Storytelling and Its Effect on Repurchase Intention, A Survey on Indonesian Customer with Heuristic Theory Perspective

Hannisa Rahmadani Hapsari[1*], Weni Novandari [2], Refius Pradipta Setyanto[3]
[1*] Department of Community Guidance, Polytechnic of Correctional Science

[2, 3] Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Jenderal Soedirman University

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the effect of storytelling marketing with heuristic theory perspective on repurchase intentions through the mediating variables of empathy, brand attitude, and brand image. The storytelling marketing dimensions used in this study consist of perceived esthetics, narrative structure, and self-reference. In addition, this study used humorous storytelling ad by one of technology services company in Indonesia. The implementation of this study is further based on a survey on 344 respondents which were analyzed using second order PLS-SEM disjoint two-stage approach. The result shows that storytelling marketing has a positive effect on repurchase intention. Empathy, brand attitude, and brand image also mediate the relationship between storytelling marketing and repurchase intention. However, in this study, storytelling marketing contributed weakly to empathy, brand attitude, and brand image. In addition, repurchase intention in this study is more affected by brand attitude and brand image. This research supports the heuristic theory in explaining the effect of storytelling marketing on consumer repurchase intention. This study also provided empirical results related to the effect of the dimensions of perceived esthetics, narrative structure, and self-reference on brand attitudes and brand image that have not been widely tested.

Introduction

Storytelling is the utilization of stories to communicate messages that reflect the company brand positively (Fog et al., 2010). Data shows that 92% of consumers want brands to create ads that evoke the feeling of storytelling (leapmesh.com, 2024). Then, 55% of consumers think about buying the brand in the future if the story presented is good. Meanwhile, from a business perspective, data shows that storytelling can generate conversion rates of up to 30% (leapmesh.com, 2024). In this case, conversion is obtained when consumers acquire products, both goods and services (Pereira et al., 2021).

In this study, storytelling consists of the dimensions of perceived esthetics, narrative structure, and self-reference (Akgün et al., 2015; Hsiao et al., 2013; Kim & Hall, 2020; Xiao et al., 2022). The dimensions refer to the heuristic theory proposed by Kahneman & Tversky (1972), namely representativeness heuristic, availability heuristic, as well as anchoring and adjustment heuristic. The representativeness heuristic is represented by perceived esthetics, the availability heuristic is represented by narrative structure, while the anchoring and adjustment heuristic is represented by self-reference (Hsiao et al., 2013).

Previous researchers found a positive effect from storytelling on consumer purchase intentions (Nie et al., 2017; Tsai, 2020; Young et al., 2019). However, Coker et al. (2017) found conflicting results that there was no difference in purchase intention between viewers of storytelling ads and viewers of

straight-sell ads. Hapsari et al. (2022) have filled this research gap by testing empathy as a mediating variable as did by Akgün et al. (2015) and Hsiao et al. (2013), but using video ads.

However, Hapsari et al. (2022) obtained results that empathy only mediates the positive relationship between the self-reference dimension and purchase intention. Hence, Yueh & Zheng (2019) further suggested that other variables besides affection could be used in future research. Affection itself, in Escalas & Stern (2003), is mentioned as the main component of empathy.

Based on the suggestions from Yueh & Zheng (2019), this study added mediating variables other than empathy, namely brand attitude and brand image. Brand attitude consists of cognitive component and affective component (Percy & Rossiter, 1992). The affective component is one of the elements inherent in storytelling marketing (Escalas & Stern, 2003). Although purchase intentions and behaviour are the ultimate goals of advertising, often a person must be conditioned in a way that increases the salience of the brand, which then forms at least some tentative attitudes toward the brand before considering a purchase (Percy & Rossiter, 1992).

Brand image is tested as a mediating variable because good memories of products for consumers can increase repurchase intentions (Huang et al., 2019). Consumers may agree or disagree with the positioning claims made by the company due to their previous schema (Lee et al., 2018). Thus, marketers need to convey and communicate a relevant and meaningful position in the minds of the target consumers to increase repurchase intention.

This research further also aimed to add empirical evidence regarding the effect of storytelling marketing with the dimensions of perceived esthetics, narrative structure, and self-reference on brand attitudes and brand image as mediating variables that are still rarely tested. The results of this research will show whether Indonesian consumers' repurchase intentions increase after watching company humorous storytelling ad.

Literature Review

Heuristic Theory

Heuristics or subconscious routines that can reduce the complexity of tasks such as assessing probabilities and predicting values. Heuristics are quite helpful in making quick judgments or solutions and can be used to evaluate goods and services (Hsiao et al., 2013). Heuristics illustrate that consumers often adopt a 'shortcut' mentality to minimize effort. Three heuristics commonly used to assess probability and predict value are the representativeness heuristic, the availability heuristic, and the anchoring and adjustment heuristic (Kahneman & Tversky, 1972; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

Storytelling Marketing

Storytelling is introducing a brand to consumers through a story (Pan & Chen, 2019). Storytelling advertising can engage and entertain consumers, communicate and exemplify how products can be used to create meaning (Escalas, 2004). Storytelling marketing in this study consists of perceived esthetics (PE), narrative structure (NS), and self-reference (SR).

PE is the level of viewers' perception of the visual richness and visual attractiveness of brand advertisements (Hsiao et al., 2013; Ko & Hsu, 2019). Beauty or esthetics is a pleasant subjective experience that is directed at an object and is not mediated by intervening reasoning (Reber et al., 2004). Thus, PE in this study is when product advertising is visually attractive and provides a pleasant experience for the audience. The relation to storytelling marketing, consumers rely on aesthetic aspects in ad to evaluate the possibility that the goods or services offered will attract their interest, in line with the representativeness heuristic theory. Hsiao et al. (2013) provided an example of an iPhone design that is an example for other manufacturers to attract people's attention as if their product is similar to the iPhone.

NS in storytelling is the level of audience perception of the completeness and causality of the plot structure in brand advertisements (Hsiao et al., 2013; Ko & Hsu, 2019). NS can help consumers remember important information (Yueh & Zheng, 2019). In line with availability heuristic theory, a person uses their recall ability to judge a good or service and make a decision (Zhang, 2022). The availability heuristic plays an important role in consumer purchasing decisions (Akgün et al., 2015).

Characters develop goals that lead to actions, which produce certain results (Escalas, 2004). Thus, characters in stories can encourage consumers to do similar things such as buying goods or using services demonstrated in the story.

SR in storytelling is the level of similar experiences that viewers remember when watching microfilms of a brand (Hsiao et al., 2013; Ko & Hsu, 2019). SR in advertising is a form of cognitive process when consumers connect advertising information with their feelings of self (Martin et al., 2004). Thus, advertising scenes has the potential to make viewers feel connected because they have experienced the same thing as the advertising scene. In many situations, one makes estimates based on initial values that are adjusted to produce a final answer (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

Storytelling Marketing, Empathy, and Repurchase Intention

Storytelling can convey product messages and beliefs that enable consumers to develop empathy under situations when rational perception is lacking (Li & Liu, 2020). Empathy is defined as one's absorption in another person's feelings (Escalas & Stern, 2003). PE, NS, and SR in tourism blog storytelling were found to have a positive effect on empathy (Akgün et al., 2015; Hsiao et al., 2013). The level of empathic understanding of mobile storytelling video advertisements had a significant impact on consumers (Zou & Wang, 2021).

High empathy can arouse individual behavior (Akgün et al., 2015). In this case, Hwang & Kim (2018) showed that empathetic consumers are more likely to repurchase a product. It is further supported by the findings of previous research that empathy was found to have a positive effect on purchase intention (Akgün et al., 2015; Hapsari et al., 2022; Hwang & Kim, 2018).

Companies can use storytelling to evoke positive emotions in people regarding goods and services, which can further trigger empathy to develop behavior (Akgün et al., 2015). Related to this, Yueh & Zheng (2019) explained that narrative processing indirectly influences purchase intentions through consumers' emotional responses. Hence, author proposed the following hypothesis.

H1: Storytelling marketing has a positive effect on empathy
H4: Empathy has a positive effect on repurchase intention
H7: Empathy mediates the positive influence of storytelling marketing on repurchase intention.

Storytelling Marketing, Brand Attitude, and Repurchase Intention

The emotional connection with the brand is best captured by brand attitude as an affective component, so storytelling ads should produce better attitude changes towards the brand than straight-sell ads (Coker et al., 2017). Brand attitude is a buyer's overall evaluation of a brand regarding its ability to satisfy currently relevant motivations (Percy & Rossiter, 1992). Wymer & Casidy (2019) added that brand attitude refers to the extent to which the brand object is perceived favourable by the target group.

Storytelling was found to have a positive effect on brand attitudes that a story with sufficient information can change consumers' emotions and influence their attitudes towards a brand (Yueh & Zheng, 2019). Lundqvist et al. (2013) found that consumers who are exposed to stories talk more about the brand. Their voice and facial expressions are more positive towards the brand and often associate it with themselves (Lundqvist et al., 2013).

Repurchase intention is a person's assessment of repurchasing services from the same company by considering their current situation and circumstances (Hellier et al., 2003). The attitude is a critical factor before a repurchase decision made. Companies need to formulate specific strategies to influence consumer attitudes towards a product (Surianto et al., 2020). In this case, several studies have found that brand attitude has a positive effect on repurchase intention (Foroudi et al., 2021; Rafiq et al., 2020; Surianto et al., 2020).

Brand attitude explains consumers' responses to exposure to a brand story. When consumers are exposed to an interesting brand story, they tend to reconstruct their values and belief systems according to the story which influences their brand attitudes and behavioural intentions (Lee & Jeong, 2017). A story with sufficient information can change emotions and influence consumers' attitudes towards a brand, thereby increasing their purchasing intentions and behaviour (Yueh & Zheng, 2019). Hence, the author proposed the following hypothesis.

H2: Storytelling marketing has a positive effect on brand attitude
H5: Brand attitude has a positive effect on repurchase intention

H8: Brand attitude mediates the positive influence of storytelling marketing on repurchase intention

Storytelling Marketing, Brand Image, and Repurchase Intention

Companies can use storytelling to highlight advantages and brand associations so that it is hoped that positive perceptions will be formed in consumers' memories. Storytelling ad is expected to be a tool to improve brand image and create effective communication and consensus with consumers (Zou & Wang, 2021). Brand image is defined as a holistic construct formed from the combination of all brand associations that are tied to the brand (Faircloth et al., 2001). Brand image also defined as the overall perception of consumers about a brand which is produced by the interaction of cognitive, affective, and evaluative processes (Lee et al., 2018).

Agreeing with the company's beliefs in the story will lead consumers to agree with the company and products and present positive emotions to influence brand image (Pan & Chen, 2019). The better the company's image will have an impact on their intention to repurchase (Huang et al., 2019; Shah et al., 2020; Surianto et al., 2020). Thus, brand image is expected to be an appropriate mediating variable.

Tsai (2020) stated that brand stories are a tool for forming product images, consumers can buy a product because they feel the spirit of the brand. Pan & Chen (2019) found that implementing storytelling can promote the brand image of ecotourism businesses and increase purchasing intentions. Ryu et al. (2019) explained that ensuring a well-structured story is woven throughout all communications by the hotel brand will produce a strong brand image, which can ultimately bring guests to the hotel. The author proposes the following hypothesis.

H3: Storytelling marketing has a positive effect on brand image
H6: Brand image has a positive effect on repurchase intention
H9: Brand image mediates the positive effect of storytelling marketing on repurchase intention
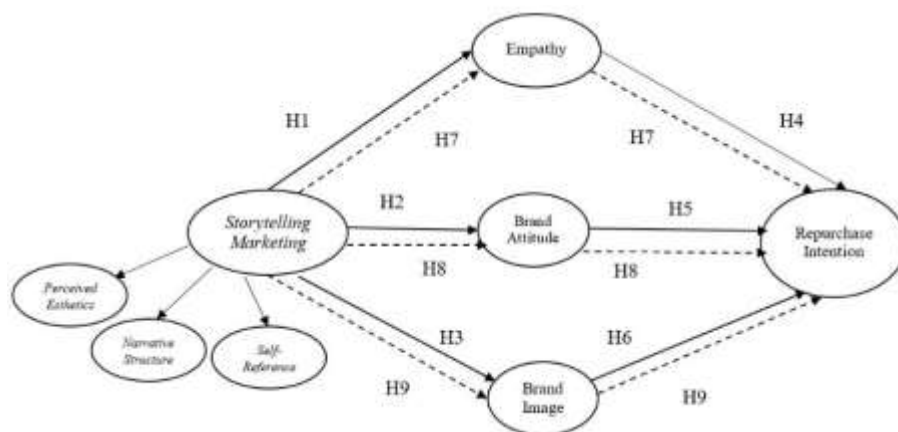

Figure. 1. Proposed Model

Method

This research employed a quantitative approach. The exact number of the population is unknown so this research used convenience sampling techniques. The data collection instrument is a survey using Google Form conducted online, 344 adequate samples were obtained. This research used humorous storytelling ad by one of technology services company in Indonesia with 2 minutes 58 seconds duration. The questionnaire consists of five Likert scales ranging from scale 1 "Strongly Disagree" to scale 5 "Strongly Agree" adapting the scale in previous research. This research adapted the measurement of PE from Hsiao et al. (2013) and Lavie & Tractinsky (2004) with 4 items, namely the ad is aesthetic (PE1), original (PE2), fun (PE3), and creative (PE4). The NS measurement was adapted from Hsiao et al. (2013) and Delgadillo & Escalas (2004) with 4 items, namely I understand what the actor in the ad feels and thinks (NS1), I understand the actor's personal changes in the ad (NS2), I understand the causes of the events described in the ad (NS3), and I understand that the ad has a series of initial events, a crisis, and a conclusion (NS4). Furthermore, the SR measure was adapted from Hsiao et al. (2013) and Martin

et al. (2004) with 4 items, namely the ad makes me think about personal experiences with the advertised service (SR1), the ad model speaks to the group of which I am a member (SR2), and I easily find similarities with the ad model (SR3), the ad seems to relate to me personally (SR4).

The empathy measurement scale was adapted from Escalas & Stern (2003) with 5 items, namely when watching the ad, I feel as if the event is really happening to me (EM1), I feel as if I am one of the characters (EM2), I feel that the events in the advertisement happened to me (EM3), I experienced many of the same feelings as those described by the characters (EM4), and I feel as if the characters' feelings were my own (EM5).In addition, the brand attitude measurement was adapted from Wang et al. (2019) with 3 items. There are the brand is beneficial (BA1), the brand gives a good feeling (BA2), and the brand is desirable (BA3).

The brand image measurement was adapted from Ansary & Nik Hashim (2017) with 4 items, namely the brand has a personality that differentiates itself from competitors (BI1), the brand does not disappoint customers (BI2), the brand is one of the best brands in its sector (BI3), as well as a stable brand on the market (BI4). The measurement of repurchase intention was adapted from Ginting et al. (2023) with 4 items, namely I am willing to repurchase services that have been purchased (RI1), I am willing to recommend services that have been purchased to other people (RI2), I am willing to choose services that have been purchased as the main choice compared to similar services from other brands (RI3), and I am willing to seek information about the desired service and seek information to support the positive characteristics of the service (RI4).

Furthermore, data analysis was carried out using the SmartPLS 30-days trial software (Ringle et al., 2022). This research model used second order, following the guidelines written by Sarstedt et al. (2019). In this case, the author also used the disjoint two-stage approach method with practical considerations, but did not provide different results from the other methods (Sarstedt et al., 2019). Further explanation will be explained in the results section.

Results and Discussion
General Description of Respondents Characteristics
Collected questionnaire was dominated by respondents aged 17-26 years as shown in Table 1. The respondents participated are at this age groups because at those ages, they are considered to have more free time to watch the humorous storytelling ad, which is longer than the usual ad. In addition, the majority of respondents are students. Many students use the company services for transportation, food and beverage delivery, sending packages, e-wallet, etc. The use of this service is because they belong to the students who like practicality and convenience.

Table 1. General Description of Respondents

Demographic	Factors	Amount	Percentage
Gender	Female	258	75.00
	Male	86	25.00
Age	17-26	297	86.34
	27-36	25	7.27
	37-46	17	4.94
	> 46	5	1.45
Occupation	College Student	255	74.13
	Entrepreneur	10	2.91
	Private employees	40	11.63
	Government employees	11	3.20
	Housewife	8	2.33
	Others	3	0.87

Source: (Author, 2023)

Data Analysis Results

Based on the disjoint two-stage approach method stage 1, all of lower-order exogenous constructs, namely PE, NS, and SR, are connected to all endogenous constructs, namely EM, BA, BI, and RI. In stage 1, it is sufficient to evaluate the measurement model consisting of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability (Sarstedt et al., 2019).

Table 2. Evaluation of Stage 1 Measurement Model

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	(α)	CR	AVE
Perceived Esthetics (PE)	PE1	0.764	0.745	0.838	0.564
	PE2	0.726			
	PE3	0.778			
	PE4	0.734			
Narrative Structure (NS)	NS1	0.742	0.743	0.838	0.563
	NS2	0.783			
	NS3	0.737			
	NS4	0.740			
Self-Reference (SR)	SR1	0.755	0.765	0.850	0.586
	SR2	0.772			
	SR3	0.766			
	SR4	0.768			
Empathy (EM)	EM1	0.822	0.867	0.905	0.656
	EM2	0.821			
	EM3	0.875			
	EM4	0.815			
	EM5	0.709			
Brand Attitude (BA)	BA1	0.822	0.773	0.868	0.697
	BA2	0.857			
	BA3	0.808			
Brand Image (BI)	BI1	0.703	0.769	0.852	0.590
	BI2	0.776			
	BI3	0.791			
	BI4	0.798			
Repurchase Intention (RI)	RI1	0.849	0.890	0.924	0.753
	RI2	0.848			
	RI3	0.888			
	RI4	0.885			

Source: (Author, 2023)

Table 2 shows the results of PLS-algorithm to evaluate the measurement model in stage 1. All AVE values of the indicators are >0.50, hence based on Hair et al. (2017), the convergent validity is achieved. Furthermore, all constructs have a composite reliability value of >0.70, so they are reliable. The HTMT value in Table 3 shows the correlation of each indicator of a construct is with each other, which is <0.85 for constructs that are contextually different and <0.90 for constructs that are conceptually similar, so the discriminant validity is achieved.

Table 3. HTMT Value in Stage 1

	BA	BI	EM	NS	PE	RI	SR
BA							
BI	0.889						
EM	0.592	0.653					
NS	0.655	0.647	0.646				
PE	0.643	0.633	0.475	0.794			
RI	0.766	0.853	0.625	0.661	0.650		

SR	0.644	0.647	0.817	0.705	0.562	0.598

Source: (Author, 2023)

The PLS algorithm in stage 1 produces latent variable score (Sarstedt et al., 2019). The latent variable scores from PE, NS, and SR constructs were taken, then compiled together with indicators of other endogenous constructs into a new dataset. These three latent variable scores would be the indicators of the higher-order storytelling marketing (SM) construct.

Table 4. Evaluation of Measurement and Structural Models Stage 2

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	(α)	CR	AVE	VIF	R²	Q²
Storytelling Marketing (SM)	PE	0.806				1.606		
	NS	0.862	0.768	0.866	0.683	1.836	-	-
	SR	0.809				1.447		
Empathy (EM)	EM1	0.821				2.115		
	EM2	0.820				2.129		
	EM3	0.875	0.867	0.905	0.656	2.602	0.421	0.416
	EM4	0.813				2.073		
	EM5	0.712				1.486		
Brand Attitude (BA)	BA1	0.822				1.564		
	BA2	0.857	0.773	0.868	0.687	1.648	0.368	0.361
	BA3	0.807				1.555		
Brand Image (BI)	BI1	0.704				1.384		
	BI2	0.775	0.769	0.852	0.590	1.536	0.362	0.355
	BI3	0.791				1.573		
	BI4	0.798				1.481		
Repurchase Intention (RI)	RI1	0.849				2.147		
	RI2	0.849	0.890	0.924	0.753	2.181	0.601	0.396
	RI3	0.887				3.145		
	RI4	0.884				3.120		

Source: (Author, 2023)

In stage 2, the measurement model was evaluated again using the PLS algorithm. Table 4 shows that the values have met the threshold values so that convergent validity and reliability are achieved. Furthermore, Table 5 shows HTMT values in stage 2, that are already <0.85 and <0.90 so the discriminant validity is achieved. The measurement model has met the requirements so it is continued with structural model evaluation consisting of collinearity tests, bootstrapping, coefficient of determination (R²), effect size (f²), and predictive relevance (Q²).

Table 5. HTMT Values in Stage 2

	BA	BI	EM	RI	SM
BA					
BI	0.889				
EM	0.592	0.653			
RI	0.766	0.853	0.625		
SM	0.785	0.775	0.786	0.768	

Source: (Author, 2023)

Table 4 shows that the R² of the endogenous constructs EM, BA, and BI are 0.421, 0.368, 0.362 respectively. This means that SM influences these three endogenous constructs weakly. Then, the R² of the endogenous RI construct is 0.601, which means that SM, EM, BA, and BI influence RI moderately. Table 5 shows the Q² value for each reflective endogenous which is greater than zero. Hair et al. (2017) explained that Q² more than 0 indicates the predictive relevance of the path model for a particular dependent construct, which in this study is RI. Table 6 shows the f² value indicating the contribution of the exogenous construct to the R² value of the endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2017). The f² values

of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 respectively indicate small, medium, and large influence on the endogenous construct.

Table 6 shows that SM has a large influence on EM, BA, and BI in this research model. BA has a small influence meanwhile BI has medium influence in explaining changes in R^2 of respondents' repurchase intentions. EM has a very small influence and has not reached the minimum threshold required to explain changes in R^2 in repurchase intentions.

Table 6. F^2 value in Structural Model Evaluation Stage 2

Path	f^2	Path	f^2	Path	f^2
SM->EM	0.728	SM->BI	0.568	BA->RI	0.037
SM->BA	0.581	EM->RI	0.016	BI->RI	0.195

Table 4 shows VIF values <5 (Hair et al., 2017) so that there is no collinearity. The results of one-tailed bootstrapping 0.05 (Hair et al., 2017) in Table 7, shows that all hypotheses have a t value >1.645 and probability value <0.05 so that all hypotheses are accepted. SM was found to contribute the most to empathy. BI is the one that contributes the most to repurchase intentions so its mediation influence is the greatest.

Table 7. Bootstrapping Results in Stage 2 Structural Model Evaluation

Hypothesis	Original Sample	Standard Deviation	t values	p values	Information
*SM -> RI	0.209	0.057	3.665	0.000	Accepted
H1: SM -> EM	0.649	0.031	21.225	0.000	Accepted
H2: SM -> BA	0.606	0.040	15.097	0.000	Accepted
H3: SM -> BI	0.602	0.039	15.610	0.000	Accepted
H4: EM -> RI	0.107	0.048	2.249	0.025	Accepted
H5: BA -> RI	0.177	0.054	3.290	0.001	Accepted
H6: BI -> RI	0.412	0.069	5.946	0.000	Accepted
H7: SM -> EM -> RI	0.070	0.032	2.201	0.028	Accepted
H8: SM -> BA -> RI	0.108	0.035	3.067	0.002	Accepted
H9: SM -> BI -> RI	0.248	0.044	5.640	0.000	Accepted

Source: (Author, 2023)

Full collinearity test was used to check common method bias/CMB (Kock, 2015). CMB can occur when the independent and dependent variables are captured by the same response method. If the VIF is equal to or less than 3.3 then the model is free from CMB (Kock, 2015), as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Common Method Bias Results

Variables	SM	EM	BA	BI	RI
VIF	1.457	1.499	2.075	2.173	2.206

Source: (Author, 2023)

Table 9. PLSpredict Results

Indicators	PLS_RMSE	LM_RMSE	Indicators	PLS_RMSE	LM_RMSE
EM1	0.621	0.608	BI3	**0.457**	0.570
EM2	0.656	0.642	BI4	**0.463**	0.581
EM3	0.625	0.606	BI5	**0.437**	0.534
EM4	0.641	0.616	BI6	**0.414**	0.520
EM5	0.614	0.516	RI1	**0.401**	0.503
BA1	**0.513**	0.480	RI2	**0.446**	0.577
BA2	**0.478**	0.507	RI3	**0.429**	0.547

BA3	**0.506**	0.570	RI4	**0.428**	0.544

Source: (Author, 2023)

Based on the PLSpredict results in Table 9, there are 11 of the 16 indicators (those in bold) that produce predictive errors PLS_RMSE that are smaller than LM_RMSE. Thus, the PLS-SEM RMSE value that is greater than the LM RMSE value for 5 of the 16 indicators (which are not in bold) is the minority. The minority of predictive errors shows that the model has medium predictive power (Hair et al., 2019).
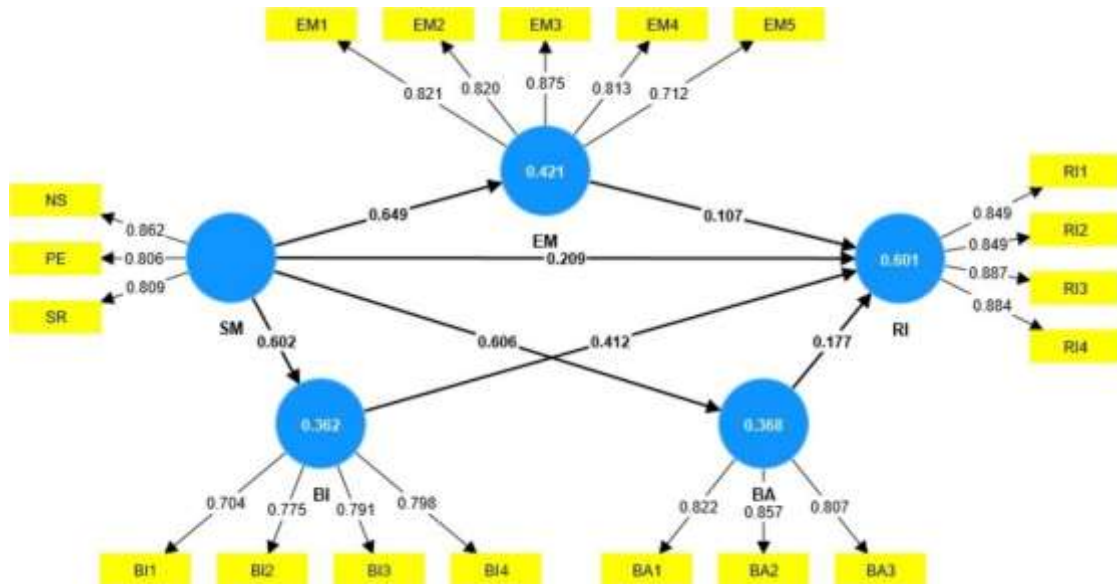

Figure 2. Output of the Disjoint Approach (Author, 2023)

The purpose of this study is to fill the research gap between storytelling marketing and repurchase intention by reexamining empathy as a mediating variable. This study also analyzed the influence of storytelling dimensions PE, NS, and SR on brand attitude and brand image. This study used humorous storytelling ad videos from one of the technology companies in Indonesia.

Based on the hypothesis test in Table 7, the majority of respondents agreed that the humorous storytelling ad, which they had watched before filling out the questionnaire, was presented esthetically, creatively, and fun. The ad also has a clear plot so that respondents can easily understand the actor's thoughts and identify the initial event, crisis, and conclusion. It is also supported by the overall scene of the actor performing various service used, so respondents as consumers can connect with the actor.

Humorous storytelling ad have a positive effect on empathy. This is in line with previous research that storytelling can increase audience empathy (Akgün et al., 2015; Hsiao et al., 2013; Zou & Wang, 2021). The pleasant narrative gives consumers a good feeling. In addition, storytelling ad can improve brand attitude, in line with previous research (Coker et al., 2017; Lundqvist et al., 2013; Yueh & Zheng, 2019). A good narrative structure increases positive emotions and attitudes (Escalas & Stern, 2003). Humorous narrative structures are memorable to consumers. As explained in the availability heuristic theory that one can use the information they easily recall to make decisions without asking themselves relevant questions or doing further research (Zhang, 2022).

Storytelling ad can improve brand image, in line with previous research (Pan & Chen, 2019; Ryu et al., 2019; Tsai, 2020). Respondents as consumers can follow the clarity of the storyline. Brand stories with high plot clarity increase positive brand images compared to stories that are less clear (Ryu et al., 2019). The ad used in this study are also in accordance with the anchoring and adjustment heuristic theory because they describe consumers' own experiences (Hsiao et al., 2013) when using these services.

Empathy has a positive effect on repurchase intention, as supported by the previous research done by Hwang & Kim (2018). The resulting emotions affect hedonic consumption emotions and have an impact on purchase intentions (Akgün et al., 2015). Empathy can positively influence consumers' decisions to purchase services designed for the welfare of society as a whole (Hwang & Griffiths, 2017). Brand

attitude has a positive effect on repurchase intention in line with previous research (Foroudi et al., 2021; Rafiq et al., 2020; Surianto et al., 2020). Buyers choose the best brand among alternatives that buyers know can fulfill their motivation (Percy & Rossiter, 1992). Furthermore, brand image has a positive effect on repurchase intention, as in line with the previous research (Huang et al., 2019; Shah et al., 2020). Brand image can be used as a standard for a type of service for consumers because standardizing services is more difficult than standardizing goods (Shah et al., 2020).

Empathy, brand attitude, and brand image were found to mediate the positive relationship of storytelling ad with repurchase intention. The storytelling ad in this study had the most impact in improving their attitude and brand image. In this study, brand image became the strongest antecedent in increasing repurchase intention. Marketers need to ensure that a well-structured story is woven throughout the communication so that it will produce a strong brand image, which in turn can bring consumers (Ryu et al., 2019). Brand stories are a tool to shape product images. Consumers buy a product because they feel the brand storyline or the spirit of the brand (Tsai, 2020).

Conclusions and recommendations

Based on data analysis, it is concluded that storytelling marketing has a positive effect on empathy, brand attitude, and brand image. Empathy, brand attitude, and brand image have a positive effect on repurchase intention. Furthermore, empathy, brand attitude, and brand image were found to partially mediate the positive relationship between storytelling marketing and repurchase intention. Partial mediation is demonstrated by the direct influence of storytelling marketing on repurchase intentions which is still significant even though mediating variables have been included in the model (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

The results of this research have theoretical implications by filling the gap regarding the inconsistency of the direct effect of storytelling marketing on purchase intentions. Besides, not many have tested the influence of the dimensions of perceived esthetics, narrative structure, and self-reference on brand attitude and brand image.

Based on the bootstrapping results, it is known that narrative structure (0.862) contributes the most to the storytelling marketing construct. This is in line with the ad being tested because it has a strong narrative from the beginning to the end, thereby establishing clarity in the plot of the ad. Plot clarity can contribute to brand image (Ryu et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the dimensions of perceived esthetics (0.806) and self-reference (0.809) provide similar contributions to the storytelling marketing construct. Thus, the results obtained can contribute to the research on heuristics that can be used to analyze the effect of storytelling marketing on repurchase intentions.

The results of this research have practical implications. Companies interested in making storytelling ad are advised to emphasize on narrative structure. A good narrative can introduce a brand positively to viewers. Perceived esthetics is important to attract attention so that viewers do not click 'skip' on the ad. Self-reference is needed so that viewers feel familiar with the events in the ad so that it is easier to imagine the use of the advertised service.

Consumers will feel involved if the narrative uses a first person point of view which can reduce the psychological distance between the brand and its audience (Ryu et al., 2019). As the humorous storytelling ad in this research uses a first person point of view, viewers can feel like they are being invited to communicate with the actor. An entertaining ad will be difficult for viewers to ignore so the inserted marketing information will be effectively captured by the audience.

The type of storytelling ad needs to be adjusted to the target consumer. This relates to the use of language, terms, story ideas, visual appeal, etc. For example, as the consumers of the company in this research are dominated by the young generation that is tech savvy, the scenes in the ad also show the use of service applications in entertaining way.

Brand attitude and brand image individually contribute considerably to repurchase intentions. This could be an opportunity for companies to build them up through storytelling ads, preventing viewers from experiencing uncomfortable feelings as a result of witnessing the brand's straightforward or excessive self-claims.

The use of storytelling ad needs to be adjusted to the culture of a country. For example, storytelling ad used in this research also features one of Indonesia's cultural icons, specifically the Betawi culture, namely Ondel-ondel. The important goal is to make the brand memorable to consumers.

Companies also needs to determine an effective strategy. It is better if the ads can be seen by many people. As a case example from Indonesia, storytelling ads advertised on YouTube, or storytelling ads that start with a viral teaser, tend to attract more viewers than storytelling ads that are just uploaded without any strategy.

The use of storytelling to influence consumer emotions is effective to use because consumer consumption decisions are not always rational and provide opportunities for marketing to be manipulated (Tsai, 2020). In terms of increasing sales, companies can convey their goods/services with situations that are often experienced by consumers so they do not have much consideration to purchase as described in heuristic theory.

This research has several limitations. Repurchase intention in this study is more influenced by brand attitude and brand image. Thus, the same feelings between consumers and actors in humorous storytelling ad are not a significant contributor to repurchase by consumers in Indonesia. Besides, the predictive power of this research model is medium as shown by the PLSpredict results. Future researchers can modify the model with variables that are more accurate in explaining a series of storytelling marketing relationships with consumer's behavior.

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