

How digital storytelling and brand resonance drive purchase intention among small business entrepreneurs on social media in Egypt

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Abstract

Social media is a crucial tool for small business owners to interact with their customers and influence consumer behavior in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

This study investigates the influence of digital storytelling and brand resonance on the purchase intentions of consumers who engage with Egyptian small business owners on social media platforms. Methodology: This study utilizes Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess the expected relationships based on survey data collected from 123 social media users in Egypt. The findings indicate that brand resonance serves as a stronger predictor of purchase intention, although both digital storytelling and brand resonance exhibit positive and significant effects. The intention to purchase is significantly affected by the narrative structure and the perceived ethics of digital storytelling elements. The impact of perceived aesthetics is minimal. Furthermore, the dimensions of attitudinal attachment and sense of community exhibit no significant direct effect, whereas active engagement and behavioral loyalty are identified as the most significant aspects of brand resonance. The model explains a significant amount of the variance in purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.817$), highlighting the necessity of enhancing strong consumer-brand interactions within social media contexts. The findings enhance the current literature on digital marketing and branding by providing evidence from an emerging market context, suggesting that narrative alone is insufficient to influence purchase behavior unless it is converted into authentic brand resonance. The findings have significant implications for entrepreneurs aiming to enhance customer engagement, loyalty, and purchase intention through the use of authentic and ethical storytelling strategies.

Introduction

In today's fast-paced, digital world, it is critical for companies to provide their audience with relatable and interesting information. The branding, engagement, and expansion of a corporate organization are the primary pillars of digital content strategy, especially for small business owners. You may have a consistent, relevant, and targeted approach to storytelling—which is how consumer perceptions are formed—by having a clear and well-organized content strategy (Green & Williams, 2023).

Consumers increasingly expect brands to engage them with narratives that reflect authenticity, purpose, and emotional value (Ashley & Tuten, 2020; Saboo et al., 2023). For small businesses, especially in emerging markets like Egypt, digital storytelling has become a crucial means of differentiation in an overcrowded online marketplace. Through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, small business owners are not just selling products; they are sharing their journey, their values, and the community behind the brand.

Brand storytelling—defined as the strategic use of narrative elements to craft meaningful, coherent brand messages—has been shown to enhance emotional engagement, strengthen brand identity, and build customer trust (Marques et al., 2020; Pera, Viglia, & Furlan, 2020). This process contributes significantly to brand resonance, a concept rooted in Keller's (2001) brand equity model, which refers to the deep psychological connection a consumer feels with a brand. Strong brand resonance leads to outcomes such as loyalty, advocacy, and long-term customer relationships (Algharabat et al., 2022).

In contrast to traditional advertising, storytelling is integrating companies into narratives that appeal to consumers' emotions, values, and experiences (Nguyen & Lee, 2023). Effective brand storytelling also helps to increase a brand's resonance and engagement, making it harder to ignore (Miller & Taylor, 2023).

Additionally, the importance of brand storytelling for consideration and purchase has only grown with

the development of social media. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok give marketers a variety of storytelling formats, including interactive content and short-form videos, that allow for real-time interaction. Research-based on data gathered up until October 2023 indicates that social media material with a narrative component frequently increases consumer purchase intention through perceived authenticity, trust, or emotional engagement (Clark & Davis, 2024).

Although this can be an excellent opportunity, small business owners in a number of markets, like Egypt, still struggle to successfully use digital content tactics. Due to limited resources, the need to beat competitors, and shifting customer preferences, content development, delivery, and optimization are now considered significant commitments rather than options (Brown and Smith, 2024). Considering that they can effectively prepare crowd research, content creation, storytelling techniques, and execution evaluation for success, everything essential to digital content strategy should be beneficial.

In Egypt, small and micro-enterprises make up over 90% of active businesses and play a critical role in the national economy (CAPMAS, 2023). However, many face challenges related to limited marketing resources, digital skills gaps, and intense competition. Leveraging digital storytelling could offer these entrepreneurs a cost-effective yet impactful way to cultivate brand resonance. Despite its growing significance, little is known about how Egyptian small business owners strategically use storytelling within their digital content strategies or how such efforts influence consumer perception and engagement.

The purpose of this study is to ascertain how brand storytelling and brand resonance in digital platforms affect Egyptian SMEs and their entrepreneurs. In order to adapt theory to practice in digital marketing, the ultimate goal of this study is to establish the foundation for understanding how customer perceptions, cultural resonance, and storytelling distinctiveness affect actual brand engagement or purchase intent.

Although storytelling has emerged as a core element of digital branding, empirical research on its strategic application among small businesses—especially in non-Western, developing contexts—is still in its infancy (Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2021). Much of the current literature focuses on corporate brands in developed economies, often overlooking how small entrepreneurs in emerging markets like Egypt utilize storytelling to build brand relationships online. Furthermore, while brand resonance is a well-established theoretical concept, there is limited evidence on how digital storytelling contributes to its development in real-world entrepreneurial contexts (Chathoth et al., 2022).

As Egyptian small business owners increasingly adopt social media for brand communication, understanding the dynamics between their storytelling practices and customer engagement becomes critical. Without such insights, small firms may miss the opportunity to create lasting emotional bonds with consumers—bonds that are essential for sustainability and competitive advantage in the digital economy. This research therefore seeks to provide actionable insights that could enable small businesses to enhance their digital marketing effectiveness by exploring the relationship between storytelling techniques, consumer perceptions, and brand resonance. It will also look into how each of these stages of storytelling play a vital role in building strong brand associations and customer purchase intentions through Egypt's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Literature Review and research hypotheses 2.1 Digital Content Strategies

Because social media content marketing works, brand ambassadors can boost electronic word-of-mouth, and therefore brand engagement. Users and brands alike can share their stories through a content community. The business can produce content that humanizes it and demonstrates empathy for the concerns and issues of its target audience. Users may also contribute to creating a narrative that strengthens the brand's positive image. As a result, it is recognized that brand engagement with consumers on social media facilitates content production alongside the business, which uses connections to its advantage by establishing and maintaining an online community. Customers can create content and distribute it to other brand followers. (Lopes & Casais, 2022)

Trevor Changing topics, the work's popularity and impact can also be determined by the sci-writing style. Studies with abstracts that are more narrative in nature have been proven to have greater citation frequencies. These findings suggest that careful storytelling not only increases comprehension but also increases scientific community members' interest in the study.

Digital content strategy is a comprehensive approach that outlines how a company or brand will create, distribute, and manage digital content in order to accomplish its objectives. For this reason, developing a clear digital content plan is essential for achieving branding, customer engagement, and conversion goals.

This offers messaging consistency across various digital touchpoints and guarantees that the information is pertinent to the intended audience. New research indicates that a strong content strategy can significantly increase the effectiveness of digital marketing initiatives by making material more measurable, relevant, and targeted. (Green & Williams, 2021).

Stages of Digital Content Strategy

Step 1: Establishing Goals and Objectives

Establishing goals and objectives is the first stage in developing a digital content strategy. Planning is the most crucial stage in the content creation process. In order to be actionable and in line with more general company objectives, the goals themselves should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). According to studies, companies that set content goals are better organized in how they track outcomes and use data to inform choices. At this point, it is ensured that content creation is both goal-oriented and purposeful. Davis (2022)

Step 2: Conducting Audience Research and Creating Personas

Regarding Audience Research: An Essential Step in Developing a Robust Digital Content Strategy. Businesses may provide pertinent content by understanding the traits, inclinations, and difficulties of their target audience. You will frequently develop consumer personas at this phase that represent trends in your target demographic. According to research, content strategies that are grounded in a thorough understanding of an audience are more relevant and result in higher levels of engagement. Marketers may produce more engaging content by creating personas and comprehending the emotional and cognitive needs of their audience. Miller and Taylor (2020)

Step 3: Ideation and Content Creation

The second stage involves content production and ideation if you have a clear understanding of your objectives and target audience. After planning and brainstorming, we moved on to the content development step, which must satisfy the audience and achieve the original objectives. Blog entries, social media updates, podcasts, videos, and infographics are a few types of content. Content that is amusing, educational, or adds value for the audience performs better, according to study. In the end, honest storytelling allows you to establish a personal connection with your customers, and the most effective content shows a sincere comprehension of the brand's voice, mission, and audience interests.

Step 4: Promotion and Distribution of Content

Distribution and promotion are the next steps after content creation. Selecting the best digital platforms (social networks, email, blogs, websites, etc.) to distribute the material is the last stage in this process. Your distribution strategy may vary depending on where your target audience lives, and new research indicates that multi-channel tactics will increase content visibility. The study found that combining paid and organic marketing strategies can increase reach and engagement. At this point, audience segmentation and SEO optimization are essential to ensuring that the correct individuals see what we produce. Nguyen (2023)

Step 5: Assess and Enhance

The last phase of a digital content strategy is evaluating its efficacy and refining the material and subsequent initiatives. By monitoring key performance indicators (formerly known as KPIs) for engagement rates, website traffic, and conversion rates, businesses can accomplish their objectives. Typically, optimization entails modifying headlines, content formats, or distribution tactics in light of analytics information. The foundation of Net Promoter Score is the notion that you can stay ahead of the competition year after year by measuring and improving continuously. Davis and Smith (2022)

Stages of Storytelling

Consumer impressions are also significantly impacted by the emotional interactions that brand tales generate. Emotional narratives establish a stronger bond between the brand and its customers. Brands with greater emotional involvement tend to score higher because consumers' attachment to a brand grows stronger when they experience good emotions through storytelling, such as joy, empathy, and inspiration. Increased brand loyalty, a tendency to discuss and advocate the brand to peers, and ultimately a higher intent to buy might result from such emotional attachment. Miller and Taylor (2020)

Storytelling encourages scientific inquiry beyond the technicalities by crafting a narrative that appeals

to more than just the analytical mind. The Proceedings of the Design Society have released preliminary findings regarding the potential of storytelling as an analytical tool for evaluating research initiatives. It has been demonstrated that storytelling facilitates the synthesis and analysis of research plans and designs and contributes to the development of a logical framework that enhances comprehension. (Taylor,2021)

Digital storytelling (DST) combines digital elements such as text, images, and recorded audio with storytelling. Videos, music, and narrations. No one can dispute the importance of storytelling as the foundation of human communication, as evidenced by the tale of Sinuhe in ancient Egypt, the tale of Homer in Greece, or the legends of early humans, since oral tradition has helped to teach and transfer knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. Since writing a narrative is a process of creating meaning, storytelling and learning are closely linked. As such, it is a novel idea in the field of education. Given that students in health practice meet many client tales regularly, storytelling may be a useful technique for achieving educational objectives, particularly critical thinking, which is the main objective of all educational systems. (Mojtahedzadeh et.al.,2021) 2.4 Storytelling distinctive

It is commonly acknowledged that using stories in scientific research has many advantages, including improved communication, comprehension, and engagement. Transition to Increased Inclusion and Communication (Green,2025)

According to studies, a company's narrative may significantly influence your decision to buy, particularly if it speaks to your identity or your emotions. Brands may accomplish this by using relatable and genuine stories, which will increase their perceived worth in the eyes of customers and foster relationships based on trust. Americans are more likely to purchase from companies they believe reflect their values as a result of this trust, which increases their buying intent. The emotional connection that storytelling fosters can encourage impulsive purchases because it may compel customers to act on the emotional attachment that the message evokes. (Lee and Johnson, 2022).

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Within the professional environment, storytelling is often used to make intricate ideas intelligible. By its very nature, narrative makes it easier to explain complex scientific ideas in a clear and structured manner. There is proof that stories can make scientific facts more appealing and memorable, increasing their persuasiveness. By presenting their data in a narrative format, scientists might improve the way their findings are understood by the audience. (Jones, 2022)

As noted earlier, storytelling can act as a tool for analysis. Storytelling encourages scientific inquiry beyond the technicalities by crafting a narrative that appeals to more than just the analytical mind. The Proceedings of the Design Society have released preliminary findings regarding the potential of storytelling as an analytical tool for evaluating research initiatives. It has been demonstrated that storytelling facilitates the synthesis and analysis of research plans and designs and contributes to the development of a logical framework that enhances comprehension. (Taylor, 2021)

Although narrative in scientific research is fundamentally pointillist, since it incorporates both qualitative and quantitative analysis, which is inherently multidisciplinary, embracing narrative allows researchers to increase the study's impact, accessibility, and engagement. (Green, 2025) As a result, audiences have been shown to become emotionally invested in stories. It has been demonstrated that stories that evoke strong feelings are more likely to be remembered and shared than others. This is comparable to resonance, which is a story that speaks to the emotions of the audience. A tale is more likely to have a lasting impact if it more closely aligns with the audience's values, past experiences, and emotional state. (Parker, 2020)

"Currently, narrative resonance can be used in science communication to convey concepts and ideas that are frequently difficult to convey. Scientists can increase public knowledge and participation by using narrative strategies that speak to the emotional and intellectual requirements of the general audience. This approach does a great job of providing context between the specifics of the researchers' work and the people

who stand to gain the most from these results. (Taylor, 2022)

Storytelling and Consumer Perceptions

When used in scientific communication, storytelling can significantly boost audience interest. My science has been completely at odds with some of my work. According to a report published in Nature, narrative and credible science communication are not mutually exclusive and, when combined, can be effective partners in helping people relate to and understand scientific information. (Smith,2023)

By its very nature, narrative makes it easier to explain complex scientific ideas in a clear and structured manner. There is proof that stories can make scientific facts more appealing and memorable, increasing their persuasiveness. By presenting their data in a narrative format, scientists might improve the way their findings are understood by the audience. (Jones,2022) (Nguyen, 2021) revealed that Currently, message, conflict, character, and plot are the four fundamental components of storytelling that are enumerated in many studies and regarded as crucial.

Message: an essential element of storytelling that is incorporated into the narrative to positively inspire and communicate with the audience. Clearly defining a message is necessary in strategic situations; as evidence, marketers use a message to effectively convey the brand's meaning to consumers.

Conflict: a factor that prompts the audience to take action and consider potential solutions. Through resolved disputes and well-founded solutions, the audience observes the stories' lessons.

Character: Through storytelling, characters communicate with the audience. They bring the story to life and create tensions.

Plot: the story's progression is known as the plot. The storyline keeps events, characters, and conflicts consistent with the stories' chronological periods. This component must be well organized to both maintain audience interest and assist the story.

On the practical wise, it is commonly acknowledged that using stories in scientific research has many advantages, including improved communication, comprehension, and engagement. (Green, 2025)

Despite its usage in scientific communication, storytelling can significantly boost audience interest. According to a report published in Nature, narrative and credible science communication are not mutually exclusive and, when combined, can be effective partners in helping people relate to and understand scientific information. (Smith, 2023)

In reality, the work's popularity and impact can also be determined by the sci-writing style. Studies with abstracts that are more narrative in nature have been proven to have greater citation frequencies. These findings suggest that careful storytelling not only increases comprehension but also increases scientific community members' interest in the study.

When a story resonates with a specific community or society because it speaks to their shared experiences, customs, or values, it is said to have cultural resonance. According to recent studies, narratives that draw on cultural symbols, shared experiences, or group emotions are more likely to evoke a deeper level of audience participation. Storytelling can be facilitated by culturally recognized themes, strengthening relationships and ensuring that more individuals understand stories within a cultural framework. (Nguyen, 2023)

Band Resonance and Storytelling

In summary, narrative in scientific research is fundamentally pointillistic since it incorporates both qualitative and quantitative analysis, which is inherently multidisciplinary. By embracing narrative, researchers can increase the study's impact, accessibility, and engagement. (Green,2025) How culturally relevant a brand's narrative is is another significant aspect affecting how customers view a brand. When a brand story aligns with the cultural background and experiences of the target audience, it is more thoroughly filtered to help individuals develop a deeper understanding of their brand stories. Customers' perceptions of brands can be improved and brand loyalty can be fostered by using culturally relevant storylines (Panda). According to recent studies, brands that adapt their narrative to local traditions, values, and practices are perceived as being more considerate, inclusive, and socially conscious. (Nguyen and Lee, 2021). or service that offers the remedy, to maintain audience engagement while bolstering the stories. The Reasons for Having a Digital Content Strategy

While resonant stories simplify difficult material through a cognitive phenomenon that aids in understanding and even memory retention. In general, information may be recalled and comprehended successfully if it is presented in a narrative that corresponds with the audience's emotional and cognitive

state. Understanding is supported by the cognitive anchor provided by the "resonance" between the story and the listener's preexisting knowledge and emotional state. (Lee, 2019)

H1: Digital Storytelling has an effect on Brand Resonance.

H1.1: Perceived Aesthetics has an effect on Purchase Intention in social media. H1.2: Narrative Structure has an effect on Purchase Intention in social media.

H1.3: Perceived Ethics has an effect on Purchase Intention in social media.

Brand Storytelling and Purchase Intention in Social Media

Brand storytelling on social media has become a potent strategic tool for businesses trying to forge closer emotional connections with their customers. Because of this, companies are now using storytelling to develop stories that connect with their target audience and forge deeper, more emotional ties. Through the integration of captivating images, textual components, and interactive aspects on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, marketers can craft compelling narratives that enthrall users. Research indicates that emotionally charged material tends to increase brand loyalty and customers' propensity to take action, including making a purchase. Smith (2021) *Storytelling's Effect on Purchase Intention*

Consumer views and buying intentions are significantly influenced by how authentic the brand story is. They are therefore more likely to believe in and purchase from companies that provide transparency and authenticity. Authenticity can be achieved through social media through consistent messaging and behind-the-scenes content, but I think user-generated content is the best way to share true consumer tales. Purchase intentions and brand loyalty are explained by consumers' emotional attachment to the brand as a result of their impression of its sincerity. (Clark and Davis, 2021). *Storytelling components of narrative in social media marketing*

Brands may utilize social media as a platform to convey their story in real time and in a variety of content types, including user-generated material, live videos, and stories. This rapidly expanding ecosystem connects brands with consumers through interaction, discovery, and discovery. Brands may create a two-way communication channel to strengthen their relationship with their audience by utilizing interactive social media forms like surveys, comment sections, and direct messages. Research indicates that meaningful interactions between the brand and its customers, as well as reactions to the company's comments, improve the possibility that the consumer would make a purchase because they foster a sense of community and allow the brand to interact with the customer. To suggest a whole overhaul, how serious is the issue of customer trust and brand authenticity in social media storytelling? Social media advertisements that use a problem-solving framework are especially effective because they lead the customer on an emotional journey that culminates in the brand's product. *Consumer Perceptions and Storytelling. Brands Use Storytelling to Influence Consumer Behavior* One of the most effective strategies used by brands to influence consumers' attitudes and perceptions of goods and services is storytelling. Because storytelling may provide a narrative that speaks to a consumer's values, emotional state, and experiences, it fosters a deeper bond between the brand and the customer. This connection fuels a brand's emotional resonance and perception, elevating its quality, authenticity, and overall value for customers. According to studies, marketers can have a big impact on consumers' views and intentions toward a brand by telling an engaging tale. Smith (2021)

Customers' perceptions of the brand's identity and values are significantly influenced by brand storytelling. Businesses can influence how consumers view a brand by integrating it within a (narrative) framework that reflects and reflects particular cultural, social, or individual values. Stories that align with a customer's identity or personal values seem to have a greater positive impact on brand views. Not to mention that customers feel a stronger emotional bond with the company because of the relevant characters, crises, and resolves in each of these stories. (Clark and Brown, 2022).

Authenticity is a key factor in determining whether or not customers believe a brand's narrative. Consumer mistrust of dishonest marketing tactics has increased over time. Customers therefore see brands more favorably when they provide genuine and open tales, whether they are based on

real customer experiences, behind-the-scenes material, or the sharing of corporate principles. Genuine storytelling is what fosters customer trust, which is essential for preserving customers' long-term loyalty and satisfaction. (Green and Davis, 2023)

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Even though social media content marketing works, brand ambassadors can boost electronic word- of-mouth, and therefore brand engagement. Users and brands alike can share their stories through a content community. The business can produce content that humanizes it and demonstrates empathy for the concerns and issues of its target audience. Users may also contribute to creating a narrative that strengthens the brand's positive image. As a result, it is recognized that brand engagement with consumers on social media facilitates content production alongside the business, which uses connections to its advantage by establishing and maintaining an online community. Customers can create content and distribute it to other brand followers. (Lopes & Casais, 2022)

Given this background, the following hypotheses are proposed to examine how digital storytelling builds brand resonance and drives purchase intention among social media users?

H2: Digital storytelling has an effect on Purchase Intention in social media.

H2.1: Brand Loyalty has an effect on Purchase Intention in social media.

H2.2: Attitudinal attachment has an effect on Purchase Intention in social media. H2.3: Sense of Community has an effect on Purchase Intention in social media. H2.4: Active Engagement has an effect on Purchase Intention in social media.

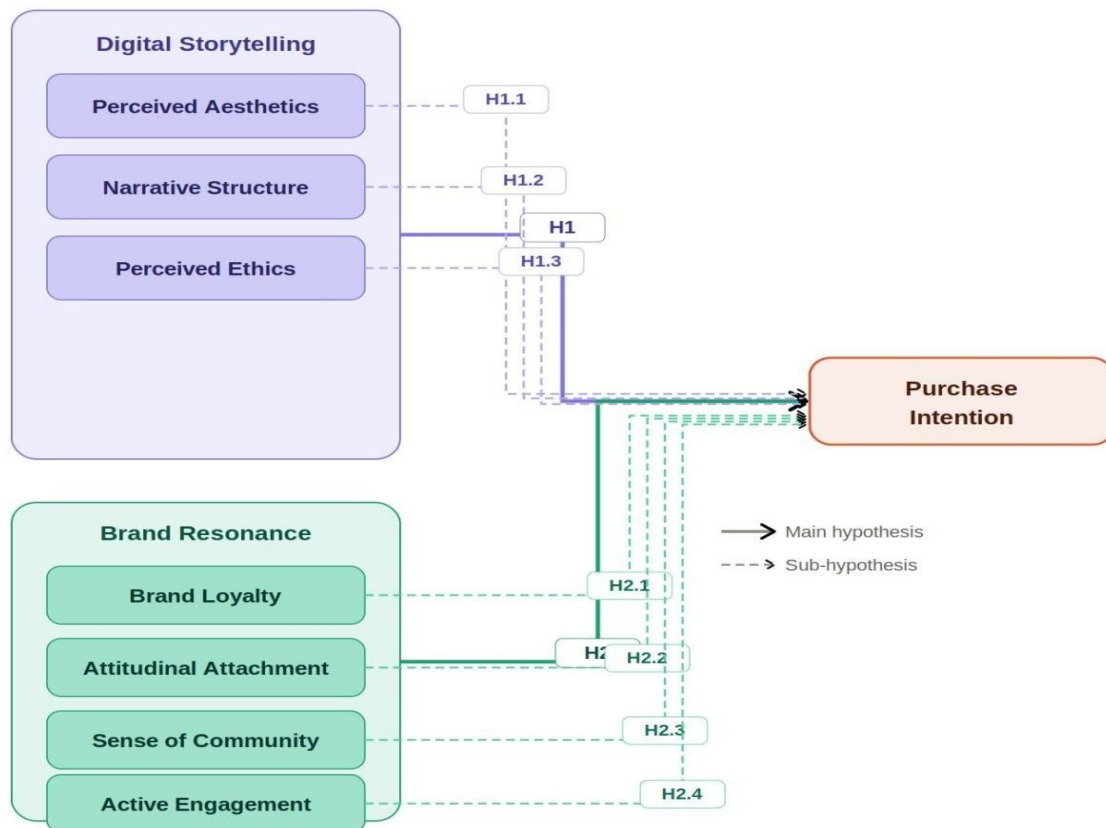


Fig.1 Research Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Sample and procedure

This study employed a survey method. The survey instrument, initially developed in English, was translated into Arabic with high level of accuracy and clarity to be more accessible to all respondents who may not very well in understanding the survey in English language. Data were collected from Social media users in Egypt. convenience non-probability sampling method targeted customers with direct knowledge of Egyptian small business entrepreneurs' campaigns in social media, enhancing the study's validity. A pilot test involving 50 volunteers on September, 2025, refined the survey instrument.

Measurements

In this study, all constructs were measured using 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), in addition to close ended questions related to their storytelling content engagement, Entrepreneur they are Following, Type of Storytelling Content Enjoyed, and Purchase Behavior Linked to Storytelling.

Digital storytelling was operationalized as a multidimensional construct comprising perceived aesthetics, narrative structure, and perceived ethics. The measurement items were adapted from prior literature (Hekkert, 2006; Townsend & Sood, 2012), (Green & Brock, 2000; Escalas, 2004; Woodside et al., 2008), and (MacInnis & Park, 2005). All items were modified to fit the context of social media marketing among small business entrepreneurs.

Brand resonance adapted from Keller (2001, 2003), representing the highest level of brand-consumer relationships. It was operationalized through four dimensions: behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community, and active engagement. Measurement items were adapted from Keller's original framework and supported by prior studies on brand loyalty (Oliver, 1999), brand community (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), and customer engagement (Hollebeek, 2011). While the independent Variable purchase intention was adapted from (Erkan & Evans, 2016) All items were modified to suit the context of social media marketing among small business entrepreneurs.

Results

This section presents the empirical analysis of the study, based on the data collected through the questionnaire administered to the research sample. It aims to provide a comprehensive examination of respondents' perceptions and behaviors related to digital storytelling, brand resonance, and purchase intention in social media contexts. The section begins with a descriptive analysis of the sample characteristics and study variables, followed by testing the research hypotheses using appropriate statistical techniques. In addition, the measurement model is evaluated in terms of reliability and validity, and the structural model is assessed to examine the relationships among the study constructs. The findings are then interpreted and discussed in light of the study objectives and theoretical framework.

In alignment with the nature of the research problem and its underlying objectives, the study adopts the descriptive-analytical approach. This approach is concerned with examining the phenomenon as it exists in reality, providing an accurate and systematic description through both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. It extends beyond mere data collection to encompass in-depth analysis, interpretation, and the identification of relationships among variables, thereby enabling the researcher to derive meaningful conclusions and develop a theoretically grounded conceptual framework.

To achieve the study objectives and test the proposed hypotheses, a field study was conducted using a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument.

Furthermore, the study employs Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares (SEM- PLS) through Path Analysis based on a Latent Variable Path Model (LVPM). This approach offers several advantages over traditional analytical methods, including the ability to model latent constructs, account for measurement error, test complex causal relationships, and comprehensively evaluate overall model fit (Kline, 2016, pp. 3-5).

Study Population

The study population comprises social media users who follow and engage with small business entrepreneurs on social media platforms in Egypt. These individuals represent the target audience exposed to digital storytelling content and brand-related interactions, making them appropriate for examining the relationships among digital storytelling, brand resonance, and purchase intention. Due to the absence of an

official sampling frame or precise statistical records, the exact size of the population cannot be determined. However, it is considered to be large and heterogeneous, encompassing users with diverse demographic characteristics and varying levels of engagement with entrepreneurial content on social media.

To estimate the appropriate sample size for testing the study hypotheses, an a priori power analysis was conducted using GPower (version 3.1.9.4). The analysis was based on linear multiple regression (fixed model, R^2 deviation from zero), which is conceptually aligned with the structural relationships examined in the SEM-PLS model adopted in this study. In light of the model specification, which includes two independent variables – Digital Storytelling and Brand Resonance – as predictors of Purchase Intention, a set of standard parameters was defined, including a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, and a high statistical power of 0.95. The results of the analysis indicated that the minimum required sample size is 107 respondents.

The final sample, consisting of 123 valid responses, exceeds this estimated threshold and is therefore considered appropriate for testing the study hypotheses within the adopted analytical framework.

Table (1) Demographic Characteristics of the Research Sample

Variable	Frequency	Percent	
Gender	Male	68	55.28%
	Female	55	44.72%
Age Group	18-24	105	85.37%
	25-34	13	10.57%
	35 and above	5	4.07%
Education Level	High School	17	13.82%
	Bachelor's Degree	89	72.36%
	Master's Degree	6	4.88%
Doctorate	4	3.25%	
Other	7	5.69%	
Less than 1 hour	4	3.25%	
How often do you use social media per day?	1-2 hours	14	11.38%
	3-4 hours	33	26.83%
More than 4 hours	72	58.54%	
Do you follow any brands on social media?	Yes	111	90.24%
	No	12	9.76%
Total	123	100.00%	

Table (1) shows that the sample demonstrates a relatively balanced gender distribution, with males accounting for 55.28% and females 44.72%, indicating no substantial gender bias. In terms of age, the majority of respondents fall within the 18-24 age group (85.37%), followed by those aged 25-34 (10.57%), while respondents aged 35 and above represent a smaller proportion (4.07%). This indicates that the sample is predominantly composed of young adults, and more specifically, largely consists of young entrepreneurs or individuals engaged in entrepreneurial activities on social media.

With regard to educational level, most participants hold a bachelor's degree (72.36%), followed by high school qualifications (13.82%), whereas postgraduate qualifications (master's and doctorate) represent a relatively limited share. This suggests that the sample is characterized by a generally adequate educational background.

In terms of social media usage, a considerable proportion of respondents (58.54%) reported using social media for more than four hours per day, while 26.83% use it for three to four hours daily, reflecting a high level of engagement with social media platforms. Furthermore, the majority of respondents (90.24%) indicated that they follow brands on social media, highlighting their exposure to branded content and reinforcing the suitability of the sample for examining purchase intention in a social media context.

Overall, the demographic profile of the sample suggests that it is well aligned with the research context, particularly in terms of active social media usage and engagement with brands, which are essential conditions for investigating the relationships proposed in the study model.

Study Instrument Design and development

Data for the present study were collected using a structured questionnaire specifically developed to measure the key constructs of the research model, namely digital storytelling, brand resonance, and purchase intention in social media contexts. The questionnaire was designed based on an extensive review of relevant literature, and all measurement items were adapted from previously validated scales to ensure content validity and theoretical consistency.

The questionnaire consists of four main sections. The first section captures respondents' demographic characteristics, including gender, age group, educational level, frequency of social media usage, and whether they follow brands on social media. The second section measures Digital Storytelling through three dimensions: perceived aesthetics, narrative structure, and perceived ethics. Each dimension was operationalized using multiple items adapted from prior studies such as Lundqvist et al. (2013), Woodside et al. (2008), Fog et al. (2010), Nabi and Green (2015), Herskovitz and Crystal (2010), and Iyer et al. (2019). These items assess respondents' perceptions of the visual appeal, narrative coherence, and ethical aspects of storytelling content presented by brands on social media.

The third section assesses Brand Resonance, conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community, and active engagement. The measurement items for these dimensions were adapted from established works including Keller (2001, 2009), Fournier (1998), Thomson et al. (2005), and McAlexander et al. (2002), capturing both behavioral and emotional aspects of consumers' relationships with brands.

The fourth section measures Purchase Intention in social media, using items adapted from Ajzen (1991), Kim and Ko (2012), and Zhang and Benyoucef (2016), focusing on respondents' likelihood and willingness to purchase products or services based on brand-related content encountered on social media platforms.

All items in sections two, three, and four were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

In addition, the questionnaire includes a set of contextual questions related to respondents' interaction with Egyptian small business entrepreneurs on social media, including the type of entrepreneur followed, platform of engagement, level of interaction with storytelling content, and prior purchase behavior influenced by such content. These questions provide contextual depth and enhance the interpretability of the findings.

Reliability and Validity

The assessment of the measurement model represents a fundamental step in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), as it focuses on evaluating the relationships between latent constructs and their observed indicators. This stage aims to verify the reliability and validity of the measurement scales employed in the study.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and ρ_A , while convergent validity was examined through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to established guidelines (Hair et al., 2019), acceptable reliability is indicated when Cronbach's Alpha and CR values exceed 0.70, and convergent validity is confirmed when AVE values are greater than 0.50. Furthermore, discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which requires that the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs, thereby ensuring the distinctiveness of each latent variable.

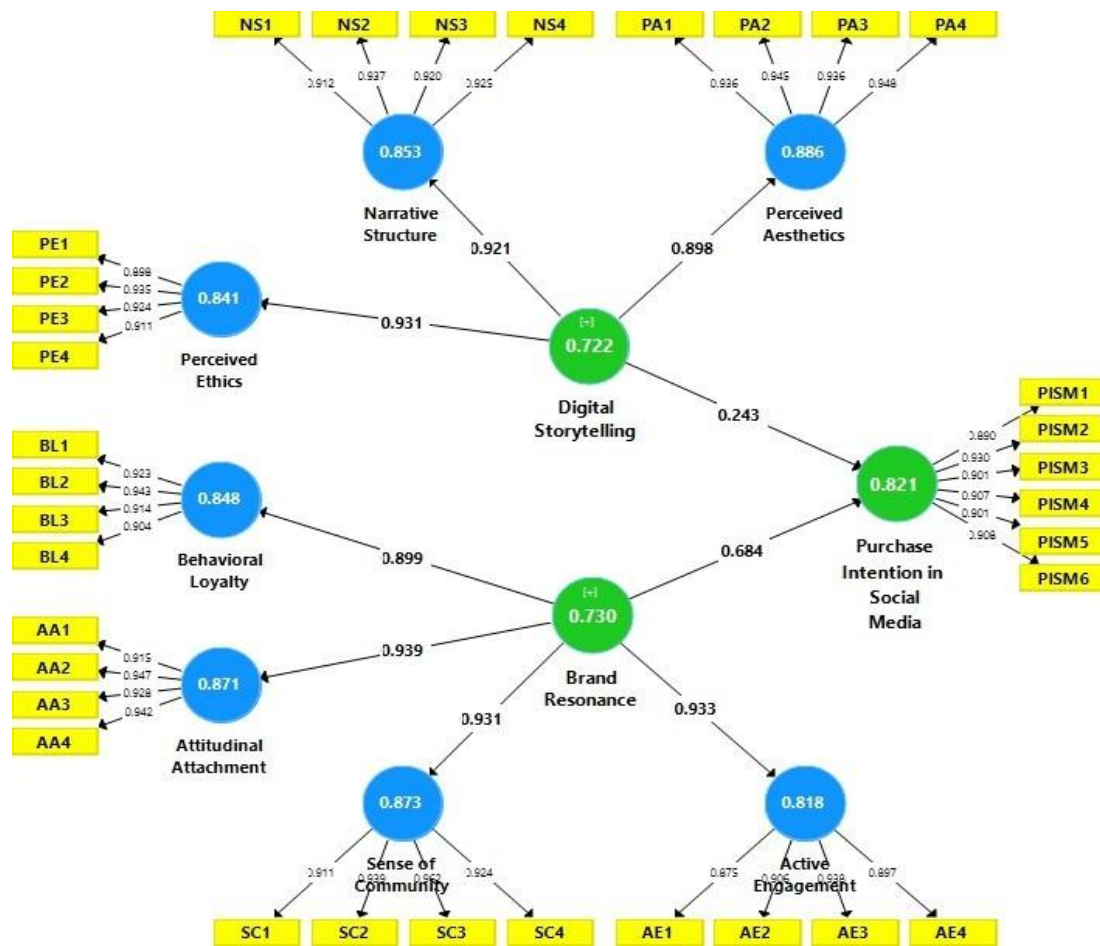


Figure (2) Measurement Model

Table () reports the standardized factor loadings along with their corresponding T-statistics and p-values. The results show that all factor loadings are high (exceeding 0.875) and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that all measurement items are strong indicators of their respective constructs and providing solid evidence of convergent validity.

Table (2) Factor loading in measurement model

Item <--- Factor	Factor loading	T Statistics	P-Value
AA1 <- Attitudinal Attachment	0.915	40.731	0.000
AA2 <- Attitudinal Attachment	0.947	64.867	0.000
AA3 <- Attitudinal Attachment	0.928	45.756	0.000
AA4 <- Attitudinal Attachment	0.942	52.233	0.000
AE1 <- Active Engagement	0.875	27.467	0.000
AE2 <- Active Engagement	0.906	49.333	0.000

Item <--- Factor	Factor loading	T Statistics	P-Value
AE3 <- Active Engagement	0.938	72.315	0.000
AE4 <- Active Engagement	0.897	36.778	0.000
BL1 <- Behavioral Loyalty	0.923	51.383	0.000
BL2 <- Behavioral Loyalty	0.943	87.358	0.000
BL3 <- Behavioral Loyalty	0.914	44.787	0.000
BL4 <- Behavioral Loyalty	0.904	40.998	0.000
NS1 <- Narrative Structure	0.912	42.526	0.000
NS2 <- Narrative Structure	0.937	77.957	0.000
NS3 <- Narrative Structure	0.920	51.250	0.000
NS4 <- Narrative Structure	0.925	53.622	0.000
PA1 <- Perceived Aesthetics	0.936	56.721	0.000
PA2 <- Perceived Aesthetics	0.945	74.054	0.000
PA3 <- Perceived Aesthetics	0.936	63.029	0.000
PA4 <- Perceived Aesthetics	0.948	74.502	0.000
PE1 <- Perceived Ethics	0.898	33.027	0.000
PE2 <- Perceived Ethics	0.935	65.588	0.000
PE3 <- Perceived Ethics	0.924	46.824	0.000
PE4 <- Perceived Ethics	0.911	47.706	0.000
PISM1 <- Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.890	37.527	0.000
PISM3 <- Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.901	35.954	0.000
PISM5 <- Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.901	31.038	0.000
SC1 <- Sense of Community	0.911	39.663	0.000
SC2 <- Sense of Community	0.939	68.937	0.000
SC3 <- Sense of Community	0.962	116.771	0.000
SC4 <- Sense of Community	0.924	49.595	0.000

Table (2) further indicates that all constructs demonstrate high levels of internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.925 to 0.975 and Composite Reliability values ranging from 0.947 to 0.977, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Similarly, rho_A values confirm the robustness of the measurement scales.

In terms of convergent validity, all AVE values range between 0.722 and 0.886, significantly surpassing the minimum threshold of 0.50. This indicates that a substantial proportion of variance in the indicators is explained by their respective latent constructs.

Table (3) Reliability, Convergent Validity Indicators for Measurement Model

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Perceived Aesthetics	0.957	0.957	0.969	0.886
Narrative Structure	0.943	0.943	0.959	0.853
Perceived Ethics	0.937	0.937	0.955	0.841
Digital Storytelling	0.965	0.965	0.969	0.722
Behavioral Loyalty	0.940	0.941	0.957	0.848
Attitudinal Attachment	0.950	0.951	0.964	0.871
Sense of Community	0.951	0.952	0.965	0.873
Active Engagement	0.925	0.927	0.947	0.818
Brand Resonance	0.975	0.976	0.977	0.730
Purchase Intention in	0.956	0.957	0.965	0.821

Social Media

The results of discriminant validity assessment using the Fornell–Larcker criterion indicate that the square root of the AVE for Purchase Intention in Social Media (0.906) exceeds its correlations with both Brand Resonance (0.896) and Digital Storytelling (0.840), thereby confirming discriminant validity for this construct.

However, the findings reveal that the square root of the AVE for Brand Resonance (0.855) is slightly lower than its correlation with Purchase Intention in Social Media (0.896). A similar pattern is observed between Digital Storytelling (0.850) and Brand Resonance (0.873), indicating a potential overlap between these constructs.

Despite this, such results can be theoretically justified, as the constructs are conceptually and empirically closely related. Brand Resonance inherently reflects a deep psychological and behavioral connection with the brand, which is strongly associated with consumers' purchase intentions. Likewise, Digital Storytelling serves as a key antecedent that fosters brand resonance, leading to naturally high correlations among these variables.

Therefore, the observed lack of strict discriminant validity may be attributed to the theoretical proximity and hierarchical nature of the constructs, rather than measurement deficiencies. This interpretation is consistent with prior research in consumer behavior and branding literature, where highly related constructs often exhibit strong intercorrelations.

Methods of Data Analysis

The collected data were processed, coded, and analyzed using SPSS (version 27) and SmartPLS (version 3). A set of statistical techniques was employed to address the study objectives and test the research hypotheses.

Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and coefficients of variation, were used to describe respondents' perceptions of the study variables. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among variables.

To test the research hypotheses, Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) was applied, allowing for the assessment of both measurement and structural models. This included evaluating path coefficients, T-statistics, p-values, and confidence intervals, in addition to examining model fit (SRMR), explanatory power (R^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2).

Research Results

The current section includes the results, and its discussion, by presenting the descriptive statistics results of the study variables, and then presenting and discussing the results of testing research hypotheses as follows:

Descriptive statistics of Study Variables

To provide an overall understanding of respondents' perceptions toward the study variables, descriptive statistical measures were computed, including the mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and 95% confidence intervals. These indicators offer insights into the central tendency, dispersion, and relative consistency of responses across the constructs and their dimensions.

Table (4) Descriptive statistics of the study variables and their respective dimensions.

Variables	Mean	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variance	Level	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound				
Digital Storytelling	Perceived Aesthetics	3.695	3.506	3.884	1.059	28.65%	High
	Narrative Structure	3.526	3.354	3.699	0.967	27.42%	High
	Perceived Ethics	3.461	3.272	3.651	1.063	30.71%	High
	Total	3.561	3.393	3.729	0.944	26.50%	High
	Behavioral Loyalty	3.545	3.364	3.725	1.010	28.48%	High
	Attitudinal Attachment	3.447	3.276	3.619	0.961	27.88%	High

	Sense of Community	3.285	3.101	3.469	1.031	31.39%	Moderate
Brand	Active Engagement	3.266	3.081	3.451	1.038	31.77%	Moderate
Resonance	Total	3.386	3.219	3.552	0.934	27.59%	Moderate
Purchase Intention in Social Media		3.459	3.271	3.648	1.055	30.50%	High

The results indicate that Digital Storytelling recorded a generally high level, with an overall mean of 3.561, suggesting that respondents perceive storytelling content on social media as positively implemented. Among its dimensions, Perceived Aesthetics achieved the highest mean (3.695), indicating that visual appeal plays a prominent role in shaping user perceptions, followed by Narrative Structure (3.526) and Perceived Ethics (3.461), both of which also fall within the high level.

Regarding Brand Resonance, the overall mean reached 3.386, reflecting a moderate level. While Behavioral Loyalty (3.545) and Attitudinal Attachment (3.447) exhibited high levels, the dimensions of Sense of Community (3.285) and Active Engagement (3.266) were rated at a moderate level. This suggests that although respondents demonstrate a reasonable degree of loyalty and emotional attachment to brands, their deeper engagement and sense of belonging to brand communities are comparatively less developed.

In terms of Purchase Intention in Social Media, the results show a high level with a mean of 3.459, indicating a relatively strong tendency among respondents to consider purchasing products based on social media content.

Additionally, the coefficients of variation across all variables are relatively low (ranging between approximately 26% and 32%), indicating a reasonable level of consistency in respondents' answers. The 95% confidence intervals are also narrow, which enhances the reliability of the estimated means.

Test of Research Hypotheses

To examine the strength and direction of the relationships among the study variables, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. This analysis provides initial evidence regarding the associations between the dimensions of digital storytelling, brand resonance, and purchase intention in social media. Statistical significance was assessed using p-values.

Table (5): Pearson Correlation Matrix among Study Variables

Variables		Behavioral Loyalty	Attitudinal Attachment	Sense of Community	Active Engagement	Brand Resonance	Purchase Intention in Social Media
Perceived Aesthetics	Pearson Correlation	0.706	0.707	0.625	0.693	0.738	0.674
	P-Value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Narrative Structure	Pearson Correlation	0.796	0.742	0.691	0.736	0.801	0.790
	P-Value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Perceived Ethics	Pearson Correlation	0.812	0.792	0.764	0.822	0.862	0.843
	P-Value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Digital Storytelling	Pearson Correlation	0.841	0.815	0.757	0.819	0.873	0.839
	P-Value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Purchase Intention in Social Media	Pearson Correlation	0.794	0.817	0.831	0.876	0.897	1.000
	P-Value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	----

The results indicate that all correlations are positive and statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.000$), suggesting strong associations among the constructs. Specifically, the dimensions of Digital Storytelling show substantial positive relationships with all components of Brand Resonance. Among these, Perceived Ethics demonstrates the strongest correlations, particularly with Active Engagement ($r = 0.822$) and overall Brand Resonance ($r = 0.862$), indicating that ethical perceptions of storytelling content play a critical role in strengthening users' engagement and their relationship with brands.

Similarly, Narrative Structure exhibits strong correlations with Behavioral Loyalty ($r = 0.796$) and Purchase Intention ($r = 0.790$), highlighting the importance of coherent and compelling storytelling in influencing consumer behavior. Perceived Aesthetics also shows significant relationships with all variables, although at slightly lower levels compared to other dimensions.

At the aggregate level, Digital Storytelling demonstrates strong positive correlations with Brand Resonance ($r = 0.873$) and Purchase Intention in Social Media ($r = 0.839$), providing preliminary support for the proposed hypotheses regarding its influential role.

Furthermore, Brand Resonance is highly correlated with Purchase Intention ($r = 0.897$), representing the strongest relationship observed in the model. This finding suggests that a stronger emotional and behavioral connection with a brand is closely associated with a higher likelihood of purchase.

Effects of Digital Storytelling and Brand Resonance on Purchase Intention in Social Media

To examine the proposed relationships among the study constructs, the structural model was assessed using the PLS-SEM approach. This analysis focuses on evaluating the path coefficients (β), their statistical significance (T-values and p-values), and the explanatory power (R^2) of the endogenous constructs.

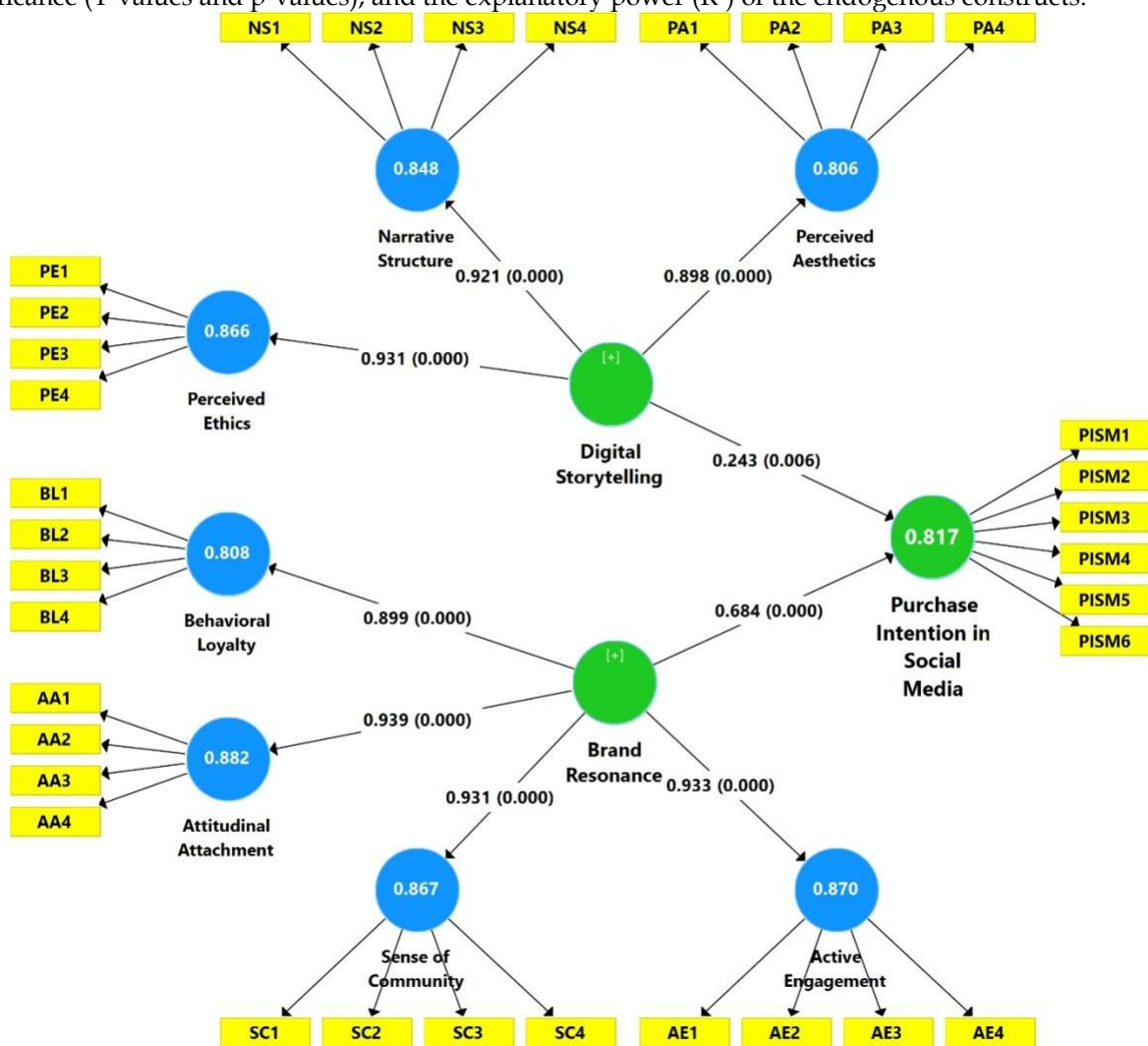


Figure (3) Structural Model Results and main Hypothesis Testing

The model demonstrates a high level of explanatory power, with an R^2 value of 0.817 for Purchase Intention, indicating that a substantial proportion of variance is explained by the independent constructs.

In terms of model fit, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) values for both the saturated model (0.063) and the estimated model (0.069) are below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a good model fit. Additionally, the d_{ULS} values (7.871 for the saturated model and 9.318 for the estimated model) fall within acceptable limits, further supporting the adequacy of the model.

Regarding predictive relevance, the results of the Stone–Geisser Q^2 value for Purchase Intention in Social Media reached 0.662, which is substantially greater than zero, indicating strong predictive relevance of the model. This confirms that the model not only explains the relationships among variables but also possesses a high capability to predict the endogenous construct.

Table (6) presents the results of the structural model, including the standardized path coefficients, bootstrapped confidence intervals, T-statistics, and p-values, for the relationships among Digital Storytelling, Brand Resonance, and Purchase Intention in Social Media.

Table (6): Structural Effects of Digital Storytelling and Brand Resonance on Purchase Intention (n =123)

Path	Standardized Coefficients (β)	Confidence Interval		T Statistics	P Values
		2.50%	97.50%		
Digital Storytelling -> Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.243	0.064	0.417	2.786	0.006
Brand Resonance -> Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.684	0.512	0.855	8.128	0.000

The results indicate that Digital Storytelling has a positive and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention in Social Media ($\beta = 0.243$, $T = 2.786$, $p = 0.006$), thereby providing empirical support for H1, which states that digital storytelling has an effect on purchase intention in social media. Although the effect is statistically significant, its magnitude is relatively moderate, suggesting that digital storytelling contributes to purchase intention but is not the primary determinant.

Similarly, the findings reveal that Brand Resonance has a strong and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention in Social Media ($\beta = 0.684$, $T = 8.128$, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting H2. The strength of this relationship indicates that brand resonance plays a dominant role in influencing consumers' purchase intentions.

Overall, both hypotheses (H1 and H2) are supported, with the results highlighting that while digital storytelling exerts a meaningful influence, brand resonance represents the more powerful predictor of purchase intention in social media contexts.

Effects of Digital Storytelling Dimensions on Purchase Intention in Social Media

To further examine the individual effects of digital storytelling dimensions, the structural model was estimated by assessing the effects of Perceived Aesthetics, Narrative Structure, and Perceived Ethics on Purchase Intention in Social Media, along with model fit, explanatory power, predictive relevance, and collinearity diagnostics.

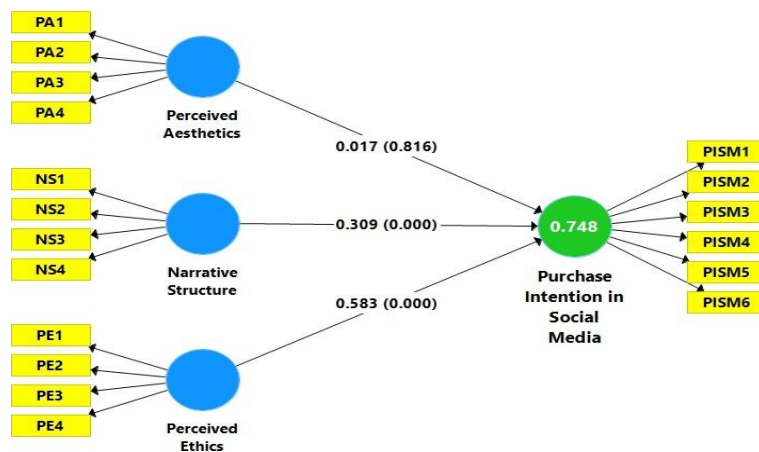


Figure (4) Structural Model of Digital Storytelling Dimensions and Purchase Intention

In terms of explanatory power, the model explains a substantial proportion of variance in Purchase Intention, with an R^2 value of 0.748 (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.742$), reflecting a high level of explanatory capability.

Regarding model fit, the SRMR value (0.041) for both the saturated and estimated models is well below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating an excellent model fit. Additionally, the d_{ULS} (0.293) and

d_G (0.475) values further support the adequacy of the model.

To assess multicollinearity, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were examined. The results indicate that VIF values range between 2.505 and 3.415, which are below the critical threshold of 5, confirming the absence of multicollinearity issues.

Furthermore, the model demonstrates strong predictive relevance, as indicated by the Stone– Geisser Q² value of 0.603 for Purchase Intention, which is substantially greater than zero. This result confirms the model’s high predictive capability for the endogenous construct.

Table (7) Effects of Digital Storytelling Dimensions on Purchase Intention (n =123)

Path	Standardized Coefficients (β)	Confidence Interval		T Statistics	P Values
		2.50%	97.50%		
Perceived Aesthetics -> Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.017	-0.148	0.142	0.233	0.816
Narrative Structure -> Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.309	0.164	0.496	3.510	0.000
Perceived Ethics -> Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.583	0.405	0.774	6.525	0.000

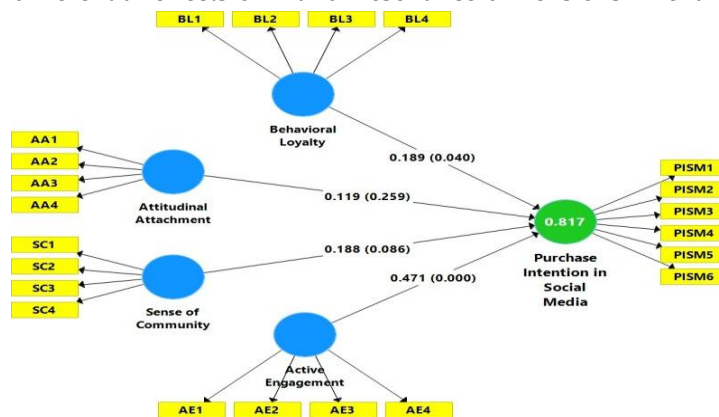
The results indicate that Perceived Aesthetics does not have a statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention in Social Media ($\beta = 0.017$, $T = 0.233$, $p = 0.816$), as the confidence interval [-0.148, 0.142] includes zero. Accordingly, H1.1 is not supported, suggesting that visual appeal alone is insufficient to directly influence consumers’ purchase intentions.

In contrast, Narrative Structure demonstrates a positive and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.309$, $T = 3.510$, $p < 0.001$), with a confidence interval [0.164, 0.496] that excludes zero. Therefore, H1.2 is supported, indicating that a well-structured and coherent story enhances consumers’ purchase decisions.

Moreover, Perceived Ethics exhibits a strong and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.583$, $T = 6.525$, $p < 0.001$), with a confidence interval [0.405, 0.774]. Thus, H1.3 is supported, highlighting that ethical perceptions—such as honesty, transparency, and credibility—play a critical role in shaping purchase intention.

Effects of Brand Resonance Dimensions on Purchase Intention in Social Media

To examine the differential effects of Brand Resonance dimensions – Behavioral Loyalty, Attitudinal



Attachment, Sense of Community, and Active Engagement—on Purchase Intention in Social Media, the structural model was evaluated using the PLS-SEM approach.

Figure (5) Structural Model of Brand Resonance Dimensions and Purchase Intention

The model indices indicate an adequate overall fit. In terms of explanatory power, the model explains

a substantial proportion of variance in Purchase Intention, with an R^2 value of 0.817 (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.811$), indicating a high level of explanatory capability.

Regarding model fit, the SRMR value (0.035) for both the saturated and estimated models is well below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating an excellent fit. Additionally, the d_{ULS} (0.316) and d_G (0.801) values further support the adequacy of the model.

To assess multicollinearity, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were examined. The results show that VIF values range between 3.267 and 4.74, which are below the critical threshold of 5, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern, although some values approach the upper acceptable limit.

Table (8) Effects of Brand Resonance Dimensions on Purchase Intention in Social Media (n =123)

Path	Standardized Coefficients (β)	Confidence Interval		T Statistics	P Values
		2.50%	97.50%		
Behavioral Loyalty -> Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.189	0.032	0.399	2.064	0.040
Attitudinal Attachment -> Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.119	-0.077	0.317	1.129	0.259
Sense of Community -> Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.188	-0.001	0.407	1.719	0.086
Active Engagement -> Purchase Intention in Social Media	0.471	0.241	0.646	4.377	0.000

The results indicate that Behavioral Loyalty has a positive and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention in Social Media ($\beta = 0.189$, $T = 2.064$, $p = 0.040$). The confidence interval [0.032, 0.399] does not include zero, confirming the significance of the relationship. Therefore, H2.1 is supported, suggesting that consumers' repeated preference and commitment to a brand contribute to their purchase intention, although the effect size is relatively modest.

In contrast, Attitudinal Attachment does not have a statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.119$, $T = 1.129$, $p = 0.259$), as the confidence interval [-0.077, 0.317] includes zero. Accordingly, H2.2 is not supported, indicating that emotional attachment alone may not directly translate into purchase intention.

Similarly, Sense of Community shows a positive but statistically non-significant effect ($\beta = 0.188$, $T = 1.719$, $p = 0.086$), with a confidence interval [-0.001, 0.407] that marginally includes zero.

Thus, H2.3 is not supported, suggesting that a sense of belonging to a brand community is not sufficient by itself to drive purchasing behavior.

On the other hand, Active Engagement demonstrates a strong and statistically significant effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.471$, $T = 4.377$, $p < 0.001$), with a confidence interval [0.241, 0.646] that clearly excludes zero. Therefore, H2.4 is supported, indicating that consumers' active interaction with brands – such as sharing, commenting, and participating – plays a critical role in shaping purchase intention.

Interaction with Egyptian small business entrepreneurs on social media

Entrepreneur Awareness & Following

Table (9) presents the frequency distribution of respondents' awareness and following of Egyptian small business entrepreneurs on social media.

Entrepreneur	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fati's (@fatis.eg) Donuts	42	34.15%
Dina Dash (@dinadash) Luxury Marketing & Lifestyle Entrepreneur	41	33.33%
Farah Nofal (@farahnofal) Fehe Cosmetics	39	31.71%
Dina Ghabbour (@dinaghabbour) – Women's Empowerment & Podcast Entrepreneur	40	32.52%
Hadia Ghaleb (@hadiaghaleb) – Fashion & Lifestyle Entrepreneur	41	33.33%
Herds by Farah Haridy – Fast Food	31	25.20%
None of the above	30	24.39%
Other	4	3.25%

The results indicate that Fati's Donuts (@fatis.eg) is the most followed entrepreneur among respondents, with a frequency of 42 (34.15%), followed closely by Dina Dash and Hadia Ghaleb, each with

41 responses (33.33%). Similarly, Dina Ghabbour (32.52%) and Farah Nofal (31.71%) also demonstrate high levels of followership, suggesting a relatively strong presence of these entrepreneurs across social media platforms.

In contrast, Herds by Farah Haridy shows a comparatively lower level of followership (25.20%), indicating more limited reach or engagement relative to other entrepreneurs included in the list.

Notably, 24.39% of respondents selected "None of the above," which suggests that a considerable segment of the sample either follows other entrepreneurs not listed in the questionnaire or does not actively follow Egyptian small business entrepreneurs on social media.

Additionally, a small proportion of respondents (3.25%) selected "Other," indicating the presence of additional entrepreneurs outside the predefined categories.

Primary Entrepreneur Followed

Table (10) presents the distribution of respondents based on the primary entrepreneur they follow and engage with most on social media.

Entrepreneur	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fati's	25	20.33%
Dina Dash	13	10.57%
Farah Nofal	24	19.51%
Dina Ghabbour	14	11.38%
Hadia Ghaleb	26	21.14%
Herds by Farah Haridy	16	13.01%
Other	5	4.07%

The results indicate that Hadia Ghaleb is the most actively followed entrepreneur, with 26 respondents (21.14%), followed closely by Fati's (20.33%) and Farah Nofal (19.51%). This suggests that these entrepreneurs have relatively stronger engagement levels and are more influential in shaping respondents' interactions on social media.

In contrast, Herds by Farah Haridy accounts for 13.01% of the responses, while Dina Ghabbour (11.38%) and Dina Dash (10.57%) show comparatively lower levels of primary engagement.

This indicates variation in the depth of audience interaction, even among entrepreneurs with similar overall followership levels.

Additionally, a small proportion of respondents (4.07%) selected "Other," reflecting the presence of alternative entrepreneurs who serve as primary points of engagement for some users.

Platform of Engagement

Table (11) presents the distribution of social media platforms through which respondents primarily follow and engage with the selected entrepreneur

Platform of Engagement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Instagram	91	73.98%
TikTok	77	62.60%
Facebook	36	29.27%
YouTube	19	15.45%
X (Twitter)	8	6.50%

The results indicate that Instagram is the most dominant platform, with 91 respondents (73.98%), followed by TikTok with 77 respondents (62.60%). This reflects the strong preference for visually rich and short-form video content platforms among respondents.

In contrast, Facebook shows a moderate level of usage (29.27%), while YouTube (15.45%) and X (Twitter) (6.50%) demonstrate comparatively lower levels of engagement. This suggests that respondents are less likely to rely on these platforms for following entrepreneurial content.

Overall, the findings highlight that Instagram and TikTok serve as the primary channels for digital storytelling and brand interaction, making them critical platforms for influencing consumer perceptions and purchase intentions.

Storytelling Content Engagement

Table (12) presents the frequency distribution, mean scores, and standard deviations of respondents' engagement with storytelling content shared by entrepreneurs on social media. Table (12): Descriptive Statistics of Storytelling Content Engagement

Statement		Responses					Mean	Std. Deviation
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never		
I watch their storytelling videos	Count	26	35	42	11	9	3.47	1.14
	%	21.14%	28.46%	34.15%	8.94%	7.32%		
I like or react to their storytelling content	Count	21	35	44	12	11	3.35	1.15
	%	17.07%	28.46%	35.77%	9.76%	8.94%		
I comment on their storytelling posts	Count	16	16	32	25	34	2.63	1.36
	%	13.01%	13.01%	26.02%	20.33%	27.64%		

Statement		Responses					Mean	Std. Deviation
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never		
I share their storytelling content with others	Count	13	17	51	14	28	2.78	1.24
	%	10.57%	13.82%	41.46%	11.38%	22.76%		
I save their storytelling content for later	Count	20	22	44	14	23	3.02	1.31
	%	16.26%	17.89%	35.77%	11.38%	18.70%		

The results indicate that respondents demonstrate a moderate level of engagement with storytelling content overall. Specifically, the statement "I watch their storytelling videos" recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.47, SD = 1.14$), followed by "I like or react to their storytelling content" ($M = 3.35, SD = 1.15$). This suggests that respondents are more inclined toward passive forms of engagement, such as viewing and reacting to content.

In contrast, lower mean scores were observed for more active forms of engagement. The statement "I comment on their storytelling posts" recorded the lowest mean ($M = 2.63, SD = 1.36$), indicating that respondents are less likely to participate in interactive discussions.

Similarly, "I share their storytelling content with others" yielded a relatively low mean ($M = 2.78, SD = 1.24$), reflecting limited content dissemination behavior.

The item "I save their storytelling content for later" showed a moderate mean ($M = 3.02, SD = 1.31$), suggesting occasional but not consistent deeper engagement.

Type of Storytelling Content Enjoyed

Table (13) presents the distribution of the types of storytelling content that respondents enjoy most when engaging with entrepreneurs on social media.

Type of Storytelling Content Enjoyed	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Founder/personal story (how the brand started, challenges faced)	67	54.47%
Behind-the-scenes content (how products are made or prepared)	56	45.53%
Customer success stories and testimonials	41	33.33%
Day-in-the-life vlogs of the entrepreneur	56	45.53%
Product journey stories (from idea to final product)	51	41.46%

Type of Storytelling Content Enjoyed	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Values and mission storytelling (what the brand stands for)	31	25.20%
Seasonal or occasion-based stories (Ramadan, Eid, etc.)	29	23.58%

The results indicate that founder or personal stories are the most preferred type of storytelling content, with 67 respondents (54.47%). This suggests that narratives highlighting the entrepreneur's journey, challenges, and personal experiences are particularly effective in attracting audience interest.

This is followed by behind-the-scenes content and day-in-the-life vlogs, each reported by 56 respondents (45.53%), reflecting a strong preference for authentic and transparent content that provides insight into the entrepreneur's daily activities and business processes. Similarly, product journey stories (41.46%) also demonstrate notable appeal, indicating that respondents value understanding how products evolve from idea to final form.

In contrast, customer success stories and testimonials (33.33%) show moderate levels of interest, while values and mission storytelling (25.20%) and seasonal or occasion-based stories (23.58%) are relatively less preferred. This suggests that respondents prioritize personal and process-oriented narratives over more formal or promotional storytelling approaches.

Duration of Following

Figure (6) presents the distribution of respondents according to the duration of following the selected entrepreneur on social media.

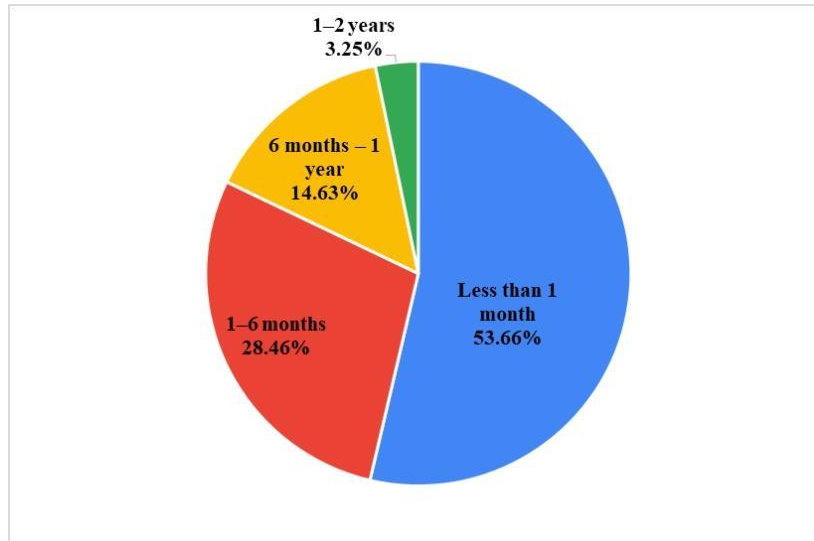


Figure (6): Duration of Following the Selected Entrepreneur

The results indicate that more than half of the respondents (53.7%) have been following the entrepreneur for less than one month, while 28.5% have followed them for a period ranging from one to six months. In contrast, smaller proportions reported longer follow durations, with 14.6% following for six months to one year, and only 3.3% following for one to two years. These findings suggest that the majority of respondents are relatively recent followers, indicating that their engagement with the entrepreneur is still in an early stage. This may reflect the dynamic and rapidly evolving nature of social media environments, where users frequently discover and follow new content creators.

Purchase Behavior Linked to Storytelling

Table (14) presents the distribution of respondents' purchase behavior influenced by storytelling content shared by entrepreneurs on social media.

Table (14): Purchase Behavior Linked to Storytelling Content

purchase behavior influenced by storytelling content	Frequency	Percent
Yes, more than once	66	53.66%
Yes, once	35	28.46%
Not yet, but I intend to	18	14.63%
No, I have not purchased and don't intend to	4	3.25%

The results indicate that a substantial proportion of respondents have engaged in purchase behavior after exposure to storytelling content. Specifically, 53.66% of respondents reported that they have purchased more than once, while 28.46% indicated that they have made a purchase at least once. This demonstrates that storytelling content is highly effective in converting engagement into actual purchasing behavior.

Additionally, 14.63% of respondents reported that they have not yet made a purchase but intend to do so, suggesting the presence of a strong latent purchase intention among this segment. In contrast, only 3.25% of respondents stated that they have neither purchased nor intend to purchase, indicating minimal resistance to storytelling-driven influence.

Storytelling Influence on Purchase Decision

Figure (7) presents the extent to which storytelling content influences respondents' decisions to purchase or consider purchasing products offered by entrepreneurs on social media.

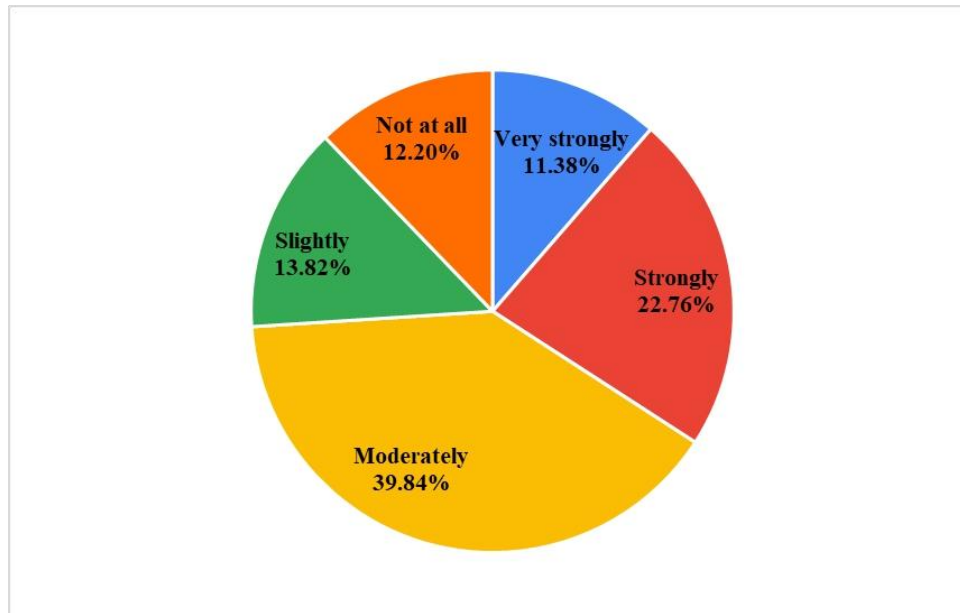


Figure (7): Influence of Storytelling Content on Purchase Decision

The results indicate that storytelling content exerts a moderate to strong influence on respondents' purchase decisions. Specifically, the largest proportion of respondents (39.84%) reported a moderate influence, followed by 22.76% indicating a strong influence, and 11.38% reporting a very strong influence. This suggests that storytelling content plays a meaningful role in shaping consumers' purchasing considerations.

On the other hand, 13.82% of respondents reported only a slight influence, while 12.20% indicated that storytelling content does not influence their purchase decisions at all. This reflects some variability in responsiveness, where not all consumers are equally affected by storytelling strategies.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the extent to which digital storytelling and brand resonance shape the purchase intentions of customers engaging with small business entrepreneurs on social media platforms in Egypt. Drawing on survey data and statistical analysis, the findings confirm that both variables exert a statistically significant influence on purchase intention – a result that aligns well with the growing body of literature connecting narrative-driven communication and deep brand relationships to consumer behavior in digital environments (Rigby & Lee, 2024; Joshi et al., 2022).

What stands out most clearly from the results, however, is not merely that both factors matter, but that brand resonance carries considerably more weight than digital storytelling when it comes to driving purchase intention. This finding deserves careful reflection. Brand resonance, as conceptualized within Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) framework, represents the highest level of the brand-customer relationship – encompassing behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, a sense of community, and active engagement. When a customer reaches this level of connection with a brand, their intention to purchase is no longer driven primarily by the content they encounter in any given moment; it is anchored in something far deeper and more durable. The small business entrepreneurs operating on Egyptian social media platforms who manage to cultivate this kind of resonance with their audiences are, in essence, transforming casual followers into committed brand advocates.

Digital storytelling, while clearly influential in its own right, appears to function more as a pathway into the brand relationship rather than its ultimate driver. Authentic, emotionally engaging narratives help businesses capture attention, build initial trust, and differentiate themselves in an increasingly crowded digital landscape. Research consistently shows that stories reflecting personal experiences or culturally relevant values make brands feel more relatable and trustworthy (Teraiya et al., 2023; Zhang & Zhang, 2023). In the Egyptian context – where social media penetration continues to grow rapidly, and platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have become vital commercial spaces – the ability to tell a

compelling story is no longer optional for small businesses; it is a basic expectation. Yet the evidence from this study suggests that storytelling, on its own, cannot substitute for the accumulated equity that comes from consistent, meaningful brand–customer interaction over time.

Taken together, these findings paint a coherent picture: digital storytelling opens the door, but brand resonance is what keeps customers coming back. For small business entrepreneurs in Egypt who are trying to compete in a digital marketplace dominated by larger, more resource-rich players, this distinction carries real strategic implications. Building resonance requires sustained effort — showing up consistently, listening to customers, creating communities around shared values, and delivering experiences that feel personal even at scale. It is harder than crafting a single well-produced story, but the return in terms of customer loyalty and purchase intention appears to be substantially greater.

On a broader level, this research contributes to the growing scholarly conversation about how brand-related variables interact with digital communication strategies to shape consumer behavior in developing and emerging market contexts. The Egyptian market, with its unique blend of high social media engagement, cultural richness, and evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem, offers a fertile and underexplored setting for this kind of inquiry, and the results here suggest that findings from Western or East Asian contexts do not always transfer directly without modification.

Research Implications

Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, this study makes several contributions that extend the existing literature on digital marketing, brand management, and consumer behavior. First, it provides empirical evidence from an Arab, developing-market context for the comparative influence of digital storytelling and brand resonance on purchase intention — a pairing that has received relatively limited joint examination, particularly outside North America, Europe, and East Asia. By situating both constructs within a single framework and testing them simultaneously, the study offers a more complete picture of how these forces interact than would be possible from examining either variable in isolation.

Second, the finding that brand resonance exerts a stronger effect on purchase intention than digital storytelling reinforces and extends Keller's CBBE model in a social media context. While the model was originally developed with larger, established brands in mind, this research demonstrates that its core logic — that the deepest and most commercially valuable brand relationships are built on loyalty, attachment, community, and engagement — applies equally to small businesses operating in informal digital commerce settings. This is a theoretically meaningful contribution because it challenges the implicit assumption that small businesses are primarily storytelling entities and suggests they should be understood as brand-building entities first.

Third, the study contributes to narrative transportation theory (Green et al., 2004) by showing that while transportation through storytelling is a meaningful predictor of behavioral outcomes, its influence on purchase intention is moderated by prior brand relationship quality. In other words, the same story will resonate very differently with a customer who already feels deeply connected to a brand compared to one who is encountering it for the first time. This insight points toward a more nuanced model of digital storytelling effectiveness, one that accounts for the customer's existing position within the brand relationship cycle.

Finally, the research adds to a growing body of empirical work on social commerce in MENA and African markets (Al-Omari & Alzoubi, 2023; Zeqiri et al., 2025), offering a grounded contribution to debates about whether globally derived theoretical frameworks adequately capture the dynamics of digital consumer behavior in culturally and economically distinct settings. The results suggest that while the fundamental relationships between these constructs are consistent with global trends, the relative weighting of brand resonance in this context may reflect specific cultural values — such as trust, community belonging, and personal relationship — that are particularly salient in Egyptian consumer culture.

Practical Implications

For small business entrepreneurs operating on social media in Egypt, the findings of this study offer a set of clear and actionable insights. The most immediate takeaway is the need to think beyond content creation and toward brand relationship management. Many small businesses invest considerable time and resources into producing engaging stories — behind-the-scenes videos, founder narratives, customer

testimonials – without systematically working to convert that attention into lasting brand resonance. This study suggests that such an imbalance may leave significant commercial value on the table.

Specifically, entrepreneurs should think about digital storytelling not as an end in itself but as the opening chapter of an ongoing brand relationship. A well-told story that reflects authentic values, culturally resonant experiences, and genuine customer insight can serve as a powerful entry point. Ads featuring authentic and relatable stories increase the likelihood that consumers will purchase the advertised products (HRMARS, 2024). But the real competitive advantage lies in what happens after that first connection is made: whether the business follows through with consistent engagement, responsive communication, and a community-building approach that makes customers feel genuinely seen and valued.

Practically, this means small businesses should invest in community management as seriously as they invest in content production. Responding to comments thoughtfully, featuring customer stories and user-generated content, creating spaces for loyal customers to connect with each other – these are the kinds of actions that gradually build the sense of community and attitudinal attachment that Keller associates with brand resonance. On platforms like Facebook Groups, Instagram Stories, and TikTok comment threads, these micro-interactions accumulate over time into something that has real commercial weight.

For digital marketing practitioners and agencies working with small businesses in Egypt, the findings also suggest a recalibration of how performance is measured. Metrics like reach, views, and engagement rate are valuable, but they primarily measure storytelling impact. To understand whether brand resonance is actually building, practitioners should also track indicators such as repeat purchase rates, customer referral behavior, active participation in brand communities, and the degree to which customers proactively recommend the brand to others. These measures are harder to capture through standard analytics dashboards, but they are far more diagnostic of long-term commercial health.

Finally, the findings have implications for policymakers and organizations supporting small business development in Egypt, including digital entrepreneurship programs and chambers of commerce. Training curricula that focus exclusively on content skills – photography, videography, copywriting – may need to be supplemented with modules on brand strategy, customer relationship management, and the principles of building community-driven brands on social platforms. This is particularly relevant as Egypt's entrepreneurial ecosystem continues to mature and the competition for consumer attention on social media intensifies.

Limitations of the Study

While this research contributes meaningfully to literature, it is important to acknowledge its limitations honestly, as they shape how the findings should be interpreted and how future work in this area should be designed.

The first limitation concerns the scope and generalizability of the sample. The study focused specifically on small business entrepreneurs on social media in Egypt, which, while theoretically justified, means the findings may not transfer directly to other sectors, demographic groups, or national contexts. Egypt's social media landscape has particular characteristics – including high Facebook penetration, a relatively young population, and a distinct cultural orientation toward community and personal trust – that may amplify or moderate the effects found here in ways that would not be replicated elsewhere. Researchers working in other MENA countries, sub-Saharan Africa, or other developing markets should replicate this study before drawing generalized conclusions.

Second, the cross-sectional design of the study captures a snapshot of attitudes and intentions at a single point in time. Brand resonance and digital storytelling are inherently dynamic phenomena – they build, evolve, and sometimes decay over the course of an ongoing relationship between a customer and a brand. A cross-sectional survey cannot capture this temporal dimension. It is entirely possible that the relationships between the variables look different at earlier versus later stages of the customer journey, and a longitudinal research design would be far better suited to investigating how these dynamics unfold over time.

Third, this study relies on self-reported data collected through a structured questionnaire. While this is a widely accepted approach in consumer behavior research, it is subject to the limitations inherent in self-report measures, including social desirability bias, recall inaccuracies, and the well-documented gap between stated intentions and actual purchasing behavior. Respondents may have overstated their purchase intentions or their level of engagement with branded content in ways that inflate the observed

effect sizes. Future research would benefit from triangulating survey data with behavioral data – such as actual purchase records or engagement analytics – to obtain a more accurate picture.

Fourth, while digital storytelling and brand resonance were selected as the focal predictors based on theoretical grounding and research gaps, the model necessarily omits other variables that are known to influence purchase intention in social media contexts. Factors such as influencer endorsement, perceived product quality, price sensitivity, social proof mechanisms, and platform-specific algorithmic effects were not included in the current framework. Their omission does not diminish the value of the study's contribution, but it does mean the explanatory model is partial, and the findings should be interpreted with this in mind.

Fifth, the study does not distinguish between different types of social media platforms – Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and others – despite the fact that these platforms differ substantially in their affordances, user demographics, and the kinds of storytelling they make possible. It is conceivable that digital storytelling is more effective on TikTok (where short-form video is native) while brand resonance may be more easily built on Facebook (where community features are more robust). Future research that disaggregates findings by platform could yield considerably more nuanced and actionable insights.

Future Research Directions

The findings and limitations of this study open up several productive avenues for future investigation that could substantially advance our understanding of digital marketing dynamics among small businesses in Egypt and beyond.

The most immediate priority for future research is to replicate and extend this study using longitudinal data. Following a cohort of small business entrepreneurs and their customers over a period of twelve to twenty-four months would allow researchers to examine how brand resonance builds over time, whether early digital storytelling investments translate into later resonance, and at what point in the customer journey each variable is most influential. This kind of research design would add considerable theoretical depth to the cross-sectional picture captured here.

A second valuable direction would be to investigate the mediating and moderating mechanisms that connect digital storytelling to purchase intention through brand resonance. The current study establishes that both variables independently predict purchase intention, but it does not fully explore whether storytelling drives purchase intention partly because it first builds resonance. A mediation analysis in a future study could test whether brand resonance mediates the relationship between digital storytelling and purchase intention, which would have important implications for how we conceptualize the causal architecture of the model.

Third, future research should examine the moderating role of platform type. Given the distinct affordances of Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and emerging platforms such as Snapchat and BeReal, it is worth investigating whether the relative influence of digital storytelling versus brand resonance varies by platform. This could be explored through a multi-platform comparative study or through experimental designs that expose participants to equivalent brand content across different platforms and measure resulting intentions.

Fourth, the cultural specificity of these findings deserves further interrogation. Egypt is one of the most digitally active markets in the Arab world, yet it shares important cultural characteristics – including high power distance, collectivist values, and strong interpersonal trust norms – with other countries in the MENA region and beyond. A cross-national comparative study spanning Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and perhaps Turkey or Nigeria would help disentangle which aspects of the findings are culturally particular and which reflect more universal patterns of digital consumer behavior.

Fifth, the role of content type within digital storytelling merits deeper exploration. This study treated digital storytelling as a relatively unified construct, but in practice, the stories that small businesses tell take many different forms – founder origin stories, customer transformation narratives, behind-the-scenes glimpses, cultural or seasonal themes, and so on. Future research that disaggregates these content types and examines their differential effects on brand resonance and purchase intention would offer much more granular guidance for practitioners.

Sixth, given the growing role of artificial intelligence tools in content creation, future research should examine whether AI-generated storytelling content builds brand resonance as effectively as human-generated content, or whether consumers can detect and respond differently to algorithmic narratives. This

is a rapidly evolving area with significant practical implications for small business entrepreneurs who are increasingly using AI tools to scale their content production.

Finally, future work could adopt a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative survey data with qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, ethnographic observation, or content analysis of actual social media accounts. This would allow researchers to go beyond measuring the strength of statistical relationships and develop a richer, more textured understanding of how small business entrepreneurs in Egypt actually construct and manage their brand narratives – and how customers experience and respond to them in the flow of everyday digital life.

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