

## AI-Generated Green Brand Storytelling with Narrative Rhetoric and Its Impact on Immersion, Brand Trust, and Brand Loyalty

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### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords:

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**Background:** Rising consumer skepticism toward palm oil-based products due to desirability concerns has prompted companies to adopt more persuasive communication strategies. However, empirical research examining the effectiveness of AI-generated green brand storytelling integrated with narrative rhetoric is limited. This study aims to investigate the impact of narrative rhetoric storytelling on immersion, brand trust, and brand loyalty.

**Method:** This study uses a quantitative method where data were collected from 350 respondents using purposive sampling and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), supplemented by an independent sample t-test.

**Results:** The findings indicate that storytelling incorporating elements of narrative rhetoric has a significantly stronger effect on brand loyalty compared to non-narrative storytelling. Furthermore, anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism significantly increase consumer immersion, with symbolism showing the strongest effect. Immersion was found to significantly influence brand trust, which in turn was the most significant predictor of brand loyalty.

**Conclusion:** The conclusion highlight the sequential mechanisms by which narrative rhetorical elements increase engagement, which strengthens trust and ultimately drives loyalty. This study extends narrative rhetorical theory by demonstrating its role in sustainability communication and provides empirical evidence that persuasive storytelling can effectively reduce consumer skepticism and strengthen long-term brand relationships in the context of palm oil-based products.

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## INTRODUCTION

Oil palm plantations are often associated with environmental degradation and land-use change, which are perceived to increase the risk of hydrometeorological disasters, such as the flash floods that occurred in several regions of Sumatra in 2025 (Yanfatriani et al., 2024). These events have not only disrupted local socio-economic conditions but have also contributed to growing consumer scepticism

toward palm oil based products. Negative perceptions of palm oil are further reflected in global market trends, where “palm oil-free” labels are increasingly used on consumer products as an implicit rejection of palm-based ingredients. Such labelling encourages consumers to choose alternatives perceived as more environmentally friendly, while reinforcing the perception that palm-based products are less sustainable (Mohd Huda, 2024).

In response to this challenge, green brand storytelling has emerged as a strategic communication tool that enables companies to convey sustainability narratives and strengthen emotional connections with consumers (Huang et al., 2022). In recent years, many global brands such as IKEA, Nike, Dove, and The Body Shop have increasingly incorporated storytelling into their sustainability communication strategies. Campaigns such as “A Better World Starts at Home” (IKEA), “Move to Zero” (Nike), “Real Beauty” (Dove), and “Enrich Not Exploit” (The Body Shop) reflect the growing importance of narrative-based approaches in promoting sustainable values (Ahuvia et al., 2022). Prior research suggests that storytelling enhances brand differentiation, emotional engagement, and consumer attitudes (Liu et al., 2022).

However, empirical studies examining the effectiveness of green brand storytelling in restoring consumer trust, particularly in crisis contexts, remain limited. Overall, there is a significant gap in research examining storytelling as a sustainability communication tool and its role in shaping consumer trust and loyalty, especially in emerging markets such as Indonesia. At the same time, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed marketing communication by enabling firms to generate personalized and adaptive storytelling content (Nguyen Van & Vu Gia, 2025).

Despite its growing application, limited research has explored the integration of AI-generated storytelling with narrative rhetoric elements (e.g., anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism) and its impact on consumer immersion, trust, and loyalty. Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of AI-generated green brand storytelling with narrative rhetoric on immersion, brand trust, and brand loyalty in the context of palm oil-based products. By addressing the intersection of AI, narrative persuasion, and sustainability communication, this study provides empirical evidence on how brands can restore consumer trust in industries facing environmental scepticism (Guenduez & Mettler, 2023).

Refers to the use of authentic narratives about sustainability initiatives and environmentally responsible practices to establish emotional connections with consumers. Storytelling, as a marketing instrument, is no longer limited to the dissemination of product related information; rather, it involves constructing meaningful and relatable narratives that resonate with consumers’ emotions, values, and aspirations. Through effective storytelling, brands can cultivate a sense of connectedness and engagement, ultimately fostering consumer loyalty (Wijayanto et al., 2024).

Prior research indicates that consumers are not merely rational agents who respond to functional product attributes; instead, they are emotionally driven and tend to favour brands that reflect or enhance their sense of identity (Davey et al., 2024). This paradigm shift is particularly important for nurturing brand loyalty, as consumers are more likely to remain committed to brands that provide a sense of belonging or shared purpose (Haudi et al., 2022). Storytelling extends beyond personal narratives to a strategic branding tool that marketers have long utilized. Defines storytelling as a ‘strategic branding concept and an operational communication tool, that is crucial in increasing product value, conveying brand values, communicating the firm’s image, and developing an emotional connection with consumers’. A story-based advertisement (Lim et al., 2023).

From a narrative rhetoric perspective, story-based advertising utilizes persuasive narrative elements such as anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism to influence consumer perception and increase immersion in green brand storytelling (Biesecker, 2025). By crafting narratives that highlight environmentally responsible practices palm oil based brands seek to build meaningful emotional connections with environmentally conscious consumers. A growing body of literature, highlights the effectiveness of storytelling, particularly in its capacity to humanize brands, evoke emotional responses, and foster enduring consumer brand relationships one of the core objectives in branding strategy (Deng, 2025).

Empirical evidence indicates that storytelling contributes to various positive brand outcomes, including purchase intention, brand attitude, brand love, brand perception, enhanced memorability and recall. Enriched brand experience, increased brand loyalty, and stronger brand differentiation (Crespo et

al., 2023). As its application in branding and advertising continues to expand, storytelling is no longer viewed merely as a communication technique, but rather as a fundamental strategic tool further argue that incorporating rhetorical strategies into green brand stories enhances their persuasive power and strengthens perceptions more compelling and authentic (Belova, 2021).

They further demonstrate that two rhetorical strategies reversal and symbolism play a significant role in strengthening brand trust (Tianli & Chen, 2024). Accordingly, this study builds upon this line of inquiry by examining green brand storytelling from a rhetorical perspective in order to generate deeper insights into how narrative strategies enhance credibility and trust formation. Accordingly, storytelling that incorporates narrative rhetoric should produce higher levels of immersion compared to non-rhetorical green storytelling (Wornyo, 2022).

At a more granular level, specific rhetorical strategies anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism may independently contribute to immersion by stimulating emotional attachment, perspective shifting, and symbolic interpretation. Furthermore, immersive experiences are expected to foster brand trust, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty. However, the effectiveness of immersion in building trust may vary depending on the level of consumer green scepticism. This reasoning leads to the following hypotheses (Fan et al., 2025).

Narrative rhetoric refers to “a discourse defined by a particular lexicon, grammatical structures, literary/poetic features, or other devices within a specific social context and typically used as a functional vehicle of persuasion, such as ‘the rhetoric of advertising (Ye, 2024). More generally, rhetoric is related to the deliberate process of language selection to convince or move people toward specific desired ends (Biscaro et al., 2025). in the context of brand storytelling, rhetoric facilitates persuasion. In previous research on narrative immersion, immersion included strong affective responses and reduced critical thought, which in turn induced favorable brand attitudes and brand evaluations. Therefore, the influence of a well-structured brand narrative on brand trust and brand loyalty is of substantial value to research because brand image is an important factor necessary to “maintain a relatively high score rating among loyal consumers” (Huang & Guo, 2021).

Anthropomorphism refers to the attribution of human-like traits, emotions, and characteristics to non-human entities (Otsu & Izumi, 2025). In branding, it is used to present brands as human-like entities that embody core values and personality traits, thereby enhancing emotional connection, perceived authenticity, and consumer trust (Xie & Wei, 2025). This strategy is particularly relevant for green brands, as assigning human characteristics such as sincerity and compassion can differentiate them from competitors and strengthen consumer engagement (Kayeser Fatima et al., 2024). Reversal, derived from Aristotle’s concept of *peripeteia*, refers to unexpected changes or turning points in a narrative that create tension, conflict, and eventual resolution (Pino Gavidia & Adu, 2022).

H2.1 The relationship between the use of anthropomorphism in green brand storytelling and consumer immersion is positive.

H2.2 The relationship between the use of reversal in green brand storytelling and consumer immersion is positive.

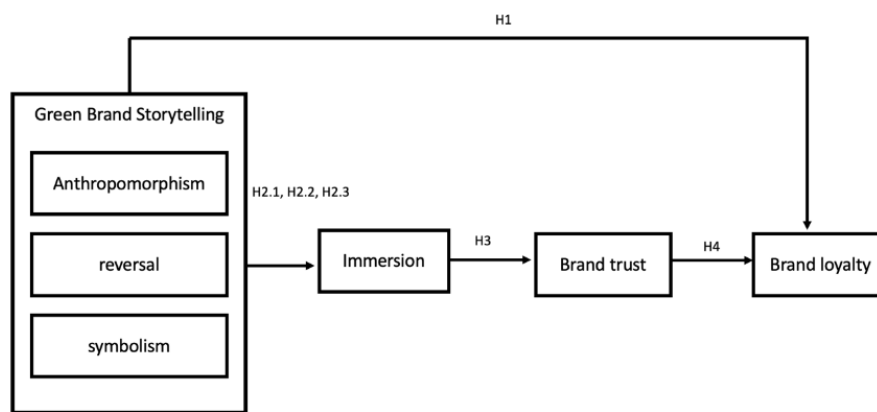
H2.3. The relationship between the use of symbolism in green brand storytelling and consumer immersion is positive.

Brand loyalty refers to consumers’ deep commitment to repeatedly purchase a particular brand in the future, despite situational influences or marketing efforts from competing brands define brand loyalty as consumers’ tendency to consistently choose and recommend a brand based on their level of trust and emotional attachment (Iddo Driantami & Prasetyo, 2022). Brand loyalty is reflected not only in repeat purchase behavior (behavioral loyalty) but also in consumers’ positive attitudes, preferences, and psychological attachment to the brand (Yum & Yoo, 2023)

Therefore, brand loyalty is viewed as the outcome of a long-term relationship between consumers and brands, built through experience, trust, and value congruence. In the context of brand storytelling, loyalty is cultivated through the brand’s ability to evoke emotional and cognitive engagement. Storytelling enables brands to communicate values, identity, and purpose narratively, allowing consumers to not only understand functional benefits but also develop personal meaning toward the brand (Escalas, 2004). Strong brand stories enhance emotional connectedness, strengthen consumers’

self-identification with the brand, and foster enduring positive attitudes (Mills & John, 2025). Research shows that consumers deeply engaged in brand narratives tend to exhibit higher levels of trust, which serves as a critical foundation for brand loyalty formation (Luxamimongkolchai & Nuangjamnong, 2024).

Furthermore, in green brand storytelling, brand loyalty becomes increasingly relevant as modern consumers evaluate brands not only based on product quality but also on communicated sustainability values and social responsibility. Authentic and consistent storytelling of environmental commitment enhances perceptions of brand authenticity, reinforces trust, and ultimately drives long-term consumer loyalty (Suknaic, 2025). Thus, brand storytelling functions as a strategic mechanism linking narrative experience, consumer trust, and brand loyalty, especially in the context of palm oil based products that face scepticism regarding sustainability claims. Based on the proposed hypotheses above, this study develops a conceptual (Nurfatwa et al., 2023).



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**

**METHOD**

This study uses a quantitative method. Based on the proposed hypotheses above, this study develops a conceptual framework grounded in Narrative Rhetoric Theory (Mao et al., 2025). Prior research demonstrates that green brand storytelling incorporating narrative rhetorical strategies namely anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism significantly enhances narrative immersion, which subsequently influences perceived brand authenticity and brand trust. In the context of this study, the framework is particularly relevant given the increasing public attention and controversy surrounding palm oil sustainability issues. As a result, consumers have become more critical and skeptical toward brand claims related to sustainability (Kumar et al., 2025).

In such a context, green brand storytelling serves as a strategic communication tool to address consumer skepticism and shape positive brand perceptions. Building upon this foundation, the present study extends the model by examining how narrative rhetorical elements embedded in green brand storytelling influence consumer responses. Specifically, the framework posits that anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism enhance consumers’ immersion in the storytelling experience. Immersion, in turn, strengthens brand trust, which subsequently drives brand loyalty (Polydorou, 2024).

Furthermore, this study proposes that green brand storytelling may also exert a direct influence on brand loyalty, beyond its indirect effects through immersion and brand trust. The framework proposes a sequential mechanism in which rhetorical elements enhance immersion, which subsequently strengthens brand trust and ultimately drives brand loyalty. In addition, a direct effect of storytelling on brand loyalty is also examined. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study (Karapakdee & Wannapiroon, 2023).

The target population of this study consists of Indonesian consumers aged between 15 and 60 years who have purchased and used Pantene shampoo and are aware that the product contains palm oil-based ingredients. The respondents are drawn from major urban areas in Indonesia, including the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek), as well as cities in Central Java and East Java, namely Yogyakarta,

Semarang, and Surabaya. A total of 350 respondents were included in this study. These regions are selected due to their relevance as major consumer hubs characterized by intense market competition, high brand accessibility, and frequent exposure to digital storytelling (Yang, 2023).

In addition, urban consumers in these areas tend to demonstrate higher awareness of sustainability-related issues, including palm oil controversies, which makes them particularly suitable for investigating the effectiveness of green brand storytelling in shaping brand trust and loyalty. Given that the exact population size is unknown and cannot be fully enumerated, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed (Lo et al., 2020). The minimum required sample size for this study was 300 respondents at a 95% confidence level. This sampling technique allows researchers to select respondents who meet specific inclusion criteria relevant to the research objectives. Similar sampling approaches have been widely adopted in consumer behavior and branding research (Narjis Fatima et al., 2024).

Purposive sampling is considered appropriate as this study requires respondents who have prior experience with the brand and have been exposed to sustainability-related communication. Participation in this study was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the research prior to completing the survey. To ensure data completeness and quality, only fully completed questionnaires were retained for analysis, while incomplete responses were excluded to maintain the robustness of statistical estimation. The study adopted a cross-sectional design, with data collected at a single point in time (Haro-Sarango, 2026).

To examine the causal mechanism, respondents were divided into two groups. The first group was exposed to AI-generated green brand storytelling incorporating rhetorical elements such as anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism. The second group received a non-narrative version of the brand message, which served as the control condition. This comparative design enables the study to assess the effect of narrative rhetorical elements on immersion and subsequent outcomes, including brand trust and brand loyalty. All data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) (Rizqah et al., 2025).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement items were adapted from established literature to ensure content validity. A total of 20 items were developed based on prior studies to assess the proposed research framework within the target population, as summarized in the operationalization of variables presented in Table 1. All constructs in this study were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”. Green brand storytelling was modeled as a formative construct consisting of three dimensions: anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism, in line with the perspective of narrative rhetoric theory.

Anthropomorphism was measured using three items reflecting human presence, the use of personal pronouns, and imperative expressions in storytelling. Reversal was measured using three items capturing the presence of a clear narrative climax, obstacles faced by the protagonist, and the resolution of these challenges (Ma & Wu, 2025). Symbolism was also measured using three items derived, reflecting archetypal characters and meaningful story elements that convey positive values and personal transformation. Immersion was measured using three items capturing the extent to which respondents feel mentally engaged, curious about the storyline, and emotionally affected by the brand storytelling (Marx, 2024).

Brand trust was measured using three items, reflecting consumers' confidence in the brand's reliability, credibility, and ability to fulfill its promises (Varghese & Dr. Amitabh Satapathy, 2025). Finally, brand loyalty was measured using five items, capturing behavioral intentions such as recommending the brand, choosing it as a first option, resisting switching, and overall satisfaction after exposure to brand storytelling. The data collection process was conducted through an online questionnaire developed using Google Forms and distributed via social media platforms, including Instagram and WhatsApp, during the period of January to March 2026. The online survey method was selected to facilitate efficient data collection and to broaden access to the target respondents (Vilaningrum Wadyatenti & Pranatasari, 2025).

A total of 368 questionnaires were distributed in this study; however, only 350 responses were successfully collected and deemed complete, meeting the requirements for further analysis. Table 2 indicates that the majority of respondents were female, comprising 69% (n = 241), followed by males at

31% (n = 109). In terms of age distribution, half of the respondents (50%) belonged to the 21–30 age group (n = 175), followed by those aged 15–20 years at 27% (n = 95). Respondents aged 31–40 accounted for 16% (n = 56), while those aged 41–50 represented only 7% (n = 24), and no respondents were recorded in the 51–60 age group. The majority of respondents were students, comprising 66% (n = 231), followed by employees at 18% (n = 62) and civil servants at 10% (n = 35). A smaller proportion of respondents consisted of entrepreneurs (2%, n = 7), unemployed individuals (1%, n = 4), and others (3%, n = 10). In terms of domicile, nearly half of the respondents resided in Yogyakarta (46%, n = 161), followed by Surabaya at 13% (n = 46) and Jakarta at 10% (n = 35), while Semarang accounted for only 2% (n = 7) of the total respondents. Regarding income, the majority of respondents (58%, n = 203) reported earning below IDR 2,500,000. This was followed by respondents earning IDR 2,500,000–3,000,000 at 16% (n = 56), IDR 3,000,000–5,000,000 at 11% (n = 39), IDR 5,000,000–10,000,000 at 9% (n = 32), and above IDR 10,000,000 at 5% (n = 18).

**Table 2. Profile of Respondents**

Profile	Total	Percentage
Gender		
Male	109	31%
Female	241	69%
Age group		
15-20	95	27%
21-30	175	50%
31-40	56	16%
41-50	24	7%
51-60	-	0%
Occupation		
Student	231	66%
Employee	62	18%
Civil Servant	35	10%
Entrepreneur	7	2%
Unemployed	4	1%
Others	10	3%
Domicile		
Jogja	161	46%
Jakarta	35	10%
Surabaya	46	13%
Semarang	7	2%
Income		
< 2.500.000	203	58%
2.500.000-3.000.000	56	16%
3.000.000-5.000.000	39	11%
5.000.000-10.000.000	32	9%
>10.000.000	18	5%

The measurement items were initially assessed using reliability and validity tests through SPSS, followed by confirmatory analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). To ensure the robustness of the measurement model, two iterations of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were conducted. During the second iteration, indicators with low factor loadings, such as ANT1 (0.193) and REV2 (0.465), were removed to improve the model fit and construct validity. The final measurement model demonstrates satisfactory reliability and validity. All constructs achieved Cronbach's Alpha values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. In addition, the Composite Reliability (CR) values exceed 0.70, confirming adequate construct reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are above 0.50, indicating sufficient convergent validity (Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, all remaining indicator loadings are statistically significant and above the acceptable level of 0.70, supporting indicator reliability. Discriminant validity is also established as the correlations among constructs are below the threshold value of 0.85, suggesting that each construct is distinct from one another. Overall, these results confirm

that the measurement model used in this study is both reliable and valid, and suitable for further structural model analysis (Kurtaliqi et al., 2024).

**Table 3. Measurement Model Test Results**

Variables		Items	Factor loadings	CR	AVE	Source
<b>Anthropomorphism</b>	ANT1. Pantene's storytelling features one or more human characters.	ANT1	0.193			Wen and Song, 2017
	ANT2. Pantene refers to itself using first-person pronouns in its storytelling.	ANT2	0.542			
	ANT3. Some actions or messages in Pantene's storytelling are delivered as direct appeals to the audience.	ANT3	0.837			
<b>Reversal</b>	REV1. Pantene's storytelling has a clear storyline with a defined climax.	REV1	0.791			Chiun et al., 2012
	REV2. The main character in Pantene's storytelling faces challenges or obstacles.	REV2	0.465			
	REV3. The challenges in Pantene's storytelling are resolved at the end of the story.	REV3	0.796			
<b>Symbolism</b>	SY1. The main character in Pantene's storytelling demonstrates care and confidence in facing challenges.	SY1	0.767			Gutmas's., 2017
	SY2. Pantene's storytelling portrays a journey toward self-confidence and harmony with the environment.	SY2	0.834			
	SY3. Pantene's storytelling conveys positive and constructive cultural values.	SY3	0.890			
<b>Immersion</b>	IM1. I feel mentally engaged when watching Pantene's storytelling.	IM1	0.794	0.847	0.650	Apple et al., 2015
	IM2. I am curious to know how Pantene's storytelling ends.	IM2	0.745			
	IM3. Pantene's storytelling affects me emotionally.	IM3	0.874			
<b>Brand trust</b>	BT1. I trust Pantene after watching its storytelling.	BT1	0.875	0.907	0.764	Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), Schallehn et al. (2014)
	BT2. I believe Pantene can fulfill the promises conveyed in its storytelling.	BT2	0.865			
	BT3. I feel secure relying on Pantene based on its storytelling.	BT3	0.883			

<b>Brand Loyalty</b>	BL1. I often share or recommend Pantene after watching its storytelling.	BL1	0.775	0.879	0.593	Severi E & Ling, 2013
	BL2. I usually choose Pantene as my first choice compared to other hair care brands.	BL2	0.718			
	BL3. I would recommend Pantene to others after watching its storytelling.	BL3	0.783			
	BL4. I do not intend to switch to other hair care brands after watching Pantene's storytelling.	BL4	0.764			
	BL5. I feel satisfied with Pantene after watching its storytelling.	BL5	0.808			

The distinctiveness of the constructs was examined through a discriminant validity assessment using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The HTMT approach is considered a more stringent and reliable method for assessing discriminant validity compared to traditional techniques (Scanlon et al., 2025). The HTMT values reported in Table X indicate that all inter-construct correlations are below the recommended threshold of 0.85. Specifically, the highest HTMT value is observed between brand trust and brand loyalty (0.761), followed by immersion and brand loyalty (0.735), and immersion and brand trust (0.658). All remaining values are substantially lower than the cut-off point. These results suggest that each construct captures a distinct conceptual domain and is sufficiently differentiated from one another. Therefore, the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory discriminant validity.

**Table 4. the HTMT Results**

Variable	Anthropomorphism	Reversal	Symbolism	Immersion	Brand trust	Brand Loyalty
Anthropomorphism	1					
Reversal	0.619**	1				
Symbolism	0.469**	0.595**	1			
Immersion	0.357**	0.456**	0.530**	1		
Brand trust	0.434**	0.554**	0.526**	0.658**	1	
Brand Loyalty	0.385**	0.468**	0.436**	0.735**	0.761**	1

The structural relationships between the constructs were assessed using bootstrapping techniques. A summary of the hypothesis testing results is presented in Table X. The findings indicate that storytelling incorporating narrative rhetorical strategies has a significantly stronger effect on brand loyalty compared to non-narrative storytelling, thereby providing empirical support for H1. The independent samples t-test results reveal a statistically significant difference between the two groups ( $t = 15.235$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), with the mean value of brand loyalty being higher in the narrative rhetoric group ( $M = 34.04$ ) than in the non-narrative group ( $M = 27.71$ ).

Furthermore, the results demonstrate that all three dimensions of narrative rhetoric significantly influence immersion. Anthropomorphism has a positive and significant effect on immersion ( $\beta = 0.167$ ;  $t = 3.596$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), supporting H2. Similarly, reversal exerts a significant positive effect on immersion ( $\beta = 0.267$ ;  $t = 5.735$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming H3. Among the three dimensions, symbolism shows the strongest effect on immersion ( $\beta = 0.316$ ;  $t = 6.755$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), thereby supporting H4. In addition, immersion is found to have a strong and significant effect on brand trust ( $\beta = 0.668$ ;  $t = 17.817$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H5.

This indicates that higher levels of consumer engagement in brand storytelling lead to increased trust toward the brand. Moreover, brand trust has a substantial positive influence on brand loyalty ( $\beta = 0.791$ ;  $t = 36.972$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), thus supporting H6. This relationship represents the strongest path in the

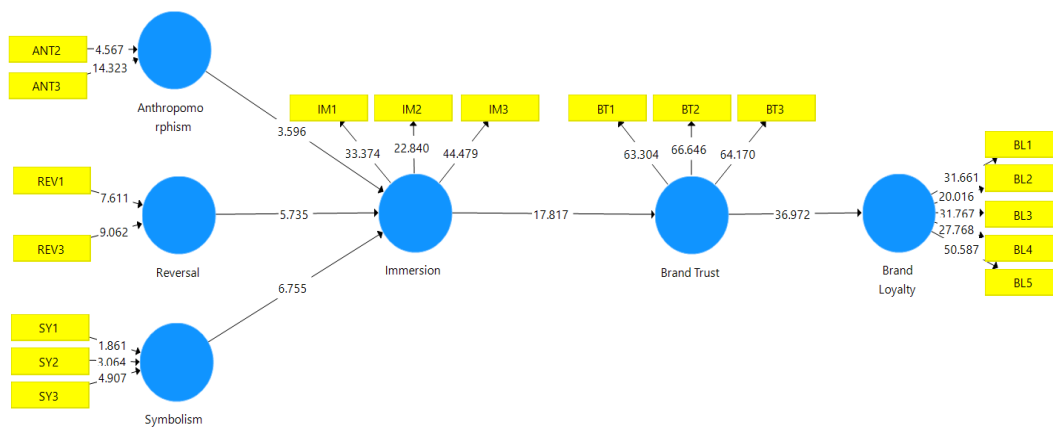
model, highlighting the critical role of trust in driving consumer loyalty. The explanatory power of the model was assessed using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ).

The results show that the model explains 37.4% of the variance in immersion ( $R^2 = 0.374$ ), 44.5% of the variance in brand trust ( $R^2 = 0.445$ ), and 62.5% of the variance in brand loyalty ( $R^2 = 0.625$ ), indicating moderate to substantial explanatory power (Hair et al., 2021). Prior to the structural analysis, two iterations of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were conducted to ensure measurement validity. Indicators with low factor loadings, such as ANT1 (0.193) and REV2 (0.465), were removed in the second iteration to improve model fit. The final measurement model demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity, as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha values above 0.80, along with acceptable composite reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values.

**Table 5. Result of research hypotheses**

Hypotheses	Standardized regression weights	C.R. (t-value)	p-value	Hypothesis status
H2: Anthropomorphism → immersion	0.167	3.596	0.000	Accepted
H3: Reversal → Immersion	0.267	5.735	0.000	Accepted
H4: Symbolism → Immersion	0.316	6.755	0.000	Accepted
H5: Immersion → Brand Trust	0.668	17.817	0.000	Accepted
H6 : Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty	0.791	36.972	0.000	Accepted

The findings of this study confirm the significant role of narrative rhetoric in facilitating immersion and strengthening subsequent consumer responses. Specifically, the results reveal that anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism positively influence immersion. Among these, symbolism and reversal exhibit stronger effects, indicating that meaningful symbols and unexpected narrative developments are particularly effective in evoking deeper audience engagement. These findings are consistent with prior research suggesting that narrative elements that enhance emotional and cognitive involvement play a crucial role in transporting consumers into the story (Meadows, 2023)



**Figure 2. Results of hypothesized model. Note\*\*\* Significant at the 0.001 level**

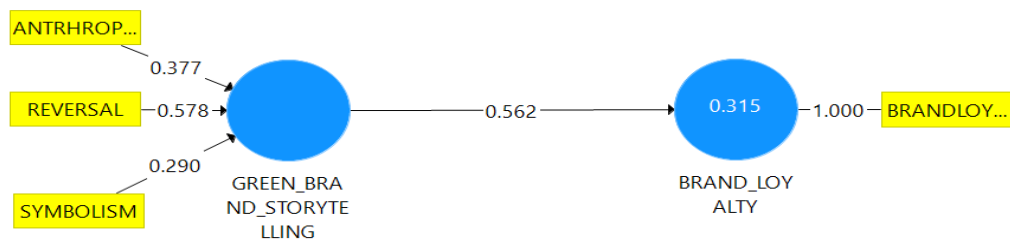
Second, this study extends the existing literature on brand storytelling, which has traditionally focused on story structure and embedded brand values, by shifting the emphasis toward the strategic use of rhetorical elements in shaping consumer experience (Nguyen et al., 2024). The results suggest that, compared to simple or straightforward storytelling, narratives enriched with rhetorical strategies are more effective in engaging consumers and influencing their perceptions. This finding provides empirical support for the argument that compelling brand stories are more persuasive than mere factual information and are better able to foster emotional connections with consumers (Chen et al., 2024).

Third, unlike some prior studies that report inconsistent findings regarding anthropomorphism, this study identifies a significant positive effect of anthropomorphism on immersion. This suggests that

attributing human-like characteristics to a brand can enhance relatability and emotional attachment, thereby increasing audience involvement in the narrative. This finding reinforces the notion that anthropomorphism serves as an effective mechanism for humanizing brands and strengthening consumer engagement (Elfadil et al., 2026). Furthermore, the results demonstrate that immersion has a strong and significant effect on brand trust. This indicates that when consumers become deeply absorbed in a brand story, they are more likely to perceive the brand as credible and trustworthy. This finding aligns with previous studies highlighting that immersive experiences reduce resistance and enhance persuasive outcomes by fostering emotional connection (Cui et al., 2025).

Finally, brand trust is found to have the strongest influence on brand loyalty, confirming its central role in building long-term consumer relationships. The high magnitude of this effect suggests that trust serves as a critical foundation for sustaining consumer commitment and repeat behavior. This finding is consistent with prior research emphasizing that trust is a key driver of loyalty in branding contexts (Elsayed, 2023). Overall, the results highlight that the effectiveness of brand storytelling lies not only in the story itself but also in how the story is constructed through rhetorical strategies that enhance immersion, build trust, and ultimately foster brand loyalty (Houghton, 2023).

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for the first-order constructs anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism associated with the second-order construct of green brand storytelling were all below the recommended threshold of 3.3 (Diamantopoulos et al., 2012), indicating the absence of multicollinearity issues in the model. Specifically, the VIF values ranged from 1.200 to 1.629, suggesting that each indicator contributes uniquely to the formative construct. The redundancy analysis yielded a path coefficient of 0.562, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017), thereby confirming the convergent validity of the higher-order construct. This result indicates that the formative construct of green brand storytelling adequately captures the underlying concept. Overall, the results presented in Table 6 suggest that there are no substantial collinearity issues among the formative indicators. All three dimensions demonstrate significant contributions to the construct, as evidenced by their respective weights and t-values. Reversal exhibits the highest contribution (weight = 0.578;  $t = 7.392$ ), followed by anthropomorphism (weight = 0.377;  $t = 4.251$ ) and symbolism (weight = 0.290;  $t = 3.715$ ). These findings indicate that each dimension plays a meaningful role in forming the green brand storytelling construct. Although symbolism shows a relatively lower weight compared to the other dimensions, it remains statistically significant and is therefore retained to preserve the content validity of the construct (Ringle et al., 2023).



**Figure 3. Reversal exhibits the highest contribution**

The results of this study provide strong empirical support for the role of narrative rhetoric theory in explaining consumer responses to green brand storytelling. The findings are consistent with prior research on narrative persuasion and extend the literature by demonstrating how rhetorical elements influence brand-related outcomes through psychological mechanisms. The significant effect of narrative rhetorical storytelling on brand loyalty confirms that storytelling enriched with rhetorical elements plays a crucial role in strengthening consumer–brand relationships. Compared to non-narrative communication, rhetorical storytelling appears to enhance emotional engagement and message persuasiveness, thereby increasing consumer attachment to the brand.

This finding aligns with previous studies suggesting that narrative-based communication is more effective than purely informational content in influencing consumer attitudes and behavior. In addition, the findings demonstrate that the three dimensions of narrative rhetoric anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism serve as important drivers of immersion. Among these, reversal emerges as the most

dominant factor, followed by anthropomorphism and symbolism. This suggests that narrative techniques involving plot development, conflict, and resolution are particularly effective in capturing consumer attention and sustaining engagement. In line with prior research on narrative transportation, elements that introduce tension and emotional shifts tend to deepen audience involvement and enhance immersion (Vaccaro et al., 2021)

Furthermore, the significant role of anthropomorphism indicates that attributing human-like characteristics to brands can foster emotional connections, making the storytelling experience more relatable. Although symbolism shows a relatively lower contribution, it remains significant, suggesting that symbolic meaning still plays an important role in shaping consumers' interpretation of brand narratives. These findings highlight that the effectiveness of storytelling depends not only on message content but also on how the story is structured and delivered through rhetorical strategies. The results also reveal that immersion plays a central role in influencing brand trust. When consumers become deeply engaged in storytelling, they are more likely to perceive the brand as credible and trustworthy. This finding is consistent with narrative persuasion theory, which suggests that immersive experiences reduce cognitive resistance and enhance message acceptance.

In the context of green brand storytelling, this mechanism is particularly important, as sustainability-related claims especially those associated with palm oil are often subject to consumer skepticism. By increasing immersion, brands can mitigate skepticism and strengthen trust perceptions. Moreover, the findings confirm that brand trust is a key determinant of brand loyalty, representing the strongest relationship in the model. This result reinforces the well-established notion in branding literature that trust serves as the foundation of long-term consumer relationships. When consumers perceive a brand as reliable and credible, they are more likely to exhibit loyalty behaviors such as repeat purchase and positive word-of-mouth. Taken together, the findings suggest a clear sequential mechanism in which narrative rhetorical elements enhance immersion, which in turn strengthens brand trust and ultimately drives brand loyalty.

This process highlights the importance of psychological engagement in translating storytelling into behavioral outcomes. From a theoretical perspective, this study provides important insights by integrating narrative rhetoric theory with branding and sustainability literature. It demonstrates that rhetorical strategies are not merely stylistic devices but serve as critical drivers of consumer engagement and trust formation. Furthermore, the findings emphasize that the effectiveness of storytelling is context-dependent, particularly in industries facing reputational challenges such as palm oil, where building trust is essential. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of research on green marketing by demonstrating that narrative rhetoric can serve as a powerful tool in enhancing consumer engagement, trust, and loyalty. These findings offer valuable implications for both researchers and practitioners seeking to design more effective storytelling strategies in sustainability-driven markets.

## CONCLUSION

This study extends Narrative Rhetoric Theory by demonstrating its explanatory power in the context of green brand storytelling, particularly in shaping consumer trust and loyalty. The findings reveal that narrative rhetorical strategies anthropomorphism, reversal, and symbolism play a crucial role in enhancing consumer immersion, which subsequently strengthens brand trust and ultimately drives brand loyalty. In addition, storytelling enriched with rhetorical elements is shown to have a significantly stronger effect on brand loyalty compared to non-narrative communication. These results highlight that the effectiveness of green brand storytelling lies not only in delivering sustainability-related information but also in how the message is constructed through persuasive narrative techniques. In particular, the findings suggest that immersion serves as a key psychological mechanism that translates storytelling into trust formation and behavioral outcomes. This refines prior research by emphasizing the importance of narrative structure and emotional engagement in influencing consumer responses, especially in industries facing reputational challenges such as palm oil. From a managerial perspective, the findings imply that companies should prioritize the design of compelling and immersive storytelling strategies that incorporate rhetorical elements to enhance consumer engagement. Marketers should focus on developing narratives that evoke emotional involvement, build credibility, and communicate sustainability values effectively. Simply providing factual or informational messages may not be sufficient to foster trust and long-term loyalty in increasingly competitive and sustainability-conscious markets. The

findings should be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, the sample is dominated by younger respondents and students, which may influence the generalizability of the results, as this segment tends to be more flexible in brand preferences and more responsive to digital storytelling. Second, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to capture changes in consumer behavior over time. Third, the reliance on self-reported measures may introduce potential bias in assessing perceptions and behavioral intentions. Future research is encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs to examine how immersion and trust evolve over time and influence long-term loyalty. In addition, further studies could explore additional rhetorical elements or psychological mechanisms that may enhance the effectiveness of storytelling. Comparative research across different industries or cultural contexts would also provide deeper insights into the boundary conditions of narrative rhetoric theory. Finally, integrating objective behavioral data, such as purchase history or engagement metrics, may strengthen the empirical validity of future studies.

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