

The Effect of Storytelling and Instagram Marketing on Purchase Intention Through Brand Awareness

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Abstract—This study aims to analyze the effect of storytelling and Instagram marketing on Fore Coffee purchase intention in Medan, with brand awareness as a mediating variable. The study uses a quantitative approach with purposive sampling techniques on 100 respondents aged 18-35 years who have been exposed to Fore Coffee Instagram content. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) through SmartPLS 4.0. The results show that Instagram marketing has a significant effect on brand awareness and purchase intention, both directly and through the mediating role of brand awareness. In contrast, storytelling does not have a significant effect on brand awareness or purchase intention. The coefficient of determination (R^2) values of 0.437 for brand awareness and 0.754 for purchase intention indicate that the model explains a moderate proportion of variance in brand awareness and a substantial proportion of variance in purchase intention. The results confirm that, in the context of Fore Coffee consumers in Medan, the effectiveness of digital marketing is more determined by the optimization of Instagram's visual and interactive features than by a narrative approach. These findings contribute to the digital marketing literature by highlighting the relative effectiveness of Instagram marketing and storytelling in influencing purchase intention through brand awareness. The results also provide practical insights for businesses to optimize Instagram marketing strategies.

Keywords: Storytelling; Instagram Marketing; Brand Awareness; Purchase Intention

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the fourth-largest coffee producer globally, with domestic coffee consumption reaching 4.79 million bags during the 2023–2024 period and projected to continue growing (GoodStats, 2025). This trend has driven the expansion of modern coffee shops that emphasize branding, digitalization, and consumer experience (Wijaya & Rizka, 2021). A similar phenomenon is evident in Medan, where coffee culture is particularly strong among younger consumers. Previous studies suggest that coffee consumption is influenced by sensory attributes, brand image, and the role of coffee shops as social spaces (Tinambuann et al., 2020; Lukitaningsih & Juliani, 2021). Moreover, coffee consumption has evolved beyond a functional need into a cultural and symbolic practice, with consumers increasingly associating coffee consumption with lifestyle, self-expression, and social identity. Consequently, coffee shops compete not only through product quality but also through brand values and emotional experiences that resonate with consumers (Purnomo et al., 2021). In the digital era, consumers increasingly rely on online information, social interactions, and digital content throughout the decision-making process, from information search to purchase decisions, highlighting the strategic importance of Instagram marketing and brand storytelling (Siregar & Nasution, 2023).

A prominent brand exemplifying this trend is Fore Coffee, one of Indonesia's rapidly growing coffee chains that actively integrates digital marketing with narrative-driven communication through Instagram. Notable initiatives, such as the The Tani Series and #MovingFOREward campaigns, emphasize storytelling, sustainability, and emotional consumer engagement (Tampang.com, 2024). Utama et al. (2021) found that coffee consumption increasingly reflects consumers' lifestyles, with purchase decisions often preceded by active information search and evaluation through digital platforms, making social media an important channel for influencing consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. Furthermore, 78.4% of Fore's consumers in Medan identified Instagram as their primary source of brand discovery. Brand awareness serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between digital strategies and purchase intention (Mahdieh et al., 2024; Patmawati & Miswanto, 2022). However, previous studies have largely examined storytelling, Instagram marketing, brand awareness, and purchase intention separately. Limited research has investigated the integrated effects of storytelling and Instagram marketing on purchase intention through brand awareness, particularly for local brands such as Fore Coffee in Medan.

Storytelling refers to communicating brand messages through meaningful narratives that foster emotional engagement (Fill & Turnbull, 2019). Previous studies show that storytelling enhances brand awareness and purchase intention (Dessart & Standaert, 2023). Instagram marketing enhances brand visibility and consumer engagement through visual and interactive content (Belch & Belch, 2021; Park & Namkung, 2022). Brand awareness reflects consumers' ability to recognize and recall a brand, whereas purchase intention represents consumers' willingness to purchase after evaluating the brand (Elliott et al., 2018; Keller et al., 2015).

Previous studies have examined the relationships among digital marketing, brand awareness, and purchase intention from different perspectives. Aji et al. (2020) found that Instagram marketing positively influenced purchase intention through brand equity but did not examine storytelling. Tsai (2020) reported that storytelling strengthened emotional attachment but did not significantly influence purchase intention and excluded Instagram marketing and brand awareness from the research model. Rahmadhani et al. (2023) showed that storytelling enhanced brand awareness on

TikTok using a qualitative approach without examining purchase intention. Zeqiri et al. (2025) confirmed that social media marketing positively affected brand awareness and purchase intention but did not incorporate storytelling. Similarly, Trebs and Mota (2022) found that narrative advertising increased purchase intention on Instagram, although the study used a fictitious brand. Previous studies consistently demonstrate the positive role of Instagram marketing in enhancing brand awareness and purchase intention, whereas the effectiveness of storytelling remains inconclusive and appears to depend on factors such as narrative quality, platform characteristics, and consumer engagement. Moreover, most studies have examined these marketing strategies independently rather than within a unified research model.

These studies reveal several research gaps. Previous research has generally examined storytelling and Instagram marketing separately, while limited studies have integrated both variables in a single model using brand awareness as a mediating variable. Overall, previous studies consistently demonstrate the positive role of Instagram marketing, whereas the effectiveness of storytelling remains inconclusive. Most studies have examined these strategies independently rather than within a unified research model. Accordingly, this study contributes theoretically by integrating storytelling and Instagram marketing within a single model using brand awareness as a mediator in the context of a local coffee brand. Practically, it provides managerial insights for optimizing Instagram-based marketing strategies to strengthen brand awareness and purchase intention.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Research Variables and Measurement

The measurement items for all constructs were adapted from previously validated scales (Daunert & Seel, 2021). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). A five-point Likert scale provides a balanced and symmetrical range of response options that effectively captures respondents' attitudes while minimizing response bias and facilitating quantitative statistical analysis (Koo & Yang, 2025).

2.2 Sampling and Population Technique

This study employed a quantitative research approach based on the positivist paradigm to examine the relationships among storytelling, Instagram marketing, brand awareness, and purchase intention. The research was conducted in Medan, Indonesia, during April–May 2025. The target population consisted of Medan residents aged 18–35 years who had been exposed to Fore Coffee's Instagram content within the previous six months. Both existing and potential consumers were included because purchase intention may develop prior to actual purchasing behavior. Since the exact population size was unknown, a purposive sampling technique was employed. Respondents were required to be domiciled in Medan, aged between 18 and 35 years, and have been exposed to Fore Coffee's Instagram content during the specified period. Based on Purba's (2016) formula for unknown populations, the minimum required sample size was 96 respondents, which was subsequently rounded to 100 to facilitate statistical analysis. This sample size also satisfies the recommended requirements for PLS-SEM analysis with small-to-medium samples (Hair et al., 2022). Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire administered via Google Forms and distributed through social media and messaging platforms to efficiently reach respondents who met the sampling criteria. The use of an online questionnaire enabled standardized data collection and facilitated efficient statistical analysis of respondents' perceptions (Torrentira, 2020).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Storytelling and Instagram marketing are hypothesized to influence purchase intention directly and indirectly through brand awareness, as illustrated in Figure 1.

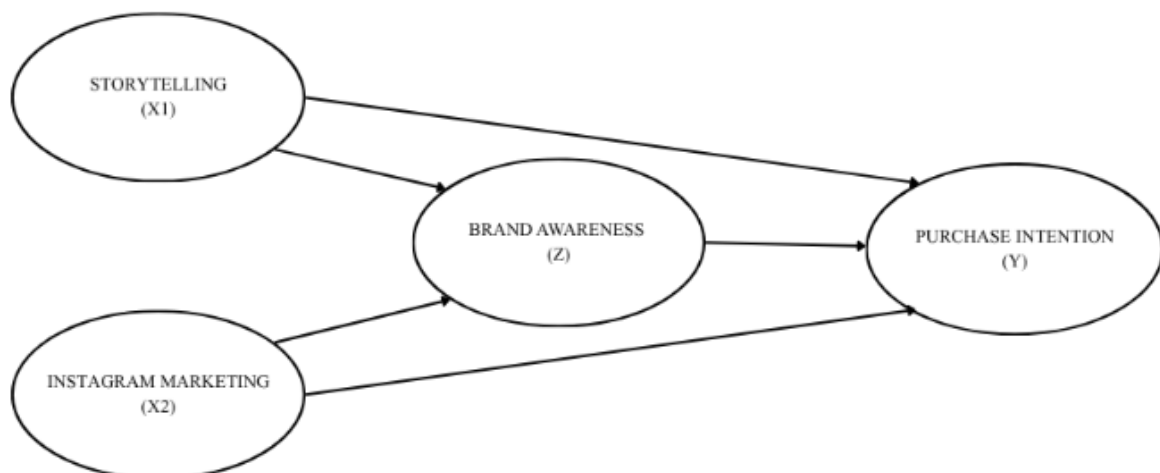


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

2.4 Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses were developed based on the conceptual framework and relevant theoretical and empirical literature.

H1: Storytelling positively affects brand awareness.

H2: Instagram marketing positively affects brand awareness.

H3: Storytelling positively affects purchase intention.

H4: Instagram marketing positively affects purchase intention.

H5: Brand awareness positively affects purchase intention.

H6: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between storytelling and purchase intention.

H7: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between Instagram marketing and purchase intention.

2.5 Data Analysis and Testing Techniques

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0 because it is suitable for testing complex models involving multiple latent constructs and mediating relationships while performing well with small-to-medium sample sizes (Hair et al., 2022). The analysis consisted of two main stages: measurement model assessment and structural model assessment. The measurement model was evaluated by examining indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity to ensure the adequacy of the measurement instruments. Subsequently, the structural model was assessed by evaluating collinearity, path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). Finally, the bootstrapping procedure was performed to test the significance of the hypothesized direct and indirect (mediation) relationships.

2.6 Operational Definition

Table 1 summarizes the operational definitions of each construct, including their dimensions, measurement scales, and questionnaire indicators adapted from previous studies.

Table 1. Operational Definitions of the Research Variables

Variable	Operational Definition	Dimension	Measurement Scale	Measuring Instruments
Storytelling (X1) (Fill & Turnbull, 2019)	The delivery of brand messages through meaningful and emotionally engaging narratives designed to create connections between consumers and the brand.	Entertainment; Memorability; Time Duration; Brand Personality; Brand Promise	Likert 1–5	Questionnaire
Instagram Marketing (X2) (Belch & Belch, 2021; Park & Namkung, 2022)	Marketing activities conducted through Instagram by utilizing visual content, interactive features, and promotional communication to increase brand visibility and consumer engagement.	User Interaction; Call to Action (CTA); Influencer Marketing; Informative Content; Visual Appeal; Posting and Promotion Activity	Likert 1–5	Questionnaire
Brand Awareness (Z) (Elliott et al., 2018; Mahdiah et al., 2024)	The extent to which consumers are able to recognize and recall Fore Coffee as a member of the coffee product category.	Top of Mind; Brand Recall; Brand Recognition; Brand Knowledge	Likert 1–5	Questionnaire
Purchase Intention (Y) (Elliott et al., 2018; Keller et al., 2015)	Consumers' tendency and willingness to purchase Fore Coffee products after evaluating and becoming familiar with the brand.	Decision Support; Interest in Purchasing; Confidence in Purchasing	Likert 1–5	Questionnaire

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The proposed research model was estimated using SmartPLS 4.0. Figure 2 presents the final latent variable model used to evaluate the measurement model (outer model) and structural model (inner model). It also provides the conceptual basis for testing the proposed direct and mediating relationships among the study variables.

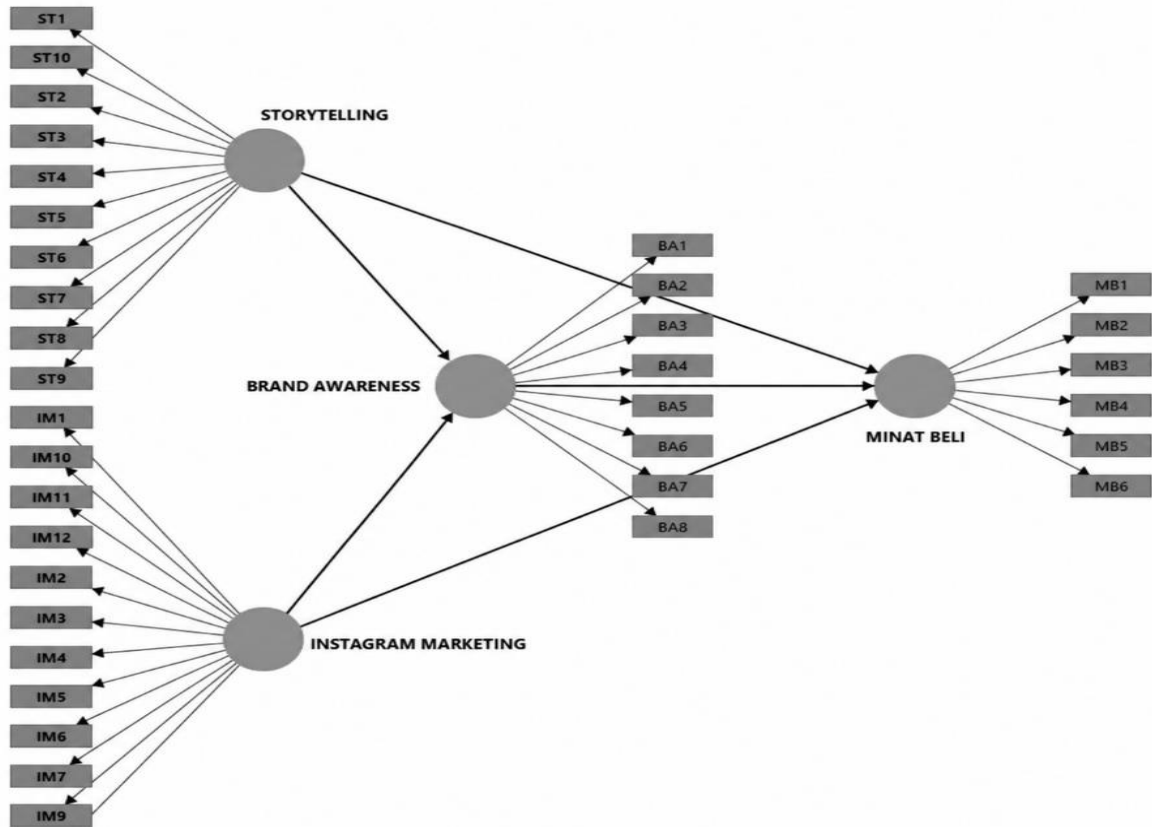


Figure 2. Latent Model of Research Variables

3.1.1 Respondent Characteristics

Respondent characteristics in this study included gender, age, and familiarity with Fore Coffee.

Table 2. Description of Respondent Characteristics

No	Characteristic	Category	Number	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	23 Respondents	23%
		Female	77 Respondents	77%
2.	Age	17–21 years old	49 Respondents	49%
		22–26 years old	39 Respondents	39%
		27–31 years old	8 Respondents	8%
		>31 years old	4 Respondents	4%
3.	How Familiar with Fore Coffee	Familiar with the Product and Have Purchased It	58 Respondents	58%
		Familiar with the Product but Have Never Purchased It	42 Respondents	42%

Based on Table 2, 77% of respondents are female and 23% are male. The majority are aged 17–21 years (49%) and 22–26 years (39%), reflecting the dominance of young Instagram users. A total of 58% are familiar with and have purchased Fore Coffee, indicating fairly high brand awareness.

3.1.2 Measurement Model Assessment (Outer Model)

The measurement model was assessed through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability analyses.

a. Convergent Validity

Table 3. Loading Factor Values

Variable	Indicator	Item	Loading Factor	Description
Storytelling	Memorability	ST4	0.768	Valid
	Time Duration	ST5	0.735	Valid
		ST6	0.782	Valid
	Brand Personality	ST7	0.844	Valid

Variable	Indicator	Item	Loading Factor	Description
Instagram Marketing	Brand Promise	ST8	0.798	Valid
		ST9	0.734	Valid
		ST10	0.709	Valid
	User Interaction	IM1	0.618	Valid
		IM2	0.684	Valid
	Call to Action (CTA)	IM4	0.647	Valid
	Influencer Marketing	IM5	0.795	Valid
		IM6	0.799	Valid
	Informative	IM8	0.678	Valid
		IM9	0.661	Valid
	Visual Appeal	IM10	0.736	Valid
		IM11	0.622	Valid
Brand Awareness	Posting and Promotion Activity	IM12	0.646	Valid
		BA1	0.829	Valid
		BA2	0.809	Valid
	Top of Mind	BA3	0.765	Valid
		BA4	0.864	Valid
		BA5	0.656	Valid
	Brand Recall	BA6	0.731	Valid
		BA7	0.788	Valid
		MB1	0.719	Valid
	Brand Recognition	MB2	0.724	Valid
		MB3	0.808	Valid
		MB4	0.774	Valid
Purchase Intention	Brand Knowledge	MB5	0.873	Valid
		MB6	0.817	Valid

According to Table 3, it can be seen that all indicators of the variables of storytelling, Instagram marketing, brand awareness, and purchase interest are above 0.60 and can be considered valid. All variable indicators have met the convergent validity requirements, so none need to be excluded from the construct.

b. Average Variance Extracted

The AVE value must meet the criteria, above 0.50. The AVE values are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Description
Storytelling	0.591	Valid
Instagram Marketing	0.478	Valid
Brand Awareness	0.608	Valid
Purchase Intention	0.621	Valid

Based on Table 4, the AVE value of Instagram Marketing is 0.478, slightly below the recommended threshold of 0.50. However, the construct was retained because its Composite Reliability value is 0.901 (> 0.70). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair et al. (2019), an AVE below 0.50 is still acceptable when composite reliability is above 0.70 and indicator loadings are adequate. Therefore, the Instagram Marketing construct can be considered valid and reliable.

c. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity aims to test whether the indicators in an instrument truly measure different constructs. This test is assessed from the cross loadings between the indicators and their constructs. The results of the cross loadings test in this study are as follows:

Table 5. Cross Loading Results

Indicator	Storytelling	Instagram Marketing	Brand Awareness	Purchase Intention
ST10	0.709	0.492	0.433	0.415
ST4	0.768	0.654	0.375	0.557
ST5	0.735	0.589	0.366	0.548
ST6	0.782	0.631	0.464	0.630
ST7	0.844	0.654	0.380	0.604
ST8	0.798	0.691	0.401	0.593
ST9	0.734	0.566	0.470	0.596
IM1	0.467	0.618	0.452	0.430
IM10	0.524	0.736	0.570	0.677

Indicator	Storytelling	Instagram Marketing	Brand Awareness	Purchase Intention
IM11	0.560	0.622	0.432	0.551
IM12	0.459	0.646	0.388	0.545
IM2	0.563	0.684	0.453	0.640
IM4	0.589	0.647	0.446	0.545
IM5	0.614	0.795	0.505	0.726
IM6	0.622	0.799	0.500	0.674
IM8	0.623	0.678	0.367	0.532
IM9	0.497	0.661	0.423	0.528
BA1	0.320	0.439	0.829	0.400
BA2	0.378	0.539	0.809	0.515
BA3	0.400	0.535	0.765	0.492
BA4	0.485	0.574	0.864	0.548
BA5	0.522	0.440	0.656	0.514
BA6	0.309	0.410	0.731	0.332
BA7	0.471	0.601	0.788	0.658
MB1	0.569	0.625	0.496	0.719
MB2	0.498	0.663	0.450	0.724
MB3	0.679	0.694	0.503	0.808
MB4	0.466	0.676	0.518	0.774
MB5	0.677	0.692	0.572	0.873
MB6	0.589	0.692	0.540	0.817

Based on Table 5, the evaluation process of the previous measurement model was carried out in three stages so that several indicators had to be eliminated and retested to ensure that all remaining indicators showed an outer loading value > 0.60 , which means that they met convergent validity.

d. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

According to Thakkar, a construct is said to have high reliability if the composite reliability is greater than 0.70 and the Cronbach's alpha value is at least 0.60 (Thakkar, 2020).

Table 6. Results of Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test and Composite Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho c)	Description
Storytelling	0.885	0.909	Reliable
Instagram Marketing	0.877	0.901	Reliable
Brand Awareness	0.892	0.915	Reliable
Purchase Intention	0.876	0.907	Reliable

According to Table 6, all variables are also reliable with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values > 0.70 . Based on these results, all constructs demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency and reliability.

3.1.3 Structural Model Assessment (Inner Model)

The structural model (inner model) assesses the relationships among constructs, their significance, and the model's explanatory power (R^2).

a. VIF (Variance Inflation Factor)

The multicollinearity test aims to ensure that there is no high correlation between independent variables that could disrupt the stability of the structural model. A VIF value < 5 indicates that the model is free from multicollinearity problems (Hair and Alamer, 2022).

Table 7. VIF Results

Variable	Brand Awareness (BA)	Purchase Intention (MB)
ST	2.755	2.756
IM	2.755	3.473
BA		1.777

Based on Table 7, all VIF values are below 5, so it can be concluded that there are no serious multicollinearity symptoms between latent variables in the model.

b. R-Square Evaluation

In PLS-SEM, the R^2 value is used to measure the extent to which the latent independent variables are able to explain the variance of the latent dependent variables in the model. The R^2 value reflects the overall predictive power of the model and ranges from 0 to 1.

Table 8. R-Square Test Results (R2)

Variable	R-square	R-square Adjusted
Brand Awareness	0.437	0.426
Purchase Intention	0.754	0.746

Based on Table 8, the R-square value for brand awareness of 0.437 indicates that storytelling and Instagram marketing explain 43.7% of the variation, which is classified as moderate. Meanwhile, the R-square value for purchase intention is 0.754, indicating that storytelling, Instagram marketing, and brand awareness explain 75.4% of the variation in purchase intention, which is classified as strong.

c. Effect Size Test (F-Square)

According to Hair et al. (2019), the effect size test (f^2) is used to see the unique contribution of an exogenous variable to an endogenous variable by measuring the change in the R^2 value if that variable is removed from the model. The f^2 value indicates the level of influence at the structural level, with criteria of 0.02 (low), 0.15 (moderate), and 0.35 (high).

Table 9. Effect Size Test Results (F-Square) Direct Effects

Variable	Brand Awareness (BA)	Purchase Intention (MB)
ST	0.001	0.033
IM	0.261	0.473
BA		0.052

The effect size test results show that storytelling has a very low effect on brand awareness (0.001) and a small effect on purchase intention (0.033), indicating a limited contribution. In contrast, Instagram marketing has a moderate effect on brand awareness (0.261) and a large effect on purchase intention (0.473), making it a strong predictor. Meanwhile, brand awareness has a low effect on purchase intention (0.052), indicating that although significant, its influence is still limited.

Table 10. Effect Size Test Results (F-Square) Indirect Effects

Mediation Process	Indirect Effect (O)	Upsilon V	Interpretation
IM>>BA>>MB	0.096	0.0092	Low
ST>>BA>>MB	0.005	0.000025	Very Low

Based on the table above, it is known that Instagram marketing has a very low mediating effect on purchase intention through brand awareness, with an ϵ value of 0.009. Although statistically significant ($p = 0.037$), the magnitude of the effect is still very small according to the criteria of Lachowicz (2018). Storytelling has no mediating effect on purchase intention through brand awareness. The ϵ value of 0.000025 is very low and insignificant ($p = 0.431$), indicating that brand awareness is not an effective mediator between storytelling and purchase intention.

d. Model Fit Test

The model fit test was conducted by comparing the SmartPLS 4.0 estimation output results with the criteria as explained in the following table.

Table 11. Model Fit

Measurements	Estimation Results
SRMR	0.081
d-ULS	3.262
d-G	2.072
Chi Square	$900.055 \geq 43.773$
NFI	0.632
GoF	0.580
Q ² Predictive	Brand Awareness: 0.377 Purchase Intention: 0.722

Evaluation of the model fit indices demonstrates that the proposed model exhibits acceptable fit and predictive relevance. The SRMR value of 0.081 satisfies the recommended threshold (< 0.10), while the NFI value of 0.632 indicates a moderate level of model fit. Furthermore, the GoF value of 0.580 suggests substantial explanatory power. The model's predictive relevance is supported by the Q^2 values of 0.377 for brand awareness and 0.722 for purchase intention, indicating that the model possesses strong predictive capability, particularly in explaining consumers' purchase intention.

e. Hypothesis Testing

A hypothesis is considered supported when the p -value is below 0.05 and the t -statistic exceeds 1.96.

Table 12. Direct Effect Results

	Original sample(O)	Sample Mean(M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-statistics (O/STDEV)	P- values	Descripti on
ST->BA	0.031	0.037	0.154	0.203	0.419	No
ST->MB	0.150	0.151	0.109	1.382	0.083	No
IM->BA	0.636	0.648	0.149	4.257	0.000	Sig
IM->MB	0.636	0.641	0.110	5.781	0.000	Sig
BA->MB	0.151	0.146	0.081	1.858	0.032	Sig

Table 13. Indirect Effect Results

	Original sample(O)	Sample Mean(M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-statistics (O/STDEV)	P- values	Description
IM >> BA >> MB	0.096	0.091	0.054	1.787	0.037	Sig
ST >> BA >> MB	0.005	0.008	0.027	0.174	0.431	No

A mediating relationship is considered significant if the p-value is < 0.05 . Based on the analysis results, the following direct effect and indirect effect hypothesis test results were obtained.

1. H1 was not supported, as storytelling did not have a significant effect on brand awareness ($\beta = 0.031$, $t = 0.203$, $p = 0.419$).
2. H2 was supported, indicating that Instagram marketing had a positive and significant effect on brand awareness ($\beta = 0.636$, $t = 4.257$, $p < 0.001$).
3. H3 was not supported, as storytelling did not have a significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.150$, $t = 1.382$, $p = 0.083$).
4. H4 was supported, indicating that Instagram marketing had a positive and significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.636$, $t = 5.781$, $p < 0.001$).
5. H5 was supported, indicating that brand awareness had a positive and significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.151$, $t = 1.858$, $p = 0.032$).
6. H6 was not supported, as brand awareness did not significantly mediate the relationship between storytelling and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.005$, $t = 0.174$, $p = 0.431$).
7. H7 was supported, indicating that brand awareness significantly mediated the relationship between Instagram marketing and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.096$, $t = 1.787$, $p = 0.037$).

3.1.4 Importance Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)

Ringle and Sarstedt (Hair et al., 2019) state that IPMA is used to compare the importance and performance of a variable on a target construct to identify priorities for improvement.

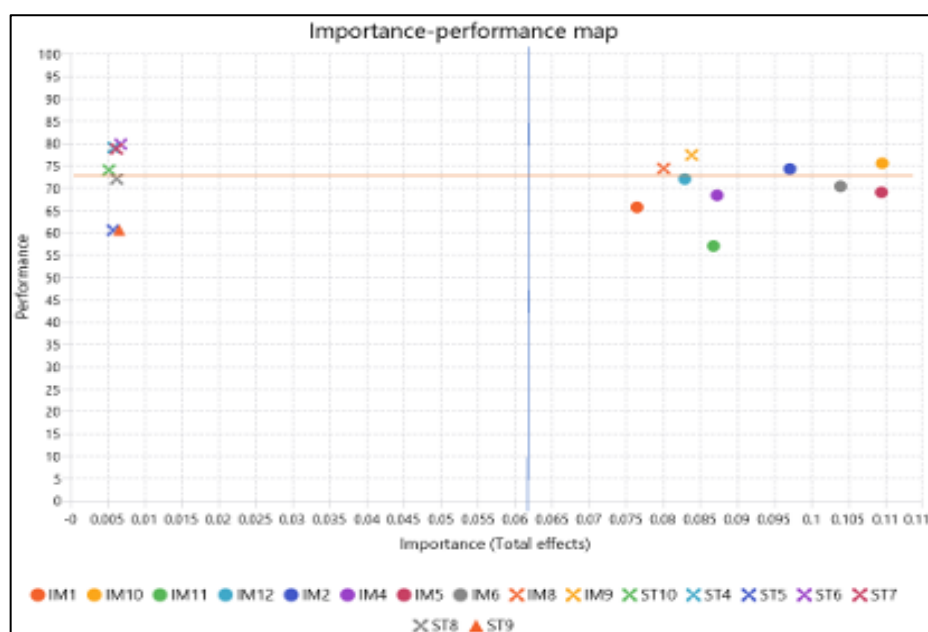


Figure 3. Results of the IPMA Brand Awareness Analysis

For the brand awareness variable, indicators IM2, IM8, IM9, IM10, and IM12 are included in the high influence and high-performance category, so they are retained. IM1, IM4, IM5, IM6, and IM11 have high influence but low

performance, so they are prioritized for improvement. From a managerial perspective, Fore Coffee should focus on improving user interaction, call-to-action strategies, influencer collaborations, and posting activities, as these indicators have a strong influence on brand awareness but have not yet achieved optimal performance. Enhancing these aspects may strengthen consumers' recognition and recall of the brand. Indicators ST5 and ST9 have low influence and performance, while ST4, ST6, ST7, ST8, and ST10 show high performance despite their low influence.

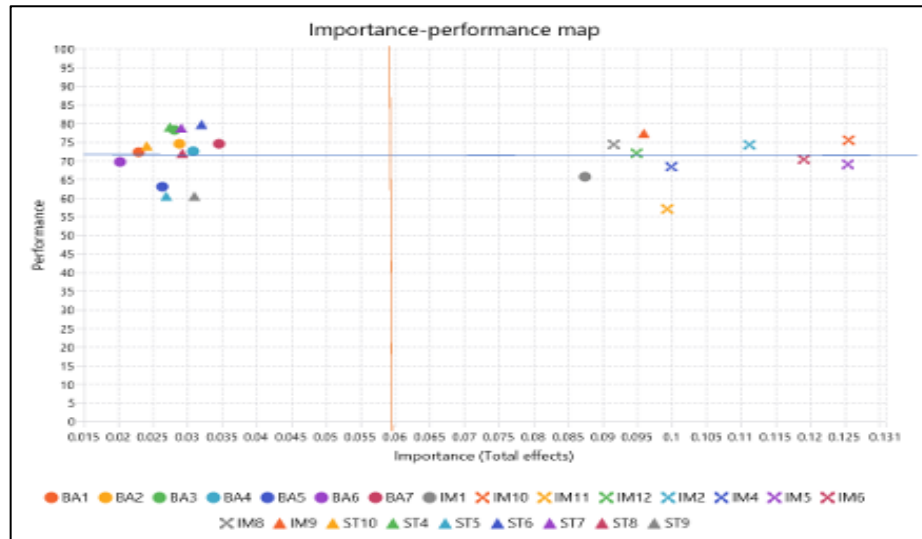


Figure 4. Results of the IPMA Purchase Intention Analysis

The results show that IM10, IM9, and IM2 have high importance and high performance and should therefore be maintained. In contrast, IM11 has high importance but relatively low performance, indicating a priority area for managerial improvement. Fore Coffee should strengthen the consistency and effectiveness of its Instagram promotional activities to maximize their impact on consumers' purchase intention. Conversely, ST5 and ST9 show low importance and performance, while ST6 and ST7 demonstrate high performance despite their lower importance.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Storytelling positively affects brand awareness

Fore Coffee's storytelling has not been sufficiently effective in strengthening consumers' brand recognition and recall. This may be because consumers enjoyed the stories but did not strongly associate them with the Fore Coffee brand, indicating that storytelling requires clearer brand integration and repeated exposure to strengthen brand awareness. The result is consistent with Barbosa et al. (2021), who argued that storytelling is less effective when the narrative is weakly connected to the brand, and Ayuningtyas (2019), who reported that repeated exposure is necessary to enhance brand awareness.

3.2.2 Instagram marketing positively affects brand awareness

The visually appealing content, interactive features, and consistent promotional activities increase brand exposure, making Fore Coffee easier for consumers to recognize and recall. This is consistent with Zeqiri et al. (2025) who found that social media marketing enhances brand awareness through greater consumer exposure and engagement.

3.2.3 Storytelling positively affects purchase intention

Although storytelling may create emotional engagement, it did not directly encourage purchase intention. This indicates that emotional storytelling alone was insufficient to stimulate purchase intention without being supported by stronger promotional messages or clearer product value. This finding supports Tsai (2020), who found that storytelling influences purchase intention indirectly through emotional attachment and brand identification. However, it differs from Tamba et al. (2023), suggesting that the effectiveness of storytelling depends on the product and consumer context.

3.2.4 Instagram marketing positively affects purchase intention

The attractive visual content, user-generated content, and promotional campaigns effectively capture consumers' attention and encourage purchase decisions. This result is consistent with Akbar et al. (2022) and Angela and Siregar (2021), who also reported positive effects of social media marketing on consumer behavioral intentions.

3.2.5 Brand awareness positively affects purchase intention

Consumers are more likely to consider purchasing brands that are familiar to them, as greater brand awareness increases confidence during the purchase decision process. Putra and Aristana (2020) and Manik and Siregar (2022), confirming the important role of brand awareness in encouraging purchase intention.

3.2.6 Brand awareness mediates the relationship between storytelling and purchase intention

The storytelling content was unable to generate sufficient brand awareness to translate consumers' emotional responses into purchase intention. This is consistent with Mavilinda et al. (2023), who reported that storytelling increases customer engagement but does not necessarily lead to purchase decisions.

3.2.7 Brand awareness mediates the relationship between Instagram marketing and purchase intention

Consistent visual exposure, interactive features, and influencer promotions strengthen brand awareness, which subsequently encourages consumers' purchase intention. The result is consistent with Indrayana and Santika (2023) and Lestari and Yuniarinto (2024), who highlighted the mediating role of brand awareness in social media marketing.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that Instagram marketing has a stronger influence on brand awareness and purchase intention than storytelling among Fore Coffee consumers in Medan. Storytelling showed no significant direct or indirect effects, indicating that its current implementation has not effectively strengthened consumers' connection with the brand. In contrast, Instagram marketing significantly enhanced both brand awareness and purchase intention, while brand awareness positively influenced purchase intention and mediated the relationship between Instagram marketing and purchase intention, but not storytelling. Theoretically, this study contributes to the digital marketing and consumer behavior literature by providing empirical evidence on the differing effects of storytelling and Instagram marketing on purchase intention through brand awareness in the context of Fore Coffee consumers in Medan. These findings further extend the literature by highlighting that the effectiveness of storytelling is context-dependent, whereas Instagram marketing remains a key driver of consumer responses. Managerially, Fore Coffee should strengthen its Instagram marketing through more engaging content, interactive communication, influencer collaborations, and promotional campaigns, while refining its storytelling strategy to deliver more authentic and locally relevant narratives. This study is limited to consumers in Medan and a research model comprising four variables. Future studies should involve broader samples and incorporate additional constructs, such as brand image, electronic word-of-mouth, trust, and perceived value, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of purchase intention in digital marketing.

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