

**Influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement-
The Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence - A Case Study on a Sample
of Countries in the Middle East and North Africa Region**

تأثير سرد قصة العلامة التجارية على تفاعل العملاء - الدور المعدل للذكاء العاطفي - دراسة حالة على عينة
من دول منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا

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Abstract:

This study investigates the influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement and examines the moderating role of Emotional Intelligence in this relationship. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional survey of social media users and analyzing data through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), the results reveal that Brand Storytelling has a significant positive effect on Customer Engagement, demonstrating that narrative-driven brand communication enhances emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement. Additionally, Emotional Intelligence is found to significantly moderate this relationship, indicating that consumers with higher emotional intelligence respond more strongly to storytelling efforts. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on digital marketing and emotional branding by highlighting the importance of both narrative quality and consumer emotional capabilities in shaping customer engagement. Practical implications suggest that brands should tailor storytelling strategies to resonate with emotionally perceptive audiences to maximize engagement outcomes.

Keywords: Brand Storytelling, Customer Engagement, Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Branding, Digital Marketing.

JEL Classification Codes: M31, M39.

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة في معرفة تأثير سرد قصة العلامة التجارية على تفاعل العملاء وتم دراسة الذكاء العاطفي كمعدل في هذه العلاقة، واعتمدت الدراسة على منهج كمي من خلال استبيان مقطعي لمستخدمي وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، إضافة الى تحليل البيانات باستخدام نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية بالاعتماد على المربعات الصغرى الجزئية (PLS-SEM) وظهرت النتائج أن سرد العلامة التجارية يؤثر تأثيرا إيجابيا معنويا على تفاعل العملاء، وهذا ما يدل على أن الاتصال بالعلامة التجارية القائم على السرد يفعل أبعاد التفاعل العاطفي والمعرفي والسلوكي لدى المستهلكين. كما تبين أن للذكاء العاطفي أثرا تعديليا في هذه العلاقة، حيث يستجيب المستهلكون ذوو الذكاء العاطفي المرتفع بصورة أكبر لجهود سرد العلامة التجارية، وتشير الدلالات التطبيقية إلى ضرورة قيام العلامات التجارية بمواءمة استراتيجيات السرد القصصي بما ينسجم مع الفئات الأكثر إدراكا عاطفيا، بغية تعظيم مستويات التفاعل المنشودة.

كلمات مفتاحية: سرد قصص العلامة التجارية، تفاعل العملاء، الذكاء العاطفي، العلامة العاطفية، التسويق الرقمي.

تصنيفات JEL : M31, M39

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Introduction:

Brand storytelling has become a central strategy in modern marketing, as firms increasingly shift from traditional promotional messages to narrative-based communication that builds emotional and cognitive connections with customers. Through compelling stories, brands can convey identity, values, and personality, thereby creating meaningful, memorable experiences that strengthen customer engagement. Despite the growing relevance of storytelling in digital and social media environments, empirical research on how customers psychologically process these stories—and how this influences their level of engagement—remains limited.

The core problem driving this study is the lack of understanding of individual differences in consumer responses to brand stories. Specifically, customers vary in their ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions, a capability known as Emotional Intelligence (EI). These differences may significantly shape how brand stories are interpreted and how deeply customers engage with the brand. However, the moderating influence of EI on the relationship between brand storytelling and customer engagement has not been sufficiently examined, creating a clear gap in the marketing and consumer behaviour literature.

This study addresses the gap by exploring whether and to what extent EI alters the impact of brand storytelling on customer engagement. Accordingly, the research seeks to answer the following questions: (1) Does brand storytelling positively influence customer engagement? (2) Does emotional intelligence moderate this relationship? To address these questions, the study has two main objectives: to analyse the effect of brand storytelling on customer engagement, and to test the moderating role of emotional intelligence in this relationship. By doing so, the study aims to provide both theoretical insights and practical guidance for brands seeking to design more emotionally resonant storytelling strategies.

1- Literature Review:

1-1-Brand Storytelling :

Brand storytelling refers to the strategic use of narrative to communicate a brand's identity, values, and message to consumers. It serves as a powerful tool for brands to connect emotionally with their audience, making complex information more relatable and persuasive. This approach not only enhances brand recognition but also fosters consumer loyalty by creating a shared narrative that resonates with their experiences and aspirations. The following sections delve into the key components and frameworks of brand storytelling.

Definition and Importance:

- Brand storytelling is defined as managing brand communication through narratives that engage consumers on an emotional level(Lu et al., 2023).
- It transforms brands into relatable entities, allowing consumers to empathise and build relationships with them(Lu et al., 2023).

Three-Dimensional Framework:

- Effective brand storytelling requires understanding the customer journey, brand identity, and market context(Pereira, 2019).
- The Storytelling Superpower framework identifies essential brand personas and helps craft authentic messages that resonate with customers(Pereira, 2019).

Impact on Advertising:

Influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement _ The Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence _ A Case Study on a Sample of Countries in the Middle East and North Africa Region

- Storytelling enhances advertising effectiveness by differentiating brands and giving them personality(Mohamed et al., 2024).
- Visual storytelling, particularly through video advertisements, has proven to attract and engage audiences effectively(Mohamed et al., 2024).

While brand storytelling is widely recognised for its benefits, some critics suggest that the effectiveness of narratives can vary based on consumer perception and the authenticity of the story being told(Benmoussa & Maynadier, 2013).

1-2-Customer Engagement:

Customer engagement (CE) refers to the multifaceted relationship between consumers and brands, extending beyond mere transactions to foster loyalty and emotional connections. It encompasses various interactions, including social media activities, brand recommendations, and participation in promotional events. This ongoing relationship is characterised by cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions that influence consumer perceptions and actions towards a brand(Madhupriya, 2024; Alversia et al., n.d.).

Definition and Importance:

- CE is defined as the intentional cultivation of relationships that provide value at every customer interaction, enhancing brand loyalty(Madhupriya, 2024).
- It has gained prominence in marketing as a key strategy for building trust and authenticity with consumers(Mariana, 2023).

Dimensions of Customer Engagement:

- CE includes cognitive (thoughts about the brand), emotional (feelings towards the brand), and behavioural (actions taken) aspects(Alversia et al., n.d.).
- Engagement activities can range from social media interactions to participation in brand-related contests(Mariana, 2023).

Impact of Digital and Social Media:

- The rise of digital marketing has transformed CE, making online and social media engagement critical for brands(Attaoui & Gaber, 2024) (Çini, 2022).
- Effective use of technology, such as AI, can enhance customer interactions and engagement outcomes(Attaoui & Gaber, 2024).

While customer engagement is essential for fostering brand loyalty, it is important to recognise that not all engagement strategies yield positive results. Some consumers may prefer less intrusive forms of interaction, indicating a need for brands to balance engagement efforts with consumer preferences.

1-3- Emotional Intelligence:

Emotional Intelligence (EI) encompasses the ability to recognise, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. It plays a crucial role in personal and professional success, influencing interpersonal relationships and effective communication. High EI individuals can navigate social complexities, maintain strong relationships, and achieve self-defined goals, making it a vital skill in various contexts, including the workplace and healthcare settings. The following sections elaborate on key aspects of EI.

Definition and Components:

- EI combines interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, enabling individuals to analyse and manage emotions effectively(L & Laxmi, 2025).
- Key components include self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and intrinsic motivation(Shafik, 2024).

Importance in Professional Settings:

- EI is a significant predictor of career success, enhancing individuals' ability to cope with vocational challenges(Chen, 2025).
- In the workplace, strong EI fosters better teamwork, leadership, and overall employee performance(Kaur, 2023).

Development and Assessment:

- EI can be developed through strategies like mindfulness and empathetic listening(Shafik, 2024).
- Assessment tools include self-report questionnaires and multisource feedback instruments(Shafik, 2024).

While EI is often linked to positive outcomes, some argue that it may not be the sole determinant of success, as technical skills and academic qualifications also play critical roles in various fields(Kaur, 2023).

1-4-Review of relevant prior research and scholarly works:

1-4-1- The relationship between Brand Storytelling and Customer Engagement:

The relationship between brand storytelling and customer engagement is increasingly recognised as a vital component of effective marketing strategies. Brand storytelling fosters emotional connections and enhances user interaction, particularly on social media platforms. This synthesis of research highlights several key aspects of this relationship.

Emotional Connection:

- Storytelling creates a personal connection between consumers and brands, enhancing emotional engagement(Kemp et al., 2021).
- Emotional narratives can lead to increased brand loyalty and positive perceptions, as consumers feel more invested in the brand's story(Rehman & Gaur, 2025).

Mediating Role of Customer Engagement:

- Customer engagement acts as a mediator between storytelling and purchasing decisions, suggesting that effective storytelling can lead to higher engagement levels, which in turn influence buying behaviour (Mavilinda et al., 2023).
- Engaged customers are more likely to share brand stories, further amplifying reach and impact(Menon et al., 2024).

Strategic Implications:

- Marketers can leverage storytelling to create compelling content that resonates with target audiences, driving both engagement and brand awareness(Marques et al., 2023).
- The integration of user-generated content can enhance storytelling effectiveness, fostering a community around the brand(Kemp et al., 2021).

Conversely, while storytelling is a powerful tool, its effectiveness can vary based on the audience's receptiveness and the authenticity of the narrative. Brands must ensure that their stories align with consumer values to avoid disconnects that could hinder engagement.

**Influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement _
The Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence _ A Case Study
on a Sample of Countries in the Middle East and North Africa Region**

First hypothesis (H1): There is no statistically significant positive relationship between Brand Storytelling and Customer Engagement at a 5% significance level.

1-4-2- The relationship between Emotional Intelligence and the impact of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement:

The relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and the impact of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement is significant, as both elements contribute to creating deeper emotional connections between brands and consumers. Emotional Intelligence enables brands to understand and respond to consumer emotions effectively, while storytelling serves as a medium to convey these emotions, enhancing customer engagement.

Emotional Intelligence in Branding:

- Understanding Consumer Emotions: Brands that leverage EI can identify and resonate with consumer emotions, leading to stronger connections("Customer Engagement Through Emotional Br...", 2022).
- Building Trust and Loyalty: Emotional branding fosters loyalty by aligning brand values with consumer identities, making customers feel understood and valued("Customer Engagement Through Emotional Br...", 2022).

The Role of Brand Storytelling:

- Enhancing Engagement: Storytelling captivates audiences by creating relatable narratives, which significantly boost customer interaction on platforms like social media(Rehman & Gaur, 2025).
- Emotional Resonance: Effective storytelling evokes emotions, leading to increased brand perception and loyalty, as evidenced by campaigns that integrate emotional narratives(Freire, 2024)("Emotionally Engaging Customers Through S...", 2022).

In contrast, some argue that while emotional connections are vital, they may not always translate into tangible business outcomes. Brands must balance emotional engagement with practical value to ensure sustained customer loyalty and engagement.

Second Hypothesis (H2): There is no significant role for Emotional Intelligence in reducing the relationship between Brand Storytelling and Customer Engagement at a 5% significance level.

1-5-Gaps in existing literature :

1-5-1- Gaps Related to the Relationship Between Brand Storytelling and Customer Engagement

Lack of focus on individual differences among consumers:

Most studies show that brand storytelling increases engagement, but they treat consumers as a homogeneous group, ignoring psychological traits (e.g., emotional intelligence) that may influence responses to storytelling.

Limited empirical evidence in digital and social media contexts:

Although many works conceptually highlight storytelling's role on social platforms, empirical, data-driven studies examining its direct impact on customer engagement remain scarce, especially in emerging markets.

Weak theoretical integration:

Many studies discuss emotional connection and engagement, but few use established behavioural or emotional theories to explain *why* storytelling drives engagement.

Insufficient examination of authenticity and narrative quality:

Existing research assumes that storytelling works equally well across contexts, with little attention to when storytelling fails or how story authenticity influences engagement.

Lack of mediating and moderating mechanisms:

Prior studies identify engagement as a mediator, but very few examine moderating variables (e.g., EI, personality traits, cultural differences) that might strengthen or weaken the effect of storytelling.

1-5-2-Gaps Related to Emotional Intelligence and Its Role in Storytelling–Engagement Relationship:

Scarcity of studies integrating EI with brand storytelling:

Research on Emotional Intelligence mainly discusses its role in branding or emotional marketing broadly, but very few studies explicitly examine EI within the context of brand storytelling.

Limited investigation of EI as a moderator:

Most existing literature views EI as a predictor of customer behaviour. Its moderating role—especially in digital engagement contexts—remains underexplored.

Insufficient empirical testing:

Studies often emphasise the importance of emotional resonance, but there is a lack of quantitative models testing whether consumers with high EI process brand stories differently from those with low EI.

Absence of cross-disciplinary integration:

Research rarely combines insights from psychology (EI) and marketing (storytelling), leaving a gap in understanding how emotional processing abilities influence consumer engagement.

Mixed findings on emotional engagement outcomes:

While EI and emotional storytelling are seen as beneficial, some studies question whether emotional appeal always leads to behavioural engagement.

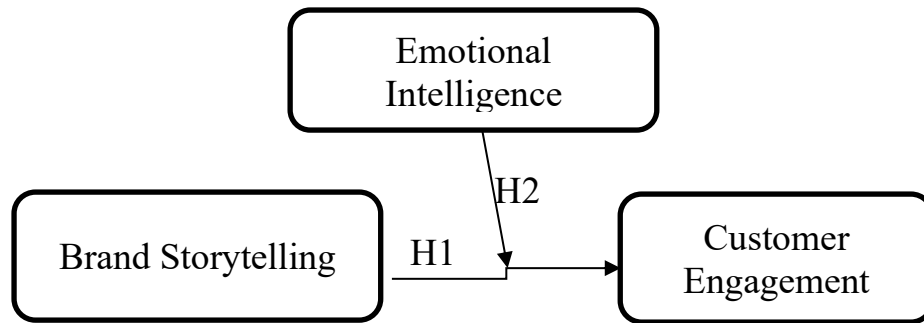
This inconsistency indicates a gap requiring empirical validation, especially with moderation analysis.

1-5-3- Overall Research Gap

Although brand storytelling is recognised as a strong driver of customer engagement, there is limited knowledge about the psychological conditions under which this relationship becomes stronger or weaker. Emotional Intelligence—despite being a crucial consumer trait influencing emotional processing—has not been sufficiently examined as a moderating factor in the storytelling–engagement relationship. This creates a clear theoretical and empirical gap that the current study aims to address.

**Influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement _
The Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence _ A Case Study
on a Sample of Countries in the Middle East and North Africa Region**

Figure 1. Theoretical framework.



2- Methodology:

2-1-Research Design and Approach :

This study adopts a quantitative research design and utilises a cross-sectional survey approach to investigate the influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement and the moderating role of Emotional Intelligence. A quantitative design is suitable for examining relationships between variables and testing hypotheses statistically. The study employs the positivist paradigm, which assumes that consumer attitudes and engagement behaviours can be measured objectively using structured instruments.

The conceptual model—Brand Storytelling (independent variable), Customer Engagement (dependent variable), and Emotional Intelligence (moderator)—is tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). This analytical approach is appropriate for predictive modelling, complex relationships, and studies involving latent variables measured by multiple indicators.

2-2- Data Collection Methods :

- **Population and Sampling**

The population consists of social media users who follow brand pages on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. These users are appropriate because storytelling content is widely delivered and consumed on digital platforms.

The study uses purposive sampling, selecting participants who have prior experience engaging with brand content online. A sample size between 250 and 400 respondents is targeted, which aligns with recommendations for PLS-SEM and ensures sufficient statistical power.

- **Instrument and Measures**

Data will be collected using a structured online questionnaire, divided into four sections:

- 1- Demographics (age, gender, education, frequency of social media use)
- 2- Brand Storytelling – measured using established scales adapted from Escalas (2004) and recent storytelling literature
- 3- Customer Engagement – measured using scales from Hollebeek et al. (2014), capturing cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement
- 4- Emotional Intelligence – measured using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)

Items will be rated on a 5-point or 7-point Likert scale, depending on scale compatibility.

- Data Analysis Procedure

Collected data will be analysed using SmartPLS, following these steps:

- 1- Descriptive statistics
- 2- Assessment of measurement model (reliability and validity tests: Cronbach's Alpha, CR, AVE)
- 3- Structural model evaluation (path coefficients, R^2 , f^2 effect sizes)
- 4- Hypothesis testing, including moderation analysis using interaction terms

2-3- Rationale for the Chosen Methods

A quantitative survey is chosen because it enables systematic measurement of consumer perceptions and behavioural engagement, which are abstract constructs best captured using validated scales. The cross-sectional design allows efficient data collection from a large and diverse online audience, making it suitable for studies involving digital consumer behaviour.

The choice of PLS-SEM is justified by several reasons:

- It accommodates complex models involving latent variables
- It performs well with medium sample sizes
- It focuses on prediction and theory development, aligning with the study's exploratory nature
- It is robust to non-normal data distributions, common in consumer surveys

Using an online questionnaire enhances accessibility, reduces cost, and ensures reaching active social media users, who are the most relevant audience for brand storytelling research.

Purposive sampling is appropriate because the study requires respondents who have exposure to brand stories and demonstrate engagement behaviours. Measuring Emotional Intelligence through WLEIS is justified due to its strong psychometric properties, cross-cultural validity, and widespread acceptance in marketing and psychology research.

3- Data Presentation and Analysis:

3-1-Study Context: Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region:

The current study was conducted within the context of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, a diverse and rapidly evolving marketplace characterised by increasing digital adoption and strong consumer engagement with brands on social media platforms. This regional focus provides valuable insights into how cultural, social, and emotional dynamics influence consumer responses to brand storytelling, making it a suitable setting for examining the role of emotional intelligence in shaping engagement behaviours. By situating the research within MENA countries, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of consumer-brand interactions in non-Western contexts, where emotional communication often plays a central role in marketing practices.

3-2-Sample Characteristics: Number of Participants:

The study collected data from a total of **90** participants, all of whom were active social media users with prior exposure to brand content online. This sample size allowed for the effective application of statistical techniques, including PLS-SEM, to test the proposed relationships and moderation effects. The participants represented a diverse demographic background, ensuring meaningful variation in emotional intelligence and engagement behaviours. The inclusion of 90 respondents provided sufficient statistical power to evaluate the impact of brand storytelling and the moderating role of emotional intelligence, thereby supporting the study's analytical rigour and the validity of its conclusions.

**Influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement _
The Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence _ A Case Study
on a Sample of Countries in the Middle East and North Africa Region**

3-3- Assessment of the measurement Model:

3-3-1-Convergent Validity:

Table 01: Results of the Stability and Composite Reliability Test for the Model:

variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted AVE
Brand Storytelling	BS_1	0.583	0.867	0.897	0.556
	BS_2	0.828			
	BS_3	0.757			
	BS_4	0.802			
	BS_5	0.816			
	BS_6	0.714			
	BS_7	0.691			
Customer Engagement	CE_1	0.928	0.892	0.933	0.822
	CE_2	0.902			
	CE_3	0.890			
Emotional Intelligence	EI_1	0.687	0.886	0.909	0.556
	EI_2	0.796			
	EI_3	0.756			
	EI_4	0.714			
	EI_5	0.783			
	EI_6	0.707			
	EI_7	0.757			
	EI_8	0.758			

Source: Compiled by researchers based on the outputs of Smart PLS4.

The results presented in Table 01 indicate that all constructs in the model demonstrate satisfactory reliability and convergent validity. Cronbach's Alpha values for Brand Storytelling (0.867), Customer Engagement (0.892), and Emotional Intelligence (0.886) exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming strong internal consistency. Similarly, Composite Reliability (CR) values for all variables—0.897, 0.933, and 0.909, respectively—are above 0.70, indicating robust construct reliability. Regarding convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for Brand Storytelling (0.556), Customer Engagement (0.822), and Emotional Intelligence (0.556) all surpass the minimum acceptable level of 0.50, suggesting that more than half of the variance in the indicators is explained by their corresponding latent constructs. Although a few item loadings are relatively lower (e.g., BS_1 at 0.583 and some EI items slightly above 0.70), they remain within acceptable limits and do not undermine the overall validity of the constructs. Collectively, these results confirm that the measurement model exhibits good reliability and convergent validity, making it suitable for further structural analysis.

3-3-2-Discriminate Validity :**Table 02: Fornell-Larcker Criterion**

variables	BS	CE	EI
BS	0.746		
CE	0.634	0.907	
EI	0.712	0.552	0.745

Source: Compiled by researchers based on the outputs of Smart PLS4.

The Fornell–Larcker Criterion results in Table 02 confirm that the model demonstrates acceptable discriminant validity, as the square root of each construct's AVE (shown on the diagonal) is higher than its correlations with other constructs. Specifically, Brand Storytelling shows a square root of AVE equal to 0.746, which is greater than its correlations with Customer Engagement (0.634) and Emotional Intelligence (0.712). Similarly, Customer Engagement has the highest value on its row and column (0.907), exceeding its correlations with Brand Storytelling and Emotional Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence also meets the criterion, with a square root of AVE of 0.745 exceeding its correlation with Customer Engagement (0.552). Although the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Brand Storytelling (0.712) is relatively high, it remains lower than the square root of Emotional Intelligence's AVE (0.745), confirming that the constructs are distinct. Overall, these results validate that the latent variables in the model measure different conceptual domains and do not suffer from multicollinearity issues.

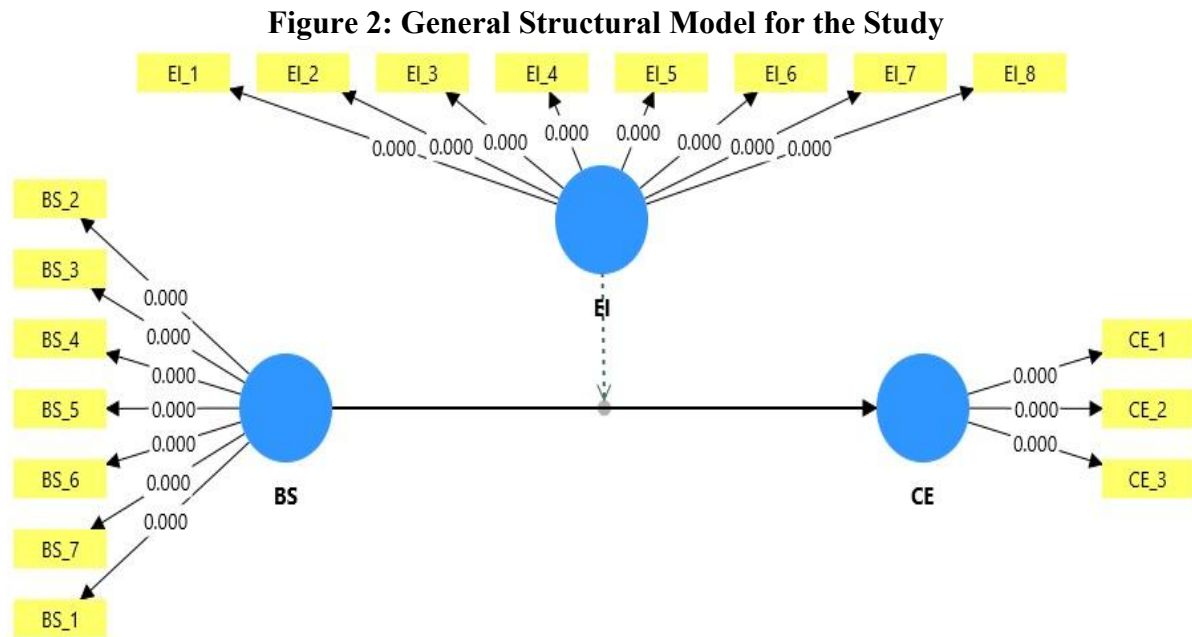
Table 03: the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT)

variables	BS	CE	EI
BS			
CE	0.692		
EI	0.814	0.607	
EI x BS	0.247	0.041	0.270

Source: Compiled by researchers based on the outputs of Smart PLS4.

The HTMT results in Table 03 provide further support for the discriminant validity of the model. All HTMT values fall below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.85, indicating that the constructs are empirically distinct. The HTMT value between Brand Storytelling and Customer Engagement is 0.692, suggesting a moderate but acceptable level of association without excessive overlap. The relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Customer Engagement (0.607) is also well within acceptable limits. The HTMT value between Brand Storytelling and Emotional Intelligence (0.814), although relatively high, remains below the 0.85 cutoff, confirming adequate discriminant validity. Importantly, the interaction term (EI × BS) shows very low HTMT values with all constructs (0.247 with BS, 0.041 with CE, and 0.270 with EI), confirming that the moderator construct is clearly distinguishable from the main variables. Overall, the HTMT criterion confirms that the constructs measure different underlying concepts and that multicollinearity is not a concern in the model.

**Influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement _
The Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence _ A Case Study
on a Sample of Countries in the Middle East and North Africa Region**



Source: Compiled by researchers based on the outputs of Smart PLS4.

3-4-Testing the Internal Model (Structural Model)

Validity of the Structural Model:

Table 04: Validity of the Structural Model

Variables	Coefficient of Determination (R ²)	Explanatory size (F ²)
Customer Engagement	0.441	/
Brand Storytelling	/	0.217
Emotional Intelligence	/	0.047

Source: Compiled by researchers based on the outputs of Smart PLS4.

The results in Table 04 show that the structural model demonstrates acceptable explanatory power and meaningful effect sizes. The Coefficient of Determination (R²) for Customer Engagement is 0.441, indicating that Brand Storytelling and Emotional Intelligence together explain 44.1% of the variance in Customer Engagement—a moderate and satisfactory level of predictive capability for behavioural research. Regarding effect sizes (F²), Brand Storytelling has an F² value of 0.217, which represents a medium effect, meaning it contributes substantially to explaining variations in Customer Engagement. In contrast, Emotional Intelligence shows a smaller effect size (F² = 0.047), indicating a weak but meaningful contribution, consistent with its role as a moderating rather than direct predictor. Overall, these results suggest that Brand Storytelling is the primary driver of Customer Engagement in the model, while Emotional Intelligence adds incremental explanatory value, supporting the proposed conceptual framework.

3-5-Discussion of testing the study hypotheses

3-5-1-Hypotheses:

- First hypothesis (H1): There is no statistically significant positive relationship between Brand Storytelling and Customer Engagement at a 5% significance level.
- Second Hypothesis (H2): There is no significant role for Emotional Intelligence in reducing the relationship between Brand Storytelling and Customer Engagement at a 5% significance level.

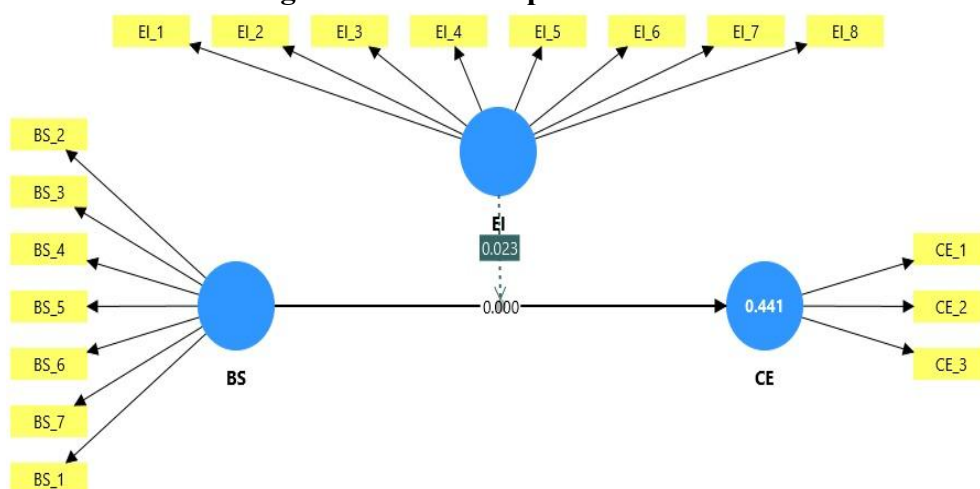
Table 5: Testing the Hypotheses for the Study (H₁, H₂)

Hypothesis	Paths	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H ₁	BS -> CE	0.497	0.499	0.115	4.329	0.000	Hypothesis Accepted
H ₂	EI x BS -> CE	0.123	0.123	0.054	2.281	0.023	Hypothesis Accepted

Source: Compiled by researchers based on the outputs of Smart PLS4.

The results in Table 5 indicate strong empirical support for both hypotheses. For H₁, the path coefficient from Brand Storytelling to Customer Engagement is 0.497, with a high T-value of 4.329 and a highly significant p-value (0.000), confirming that Brand Storytelling has a positive and statistically significant direct effect on Customer Engagement. This means that effective storytelling substantially enhances how customers interact, respond to, and engage with a brand. For H₂, the interaction effect between Emotional Intelligence and Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement also shows a significant positive coefficient (0.123), with a T-value of 2.281 and a p-value of 0.023, indicating acceptance of the moderating hypothesis. Although smaller in magnitude, this effect demonstrates that Emotional Intelligence strengthens the impact of Brand Storytelling, meaning customers with higher emotional intelligence are more responsive and more easily engaged when exposed to brand narratives. Together, these findings validate the proposed model and underscore the importance of both emotional communication (via storytelling) and consumer emotional capacities in shaping engagement behaviour.

Figure 3: Results of path coefficients



Source: Compiled by researchers based on the outputs of Smart PLS4.

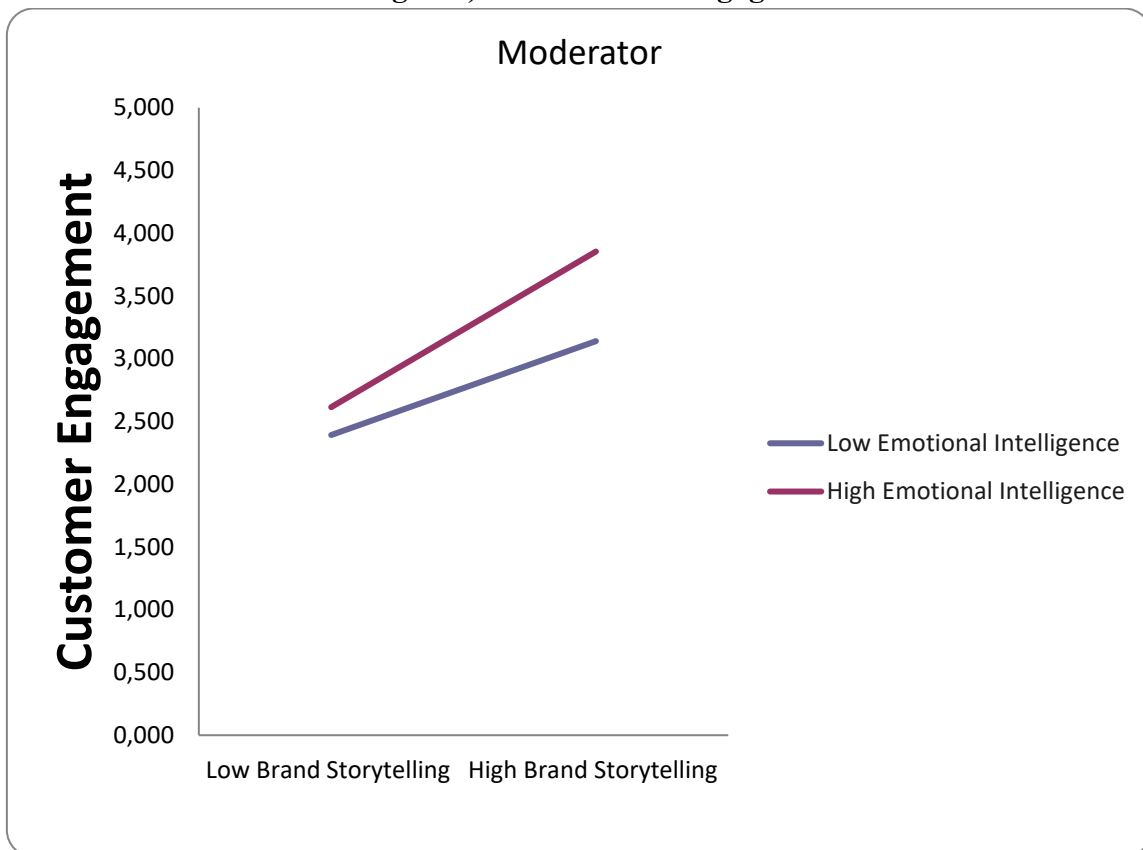
**Influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement _
The Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence _ A Case Study
on a Sample of Countries in the Middle East and North Africa Region**

Table 6: Testing the effectiveness of the moderating variable (Emotional Intelligence) in reducing the effect of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement

Relationship	Path Coefficient	P Value s	Hypothesi s
BS -> CE	0.497	0.000	Accepted
EI -> CE	0.234	0.025	Accepted
The Interaction (Brand Storytelling * Emotional Intelligence) --> Customer Engagement	0.123	0.023	Accepted

Source: Compiled by researchers based on the outputs of Smart PLS4.

Figure 4: Path coefficients of The Interaction (Brand Storytelling * Emotional Intelligence) --> Customer Engagement



Source: Compiled by researchers based on the outputs of Microsoft Excel.

The graph illustrates the moderating role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on the relationship between Brand Storytelling and Customer Engagement. As shown, Customer Engagement increases as Brand Storytelling moves from low to high levels, confirming its positive effect. However, the slope of the line for individuals with high Emotional Intelligence is noticeably steeper compared to those with low Emotional Intelligence. This indicates that consumers with higher EI respond more strongly to brand stories, exhibiting significantly higher engagement levels when storytelling is high. Conversely, although consumers with low EI also show increased engagement, the effect is weaker. Overall, the visualisation supports the

statistical results, demonstrating that Emotional Intelligence amplifies the impact of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement—customers who are better at understanding and processing emotions are more influenced by narrative-driven brand content.

3-5-2-Discussion:

The findings of this study provide strong empirical evidence for the significant influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement and the moderating role of Emotional Intelligence in this relationship. The results reveal that Brand Storytelling exerts a substantial positive effect on Customer Engagement, indicating that consumers respond more actively—emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally—when exposed to compelling brand narratives. This suggests that storytelling serves as an effective strategic communication tool capable of fostering deeper customer involvement. Additionally, the moderation analysis demonstrates that Emotional Intelligence significantly strengthens this relationship. Consumers with higher Emotional Intelligence exhibit higher engagement levels when exposed to strong storytelling content, implying that individuals who better understand and process emotions are more likely to form meaningful connections with narrative-driven brand messages.

These findings align closely with earlier research emphasising the role of emotional connection in influencing consumer behaviour. Studies such as Kemp et al. (2021) and Rehman & Gaur (2025) highlighted that storytelling enhances emotional engagement by creating relatable and authentic brand experiences. Similarly, this study confirms that storytelling remains a powerful driver of consumer engagement across digital platforms. Moreover, the mediating influence of engagement identified in previous research (e.g., Mavilinda et al., 2023; Menon et al., 2024) is consistent with the present findings showing that storytelling predicts engagement outcomes. The moderating effect of Emotional Intelligence also resonates with prior conceptual work on emotional branding, which emphasises that emotionally intelligent consumers are more receptive to value-driven narratives and develop stronger loyalty (Freire, 2024; “Customer Engagement Through Emotional Branding,” 2022). However, this study extends the literature by providing robust empirical evidence that EI does not merely correlate with engagement but actively amplifies the effectiveness of brand storytelling. This contribution addresses a notable gap in previous research, which largely overlooked the role of consumer psychological traits in shaping the impact of storytelling.

Taken together, the results reinforce the importance of integrating emotionally resonant storytelling with an understanding of consumer emotional capabilities. The study supports existing knowledge while contributing new insights into how and why storytelling works, particularly in digital engagement contexts. By demonstrating that Emotional Intelligence enhances the effectiveness of brand narratives, the findings highlight the need for brands to tailor storytelling strategies in ways that appeal to the emotional processing styles of their target audiences.

4-Conclusion:

This study examined the influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement and explored the moderating role of Emotional Intelligence in this relationship. The findings demonstrate that Brand Storytelling significantly enhances Customer Engagement, confirming that narrative-driven brand communication is a powerful tool for stimulating emotional, cognitive, and behavioural involvement. The results also show that Emotional Intelligence plays a meaningful moderating role, strengthening the positive effect of storytelling on

Influence of Brand Storytelling on Customer Engagement _ The Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence _ A Case Study on a Sample of Countries in the Middle East and North Africa Region

engagement. Consumers with higher Emotional Intelligence respond more deeply to brand narratives, resulting in stronger engagement levels compared to those with lower EI.

The importance of the independent variable—Brand Storytelling—lies in its ability to create meaningful emotional connections and stimulate active customer participation, making it a critical driver of engagement in digital brand communication. The moderating variable—Emotional Intelligence—adds an essential layer of insight by highlighting that customers' emotional processing abilities shape how effectively storytelling translates into engagement. This interaction underscores the need for brands to not only craft compelling stories but also tailor their narratives to audiences with varying levels of emotional sensitivity.

Overall, the study contributes to the marketing and consumer behaviour literature by confirming the central role of storytelling in driving engagement and by illuminating the psychological boundary conditions under which storytelling becomes most effective. These insights provide valuable implications for marketers seeking to design emotionally resonant content and optimise engagement strategies across diverse consumer segments.

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