

國立政治大學商學院國際經營管理英語

碩士學位學程

International MBA Program

College of Commerce

National Chengchi University

碩士論文

Master's Thesis

商業敘述方式以及其對客戶關係之影響

**The mechanisms of storytelling and its impact
on customer relationships**

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中華民國一一〇年十二月

December 2021

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Acknowledgements

For this thesis, within the International MBA program of NCCU, I would like to thank all the people who made this project possible.

First, I would like to thank my tutor, Professor Foo Nin Ho, for guiding me and helping me during the process of writing this thesis. His advice and feedback have been precious.

Secondly, I would like to thank all the people who agreed to answer the survey. Without them and the time they took to help me, there would be no material to finalize this thesis. I would also like to thank all the people who participated, in one way or another, in the realization of this thesis, whether it was by providing me with food for thought, by criticizing my work or by supporting and advising me.

Finally, I would like to thank the IMBA program for providing me with the knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish this academic work that concludes my studies.

Abstract

The mechanisms of storytelling and its impact on customer relationships

By

Nolwenn Loison

Storytelling is a tool that is of great interest to companies and particularly to marketing, sales, and communication experts because of its ability to convey a brand image and above all, to attract customers. Storytelling is considered as a powerful tool to generate a strong brand image. It has also established itself as an effective vector of corporate values. Through this thesis project, the objective is to understand why this practice can be so effective and how it works. This thesis also seeks to demonstrate the impact of storytelling on customer loyalty and the elements that influence this impact. There are many notions that revolve around storytelling. Here are the ones that this thesis focuses on: identification, emotion creation, trust (through credibility, integrity, and benevolence), customer loyalty and brand commitment.

Keywords: Storytelling; Customer experience and relationship; Brand image; Sales pitch

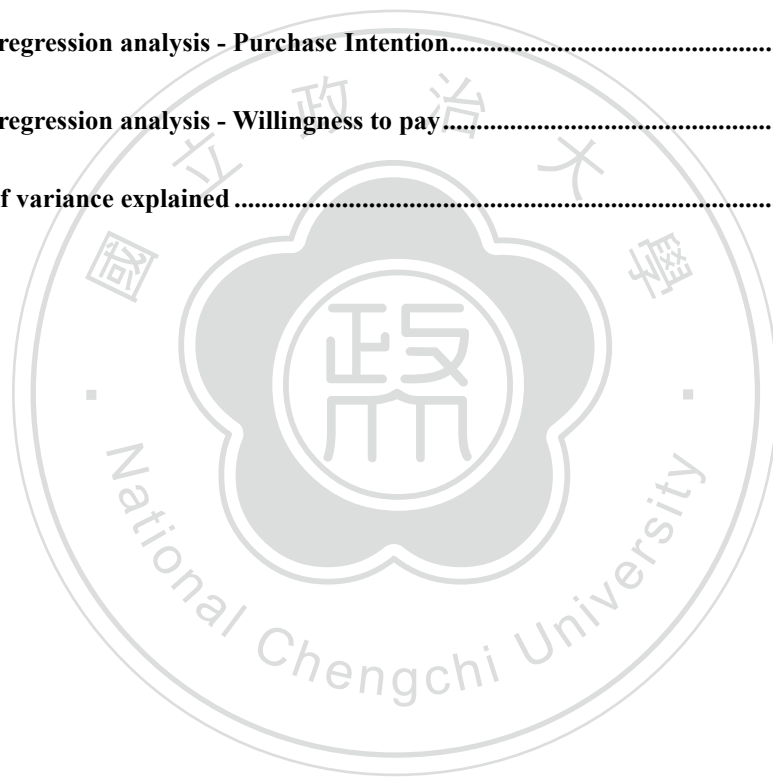
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1. Introduction

What happens when writers are hired by a company to make up stories about low-quality products, and then those same objects are sold online with those stories? In 2009, Rob Walker and Joshua Glenn launched the "Significant Objects» anthropological experiment, which aimed to see the impact of storytelling on an object's value to the consumer. During this experiment, Walker and Glenn asked 100 writers to invent stories about objects with a combined total value of \$129 and afterwards sell them on eBay to see if the stories had led to an increase of value. The result was a whopping \$3.6 million in net profit, or a 2700% increase in final margin. Through these edifying figures, we can discern the lucrative dimension of this practice that we call "storytelling". This experience allows us to better understand the economic interest of using storytelling, and why this practice has become commonplace for many companies since the 90s.

In addition to its economic efficiency, storytelling proves to be a powerful vector of information and favors its memorization. Thus, it is a real tool to influence consumers/potential clients. In her article Unraveling the technique of storytelling, Helen Love asserts this theory through the example of a study conducted by the London Business School: the institution demonstrated that the levels of information retention delivered by traditional communication media could vary considerably. The simple use of statistics in a simple PowerPoint presentation led to an information retention rate of about 5 to 10%, at best. If the statistics were coupled with a bit of storytelling, the retention rate rose to about 25 to 30%. But the biggest impact came from using storytelling as a full-fledged communication medium. This could lead to an audience retention rate around 65-70%. This statistic is solid proof of the power of storytelling for any business owner who is looking for an effective way to communicate their brand image to customers.

Thus, through the examples cited above and in view of the effectiveness of this practice, storytelling is now a concept that attracts not only salespeople but also marketing and communication experts. Storytelling a powerful tool: that allows the creation of a brand image and it's a vector of the company's values. Through storytelling, the company can ultimately generate sales since it often influences customer acquisition and loyalty.

Nevertheless, the influence mechanisms and the powers of storytelling are still very much under-analyzed and under-developed. How does storytelling attract customers to a brand? What are the concrete ways to create loyalty and engagement? What are the sources of its effectiveness? I realized that very few studies analyzed the inner workings of this concept, that they had never been fully dissected and studied until now. Thus, thanks to this project, which is part of our thesis, I aim to explore the following subject: the different forms of storytelling in companies, their mechanisms of influence and their impact on customer relations.



2. Part one: Literacy review

2.1. What is storytelling?

2.1.1. Definition of the concept

Many definitions of storytelling exist. The most used definition, which is also the simplest, is the one that defines storytelling as "the art of telling stories". For our study, we have decided to describe 3 definitions of storytelling.

In *Le storytelling en action*¹, Olivier Clodong and Georges Chétochine have chosen to define storytelling through a Chinese portrait. For them, if storytelling were a person, it would be a hero of an epic, because we can observe storytelling as "the art of transforming a lambda subject into a character". If it were an organ, it would be the heart: it uses our emotions to compel us make decisions that we think are rational. In marketing and sales, for example, it can make us buy and/or be loyal to a brand. If storytelling were a relationship mode, it would be exchange because storytelling exchanges with its receiver to adapt to him and create a real emotional interaction. To the question "if storytelling were an advertising trend", Clodong and Chétochine put forward advertising. Advertainment (a contraction of advertising and entertainment) is the fact of proposing entertaining and amusing advertisements, and of conceiving the communication space as a moment of entertainment. Thus, advertising often uses storytelling by telling a story to consumers to entertain them. Clodong and Chétochine complete this definition by showing that storytelling is applied in almost every field: management, marketing, politics, diplomacy, law, journalism, school, research, lobbying, art...

In his book *Storytelling*², Christian Salmon describes storytelling as "the art of telling stories". This technique goes beyond simple entertainment and is now found "in the world of management as well as political communication". It can be found in different forms, "from oral storytelling as practiced by griots or storytellers to "digital storytelling", a virtual immersion in multi-sensory and highly scripted universes. It is a way to transmit information that will touch the sensitivity of the receiver, even if it is a distortion of reality. The author also questions the morality of this process, wondering if the art of storytelling has not turned into an "instrument

¹ CLODONG, Olivier, CHETOCHINE Georges. *Le storytelling en action*. Eyrolles, 2010

² SALMON, Christian. *Storytelling*. La Découverte, 2008

of state lies and control of opinions", speaking of a "grand robbery" on our collective imagination. Finally, according to the author, storytelling contributes to the identification of the consumer with a brand, it is found in the values transmitted through the story developed by the company.

Another approach to storytelling can be found in George Lewi's book, *La fabrique de l'ennemi : comment réussir son storytelling*³, defining the concept as "a narrative that conveys a message with a defined objective". The author strongly supports the idea that storytelling is based on the enunciative structure of myth, resting on five pillars:

- The description of the context
- The story, its events, and its elements of verisimilitude
- The arrival of the savior
- The denouement
- The final commentary that closes the narrative and its object

In his book, G. Lewi explains that storytelling speaks to both our rational and emotional sides, alternating elements of verisimilitude and realism with appeals to our memory and sensations, which is what makes the concept so effective. Thus, storytelling is a well-oiled mechanism, built from scratch so that its impact is strong and arouses a desire to act (buy, come, participate, support) in the people receiving the message. "The purpose of storytelling is to change the mind, to change how people think, to change the attitude and behavior of the person to whom it is addressed".

After having detailed these definitions, we believe that Christian Salmon's definition is the most relevant for the rest of our study because it is part of a management context while remaining broad enough to be exploited from different angles. Our entire project will therefore be based on this definition.

To this academic definition, we should add the following: storytelling is a marketing and sales tool that influences customer behavior. In fact, because it allows us to address the customer throughout his or her contact with the company, storytelling succeeds in attracting new

³ LEWI, Georges. *La fabrique de l'ennemi : comment réussir son storytelling*. Vuibert, 2013

customers and strengthening ties with existing ones through the story it tells. For the rest of our study, we assume that the effects of storytelling are customer acquisition and loyalty.

To better understand the scope of the subject, the following part will be devoted to the historical aspect of storytelling: from its origins to its various applications in companies. We will see how storytelling has developed over the last few decades to play an important role in marketing and sales.

2.1.2. History: the growing role of storytelling in the business world

➤ Storytelling is an ancestral practice

According to the French semiologist Roland Barthes⁴, "In its almost infinite forms, the narrative is present in all times, in all places, in all societies; the narrative begins with the very history of humanity; never has there been a group of individuals (tribe, etc.) without a narrative, there is not, there has never been anywhere any people without a narrative; all classes, all human groups have their narratives, and very often these narratives are tasted in common by men of different, even opposite, cultures. Narrative makes a mockery of good and bad literature: international, transhistorical, transcultural, narrative is there, like life." Storytelling is therefore intrinsically linked to human history.

Sharing stories is an art that has evolved over the centuries, from visual and oral transmission to a written transmission with the invention of writing. Looking at the various myths and legends that have come down to us, it is easy to see that their sole purpose is not entertainment. They serve to convey values, lessons and sometimes, warnings.

How did this way of transmitting information come to be used in the corporate world, and what is its place today? In the book *Storytelling*, the author differentiates between these great narratives and today's storytelling in the following way: "The great narratives that mark our human history from Homer to Tolstoy and from Sophocles to Shakespeare, told universal myths and transmitted the lessons of past generations, lessons of wisdom, the fruit of accumulated experience. Storytelling goes the other way around: it places artificial narratives on reality,

⁴ BARTHES, Roland. *Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits*. In Communications. Seuil, 1966

blocks exchanges and saturates the symbolic space of series and stories. It does not tell the experience; it traces the conducts and directs the flows of emotions"⁵.

Previously perceived as a form of communication reserved for the very young, storytelling has been surprisingly successful since the 1990s, first taking the United States by storm and then spreading to the rest of the corporate world. Reality is presented through a narrative filter to generate "useful" perceptions and stimuli for the consumer. We will go into more detail on the nature of these stimuli on consumers and on the company later in this study.

➤ **The rise of storytelling in business**

In his article *Enquête: le storytelling en entreprise*⁶, Stéphane Dangel explains that storytelling today is a continuation of the past. Indeed, it is a new modern form, adapted to today's society, of this tradition of storytellers, African griots, or Indian shamans. Modern storytelling has its origins in another discipline: narratology. Narratology studies the narrative techniques and structures used in literary texts. The first works of narratology in modern literary studies come from Russian formalism and especially from the works of Victor Shklovsky and Boris Eichenbaum. In their book *Le storytelling pas à pas*⁷, De Wilfrid Gerber, Jean-Christophe Pic and Alina Voicu explain that narratology as it was practiced from the 1920s in Russia was only interested in the text itself. From the 1970s onwards, researchers became more and more interested in the receiver and his role in interpreting the meaning of the narrative. It is from this narratology, which is interested in the narrator, that storytelling applied to the business world was born.

Olivier Clodong and Georges Chétochine⁸ explain that in the 1980s, marketing was dominated by brand image and that in the last fifteen years, brand story has developed until it has become the norm in the 2000s. The objective is not only to convince the consumer, but to allow him to identify himself and to immerse him in the heart of a story of which he could be the hero. "People do not buy products, but the stories that these products represent. Nor do they buy

⁵SALMON, Christian. *Storytelling*. La Découverte, 2008

⁶ DANGEL, Stéphane. *Enquête : le storytelling en entreprise*. overblog, 2009

⁷ GERBER, Wilfrid, PIC, Jean-Christophe, VOICU, Alina. *Le storytelling pas à pas*. Vuibert, 2012

⁸ CLODONG, Olivier, CHETOCHINE Georges. *Le storytelling en action*. Eyrolles, 2010

brands, but the myths and archetypes that these brands symbolize"⁹. For Christian Salmon, storytelling fulfills a role of belief construction for contemporary individuals in need of reference. The accessibility of information, driven by digital technology, can create an accumulation of technical data and figures. In this saturation of information, storytelling allows to make sense and to simplify the contact with the consumer. This evolution from promoting a product to promoting a brand story has led to an evolution in vocabulary: in advertising we talk less about consumers, but more about the audience. What matters is who will hear or see our story.

From then on, storytelling has become a powerful asset for any company wishing to communicate on its image and thus maintain long-lasting and solid relationships with its customers, guaranteeing the durability of the organization. The notion of customer journey has become, since the beginning of the 2000s, a fundamental concept, as evidenced by the numerous companies developing departments and careers exclusively dedicated to the relationship, the journey, and the customer experience. CRM software, chat bot, satisfaction form, verbatim analysis... several tools have been put in place to listen and communicate directly with customers. Among them, storytelling offers a unique way for companies to talk to their customers while building relationships with them. Storytelling occurs at the beginning of the experience that the customer builds in contact with the brand, introducing the ideas and values of the brand to the customer/consumer.

The storytelling thus exerts an influence on the customer journey, meaning the set of stages through which a customer passes throughout his relationship with an organization. According to Barbara Kaufman¹⁰, storytelling generates positive feelings in customers, helps them to better understand the benefits of the brand beyond the mere numbers, increases trust in the company and makes it unique. In addition, it has a positive influence on customer acquisition and loyalty. This idea is supported by a study developed in *The impact of storytelling on the*

⁹ SALMON, Christian, *Storytelling*, Éditions La Découverte, 2007

¹⁰ KAUFMAN, Barbara. *Stories that SELL, stories that TELL*. Journal of Business Strategy, 2003

*consumer brand experience: the case of a firm-originated*¹¹. The four authors of the study examine how a corporate storytelling influences the experience of a cosmetics brand on consumers, by comparing two groups of individuals. The first group was confronted with the brand story while the other was not. The chosen brand was an actual brand but not present in the study country. In-depth interviews were conducted with individuals in both experimental conditions. Comparisons revealed remarkable differences between the two groups. Consumers who were exposed to the story described the brand in much more positive terms and were willing to pay more for a product that was presented to them. The story effectively affects the consumer's brand experience, makes customers' opinions of product attributes positive (packaging, quality, benefits...) and engages the willingness to spend money on that brand. The study demonstrates the power of storytelling on consumer experiences and concludes on the influential power of this practice. Storytelling can attract customers and make them buy.

Moreover, there are several narrative techniques that a company can choose to use depending on the desired reaction of the listener. Stephen Denning¹² identifies eight models, depending on the objective of the message: to trigger an action, to communicate the company's history, to transmit values, to communicate who the company is today, to encourage exchange, to disprove rumors, to share knowledge, to guide customers towards the future. These distinct models will generate specific reactions in the listener, which will impact his relationship with the company and his vision of the products.

This first part allowed us to explain what storytelling is and to look back at the origins of the concept. We have also seen how company's storytelling has a strong impact on customer relations. For the remainder of our study, we maintain the previously elaborated statement mentioned in the introduction according to which the effects of storytelling are customer acquisition and loyalty.

¹¹ LUNDQVIST, Anna, LILJANDER, Veronica, GUMMERUS, Johanna, VAN RIEL Allard. *The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: the case of a firm-originated story*. Journal of Brand Management, 2013, n°20

¹² DENNING, Stephen. *Effective Storytelling: Strategic Business Narrative Techniques*. Strategy & Leadership, 2006, vol 34 n°1

In the following part, we will try to understand how and why storytelling influences the customer relationship, makes them more loyal and allows companies to acquire new customers. The identification and sharing of emotions are two mechanisms of storytelling that we will study in this second part.

2.2. Storytelling mechanisms of influence

2.2.1. Identification

Identification is the first mechanism of storytelling that we will explore in our second part. We define identification as the process that allows the consumer to link his personality and values to the one presented by the company, thus taking a role in the "company's story". In some cases, this identification is so strong that the brand becomes part of the customer's personality. We will try to understand two essential points for our study. First, we want to understand how storytelling allows companies to create identification with their brand. Secondly, we want to understand what identification mechanisms makes people more loyal, in other words, how the receiving audience of the story develops a connection with the company that tells it, how it feels concerned, understood, and how it manages to find reference points and elements in the story that echoes their personal experience.

According to Bhattacharya and Sen¹³, the strongest relationships between consumers and companies are based on identification with the companies that help them satisfy one or multiple needs. Identification, in our context, is a largely unconscious process by which an individual shapes his or her thoughts, feelings, and actions according to those attributed to something that has been incorporated as a mental image. It is, therefore, the act of recognizing oneself in a characteristic, or a person outside of oneself. Identification with a company or a brand has multiple facets that we will develop in this section.

➤ Identification: the essence of fiction

Jean-Marie Schaeffer¹⁴ distinguishes two types of fictions: ludic fictions, in which we freely engage for our own pleasure, and instrumental fictions which are serious. Storytelling, as used

¹³ SANKAR, Seen, BHATTACHARYA, C.B. *Consumer–Company Identification: A Framework for Understanding Consumers' Relationships with Companies*. Sage journals, 2003

¹⁴ SCHAEFFER, Jean-Marie. *De l'imagination à la fiction*. Vox Poetica, 2002

in marketing, is a form of playful fiction. According to the author, ludic fictions are composed of three interrelated mimetic mechanisms:

- The playful concealment,
- Mimetic immersion,
- Analogical modeling.

The playful concealment is the pretending to be in another reality. The objective is not to deceive but "to put at the disposal of the one who engages in the fictional space of the starters which allow him to adopt the mental attitude of the "as if", i.e., to slip into the universe of fiction". Fiction leads to a process of mimetic immersion that leads us to treat the fictional representation "as if" it was a real representation. We appropriate this false reality through "mechanisms of introjection, projection and identification". The purpose of fiction is to create a fictional universe. This universe has a relation of similarity, not with the real but with the representations of the real (instrumental fictions as Jean-Marie Schaeffer calls them). The author explains it well by saying that "the fiction does not imitate the reality, but our modes of representation of the reality." This phenomenon, at the center of fiction is analogical modeling.

After having understood and explained them, we can wonder about the consequences of these three mechanisms.

These three mechanisms have a strong influence on our future interactions with reality, since they create "mental processing loops" that we use daily. We reuse these analogical mimicry mechanisms unconsciously and they influence our actions such as our purchases for example. These fictional models can also "simulate affective reactions or impulsive commitments". The fictional model being simple to understand, we tend to use this model in our actions. So, storytelling creators create fictions and use these mechanisms to create the playful concealment as a vehicle for immersion in their brand's universe. All this results in making existing customers even more loyal and in acquiring new customers who have been touched by the company's storytelling.

➤ **Brand communities**

Companies want loyal customers to repurchase their products or services. Loyalty can go beyond repurchase, and make customers feel a part of the company's success. In other words, the customer can become so attached to the company that they will live its successes as his own. For Hall Douglas T., Benjamin Schneider, and Harold T. Nygren¹⁵, organizational identification is the process by which the goals of the organization and those of the individual become increasingly integrated or congruent. It is a phenomenon that is often found in employees who want their company to succeed. But identification, through storytelling, can also come from customers.

In an article in the *Journal of Communication*, Randolph T. Barker and Kim Gower¹⁶ demonstrate that the strength of storytelling as a method of communication lies in the fact that all humans are storytellers capable of sending and receiving messages. Storytelling establishes a common space between all participants and provides a faster method of establishing a social relationship. Indeed, around a common topic it is easy to exchange and therefore create social connections. Storytelling, which is easily understood and implemented by all participants, can function as a meaning-making tool to help consumers and their groups build a stronger personal and organizational identity. Storytelling therefore plays a key role for companies in creating a community around their brand.

As Charmaine du Plessis explains using the example of Coca-Cola¹⁷, brands can also foster the creation of a community around their brand through storytelling: not by telling stories themselves but by encouraging consumers to tell their own stories with the brand and its products/services. By involving consumers in the stories of its brand in a relevant and useful way, the Coca-Cola company for example gains added value and visibility.

The study of identification with a brand or company is related to theories of identification with

¹⁵ HALL, Douglas T., SCHNEIDER, Benjamin, NYGREN, Harold T. *Personal Factors in Organizational Identification. Administrative. Science Quarterly*, 1970, n°15

¹⁶ BARKER, Randolph T., GOWER, Kim. *Strategic Application of Storytelling in Organizations: Toward Effective Communication in a Diverse World. Journal of Business Communication*, 2010, n°47

¹⁷ DU PLESSIS, Charmaine. *Brand storytelling: the case of Coca-Cola's Journey corporate website. Communitas*, 2015

organizations. According to Mael and Ashforth¹⁸, organizations can be important sources of identity construction for individuals. For the authors, identification with organizations is a form of social identification: the customer defines himself by the attributes and values of a company, which he believes also define the company's other customers. Being connected to a company gives us a sense of belonging to a community. By developing stories around their brands, companies multiply the chances of creating identification.

Moreover, with the emergence of the internet and online communities, companies have been able to strengthen their ability to create links between consumers. In their research, Karine Raïes and Marie-Laure Gavard-Perret¹⁹ have sought to demonstrate the links between:

- Participation in a virtual community around a brand,
- Commitment to the community,
- Commitment to the brand
- Brand loyalty intention.

Their work validated their hypotheses, namely that the more a consumer participates and exchanges within a virtual community of a brand, the more he feels committed to this community. This commitment is an affective commitment to the community and therefore to the brand. In fact, there is a "dual relationship" between these two commitments that are self-influencing. To illustrate this idea, we can take the example of Apple and Steve Jobs who, with his marketing force, developed the "Apple way of life". There is an Apple community for whom the brand's history has a meaning. The identification with this Apple community and the meaning given to the products through the brand's storytelling create a very strong loyalty among Apple's customers.

¹⁸ MAEL, Blake E., ASHFORTH, Fred A. *Social Identity Theory and Organization*. The Academy of Management Review, 1989, n°14

¹⁹ RAIES, Karine, GAVARD-PERRET, Marie-Laure. *Intention de fidélité à la marque des participants à une communauté virtuelle de marque : le rôle dual de l'engagement*. Recherche et Applications en Marketing, 2011, n°26

This sense of commitment does not only increase the consumer's intention to be loyal to the brand, but also aims to make him/her an actor in the company's strategy. Lusch and Vargo²⁰ argue that the brand community ultimately motivates companies to collaborate with customers to co-create the entire marketing program. This is consistent with the "open source"²¹ rationale for innovation and with new business practices that leverage brand communities. LEGO uses its community to create new designs²², organizes competitions and finds some of its new employees within its community. In other words, a brand community is a sign of successful customer identification, but also a resource for creativity and innovation for the company.

Another effect of creating a brand community is the polarization of its image. As much as a brand can find itself adored by a community, it can also find itself with strong detractors. If a brand is put in the spotlight, actively criticizing that brand also becomes a personality trait, and the creation of another kind of community. The brand is not indifferent to most individuals, and the relationship between the consumer and the brand is highly dependent on the intensity of the memories (positive or negative). Although adored by some, Apple was identified by Hegner as one of the most hated brands in the last decade²³. Some individuals may feel distanced from the brand and thus love or hate it, respectively. In anti-brand communities, Apple's detractors denounce the brand as elitist, self-congratulatory and lacking in innovation²⁴.

Does this mean Apple should evolve its storytelling to appease its detractors? Polarized prospects can be an opportunity for the brand. According to Osuna Ramírez's article, three actors benefit from brand polarization: the brand management team, the brand as an entity and engaged consumers²⁵. Having opponents and some competition (like Microsoft/Apple) affirms

²⁰ LUSCH, Robert F, VARGO, Stephen L. *Service-Dominant Logic as a Foundation for Building a General Theory* in *The Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing*. M. E. Sharpe, 2006, p 406-420

²¹ ETGAR, Michel. *A Descriptive Model of the Consumer Co production Process*. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 2008, n°36, p 97-100

²² KOERNER, Brendan, *Geeks in Toyland*. *Wired*, 2006, n°150, p 104-112

²³ HEGNER, Sabrina M., FETSCHERIN, Marc, VAN DELZEN, Marianne. *Determinants and outcomes of brand hate*. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 2017, n°26, p 13-25

²⁴ RODRIGUES, C., BRANDÃO, A., RODRIGUES, P. *I can't stop hating you: an anti-brand-community perspective on Apple brand hate*. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 2020

²⁵ OSUNA RAMÍREZ, S. A., VELOUTSOU, C., MORGAN-THOMAS, A. *I hate what you love: brand polarization and negativity towards brands as an opportunity for brand management*. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 2019

the community's sense of belonging, facilitates the brand's stances, and encourages consumers to engage in brand advocacy.

A brand's community is therefore the result of a strong identification and sense of belonging on the part of consumers. The links between storytelling, identification, community, and loyalty generate a new value creation. Storytelling favors the creation of communities around a brand that develop identification with this brand. This identification leads to intensified brand loyalty. Beyond the "group" aspect through the brand community, we can identify with customers as individuals.

➤ **Identification to current customers**

The customer, consumer or prospect is the target of the storytelling in the commercial and marketing argument: it is him that we try to convince to buy. However, the customer can also play a very important role in the storytelling of a company because the consumers' stories are part of the brand's history.

In their article *When Consumers and Brands Talk: Storytelling Theory and Research in Psychology and Marketing*, Woodside, Sood and Miller²⁶ explain that many consumers like to report and tell (whether on blogs or other social media platforms) about their experiences, including the brands they buy and use in their daily lives. This has been particularly evident with "Haul" videos, where influencers and content creators talk about items they have recently purchased and give their opinions on them. Consumers become the storytellers instead of the company. Today, most companies, especially service companies, have a tab on their website called Customer Testimonials or Customer Stories.

The storytelling of a company allows its relationship with its customers to evolve into another form of brand attachment. According to the article *Consumers' relationships with brands*²⁷, the different forms of brand attachment are:

²⁶ WOODSIDE, Arch G., SOOD, Suresh, MILLER, Kenneth E. *When Consumers and Brands Talk: Storytelling Theory and Research in Psychology and Marketing*. Psychology & Marketing, 2008, n°25

²⁷ ALVAREZ, C., FOURNIER, S. Consumers' relationships with brands. *Current Opinions in Psychology*, 2016, n°10

- **Emotional attachment:** emotion-laden target-specific bond' between a consumer and a brand,
- **Brand attachment:** strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self
- **Customer attachment style:** a customer's working model of relating with a specific firm.
- **Attachment-Aversion:** a unifying conceptual model of brand relationships that identifies determinants of their valence and salience,
- **Self-brand connection:** degree to which consumers have incorporated the brand into their self-concepts,
- **Inclusion of the brand in the self:** how much consumers experience a brand's resources, perspectives, and identities as their own,
- **Brand relationship quality:** quality, depth, and strength of the consumer-brand relationship.
- **Brand love:** a consumer-brand relationship prototype that goes beyond self-brand connection and attachment.

They therefore vary in intensity, and the objective for the company is to create the strongest possible relationship with its customer. An intense relationship leads to a promise of loyalty, regular purchases, but also word-of-mouth. In marketing, WOM (Word of Mouth) is the fact that a consumer's interest in a company's product or service is reflected in their daily dialogues. Essentially, it's free advertising triggered by customers' experiences - and usually something beyond what they expected. Storytelling can help build a customer's attachment and turn them into a brand representative. The customer will get involved with the company and share their opinions in their various social circles. We are talking about a targeted promotion, correlated by a trusted person (the person doing the WOM) and free for the company. The customer becomes a full-fledged representative of the brand. It is therefore legitimate to ask what other forms of brand representation there are. To facilitate identification, the brand can be represented by known models.

➤ Identification with famous models

Many stories are built on very ancient foundations that can be called archetypes. According to Woodside²⁸, an archetype is a primary unconscious form, an original pattern or prototype in the human mind. Archetypes are not learned or acquired: they are with us from birth and are as natural and ingrained in us as our own DNA. Archetypes are unconscious collective forces that affect beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors implicitly and/or explicitly. Woodside tried to show how consumers' interactions with brands and products provide them with pleasure that unconsciously relates to one or more archetypes and thus gives meaning to their consumption.

Many archetypes are found in myths and their heroes. In his book, mythologist, and brand specialist Georges Lewi²⁹ draws many parallels between Greek mythology and our modern brands. He compares Michelin to Achilles: they are both archetypes of continuous surpassing, with an incessant search for security. Georges Lewi compares brands like IBM and Apple to Ulysses: like him, they are confronted with extraordinary situations and must undergo difficult trials to finally triumph. Brands today are using the same patterns that were used for myths in antiquity. These patterns have already proven their strength: ancient myths are still told centuries later. This remark supports what we said earlier: storytelling is a modern adaptation of a historical phenomenon.

In *Rumeur, le plus vieux des média du monde*, Jean-Noël Kapferer³⁰ explains that "the human mind seems to be constantly searching for balanced explanatory schemes, allowing to link together scattered and disordered events". Thus, we tend to believe in stories because they simplify the multitude of information we encounter every day. The type of story that works best according to Kapferer is that of exemplary stories, also called "urban legends". These are stories where something extraordinary happens to an ordinary person with an ordinary life. What makes this type of story particularly successful is that we can easily identify with the hero.

So, there are several models of storytelling that allow the audience to project themselves into

²⁸WOODSIDE, Arch G. *Brand-Consumer Storytelling Theory and Research: Introduction to a Psychology & Marketing Special Issue*. Psychology and Marketing, 2010, n°27

²⁹ LEWI, Georges. *Mythologie des marques : quand les marques font leur storytelling*. Pearson, 2009

³⁰ KAPFERER, Jean-Noël. *Rumeur, le plus vieux des média du monde*. Le Seuil, 1987

the story that is presented to them. But form is not the only way to capture the audience's attention. The content is just as important, and this is what we will explore in the next section.

➤ **Identification with the company's values**

Consumer specialist Benoît Heilbrunn³¹ explains that "the way we look at brands has also evolved, from an approach that considered brands essentially as a sign of differentiation and identification to a holistic conception in which we consider brands as narrative machines whose function is to produce and transmit meaning". Customers are trying more and more to make sense of the products and services they buy, and storytelling allows brands to transmit their values and prove the coherence of their discourse.

Interest in "ethical" consumption has increased over the last few decades³². This ethical consumption is generally defined as "taking into account the public and societal consequences of individual actions"³³. We are therefore seeing the emergence of a new phenomenon directly linked to the values of a company, the "brand avoidance"³⁴. This phenomenon is defined as "a consumer actively rejecting a brand even though it is available, accessible and affordable". The digital age allows consumers to make informed and educated choices. A company that presents itself with ethical values and a commitment to the betterment of society will particularly resonate with consumers trying to find meaning.

However, it is possible for this storytelling on corporate values to generate effects contrary to those desired if it does not match reality. Consumers disappointed by their experience or by the dissonance between the values presented and reality may turn into brand detractors. Brand Love turns into Brand Hate if the company does not live up to its promises. Empirical analysis confirms that brand hate is a multidimensional concept composed of three key emotions:

³¹ HEILBRUNN, Benoît. *Modalité et enjeux de la relation consommateur-marque*. Revue française de gestion, 2003, n°145

³² PROTHERO, Andrea, DOBSCHA, Susan, FREUND, Jim, KILBOURNE, William E., LUCHS, Michael G., OZANNE, Lucie K., THØGERSEN John. *Sustainable Consumption: Opportunities for Consumer Research and Public Policy*. Journal of Public Policy and Marketing, 2011, n°308

³³ WEBSTER, Frederick E., *Determining the characteristics of the socially conscious consumer*. Journal of Consumer Research, 1975, vol 2 n°3

³⁴ KNITTEL, Zana, BEURER, Karoline, BERNDT, Adele. *Brand avoidance among Generation Y consumers*. Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, 2016, n°19

disgust, contempt, and anger.

We have just seen in this section that the identification mechanism of a customer has several dimensions. One can identify with different elements (to a community, to existing customers, to the company's values...). The identification allows to create a connection with the company and helps to feel concerned by what it proposes. From the multiple cases cited above, we have demonstrated that storytelling manages, through the effects of identification, to have a positive influence on the receiving audience. We are now going to look at a second mechanism of storytelling: the sharing of emotions from a company to a customer and how this impacts the consumer's behavior towards a brand.

2.2.2. Sharing of emotions

As we have just seen, a customer is attached to a company or a brand image through an identification mechanism. Added to this, a second aspect of storytelling can also influence the customer: sharing emotions. In this case, the affinity with the company is likely to go even further because the customer can receive and transmit emotions, establishing a real relationship of trust that results in a strong commitment. Consumers are trying to feel something, they want to fulfill their dreams. Stories told through storytelling help create such experiences.

➤ Chemical reactions to stories

In their book, Olivier Clodong and Georges Chétochine³⁵ explain that the researcher Nahum Gershon has demonstrated that the human brain has an excellent capacity for "multisensory synthesis of information" when it is presented in narrative form. For them, the emotion contained in a story increases our perception tenfold, further anchoring the stories in our memory. It is on emotions that stories act. The representation of a fact has a much stronger influence on our emotions than the simple perception of the fact.

In an article in the Harvard Business Review, Paul J. Zak³⁶ (director and founder of the Center for Neuroeconomics Studies and professor of economics) explains his scientific discovery in the laboratory of a neurochemical called oxytocin, which is a key signal in the brain that it is

³⁵ CLODONG, Olivier, CHETOCHINE Georges. *Le storytelling en action*. Eyrolles, 2010

³⁶ ZAK, Paul J. *Why Your Brain Loves Good Storytelling*. Harvard Business Review, 2014

safe to approach others. Oxytocin is secreted when we are told stories and it enhances our sense of empathy. A new study conducted by the author's lab has proven this. The study involved showing storytelling videos to subjects who had their blood drawn before and after watching the video. The results showed that character-driven narratives consistently elicited oxytocin secretion. The rest of their study showed that to elicit the desire to help others, a story must first sustain attention by building tension during the story. If the story manages to create this tension, viewers will be more likely to share the emotions of the characters and thus develop the same feelings and behaviors as those characters. Paul J. Zak sought to apply the results of their studies to business. According to him, character-driven and emotional narratives are better at getting across the key points the speaker wants to make and better at retaining them. Therefore, to trigger the most effective chemical reactions, companies should broadcast stories of human struggle that end in triumph.

Finally, according to Paul J. Zak, one of the most important things a company can do for its storytelling is to share its founding myth. It is an effective way to communicate a transcendent goal both internally (this story will strongly contribute to the motivation of the teams and the development of a common goal) and externally through communication.

Through storytelling, brands seek to capture the attention of potential consumers, and this works thanks to a hormone: cortisol. Jeremy Adam Smith³⁷ explains that when faced with a stressful situation, adrenaline rises and our body releases a hormone, cortisol, which increases our attention, strength, and speed. This is a natural reaction that we use to save ourselves from dangerous situations. So, when we read or watch a stressful story, our body releases cortisol which captures our full attention. In his article, the author also explains that when the cortisol that feeds attention mixes with the oxytocin of empathy, we experience a phenomenon he calls transportation. This phenomenon gives the impression that our destinies are intertwined with those of imaginary people. Finally, if the story has a happy ending, it triggers the release of dopamine in the limbic system, the reward center of the brain. At this point, we are overwhelmed by a feeling of optimism because dopamine is considered the molecule of pleasure.

³⁷ ADAM SMITH, Jeremy. *The Science of the Story*. Greater Good Science Center, 2016

To conclude this part, we can say that human beings are naturally sensitive to storytelling. They are good receivers of the stories they are told because they have chemical mechanisms that generate strong emotions. They retain, compartmentalize and link elements of the story to their own sensations and memories. Thus, this partially explains the effectiveness of such a practice. These chemical mechanisms are specific to humans, so these phenomena are ancestral. We can therefore ask ourselves why storytelling has developed so much in the last few decades.

➤ **A modern necessity**

As we showed earlier, storytelling has always existed. But the question is: why has storytelling in sales and marketing been so successful in recent years?

The strength of storytelling lies in a paradox: we need to relate to reality even though it is not always what we want it to be. We need to identify ourselves with causes, products, or brands. This is linked to the fact that we live in societies with a permanent access to current events that are often anxiety-provoking. Georges Lewi explains that the feeling of insecurity "stimulates our search for truth, for the meaning of life, and our thirst for magic and mystery"³⁸. In this context, storytelling brings facts about a company in a familiar way (like we were told stories as children) and creates emotion. Like the media, storytelling is about reality, but it brings meaning and a sense of comfort. There is therefore a differentiation effect that we make when we see an advertisement or a commercial argument using storytelling: this reality seems better to us than the one we live in everyday life.

This observation can be completed by the book *Le storytelling pas à pas*³⁹ where the authors explain that our current environment is characterized by the economy of attention where the contents multiply and where the information has no physical or temporal barrier. This explains why a person's attention is limited and why we are a society in perpetual search of meaning (disenchantment, skepticism ...). For us modern men and women, it is much easier to feel emotions in front of living visual representations.

³⁸ LEWI, Georges. *Devenir une marque mythique : Storytelling et digital*. Vuibert, 2019

³⁹ GERBER, Wilfrid, PIC, Jean-Christophe, VOICU, Alina. *Le storytelling pas à pas*. Vuibert, 2012

➤ **The brand personality: a creator of emotions**

Emotions are a characteristic of living beings. We can be moved by the stories of other humans or by the fate of animals. It is much rarer that we are moved by objects or concepts. But brands are not living beings. To emotionally move their customers, companies try to make their brands come alive by creating a personality for them.

According to Jennifer L. Aaker⁴⁰, brand personality is the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. In her article, she defines the five dimensions of brand personality as sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and robustness. She explains that brand personality increases consumer preference and usage, generates emotions in consumers, and increases levels of trust and loyalty to the brand. Aaker uses the example of personality traits associated with Coca-Cola products that are , American, and real. This personality is relatively enduring and differs from that of its competitors: Pepsi is young, exciting, and trendy; Dr. Pepper is non-conforming, unique, and fun.

These brand personalities are created and disseminated through storytelling. In the article *The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: The case of a firm-originated story*⁴¹, the authors explain that consumers are looking for experiences that appeal to their emotions and dreams, and stories help create such experiences. Stories have heroes and companies can turn the brand, employees, or customers into heroes with positive effects on internal and external brand perception.

Brand personality helps create a real relationship between the brand and the customer. Charmaine Du Plessis⁴² presented nine types of consumer experiences that can be built or reinforced by brand storytelling. Among these experiences there is social identity, which consists of communicating the character or personality of the brand through a character-centric narrative, while giving consumers a sense of belonging to the brand and its community. The personality of the brand will therefore shape the customer/brand relationship. This relationship

⁴⁰ AAKER, Jennifer L. *Dimensions of Brand Personality*. Journal of Marketing Research, 1997, vol 34 n°3

⁴¹ LILJANDER, Veronica, GUMMERUS, Johanna, VAN RIEL, Allard. *The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: The case of a firm-originated story*. Journal of Brand Management, 2013, n°20

⁴² DU PLESSIS, Charmaine. *An Exploratory Analysis of Essential Elements of Content Marketing*, 2015

will create emotions for the customer, which will strengthen their loyalty or make them want to be a customer.

➤ **Make the customer unique and important**

A customer will be even more loyal to a brand and will buy it if he shares a strong emotion with it. To do this, it is essential to put the customer at the center of the story. G. Anthony Gorry and Robert A. Westbrook⁴³ affirm that companies that know how to listen to their customers other than through marketing analyses or statistics, and that can put themselves in their shoes, communicate with them and maintain a strong relationship over the long term, ultimately achieve growth in their revenues. Ritz-Carlton, Levi Strauss, Harley Davidson are companies that have been able to create this link with their customers by listening to them and making their concerns a priority. "You are at the heart of the company, and you matter to us", these brands tell their customers. This makes them feel involved, heard, and understood. Some go further and place the customer/consumer/prospect at the center of the story being told, becoming the individual to whom the message is personally addressed. This creates a sense of pride, with positive effects on the brand's vision. This feeling is essential in the creation of the customer relationship, as is the feeling of trust

➤ **The importance of trust in the customer relationship**

In their article *The Different Roles of Satisfaction, Trust and Commitment in Customer Relationships*⁴⁴, Garbarino and Johnson state that the decisions made by a consumer are driven by two key elements: trust and commitment to the brand. These are two essential ingredients for any long-term relationship. To prove their theory, the authors conducted a study on groups of customers. They divided the customer base of an organization into "weak" and "strong" relationship groups. The authors analyzed the relationship between satisfaction, trust, commitment, and future intentions of customers of a New York City theater company. For customers in the "weak" relationship group (one-way ticket buyers and occasional subscribers),

⁴³ GORRY, Anthony G., WESTBROOK, Robert A.. *Can you hear me now? Learning from customer stories.* Business Horizon, 2011, n°54

⁴⁴ GARBARINO, Ellen, JOHNSON, Mark S.. *The Different Roles of Satisfaction, Trust and Commitment in Customer Relationships.* Journal of Marketing, 1999

overall satisfaction was the most important factor influencing their future intentions. For customers in the "strong" relationship group (regular subscribers), trust and commitment, rather than satisfaction, play a dominant role in their future intentions.

We see that trust and commitment are two key elements of the customer relationship. The question this raises is: what is the link between trust and commitment?

In their article, Gurviez and Korchia⁴⁵ define trust in a brand as "a psychological variable that reflects a set of accumulated assumptions about the credibility, integrity, and benevolence that the consumer attributes to the brand". They explain that a stable and lasting relationship between consumer and brand must necessarily involve trust. For them, commitment is a direct consequence of the consumer's trust in a brand.

The three dimensions present in the trust process are therefore:

- **Credibility** which is the evaluation of the brand to meet the consumer's expectations. It is based on the attribution to the brand by the consumer of a degree of expertise regarding its functional expectations on the satisfaction of its needs.
- **Integrity** is the attribution of loyal motivations to the brand regarding the honesty of its discourse.
- **Benevolence** the attribution to the brand of a sustainable consumer orientation concerning the consideration of the consumer's interests, even before its own short-term interests.

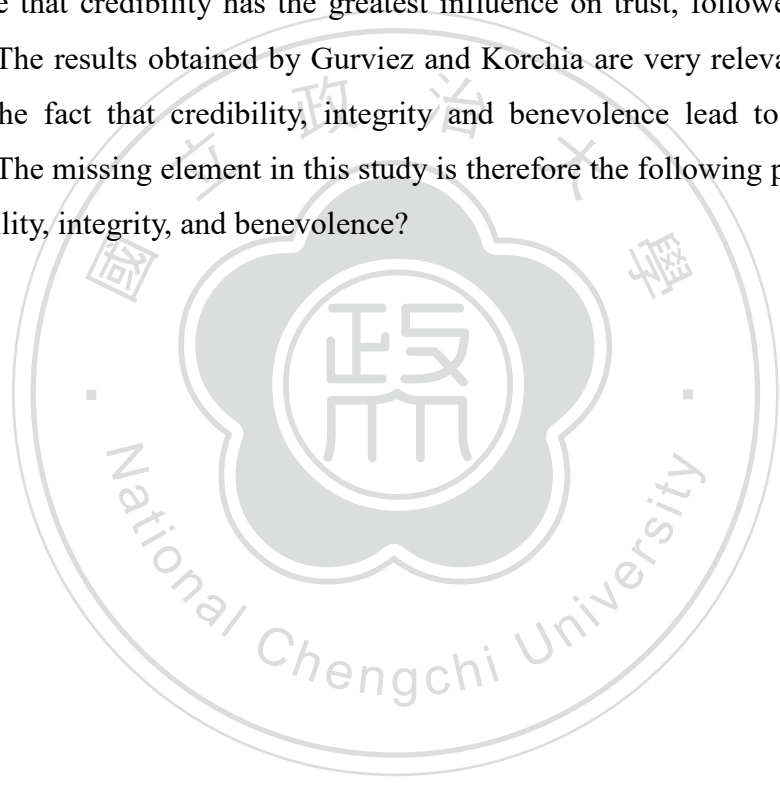
⁴⁵ GURVIEZ, Patricia, KORCHIA, Michaël. *Proposition d'une échelle de mesure multidimensionnelle de la confiance dans la marque*. Recherche et Applications en Marketing, 2002, vol 17 n°3

Their study produced the following table:

Table 1:Gurviez and Korchia - Consumer-Brand Relationship Model Including Trust and Three Consequences

Structural link	Credibility → Trust	Integrity → Trust	Benevolence → Trust	Trust → Commitment
	0,713	0,294	0,171	0,657

They conclude that credibility has the greatest influence on trust, followed by integrity and benevolence. The results obtained by Gurviez and Korchia are very relevant and allow us to really grasp the fact that credibility, integrity and benevolence lead to trust and trust to commitment. The missing element in this study is therefore the following point: what element creates credibility, integrity, and benevolence?



3. Conclusion and transition

This first major part has established the basis of our topic. Our literature review first helped us to define and understand the notion of storytelling. By studying these multiple definitions, two main mechanisms emerged: identification and creation of emotions. We could see that identification is the specificity of fiction: in every story told, we find identification processes. In addition, existing customers also play a very strong role in enabling identification. Storytelling, by using known models or patterns anchored in our minds and by relying on the company's values, allows customers or potential customers to identify with a brand. Stories allow us to identify ourselves, but our various readings have also shown us that the second great effect of stories is to make us feel strong emotions. We have a natural tendency, through chemical mechanisms, to feel emotions when we read or hear stories. To reinforce these emotions, brands also create brand personalities. Indeed, we are inclined to be more moved by human representations than by organizations that are only vague entities.

In the light of our different readings, storytelling seems, in the long term, to allow a better customer loyalty through engagement. The definitions and the different mechanisms mentioned prove it. The elements developed in the very last part of our literature review, notably the study by Gurviez and Korchia, allow us to establish that credibility, integrity, and benevolence create trust, which ends up creating commitment to a brand. So, after developing and understanding these elements of literature on storytelling and relationship marketing, we arrive at the following hypothesis: if storytelling acts on commitment, it means that it acts on credibility, integrity, and benevolence. We therefore believe that storytelling acts on the three dimensions of trust while exercising its two mechanisms which are identification and emotion creation. In view of these different ideas, here are the hypotheses that we put forward for the continuation of our study:

- H1: Identification, created by storytelling, leads to customer commitment to the brand.
- H2: Emotions, created by storytelling, lead to customer commitment to the brand.

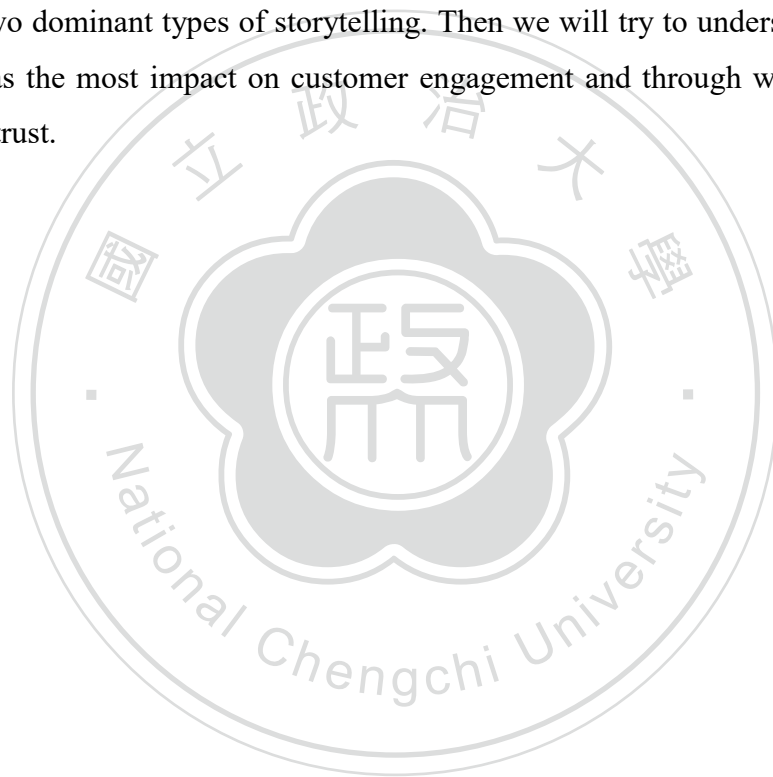
Our literature review allowed us to identify different forms of storytelling:

- Storytelling around the company's values,

- Storytelling around the founder or the creation of the company,
- Storytelling in the form of a stressful story with a positive ending,
- The storytelling around the customers and / or highlighting the brand community.

To validate our hypotheses, we want to rely on the two dominant types of storytelling that we believe to be the storytelling around the values and the storytelling around the customers and or/ highlighting the brand community.

To begin our second part, we will first realize a netnography of different brands to verify and confirm the two dominant types of storytelling. Then we will try to understand which type of storytelling has the most impact on customer engagement and through which mechanism or dimension of trust.



4. Part two: analysis of the storytelling used by different Taiwanese companies

Our first part allowed us to define the theoretical basis of storytelling. For the next part of our study, we want to understand storytelling used in a more practical way thanks to a netnography. We want to understand how companies communicate and promote their brand image. In other words, the goal is to understand what types of storytelling are practiced by companies. By comparing several company websites, it is possible to establish which ones are the most frequently used.

4.1. Methodology

4.1.1. Selection of companies analyzed

It was chosen to analyze Taiwanese companies. As this study is in English, it was necessary to find international companies having a website in English. It seemed more relevant, to be able to compare the companies in the best way, that they are all from the same sector. By interest and number of relevant companies found, the food industry was chosen. The chosen brands and companies stand out for their interesting storytelling. Here is the list of companies studied:

- HeySong, drinks company
- Hunya Foods, sweets company,
- King Car group, food, and various consumer goods company.

HeySong Corporation is a famous beverage producer. It was founded in 1925. HeySong corporation has 562 employees across all its locations and generates \$322.41 million in sales. There are 16 companies in the HeySong corporation corporate family. The company is listed in Taiwan (TPE). Its stock market capitalization is TWD14.21 billion.

Hunya Foods Co., Ltd. was 1976 as a chocolate producer company. The current Chairman of the board and general manager is Ms. Yun Qi Zhang. In 2020 the revenue was TWD1 637,28 million. The company is listed in Taiwan (TPE). Its market capitalization is TWD1.92 billion.

The King Car Group is a Taiwanese conglomerate founded in 1979 which owns several international brands. Its CEO is Mr. Yu-ting Lee, founders' son. It is mainly a coffee, beer, and whisky company. The company is owned by the founding family and is not listed on the stock exchange.

We will focus on the storytelling of the groups as a whole and on certain brands.

4.1.2. Development of the analysis grid

The netnography will be carried out from the analysis of the websites of the three companies mentioned above. The results will be gathered in a table. In the columns, we find the name of each brand. On the line, the different types of storytelling are detailed:

- Storytelling around the brand community / existing customers
- Storytelling around the founder, the creation of the company
- Storytelling around the country-of-origin pride
- Storytelling around the company's values
- Storytelling around the life of the company

Each line is divided into subcategories that detail each form of storytelling. For example, in the line dedicated to "storytelling around the company's values", six sub-categories of values are explained: ecology, pleasure and conviviality, family and sharing, anchoring in the territory and finally rurality and commitment to employment. This choice of methodology makes it possible to specify the values communicated by the companies and the type of storytelling applied. The last line of the table is devoted to a final commentary giving an overview of the storytelling of the company studied. Similarly, the last column of the table concludes on the different approaches that companies can have on a form of storytelling. This allowed us to have a double analysis: the storytelling by company on the one hand and the different uses of each type of storytelling on the other hand.

The purpose of this table is to collect the elements that justify the type of storytelling used by each company and to have an overview of the three companies to establish comparisons and differences. The selected data is mainly presented in the form of quotes from the respective

websites. The idea is to compare the similarities and differences between the selected companies and to show a trend of which storytellings are used most.

4.2. Results

Netnography has shown that each company has its own storytelling. This confirms the elements studied in the literacy review: each company creates its brand image around its storytelling, and conversely, its storytelling around its brand image.

First, concerning the storytelling based on values, it is the ecological values and commitments of HeySong that are put forward: *“In 2015, the Plant#3, Chungli Plant was awarded green building silver medals”*) and Hunya Foods (*“Based on the sustainability vision of "Local Sustainability for Happiness Extension", the company has developed five major sustainability strategies and the goals which are to be achieved by 2030”*). HeySong and King Car use storytelling to highlight all their actions in favor of youth: *“Launched in 1950, HeySong Sarsaparilla is one of the classic drinks that represents the spirit of Taiwan. It keeps inspiring young people to pursue their dreams”*, *“To fulfill its social responsibilities, the King Car Group established the King Car Cultural & Educational Foundation in 1980”*. The other two values highlighted by the companies are quality and integrity. For example, Hunya Foods demonstrates it as follows: *“Ever since its foundation in 1976 when the first chocolate product was launched, Hunya has run its business by upholding the philosophy of ‘Honesty, Innovation, Quality and Service’, with responsibility of striving for perfection to provide customers with lovely and fascinating sweets and add more pleasant vibes to customers’ lives”*. Company values are very important elements in the marketing of a company. Storytelling is a powerful tool to promote them and give a good image of the company. Through their storytelling, companies show their positive impact on society.

The second major type studied is the storytelling around the founder, the creation of the company and its geography. Companies differ from each other on this subject. HeySong places great emphasis on the foundation of the company and its founder. The history of the founder is told as a story: *“The HeySong Group was founded by the Chang family in 1925. Mr. Wen-Chi Chang, who is the founder of the company, has long desired to be an entrepreneur since childhood, due to his family background”*. On both the HeySong and Hunya Foods websites, an

entire page of the website is a timeline of the company. For King Car the history of the company is told in the form of a video.

The three companies are very proud to be Taiwanese companies and they show their roots in the territory through storytelling. HeySong shows that they started in Taiwan and then expanded internationally: *“Launched in 1950, HeySong Sarsaparilla is one of the classic drinks that represents the spirit of Taiwan. By 1999, English was added to the HeySong logo, announcing an attempt by the HeySong brand to enter the international market from Taiwan”*. In another style, Hunya Food emphasizes the fact that it uses raw materials from Taiwan: *“We choose the Black Diamond Peanut produced in Yunlin to produce our Black Diamond Peanut Nougat and use local lemon, purple yam and Ruby Black Tea to produce Wafer Pie, by which tasty products are presented and at the same time local agriculture in Taiwan is supported”*. King Car stands out by using a different medium: the story of Kavalan whisky is told through a promotional video. In this video, the anchoring in a Taiwanese territory is highlighted. It is also the quality of the products that is promoted.

Finally, all companies use storytelling to show that they are close to their customers and that they understand and respond to their needs and desires: *“Times have changed. However, consumers don't just drink to “quench thirst and fight the heat”. Their next desire was for a “fun atmosphere” and now, a “healthy experience”. HeySong has moved with the flow to develop and invent all kinds of new high-quality products to meet customer requirements. It is critical to instill into the public consciousness the idea that “Soft drink means HeySong, HeySong is not just soft drinks”.* Hunya Foods (through its brands Rivon), shows with its storytelling that it is a company whose mission is to take care of its customers and bring them comfort and joy: *“By upholding the initial philosophy of ‘Always care about you’ and the brand spirit of ‘You Are My Happiness’, Rivon restarts its journey in hope that people can be connected together through what Rivon provides because every happy event in life is worth celebrating!”*. King Car group has a quite similar approach, for example with its brand Buckskin Restaurant: *“Buckskin Restaurant Group is all about “enjoying beer.” Buckskin pairs its beers with a diverse selection of culinary choices to create a novel and sophisticated approach to beer drinking, while satisfying the gastronomic desires of its customers.”*.

Thanks to our netnography, we have been able to compare the different interpretations and uses of mechanisms across companies. We were able to note similarities and differences between these companies of the same sector. HeySong places great emphasis on being a company with integrity and being transparent with their customers. The story of their creation and their creators is also very important and highlighted. Hunya Foods storytelling is really about its values: Sustainability, Quality and Pleasure. We found this in their statement: "*Local Sustainability for Happiness Extension*". In its website the company tries to prove its line of conduct which is to preserve the environment while producing products of very high quality. All these efforts are made to put customer satisfaction at the center of the company's storytelling. The storytelling of King Car is quite surprising and different from others. It is very much part of the territory and the different sites of the company. The history of the company and its foundation is not very much emphasized. This is probably related to the fact that having multiple brands, it is a bit difficult to find a common story. The storytelling explains well how the company does everything to satisfy the desires of their customers.

Despite all these differences in storytelling, it seems that two predominant and frequently used themes in the different storytelling studies were identified: the company's values and the customer experience with the brand.

5. Part three: Study

This section is focused on explaining the execution and results of the quantitative study conducted for this thesis. The aim of this study is to measure the behaviors and/or opinions of a sample of people concerning the two main forms of storytelling that have been distinguished in our netnography. The objective is to test our previously stated hypotheses and to validate them or not by confronting them with reality.

5.1. Methodology

To validate our hypotheses, we created two distinct texts: one with storytelling elements around the company's values, the other with storytelling elements around the brand community and customers. Participants were randomly confronted with only one of the two scenarios. Following this reading, they had to answer a questionnaire. This questionnaire was unique for both groups and concerned the text they had just read. The aim of this study was to collect the readers' opinions and reactions concerning the storytelling they were confronted with and to test the degree of effectiveness of the texts and, ultimately, of the storytelling. The whole study was created and presented on the Qualtrics platform.

➤ Elaboration of the two texts

The two texts were inspired by what had been read and seen on the websites of the brands analyzed during the netnography. A fictitious brand of chocolate spread, Delichoco, was invented and then the two texts with their respective storytelling around the brand were written. The idea was to create two texts similar in form and content but different in the words chosen to communicate the storytelling. Here are the two versions chosen:

Text 1 - storytelling around environmental and societal values

"At Delichoco, we are committed **to caring for our environment and contributing to a healthier future**. Founded in 1975, the brand has been committed since its inception to producing a delicious chocolate spread **while protecting the planet**: our products are sourced **from quality organic sources**. Our values are embedded in our DNA: **respect, sustainability, and solidarity**. Thanks to its unique recipe, its light texture and its fair-trade chocolate, Delichoco chocolate spread is the ideal companion for sweet breaks".

Text 2 - storytelling around the community and customers

"At Delichoco, we are committed **to taking care of our customers and contributing to your satisfaction**. Created in 1975, the brand has been committed since its inception to producing a delicious chocolate spread **to best meet the expectations of its consumers**: our products are created **to meet your desires**. Our values are embedded in our DNA: **conviviality, pleasure and sharing**. Thanks to its unique recipe, its light texture and its gourmet chocolate, Delichoco chocolate spread is the ideal companion for sweet breaks with family or friends."

Each text was illustrated with an image that conveyed the message of each storytelling. These images can be found in appendix 2. In addition, certain words were deliberately displayed in bold to draw the reader's attention to the essential words and expressions related to storytelling. The complete questionnaire is in appendix 3.

➤ **Question and measurement range**

After reading the text, the participants were asked to answer a questionnaire about it. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: the first part consists of seventeen questions aimed at measuring the level of credibility, integrity, and perceived benevolence, as well as the emotion aroused, and the identification mechanism triggered by the storytelling in the text. The second part concerns three questions aimed at identifying the characteristics of the sample of participants.

For each question, the response choices were (Likert scale):

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The questions in the second part were written to learn more about the nature of the respondents. Three questions were written to this effect:

- Who are you? (Gender)
- How old are you? (Age)
- How much chocolate spread do you eat? (Frequency)

Finally, two "manipulation check" questions were added throughout the questionnaire to ensure that participants did not answer randomly or were aware of what was being asked of them. The two questions were as follows:

- This is a check question, please check "Disagree."
- This storytelling emphasizes the company's social and societal impact / emphasizes the brand's customer experience and satisfaction

The questionnaire was relayed and shared numerous times on social networks and through different channels to obtain the desired sample of 150 responses. In total, we collected 235 responses. In the following section, we will see how these results were studied and analyzed.

5.2. Analysis

To carry out the analysis of our results we used the SPSS software. Each answer given on the Likert scale was assigned several points:

- Strongly disagree - 1 point
- Disagree - 2 points
- Somewhat disagree - 3 points
- No opinion - 4 points
- Somewhat agree - 5 points
- Agree - 6 points
- Strongly agree - 7 points

Note that the scandal-related question was reverse-coded.

5.2.1.1. Presentation of the sample

Our respondent sample is 71.3% female and 27.9% male. Respondents range in age from 18 to 74 years and the average age of our sample is 29 years. 19.1% of the respondents never consume chocolate spreads, 44.1% rarely, 31.6% sometimes and 5.1% often consume chocolate spreads.

5.2.2. Verification of the manipulation

These questions are each introduced in both versions of the texts: they allow us to know if the respondents understood what type of storytelling they were dealing with.

The first question was "This storytelling emphasizes the social and societal impact of the company". The average of those who read the values storytelling was 5.66 while respondents faced with the other storytelling had an average of 3.68. Our p-value (Sig.) is 0.000, so this result is significant. We have confirmation that those who read the values storytelling found that this storytelling emphasized the social and societal impact of the company.

The second question was "This storytelling emphasizes the brand's customer experience and satisfaction." On this question, the average of those who read the customer experience storytelling was 4.92 while respondents facing the other storytelling had an average of 3.54. Our p-value is still 0.000 (< 0.05), so this result is significant. We have confirmation that those who read the customer orientation storytelling did understand that this storytelling focused on the branded customer experience and their satisfaction.

Our two verification questions allow us to say that the manipulation worked. We can then exploit the rest of the results.

Table 2: Verification of the manipulation

Variables	Mean		P-Value
	This storytelling emphasizes the social and societal impact of the company	This storytelling emphasizes the brand's customer experience and satisfaction	
Text 1 (about values)	5,66	3,54	0,00
Text 2 (about customer experience)	3,68	4,92	0,00

5.2.3. Test of the hypotheses

➤ Analysis of variance (Anova)

We averaged the different questions for each criterion (integrity, credibility, benevolence, identification, emotion creation, loyalty).

First, we tried to identify which criteria were influenced by the type of storytelling proposed.

The type of storytelling has no effect on the notion of credibility because the averages are very close, and our p-value is higher than 0.1.

The type of storytelling has no effect on the notion of benevolence because the averages are very close, and our p-value is higher than 0.1.

The type of storytelling influences the notion of integrity. Our p-value is 0.004, so our results are significant. Storytelling around company values, with an average of 4.15, is perceived as having more integrity than customer experience storytelling which has an average of 3.66.

The type of storytelling influences emotion creation. Our p-value is 0.000, so our results are significant.

Storytelling around company values, with an average of 4.35, creates more emotions than customer experience storytelling which has an average of 3.57.

The type of storytelling influences respondents' brand identification. Our p-value is 0.000, so our results are significant. Respondents tend to identify with the brand for both types of storytelling. Identification is stronger when respondents are confronted with a values storytelling (average of 5.73), than when they are confronted with a customer experience storytelling (average of 4.78).

Next we wanted to test the impact of the type of storytelling on word-of-mouth, purchase intention and willingness to pay. The sigma for all three criteria is 0.000, so our results are significant.

The type of storytelling used differently influences word of mouth. Storytelling around company values storytelling, with an average of 4.54, induces more word-of-mouth than customer experience storytelling, which has an average of 3.66.

The type of storytelling used differently influences purchase intent. Storytelling around company values, with an average of 4.31, has a higher purchase intent than customer experience storytelling, which has an average of 2.92.

The type of storytelling used differently influences willingness to pay. Storytelling around company values, with an average of 4.82, leads to a higher willingness to pay than customer experience storytelling which has an average of 2.92.

Table 3: Analysis of variance

Variables	Mean		P-Value
	Text 1 (about values)	Text 2 (about customer experience)	
Credibility	4,51	4,39	0,436
Benevolance	4,45	4,64	0,290
Integrity	4,15	3,67	0,004
Creation of emotions	4,35	3,57	0,000
Identification	5,74	4,78	0,000
Word-of-mouth	4,54	3,66	0,000
Purchase intention	4,31	2,92	0,000
Willingness to pay	4,82	2,92	0,000

This first part of the analysis allowed us to demonstrate the effects of each type of storytelling on the three components of trust, emotions, identification and the three purchase criteria (word-of-mouth, purchase intention and willingness to pay). Now we want to know if trust, emotion creation and identification also have a direct effect on word-of-mouth, purchase intention and willingness to pay. To show this, we performed linear regressions.

We ran three linear regressions for each of our dependent variables of word-of-mouth, purchase intention, and willingness to pay. We tested the relationship between each of these dependent variables with our different independent variables of integrity, credibility, caring, emotion creation, and identification.

➤ **Linear regression analysis - word-of-mouth**

Our Anova is relevant (p-value <0.1). Our model with independent variables is therefore relevant.

The study of our coefficients table allows us to understand the relationships between our variables.

Credibility does have a relevant effect on word-of-mouth (p-value<0.1). The Beta of this criterion is 0.199. This Beta is positive, so the more credible the participants found the brand, the more they felt like recommending the brand.

Integrity does have a relevant effect on word-of-mouth (p-value<0.1). The Beta of this criterion is 0.297. This Beta is positive, so the more the participants found the brand to have integrity, the more they felt like recommending the brand.

The creation of emotions does have a relevant effect on word-of-mouth (p-value<0.1). The Beta of this criterion is 0.158. This Beta is positive, so the more emotions the participants created, the more they wanted to recommend the brand.

Identification does have a relevant effect on word-of-mouth (p-value<0.1). The Beta of this criterion is 0.300. This Beta is positive, so the more the participants identified themselves, the more they felt like recommending the brand.

The comparison of our 4 positive Betas allows us to say that identification is the criterion that influences word-of-mouth the most. Integrity comes next, then credibility. Finally, the creation of emotion is the criterion that has the least influence on the willingness to recommend a product or a brand.

Benevolence has a p-value greater than 0.1, so the effect of this criterion is not significant.

Table 4: Linear regression analysis – Word-of-mouth

Variables	Beta	P-Value
	Word-of-mouth	
Credibility	0,199	0,011
Benevolence	-0,005	0,945
Integrity	0,297	0,000
Creation of emotions	0,158	0,030
Identification	0,300	0,000

➤ **Linear regression analysis - purchase intention**

Our Anova is significant (p-value <0.1). Our model with independent variables is therefore relevant.

The study of our coefficients table allows us to understand the relationships between our variables.

The creation of emotions has a significant effect on the intention to buy (p-value<0.1). The Beta of this criterion is 0.418. This Beta is positive, so the more emotions the participants created, the more they intend to buy the product of this brand.

The identification has a significant effect on the intention to buy (p-value<0.1). The Beta of this criterion is 0.222. This Beta is positive, so the more participants identified themselves, the more they intend to buy the product of this brand.

The comparison of our 2 positive Betas allows us to say that the creation of emotion influences the purchase intention more than the identification.

Credibility, benevolence, and integrity have a p-value higher than 0.1 so the effect of storytelling on these criteria is not significant.

Table 5: Linear regression analysis - Purchase Intention

Variables	Beta	P-Value
	Purchase Intention	
Credibility	0,090	0,284
Benevolence	0,012	0,877
Integrity	0,110	0,178
Creation of emotions	0,418	0,000
Identification	0,222	0,007

➤ **Linear regression analysis - willingness to pay**

Our Anova is significant (p-value <0.1). Our model with independent variables is therefore relevant.

The study of our coefficient table allows us to understand the relationships between our variables.

Integrity does have a significant effect on willingness to pay (p-value<0.1). The Beta for this criterion is 0.108. This Beta is positive, so the more the participants find the brand to have integrity, the more they are willing to pay more for this product.

The creation of emotions does have a significant effect on the willingness to pay (p-value<0.1). The Beta of this criterion is 0.311. This Beta is positive, so the more emotions participants created, the more they are willing to pay more for this product.

Identification does have a significant effect on willingness to pay (p-value<0.1). The Beta of this criterion is 0.196. This Beta is positive, so the more the participants identified themselves, the more they are willing to pay more for this product.

The comparison of our 3 positive Betas allows us to say that the creation of emotion influences the willingness to pay much more than identification and integrity.

Credibility and benevolence have a p-value higher than 0.1, so the effect of these criteria is not significant.

Table 6: Linear regression analysis - Willingness to pay

Variables	Beta	P-Value
	Willingness to pay	
Credibility	0,108	0,214
Benevolence	-0,024	0,762
Integrity	0,234	0,006
Creation of emotions	0,311	0,000
Identification	0,196	0,021

➤ **Analysis of the share of variance explained**

To find out how much of the variance is explained by our variables we analyzed the R2 of each of our linear regressions.

53.5% of the variance in word-of-mouth is related to credibility, integrity, emotions, and identification. This means that 53.5% of the differences in intention to recommend the product are explained by differences in perceived credibility, perceived integrity, emotions created and differences in identification.

45.7% of the variance in purchase intention is related to emotions and identification. This means that 45.7% of the differences in purchase intention are explained by differences in created emotions and differences in identification.

41.3% of the variance in willingness to pay is related to integrity, emotions, and identification. This means that 41.3% of the differences in purchase intention are explained by differences in perceived integrity, created emotions, and differences in identification.

Table 7: Share of variance explained

Variables	R2
Word-of-mouth	0,535
Purchase intention	0,457
Willingness to pay	0,413

➤ **Conclusion analysis**

To conclude, we can say that if a company wants to create behaviors conducive to purchase (word-of-mouth, purchase intention and willingness to pay), the storytelling used must arouse emotions (the most important criterion) and allow customers to identify with the brand. It is also necessary to be perceived as a credible and honest company. On the other hand, benevolence does not influence customer loyalty. Finally, the storytelling around the company's values has the best effect on the different mechanisms of influence.

5.3. Discussion

5.3.1. Theoretical discussion

The literature review and netnography put forward two main ideas that became the hypotheses:

- H1: Identification, created by storytelling, leads to customer commitment to the brand.
- H2: Emotions, created by storytelling, lead to customer commitment to the brand.

The great importance of trust, through its three components (integrity, benevolence, credibility) on customer engagement and loyalty was understood.

On the other hand, the netnography confirmed that the two most used forms of storytelling are the storytelling around the company's values and the storytelling around the brand community and the customer experience.

The results of the study complement and give a new reading to the ideas mentioned above. The main goal with this survey was to test and understand which component of trust is influenced by which type of storytelling. Also, to understand to what extent trust influences customer engagement and brand loyalty.

From the study, it appears that storytelling based on the company's values leads to a better customer engagement through its three components: word of mouth, purchase intention and willingness to pay.

Moreover, the results show that storytelling, to generate loyalty and customer engagement,

must firstly create emotions and, secondly, allow customers to identify with the brand. The storytelling must also convey an image of credibility and integrity associated with the brand. However, we find that trust as a whole has little influence on customer engagement via purchase.

Digging deeper into the approach to the three purchase components of word of mouth, purchase intent and willingness to pay, here's what can be learnt:

Word of mouth

Storytelling around values has more effect on word of mouth than storytelling around the customer experience. Indeed, this type of storytelling has a strong influence on identification and credibility which in turn leads to word of mouth. Thus, customers facing a brand creating a storytelling around values will tend to engage in a word-of-mouth action, to identify themselves with this brand that they consider credible, which will lead them to talk about it around them.

Purchase intention

Storytelling around values has more effect on purchase intention than storytelling around customer experience. Storytelling around values creates emotions and favors customer identification, both of which lead to purchase intention. In the same way, people confronted with value storytelling develop emotions and tend to identify with the brand, which leads to a stronger intention to buy a product from the brand. We also notice that trust has no effect on purchase intention. This can be explained by the fact that trust is built over time. This point will be discussed in more detail in the limitations section of the survey.

Willingness to pay

Storytelling around values has a greater effect on willingness to pay than storytelling around the customer experience. Once again, the storytelling around values creates emotions and favors identification. As we have seen, the creation of emotion strongly influences the willingness to pay. Therefore, customers confronted with storytelling around the company's values will develop strong emotions that will influence their willingness to pay more for a product.

5.3.2. Managerial discussion

Value storytelling seems to be effective since it appears from our survey that it strongly and separately influences trust and its three components (credibility, integrity, and benevolence), identification and emotion creation on the one hand, and purchase and its three components (word of mouth, purchase intention and willingness to pay) on the other hand.

However, the link tested and found in our linear regression between trust and purchase is not very explicit. Indeed, and this will be found in the limitations of the survey, the components of trust have little, or at least partial, influence on a purchasing action. Nevertheless, beyond trust, identification and creation of emotions are developed by the storytelling around values, which themselves lead to purchasing behavior.

Business leaders, marketing, sales, and communication experts should focus their storytelling on the values of their brand and their company, to generate emotion and identification that lead to stronger buying actions and behavior.

5.4. Limits of the study

While the results of our study are relevant and provide new insights into the use of storytelling and its impact on consumers, we are also aware of the limiting elements of our survey.

In its results, our study did not have the capacity to cover a perfectly representative sample of the population. The sample consisted of 136 people, 71% of whom were women. The questionnaire was shared within various networks. Although this allowed for the collection of data, it also implies that socio-professional diversity is likely to be limited. This data was not asked in our survey. This means that the research does not link consumers' income to their perception of storytelling. However, economic level does have a direct impact on the purchase decision. This same budget, however, may obscure the impacts of storytelling in favor of simply choosing the cheapest product. The survey is therefore limited in its understanding of the consumer's purchase decision.

The age of the respondents was not related to the impact of storytelling on the consumer. This also represents a limitation of the study. The consumer's vision and receptivity may evolve over the course of his or her life, and it would have been interesting for companies to know which

storytelling is more adapted to which age group.

On the other hand, the study did not manage to prove that storytelling had an impact on benevolence. Indeed, the results do not show a significant link between storytelling (of any type) and the fact that the company is perceived as benevolent. This was measured through the following questions:

- This brand cares about its customers
- The company listens to consumer feedback

The questions could have been phrased differently or could have been phrased in a scenario where the respondents are customers/are aware of the brand. This may make them feel more involved. In addition, the notion of trust is difficult to establish for a fictitious brand. This has an impact on the answers given, and we realized from some of the feedback we received from respondents that this relationship of trust is established over time. However, this questionnaire tries to obtain an immediate feeling about a company that the participants discovered only a few minutes before, when reading the text.

Moreover, the social desirability bias must be considered: it consists in wanting to present oneself in a favorable light to one's interlocutors. Indeed, in the case of the questionnaire, respondents may have tended to answer positively because it concerned social and environmental issues. Therefore, they may be unconsciously pushed to adjust their answers according to the image they wish to project (although the questionnaire is anonymous and the answers confidential).

6. Conclusion

6.1. Validation or not of the hypotheses

As a reminder, the hypotheses are:

- H1: Identification, created by storytelling, leads to customer commitment to the brand.
- H2: Emotions, created by storytelling, lead to customer commitment to the brand.

Through our survey, we tried to find out if the two most used forms of storytelling lead to purchase intention and encourage consumers to respond more positively to the brand's marketing. Among these two forms of storytelling, we wanted to know which one was the most effective.

The study validates both hypotheses. Indeed, it was shown that both emotion creation and identification have positive effects on customer engagement with the brand (through word-of-mouth, purchase intention and willingness to pay). Beyond validating the hypotheses, the study allowed us to prioritize the two mechanisms. Indeed, the creation of emotions has a stronger effect on customer loyalty than brand identification.

The study shows that storytelling based on the company's values leads to a better customer engagement than storytelling based on the customer experience. The type of storytelling influences one of the three criteria of trust. Indeed, the type of storytelling does not influence the perceived credibility and benevolence of the company. But the storytelling about values is perceived as having more integrity than the storytelling about the customer experience. Moreover, the study allowed us to demonstrate that value storytelling has a greater effect on all the customer engagement criteria we have chosen (word of mouth, purchase intention, willingness to pay) than customer experience storytelling.

6.2. Limitations of this thesis

The main objective of this thesis was to understand the mechanisms of storytelling, their influence on the customer experience and the interest that these practices represent for companies. We have done complete research on the history of storytelling, its definitions, and its uses by companies. However, it is necessary to identify the limitations of this report. During

our literature review, we focused mainly on two mechanisms: identification and emotion creation. However, storytelling is not only composed of these two elements.

It would have been interesting to analyze the components of trust, by comparing the mechanisms of trust creation in consumers, and the duration of this created trust. We could also have tried to understand how a company manages to present itself as deserving the trust of its customers and how this trust can integrate a company into the culture of a family. Indeed, some brands manage to inscribe themselves within social groups, and manage to integrate new customers simply by the transition of value within these groups.

Another limitation of the analysis can be found in our netnography. We chose to focus on three companies from the same sector. We could have tried to compare companies from different sectors. These companies are large. It would have been relevant to study how the size of a company can impact its choice of storytelling. Would it be easier for a smaller group to become close to its customers' values?

Bouncing off these brands, which have a strong presence on social networks, a complementary research direction to this thesis would be the presence of brands on social networks, and how interactions with customers and prospects is the daily expression of a brand storytelling. Strengthening the research on the digitalization of storytelling and its evolution would have allowed us to have a better vision of the future of storytelling.

Our study therefore has limitations that would be interesting to explore in future research. Finally, the study focused mainly on the positive aspects of storytelling, but the effect of storytelling also has its limits and can sometimes turn against the brand.

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8. Appendix

8.1. Appendix 1

		HeySong	Hunya Foods	King Car
Storytelling around the company's values	Ecology and Sustainability	<p>HeySong Chungli Plant established the "Energy Management Committee" and passed ISO 50001: 2011 energy management system certification in December 2014. In 2015, the Plant#3, Chungli Plant was awarded green building silver medals. In 2017, the heavy oil boilers of the Chungli Plant were completely replaced with natural gas boilers, which could effectively reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The Touliu Plant was also completely replaced with natural gas boilers in 2019 to reduce environmental loads.</p>	<p>Hunya implements SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), a call for action by all countries promoted by the United Nations, as the pivot of the company's CSR vision development and facilitation. Based on the sustainability vision of "Local Sustainability for Happiness Extension", the company has developed five major sustainability strategies and the goals which are to be achieved by 2030. Hunya will continue to facilitate the establishment of the cornerstone of sustainable operations and exert influence by actively carrying out its sustainable governance and business practices in relation to the environment, safety, society, and brand product development to act as an important promoter in shaping a happy life</p> <p>Sustainable operations have always been one of Hunya's continuous tasks. Looking ahead to the future, it is hoped that sustainability can be achieved through our CSR, and can also be combined with the core of the enterprise and transformed into a "cradle to cradle" (C2C) concept.</p>	<p>The company uses farming technology that does not involve any chemical agents or antibiotics, which makes our shrimp popular among consumers. Finally, the Afforestation Park features a large number of planted trees, as well as the Mr. Brown Café Castle, everyone's first step to becoming one with the natural environment. We invite the public to come, take a stroll, and feel the beauty of nature with your heart.</p>

			<p>Being faced with the risks of climate change, our company has introduced ice storage tanks, air compressors, rainwater harvesting pools and solar panels since 1992. It has also invested in renewable energy to realize the "green factories". In 2019, the experimental research on biological recycling was started, by which the discarded ingredients in the production process were turned into organic fertilizers to achieve a circular economy. In 2020, the BS8001 circular economy was officially introduced, and the Industrial Green Growth Program was co-promoted by our company and the Industrial Development Bureau, MOEA.</p> <p>Happy Moments Last Forever Hunya is committed to running its main business and providing safe and quality products and services. It actively demonstrates its determination to pursue the sustainable development and operations, and assumes responsibility to the public through its strategies; activities; and operational performance in relation to economic; social; and environmental indicators in its sustainable business practices.</p>	
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	<p data-bbox="300 987 331 1301" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Action for Young People</p> <p data-bbox="357 593 711 1025">Launched in 1950, HeySong Sarsaparilla is one of the classic drinks that represents the spirit of Taiwan. It keeps inspiring young people to pursue their dreams. Starting in 2018, “Dare to be you” became the main slogan, encouraging young people to awaken that spirit of bravery in their hearts, becoming courageous enough to do what they want to do!</p> <p data-bbox="357 1066 711 1697">HeySong is about to enter the hundred-year mark of its deep cultivation in Taiwan, continuing its insistence on environmental sustainability and its concern for the land of Taiwan. As a result, we have set up the HeySong Educational Foundation in 2013, hoping to start at the “educational” level and move forward from there. Through the power of education, we will bring children closer to the land and create a healthier and happier learning environment for children. + Youtube Video about the Foundation</p>		<p data-bbox="1088 309 1423 981">To fulfill its social responsibilities, the King Car Group established the King Car Cultural & Educational Foundation in 1980. The Foundation's current mission consists of the four chief goals of "global issues, cultural understanding, artistic beauty, and local concern" to promote international awareness among young people. We hope that youths will show concern for both local culture and global issues and become citizens of the world in realizing the goals of sustainable development.</p> <p data-bbox="1088 1014 1423 1980">King Car Cultural & Educational Foundation was established in 1980 based on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1088 1115 1423 1249">■ the King Car Group’s philosophy of sustainable operation “receiving from society, using for society.” Since its establishment, the foundation set its mission to promote social welfare and innovative educational services in response to world trends. Currently, the foundation is hoping to cultivate educational services based on the core objective of advancing social welfare, reading education, art education, and literature promotion, and to connect with the international community. Putting our philosophy on education into action, the foundation is devoted to the mission of cultivating world citizens with life-long learning habits and aesthetic taste.</p>
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Quality

In order to provide consumers with a sweet taste, we continue to produce products such as "We Made" series by looking for high-quality ingredients and emphasizing no added flavors, colorings or preservatives, which let simple and pure ingredients present the beautiful original taste of food. We also promise to reduce sugar by 5% by 2025 in our products and increase the use of animal protein sources that meet animal welfare.

Based on the sustainability vision of "Local Sustainability for Happiness Extension", Hunya will continue to take further initiatives to share its sustainability implementation experiences and food technologies with domestic and foreign manufacturers, as well as assist Taiwan's food industry partners and the newly joined startups in continuously shining a light on the food industry stage. Moreover, we will make persistent efforts to create a happy and inclusive environment for our stakeholders so as to become a leading benchmark and influencer for Taiwan's food industry to move towards happiness and sustainability!

Enjoy Exquisite Taste
77 Division is mainly for the business of leisure foods such as biscuits, chocolates, etc., from which the long-standing 77 Nougat

On the presentation video, they show the journey of a product in the factory => it shows how quality is important for the company.

Mr. Brown Café (Mr. Brown Coffee Co., Ltd.) was established in 1998. King Car has 20 years of experience in coffee beverage development and an excellent brand reputation, and Mr. Brown Café was the company's first crossover into the food and beverage industry. Mr. Brown Café uses specially selected single varietal Arabica coffee beans from superior coffee plantations and the beans are freshly roasted weekly.

		<p>and well-known Wafer Pie and Milano Puff Pastry come into existence. With the high-standard management & control production process comparable to that of technology industry, we hold fast to the philosophy of ‘Honesty, Innovation, Quality and Service’ in running our business and making an effort in maintaining target markets by continuously developing new products to satisfy the tastes of different customer groups, which has completely presented our four decades of unique techniques and insistence on quality in chocolate products. We will keep creating varied snacks that will, we believe, be loved by customers.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Integrity</p>	<p>With the rapidly changing market, HeySong Corporation has been adhering to its values of “serving with integrity”. HeySong dedicated to professionalism is reflected in every aspect of production. Based on professional research and development (R&D) capabilities and innovation beverage equipment, HeySong’s quality has been recognized by all walks of life and awarded a number of international quality, health certification, etc.</p> <p>After six years of difficult operations, it was officially renamed as "HeySong" in 1931. This has been used as the registered trademark until the present; the name</p>	<p>Ever since its foundation in 1976 when the first chocolate product was launched, Hunya has run its business by upholding the philosophy of ‘Honesty, Innovation, Quality and Service’, with responsibility of striving for perfection to provide customers with lovely and fascinating sweets, and add more pleasant vibes to customers’ lives. After the establishment of the two major</p>	

		<p>“HeySong” mainly embodies the hopes that the company's development can be "eternally evergreen" and the eight-mirror prism shape of the trademark outer circle conveys the “pure and bright” honest sincerity of the HeySong Company.</p>		
<p>Storytelling around the founder and the creation of the company</p>	<p>Founder of the company</p>	<p>The HeySong Group was founded by the Chang family in 1925. Mr. Wen-Chi Chang, who is the founder of the company, has long desired to be an entrepreneur since childhood, due to his family background. At the end of 1924, there was a company named “Ni-Co Ni-Co” near to the Taipei Railway Station on Chengchou Road. This company engaged in production of marble soda and sought to sell its business. This led Mr. Chang to take up manufacturing soda, and he raised funds to purchase the equipment of Ni-Co Ni-Co. In 1925, he and his six cousins jointly founded “Chin Shing Co., Ltd”. They first engaged in production of soda under the brand of “Fuji” with the Yamakata trademark, and then Mr. Chang and his two brothers jointly created the brand of “Sanshou” marble soda. This could be regarded as the seed of development for HeySong Group. At that time, Mr. Wen-Chi was responsible</p>		

	<p>for development and production, and his younger brother, Mr. You-Sheng Chang, was in charge of promotion and sales. Their perfect teamwork laid the foundations for the HeySong Group.</p> <p>First founded in 1925, the "Fuji" soda with the "Mountain shape" trademark and the "Sanshou" ramune with the “three brothers joining hands startup icon” trademark, planted the seeds of what will later become the HeySong company. At the time, Mr. Chang Wen-chi was responsible for production and R&D, his brother Mr. Chang Yousheng was responsible for marketing and sales. The brothers worked hard together for the soda business and laid the foundation for the development of the HeySong Company.</p>		
<p>History</p>	<p>In the website there is a very long page with all the milestones of the company history. While reading we can understand all the story of HeySong.</p> <p>HeySong Corporation has been dedicated to the professional beverage business for many years. With the steadily growing revenue, it has also been articulated the corporate values for corporate investment through diversification strategies, to fulfill the corporate vision of “being to provide safe, reliable food and beverages; being to create happy, enjoyable environment</p>	<p>In the website there is a very long page with all the milestones of the company history. While reading we can understand all the story of Hunya Foods. This page insists a lot on the quality prices earned by the company. Hunya has a tourist site, they are proud of it and show it here.</p>	<p>On King Car Website we can find a video which tells the story of the company since its foundation.</p>

<p>Storytelling around the country-of-origin pride</p>	<p>Launched in 1950, HeySong Sarsaparilla is one of the classic drinks that represents the spirit of Taiwan.</p> <p>By 1999, English was added to the HeySong logo, announcing an attempt by the HeySong brand to enter the international market from Taiwan. Slowly but surely, the HeySong corporation has spanned across the decades, from an agrarian society to an industrial society, to today's internet-centric information society, "HeySong" carries the times when the Taiwanese people worked together and harvested the fruits of their labor along with it. In the face of an ever-changing market, we adhere to the business philosophy of "honest service" with a firm grasp on trends and fads, a flexible business model, we gradually established an unwavering industry status in the hearts of the Taiwanese people.</p> <p>HeySong is about to enter the hundred-year mark of its deep cultivation in Taiwan, continuing its insistence on environmental sustainability and its concern for the land of Taiwan. As a result, we have set up the HeySong Educational Foundation in 2013, hoping to start at the "educational" level and move forward from there. Through the power of education, we will bring children closer to the land and create a healthier and happier learning environment for children.</p>	<p>Local Ingredients Utilization Utilize local ingredients in Taiwan to create Taiwanese featured products We choose the Black Diamond Peanut produced in Yunlin to produce our Black Diamond Peanut Nougat and use local lemon, purple yam and Ruby Black Tea to produce Wafer Pie, by which tasty products are presented and at the same time local agriculture in Taiwan is supported.</p>	<p>Promotional video that tells the story of Kavalan Whisky: highlights Taiwan and Yilan County. The territory and the quality of the Taiwanese environment are highlighted.</p>
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Storytelling around the customers	Desires of the customers	<p>Everyone has heard of the advertising slogan “HeySong means soft drink, soft drink means HeySong”. The slogan not only reflects HeySong’s dominance in the Taiwanese beverage industry but also makes us wonder at how our predecessors managed to triumph against all odds.</p> <p>Times have changed. However, consumers don’t just drink to “quench thirst and fight the heat”. Their next desire was for a “fun atmosphere” and now, a “healthy experience”.</p> <p>HeySong has moved with the flow to develop and invent all kinds of new high quality products to meet customer requirements. It is critical to instill into the public consciousness the idea that “Soft drink means HeySong, HeySong is not just soft drinks”.</p>	<p>We will keep creating varied snacks that will, we believe, be loved by customers.</p>	<p>The King Car Group is always pursuing excellence, innovation, and professional organization based on the philosophy of “consumers first.” In response to global trends, the King Car Group has invested a significant amount of research resources to improve the public’s food quality, offer better care to consumers, and create a healthier environment for every one of us in the 21st century.</p> <p>Kavalan whisky promotional video: shows that the product has been created to meet the expectations of the consumers. The story of Kavalan whisky and a Taiwanese product that is ready to make its consumers happy.</p>
	Pleasure of the consumers		<p>By upholding the initial philosophy of ‘Always care about you’ and the brand spirit of ‘You Are My Happiness’, Rivon restarts its journey in hope that people can be connected together through what Rivon provides because every happy event in life is worth celebrating!</p>	<p>Life starts from each cup of Mr. Brown Café aromatic coffee. Each cup of coffee tells a different life story, and Mr. Brown Café shares every beautiful moment of life with you.</p> <p>Since the founding of the first Mr. Brown Café, the company’s mission has always been to “provide customers with good coffee and cultivate local coffee culture.”</p> <p>Buckskin Restaurant Group is all about "enjoying beer." Buckskin pairs its beers with a diverse selection of culinary choices to create a novel and sophisticated approach to beer drinking,</p>

				<p>while satisfying the gastronomic desires of its customers.</p>
<p>Final comment on the company storytelling</p>	<p>HeySong places great emphasis on being a company with integrity and being transparent with their customers. The story of their creation and their creators is also very important and highlighted.</p>	<p>Hunya Foods storytelling is really about its values: Sustainability, Quality and Pleasure. We found this in their statment: "Local Sustainability for Happiness Extension". In its website the company tries to prove its line of conduct which is to preserve the environment while producing products of very high quality.</p>	<p>The storytelling of King Car is quite surprising and different from others. It is very much part of the territory and the different sites of the company. The history of the company and its foundation is not very much emphasized. This is probably related to the fact that having multiple brands, it is a bit difficult to find a common story. The storytelling explains well how the company does everything to satisfy the desires of their customers.</p>	

8.2. Appendix 2



8.3. Appendix 3

You will read a text with storytelling elements and then we will ask you questions about the text. We are looking for diversity of opinion. There are no right or wrong answers. This questionnaire is anonymous and can be completed in 4 minutes. You are going to read a text about a chocolate spread brand, Delichoco. Please read the entire text before answering the questions.

/TEXT 1 or 2/

- I have confidence in the quality of the product offered
- I trust this company to compete with other companies in the market
- This brand takes care of its customers

- The company listens to consumer feedback
- This company is transparent with its customers
- This brand is sincere with consumers
- This company may be subject to scandal
- The company touches me beyond its product
- I want to know more about the company
- Memories come back to me when I read the brand description
- I can easily identify the values put forward by the company
- The image that the company projects is in line with my personal values
- I will recommend this product to my friends and family
- I intend to buy this product
- I would be willing to buy this product even if it is more expensive than its competitors
- This storytelling emphasizes the social and societal impact of the company
- This storytelling focuses on the brand's customer experience and satisfaction
- Who are you?
- How old are you?
- What is your chocolate spread consumption?