

# The Impact of Brand Storytelling and Brand Image on Marketing Performance: A Case Study of Grab Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of brand storytelling and brand image, mediated by purchase decisions, on the marketing performance of PT. Grab Teknologi Indonesia, which at the end of 2023 made its first profit in history and reduced Grab's losses from US\$ 1,74 in 2022 to US\$ 485 million in 2023. Using SEM analysis with data from 96 respondents, results indicate that both brand storytelling and brand image significantly enhance marketing performance, with purchase decisions acting as a critical mediating factor. These findings offer strategic insights for improving marketing performance through enhanced storytelling and brand imaging.

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pengaruh brand storytelling dan brand image yang dimediasi oleh purchase decision terhadap marketing performance PT. Grab Teknologi Indonesia, yang pada akhir tahun 2023 berhasil membukukan laba pertama sepanjang sejarah dan mengurangi kerugian Grab dari US\$ 1,74 juta pada tahun 2022 menjadi US\$ 485 juta pada tahun 2023. Dengan menggunakan analisis SEM dengan data dari 96 responden, hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa brand storytelling dan brand image secara signifikan meningkatkan marketing performance, dengan purchase decision berperan sebagai faktor mediasi yang penting. Temuan ini menawarkan wawasan strategis untuk meningkatkan marketing performance melalui peningkatan storytelling dan brand image.



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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology today has opened up various job opportunities and significantly affected the way of life and various life factors around the world. The increasing number of internet users and online transactions shows the acceleration of technological growth in all aspects of business, which changes the marketing landscape. As a result, companies and business professionals face fierce competition to attract consumer attention and drive demand for products or services (Karampourniotti & Wiedmann, 2021; Lathif & Giovanni, 2022; Apjii.or.id, 2024).

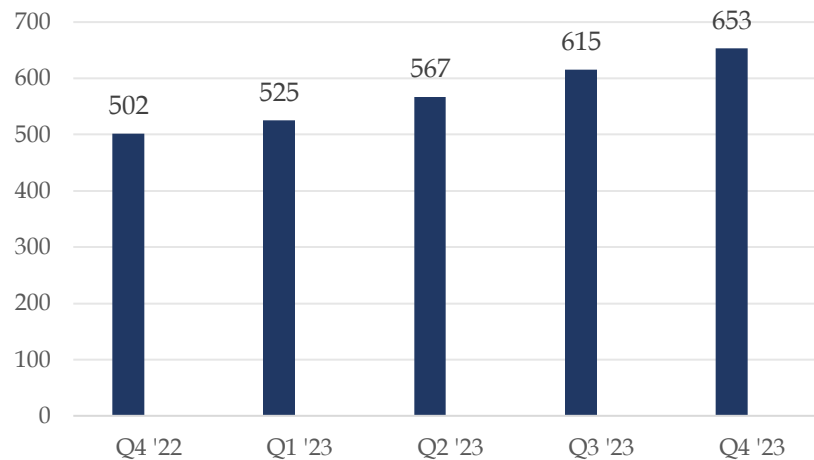
In relation to this, many entrepreneurs develop their business by building an online presence through social media (Verhoef et al., 2021). Digital marketing strategies are carried out to attract the attention of the company's target market (Harahap et al., 2023) in order to influence consumer reactions to make purchases (Huda et al., 2021), and expand the business and adapt to improve and maintain the company (Raharja & Natari, 2021), so that it can improve marketing performance.

In this study, the focus of the discussion is internet users who use Grab. PT Grab Teknologi Indonesia is one of the prominent forces of Indonesian transportation services (Badrany et al., 2021), which has become familiar in society and is growing bigger day by day (Tanjung et al., 2021). On-demand service platform Grab started its business as a transportation company, before rapidly expanding into services such as ordering food or groceries, sending packages, paying for online purchases, or accessing loan and insurance services, all in one application (Grab, 2024). Effective marketing is one of the keys to Grab's marketing success. However, the company does not stop there. One of the key strategies that the company has implemented to strengthen market dominance is through story-based promotions that have a strong influence on purchasing transactions (Rizkia & Oktafani, 2020).

**Table 1** Group's Key Operational and Financial Highlights Fourth Quarter 2023

(\$ in millions, unless otherwise stated)	Q4 2023	Q4 2022	YoY % Change	YoY % Change (Constant Currency4)
	(unaudited)	(unaudited)		
<b>Operating metrics:</b>				
GMW	5,441	4,97	9%	8%
On-Demand GMW3	4,122	3,499	18%	17%
MTUs (millions of users)	37.7	33.6	12%	
GMV per MTU (\$)	144	149	-3%	3%
Partner incentives	172	174	-1%	
Consumer incentives	225	238	-5%	
<b>Financial measures:</b>				
Revenue	653	502	30%	30%
Profit/(Loss) for the period	11	(391)	NM	
Total Segment Adjusted EBITDA	228	112	104%	
Adjusted EBITDA	35	(111)	NM	
Net cash used in operating activities	(26)	(23)	-9%	
Adjusted Free Cash Flow	1	(32)	NM	

Source: Grab, 2024



**Figure 1** Grab Profit From 4<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2022 to 4<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2023

*Source: Trading View, Inc., 2024*

It is noted that throughout history, Grab made its first profit by declaring a profit of US\$ 11 million and making revenue of US\$ 653 million in the last quarter of 2023, throughout October-December. Compared to the last quarter of the previous year which still lost US\$ 391 million, Grab's profit has clearly skyrocketed. The one-year performance drastically reduced Grab's loss in 2022 at US\$ 1,74 to US\$ 485 million in 2023 (Grab, 2024).

Although Grab has made a profit, it still has to do and improve its marketing performance. This is intended so that the company can survive amidst the uncertain business dynamics in the application-based transportation sector. Marketing performance is the level of achievement obtained from all marketing activity procedures of a company. This level is one of the indicators that illustrates the progress or decline of a company. Basically, all marketing efforts and strategies implemented by entrepreneurs are the definition of marketing performance (Chong & Ali, 2022).

There has been research on the impact of brand image on marketing performance, but the results vary. For example, Propheto et al., (2020) found that brand image has no substantial direct influence on marketing performance. These findings contradict prior studies by Rachmawati & Andjarwati, (2020); Tanjung et al., (2021); Sudarman & Laila, (2023), which found that brand image has a favorable and significant influence on marketing performance, demonstrating its importance in consumer choice.

This study also examines how brand storytelling influences Grab's first historical profit, where not many previous researchers have discussed this phenomenon. In addition, the influence of purchase decisions on marketing performance remains insufficiently explored, with limited prior studies available as basis. Yasa et al., (2020) provide some insight into marketing performance measurement using indicators like annual sales, market share growth, and operating profits, but not directly estimated how purchase decision contributes at using marketing strategy to improve marketing performance. Moreover, the relationship between purchase decisions and marketing performance has not been a

specific focus in most prior studies, leaving a lack of clarity and comprehensive understanding of how these variables interact.

This study seeks to elucidate the correlation between brand storytelling and brand image in relation to marketing performance, with purchase decision serving as a mediating variable. The central problem addressed is how to improve marketing performance at PT. Grab Teknologi Indonesia through brand storytelling and brand image, based on consumer purchase decisions.

From the business phenomena and differences in research results from previous researchers, this study attempts to provide input or solutions to existing problems by including purchase decisions as intervening variables, bridging the existing research gap and exploring strategies for improving marketing performance at Grab in Indonesia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Marketing Performance

Performance is defined as the level of achievement of individual or group work from achieving goals and completing tasks within specified time limits. Marketing performance is very important to increase trading capacity and develop company trade (Basuki & Husni, 2022). According to Ferdinand, (2003); Suryani et al., (2021), good marketing performance is stated in three points: the first is the selling value, which is represented by the worth of money or the unit of product sale. Second, sales growth is demonstrated by comparing the rise in sales of the same product over a given period of time. Finally, market share is determined by comparing the product's position in dominating the market to competitors, resulting in corporate profits. Marketing performance improvement strategies can be carried out in several ways, one of them is according to Muis et al., (2022), said that with consumers making purchases, sales will increase and approach the profit target. This was also expressed by Naylor, Lamberton & West, (2012); Ketaren & Ruswanti, (2022), which states that spending on purchases made by consumers will increase company profits. Therefore, in this study, **H5 is formulated, namely: purchase decisions have a significant positive effect on marketing performance.**

### Purchase Decision

Purchasing decisions are a process of collecting and combining information and knowledge from individuals and organizations before making a purchase by choosing one of two alternatives (Ilhamalimy & Mahaputra, 2021). Kotler & Keller, (2016); Rizkia & Oktafani, (2020), mentioned that choosing a product, brand, supplier, time of purchase, amount purchased, and payment method are elements to understand purchase decisions. In this study, the indicators used are the product of choice, the brand of choice, and time to purchase. The survival of a company is largely determined by consumer behavior, therefore, creating and retaining consumers is an important key for a company to be successful in competing (Oktari et al., 2020). Brand storytelling strategy that has been proven by Tsai, (2020), able to influence consumers to make purchases of a product or service. This was clarified by Yueh & Zheng, (2019), which states that the use of brand storytelling by business actors can increase consumer purchasing decisions, therefore, this study

formulates an **H1: Brand storytelling has a significant positive effect on purchase decisions.**

Besides that, in increasing purchasing decisions, according to Rachmawati & Andjarwati, (2020); Yusuf, (2021); Tauran et al., (2022), said that consumer purchasing decisions are positively and significantly impacted by brand image; a similar thing was also expressed by Putri & Nilowardono, (2021) which states that customers will be more inclined to purchase products or services with a good brand image, for this reason an **H2 is formulated: Brand image has a significant positive effect on purchase decisions.**

### **Brand Storytelling**

Storytelling is a natural way to capture attention, maintain interest, and create an emotional connection with the listener. Storytelling is a method of explaining an event through narrative storytelling. Through stories as a form of branded content, consumers will develop an emotional connection with the characters and elements of the brand. Stories can bring a brand to life (Bauer et al., 2016). In marketing, brand storytelling is a strategic element for creating challenges and competitive advantages (Rachman et al., 2024). In creating trust and understanding of the relationship between consumers and companies, many companies use brand storytelling as a marketing strategy (Gensler et al., 2013; Hong et al., 2021). Storytelling provides consumers with an experience of the product they are using. Stories that touch the hearts of listeners will increase interest or even action to make a purchase transaction (ZA et al., 2021). The brand storytelling indicators used in this study are interesting ideas, the meaning of the story, and the precise presentation of the story that will arouse emotional involvement in consumers (Mavilinda et al., 2023).

Many business actors on a small, medium, and large scale have proven that brand storytelling strategies are effective in attracting and retaining consumers, which will then also raise the products or service's selling value (Lundqvist et al., 2013; Rahman et al., 2023). Through brand storytelling, the brand image the company wants to convey will be more easily and more positively accepted by consumers, which then will increase their willingness to pay more for the product or service (Pulizzi, 2012; Rahman et al., 2023). From this research, **H3 can be drawn: Brand storytelling has a positive and significant influence on the marketing performance of PT Grab Teknologi Indonesia.**

### **Brand Image**

Brand image, according to Aaker (1991), is a network of associations that are usually arranged in a coherent and logical manner. This implies that if customers believe there is a consistent relationship between the product's physical look, information clarity, advantages articulation, color, and logo, they and the general public will have a favorable impression of the brand (Pertwi et al., 2023). The company's brand image is the image conveyed by a consumer brand. After experiencing the advertised goods or services, the consumer's perception of the brand is considered to have an impact on their decision to use that product or service, both favorably and unfavorably (Propheto et al., 2020). When consumers compare brands to each other, brand image can change the way they view those

brands. Widianti, (2022); Putri & Nilowardono, (2021), mentions that the indicators for measuring brand image are: recognition, reputation, and affinity.

Propheto et al., (2020), has conducted research on marketing performance, the results show that brand image has no direct impact on marketing performance. While Suryani et al., (2021); Sudarman & Lailla, (2023), who also conducted research on marketing performance, found that brand image is a crucial component that determines marketing performance and indicates its important role in consumer choice. From this research, an **H4 can be drawn: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on the marketing performance of PT Grab Teknologi Indonesia.**

## RESEARCH METHOD

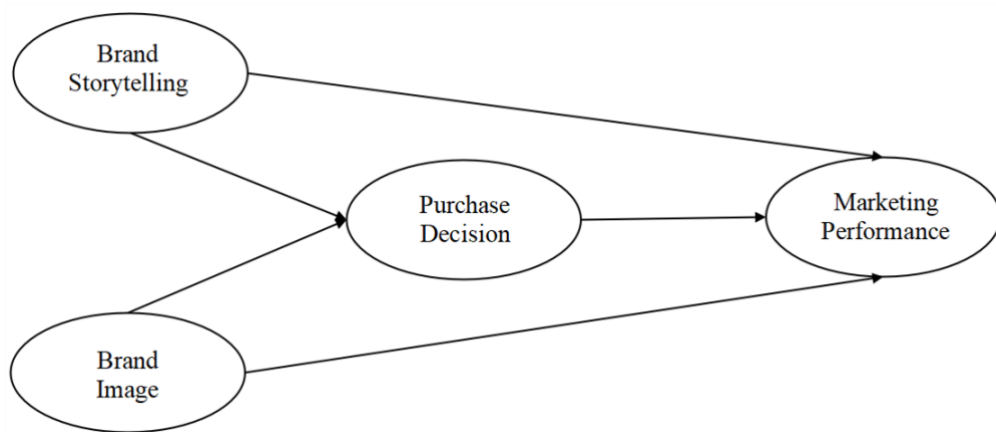
This study uses a quantitative method. The quantitative technique involves conducting research utilizing samples and numerical data to investigate a specific population or sample. Quantitative data gathering and testing typically include random sampling. The study's population or sample consisted of customers who had made transactions on the Grab application and whose numbers were unknown (Sugiyono, 2013; Putri & Nilowardono, 2021). Data was collected using a survey in the form of a structured questionnaire distributed to respondents (Rusmayadi et al., 2024).

Based on Hait et al., (2014); Putri & Nilowardono, (2021), the sample size is determined by multiplying the total number of indicators of the variable by a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 10. In this study there are 12 indicators, the minimum number of respondents is  $12 \times 5 = 60$ , and the maximum number of respondents is  $12 \times 10 = 120$ , the respondents used are  $12 \times 8 = 96$ .

To perform data processing, this study used SEM-PLS analysis with SmartPLS. In marketing research, Structural Equation Model (SEM) is a method for estimating complex models with connection and chains of influence between theoretical constructs that cannot be directly observed (Hair et al., 2017; Martinez-Lopez, 'Gazquez-Abad,' & Sousa, 2013; Guenther et al., 2023). The data was processed using Partial Least Square (PLS) with a Likert scale of measurement, including evaluating the perspective, opinion, and perception of individuals or groups towards certain social phenomena. The Likert scale used ranges from score 1 to 5, in which 'disagree' is represented by score of 1, and 'agree' is represented by a score of 5 (Suryani et al., 2021).

According to Hamid & Anwar, (2019), steps in using SEM-PLS are as follows: the first step is to create a strong model specification, which is then evaluated with the measurement model or outer model. This procedure begins with a construct validity test, which includes convergent validity (by loading factor value analysis), AVE, and discriminant validity (using cross loading). Additionally, reliability is assessed using composite reliability. Construct validity is verified by examining the composite reliability value that reflects the reliability and validity of the construct as a whole. After that, evaluation of the inner model or structural model is carried out to assess the influence between latent variables through path coefficient analysis using the bootstrapping method. Evaluation of the structural

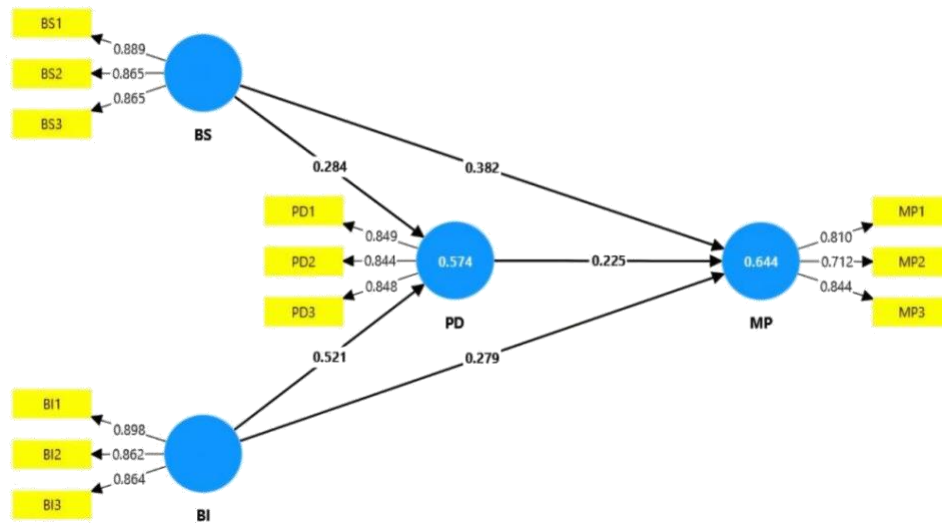
model includes analysis of the R-Square value and significance level to estimate the quality and strength of the relationship in the model.



**Figure 2** Concept Framework

**RESULT and DISCUSSION**

Analysis of questionnaire data collected from 96 respondents who have made transactions in Grab in Indonesia was conducted by categorizing respondents according to gender, age, and monthly income. There were 16 male and 80 female respondents out of the 96 total. Compared to men, women are more likely to utilize the Grab transportation app. From the age factor, it reveals that there are 86 respondents aged 18-28 years, 5 aged 29-39 years, 4 aged 40-50 years, and 1 aged 51-61 years. From the data, it can be said that respondents of productive age use the Grab transportation service application more. In terms of income, the data shows that there are 82 respondents with a majority income ranging from IDR 0 to IDR 5,000,000 per month, while 13 respondents earn IDR 5,000,001 to IDR 10,000,000 per month, and only 1 respondent earns IDR 10,000,001 to IDR. 15,000,000 per month.



**Figure 3** SEM PLS Diagram Result Test  
 Source: Data Processing Result, 2024

**Table 2** *Outer Loading*

	BI	BS	MP	PD
BI1	0,898			
BI2	0,862			
BI3	0,864			
BS1		0,889		
BS2		0,865		
BS3		0,865		
MP1			0,810	
MP2			0,712	
MP3			0,844	
PD1				0,849
PD2				0,844
PD3				0,848

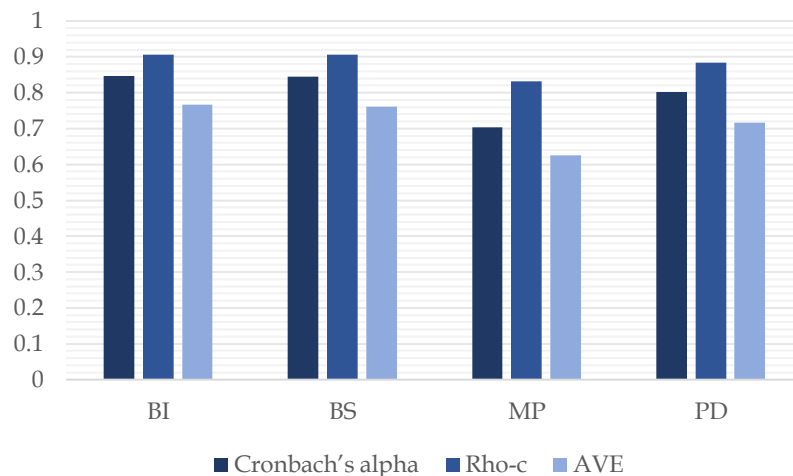
Source: Data Processing Result, 2024

The value of the loading factor will be considered valid or meet convergent validity if the value is greater than 0,7 (Suharyanto & Rahman, 2022). The lowest loading factor in table 2 is 0,712, which means that the indicator is valid or meets convergent validity.

**Table 3** *Construct Validity and Reliability*

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
BI	0,847	0,907	0,766
BS	0,844	0,906	0,762
MP	0,703	0,832	0,625
PD	0,803	0,884	0,717

Source: Data Processing Result, 2024



**Figure 4** *Construct Validity and Reliability*  
Source; Data Processing Result, 2024



In the Cronbach Alpha construct, the recommended value is above 0,7 (Lathif & Giovanni, 2022). Table 3 shows that all construct values are above 0,7 with the lowest being 0,703.

Reliability is tested by calculating the composite reliability value of the construct measurement indicators. The results will be considered satisfactory if the composite reliability value is above 0,7 (Muis et al., 2022). Table 3 shows that every construct in the calculated model satisfies the criteria for discriminant validity since all composite reliability values are over 0,7, with the lowest composite reliability being 0,832.

The minimum limit of AVE in the study is above 0,5 (Rusmayadi et al., 2024). In table 3, all variables show AVE values higher than 0,5 with the lowest value of 0,625, so the minimum limit of AVE has been met. It can be concluded that all indicators in this study are considered valid and reliable.

**Table 4** *Fornell-Larcker Test*

	BI	BS	MP	PD
BI	0,875			
BS	0,753	0,873		
MP	0,733	0,745	0,790	
PD	0,734	0,676	0,689	0,847

*Source: Data Processing Result, 2024*

The discriminant validity test result are seen through the Fornell-Larcker criteria. The findings of the Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis of all variables are considered valid, as Table 4 demonstrates that each construct's square root of AVE is higher than its correlation with other constructs (Hartanto et al., 2022).

**Table 5** *R-Square Test*

	R-square	R-square adjusted
MP	0,644	0,633
PD	0,574	0,565

*Source: Data Processing Result, 2024*

The R-Square value for the Marketing Performance (MP) variable shows a value of 0,644, indicating that the Brand Image (BI), Brand Storytelling (BS), and Purchase Decision (PD) variables affect Marketing Performance by 64,4%. While for Purchase Decision a value of 0,574 is obtained, indicating that 57,4% of the Purchase Decision variable can be influenced by Brand Image and Brand Storytelling.

**Table 6** *Mediation Test*

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
BI → MP	0,279	0,276	2,159	0,031
BI → PD	0,521	0,518	4,969	0,000
BS → MP	0,382	0,384	3,960	0,000

BS → PD	0,284	0,289	2,761	0,006
PD → MP	0,225	0,229	2,050	0,040

*Source: Data Processing Result, 2024*

## DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: Brand storytelling has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. Based on the results of the hypothesis test conducted, brand storytelling positively and significantly affects purchase decisions as reflected in the results of the t statistics  $2,761 > 1,96$  and p values  $0,006 < 0,05$ . This is indicating that the better the Grab's storytelling, the more beneficial the impact on purchasing decisions; hence, hypothesis 1 is accepted. Brand storytelling in this study is implemented in interesting ideas, story meaning, and precisely the presentation of stories that will arouse consumer emotional involvement and provide valuable experiences to consumers that foster a desire to make transactions, this results are as previously studied by Yueh & Zheng, (2019); Rizkia & Oktafani, (2020); Tsai, (2020); Haudi et al., (2020); Ebrahim, (2020); Shahrin et al., (2022); Rahman et al., (2023); Munir et al., (2024).

Hypothesis 2: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decision. Brand Image on purchase decision shows t statistics  $4,969 > 1,96$  and p values  $0,000 < 0,05$ , then Brand Image positively and significantly affects purchase decision, so hypothesis 2 is accepted. The results prove that Grab's recognition, reputation, and affinity greatly influence purchase decision in choosing transportation service applications and making transaction decisions. A good company brand image shapes consumer perceptions and adds value beyond the product or service itself, which will influence the decision-making process, leading consumers to choose them over competitors. These results are in line with previous research by Rachmawati & Andjarwati, (2020); Tsai, (2020); Putri & Nilowardono, (2021); Yusuf, (2021); Tauran et al., (2022); Sudarman & Lailla, (2023).

Hypothesis 3: Brand storytelling has a positive and significant effect on marketing performance. From the data analysis results, it can be seen that brand storytelling on marketing performance shows t statistics  $3,960 > 1,96$  and p values  $0,000 < 0,05$ . Which means that the better PT. Grab Teknologi Indonesia in implementing interesting story ideas, story meaning, and accuracy of story presentation, the higher the company's marketing performance. Thus, brand storytelling positively and significantly affects marketing performance, hence hypothesis 3 is accepted. The results that prove that brand storytelling has an effect on marketing performance are in line with previous research by Yasa et al., (2020); Marpaung & Hermawan, (2022); Rahman et al., (2023); Rachman et al., (2024); Munir et al., (2024); Suryana, (2024).

Hypothesis 4: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on marketing performance. Brand image on marketing performance shows t statistics  $2,159 > 1,96$  and p values  $0,031 < 0,05$ . The more Grab highlights the level of recognition, reputation, and good affinity that Grab has, the higher Grab's marketing performance. A positive brand image increases the likelihood that consumers will respond to commercials and promotions, since the brand is already perceived as reputable and valuable. A strong brand image provides

a competitive edge, allowing campaigns to stand out in crowded markets. So brand image positively and significantly affects marketing performance, so hypothesis 4 is accepted. These results are in line with previous research by Rachmawati & Andjarwati, (2020); Tanjung et al., (2021); Suryani et al., (2021); Yusuf, (2021); Basuki & Husni, (2022); & Sudarman & Lailla, (2023).

Hypothesis 5: Purchase decision has a significant and positive effect on marketing performance. Purchase decision on marketing performance shows t statistics  $2,050 > 1,96$  and p values  $0,040 < 0,05$ , so the purchase decision positively and significantly affects marketing performance, so hypothesis 5 is accepted. Grab's brand storytelling and brand image-based marketing strategy have succeeded in attracting consumers' attention to make purchases in the Grab application. The success that makes consumers make decisions and buy products or services in Grab will have an impact on increasing various aspects of PT. Grab Indonesia's marketing performance. Research on purchase decisions that affect marketing performance is also discussed in previous research by Yasa et al., (2020), which states that marketing performance measurement can be done through annual sales, market share growth, and operating profits.

Brand storytelling used by Grab, such as "One app can do it all," "The Everyday Everything App," and "Charging Forward Together," not only shows the ease of use of features in the Grab application, where everyone from all ages and backgrounds can use it, but also the completeness of the application that can be used for many things, from ordering food, shopping, and transportation, as well as various security features to ensure customers and partners are safe when using Grab. For example, in Grab advertisements with the hashtags "#Percaya," "#NoMinder," "SelaluJadiAndalan," "#TerusUsaha," "#SepiringKenangan," and so on, which highlight Grab's mission to improve life in the digital economy, such as stories of drivers who overcome difficulties and families who rely on Grab services for their daily needs, are easily evoke emotions such as gratitude, concern, happiness, and hope. This interesting brand storytelling strategy provides emotional resonance that builds customer trust and loyalty, thus strengthening the brand image of PT. Grab Teknologi in the eyes of the public. This strategy is also used by similar companies, such as Gojek "Pasti Ada Jalan" and Maxim, which often use animated advertisements and a simple everyday approach.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study has demonstrated that brand storytelling and brand image strategies of PT. Grab Teknologi Indonesia have a positive and significant indirect influence mediated by purchase decisions on marketing performance. The direct influence of brand storytelling and brand image marketing strategies on marketing performance has also been proven to show positive and significant results, with the direct influence of brand storytelling on marketing performance being stronger than the influence of brand image on marketing performance. This study also emphasizes how important it is for businesses to maximize their marketing strategies by investing in compelling brand storytelling and strengthening their brand image to increase consumer interest in the brand, which will influence their purchasing decisions. This will benefit the business and improve overall marketing

performance, not just in on-demand services, but also other region and market segments, for example Patagonia “Don’t Buy This Jacket” and even at fundraising event.

However, this study has limitations. First, the indicators taken from each of the variables studied were only 3, so that other variables were not studied extensively. Second, due to limited resources, the number of samples that currently represent the population is only 96 participants, which can limit the opportunity to draw overall conclusions. Third, this study only limits the criteria to age, gender, and income, so that specific conclusions involving city of origin, religion, education, and status cannot be drawn.

Future-related research directions will include increasing the number of research indicators, expanding participant samples online and offline with more diverse demographic factor, and studying the involvement of other related variables like consumer trust, platform usability, or regional market dynamics, to better understand the phenomenon that links marketing strategies to consumer decisions, which will ultimately affect the company's overall marketing performance. For future research, it is advisable to adopt a longitudinal research design, where data is collected periodically over a defined time frame, usually every three months, with the same group of respondents. This method will enable researchers to gather more comprehensive and detailed data, providing valuable insights into the changes or trends of the variables under study over time (Firdaus, 2020; Firdaus & Mulyanto, 2020; Firdaus et al., 2021).

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