



Analysis Of Narrative Strategy And The Use Of Family Emotion In Marjan Syrup Ad Storytelling During Ramadan As An Effort To Build Emotional Brand Attachment

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Abstract. Competition for food and beverage products is very tight, especially during the month of Ramadan. Storytelling has become a crucial strategy for creating brand differentiation. Marjan Syrup advertisements consistently use strong, cinematic narratives, which are different from other seasonal ads, by emphasizing the values of togetherness and family. This research aims to: (1) Analyze the narrative structure and strategy used in the Marjan Ramadan ad. (2) Identify how the representation of family emotion is constructed in the narrative. (3) Analyze the role of this storytelling strategy in building Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA), which is measured through the dimensions of Affection, Connection, and Passion (Thomson et al., 2005). This study uses a Descriptive Qualitative approach with the Narrative Semiotic Analysis method (Roland Barthes / Vladimir Propp) applied to the Marjan Syrup Ramadan edition advertisement. The object of analysis covers denotative elements (visual, plot, characters) and connotative/myth elements (the meaning of family, warmth). Predictively, the research results show that Marjan's narrative strategy, which packages folklore or fiction with a resolution that always culminates in the moment of breaking the fast together, successfully links the brand deeply with the social myth of family warmth during Ramadan. This emotional attachment (EBA) is formed through narrative resonance that creates feelings of nostalgia (Affection), makes Marjan a symbol of tradition (Connection), and triggers annual anticipation (Passion). Storytelling based on cultural narratives and family emotion is an effective marketing communication strategy to move beyond brand awareness and achieve a strong level of brand attachment, making Marjan a top of mind and cultural icon of Ramadan.

Keywords: Storytelling, Narrative Strategy, Ramadan Ad, Family Emotion, Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA), Marjan Syrup.

INTRODUCTION

Modern marketing communication has shifted from merely delivering product information (transactional advertising) to creating deep experiences and relationships with consumers (*emotional branding*). This strategy is increasingly crucial in the Indonesian market, especially during the month of Ramadan a period where consumer spending significantly increases and advertising competition reaches its peak. Ramadan is not only a season of worship but also a cultural moment strongly associated with the values of togetherness, warmth, and family tradition.

In this context, Marjan Syrup advertisements have positioned themselves as a unique and iconic phenomenon. Unlike competitors who tend to focus on discounts or product features, Marjan consistently invests resources in a cinematic *storytelling* format that resembles a short film or series, often adapting local folklore or myths with fantastic visuals (Examples: Marjan's ads featuring Dewi Sri, Baruna, or Putri Hijau).

This uniqueness lies in the narrative strategy employed. Despite the fantasy plot and heroic conflicts presented, the Marjan narrative always concludes at the same resolution point: the moment of family warmth during *iftar* (breaking the fast) accompanied by the Marjan syrup product. The annual repetition of this structure has created a *Ramadan Media Ritual* among the Indonesian community.

This research views the Marjan advertisement not just as an effort to increase immediate sales, but as a systematic endeavor to build Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA), which is the level of strong emotional connection between consumers and the brand (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). By leveraging the highly valued family emotions during Ramadan, the Marjan narrative attempts to plant the brand as a symbol of tradition, nostalgia, and harmony.

Therefore, this research is important for thoroughly dissecting how the narrative strategy is constructed, how family emotion is exploited, and the extent to which the synergy of these two elements successfully forms Marjan's Emotional Brand Attachment, which transcends mere *brand awareness* towards long-term loyalty and emotional attachment.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Concepts of Marketing Communication and Storytelling Advertising

1. The Role of Advertising in Seasonal Marketing

Advertising is a key element of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) that aims to shape consumer awareness, attitude, and ultimately, purchase decisions. In seasonal marketing, particularly during Ramadan, advertising functions as more than just a product announcement; it becomes a cultural marker. A brand that succeeds in this context is one that can link itself to the dominant cultural and emotional values of that season (Shimp, 2010). Marjan Syrup advertising is a prime example, where its appearance signals the approach of the holy month, transforming it into a seasonal brand icon (Nugroho & Suryani, 2020).

2. Storytelling in Advertising

Storytelling is a communication strategy where a brand conveys its values, identity, and message through a cohesive narrative. Effective storytelling does not just present information, but also evokes emotion and makes the consumer feel involved in the plot (Holt, 2004). In advertising, storytelling shifts the focus from the product (what is sold) to the experience and value (why the brand matters to the consumer).

B. Narrative Strategy: Dissecting the Structure of Marjan Ads

The narrative strategy refers to the framework used by advertisers to construct an engaging and persuasive story. To analyze the structure of Marjan ads, which often take a serial format, two classic structuralist approaches are highly relevant:

1. Narrative Structure (Vladimir Propp)

Propp (1968) identified 31 "functions" or recurring narrative elements in folktales. Although Propp focused on folktales, this framework can be modified to analyze the plot of narrative advertisements:

- a. Initial Situation: Introduction of the background and characters (e.g., peaceful life before conflict arises).
- b. Conflict (Lack/Villain): The hero (the character representing good or value) faces a challenge or antagonist (e.g., a monster, evil force, or drought).
- c. Hero's Journey/Action: A series of events performed by the hero to overcome the conflict.
- d. Resolution/Denouement: The conflict is resolved. In Marjan ads, this resolution of the fantastic conflict always concludes with a transition to the moment the family gathers to break the fast.

- e. The Brand as Reward: The product (Marjan Syrup) is presented as part of the reward or the ultimate symbol of harmony after the struggle or victory.
2. Narrative Semiotic Analysis (Roland Barthes)

Barthes (1964) proposed three layers of meaning essential for understanding advertisements:

 - a. Denotation: The literal or descriptive meaning (e.g., a bottle of syrup, a scene at the dining table, a character holding a weapon).
 - b. Connotation: The culturally associated meaning (e.g., the red color of the syrup connotes warmth or energy; the iftar scene connotes peace and gratitude).
 - c. Myth: The meaning that is institutionalized and viewed as a social truth or ideology. Marjan ads create the Myth of the Ideal Ramadan Family, where warmth, togetherness, and peace are always ensured and symbolized by the presence of the Marjan brand (Putra & Hidayat, 2022).
- C. Family Emotion and Cultural Resonance in Advertising

Marjan's advertising is effective because it leverages family emotion, which is the highest cultural value in Indonesia, particularly during Ramadan. This emotion creates a strong Cultural Resonance:

 1. Warmth and Intimacy (Affective Appeal): The use of soft lighting (dusk light), moving music, and affectionate character interaction creates an atmosphere that evokes feelings of emotion and peace, transferring these positive emotions to the brand (Sutherland, 2005).
 2. Nostalgia: The consistency of the theme and ad format from year to year evokes the emotion of nostalgia (a longing for past Ramadans). Nostalgia is proven to be a strong mediator between storytelling and purchase intention because it creates a deep attachment to the past (Junaidi et al., 2025).

D. Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA)

Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA) is the main dependent variable in this research, defined as the level of strong emotional connection felt by consumers towards a brand, transcending behavioral loyalty or satisfaction (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). EBA explains why consumers are willing to pay a premium price, reject alternatives, and even defend the brand. EBA can be measured through three main interconnected dimensions (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005):

EBA Dimension	Theoretical Definition	Relevance to Marjan Ads
1. Affection	Feelings of deep love, affection, and peace that a consumer feels towards the brand.	The Marjan brand is associated with the feeling of family love and the comfort of homecoming after the internal struggle of Ramadan.
2. Connection	The feeling that the brand has a deep psychological proximity and relevance to the consumer's self-identity or values.	Consumers feel Marjan is an obligatory symbol/ritual of their Ramadan; Marjan is connected to their identity as part of the Indonesian family tradition.
3. Passion	Intense desire, enthusiasm, or strong anticipation for the brand, even anxiety if unavailable.	Triggers annual anticipation for the launch of the new Marjan ad (Brand Anticipation).

This emotional attachment is formed because Marjan's storytelling consistently and repeatedly succeeds in linking the brand to consumers' emotional needs for harmony, tradition, and togetherness, and not merely the functional need for a sweet drink.

E. Relationship Between Narrative Storytelling and Emotional Brand Attachment

The conceptual model of this research is based on the hypothesis that an effective narrative strategy and the well-constructed use of family emotion will trigger EBA.

{Storytelling Narrative (Marjan Ad)} + {Family Emotion} implies {Creation of Cultural Myth} implies {Emotional Brand Attachment (Affection, Connection, Passion)}

Storytelling acts as an emotional bridge that transfers the positive meaning of the hero narrative and family warmth to the brand. The fantastic narrative serves as an attention grabber, while the resolution scene (iftar) functions as an emotional anchor that binds the brand into the high-value cultural context of Ramadan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Approach and Type

This research uses a Descriptive Qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is chosen because the goal is to understand, interpret, and explain the meanings (narrative meaning, family emotion meaning, and brand attachment meaning) contained in the visual and verbal text of the advertisement (Creswell, 2014).

The research type is descriptive-analytical, focusing on systematically describing the phenomenon of Marjan Syrup Ramadan Ad Storytelling and deeply analyzing how these narrative elements operate to build Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA).

B. Object and Unit of Analysis

1. Research Object

- The main object of this research is the Marjan Syrup Ramadan Edition Ad from 2023, featuring the folklore story of "Baruna the Guardian of the Ocean."
- Reason for Object Selection: This ad was chosen due to its thematic consistency in using long, cinematic visual storytelling, the contrast between the fantasy storyline and the realistic ending (the iftar moment), and the high level of cultural resonance and brand anticipation it generated among the public.

2. Unit of Analysis

The units of analysis in this research are:

- Visual Text: All elements of images, cinematography, characters, and product appearances in the advertisement.
- Verbal/Audio Text: Dialogue, voice narration, sound effects, and background music used to build emotion and mood.
- Narrative Structure: The sequence of plot, conflict, and resolution in the advertisement's storyline.

C. Data Collection Techniques

The data used is primary data in the form of the ad content. The data collection techniques employed are:

- Non-Participant Observation: The researcher repeatedly observes and records (via screenshots or scene transcripts) the Marjan Syrup Ramadan Ad broadcast (on YouTube or other digital platforms) to obtain complete visual, audio, and scene sequence details.
- Documentation: Collection of secondary data in the form of dialogue transcripts (if available), background information about the ad production, as well as public reviews and ad performance data (views, comments) to complete the context.

D. Data Analysis Method

The main method used is Narrative Semiotic Analysis, operationalized using the frameworks of Roland Barthes and Propp's narrative structure. The analysis process is conducted through the following stages:

Analysis Stage	Theoretical Method Used	Analysis Objective
1. Denotation Analysis	Roland Barthes Semiotics	To objectively describe what is seen and heard in every shot or key scene of the ad (setting, characters, product).
2. Connotation Analysis	Roland Barthes Semiotics	To interpret the cultural or associative meaning of the denotative signs. To find out how the visual of "family" is associated with the meaning of "warmth" or "gratitude."

Analysis Stage	Theoretical Method Used	Analysis Objective
3. Myth & Ideology Analysis	Roland Barthes Semiotics	To uncover the ideology or "social truth" being promoted, namely how Marjan is positioned as a symbol of Ramadan togetherness (The Myth of the Ideal Family) which always serves as the resolution to all conflicts.
4. Narrative Structure Analysis	Propp's Functions & Storytelling Framework	To map the ad's storyline (Plot): Identify the Initial Situation, Conflict (Antagonist/Villain), Hero's Action, and Final Resolution (The function of the Marjan syrup product as a reward/story closure).
5. Contribution to EBA Analysis	Thompson, MacInnis, & Park Framework (2005)	To link the Narrative and Semiotic findings with the three dimensions of EBA: Affection, Connection, and Passion to explain how storytelling emotionally binds the brand.

E. Data Validity Check (Triangulation)

To ensure the validity of the findings, this qualitative research uses the technique of Data Source and Theoretical Triangulation:

1. Data Source Triangulation: The results of the narrative semiotic analysis of the ad will be strengthened with secondary data, such as public comments (from YouTube or social media platforms) or media reviews. This helps ensure that the interpretation found by the researcher has resonance or justification from audience perception (reception).
2. Theoretical Triangulation: The use of more than one relevant theoretical framework (e.g., combining Barthes' Semiotics with Propp's Structure, then linking it to EBA) to review the data from various perspectives, making the interpretation richer and more comprehensive.

F. Relevant Research

The following relevant research, which the author has presented, will serve as an essential foundation for analyzing the narrative strategy, the use of family emotion, and their impact on the emotional attachment of the Marjan Syrup brand.

No.	Research Title	Principal Author/Writer	Core Discussion
1.	The Effect of Storytelling Branding and Nostalgia Emotion on Marjan Syrup Ramadhan Purchase Intention	Not specified in the snippet, but a quantitative study with 200 respondents.	Analyzes the impact of storytelling branding on purchase intention with nostalgia emotion as a mediating variable, using Marjan Syrup's Ramadan advertisements from the last 3 years. The results show that storytelling branding has a positive effect on purchase intention, both directly and through the mediation of nostalgia emotion. This confirms the importance of emotional narrative in strengthening consumer engagement.

No.	Research Title	Principal Author/Writer	Core Discussion
2.	ABSTRACT: This study aims to examine the influence of emotional connection and perceived message credibility in Ramadhan-themed storytelling advertisements on brand awareness and purchase intention, using Syrup Marjan as the case study.	Daffa Bayu Cakrabuana (Thesis, 2025)	Examines the influence of emotional connection and perceived message credibility in Ramadan-themed Marjan Syrup storytelling advertisements on brand awareness and purchase intention. The main finding is that emotional connection has a significant influence on both brand awareness and purchase intention, indicating that emotional involvement in storytelling plays a dominant role in affecting consumer behavior during the Ramadan campaign.
3.	Roland Barthes Semiotics Analysis on Marjan Ad 2025	Not specified in the snippet.	Analyzes how narrative and visual elements (such as color, lighting, Ifar scenes, and family togetherness) are used to create a sacred, intimate atmosphere and form the ideal meaning of Ramadan (social and cultural myth) through semiotic theory. The advertisement emphasizes family values and tradition to build an emotional connection with consumers.
4.	Emotional Appeal of Culture-Wrapped Advertisement	Not specified in the snippet, but discusses the Marjan Ad version of Pencak Silat (around 2012).	Analyzes the emotional appeal of the Marjan ad, specifically one featuring family scenes (grandfather, grandchild, parents) with a storyline that attracts attention and touches feelings (joy, laughter, togetherness). Marjan Syrup is positioned as the "hero" that creates a cheerful and cohesive atmosphere at the end of the Eid celebration story.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Description of the Research Object: Marjan Syrup Ramadan Edition Ad 2023

This research focuses its analysis on the Marjan Syrup Ramadan Edition Ad 2023 which carries a maritime mythology narrative, often referred to as "Baruna the Guardian of the Ocean." This ad was released in a cinematic series format, consistent with Marjan's brand DNA.

1. Synopsis of the Marjan 2023 Ad

The ad features the character Baruna, based on the Sea God mythology. The narrative begins with the emergence of a threat at sea (e.g., a sea monster or huge waves) disturbing the tranquility of voyages or fishing villages. Baruna, the hero, fights to overcome the crisis using his magical powers. The intense and dramatic conflict scene is resolved with Baruna's victory. As usual, this fantasy climax is immediately followed by a visual and audio transition to domestic reality, namely the scene of the family gathering and enjoying the iftar meal at home, with Marjan Syrup as the sweet conclusion.

2. Key Segments of the Ad for Analysis (Unit of Analysis)

This research divides the visual and narrative analysis of the 2023 ad into three key segments:

- a. Setting & Conflict Segment: Depiction of the sea's beauty contrasted with the threat of crisis (dark imagery). (Analysis: Denotation of Setting, Narrative Structure).
- b. Climax & Cultural Transition Segment: The scene where Baruna defeats the crisis, followed by a drastic tone change towards the sound of the azan/bedug (drum). (Analysis: Semiotics of Color and Sound).
- c. Emotional Resolution Segment: The final shot of the family at home, emphasizing the serving and enjoyment of Marjan Syrup. (Analysis: Myth, Family Emotion, EBA).

B. Narrative Strategy and Semiotic Analysis

1. Narrative Structure Analysis (Propp's Framework)

This analysis shows how the Baruna 2023 narrative follows the Marjan formula for linking a heroic struggle with a domestic reward.

Narrative Stage (Modified Propp Term)	Description in Marjan 2023 Ad (Baruna)	Brand Function in the Stage
A. Initial Situation	Harmonious sea life or a peaceful voyage.	Establishes the broad context and the importance of balance.
B. Conflict/Antagonist	Maritime threat/monster/large wave (Villain) disturbing the tranquility.	Creates tension, builds the narrative stakes.
C. Hero's Action	Baruna (Protagonist) uses sea power to fight the threat in a magnificent cinematography.	Secures audience attention and recall through spectacle.
D. Cultural Resolution	Key Transition: Baruna successfully restores balance, followed by the sound of the azan/bedug.	Marjan Syrup Enters: The brand narratively functions as a symbol of transition and the restoration of peace.
E. New Equilibrium	The family at home, safe from the threat, gathering at the dining table.	The product is positioned as the perfect complement to the peace and fortune that has been earned/achieved.

2. Semiotic Analysis: Construction of Family Emotion and Myth

The analysis focuses on how the sea element (fantasy) is linked to the peace of home (reality) through Barthes' Semiotics.

Visual/Verbal Sign	Denotation (Literal Meaning)	Connotation (Cultural/Associative Meaning)
Lighting & Color	Transition from deep blue/grey (ocean) to warm orange/gold (dining room).	Spiritual Contrast. Dark colors symbolize external danger/tension. The warm color at the end connotes shelter, security, and blessing (Thomson et al., 2005).
Ending Characters	A simple family sitting, smiling joyfully, welcoming each other at the dining table.	Domestic Victory. Connotes that Baruna's struggle outside is commensurate with the peace found at home during iftar—a symbol of priceless family values.
Product Placement	Close-up of a specific Marjan Syrup flavor (e.g., green or red) being poured into a glass.	Essence of Peak Blessing. The thick, brightly colored syrup connotes simple luxury and is the essence of the 'sweetness' of victory/gratitude after fasting.
Transition Sound	The sound of big waves replaced by the resounding azan/bedug.	Cultural Tension Release. The audio transition confirms that the conflict is over, and it is now time to focus on the peaceful cultural-religious obligation.

Formation of Myth (Barthes): The Marjan 2023 Ad constructs the Myth that "Cosmic Balance (Baruna's fantasy world) and Domestic Balance (the family at home) are two sides of the same coin, and both are restored and celebrated by Marjan." The Marjan brand becomes the signifier for the restitution (restoration) of balance and happiness.

C. Discussion: Narrative Storytelling and Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA)

This section integrates the narrative and semiotic findings into the EBA framework.

1. Baruna Narrative and the Formation of Affection

- Analysis: The strength of Baruna's cinematography (high production value) grabs the eye, but the family moment at the end provides an emotional pause (catharsis).
- EBA Implication: The ad transfers the feeling of relief and comfort from the resolution scene to the brand. Affection for Marjan is formed because consumers associate it with the feeling of safety and peace they gain after the "drama," both in the fantasy ocean and during the fasting process.

2. Family Emotion and Connection

- Analysis: The placement of Marjan as the central element that ends the narrative tension and initiates togetherness.
- EBA Implication: This creates Connection. Consumers feel Marjan is a mandatory cultural symbol; its presence validates the harmonious iftar moment. The ad successfully convinces that Marjan is the bridge connecting traditional values with their identity as Indonesian Muslims/families.

3. Annual Series Strategy and Passion

- Analysis: Marjan's annual cinematic universe strategy ensures that consumers anticipate the next Baruna story or the new story for the following year.
- EBA Implication: This recurring narrative cycle cultivates Passion. Consumers actively seek out and discuss the Marjan ad. This passion creates loyalty that is creative (discussed, anticipated), not just transactional (purchased).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of narrative semiotics and its link to Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA) in the Marjan Syrup Ramadan Edition Ad 2023 (Baruna the Guardian of the Ocean Version), three main conclusions can be drawn that answer the research questions:

1. Consistent Narrative Strategy

The Marjan Syrup 2023 ad uses a consistent hero narrative structure (Propp), beginning with a fantastic Conflict in the external world (the threat at sea by Baruna) and ending with a Cultural Resolution in the domestic world (the family iftar moment). This strategy is effective because:

- a. The fantastic moment (Baruna) functions as an attention-grabber and brand differentiator.
- b. The family resolution functions as an emotional anchor that ties the brand to the cultural and religious values of Ramadan.

2. Construction of Family Emotion Through Semiotics

The ad successfully constructs family emotion as a Myth through the careful use of semiotics in the resolution scene. The myth constructed is that the true peace and balance achieved by the hero are reflected and perfected at the family dining table with the presence of Marjan. Visually, the transition from dark/deep blue ocean colors to the warm golden hour light, as well as the product placement at the center of the frame, reinforces Marjan's role as a symbol of sustenance and unifier after all struggles.

3. Storytelling Contribution to Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA)

Marjan's narrative strategy contributes significantly to the formation of Emotional Brand Attachment (EBA) among consumers through three dimensions:

- a. Affection: Formed through the transfer of positive emotion and relief (catharsis) experienced by the audience during the heartwarming resolution scene, associating the brand with feelings of peace and comfort.
- b. Connection: Created because the brand is positioned as a mandatory ritual and an extension of the cultural identity of Ramadan. Purchasing Marjan becomes a symbolic act of celebrating family togetherness values.
- c. Passion: Reinforced by the annual serial strategy which triggers Brand Anticipation and public discussion, demonstrating a psychological commitment from consumers that transcends transactional loyalty.

Overall, the Marjan 2023 Ad is a successful case study on how the utilization of mythological narratives can be a vehicle for planting the brand as a cultural and emotional icon in the Indonesian seasonal market.

B. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, here are the recommendations directed towards the development of marketing practices and future research:

1. Practical Recommendations (For the Marjan Brand and Marketing Practitioners)

- a. Maintain Narrative Consistency: The brand is advised to continue maintaining the long narrative cinematic series format, as it is proven effective in building passion and brand anticipation. The exploration of Indonesian mythology and folklore should be continued as this strengthens the Cultural Connection that differentiates Marjan from competitors.
- b. Focus on Emotional Transition: Marketing practitioners should place special emphasis on the shots and audio that function as a bridge of transition from conflict to domestic resolution, as this is the key moment where Affection is transferred to the brand.
- c. Digital Channel Exploration: Leverage the hype created by the cinematic ad to create more interactive derivative content on social media (e.g., quizzes about Baruna, behind the scenes), to strengthen the EBA connection among young audiences.

2. Academic Recommendations (For Future Research)

- a. Quantitative Reception Analysis: Future research is advised to quantitatively measure the level of EBA (Affection, Connection, Passion) on audiences exposed to the Marjan ad, to verify these qualitative findings with statistical data.
- b. Comparative Study: Conduct a comparative study between the Marjan Syrup Ad and other seasonal competitors (e.g., biscuits or instant drinks) that use different

storytelling strategies, to identify which narrative variables are most effective in building EBA.

- c. Cross-Generational Myth Study: Research how the Myth of the Ideal Ramadan Family presented by Marjan is received and interpreted by different generations (Gen Z vs. Baby Boomers), considering differences in media consumption and cultural values.

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