

WORDS OF WONDER: PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE IN PROMOTING MENGENING TEMPLE, BALI

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Abstract

Mengening Temple, located in Tampaksiring Village, Gianyar, Bali, possessed historical and cultural richness with great potential to be developed as a tourist destination. However, it called for supplementary promotional tactics to elevate the interest in visiting the temple. This study explored the role of persuasive language in advertising this historical site and how it might boost the number of visit. Direct observation and in-depth interviews with the temple's caretakers, Gianyar's Cultural Office, and local tour guides were conducted to discover the temple's history and current condition. An online survey was conducted using random sampling to 40 respondents and the results were tabulated using the Smart PLS application to analyse the effects of persuasive language and storynomics to the interest in visiting. The results showed that: (1) Persuasive Language (X) has a significant positive influence on Interest in Visiting (Y) (P-Value = 0.006); (2) Persuasive Language (X) has a significant positive influence on Storynomics (Z) (P-Value = 0.000); (3), Storynomics (Z) has a significant positive influence on Interest in Visiting (Y) (P-Value = 0.000); and (4) the Z variable (Storynomics) does not strengthen the influence of X (Persuasive Language) on Y (Interest in Visiting).

Keywords: cultural heritage, interest of visit, mengening temple, persuasive language, tourism advertising

Introduction

Bali has become known for its natural potential and unique culture, which always manage to attract the interest and visits of tourists. The most important cultural heritage sites in Bali can be found along the Pakerisan River in Tampaksiring Village, Gianyar Regency. This area has been designated by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage, due to the existence of the heritage sites situated on the river banks, including Tirta Empul, Mengening Temple, Gunung Kawi Temple, and Goa Garba (Utami et al., 2017). The archaeological sites along the Pakerisan River can be developed into a cultural-based edutourism destination (Widana, 2016; Parmita et al., 2022). However, the lack of accurate information regarding geology, history, or relics remains a challenge (Sukanadi et al., 2022). Additionally, further investigation is required regarding the development of eco-friendly tourism in the Pakerisan watershed, in order to maintain the harmony between utilization and preservation (Palguna & Putra, 2022).

One of the significant sites in Pakerisan watershed is Mengening Temple, which has been designated as a cultural heritage site by Bali Provincial Government under Law No. 5 of 1985, and later declared as a National Cultural Heritage through Ministerial Decree No. 131/M/1998. Located in Banjar Saraseda, Tampaksiring Village, Gianyar, this temple is managed by the *krama* (community) of Saraseda. The majority of the community members involved in managing the tourist attraction at Mengening Temple work voluntarily or through *ngayah* (Parmita et al., 2022). The community members provide tourism support facilities, such as the offerings for praying, food and souvenirs for visitors. Some of the members are stationed at the entrance to help foreign tourists wear *kamen*. Some are also stationed in the *penglukatan* (purification) area to guide the tourists, and *Jero Mangku* (the priest) leads the prayers. In the parking area, members of the *Pecalang* (security guard) are assigned to oversee the vehicles (Parmita et al., 2022). Mengening Temple is open for religious, social, educational, scientific, technological, cultural, and tourism purposes.

Mengening Temple is an important historical and cultural site in Bali, valued for its serene atmosphere, sacred spring, and beautiful architecture. When entering the temple, there are signs and rules for visitors. The allowed visiting hours typically range from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. However, these hours may vary, and it is always a good idea to check with local sources or guides for the most current information before planning to visit this temple.



Image 1. The Rules for entering Mengening Temple.

Source: the researcher's documentation



Image 2. The Visiting Hours for Mengening Temple.

Source: the researcher's documentation

The temple itself features classic Balinese temple architecture, with intricately carved stone walls, statues, and gates. There are shrines dedicated to Hindu gods and deities, as well as beautifully crafted sculptures and ornamental details that reflect Bali's rich cultural heritage.



Image 3. The name of the temple written in Balinese script.

Source: the researcher's documentation



Image 4. The Inscription of Mengening Temple as UNESCO World Heritage.

Source: the researcher's documentation

The temple is known for its holy spring water, which flows through fountains and pools. The temple's location by the river adds to its serene atmosphere. Not only locals but also foreign visitors often perform self-purification as part of the spiritual practices at the temple. This act is typically done to cleanse the body and mind, preparing oneself for a sacred or spiritual experience. Self-purification is seen as a way of aligning with the divine energy of the temple and achieving a deeper sense of peace or clarity. Tourists who perform the *melukat* ritual at Pura Mengening have diverse motivations, with the majority driven by self-actualization and transcendental needs (Widana, 2016).



Image 5. Self-purification at Mengening Temple

Source: the researcher's documentation

Self-purification at a temple like Mengening usually involves:

1. Ceremonial Washing: Visitors may immerse themselves in the temple's holy spring water, which is believed to cleanse them of negative energies or impurities. This is part of the Balinese Hindu purification ritual, known as "*Melukat*".

2. Offering Prayers: After purification, visitors may offer prayers and incense to the deities, seeking blessings or spiritual healing.
3. Symbolic Actions: Some might also use holy water and flowers to offer prayers for personal or family well-being, as well as spiritual growth.



Image 6. The rules for conducting purification

Source: the researcher's documentation



Image 7. The list of holy water and their functions

Source: the researcher's documentation

The promotion of Cultural Heritage Sites is aimed to strengthen cultural identity and boost the economy of the community (Sukanadi et al., 2022; Ekasani et al., 2022). Previous studies have identified how the promotion strongly influence the interest of visit (Machmury, 2023; Arianto et al., 2022). However, how strong the persuasive language within the promotion (Sholikhah, 2019; Rimbawati, 2020; Chen & Zhang, 2023) leverages the interest to visit has received little attention from academics. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the influence of persuasion, which is moderated by storynomic, on the interest to visit the Mengening Temple.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Mengening Temple as a cultural heritage is favorite to those who seek for self-actualisation and perform self-purification (Widana, 2016). Located in the Pakerisan watershed, this temple can be developed by implementing local environmental philosophy and managing waste properly (Palguna & Putra, 2022). Having a good community management (Parmita et al., 2022), this site is potential to attract visitors, both locals and foreigners.

Promotion on one hand, and the advances of internet on the other, are the effective strategies to increase the number of tourists (Damayanti et al., 2023; Arianto et al. 2022; Nida, 2014). The promotion of destinations generally make use of persuasive language which is concerned with changing the attitudes and the behavior of people (Gardikiotis & Crano, 2015). It mainly focuses on how individuals come to understand their social surroundings, maintain balance between their attitudes and behaviors, predict actions based on attitudes, and the extent to which they carefully consider messages intended to influence them Li & Ma, 2024; Kumar et al., 2023; Romanova & Smirnova, 2019; Sparks et al., 2013). The

implementation of persuasion is also seen in many studies, including those concerned with the purchase of a product, a service, and company recruitment, (Lestari et al. 2025; Paramita, 2022; Sholikhah, 2019; Rahmawati, 2016). The promotion of tourism destination can also make use of the storytelling to increase the motivation and interest to visit (Sukanadi et al., 2022; Yuliarti et al., 2021; Karta et al., 2021).

Persuasive language is used in active communication by sellers on Instagram to encourage the buyer to become interested in purchasing the product (Paramita, et al., 2022). The study discovered four ways of implementing persuasive language in online advertising. Firstly, many online sellers use persuasive sentences in English, such as 'sale', 'inbox', 'update', 'new item', 'live', 'delivery', 'special item', and 'free', which makes the promotion appear more modern and reflects the seller's level of knowledge. This helps the audience feel more confident about the quality of the products. Secondly, persuasive language in online buying and selling activities are also used in non-verbal forms, by tagging descriptions in illustrations or product image. Thirdly, stimulating the buyer's curiosity about a product by not listing the price and only providing the note 'please inbox/DM'. Fourthly, providing an attractive offer related to the product by directly offering discounts, product promotions, etc. The hope is that this persuasion will increase the buyer's interest in the product being sold (Paramita et al., 2022).

This study implements the Persuasion theories (Gardikiotis & Crano, 2015) and Theory of planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Persuasion, on one side, is concerned with changing the attitudes and the behavior of people (Gardikiotis & Crano, 2015). A persuasive language is an invitation sentence that serves to lead the opinion of the reader to follow the intent and purpose of the maker of the sentence (Paramita, et al., 2022). It mainly focuses on how individuals come to understand their social surroundings, maintain balance between their attitudes and behaviors, predict actions based on attitudes, and the extent to which they carefully consider messages intended to influence them. The implementation of persuasion is also seen in the purchase of a product, a service, and company recruitment, (Lestari et al., 2025; Paramita et al., 2022; Sholikhah, 2019; Rahmawati, 2016). The initial persuasive strategy in ads is providing informative function about the product through advertisement headline. Several persuasive functions of advertisements which reflected from their structure are to introduce new product, to promote a product, to remind about well-established product, and to announce special offers (Gardikiotis & Crano, 2015). Subsequently, targeting the market by providing detailed information and illustration about the product or services (Sholikhah, 2019). It is therefore important to assess the factors that lead to attitude–behavior consistency.

The theory of Planned Behavior, on the other, suggests that individual behavior is driven by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Specifically, a person's intention to perform a behavior (e.g., visiting a destination) is influenced by Attitudes (i.e. the positive or negative beliefs about the destination); Subjective Norms (i.e. the social pressures or influences e.g., recommendations from friends, influencers, or peer groups); Perceived Behavioral Control (i.e. the perceived ease or difficulty of traveling to a destination e.g., accessibility, cost); and Application (i.e. fostering positive attitudes through

emotional appeals, promoting social influences, e.g., testimonials) and making the destination seem easily accessible and manageable.

Research Method

The subject of this study was Mengening Temple site located in Tampaksiring Village, Gianyar, Bali. The selection of this temple was based on several considerations: 1) it held historical and cultural significance; 2) it had the potential to be developed as a tourist destination; 3) it required additional attention for destination promotion. The photographic documentation of the Mengening Temple site was personally collected during the field research, while secondary data including history, stories, and the inventory of Mengening Temple through direct observation at the site as well as through in-depth interviews with the priest and the caretaker of Pura Mengening, the Cultural Department of Gianyar Regency, tour guides, and the Head of the village to understand the history and current condition of the temple.

A questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms, with random sampling to 40 respondents to understand the role of storynomics in increasing interest in visiting Pura Mengening. The respondents' answers were later tabulated and analyzed using the Smart PLS application. The research variables investigated were Persuasive language as the independent variable; Interest in visiting as the dependent variable; and Storynomics as the moderating variable which affects the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. To facilitate the understanding of the data testing process, the structural model was first designed as follows:

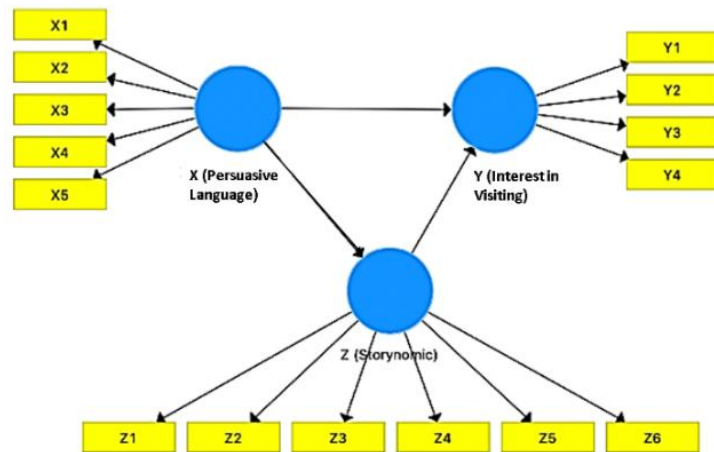


Image 8. Structural Equation Model
Source: The Research Analysis

To predict the relationships between latent variables in the structural model prior to hypothesis testing, a measurement testing was conducted validity testing to determine the ability of the research instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure, and reliability testing to assess the consistency of the measurement tool in measuring a concept. Validity and reliability testing of constructs can be conducted by designing a measurement model or outer model.

Results and Discussion

Result of Data Testing and Research Model

In this study, four research questions were identified with three variables: one independent construct variable (X), one moderating variable (Z), and one dependent construct variable (Y). To predict the relationships between latent variables in the structural model prior to hypothesis testing, measurement testing must undergo validity testing to determine the ability of the research instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure, and reliability testing to assess the consistency of the measurement tool in measuring a concept (Abdillah & Jogiyanto, 2009) Validity and reliability testing of constructs can be conducted by designing a measurement model or outer model.

1) Designing the Outer Model

a. Validity Testing with Convergent Validity

Validity testing is carried out using the evaluation of the measurement (outer) model, specifically by using convergent validity, where the loading factor for each construct must be greater than 0.70 for the target variables. The following is the output of the measurement model or outer model using PLS 3.0.

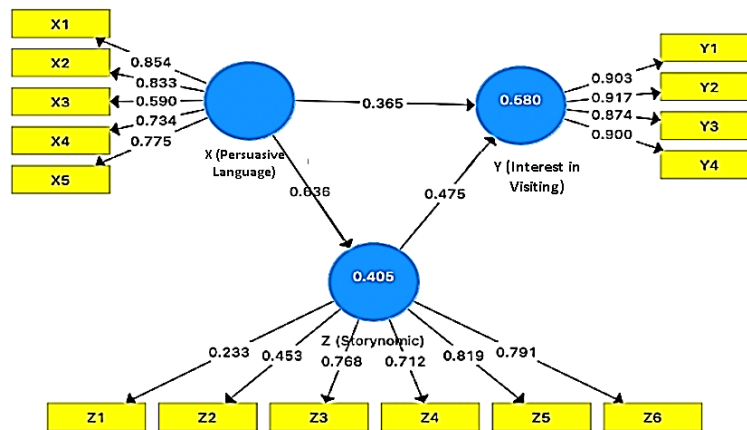


Image 9. Outer Model

Source: The Research Analysis

The output that explains the relationship between the latent variables and their indicators is as follows.

Table 1. Initial Outer Loading

Var	X (Persuasive language)	Z (Storynomics)	Y (Interest in Visiting)	Notes
X1	0.854			Valid
X2	0.833			Valid
X3	0.590			Valid
X4	0.734			Valid
X5	0.775			Valid
Z1		0.233		Not Valid
Z2		0.453		Not Valid
Z3		0.768		Valid

Z4		0.712		Valid
Z5		0.819		Valid
Z6		0.791		Valid
Y1			0.903	Valid
Y2			0.917	Valid
Y3			0.874	Valid
Y4			0.900	Valid

Source: The Research Analysis

Based on the image and table above, there are three indicators with loading factors less than 0.50, namely Z1 and Z2. Therefore, these two indicators are considered invalid and must be removed from the model. After removing indicators Z1 and Z2, the PLS algorithm was recalculated to obtain new outer loadings, which explained the relationship between the latent variables and their indicators. The outer loadings after removing indicators Z1 and Z2 were as follows:

Table 2. Final Outer Loading

Var	X (Persuasive language)	Z (Storynomics)	Y (Interest in Visiting)	Notes
X1	0.855			Valid
X2	0.831			Valid
X3	0.591			Valid
X4	0.734			Valid
X5	0.775			Valid
Z3		0.801		Valid
Z4		0.711		Valid
Z5		0.820		Valid
Z6		0.789		Valid
Y1			0.903	Valid
Y2			0.917	Valid
Y3			0.874	Valid
Y4			0.900	Valid

Source: The Research Analysis

b. Validity Testing with Discriminant Validity

The next evaluation is to examine and compare the discriminant validity with the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE). The measurement model is assessed based on the cross-loading measurements with the constructs. If the correlation between the construct and each of its indicators is greater than the correlation with other constructs, the latent construct predicts its indicators better than other constructs. If the value is higher than the correlation value among the constructs, then appropriate discriminant validity will be achieved (if $AVE > 0.50$). Below were the measurement results with the AVE for each indicator:

Table 3. Measurement based on the AVE Criteria

Variables	AVE
X (Persuasive language)	0.582
Y (Interest in visiting)	0.808
Z (Storynomics)	0.613

Source: The Research Analysis

Based on the measurement results above, it can be seen that the AVE values for the three indicators were greater than 0.50, thus it can be stated that the 13 indicators in this study were valid.

c. Reliability Testing with Composite Reliability

In determining composite reliability, if the composite reliability value is > 0.70 , the construct has high reliability or is reliable. If it is > 0.6 , it is considered sufficiently reliable. The results of the reliability test is shown below.

Table 4. Measurement with *Composite Reliability*

Variables	<i>Composite Reliability</i>
X (Persuasive language)	0.873
Y (Interest in visiting)	0.944
Z (Storynomics)	0.863

Source: The Research Analysis

Based on the measurement results above, all latent variables have composite reliability values > 0.70 , meaning that all independent latent variables are appropriate and suitable to be tested for their impact on the dependent latent variable.

d. Reliability Testing with Cronbach Alpha

In PLS, reliability testing is reinforced by Cronbach's alpha, where the consistency of each answer is tested. Cronbach's alpha is considered appropriate if $\alpha \geq 0.6$ and sufficient if $\alpha \geq 0.3$. The results of the Cronbach alpha measurement are as follows:

Table 5: Measurement with *Cronbach Alpha*

Variables	<i>Cronbach Alpha</i>
X (Persuasive language)	0.822
Y (Interest in visiting)	0.921
Z (Storynomics)	0.791

Source: The Research Analysis

Based on the reliability testing above, it can be concluded that all variables are reliable.

2) Designing the Inner Model

The goodness of fit of the model is measured using the R-square of the dependent latent variable, with the same interpretation as regression. Q-Square

predictive relevance for the structural model measures how well the observed values are generated by the model and its parameter estimates. An R-square value > 0 indicates that the model has predictive relevance, whereas if the R-square value ≤ 0 , it indicates that the model has low predictive relevance. The results of the inner model measurement with PLS are as follows.

Table 6. R Square

Variables	R Square
Y (Interest in Visiting)	0.599
Z (Storynomic)	0.393

Source: The Research Analysis

From the R-Square table above, it can be seen that the R-Square value for variable Y is 0.599 and for variable Z is 0.393. This R-Square result can be interpreted as follows: the influence of the Persuasive Language variable (X) explains 59.9% of the dependent latent variable, while the remaining 40.1% is explained by other variables outside the study. Similarly, the Persuasive Language variable (X) is explained by the independent latent variables at 39.3%, while the remainder is explained by other variables.

In hypothesis testing, the value analysed is the t-statistic value generated from the PLS output, which is then compared to the t-table value. The PLS output represents the estimates of latent variables, which are linear aggregates of indicators. The testing criteria with a significance level (α) of 5% are determined as follows:

- a. If $t\text{-statistic} > t\text{-table}$, i.e., greater than 1.96, the hypothesis is accepted
- b. If $t\text{-statistic} < t\text{-table}$, i.e., less than 1.96, the hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis testing with PLS is conducted in two stages: first, by directly calculating the effect of the independent latent variable on the dependent latent variable, and second, by calculating the effect of the independent latent variable on the dependent latent variable with the moderating effect of storynomics. The output from the PLS bootstrapping results for testing the research hypotheses H1 to H3 is as follows:

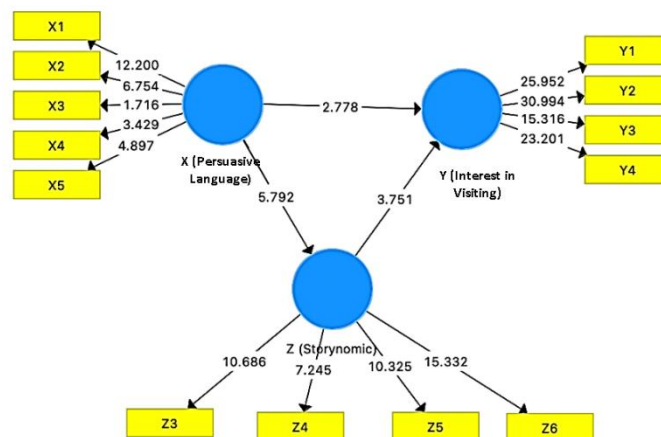


Image 10. Bootstrapping Result for H1 to H3

Source: The Research Analysis

Test 1: The effect of Persuasive Language to the Interest in Visiting

Table 7. Bootstrapping Hypothesis 1

Var	Original sample (O)	Mean (M)	Deviation Standard (DEV)	T Statistics (O/DEV)	P Values
X => Y	0.352	0.357	0.127	2.778	0.006
X => Z	0.627	0.615	0.108	5.792	0.000
Z => Y	0.503	0.513	0.134	3.751	0.000

Source: The Research Analysis

The first hypothesis, which tests the relationship between Persuasive Language Function (X) and intention to visit (Y), shows an original sample value of 0.351 and a t-statistic of 2.778. The measurement results indicate that the t-statistic > t-table (significance level of 5% = 1.960), meaning that the first hypothesis in this study is accepted. From these data, it can be interpreted that the sample data for the independent latent variable (Persuasive Language) successfully demonstrates a relationship with the dependent latent variable (Interest in Visiting). In other words, Persuasive Language (X) has a significant positive influence on Interest in Visiting (Y) (P-Value = 0.006). This finding is related to how persuasive language is effectively used to sell online products (Putri Paramita et al, 2022), and how persuasion influence customers' behavior in purchasing goods (Gardikiotis & Crano, 2015).

Test 2: The Effect of Persuasive Language on the Storynomics

The second hypothesis, which tests the relationship between Persuasive Language (X) and Storynomics (Z), shows an original sample value of 0.627 and a t-statistic of 5.792. The measurement results indicate that the t-statistic > t-table (significance level of 5% = 1.960), meaning that the second hypothesis in this study is accepted. From these data, it can be interpreted that the sample data for the independent latent variable (Persuasive Language) successfully demonstrates a relationship with the dependent latent variable (Storynomics). In other words, Persuasive Language (X) has a significant positive influence on Storynomics (Z) (P-Value = 0.000). This finding confirms that the persuasiveness of direct marketing or word of mouth recommendations to promote local tourist attractions. (Arini, et al, 2021).

Test 3: The Effect of Storynomics on the Interest in Visiting

The third hypothesis, which tests the relationship between Storynomics (Z) and Interest in Visiting (Y), shows an original sample value of 0.503 and a t-statistic of 3.751. The measurement results indicate that the t-statistic > t-table (significance level of 5% = 1.960), meaning that the third hypothesis in this study is accepted. From these data, it can be interpreted that the sample data for the independent latent variable (Storynomics) successfully demonstrates a relationship with the dependent latent variable (Interest in Visiting). In other words, Storynomics (Z) has a significant positive influence on Interest in Visiting (Y) (P-Value = 0.000). This result confirms that an informative story can attract tourists to visit a destination (Dewi & Fitriani, 2020). Storynomic also provides educational value to visitors mainly on the history and local wisdom (Aditya & Sari, 2023).

Test 4: The Effect of Interest in Visiting with Storynomics as a Moderating Variable

The bootstrapping PLS output for testing hypothesis H4, which uses a moderating variable, is as follows:

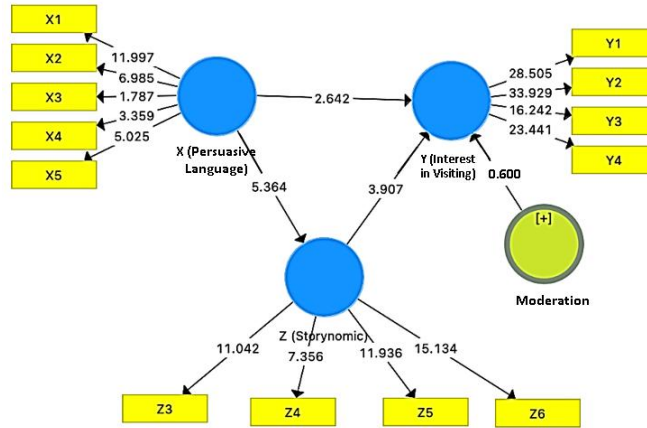


Image 11. Bootstrapping Result for Moderating Effect X*Z
Source: The Research Analysis

Table 8. Bootstrapping Hypothesis 2

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Mean (M)	Deviation Standard (DEV)	T Statistics (O/DEV)
Moderating effect X*Z	0.064	0.029	0.107	0.600

Source: The Research Analysis

The fourth hypothesis, which tests the relationship between Persuasive Language and Interest in Visiting with Storynomics as a moderating variable, shows an original sample value of 0.064 and a t-statistic of 0.107. The measurement results indicate that the t-statistic < t-table (significance level of 5% = 1.960), meaning that the fourth hypothesis in this study is rejected. From these data, it can be interpreted that the Z variable (Storynomics) does not strengthen the influence of X (Persuasive Language) on Y (Interest in Visiting), or in other words, X*Z does not have a significant influence on Y with a negative relationship.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, Persuasive Language has a significant positive influence on Interest in Visiting; and it has a significant positive influence on Storynomics, while Storynomic itself has a significant positive influence on Interest in Visiting, but it does not strengthen the influence of Persuasive Language on the Interest in Visiting. It is concluded that the persuasion has a significant influence in leveraging the interest to visit. Nevertheless, the storynomics of the Mengening Temple does not give substantial moderation among the two variables. This means that the use of persuasive language in the promotion of tourism destination is proven to significantly increase the interest of visit. It is highly recommended to apply this type of language in boosting the promotion of the Bali’s tourism.

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