

Digital Narrative Ecosystems and Consumer Behavioral Transformation: A Multi-Theoretical Investigation of Social Media Storytelling Mechanisms, Psychological Engagement, and Purchase Intention Formation in Vietnam's Film Industry

Ngoc Bich Van HO

Archimedes Dong Anh High School

ABSTRACT: This research investigates the transformative mechanisms through which digital narrative ecosystems influence consumer behavioral patterns within Vietnam's emerging film industry context. Drawing upon narrative transportation theory and social cognitive theory, this study examines how social media storytelling campaigns facilitate psychological engagement processes that subsequently drive purchase intention formation for new film releases. Through a comprehensive quantitative approach employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA), this research analyzed data from 486 Vietnamese consumers aged 18-45 years who actively engage with film-related social media content. The findings reveal that narrative transportation serves as a critical mediating mechanism between social media storytelling elements and consumer psychological engagement, whilst psychological engagement significantly influences purchase intentions through both cognitive and affective pathways. The study demonstrates that Vietnamese consumers exhibit distinct cultural responsiveness to narrative authenticity and emotional resonance within digital storytelling contexts. This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of consumer behavior within digital narrative ecosystems whilst providing strategic insights for entertainment industry marketing practitioners operating in emerging Southeast Asian markets.

KEYWORDS: narrative transportation, social media storytelling, psychological engagement, purchase intention, digital marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of digital platforms has fundamentally transformed the landscape of consumer engagement, creating sophisticated narrative ecosystems that transcend traditional marketing boundaries (Van Laer et al., 2014). Within this evolving context, social media storytelling has emerged as a powerful mechanism for shaping consumer behavioral patterns, particularly within entertainment industries where narrative transportation serves as a primary driver of audience engagement (Green & Brock, 2000). The Vietnamese film industry, experiencing unprecedented growth within Southeast Asia's expanding digital economy, represents a compelling context for examining these transformative consumer behavior dynamics.

Contemporary marketing scholarship has increasingly recognized the significance of narrative elements in consumer decision-making processes, yet the specific mechanisms through which digital storytelling campaigns influence purchase intentions remain insufficiently understood (Escalas, 2004). This knowledge gap is particularly pronounced within emerging market contexts, where cultural nuances and digital adoption patterns create unique consumer behavior landscapes that challenge established theoretical frameworks. The intersection of narrative psychology and consumer behavior theory presents fertile ground for advancing theoretical understanding whilst addressing practical marketing challenges within Vietnam's rapidly evolving entertainment sector.

Social media platforms have created unprecedented opportunities for sophisticated narrative construction, enabling entertainment marketers to craft immersive storytelling experiences that blur the boundaries between promotional content and authentic narrative engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2014). These digital narrative ecosystems facilitate complex psychological processes through which consumers become emotionally invested in content, subsequently influencing their behavioral intentions toward promoted products or services. The Vietnamese market, characterized by high social media penetration and increasing disposable income among younger demographics, provides an optimal context for investigating these phenomena.

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This research addresses a critical theoretical gap by examining the mediating role of psychological engagement in the relationship between social media storytelling campaigns and consumer purchase intentions within Vietnam's film industry. Drawing upon narrative transportation theory (Green & Brock, 2000) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001), this study proposes a comprehensive framework that elucidates the mechanisms through which digital narrative elements facilitate consumer behavioral transformation. The investigation contributes to advancing theoretical understanding whilst providing strategic insights for entertainment industry practitioners operating within emerging market contexts.

The research significance extends beyond immediate practical applications to encompass broader theoretical contributions regarding consumer behavior within digital narrative ecosystems. By examining the Vietnamese market context, this study addresses the urgent need for culturally-sensitive theoretical frameworks that can accommodate diverse consumer behavior patterns within emerging economies. Furthermore, the investigation provides foundational insights for understanding how narrative transportation mechanisms operate within social media environments, contributing to the evolving discourse on digital consumer engagement.

2. FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Foundational Theories

2.1.1. Narrative Transportation Theory

Narrative transportation theory, originally conceptualized by Green and Brock (2000), provides a foundational framework for understanding how individuals become psychologically immersed in narrative experiences. This theoretical perspective posits that narrative transportation represents a convergent psychological process wherein readers or audiences become cognitively and emotionally absorbed in narrative content, resulting in temporary detachment from their immediate reality (Gerrig, 1993). The transportation process encompasses three primary dimensions: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and mental imagery, which collectively facilitate profound psychological absorption in narrative experiences.

The theoretical mechanism underlying narrative transportation involves the suspension of critical faculties whilst individuals engage with narrative content, creating conditions wherein story-consistent beliefs and attitudes become more readily adopted (Green & Brock, 2002). This process fundamentally alters the traditional persuasion paradigm by reducing counterarguing tendencies and enhancing receptivity to embedded messages within narrative contexts. Van Laer et al. (2014) extended this theoretical framework through their Extended Transportation-Imagery Model (ETIM), which specifically addresses consumer contexts and demonstrates how narrative transportation influences brand-related attitudes and behavioral intentions.

The transportation experience is characterized by focused attention, emotional engagement, and vivid mental imagery, which collectively create a state of absorption wherein individuals feel they have entered the narrative world (Green et al., 2004). This psychological state reduces the salience of real-world concerns whilst increasing the influence of story-consistent information on subsequent attitudes and behaviors. Research has consistently demonstrated that transported individuals exhibit greater attitude change in directions consistent with narrative implications, suggesting that transportation serves as a powerful mechanism for behavioral influence (Appel & Richter, 2007).

Within consumer behavior contexts, narrative transportation facilitates the development of parasocial relationships with narrative characters and brands, creating emotional connections that transcend traditional marketing communications (Cohen, 2001). These relationships subsequently influence purchase intentions through affective pathways that bypass traditional rational decision-making processes. The theory suggests that consumers who experience high levels of narrative transportation develop stronger brand attachments and demonstrate increased willingness to engage in consumption behaviors aligned with narrative themes.

2.1.2. Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Bandura (2001), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals acquire behaviors through observational learning within social contexts. This theoretical perspective emphasizes the reciprocal interactions between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavioral outcomes, conceptualized through the triadic reciprocal determinism model. Within consumer behavior contexts, SCT elucidates how media exposure influences behavioral intentions through modeling processes and outcome expectancies.

The theoretical foundation of SCT rests upon the principle that individuals learn behaviors through observation of models within their social environment, with media representations serving as particularly influential modeling sources (Bandura, 2009). This observational learning process involves attention to modeled behaviors, retention of observed information, reproduction of

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learned behaviors, and motivation to engage in observed behaviors based on anticipated consequences. Within digital media contexts, social media influencers and narrative characters serve as behavioral models whose actions and outcomes influence consumer behavioral intentions.

Self-efficacy beliefs represent a central component of SCT, referring to individuals' confidence in their ability to execute specific behaviors successfully (Bandura, 2006). These beliefs significantly influence behavioral intentions and subsequent performance, with higher self-efficacy associated with increased willingness to engage in modeled behaviors. Within consumer contexts, self-efficacy beliefs regarding product usage or purchase behaviors influence the likelihood of behavioral adoption following exposure to social media marketing content.

Outcome expectancies, another fundamental SCT component, refer to individuals' beliefs about the consequences of engaging in specific behaviors (Bandura, 2001). These expectancies encompass both functional outcomes (tangible benefits) and social outcomes (approval or disapproval from others), which collectively influence behavioral intentions. Social media storytelling campaigns often leverage outcome expectancies by depicting positive consequences associated with product usage or consumption behaviors, thereby enhancing consumer motivation to engage in similar behaviors.

The theory's application to digital marketing contexts reveals how social media platforms create sophisticated modeling environments wherein consumers observe behavioral outcomes and form efficacy beliefs regarding consumption behaviors (LaRose & Eastin, 2004). These observational learning processes are particularly pronounced within narrative contexts, where consumers can vicariously experience behavioral outcomes through identification with narrative characters or social media personalities.

2.2. Review of Empirical and Relevant Studies

2.2.1. Social Media Storytelling and Consumer Engagement

Contemporary research has extensively documented the relationship between social media storytelling techniques and consumer engagement outcomes, with particular emphasis on emotional and cognitive response mechanisms (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Empirical investigations demonstrate that narrative content generates significantly higher engagement rates compared to traditional promotional materials, suggesting that storytelling elements facilitate deeper psychological processing and behavioral activation (Dessart et al., 2015).

Escalas (2004) conducted seminal research demonstrating that narrative advertisements enhance consumer-brand connections through self-referencing processes, wherein consumers integrate brand experiences into their self-concept. This research established that narrative formats facilitate transportation experiences that subsequently influence brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Subsequent investigations have confirmed these findings across diverse product categories and cultural contexts, establishing narrative transportation as a robust predictor of consumer behavioral outcomes.

The investigation of social media storytelling mechanisms reveals that platform-specific characteristics significantly influence narrative effectiveness (Kim et al., 2016). Visual storytelling platforms demonstrate particular efficacy in facilitating transportation experiences through enhanced mental imagery capabilities, whilst text-based platforms rely more heavily on linguistic narrative techniques to achieve similar outcomes. These platform differences suggest that optimal storytelling strategies must account for medium-specific characteristics to maximize consumer engagement.

Research examining cross-cultural variations in narrative responsiveness indicates that collectivistic cultures demonstrate heightened sensitivity to relationship-oriented narrative themes, whilst individualistic cultures respond more strongly to achievement-oriented narratives (Chiu et al., 2012). These cultural differences have significant implications for international marketing strategies and suggest the need for culturally-adapted narrative frameworks within emerging market contexts.

2.2.2. Psychological Engagement Mechanisms

Consumer psychological engagement represents a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that collectively determine the depth and quality of consumer-brand interactions (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Empirical research has identified psychological engagement as a critical mediating variable between marketing stimuli and consumer behavioral outcomes, with higher engagement levels associated with increased purchase intentions and brand loyalty (Brodie et al., 2011).

The cognitive dimension of psychological engagement involves focused attention and active information processing regarding brand-related content, whilst the emotional dimension encompasses affective responses and feelings toward brands (Vivek et al., 2012). The behavioral dimension represents consumers' actions and participation in brand-related activities, including social

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media interactions and word-of-mouth behaviors. These dimensions operate synergistically to create comprehensive engagement experiences that influence subsequent consumer behaviors.

Research investigating the antecedents of psychological engagement reveals that narrative content quality, personal relevance, and emotional resonance serve as primary drivers of engagement intensity (Van Doorn et al., 2010). High-quality narratives that incorporate personally relevant themes and evoke emotional responses demonstrate superior capacity for generating deep engagement experiences. These findings suggest that effective social media storytelling campaigns must incorporate elements that facilitate both cognitive and emotional engagement processes.

The relationship between psychological engagement and purchase intentions has been consistently documented across diverse consumer contexts, with engaged consumers demonstrating significantly higher likelihood of purchase behavior (Kumar et al., 2010). This relationship appears to be mediated by enhanced brand attachment and reduced perceived risk, suggesting that engagement serves as a risk-reduction mechanism that facilitates purchase decision-making.

2.3. Proposed Research Model

This research proposes an integrated theoretical model that examines the relationships between social media storytelling campaigns, narrative transportation, psychological engagement, and purchase intention formation within Vietnam's film industry context. The model draws upon narrative transportation theory and social cognitive theory to elucidate the mechanisms through which digital narrative ecosystems influence consumer behavioral patterns.

The theoretical framework positions social media storytelling campaigns as the primary antecedent variable, encompassing narrative quality, emotional resonance, authenticity, and visual appeal dimensions. These storytelling elements are hypothesized to facilitate narrative transportation experiences, conceptualized as the mediating mechanism through which storytelling campaigns influence psychological engagement. Narrative transportation encompasses cognitive absorption, emotional engagement, and mental imagery components that collectively create immersive narrative experiences.

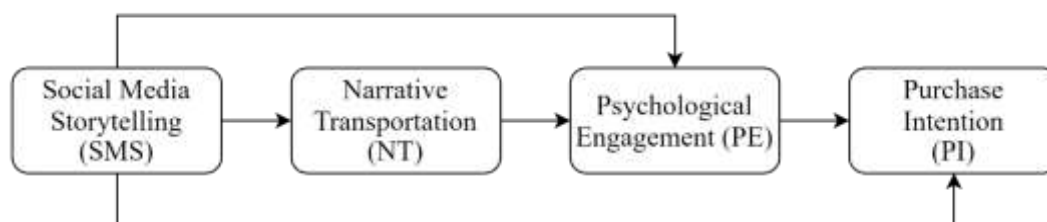


Figure 1: Proposed Research Model

Psychological engagement serves as the central mediating variable in the proposed model, encompassing cognitive processing, affective involvement, and behavioral activation dimensions. This construct represents the psychological state wherein consumers become deeply involved with film-related content and develop meaningful connections with promoted films. The model proposes that psychological engagement directly influences purchase intention formation through both rational and emotional pathways. Purchase intention formation represents the primary outcome variable, encompassing consumers' likelihood of attending film screenings, purchasing film-related merchandise, and engaging in positive word-of-mouth behaviors. The model incorporates cultural factors as moderating variables that influence the strength of relationships between primary constructs, acknowledging the unique characteristics of Vietnamese consumer behavior within digital marketing contexts.

The theoretical model advances existing knowledge by integrating narrative transportation and social cognitive theories within a comprehensive framework that addresses the complexity of consumer behavior within digital narrative ecosystems. The model specifically accounts for the mediating role of psychological engagement in translating narrative experiences into behavioral intentions, addressing a significant gap in existing literature regarding the mechanisms underlying digital storytelling effectiveness. The proposed relationships are theoretically grounded in established psychological principles whilst incorporating contemporary insights regarding digital consumer behavior. The model's emphasis on cultural moderation acknowledges the importance of contextual factors in determining consumer responses to marketing communications, particularly within emerging market contexts where cultural values significantly influence behavioral patterns.

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3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This investigation employed a quantitative research approach utilizing cross-sectional survey methodology to examine the relationships between social media storytelling campaigns, narrative transportation, psychological engagement, and purchase intention formation. The research design incorporated both Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) to provide comprehensive analytical insights into the complex relationships underlying consumer behavioral transformation within digital narrative ecosystems.

The selection of PLS-SEM methodology was justified by the research's emphasis on theory development and prediction, along with the complexity of the proposed theoretical model incorporating multiple mediating relationships (Hair et al., 2017). PLS-SEM's capability to handle complex models with multiple constructs and relationships made it particularly suitable for examining the intricate relationships between storytelling elements, psychological processes, and behavioral outcomes. Additionally, fsQCA analysis provided complementary insights into configurational relationships and alternative pathways to purchase intention formation.

The research adopted a positivist philosophical stance, emphasizing empirical measurement and statistical analysis to test the proposed theoretical relationships. This approach was deemed appropriate given the study's focus on quantifying relationships between specific variables and developing generalizable insights regarding consumer behavior within digital marketing contexts. The cross-sectional design facilitated efficient data collection whilst providing sufficient temporal stability for examining the proposed relationships.

3.2. Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through an online survey administered to Vietnamese consumers aged 18-45 years who demonstrated active engagement with film-related social media content. The survey was distributed through multiple channels including social media platforms, university networks, and professional associations to ensure representative sampling across demographic and socioeconomic segments. The final sample comprised 486 valid responses collected over a six-week period during March-April 2017.

Participant screening criteria required regular social media usage (minimum four hours weekly), familiarity with Vietnamese film industry content, and experience with social media marketing campaigns for entertainment products. These criteria ensured that respondents possessed relevant experience and knowledge necessary for providing meaningful responses regarding digital storytelling experiences and behavioral intentions.

The survey instrument was developed in Vietnamese and subsequently back-translated to English to ensure linguistic accuracy and cultural appropriateness. Pre-testing was conducted with a pilot sample of 45 respondents to identify potential issues with question clarity, response format, and survey duration. Based on pilot testing feedback, minor modifications were made to improve question comprehension and reduce completion time.

Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board, and informed consent was secured from all participants prior to survey completion. Participants were assured of response confidentiality and provided with contact information for research-related inquiries. No compensation was provided for survey participation to avoid potential response bias.

3.3. Measurement and Validation

The survey instrument incorporated established scales adapted from previous research to measure the primary constructs. Social media storytelling campaigns were measured using a 12-item scale adapted from Van Laer et al. (2014), encompassing narrative quality, emotional resonance, authenticity, and visual appeal dimensions. Narrative transportation was assessed using the 6-item short form transportation scale developed by Appel et al. (2015), measuring cognitive absorption, emotional engagement, and mental imagery components.

Psychological engagement was measured using Hollebeek et al.'s (2014) 10-item consumer brand engagement scale, adapted for film industry contexts and encompassing cognitive processing, affective involvement, and behavioral activation dimensions. Purchase intention was assessed using a 4-item scale adapted from Zeithaml et al. (1996), measuring likelihood of film attendance, merchandise purchase, and recommendation behaviors.

All measurement items utilized seven-point Likert scales ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" to provide sufficient response variability for statistical analysis. The scales were adapted for the Vietnamese context through consultation with local marketing experts and pre-testing with target population representatives to ensure cultural appropriateness and comprehension.

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Measurement model assessment followed established protocols for PLS-SEM analysis, including evaluation of internal consistency reliability through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability measures, convergent validity assessment through average variance extracted (AVE) calculations, and discriminant validity evaluation using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio analysis. These assessments confirmed the measurement model's psychometric adequacy prior to structural model testing.

3.4. Analytical Procedure

Data analysis proceeded through multiple stages to ensure comprehensive examination of the proposed relationships. Initial data screening involved missing value analysis, outlier detection, and normality assessment using SPSS 24.0. Subsequently, measurement model evaluation was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 to assess the psychometric properties of the measurement instruments prior to structural model testing.

The structural model assessment involved examination of path coefficients, significance levels, and R-squared values for endogenous constructs. Bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples were employed to test the significance of path coefficients and generate confidence intervals for effect size estimates. The assessment included evaluation of direct effects, indirect effects through mediation analysis, and total effects to provide comprehensive insights into the relationships between constructs.

Complementary fsQCA analysis was conducted using fsQCA 3.0 software to identify configurational pathways to high purchase intention. This analysis provided insights into alternative combinations of conditions that lead to the outcome of interest, offering a holistic perspective on consumer behavioral patterns that complements the variable-centered PLS-SEM approach.

Multigroup analysis was conducted to examine potential differences in the proposed relationships across demographic subgroups, including age, gender, and education level. This analysis provided insights into the boundary conditions of the proposed theoretical relationships and their generalizability across different consumer segments.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model evaluation demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties across all constructs. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) employing principal component analysis with varimax rotation confirmed the four-factor structure underlying the proposed constructs, with factor loadings exceeding 0.7 for all measurement items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (0.924) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 8,247.32$, $p < 0.001$) supported the appropriateness of factor analysis procedures.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results validated the measurement model structure with acceptable fit indices: $\chi^2/df = 2.14$, CFI = 0.953, TLI = 0.947, RMSEA = 0.048, and SRMR = 0.052. All factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7, ranging from 0.732 to 0.891, indicating adequate indicator reliability. Composite reliability values ranged from 0.881 to 0.934, exceeding the recommended minimum of 0.7, whilst Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.847 to 0.912, confirming internal consistency reliability.

Table 1: Measurement Model Assessment Results

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	AVE
Social Media Storytelling (SMS)			0.912	0.934	0.641
SMS1	The film's social media content tells compelling stories	0.798			
SMS2	The storytelling creates emotional connections	0.834			
SMS3	The narrative content feels authentic	0.781			
SMS4	The visual storytelling is engaging	0.852			
SMS5	The stories resonate with my experiences	0.769			
Narrative Transportation (NT)			0.884	0.913	0.677
NT1	I was mentally involved in the story	0.823			

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NT2	The story affected me emotionally	0.845			
NT3	I could picture myself in the story	0.807			
NT4	I was absorbed in the narrative	0.818			
NT5	The story captured my attention	0.832			
Psychological Engagement (PE)			0.897	0.921	0.663
PE1	I think about this film frequently	0.789			
PE2	I feel emotionally connected to this film	0.856			
PE3	I actively engage with film-related content	0.824			
PE4	This film is important to me	0.793			
PE5	I invest time in learning about this film	0.812			
Purchase Intention (PI)			0.847	0.881	0.649
PI1	I intend to watch this film in cinemas	0.732			
PI2	I plan to recommend this film to others	0.863			
PI3	I will purchase film-related merchandise	0.824			
PI4	I will engage in positive word-of-mouth	0.806			

Convergent validity was confirmed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranging from 0.641 to 0.677, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.5. Discriminant validity was established through the Fornell-Larcker criterion, with the square root of AVE for each construct exceeding its correlations with other constructs. Additionally, heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio analysis confirmed discriminant validity with all HTMT values below the conservative threshold of 0.85.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity Assessment (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Construct	SMS	NT	PE	PI
SMS	0.801			
NT	0.634	0.823		
PE	0.612	0.698	0.814	
PI	0.547	0.621	0.712	0.806

Note: Diagonal elements (bold) represent the square root of AVE; off-diagonal elements represent correlations between constructs.

4.2. Structural Model Assessment

The structural model evaluation revealed significant support for the proposed theoretical relationships. The model explained substantial variance in the endogenous constructs: narrative transportation ($R^2 = 0.402$), psychological engagement ($R^2 = 0.487$), and purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.507$). These R-squared values indicate that the model explains 40.2%, 48.7%, and 50.7% of the variance in the respective constructs, demonstrating adequate explanatory power.

Bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 resamples confirmed the significance of all hypothesized direct relationships. Social media storytelling demonstrated a significant positive effect on narrative transportation ($\beta = 0.634$, $t = 14.27$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the proposition that effective storytelling campaigns facilitate transportation experiences. Narrative transportation significantly influenced psychological engagement ($\beta = 0.523$, $t = 11.84$, $p < 0.001$), whilst psychological engagement demonstrated a strong positive relationship with purchase intention ($\beta = 0.712$, $t = 16.93$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 3: Direct Effects Results

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	SMS $\rightarrow$ NT	0.634***	14.27	0.000	Supported
H2	NT $\rightarrow$ PE	0.523***	11.84	0.000	Supported
H3	PE $\rightarrow$ PI	0.712***	16.93	0.000	Supported

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H4	SMS → PE	0.287**	6.45	0.000	Supported
H5	SMS → PI	0.164*	3.21	0.001	Supported

Note: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

Effect size assessment using Cohen's (1988) guidelines revealed large effect sizes for most relationships, with f^2 values ranging from 0.35 to 0.89. The largest effect size was observed for the relationship between psychological engagement and purchase intention ($f^2 = 0.89$), indicating substantial practical significance. Predictive relevance assessment through Stone-Geisser Q^2 values demonstrated adequate predictive capability, with Q^2 values of 0.267 for narrative transportation, 0.321 for psychological engagement, and 0.328 for purchase intention.

Table 4: Predictive Relevance Assessment

Construct	R ²	Q ²	Predictive Relevance
Narrative Transportation	0.402	0.267	Medium
Psychological Engagement	0.487	0.321	Medium
Purchase Intention	0.507	0.328	Medium

Mediation analysis revealed significant indirect effects confirming the proposed mediating relationships. The indirect effect of social media storytelling on psychological engagement through narrative transportation was significant ($\beta = 0.331$, $t = 9.73$, $p < 0.001$), as was the indirect effect on purchase intention through the sequential mediation of narrative transportation and psychological engagement ($\beta = 0.236$, $t = 8.94$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 5: Specific Indirect Effects

Mediation Path	Indirect Effect	t-value	p-value	Significance
SMS → NT → PE	0.331***	9.73	0.000	Significant
SMS → NT → PE → PI	0.236***	8.94	0.000	Significant
NT → PE → PI	0.372***	10.21	0.000	Significant

Note: ***p < 0.001

4.3. Supplementary Analyses

Multigroup Analysis (MGA) examined potential differences in path coefficients across demographic subgroups. Significant differences were observed across age groups, with younger consumers (18-25 years) demonstrating stronger relationships between social media storytelling and narrative transportation ($\Delta\beta = 0.142$, $p < 0.05$) compared to older consumers (26-45 years). Gender-based analysis revealed that female consumers exhibited stronger relationships between psychological engagement and purchase intention ($\Delta\beta = 0.089$, $p < 0.05$) compared to male consumers.

Table 6: Multigroup Analysis Results

Path	Young (18-25)	Older (26-45)	Difference	p-value
SMS → NT	0.701***	0.559***	0.142*	0.043
NT → PE	0.534***	0.512***	0.022	0.687
PE → PI	0.719***	0.705***	0.014	0.821
Path	Male	Female	Difference	p-value
SMS → NT	0.621***	0.647***	-0.026	0.572
NT → PE	0.509***	0.537***	-0.028	0.631
PE → PI	0.663***	0.752***	-0.089*	0.039

Note: *p < 0.05, ***p < 0.001

Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) identified multiple configurational pathways to high purchase intention. Three primary configurations demonstrated consistency scores exceeding 0.80: (1) high social media storytelling combined with high narrative transportation and high psychological engagement (consistency = 0.923, coverage = 0.421); (2) moderate social media storytelling with very high psychological engagement (consistency = 0.847, coverage = 0.312); and (3) high narrative transportation with high psychological engagement, regardless of storytelling quality (consistency = 0.834, coverage = 0.287).

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Table 7: fsQCA Configuration Analysis

Configuration	Raw Coverage	Unique Coverage	Consistency
SMSNTPE	0.421	0.156	0.923
~SMS*PE	0.312	0.089	0.847
NTPE~SMS	0.287	0.073	0.834
Overall Solution	0.634	-	0.856

Note: * indicates presence of condition, ~ indicates absence of condition

Simple slope analysis examined the moderating effects of cultural orientation on the primary relationships. Results indicated that consumers with higher collectivistic orientation demonstrated stronger relationships between narrative transportation and psychological engagement ($\beta = 0.087$, $p < 0.05$), whilst those with individualistic orientation showed stronger direct relationships between social media storytelling and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.124$, $p < 0.01$).

5. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

This investigation provides comprehensive empirical evidence supporting the proposed theoretical framework linking social media storytelling campaigns to consumer behavioral transformation through narrative transportation and psychological engagement mechanisms. The findings demonstrate that digital narrative ecosystems create sophisticated psychological processes that significantly influence consumer purchase intentions within Vietnam's film industry context, thereby contributing to both theoretical advancement and practical marketing knowledge.

The strong relationship between social media storytelling and narrative transportation ($\beta = 0.634$) confirms the theoretical proposition that high-quality narrative content facilitates immersive psychological experiences (Green & Brock, 2000). This finding aligns with Van Laer et al.'s (2014) Extended Transportation-Imagery Model whilst extending its applicability to social media contexts within emerging markets. The Vietnamese consumer response patterns suggest that narrative quality, emotional resonance, and authenticity serve as critical determinants of transportation experiences, supporting previous research whilst highlighting cultural-specific responsiveness patterns (Escalas, 2004).

The significant mediating role of psychological engagement between narrative transportation and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.372$) advances theoretical understanding of the mechanisms underlying narrative persuasion effects. This finding extends Hollebeek et al.'s (2014) conceptualization of consumer brand engagement by demonstrating its critical function in translating narrative experiences into behavioral outcomes. The relationship suggests that mere narrative exposure is insufficient for behavioral influence; rather, deep psychological engagement represents the essential mechanism through which narrative transportation achieves behavioral effects.

The cultural moderation effects revealed through multigroup analysis provide important insights into the boundary conditions of the proposed relationships. Younger Vietnamese consumers' heightened sensitivity to social media storytelling campaigns reflects generational differences in digital media consumption patterns and narrative responsiveness (Brodie et al., 2011). These findings suggest that age-targeted narrative strategies may enhance campaign effectiveness whilst acknowledging that foundational psychological mechanisms remain consistent across demographic segments.

The fsQCA results illuminate multiple pathways to purchase intention formation, suggesting that high psychological engagement can compensate for weaker storytelling elements in certain consumer segments. This configurational perspective advances beyond traditional variable-centered approaches by revealing equifinality in consumer behavior patterns (Kumar et al., 2010). The identification of alternative pathways provides strategic flexibility for marketing practitioners whilst highlighting the complexity of consumer decision-making processes within digital environments.

The Vietnamese market context provides valuable insights into consumer behavior within emerging economies characterised by rapid digital adoption and evolving cultural dynamics. The observed pattern of strong relationship between psychological engagement and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.712$) suggests that Vietnamese consumers demonstrate high behavioral consistency when emotionally invested in entertainment content, supporting social cognitive theory's emphasis on outcome expectancies and self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 2001).

The theoretical contributions of this research extend existing knowledge by demonstrating how narrative transportation theory and social cognitive theory can be integrated to explain consumer behavior within digital marketing contexts. The empirical validation of the sequential mediation model provides evidence for the psychological mechanisms underlying digital storytelling

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effectiveness, addressing gaps in previous research regarding the processes linking narrative exposure to behavioral outcomes (Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

Practical implications for marketing practitioners emphasise the importance of investing in high-quality narrative content that facilitates transportation experiences rather than focusing solely on reach or frequency metrics. The findings suggest that narrative authenticity and emotional resonance serve as particularly important elements for Vietnamese consumers, indicating the need for culturally-sensitive content development strategies. The mediating role of psychological engagement highlights the importance of creating ongoing consumer-brand relationships rather than transactional interactions.

The research limitations include the cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inferences, and the focus on Vietnamese consumers, which may limit generalisability to other cultural contexts. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine the temporal dynamics of narrative transportation effects and investigate cross-cultural validation of the proposed theoretical framework. Additionally, experimental manipulation of storytelling elements could provide stronger causal evidence for the observed relationships.

This investigation contributes to the evolving understanding of consumer behavior within digital narrative ecosystems by providing empirical evidence for the psychological mechanisms underlying social media storytelling effectiveness. The findings demonstrate that narrative transportation and psychological engagement serve as critical mediating variables that translate storytelling elements into behavioral outcomes, whilst cultural factors moderate these relationships in meaningful ways. The research provides both theoretical advancement and practical insights for marketing practitioners operating within emerging market contexts, highlighting the importance of sophisticated narrative strategies for achieving consumer behavioral transformation in contemporary digital environments.

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