

**The effect of brand anthropomorphism in storytelling video ads on WOM intention: The perspective of narrative transportation theory**

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## **Abstract:**

In the era of digital media, storytelling has increasingly become a powerful marketing tool to effectively convince and attract consumers. Based on narrative transportation theory, this research aims to examine the influence of brand anthropomorphism on consumers' word-of-mouth intent in the context of storytelling video ads. Additionally, it investigates the mediating effect of sense of presence and the moderating effect of perceived brand authenticity. A quantitative approach was conducted using a purposive sampling method to gather data from 360 participants in France. The findings show that narrative transportation is positively impacted by brand anthropomorphism, which in turn affects consumers' sense of presence and propensity to spread word of mouth. The results of the serial mediation analysis demonstrate that the association between narrative transportation and WOM intention is partially mediated by sense of presence, while the multi-group analysis reveals the moderating effect of perceived brand authenticity.

**Keywords:** Brand anthropomorphism; narrative transportation; perceived brand authenticity; sense of presence; WOM intention

## **Résumé:**

À l'ère des médias numériques, la narration s'est imposée comme un puissant outil de marketing pour convaincre et séduire efficacement les consommateurs. S'appuyant sur le paradigme du transport narratif, cette recherche vise à examiner l'influence de l'anthropomorphisme de la marque sur l'intention de bouche-à-oreille des consommateurs dans le contexte des publicités vidéo narratives. En outre, elle examine l'effet médiateur du sentiment de présence et l'effet modérateur de l'authenticité perçue de la marque. Une approche quantitative a été adoptée, utilisant une méthode d'échantillonnage raisonné pour recueillir des données auprès de 360 participants en France. Les résultats montrent que le transport narratif est positivement influencé par l'anthropomorphisme de la marque, qui à son tour affecte le sentiment de présence des consommateurs et leur propension à répandre le bouche-à-oreille. Les résultats de l'analyse de médiation en série montrent que l'association entre le transport narratif et l'intention de bouche-à-oreille est partiellement médiatisée par le sentiment de présence, tandis que l'analyse multigroupe révèle l'effet modérateur de l'authenticité perçue de la marque.

**Mots-clés :** Anthropomorphisme de la marque ; transport narratif ; la perception de l'authenticité envers la marque ; le sens de présence ; BAO intention

## 1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, there has been a significant surge in scholarly interest in storytelling advertising. By 2025, the French market for digital video advertising is expected to contribute approximately USD 2.61 billion in ad revenue. The market is projected to reach a total volume of around USD 3.25 billion by 2029, evolving at a compound annual growth rate of 5.68% (Statista, 2025). Investigators from across multiple fields and settings have started to embrace narrative transportation as a persuasive strategy, shaping changes in consumers' attitudes, beliefs, intentions and behaviors (Van Laer et al., 2014). Although the widespread interest in narrative transport as a mechanism of persuasion is exciting, it has generated a splintered conversation with pertinent published studies in academic journals within areas such as advertising (Grigsby et al., 2023), marketing (Anaza et al., 2020), communication (Oh et al., 2020), psychology (Nielsen et al., 2018) and health (Andrews et al., 2022). In light of the ongoing value that narrative transportation holds for marketers in terms of influencing product choice (Redondo et al., 2018), improving attitudes (Escalas, 2004), boosting word-of-mouth intentions (Seo et al., 2018) and increasing purchase intentions (McFerran et al., 2010). The persuasive power of narrative transportation has received increased attention, however little is known about the nature of this relationship, particularly the connection between the psychological process of narrative transportation and the sense of presence, which has been insufficiently investigated. According to Zhang et al. (2020), anthropomorphism is an extremely important strategic tool in brand marketing, playing a significant role in its promotion and serving as a frequently used strategy to marketing management. While anthropomorphism has extensively proven to be an effective strategy within the domain of marketing practices for increasing product affinity (Puzakova et al., 2013), improving product evaluation (Zhang and Wang, 2023) and enhancing consumers' behavioral intentions (Xu et al., 2024), there has been scant empirical investigation into how brand anthropomorphism influences narrative transportation in the sphere of storytelling video ads. In addition, the potential mediating mechanism of sense of presence linking narrative transportation to consumers' WOM intention requires further clarification. The majority of the literature (Campagna et al., 2023; Zhang and Liu, 2023) highlights perceived brand authenticity as a catalyst in shaping consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions toward the brand. However, to the best of our knowledge, there is a paucity of studies investigating the moderating role of perceived brand authenticity. To cover these gaps, we seek to answer the following research questions: (1) How does brand anthropomorphism in storytelling video ads lead to narrative transportation and how does narrative transportation

influence consumers' sense of presence and word-of-mouth intention? (2) How does sense of presence mediate the relationship between narrative transportation and WOM intention? (3) How does perceived brand authenticity moderate the relationships?

## **1. Theoretical backgrounds and hypotheses development**

### **1.1 Storytelling video ads and narrative transportation theory**

Storytelling is considered an effective method in advertising to convey information and promote communication (Padgett and Allen, 1997). Storytelling video ads attempt to convey the meaning of the brand through an engaging storyline, providing the audience with personally meaningful brand benefits (Haring, 2003). Storytelling marketing emphasizes the construction and dissemination of stories that align with consumer's psychological and emotional needs (Chang, 2025). Narrative transport theory is used as a theoretical framework to study the impact of brand anthropomorphism in storytelling videos on social media platforms. Narrative transportation refers to the psychological process by which people are deeply attracted to a story and experience a sense of immersion, as if they are part of the narrative environment (Deb et al., 2025). This phenomenon is very important for advertising, especially in the field of video storytelling, where the main goal is to attract consumers and influence their attitudes and behaviors (Lu et al., 2016).

### **1.2 The effect of brand anthropomorphism on narrative transportation**

By giving brands human characteristics, anthropomorphism aims to humanize them and improve consumer-brand communication, which in turn leads to more positive customer reactions (Guido and Peluso, 2015; Kim and Swaminathan, 2021; Zhang and Wang, 2023). An anthropomorphized character woven into the narrative can evoke empathetic responses from consumers, reinforcing their emotional connection to the brand's story, and ultimately contributing to more positive evaluations of the brand (Escalas, 2004; Shen et al., 2014). A strong sense of immersion in the brand's narrative is evoked by the anthropomorphic features, which frequently result in narrative transportation (Han et al., 2025). Furthermore, Thomas and Grigsby (2024) have demonstrated that anthropomorphic characteristics of a storyteller increase consumers' narrative transportation. In this research, we expect that anthropomorphism, the attribution of human characteristics to brands, plays a significant role in narrative transportation within storytelling video ads. In light of the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H1:** *Brand anthropomorphism positively influences consumer narrative transportation*

### **1.3 The effect of narrative transportation on sense of presence and Word-of-mouth intention**

Sense of presence has been defined: "a psychological state in which virtual objects are experienced as actual objects in either sensory or non-sensory ways" (Lee, 2004).

Audiovisual stories, including films and television programs, can evoke vivid psychological experiences characterized by a heightened perception of realism; this experiential state is commonly referred to as a sense of presence (Li et al., 2015). Consequently, as a form of visual stories, storytelling videos in social media platforms may provide potential consumers a sense of presence. Research indicates that the sense of presence is partly influenced by the degree of immersion (Cadet and Chainay, 2020); specifically, narrative transportation involves immersion in the story, which enhance the experience of presence (Sherman and Craig, 2003). According to Cao et al. (2021), the sense of presence generated by the narrative in short tourist videos stems from the immersion produced by narrative transportation. Accordingly, we formulate the following hypothesis:

**H2: *Narrative transportation positively influences consumers' sense of presence***

Individuals are more likely to be convinced by their emotional reactions during narrative persuasion than by arguments derived from the content provided in the story (Kang et al., 2019). Because its storytelling technique creates a psychological known as narrative transportation, storytelling advertising is extremely effective at influencing consumers' behavioral intention (Escalas, 2004; Van Laer et al., 2014). Several studies (Kang et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2024; Han et al., 2025) have highlighted the substantial influence of narrative transportation on consumers' behavioral intention. For instance, Han et al. (2025) have examined the effects of narrative transportation on product evaluation and purchase intention. Additionally, Kang et al. (2019) found that narrative transportation is positively associated with behavioral responses, such as the willingness to share information about storytelling ads through word-of-mouth. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H3: *Narrative transportation positively influences consumers' WOM intention***

**1.4 The effect of sense of presence on WOM intention**

The concept of sense of presence has been used extensively in previous researches to explain the persuasive power of immersive media (Breves and Dodel, 2021). A wealth of research further underscores the pivotal role of sense of presence in the enhancement of advertising efficiency across different settings (Li et al., 2002; Debbabi et al., 2013; Roettl and Terlutter, 2018; Cao et al., 2021). In the domain of advertising, empirical studies suggest that high levels of presence positively affect consumer responses, including attitudes toward the advertisement and brand, as well as purchase intentions (Roettl and Terlutter, 2018). Moreover, Di Dalmazi et al. (2024) emphasize that the sense of presence elicited by immersive VR video increases tourists' intention to visit the destination and their likelihood to recommend it to others. In other words, a favorable sense of presence is likely to foster a

stronger intention to engage in positive WOM communication. Based on these foundational assumptions, we advance the following hypothesis:

**H4:** *Sense of presence positively influences WOM intention*

Drawing upon the aforementioned hypotheses, this current research proposes the following hypothesis:

**H5:** *Sense of presence mediates the relationship between narrative transportation and WOM intention*

### **1.5 The moderating role of perceived brand authenticity**

Perceived brand authenticity (PBA) refers to consumers' subjective evaluation of a brand's authenticity (Napoli et al., 2014). Narrative immersion can serve to boost perceptions of brand authenticity, as immersive experiences have been reported to improve persuasive effect (Banerjee and Greene, 2012). In addition, Huang and Guo (2020) investigated the relationship between consumers' immersion in brand narratives and their perceptions of brand authenticity. Prior research indicated that perceptions of authenticity play a crucial role in shaping consumers' brand attitudes (Campagna et al., 2023), fostering brand admiration and increase purchase intentions (Zhang and Liu, 2023). From this viewpoint, we expect that consumers with a high degree of perceived brand authenticity, compared to those with low perceived authenticity, they are more likely to experience narrative transportation, ultimately enhancing their WOM intentions. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**H5:** *Perceived brand authenticity positively moderates the relationship between narrative transportation and WOM intention*

**Figure 1: Conceptual model (see Appendix A)**

## **2. Methodology**

In France, digital storytelling advertising is regarded as an effective strategy that fosters consumer responses consistent with both cognitive and behavioral engagement within narrative-driven marketing (Ben Aicha and Bouzaabia, 2023). In order to ensure that the respondents were suitable to the study's goals, a quantitative study was undertaken utilizing a non-probabilistic purposive sampling technique for selecting French participants who had previous experience watching storytelling video advertisements on social media platforms. An online survey was deployed to gather data from French customers between April and May, 2025. The questionnaire contained a screening question that asked participants if they had ever experience with storytelling videos on social networks. Only those who attested to this experience were permitted to proceed with the survey. 360 valid responses were collected from the original sample of 425 respondents, representing an effective response rate of

84.71%. Details of the sample profile are presented in Table 1 in the Appendix. The measurement scale used in this study draws on previous research and is adapted to the current context. To measure brand anthropomorphism, we adopted the scale of Tuskej and Podnar (2018). Three items adapted from Escalas (2004) were used to assess narrative transportation. The sense of presence was estimated using a scale consisting of eight items adapted from Usoh et al. (2000). WOM intention was assessed using a scale comprising three items developed by Kang et al. (2019). To evaluate perceived brand authenticity, we used the scale of Napoli et al. (2014). A seven-point Likert scale, spanning from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), was employed to evaluate all-self-assessment items.

### **3. Data analysis**

#### **3.1 The measurement model**

SPSS 24 and Amos 26 were used for subsequent empirical analyses. To assess the potential presence of common method bias (CMB), Harman's single factor test was applied. The analysis showed that a single factor accounted for 27.805% of the total of variance, falling below the 50% benchmark, thus suggesting that CMB was not a major issue in this study (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To test the reliability and validity of the measurement model, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using Amos 26. As depicted in Table 2 in Appendix, both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7, with ranges of 0.792 to 0.974 and 0.816 to 0.928 respectively, thereby indicating satisfactory reliability of the constructs (Hair et al., 2015). The AVE values were above the established criterion of 0.5, providing evidence of convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, as shown in Table 3, the square root of AVE for each variable is greater than the respective inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

#### **3.2 The structural model**

Structural equation modeling was performed to test hypothetical relationships. The structural model demonstrates a robust overall fit, supported by the following fit indices (CMIN/df=2.168; RMR=0.057; AGFI=0.916; GFI=0.937; CFI=0.908; NFI=0.926; RMSEA=0.056). Each path's significance was assessed by applying a t-test, considering results statistically significant when the t-value surpassed 1.96 and the p-value was less than 0.05 (see Table 4 in Appendix). The effect of brand anthropomorphism on narrative transportation was significant and positive statistically ( $\beta=0.376$ ;  $t=7.144$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), supporting hypothesis H1. The empirical results indicate that narrative transportation positively and significantly sense of presence ( $\beta=0.322$ ;  $t=6.171$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and WOM intention ( $\beta=0.434$ ;  $t=3.821$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), thus supporting H2 and H3. Moreover, the sense of

presence has a positive and significant effect on WOM intention ( $\beta=0.305$ ;  $t=3.546$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), which supports statistically H4.

### **3.3 Mediating effect test**

In order to test the mediating effect of sense of presence, a serial mediation was performed using Amos bootstrapping. As shown in Table 5 in Appendix, the results revealed that sense of presence has a significant indirect effect on the link between narrative transportation and WOM intention ( $\beta=0.736$ ,  $t=4.176$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Since narrative transportation has a statistically significant effect on WOM intention, the sense of presence acts as a partial mediation.

### **3.4 Moderating effect test**

Through a multigroup analysis, the moderating effect of perceived brand authenticity was examined. This method enables to compare individuals with high ( $n=200$ ) and low ( $n=160$ ) levels of perceived brand authenticity using a comparative structural path analysis. A significant chi-square difference between the unconstrained and constrained models was observed ( $H6: \Delta\chi^2=13.642$ ,  $P=0.000$ ), signifying that the influence of narrative transportation on WOM intention differed significantly depending on the perceived level of brand authenticity levels. As presented in Table 6 in Appendix, narrative transportation demonstrated a significantly stronger effect on WOM intention for consumers with high perceived brand authenticity ( $\beta=0.849$ ,  $t=4.662$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) than for those exhibiting low perceived authenticity ( $\beta=0.378$ ,  $t=2.750$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), thereby providing empirical support for hypothesis H6.

## **4. Discussions, contributions, limitations and future researches**

### **4.1 Discussions**

French consumers are increasingly turning to tailored digital video content that corresponds to their individual preferences and lifestyles, stimulated by the growth of storytelling on-demand services (Statista, 2025). First of all, the results of the empirical analysis indicate that brand anthropomorphism has a positive and significant effect on narrative transportation in the context of storytelling video advertisements. This finding is consistent with prior studies (Thomas and Grigsby, 2024; Han et al., 2025). Anthropomorphic cues and human-like brand traits effectively enhance consumers' narrative transportation by deepening their immersion in the story. Secondly, the findings further support the association between narrative transportation and sense of presence, as evidenced in previous scholarly work (Cadet and Chainay, 2020; Cao et al., 2021). Accordingly, when consumers become immersed and engrossed in a story, they are more likely to experience a heightened sense of presence within the narrative. Thirdly, the research provides empirical support for the link between narrative

transportation and consumers' intention to engage in WOM communication. This outcome aligns with the proposal of Kang et al. (2019), suggesting that when consumers are cognitively and emotionally immersed in a narrative, they are more inclined to recommend and discuss the brand with others. Fourthly, the effect of sense of presence on WOM intention is supported, aligning with the research conducted by Di Dalmazi et al. (2024). In fact, individuals watching a storytelling video ad can feel like they are an integral part of the scene. This sense of presence can increase their desire to share information and talk about brands to others. Fifthly, a serial mediation analysis supports the partial mediating role of sense of presence on the link between narrative transportation and WOM intention. In other words, when consumers feel transported in a story, they also experience a stronger sense of presence, which increases their likelihood to talk about brands featured in storytelling video ads. Notably, the results of a multi-group moderation analysis reveal that perceived brand authenticity significantly moderates the association between narrative transportation and WOM intention. Specifically, when a brand is perceived as highly authentic, consumers are likely to be deeply transported and engrossed in a brand storytelling and exhibit a greater propensity to recommend the brand to others or share their experiences. This verdict contributes to the study by Zhang and Liu (2023) on the direct effect of brand authenticity on consumers' behavioral intentions.

#### **4.2 Contributions**

This research further enriches theoretically the literature review in the domain of storytelling advertising by establishing a theoretical underpinning based on the theory of narrative transportation. This paper provides a meaningful implication to previous researches by highlighting the antecedents and consequences of narrative transportation, with a particular emphasis upon how anthropomorphic brand cues effectively contribute to the enhancement of the experience of narrative transportation. Furthermore, this study sheds light on the psychological and persuasive mechanisms that combine narrative transportation to consumers' feelings of presence and their willingness to share word-of-mouth recommendations. Importantly, this research is among the initial efforts to investigate the role of sense of presence as a mediating mechanism in clarifying the indirect persuasive effect of narrative transportation on consumers' word-of-mouth (WOM) intention. The study provides a novel theoretical framework that expands on our grasp of how immersive storytelling experiences shape eventual consumer advocacy behavior by incorporating presence into the narrative persuasion paradigm. In addition, to the best of our knowledge, this present work addresses critical gaps in the literature review by examining the moderating role of perceived

brand authenticity, thereby offering nuanced evidence on how perceptions of authenticity among consumers can heighten or weaken the persuasive effect of narrative transportation on subsequent WOM behavior.

The research findings offer several managerial implications to marketing practitioners operating within the domain of storytelling advertising. Specifically, they provide practical instructions for the creation of successful storytelling-based advertisements. Marketers can leverage brand anthropomorphism as a strategic tool to effectively enhance consumers' narrative transportation. For instance, using anthropomorphic brand characters in storytelling advertisements can improve and deepen consumers' narrative transportation in the retail and e-commerce industries. Similarly, the automotive industry can adopt personified and anthropomorphic cues for vehicles to foster individuals' immersion in brand narratives.

The results underscore the effectiveness of narrative transportation in strengthening individuals' sense of presence and stimulating positive word-of-mouth behaviors. Therefore, managers should concentrate on crafting immersive stories that foster deeply embedded engagement through cognitive and emotional inclusion, ultimately increasing consumers' sense of belonging to the brand. The results imply that the feeling of presence is a crucial psychological mechanism mediating the link between narrative transportation and WOM intention. In other words, when consumers are cognitively absorbed in a brand story, they are more likely to recommend the brand to others because they feel like they are part of the scene. Notably, immersive brand narratives may substantially elicit WOM behaviors when the brand behind the story is perceived as highly genuine and authentic. Consequently, marketers should concentrate on reinforcing brand authenticity through ensuring message trustworthiness, consistent communications and achieving brand commitments. Moreover, advertisers should efficiently implement authentic visuals, spatialized audio, interactive functionalities, high-quality scenarios and captivating storytelling to evoke a greater experience of narrative transportation and sense of presence. In sum, marketers across industries such as e-retailing, the food industry and the tourism sector can use personified brands with human-like characteristics to stimulate a more profound level of consumer immersion by strategically embedding anthropomorphic features within storytelling campaigns. Thus, this can reinforce the sense of presence and ultimately result in more favorable consumer behaviors, including positive word-of-mouth. These relevant insights serve as a guideline to design and develop more effective and persuasive storytelling-based advertising campaigns.

#### **4.3 Limitations and future researches**

Despite the significant contributions of this research, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations for considerations in future studies. The cross-sectional approach used in this paper limits the capacity to identify causal inference and track changes over time. Therefore, in order to overcome these limitations, longitudinal or experimental methodologies can be adopted in future research. Furthermore, consumers' narrative transportation is influenced not only by brand anthropomorphism but also by other factors such as storyteller attributes and consumer characteristics (Thomas and Grigsby, 2024). Examining how narrative transportation contributes to the dissemination of false information would be an extension of this work. This process, which explains how people become emotionally and cognitively immersed and engrossed in a story, may have an impact on how credible content is viewed and how widely it is shared. Including this factor would expand the scope of this approach and improve the comprehension of disinformation processes. Lastly, this study does not examine storytelling video advertisements within the context of a specific product category. Accordingly, future research should consider specifying the product type to investigate potential differences across categories.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data will be available upon request

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## Appendix A:

Figure 1: Conceptual model

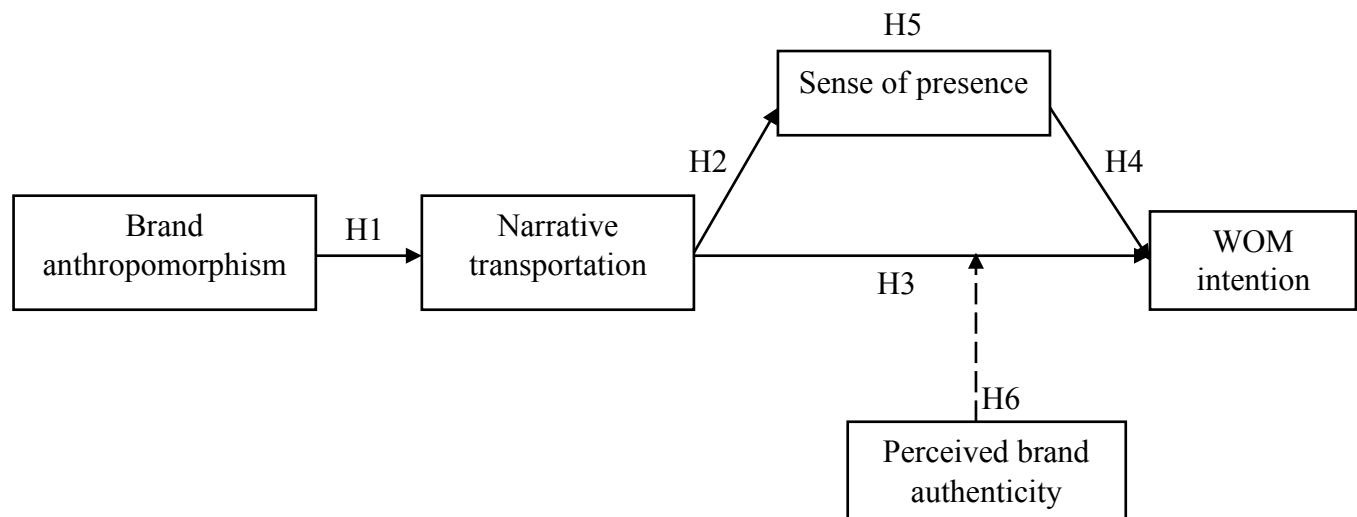


Table 1: Sample profile

| Demographic characteristics |                        | Frequency | Rate   |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Gender                      | Male                   | 175       | 48.61% |
|                             | Female                 | 185       | 51.39% |
| Age                         | 20-25                  | 160       | 44.44% |
|                             | 26-35                  | 120       | 33.33% |
|                             | 36-45                  | 55        | 15.28% |
|                             | 46-55                  | 15        | 4.17%  |
|                             | 56-65                  | 10        | 2.78%  |
|                             |                        |           |        |
| Educational level           | High school graduation | 100       | 27.78% |
|                             | College graduation     | 45        | 12.5%  |
|                             | University graduation  | 215       | 59.72% |
| Social media usage          | 1-3 times per day      | 45        | 12.5%  |

|                  |                           |     |        |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----|--------|
| <b>frequency</b> | 4-6 times per day         | 194 | 53.89% |
|                  | More than 6 times per day | 121 | 33.61% |

**Table 2: Measurements**

| <b>Variables</b>                   | <b>Items</b>                                                 | <b>Cronbach Alpha</b> | <b>Composite Reliability (CR)</b> | <b>AVE</b> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Brand anthropomorphism (BA)        | -BA1<br>-BA2<br>-BA3<br>-BA4<br>-BA5                         | 0.974                 | 0.928                             | 0.836      |
| Narrative transportation (NT)      | -NT1<br>-NT2<br>-NT3                                         | 0.878                 | 0.866                             | 0.748      |
| Sense of presence (SP)             | -SP1<br>-SP2<br>-SP3<br>-SP4<br>-SP5<br>-SP6<br>-SP7<br>-SP8 | 0.814                 | 0.816                             | 0.735      |
| WOM intention (WOM)                | -WOM1<br>-WOM2<br>-WOM3                                      | 0.792                 | 0.855                             | 0.728      |
| Perceived brand authenticity (PBA) | -PBA1<br>-PBA2<br>-PBA3<br>-PBA4                             | 0.856                 | 0.914                             | 0.806      |

**Table 3: Discriminant validity**

|    | BA           | NT | SP | WOM | PBA |
|----|--------------|----|----|-----|-----|
| BA | <b>0.914</b> |    |    |     |     |

|     |       |              |              |              |              |
|-----|-------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| NT  | 0.810 | <b>0.885</b> |              |              |              |
| SP  | 0.752 | 0.745        | <b>0.857</b> |              |              |
| WOM | 0.653 | 0.727        | 0.621        | <b>0.853</b> |              |
| PBA | 0.572 | 0.635        | 0.462        | 0.685        | <b>0.898</b> |

**Table 4: Hypotheses testing**

| Hypothesis | Paths                    | Estimate | C.R   | P     | Result    |
|------------|--------------------------|----------|-------|-------|-----------|
| H1         | BA $\longrightarrow$ NT  | 0.376    | 7.144 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H2         | NT $\longrightarrow$ SP  | 0.322    | 6.171 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H3         | NT $\longrightarrow$ WOM | 0.434    | 3.821 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H4         | SP $\longrightarrow$ WOM | 0.305    | 3.546 | 0.000 | Supported |

**Table 5: Test of the mediating effect of sense of presence**

| Relationship                                  | Direct effect | Indirect effect (mediation) | Total effect | Result                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| NT $\longrightarrow$ SP $\longrightarrow$ WOM | 0.434***      | 0.736***                    | 0.311***     | <b>Partial mediation</b> |

**Table 6: Test of the moderating effect of perceived brand authenticity**

| Hypothesis | Causal relationship      | Estimate |       | C.R   |       | P     |       |
|------------|--------------------------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|            |                          | High     | Low   | High  | Low   | High  | Low   |
| <b>H6</b>  | NT $\longrightarrow$ WOM | 0.849    | 0.378 | 4.662 | 2.750 | 0.000 | 0.006 |

