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Testing narrative perspective of digital heritage campaigns: A quantitative analysis on Dong Ho folk painting with artisan-led content

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Abstract

The International Journal of Heritage Studies focuses on modern interpretation and preservation of cultural heritage. This paper reports on a study of the 'Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ' campaign, aimed at engaging Vietnamese Gen Z with folk painting. Traditional ICH, like Dong Ho art, struggles to connect with digital-native youth. Digital campaigns and short-form platforms like TikTok offer new, underexplored ways to showcase and commercially promote heritage.

Aim: This study aimed to experimentally investigate the differential impact of Cultural-Value versus Personal-Experience storytelling frames, co-created with the original artisan on a short-form video platform, on Gen Z's behavioral intentions toward the ICH.

Methodology: A quantitative, cross-sectional survey was used with Gen Z consumers in Vietnam aged between 18 and 27 as digital natives to underline the role of cultural heritage in different social media platforms. The study tested hypotheses about campaign teams and artisans using regression and mediation analysis to assess how framing influences intentions via perceived authenticity and narrative transportation.

Results: The storytelling frame did not significantly impact Perceived Authenticity (H1: $p = .176$) or Narrative Transportation (H2: $p = .436$). Furthermore, neither Authenticity nor Transportation significantly predicted Attitude toward the heritage (H3A: $p = .646$; H3B: $p = .707$). The only significant predictor found was Prior Visit Experience, which positively predicted Willingness-to-Pay (WTP) ($\beta = .107, p = .033^{*}$).

Conclusion: The narrative persuasion model cannot fully explain Gen Z's response to short-form ICH content, showing a break in the frame-to-attitude psychological chain on fast media. Future studies should integrate platform-native variables like social influence and entertainment value as potential mediators of behavioral intentions.

How does paper align with the journal's aims and scopes?

The International Journal of Heritage Studies focuses on modern interpretation and preservation of cultural heritage. This paper reports on a study of the 'Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ' campaign, aimed at engaging Vietnamese Gen Z with folk painting. Traditional ICH, like Dong Ho art, struggles to connect with digital-native youth. Digital campaigns and short-form platforms like TikTok offer new, underexplored ways to showcase and commercially promote heritage.

Highlights

- This study tested the "Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ" campaign on TikTok to see if Cultural-Value or Personal-Experience storytelling frames better engage Vietnamese Gen Z with Dong Ho folk painting.
- Research found no significant link between storytelling frame, perceived authenticity, or narrative transportation, and attitudes toward the heritage, contrary to persuasion models.
- The only key predictor of Willingness-to-Pay was a prior physical visit to the heritage site, highlighting the power of tangible experience in boosting economic support for ICH.
- The findings challenge the Narrative Persuasion Model's applicability to TikTok's fast-paced, short videos, showing a breakdown in the usual psychological chain from message framing to consumer attitude.
- By identifying digital narrative limitations, the study offers empirical evidence for heritage practitioners, proposing a two-step strategy: digital awareness-building then physical experience to turn engagement into financial support.

1 Introduction

The protection and transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) represent a significant global challenge in the digital era, as noted by Gonçalves et al. (2022). The need for innovative and sustainable engagement strategies has become critical for ensuring the longevity of cultural practices and community continuity (Gonçalves et al., 2022). An empirical investigation by Nikolakopoulou et al. (2022) confirms that digital platforms provide unprecedented opportunities for heritage interpretation and public outreach, moving beyond traditional museum spaces. Conveying ICH often requires interactive and immersive storytelling to resonate with a modern, global audience (Nikolakopoulou et al., 2022).

Research conducted by Cao (2025) provides evidence that short-form video platforms, such as TikTok, have emerged as powerful conduits for promoting various forms of ICH, including musical and visual arts. The rapid, attention-driven nature of these platforms demands new, condensed communication styles for heritage content (Cao, 2025). Based on the findings of Liu et al. (2024), the influence of TikTok on the behavioral intentions of Generation Z (Gen Z) toward tourism and culture has been widely documented. The platform's unique features, such as algorithm-driven discovery and the resultant flow experience, shape content consumption for this demographic (Liu et al., 2024). The results reported by Montag et al. (2021) demonstrate that the psychology of TikTok use is characterized by high engagement and rapid content cycling. This characteristic poses a distinct challenge for communicating the depth and historical context often required for heritage appreciation (Montag et al., 2021). According to the evidence presented by Zhou et al. (2023), short-form videos significantly influence young tourists' destination choices. These visual narratives play a role in converting general awareness into a potential travel or purchase decision (Zhou et al., 2023).

Drawing on the work of Dionísio and Nisi (2021), effective engagement with heritage requires leveraging digital storytelling to bridge the gap between the traditional subject and the contemporary audience. Transmedia narratives, and by extension short-form video, can deepen the tourist's understanding of local heritage (Dionísio & Nisi, 2021). The findings of Boukes and LaMarre (2021) indicate that narrative richness and the resulting process of narrative transportation are critical factors for persuasive communication. When audiences are immersed in a story, their attitudes and subsequent behavioral intentions are more strongly impacted (Boukes & LaMarre, 2021). Consistent with earlier findings by Carvalho et al. (2023), the perception of authenticity remains a cornerstone for cultural heritage consumption and emotional connection. Audiences evaluate the credibility of the heritage presentation, which impacts their overall positive attitude toward the heritage (Carvalho et al., 2023). As reported by Phat et al. (2025), authenticity acts as a vital mediating factor in the relationship between cultural heritage and destination attractiveness. The perceived genuineness of the experience is often what drives tourists' conservational and purchase decisions (Phat et al., 2025).

Evidence from Orazi et al. (2025) suggests that the structure and nature of verbal persuasion, whether analytical or narrative, is a key determinant of communication effectiveness. The choice of content frame is therefore a crucial design decision for heritage actors seeking to communicate specific values (Orazi et al., 2025). A longitudinal study by Wertgen et al. (2021) establishes that source credibility plays a central role in the validation of information and the acceptance of a message. The identity of the narrator, particularly an authentic source, significantly influences persuasive outcomes (Wertgen et al., 2021). Building on prior research by Pan et al. (2024), the effectiveness of influencer marketing on short-form platforms relies heavily on the credibility and perceived expertise of the content creator. Artisan-led content, as a form of co-creation, introduces a new, authentic dimension to source effects in heritage promotion (Pan et al., 2024). Research by Ruangkanjanases et al. (2023) further highlights that value co-creation with users is essential for brand equity on short-form video platforms. The active involvement of the artisan is a direct form of co-creation that can enhance perceived value (Ruangkanjanases et al., 2023).

1.1 Research Problem and Research Aim

The Dong Ho folk painting, an ICH practice, faces significant safeguarding challenges that require new avenues for effective transmission and commercial viability. The existing literature on digital heritage primarily describes engagement and content characteristics, yet a critical lack of experimental evidence prevents heritage practitioners from understanding the causal mechanism of narrative persuasion on platforms like TikTok (Guo et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2023). Specifically, it remains unclear whether a cultural-value frame (historical/symbolic) or a personal-experience frame (artisan's journey/life) is more effective for the crucial Gen Z audience (Du & Wang, 2025; Seyfi et al., 2023). Furthermore, the mediating roles of perceived authenticity and narrative transportation in this specific short-form, artisan-led context have not been experimentally isolated (Li et al., 2024; Lillie et al., 2025). To address this challenge, a communication campaign was launched in early 2026. The Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ communication campaign was an experimental sign to target Gen Z and explore how artisan-led co-creation enhances source credibility, storytelling methods, and interactions. Therefore, this study aimed to experimentally investigate the differential impact of cultural-value versus personal-experience storytelling frames as discussed in the Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ' campaign to analyze behavioral intentions of Gen Z toward the Dong Ho folk painting. The research specifically analyzes the mediating effects of perceived authenticity and narrative transportation.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Storytelling Frames and Cultural Heritage Persuasion

Drawing on the work of Orazi et al. (2025), the presentation structure of persuasive content is a critical determinant of message effectiveness. The choice between analytical (fact-based) and narrative (story-based) content significantly impacts audience processing, suggesting the mechanism of content delivery is paramount (Orazi et al., 2025). As documented by Calvi and Hover (2021), framing is essential for mythmaking and meaning creation within tourist destinations. Different frames highlight specific attributes of a place or practice, thereby shaping visitor expectations and appeal (Calvi & Hover, 2021). Consistent with earlier findings by May et al. (2025), narrative framing influences decision-making, even within high-tech extended reality environments. The frame chosen for a heritage narrative directly impacts how a cultural object, such as the Dong Ho folk painting, is evaluated by the viewer (May et al., 2025).

Research conducted by Yuxin et al. (2024) provides evidence that historical storytelling greatly influences cultural heritage tourists' intention to revisit a site. The specific focus of the story, whether on historical legacy (cultural-value frame) or contemporary human experience (personal-experience frame), is the operational manipulation of the narrative frame (Yuxin et al., 2024). These two frameworks were extracted from the content strategy for the "Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ" campaign. The campaign analyzed distinguished features, history and meanings of the Dong Ho painting and how it affected the storytelling perspective of the cultural value frame. Next, the Hoa Sac represented the personal experience frame that fostered emotional connection between the target generation (Gen Z). An experimental analysis by Gan et al. (2023) demonstrates that the narration appeal in short videos significantly interacts with visual content to affect travel intentions. The framing of content dictates which elements (visual appeal or narrative depth) receive the most attention from the Gen Z audience (Gan et al., 2023). Based on the findings of Bhattacharya et al. (2024), the impact of symbols, which are core to the cultural-value frame, influences campaign effectiveness on TikTok. The use of specific cultural symbols is a function of the chosen narrative frame (Bhattacharya et al., 2024).

2.2 The Mechanism: Narrative Transportation and Perceived Authenticity

As described by Lillie et al. (2025), structural elements, such as narrative immersion, are vital in persuasive narratives for promoting behavioral change. The narrative immersion model illustrates how deep engagement facilitates message acceptance and attitudinal shifts (Lillie et al., 2025). The findings of Boukes and LaMarre (2021) indicate that narrative transportation acts as a key psychological mediator between message consumption and attitudinal

change. A viewer fully absorbed in a short-form heritage story will demonstrate higher message credibility and positive attitudes toward the subject (Boukes & LaMarre, 2021). The results reported by Lin et al. (2024) demonstrate the importance of the flow experience, which is closely related to transportation, in the effectiveness of storytelling in tourism. Narrative transportation is therefore critical for converting passive viewing into active behavioral intention (Lin, 2024).

Building on prior research by Pietroni (2025), a sense of authenticity is crucial in any heritage presentation, especially those utilizing new media. The design of the short-form video must reinforce the genuine and non-commercial nature of the cultural subject to be successful (Pietroni, 2025). In line with the theoretical perspective proposed by Carvalho et al. (2023), perceptions of authenticity shape the emotional responses of tourists to intangible heritage. A heightened perception of authenticity strengthens the value and acceptance of the heritage presentation (Carvalho et al., 2023). Although the Gen Z generation has a positive attitude towards traditional cultural heritage, they perceive Dong Ho paintings as a distant part of modern life. During the communication campaign for Đông Hồ, modern visuals and contemporary contexts were used to create a foundational experience for Gen Z to engage with and empathise with traditional heritage within digital spaces. Based on the preliminary campaign research, Gen Z perceive a core “tension” in finding heritage “distant” and “academic”. It has become essential to connect them with authentic and experimental narratives to provide a better experience.

As reported by Li et al. (2024), perceived authenticity strongly shapes tourists’ conservational intentions toward cultural heritage in the digital environment. An authentic presentation is essential for driving long-term support behaviors, such as visiting or purchasing (Li et al., 2024). Evidence from Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021) suggests that memorable tourism experiences, rooted in perceived authenticity, lead to positive behavioral intentions among heritage tourists. The memory of an authentic encounter translates into future advocacy and support (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021).

2.3 Source Credibility and Artisan-Led Content

A longitudinal study by Wertgen et al. (2021) establishes that the credibility of the source dictates the level of validation applied to presented information. Higher source credibility leads to increased acceptance of the message, regardless of its inherent plausibility (Wertgen et al., 2021). An empirical investigation by Heiss et al. (2024) confirms that credibility cues, such as expert presence, can enhance the persuasive effect of short-form social media videos. The visible presence of the original artisan is expected to function as a powerful credibility cue, directly impacting the message's effectiveness (Heiss et al., 2024). As shown in the Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ campaign, the source credibility was obtained by collaborating with Đông Hồ artisans and artistic places like the Đông Hồ painting museum. Such artisan led content did not only serve as the authentic chủ thể” (subject) but increased validation for the traditional art using cultural knowledge. Research conducted by Houghton et al. (2022) provides evidence that credible narrators significantly reduce the likelihood of misinformed readers accepting false information. An authentic artisan serves as the ultimate credible source for the knowledge and history of ICH (Houghton et al., 2022).

As outlined by Alim et al. (2025), the influence of follower–influencer interactions is critical for shaping consumers’ behavioral responses. The artisan’s visibility and involvement in the content effectively turns the artist into an authentic, expert-level influencer for the heritage practice (Alim et al., 2025). Guided by the study conducted by Echavarria et al. (2022), engaging communities through creative, place-based narratives can facilitate cultural heritage engagement. The artisan is the genuine embodiment of the "place-based narrative" for Dong Ho folk painting, enhancing its perceived authenticity (Echavarria et al., 2022). Based on the findings of Nisi et al. (2023), social inclusion and cohesion are fostered when cultural heritage digital tools connect directly to the people. An artisan’s co-created participation validates the content as authentic and human-centric, aligning with the journal's focus on heritage and identities (Nisi et al., 2023).

2.4 Behavioral Intentions in the Digital Heritage Context

As described by Guo et al. (2025), tourism short video content marketing influences users’ behavioral intention through a clear impact mechanism, linking exposure to the desire to travel. This framework is adapted to measure active heritage support through the specific outcomes of visiting a craft village or purchasing traditional artwork (Guo et al., 2025). The findings of Seyfi et al. (2023) indicate that lifestyle politics drive Gen Z tourists’ buycott behavior toward sustainable heritage. Intention to purchase and visit is a measurable manifestation of support for the ICH practice (Seyfi et al., 2023). Research conducted by Lu et al. (2025) provides evidence that creative tourist experiences and engagement influence Gen Z’s environmentally responsible behavior. Active heritage support, such as visiting or purchasing, is an essential form of pro-social behavior necessary for sustainability (Lu et al., 2025). Consistent with earlier findings by Shreedhar (2021), storytelling is effective in converting passive engagement on social media into active conservation action. The narrative frame is therefore the key lever for this conversion (Shreedhar, 2021). An empirical investigation by Kasemsarn and Nickpour (2025a) confirms that social media storytelling frameworks are essential for promoting cultural heritage tourism among youth. The frameworks must be designed to maximize visit and purchase intentions to ensure the viability of the heritage (Kasemsarn & Nickpour, 2025b).

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, post-positivist research framework, utilizing a cross-sectional experimental survey design to investigate the digital consumption of intangible cultural heritage. The research specifically focused on Dong Ho painting, a traditional Vietnamese art form, as the focal stimulus to evaluate how distinct narrative structures influence consumer psychology. The experiment was designed as a motivation of the “Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ" campaign to study role of content pillars in the digital traditional heritage.Participants were classified based on their perceived exposure to either Cultural-Value Framing, which emphasizes historical continuity and traditional preservation, or Personal-Experience Framing, which highlights the creator’s individual journey and emotional resonance. These frameworks were redirected from the Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ" campaign to collaborate with

recognized artisans to mirror deeper insights on traditional artworks. This design facilitated the statistical assessment of variance across psychological states and behavioral intentions, allowing for a robust examination of the causal-predictive relationships within the proposed theoretical model.

3.2 Sampling Strategy and Participant Profile

The sampling strategy targeted Generation Z consumers in Vietnam, defined as individuals aged from 18 to 27. The group was chosen as the primary analytical unit because they are considered the audience of “digital natives” and play a crucial role in the revival of cultural heritage through social media platforms like TikTok and YouTube. The age of the target audience ranged between 14–28 years old while the primary target group was targeted between 18–24 years old. The survey channelling was carried out using the same method used in the Đông Hồ" campaign channels to leverage better exposure to the audience. Utilizing a purposive sampling technique, a final sample of $N = 400$ valid responses was obtained after rigorous data cleaning. To enhance the ecological validity and generalizability of the findings, the researchers ensured a balanced distribution across genders and geographic regions, including the Northern, Central, and Southern territories of Vietnam. This stratification minimizes the risk of geographic bias and ensures that the data reflects a holistic view of the national youth demographic.

3.3 Measurement Scales and Instrumentation

Measurement scales were rigorously adapted from established literature to ensure high construct validity, with all items translated and back-translated to maintain linguistic equivalence. Perceived authenticity was measured via a three-item scale focusing on genuineness and de-commercialization, while narrative transportation was assessed using a four-item scale measuring cognitive and emotional absorption. Attitude toward heritage was captured through a semantic differential scale assessing general valence and engagement. Behavioral outcomes were evaluated via intentions to visit craft villages, purchase products, and share content, alongside a calculated willingness to pay (WTP). All constructs, except WTP, were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

3.4 Developmental change using Đông Hồ' campaign linkage

The experimental design for the study was developed in direct collaboration with the 'Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ' campaign and a recognised Đông Hồ artisan. The videos aligned with the campaign’s production style, visual identity, and on-screen presentation of the artisans featured. In line with the cultural-value frame, the study drew on the campaign’s content during the initial educational phase. It also highlighted historical techniques and symbolic meanings to target its impact on the Gen Z population. Furthermore, the 'Personal-Experience Frame' mirrored the campaign’s core storytelling journey to shift emotional resonance.

3.5 Data Collection and Quality Control

Data collection was executed through an online self-administered questionnaire disseminated via high-traffic social media platforms frequented by the target demographic, specifically TikTok and Facebook. To mitigate common method bias, the survey instrument incorporated procedural remedies such as respondent anonymity and the psychological separation of measurement items. For quality control, an attention filter, requiring participants to identify the specific heritage type mentioned, was placed mid-survey to exclude inattentive respondents. Only completed entries were analyzed, precluding the need for imputation methods regarding missing data and ensuring a high-quality dataset for subsequent statistical testing.

3.6 Statistical Analysis and Modeling Strategy

The statistical analysis strategy followed a multi-stage approach using IBM SPSS Statistics v.27. Initial data screening involved the calculation of descriptive statistics and Cronbach’s alpha coefficients to confirm scale reliability, alongside Pearson bivariate correlations to identify initial directional relationships. Prior to predictive modeling, fundamental assumptions of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression were tested, including multicollinearity via Variance Inflation Factors (VIF), normality through Normal P-P plots, and homoscedasticity via the visual inspection of standardized residual scatterplots. Hypothesis testing was conducted through a series of multiple linear regressions to map the structural paths between framing types, psychological mediators, and behavioral intentions. Finally, mediation analysis was performed to isolate the indirect influence of narrative framing on consumer behavior through the established mediators of authenticity and transportation.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Frame-to-Authenticity Pathway (H1): An Unexpected Null Finding

The study conducted an analysis to investigate whether the storytelling frame significantly influenced the perceived authenticity of the Dong Ho folk painting content. The findings of the regression analysis indicate that the storytelling frame, comparing the Cultural-Value Frame to the Personal-Experience Frame, did not significantly predict Perceived Authenticity (Table 1, $t = 1.355, p = .176$). This result suggests that Gen Z, aged 18 to 27, perceived the genuineness and de-commercialisation of intangible cultural heritage as statistically similar regardless of whether the short-form video emphasised historical facts or the artisan’s individual life. The observed lack of differentiation contradicts initial theoretical expectations based on heritage consumption literature.

Table 1
Coefficients of Model 1

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.382	.230		1.660	.098
	Auth_Total	.064	.048	.068	1.355	.176
	Trans_Total	− .036	.046	− .039	− .781	.436
a. Dependent Variable: Frame						

The finding of a non-significant link challenges the notion that objective framing, such as the Cultural-Value approach, automatically confers a higher sense of authenticity than a more subjective, personal approach in a short-form video context. Based on the results, the decoupling contrasts with the success outcome of the Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ campaign that helped build a credible online presence. The campaign's feedback was positive on both Facebook and TikTok pages, as it helped them gain 3000 followers and received culturally positive feedback. Similarly, the Dong Ho folk painting narrated a multi-phase campaign strategy to develop an interactive content ecosystem. Amongst the number of followers, the target age range of audience targets between 14–28 years old. The campaign frames a sequenced content calende in addition to educatiobnal posts and key phrases like "Chạm," "Hòa Sắc," and "Lan Sắc" to build authenticity and trust over time.

Drawing on Pietroni (2025), the results suggest that the technological platform's rapid, multisensory nature may override the nuanced impact of message content on the sense of authenticity. The digital format, as a hybrid reality, might itself introduce a level of perceived mediation that dampens the effect of subtle framing differences (Pietroni, 2025). Based on the findings of Carvalho et al. (2023), the perception of authenticity, particularly in digital contexts, often relies more heavily on emotionally charged factors and user-generated feedback than on historical data presentation alone. The short-form video's inherent constraints might preclude the detailed context necessary for the Cultural-Value frame to establish objective authenticity (Carvalho et al., 2023).

Research conducted by Li et al. (2024) provides evidence that perceived authenticity is vital for shaping conservational intentions toward cultural heritage in the digital era. The failure of either frame to significantly elevate authenticity is a novel and critical insight for heritage management, indicating that simply changing the narrative focus does not solve the authenticity paradox of digital presentation (Li et al., 2024). In line with the theoretical perspective proposed by Wu et al. (2025), cultural distortion risk and the perceived value are often mediating factors of tourist loyalty at heritage sites, and the null finding on authenticity suggests that neither frame successfully mitigated the "distortion risk" inherent in translating ICH to TikTok. The brevity of the short-form video might make it difficult to convey the depth required to achieve authentic perceived value (Wu et al., 2025). An empirical investigation by Calvi and Hover (2021) confirms that storytelling is crucial for mythmaking in tourist destinations, yet the present study's data suggests that on TikTok, both the historical and personal narratives may be processed merely as "content" rather than as truly authentic heritage communication. The velocity and volume of content on the platform may attenuate the deep processing needed for authenticity (Calvi & Hover, 2021).

As described by Zhu et al. (2023), the development of souvenirs related to cultural heritage often depends on the successful communication of authentic cultural value. The non-significant influence of framing on authenticity suggests a broader problem for heritage commercialization strategies (Zhu et al., 2023). Furthermore, evidence from Phat et al. (2025) suggests that authenticity acts as a vital component in determining destination attractiveness, underscoring the severity of the non-significant effect found here. The key mechanism expected to drive heritage interest failed to materialize across both framing conditions (Phat et al., 2025). The study conducted by Kasemsarn and Nickpour (2025a) reveals that successful social media storytelling for youth heritage tourism relies on a framework that integrates elements appealing to the contemporary audience. The null effect indicates that a mere shift between a collective historical focus and an individual personal focus does not meet the necessary criteria for perceived genuineness among Gen Z (Kasemsarn & Nickpour, 2025b).

The novelty of this null finding lies in its contradiction of traditional framing theory within a short-form, ICH context. While Boukes and LaMarre (2021) established that narrative messages impact credibility, the present study indicates that the frame itself is not the primary determinant of perceived authenticity, a form of credibility, when the medium is TikTok. The platform's culture of skepticism and quick consumption may be a stronger variable (Boukes & LaMarre, 2021). Building on prior research by Wertgen et al. (2021), source credibility remains critical for information validation, yet the lack of distinction between the frames on authenticity suggests the perception of the *artisan source* itself may be the dominant factor rather than the message structure. The presence of the artisan as the physical source might have maximized perceived authenticity in *both* conditions, leading to the observed ceiling effect (Wertgen et al., 2021). The final implication of this finding suggests heritage practitioners must focus more intensely on visual cues of genuineness and the perceived intention of the content creator rather than on the content structure alone.

4.2 Frame-to-Transportation Pathway (H2): The Failure of Narrative Immersion

The study investigated whether the narrative frame differentially influenced Narrative Transportation, the state of cognitive and emotional absorption into the story. The regression analysis reported in Table 2 showed that the storytelling frame did not significantly predict Narrative Transportation ($t = -0.781, p = .436$). This result fails to support Hypothesis 2, indicating that neither the Cultural-Value Frame nor the Personal-Experience Frame was significantly more effective at immersing Gen Z viewers into the Dong Ho painting narrative. The emotional draw of the personal narrative was statistically no different from the factual pull of the historical narrative.

Table 2
Coefficients Model 2

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.604	.185		19.497	.000
	Attitude	.023	.050	.023	.460	.646
a. Dependent Variable: Auth_Total						

This unexpected null finding challenges established principles of narrative persuasion, which posit that personal, emotionally resonant narratives are superior at generating transportation. TikTok has a scroll-driven nature that makes it engaging for viewers to prevent deep, cognitive processing to narrate the transportation of emotional appeal and the background behind the visual art. The Đông Hồ" campaign has its own metrics that convey a different story about engagement. The video's interaction with the audience has gained over 50,000 views and 30 + instances of UGC content. The findings of Lillie et al. (2025) indicate that structural elements of a narrative are critical for promoting immersion and persuasion. The brief time limit and algorithmic structure of TikTok may prevent the necessary cognitive resources from being engaged for true narrative transportation (Lillie et al., 2025). For instance, in the Đông Hồ campaign, the platform-native elements and algorithms use hashtag challenges (#ChamsacDongHo) creates the likelihood of creating a passive absorption to drive real-life engagement. As documented by Yuxin et al. (2024), historical storytelling is effective in driving revisit intention in cultural heritage contexts, but that research typically involved longer, more in-depth narratives. The short-form video's inherent constraints may limit the emotional development required for deep transportation, regardless of the frame (Yuxin et al., 2024).

The novelty of this finding lies in its contribution to the debate surrounding the applicability of narrative persuasion models to ultra-short-form digital media. Research conducted by Liu et al. (2024) provides evidence that flow experience is a key psychological mechanism in the link between TikTok content and tourists' behavioral intentions. The failure to find a difference in transportation suggests that while flow (a state related to transportation) may exist on the platform, the *narrative framing* is not the primary mechanism driving it; instead, it may be the speed, music, and interactive features of the platform itself (Liu et al., 2024). Building on prior research by Guo et al. (2025), the impact mechanism of tourism short video content on travel intention suggests that visual content and immediacy are critical. The frame itself, which relies on verbal and symbolic cues, may be less salient than the high-speed visual experience (Guo et al., 2025).

Consistent with earlier findings by Hauser et al. (2022), multimodal narratives are essential for heritage presentation in museums, but the current study suggests that balancing the modality is critical in short-form video. The rapid visual information load may have minimized the impact of the narrative script's framing, leading to equal and low levels of transportation across both experimental groups (Hauser et al., 2022). Furthermore, evidence from Dionísio and Nisi (2021) suggests that transmedia storytelling is effective for heritage engagement by creating a comprehensive story world. The single, isolated short-form video used in this experiment may have been insufficient to generate the depth of character identification required for high transportation, regardless of the frame (Dionísio & Nisi, 2021). The implication for heritage practitioners is clear: achieving deep immersion on short-form platforms requires more than just compelling framing; it necessitates a focus on highly specialized visual techniques and editing to compensate for the temporal constraints.

4.3 Mediators-to-Attitude Pathway (H3A, H3B): A Disconnect in Psychological Processing

The study assessed the mediating role of Perceived Authenticity and Narrative Transportation on Attitude toward the heritage. The results reported in Table 3 and Table 4 indicate a non-significant relationship for both pathways: Authenticity did not significantly predict Attitude ($t = .460, p = .646$), and Transportation did not significantly predict Attitude ($t = -.376, p = .707$). This finding represents a significant and highly unexpected break from the conventional Narrative Persuasion Model, challenging Hypotheses 3A and 3B.

Table 3
Coefficients Model 3 H3 A

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.604	.185		19.497	.000
	Attitude	.023	.050	.023	.460	.646
a. Dependent Variable: Auth_Total						

Table 4
Coefficients Model 3 H3 B

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.416	.192		17.839	.000
	Attitude	− .019	.051	− .019	− .376	.707
a. Dependent Variable: Trans_Total						

The findings present an overlay of the psychological mediators and how it affects the attitude and perspectives of the target audience research. Based on the pre-campaign study, Gen Z represented passively positive attitude including "thiện cảm" that means goodwill. These themes identify the core behavior and attitude of people towards heritage. The findings suggest that even when a Gen Z viewer perceived the Dong Ho content as authentic or felt transported by the story, this psychological state did not translate into a statistically significant shift in their overall attitude toward the intangible cultural heritage. This null result is one of the study's most novel contributions, as it directly contradicts the expected causal chain in persuasive communication. Drawing on the work of Boukes and LaMarre (2021), transportation is consistently shown to mediate the link between narrative messages and attitudes. The failure of this link here suggests a unique psychological barrier within the short-form heritage context (Boukes & LaMarre, 2021). As reported by Pietroni (2025), the sense of authenticity is expected to enhance the overall experience and attitude toward heritage. The apparent disconnect between authenticity perception and attitude formation might be explained by the low-stakes nature of the social media interaction, where a positive feeling about the content does not automatically elevate the perception of the underlying heritage (Pietroni, 2025).

An empirical investigation by Alim et al. (2025) confirms that influencer-follower interactions, which rely heavily on perceived source credibility and authenticity, lead to consumer behavioral responses. The present study's data suggests that while the source (artisan) may have been credible, the mediated psychological effect of authenticity did not carry through to attitude change on a platform like TikTok (Alim et al., 2025). Building on prior research by Guo et al. (2022), cultural heritage narratives are known to foster empathy and positive attitudes, particularly among youth. The lack of a relationship here may indicate a ceiling effect where Gen Z already holds a passively positive attitude toward heritage, and the brief exposure, even if transporting, is insufficient to significantly increase this attitude (Guo et al., 2022).

The observed disconnect introduces a critical research gap: if the primary psychological mediators of heritage engagement (authenticity and transportation) do not predict attitude in a short-form video context, what does? In line with the theoretical perspective proposed by Montag et al. (2021), the psychology of TikTok use may prioritize entertainment value and fleeting emotional gratification over deep cognitive processing. The positive valence generated by authenticity or transportation may be platform-specific and not transfer to the larger, sustained construct of attitude toward the heritage (Montag et al., 2021). Research conducted by Hauser et al. (2022) provides evidence that multimodal narratives enhance the museum experience, yet the digital translation to a small screen, high-speed environment appears to decouple the traditional psychological gains from attitude formation. The overall brevity and context of the viewing experience appear to attenuate the persuasive power of both authenticity and transportation in this setting (Hauser et al., 2022). Consequently, the study's findings indicate the need for a re-evaluation of the Narrative Persuasion Model's applicability to heritage communication on micro-video platforms, suggesting that the effect is either significantly weaker or mediated by an unmeasured, platform-native construct.

4.4 Frame-to-Behavioral Intentions (H4A, H4B, H4C): Control Variable Reveals Disconnect

The study tested the relationship between the control variable, Prior Visit Experience (Visited_Craft_Village), and the four behavioral outcomes: Visit Intention, Purchase Intention, Share Intention, and Willingness-to-Pay (WTP). The results reported in Table 6 show that Prior Visit Experience did not significantly predict Visit Intention ($t = .070, p = .944$), Purchase Intention ($t = -.695, p = .488$), or Share Intention ($t = -.633, p = .527$). This finding challenges the expected relationship between previous exposure and future engagement, indicating a disconnect that requires careful interpretation.

The failure of prior experience to predict future intentions suggests that the memory of the past visit may not be a dominant factor in shaping the intent to engage with new digital content and subsequent behavioral outcomes. This is a counterintuitive result in tourism and consumer behavior literature. Drawing on the work of Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021), memorable tourism experiences are strongly associated with future behavioral intentions, including repeat visits. The current data, however, suggests that for the Gen Z demographic, the memory of a *single* prior visit may be less potent than real-time social media stimuli for driving non-WTP intentions (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). As reported by Seyfi et al. (2023), Gen Z's buycott behavior is often driven by lifestyle politics and immediate social context rather than historical experience. The low significance levels for visit, purchase, and share intentions suggest these short-term behavioral goals are influenced by factors other than remote personal history (Seyfi et al., 2023).

An empirical investigation by Gan et al. (2023) confirms that short video marketing strongly influences travel intentions. The current study's null finding for the influence of prior visits suggests that the digital narrative's effect, rather than the memory of the physical place, is the key driver of future intent (Gan et al., 2023). This aligns with the funnel approach in the thesis project for the heritage study that was phased to build high-engagement moments to nurture the community and develop awareness of targeted interventions to frame behavioural intentions. Building on prior research by Lu et al. (2025), creative tourist experiences and engagement influence Gen Z's environmentally responsible behavior. The implication of the null finding here is that the digital experience of heritage may operate as an isolated, creative experience, decoupled from the memory of the past physical engagement (Lu et al., 2025).

The core of the study, RQ4, sought to find which *frame* (Cultural-Value or Personal-Experience) converts passive engagement into active heritage support. The findings in the correlation table (Table 5) demonstrate that the Frame variable also did not significantly correlate with Visit Intention ($p = .742$), Purchase Intention ($p = .366$), or Share Intention ($p = .494$). This novel discovery indicates that neither storytelling frame, in the context of the current experiment, directly drove the desired immediate behavioral outcomes. Consistent with earlier findings by Guo et al. (2025), the impact mechanism of tourism short video content on users' travel behavioral intention is complex. The results suggest that the direct effect of framing on active intent is negligible, necessitating a focus on the indirect, unmeasured pathways, which likely relate to social network effects and social sharing incentives (Guo et al., 2025). The study conducted by Kasemsarn and Nickpour (2025b) highlights the importance of youth engagement frameworks in digital storytelling for cultural heritage tourism. The failure of the frame to directly predict behavioral intentions suggests the current design of the content did not successfully bridge the gap between passive viewing and active support (Kasemsarn & Nickpour, 2025a).

Table 5
Correlations

		Frame	Auth_Total	Trans_Total	Attitude	Q15_Visit_Village	Q16_Buy_Products	Q17_Share_Content
Frame	Pearson Correlation	1	.066	− .037	− .002	− .017	− .045	− .034
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.185	.465	.975	.742	.366	.494
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Auth_Total	Pearson Correlation	.066	1	.036	.023	− .037	.074	− .063
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.185		.477	.646	.455	.142	.207
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Trans_Total	Pearson Correlation	− .037	.036	1	− .019	− .095	− .001	.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.465	.477		.707	.058	.978	.230
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	− .002	.023	− .019	1	.025	.070	.083
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.975	.646	.707		.622	.164	.096
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Q15_Visit_Village	Pearson Correlation	− .017	− .037	− .095	.025	1	.008	− .059
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.742	.455	.058	.622		.876	.239
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Q16_Buy_Products	Pearson Correlation	− .045	.074	− .001	.070	.008	1	.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.366	.142	.978	.164	.876		.935
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Q17_Share_Content	Pearson Correlation	− .034	− .063	.060	.083	− .059	.004	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.494	.207	.230	.096	.239	.935	
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400	400

4.5 Willingness-to-Pay Pathway (H4D): The Economic Value of Experience

In stark contrast to the other behavioral intention variables, the regression analysis for Model 4 revealed that Prior Visit Experience significantly predicted Willingness-to-Pay (WTP) ($t = 2.139, p = .033^{*}$, Beta $= .107$) (Table 6). This finding supports a partial relationship within Hypothesis 4 for the economic outcome. The result indicates that Gen Z participants who had previously visited the craft village were significantly more willing to commit a higher financial value toward the Dong Ho painting or related products than those who had no prior experience.

Table 6
Coefficients of model 4 for H4

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.280	.117		2.398	.017
	Q15_Visit_Village	.001	.019	.003	.070	.944
	Q16_Buy_Products	− .014	.020	− .035	− .695	.488
	Q17_Share_Content	− .012	.019	− .032	− .633	.527
	Q18_Willingness_To_Pay	.039	.018	.107	2.139	.033

a. Dependent Variable: Visited_Craft_Village

This finding is a novel contribution that isolates the economic residual effect of a physical heritage experience in a digital consumption study. Drawing on the work of Zhu et al. (2023), the economic valuation of cultural heritage, often manifested in souvenirs, is rooted in the physical and experiential connection. The significant relationship for WTP, but not for other intentions, suggests that prior experience instills a more deeply entrenched economic valuation of the art form that remains latent until prompted (Zhou et al., 2023). As reported by Balaskas et al. (2025), Neurotourism aspects in heritage destinations influence memory and recommendation intention. The memory of the physical visit appears to anchor the financial commitment, making WTP the most robust behavioral intention in the presence of prior experience (Balaskas et al., 2025).

An empirical investigation by Du and Wang (2025) confirms that the perceived landscape value influences tourists' behavioral intentions in historical blocks. The physical experience of the craft village, and the associated value derived from that tangible place, appears to exert a long-lasting effect only on the financial commitment to the heritage, not the more easily influenced intentions to visit or share (Du & Wang, 2025). Building on prior research by Seyfi et al. (2023), the exploration of Gen Z tourists' buycott behavior demonstrates that their consumption is heavily politicized and value-driven. The finding suggests that a prior visit validates the economic value of the cultural product, making the purchase a more value-aligned decision (Seyfi et al., 2023).

The significant positive relationship between prior visit and WTP, with a standardized Beta of .107 (Table 6), provides concrete evidence for the lasting economic impact of physical heritage tourism. The results provide strong validation to the online-offline model described in the "Chạm Sắc Đông Hồ" campaign. This digital campaign was all set to create a consumer-driven experience to build an inclusive community that respects and interacts with heritage experiences more often. In line with the theoretical perspective proposed by Alim et al. (2025), the strength of the influencer-follower interaction, which includes exposure to products, drives behavioral responses. For instance, in the thesis project, workshops at FPT University Hanoi were an add-on to build narrative awareness and target a large audience pool using digital platforms such as TikTok. These audiences were invested in the campaign to show their interests whilst their experience was examined. Upon examination, it was revealed that target audience gained memorable, sensory experience that played major impact on their minds. While the short-form content itself did not drive WTP (based on the non-significant frame correlations), the memory of the *physical* encounter acted as a powerful financial cue (Alim et al., 2025). The final implication of this finding is that for the economic sustainability of ICH, digital outreach (TikTok) should be viewed as a means to prime the audience for a future financial transaction rather than a direct WTP driver, with the highest WTP coming from the segment that has already validated the experience through a physical visit.

4.6 Limitations and Strengths

The study's principal strength lies in its experimental design, utilizing a controlled cross-sectional approach with a specific ICH case, Dong Ho painting, and targeting the crucial Gen Z demographic in Vietnam. The experimental manipulation of the narrative frame and the inclusion of the artisan as the source provide a clean test of causality, which is lacking in much of the descriptive heritage media literature (Alim et al., 2025; Wertgen et al., 2021). The rigorous data quality control, including attention checks and statistical assumption testing, further strengthens the internal validity of the null findings. A primary limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the data collection, which captures only immediate post-exposure intentions and cannot account for the longitudinal, cumulative effect of the content over time. Additionally, the study used a single exposure to the stimulus; repeated exposure might be necessary to build the transportation and attitude change expected in the full Narrative Persuasion Model (Boukes & LaMarre, 2021). The low R-squared values in the models indicate that the tested psychological variables explain only a very small percentage of the variance in the behavioral outcomes.

4.7 Future Research Directions

Future research should move beyond static exposure to explore the impact of longitudinal engagement with co-created heritage content on TikTok (Kasemsarn & Nickpour, 2025a). Given the weak relationship between the tested psychological mediators and attitude, future work should integrate platform-native variables, such as social influence (shares, comments, duets) and entertainment value, as new mediators of behavioral intentions (Guo et al., 2025; Pan et al., 2024). Specifically, an experimental design could manipulate the *visuality* of the artisan's involvement and test its direct effect on source credibility, addressing the unmeasured variable identified in this study (Heiss et al., 2024; Houghton et al., 2022). Furthermore, given the significant finding on WTP, future studies should investigate the mechanism by which prior physical experience anchors financial valuation in digital contexts, perhaps by measuring memory recall and place attachment (Du & Wang, 2025; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Finally, future research should broaden the focus to include the co-creation process itself, exploring how the artisan's creative journey influences content effectiveness (Echavarria et al., 2022).

5 Conclusion

Drawing from the experimental analysis of the "Cham Sac Dong Ho" campaign's core content, this study provides critical greening to the traditional models of the persuasion in narrative communication within the context of short form digital heritage communication. The key finding is that neither the Cultural-Value nor the Personal-Experience storytelling frames, which represent the two main content pillars of the campaign, significantly affected the key psychological mediators of Perceived Authenticity or Narrative Transportation in a controlled, single use, design. Consequently, these mediators did not translate into a strong change of overall attitude and/or immediate change of behavioural intentions for Gen Z. This powerful set of null effects is the main theoretical contribution: it empirically establishes the limits of the Narrative Persuasion Model as applied to the high-velocity fragmented consumption environment of platforms such as TikTok. The assumed causal chain of the model (Frame - Authenticity/Transportation - Attitude - Behavior) does not apply when critically considering the kind of conditions that constitute the context of modern heritage outreach, which demands new theoretical frameworks that were constructed for digital natives engagement. However, the most important finding of the study, and its most important practical contribution, came, not from the tested model, but from a control variable. Prior physical experience (i.e., having visited a craft village) was the only significant predictor of Willingness-to-Pay (WTP). This result sheds light on the road towards economic sustainability of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in the digital age and is important for the evidence-based validation of integrated campaign strategies.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest:

The research was conducted completely independently. The authors declare that no financial, personal, or professional relationships exist that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

Ethical Approval:

Ethical approval was not explicitly applicable for this type of research as no vulnerable populations were involved, and the data was collected anonymously via an online survey. Participation was entirely voluntary and informed consent was implied by survey completion.

Consent for Publication:

Consent for publication is not applicable to the present study as the research involves aggregate data from voluntary participants and does not contain any individual personal data, images, or specific content requiring individual consent.

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Author Contribution:

The study was developed through collaborative effort. All authors contributed equally to the theoretical conceptualization, experimental design, data analysis strategy, and the final manuscript preparation. Each author fulfilled the criteria for authorship.

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