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Brand Storytelling and Its Role in the Consumer's Psychological Pathway to Brand Advocacy

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Abstract

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In a saturated digital marketplace, brands increasingly rely on storytelling to foster WOM advocacy. However, it remains unclear whether storytelling directly triggers advocacy or if cognitive attitudes mediate this relationship. This study investigates the psychological pathway to brand advocacy by integrating the visual, narrative, and symbolic dimensions of brand storytelling with Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Utilizing a quantitative, cross-sectional online survey of a European sample (N=164), data across three brands (Apple, Nike, IKEA) was analyzed using bivariate, multiple regression, and exploratory analysis. Findings challenge direct-effect models: storytelling dimensions do not independently drive advocacy when core psychological attitudes are considered. Instead, Attitude to Advocacy and Perceived Behavioral Control dictate WOM intentions. Furthermore, the rejection of Subjective Norm highlights that Generation Z values radical authenticity over social conformity. Ultimately, brand storytelling acts purely as an antecedent, with the symbolic dimension serving as the foundational raw material shaping the attitudes that trigger advocacy.

Keyword: Brand Storytelling, Corporate Brand Communication, Theory of Planned Behavior, Brand Advocacy, Consumer Psychology, Generation Z.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background & Problem Discussion

In an era defined by rapid digitalization and saturated mass-markets, the traditional mechanisms of brand communication are no longer sufficient to capture consumer attention. Today's consumers increasingly seek meaningful brand relationships rather than mere transactional exchanges (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 262). Modern purchasing decisions are frequently nonrational; people consume products not simply out of functional need, but driven by desires for self-expression, socialization, and emotional attachment (Kang et al., 2019, p. 47-48). Consequently, a brand's ability to survive in this highly competitive landscape relies heavily on differentiation through experiences. To provide this unique value, brand storytelling—often serving as the cornerstone of modern content marketing—has emerged as to break through the commercial clutter and stimulate positive consumer engagement (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 262).

Brand storytelling is now integral to every channel and format. Throughout the digital evolution, companies have expanded their holistic targeting approaches to reach, attract and retain customers through newsletters, websites, social media content, and even podcasts (Pulizzi, 2012, p. 116). The effectiveness of this strategy lies in human psychology: humans naturally tend to process and store information in the form of stories, making narratives highly memorable (Kang et al., 2019, p. 47). When exposed to storytelling stimuli, consumers mentally combine the brand's narrative with their own personal experiences, allowing them to become active participants—and even co-authors—of the brand experience (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 262).

The interactive dynamic is critical for establishing consumer trust and loyalty, which remain fundamental to sustained brand success. In saturated digital marketplaces, storytelling offers a powerful mechanism for trust-building and differentiation (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 262). When storytelling feels, authentic, transparent and personally relevant, it fosters and emotional bond that translates directly into both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. The tangible impact of this emotional connection is highly significant. Recent empirical data reveals that approximately 78% of consumers feel more emotionally connected to brands that utilize

storytelling, and 65% admit that these narratives actively influence their decision to return to a brand or recommend it to others (Gupta & Satsangi, 2025, p. 16316). Because storytelling serves as a direct precursor to consumer loyalty and peer-to-peer recommendation, understanding the exact mechanism behind this phenomenon is of critical importance for modern marketers.

1.2 Aim and Research Question

The objective of this study is to contribute to the existing knowledge regarding consumer loyalty, specifically by isolating the antecedents of its attitudinal dimension. To achieve this, the study examines the impact of the three brand storytelling dimensions —visual, narrative, and symbolic— on consumers and their subsequent intention to act as brand advocates (the behavioral expression of attitudinal loyalty). By testing different hypotheses derived from these dimensions, this research seeks to elucidate the distinct psychological and emotional effects each dimension exerts on the consumer. Furthermore, by sampling across diverse demographic groups, the study aims to identify potential heterogeneity in these effects between generational (e.g., comparing Generation X and Generation Z) and cultural contexts.

Methodologically, the study employs a quantitative approach design utilizing multiple regression analysis. The theoretical framework underpinning this analysis is an adapted version of the Theory of Planned Behavior, modified to model the relationship between storytelling stimuli and consumer's intention to advocate for the brand.

The research question addressing this aim is formulated as follows:

RQ: How do brand storytelling dimensions contribute to consumers ' attitudinal loyalty and their intention to advocate for a brand?

1.3 Relevance

Although attitudinal loyalty has historically received less empirical attention than behavioral loyalty, understanding its mechanisms and primary drivers is paramount. Consequently, this section outlines both the academic and managerial relevance of isolating this attitudinal dimension.

From an academic perspective, attitudinal loyalty is the essential psychological counterpart of the overall consumer loyalty construct (Ma & Wu, 2025, p. 206). If this dimension continues to be overlooked, the understanding of consumer overall loyalty remains incomplete. Within the communication field, brand storytelling exerts a high cognitive influence on consumers, enhancing recall and fostering a perception of the brand as a reflection of their personality, eventually aligning them with the brand (Mandung, 2024, p. 66, 67). This leads to a stronger emotional bond, in which consumers find comfort and reliability (Chebab & Boukerch, 2025, p. 2).

Once this connection is established and strengthened among a consumer base, a brand community can flourish. As Muniz & O'Guinn (2001, p. 413) note, the brand has shifted to become a central element of modern society, effectively substituting traditional communal bonds with shared brand experiences. Under these circumstances, increased brand knowledge encourages consumers to keep the brand conversation alive on social media, thereby increasing brand visibility. More importantly, consumers transition into advocates. They not only recommend the brand but also authentically defend it—a state described by Keller (2001, p. 15) as active engagement, the highest level of brand resonance. This authenticity acts as an objective witness to the brand's value (Umeogu, 2012, p. 112), exerting a compelling influence that can trigger purchase behavior in others (Ma & Wu, 2025, p. 206).

Furthermore, behavioral loyalty cannot singularly retain consumers in a crowded market where substitutes are readily available. As Dick & Basu (1994, p. 100) established, behavioral loyalty requires attitudinal loyalty to avoid becoming merely 'spurious loyalty'. The emotional meaning provided by brand storytelling, creates a unique, highly defensible bond that supports consumer retention and increases repeat purchase likelihood (Ma & Wu, 2025, p. 206).

From a managerial perspective identifying the primary driver of this attitudinal loyalty is critical. Brand communication is broad, yet corporate budgets are strictly limited. Therefore, determining which dimension of brand storytelling (visual, narrative, or symbolic) most effectively converts consumers into loyal brand advocates is paramount for strategic communication planning and budget allocation (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001, p. 90, 91). Just as precise targeting makes brand communication more compelling, identifying the most potent storytelling dimension allows marketers to optimize their budgets. While all three dimensions must align to support a cohesive brand message, this research posits that specific dimensions exert

a disproportionately powerful psychological effect on the consumer, offering a clear blueprint for maximizing return in marketing investment.

1.4 Disposition

The remainder of this thesis is structured across five subsequent chapters. Chapter 1 establishes the theoretical foundation of the study by exploring the core concepts of brand communication and brand storytelling, specifically detailing its visual, narrative, and symbolic dimensions. Additionally, it reviews previous research on consumer responses and authenticity, ultimately adapting the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to construct the research model and formulate the study's hypotheses.

Following the theoretical framework, Chapter 3 establishes the quantitative methodology utilized to answer the research question. This section outlines the positivist research philosophy and deductive design, describes the data collection and sampling strategy, and explains the survey measurement instruments, the analytical procedures used to ensure validity and reliability before concluding with reliability checks, correlation analysis of the research model. Next, Chapter 4 presents the statistical findings derived from the collected data, including the descriptive statistics of the sample profile, and the hierarchical multiple regression results used to formally test the hypotheses.

Building upon these findings, Chapter 5 interprets the empirical results, bridging the statistical data with the established literature to provide an in-depth explanation of the psychological attitudes driving consumer advocacy. Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the overarching conclusions of the research, addresses the conceptual and methodological limitations of the study, and offers strategic recommendations for future research in the field of brand communication.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter establishes the theoretical foundations of the study by first defining the core concepts within the field of brand communication. Subsequently, previous literature is analyzed in-depth to contextualize the current research, highlighting the established connections and methodologies used by researchers in recent studies. Finally, the chapter synthesizes these theoretical insights through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), demonstrating how the study's conceptual model and formal hypotheses are built upon this established psychological framework.

2.1 Brand Communication

As Duncan and Moriarty (1998, p. 2) state, communication is a fundamental meaning-making human activity, which in marketing is crucial for establishing and maintaining brand relationships. Communication serves as the point of departure in a consumers' journey with a brand. It is the mechanism that introduces the brand by producing a stimulus to which the consumer will react. Indeed, the primary challenge lies in designing and implementing brand communication that effectively resonates with the target audience. Starting with the establishment of brand awareness (which encompasses both brand recognition and recall), brand communication attempts to create a distinct brand perception — or brand image — in the eyes of the consumer (Keller, 1993, p. 3). It does this by establishing a set of psychological associations (e.g. this brand can allow me to explore my creativity).

Crucially, contemporary marketing literature draws a strict operational distinction between two primary sources of this communication: firm-generated content (corporate brand communication) and user-generated content (consumer brand communication) (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). While consumer brand communication encompasses peer-to-peer interactions such as organic WOM and brand advocacy, corporate brand communication represents the strategic, top-down messaging meticulously crafted and disseminated by the organization itself. It is imperative to state that this research focused strictly on the corporate side of brand communication. The fundamental objective is to evaluate how deliberate, firm-generated storytelling strategies act as the initial stimulus designed to ultimately trigger that secondary layer of consumer-driven advocacy (Godes & Mayzlin, 2009)

In this sense, brand image is the starting point of the potential brand value according to the consumer's own evaluation. Brand image produces meaning, which is subsequently translated into perceived attributes, benefits and overall brand attitudes (Keller, 1993, p. 3-4). Eventually, these components form complete customer-based brand equity, which Keller (1993, p. 2) defines as 'the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand'. Most favorably, the consumer should hold strong, unique, and positive associations with the brand (Keller, 1993, p. 2), so that these ones trigger a positive behavioral response (Keller, 1993, p. 8), that leads to sales in the short-term, and ultimately, to loyalty in the long run.

This sequential journey from initial brand stimulus to behavioral response conceptually parallels the traditional AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) (Strong, 1925). However, in the context of modern brand relationships, contemporary marketing scholars emphasize that this traditional hierarchy of effects must be expanded. The final phase of 'Action' is no longer confined to a mere transactional purchase; rather, it evolves into an ongoing behavioral commitment where the ultimate action is post-purchase advocacy (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017, p. 64). Therefore, a successful brand communication strategy does not end at the point of sale, but rather leverages strong customer-based brand equity to turn consumer satisfaction into the active intention to advocate, thereby converting the buyer into a secondary communicator for the brand.

To achieve this depth of meaning and connection, modern brands are increasingly relying on brand storytelling as their primary communication strategy. The following sections explore the concept of brand storytelling and its core dimensions, culminating in an analysis of its ultimate effects on consumer behavior: brand attitude and attitudinal brand loyalty.

2.1.1 Brand Storytelling

Brand storytelling is a communication mechanism brands use to connect with their target audience by communicating their brand personality and values. Stories help create an immersive and relatable effect that, by generating resonance, triggers an emotional response from the consumer. The result is a consumer sense of connection with the brand that keeps them engaged and loyal (Mandung, 2024, p. 66). This aligns with research findings (Zavodny Pospisil, 2010, p. 2), which show that rather than being rational, consumers are moved by emo-

tions and prime brands on which they see themselves reflected (Mandung, 2024, p. 66). What consumers also enjoy is having a sense of belonging or a mission in their life, provided by their own alignment with the brand storytelling (Mandung, 2024, p. 66,67). In this sense, storytelling is paramount for brands thanks to its ability to break the clutter and establish meaningful and emotional connections with consumers.

The psychological effect is strong: their immersion in the story increases recall effect and opens the door for an emotional attachment to the brand. These help consumers have thoughts and feelings toward the brand, which slowly gain more importance in their identity (Mandung, 2024, p. 66,67). In this scenario, even their attention and cognitive resources are subtle to that effect (Chebab & Boukerch, 2025, p. 2). Indeed, research suggests that humans apply the *caregiver*-bond instincts to brands, meaning that to create an emotional bond, a brand must mirror the qualities of a reliable caregiver. Consumers rely on brands to provide emotional comfort and functional reliability (Chebab & Boukerch, 2025, p. 2). Eventually, this fosters their sense of trust and loyalty (Mandung, 2024, p. 67).

This study posits that brand storytelling is not a monolithic concept but is composed of three distinct communication dimensions: visual, narrative and symbolic. While previous literature has analyzed them as separate communication mechanisms, this research integrates them into a unified framework. This constitutes the primary theoretical contribution of this thesis: first, by defining these dimensions as the collective pillar of brand storytelling; and second, by incorporating them into an extended version of the Theory of Planned behavior (TPB) model. The following sections provide the specific definitions of the dimensions, as well as their respective role and influence on the consumer as part of brand storytelling communication.

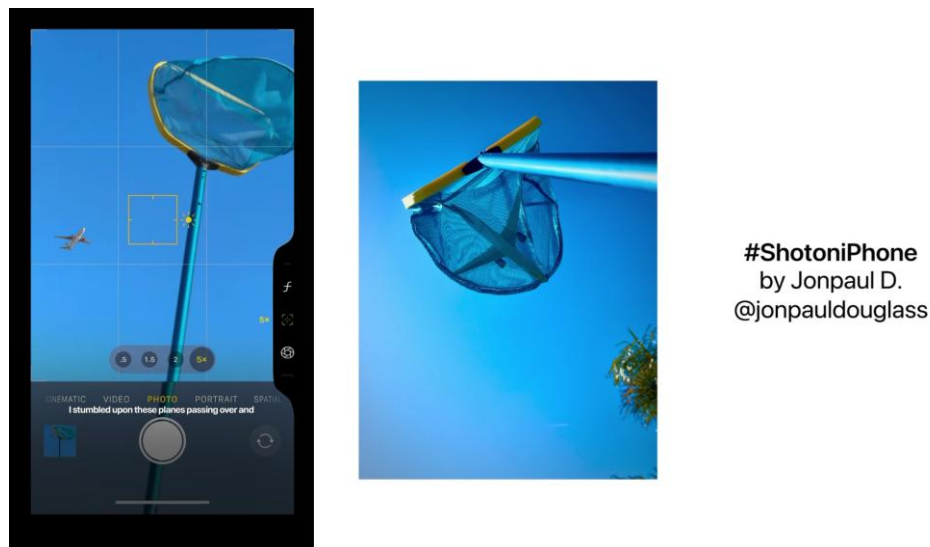
2.1.1.1 The Visual Dimension of Brand Storytelling

The first dimension is visual storytelling, given that it is directly linked to of the first creation steps of a brand: the visual identity (*see Figure 1*). This dimension of storytelling is defined as the visual communicator of the brand's narrative. While visual identity includes recognition elements such as the brand logo, visual storytelling extends beyond it. It involves the strategic use of fonts, color palettes, graphics and imagery— these two last ones being different than brand mascots or characters—to construct a cohesive representation of the brand's concept (e.g., Channel's sophistication, Samsung's innovation, ...). Beyond brand representation, the

primary function of visual storytelling is to generate engagement by reinforcing the brand's personality and identity through aesthetic cues (Daniel James Consulting, 2025).

Figure 1

Example of the Visual Dimension of a Brand



Note: Visual stimulus from Apple's 'Shot by iPhone' campaign, illustrating the user's creative process in capturing an optical illusion where a flying plane appears 'trapped'. Images adapted and extracted by the author from Apple's Instagram account (Apple, n.d)).

The persuasive power of visual storytelling relies on the transportation effect it triggers in the audience. This concept was originally defined as *Narrative Transportation*, referring to a convergent psychological process wherein the reader is absorbed into a narrative world. This state entails distinct mental processes that include attention, imagery, and feelings (Green & Brock, 2000, p. 701). Crucially, the transportation phenomenon is not limited to reading written texts but applies to any form of transmitting narrative information. When individuals experience transportation, they are captivated by the narrative to the extent that they mentally lose awareness of the reality around them. Being lost in the narrative world, individuals experience an emotional and motivational response induced by the content of the narrative, which simultaneously can influence their attitudes and beliefs (Green & Brock, 2000, p.702).

Transportation functions as a psychological mechanism that can persuade individuals by reducing their negative cognitive response. When immersed in the story, individuals are less likely to mistrust or question the story's message and are more likely to be influenced by it. At the same time, this immersion translates into *experiencing* the story as if it were real, which

favors the organic formation of attitudes. Characters in the narrative play an important role as well. They can instill strong emotions in transported individuals, impacting their beliefs and attitudes (Green & Brock, 2000, p.702). Therefore, rather than relying on rational reasoning and evaluation, transportation uses affective mechanisms to persuade. This is attributed to the receptive attitude individuals have toward stories, which are often seen as entertaining. Another crucial characteristic of transportation posited by Green & Brock (2000, p.702), is that this immersion in the narrative impedes individuals from accessing contradictory previous experiences and thoughts.

The advantages of visual storytelling are many. Firstly, this way of communication is more dynamic and requires a lower cognitive effort in comparison to text processing (Wang et al., 2025, p. 12). Besides, this dimension enhances this process by facilitating the imagery component of transportation (Van Laer et al., 2014, p. 10, 19), by providing immediate mental imagery that allows for faster processing and retention. Indeed, visual content accounts for a 65% of information retention rate compared to only 10% for oral communication (Daniel James Consulting, 2025). Therefore, by reducing the need for active imagination to visualize the narrative, the visual dimension effectively drives transportation and the subsequent emotional response. Eventually, this is translated into brand engagement (Wang et al., 2025, p.13), providing a solid foundation upon which attitudinal loyalty can be built and cultivated.

2.1.1.2 The Narrative Dimension of Brand Storytelling

Before defining the narrative dimension, a clarification is needed regarding the nature of *narrative*. While the term can refer broadly to any verbal retelling, in the context of brand storytelling, the narrative dimension refers specifically to the structure and linguistic articulation of the story (*see Figure 2*). Therefore, narrative storytelling encompasses more than just the tone of voice, the brand slogan, and other communication messages expressed in words. Rather, this dimension is linked to the structural way a brand's story is communicated. While brand storytelling provides the core meaning, the narrative dimension serves as the narrative vehicle for its delivery. It encompasses the temporal organization of events, characterized by a beginning, middle, and end, as well as the linguistic execution of the plot, structured around action-outcome sequences that guide the message (Escalas, 2004, p. 5). Through this specific structure, brands attempt to build a coherent world that provides a solid foundation for subsequent consumer emotional attachment.

Figure 2

Example of the Narrative Dimension of a Brand

'Are you made for this? I mean, we're all made of the same stuff. But choosing to do something, even when you don't know if you can do it, that just shows you... What else you can become. Just do it!'
– Nike.

Note: Communication message extracted by the author from a video's voice recording from Nike's social media brand content (Nike, n.d)

The power of the narrative dimension lies in its ability to engage individuals in *Narrative Processing*. Narrative processing focuses on creating meaning from the structure of the story. Through this processing, individuals assess the story's events and form their own opinions, which can eventually lead to the audience feeling identified with the story's message (Escalas, 2004, p. 7). This identification is cognitively supported by self-referencing. As defined by Escalas (2007, p. 422), self-referencing is the process wherein individuals understand incoming information by comparing it to self-relevant information stored in their memory. When a narrative triggers this self-referencing, the consumer effectively bridges the gap between the brand's message and their own identity, making the story feel personal and relevant.

Ultimately, this deep level of identification drives behavioral outcomes. Previous research highlighted by Kang et al. (2019, p. 49) indicates that identification with narrative characters shows a positive association with affective involvement. Crucially, this involvement facilitates interpersonal discussion. Therefore, when the narrative dimension successfully triggers identification and self-referencing, it naturally encourages consumers to share the story, thereby generating positive WOM intentions.

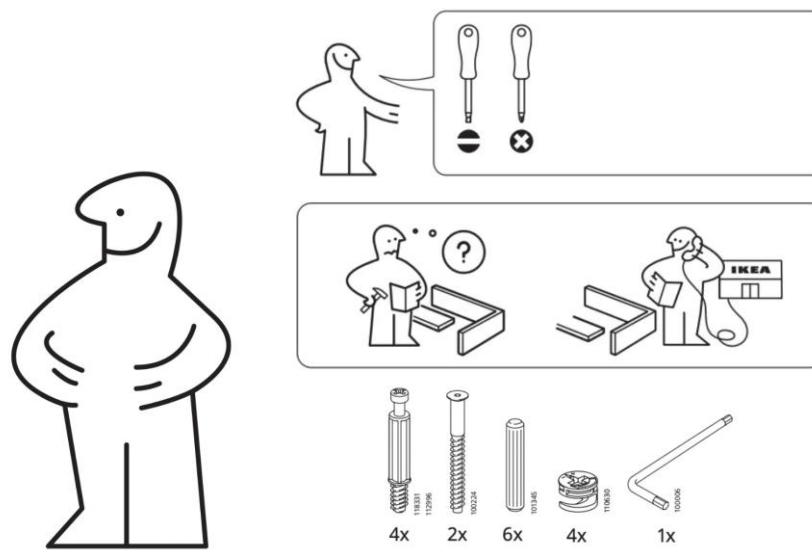
2.1.1.3 The Symbolic Dimension of Brand Storytelling

The symbolic dimension of brand storytelling focuses on the use of symbols, mascots, and brand story characters to convey meaning (*see Figure 3*). Unlike the visual dimension, symbolic storytelling goes beyond graphics and imagery, prioritizing the communication of the brand's abstract nature. To provide a concrete representation of the brand's personality and identity, brand managers use archetypes. They enable consumers to associate the brand with deep, symbolic meanings ranging from self-identity to family traditions, which subsequently influence the functional and experiential benefits consumers perceive (Xara-Brasil et al.,

2018, p. 143). In this context, symbols function as the anthropomorphic vehicle of the brand's identity. This allows the abstract archetype to perform within the narrative, providing a tangible figure onto which consumers can project different meanings. These projected meanings are immediately translated into added value. By producing specific feelings and ideas, brands gain a strong symbolic presence, ultimately becoming a crucial part of the culture and the consumer's identity (Xara-Brasil et al., 2018, p. 144).

Figure 3

Example of the Symbolic Dimension of a Brand



Note: Visual from IKEA's book of instructions presenting the 'Everyman' brand symbol. Extracted by the author from IKEA (n.d.).

This value creation occurs because archetypes deeply connect with fundamental human motivations and imbue products and brands with significance that aligns with consumers' desires (Xara-Brasil et al., 2018, p. 144). Therefore, the purpose of utilizing symbols is to provide an anthropomorphic embodiment of the brand's identity. Because these symbols present themselves as personifications of the brand (Siraj & Kumari, 2011, p. 47) —acting as if they were human-like characters— consumers judge them by human standards: specifically, authenticity.

Consequently, the success of this dimension relies on authenticity theory. As noted by Ofose-Boateng & Jose (2025, p. 261), consumers actively evaluate the genuineness and moral integ-

rity of brand narratives. When a symbol is perceived as sincere and culturally relevant, it fosters a relationship based on trust. This mechanism is supported by social identity theory, which explains that consumers derive part of their identity from the brands they associate with. When a brand's symbolic storytelling authentically reflects values that resonate with the consumer reinforces their social identity. This alignment creates deep emotional bonds, ultimately shaping consumer trust and driving loyalty (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 261).

2.1.2 Consumer Responses to Brand Communication: Brand Attitude and Loyalty

The primary consumer response generated by storytelling stimuli is the formation or alteration of brand attitude. Keller (1993, p. 4) conceptualizes this concept as the overarching evaluation a consumer holds regarding specific brand. The critical importance of brand attitude lies in its role as the point of departure for subsequent consumer behavior, such as brand choice or advocacy. Furthermore, brand attitudes are formed of both direct experiential benefits (such as product consumption) and extrinsic symbolic benefits and beliefs (Keller, 1993, p. 5).

In the context of modern brand communication, storytelling serves as the ultimate catalyst for this attitudinal shift (Kang et al., 2019). The transition from a baseline brand attitude to a deep, long-term intention to advocate is made possible by the psychological mechanisms embedded within the storytelling dimensions. Specifically, when a consumer experiences narrative transportation, visual identification, and symbolic authenticity, the brand transcends its functional attributes (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025). These three elements form the basis of a loyalty-building mechanism, establishing a profound emotional connection (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 264). Consequently, this deep-rooted connection manifests as a strong, positive behavioral intention —ultimately resulting in advocacy, wherein the consumer actively and positively promotes the brand through WOM (Ajina, 2019).

Consumer advocacy is defined as an engagement wherein consumers share their knowledge and experiences with others to assist them. In this sense, brand consumers are perceived by their peers as an authentic and trustworthy source of brand and/or product-related information (Mishra & Gupta, 2025, p. 4). As Wu & Chiang (2023, p. 4) explain, advocacy and positive WOM are intrinsically linked to each other. In fact, positive WOM represents the core mechanism of advocacy, which Kang et al. (2019, p. 48) characterizes as the casual, consumer-to-

consumer exchange of knowledge regarding a product or brand (Kang et al., 2019, p. 48). The power of this communication lies in the influence it has over other consumers' behavior. Positive WOM can encourage product purchase, facilitating the start of a new relationship between a prospective consumer and the brand. Through continued loyalty cultivation and overall brand satisfaction, that new consumer can eventually become a brand advocate itself. Therefore, this study considers that intention to advocate—specifically through engaging into positive WOM—as the dependent variable.

However, according to the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), a positive attitude toward the brand and the act of advocacy is not the sole driver of this behavioral intention. The final decision to engage in advocacy is concurrently shaped by subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. Rather than making the decision in isolation, a consumer's likelihood of sharing positive WOM depends heavily on the social approval of their immediate peers (subjective norms) and the perceived capability and opportunity to actively recommend the brand to others (perceived behavioral control). Together with brand attitude, these factors form a comprehensive predictive framework for the consumer's ultimate intention to advocate.

2.2 Previous Research and Theory

This section reviews the foundational literature regarding the impact of brand storytelling on consumer advocacy. First, it provides an in-depth analysis of a key empirical study that examines the cognitive and emotional mechanisms of narrative persuasion—specifically transportation and identification—and how the perceived authenticity and symbolic meaning of these narratives shape WOM intentions. Subsequently, it examines contemporary research that applies the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to link these communication stimuli together within a measurable, predictive framework. Collectively, these previous works provide the empirical justification for the currently study's research design and the operationalization of its variables.

2.2.1 The Role of Storytelling in Advertising in Relation to WOM intention

Kang et al. (2019) conducted a study to analyze the influence of storytelling advertising on consumers' emotional response and WOM (Word-of-Mouth) intentions. This research ex-

plores the compelling effect of storytelling in advertising using three fundamental components of narrative persuasion: transportation, identification, and preference for narrative in an individual's thinking. This way it aims to observe how narrative structures influence consumer emotions and, crucially, their WOM intentions (Kang et al., 2019, p. 47). The authors argue that unlike traditional informational advertising, storytelling facilitates a deeper cognitive and emotional processing of the brand message (Kang et al., 2019, p. 48).

The study employed an experimental design utilizing a national online sample of 300 participants. To isolate the effects of the narrative dimension, the researchers manipulated a radio advertisement for a fictitious luggage brand into three distinct treatments: a story told by the company's founder, a story told by a customer, and a control condition containing only factual, informational content. This allowed a comparative analysis between narrative-based and attribute-based communication strategies (Kang et al., 2019, p. 49-50).

The central premise of the study is grounded in the concept of narrative transportation. The authors hypothesized that advertisements utilizing a storytelling format would generate higher levels of positive emotional response and narrative engagement than informational ads. Furthermore, they posited that this heightened engagement would act as a primary determinant of the consumer's intention to share information about the brand (WOM). This framework aligns with the view that emotional connection serves as a precursor to behavioral intention (Kang et al., 2019, p. 48-49). The empirical results validated that storytelling formats generated significantly more favorable emotional responses compared to the control group. Importantly, the analysis confirmed that narrative transportation functions as a critical mediator; consumers who were mentally transported by the story showed a stronger positive attitude toward the ad (Kang et al., 2019, p. 51-52).

Most significant for the current research model, Kang et al. (2019) demonstrated a positive correlation between narrative engagement and WOM intention. This finding supports the methodological decision in this thesis to operationalize attitudinal loyalty through the metric of WOM intention, confirming that storytelling stimuli —when they successfully trigger transportation and a positive effect— are effective predictors of a consumer's willingness to advocate for the brand (Kang et al., 2019, p. 52).

This article contributes to the present research by providing a validated framework for WOM intention measurement. However, this study extends Kang et al. (2019) work. While they included narrative preference as a predictor, this study incorporates authenticity, alongside narrative transportation and identification. Additionally, this study follows Kang et al.'s (2019) approach for the operationalization of the brand advocacy construct. This construct goes beyond traditional WOM by measuring a consumer's active intent to highly recommend and defend a brand, a mechanism which is further explained in section 2.2.4.

2.2.2 The Role of Authenticity in the Symbolic Meaning of Brand

Narratives

Contemporary research continually highlights storytelling as a mechanism to humanize brands and foster profound emotional consumer-brand bonds. Focusing on the emerging market of Ghana, Ofosu-Boateng and Jose (2025, p. 259) explored the impact of brand narratives on trust, loyalty, and perceived authenticity. By anchoring their investigation in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm, alongside Social Identity and Authenticity theories, (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 261), the researchers offer significant perspective on how audiences assess the symbolic meaning and sincerity of brand narratives (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 259).

Diverging from the predominantly quantitative, Western-centric focus of past storytelling literature, Ofosu-Boateng and Jose (2025) utilized an exploratory qualitative approach to uncover the nuanced, emotional facets of brand engagement. The methodology involved in-depth, semi-structured, interviews with twenty millennial and generation Z consumers (aged 18-45) residing in urban areas, all of whom were active digital consumers of both local and global. Through thematic analysis, the authors sought to decode the personal significance the audiences attach to brand narratives, as well as how these subjective interpretations drive broader relationship outcomes (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 264, 265).

Their findings indicate that audiences are not passive receptors; instead, they critically judge a story's authenticity by scrutinizing its moral integrity and emotional resonance. The study categorized this evaluation process into three core themes. The first theme, 'Narrative Relatability' (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 267), suggests that authenticity is achieved when stories reflect the actual life experiences, ambitions, and daily challenges of the consumer.

When brands broadcast familiar, reality-based journeys, it significantly reduces audience skepticism and deepens emotional involvement.

The second theme, ‘Cultural Resonance’ (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 267), highlights the necessity of integrating regional markers –such as native languages, local traditions, and indigenous symbolism– to achieve symbolic identification. Narratives anchored in the audience’s specific cultural identity generate substantial trust, while imported or disconnected imagery is often dismissed as artificial. Finally, the third theme, ‘Perceived Sincerity and Transparency’ (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 268), links authenticity directly to a brands willingness to be vulnerable. The researchers found that highly polished, over dramatic, or celebrity-driven campaigns often trigger doubt. is heavily associated with believability and brand vulnerability. Conversely, stories that openly acknowledge brand failures or real-world difficulties project emotional honesty and are consequently perceived as highly genuine.

Moreover, the research underscores the modern consumers’ adeptness at separating true authenticity from what the authors term ‘*performative storytelling*’ (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 268). While the latter is rejected as superficial, depthless marketing maneuver, true authenticity is recognized through a brand’s sustained behavioral consistency and long-term dedication to community values. Ultimately, these findings confirm that storytelling functions simultaneously as a cultural stimulus and a strategic tool for relationship-building. The authors noted two completely different sides in consumer expectations based on brand origin: domestic brands are trusted when they display cultural intimacy and vulnerability (e.g., sharing startup struggles), whereas global brands are judged on their consistency and professional reputation. Regardless of the origin, when a narrative successfully blends relatability, cultural ties, and sincerity, it initiates a cognitive and emotional response that leads directly to enduring consumer loyalty. Consequently, when a story aligns with personal values, consumers develop robust affective ties and show a higher propensity for a brand advocacy (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 269 - 274).

This qualitative framework serves as a direct theoretical foundation for how the symbolic dimension is operationalized within the current study’s conceptual model. Because Ofosu-Boateng and Jose (2025) empirically demonstrate that narratives facilitate symbolic identification by reflecting the consumer’s own reality, their conclusions validate using perceived brand authenticity as the core measurement of the construct. This construct, in turn, acts as the

primary mechanism for predicting both attitudinal loyalty and the intention to generate positive WOM (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 274, 275).

2.2.3 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The theory of planned behavior sets its focus on the intention of performing a concrete behavior by an individual. In this sense, intention is understood as the sum of motivations that exert an influence on individuals' behavior. Therefore, it contemplates willingness and the effort needed to execute the behavior in question. An individual's freewill must be assured so that performance takes place (Ajzen, 1991, p. 181). Nevertheless, other factors are considered with respect to some behaviors. Differing from motivation, these factors depend on feasibility and opportunity and represent the real control the individual has over performing the behavior. Consequently, for behavioral performance, both intention and behavioral control are determinants (Ajzen, 1991, p. 182).

The theory assumes that intentions are expected to have an influence on performance, given the individual has control over behavior; conversely, performance should increase with behavioral control, considering the individual's existing motivation to perform such behavior. However, behavior control is based on individual perception, despite its objective, actual existence. This psychological construct is partially based on the individual's belief in the feasibility of performing the behavior, which can be different depending on the context and actions (Ajzen, 1991, p. 183). The other view of perceived behavioral control lies in the individuals' perception of their capability of successfully execute of performance. Thus, the individual needs to feel confident. However, this perception influences other thoughts, evaluation and emotional reactions (Ajzen, 1991, p. 184). In other words, if an individual has the intention to run a marathon (motivation), perceived behavioral control will be present in the feasibility assessment (e.g. can I run a marathon?), further decisions to increase not only feasibility, but confidence as well (e.g. start training in advance), and effort investment (e.g., am I willing to dedicate time and effort to train?).

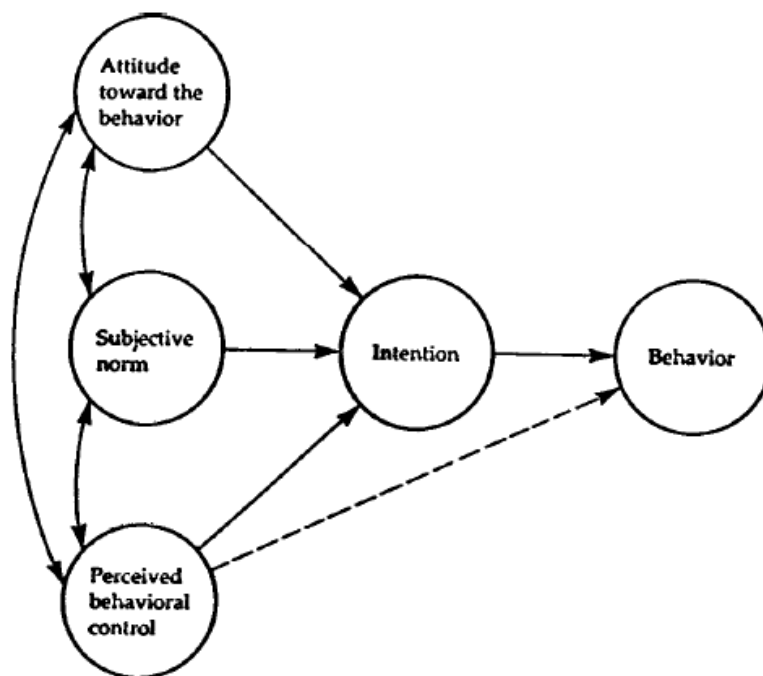
Having established the crucial role of intention and control, it is time now to focus on its model (see *Figure 4*), which provides a comprehensive view of the origins of intentions. The model posits three distinct and independent determinants of intention. The first one is '*attitude towards the behavior*' (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188) —in other words, the individual's positive or negative appraisal of executing the behavior. The model also includes a determinant linked

to the subjective norm, which refers to the social pressure perceived by the individual regarding whether to execute the behavior. Finally, the third predictor is perceived behavioral control, which is related to the feasibility and potential difficulties of performance, as well as to previous experience.

It is understood that if the three intention predictors are favorable, a positive correlation exists with intention itself. However, the relative weight of these intention determinants varies depending on the specific context and behavior.

Figure 4

Theory of Planned Behavior Model



Note: From Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen (1991, p. 182)

The following section further explains why this theory is chosen as the foundation of the theoretical framework for this quantitative research and how the model is adjusted to this one.

2.2.4 From Brand Communication stimuli to Brand Advocacy through TPB

Building upon the critical role of brand narrative authenticity, it is essential to recognize how these evaluations shape overall brand perception. Because brand image is formed by the sum of consumer perceptions, experiences, and evaluations (Cengiz, 2015, p. 62), effective brand

communication stimuli inherently alter the consumer's perceived brand image. Consequently, a strong, authentically perceived brand image is a direct quantitative predictor of a consumer's commitment to engaging in positive WOM (Dam, 2020, p. 450, 455).

However, to understand the exact psychological mechanism that translates this perceived image into active brand advocacy, researchers rely on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Recent quantitative research consistently demonstrates that a consumer's intention to generate positive WOM is directly predicted by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajina, 2019, p. 1563; Wu & Chiang, 2023, p. 21, 22). Furthermore, Hegner et al. (2017, p. 32) confirm that deep emotional connections to a brand—such as those fostered by narrative storytelling—rely on these exact TPB variables to translate into measurable advocacy and loyalty. While these individual pathways are well grounded and demonstrated, a comprehensive model testing the specific, comparative impact of visual, narrative and symbolic storytelling dimensions on this TPB framework has to yet to be fully explored.

2.3 Research Gap

Fundamentally, brand storytelling aims to communicate the brand's core meaning embedded within a story format. In this context, the story represents the meaning itself, which is disseminated through three distinct communication channels. This transmission of meaning generates an emotional response, establishing a solid foundation upon which consumer relationships—and ultimately, brand loyalty—are built. While brand storytelling dimensions communicate a unified meaning, they do so through distinct mechanisms: the narrative dimension provides structure and coherence (action-outcome sequences); the visual dimension delivers sensory experience through mental imagery; and the symbolic dimension provides the hero or avatar that personifies the brand's values.

Therefore, a critical research gap exists in isolating these dimensions to analyze their distinct impacts on consumer attitudes. Specifically, this study seeks to disaggregate these components to measure their individual effects on attitudinal brand loyalty, operationalized here as positive WOM intention. Treating them as separate communication channels allows for a deeper understanding of the underlying psychological processes. Although these dimensions operate jointly in practice, distinguishing their specific influence is paramount to identifying

which mechanism is most compelling. This analysis is key to crafting and implementing more effective, data-driven storytelling strategies.

2.3.2 Research Model

The following explains how the TPB model is adapted and used in this study for the purpose of answering the research question.

This research study adopts the TPB framework, except for the final actual behavior variable. Concerning the dependent variable, the focus of this research is examining consumers' intention to advocate—which is the expression attitudinal loyalty. Since the study employs a cross-sectional design rather than a longitudinal observation, capturing the consumer's intention to become brand advocates serves as the most accurate proxy for future behavior. Furthermore, this study operationalizes the construct of brand advocacy through positive WOM intention, following the approach of Kang et al. (2019). According to these authors, positive WOM is viewed as the behavioral manifestation of attitudinal loyalty. Therefore, items measuring the intention to '*recommend the brand*', '*speak positively about the brand*', and '*encourage others to choose the brand*' serve as the indicators for the dependent variable.

This study adapts the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) to serve as the baseline framework for understanding consumers' drivers of advocacy (*see Figure 5*). In the adjusted model, the standard TPB constructs—attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control—are included as control variables. This ensures that the analysis accounts for the consumer's general disposition, social pressure, and ability to advocate, which are established predictors of behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188).

To isolate the specific impact of the brand storytelling as a communication strategy, the model introduces the dimensions of brand storytelling—visual, narrative, and symbolic—as the primary independent variables. While these dimensions collectively contribute to the brand overarching image, they are tested as different predictors. They are posited to influence intention to advocate (operationalized as WOM intentions), operating independently from a consumer's general attitudinal evaluation of the brand. Consequently, the independent variables are explicitly conceptualized as attitude to visual storytelling, attitude to narrative storytelling, and attitude to symbolic storytelling, collectively categorized as attitude to brand storytelling

stimuli. This terminology is deemed appropriate to establish a framework that captures consumers' real-time, psychological reactions to the communication stimuli. Ultimately, this framework aligns with the core prediction of the study: that the immediate perception influence of targeted storytelling stimuli directly drives consumers' intention to advocate.

This distinction is crucial. While standard attitude represents a summary evaluation of the behavior Ajzen (1991, p. 191) —e.g., advocating for this brand is good/bad—, the storytelling dimensions capture the specific content and meaning communicated by the brand. By treating the TPB constructs as controls, the model tests the influence of brand storytelling independently. This approach allows to study to determine if these elements drive advocacy intentions above and beyond the consumer's pre-existing rational attitude and social norms, while simultaneously identifying which specific dimension – visual, narrative, or symbolic – exerts the strongest influence on consumer advocacy.

2.3.3 Hypotheses Development

In alignment with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the transition from perception to actual behavioral intention is also driven by the consumer's psychological and social evaluations. To test this established framework alongside with the storytelling stimuli, these core variables are included as direct predictors. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: *Attitude to advocacy* will be positively associated with consumer's intention to advocate.

H2: *Subjective norm* will be positively associated with consumer's intention to advocate.

H3: *Perceived behavioral control* will be positively associated with consumer's intention to advocate.

Furthermore, drawing upon the foundational literature regarding narrative persuasion (Kang et al., 2019) and the role of authenticity in brand symbolic meaning (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025), this study posits that the isolated dimensions of brand storytelling act as direct stimuli for positive consumer behavior. Therefore, the hypotheses are formulated as follows.

H4: *Attitude to visual storytelling* will be positively associated with consumer's intention to advocate.

H5: *Attitude to narrative storytelling* will be positively associated with consumer's intention to advocate.

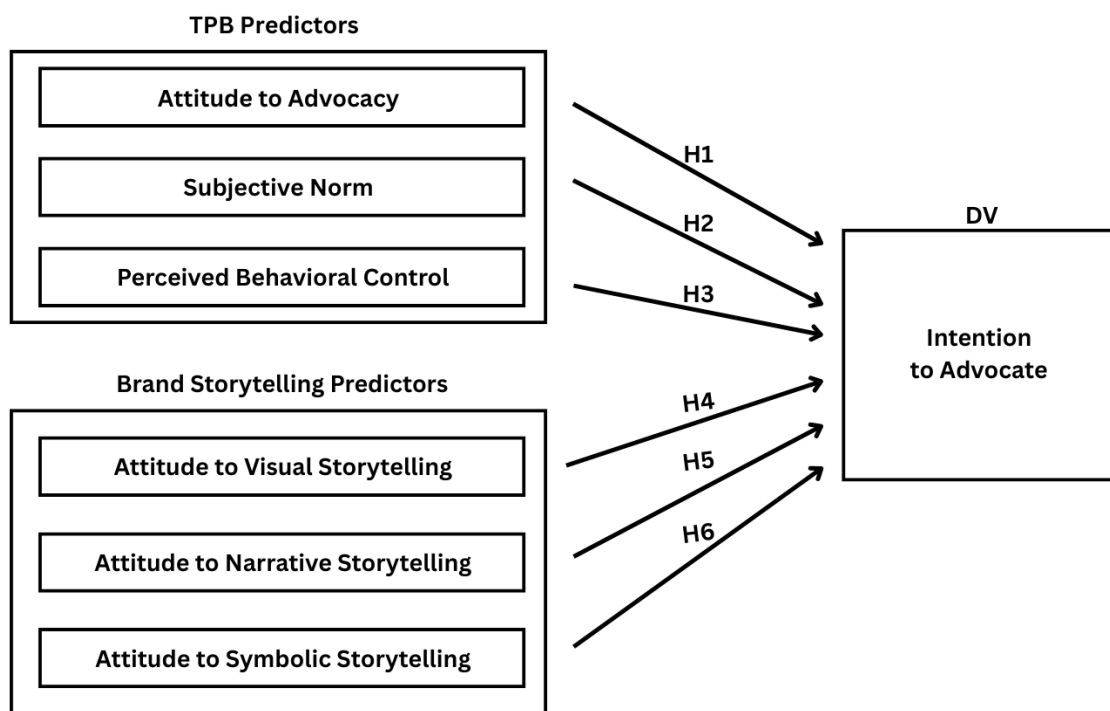
H6: *Attitude to symbolic storytelling* will be positively associated with consumer's intention to advocate.

Given that the main objective of this research is to examine the isolated effect of storytelling dimensions on consumers' intention to advocate these dimensions constitute the primary contribution to the literature. Consequently, hypotheses 4,5,6 are deemed the primary hypotheses. The TPB hypotheses (H1-H3), while crucial for providing a foundational framework to isolate storytelling dimensions' effect on consumers, fulfill a secondary role.

Figure 5

Research Model

Extended TPB Model



3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophy & Design

This study is rooted in the positivist research philosophy. As previously stated, established literature (e.g., Kang et al., Ajzen) serves as the foundations of the theoretical framework upon which the research model is built. These existing theories, alongside newly developed hypothesis, will be tested through the collection of data and analysis of empirical data. The results will serve to confirm or refute the study's hypotheses, thereby contributing to existing knowledge and pointing toward new directions for future research (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 103).

The study operates on the premise of an objective reality —operationalized through the model variables—which can be measured through a structured survey containing Likert scales and subsequent regression analysis. Furthermore, the findings are intended to be generalized to larger consumer groups (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 103). The reliance on a survey instrument and the aim of hypothesis testing indicate a deductive research approach (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 138). Because the study departs from established frameworks (e.g. The Theory of Planned Behavior), to construct hypotheses, the chosen theoretical framework is deemed highly appropriate for this research objective (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 152).

Furthermore, this is a quantitative explanatory study, as it aims to examine the specific predictive associations between the independent variables and the dependent variable (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 134). Specifically, the study measures how visual transportation, narrative identification, and perceived symbolic authenticity associate with and predict a consumer's intention to advocate, while controlling for their baseline behavioral intentions. Given that data is collected at a single, specific point in time rather than longitudinally, the research utilizes a cross-sectional design.

For the execution of the study, three different brands were selected: Apple, Nike, and IKEA. These brands represent fundamentally distinct brand archetypes, operate within different industries, and maintain varying market positionings and price points. This variance ensures that the findings are not limited to a single industry context. Because this research explores

the underlying psychological mechanisms between storytelling and consumers, utilizing diverse brands allows the study to demonstrate whether storytelling effectiveness—and its subsequent impact on WOM—is a universal driver of advocacy, regardless of a brand’s specific value proposition. To ensure the validity of the stimuli, the selected brands must possess a high level of global familiarity and exhibit highly recognizable storytelling practices across visual, narrative, and symbolic dimensions.

The first brand, Apple, represents the technology sector and is characterized by a premium, exclusive market positioning. Academically, Apple has been cited as embodying the outlaw archetype (Xara-Brasil et al., 2018, p. 146), matching with its disruptive, revolutionary reputation in the modern technological world (Xara-Brasil et al., 2018, p. 146). Simultaneously, the brand has cultivated an identity centered on creativity, innovation, and empowering the user to build and design. Therefore, nowadays the brand mainly embodies the creator archetype (Apple Branding Strategy and Marketing Case Study | Map & Fire, 2022; Kreicbergs & Ščeulovs, 2022, p. 24).

The second brand, Nike, represents the sportswear and apparel industry with a mid-to-high price point and a mainstream, highly accessible positioning. Driven by its globally recognized ‘*Just do it*’ narrative, Nike is a clear example of a hero brand archetype (Xara-Brasil et al., 2018, p. 146; Kreicbergs & Ščeulovs, 2022). The brand’s storytelling consistently communicates overcoming adversity, discipline, athletic triumph and personal greatness (Nike Branding Strategy and Marketing Case Study | Map & Fire, 2022). The third brand, IKEA, operates in the home furnishing sector, positioning itself as budget-friendly, practical and highly resourceful. IKEA’s storytelling is deeply rooted in everyday relatability, functionality and domestic life (Ikea Branding Strategy and Marketing Case Study | Map & Fire, 2023) firmly establishing it as the everyman brand archetype (Kreicbergs & Ščeulovs, 2022, p. 24).

By selecting brands with such fundamentally different personalities, this study tests the robustness of the proposed model. It allows the research to verify whether the three dimensions of storytelling effectively drive attitudinal loyalty—measured as the intention to do positive WOM—, regardless of whether the brand’s core narrative is about creating (Apple), winning (Nike), or belonging (IKEA).

3.2 Data Collection & Sampling Strategy

The target population for this study comprises general consumers of various nationalities and age groups (Gen Z, Millennials and Gen X) who possess basic familiarity with global brands. The research is limited to Europe. According to the literature, cultural relevance (Ofosu-Boateng & Jose, 2025, p. 262) is needed for storytelling to be effective. Despite the different strategies companies use across Europe, these countries share enough cultural common ground to support this research scope.

Given the practical constraints of time and budget inherent to academic thesis research, the study employs convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique. Participants are recruited by posting the questionnaire on *Survey Swap* web—a platform that facilitates the exchange of survey answers between users—and distributing the survey link through the researcher's personal and academic networks (e.g., via direct messaging platforms like WhatsApp and social media such as LinkedIn). Furthermore, an element of snowball is be utilized, as initial respondents are encouraged to forward the survey link to their own contacts to expand the sample size. Prior to participation, the survey's introductory page provided a brief overview of the research objectives and guaranteed respondent anonymity, explicitly stating that no personally identifiable data would be collected.

While convenience sampling is highly effective for gathering large amounts of data quickly, it is acknowledged that cases are selected purely based on their ease of access errors (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 232). Consequently, the sample is not statistically representative of the entire global, European consumer population, which limits the absolute generalizability of the findings. However, this method is highly appropriate for the current study. The primary objective of this research is not to estimate exact population parameters (e.g., the exact percentage of European consumers who advocate for Nike), but rather to test the theoretical relationships between variables—specifically, how the visual, narrative, and symbolic dimensions of storytelling influence the intention to generate positive WOM (intention to advocate). Because the study focuses on underlying psychological and behavioral mechanisms, a diverse convenience sample provides sufficient and valid data to test the robustness of the proposed theoretical model.

A total 164 valid European consumers participated in this study, which according to Pallant (2020, p.150) is statistically sufficient for conducting multiple regression analysis by complying with the minimum threshold $N > 50 + 8m$ (where $m=10$ independent variables). An additional eight respondents who indicate that they were ‘*not familiar with or have never interacted with any of these brands*’ were automatically directed to exit the survey, ensuring a baseline of brand familiarity. As detailed in *Table 1*, the final sample skewed heavily female and young, with Generation Z comprising the clear majority of respondents. Geographically, the sample captured individuals from 20 European countries, though there was a significant concentration of participants originating from Spain. *Table 1* below presents a comprehensive overview of the sample’s demographic profile:

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Sample

Demographic Characteristic	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	120	73.2%
Male	44	26.8%
Other	0	0.0%
Generational Cohort		
Gen Z	101	61.6%
Gen X	42	25.6%
Millennials	21	12.8%
Geographical Distribution (Top 5)		
Spain	70	42.7%
Italy	15	9.1%
Sweden	13	8.1%
United Kingdom	12	7.3%
Hungary	8	4.9%
Other European Countries (15 combined)	46	27.9%
Total Valid Sample	164	100.0%

3.3 Measurement Instruments

3.3.1 Data Collection Instrument: Survey Design

The primary data for this research will be collected through a self-administered, quantitative online questionnaire design in Google Forms. Online surveys are highly efficient for cross-sectional studies, allowing for rapid data collection, automated logic routing (branching), and standardized formatting of Likert-scale questions, which minimizes researcher interference and transcription errors (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 356-358). The execution of the study relies on the stimuli generated by a specific brand, which the survey respondent selects. Although participants are presented with three brand options, they are instructed to select only one to evaluate. A set of three brands was deemed optimal to provide sufficient diversity while preventing choice overload or respondent fatigue.

To establish a comprehensive profile of the sample, the survey collects demographic data (such as gender, age and nationality), as well as consumer habit data. These specific metrics are used as control variables in the subsequent regression analysis to isolate the effects of the primary independent variables, while also facilitating a generational comparison. These control variables are measured using standard categorical formats to prevent survey fatigue. Gender was captured through predefined answers (Female, Male, Other), as well as age was captured through predefined age brackets equivalent (e.g., 18–29, 30–45, 46–61) to explicitly facilitate the aforementioned generational comparative analysis. Nationality is recorded using a standard nominal list. Additionally, baseline consumer habits are assessed via a single item frequency scale measuring the respondents' prior level of interaction with the selected brands. These concise measures are deemed methodologically sufficient for profiling the sample and isolating the effects of the primary predictors in the regression model.

Furthermore, to ensure data integrity, the survey includes a screening question (*"I am not familiar with or have never interacted with any of these brands."*), which immediately terminates the survey for unqualified respondents, thereby protecting the dataset from uninformed or neutral bias. Furthermore, to account for inattentiveness, an attention check was included. Participants were asked to select '5 (*Strongly Agree*)' to ensure they are reading carefully and to filter out automated or low-effort responses.

The research examines the psychological and behavioral relationships between brands and consumers resulting from storytelling stimuli. Because consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions are latent, abstract constructs, they must be operationalized into measurable items. Therefore, all constructs in this study are measured using standardized 5-point Likert-scales, ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). This method effectively captures the qualitative nature of consumers attitudes and transforms it into quantitative data suitable for the regression analysis. The full list of measurement items, block configurations, and their adapted sources can be found in Appendix A.

3.3.2 Measurement of the Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate

Attitudinal loyalty is a broad construct that manifests in varying degrees of consumer commitment. Aligning with Kang et al.'s (2019, p. 47) study on the effect of storytelling in advertising, this research operationalizes attitudinal loyalty specifically as the intention to engage in positive WOM. By adapting validated, standard WOM scales from existing literature (Kang et al., 2019, p. 50, 51), the study ensures strict construct validity—guaranteeing that the survey instrument accurately measures the underlying concept of advocacy.

To capture the multi-dimensional nature of this variable, intention to engage in positive WOM is measured using three distinct Likert-scale items, automatically adapted to display the specific brand chosen by the participant. These three items represent and escalation in consumer advocacy: The first statement (*"I think I will speak positively about IKEA with the people that I know."*), measures baseline brand affinity. It implies brand knowledge and a positive perception of the brand's reputation but does not strictly require the respondent to be an active purchaser.

The second item (*"How likely are you to recommend Nike to a friend or colleague?"*) measures active referral intention, which is typically rooted in a higher degree of familiarity, likeability, or direct brand experience. And the final statement (*"I would encourage others to choose Apple over other brands."*) measures the highest level of advocacy and brand favoritism. It moves from passive recommendation and indicates active persuasion and emotional attachment. Together, these three items provide a holistic measurement of the dependent vari-

able, capturing the entire spectrum of attitudinal loyalty from general positive opinion to active brand advocacy.

3.3.3 Measurement of the Independent Variables: Visual, Narrative and Symbolic Storytelling Dimensions

To analyze the independent variables' individual influence on consumers' intention to engage in positive WOM, the three dimensions of brand storytelling are presented and tested separately. To ensure respondents correctly process the stimuli before answering, each dimension is introduced with a clear, accessible prompt (e.g., *"Please read the short text below and answer the following questions."*). Images and short texts are explicitly chosen over video to ensure the dimensions remain isolated and participants' responses are driven solely by the intended variable. All visual and textual materials employed in the survey are authentic assets that have been officially used in the brands' real-world communications.

Visual storytelling is operationalized through the construct of transportation, as visuals provide the mental imagery necessary for the consumers to cognitively and emotionally immerse themselves in the brand's world. To ensure consistency across Apple, Nike, and IKEA, a sequential before-and-after visual format is employed (*see Figure 6*). This format naturally facilitates transportation by showing a progression. For Apple (creator), the image depicts the creative process of a common iPhone user capturing a photo, providing a relatable creative journey. For Nike (hero), the visual aligns with the brand's empowerment message by showing a woman running alone at night, transitioning to her running a marathon – a clear trajectory from physical struggle to physical achievement. For IKEA (everyman), the visual displays a relatable household mishap (damaged wallpaper) followed by a resourceful, budget-friendly solution (hanging a picture over it).

Figure 6
Images Used for Visual Storytelling's Stimuli



Note: Selected images representing the visual dimension of each brand. Stimuli depict ‘action-outcome’ sequences with minimal text content to ensure focus on visual processing. Images extracted by the author from Apple (n.d), Sportswear Brand Strategy (2013), Mood Advertising (n.d).

The multi-dimensional nature of the transportation is measured progressively through four adapted items. The first statement of the visual dimension (e.g., *"I feel this brand inspires me to explore my creativity"* from Apple questions), measures whether participants perceive the brand's archetype and personality through this type of communication —the archetypal perception. The second item checks the extent to which the aesthetic style of the brands is visually captivating —the aesthetic captivation. The third statement measures transportation, asking participants if the visual imagery picturing themselves as part of the brand world — the cognitive transportation, while the fourth statement measures a higher level of transportation, connecting with participants' emotional engagement (e.g., *"The visual aesthetics of Nike allow me to easily picture myself feeling empowered by using their products"*).

Narrative storytelling is operationalized through the construct of identification, as a story's structure allows consumers to relate to the characters and the core message. Participants are presented with a short brand text of strictly controlled length (between 40 and 46 words) to ensure consistency and prevent reading fatigue (*see Figure 7*). Apple's text describes facing a blank screen and diving into the creative process to produce a masterpiece. Nike's text focuses on overcoming doubt and taking action. IKEA's text narrates the transition from the mundane everyday chores to establishing authentic family connections.

Figure 7

Communication Messages Used for Narrative Storytelling's Stimuli

Apple: <i>'Every story you love, every invention that moves you. Every idea you wished was yours, all began as nothing. Just a flicker on a screen, asking a simple question: What do you see? Good ideas start here.'</i> Apple – Mac.
Nike <i>'Are you made for this? I mean, we're all made of the same stuff. But choosing to do something, even when you don't know if you can do it, that just shows you... What else you can become. Just do it.'</i> – Nike.
IKEA <i>'Let's face it, the best parties always end up in the kitchen, and the best conversations happen when doing the dishes. So, let's make hosting less of an 'event' and more of a come as you are. Concentrate on what really matters: The people you love.'</i> –IKEA

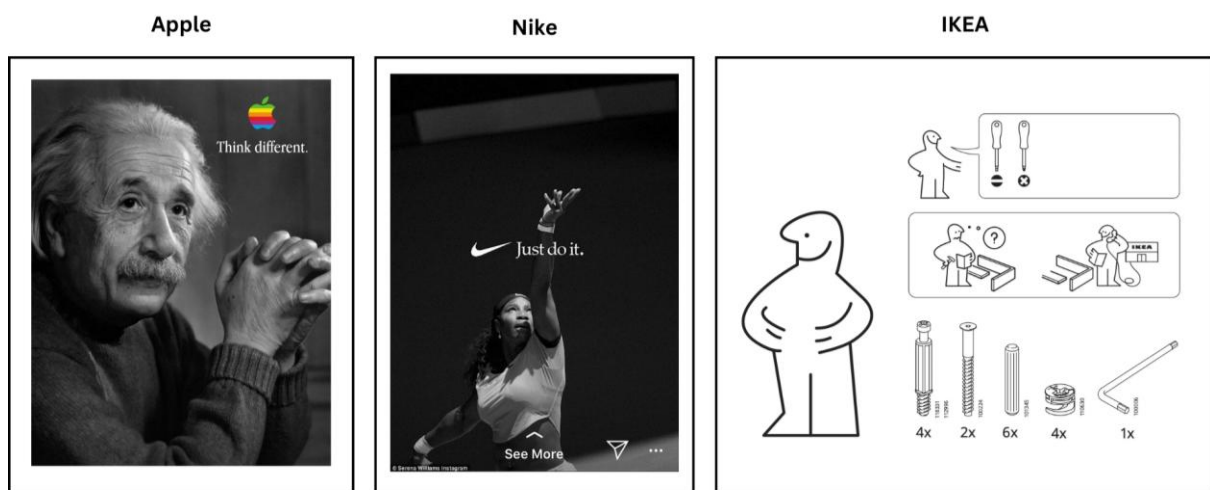
Note: Compilation of communication messages extracted from video voice recordings sourced from the social media brand content of the three brands selected. Texts extracted by the author from Apple (2025), Nike (n.d.), IKEA (2025). Texts compiled by the author.

Identification is measured using three progressive statements. The first statement of the narrative dimension (e.g., *"I feel a personal connection to the story and plot IKEA communicates."*), measures the initial stage of identification which relies on personal identification. The second item (e.g., *"I feel identified to the brand story because I think it represents the values, I believe in."*), checks where there is not only a personal connection, but alignment with the brand. And the third statement (e.g., *"I see myself reflected in the story's character."*), measures to which extent identification leads to self-reflection on the brand's message.

Symbolic storytelling is operationalized through the construct of perceived authenticity, as symbols are used to convey a brand's abstract meaning. For a symbol to effectively connect with a consumer, it must be perceived as genuine to be credible. For the three brands, participants are shown a visual primarily featuring a brand symbol, ensuring consistency (*see Figure 8*). Participants are shown an image featuring a specific brand symbol. For Apple, an image of Albert Einstein from the 'Think Different' campaign is used (Apple, 2026). Einstein represents the prestige and genius of the creator archetype (notably, Steve Jobs was excluded to prevent his public reputation from skewing perceptions). For Nike, a top athlete, Serena Williams is utilized; she authentically personifies the hero's message of discipline and professional triumph. For IKEA, the animated, so-called the IKEA man (the brand's classic manual character) is used. This character represents the everyman's universal experience of assembling a piece of furniture and acts as a genuine symbol of the brand's helpful, practical nature offering a more narrative-driven symbol than a static product like the blue FRAKTA bag.

Figure 8

Images Used for Symbolic Storytelling's Stimuli



Note: Selected images representing the symbolic dimension of the three brands, featuring human and anthropomorphic figures as brand symbols. Images compiled and adapted by the author from Chatziliadis (2019), Nike (2024), IKEA (n.d.).

Perceived authenticity is measured using three progressive items. The first statement (e.g., "*I think Apple communicates its values honestly and authentically.*"), measures the brand's overall authenticity perception. The second item (e.g., "*The characters/symbols Nike uses represent values that feel authentic and true to me.*"), measures the authenticity of the symbol. And

the third statement (e.g., *"IKEA's portrayal of its values feels genuine rather than just a marketing tactic."*), measures the extent to which the brand's message is perceived as genuine.

3.3.4 Measurement of TPB Predictors

To accurately isolate and measure the unique variance in positive WOM caused by brand storytelling stimuli, this study must account for consumers' pre-existing behavioral intentions. Therefore, the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) is employed as a rigorous framework to establish control variables. According to TPB, human behavior is guided by three core constructs: attitude to the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. In accordance with the TPB's principle of compatibility, all control variables in this study are strictly operationalized to align with the target behavior: the act of recommending or speaking positively about the brand in question, rather than the act of purchasing. All control variables are measured using 5-point Likert scales (1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree), adapted from established TPB scales.

Attitude to the behavior refers to the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the target behavior. If a consumer already believes that advocating for a brand is inherently foolish or beneficial, this baseline attitude will heavily influence their final WOM intention, regardless of the storytelling stimuli. This construct is measured progressively through three items that capture both rational and emotional evaluations. The first item (e.g., *"For me, speaking positively about Apple would be a good idea."*) measures the cognitive, logical evaluation of the behavior. The second statement (e.g., *"For me, recommending Nike to others would be pleasant."*), measures the emotional and personal sentiment toward the act of advocacy. And the third item (e.g., *"Overall, I have a favorable attitude toward recommending IKEA."*), measures whether the consumer perceives generating WOM as a valuable or useless exercise.

Subjective norm refers to the perceived social pressure to perform the behavior. In a WOM context, consumers are less likely to advocate for a brand if they believe their social circle will judge them negatively for it. To ensure natural phrasing while maintaining academic validity, these items focus on social safety and approval. This construct is measured these statements assessing social expectation. The first item (e.g., *"People who are important to me would encourage me to recommend Apple."*), measures the baseline perceived acceptance

from close, influential contacts. The second statement (e.g., *"The fact that many people speak positively about Nike encourages me to do it too"*), measures how the behavior of the broader social environment influences the respondent's own comfort level in advocating. And the third item (e.g., *"Most people that I know would approve of me speaking positively about IKEA."*), measures the anticipated reaction and value alignment with the respondent's immediate peer group.

Perceived behavioral control refers to the individual's perceived ease or difficulty in performing the behavior, reflecting past experience and anticipated impediments. In the context of brand advocacy, this controls for when the consumer feels they have the autonomy, knowledge, or social platform to actually recommend the brand to others. This construct is measured these statements assessing social expectation. The first item (e.g., *"I feel that I know the brand enough to speak positively about it."*), measures the consumer's perceived freedom from external constraints or forcing factors. The second statement (e.g., *"It would be easy for me to explain others why Nike is a good brand."*), measures the internal belief in their own ability to accurately recommend a brand. And the third item (e.g., *"Whether or not I recommend IKEA is entirely up to me."*), measures the perceived self-autonomy to generate positive WOM.

By statistically controlling for these three TPB dimensions in the subsequent regression analysis, the research model ensures that any significant relationship found between the storytelling dimensions (visual, narrative, symbolic) and the dependent variable (intention to engage in positive WOM) is a direct result of the storytelling stimuli itself, rather than underlying social or psychological predispositions.

3.4 Quality Criteria: Validity & Reliability

To ensure the scientific rigor of this quantitative study, both the reliability and validity of the measurement's instruments must be established.

Reliability refers to the internal consistency of the survey construct —meaning that the item measuring a specific variable yield consistent results across respondents. To test this, Cronbach's Alpha will be calculated for each multi-item construct (visual, narrative, symbolic, attitude to advocate, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intention to advo-

cate) Following established academic guidelines, a Cronbach's Alpha of 0,70 or higher is considered the threshold for acceptable internal consistency (Pallant, 2010, p. 100). On another note, validity ensures that the survey instrument is accurately measuring the theoretical concepts claims to measure. Because this study examines specific brand contexts (Apple, Nike, IKEA), a hybrid approach to validity is employed.

First, where possible, established scales from peer-reviewed literature are utilized to secure validity construct. Specifically, the scales measuring visual identification, narrative transportation, and WOM intention are adapted from the previously validated study from Kang et al. (2019, p. 50). Second, the items measuring the Theory of Planned Behavior constructs (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) were structurally adapted from Ajzen's (1991) standard measurement guidelines to fit the specific context of brand advocacy.

Finally, to measure the symbolic dimension of each specific brand, items are self-developed for the purposed of this study based on Ofosu-Boateng and Jose (2025). This way, content validity is ensured for these newly adapted items, whose questions are strictly derived from the theoretical definitions established in the theoretical framework (Chapter 2). By directly translating theoretical concepts (such as brand archetypes and symbolic authenticity) into the measurement items, the survey maintains strong face and content validity.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Statistical Analysis

After the primary data collection, the dataset is exported from the survey platform into an excel file and prepared for statistical analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics. The data analysis process is conducted in three systematic phases to ensure rigorous hypothesis testing. First, the dataset undergoes a data cleaning process. This involves screening for and removing incomplete responses, unengaged respondents (e.g., participants who clicked '1' for every answer), and significant outliers that could skew the results (Pallant, 2010, p. 43). Second, descriptive statistics—including means, standard deviations and frequencies (*see Appendix B, SPSS Output B1 for further data disclosure*)—are generated to profile the demographic characteristics of the sample and summarize the control variables (Pallant, 2010, p. 53).

Finally, to test the formal hypotheses (H1 through H6), multiple linear regression is employed. This method is appropriate as the study seeks to measure the predictive relationship between multiple independent variables (visual, narrative, and symbolic storytelling dimensions) and a single continuous dependent variable —intention to advocate— (Pallant, 2010, p. 148). Before running the regressions, the fundamental assumptions of multiple regression are verified. This includes testing for multicollinearity (Pallant, 2010, p. 158) to ensure the independent variables are not overly correlated, as well as checking for the normal distribution of residuals (Pallant, 2010, p. 160).

3.5.2 Reliability & Validity Checks: Cronbach's alpha

Given that all variables in this study utilized multi-item scales, reliability checks are conducted prior to the index creation. To ensure cross-contextual reliability, Cronbach's Alpha is first calculated for each brand subset individually and then for the pooled data set to form the final, aggregated indices.

Across all three brands (Apple, Nike and IKEA), the Visual, Narrative and Symbolic storytelling dimensions consistently demonstrate high internal consistency, with all Cronbach's Alpha scores exceeding the 0.70 threshold (*see Table 2*). For the TPB variables, Attitude to Advocacy and Subjective Norm also score > 0.70 across all brands. However, PBC scale initially presents low reliability. Analysis of the '*Scale if item deleted*' output reveals that removing the third item significantly improves the alpha (e.g. raising Apple's PBC alpha from 0,4 to 0.710). This suggests participants conceptually differentiate 'having the knowledge' from 'having the freedom' to recommend a brand. Consequently, the third item is removed, and the final PBC index focuses strictly on the capability to advocate.

While a full-detailed disclosure of Cronbach's Alpha scores is available in *SPSS Output B2 in Appendix B*, a comprehensive overview is presented in *Table 2* below:

Table 2: Construct Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)

Construct / Scale	Number of Items (N)	Apple (α)	Nike (α)	IKEA (α)	Master Indexes (α)
Intention to Advocate	3	0.890	0.865	0.861	0.877
Theory of Planned Behavior					

Attitude to Advocate	3	0.897	0.853	0.905	0.890
PBC	2	0.710	0.826	0.909	0.831
Subjective Norm	3	0.743	0.772	0.759	0.760
Brand Storytelling Dimensions					
Visual Dimension	4	0.774	0.748	0.786	0.761
Narrative Dimension	3	0.893	0.785	0.838	0.848
Symbolic Dimension	3	0.853	0.800	0.847	0.847

Given these strong individual results, the data is pooled into a master dataset. The final pooled master indexes demonstrate excellent reliability: Visual, Narrative and Symbolic. The TPB master indexes also confirm high reliability for Attitude to Advocacy, Subjective Norm, and PBC. The dependent variable (Intention to Advocate) scores an alpha > 0.70 too.

3.5.3 Model Assumptions: Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation analysis is conducted to examine the relationship between variables and identify potential multicollinearity (*see Appendix B, Table B3*). All correlation coefficients are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

None of the independent variables exhibited a Pearson coefficient above 0.80 threshold that would indicate multicollinearity (Pallante, 2010, p. 290). Among the storytelling dimensions, the Visual dimension presents a strong correlation with Narrative ($r = 0.581$) and Symbolic ($r = 0.549$) storytelling, as well as the strongest correlation with the dependent variable ($r = 0.499$). The TPB variables exhibit higher intercorrelations, notably between Attitude to Advocacy and Subjective Norm ($r = 0.712$). While this strong relationship is theoretically consistent with the TPB framework, formal collinearity diagnostics are assessed during the regression to further verify whether multicollinearity assumptions is actually violated (*Table 3*). All Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are well below the strict threshold of 10 (Pallant, 2010, p. 158). Furthermore, all Tolerance values are strictly above 0.10, confirming the assumption of multicollinearity was not violated (Pallant, 2010, p. 158).

Table 3: Multicollinearity Diagnostics for TPB Predictors

Variable	VIF	Tolerance
Attitude to Advocacy	1.540	.649
Subjective Norm	1.376	.727
PBC	1.369	.731

3.5.4 Model Diagnostics

To test the hypotheses and evaluate the incremental predictive power of the storytelling dimensions, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis is conducted. Prior to interpretation, the assumption of normality is assessed via the residual histogram and the Normal P-P Plot (*see Appendix B, Chart B4*). They show that the residuals are approximately normal distributed, as the data points closely followed the diagonal line, satisfying the normality assumption for multiple linear regression (Pallant, 2010, p. PAGE). By revising the scatterplot, it is concluded that the assumption of homoscedasticity is not violated (*see Appendix B, Chart B5*).

To systematically evaluate the predictors of advocacy intention, the multiple regression analysis is structured across four distinct models. Model 1 establishes the baseline by entering dummy variables for brand, gender and generation as control variables (utilizing Apple, Male and Gen X as reference categories) to ensure results were not inherently biased by demographic or brand-specific factors. Model 2 introduces the core psychological predictors from the Theory of Planned Behavior (Attitude to Advocacy, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioral Control) alongside the baseline controls. To isolate the direct impact of the communication stimuli, Model 3 removed the TPB predictors and replaced them with the three brand storytelling dimensions (Visual, Narrative and Symbolic). Finally, Model 4 represents the comprehensive, fully integrated framework, simultaneously entering the baseline controls, the TPB constructs, and the storytelling dimensions to evaluate their combined effects and test for cognitive overshadowing.

4. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Regarding brand selection, 57 participants evaluated Apple. Descriptive statistics indicate Apple is highly preferred by Gen Z participants (71.9%) compared to their representation in the other two brands groups. Cross-tabulation analysis of gender reveal that Ikea captures the highest share of female participants (78%), followed by Nike (75%) and Apple (66.7%). Furthermore, 48 consumers evaluated Nike, which also presents a predominant share of Gen Z (64.6%), against 25% Gen X and 10.4% Millennials. Finally, 59 participants evaluated IKEA, demonstrating a relatively balanced share of Gen Z (49.2%) and Gen X (35.6%) respondents. Nationality cross-tabulations show that Italian and Hungarian respondents favored Apple, whereas Swedish favored IKEA. Spanish and British participants are more evenly distributed across the three brands.

The level of interaction/purchase frequency yield a mean of 3.53, with both the median and mode at a 4 (*'Frequently'*), representing 31.1% of the sample. Additionally, 29.9% of respondents interact with the brand *'Sometimes'*, 20.1% *'Very Frequently'* and 18.9% *'Rarely'*. Cross-tabulations reveal that Apple has the highest share of interactions, with 35.1% selecting *'Frequently'*, followed by *'Sometimes'* (26.3%), and *'Very Frequently'* 21.1%. Regarding brand loyalty, the sample presents a mean of 2.71, a median of 3 (*'Between 6 and 10 years'*), and a mode of 2 (*'Between 1 and 5 years'*), representing 42.1% of respondents. Across the brands, Apple captures the largest share of short-medium term loyalty (47.4% at 1 to 5 years). Conversely, IKEA demonstrated the highest share of long-term consumers, with 35.6% reporting loyalty for more than 10 years, followed closely by Nike (29.2%). *Table B6 and SPSS Output B7 in Appendix B* provide a complete overview of the previous sample data.

Finally, a Chi-Square Test for independence is conducted to verify that the demographic distribution is equal across the three brand groups. For all control variables, the Pearson Chi-Square significance is > 0.05 (see *Table 4*). This confirms that the demographic profiles of the three brand groups are statistically similar, suggesting any differences in advocacy intention are driven by the independent variables rather than demographic biases.

Table 4: Pearson Chi-Square Results for Demographic and Behavioral Controls by Brand

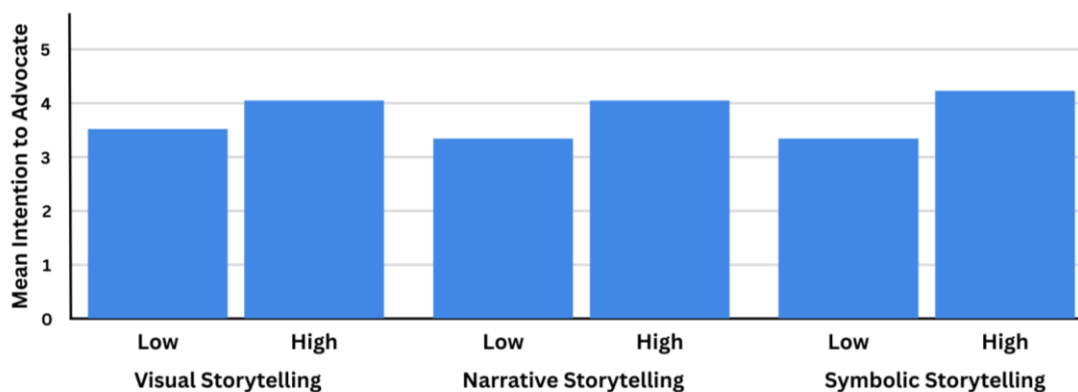
Control Variable	Pearson Chi-Square (χ^2)	df	p-value
Gender	2.001	2	.368
Generation	7.493	4	.112
Country	28.889	38	.856
Interaction Frequency	1.741	6	.942
Loyalty years	5.573	6	.473

4.1.1 Bivariate Analysis: Storytelling Dimensions and Attitude to Advocate

To further examine the foundational relationship between the storytelling dimensions and core psychological metrics, a bivariate analysis is conducted (*see Figure 9*). Respondents are classified into two distinct categories based on their *Attitude to Advocate* (Low vs High). When evaluating the mean of the storytelling dimensions across these two groups, a clear pattern emerges. The analysis reveals that consumers with the ‘High Attitude to Advocate’ group score consistently higher across all three storytelling dimensions compare to those in the ‘Low’ group. Furthermore, when comparing the dimensions within the ‘High’ attitude group, the Symbolic dimension records the highest overall engagement, followed by the Visual dimension, while the Narrative dimension records the lowest mean score of the three. This indicates that while all forms of storytelling are positively associated with a strong attitude toward advocacy, symbolic messaging holds the strongest correlational presence among highly willing brand advocates.

Figure 9

Bivariate Chart of Storytelling Dimensions by Attitude to Advocacy



4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

4.2.1 Model 1: Dummies impact on Intention to Advocate

Model 1 established the baseline by regressing the control variables —demographics (gender and age) and brand dummies (with Apple serving as the reference category) – against the dependent variable, Intention to Advocate. The baseline model explains a statistically significant, yet modest, portion of the variance in advocacy intentions (Adj. R Square = 0.135, $p < .001$), as shown in *Table 5* down below. Among the predictors, gender emerges as a highly significant positive determinant, indicating that female respondents report higher intentions to advocate. Regarding the brand control variables, Nike is significant and negative, revealing that baseline intentions to engage in positive WOM are significantly lower for Nike compared to the reference brand, Apple. Conversely, age and IKEA do not exert a statistically significant impact on the baseline model.

4.2.2 Model 2: Dummies and TPB Predictors impact on Intention to Advocate

In Model 2, the psychological predictors from the Theory of Planned Behavior – Attitude to Advocacy, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Subjective Norm– are added as the baseline controls. The inclusion of these variables results in a considerable and statistically significant jump in explanatory power, with the model explaining nearly three-quarters of the variance in the dependent variable (Adj. R Square = 0.768, $p < .001$), as shown in *Table 5* at the end of this section. This drastic increase underlines the primary importance of the cognitive-behavioral predispositions over basic demographics.

Looking at individual predictors, the demographic effects vanish: gender and age are rendered completely non-significant. Instead, variance is heavily driven by individual TPB constructs. Attitude to Advocacy emerges as the strongest predictor in the model ($\beta = 0.519$, $p < .001$), followed closely by PBC ($\beta = 0.345$, $p < .001$). Interestingly, Subjective Norm was not significant, suggesting social expectations do not drive advocacy intention within this sample. Finally, controlling for these psychological mechanisms shifted the brand variables: both Nike and IKEA are statistically significant and negative, indicating that when psychological attitudes are held equal, Apple maintains a baseline advantage in generating advocacy intentions over both competitors.

4.2.3 Model 3: Dummies and Brand Storytelling Predictors

In Model 3, the three brand storytelling dimensions (visual, narrative, and symbolic) are added baseline controls, while omitting the TPB predictors. This step isolates the direct impact of the storytelling stimuli on advocacy intentions, revealing a statistically significant explanatory power of 34.3% (Adjusted R Square = 0.343, $p < .001$), as shown in *Table 5* down below. Compared to the baseline model (Model 1), the inclusion of these communication dimensions yields a meaningful increase in the variance explained, alongside several notable shifts in variable significance

Regarding control variables, Nike becomes a significant negative predictor, alongside IKEA. This indicates that, without TPB factors, consumers of both IKEA and Nike are significantly less likely to advocate for their respective brands compared to the Apple baseline. Additionally, gender is revealed as a significant positive predictor, suggesting that females are inherently more likely to act as brand advocates than males when internal attitudes are not controlled for. Crucially, with respect to the storytelling dimensions, both the Visual and Symbolic dimensions emerge as significant positive predictors. The Symbolic dimension ($\beta = 0.278$, $p < 0.001$) serves as the strongest predictor in this exploratory model, closely followed by the Visual dimension ($\beta = 0.255$, $p < 0.001$). This proves that when TPB is removed, symbolic storytelling is the primary driver of advocacy intention among the storytelling variables.

4.2. Model 4: Dummies, Brand Storytelling Predictors and TPB Predictors impact on Intention to Advocate

Finally, Model 4 represents the fully integrated, comprehensive model, simultaneously entering the demographic dummy variables (gender, generation, and brand), the TPB variables, the brand storytelling dimensions. The analysis reveal that this complete framework explains a substantial 76,4% (Adjusted R Square = 0.764, $p < .001$) of the variance in intention to advocate, as shown in *Table 5* down below. Notably, comparing this to Model 2 reveals that adding the story dimensions yields no additional explanatory power, with the Adjusted R Square remaining statistically unchanged. Within this model, Attitude to Advocacy ($\beta = 0.517$, $p < 0.001$) and PBC ($\beta = 0.344$, $p < 0.001$) emerge as highly significant predictors. Therefore, **hypotheses H1 and H3 are supported**, with Attitude to Advocacy serving as the strongest overall predictor in the model. Conversely, Subjective Norm is not a statistically significant predictor ($\beta = 0.105$, $p > 0.05$), leading to **the rejection of hypothesis H2**.

Moreover, gender and generational cohorts (Gen Z and Millennials) emerge as non-significant predictors, suggesting that when core psychological attitudes are accounted for, the intention to advocate is not dictated by age or gender. Notably, the generational comparison reveals that the younger the consumer is, the more likely it is that he/she engages into brand advocacy. These regression results align with the Chi-Square Test for independence, supporting the conclusion that differences in advocacy intention are primarily driven by the independent variables and not the demographic biases.

Regarding brand control variables, Nike emerges as statistically non-significant, whereas IKEA is revealed as a significant negative predictor. This suggests a fundamentally lower baseline intention to advocate for IKEA compared to Apple, regardless of TPB factors.

Regarding storytelling dimensions within this primary model, none emerge as statically significant predictors of advocacy. Therefore, **hypotheses H4, H5 and H6 are rejected**. This indicates that while storytelling dimensions may hold correlational relationships with advocacy, they could not act as direct predictors when core behavioral attitudes like TPB are accounted for. This result is likely due to the high statistical power of the TPB constructs, which effectively capture and overshadow the explanatory variance of the intention to advocate. While a full-detailed disclosure on models 1 to 4 is available in *SPSS Output B8 in Appendix B*, a comprehensive overview of the standardized coefficients and model summary statistics for these three models is presented in *Table 5* below:

Table 5: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Results for Intentions to Advocate

Predictors	Model 1 (β)	Model 2 (β)	Model 3 (β)	Model 4 (β)
Baseline Controls				
Gender	0.332*	0.017	.177*	0.016
Dummy Gen Z	0.057	-0.010	-0.057	-0.010
Dummy Millennials	0.065	-0.006	.008	-.006
Nike Dummy	-0.255*	-0.089*	-0.310*	-0.90
IKEA Dummy	-0.143	-0.131*	-0.244*	-0.132*
TPB Predictors				
Attitude to Advocate	—	0.519*	—	0.517*

PBC	—	0.345*	—	0.344*
Subjective Norm	—	0.105	—	0.105
Storytelling Predictors				
Visual Dimension	—	—	0.255*	0.002
Narrative Dimension	—	—	0.073	0.003
Symbolic Dimension	—	—	0.278*	0.002
Model Summary				
R ²	.153	.780	.376	.780
Adjusted R ²	.127	.768	.343	.764
R ² Change	.160	.612	.190	.001

Note: * Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

4.3 Exploratory Analysis

4.3.1 Multiple Regression Analysis setting each Storytelling Dimension as DV

To further unpack the influence of demographic and brand factors on how consumers perceive storytelling, three additional regression models are run, setting each storytelling dimension as the dependent variable.

When the Visual Dimension is set as the dependent variable, the control predictors explain 11.3% of the variance (Adjusted R Square = 0.113, $p < .001$). Notably, Nike and IKEA are non-significant compared to Apple baseline. This indicates that the brand type has no influence on a consumer's attitude toward visual storytelling; the appeal is universal across these brands. However, gender is a significant positive predictor, meaning females are more drawn to Visual storytelling than males. Age also plays a role, with GenZ as a significant positive predictor, while Millennials are revealed as non-significant. This suggests, younger consumers are highly receptive to the visual dimension.

When the Narrative dimension is set as the dependent variable, model explains 9.2% of the variance (Adjusted R Square = 0.092, $p < .001$). Similar to the visual dimension, the brand dummies for Nike and IKEA are revealed as not statistically significant predictors. Gender once again emerges as the sole strong positive predictor, indicating females have a signifi-

cantly higher affinity for narrative storytelling. Generational cohorts are not significant, showing age does not dictate narrative preference.

Finally, when setting the Symbolic dimension as the dependent variable, the model explains 13.2% of the variance (Adjusted R Square = 0.132, $p < .001$). Unlike the other dimensions, brand type heavily influences symbolic storytelling. Both IKEA and Nike emerge as significant predictors compared to Apple, with IKEA showing the strongest effect. This suggests that IKEA and Nike consumers are highly engaged by symbolic messaging. Furthermore, gender, and Gen Z remain significant positive predictors, concluding that younger consumers and female consumers are most likely to develop strong attitudes toward symbolic storytelling. While a full-detailed disclosure on these three exploratory models is available in *SPSS Output B9 in Appendix B*, a comprehensive overview of the standardized coefficients and model summary statistics for these three models is presented in *Table 6* below:

Table 6: The Impact of Brand and Demographic Controls on Storytelling Dimensions

Predictor	Model A: Visual Dimension (β)	Model B: Narrative Dimension (β)	Model C: Symbolic Dimension (β)
Constant	—	—	—
Baseline Controls			
Nike Dummy	-.499	.053	.224*
IKEA Dummy	.191	.114	.319*
Female Dummy	3.749*	.323*	.205*
Gen Z Dummy	2.504*	.035	.198*
Millennial Dummy	1.024	.120	.095
Model Fit Statistics			
Total R ²	.140	.120	.159
Adjusted R ²	.113	.092	.132

Note: * Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

5. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

5.1 Interpretation of Results

The hierarchical multiple regression analysis reveals that demographic factors—specifically gender and age—do not directly dictate European consumers’ intention to advocate for a brand. While the baseline (Model 1) suggests that female respondents report higher initial intentions to advocate, this effect vanishes once psychological attitudes (TPB) are introduced. Furthermore, age was not a significant predictor at any stage of the regression. This indicates advocacy is not intrinsically tied to a consumer’s demographic identity; rather, any initial gender differences are entirely explained by underlying cognitive attitudes.

Regarding brand selection, the full regression (Model 4) demonstrates that Apple possesses a significantly higher baseline for consumer advocacy compared to IKEA. IKEA remains a significant negative predictor, suggesting that consumers inherently require stronger psychological drivers to advocate for functional/utilitarian brands than they do for highly expressive, status-signaling brands like Apple. Meanwhile, Nike showed lower baseline advocacy in early models, but it becomes statistically non-significant in the final model. This indicates that the core TPB attitudes are fully accounted for, the gap between Apple and Nike closes, but the functional barrier for IKEA remains.

The findings confirm that advocacy intention is overwhelmingly driven by Attitude to Advocacy ($\beta = 0.517$) and PBC ($\beta = 0.344$), **fully supporting H1 and H3**. This suggests that European consumers must evaluate the act of advocacy favorably and feel a high degree of ‘digital agency’ in performing it. Notably, **the rejection of Subjective Norm (H2)** signals a pivotal shift in consumer psychology. As Gen Z represents the largest share of the sample (61.6%), this rejection of external social pressure aligns with the contemporary consumer behavior literature which posits that Gen Z is highly individualistic and value-driven (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; McKinsey & Company, 2024; Widyastuti, et al., 2023, p.17). This rejection of external conformity is deeply rooted in this cohort’s uncompromising demand for authenticity – both in how they express their personal identities and in the ethical transparency they expect from corporations. Consequently, because Gen Z views peer-pressured consumption as inher-

ently inauthentic, when deciding whether to advocate for a brand, these younger consumers rely heavily on their own internal attitudes rather than seeking social approval.

Regarding the storytelling framework, while Visual and Symbolic storytelling dimensions showed predictive promise in the third hierarchical step (Model 3), they lose all statistical significance when analyzed alongside the TPB constructs in the full model (Model 4), leading to the **rejection of H4, H5 and H6**. This overshadowing effect indicates that storytelling dimensions do not exert a direct, independent influence on consumer's intention to advocate. Instead, their influence is purely foundational. This foundational role is explicitly supported by the bivariate analysis, which demonstrates that consumers possessing a 'High Attitude to Advocate' concurrently exhibits the higher engagement with brand storytelling. Crucially, the bivariate findings reveal that the symbolic dimension resonates most powerfully among these high-attitude consumers, surpassing both visual and narrative formats.

Additionally, the exploratory analyses further corroborate this foundational role by proving that storytelling dimensions act as early-stage cognitive filters—shaping the attitudes that eventually lead to advocacy, rather than triggering the intention directly. Furthermore, the exploratory models reveal that Gen Z and female consumers are highly receptive to Visual and Symbolic stimuli. Crucially, while Apple dominates baseline advocacy the exploratory data shows that IKEA and Nike significantly outperform Apple in generating engagement with Symbolic storytelling. This confirms that modern European consumers —driven largely by the individualistic and value-oriented Gen Z cohort— are primarily constructing their positive brand attitudes based on symbolic alignment. They are not merely looking at how a brand looks (Visual) or what story it tells (Narrative), but rather what the brand stands for (Symbolic). When a brand's symbolic values authentically match the consumer's personal identity, the baseline attitude toward advocacy is significantly strengthened.

Beyond validating the specific hypotheses, these findings offer critical empirical support for contemporary brand storytelling theory, illuminating why modern corporations increasingly prioritize narrative strategies over traditional, functional communication (Lundqvist et al., 2013). Historically, conventional advertising relied heavily on a utilitarian paradigm — pushing product features specifications, and price points (Escalas, 2004). However, the strong association of the Symbolic and Visual dimensions within the high-attitude cohort demonstrates that modern consumer engagement operates on an experiential and identity-driven lev-

el. By demonstrating that symbolic storytelling yields the highest engagement among consumers with a strong attitude toward advocacy, this study illustrates why brands like Nike or IKEA successfully bypass traditional advertising fatigue (van Laer et al., 2019). Consumers do not merely absorb information; instead, they undergo a process of narrative transportation, aligning the brands symbolic myths with their own personal identities (Green & Brock, 2000). When companies leverage storytelling, they transform a passive transactional relationship into an active emotional bond. Ultimately, this research proves the strategic business case for modern storytelling: it acts as a highly effective psychological catalyst that primes consumers not just to purchase, but to organically step into the role of brand advocates within their digital peers' networks.

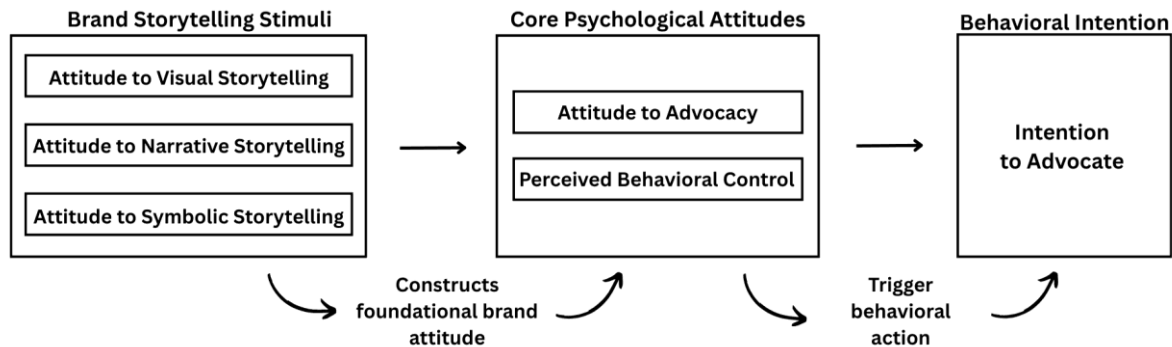
5.2 Theoretical Implications

This study offers significant theoretical contributions to the literature on brand communication and consumer psychology by bridging contemporary storytelling frameworks with foundational behavioral models.

First, this study contributes to the literature on narrative persuasion, specifically adding a critical boundary condition to the direct predictive models proposed by researchers such as Kang et al. (2019). While previous literature asserted that narrative transportation and storytelling engagement act as direct determinants of WOM intention, the empirical findings of this study provide a vital nuance. The **rejection of hypotheses H4, H5 and H6** demonstrates that visual, narrative, symbolic storytelling dimensions do not exert an independent, direct influence on advocacy when core cognitive attitudes are accounted for. Instead of contradicting Kang et al. (2019), these findings refine their framework, suggesting that brand storytelling operates strictly as an antecedent. Storytelling successfully constructs the foundational brand attitude, but it is the strength of that internal attitude—rather than the storytelling stimuli itself—that ultimately triggers advocacy. For a more comprehensive understanding, Figure 9 proposes the following psychological pathway European consumers -specially Gen Z- follow toward brand advocacy.

Figure 9

The Revised Psychological Pathway Toward Brand Advocacy



Second, the study validates the enduring robustness of Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) in a modern digital marketing context, while simultaneously highlighting a vital generational shift. The strong predictive power of Attitude to Advocacy and Perceived Behavioral Control confirms TPB’s applicability to non-transactional, modern consumer behaviors like brand advocacy. However, the unexpected failure of Subjective Norm challenges traditional TPB assumptions regarding social conformity. This finding implies that established behavioral models may need to be updated or re-weighted when applied to younger, highly individualistic cohorts (e.g. Gen Z), where internal attitude heavily outweighs external peer pressure.

Third, this rejection of Subjective Norm provides quantitative validation for recent qualitative theories regarding consumer authenticity. Aligning with the findings of Ofosu-Boateng and Jose (2025), this study reinforces the notion that modern consumers evaluate brands through a lens of radical authenticity and moral integrity. Because younger demographics view peer-pressured consumption as inherently inauthentic, social expectations no longer dictate brand advocacy. Thus, this study theoretically extends Ofosu-Boateng and Jose’s (2025) framework by demonstrating that the modern demand for authenticity not only shapes how consumers perceive symbolic brand narratives, but also fundamentally alters the psychological pathways they use to make advocacy decisions.

Finally, the exploratory analysis revealed that gender is a significant predictor across all storytelling dimension and the ultimate intention to advocate. Specifically, females showed a higher affinity for visual and narrative stimuli, which aligns with Self-Congruity Theory (Sirgy,

1982) and suggests that women may utilize brands aesthetics more actively in the construction of their personal identities. Furthermore, the higher engagement with narrative storytelling among women can be attributed to higher baseline levels of consumer empathy (Escalas & Stern, 2003), which facilitates deeper ‘transportation’ into the brand’s message. Interestingly, the preference for IKEA’s symbolic dimension suggests a gendered response to ‘authentic’ domesticity. While Apple’s symbolism is often more aspirational and status-driven, IKEA portrays a relatable, and accurate reality that may resonate more deeply with female consumers who traditionally oversee the curation of domestic spaces. Finally, the finding that women are more likely to be brand advocates supports the Social Role Theory (Koenig & Eagly, 2014, p. 372, 377, 386) woman view the act of recommending a brand as a communal contribution to their social network, sharing experiences to help peers avoid risks or maximize utility, thereby turning a personal attitude into a collective social benefit.

5.3 Managerial Implications

The findings of this research offer several strategic pivots for marketing practitioners and brand managers operating in the European digital landscape.

Firstly, visual aesthetics alone are not enough to engage consumers in advocacy. Since storytelling dimensions do not directly trigger advocacy, marketers must ensure that creative campaigns are explicitly designed to shift the consumer’s attitude toward the act of sharing. A visually stunning campaign is not sufficient if it does not clearly align the brand’s values with the consumer’s personal identity.

Second, it is paramount to enhanced Perceived Behavioral Control. Because this is one of the primary driver of advocacy, brands should focus on reducing the friction of WOM. This includes providing easy-to-use digital sharing tools, pre-crafted referral content, and rewards that make the consumer feel competent and in control of their advocacy. Third, the non-significance of Subjective Norm suggests that traditional peer-pressure-based marketing (e.g., everyone is doing it) is losing its efficacy with younger cohorts. Instead, managers should prioritize radical transparency and identity-driven messaging. For Gen Z, advocacy is a tool for self-expression, not social conformity; therefore, brands must provide raw and honest stories that this demographic feels proud to adopt as their own.

Finally, different strategies should be followed by functional versus expressive brands. Managers of functional brands (like IKEA) must recognize that their baseline for advocacy is naturally lower than that of status-driven brands (like Apple). To overcome this, functional brands should lean more heavily into symbolic storytelling to create emotional bridges that the product's utility alone cannot provide. Conversely, managers of highly expressive brands (like Nike) must understand that symbolic messaging alone does not guarantee a monopoly on WOM. As demonstrated by Apple's anomalous dominance, even established lifestyle brands must continuously innovate their storytelling to ensure it actively lowers the friction of sharing and directly fortifies the consumer's internal attitude. Because the data explicitly ranks the Symbolic dimension as the strongest storytelling antecedent among high-advocacy consumers, managers must prioritize value-driven, symbolic messaging over purely aesthetic (visual) or purely descriptive (narrative) campaigns. For modern consumers, sharing a brand is an act of self-expression; therefore, the brand's symbolic meaning must be unmistakably clear and radically authentic.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Limitations

While this research provides valuable insights into the intersection of brand storytelling and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), several methodological and conceptual limitations must be acknowledged.

First, the study is constrained by a strict four-month timeframe for research design, data collection, and analysis. Consequently, the research relies on a cross-sectional design, capturing consumer attitudes and advocacy at a single point in time, rather than tracking how storytelling builds advocacy longitudinally over years of brand interaction. Second, while this study utilizes brand dummy variables to control for baseline differences, the sample size per brand (ranging from 48 to 59 respondents) prevents the ability to run reliable, independent regressions for each specific brand. Consequently, it remains unclear whether the efficacy of specific storytelling dimensions (visual, narrative and symbolic) fluctuates depending on the brand's industry or established identity.

Third, due to resource and budget constraints, this study utilizes non-probability convenience and snowball sampling. While this successfully yields a diverse European sample, it also results in a geographic skew, with Spanish consumers heavily overrepresented (42.7%). Consequently, cultural nuances regarding brand perception and WOM behavior may influence the pooled results, limiting the absolute generalizability of the findings across the broader European population. Fourth, a notable limitation of this research lies in its external validity. Because the data collection heavily relied on a convenience sample drawn from Survey Swap, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn, the resulting respondent profile is predominantly comprised of younger university students and young professionals.

The utilization of non-probability convenience sampling inherently limits the external validity and statistical generalizability of the findings to the broader, mainstream marketplace (Malhotra, 2019; Saunders et al., 2019). This younger demographic is naturally highly tech-savvy and habituated to digital communication platforms. While this makes them an ideal audience for studying online WOM and brand advocacy, it also means the findings should be interpreted with caution. These digital-native cohorts systematically exhibit higher digital literacy and

respond more favorably to modern brand storytelling dimensions compared to older less digitally integrated generations (Prensky, 2001; Voldnes et al., 2022). Consequently, the predictive power of the model may vary across more diverse, multi-generational consumer segments.

Finally, the selection of the brands themselves presents a conceptual limitation. To ensure broad familiarity across all generational cohorts, Apple is selected as one of the target brands. However, Apple has cultivated a dominant brand equity, inspiring an exceptionally high baseline of brand loyalty that commands a uniquely powerful psychological hold over its consumers. This extreme base loyalty and advocacy likely act as an overarching influence in the dataset, potentially skewing the results and overshadowing the subtle, incremental effects of the storytelling variables.

6.2 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several avenues for future research are highly recommended.

To address the methodological constraints, future studies should employ true random probability sampling to ensure a balanced demographic distribution, mitigating any potential cultural bias. Furthermore, future research should collect larger, brand specific samples to test whether brand type moderates the relationship between storytelling dimensions and consumer advocacy. Crucially, future research must expand the scope of brands and industries analyzed. The primary conclusion of this thesis—that the TPB constructs completely absorb the prediction power of brand storytelling—may be context-dependent. Future scholars should investigate whether this phenomenon holds true universally, or if brand storytelling exerts a more direct influence on advocacy in different contexts, such as within low-involvement industries, emerging startup brands, or sectors where consumers do not already hold pre-existing, deeply entrenched attitudes.

Furthermore, this study reveals Subjective Norm as a non-significant variable, directly challenging Ajzen's (1991) traditional Theory of Planned Behavior model. Future research should explore whether this is a context-dependent result of this specific sample, or indicative of a broader behavioral shift. It is paramount to continuously update the understanding of consum-

er psychology, especially regarding new cohorts like Gen Z, because their highly individualistic nature may require entirely different marketing formulas for storytelling to successfully build brand advocacy.

Additionally, researchers must be strategic regarding the inclusion of dominant brands. Future comparative studies should consider excluding brands with anomalous market power (like Apple) to prevent extreme baselines from muting the variables being tested. Alternatively, the unique advocacy engine of Apple warrants its own isolated, in-depth phenomenological research to deconstruct how its specific blend of aesthetic and functional storytelling bypasses traditional consumer rationale.

6.3 General Conclusion

In an increasingly, saturated digital marketplace, the battle for consumer attention has never been more intense. As established in the introduction of this thesis, brands are investing heavily in storytelling to cut through the noise and turn passive consumers into vocal brand advocates. This research is driven by a critical need to understand whether these creative storytelling investments actually drive WOM, or if consume advocacy is still governed by traditional, calculates psychological metrics.

To answer this, this study bridges distinct streams of literature: contemporary brand storytelling and Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior. The initial hypotheses posit that while foundational attitudes (H1-H3) would play a role, specific storytelling dimensions would exert their own independent, significant influence on a consumer's intention to advocate (H4-H6). However, the empirical findings fundamentally challenge those initial theoretical assumptions. The results offer a sobering and highly valuable reality check for modern marketers: while compelling storytelling is undeniably correlated with consumer advocacy, it cannot bypass fundamental cognitive attitudes of the consumer. **Hypotheses H4, H5 and H6 are firmly rejected**, proving that a beautiful visual campaign or a moving brand narrative is not a standalone catalyst for WOM.

Instead, this thesis concludes that the true value of brand storytelling lies in its role as an antecedent. Storytelling is the raw material used to construct a consumer's internal attitude; however, it is the overarching strength of that attitude (H1), combined with the consumer's per-

ceived capability to share it (H3), that truly triggers advocacy. Furthermore, the unexpected failure of Subjective Norm (H2) signals a potential, yet crucial shift, in the literature: younger demographics, particularly Gen Z, are increasingly relying on their own individualized values rather than social approval when deciding to advocate for a brand.

Ultimately, to generate true brand advocacy in the modern era, marketers cannot rely on surface-level creative execution alone. They must strategically craft brand messaging that directly fortifies the consumer's internal attitude and empowers their capability to share. Crucially, as Gen Z continues to dominate the consumer landscape, this storytelling must be grounded in radical authenticity rather than manufactured marketing. Brands must recognize that today's consumers advocate on their own terms, driven by personal conviction and genuine alignment, rather than social pressure.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Survey Title: *Brand Communication Survey*

Introduction Text: *Welcome, and thank you for your participation!*

This research survey explores how people in Europe perceive and react to different types of brand communication. Specifically, it looks at how well-known brands use storytelling—through images, texts, and symbols—to connect with consumers.

Important information before you begging:

-There are no right nor wrong answers. I am only interested in your honest opinions, thoughts, and feelings. Please answer as genuinely as possible.

-Anonymity and privacy guaranteed. All data collected in this survey is completely anonymous and will be used strictly for academic purposes. No personally identifiable information will be tracked or shared.

-The participation is voluntary. You may choose to stop and exit the survey at any time without any consequences.

The survey should take approximately 5-7 minutes to complete.

Thank you very much for your time and contribution to my research!

Survey Flow and Dynamic Logic: After the initial demographic screening, respondents were randomly assigned to evaluate one of three target brands (Apple, Nike or IKEA). To prevent redundancy in this appendix, the survey items are presented once. Wherever the bracketed placeholder (Select Brand) appears in the items below, the survey software dynamically displayed the name of the respondent's assigned brand.

Table A1: Demographics

Construct	Survey Item	Measurement Scale / Options	Source
Age / Generation	Indicate your age	•18–27 (Gen Z) •28–43 (Millennials) •44–59 (Gen X)	Self-developed
Gender	Indicate your gender:	•Female •Male •Other	Self-developed
Nationality	Indicate your nationality	[Drop-down list of European countries]	Self-developed

Table A2: Brand Control Variables

Construct	Survey Item	Measurement Scale / Options	Source
Brand Selection	Choose the brand with which you are most familiar out of the following options	•Apple •Nike •IKEA •I am not familiar with or have never interacted with any of these brands.	Self-developed
Brand Familiarity	How often do you interact with or purchase from [Selected Brand]?	1-5 Likert Scale <i>(1 = Never, 5 = Daily)</i>	Self-developed
Brand Loyalty	How long have you been a customer of [Selected Brand]?	•Less than a year •Between 1 and 5 years •Between 6 and 10 years •More than 10 years	Self-developed

Table A3: Storytelling Dimensions Constructs

Construct	Survey Item	Measurement Scale	Source
Visual Dimension	1.(Apple) I feel this brand inspires me to explore my creativity. / (Nike) I feel this brand inspires me to overcome challenges / (IKEA) I feel this brand reflects my life reality. 2. The aesthetic style of [Selected Brand] is visually captivating. 3. The visual imagery used by [Selected Brand] allow me to easily picture myself as part of the brand story. 4. The visual aesthetics of... -Apple allow me to easily picture myself feeling expressive and proud of what I create. -Nike allow me to easily picture myself feeling empowered by using their products -IKEA allow me to easily picture myself finding clever solutions for home problems	1-5 Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	Self-developed based on Kang et al. (2019)
Narrative Dimension	1. I feel a personal connection to the story and plot [Selected Brand] communicates. 2. I feel identified to the brand story because I think it represents the values I believe in. 3. I see myself reflected in the story's character	1-5 Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	Self-developed based on Escalas (2004) and Kang et al. (2019)
Symbolic Dimension	1. I think [Selected Brand] communicates its values honestly and authentically. 2. The characters/symbols [Selected Brand] uses represent values that feel au-	1-5 Likert Scale (1 = Strongly	Self-developed based on Ofosu-Boateng & Jose (2025)

Construct	Survey Item	Measurement Scale	Source
	thentic and true to me. 3. [Selected Brand] portrayal of its values feels genuine rather than just a marketing tactic.	Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	

Table A4: Attitudinal Loyalty Constructs

Construct	Survey Item	Measurement Scale	Source
Intention to Advocate	1. How likely are you to recommend [Selected Brand] to a friend or colleague? 2. I think I will speak positively about [Selected Brand] with the people that I know 3. I would encourage others to choose [Selected Brand] over other brands	1-5 Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	Self-developed based on Kang et al. (2019)

Table A5: Theory of Planned Behavior Constructs

Construct	Survey Item	Measurement Scale	Source
Attitude to Advocacy	1. For me, speaking positively about [Selected Brand] would be a good idea. 2. For me, recommending [Selected Brand] to others would be pleasant.	1-5 Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	Self-developed based on Ajzen (1991)

Construct	Survey Item	Measurement Scale	Source
	3. Overall, I have a favorable attitude toward recommending [Selected Brand]		
Perceived Behavioral Control	1 I feel that I know the brand enough to speak positively about it. [Selected Brand]. 2. It would be easy for me to explain others why [Selected Brand] is a good brand. 3. Whether or not I recommend [Selected Brand] is entirely up to me	1-5 Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	Self-developed based on Ajzen (1991)
Subjective Norm	1. People who are important to me would encourage me to recommend [Selected Brand]. 2. The fact that many people speak positively about [Selected Brand] encourages me to do it too 3. Most people that I know would approve of me speaking positively about [Selected Brand]	1-5 Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)	Self-developed based on Ajzen, 1991)

Appendix B: SPSS Statistical Outputs and Graphs

SPSS Output B1: Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

➔ Frequencies

		Statistics					
		Gender	Brand	Indicate your country of origin	Generation groups	How often do you interact with or purchase from the brand you chose?	How long have you been a customer of this brand you chose?
N	Valid	164	164	164	164	164	164
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.27	2.01	13.98	1.64	3.52	
Median		1.00	2.00	17.00	1.00	4.00	
Mode		1	3	17	1	4	
Std. Deviation		.444	.844	5.038	.864	1.018	
Minimum		1	1	1	1	2	
Maximum		2	3	20	3	5	

Frequency Table

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	120	73.2	73.2	73.2
	Male	44	26.8	26.8	100.0
	Total	164	100.0	100.0	

		Brand			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Apple	57	34.8	34.8	34.8
	Nike	48	29.3	29.3	64.0
	Ikea	59	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	164	100.0	100.0	

		Generation groups			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Gen Z	101	61.6	61.6	61.6
	Millennials	21	12.8	12.8	74.4
	Gen X	42	25.6	25.6	100.0
	Total	164	100.0	100.0	

Indicate your country of origin

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Austria	4	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Azerbaijan	1	.6	.6	3.0
	Czechia (Czech Republic)	3	1.8	1.8	4.9
	Denmark	1	.6	.6	5.5
	Finland	3	1.8	1.8	7.3
	France	3	1.8	1.8	9.1
	Germany	7	4.3	4.3	13.4
	Hungary	8	4.9	4.9	18.3
	Italy	15	9.1	9.1	27.4
	Kazakhstan	3	1.8	1.8	29.3
	Netherlands	3	1.8	1.8	31.1
	Norway	1	.6	.6	31.7
	Poland	5	3.0	3.0	34.8
	Portugal	1	.6	.6	35.4
	Romania	6	3.7	3.7	39.0
	Slovakia	3	1.8	1.8	40.9
	Spain	70	42.7	42.7	83.5
	Sweden	14	8.5	8.5	92.1
	Ukraine	1	.6	.6	92.7
	United Kingdom	12	7.3	7.3	100.0
	Total	164	100.0	100.0	

How often do you interact with or purchase from the brand you chose?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	31	18.9	18.9	18.9
	Sometimes	49	29.9	29.9	48.8
	Frequently	51	31.1	31.1	79.9
	Very Frequently	33	20.1	20.1	100.0
	Total	164	100.0	100.0	

How long have you been a customer of this brand you chose?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Between 1 and 5 years	69	42.1	42.1	42.1
	Between 6 and 10 years	37	22.6	22.6	64.6
	Less than a year	12	7.3	7.3	72.0
	More than 10 years	46	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	164	100.0	100.0	

SPSS Output B2: Reliability Check (Cronbach's alpha)

Apple Questionnaire

Apple -Visual Dimension

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	57	34.8
	Excluded ^a	107	65.2
	Total	164	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.774	4

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I feel this brand inspires me to explore my creativity."	11.39	4.813	.597	.714
"The aesthetic style of Apple is visually captivating."	10.67	7.012	.288	.842
"The visual aesthetic used by Apple allow me to easily picture myself as part of the brand story."	11.25	5.189	.656	.679
"The visual aesthetics of Apple allow me to easily picture myself feeling expressive and proud of what I create."	11.12	4.538	.810	.586

Apple – Narrative Dimension

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.893	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I feel a personal connection to the story and plot Apple communicates."	6.21	4.276	.737	.893
"I feel identified to the brand's purpose because I think it represents the values I believe in."	6.19	4.016	.837	.809
"I see myself reflected in the story's character."	6.47	3.897	.801	.840

Apple – Symbolic Dimension

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.853	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I think Apple communicates its values honestly and authentically."	6.18	3.933	.814	.712
"The characters/symbols Apple uses represent values that feel authentic and true to me."	6.28	3.848	.771	.748
"Apple's portrayal of its values feels genuine rather than just a marketing tactic."	6.49	4.290	.600	.911

Apple – Attitude to Advocacy

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.897	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"For me, speaking positively about Apple would be a good idea."	7.77	3.572	.721	.916
"For me, recommending Apple to others would be pleasant."	7.67	2.869	.845	.814
"Overall, I have a favorable attitude toward recommending Apple."	7.47	3.325	.839	.821

Apple – Subjective Norm

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.743	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"My friends and family would agree with me recommending Apple to others."	7.33	3.440	.542	.689
"The fact that many people speak positively about Apple encourages me to do it too."	7.67	2.976	.553	.685
"Most people that I know would approve of me speaking positively about Apple."	7.25	3.260	.621	.602

Apple – Perceived Behavioral Control

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.400	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I feel that I know the brand enough to speak positively about it."	8.32	1.577	.445	-.131 ^a
"It would be easy for me to explain others why Apple is a good brand."	8.07	1.709	.339	.095
"Whether or not I recommend Apple is entirely up to me."	7.65	2.625	-.008	.710

a. The value is negative due to a negative average covariance among items. This violates reliability model assumptions. You may want to check item codings.

Apple – Intention to Advocate

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.890	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I think I will speak positively about Apple with the people that I know."	7.96	3.177	.825	.810
"I am likely to recommend Apple to a friend or colleague"	7.89	3.132	.790	.840
"I would encourage others to choose Apple over other brands."	7.96	3.249	.743	.881

Nike Questionnaire

Nike –Visual Storytelling

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	48	29.3
	Excluded ^a	116	70.7
	Total	164	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.748	4

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I feel this brand inspires me to overcome challenges."	11.04	4.381	.524	.704
"The aesthetic style of Nike is visually captivating."	10.67	5.674	.345	.783
"The visual aesthetic used by Nike allow me to easily picture myself as part of the brand's story"	11.02	4.021	.664	.616
"The visual aesthetics of Nike allow me to easily picture myself feeling empowered by using their products"	11.02	4.276	.659	.624

Nike –Narrative Storytelling

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.785	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I feel a personal connection to the story and plot Nike communicates."	6.58	3.312	.637	.694
"I feel identified to the brand's purpose because I think it represents the values I believe in."	6.40	3.478	.658	.679
"I see myself reflected in the story's character." 2	6.81	3.092	.588	.757

Nike –Symbolic Storytelling

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.800	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I think Nike communicates its values honestly and authentically."	6.96	2.722	.671	.704
"The characters/symbols Nike uses represent values that feel authentic and true to me."	7.04	2.637	.640	.732
"Nike's portrayal of its values feels genuine rather than just a marketing tactic."	7.58	2.504	.628	.748

Nike – Attitude to Advocacy

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.853	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"For me, speaking positively about Nike would be a good idea."	7.35	2.319	.618	.890
"For me, recommending Nike to others would be pleasant."	7.44	1.953	.768	.752
"Overall, I have a favorable attitude toward recommending Nike."	7.29	1.998	.795	.727

Nike – Subjective Norm

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.772	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"My friends and family would agree with me recommending Nike to others."	7.02	2.872	.598	.705
"The fact that many people speak positively about Nike encourages me to do it too."	7.35	2.361	.572	.761
"Most people that I know would approve of me speaking positively about Nike."	6.92	2.887	.687	.627

Nike –Perceived Behavioral Control

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.690	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I feel that I know the brand enough to speak positively about it."	7.42	3.014	.613	.464
"It would be easy for me to explain others why Nike is a good brand."	7.35	2.914	.611	.460
"Whether or not I recommend Nike is entirely up to me."	6.56	3.528	.327	.826

Nike –Intention to Advocate

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.865	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I think I will speak positively about Nike with the people that I know."	6.96	3.317	.693	.855
"I am likely to recommend Nike to a friend or colleague"	7.02	3.042	.801	.759
"I would encourage others to choose Nike over other brands."	7.19	2.836	.744	.814

IKEA Questionnaire

IKEA– Visual Storytelling

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	59	36.0
	Excluded ^a	105	64.0
	Total	164	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.786	4

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I feel this brand reflects my real life reality."	11.47	4.909	.644	.712
"The aesthetic style of Ikea is visually captivating."	11.10	6.645	.509	.775
"The visual aesthetic used by Ikea allow me to easily picture myself as part of the brand's story."	11.15	5.614	.698	.685
"The visual aesthetics of Ikea allow me to easily picture myself finding clever solutions for home problems."	10.81	5.672	.556	.754

IKEA– Narrative Storytelling

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.838	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I feel a personal connection to the story and plot Ikea communicates."	6.78	3.244	.711	.768
"I feel identified to the brand's purpose because I think it represents the values I believe in." 2	6.78	3.864	.631	.841
"I see myself reflected in the story's character." 3	7.05	3.290	.770	.707

IKEA– Symbolic Storytelling

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.847	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I think Ikea communicates its values honestly and authentically."	7.36	2.819	.791	.717
"The characters/symbols Ikea uses represent values that feel authentic and true to me."	7.39	3.104	.730	.780
"Ikea's portrayal of its values feels genuine rather than just a marketing tactic."	7.56	2.630	.651	.869

IKEA– Attitude to Advocacy

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.905	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"For me, speaking positively about Ikea would be a good idea."	7.75	3.193	.771	.898
"For me, recommending Ikea to others would be pleasant."	7.81	2.603	.869	.813
"Overall, I have a favorable attitude toward recommending Ikea."	7.63	2.928	.801	.872

IKEA– Subjective Norm

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.759	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"My friends and family would agree with me recommending Ikea to others."	7.46	2.735	.688	.582
"The fact that many people speak positively about Ikea encourages me to do it too."	7.83	2.454	.545	.747
"Most people that I know would approve of me speaking positively about Ikea."	7.42	2.835	.561	.709

IKEA– Perceived Behavioral Control

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.783	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I feel that I know the brand enough to speak positively about it." 2	8.07	2.099	.725	.585
"It would be easy for me to explain others why Ikea is a good brand."	8.03	2.378	.763	.560
"Whether or not I recommend Ikea is entirely up to me."	7.59	3.004	.418	.909

IKEA– Intention to Advocate

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.861	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
"I think I will speak positively about Ikea with the people that I know"	7.44	3.044	.719	.821
"I am likely to recommend Ikea to a friend or colleague"	7.41	3.108	.819	.740
"I would encourage others to choose Ikea over other brands"	7.76	2.908	.688	.858

Master Indexes Reliability Tests

Visual Dimension Master Index

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.761	4

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Master_Vis_Q1	11.3171	4.696	.587	.693
Master_Vis_Q2	10.8232	6.453	.362	.795
Master_Vis_Q3	11.1463	4.948	.669	.646
Master_Vis_Q4	10.9817	4.828	.642	.658

Narrative Dimension Master Index

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.848	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Master_Nar_Q1	6.52	3.637	.703	.802
Master_Nar_Q2	6.46	3.821	.718	.789
Master_Nar_Q3	6.78	3.461	.732	.774

Symbolic Dimension Master Index

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.847	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Master_Sym_Q1	6.83	3.394	.782	.725
Master_Sym_Q2	6.90	3.414	.740	.763
Master_Sym_Q3	7.20	3.397	.633	.872

Attitude to Advocate Dimension Master Index

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.890	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Master_Att_AdvQ1	7.64	3.066	.712	.904
Master_Att_AdvQ2	7.65	2.498	.837	.797
Master_Att_AdvQ3	7.48	2.779	.814	.819

Subjective Norm Dimension Master Index

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.760	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Master_SNQ1	7.29	3.016	.608	.662
Master_SNQ2	7.63	2.614	.560	.730
Master_SNQ3	7.21	3.003	.620	.650

Perceived Behavioral Control Dimension Master Index

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.831	2

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Master_PBCQ1	3.71	.930	.711	.
Master_PBCQ2	3.60	.954	.711	.

Intention to Advocate Dimension Master Index

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.877	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Master_IntQ1	7.52	3.257	.760	.830
Master_IntQ2	7.48	3.184	.810	.787
Master_IntQ3	7.68	3.064	.726	.864

Table B3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.Dummy Gender	—	—	1											
2.Dummy GenZ	—	—	.173	1										
3.Dummy Millennials	—	—	-.221	-.485	1									
4.Dummy Nike	—	—	.027	.040	-.046	1								
5. Dummy IKEA	—	—	.081	-.192	.055	-.482	1							
6. Attitude to Adv	3.79	.812	.379	.140	-.083	-.091	.065	1						
7. PBC	3.66	.897	.221	.046	.076	-.269	.118	.642	1					
8. Subjective Norm	3.69	.801	.338	.106	-.064	-.113	.090	.712	.622	1				
9. Visual Storytelling	3.69	.734	.321	.238	-.080	-.038	.023	.538	.470	.487	1			
10. Narrative Storytelling	3.29	.920	.315	.031	.036	.003	.115	.430	.380	.364	.581	1		
11. Symbolic Storytelling	3.49	.889	.261	.147	-.039	.079	.194	.490	.430	.419	.549	.501	1	
12. Intention to Adv	3.77	.864	.312	.118	-.032	-.178	-.001	.821	.755	.693	.499	.386	.420	1

Note. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 and the 0.05 level (2-tailed). M and SD represent Mean and Standard Deviation. (Gender coded as Female = 1, Male = 0)

Chart B4: Normal P-P Plot

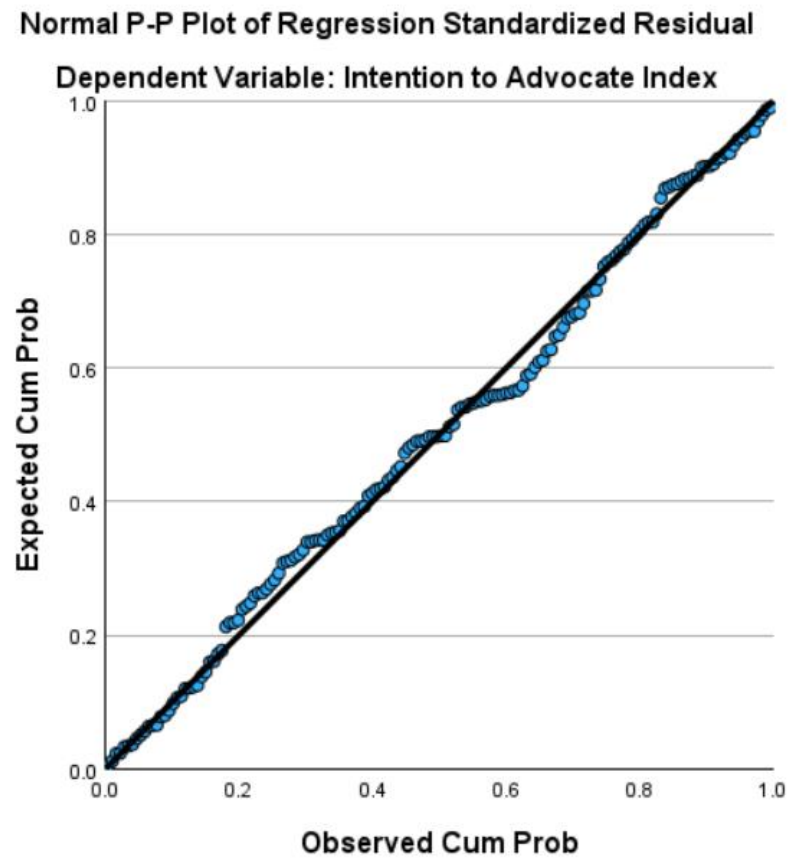


Chart B5: Scatterplot

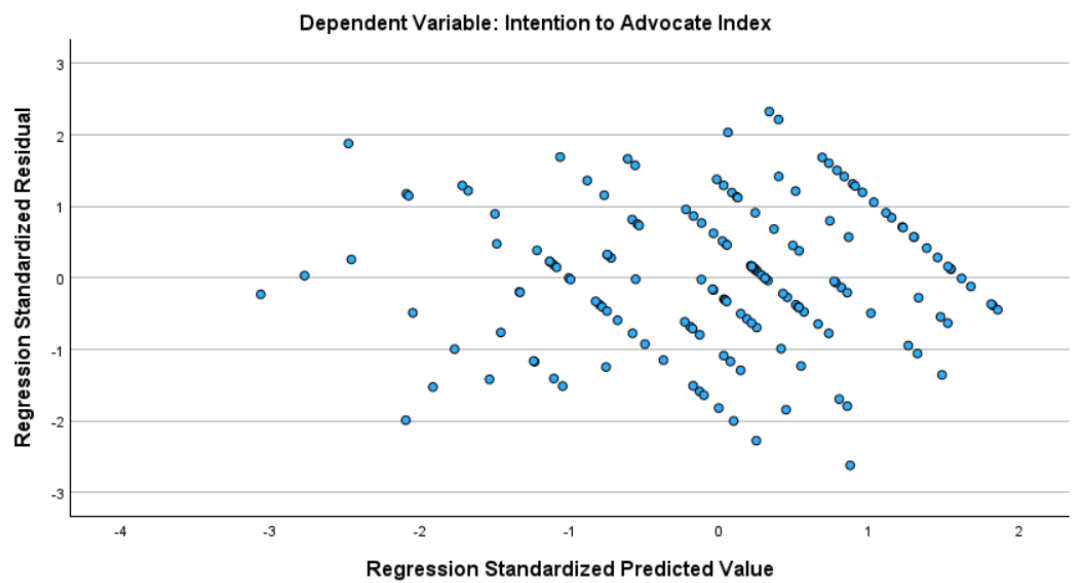
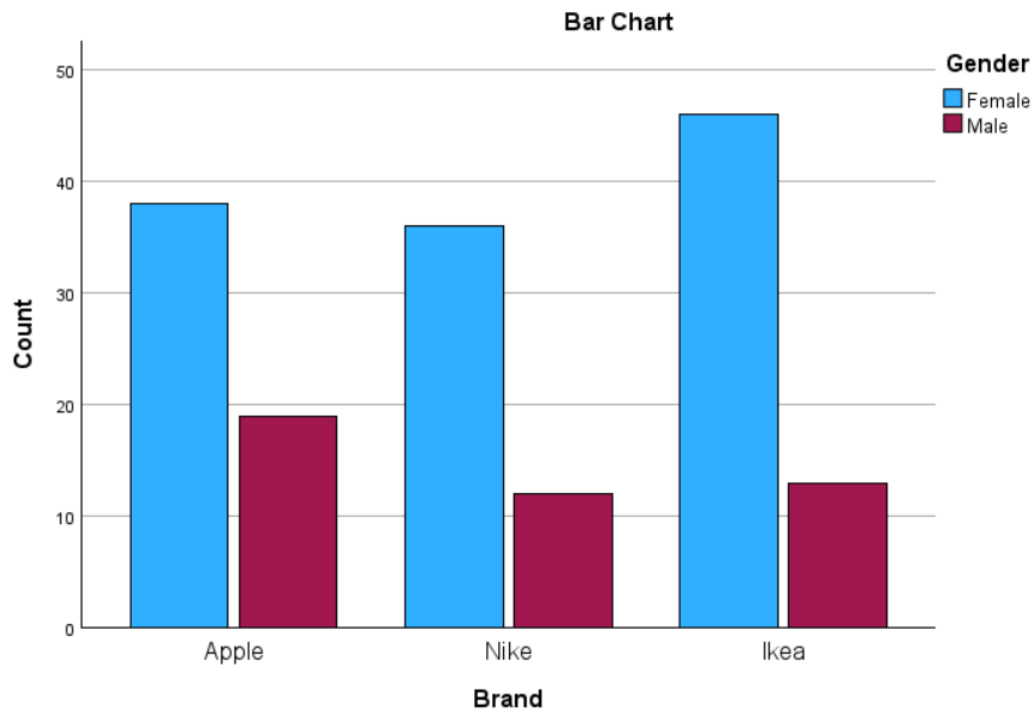


Table B6: Sample Profile and Brand Interaction Overview

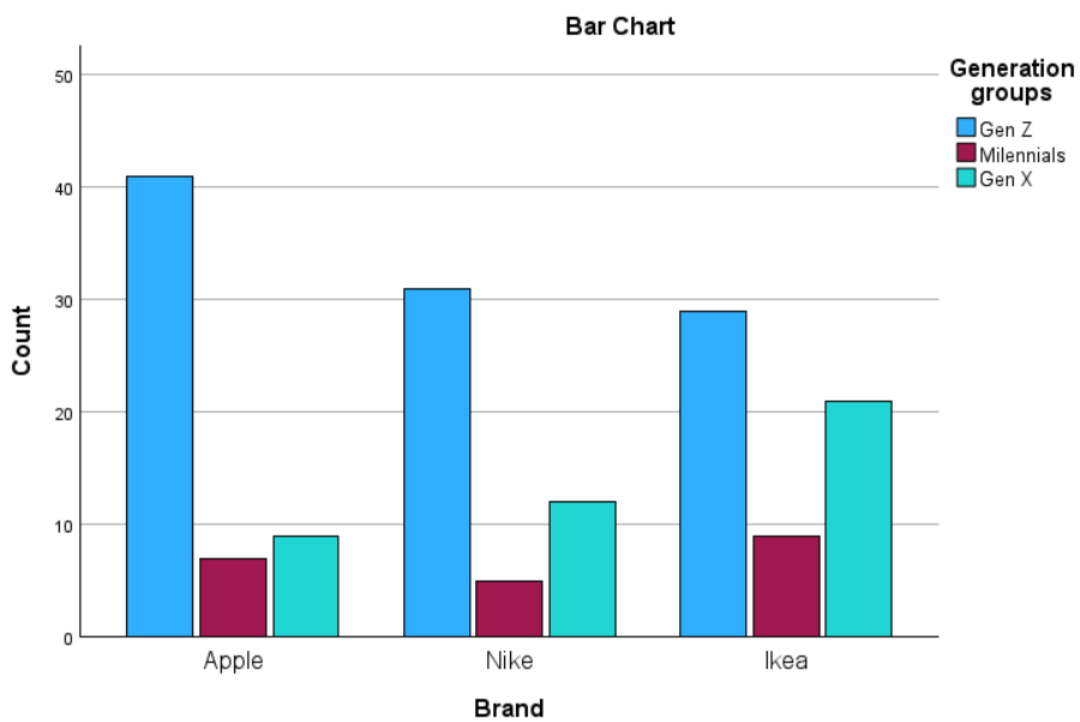
Characteristic	Overall Sample	Apple (n = 57)	Nike (n = 48)	IKEA (n = 59)
Gender (% Female)	73.2%	66.7%	75.0%	78.0%
Generation				
Gen Z	61.6%	71.9%	64.6%	49.2%
Millennials	12.8%	12.3%	10.4%	15.3%
Gen X	25.6%	15.8%	25.0%	35.6%
Interaction Frequency				
Mean (1-5 scale)	3.53	—	—	—
Very Frequently	20.1%	21.1%	18.8%	20.3%
Frequently	31.1%	35.1%	33.3%	25.4%
Sometimes	29.9%	26.3%	29.2%	33.9%
Rarely	18.9%	17.5%	18.8%	20.3%
Characteristic	Overall Sample	Apple (n = 57)	Nike (n = 48)	IKEA (n = 59)
Brand Loyalty				
Mean (1-5 scale)	2.71	—	—	—
Less than a year	7.3%	5.3%	10.4%	6.8%
1 to 5 years	42.1%	47.4%	39.6%	39.0%
Between 6 and 10 years	22.6%	28.1%	20.8%	18.6%
> 10 years	28.0%	19.3%	29.2%	35.6%

SPSS Output B7: Clustered Bars of Demographic Profiles Across Brand Subsets

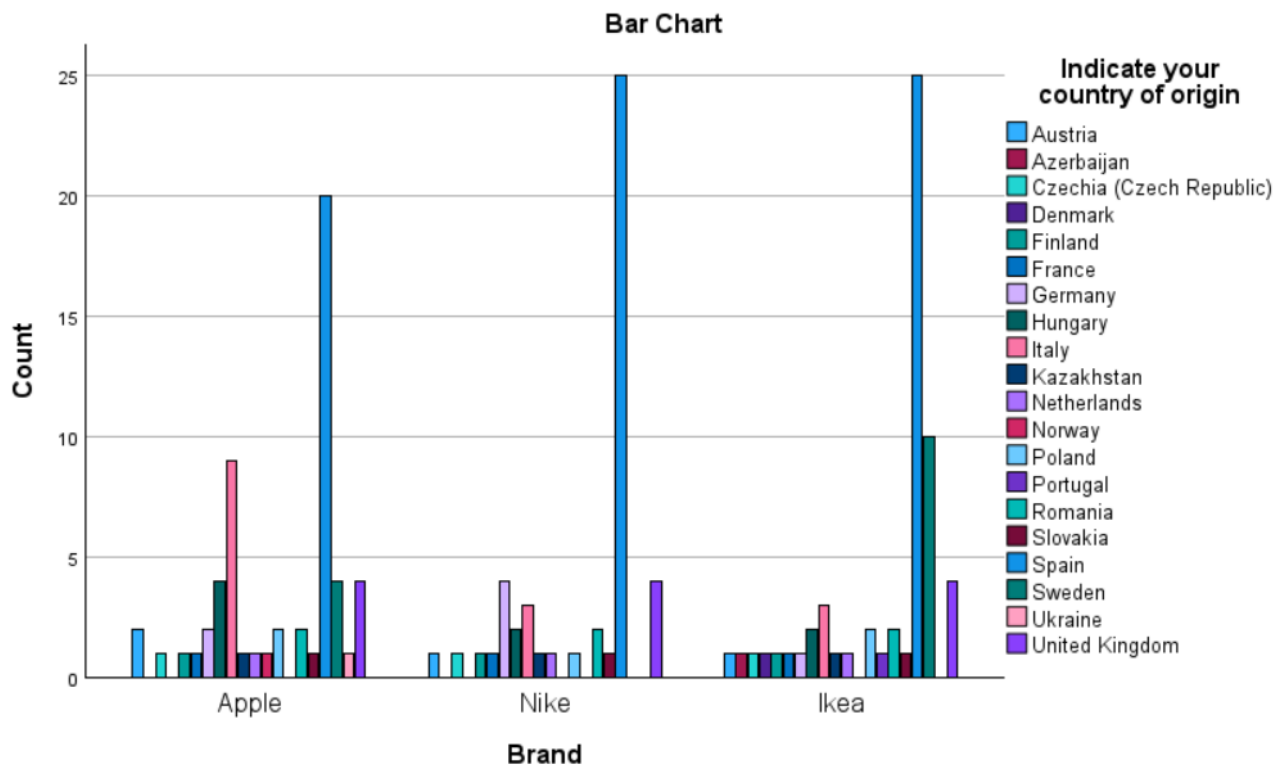
Clustered Bar Chart of Gender Distribution Across Brand Subsets



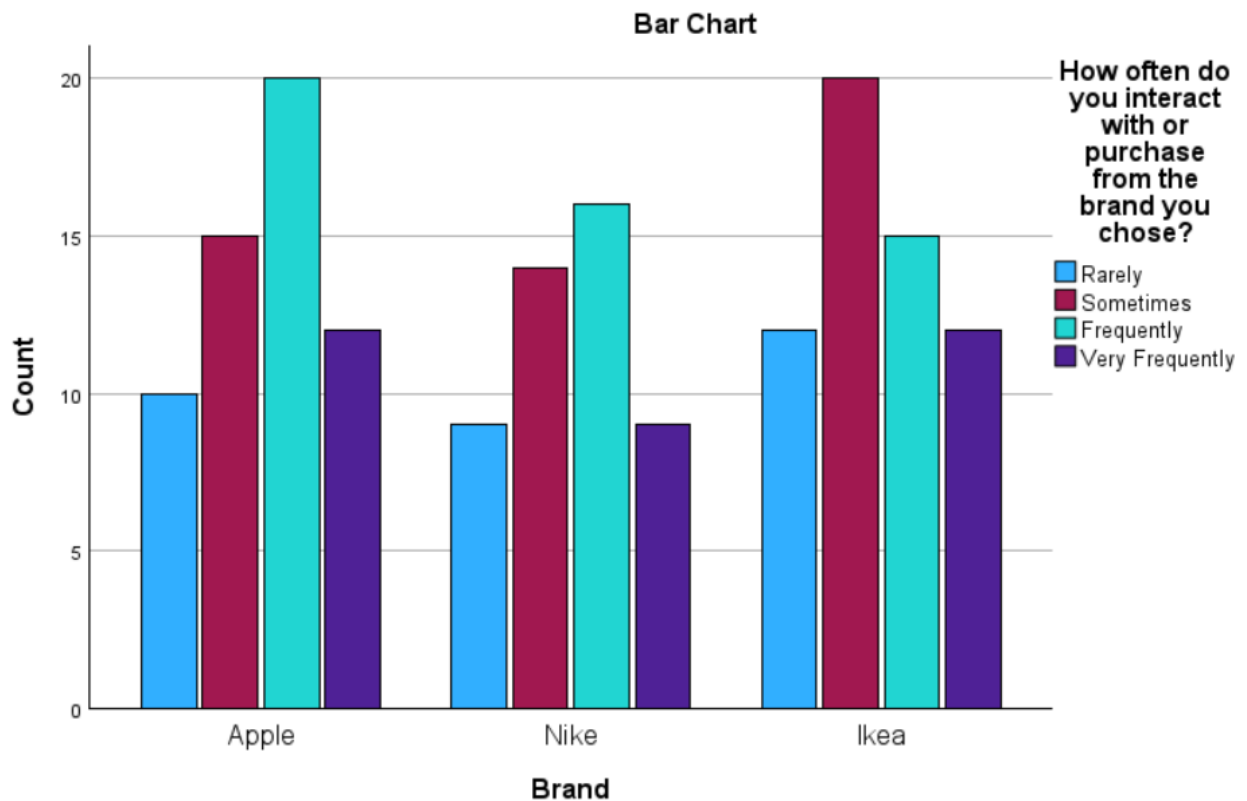
Clustered Bar Chart of Generational Cohort Distribution Across Brand Subsets



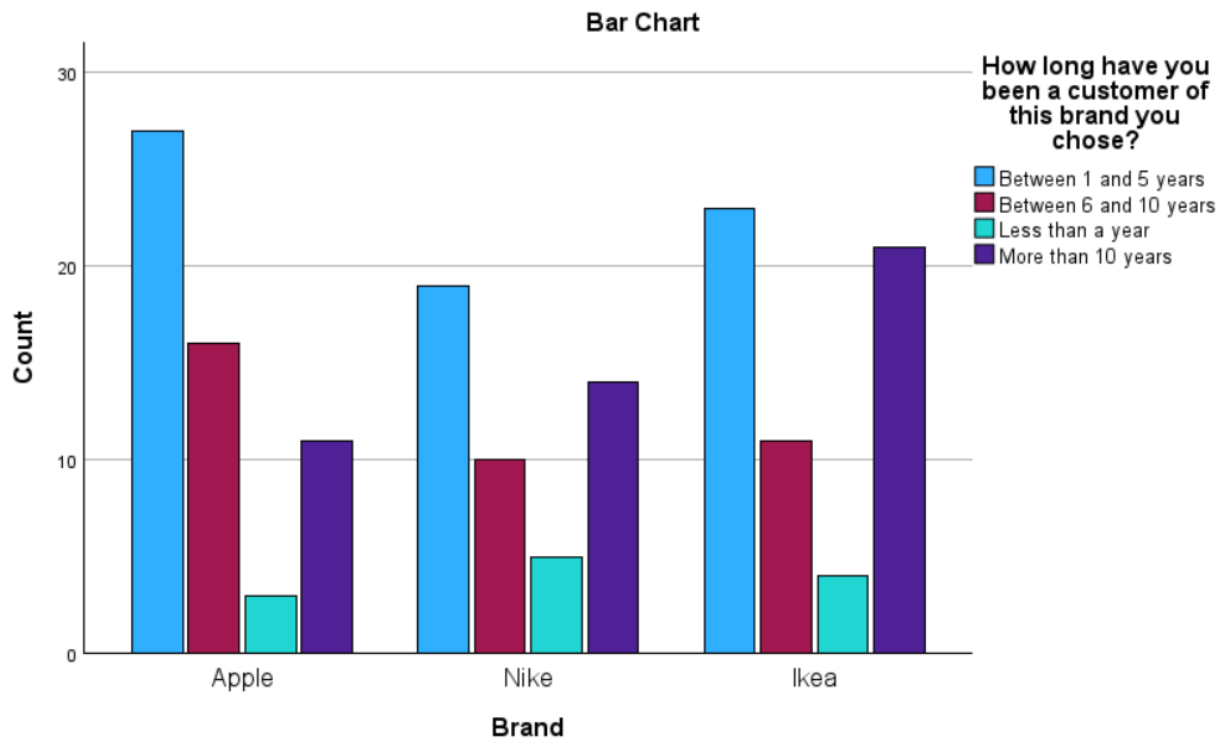
Clustered Bar Chart of Geographic/Country Distribution Across Brand Subsets



Clustered Bar Chart of Brand Interaction Frequency Across Brand Subsets



Clustered Bar Chart of Brand Loyalty Duration Across Brand Subsets



SPSS Output B8: Regression Analysis of Models 1 to 4

Model 1: Dummy Control Variables as IVs

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.392 ^a	.153	.127	.808

a. Predictors: (Constant), DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, DummyIkea, DummyGenZ

b. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.681	5	3.736	5.728	<.001 ^b
	Residual	103.063	158	.652		
	Total	121.744	163			

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

b. Predictors: (Constant), DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, DummyIkea, DummyGenZ

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.448	.184		18.739	<.001
	DummyNike	-.483	.159	-.255	-3.028	.003
	Dummylkea	-.257	.155	-.143	-1.659	.099
	DummyGender	.645	.149	.332	4.321	<.001
	DummyGenZ	.101	.154	.057	.654	.514
	DummyMillenials	.169	.218	.065	.774	.440

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

Model 2: Dummy Control Variables and TPB Predictors as IVs

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.883 ^a	.780	.768	.416

a. Predictors: (Constant), PBC Index, DummyGenZ, Dummylkea, DummyGender, DummyMillenials, DummyNike, Subjective Norm Index, Attitude to Avocacy Index

b. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	94.918	8	11.865	68.552	<.001 ^b
	Residual	26.827	155	.173		
	Total	121.744	163			

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

b. Predictors: (Constant), PBC Index, DummyGenZ, Dummylkea, DummyGender, DummyMillenials, DummyNike, Subjective Norm Index, Attitude to Avocacy Index

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.162	.186		.869	.386
	DummyNike	-.169	.085	-.089	-1.977	.050
	Dummylkea	-.234	.080	-.131	-2.929	.004
	DummyGender	.033	.083	.017	.402	.688
	DummyGenZ	-.017	.079	-.010	-.220	.826
	DummyMillenials	-.015	.114	-.006	-.132	.895
	Attitude to Avocacy Index	.552	.063	.519	8.732	<.001
	Subjective Norm Index	.114	.061	.105	1.852	.066
	PBC Index	.332	.053	.345	6.326	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

Model 3: Model 2: Dummy Control Variables and Storytelling Predictors as IVs

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.613 ^a	.376	.343	.700

a. Predictors: (Constant), Symbolic Dimension Index, DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, DummyGenZ, Narrative Dimension Index, Dummylkea, Visual Dimension Index

b. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	45.736	8	5.717	11.659	<.001 ^b
	Residual	76.008	155	.490		
	Total	121.744	163			

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

b. Predictors: (Constant), Symbolic Dimension Index, DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, DummyGenZ, Narrative Dimension Index, Dummylkea, Visual Dimension Index

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.630	.303		5.379	<.001
	DummyNike	-.588	.143	-.310	-4.096	<.001
	Dummylkea	-.439	.142	-.244	-3.090	.002
	DummyGender	.345	.137	.177	2.509	.013
	DummyGenZ	-.101	.137	-.057	-.733	.465
	DummyMillenials	.021	.190	.008	.109	.913
	Visual Dimension Index	.301	.104	.255	2.895	.004
	Narrative Dimension Index	.068	.078	.073	.874	.384
	Symbolic Dimension Index	.270	.081	.278	3.329	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

Model 4: Research model (Dummy Control Variables, Storytelling and TPB predictors as IVs)

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.883 ^a	.780	.764	.420

a. Predictors: (Constant), PBC Index, DummyGenZ, Dummylkea, DummyGender, Narrative Dimension Index, DummyMillenials, DummyNike, Symbolic Dimension Index, Subjective Norm Index, Visual Dimension Index, Attitude to Avocacy Index

b. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	94.920	11	8.629	48.896	<.001 ^b
	Residual	26.824	152	.176		
	Total	121.744	163			

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

b. Predictors: (Constant), PBC Index, DummyGenZ, Dummylkea, DummyGender, Narrative Dimension Index, DummyMillenials, DummyNike, Symbolic Dimension Index, Subjective Norm Index, Visual Dimension Index, Attitude to Avocacy Index

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.155	.204		.757	.451
	DummyNike	-.171	.092	-.090	-1.864	.064
	DummyIkea	-.236	.086	-.132	-2.740	.007
	DummyGender	.032	.085	.016	.373	.710
	DummyGenZ	-.019	.083	-.010	-.225	.822
	DummyMillenials	-.016	.115	-.006	-.140	.889
	Visual Dimension Index	.002	.065	.002	.033	.974
	Narrative Dimension Index	.003	.047	.003	.065	.948
	Symbolic Dimension Index	.002	.051	.002	.036	.971
	Attitude to Avocacy Index	.550	.066	.517	8.335	<.001
	Subjective Norm Index	.113	.062	.105	1.814	.072
	PBC Index	.331	.055	.344	6.045	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

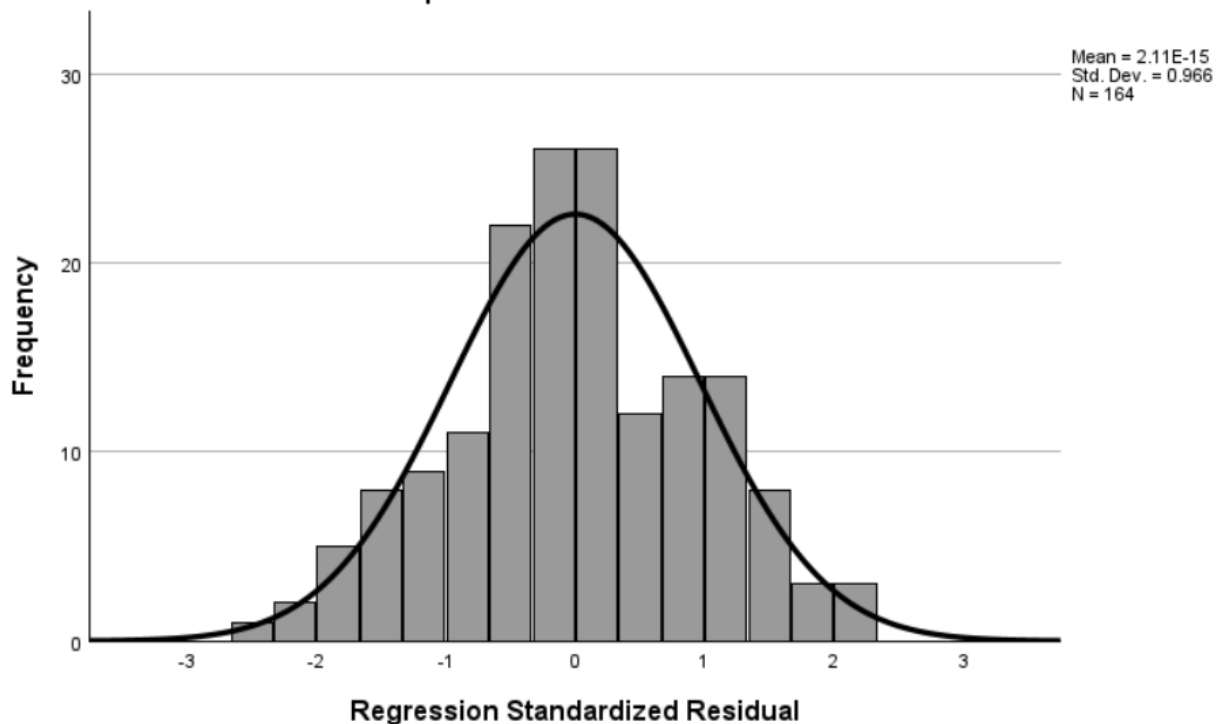
Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1.43	5.19	3.77	.763	164
Residual	-1.102	.977	.000	.406	164
Std. Predicted Value	-3.065	1.859	.000	1.000	164
Std. Residual	-2.623	2.325	.000	.966	164

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index

Histogram

Dependent Variable: Intention to Advocate Index



SPSS Output B9: Exploratory Models

Exploratory Model 1: Visual Storytelling as DV

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, Dummylkea, DummyGenZ ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Visual Dimension Index

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.375 ^a	.140	.113	.691

a. Predictors: (Constant), DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, Dummylkea, DummyGenZ

b. Dependent Variable: Visual Dimension Index

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.314	5	2.463	5.157	<.001 ^b
	Residual	75.452	158	.478		
	Total	87.765	163			

a. Dependent Variable: Visual Dimension Index

b. Predictors: (Constant), DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, Dummylkea, DummyGenZ

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.122	.157		19.832	<.001
	DummyNike	-.068	.136	-.042	-.499	.619
	Dummylkea	.025	.133	.017	.191	.848
	DummyGender	.479	.128	.290	3.749	<.001
	DummyGenZ	.330	.132	.219	2.504	.013
	DummyMillenials	.191	.187	.087	1.024	.308

a. Dependent Variable: Visual Dimension Index

Exploratory Model 2: Narrative Storytelling as DV

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, Dummylkea, DummyGenZ ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Narrative Dimension Index

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.347 ^a	.120	.092	.876

a. Predictors: (Constant), DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, Dummylkea, DummyGenZ

b. Dependent Variable: Narrative Dimension Index

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.574	5	3.315	4.318	.001 ^b
	Residual	121.293	158	.768		
	Total	137.867	163			

a. Dependent Variable: Narrative Dimension Index

b. Predictors: (Constant), DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, Dummylkea, DummyGenZ

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.613	.200		13.092	<.001
	DummyNike	.108	.173	.053	.623	.534
	Dummylkea	.219	.168	.114	1.298	.196
	DummyGender	.668	.162	.323	4.124	<.001
	DummyGenZ	.066	.167	.035	.394	.694
	DummyMillenials	.330	.237	.120	1.397	.164

a. Dependent Variable: Narrative Dimension Index

Exploratory Model 3: Symbolic Storytelling as DV

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, Dummylkea, DummyGenZ ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Symbolic Dimension Index

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.398 ^a	.159	.132	.828

a. Predictors: (Constant), DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, Dummylkea, DummyGenZ

b. Dependent Variable: Symbolic Dimension Index

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.416	5	4.083	5.955	<.001 ^b
	Residual	108.337	158	.686		
	Total	128.753	163			

a. Dependent Variable: Symbolic Dimension Index

b. Predictors: (Constant), DummyMillenials, DummyNike, DummyGender, Dummylkea, DummyGenZ

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.594	.189		13.752	<.001
	DummyNike	.436	.163	.224	2.671	.008
	Dummylkea	.588	.159	.319	3.698	<.001
	DummyGender	.409	.153	.205	2.674	.008
	DummyGenZ	.362	.158	.198	2.293	.023
	DummyMillenials	.252	.224	.095	1.127	.262

a. Dependent Variable: Symbolic Dimension Index