

Immersive Storytelling in Virtual Reality: Digital Interactions for Enhanced Consumer Engagement

Abstract

In an era where digital saturation often dulls consumer attention, Virtual Reality (VR) emerges as a frontier for truly immersive brand experiences. As marketers scramble to capture fleeting interest, VR's capacity for 360° engagement raises a compelling question such as what drives consumers to not just view but truly connect with virtual content. Despite growing VR adoption—especially in tech-savvy Southeast Asian markets—there is limited empirical evidence on which VR dimensions most powerfully foster consumer engagement.

This study evaluates three core VR dimensions—immersive storytelling (ST), technology integration into marketing strategies (IV), and exposure frequency and duration (EF)—to determine their relative contributions to consumer engagement (CE). A convenience sample of 499 participants from diverse Southeast Asian demographics completed an online survey using validated five-point Likert scales. Reliability ($\alpha \geq 0.85$) and convergent validity ($AVE \geq 0.69$) were confirmed. Data were analyzed via Structural Equation Modeling in SmartPLS and multiple regression in SPSS to assess paths from ST, IV, and EF to CE. The result shows that Storytelling (ST) was the strongest and only statistically significant predictor ($\beta = 0.769, p < 0.001$). Furthermore, VR integration (IV) ($\beta = 0.096, p = 0.138$) and exposure (EF) ($\beta = 0.099, p = 0.107$) had positive but non-significant effects. The overall model explained 98.1% of variance in CE ($R^2 = 0.981; F(3,94) = 1668.495, p < 0.001$).

Immersive storytelling within VR environments is the pivotal driver of consumer–brand connection, eclipsing both technical integration and duration of exposure. Theoretically, this underscores narrative immersion as a cornerstone of VR engagement. Practically, brands should prioritize high-quality, story-driven VR content to deepen consumer involvement. Future research should examine longitudinal effects, demographic moderators, and synergistic integration with AI/AR technologies across wider markets.