

Brand Narratives in a World of Fragmented Digital Media: An Abstract



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Abstract Narratives are deeply embedded elements of human cognition and social being and widely recognized across psychology, management, and the humanities as such (e.g. Bruner 1986; Gergen and Gergen 1988; McAdams 1993, 2010; Polkinghorne 1988; Wyer 1995). Narratives and storytelling are increasingly recognized in marketing as powerful drivers of consumer behavior (e.g., Ardelet et al. 2015; Bertele et al. 2020; Gilliam and Zablah 2013; Gilliam and Flaherty 2015; Gilliam et al. 2017, 2018; Godin 2012; Kozinets et al. 2010; Van Laer et al. 2018).

Brand narratives can impact buyers' self-identity and facilitate sense-making during purchase and consumption journeys (Cooper et al. 2010).

Narrative transportation into a story world can affect consumers' beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors (Escalas 2007; Van Laer et al. 2014). This can occur with just a short story or photo without regard to age or culture (Escalas 2004; Kim et al. 2016).

Research questions

RQ1—what are brand narratives?

RQ2—how do brand narratives originate and evolve?

RQ3—how are brand narratives used in purchasing?

RQ4—what framework could be used for analyzing brand narratives in a digital world?

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Following the 6-step process of Gilliam and Voss (2013) for developing definitions of marketing constructs, the contributions from extant literature were distilled into the following definition of brand narratives: “a consumer’s evolving, co-created narrative formed via a sensemaking amalgamation of brand meanings and consumer self-identity.”

The origin, evolution, and use in purchasing of brand narratives is dynamic and complex. The consumer develops a brand narrative for each brand in a product category by using information from the market. In a purchase, this brand narrative interacts with the deal and the promise sought. The consumer chooses the desired state which then provides feedback to future purchases.

Keywords Branding · Story · Storytelling · Digital marketing · Social media

References Available Upon Request