



DISSERTATION PROPOSAL
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INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF STORYTELLING ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS FROM TRAVELLERS PERSPECTIVE – CASE STUDY OF AIRBNB

INTRODUCTION:

We often become engrossed in a good story to the point where we become unaware of the time and place, this feeling is regarded as "narrative transportation." It is a hallmark of a fantastic narrative and an effective means of influencing people's attitudes. When people get engrossed in a story, whether it be genuine or fiction, the character and their world becomes a way for their own belief. There are stories that surround us, from the more complex tales presented in books or movies to the commercials on television or in music videos. Everything has a backstory, and the techniques used to weave the story are just as significant as the plot. (Clara Mihăeș, Andreescu and Dimitriu, 2021)

New Age travelers are transforming the travel landscape by sharing their stories through Airbnb. These travelers are not just tourists, but storytellers, sharing personal growth, cultural understanding, and societal change. They are not just tourists, but storytellers who challenge traditional travel narratives and create lasting connections with local hosts. Their stories inspire others to seek unconventional paths to self-discovery, challenging societal norms and expectations. The New Age travel movement is centered on empowering travelers to redefine their identities through storytelling, paving the way for a more inclusive and diverse travel culture. These narratives foster empathy, community, and cross-cultural dialogue, breaking down stereotypes and promoting a more compassionate and interconnected world. By sharing their experiences, these travelers become agents of change, catalyzing a more compassionate and interconnected world.

Many research highlights the significant role that storytelling plays in the global world, showing how storytelling has become a collective form of distributed attention. From a demand-side approach focusing on travelers, tourism has been found to provide rich opportunities for the sharing of experiences, the building of relationships, the connecting of meaning between sites and practices, and even the co-creation of narratives. Such speaking and listening activities bring people into the moment, encourage people to imagine they are there, embrace them in the event, and confer legitimacy to their having been there. Indeed, we can follow through from the concept of presumption and co-creation into the realm of co-narration, with ubiquitous digitalization enabling people to exchange their views readily and in a variety of ways.

Research Goal- To unveil the power of narrative and explore and investigate ways in which Storytelling influences consumer's attitudes and actions towards Airbnb, evaluating the efficacy of Airbnb's storytelling tactics from viewpoints of its patrons.

Research Objectives- This research orbits around the main objective through the following research areas:

- ✚ To examine the role of storytelling in shaping urban explorers' (the guests) expectations and perspectives on decision making for the experience overall.
- ✚ To examine how perceived storytelling can influence sustainable and responsible travel practices, guest satisfaction, perceived value, and their intention to revisit in terms of loyalty.
- ✚ To Identify and understand different elements of storytelling that contributes to its virility and which of them are most effective in shaping customer experience including emerging tech like AI,AR,VR for enhanced and tailored content.
- ✚ To evaluate and make suggestions to businesses that optimize digital platforms for consumer engagement and loyalty in order to expand the application of this strategy and help it reach new and sustainable benchmarks.

Research Questions-

- How does engaging storytelling influence the new age travelers or customers' expectations and viewpoints regarding decision making throughout entire experience?
- In what way perceived storytelling adds to the efficacy of sustainable and ethical travel methods, tourists' enjoyment, perception of value, and propensity to return?
- What are the different elements of engaging storytelling and which of them are most effective in shaping customer experience including emerging technologies boosting its virility?
- How this approach helps organizations that leverage digital platforms into fostering customer engagement, loyalty and establish more enduring standards for future milestones?

Literature Review:

In order to better link the literature review with my research aims, objectives, and problems, it will be organized around a number of important theoretical frameworks and models. Possible considerations will include the following models and theories. The sharing economy- A stunning example of Airbnb, a significant development in the last half-century, has been largely unexplored by business ethicists. (MacDonald, 2018)

Short videos are in demand, numerous destination management companies have attempted to capture the breathtaking scenery of a place in little videos. The efficacious video attributes and the cognitive processes of prospective visitors during the viewing of these brief, nudging towards that the narrative element of a brief video can affect the mindset of a customer's final decisions. (Cao et al., 2021)

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) stated differently, the elaboration likelihood model is employed to study the multiplicity of ways in which people interpret information and the manner in which these interpretations result in modifications to attitudes and, eventually, behavior. It is a powerful framework that is well-built, descriptive, and academically precedent-driven. There are still questions over its actual use in practice, despite its theoretical importance. Offers a structure for persuasion that may be adjusted for different factors. Attitude formation that is more predictive and persistent is correlated with high elaboration likelihood. (J. Kitchen et al., 2014)

This paper will also have brief insight on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model to analyze the impact of social networking services (SNS) on rural and tourism overall. TPB model supports this paper's goal of looking at responsible travel practices by assisting in the exploration of how storytelling affects travelers' attitudes toward sustainable activities and their behavioral intentions. (Joo, Seok and Nam, 2020)

Brand storytelling framework- The framework for brand storytelling is essential to comprehending how Airbnb uses storytelling to develop a strong brand identity and cultivate customer loyalty. This framework will directly support my research goal of assessing the effectiveness of Airbnb's storytelling strategies. This model will explain in more detail utilizing incongruity to increase brand storytelling's efficacy, Consumers' preconceived notions about brand storytelling which may be challenged by incongruity. The main components of storytelling, such as character, setting, and storyline, are identified in this study, along with examples of how marketers might use these components to create incongruity. (Houghton, 2021)

This paper will also shine a light on various other articles and books by authors like (Sabah, 2023) for digital storytelling and emerging advanced technologies like AR/VR, also (Yılmaz, Erdem and Resuloğlu, 2019). This explores the concept of transmedia storytelling, which involves dispersing integral elements of a fiction across multiple delivery channels to create a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. It covers the historical development of storytelling, branding narratives, global narratives in Asian countries, and transmedia storytelling in different aspects. A pertinent theoretical framework that addresses storytelling in contemporary culture along with the most recent and diverse analyses and case studies in the area. (Clara Mihăeș, Andreescu and Dimitriu, 2021) 360° spherically recorded videos when seen through immersive media evoke a sense of spatial presence. Strong media coverage amplifies the desire to suggest the video. Videos featuring immersive footage and storytelling techniques work well for communicating about issue at hand. (Amrhein and Delia Cristina Balaban, 2024) Brands are exploring augmented digital humans as storytelling agents to enhance interaction and entertainment value. Research indicates that when the tale aligns well with the product, both kinds of agents facilitate narrative transportation. Additionally, a digital person that is viewed as more human-like generates more favorable reactions from customers, pointing to a successful new strategy for storytelling marketing. (Sung and others, 2023) This will go over the intention-behavior gap associated with buying environmentally friendly products and how social media impacts help to close it. It has been suggested that social media influencers (SMIs) serve as product endorsers for green items in order to boost the effectiveness of advertising and encourage sustainable behavior. (Rodrigo and Mendis, 2023) (Breves and Liebers, 2022)

Research Methodology:

Research Methods for Business Students by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill is a comprehensive guide for students conducting research-led projects or dissertations. It covers observation research, data collection, and academic poster preparation. Saunders' research onion outlines the decisions required for developing a research methodology, ranging from philosophical to tactical and practical, for dissertations, thesis, or other formal projects. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019)

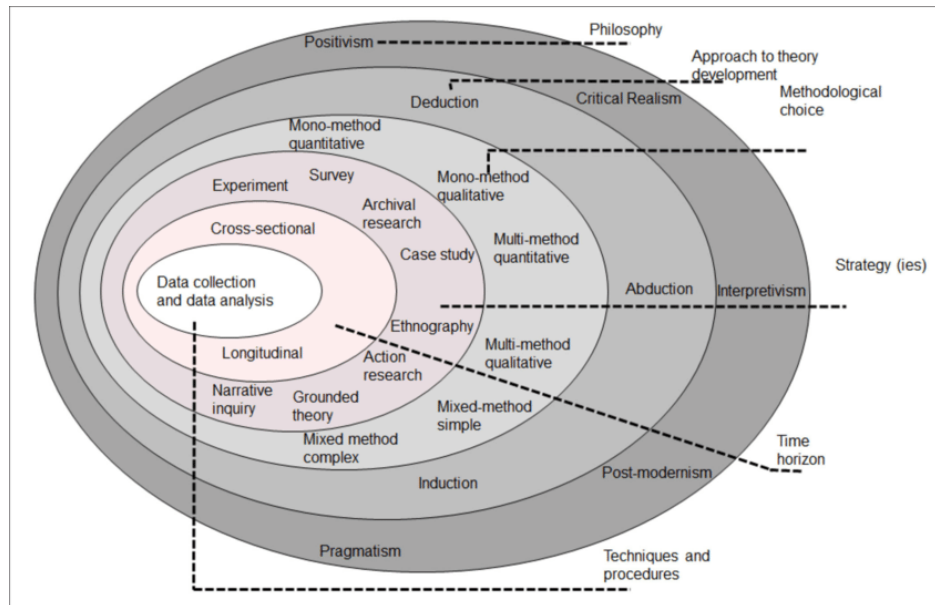


Figure 1: Research onion, Saunders (2019)

Philosophy:

For this paper, Interpretivist philosophy emphasizes the influence that societal and cultural elements can have on an individual. This viewpoint is focused on how individuals think and feel about the sociocultural environment. According to the interpretivist viewpoint, the researcher must actively participate in the study to get a complete picture of the participant's actions, meanings, and thoughts. An interpretivist approach makes sense because experiences and stories are inherently subjective. This philosophy places a strong emphasis on appreciating experiences and meanings from the viewpoints of those involved.

Research approach:

An inductive approach makes it possible to build theories based on the themes and patterns that show up in the data. This is particularly important to comprehend how narrative affects the attitudes and actions of tourists. Research would be necessary to understand more about this community and build theories because there is a lack of information available about it. The hallmark of inductive approaches is the development of hypotheses through inquiry, as opposed to starting a project with predetermined notions.

Research strategy:

Survey: Using surveys to get quantitative information on visitor views and actions regarding Airbnb's storytelling initiatives will be helpful.

Narratives: Travelers' experiences and opinions of Airbnb's storytelling can be better understood through semi-structured interviews however it won't be in the form of interview instead it will be used as narrative from social media and reviews maintaining anonymity.

Methodological choice:

Integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches yields a thorough comprehension. While quantitative methods, like surveys, may gauge the impact of storytelling, qualitative ones, like narratives and journals, can examine in-depth insights. For this paper, a primary and secondary data will be considered.

Time-Horizon:

The time horizon for this paper will be cross-sectional as the given research time for this paper is 16 weeks within which the study needs to be done.

Techniques and procedure:

Data collection-

Surveys: Information on the opinions, attitudes, and actions of Airbnb guests that are impacted by storytelling can be obtained through online questionnaires sent to them. Content analysis: Examining Airbnb's narrative content (such as host narratives and guest reviews) might shed light on the components and potency of their storytelling.

Data analysis-

Qualitative Analysis: Patterns and themes from content analysis narrative transcripts can be found and examined using thematic analysis by NVivo or excel.

Quantitative Analysis: Survey data can be statistically analyzed to find patterns, correlations, and the overall effect of storytelling on the attitudes and behaviors of travelers by SPSS.

Sample size and type-

30 plus surveys will be collected and analysed which will be taken from frequent travelers from age group of 20-40 as well 40-60 from residents of UK.

Research Limitations:

The main limitations of this research include potential response bias from participants, the challenge of generalizing findings from a specific case study (Airbnb) to other digital platforms, and the reliance on self-reported data, which may not accurately reflect actual behaviors and attitudes.

Research Ethics:

In order to maintain ethical integrity, all participants in this study will provide their informed consent, their anonymity and confidentiality will be guaranteed, and the research will follow the ethical rules established by the institution's review board, which will ensure that no harm or undue influence occurs throughout the research process.

Timeline of Tasks for paper

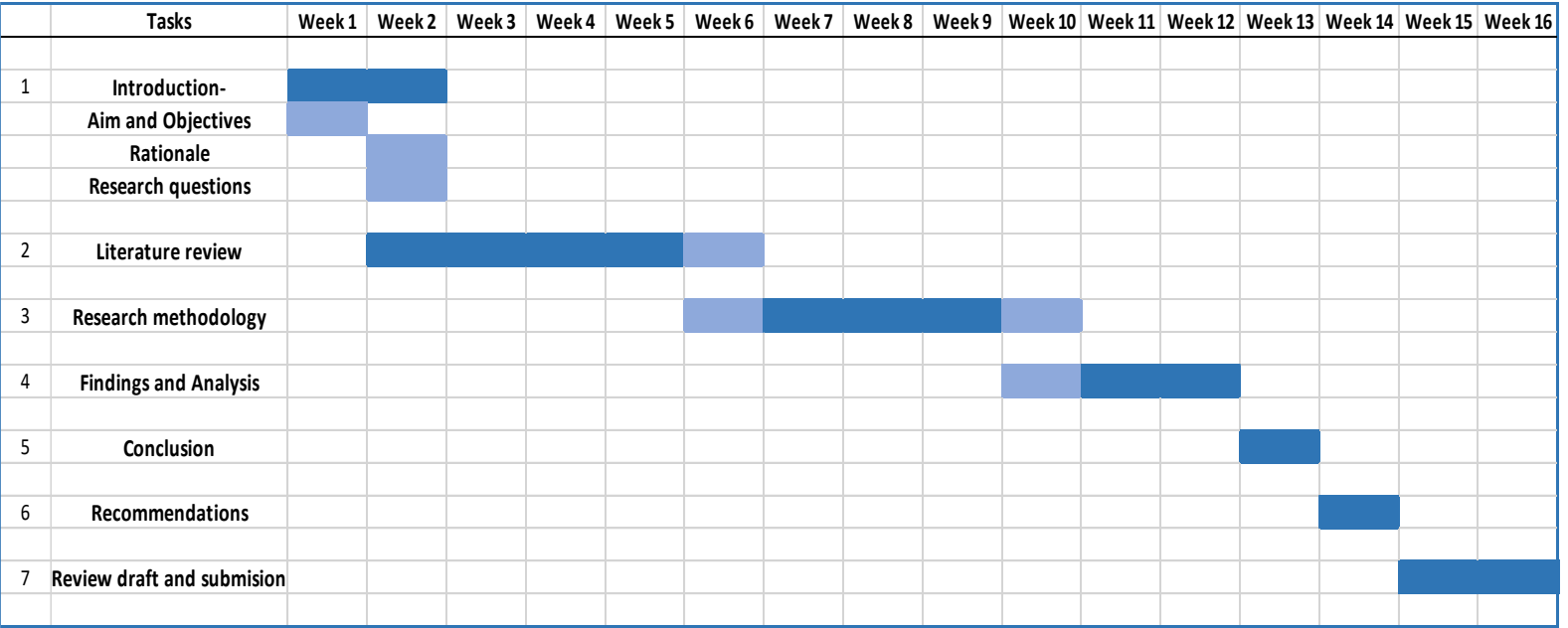


Figure 2: Gannt chart

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