

# Once Upon a Time... Storytelling, Brands and Social Enterprises

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*Storytelling has been a subject of academic inquiry for almost twenty years. Contemporary research in marketing now consents the idea that storytelling is relevant to branding. Social Entrepreneurship has been a topic of academic study for more than forty years; however, the concept has proved controversial because the term is used differently by different scholars. This study's central contribution is to offer a comprehensive understanding to the reader of where the conversation is regarding Storytelling, Branding and Social Entrepreneurship in the academic marketing literature and to know what researchers should do to extend work in that area. Both Consumer Theory and Consumer Narratives Theory provide a framework that helps explain the role of storytelling in branding. In this study, I review the background, key aspects, and criticism of both Consumer Theory and Consumer Narratives Theory, intending to gather an in-depth understanding of the role of storytelling in marketing. Finally, I put into perspective conceptually related approaches that link storytelling to marketing and present a future research point of view.*

**Keywords:** Brands, Consumer Narratives, Consumer Theory, Social Enterprises, Social Entrepreneurship, Storytelling.

*"Maybe stories are just data with a soul" - Brené Brown.*

## 1 Introduction

Over the past twenty years, the concept of the elements that constitute a brand has developed significantly. The origin of the term branding took place when cattle owners would burn symbols and signs into their animals to help distinguish them from other animals (Henry, 2014). That is where the term brand originates. It is a German word meaning "Burn." The concept of branding started as a way to identify a product and differentiate it from its competitors. However, over time, a brand's core function has evolved into so much more. Companies are now focusing on brand management as a part of their strategic decision making and consid-

ering it as a valuable asset to the firm. These organizations realize that it is way worse to have a bad brand than a bad product. One way companies can increase their brands' attention, and curiosity is through the method of Brand Storytelling (Eckles, 2013).

Storytelling has been a subject of academic inquiry for almost twenty-five years (Henry, 2014). Contemporary Research in marketing now consents the idea that storytelling is relevant to branding (Boje, 1991). An example to illustrate this point is a study mentioned by Rush (2014), which was undertaken at Stanford Graduate School of Business, where a marketing lecturer asked 10 of her students to make a pitch. One student made a pitch through storytelling and emotions, while the rest of the nine students made a hard pitch using only facts and figures. The lecturer then asked the audience to write down everything they remembered about the pitches, and the results were astounding. 5

Studies show that we are living in an era of information saturation. Every 365 days, 5.3 trillion ads are shown, and every 60 seconds, about 700,000 Google searches are performed, plus, an average person daily comes across 100,500 words (Henry, 2014); since then, common wisdom tells us that these numbers have only probably grown.

In this context, storytelling has proven useful in the marketing efforts companies make. One example of a famous case study of brand storytelling is that of Nike. When Nike reached its maximum growth using just facts and innovation, it knew it had to do something more to engage and maintain that appeal. That is when it came up with its classic hero's journey story with a cunning plot that makes the common person both his villain and hero. Another famous case study of brand storytelling done right is Proclamation Jewelry, an elite brand providing men's jewelry. When the brand faced trouble despite being popular and providing the necessary consumer engagement, Proclamation Jewelry decided to incorporate storytelling within its brand by casting the ordinary consumer as a hero and the jewelry as sidekicks. The message went across, and growth started to rise again. There are many more examples of brands using storytelling tools with

success, as part of their marketing efforts.

Research in storytelling, specifically when related to branding, has been generated by scholars, but there are no means for assessing the relevance of this investigation to the marketing field's central questions. In such a situation, the central questions that should be asked can too easily be lost.

## 1.1 Contributions and Theories Involved

This study's central contribution is to offer a comprehensive understanding to the reader of where the conversation is regarding Storytelling, Branding and Social Entrepreneurship in the academic marketing literature. The present research uses a content analysis approach that adds to the knowledge of branding and the knowledge of narrative. Overall, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of storytelling and branding; therefore, it sheds light on what researchers should do to extend work.

Both Consumer Theory and Consumer Narratives Theory provide a framework that helps explain the role of storytelling in branding. In this study, I review the background, key aspects, and criticism of both Consumer Theory and Consumer Narratives Theory, intending to gather an in-depth understanding of the role of storytelling in marketing, with the intention of applying that understanding to Social Entrepreneurs. The objective of this study is highlight some of the empirical evidence to shed some light on the state of storytelling's art when related to branding. Finally, I put into perspective conceptually related approaches that link Storytelling to Marketing and Social Entrepreneurship, and present a future research point of view.

The current study is beneficial as it will help both practitioners and academics. When applied to Marketing, storytelling will prove to be very useful as it can help researchers understand a tool that can be used to reinforce a brand. It can help organizations, especially those with less glamorous and high-end brands, understand how to promote and add feelings and depth to their brand. Marketers can learn what kind of storytelling works and what kind does not.

The study is divided into four sections. The first section involves the Literature Review about other studies that are relevant to storytelling, branding and Social Entrepreneurship, as well as with their relationship with marketing. In the subsequent section, Research Questions and Hypotheses, I will provide a preliminary view of the questions that I will investigate throughout the study; plus, in this section, I will formulate the hypothesis and link them to the theory described in the previous section. Next follows the section Methodology, where I provide the idea of how I conducted the research and analyzed the data involved. Afterward, in Results and Discussion, the argument of the results is presented. Finally, the Conclusions, Limitations, Strengths, Further Research, and the implications of this study are presented.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Storytelling and Branding

The concept of brand storytelling in marketing derives from the idea that people had loved telling stories for as far as history can remember. Stories are engaging, pique curiosity, and can provide a spiritual, moral, and entertaining depth to the narrative. So much so that one can argue that history itself is a story (Shane, 2015). Branding involves elements as symbols, taglines, shapes, or images that act as a form of communication, can aid in product differentiation, and can also provide the following aspects to the company's product and services: attributes, benefits, culture, personalities, and intended type of user.

According to the Journal of Brand Management, there are three actions that firms carry out through branding. These are:

- Identification and differentiation.
- Maintaining consistency.
- Communicating the existence of a product and providing information on primary attributes.

The brand storytelling method is an effective way to give your brand a whole new life. It can give otherwise ordinary commodities and services a distinctiveness, character, and personality by communicating stories about them (Fournier, 1998). The whole process takes consumers on a thrilling journey that they desire to experience. Stories have a reason for being appealing. They not only take us on an unforgettable journey, but they also help to divulge knowledge, release creativity, and imagination within an individual and rejoice our culture (Boje, 1996). Since man is a social animal, communication, expression of emotions, and perception make up an important part of man's nature (Kaufman, 2003).

### 2.2 Consumer Theory and Storytelling

The reputation and prominence of storytelling are deep-rooted in marketing literature, specifically in the field of content marketing and brand journalism, and is widely accepted as a fact (Benjamin, 2006). However, common wisdom says that most content of marketing literature on storytelling comes from qualitative research on consumer behavior rather than from empirical studies involving statistics. Whether real or make-believe, stories are often simply described as effective communicators (Mossberg Nissen Johansen, 2006). Additionally, storytelling is said to add meaning, experience, and emotions. Adding a story to the brand sends a signal to the consumer that the brand is more than the information found on the website or the brochure's promotion. Aided with a story, the brand takes the form of a breathing entity complete with feelings and history; plus, a compelling story strengthens the empathy with the audience. Marketers often believe that the consumer needs to know the essential elements like practical uses and pricing before purchasing a product. However, when making this assumption, we often fail to comprehend the human mind's complexity and the human heart. People generally search for meaning within everything they do (Gabriel and Lang, 1995).

The global era of marketing has evolved much over the

past decade. With the advent of social media, the way companies interact with consumers and competitors changed significantly. Social media has become so extensive, especially in the economic, culture, and social sphere that more than 2.7 billion people have an account on Facebook as of this writing. Not only has social media influenced organizational behavior, but it has also played a significant part in shaping customer buying behavior, information retrieval, awareness, and attitudes (Mangold Faulds 2009). Along with information access, market competition among businesses has also risen expressively (Love, 2008). An increasing number of firms are recognizing the value of adding storytelling within branding. Organizations realize that sticking to the age-old purpose of branding and only communicating functional attributes will not work in the long run. They recognize the need to go over and beyond. Previously, marketers used branding to classify their products and differentiate them for the consumer; now, they understand the theoretical and practical importance of this concept (Kaplan Haenlein 2010). Marketers understand that to build that bond with the customer and gauge loyalty and repeat purchase, they need to communicate with their target audience at a level far more profound than just functional or price benefits. They need to create something that the target audience can connect with and empathize with, that the target audience cares enough about that they would keep on wanting to purchase it. Building a brand storyline is more than just engagement. It is about utilizing the brand's scarcity and uniqueness and effectively communicating its value to the consumer.

### 2.3 Essence of Stories

When crafting a story for the brand, firms need to realize that this does not just mean to come up with a fictional story. Consumer stories have been researched on as the type of consumer narratives and memorable incidents (Delgadillo and Escalas, 2004). According to Durgee (1998), consumer narratives and memorable incidents are often described as unusual episodes that have taken place concerning the product. The brand's story is a meaningful way in which the organization communicates its ideals and ethics. It is a way of showing what the organization stands up for and what it believes in. It is the voice of the organization. Most firms also create their brand in a way by satisfying consumer needs and showcasing the voice of the people. A good storyline talks about the organization. A successful storyline talks about products, solutions, needs, experiences, emotions, wants, and desires (Woodruff et al. 2008). It should not just be a once-only exercise but a people-based process that needs to keep advancing and adapting with time.

According to Miller (2009), the best kinds of storytelling are the ones that have a personal story to recount. He defines three types of personal stories.

- Tales of personal experience
- Tales of indirect experience
- Life stories

Miller suggests that personal stories are the most useful when creating a storyline because of their relatability, empa-

thy, and inspiration. Since they are not fictional, they carry with them a sense of authenticity and hence have a high level of influence on many consumers. Research has shown that advertisements with a storyline in them led to an increase in positive feelings and warmth in the consumer while at the same time, reducing the level of disinterest (Escalas, 2004).

### 2.4 Social Entrepreneurship – What does that even mean?

Social Entrepreneurship has been a topic of academic study for several years. The concept itself has been in use since the late '80s and has become more popular among scholars since then. However, the concept of Social Entrepreneurship has proved controversial, mainly because the term is used differently by different scholars. The social enterprise objectives are broader than the regular business venture. Therefore, it is relevant to take their social mission into account since it is expected to make them behave differently compared with business enterprises when facing survival.

Social ventures play a relevant one in society by creating shared value, meaning generating economic value in a way that also produces value for society by addressing its challenges (Porter Kramer, 2011).

Gregory Dees is referred to as the father of social entrepreneurship education. His definition regarding this subject is the most widely used. Gregory Dees defined the social entrepreneur as a change agent in the social sector who adopts a mission to create and sustain social value, recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission, engaging in the process of continuous innovations, adaptation, and learning, acting boldly without being limited by resources, exhibiting a heightened sense of accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created (1998). Dees recognized this as an idealized definition and acknowledged that the closer one gets to fulfill all the characteristics involved in the definition, the better one fits the social entrepreneur model.

Many definitions of social entrepreneurship have been used in the academic field, although generally, they tend to be less specific. Bornstein and Davis (2010) defined social entrepreneurship as a process by which citizens build or transform institutions to advance solutions to social problems, such as poverty, illness, illiteracy, environmental destruction, human rights abuses, and corruption to make life better for many.

Though the focus on social entrepreneurship has increased, researchers still find the topic challenging. As stated by Christie and Honig (2006) and Weerawardena and Mort (2006), the challenge borders on the definition of social entrepreneurship. The definition of social entrepreneurship stems from several domains: not-for-profit, public sectors, and profit. A unified definition is yet to emerge from the combination of these three domains. Lasprogata and Cotton (2003) confine the definition of social entrepreneurship to not-for-profit making firms. Contrastingly, Wallace (1999) represents the view that social entrepreneurship is about for-profit companies, but their founders and operators are non-

profit firms or institutions that create an organization at a loss (Baron, 2007).

Some authors have sought to adopt a broader definition of social entrepreneurship to cover individuals or organizations that venture into entrepreneurial activities but retain social goals (Certo and Miller, 2008; Van de Ven, Sapienza, Villanueva, 2007), while others view it as philanthropy (Ostrander, 2007). The varying definitions attempt to establish the field's legitimacy as challenging (Berger and Luckman, 1986; Neilsen and Rao, 1987; Reed and Luffman, 1986; Short, Payne Ketchen, 2008).

The above proposition suggests that scholars have used several perspectives to examine social entrepreneurship over the past two decades. Due to the discrepancy in visions and definitions, we suggest that management scholars should revisit the definition of social entrepreneurship so that they may come up with a broad definition as envisioned by Mair and Marti (2006), who described social entrepreneurship as follows:

*First, social entrepreneurship is an enterprise of developing value by bringing resources together in a new form. Second, the primary intention behind the resources' combination is to advance social value by triggering social change or solving social problems. Third, the assumption that social entrepreneurship is a process predisposes us to see it as an activity, which entails the provision of services and products, and at the same time, it might mean the instigation of new organizations. The view adopted in the study seem to settle that social entrepreneurship can occur in both the newly created organization or existing firm, but it has to be labeled 'social intrapreneurship.'*

## **2.5 Social Enterprises – Hybrid model, and avoiding mission drift**

The concept of a hybrid organization where both the social and commercial models interact may appear counterintuitive. In their study, Battilana, Lee, Walker, and Dorsey (2012) contended that marrying the social welfare model and profit-making model might look foreign to outside social enterprise observers. Nevertheless, proponents of mission drift view revenue generation as a means of sustaining the social enterprise because the proceeds generated would fund the activities or functions of the social enterprises (Battilana, Lee, Walker, and Dorsey, 2012). The business model would relieve the social enterprise from over-relying on the donations, grants, and subsidies, and simultaneously it would lead to the growth of the social enterprise. Porter and Kramer (2011) made a similar argument by proposing a model where 'shared value' is generated by the enterprises, where value for both society and the businessperson are created. Therefore, the difference between the social enterprise and the commercial enterprise would rest on utilizing the revenues generated from the profit-making activities.

The above arguments support an integrated hybrid model for social enterprises that have drifted their revenue generation missions. The hybrid model defines the extent to which the organization should pursue the social welfare

objectives and ventilate the same with the revenue generation model. Battilana, Lee, Walker, and Dorsey (2012) argue that the hybrid model exhibits both innovation and challenge in equal measure. The combination of a social mission and profit-making activities yields peculiar combinations of activities that might not support its existence. Striking a balance between social and economic objectives is critical to limiting drift when the social enterprise has adopted the hybrid model.

A relevant challenge that businesses pursue a social mission through market mechanisms is misalignment from their dual social-commercial objectives. Scholars like Ebrahim, Battilana, and Mair recognize that these hybrid organizations often referred to as social enterprises, combine aspects of both charity and business at their core. For that reason, their decision-making priorities may differ in selecting and aligning potentially conflicting objectives and interests, which could eventually lead to mission drift (2014). Social enterprises hold responsibility for both a social mission and for making profits to continue their mission. The definition of success for social entrepreneurs relies on creating a socially positive impact while remaining financially profitable. It should be acknowledged that these dual objectives are not necessarily aligned. Many factors affect the performance of social entrepreneurs, and they are accountable to all of their stakeholders. Therefore, social entrepreneurs' challenge is to simultaneously achieve social and financial objectives while avoiding mission drift.

## **3 Materials and methods**

### **3.1 Method of Data Collection**

The research will adopt a secondary method of data collection. A secondary method is when the researcher collects data from an external source. Instead of collecting information by himself, the researcher taps into already researched information and makes sense out of it. Commonly, secondary data is compiled and extracted by someone other than the researcher instead of primary data, which is collected by the researcher himself. As a result, secondary data is second-hand information or user information compared to primary research, which is unique and never before seen information.

There are benefits to adopting a secondary data collection method. This method's real benefit is making sense of a big picture of very diverse data, recollected at different times, and among diverse samples. However, one of the significant downsides of secondary data collection is that the data is already available. This disadvantage is worsened by the fact that researchers may rely on unreliable sources of data that are of everyday use in non-academic areas, such as newspapers, databases, books, and blogs. The problem of this approach is that there is no right way to be absolutely sure of its authenticity. To tackle this issue, I took data from respected and well-known journals in the area, which will be mentioned in short.

### 3.2 Samples/Sources of Data

The qualitative analysis of this study offers rich descriptive insights into how storytelling is used to approach different marketing phenomena in academic literature related to storytelling and branding. To do this, I carefully selected different research papers that were looked for at the digital library databases offered by Tecnológico de Monterrey and using Google Scholar as a second source to identify papers that were relevant to the study. The criteria used for selecting the research papers in this analysis were that they were included in the SCImago Journal Ranking unless noted otherwise. The papers analyzed in this study were found in the mentioned databases by searching for combinations of the following keywords: story, storytelling, narrative, branding, marketing, social entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurs, social enterprises.

For this research, authentic and relevant papers related to storytelling, branding, social entrepreneurship and marketing were researched and studied. Reputed and academic journals were mostly used, such as Industrial Marketing Management, Psychology and Marketing, Food Quality and Preference, Administrative Science Quarterly, Journal of Brand Management, with particular emphasis placed on the Journal of Consumer Research. It should be noted that only articles from peer-reviewed scholarly journals were used in this study, no popular press articles were considered for this study analysis.

### 3.3 The validity of the research

The validity of the research can be judged by the fact that only recognized and academic sources are used for this study. The research relies on proper and relevant articles that are used to understand the concept of storytelling, branding, social entrepreneurship, marketing, and consumer narratives. The journals that are used are reputable and recommended by marketing experts and scholars worldwide.

### 3.4 Philosophy and Type of Data Collection

For each of the considered papers, a record of the following data was documented: author, title, year of publication, the journal where it was published, number of citations, keywords, objective, and main topic. As proposed by Popkewitz Fendler (1999) and Phillipsc Burbules (2000), the critical theory's research paradigms were used to commence the quantitative and action-oriented research. The co-relational and cross-sectional research method was used to commence the quantitative literature analysis.

The data collected is qualitative. Qualitative data is any data expressed in categorical terms and relates to examples of opinions, descriptions, and emotions. The nature of this research is getting an in-depth understanding of the role of storytelling in marketing. Furthermore, it intends to highlight some empirical evidence, to shed some light on storytelling when related to branding and social entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is best if this is described in terms of categorical information. Qualitative data is mostly epistemological since it is based on opinions and otherwise known soft facts

that differ from people to people.

### 3.5 Research Approach

The research will also take on an exploratory approach. Since a phenomenon has been identified and importance has been established, it is only logical that it is explored further, and other links and causes are identified from a naturalistic point of view. Even though the concept of storytelling is well ingrained within marketers' minds, it is a part of concept management and brand journalism that has not been touched upon much. On the other hand, the concept of Social Entrepreneurship has been around since the late '80s, and it has been gaining popularity since then; however, this concept can mean different things to different people, which is a problem when studying the topic. Research in storytelling, specifically when related to branding and social entrepreneurship, has been generated by scholars, but there are no means for assessing the relevance of this investigation to the marketing field's central questions. In such a situation, the central questions that should be asked can too easily be lost. Hence, there is a great need to explore this concept further.

### 3.6 Research Question and Hypothesis

The study aims to explore further and touch upon the following points;

- Gathering an in-depth understanding of the role of storytelling when related to Marketing and Social Entrepreneurship.
- To highlight some of the empirical evidence to shed some light on the state of storytelling's art when related to Branding and Social Entrepreneurship.
- I am looking to understand the stories' elements to treat stories as an independent variable, therefore, operationalize their impact in other (dependent) variables, such as value perception of a brand or even a specific product.

## 4 Results and Discussion

For each part of the analysis, the data samples consisting of articles published in the peer-reviewed journals were analyzed to gather an in-depth understanding of the state of the art of storytelling and its role when related to Branding and Social Entrepreneurship. In the Annexes section of this study, a table containing the summary of this research's key findings can be found. The critical insights found in the literature are analyzed according to their publication year, and also by the journal of publication unless noted otherwise when a single author has contributed significantly to the topic through several years.

The first academic appearance of storytelling in the management literature, before it entered the realm of marketing, was made by David M. Boje (1991), who made an ethnographic approach on an office-supply firm with 300 employees; the author stated that a storytelling system has an impact in the improvement of employee participation as employees can recall a story more easily than abstract knowledge.

This article became seminal for storytelling in the management of academic literature. However, the most important contribution of Boje to the marketing dimension came until 2009, when along with Kahn, published the article “Story-branding by empire entrepreneurs: Nike, child labor, and Pakistan’s soccer ball industry,” this time via qualitative interviews (110) and textual studies, the authors made emphasis on the harmful aspect of storytelling using the case-studies of the tennis shoe brand Nike, of child labor in developing countries and Pakistan’s soccer ball industry; their main finding being the emotional harm these stories do to third world workers, along with advice on how to prevent the third world labors from the harmful aspects of branding storytelling. Other of the first efforts on bringing storytelling into the academic literature came by the letters of Boyce (1996), who via Content Analysis (24 studies), who defined a relationship between organizational culture and organizational stories, and established how the latter could be used to improve the image of the former.

The Journal of Consumer Research (JCR) extensively covers storytelling when related to marketing; this journal has proved to contain some of the most robust articles on the topic, with both large samples and strong qualitative content simultaneously. One of the notable articles of this publication was “Titanic: Consuming the Myths and Meanings of an Ambiguous Brand.” (Brown, McDonagh, Schultz, 2010); with a dataset that covered more than 1200 A4 pages, work in an archive, background reading, exhibition attendance, family history excavation, content analysis, empirical data gathering, depth interviews, and focus groups. It provides the researcher with ideas on the different methods he can follow while inquiring about the topic. The critical insight is how ambiguity in its multifaceted forms is integral to outstanding branding and consumer meaning.

An example of an experimental approach was used by Paharia, Keinan, Avery, and Schor in “The Underdog Effect: The Marketing and Disadvantage and Determination through Brand Biography” (2010). Here, with a sample of 698 individuals and their four experiments, the authors identify two dimensions of what they define as “an underdog biography,”: the first being external disadvantage, the second passion, and determination. They argue that these biographies “are effective because consumers react positively when they see the underdog aspects of their own lives being reflected in branded products” (Paharia et al., 2010). The experimental approach is also used in the article “Some Things Are Better Left Unsaid: How Word of Mouth Influences the Storyteller.” (Moore, 2011), also published in JCR, where the author explained how language influences storytellers by increasing their understanding of consumption experiences.

Robust qualitative approaches are also presented in JCR articles that let us understand the role of storytelling in marketing and its relationships with brands. The article “Narrative and Persuasion in Fashion Advertising.” (Phillips McQuarrie, 2010) used in-depth interviews with 18 participants, one of the smallest samples of the articles covered for this study, the smallest on JCR, but with clear writing by their authors. Here, they explain how the visual properties of ads

call for different modes of engagement and explore how outrageous images can lead to either narrative transportation or immersion. Another qualitative approach, via ethnography, in-depth interviews, and study of forums was made by Russell and Schau, in their article “When Narrative Brands End: The Impact of Narrative Closure and Consumption Sociality on Loss Accommodation.” (2013). They argue that accommodation processes and post-withdrawal relationship routes depend upon the nature and closure force of the narrative characteristic to the brand and the sociality surrounding its consumption.

Besides the Journal of Consumer Research, other respected journals had shed some light on storytelling, some of them covering psychology and even food consumption besides marketing.

The articles I found on non-JCR journals tend to include smaller samples and what seems at first glance like less-robust methodologies, yet were included for their interesting relationship to storytelling and branding. For example, in the article “Brand Consumption and Narrative of the Self.” (Schembri, Merrilees, Kristiansen, 2010), published in Psychology Marketing, the authors make recognition of the experiential significance of brands and advice marketers and managers how to virtually market brands based on the narrative of the self, they used seven in-depth interviews, the smallest sample found in the articles covered in this study. In 2012, Wong, Hogg, and Vanharanata published “Consumption narratives of extended possessions and the extended self.” On the Journal of Marketing Management, where via 20 in-depth interviews, they made an interesting argument on how the extended possessions (such as gifts they have given to their loved ones) provided people with an anchoring point to increase the relative stability of their relationships with others. In a similar approach, with a sample of 20 individuals who participated in in-depth interviews in 2 different experimental conditions, Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus, Van Riel published “The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: The case of a firm-originated story” in 2013 at the Journal of Brand Management. Here, the authors’ premise through their simple experiment is that consumers who were exposed to a story describe brands in much more favorable terms and are more willing to pay more for the same product.

There are also non-JCR articles that do include robust sampling and complex analysis methods while generating unique insights into the relationship between storytelling and branding. A good example is the article “Delicious words – Assessing the impact of short storytelling messages on consumer preferences for variations of a new processed meat product.” (Fenger, Aschemann-Witzel, Hansen, Grunert, 2015), published in the journal Food Quality and Preference. Here, an experiment was conducted among a sample of 1087 individuals, the authors’ idea being that consumers who were otherwise not open to adopting a new food product became more open when the storytelling element was introduced in the equation. Another powerful story was found in the article “How to Align your Brand Stories with Your Products” (Chiu, Hsieh, Kuo, 2012), published in the Journal of Re-

tailoring, using four between-subject experiments, the authors applied 1536 questionnaires. They found that authenticity, humor, and conciseness are generally valuable in appealing readers, though brand story elements impact customer attitudes differently in experiential products.

For this content analysis, the academic authors that tackled the relationship between Storytelling, Social Enterprises, and Branding, played a significant role. A research paper that undertook the issue directly was "The stories of social entrepreneurship: Narrative discourse and social enterprise resource acquisition." (Roundy, 2014), published in the *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*. The author conducted a multi-study that involved 121 interviews, observation, and archival data, producing 2400 double-spaced pages of transcripts. The purpose of the article was to understand how narratives were used to acquire social venture resources. As a result, a framework that explained how different narrative tactics and characteristics lead the social entrepreneurs to differences in their resource acquisition success; plus, a typology of social enterprises is offered, where three narrative-types are identified: (1) personal, (2) social-good, and (3) business. Ultimately, the framework will be useful for further research to be conducted on the topic.

Other articles published in respected journals shed light on the topic of storytelling when related to social entrepreneurship. Some of them include small samples and what may qualify as less-robust methodologies. Nonetheless, they were included as they covered samples of complicated access or made a significant contribution to understanding the topics' interactions. The first one is "Venture legitimacy and storytelling in social enterprises" (Margiono, Kariza, Heriyati, 2019), a qualitative study published in *Small Enterprise Research*. This article involved a multi-case study approach, which data they collected through a two-stage interview process. The authors made a relevant contribution to the field. They examined how storytelling leads to venture legitimacy in a social entrepreneurship context; plus, they provided a framework that contemplates the interaction between storytelling and venture legitimacy in this domain, which will be useful for other researchers. On the same avenue, the research paper "Identity, storytelling and the philanthropic journey" (Maclean, Harvey, Gordon, Shaw, 2015), which was published in *Human Relations*, the study involved twenty interviews to super-wealthy individuals with a minimum net worth of £10m, and some of them exceeding £100m, a sample of complicated access to most researchers. The authors developed a foundational theory of philanthropic identity narratives and explored how these narratives are structured around the framework of a journey of transformation, from entrepreneurship to philanthropy. They identify the turning-points and explain how following the script of a transformation journey makes the wealthy entrepreneurs feel empowered by generating a self- and socially oriented legacy.

Finally, an article that I consider vital for this content analysis was found in "Unpacking the Biographical Antecedents of the Emergence of Social Enterprises: A Narrative Perspective" (Chandra Shang, 2017), which was pub-

lished in *VOLUNTAS: International Journal Of Voluntary And Nonprofit Organizations*. There, the authors examined the biographical narratives of 317 individuals that self-identified as social entrepreneurs. They contributed by identifying a categorization of eight biographical antecedents of Social Entrepreneurs, which fall in two main classifications, social skills—collectivism, ideology, altruism, spiritualism—and economics skills—entrepreneurialism, resources, professionalism, higher education. Also, they developed a typology of Social Entrepreneurs, which contemplated combinations of the prior skills, which enables the researchers to classify the entrepreneurs in four distinct typologies: The Elite, The Social-Elite, The Commoner, The Social-Grassroots. The contribution these scholars made is a framework to be used as a tool for future research on the field, which I consider one of the crucial aspects in research of novel academic topics.

The results showed that although common wisdom shows storytelling as an obscure or mysterious topic to outsiders (even academics from other fields), it is actually in an appropriate and mature state in the marketing literature, and has even been covered in the specific case where Social Enterprises are involved. Multivariate methods have been adopted in the top journals, with extensive samples and datasets. Most of the journals' conclusions provide a similar theory as that of the literature, such as the positive effect on consumer buying behavior, increased consumption experience, and a rise in employee participation and recall rate. Others provide solid frameworks that will act as building blocks for other researchers. However, some of our findings need to undergo further investigation, such as The Underdog Effect and the harmful aspect of storytelling on workers' emotions in third-world countries. The conclusions of this study are discussed next.

## 5 Conclusion

### 5.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

This research's theoretical implications are pretty much consistent with what the literature had to say about Brand Storytelling, Marketing and Social Entrepreneurship. Theoretically, one of the first academic contributions to the field stated that organizational stories define an organization's culture, and they can be used to improve the image of the organization (Boje, 1991). The research explains how the aesthetic properties of ads call forth different modes of engagement and explore how grotesque imagery can lead to either narrative transportation or immersion. Furthermore, ambiguity in its multifaceted forms is integral to outstanding branding and consumer meaning-making, as well as myth appeal more generally. The research also showed how to align the brand stories with the products. Theoretically, aspects such as conciseness, reversal, authenticity, and humor are useful to engage the audience. However, it should be taken into account that story elements influence customer attitudes quite differently when looking for products than when they are experiencing products.

This research is an effort to understand the interaction of

Storytelling, Brands, and Social Enterprises; the specificity of the fields' interaction made it a difficult attempt. Nonetheless, by analyzing the state of the art of these topics in the academic field, it was found that fellow researchers already built the building blocks for further research. Not only did I find papers involving the interaction of the topics published in highly respected journals, but a set of tools that will come in handy for future research. Authors have developed frameworks to understand the interactions between the topics, classifications of the narratives of Social Entrepreneurs have been made, even a categorization of the biographies of the characters—the Social Entrepreneurs—with typologies is available for the researchers on the field; as we found by the content analysis, developing these tools involved thousands of hours of work and hundreds of persons involved. The result is a toolkit that will be crucial for future research.

Practically, this research covered how storytelling positively influenced both employees and consumers. Employee participation rose as a result of brand storytelling, and so did consumer positivity and willingness regarding the brand. The research suggests that these principles seem to hold when involving Social Enterprises.

## 5.2 Limitation of this Research

This research is strictly secondary, and hence some limitations exist. As mentioned previously, secondary research is a relatively more accessible form of research because the data needed is already published and available. The process of finding and collecting secondary data is often smooth but comes at a cost. Secondary data is often very generalized and unclear and may result in not much help for organizations or marketers. This research is mostly qualitative based research, but marketers usually look for more quantitative-based analysis when adopting a policy. The sample of journals used is limited; only 18 articles were used, and no books or websites on the topic were consulted, which makes the study reliable, but prone to overlook the role of storytelling, branding and social entrepreneurship in popular media. Since the sample size was small, there is a greater chance that the results and findings are flawed or not applicable to all organizations. Some of the journals used are more than ten years old, and since the marketplace is continually adapting and evolving, the data risks the chance of being out of date or old. Even though reputed journals and academic papers were used, there is a chance that the information may not be accurate or may have been disproved in the past. The data and the source need to be checked against newer alternatives or editions. Finally, there is a slight chance that some of the articles' publishing houses have not shown accurate data.

## 5.3 Strengths and Further Research

The research does have not only limitations but also several concrete strengths. The information is from highly credible, accurate, and reputable sources as they are taken from academic journals e.g., *Journal of Brand Management*, *Journal of Marketing Management*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, and some other highly ranked journals. Since the

sources are credible, there is less likelihood of incomplete or inaccurate data. The data also holds great potential to be generalized despite the short sample size of articles consulted, since it should be noted that each of the articles used great samples, in some cases over the order of hundreds, which gives each one of them the robustness I looked for. The concept of marketing and brand management proved to be essentially the same across different horizons.

This study's basic idea or objective was that the concepts of Storytelling, Branding and Social Entrepreneurship, as well as their relationship with the marketing literature. There is a high scope for further research through different avenues such as movies, folk tales, product placements, and many other forms of stories that involve brands. These lines of research hold a great potential for academics, practitioners and society, because understanding how stories work ultimately shows how humans work.

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Summary of the articles' main findings considered for this study, sorted by year of publication.

Author	Year	Journal	Title	Method	Sample Size	Key Finding
Boje.	1991	Administrative Science Quarterly.	The Storytelling Organization: A Study Of Story Performance In An Office-Supply Firm.	Ethnography (Participant Observation)	300 employees.	The author explained that the storytelling system is vital to improve employee participation as employees can recall a story more easily.
Boyce.	1996	Journal of organizational change management.	Organizational story and storytelling: a critical review.	Content Analysis	24 studies.	Organizational stories define an organization's culture, and they can be used to improve the organization's image.
Boje and Khan.	2009	Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship.	Story-branding by empire entrepreneurs: Nike, child labor, and Pakistan's soccer ball industry.	Qualitative Interviews and Textual Studies.	110 interviews.	Highlighted the harmful aspect of storytelling using Nike's case study, child labor, and Pakistan's soccer ball industry. According to the author, branding storytelling is harming the emotions of third-world workers. They have presented valuable literature to prevent the third world laborers from the harmful aspects of branding storytelling.
Schembri, Merrilees, Kristiansen	2010	Psychology & Marketing.	Brand Consumption and Narrative of the Self.	In-Depth Interviews	7 interviews.	Recognition of the experiential meaning of brands informs marketers and brand managers on how to virtually market brands.
Phillips, McQuarrie	2010	Journal of Consumer Research.	Narrative and Persuasion in Fashion Advertising.	In-Depth Interviews	18 interviews.	Consumers engage in ads to act, identify, feel, transport, or immerse. The authors explain how the aesthetic properties of ads call forth different modes of engagement and explore how grotesque imagery can lead to either narrative transportation or immersion.
Paharia, Keinan, Avery, Schor.	2010	Journal of Consumer Research.	The Underdog Effect: The Marketing of Disadvantage and Determination through Brand Biography.	Experiments (4).	Sample: 698.	The authors identify two essential dimensions of an underdog biography: external disadvantage, passion, and determination. They demonstrate that such a biography can increase purchase intentions, real choice, and brand loyalty. They argue that these biographies are useful because consumers react positively when they see the underdog aspects of their lives reflected in branded products.
Brown, McDonagh, Schultz.	2010	Journal of Consumer Research.	Titanic: Consuming the Myths and Meanings of an Ambiguous Brand.	Work in an archive, background reading, exhibition attendance, family history excavation, content	1200 A4 pages (dataset).	Ambiguity in its multifaceted forms is integral to outstanding branding and consumer meaning-making, as well as myth appeal more generally.

				analysis, empirical data gathering, depth interviews, and focus groups.		
Moore.	2011	Journal of Consumer Research.	Some Things Are Better Left Unsaid: How Word of Mouth Influences the Storyteller.	Experiments (4).	Thousands.	Compared to non-explaining language, explaining language influences storytellers by increasing their understanding of consumption experiences. Understanding dampens storytellers' evaluations of and intentions toward positive and negative hedonic experiences but polarizes storytellers' evaluations of and intentions toward positive and negative utilitarian experiences.
Chiu, Hsieh, Kuo.	2012	Journal of Retailing.	How to Align your Brand Stories with Your Products	Four between-subjects experiments.	1536 questionnaire s.	Authenticity, conciseness, reversal, and humor are generally useful in engaging readers, though brand story elements influence customer attitudes differently for search versus experience products.
Wong, Hogg, Vanharanta .	2012	Journal of Marketing Management.	Consumption narratives of extended possessions and the extended self.	In-Depth Interviews	20 interviews.	Extended possessions acted as continuous reminders of these extended selves. Hence, the extended possessions provided people with an anchoring point to increase the relative stability of their relationships with others, thereby countering the labile nature of ever-changing identity narratives.
Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus , van Riel.	2013	Journal of Brand Management.	The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: The case of a firm-originated story.	Experiment (In-depth interviews in 2 experimental conditions).	20 interviews.	Consumers exposed to a story describe brands in much more favorable terms and are more willing to pay more for the product or service.
Russell, Schau.	2013	Journal of Consumer Research.	When Narrative Brands End: The Impact of Narrative Closure and Consumption Sociality on Loss Accommodation.	Ethnography, in-depth interviews, study of forums.	Hundreds.	Accommodation processes and post-withdrawal relationship trajectories depend upon the nature and closure force of the narrative inherent to the brand and the sociality that surrounds its consumption.
Roundy, P. T.	2014	Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship.	The stories of social entrepreneurship: Narrative discourse and social enterprise resource acquisition	Multi-study, inductive, theory-building design.	121 interviews, observation and archival data. Producing 2400 double-spaced pages of transcripts.	Offers a typology of social enterprise narratives, identifies three narrative-types (personal, social-good and business) and shows their distinctive elements; the author proposes these narratives are the building blocks for communication with stakeholders.

Gilliam, Flaherty.	2015	Industrial Marketing Management.	Storytelling by the sales force and its effect on buyer-seller exchange	Qualitative inquiry and extensive literature search.	21 interviews.	Authors identify core themes and a model for storytelling in sales and point to managerial implications of storytelling.
Maclean, M., Harvey, C., Gordon, J., & Shaw, E.	2015	Human Relations.	Identity, storytelling and the philanthropic journey.	Qualitative.	20 interviews.	Authors offer a theoretical understanding of entrepreneurs that turn into philanthropists. They offer a foundational theory of philanthropic identity narratives; which are structured according to the metaphorical framework of the journey.
Fenger, Aschemann-Witzel, Hansen, Grunert.	2015	Food Quality and Preference.	Delicious words – Assessing the impact of short storytelling messages on consumer preferences for variations of a new processed meat product.	Experiment.	Sample: 1087.	Consumers who otherwise were not open for a new food product became more positive when storytelling was introduced.
Chandra, Y., & Shang, L.	2017	Unpacking the Biographical Antecedents of the Emergence of Social Enterprises: A Narrative Perspective.	VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary And Nonprofit Organizations.	Gioia's methodology and principal component analysis.	317 narratives of self-identified social entrepreneurs .	The authors offer a categorization system that consists of eight biographical antecedents of Social Entrepreneurs, four are categorized into social skills, and four others are categorized into economic skills. They also developed a typology of different combinations of the Social Entrepreneur's social skills and economic skills.
Margiono A., Kariza A., Heriyati P.	2019	Venture legitimacy and storytelling in social enterprises.	Small Enterprise Research.	A multiple case-study.	2 Cases, through non-structured interviews.	The authors used a narrative transportation approach to show how storytelling may be used to increase legitimacy in a social entrepreneurship context. They prescribe actions for practitioners, and provided a conceptual framework that links storytelling and venture legitimacy to social entrepreneurship.