Title: Solving the mystery of storytelling in destination marketing: A systematic review.

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Abstract: Storytelling has been prevailing in the tourism industry and considered as an effective communication tool. However, the knowledge of what and how stories connected to destinations are told and utilized is still fragmented and ambiguous. To acquire a comprehensive understanding of storytelling in the context of destination marketing, this study employs a systematic review methodology to analyze academic journal articles on relevant topics published and indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus databases from 2004 to 2023. Three research themes have been identified including: 1) analysis and deconstruction of stories; 2) examination of storytelling consequences; and 3) development of conceptual frameworks for storytelling. Moreover, storytelling elements are also disentangled and extracted. The findings suggest that research on storytelling in destination marketing is still in its emerging stage, lacking appropriate and comprehensive theoretical underpinnings and predominantly relying on qualitative analysis. The results indicate the design and implementation of storytelling in destination is a complex and integrated process that combines story content, storyteller and character, modality, and dissemination channels, involving collaboration among various stakeholders. This study also provides a summary of implications for researchers and practitioners in tourism destination area, offering further recommendations for future studies.

Keyword: Storytelling, Narrative, Destination Marketing, Literature Review, Destination Storytelling.

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