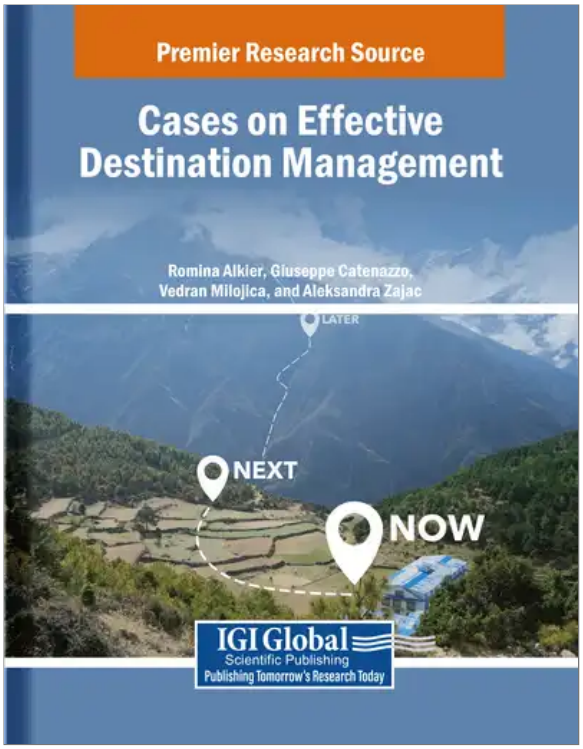

The Shortest Form of Storytelling in Destination Marketing: Tourism Slogans of the European Capitals

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Abstract

This chapter explores the role of storytelling in destination marketing and management, focusing on the utilization of slogans to enhance distinctiveness of tourist destinations, particularly European capitals. It discusses the application of narrative techniques in marketing to distinguish places in tourism market. The research identifies a gap in current understandings of how slogans can be employed in creating compelling destination brands that resonate with potential visitors. Through qualitative analysis of various slogans, the study highlights the importance of unique brand identities for destinations, which establish emotional connections with the audience. The findings suggest that storytelling transcends traditional advertising, offering a branding tool that can impact a destination's appeal and competitiveness. The chapter concludes by emphasizing the strategic value of narrative in destination marketing, proposing that effective storytelling can lead to more successful branding efforts and a stronger connection with target audiences.

1. Introduction

The significance of storytelling in destination marketing is increasingly acknowledged within scholarly circles. Defined as a rapid and influential method for capturing interest, storytelling facilitates a connection with consumers, influencing their perceptions and decisions through brand narratives (Aaker et al., 2010; Rose, 2011). Kvítková and Petrů (2021) highlights storytelling adoption by destination marketing organizations to foster emotions and empathy and to cultivate positive behavioral intentions. Narratives, when enclosed in slogans, are instrumental in distinguishing tourist destinations within a competitive marketplace (Ferreira, 2022). Kotler and Keller (2006) claim that slogans serve as cues or reference points for customers, elucidating the essence and uniqueness of brands. Aleksandrova (2019) examines slogans as pivotal communication tools for tourist destinations, analyzing their influence on visitation intensity through a literature review and statistical analysis of slogans, emphasizing their critical role in brand communication. Furthermore, Reinhold et al. (2023) advocate for a narrative perspective in marketing and destination management, focusing on stewardship, collaboration, and enriched experiences.

While existing studies (Adamus-Matuszyńska, 2021; Cooper & Buckley, 2021) have delved into the visual and informational components of destination marketing, the strategic use of narrative within slogans – especially its impact on destination perception and choice – in Europe remains underexplored. This oversight represents a theoretical and practical gap in communicating the effectiveness of destination marketing strategies. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by systematically examining the role of storytelling in destination marketing slogans in Europe. It aims to investigate the narrative techniques employed in successful slogans and their possible impact on the audience. By integrating insights from literature with an analysis of exemplary slogans, this research aspires to delineate the storytelling functions that significantly enhance destination appeal. Besides, this book chapter attempts to provide the readers with a unique European perspective, analyzing the slogans of European capitals. Throughout history, these major cities have usually been considered the ‘gems’ of their countries, and the word “capital” itself stems from “caput”, a Latin word meaning “head”. As a result, capital cities have been considered not only as the cultural, governmental and economic centers of their countries, but also as the flagship cities of their national tourism.

This attempt is timely as the tourism industry faces increasing challenges from global competition, digital marketing evolution, and shifting consumer preferences (Ojha, 2022). Understanding the role of storytelling in shaping destination images can provide critical insights for destination marketers and managers aiming to navigate these complexities. Besides, this study aims to contribute to the academic literature by providing a deeper understanding of narrative effectiveness in destination marketing and offering actionable insights for practitioners to craft more compelling marketing messages. By highlighting the strategic importance of narrative elements in slogans, this research underscores the potential for storytelling to elevate destination marketing beyond conventional approaches, fostering a more profound connection with potential visitors.

This chapter explores how storytelling impacts destination marketing. First, we set the scene by discussing storytelling's role in tourism. Next, we review existing research to show what's already known and where gaps lie. After that, our methodology section explains how we studied slogans. Then, we share our findings on how storytelling makes destinations stand out. The discussion connects these findings with broader marketing theories. Finally, we wrap up with a conclusion that highlights our main points and suggests future research directions.

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