Use of Counterfactual Thinking Technique in Storytelling: Effect on Affect and Aesthetic Judgement of a Destination/an Attraction

Kexin Wang
Purdue University, wang3648@purdue.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/purc

Recommended Citation
https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/purc/2019/Posters/39
The Use of Counterfactual Thinking Technique in Storytelling: Effect on Affect and Aesthetic Judgement of a Destination

Xinran Lethto, PhD; Alei Fan, PhD; Kexin Wang, BS; Li-Han Huang, MS; Tianyi Li, MS
Hospitality and Tourism Management, College of Health and Human Science, Purdue University

PURPOSE
The project is to addresses a significant literature gap in hospitality and tourism marketing with the use of counterfactual thinking strategy, a content strategy that forms an effective brand storytelling mechanism. Hospitality and tourism business offerings are complex with multi-components and a high degree of intangibility. Therefore, content marketing when well executed will play a critical role in terms of tangiblizing our experience-based products and building brand equity.

In this project, we aim to identify specific visual traits in brand storytelling that can optimally engage consumers. These identified traits will become useful parameters for the hospitality business in their effort to create compelling brand stories.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Counterfactual Thinking & Storytelling
Counterfactual thinking (CFT) refers to psychological activities regarding alternatives to past events, or thoughts of what could have been. He uses of CFT in advertisements is beneficial as it increases the quality of argument and thus enhances the advertisement message persuasiveness. According to Pulizzi (2012), Storytelling or content marketing is the creation of relevant and compelling content by the brand itself on a consistent basis.

Visual & Textual Content Design
Based on the former studies of visual and textual content design throughout tourism area, visual information and textual information both have an effect on how visitors judge destinations; visual information is posited to influence affective attitudes through imagery information processing, while verbal information is posited to influence cognitive attitudes through discursive information process. The effect would be more positive when using visual and textual information together.

METHODLOGY
We are going to conduct a survey to measure the effect on affect of counterfactual storytelling. Based on a theoretical model we constructed (see picture 1), we designed a questionnaire with three scenarios.

In this survey, besides the defaulted scenario, one of the three scenarios will be randomly distributed to participants. Each participant will be exposed to the default scenario and then be directed to one of the three groups as shown below:
- Defaulted scenario: Factual picture (see picture 2) and plain description will be provided
- Group 1: Control group
- Group 2: the counterfactual story will be provided
- Group 3: counterfactual story and the counterfactual picture (see picture 3) will be provided

FUTURE OUTLOOK
At first, we planned to use eye tracking machine and arousals to collect data. However, due to the inaccuracy of eye-tracking and arousal and the potential existence of multiple intervening factors, we decided to use questionnaires to collect data. The questionnaire contains questions pertaining to experience, enjoyment, aesthetics, intention to visit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
This research was partially supported by a scholarship offered by The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR). We thank our colleagues from the Department of Consumer Science, who provided valuable equipment that greatly assisted the experiment and research.