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*Research Paper*

## **Brand Storytelling and Transmedia: A Systematic Literature Review.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the consumer universe, young people from Generation Z are sensitive and open to new immersive experiences related to media technology, creating both challenges and opportunities for brands. Academic scholars and marketing professionals have been studying this new media consumer and the way it interacts with the brand universe. Continuing this line of research, this article develops a systematic literature review focused on brand storytelling and transmedia applied in the marketing process, targeting Generation Z consumers. Based on a sample of 125 articles on these topics, the results demonstrate the importance of transmedia storytelling as a strategy that allows brands to expand their narratives across different platforms, creating immersive experiences for Generation Z consumers, who value authenticity and interactivity. The social interaction generated through online storytelling strengthens the emotional connection with the brand and promotes the development of communities, which are essential for co-creating content. Based on these results, an interaction model based on the Transmedia Brand Storytelling strategy is proposed.

**Keywords:** Marketing; Transmedia; Storytelling; Brand; Generation Z.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Different technologies and their mastery by individuals lead to new challenges in creating and disseminating messages. The global dissemination of social media platforms currently presents numerous technological changes that have increased the offer of devices and formats, as well as changed the boundaries of the media industry itself, as the internet has opened up new ways of distributing content and alternatives for capturing audiences' attention (Atarama-Rojas et al., 2020). Digital natives, Generation Z consumers grew up with online digital technology and depend on it for various purposes, whether professional, educational, or personal (Florenthal, 2019). These consumers discuss and give their opinions on different platforms about market news, guided by values that allow them to select, avoid, or criticize brands, according to their social position, degree of transparency, and honesty, creating new dynamics and challenges for organizations (Nguyen et al., 2023). Prioritizing the brand's fundamental values and ensuring the authenticity of its narrative through messages that promote these values are factors that greatly influence the relationship between the brand and Generation Z (Nguyen et al., 2023).

Consumer engagement with online digital media has gained increasing attention. Given their influence on individuals' immersive experiences, allowing for new opportunities and challenges for brands to build relationships with their audiences, stories are a good way to convey a brand message and connect with the recipient (Wallace et al., 2022). By telling the story of a brand, institution, product or service using Transmedia Storytelling, the marketing strategy encourages individuals to seek and share new information and establish connections through content spread across different media, platforms and devices to reach the maximum number of audiences, promoting a unique and coordinated experience, taking advantage of the specific contribution of each medium to enhance the story (Freeman & Gambarato, 2018).

In the current context of the co-creation paradigm, the consumption experience does not reside in the object of consumption (products or services). Still, in relationships and the sharing of consumption experiences, transmedia storytelling can help build awareness, understanding, empathy, recognition, recall, and meaning to the brand (Kemp et al., 2023). For Hong et al. (2022) the Transmedia brand, storytelling is a branding tool that can attract consumers. Within the scope

of the marketing process, one of the main challenges facing brands is to identify and characterize the interactions that consumers undertake with the brand in the different communication channels in which the storytelling develops, seeking to understand how the brand can generate value in terms of creating a positive “image” and its online “notoriety”.

In a marketing and communication environment that is increasingly interactive and based on multiple platforms and media, the transmedia storytelling strategy requires reflection on its impact on how consumers engage with and shape their experience with the brand (Feiereisen et al., 2021). As the transmedia brand storytelling strategy is used in marketing and corporate communication to interact with and engage the public, it can favourably enhance consumers' beliefs, emotions, and attitudes and promote an increase in personal connection with the company (Kemp et al., 2021). To this end, we aim to identify and analyze the academic studies on the theme of Transmedia Brand Storytelling, to find an answer to the following research questions or point out paths for new studies that can answer them:

- What is the contribution of the Transmedia Storytelling strategy to building relationships between brands and young people from Generation Z?
- What is the influence of the brand's narrative on young people from Generation Z when exposed to its messages through a specific online platform?

To answer these research questions, this article is structured as follows. In the next chapter, we present the systematic literature review methodology and explain how we reached our working sample. In the following chapter, we present the results, divided into three parts: descriptive statistics, qualitative analysis, and theoretical framework. Finally, we end with the conclusions.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The systematic literature review (SLR) is a methodology that results from a scientific research process to identify, select, and synthesize all previously published research evidence, providing a solid starting point for new lines of research, based on risk reduction and transparency in all stages of the article review process (Liberati et al., 2009). Table 1 explains the research process of an SLR, dividing it into three steps (Saur-Amaral et al., 2013).

**Table 1.** Steps to perform an SLR

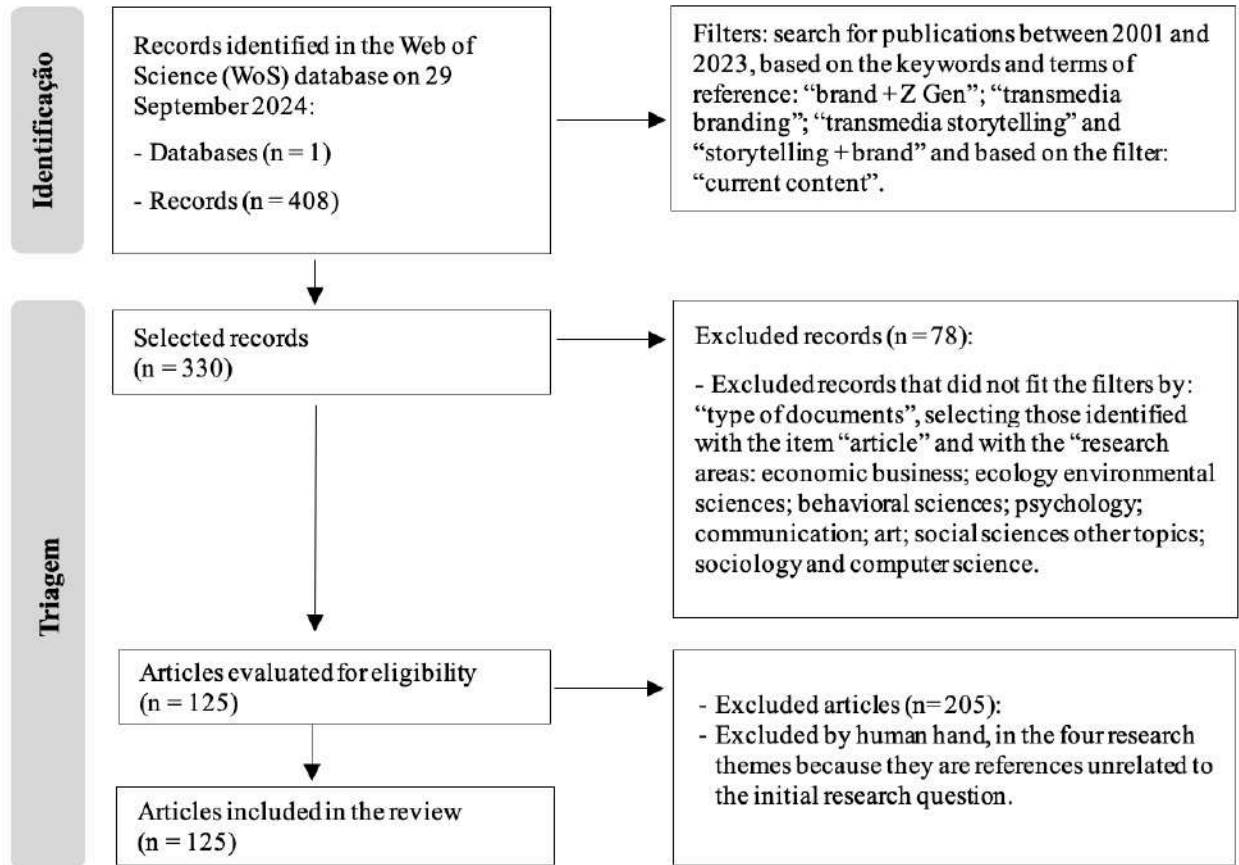
Steps	Methodological Considerations
1. Planning the review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why conduct a review?</li> <li>• Prepare a review proposal.</li> <li>• Develop a review protocol.</li> </ul>	Previous studies may be required to better understand the field of research and identify alternative ways in which the topic has been approached. The review protocol should contain a conceptual discussion of the research problem. Keywords and search terms should be identified.
2. Conducting the review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify research.</li> <li>• Select studies.</li> <li>• Assess article quality.</li> <li>• Extract data.</li> <li>• Synthesize data.</li> </ul>	It should be a comprehensive and unbiased study, rigorously applying the review protocol and inclusion/exclusion criteria. The study should be described in sufficient detail to ensure replicability. Disagreement between reviewers should be explained and consensus should be reached. The study output should be a complete list of relevant results.
3. Reporting and dissemination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the report.</li> <li>• Dissemination in practice.</li> </ul>	It must be clear and effective. Two types of reports can be produced: descriptive analysis of all results (most relevant authors, journals, etc.) and thematic analysis (emerging themes and research questions).

Source: (Adaptado de Saur-Amaral et al., 2013)

Based on the methodology described in Table 1 and also considering the flow diagram for new PRISMA 2020 systematic reviews, this SLR will follow a methodological protocol for article selection according to the variables in Figure 1 (Lamé, 2019; Page et al., 2021).

The search was carried out in the Web of Science (WoS) database, using the search terms as topics: brand\* AND gen\* Z; “transmedia branding”; “transmedia storytelling”; brand\* AND storytelling. The use of WoS allowed us to obtain publications in the most varied research areas, providing qualitative and quantitative data. Although in recent years, there has been a significant growth in the sources and metrics of bibliographic data available, WoS remains one of the main and most comprehensive sources of publications used worldwide (Pranckutė, 2021).

The first stage of this research was carried out on September 29, 2024, through the Web of Science platform, starting with identifying and selecting articles based on a protocol applied in four distinct research phases (Figure 1). The time horizon used was 2001 and 2023.



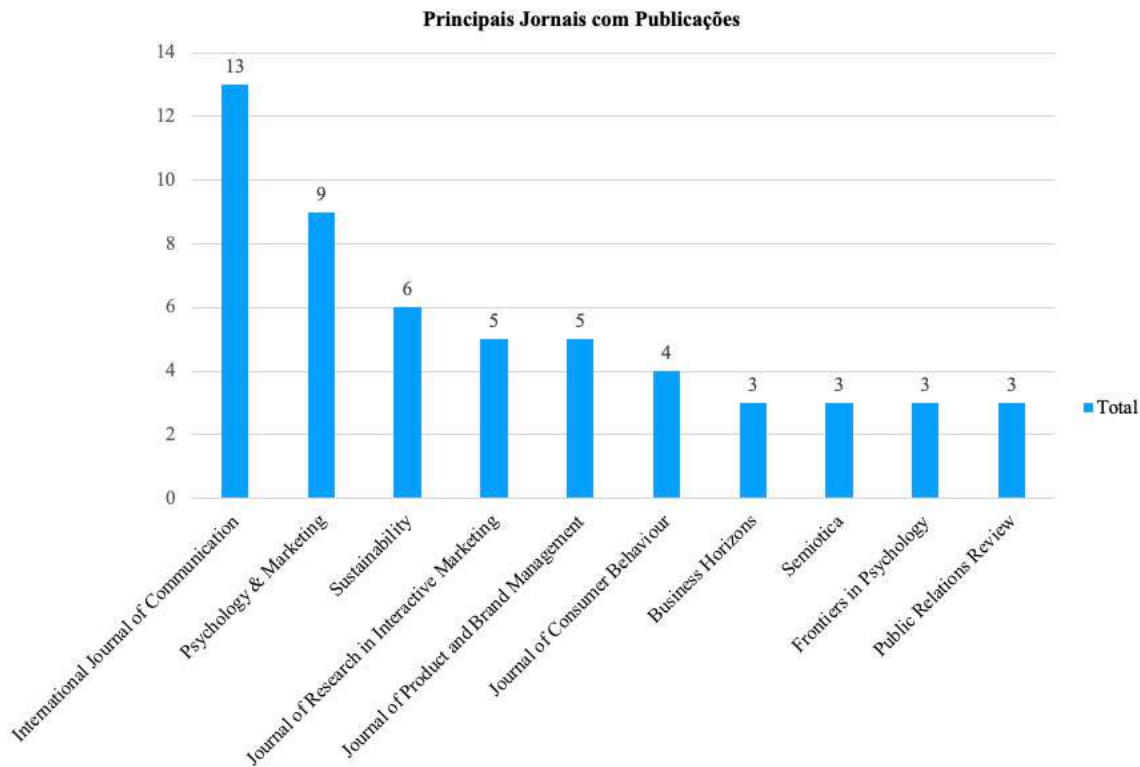
**Figure 1.** Search overview based on PRISMA template

The first stage of research resulted in a selection of articles published between 2001 and 2023, using the topics brand\* AND gen\* Z, “transmedia branding”, “transmedia storytelling”, and brand\* AND storytelling, obtaining a total of 408 articles. Subsequently, the search was refined using the “document type” filters, in which all records classified with the items “article” and “review article” were selected, as well as all documents in academic publications classified as “current content” and that fell within the “research areas” identified in Figure 1. Next, the articles were exported to EndNote 21 for a more detailed analysis of their content based on abstract reading. In this phase, 205 references were excluded, as they were not related to the initial research question. A total of 125 records were selected for the analysis of the full texts.

### 3. RESULTS

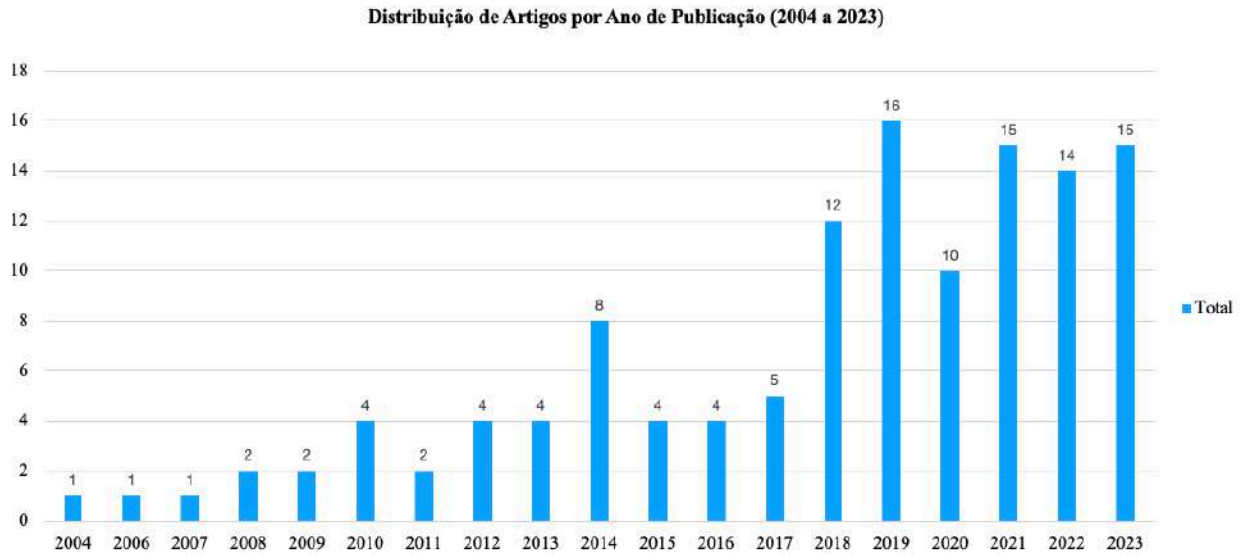
#### 3.1 Descriptive statistics

The final sample consists of 125 articles. The following journals stand out (see Figure 2): International Journal of Communication (13), Psychology & Marketing with nine articles (9), Sustainability (6), Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing (5), and Journal of Product and Brand Management (5).



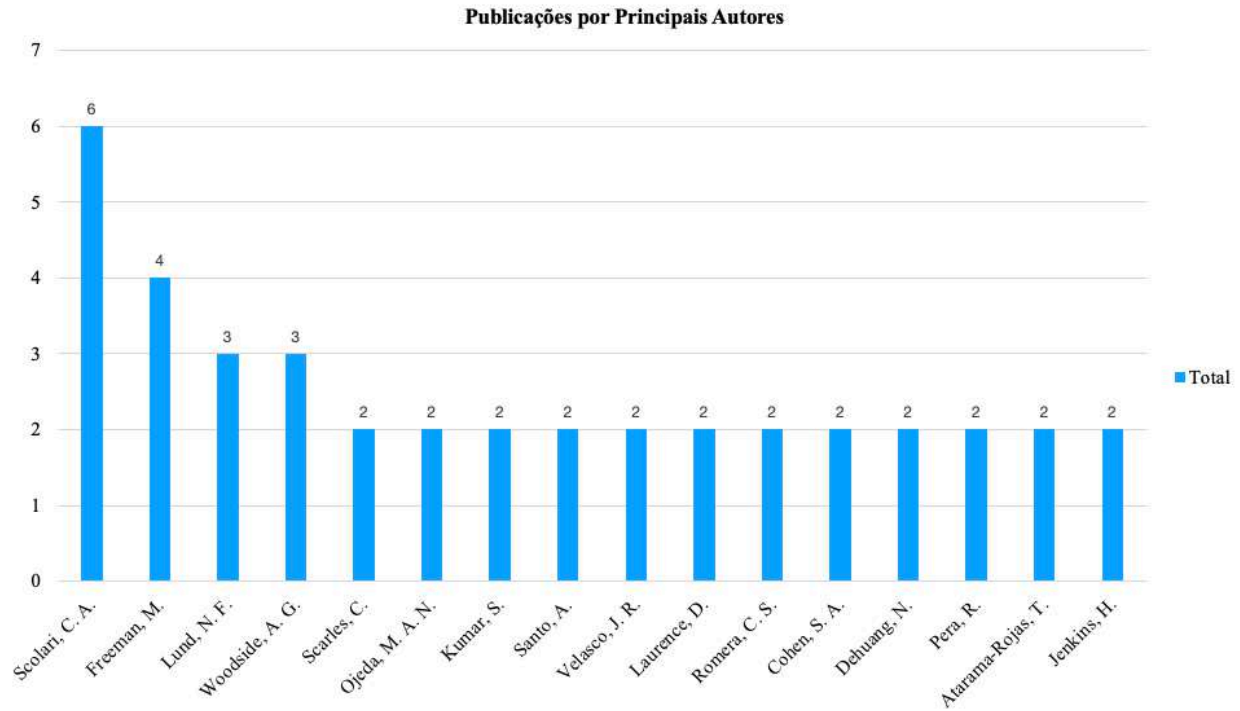
**Figure 2.** Top Ten Journals with Publications

The distribution of the number of articles per year shown in Figure 3 shows a moderate growth trend from 2004 to 2017, except 2014, which registered an atypical increase. From 2018 to 2023, an average of 15 articles were published each year.



**Figure 3.** Distribution of Articles by Year of Publication (2004 to 2023)

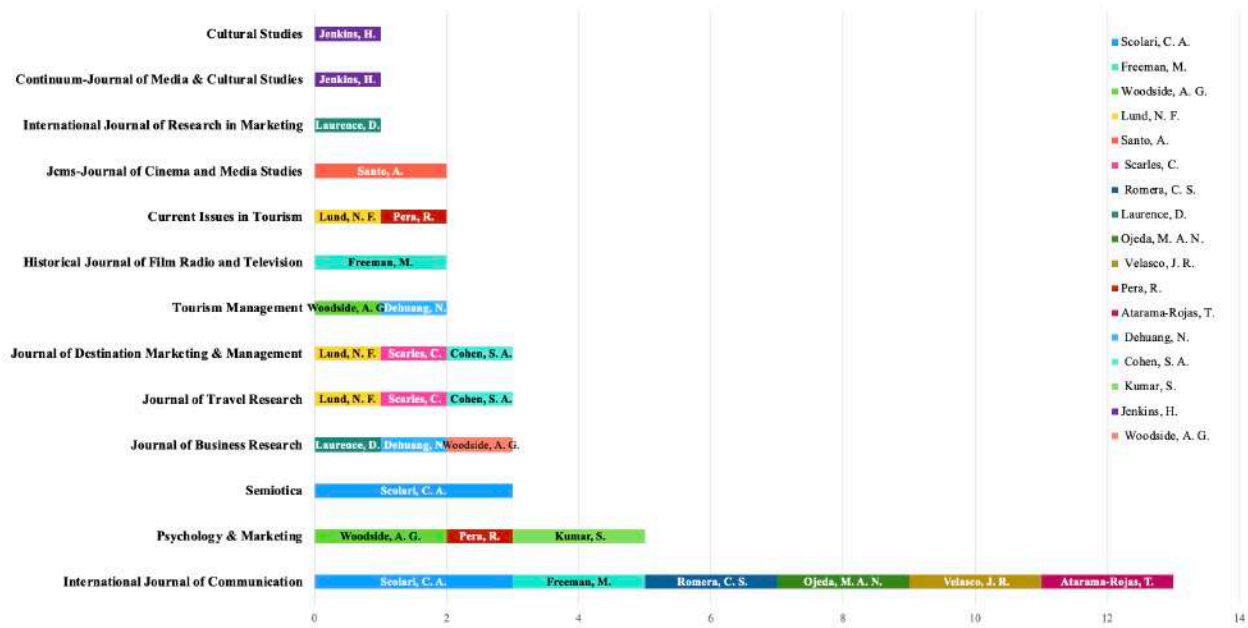
A total of 291 authors published articles individually or in groups linked to the themes of Brand, Z Generation, Transmedia Branding, Transmedia Storytelling, Brand Storytelling, and 16 authors stand out individually, representing a total of 40 publications, as shown in Figure 4. With the largest volume of published articles, the authors Carlos Scolari (6), Matthew Freeman (4), Niels Frederik Lund, and Arch Woodside (3) stand out, followed by a group of 12 other authors with two publications each.



**Figure 4.** Publications by Main Authors

When checking the correspondence of the main authors by journals, Niels Frederik Lund stands out as the author with more publications in different journals (three articles in “Current Issues in Tourism”, “Journal of Destination Marketing & Management”, and “Journal of Travel Research”). Most of the remaining authors have, on average, two or more publications in different journals, as can be seen in Figure 5.





**Figure 5.** Top Authors by Publications in Journals

### 3.2 Qualitative analysis

The full texts of the articles included in the sample were analyzed using NVivo software, and the relevant aspects are presented below.

#### 3.2.1 Brand concept

A brand is based on symbols and signals that can be materialized through a name, icon, social, cultural, and sensory elements that allow the development of relationships with meanings for a specific audience público (Kim & Kim, 2023). Consumers use brands in different ways, and they can be consumed due to the symbolism and meanings they represent and convey through a factual connection with something the consumer aspires to achieve (Woodside, 2010).

They find value in the brand through their personal experience, which is very individual. The assessment made by consumers, according to their experience with the brand and according to the values and actions that it develops, allows the creation of Brand Capital, a concept that identifies the set of assets that are associated with the name and/or symbol of a brand: brand awareness; brand image; brand loyalty; perceived quality; brand associations, as well as other assets. Brand Capital allows the entity that manages it to create qualitative and quantitative capital, reflected in an increase in value for the brand and the consumer. Two important points stand out in this process: Brand Awareness and Brand Image (Aaker, 2011).

For Longwell (1994) Brand Image represents the set of perceptions the consumer has of a certain brand that are reflected in the associations that the consumer makes in their memory. It is important to note that these associations correspond to the brand's attributes, benefits and attitudes (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Associations that define the Brand Image

Research Topic	Final Number Selected Articles
brand* AND gen* Z	26
“transmedia branding”	11
“transmedia storytelling”	23
brand* AND storytelling	65

Source: Adapted from Longwell (1994)

Brand Awareness reflects the customer's ability to recognize and remember the brand under certain conditions. The consumer gradually acquires and consolidates knowledge about the brand, which determines the brand's success and, consequently, its value as an asset (Kim, 2012; Lane Keller, 2013; Macdonald & Sharp, 2000).

In creating Brand Awareness, brands need to develop a personality that individuals understand and accept (Kim, 2012; Schmitt, 2012). The brand is no longer limited to mere words or images; it is the total delivery of an experiential promise to consumers, helping them write their life stories (Papadatos, 2006).

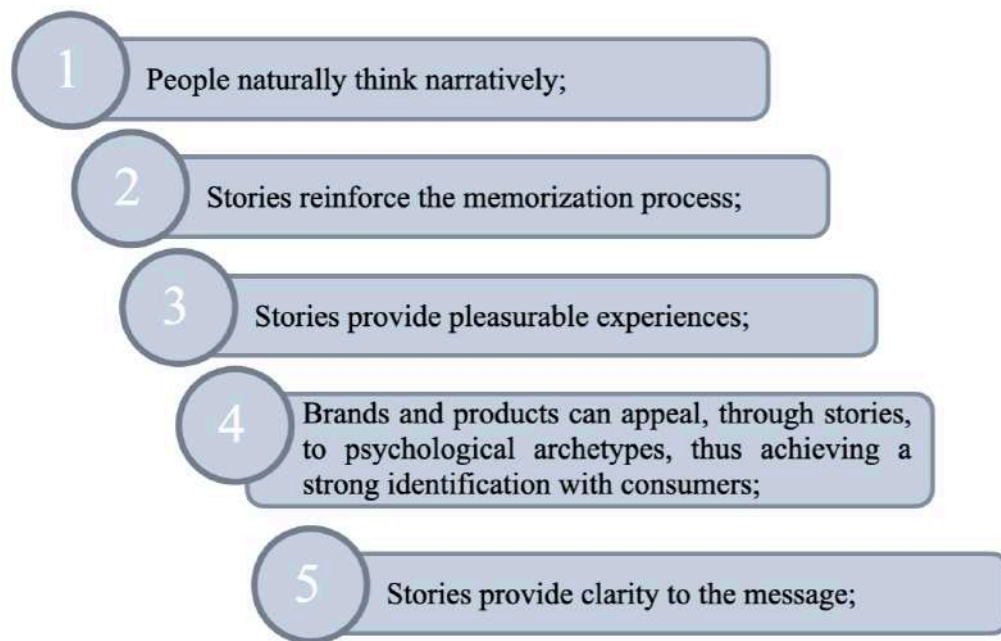
A brand is a product or service with a story attached to it, and its product can be understood as a channel through which consumers can experience the stories that the brand sells (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021). For Ganassali and Matysiewicz (2021) storytelling has become a fundamental instrument to operationalize the strategy of developing brand value for the consumer, as narratives strongly support the mythical performance of a brand, as customers consume its products and relive the stories related to them.

### 3.2.2 Brand Storytelling

Brand storytelling refers to a realistic or fictional framework in which a brand can be embedded to convey a story about its business, its founder, mission and values, and the functional and

emotional benefits of its offering in the market. It can also address social tensions, desires, and anxieties and, when applied to brand management, stories can lead consumers to attribute meaning to products and the brand (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021). Storytelling is a fundamental human activity, as it provides the primary mechanism by which people construct and understand representations of the world and, consequently, share these perceptions with each other (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021).

Stories are the production of the storyteller, a storyteller's account of an event or sequence of events. On the other hand, a narrative is one or more stories that the consumer interprets, according to their knowledge, attention, and personality. Interpretation thus constitutes an act of consumption, through which a story is converted into a narrative (Lund et al., 2018). In this context, storytelling can be defined, in a broader sense, as “transmitting messages and sharing accumulated knowledge and wisdom, to help live and explain the world around us”, allowing people to connect through ideas that give them a purpose, given that stories go far beyond the cognitive level, operating on an emotional level (Dias & Cavaleiro, 2022).



**Figure 6.** Main arguments for the storytelling strategy

Source: Adapted from Dias and Cavaleiro (2022)

Stories persuade, create meaning, and demonstrate user experiences because, compared to analytical persuasion, brand narrative persuasion seeks to determine a stronger change in an audience's attitudes and intentions and promote more lasting effects (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021). Therefore, persuasive brand management advocates the need to work on and interpret the brand's meanings and its impact on the persuasion of different audiences (internal and external) to achieve a co-creation of the brand image that is consistent with the business model of the organization it represents, with the brand narrative and the consequent storytelling strategy representing central points in the management of the brand (Iglesias & Bonet, 2012). Consequently, and also according to Dias and Cavaleiro (2022), storytelling has become a fundamental marketing tool, as it uses narrative to connect the brand to customers, focusing on sharing the values it represents through five arguments, as shown in Figure 6.

The storytelling strategy is a practice through which companies apply narrative structures to brand content, with the structure of a story typically consisting of three key elements: (1) the moral essence, (2) the characters, and (3) the plot, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Structure for Story Building

Attributes	They relate to the performance of the product, the aspects that characterize the product or service and what the consumer thinks the product is or has;
Benefits	They correspond to what consumers think the brand can do for them;
Attitudes	They are global evaluations of the brand and depend on the consumer's considerations about the brand's Attributes and Benefits. In other words, they are formed by the direct experience of the relationship between the consumer and the brand.

Source: Adapted from Dessart and Standaert (2023)

Whenever a brand tells a story, it conveys a series of values, and individuals are free to choose stories and brands from among those on the market (Scolari, 2018). According to Scolari (2018), a brand's storytelling strategy is essential to define its positioning in the market and build customer loyalty by sharing a set of values. If a brand seeks to position itself in this space by defending specific values, its competitors need to create different narratives that may be based on the same or other values. Therefore, this strategy, also called brand storytelling, which considers the involvement of the brand's audiences, promotes a more favourable attitude towards the brand since

consumers present deep cognitive processing and positive emotions when engaging with brand consumption stories (Hong et al., 2022).

Selecting the media that best suits the brand's objective and target audience is essential, as a story can be conveyed through different formats. Evolving from traditional forms, such as tales transmitted orally or through literature, narratives are now expressed in a variety of media, with various characteristics, with emphasis on online social media, which is frequently used to disseminate stories and which allows for the promotion of effects and attitudes in consumers with an impact on their decision-making (Dessart & Standaert, 2023). As the online environment emerged and expanded, brands became the focus of online communities, in which storytelling stood out as an effective way to stimulate engagement and motivate sharing (Pulizzi, 2012). The brand narrative flows from one user to another through platforms, such as social networks, dividing into several sub-stories and versions depending on the interests and personalities of the users (Lund et al., 2018).

### **3.2.3 Transmedia Storytelling**

The proliferation of interactive content in different media also shows us that the ways of telling stories have aligned with the needs of the public, giving rise to the concept of transmedia narrative, often also referred to as transmedia storytelling (Atarama-Rojas et al., 2020).

The construction of a transmedia storytelling strategy allows the creation of a relationship between the public and the brand, with a meaning based on sharing common values, and this brand narrative assumes its expression through different media platforms (Scolari, 2018). According to Jenkins (2010), “transmedia storytelling represents a process where the integral elements of a story are dispersed, systematically, through multiple distribution channels, to create a unified and coordinated entertainment experience, with each medium, according to its characteristics, contributing to the unfolding of the story”. A transmedia narrative can begin in a film, a book or a web series and continue in a collection of stories adapted to other platforms and formats, such as an interactive game, promoting the expansion of the original plot through new characters and events. At the same time, the audiences of this narrative also promote the expansion of the narrative world by creating new content and actions (Scolari, 2018).

Transmedia storytelling follows the concept of cross-media, which consists of adapting the same content to different platforms and media. In contrast, transmedia storytelling seeks to develop several distinct stories based on the characteristics of each medium, which, together, create a

broadier fictional universe based on a given brand (Bourgeon-Renault et al., 2019). For Scolari and Ibrus (2014), although other concepts such as “cross-media”, “multiple platforms”, “hybrid media”, “intertextual merchandise”, “transmedia worlds”, and “transmedia interactions” are integrated into the same conceptual circle and have fostered an interesting basis for research and academic debate on the themes of “media convergence”, “intermediality” and “new participatory media practices”, transmedia storytelling has become, as a concept and practice, a strategic tool widely used in media management.

In the current media consumption ecosystem, audiences are more fragmented, as they have multiple devices, means and communication platforms at their disposal, making culture participatory and expanding the narrative. Two basic characteristics of the concept of transmedia narrative, also known as transmedia storytelling strategy: the story is transmitted through different means and platforms, and it can begin, for example, in a film or book and continue to expand through a social network, a podcast, game or other platform, allowing it to develop through the integration of new events and characters, encouraging audiences to create and share new content to expand the narrative (Scolari, 2018).

Atarama-Rojas and Feijoo (2023), also state that encouraging public participation works as a loyalty strategy, as it promotes the creation of communities that like to share their experiences, expanding the transmedia narrative, according to two levels as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Levels of Brand Narrative Amplification

1) the moral essence	The moral essence of stories, represented through authenticity and credibility, are elements that make the story more powerful, as they create trust. The moral essence must be linked to business objectives, in order to convey a strong message and maintain strategic potential.
2) the characters	In strategic storytelling, it is important that stakeholders identify strongly with the characters, as this process of identification will sustain positive attitudes towards change and lead to real actions - when we empathize with the characters, we want to be and act like them.
3) the plot	In turn, the plot provides the logical structure and meaning for the story, allowing, as it unfolds and reveals a strong relationship between cause and effect, that stakeholders can identify how their actions contribute to the story, promoting its evolution or revolution.

Source: Adapted from Atarama-Rojas and Feijoo (2023)

Transmedia implies a paradigm shift from the digital revolution to the digitalization of a convergence culture, inviting us to think about the relationship between institutions, media and audiences, about the creation and flow of content, as it allows a shift from the consumption of messages in an individual and passive way to consumption actively and collectively (Bourgeon-Renault et al., 2019).

### 3.2.4 Brand transmedia storytelling

The use of traditional media consumption models, such as cross-media, in which brands share the same content across different media outlets without considering the characteristics of the medium itself when creating that content, hinders audience engagement, as it only creates redundant information and does not differentiate content (Freeman, 2016). Thus, Freeman (2016) argues that the Brand Transmedia Storytelling strategy enables a paradigm shift that seeks to respond to the current brand communication environment, which is saturated by the amount and flow of content circulating in different media formats and in which the audience has acquired greater control and experience with the media and platforms. du Plessis (2019) defines Brand Transmedia Storytelling as a communication process in which information about a brand is contextually integrated into a narrative, which in turn is dispersed into distinct stories across multiple media channels to create an interactive and engaging brand experience.

Digital technological innovation, increased interactivity, and the convergence of media platforms and means represent challenges and opportunities for professionals in the content development strategy in entertainment and education. Transmedia storytelling has been applied in promoting brands and other commercial contexts, for example, to promote, among others, films such as “The Matrix” or products such as the “Barbie and Ken” dolls from the Mattel brand (Johnson et al., 2021).

In this context, the transmedia storytelling strategy is useful for working with niches of consumers loyal to a particular brand narrative since the public's attention is focused on the story and its content, contrary to the traditional concept of media, in which the audience focuses only on the medium or platform Scolari (2018). The brand's narrative world comprises many small stories based on a broader narrative, in which the characters, contexts, and temporality may vary. Still, the main cause remains in all the stories, often inspired by narratives and myths existing in the sociocultural sphere (Bonnin & Alfonso, 2019). Of the various strategic approaches to building brand narrative concepts, Scolari (2018) it highlights six possible ones, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Concepts for Building Brand Narratives

	Type of Participation	
LEVEL 1	Participation based on interaction	- Creation of debates, dialogues, sharing of content and generation of communities that produce new stories;
LEVEL 2	Participation through production	- The creation of products similar to those developed by the entertainment industry, commonly referred to as user-generated content.

Source: Adapted from (Scolari, 2018)

Thus, stories represent a strategic tool for brand communication that benefits brands because, among other factors, they help to increase the confidence of decision-makers and customers, allow organizations to frame risks and opportunities in strategic plans, generate positive attitudes towards the brand, can facilitate how members of the organization understand a crisis and can help to better understand customers, by listening to the stories they share (Kemp et al., 2023).

According to van Laer et al. (2019), brand audiences process brand narrative content according to two categories: (1) overtly commercial content and (2) commercially disguised content. The first type of content provides a rational message, typical of analytical engagement. Still, it is presented through a story format, and these commercial stories actively attempt to persuade individuals to prefer the brand over other competing brands. The second type of story, although also commercial, does not provide a purely rational argument but rather the delivery of content in which the brand or product does not necessarily have to be exposed, allowing for a purely narrative approach in which the message and its format are oriented towards, for example, drawing attention to a social or personal problem, or even a call for individuals to have fun.

For du Plessis (2019), when a brand adopts transmedia storytelling to engage its audience, its narrative becomes the central point, with access through different means, and the audience can participate meaningfully. The story's ending can be changed according to the different expectations of individuals (Bassano et al., 2019; van Laer et al., 2019). In this context, the transmedia brand is presented as a new paradigm for marketing and communication strategy, facilitating its participation in the public's life since it allows the creation of more attractive content, differentiating this strategy from the traditional ones implemented in these areas, since audience feedback is consistently incorporated into the strategy (du Plessis, 2019). Therefore, promoting a



brand narrative culture throughout the organization can improve brand image, internal and external audience engagement, and stakeholder collaboration, improving strategic results (Kemp et al., 2023).

### **3.2.5 The impact of brand transmedia storytelling on consumer engagement**

In transmedia storytelling, audience input is essential to expand and generate greater interest in media products. The perceived quality of the audience, particularly Generation Z, about the storyline has a considerable impact on their loyalty to the brand and is guided by two factors: attitude towards the brand and brand trust. Attitude towards the brand reflects a conscious, favourable or unfavourable behaviour of a given audience towards a brand, affecting their intention to continue engaging with it. At the same time, brand trust is a critical component in forming attitudes and loyalty towards the brand, as it reflects the experiences of consumers when assessing the brand's value proposition. (Nguyen et al., 2023).

According to Nguyen et al. (2023), prioritizing the brand's core values and ensuring that the authenticity of its narrative is in line with its objectives, values, rules, and messages are factors that have a major influence on the relationship between the brand and Generation Z. For Atarama-Rojas and Feijoo (2023), the use of the concept of social audience refers to the use of different platforms for the consumption of audiovisual content, having been adapted to the study of transmedia storytelling, to understand the level of engagement and interaction of audiences with a given content, as well as the impact on the creation of an emotional bond at the level of consumption of audiovisual products.

This bond, often referred to as brand love, can be defined as the level of lasting emotional attachment that a satisfied consumer has for a given commercial brand, resulting in a relationship that is built when the consumer's attitude respects, among others, requirements such as: (1) passion for the brand, (2) attachment to the brand, (3) positive evaluations about the brand, (4) positive emotions; (5) brand identification; (6) brand trust; and (7) brand commitment (Dias & Cavaleiro, 2022).

In this context, the so-called audience or social public behaves as a point of contact that gets involved, encourages the creation of communities, and generates knowledge that promotes the expansion of the narrative and the experience based on new forms (Atarama-Rojas & Feijoo, 2023). The social public is the practical application that describes and explains the dynamics of

relationships between followers of a given fiction and how their activities generate value for a media product (Freeman, 2014).

The social public becomes important for the process of expanding the narrative, as it promotes the connection between the content and the various individuals, regardless of the level of emotional connection they may have to a brand or media product, since members with strong connections to the narrative tend to express and share their emotions in a way that influences others to want to experience those emotions (Atarama-Rojas & Feijoo, 2023).

As brands become storytellers, they can build and express a personality that humanizes them, which is essential to creating brand-consumer identification. In turn, the bond generated between individuals and the brand stems from strong symbolic and emotional meanings, which lead to personal connections and online engagement with brands, resulting in the sharing of positive feelings about the brand. This effect is further amplified if the narrative derives from user-generated content rather than brand-generated content (Dias & Cavaleiro, 2022).

The notion of consumers actively participating in the development of content and brand experiences gave rise to the concept of “prosumer”, which corresponds to the group of individual consumers who are willing and motivated to use media and technologies to recreate new ideas and content for the benefit of the brand, others, and themselves (du Plessis, 2019).

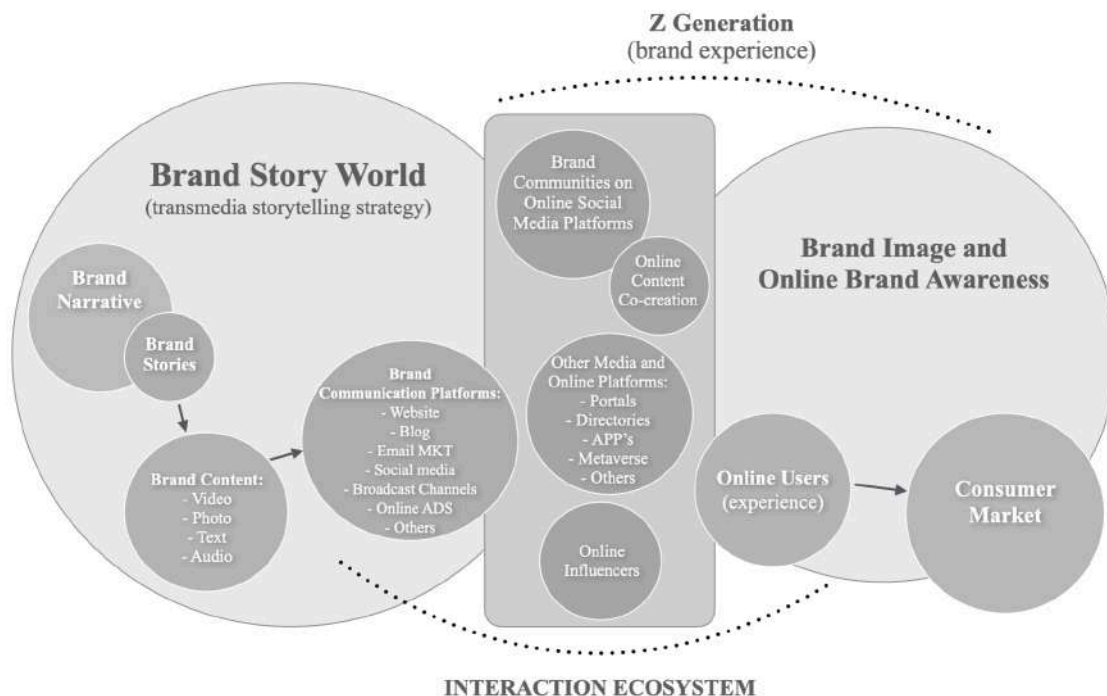
For du Plessis (2019), the ability that consumers acquired to shape brand messages represents an important change in their power while also allowing them to connect on a deeper emotional level with the brand. From this perspective of consumer-led involvement, the Brand Transmedia Storytelling strategy will make consumers an integral part of the brand story, giving them the ability to recreate the brand story and developing, as a consequence of this process, relationships with their peers, knowledge, information production, and a search for the brand. Thus, it is clear that the roles of the storyteller and the story receiver are unclear, since either the brand or its audiences can play either of these roles, resulting in an interactive co-creation process. In this case, the stories generated by the brand tend to be consistent over time, while the stories generated by users about the brand are more likely to change over time and, consequently, may give new meanings to the brand (van Laer et al., 2019).

The actions promoted by the brand’s audiences can contribute to modifying original signs and meanings and including new ones since the proposals created by the audiences function as new, parallel stories that arise from the original narrative and that they use to engage other people,

creating an interesting path for brands to adopt to expand their target audience, since the brand's transmedia narratives reach everyone: a text may interest some, and a video or other content will interest others (Ojeda et al., 2019).

When brands help their audiences, allowing them to create their own life stories based on what the brand provides them, they talk about the brand as if it represented an image of their lives, values, and attitudes. Thus, in a market saturated with commercial offers, this strategy can be differentiated for brand loyalty (Papadatos, 2006). This process can be represented visually (see Figure 7), and its components are defined in Appendix 1.

What motivates consumers to interact with different media is the promise of the extension of the story and not its repetition. Although other stories can be consumed independently, each contributes to constructing a brand narrative, allowing for different contact points. Each content created must have a universe of references so that any individual can enter and enjoy the brand narrative without depending on another medium (Long, 2009).



**Figure 7.** Theoretical Framework: Interaction model based on a Transmedia Brand Storytelling strategy

The theoretical framework reflects how the multiplicity of media has changed the logic of how audiences interact with brand content. The concept of Transmedia Narrative or Transmedia Storytelling translates into a process in which the various stories that feed the brand narrative are systematically dispersed across different platforms to reach the maximum number of audiences, promoting a unique and coordinated experience, taking advantage of the specific contribution of each medium to enhance the brand (Jenkins, 2014).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study's main goal was to identify and analyze relevant academic studies on the topic of Transmedia Brand Storytelling for Generation Z, using a SLR methodology.

Note should be taken that the SLR methodology uses only articles based on selected keywords, leaving out potentially relevant articles whose authors did not use these keywords. Only articles indexed on the WOS platform were considered, which may have left out articles indexed in other databases that were possibly relevant to the topic. Furthermore, only scientific articles were analyzed, and different publications may be included in future studies (book chapters, books, minutes).

Recognizing these methodological limitations, this SLR proposed a theoretical framework called the *Interaction model based on a Transmedia Brand Storytelling strategy*. The brand narrative comprises a set of stories created by the brand. It can encompass different characters, contexts, places, and chronologies. Still, they are interconnected through a theme transversal to the brand, supported by the essence of its business and the values it defends, and by its purpose towards customers. These stories, fed by content based on the brand's narrative and online digital media and platforms, allow interaction and engagement between consumers, offering immersive experiences that contribute to expanding the brand's image and its notoriety and creating online communities within the brand.

This interaction ecosystem is essential for the co-creation of brand content and the development of online communities, particularly within the scope of Generation Z, as social media platforms play an essential role in this ecosystem, allowing consumers of this generation the opportunity to share experiences with the brand. Given their online presence, Generation Z values immersive experiences and influences marketing strategies through their ability to interact and co-create

content, contributing to the continuous evolution of the brand narrative through the emotional connection and loyalty they develop for this one.

Several possible paths emerged for future studies related to brand transmedia storytelling (see Appendices 2 and 3). We conclude that, in spite of the gradual increase in studies focusing on the triad Marketing – Storytelling – Consumer, there is still a lack of literature to understand how brand narrative influences consumer behavior, making this area quite interesting to develop future studies (Oliveira et al., 2023). Studying the consumer of online digital media, identifying and characterizing their interactions with the brand in the online environment, resulting from the use of the Transmedia Storytelling strategy in the brand's marketing and communication process, can be useful to understand how the brand generates value from the point of view of creating a positive image and online notoriety.

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### Appendix 1. Interaction model based on a Transmedia Brand Storytelling strategy

Model Component	Model Subcomponent	Definition	Sources
BRAND STORY WORLD	Brand Narrative	The brand narrative is made up of a set of small stories, based on a broader narrative, in which the characters, contexts and temporality may vary, but the main cause remains in all stories.	(Bonnin & Alfonso, 2019)
		Thus, brand narrative results from the meaning of the various stories about it, assuming that there is a certain plot and a chronological sequence composed of its different stories.	(Iglesias & Bonet, 2012)
		A brand narrative must express the brand's values, seeking to build a strong connection between its main business and the values defended by its consumers.	(Pera & Viglia, 2016)
		Brand storytelling emerges as a strategic tool that contributes to the creation of a lasting and successful brand image.	(Donzé & Wubs, 2019)
	Brand History	A story follows a type of structure that portrays actions as events, processes, situations or states, interrelated through a certain chronological order.	(Gilliam & Flaherty, 2015)
		Thus, a brand story transmits information about it, through the creation of a plot based on a certain theme, which is composed of a sequence of events, protagonists, a certain causality and temporality.	(Solja et al., 2018)
	Brand Content	Content marketing adopts a consumer-centric approach, which seeks to create and deliver value-added, relevant and consistent content to attract and retain an audience for the brand and, consequently, drive market expansion and increased brand loyalty.	(Bazi et al., 2023)
		Brands are focused on creating captivating content that allows them to promote a narrative and, consequently, expand their influence.	(Khan, 2022)
	Brand Communication Platforms	Transmedia storytelling guarantees the user interactivity that allows them to explore the brand's content, in order to get to know its entire narrative universe, as the use of different platforms, in addition to capturing their attention, allows the implementation of innovative technologies capable of generating immersive brand experiences.	(Joy et al., 2022)



Model Component	Model Subcomponent	Definition	Sources
BRAND IMAGE AND BRAND AWARENESS	Online Users (experience)	The storytelling strategy allows users to contribute their experiences and interpretations to the brand's stories, feeling like protagonists of its own story and resulting in the creation of a participatory environment.	(Raybourn, 2014)
	Consumer Market	The narrative contemplates one or more stories that the consumer interprets, according to their knowledge, attention and personality, and this interpretation thus constitutes an act of consumption, through which a story is converted into a narrative.	(Lund et al., 2018).
		Stories allow consumers to develop awareness, understanding, empathy, recognition, memory and meaning about the brand, because when they are exposed to a brand story, they consequently show greater involvement and positive attitude towards it.	(JungHwa Hong et al., 2022)
INTERACTION ECOSYSTEM AND GENERATION Z	Brand Communities on Online Social Media Platforms	The brand's online communities are spaces where consumers interact with the brand and other consumers to ask questions, solve problems and debate new ideas. These communities allow brands to keep up with the needs of their audiences and help people identify others who share commonalities.	(Yadav et al., 2024)
		Online social media platforms strengthen interaction between members of a brand community, promoting greater proximity between them, an emotional connection with the brand and generating loyalty to it.	(Changan i & Kumar, 2024)
	Online Content Co-creation	User-generated content is an essential component of any experience through brand transmedia storytelling, as both social media platforms and other brand media should be considered free mechanisms for creating stories that enable individuals to enrich themselves. the brand's narrative world.	(Iglesias & Bonet, 2012)
		The meaning of the brand is co-created during the relationship between the brand and the consumer, as the brand image is reinterpreted by the customer at each point of contact with the brand and, consequently, this also helps to expand the brand's narrative world through the creation of new content and actions.	(Scolari, 2018)

Model Component	Model Subcomponent	Definition	Sources
INTERACTION ECOSYSTEM AND GENERATION Z	Other Media and Online Platforms	Today, the online medium assumes the main ecosystem of media convergence processes, allowing brands to take advantage of this system through transmedia storytelling strategies, as the use of different media allows the re-creation and expansion of new messages, based on collaboration between the own brand and its consumers.	(Würfel, 2014)
	Online Influencers	Members of an online brand community share values, norms and beliefs with their peers within that community, as it allows them, through individual and collaborative effort, to interact based on the creation and sharing of content with the brand itself. and with other members, resulting in a high level of involvement in evangelization activities and brand loyalty.	(Bhandari et al., 2024)
		This Generation has transformed the market and marketing, as they have a lot of influential power when it comes to the use of online technology to interact with their peers. It values different characteristics of products and services, wanting brands to provide them with great experiences, showing that interaction from consumer to consumer and from consumer to brand is essential to managing their expectations, making purchasing decisions and loyalty. to the brand.	(Mishra & Das, 2024)

## Appendix 2. Future research directions

Theme	Gap / Directions for Future Research	Source
Brand Story World	The potential that brands have to create content based on the development of a Brand Story World, the need to identify the correct approach to creating and sharing the stories that feed this narrative, as well as the analysis of consumer engagement based on these stories, open new paths for marketing strategies.	(McNely, 2017)
	Therefore, one of the challenges in implementing a brand transmedia storytelling strategy is to understand what time frame is necessary to explore the construction of a relationship between the brand and the public, as the nature of relationships requires time to develop, as well as discovering which characteristics (or types) of stories are most suitable for building these relationships and their effect in audience persuasion.	(Gilliam & Flaherty, 2015)
	There are examples in the creation of brand narratives that have successfully worked their stories in a transmedia context, of which we can highlight projects such as “The Man Your Man Could Smell Like”, by Old Spice, “The Hire”, by BMW, “The Art of the Heist”, by Audi or the “Fábrica da Felicidade” project by Coca-Cola. However, there is not enough information to understand whether these campaigns resulted in the creation of new stories and content by audiences seeking to understand the role of the “prosumer” in terms of their potential for the benefit of the brand.	(du Plessis, 2019)

Theme	Gap / Directions for Future Research	Source
Brand Image and Brand Awareness	Telling stories is already an integral part of the strategies of many entities, whether companies or other institutions. However, based on the literature reviewed, it is clear that, over time, organizations have presented little information regarding the formal use of this strategy in brand communication to build a relationship with your audience and work on your reputation.	(Dessart & Standaert, 2023)
	Therefore, it may be important to study how audiences react to the brand's transmedia storytelling strategy, trying to understand how they can be influenced to create stories based on the brand's world and what their relevance for a return to the level of consumption of its products and services, as well as understanding the impact on its image and positioning.	(Bonnin & Alfonso, 2019)
Interaction Ecosystem and Generation Z	Although the impact of a narrative on a given audience has already been explored through more traditional formats, such as literature, the press, and television, among others, there is a need to understand better the involvement of the Generation Z audience with brand stories promoted in other formats, namely in terms of digital narratives.	(Johnson et al., 2021)
	Through available technology, Generation Z consumers share their stories in different online media, such as social media platforms, making it essential to analyze their importance for building the brand narrative, its co-creation by consumers, and the impact of both on this generation's audiences	(JungHwa Hong et al., 2022)

### Appendix 3. Research Gaps

Theme	Gap
Brand Story World	- Under what circumstances can narrative be considered effective for marketing strategy.
Brand Image and Brand Awareness	- How consumers perceive the brand through narrative and how they understand its values through its stories.
Interaction Ecosystem and Generation Z	- How we can understand Gen Z consumer behavior using a brand narrative and apply this knowledge to building and managing strong customer relationships.

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