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# Developing Digital Narratives in Marketing Communication

Recep Yılmaz and Betül Başer



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# Table of Contents

<b>Foreword .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Acknowledgment .....</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	
Narratives in the Digital Age: Storytelling as a Digital Marketing Technique.....	1
<i>Bahar Dervişcemaloğlu, Ege University, Turkey</i>	
<b>Chapter 2</b>	
Who Promotes the Brand? Influencers as Narrators in Digital Marketing .....	33
<i>Elif Yılmaz, İstinye University, Turkey</i>	
<i>Tugay Sarıkaya, İstinye University, Turkey</i>	
<b>Chapter 3</b>	
The Role of Dialogue in Digital Marketing .....	57
<i>Bahar Dervişcemaloğlu, Ege University, Turkey</i>	
<b>Chapter 4</b>	
Anachrony in Digital Marketing Narratives .....	85
<i>Oğuzhan Alın, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Turkey</i>	
<b>Chapter 5</b>	
Target Audience as the “Model Reader”: The Shaping of Advertising Narratives in the Context of Personality Types .....	107
<i>Elif Ateş, Marmara University, Turkey</i>	
<i>Recep Yılmaz, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Turkey</i>	
<b>Chapter 6</b>	
Crafting Digital Narratives: A Strategic Approach to Enhancing Brand Communication and Consumer Engagement.....	125
<i>Parihar Suresh Dahake, Ramdeobaba University, Nagpur, India</i>	

## **Chapter 7**

Consumption Narratives in the Digital World: Digital Experiences of Generations X, Y, and Z.....	177
--	-----

*Betül Başer, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Turkey*

## **Chapter 8**

Impact of Digital Narratives in Marketing Communication: Strategies, Tools, Engagement, and Consumer Impact .....	199
---	-----

*Muhammad Usman Tariq, Abu Dhabi University, UAE & University College Cork, Ireland*

## **Chapter 9**

Users as the Ultimate Meaning Makers in Digital Marketing Narratives .....	227
--	-----

*Oğuzhan Alın, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Turkey*

## **Chapter 10**

Future Trends in Digital Narratives of Consumer Behavior for Takaful Through Islamic Marketing .....	253
--	-----

*Muhammad Nawaz Iqbal, Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology, Pakistan*

*Muhammad Tahir Jan, International Islamic University, Malaysia*

<b>Compilation of References .....</b>	<b>283</b>
--	------------

<b>About the Contributors .....</b>	<b>319</b>
-------------------------------------	------------

<b>Index.....</b>	<b>323</b>
-------------------	------------

# Detailed Table of Contents

**Foreword** ..... xi

**Preface**..... xiii

**Acknowledgment** ..... xv

**Chapter 1**

Narratives in the Digital Age: Storytelling as a Digital Marketing Technique..... 1

*Bahar Dervişcemaloğlu, Ege University, Turkey*

Narratology’s emergence as an academic discipline transformed our understanding of storytelling, revealing its fundamental role in human cognition and social interaction. The digital revolution has further reshaped narratives, shifting from brand-controlled messages to collaborative constructions where consumers actively participate through social media and user-generated content. While digital platforms enable personalized and interactive narratives, they also risk overwhelming audiences. Successful brands now balance strategic coherence with consumer participation, treating storytelling as a core business capability rather than just a communication tool. The future lies in blending technological innovation with authentic human connection, where ethical, adaptive narratives create meaningful brand-consumer relationships in an evolving media landscape. This study examines how digital environments have redefined narrative construction through collaborative frameworks that merge professional content with genuine audience participation.

**Chapter 2**

Who Promotes the Brand? Influencers as Narrators in Digital Marketing ..... 33

*Elif Yılmaz, İstinye University, Turkey*

*Tugay Sarıkaya, İstinye University, Turkey*

This study examines the impact of influencer content on individuals’ product purchasing behaviors, daily life practices, self-presentation, and emotional processes. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that influencers play a significant role not only as promotional tools but also in shaping individuals’ decision-making, sense of belonging, and social approval processes. Moreover, the study reveals that individuals develop a critical awareness toward media content within the context of digital culture. Overall, the results demonstrate that influencer culture produces multidimensional effects at both societal and individual levels.

### **Chapter 3**

The Role of Dialogue in Digital Marketing .....	57
---	----

*Bahar Dervişcemaloğlu, Ege University, Turkey*

The digital age has fundamentally transformed marketing from a one-way monologue into a dynamic, interactive dialogue between brands and consumers. Unlike traditional advertising, which relied on passive message dissemination, modern digital marketing thrives on engagement, co-creation, and real-time interaction. This shift is driven by technological advancements, evolving consumer expectations, and the rise of horizontally integrated media ecosystems. Today, consumers are no longer mere recipients of marketing messages but active participants who shape brand narratives through social media interactions, reviews, and user-generated content. Dialogue in digital marketing fosters trust, personalization, and long-term relationships. It moves beyond transactional exchanges to create meaningful conversations that acknowledge consumer agency and platform-specific communication norms. The future of digital marketing lies in dialogic strategies that prioritize mutual value creation over persuasion.

### **Chapter 4**

Anachrony in Digital Marketing Narratives .....	85
---	----

*Oğuzhan Alın, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Turkey*

This study examines the use of anachrony in digital marketing narratives. Anachrony is a structure that disrupts the linear flow of narrative time and occurs in the form of analepsis (flashback) and prolepsis (leap forward). Three digital commercials of Turkish Airlines, IKEA and Yapı Kredi are analyzed based on Genette's concepts of narrative time and narratological analysis method. The study shows that anachrony is not only an aesthetic preference, but also a strategy used by brands to establish an emotional connection with the target audience. Time deviations have become a meaning-making element in digital marketing narrative.

### **Chapter 5**

Target Audience as the “Model Reader”: The Shaping of Advertising Narratives in the Context of Personality Types .....	107
--	-----

*Elif Ateş, Marmara University, Turkey*

*Recep Yılmaz, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Turkey*

An advertisement presents multifaceted narratives designed to influence target audiences as a multidisciplinary marketing communication tool. For that reason, in advertising, a proper analysis of the target audience is essential. Developing narratives that are focused on the target audience is very important for persuading them by establishing an emotional bond and creating and maintaining brand loyalty. Target audience-oriented advertisements prepared with the correlation of personality types

and advertising narrative offer an interdisciplinary perspective. Based on the fact that the concept of “model reader,” which is used in narratology to refer to the reader that the author has in mind when developing a story, has a concrete counterpart in advertising in the form of “target audience,” this study attempts to define the role of the target audience in the development of advertising narratives. The effect of narratives on the target audience was discussed in the context of personality types, and how advertising strategies can be shaped was evaluated.

**Chapter 6**

Crafting Digital Narratives: A Strategic Approach to Enhancing Brand  
Communication and Consumer Engagement..... 125  
*Parihar Suresh Dahake, Ramdeobaba University, Nagpur, India*

The study investigates the different forms of craft narratives deployed by brands and its impact on brand communication and consumer engagement. The study is significant since it is set in India where digital narratology is relatively less researched and understood. The Indian context is also important since it is a rapidly growing market today in beauty and style narrative space. The results may influence a new approach towards brand communication. The two brands with long legacy are vernacular in communication, authentic, intimate, and memetic. Native narrators were found less in beauty narratives as compared to style narratives. AI generated narrators were distributed evenly in both cases but principally employed as a nonsensical voice. It is predicted that craft narratives will proliferate in the future.

**Chapter 7**

Consumption Narratives in the Digital World: Digital Experiences of  
Generations X, Y, and Z..... 177  
*Betiül Başer, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Turkey*

This study examines the transformative effect of digitalisation on consumption practices from an intergenerational perspective by comparing the responses of Generations X, Y and Z to digital marketing strategies. Based on a literature review, this qualitative study evaluated the digital media use, online shopping attitudes, social media interactions, brand loyalty and content sensitivity of the three generations. According to the findings, Generation X adopts a more cautious attitude towards digital marketing content, favouring functional and informative content. Generation Y is active in both traditional and digital channels, adopting a consumer profile that considers social proof and prioritises user experience. Generation Z, on the other hand, is more sensitive to fast, visual and personalised content, as their lifestyle is closely intertwined with the digital world. The research reveals that generational digital consumption narratives are shaped by historical, cultural and technological contexts rather than individual preferences.

## **Chapter 8**

Impact of Digital Narratives in Marketing Communication: Strategies, Tools, Engagement, and Consumer Impact ..... 199

*Muhammad Usman Tariq, Abu Dhabi University, UAE & University  
College Cork, Ireland*

This chapter examines the transformative role of digital stories in marketing communications, highlighting their strategic applications, technical equipment, audience commitment, and consumer impact. As brands apply story-counting techniques to digital platforms, stories for designing brand identity, promoting emotional connections, and improving consumer trust are significant. The chapter analyses key strategies such as interactive stories, influencer-driven content, and immersive experiences through augmented virtual reality. Tools to enable these stories are also being considered, including social media, content management systems, and AI-controlled personalization. This chapter shows how digital storytelling influences consumer behavior, loyalty, and decision-making by assessing case studies and engagement metrics.

## **Chapter 9**

Users as the Ultimate Meaning Makers in Digital Marketing Narratives ..... 227

*Oğuzhan Alın, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Turkey*

This study examines the meaning-making processes of users in digital marketing narratives from a conceptual perspective. The transformative impact of digitalization on social structures, individual life practices and corporate strategies has necessitated the development of two-way and participatory forms of communication in marketing. In this context, users have become not only consumers but also content producers and meaning-makers. Digital platforms enable users to intervene in marketing narratives through practices such as commenting, independent content production and re-presentation. In this study, how digital marketing narratives are reshaped at the individual and collective level through user participation is subjected to a conceptual evaluation from the perspective of reception aesthetics. As a result, users' contributions transform the meaning structures envisioned by brands and play a decisive role in the final meaning formation of digital marketing narratives.



## **Chapter 10**

Future Trends in Digital Narratives of Consumer Behavior for Takaful Through Islamic Marketing .....	253
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*Muhammad Nawaz Iqbal, Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology, Pakistan*

*Muhammad Tahir Jan, International Islamic University, Malaysia*

The focus of this chapter is on the future direction of the digital narratives that are key to consumer management for Takaful under Islamic marketing. All these while, the Takaful industry, which is based on Islamic principles, is subjected to new challenges and opportunities in order to transform the marketing message towards the introduction of digital transformation into the appropriate ethical and cultural values, interpreted by consumers. It highlights how digital storytelling is critical to develop consumer trust and engagement to help Takaful consumer and sustain engagement, continue to advance consumer demand for transparency, values based communications and Islamic precepts significantly impact the decision to select financial services. The chapter provides a further discussion on how technological opportunities, including the artificial intelligence, big data, and social media, can be utilized in the construction of culturally appropriate stories.

<b>Compilation of References .....</b>	<b>283</b>
--	------------

<b>About the Contributors .....</b>	<b>319</b>
-------------------------------------	------------

<b>Index.....</b>	<b>323</b>
-------------------	------------

# Foreword

The transformation of marketing communication into a narrative-centered, participatory system has compelled both scholars and practitioners to reassess how meaning, persuasion, and brand value are constructed in digital environments. Digital storytelling is no longer a stylistic choice — it has become the structural logic through which brands negotiate their identity, trust, and continuity with their audiences.

*Developing Digital Narratives in Marketing Communication* is an important scholarly response to this reality. The chapters in this volume examine how stories are built, interpreted, disrupted, and re-authored in digital settings — not by a single voice, but through multi-layered interactions among brands, influencers, platforms, and users. The book provides conceptual, methodological, and strategic frameworks for understanding narrative dynamics across generations, cultures, platforms, and digital behaviors.

This volume is edited by Prof. Dr. Recep Yılmaz and Betül Başer, two researchers whose work in narrative theory, digital communication, advertising discourse, and audience psychology has had a notable influence in Türkiye and abroad. Their editorial vision is evident in the way the chapters are curated: theory and practice are not separated — they reinforce each other. Yılmaz’s scholarship on narrative meaning-construction and Başer’s contributions to digital consumption narratives and generational communication provide an intellectual anchor that connects the entire book.

The chapters address central questions such as:

- How do influencers function as narrative agents rather than promotional instruments?
- How does the “model reader” determine the interpretive strength of a message?
- How do non-linear structures (e.g., anachrony) increase engagement?
- How do users, not brands, become the final meaning makers?

From consumer psychology to Islamic marketing and Takaful — from generational divergence to dialogic brand communication — this book demonstrates that digital narrative is not simply *delivered*, but negotiated in real time.

It is both a theoretical resource and an applied handbook — one that will serve researchers, graduate students, communication professionals, and designers of future marketing strategies.

**İdil Sayımer**

*Kocaeli University, Turkey*

# Preface

Narrative is humanity's oldest cognitive technology for making sense of the world. In the digital age, we are not witnessing the end of this tradition, but its renaissance. The digital screen is not a passive billboard—it is a dynamic stage for co-authored meaning. This book is therefore not merely about how stories are *told* in marketing communication, but how they are *constructed, negotiated, and completed* through interaction.

The dawn of the digital age has irrevocably reshaped the DNA of marketing communication. Over the past two decades, we have not merely observed an evolution in persuasion structures—we have confronted a paradigm shift. Disruptive technologies, empowered audiences, algorithmic curation, and participatory culture have collectively displaced the linear, sender-dominant communication model. In its place stands a fragmented yet coordinated narrative ecosystem—one in which audiences are not passive receivers but narrative agents, co-authors, and sovereign meaning-makers. Our central argument in this book is that narrative in digital marketing is no longer a finished artifact—it is a living conversation. Meaning is not transmitted—it is collaboratively engineered. Thus, “story” in the digital economy becomes the operational core of value construction.

*Developing Digital Narratives in Marketing Communication* is structured to guide readers through this narrative reality from micro-level mechanisms to macro-level implications. We begin by examining narrative construction in digital discourse, articulating the semiotics of dialogue as the new engine of brand communication. We interrogate how influencers, rather than functioning as mere promotional instruments, emerge as narrative authorities, shaping interpretive frames and emotional entry points. We examine how personality types function as interpretive filters in advertising reception and how generations X, Y, and Z inhabit distinct digital subcultures that require differentiated narrative strategy—not by trend, but by discourse logic.

We also explore more advanced narrative techniques, including temporal manipulation—analepsis, prolepsis, and digital anachrony—revealing how time itself becomes a rhetorical device in competing attention economies. And finally, we

deliberately include Islamic marketing and Takaful as a strategic, non-Western case study—not as an exception, but as a demonstration of the central thesis of this book: narrative authority is culturally mediated. Meaning is not universal—it is contextual, negotiated, and rooted in value systems.

Our intention as editors is not only to diagnose the new narrative paradigm but to equip readers with conceptual and practical tools. This volume is therefore designed as both a theoretical scaffold and a strategic guide. For scholars and graduate students, it offers a comprehensive architecture for rethinking narrative theory in digitally mediated environments. For practitioners and strategists, it provides frameworks for constructing participatory, culturally intelligent, and human-centered narrative systems that can produce real relational value in a hyper-connected world.

Our hope is that readers will not simply *observe* the transformation reflected in these chapters—but will learn to *navigate* it. And perhaps more importantly, to *design* within it.

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**Betül Başer**

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# Acknowledgment

Completing this editorial book would not have been possible without the participation and assistance of many people from IGI Global. Especially, behind-the-scenes contributors, Elizabeth Barrantes and Casey Long, deserve our sincere appreciation for their valuable and timely guidance, kindness, and tolerance.

We would also like to express our deep gratitude to İdil Sayımer, who wrote the foreword for our book, and to Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) members, Ercan Aktan, Emre Ş. Aslan, Nursel Bolat, Ebru Nergiz, Füsun Topsümer, Kartikeya Singh, and Esennur Sirer. Their remarkable suggestions and supervision helped shape the book perfectly.

Special thanks go to individual chapter authors for their scientific contributions and to our parents, children, partners, colleagues, and others who shared their support.

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# About the Contributors

**Recep Yılmaz**, Ph.D., is a distinguished professor and Head of the Department of Public Relations and Publicity at Ondokuz Mayıs University. Specializing in Narrative Theory, Advertising, and Theoretical Communication, he is a prolific scholar whose contributions significantly impact communication and narrative studies. Dr. Yılmaz has authored twelve influential books, including (indexed in WoS and Scopus) “Narrative Advertising Models and Conceptualization in the Social Media Age,” “Handbook of Research on Narrative Interactions,” and “Handbook of Research on Effective Advertising Strategies in the Social Media Age.” His extensive publications span prestigious journals, conference proceedings, and book chapters. Additionally, he authored the philosophical horror novella “Çerçici,” highlighting his versatile storytelling skills. He teaches courses such as “Narrative in Literature, Cinema and Advertisement” and “Advertising Scriptwriting,” inspiring students with innovative methodologies and profound industry insights.

**Betül Başer** is a research assistant at Ondokuz Mayıs University, Department of Public Relations and Publicity. She graduated from Cumhuriyet University, Faculty of Communication, Department of Public Relations and Publicity in 2017. In the same year, she started her master's degree at Marmara University Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Public Relations and Publicity, with the title “The Role of Social Media Phenomena on Purchasing Decision of Z Generation Consumers: The Example of YouTubers in 2020. In the same year, she started her doctorate education at Istanbul University Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Public Relations and Publicity, and she is continuing her doctorate education. Fields of study: Public relations, new media, digital games, and consumer behavior.

**Oğuzhan Alın** is a research assistant in the Department of Public Relations and Publicity at Ondokuz Mayıs University. Born in 1998 in Ankara, he completed his undergraduate studies in the same department at Ondokuz Mayıs University and obtained his master's degree in Media and Communication Sciences at the



same institution. He began his professional career as a corporate communications specialist and social media manager in various organizations. His current academic interests include public relations, advertising, social media, narrative theory, and intertextuality.

**Elif Ateş** is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Public Relations and Publicity at Marmara University, specializing in interpersonal communication and critical discourse analysis. Educated in both English and French language teaching at the undergraduate level, she integrates insights from linguistics, media studies, and communication theory to explore the socio-cultural dimensions of globalization, multilingualism, and narrative structures in education. Her doctoral research critically investigates societal transformation through representations in international media. Ateş has authored and co-authored over 25 academic publications across interdisciplinary domains, including cultural studies, language pedagogy, and media literacy. Her work often highlights the pedagogical power of storytelling, particularly the use of fairy tales in foreign language classrooms, and the implications of media manipulation in digital societies. She is an active participant in academic conferences and collaborative research initiatives. Ateş is committed to fostering innovative educational practices by bridging theoretical perspectives with applied methodologies, and aims to contribute meaningfully to the evolving fields of language education and communication studies.

**Parihar Suresh Dahake** is an accomplished academician and researcher with over 15 years of experience in teaching and research in the fields of Commerce and Management. Currently serving as an Assistant Professor at the School of Management, Ramdeobaba University, Nagpur, he holds a diverse educational background, including B.Tech (Applied Electronics), MBA (Marketing & Financial Management), M.Com, PGDIBO, M.A. (Psychology), and a Ph.D. in Business Management. Dr. Dahake's research interests span Business Analytics, Consumer Behavior, Predictive Analytics, and Marketing Communication. A recognized Ph.D. supervisor, he guides multiple doctoral candidates under the faculty of Commerce. He has published extensively in peer-reviewed, Scopus, and ABDC-indexed journals and authored books on Marketing Management and Consumer Behavior. He also holds a patent in wage sheet automation and actively contributes as a reviewer for prestigious journals. A recipient of multiple accolades, including the Young Researcher and Research Excellence Awards, Dr. Dahake is also a sought-after speaker and trainer. His commitment to academic excellence and innovative pedagogy has made significant contributions to management education, research, and institutional development in Central India.

**Bahar Dervişcemaloğlu** earned her degree in Turkish Language and Literature from Ege University (İzmir, Turkey), where she subsequently completed her PhD in Modern Turkish Literature and now serves as Associate Professor in the Department of Turkish and Social Sciences Education. Specializing in narrative theory, narratology, semiotics, and rhetoric, she has published two monographs: *Anlatıbilime Giriş* (Introduction to Narratology, 2016) and *Çözülemez Bulmaca: Anlatıcı Üzerine Tartışmalar* (The Unsolved Puzzle: Debates on the Narrator, 2022). Her scholarly contributions include Turkish translations of seminal works such as Manfred Jahn's *Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative* (2012), Ondřej Sládek's *Metamorphoses of the Prague School Structural Poetics* (2014), and Rita Felski's *The Limits of Critique* (2018), along with numerous articles in her field of expertise.

**Muhammad Nawaz Iqbal** is an Academician, Researcher and Philosopher. He has almost 13 years of corporate experience and is now serving as an Assistant Professor in the department of Business Administration of Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, Pakistan. He has credited numerous publications in local and international journals and also credited two books in the field of Business Management.

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**Muhammad Usman Tariq** has more than 16+ years of experience in industry and academia. He has authored more than 200+ research articles, 110+ case studies, 150+ book chapters and several books other than 4 patents. He is founder and CEO of The Case HQ, a unique repository for courses, narrative and video case studies. He has been working as a consultant and trainer for industries representing six sigma, quality, health and safety, environmental systems, project

management, and information security standards. His work has encompassed sectors in aviation, manufacturing, food, hospitality, education, finance, research, software and transportation. He has diverse and significant experience working with accreditation agencies of ABET, ACBSP, AACSB, WASC, CAA, EFQM and NCEAC. Additionally, Dr. Tariq has operational experience in incubators, research labs, government research projects, private sector startups, program creation and management at various industrial and academic levels. He is Certified Higher Education Teacher from Harvard University, USA, Certified Online Educator from HMBSU, Certified Six Sigma Master Black Belt and has been awarded PFHEA, SFSEDA, SMIEEEE, and CMBE.

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# Index

## A

Anachrony 85, 86, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104  
Analepsis 85, 91, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 102, 104

## B

Big Five Personality Traits 114  
Brand Communication 4, 20, 125, 129, 132, 133, 134, 135, 148, 149, 152, 154, 157, 163, 164, 165  
Brand Narrative 5, 112, 133, 141, 157, 164  
Brand Strategy 135

## C

Chronology 89, 90, 92, 111, 231  
Consumer Behavior 22, 54, 72, 75, 132, 162, 168, 178, 183, 184, 186, 197, 199, 202, 215, 218, 221, 223, 253, 255, 256, 262, 263, 267, 273, 275, 278, 279, 280  
Consumer Engagement 21, 30, 37, 55, 69, 75, 125, 126, 129, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 138, 143, 147, 148, 151, 156, 157, 160, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 171, 174, 201, 222, 224, 225, 270  
Consumption Narratives 177, 178, 188, 191, 197  
Content Marketing 30, 77, 135, 136, 143, 164, 167, 170, 171, 172, 173, 233, 237  
Customer Behaviour 55

## D

Digital Age 1, 7, 10, 13, 17, 18, 20, 22, 26, 35, 51, 57, 62, 64, 66, 69, 75, 92, 103, 104, 121, 122, 124, 125, 133, 183, 200, 202, 209, 222, 223, 225, 228, 232, 247, 249  
Digital Marketing 1, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14,

15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 29, 31, 33, 34, 36, 39, 52, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 83, 85, 86, 93, 94, 95, 101, 102, 104, 127, 131, 139, 140, 141, 143, 144, 156, 167, 168, 172, 173, 174, 177, 178, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 194, 195, 197, 200, 203, 205, 206, 212, 215, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 227, 228, 229, 230, 232, 234, 236, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 250, 256, 259, 261, 262, 263, 269, 275, 277

Digital Media 6, 10, 11, 20, 29, 34, 50, 83, 93, 97, 102, 105, 140, 141, 146, 152, 155, 177, 178, 186, 191, 200, 202, 204, 207, 209, 225, 228, 229, 230, 231, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 244, 258

Digital Narratives 11, 19, 20, 92, 99, 104, 105, 125, 126, 129, 132, 133, 134, 135, 138, 140, 142, 150, 152, 153, 164, 199, 203, 209, 215, 225, 231, 232, 233, 234, 241, 245, 253, 256, 257, 262, 268, 274, 275, 280

Digital Storytelling 4, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25, 29, 31, 81, 92, 104, 134, 135, 143, 145, 146, 149, 150, 169, 199, 200, 201, 202, 204, 206, 212, 218, 224, 231, 232, 247, 249, 253, 267

## I

Interactive Media 14, 31, 65, 166, 203  
Islamic Financial Market 254, 281  
Islamic Marketing 253, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 264, 266, 267, 274, 275, 277, 278, 279, 280

## M

Marketing Communication 33, 49, 51, 81, 107, 119, 124, 133, 171, 192, 199, 206, 221, 223, 228

## **N**

Narrative Theory 2, 5, 6, 10, 11, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 63, 81, 87, 124

Narrativity 6, 10, 32

Narratology 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 62, 63, 81, 82, 86, 87, 101, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 122, 123, 125

## **P**

Personality Types 107, 109, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119

Postclassical Narratology 5, 7, 11, 25, 32

Prolepsis 85, 91, 94, 95, 96, 97, 101, 102, 105

## **R**

Reconstruction of Meaning 242

Religiosity 260, 261, 264, 278, 279, 280, 281

## **S**

Shariah Compliant 254, 263, 264, 266, 269, 270, 272, 274, 276, 280

Storytelling 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 70, 71, 72, 73, 80, 81, 86, 92, 103, 104, 105, 109, 110, 111, 121, 122, 123, 126, 127, 128, 129, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 141, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 162, 164, 165, 166, 168, 169, 170, 172, 173, 175, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 231, 232, 233, 240, 247, 249, 250, 253, 256, 267, 280

Strategic Marketing 69, 135, 170, 221, 223

## **T**

Takaful 253, 254, 255, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281

Target Audiences 34, 41, 43, 49, 50, 55, 85, 101, 107, 119, 140, 185, 186, 228, 232, 243