

FUNDAÇÃO DOM CABRAL  
Mestrado Profissional em Administração

Fernando Godoy Zanicotti

SHAPING ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH STORYTELLING:  
Identifying Key Factors That Make It Compelling

Nova Lima  
2024

Fernando Godoy Zanicotti

SHAPING ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH STORYTELLING:  
Identifying Key Factors That Make It Compelling

Dissertação apresentada ao Curso de Mestrado Profissional em Administração da Fundação Dom Cabral como requisito parcial à obtenção do título de Mestre em Administração.

Área de Concentração: Gestão Contemporânea das Organizações

Linha de Pesquisa: Liderança

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Ricardo Azambuja

Nova Lima

2024

CATALOG CARD  
Elaborated by Walther Moreira Salles Library  
Fundação Dom Cabral

Z31s Zanicotti, Fernando Godoy  
Shaping organizations through storytelling: identifying key factors that make it compelling. / Fernando Godoy Zanicotti. - Nova Lima, 2024.  
[Electronic Document]

Advisor: Ricardo Daniel Meurer Azambuja, Phd.  
Dissertation (Master) – Fundação Dom Cabral. Professional Master Program in Business Administration.

1. Business Communication. 2. Organizational Behavior. 3. Organizations. 4. Strategic Leadership. I. Azambuja, Ricardo Daniel Meurer. II. Fundação Dom Cabral. Professional Master Program in Business Administration. III. Title.

CDU: 005.57

Librarian: Sandra Maria Vinhal – CRB 6/003845/0



## ATA DE DEFESA PÚBLICA DE DISSERTAÇÃO DE MESTRADO


No dia 27 de setembro de 2024, às 9h00, foi realizada a sessão pública virtual para a defesa da dissertação intitulada **SHAPING ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH STORYTELLING: Identifying Key Factors That Make It Compelling**, de autoria do mestrando **Fernando Godoy Zanicotti**, discente do **Programa de Mestrado Profissional em Administração – Gestão Contemporânea das Organizações**.


Concluído os trabalhos de apresentação e arguição a dissertação foi:

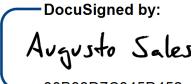
☒ APROVADA<sup>1</sup>

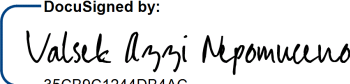
☐ APROVADA COM RESTRIÇÕES<sup>2</sup>

☐ REPROVADA

DocuSigned by:  
  
5D760785ED9E4F2...  
Orientador: Prof. Dr. Ricardo Azambuja – FDC

DocuSigned by:  
  
CB5EF8AE54684EC...  
Prof. Dr. Claudimar Pereira da Veiga – FDC

DocuSigned by:  
  
30B33D7C345D452...  
Prof. Dr. Augusto Cesar Silva Sales – FGV EBAPE

DocuSigned by:  
  
35CB9C1244DB4AC...  
Me. Valsek Azzi Nepomuceno – Egresso MPA

<sup>1</sup> Aprovada sem restrições. O candidato deverá realizar a submissão da versão final da dissertação de Mestrado no prazo máximo de 30 (trinta) dias, na versão em PDF, juntamente com o formulário de autorização para sua disponibilização no *site* do Programa e na Biblioteca virtual da FDC.

<sup>2</sup> Aprovada com restrições. O candidato deverá realizar a submissão da versão final da dissertação de Mestrado no prazo máximo de 45 (quarenta e cinco) dias, na versão em PDF, juntamente com o formulário de autorização para sua disponibilização no *site* do Programa e na Biblioteca virtual da FDC.

*I dedicate this to my parents, Paulo and Marilu. Their sacrifices, love, and unwavering belief in me have laid the foundation for all of my endeavors. To my brothers, Rafael, Diogo and Tiago, my lifelong allies who have stood by my side through the ups and downs.*

*To my love, Wyvi, my rock and guiding star. Your love and wisdom have been an unending source of strength. To our children, Sarah and Lucas, who inspire me daily to strive for greatness and remind me of what is truly important.*

*To my business partners, Ezequiel, Paulo and Tiago, and all the managers of Agres and Tecomec, as well as the entire team and everyone who contributed to this research, my sincere thanks. Your support has been invaluable in helping me bridge the gap between academia and business.*

*"The most powerful person in the world is the storyteller. The storyteller sets the vision, values, and agenda of an entire generation that is to come."*

— Steve Jobs

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Professor Ricardo Azambuja, not only an academic mentor, but also a shining beacon of knowledge and inspiration. His dedication knows no bounds—extending beyond regular hours into late nights, weekends, video calls, emails, and meticulous revisions. His incisive comments, thought-provoking remarks, and invaluable insights have consistently pushed me to raise my standards and strive for excellence. I am deeply grateful for the privilege of learning from him, for his unwavering dedication, and most importantly, for the remarkable person that he is.

To Professors Claudimar Pereira da Veiga and Deoclécio Cardoso, who motivated and inspired me at a critical moment when I had almost given up on my research. Their guidance not only reignited my passion for the study but also helped refine and focus my research question. Without their encouragement and support, I would not have completed this Master's degree. I am also thankful for their insights on various methodologies, which led me to adopt an unexpected yet effective approach in my research.

To the cherished Class of 2024, also known as Turma Tom Jobim, of the Mestrado Profissional em Administração at Fundação Dom Cabral (FDC). Beyond the confines of our formal classes in Nova Lima and other venues, our group assignments, coffee breaks, lunches, dinners, and unforgettable after-parties became avenues of profound learning and enlightenment. The diverse backgrounds of each one of you enriched our exchanges, instilling humility in me throughout this journey. Your teachings, insights, and firsthand industry experiences have been invaluable. Thank you for being an integral part of this experience.

To all my esteemed professors at FDC, one of the world's top business schools, your guidance has been instrumental in illuminating my academic path. You have shed light on its intricate nuances, and for that, my gratitude is eternal. I feel fortunate to have learned in such a challenging and inspiring environment. Thank you for playing a fundamental role in shaping my academic journey.

## RESUMO

Este estudo explora o papel do storytelling como uma ferramenta estratégica nas organizações, identificando os principais fatores que aumentam sua eficácia para a comunicação e liderança. A partir de uma revisão abrangente da literatura, foram isolados nove fatores críticos, incluindo engajamento, memorabilidade, conexão emocional e criação de sentido, utilizando o Processo Analítico Hierárquico Fuzzy (Fuzzy AHP) para a priorização. Os dados foram coletados de mais de 80 profissionais de diversos setores, oferecendo insights sobre a importância relativa desses fatores. Os resultados destacam a centralidade do engajamento emocional, da memorabilidade e do sentido, enquanto a influência da liderança, embora relevante, ficou com menor classificação. O estudo discute as limitações, como o impacto do trabalho remoto na percepção do storytelling, e propõe direções para pesquisas futuras, como estudos interculturais e adaptações ao storytelling digital. Esta pesquisa contribui para a compreensão do storytelling como uma ferramenta organizacional influente, com implicações para a liderança, engajamento de colaboradores e alinhamento cultural.

Palavras-chave: Storytelling Organizacional; Discurso; Narrativas; Engajamento e Memorabilidade; Construção de Sentido e Explicação; Conexão Emocional e Persuasão; Reforço Cultural e Identitário; Comunicação Estratégica; Liderança e Influência; Storytelling Digital e Visual.



## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the role of storytelling as a strategic tool within organizations, identifying key factors that enhance the effectiveness of storytelling for communication and leadership. Drawing from a comprehensive literature review, the research isolates nine critical factors, including engagement, memorability, emotional connection, and sensemaking, using the Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (Fuzzy AHP) for prioritization. Data were collected from over 80 professionals across multiple industries, providing insights into the relative importance of these factors. The results emphasize the centrality of emotional engagement, memorability, and sensemaking, while leadership's influence, though important, ranked lower. The study discusses limitations, such as remote work's impact on storytelling perceptions, and offers future research directions, including cross-cultural studies and digital storytelling adaptations. This research contributes to the broader understanding of storytelling as an influential organizational tool, with implications for leadership, employee engagement, and cultural alignment.

**Keywords:** Organizational Storytelling; Discourse; Narratives; Engagement and Memorability; Sensemaking and Explanation; Emotional Connection and Persuasion; Cultural and Identity Reinforcement; Strategic Communication; Leadership and Influence; Digital and Visual Storytelling.

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1 – Hierarchy of Key Factors for Effective Organizational Storytelling .....	45
FIGURE 2 – Fuzzy AHP Analysis Chart .....	54
FIGURE 3 – Colored Categorization of Storytelling Dimensions .....	55
FIGURE 4 – Consent.....	79
FIGURE 5 – Gender .....	79
FIGURE 6 – Age .....	79
FIGURE 7 – Education Level .....	80
FIGURE 8 – Employment Sector.....	80
FIGURE 9 – Area .....	80
FIGURE 10 – Position.....	81
FIGURE 11 – Years of Experience .....	81
FIGURE 12 – Engagement and Memorability .....	81
FIGURE 13 – Sensemaking and Explanation .....	82
FIGURE 14 – Emotional Connection and Persuasion.....	82
FIGURE 15 – Cultural and Identity Reinforcement.....	83
FIGURE 16 – Change and Transformation.....	83
FIGURE 17 – Cross-Cultural Communication .....	84
FIGURE 18 – Aesthetic and Enjoyment .....	84
FIGURE 19 – Leadership and Influence .....	84

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 – Dimensions and Key Factors of Compelling Organizational Storytelling .....	22
TABLE 2 – Key Factors and Descriptions of Compelling Organizational Storytelling .....	44
TABLE 3 – Linguistic Scale for Criteria Evaluation .....	46
TABLE 4 – Random Index.....	49
TABLE 5 – Identification of Key Storytelling Factors Across Literature .....	51
TABLE 6 – Demographic and Professional Profile of Respondents .....	53
TABLE 7 – Fuzzy AHP Analysis.....	54
TABLE 8 – Priorities of Storytelling Factors.....	55

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AHP	Analytic Hierarchy Process
CI	Consistency Index
CR	Consistency Ratio
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
RI	Random Index
TFN	Triangular Fuzzy Number

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1.1 Background and Context .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1.2 Exploring the Role of Storytelling as a Strategic Tool .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>1.3 Addressing the Gaps in Current Research.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>1.4 The Framework .....</b>	<b>19</b>
1.4.1 Outcomes .....	19
1.4.2 Processes.....	20
1.4.3 Delivery Modes .....	20
1.4.4 Sources .....	21
1.4.5 Application of the Framework.....	21
<b>1.5 The Proposition.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>1.6 The Method .....</b>	<b>22</b>
1.6.1 Respondent Demographics .....	23
<b>1.7 The Contribution .....</b>	<b>24</b>
 <b>2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	 <b>26</b>
<b>2.1 Discourses, Narratives, and Storytelling in Organizations.....</b>	<b>26</b>
2.1.1 Organizational Discourses .....	27
2.1.2 The Role of Narratives .....	28
<b>2.2 Storytelling in Organizations.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>2.3 Storytelling for Sensemaking and Strategic Alignment.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>2.4 Storytelling as a Strategic Leadership Tool .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>2.5 Cultural and Identity Reinforcement through Storytelling .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>2.6 Identifying Key Factors for Compelling Storytelling.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>2.7 Gaps in Existing Research .....</b>	<b>40</b>
 <b>3 METHOD .....</b>	 <b>42</b>
<b>3.1 Research Design.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>3.2 Selection Criteria for Respondents .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>3.3 Data Collection Methods.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>3.4 Data Analysis.....</b>	<b>44</b>
3.4.1 Development of the Hierarchical Structure .....	44
3.4.2 Construction of the Fuzzy Pairwise Comparison Matrix .....	45
3.4.3 Aggregation of Fuzzy Values .....	46
3.4.4 Summation and Inversion of Fuzzy Aggregates.....	46
3.4.5 Calculation of the Synthetic Extent Value .....	47
3.4.6 Determination of the Degree of Possibility .....	47
3.4.7 Evaluation of Convex Fuzzy Points .....	48
3.4.8 Normalization of Weight Vectors.....	48
3.4.9 Consistency Verification .....	49
 <b>4 ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS .....</b>	 <b>50</b>
<b>4.1 Identification of Key Factors .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>4.2 Ranking and Categorization.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>4.3 Interpretation of Findings.....</b>	<b>56</b>
 <b>5 DISCUSSION.....</b>	 <b>58</b>

<b>5.1 Confirmations .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>5.2 Additions.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>5.3 Contradictions.....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>5.4 Suggestions to Practice.....</b>	<b>61</b>
5.4.1 Craft Emotionally Engaging and Memorable Stories.....	61
5.4.2 Simplify Strategies and Facilitate Sensemaking with Storytelling .....	62
5.4.3 Strengthen Culture with Values-Driven Narratives.....	62
<b>5.5 Reflections on the Research Process .....</b>	<b>62</b>
 <b>6 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH .....</b>	 <b>64</b>
<b>6.1 Limitations .....</b>	<b>64</b>
6.1.1 Scope of Factors .....	64
6.1.2 Sample Size and Demographics .....	64
6.1.3 Cultural and Linguistic Focus.....	65
6.1.4 Impact of Remote and Hybrid Work on Storytelling Effectiveness.....	65
6.1.5 Methodological Constraints.....	66
<b>6.2 Future Research Directions .....</b>	<b>66</b>
6.2.1 Expanding the Set of Factors.....	66
6.2.2 Cross-Cultural and International Comparisons .....	66
6.2.3 Broader Demographic Sampling .....	67
6.2.4 Mixed-Method Approaches .....	67
6.2.5 Longitudinal Research.....	67
 <b>7 FINAL REMARKS .....</b>	 <b>68</b>
 <b>REFERENCES .....</b>	 <b>69</b>
 <b>APPENDIX A – Key Storytelling Factors Across Literature (Full Table) .....</b>	 <b>76</b>
 <b>APPENDIX B – Questionnaire Questions.....</b>	 <b>77</b>
 <b>APPENDIX C – Participant Responses.....</b>	 <b>79</b>

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background and Context

Organizations today face an increasingly complex and rapidly changing environment, where communication plays a pivotal role in navigating internal dynamics and responding to external pressures (Denning, 2006; Weick, 1995). Successful organizations are those that not only exchange information efficiently but also interpret and create meaning that guides decision-making, shapes behavior, and aligns strategy with culture (Boje, 1991; Gabriel, 2000). Understanding these communication processes is crucial for organizational leaders as they seek to foster engagement, build consensus, and promote effective collaboration (Barry & Elmes, 1997; Weick et al., 2005).

One of the earliest perspectives on communication in organizational settings is Strategic Ambiguity, introduced by Eisenberg (1984). This concept suggests that organizations often use deliberately vague or flexible communication to allow multiple interpretations, fostering creativity and unity among diverse stakeholders. By avoiding overly rigid or specific messages, strategic ambiguity enables organizations to adapt to evolving situations, accommodating different perspectives while maintaining a cohesive organizational narrative (Eisenberg, 1984; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010).

Storytelling, as a communication tool, often embodies strategic ambiguity because it allows for the crafting of narratives that resonate with various audiences while remaining open to interpretation (Boje, 1991). For example, organizational stories often include elements that employees can interpret differently depending on their roles, backgrounds, or personal experiences. This ambiguity allows a single narrative to unify diverse groups without being overly prescriptive or restrictive (Boje, 1991; Gabriel, 2000; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). By leaving room for interpretation, storytelling supports strategic goals while fostering alignment, as employees and stakeholders fill in the gaps with their own understanding, leading to a shared, though flexible, sense of meaning (Denning, 2006).

In a related context, Bruner (1991) introduced the idea that narrative is central to how individuals make sense of the world. His work in narrative psychology suggests that stories are fundamental to how we interpret our experiences, offering a framework that links personal and

organizational narratives. In organizational settings, Bruner's insights highlight how leaders and employees use narratives to construct meaning and create a shared reality within the organization (Bruner, 1991; Denning, 2006).

Furthermore, organizational discourse theory emerged as a significant approach to understanding how language and communication shape power dynamics, identities, and relationships within organizations. Fairclough (1992), along with contributions from Hardy et al. (2000), emphasized that discourse is not neutral; it constructs realities and can be a powerful tool in maintaining or challenging the status quo. This perspective underscores the role of language in constructing organizational identities and guiding strategic decisions, reinforcing the idea that communication is a powerful force in shaping organizational culture (Fairclough, 1992; Hardy et al., 2000).

Similarly, the concept of sensemaking, introduced by Weick (1995), builds on these ideas by exploring how individuals and organizations interpret ambiguous or complex situations to guide action. Sensemaking is central to navigating uncertainty, as organizations constantly face new challenges and opportunities. Weick's analysis of the 1949 Mann Gulch disaster emphasized how narratives and collective sensemaking are crucial for survival in times of crisis. This concept has since been applied to understand how organizations cope with change, uncertainty, and complexity in various settings (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weick, 1995).

In parallel, Barry and Elmes (1997) introduced the idea that strategy itself can be viewed as a narrative construction. They argued that strategic management involves creating narratives that provide coherence, meaning, and direction to organizational actions. These strategic narratives shape how employees and stakeholders perceive organizational goals and priorities. The success of a strategy, according to Barry and Elmes, depends largely on how well it resonates with its audience in terms of credibility and innovation, framing strategic objectives in a way that aligns with organizational culture and inspires collective action (Barry & Elmes, 1997; Vaara et al., 2016).

These theories collectively illustrate how communication within organizations goes beyond the mere transmission of information—it is about shaping meaning, building relationships, and influencing behavior. In this complex environment, storytelling has gained prominence as a



particularly powerful communication tool, one that not only engages employees but also shapes the strategic direction of the organization itself (Boje, 1991; Denning, 2008).

## **1.2 Exploring the Role of Storytelling as a Strategic Tool**

Storytelling has emerged as a particularly powerful tool in the organizational communication landscape, especially as research into organizational culture and symbolism gained prominence in the 1980s and 1990s and researchers recognized that storytelling was an important means through which managers acquired knowledge (Hummel, 1991). By building on foundational concepts such as sensemaking (Weick, 1995), discourse (Fairclough, 1992; Hardy et al., 2000), and strategic ambiguity (Eisenberg, 1984), storytelling integrates these elements to offer a structured yet flexible method for understanding complex organizational dynamics. It aids organizations not only in navigating ambiguity and change (Boje, 1991; Gabriel, 2000) but also in fostering engagement, alignment, and cultural cohesion (Barry & Elmes, 1997; Denning, 2006).

Boje (1991) first introduced the concept of “storytelling organizations,” showing how narratives actively shape and reshape organizational culture and identity. His research on an office-supply firm demonstrated how fragmented and evolving stories enabled employees to make sense of their roles and the company’s culture. This performative view of storytelling underscores how narratives adapt to meet organizational needs, keeping employees engaged and connected.

Weick (1988, 1993, 1995) expanded on these ideas by highlighting how storytelling supports sensemaking, the process by which individuals and organizations interpret and create meaning from complex or ambiguous situations. His seminal analysis of the 1949 Mann Gulch disaster illustrated how storytelling guided firefighters’ decision-making and collective action in a crisis, providing coherence and direction in moments of uncertainty. Weick emphasized the critical role that storytelling plays in helping organizations navigate chaotic environments.

Gabriel (2000) extended this understanding by exploring the emotional and symbolic dimensions of storytelling in more routine organizational settings. He recounted an incident involving a fire extinguisher explosion in a research and publishing organization, where differing interpretations of the event gave rise to multiple narratives among the staff. These

stories helped employees process emotional strain, create shared meanings, and align with organizational values. Gabriel's work underscores the importance of emotionally resonant stories in fostering cultural cohesion and a sense of belonging.

Shifting from emotional resonance to knowledge creation, Tsoukas (2005, 2009) explored the dialogical nature of storytelling within organizations. His study of management teams highlighted how storytelling acts as a tool for constructing organizational knowledge. By encouraging dialogue between leaders and employees, storytelling fosters creativity and adaptability, allowing diverse perspectives to influence strategic decisions.

Denning (2006, 2008) emphasized the strategic application of storytelling, showing how it can inspire action and align organizational goals. Through examples from companies such as Costco and Southwest Airlines, Denning demonstrated how storytelling reinforces ethical practices, motivates employees, and strengthens cultural cohesion. At Costco, narratives highlighting the company's commitment to employee well-being fostered loyalty and engagement. Similarly, at Southwest Airlines, stories about customer service and employee empowerment aligned individual actions with the company's broader vision. Denning's research underscores how strategic storytelling can drive collective action and help organizations achieve their goals.

In connection to this, Mantere (2008) explored how middle managers use storytelling to interpret and convey strategic narratives within organizations. Their work, along with studies by Balogun et al. (2014) and Sonenshein (2010), highlights the critical role that middle management plays in ensuring that these narratives resonate across various organizational levels, helping to maintain cultural alignment and ensure the successful dissemination of strategic initiatives (Rouleau, 2005; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011). This is particularly relevant in promoting coherence and fostering collective action within diverse teams.

Together, these contributions demonstrate that storytelling operates on multiple levels within organizations—from fostering cultural cohesion to guiding crisis response and shaping strategic direction. This research systematically explores some key factors that make storytelling compelling in organizational contexts, such as engagement, emotional connection, and cultural reinforcement. By identifying these factors, the study aims to provide a framework for optimizing storytelling to achieve strategic and cultural goals within organizations.

### **1.3 Addressing the Gaps in Current Research**

While storytelling is widely recognized for its potential within organizations, there appears to be a gap in fully understanding the specific key factors that make storytelling compelling. Although storytelling is often credited with shaping culture, guiding strategy, and engaging employees, it seems that some of its potential may remain untapped because these key factors have not been consistently identified or systematically leveraged.

Without an understanding of what makes stories resonate, organizations risk missing out on storytelling's full potential as a strategic tool. They may fail to craft narratives that truly inspire, engage, and align their workforce or fall short in using storytelling to drive cultural change and strategic alignment. This lack of clarity hinders organizations from optimizing storytelling to achieve their communication and strategic objectives.

This research seeks to fill that gap by systematically identifying and analyzing key factors that make storytelling compelling. By pinpointing these elements—such as engagement, emotional connection, and cultural reinforcement—organizations can unlock storytelling's transformative power, enabling them to foster deeper connections, align teams, and achieve lasting impact.

### **1.4 The Framework**

This research proposes a comprehensive framework to systematically analyze key factors that contribute to compelling storytelling within organizations. The framework is grounded in a thorough review of the literature and groups these factors into four primary dimensions: outcomes, processes, delivery modes, and sources. Each dimension captures essential factors of how stories function as strategic tools in organizational communication.

#### **1.4.1 Outcomes**

The outcomes dimension focuses on the effects that storytelling has on the audience, particularly in terms of engagement and memorability, cultural and identity reinforcement, and change and transformation. Compelling stories capture attention, drawing the audience into the narrative and ensuring active participation (Denning, 2008; Gabriel, 2000). They leave a lasting impression, making them easy to recall and share (Morgan & Dennehy, 1997). Beyond

engagement, stories reinforce organizational culture by aligning employee behaviors with the organization's core values, thereby fostering a shared sense of identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Furthermore, well-crafted stories can inspire and facilitate organizational change, helping employees make sense of transitions and encouraging them to embrace transformation (Sonenshein, 2010; Weick, 1995). Through these mechanisms, storytelling becomes a powerful tool in shaping both individual and collective behavior within organizations.

#### 1.4.2 Processes

The processes dimension delves into the mechanisms that make storytelling effective. Sensemaking and explanation are central to how stories help individuals understand complex or ambiguous situations (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weick, 1995). By framing complex ideas into a coherent narrative, stories provide clarity and foster understanding. Alongside this, stories evoke emotional connection and persuasion, which are critical in driving engagement (Barry & Elmes, 1997; Denning, 2006; Gabriel, 2000). Emotional resonance strengthens the message's impact and increases its persuasive power, leading to deeper commitment from the audience. Through these mechanisms, storytelling bridges the gap between rational comprehension and emotional involvement.

#### 1.4.3 Delivery Modes

The delivery modes dimension emphasizes the importance of selecting the appropriate medium to match the audience's needs. Aesthetic and enjoyment play key roles in enhancing engagement, as visually appealing and enjoyable stories hold attention more effectively (Denning, 2008; Kernbach et al., 2015; Mirkovski et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2002). Much like leaders selecting communication modes (Newman & Ford, 2020), storytellers must choose the most effective format—whether digital, visual, or traditional—to maximize impact. Video storytelling may suit more intimate or visual narratives, while text-based formats are better for documentation, and using multiple modes—such as combining video with text—can enhance message reception and signal its importance (Newman & Ford, 2020). The rise of digital and visual storytelling has opened new avenues for reaching wider audiences, as multimedia elements and digital platforms make stories more engaging and far-reaching in today's connected world (Kernbach et al., 2015; Mirkovski et al., 2019; Schwabe et al., 2019).

Thoughtful selection of delivery modes allows storytellers to enhance both the reach and resonance of their narratives.

#### 1.4.4 Sources

The sources dimension focuses on the storyteller's role in shaping the story's impact. Leadership and influence are key to ensuring the credibility and weight of a story. When credible leaders share stories, they inspire trust and alignment with organizational goals, making their narratives more compelling and impactful (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Storytelling by leaders not only fosters employee engagement but also reinforces organizational values (Denning, 2006; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). In today's globalized environment, cross-cultural communication also plays a crucial role. Stories that resonate across diverse cultural contexts help create unity and inclusivity, fostering a sense of belonging among diverse audiences (Barker & Gower, 2010; Czarniawska, 1997; Denning, 2008). Effective storytellers navigate cultural differences while maintaining the core message, ensuring that the story resonates broadly.

#### 1.4.5 Application of the Framework

This framework provides a holistic view of how storytelling functions in organizational settings, offering practical insights into how stories can be optimized for strategic communication. By categorizing key factors across these dimensions, organizations can better understand how to craft and deliver stories that align with their strategic objectives, foster cultural cohesion, and inspire collective action.

To summarize the framework, the following table outlines the four dimensions and their corresponding factors, providing a clear overview of how each contributes to effective storytelling:

**TABLE 1 – Dimensions and Key Factors of Compelling Organizational Storytelling**

Dimension	Key Factor	Description
<b>1.4.1. Outcomes</b>	Engagement and Memorability Cultural and Identity Reinforcement Change and Transformation	Stories capture attention and are easy to recall. Stories align behaviors with shared values. Stories inspire action for change.
<b>1.4.2. Processes</b>	Sensemaking and Explanation Emotional Connection and Persuasion	Stories clarify complex situations. Stories evoke emotional responses, boosting impact.
<b>1.4.3. Delivery Modes</b>	Aesthetic and Enjoyment Digital and Visual Storytelling	Visually appealing stories increase engagement. Digital platforms enhance storytelling reach.
<b>1.4.4. Sources</b>	Leadership and Influence Cross-Cultural Communication	Credible leaders' stories inspire trust. Stories unite diverse cultural perspectives.

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

## **1.5 The Proposition**

Based on the framework of key factors outlined in section 1.4, this research proposes that stories within organizations are most compelling when they effectively incorporate specific factors, such as engagement, emotional connection, and leadership influence. These factors not only enhance the impact of the story but also contribute to its ability to foster cultural cohesion and drive organizational change.

The central proposition of this research is that by optimizing these key factors, organizations can significantly improve the effectiveness of their storytelling efforts, leading to stronger alignment between employees and organizational goals. This proposition will be tested and refined through the empirical research process outlined in the subsequent sections.

## **1.6 The Method**

To explore and validate the key factors identified in the framework, this research employs a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques for comprehensive insights. A core component of this methodology is the Fuzzy Analytical Hierarchy Process (Fuzzy AHP), a widely recognized decision-making tool used to assess and rank multiple factors by incorporating both human judgment and uncertainty.

The AHP method, originally developed by Saaty (1977), provides a structured approach for organizing and analyzing complex decisions based on mathematical hierarchy. Building on Saaty's work, Chang (1996) introduced the Fuzzy AHP, which integrates fuzzy logic to account

for the inherent vagueness and uncertainty in human assessments. This makes Fuzzy AHP particularly suitable for this research, as it allows respondents to express the relative importance of storytelling factors in nuanced ways, reflecting the complexities of organizational communication.

A structured questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms to a select group of professionals experienced in management and organizational communication. The Fuzzy AHP method enabled a systematic ranking of storytelling factors, providing a clear understanding of their relative significance across various organizational contexts. The data gathered from 80 valid responses serve as a robust foundation for evaluating how these key factors impact organizational behavior and strategy.

#### 1.6.1 Respondent Demographics

To ensure the broad applicability of the findings, the study drew upon a diverse group of professionals across various sectors and organizational levels. The respondents' demographic backgrounds provided a wide range of perspectives, which is crucial for understanding how storytelling functions across different contexts and industries. This diversity ensures that the research findings are not confined to any one industry but are relevant to a wide range of organizational settings.

The respondent demographics are as follows (more detailed information will be provided in Section 4):

- Gender: 76% male, 24% female
- Age: from 18 to over 65 years
- Education: Undergraduate, Graduate, Master's, PhD levels
- Sectors: Private, public, and NGO
- Areas: Management, marketing, sales, communication, operations, IT, etc.
- Experience: 65% with over 15 years of professional experience

This diversity of experience and perspectives enriched the dataset, ensuring a robust analysis of how storytelling operates in organizational settings. The use of Fuzzy AHP provided a methodologically sound way of capturing these varied perspectives and allowed for a nuanced

understanding of how different factors contribute to the effectiveness of storytelling in organizations.

### **1.7 The Contribution**

This research offers important contributions to the fields of organizational communication and storytelling by identifying and categorizing common key factors that make storytelling compelling in organizational contexts. While not exhaustive, the study highlights key factors that are widely recognized for shaping organizational culture, strategy, and behavior, providing a practical framework for optimizing storytelling as a strategic tool.

The application of the Fuzzy AHP methodology adds an innovative dimension to understanding storytelling's impact across diverse organizational settings. By using this structured yet adaptable decision-making tool, the research presents a ranked collection of widely accepted storytelling factors—such as engagement, emotional connection, sensemaking, and cultural reinforcement. These insights offer organizations a valuable guide to enhancing their communication strategies and achieving stronger alignment between leadership and employees.

Additionally, the study connects established theoretical frameworks, including Fairclough's (1992) organizational discourse, Boje's (1991) concept of storytelling organizations, Weick's (1995) sensemaking, and Gabriel's (2000) emotional resonance. Through integration with practical examples from Denning (2006, 2008) and others, the research demonstrates how storytelling operates at multiple levels—from fostering cultural cohesion to supporting strategic alignment and managing organizational crises.

The findings also provide actionable insights for practitioners. By utilizing the framework of key factors, leaders and managers can craft more impactful stories that resonate with employees, foster a sense of belonging, and drive collective action. The study emphasizes the importance of leadership-driven storytelling in building trust and organizational alignment through well-crafted stories.

In conclusion, this research advances understanding of storytelling's role in organizational settings by offering a clear framework for leveraging storytelling to achieve both strategic and cultural objectives. By focusing on common, widely accepted factors, the study provides



practical guidance while recognizing that additional factors may also play a role in other organizational contexts.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research proposes that stories within organizations are most compelling when they effectively incorporate specific key factors, such as engagement, emotional connection, and leadership influence. Despite the widespread recognition of storytelling's potential in shaping organizational culture, guiding strategy, and engaging employees, much of its power remains untapped because these key factors have not been systematically identified and leveraged. This review, therefore, examines the foundational concepts of discourses, narratives, and storytelling, exploring how these constructs interact to influence behavior and create meaning within organizations.

Understanding the distinctions and interplay between discourses, narratives, and storytelling is crucial for exploring how organizations construct and communicate meaning (Boje, 2008). Discourses, as discussed in various management and organizational studies (Balogun et al., 2014; Barry & Elmes, 1997; Boje, 2008; Buchanan & Dawson, 2007; Fairclough, 2003; Grant et al., 2004; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001), provide the linguistic and conceptual frameworks through which organizations interpret and make sense of their realities. These discourses influence how organizations frame issues, define priorities, and establish power relations. From these broader discourses, narratives emerge as structured stories that offer specific interpretations of events or organizational changes (Grant et al., 2004; Vaara et al., 2016). Storytelling, in turn, animates these narratives, transforming abstract ideas into relatable and impactful stories that influence behavior, align values, and shape organizational culture (Gabriel, 2000).

This review explores the foundational concepts of discourses, narratives, and storytelling and how they operate within organizations. It highlights how these constructs interact to produce meaning, shape identity, and influence strategic decision-making.

### **2.1 Discourses, Narratives, and Storytelling in Organizations**

Organizational communication is complex and multifaceted, requiring a deep understanding of discourses and narratives. Vaara et al. (2016) highlight the power of organizational narratives to influence both stability and change, asserting that narratives are often ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations. To fully grasp the dynamics of communication within organizations,

it is essential to explore how discourses and narratives function in guiding thought, action, and culture (Czarniawska, 1997; Grant et al., 2004; Weick, 1995; Boje, 1991). This section delves into the unique roles of discourses and narratives in shaping organizational realities, while also highlighting their interplay in constructing and reinforcing organizational identity.

### 2.1.1 Organizational Discourses

Discourses serve as the foundational frameworks through which organizational members interpret and make sense of their realities (Grant et al., 2004). They are sets of interrelated ideas, concepts, and practices that provide a shared language or lexicon for producing knowledge and meaning (Foucault, 1972). Organizational discourses are reflected in written and spoken texts, as well as in organizational practices, rituals, and routines. Together, these shape how organizations operate and evolve. For instance, a discourse around corporate social responsibility provides organizations with a conceptual framework for integrating ethical and sustainable practices into their operations, influencing policies and stakeholder relationships (Carroll, 1991).

Discourses are not merely passive reflections of reality; they actively shape organizational identity and perception (Brown & Humphreys, 2006). Discourses guide members' understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and relationships within the organization, acting as cognitive maps that influence decision-making and sensemaking (Hardy et al., 2000). These cognitive maps help members navigate complex environments by providing interpretative lenses through which they view challenges and opportunities.

Additionally, discourses influence power dynamics within organizations by determining which ideas, voices, and perspectives are valued and which are marginalized (Phillips et al., 2004). As organizations construct their identities and define their strategic priorities, they rely on dominant discourses to legitimize certain actions while silencing alternative perspectives. For example, discourses around innovation and growth may prioritize technological advancements and market expansion, while simultaneously marginalizing discourses related to employee well-being or environmental sustainability. By shaping organizational priorities, discourses also influence the distribution of power and resources, affecting how decisions are made and who is included in the process (Fairclough, 2003).

Discourses also serve as the basis for crafting compelling storytelling within organizations. By providing a structured framework for key themes such as leadership, innovation, or social responsibility, discourses inform the narratives and stories that organizational leaders and members use to communicate vision, mission, and values. At the heart of organizational communication lies the concept of discourse (Grant et al., 2004). Discourses encompass sets of related ideas, concepts, and doctrines that provide a language or lexicon for interpreting and making sense of reality, producing knowledge and meaning (Foucault, 1972). They manifest as structured collections of texts, embodied in practices of talking and writing, with practices bestowing meaning to such texts. For instance, a discourse on 'corporate social responsibility' profoundly impacts company policies and stakeholder relationships, underscoring societal emphasis on ethical and sustainable practices (Carroll, 1991).

This shared reality, constructed by discourses, lays the foundation upon which organizational identity is built and maintained (Brown & Humphreys, 2006). Within an organizational setting, discourses shape member perceptions regarding their roles, the organization's mission, and its position in the broader context (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). They function as cognitive maps, guiding member understanding of roles, responsibilities, and relationships (Hardy et al., 2000).

Moreover, discourses influence power dynamics by determining which ideas are embraced and which are marginalized (Phillips et al., 2004).

### 2.1.2 The Role of Narratives

While discourses provide the broader conceptual frameworks, narratives represent the specific, structured stories that emerge within these frameworks (Bruner, 1986). Narratives are defined as accounts of events or actions that connect individual actions to broader organizational or societal themes (Bruner, 1991). Narratives incorporate characters, plots, and themes to convey meaning and provide a temporal connection between past, present, and future. In organizations, narratives play a critical role by making complex ideas more understandable and helping members make sense of their experiences (Czarniawska, 1998).

Leaders often use narratives as inspirational tools, crafting stories that communicate the organization's vision, values, and goals in ways that resonate with employees (Gabriel, 2000). These stories help to align behaviors with organizational objectives, fostering engagement and

commitment. For example, narratives that emphasize the organization's founding—highlighting early struggles, perseverance, and ultimate success—can instill a sense of pride and belonging, motivating employees to align their efforts with the organization's mission.

Beyond their inspirational value, narratives function as strategic communication channels, shaping how individuals understand their roles within the organization and their contributions to its success (Vaara et al., 2016). Narratives also serve as tools for legitimizing practices and maintaining control, particularly when they reinforce dominant organizational discourses (Boje, 1991). For example, a narrative framing a company's growth as a result of innovation can justify continued investments in technology while discouraging resistance to change.

Narratives are also critical in shaping organizational identity. They help educate members about the organization's culture and values, fostering a sense of unity and belonging (Ybema et al., 2009). Through repeated storytelling, organizations establish collective memories that reinforce shared understandings of the organization's history, values, and strategic priorities. These narratives, passed down through both formal and informal channels, become integral to the organization's identity and decision-making processes.

In this context, narratives act as the medium through which key storytelling factors, such as engagement and emotional connection, are realized. By crafting stories that resonate with employees and align with organizational values, leaders create narratives that inspire action and foster a shared sense of purpose. The flexibility and adaptability of narratives also ensure they remain relevant as the organization's priorities and challenges evolve.

## **2.2 Storytelling in Organizations**

Storytelling is the act of conveying events through words, sounds, and/or images, often by improvisation or embellishment. It is both an art and a tool, allowing for the customization of narratives to suit different audiences, contexts, and objectives (Boje, 2008). Stories are typically more specific and episodic than narratives, focusing on individual actors and actions.

In organizations, storytelling serves multiple functions, from transmitting knowledge and reinforcing culture to persuading stakeholders (Denning, 2006). Stories can be both official—

sanctioned by the organization—and unofficial, emerging organically from employees. Each offers unique insights into the organization's ethos and challenges (Gabriel, 2000).

A well-told story can inspire and motivate, with leaders often employing storytelling as a strategic tool (Barry & Elmes, 1997). Every member, in their interactions, contributes to the organization's evolving story (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). Within organizational contexts, storytelling is not merely a mode of communication but a way to catalyze and cultivate a shared sense of purpose (Boje, 1991; Denning, 2006).

From ancient tribal to modern organizational strategies, stories have acted as repositories of culture, values, and aspirations. The chronicles woven by our ancestors around campfires find parallels in the tales spun in today's corporate boardrooms, aiming to inspire, align, and motivate teams toward common objectives (Gabriel, 2000).

However, despite efforts to craft unique narratives, many stories repeat themselves, often occurring in virtually identical forms across organizations. Martin et al. (1983) refer to this phenomenon as the "uniqueness paradox," where organizations claim distinctiveness, yet their stories share themes and structures with others. This repetition underscores the shared nature of organizational storytelling, as similar challenges and values often lead to familiar narratives.

Storytelling serves a versatile role in organizations. As Gabriel (2000) highlights, organizational stories can instruct by integrating new members, bind by fostering a shared identity, clarify by navigating complex strategies, and preserve by celebrating the organization's traditions. This adaptability ensures that storytelling remains relevant in addressing a wide range of organizational needs.

The role of narratives in knowledge management and organizational learning has also been emphasized by Linde (2001), who argues that stories function as repositories of tacit knowledge. As employees share their experiences, they contribute to a collective memory that sustains organizational lessons and ensures continuity.

Denning (2006) further contends that the compelling nature of stories transcends mere information transmission, as they encapsulate an organization's ethos and can resonate more deeply than formal reports or strategies. Similarly, Boje (1991) and Buchanan & Dawson

(2007) underscore how stories provide a reflective mirror of the organization's identity while also projecting future aspirations.

In this context, Barry & Elmes (1997) describe stories as both compass and map, guiding stakeholders while offering context. Official stories, endorsed by leadership, communicate strategic intent, while unofficial stories—those shared in the corridors—offer deeper insights into the organization's culture and often reveal underlying challenges (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007).

Boje (2008) expands on this by explaining how strategic narratives interweave the past, present, and future to shape organizational identity. These narratives not only define the organization but also allow it to evolve, adapting to internal dynamics and external perceptions.

During periods of uncertainty, well-crafted stories become essential tools for meaning-making, as noted by Sonenshein (2010). By providing a clear narrative that explains both the organization's past and its trajectory, leaders can guide employees through transitions and align them with the organization's purpose.

Pentland (1999) and Buchanan & Dawson (2007) emphasize the dual role of storytelling in describing current realities while also prescribing future ideals. This balance allows stories to both inform and inspire, challenging the status quo and suggesting new directions for growth.

Weick (1995, 2001) adds that storytelling plays a crucial role in organizational sensemaking, particularly during crises. In times of uncertainty, stories provide stability and help members make sense of evolving situations. They act as anchors, guiding interpretation and action.

Beyond content, storytelling is a performative act that fosters collaboration, builds trust, and nurtures community (Boje, 1991). Boje's study of an office-supply firm demonstrates how storytelling in day-to-day interactions builds trust and reinforces a sense of shared purpose within the organization. The act of telling and retelling stories creates shared experiences and common reference points, fostering cohesion and reinforcing collective identity. This performative aspect of storytelling is crucial for building and maintaining organizational culture, as it enables members to actively participate in the ongoing construction of the organization's narrative.

Understanding the underlying structures of stories is also key to their effectiveness. Fisher (1984) argues that stories possess a narrative rationality—an internal logic that persuades and influences. Leaders can harness this structure to craft compelling stories that guide behavior and decision-making within the organization.

Finally, Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991) highlight the importance of adapting storytelling techniques as organizations evolve. As organizations undergo significant shifts, recalibrating their central narratives ensures that they remain relevant and cohesive. Engaging members across all levels in this process ensures that the story resonates with employees and reflects their lived experiences.

Storytelling, as demonstrated, is a dynamic and responsive tool, reflective of an organization's internal heartbeat and shaping its future trajectory. Stories evolve alongside the organization, adapting to new challenges and opportunities to ensure the organization's narrative remains relevant and compelling.

As organizations mature and evolve, so too do the stories they tell. Early-stage organizations may emphasize narratives of entrepreneurial spirit, innovation, and overcoming challenges, while more established organizations pivot toward stories of stability, sustainability, and long-term success (Gabriel, 2000). Understanding how these narratives evolve is critical for maintaining storytelling's relevance as an organizational tool, ensuring it continues to engage employees, align values, and shape organizational identity.

### **2.3 Storytelling for Sensemaking and Strategic Alignment**

Storytelling plays a crucial role in sensemaking, particularly in how organizational members interpret and respond to complex or ambiguous situations. Weick (1995) defines sensemaking as the process by which individuals give meaning to their collective experiences, enabling organizations to navigate uncertainty and align actions toward a common goal. In organizational settings, storytelling acts as a scaffold for sensemaking by providing structured narratives that help individuals and teams make sense of events, challenges, and opportunities.

But what drives sensemaking? One key catalyst is the experience of a discrepancy—a moment when an individual's current understanding is jarred by new information or events, prompting



a need to reconcile this divergence (Louis, 1980; Maitlis, 2005). Such moments could arise from unexpected organizational changes, conflicts, or even everyday discrepancies in narratives and practices. Storytelling provides the mechanism for reconciling these moments of cognitive dissonance, helping organizational members process the discrepancy and realign their understanding with the organization's broader goals.

Sensemaking through storytelling involves constructing coherent narratives that tie together past, present, and future events, allowing employees to better understand their roles within the organization and their contributions to broader strategic goals (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). By crafting compelling stories, leaders can help employees process ambiguity and complexity, offering a clear vision of how the organization plans to move forward and achieve its objectives.

Strategic alignment is closely linked to sensemaking, as storytelling fosters coherence between an organization's mission and the actions of its members. Gabriel (2000) emphasizes that well-crafted organizational stories help employees align their behaviors with the organization's strategic priorities, ensuring that individual actions contribute to collective success. For instance, stories that highlight a company's innovative spirit or commitment to customer service can inspire employees to embody these values in their everyday work, driving the organization toward its strategic goals.

By embedding key factors such as engagement, emotional connection, and leadership influence into organizational storytelling, leaders can create a shared understanding of the organization's strategic direction. This alignment helps mitigate uncertainty and confusion, fostering a sense of unity and purpose among employees. Furthermore, storytelling facilitates the integration of organizational culture with strategy, reinforcing the organization's values and ensuring that strategic initiatives resonate with its identity (Denning, 2006).

Effective storytelling for sensemaking and strategic alignment is not solely a top-down process. Employees at all levels contribute to the ongoing narrative of the organization, sharing their experiences and insights through informal storytelling channels (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). This collective process ensures that the organization's strategic goals are continuously reinforced and adapted to evolving circumstances, making storytelling a dynamic and interactive tool for aligning strategy with action.

In sum, storytelling provides a vital mechanism for sensemaking and strategic alignment within organizations. Through well-crafted stories, leaders can engage employees, clarify complex issues, and align their efforts with the organization's long-term goals, ensuring coherence and shared purpose across the organization.

## **2.4 Storytelling as a Strategic Leadership Tool**

Leadership is intrinsically tied to storytelling. Transformational leaders often use stories to communicate their vision, inspire followers, and drive organizational change (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In this context, storytelling becomes a strategic leadership tool that enables leaders to influence behavior, shape organizational culture, and foster a sense of collective identity.

Stories provide leaders with a powerful means of connecting with employees on an emotional level. Gabriel (2000) argues that storytelling allows leaders to bridge the gap between strategy and culture by embedding organizational values into compelling narratives. This emotional connection is key to fostering engagement, as employees are more likely to embrace the organization's mission and vision when they feel personally invested in the stories that define the organization.

Denning (2006) further explores how leaders use storytelling to build trust and credibility. By sharing stories that resonate with their audience, leaders can establish themselves as relatable and trustworthy figures, creating an environment where employees feel empowered to contribute to the organization's success. Storytelling enables leaders to communicate complex ideas in a way that is accessible and meaningful, helping to align employees with the organization's strategic objectives.

Leadership-driven storytelling is also critical in shaping organizational identity. Boje (1991) suggests that leaders play a central role in crafting the narratives that define an organization's character, values, and long-term aspirations. These stories serve as a touchstone for employees, providing a clear sense of who the organization is and where it is headed. When leaders effectively communicate this identity through storytelling, they reinforce alignment between individual actions and organizational goals, driving collective performance.

Moreover, storytelling enables leaders to navigate periods of transformation or uncertainty by offering a clear and coherent narrative that guides employees through change (Sonenshein, 2010). In these situations, stories provide context and meaning, helping employees understand the rationale behind strategic shifts and fostering resilience in the face of challenges. By positioning change within the broader narrative of the organization's growth and evolution, leaders can minimize resistance and create a shared sense of purpose.

In conclusion, storytelling is an essential strategic tool for leaders seeking to engage employees, shape culture, and align behavior with organizational goals. By leveraging the power of stories, leaders can inspire trust, foster commitment, and ensure that employees are united in their efforts to achieve the organization's strategic vision.

## **2.5 Cultural and Identity Reinforcement through Storytelling**

Storytelling is integral to reinforcing organizational culture and identity. As Gabriel (2000) suggests, stories serve as repositories of an organization's values, traditions, and beliefs, acting as a medium through which culture is transmitted and reinforced over time. By telling stories that reflect the core values of the organization, leaders and employees alike contribute to the ongoing construction of the organization's identity.

A central aspect of storytelling in organizations is its role in constructing and reinforcing identity. Organizational sensemaking, as articulated by Weick et al. (2005), highlights that identity construction is a key element in how individuals interpret their roles within an organization. Ashforth & Mael (1989) similarly argue that an individual's perception of their role and identity within the organization profoundly shapes their interpretation of experiences. Storytelling, by emphasizing key values and shared narratives, provides a mechanism for individuals to align their personal identity with the organizational identity. This alignment fosters a sense of belonging and purpose, helping employees see themselves as integral parts of the organization's mission and culture.

The ability of storytelling to strengthen cultural cohesion lies in its emotional resonance. Stories that align with the organization's values help employees internalize those values and integrate them into their day-to-day behaviors. For instance, a story that highlights the importance of teamwork and collaboration can inspire employees to work together more effectively,

reinforcing a culture of cooperation and mutual support. Gabriel's (2000) argument that stories create a shared emotional connection among organizational members, fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty, echoes this sentiment.

Organizational identity is not static; it evolves over time as the organization grows and adapts to new challenges. This dynamic aspect is supported by Weick's (1995) concept of sensemaking, which emphasizes retrospection—where organizational members reflect on past experiences to infer meanings relevant to the present or guide future anticipations (Dutton et al., 1994). Boje (2008) similarly highlights the evolving nature of storytelling in shaping organizational identity, noting that stories are continuously constructed and reconstructed to reflect the changing realities of the organization. Through storytelling, organizations can navigate transitions while maintaining a sense of continuity, ensuring that the core elements of their identity remain intact even as they adapt to new circumstances.

One of the key factors that make storytelling effective in reinforcing culture and identity is its ability to create a collective memory. According to Ybema et al. (2009), storytelling helps organizations establish shared memories that shape how employees perceive the organization's past, present, and future. These collective memories are crucial in guiding behavior and decision-making, as they provide a sense of continuity and purpose. For example, stories about the organization's founding or key turning points in its history can inspire pride and motivate employees to contribute to the organization's ongoing success.

Additionally, storytelling provides a platform for diverse voices within the organization to be heard. While official organizational narratives often come from leadership, informal stories told by employees can offer alternative perspectives that challenge or enrich the dominant narrative. This diversity of stories helps ensure that the organization's identity is inclusive and reflective of the experiences of all its members, not just those in leadership positions (Rhodes & Brown, 2005).

Cultural reinforcement through storytelling also plays a role in navigating the complexities of cross-cultural communication within global organizations. Stories that resonate across cultural boundaries can foster unity and inclusivity, helping to bridge the gap between different cultural perspectives (Vaara et al., 2016). By emphasizing shared values and experiences, storytelling

can help create a cohesive organizational identity that transcends geographical and cultural divides.

In summary, storytelling is a powerful tool for reinforcing organizational culture and identity. Through emotionally resonant stories that create shared memories and reflect the organization's values, storytelling fosters a sense of belonging and continuity. It allows organizations to adapt to change while maintaining a cohesive identity and helps bridge cultural differences within diverse teams.

## **2.6 Identifying Key Factors for Compelling Storytelling**

Organizational storytelling is most compelling when it effectively incorporates specific factors that enhance engagement, persuasion, and alignment with strategic goals. These factors, drawn from a wide range of research, are critical to understanding how storytelling can transform organizational communication, foster cultural cohesion, and drive collective action.

One of the most important aspects of storytelling is its ability to engage listeners and make information memorable. Vivid and context-rich stories capture attention and help embed organizational values within employees' minds, making the key messages more likely to be retained and acted upon. When stories align with shared experiences or touch upon universal themes, they resonate on a deeper level, allowing organizations to foster a stronger connection with their audience (Morgan & Dennehy, 1997; Khmour et al., 2023; Schwabe et al., 2019). This creates an emotional bond between the storyteller and the listener, making the story not only memorable but also personally meaningful, which is essential for long-term engagement.

In addition to fostering engagement, storytelling also plays a vital role in sensemaking, particularly in situations marked by ambiguity or complexity. Through narratives, organizational members are provided with a framework that helps them interpret and understand challenging concepts or events. This process allows individuals to reconcile conflicting information and make sense of discrepancies that might arise in their organizational roles (Beigi et al., 2019; Schwabe et al., 2019). For example, when employees are presented with conflicting messages or shifting priorities, stories offer clarity by explaining the reasoning behind strategic decisions, thereby reducing confusion and aligning their efforts with broader organizational goals.

However, it is not just clarity that makes storytelling powerful. The emotional connection forged through storytelling significantly enhances its persuasive impact. Effective stories are not only logical but also evoke strong emotional responses, which can motivate individuals to embrace new ideas and act on them. Whether it's inspiring teams to overcome challenges or reinforcing core organizational values, storytelling taps into the emotional core of its audience, driving commitment and persuasion at a deeper level (Morgan & Dennehy, 1997; Schwabe et al., 2019). This emotional resonance is crucial for moving people to action and fostering alignment with the organization's mission.

Moreover, stories play an essential role in reinforcing and shaping organizational culture and identity. By reflecting and embodying the organization's values, beliefs, and traditions, stories help employees internalize these elements and align their behaviors with the organization's objectives (Näslund & Perner, 2012; Smith & Keyton, 2001). As stories are passed down and repeated, they create a collective memory that becomes central to the organization's identity. This shared understanding strengthens the cultural fabric of the organization and fosters a sense of belonging among its members, ensuring that they act in ways that are consistent with the organization's values and aspirations (Hulst & Ybema, 2020).

Additionally, storytelling is particularly effective during periods of change and transformation. In times of uncertainty, stories can provide continuity and context, helping employees understand the rationale behind organizational shifts. By framing change within a larger narrative of growth or innovation, storytelling can reduce resistance to change and foster a sense of collective purpose (Khdour et al., 2023). In this way, stories become vehicles for driving organizational transformation while ensuring that core cultural elements remain intact.

The power of storytelling also extends beyond internal organizational dynamics. In today's globalized environment, organizations must navigate complex cross-cultural contexts. Storytelling serves as an effective tool for bridging cultural divides and creating a shared understanding across diverse groups. By crafting stories that resonate with multiple cultural perspectives, organizations can foster inclusivity and unity, ensuring that their messages are understood and embraced by a heterogeneous workforce (Barker & Gower, 2010; Beigi et al., 2019). This cross-cultural dimension of storytelling enhances its ability to communicate key organizational values to a broader audience (Barker & Gower, 2010; Hulst & Ybema, 2020).

Further adding to the impact of storytelling is its aesthetic appeal. Visually and emotionally engaging stories capture attention, increasing the likelihood that the message will resonate with the audience. Stories that are enjoyable, easy to follow, and visually compelling make a lasting impression and help organizations communicate their values and goals more effectively (Barker & Gower, 2010; Kernbach et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2002). This aesthetic quality not only enhances the listener's experience but also boosts the story's overall persuasive power.

Lastly, leadership plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of organizational storytelling. Leaders who can craft and communicate compelling stories inspire trust and influence the way employees perceive the organization's vision and mission. These stories help leaders establish credibility and foster strong relationships with their teams, ensuring that employees feel personally invested in the organization's success (Morgan & Dennehy, 1997). Leadership-driven storytelling is especially effective in aligning employees' actions with strategic goals, reinforcing the organization's identity, and motivating teams to achieve collective objectives.

In today's digital age, the reach and impact of storytelling are further amplified by digital platforms and visual technologies. Digital and visual storytelling enable organizations to enhance their stories with imagery, video, and other multimedia elements, making the narrative more vivid and engaging (Barker & Gower, 2010; Schwabe et al., 2019). This integration of technology allows organizations to reach wider audiences and creates more dynamic, interactive storytelling experiences that capture attention and inspire action.

In conclusion, organizational storytelling is a multifaceted tool that can enhance engagement, clarify complex ideas, evoke emotional responses, and align individual actions with strategic goals. By understanding and mastering the use of key factors such as memorability, emotional connection, cultural reinforcement, and leadership influence, storytelling becomes a powerful means of fostering organizational unity, driving action, and navigating change. As organizations continue to evolve, storytelling will remain a critical element in shaping their future trajectories and ensuring alignment with their core values.

## 2.7 Gaps in Existing Research

While organizational storytelling has been extensively studied, several critical gaps remain, particularly regarding the systematic identification and utilization of key factors that make storytelling compelling. Many existing studies have focused on storytelling as a tool for leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Denning, 2006) or as a method for transmitting organizational culture (Gabriel, 2000), but few have attempted to break down the specific elements that make certain stories more effective than others. In particular, a more granular exploration of factors like engagement, emotional connection, and sensemaking is needed.

One major gap lies in the intersection between storytelling and strategic alignment. Although researchers like Weick (1995) and Sonenshein (2010) have examined how storytelling aids in sensemaking and navigating ambiguity, there is limited research on how stories specifically align with organizational strategies in a way that fosters unity and drives collective action. While leaders often use storytelling to inspire and guide (Bass & Riggio, 2006), the precise mechanisms through which storytelling aligns individual actions with broader strategic goals remain underexplored.

Additionally, the role of storytelling in cross-cultural communication has not been thoroughly examined in the context of globalized organizations. Barker and Gower (2010) emphasize the need for storytelling that resonates across cultural boundaries, yet there is little empirical work on how stories can be adapted to ensure cross-cultural inclusivity. Given the increasing globalization of organizations, this is an area ripe for further exploration.

There is also a lack of research on how digital and visual storytelling—elements that are becoming increasingly prominent in today’s technologically-driven environments—contribute to the impact of organizational narratives. Kernbach et al. (2015), Schwabe et al. (2019) and Taylor et al. (2002) have touched on the role of aesthetics and digital platforms in storytelling, but more research is needed to understand how these delivery modes influence engagement and retention across different organizational contexts.

Finally, although storytelling is often lauded for its potential to evoke emotional responses and drive cultural reinforcement (Gabriel, 2000), the specific emotional and psychological mechanisms at play are often not deeply examined. Future research could benefit from a closer



investigation into how emotional resonance can be systematically harnessed in organizational storytelling to drive behavior change, foster engagement, and reinforce strategic objectives.

In summary, while the foundational work on organizational storytelling has provided valuable insights into its broad applications, there is still a need for more targeted research. Specifically, the identification and operationalization of key factors like emotional connection, sensemaking, and cross-cultural communication present significant opportunities for advancing the field. By addressing these gaps, future research can offer more concrete guidance on how organizations can leverage storytelling to achieve strategic alignment, foster inclusivity, and drive long-term success.

### 3 METHOD

In selecting the methodology for this research, it was essential to acknowledge differing perspectives on the role of narratives within organizational research. While traditional approaches often emphasize storytelling as central to understanding organizations, not all scholars subscribe to this view. Strawson (2004) challenges the primacy of narrative, arguing that life and experience can be equally understood through non-narrative structures, such as lists or taxonomies. This perspective has found resonance in the work of scholars like Barbara Czarniawska (2011), who aligns with Strawson's argument, advocating for a "non-narrative" approach in certain contexts, particularly when the aim is to focus on categorization and systematic analysis over narrative coherence. By incorporating this viewpoint, this research acknowledges that not all experiences or phenomena require a narrative structure for their effective exploration and understanding, thereby validating the use of alternative, systematic methodologies, such as Fuzzy AHP. This approach provides a rigorous, structured method for capturing and analyzing key factors in organizational storytelling without relying exclusively on narrative forms.

#### 3.1 Research Design

This research applies the Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (Fuzzy AHP) to establish a priority ranking for the key factors of storytelling within organizational contexts. The Fuzzy AHP method, derived from the traditional Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) developed by Saaty (1977), is designed to assign weights of importance through pairwise comparisons made by experts or decision-makers (Saaty, 2008; Wegner et al., 2020). Fuzzy AHP incorporates fuzzy logic, initially proposed by Zadeh (1988), to account for subjectivity in decision-making and enhance robustness (Abusaeed et al., 2023; Godoy et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2020).

The Fuzzy AHP approach is widely used in decision-making studies that involve subjective judgments (Chou & Chen, 2020; Piya et al., 2022; Serpa et al., 2023). This study adopts the method proposed by Chang (1996), which follows a step-by-step process to determine the ranking of key storytelling factors.

#### 3.2 Selection Criteria for Respondents

The selection of respondents was based on professional expertise in organizational management and leadership roles. The questionnaire was distributed to over 80 participants, all of whom were either managers or leaders in their respective organizations. These respondents were chosen due to their direct experience with storytelling in professional settings, ensuring relevant insights into the factors that make storytelling compelling within an organizational context.

This selection process ensures that the responses reflect a high level of familiarity with the practical application of storytelling techniques in leadership and management.

### **3.3 Data Collection Methods**

Data were collected through a structured survey designed using the Fuzzy AHP framework. Before distributing the survey, a pretest was conducted with a small group of experienced professors and business managers. This pretest yielded valuable feedback, which helped refine the questionnaire by improving the wording, structure, and clarity of the questions to ensure a more accurate data collection process and a respondent-friendly questionnaire (Dillman et al. 2014).

After the pretesting phase, the final version of the survey was distributed to selected experts or decision-makers, who were tasked with performing pairwise comparisons of key factors of storytelling, as outlined in Table 2. The fuzzy scale employed in the survey allowed participants to assess the relative importance of each factor, accounting for the inherent subjectivity in their judgments.

To further ensure clarity and comprehension, the meaning of each criterion and sub-criterion was provided at the beginning of the survey, and participants were reminded of these definitions throughout the questionnaire. Additionally, potential biases such as primacy effects—where earlier items in a list receive more attention—and respondent fatigue—where attention wanes over the course of a survey—were considered in the design process (Dillman et al. 2014).

Data collection occurred over five (5) business days, and eighty (80) responses were gathered.

**TABLE 2 – Key Factors and Descriptions of Compelling Organizational Storytelling**

Key Factor	Description
<b>Engagement and Memorability</b>	Stories make information more engaging and memorable because memories are storybased and episodic, involving incidents, experiences, and contexts.
<b>Sensemaking and Explanation</b>	Storytelling has strong sensemaking capabilities, helping listeners understand complex concepts in meaningful and personal ways.
<b>Emotional Connection and Persuasion</b>	Effective storytelling creates an emotional connection between the storyteller and the listener, making the information more compelling and persuasive.
<b>Cultural and Identity Reinforcement</b>	Stories reflect and reinforce organizational culture and identity, helping employees understand and align with the organization's values and beliefs.
<b>Change and Transformation</b>	Storytelling is particularly effective during times of change and transformation, contributing to a collective culture, communication, and unity.
<b>Cross-Cultural Communication</b>	Storytelling serves as an effective crosscultural communication tool, addressing the diverse communication needs of a heterogeneous workforce.
<b>Aesthetic and Enjoyment</b>	The aesthetic quality of a story, characterized by felt meaning, connectedness, and enjoyment, enhances its effectiveness and impact.
<b>Leadership and Influence</b>	Leaders who tell compelling stories can communicate important messages memorably, develop effective relationships, and inspire positive change.
<b>Digital and Visual Storytelling</b>	Digital technologies, such as video stories, enhance storytelling by adding visual and auditory elements, making the stories more vivid and impactful.

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

The collected data were then aggregated for further analysis using fuzzy logic principles to ensure the robustness and reliability of the results.

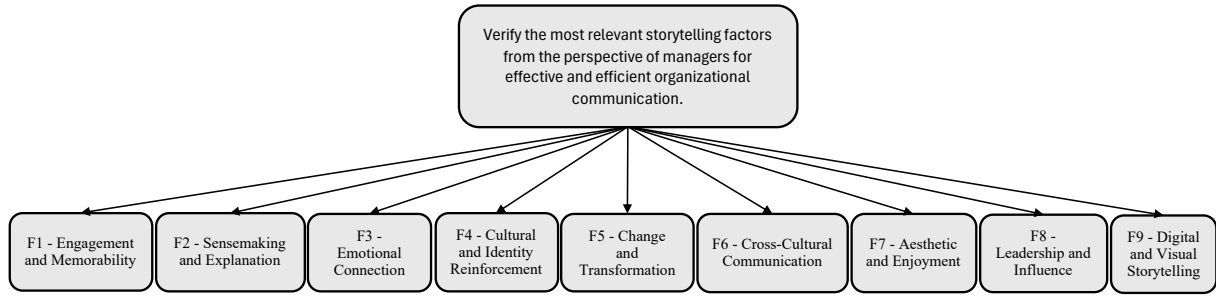
### 3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted using the Fuzzy AHP methodology as outlined by Chang (1996). The steps in the analysis included:

#### 3.4.1 Development of the Hierarchical Structure

The initial phase involves constructing a hierarchical structure that decomposes the complex decision-making problem into its fundamental components. For the purpose of this study—namely, to establish the ranking of key factors that influence organizational storytelling—a hierarchical structure was developed as illustrated in Figure 1:

**FIGURE 1 – Hierarchy of Key Factors for Effective Organizational Storytelling**



**Source: Author's own elaboration**

The hierarchy delineates the relationship between the overall goal, the criteria, and the sub-criteria relevant to the study.

### 3.4.2 Construction of the Fuzzy Pairwise Comparison Matrix

In this stage, respondent judgment is utilized to evaluate the relative importance of each factor through pairwise comparisons, resulting in a fuzzy comparison matrix. This matrix is constructed using triangular fuzzy numbers (TFNs) to capture the inherent uncertainty and imprecision in human judgments. The comparison matrix  $Z$  is mathematically represented as:

$$Z = \begin{bmatrix} (1, 1, 1) & l_{12}m_{12}u_{12} & \cdots & l_{1n}m_{1n}u_{1n} \\ l_{21}m_{21}u_{21} & (1, 1, 1) & \cdots & l_{2n}m_{2n}u_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ l_{n1}m_{n1}u_{n1} & l_{n2}m_{n2}u_{n2} & \cdots & (1, 1, 1) \end{bmatrix}$$

Where  $(Z_{ij}, l_{ij}, m_{ij}, u_{ij})$  denotes the fuzzy weight assigned to each pairwise comparison, with  $l_{ij}, m_{ij}, u_{ij}$  representing the lower, middle, and upper bounds of the triangular fuzzy number, respectively.

Respondents evaluate the relative importance of the factors using linguistic expressions (e.g., “Equal Importance,” “Little Importance”), which are then translated into fuzzy numbers using the predefined scale illustrated in Table 3:

TABLE 3 – Linguistic Scale for Criteria Evaluation

Linguistic Expressions	Equivalent Fuzzy Numbers	Triangular Fuzzy Numbers (l, m, u)
Equal Importance	1	(1, 1, 1)
Little Importance	3	(1, 3, 5)
Great Importance	5	(3, 5, 7)
Very Great Importance	7	(5, 7, 9)
Extremely Important	9	(7, 9, 9)

Source: Adapted from Saaty (1977) and Chang (1996) with further elaboration by the Author

### 3.4.3 Aggregation of Fuzzy Values

Following the construction of the fuzzy comparison matrix, the fuzzy values associated with each criterion are aggregated. This aggregation yields the total fuzzy score for each criterion, denoted by  $\sum_{j=1}^m M_{gi}^j$  as expressed in Equation 3:

$$\sum_{j=1}^m M_{gi}^j = \left( \sum_{j=1}^m l_j, \sum_{j=1}^m m_j, \sum_{j=1}^m u_j \right) \quad (3)$$

This step is critical in synthesizing the respondent judgments into a composite measure that reflects the overall importance of each criterion.

### 3.4.4 Summation and Inversion of Fuzzy Aggregates

Subsequent to the aggregation, the cumulative fuzzy scores for all criteria are computed, leading to the derivation of the inverse vector  $\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m M_{gi}^j$ . The mathematical formulation of this step is outlined in Equations 4 and 5:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m M_{gi}^j = \left( \sum_{i=1}^n l_i, \sum_{i=1}^n m_i, \sum_{i=1}^n u_i \right) \quad (4)$$

$$\left[ \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m M_{gi}^j \right]^{-1} = \left( \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n u_i}, \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n m_i}, \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n l_i} \right) \quad (5)$$

This inversion process is pivotal in normalizing the fuzzy scores, ensuring that they are comparable across different criteria.

#### 3.4.5 Calculation of the Synthetic Extent Value

The synthetic extent value ( $S_i$ ) for each criterion is subsequently calculated using Equation 6:

$$S_i = \sum_{j=1}^m M_{gi}^j * \left[ \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m M_{gi}^j \right]^{-1} \quad (6)$$

This value represents the degree to which a particular criterion contributes to the overall goal, as derived from the fuzzy pairwise comparisons:

#### 3.4.6 Determination of the Degree of Possibility

To determine the likelihood that one criterion is more important than another, the degree of possibility  $M_1(l_1, m_1, u_1) \geq M_2(l_2, m_2, u_2)$  is calculated, as per Equation 7:

$$V(M_1 \geq M_2) = \sup x \geq y \left[ \min (\mu_{M_1}(x), \mu_{M_2}(y)) \right] \quad (7)$$

This step enables the comparison of criteria in terms of their relative importance, facilitating the ranking process.

To further refine the comparison between fuzzy numbers, we calculate the ordinate of the highest intersection point between two fuzzy numbers. This calculation is crucial for determining the extent to which one fuzzy number is greater than or equal to another, which in turn influences the overall ranking of the criteria. Equation 8 is used for this purpose:

$$V(M_2 \geq M_1) = hgt(M_2 \cap M_1) \\ = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1 \text{ if } m_2 \geq m_1 \\ 0 \text{ if } m_2 < m_1 \end{array} \right. \frac{l_1 - u_2}{(m_2 - u_2) - (m_1 - l_1)} \text{ otherwise} \quad (8)$$

### 3.4.7 Evaluation of Convex Fuzzy Points

The degree of possibility that a convex fuzzy point  $M$  is greater than  $z$  convex fuzzy points  $M_i (i = 1, 2, \dots, z)$  is determined by Equation 9:

$$V(M \geq M_1, M_2, \dots, M_z) = V[(M \geq M_1); (M \geq M_2); \dots; (M \geq M_z)] \\ = V(M \geq M_p), p = 1, 2, \dots, z \quad (9)$$

If  $z \neq p$   $z = 1, 2, \dots$ , then Equation 10 is applied:

$$d'(A_p) = \min V(S_p \geq S_z) \quad (10)$$

If  $A_p (p = 1, 2, \dots, n)$  are  $n$  elements, then Equation 11 is applied:

$$W = (d'(A_1); d'(A_2), \dots, d'(A_n))^T \quad (11)$$

This evaluation is essential for determining the overall ranking of the factors.

### 3.4.8 Normalization of Weight Vectors

Finally, the normalized weight vectors are obtained, as shown in Equation 12:

$$W = (d(A_1), d(A_2), \dots, d(A_n))^T \quad (12)$$

This normalization ensures that the final rankings are proportional and meaningful, providing insights into the relative importance of the key storytelling factors.



### 3.4.9 Consistency Verification

To ensure the judgments provided by the respondents are consistent, the Consistency Ratio (CR) is calculated using the formula  $CR = \frac{CI}{RI}$ , where CI is the Consistency Index, calculated as  $CI = \frac{\lambda_{max} - n}{n - 1}$ . In these equations,  $\lambda_{max}$  is the largest eigenvalue of the pairwise comparison matrix, derived from the judgments provided by the respondents, and  $n$  is the number of factors being compared. In this research,  $n = 9$ , corresponding to the nine key factors identified for storytelling in organizations. The RI is the Random Index, which is a predefined value based on the size of the matrix  $n$ , as provided in Table 4 below:

**TABLE 4 – Random Index**

$n$	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Random Index</b>	0,52	0,89	1,11	1,25	1,35	1,40	<b>1,45</b>	1,49

**Source: Saaty (2004)**

For the judgments to be considered consistent, the CR must be less than or equal to 0,10 (or 10%). This threshold indicates acceptable consistency in the pairwise comparisons made by the respondents. A CR greater than 0,10 suggests inconsistency, and the judgments may need to be revisited.

In conclusion, the Fuzzy AHP methodology employed in this research offers a systematic approach for evaluating the key factors that influence organizational storytelling, incorporating subjective inputs and handling uncertainty. Consistency verification ensures reliable results within a clear analytical framework. With the methodology established, the next sections will present and interpret the findings, offering insights into the most critical factors for effective organizational storytelling.

## **4 ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to explore and identify key factors that make storytelling compelling within organizational settings, using the Fuzzy AHP method to prioritize these factors. Through the contributions of over 80 professionals across various sectors, the analysis revealed clear preferences and insights into which aspects of storytelling resonate most within organizations. The Fuzzy AHP process enabled the study to translate subjective judgments into structured, quantifiable data, producing a ranked list of key factors.

The findings offer significant implications for understanding the role of storytelling in engaging employees, reinforcing organizational culture, and driving strategic alignment. The following sections present a detailed analysis of the results, discussing the ranking and categorization of key factors as well as their implications for organizational practice.

### **4.1 Identification of Key Factors**

The identification of the nine key factors central to effective organizational storytelling was grounded in an extensive literature review, encompassing seminal works on storytelling, communication, and leadership. By examining both foundational and contemporary studies, key factors consistently emerged as critical to how storytelling influences engagement, communication, and organizational alignment. Factors such as Engagement and Memorability, Emotional Connection and Persuasion, and Sensemaking and Explanation have been widely recognized for their pivotal role in shaping the impact and reception of stories within organizations.

However, certain factors—such as Digital and Visual Storytelling, Aesthetic and Enjoyment, and Cross-Cultural Communication—while less prevalent in existing academic literature, were also selected for this study. Their inclusion reflects the growing relevance of these aspects in today's digital and multicultural organizational contexts. Although underexplored, these factors represent emerging trends in storytelling that warrant further investigation, particularly given the increasing use of digital platforms and the aesthetic experience in shaping communication. By incorporating these elements, this research aims to fill gaps in the literature and highlight the potential of these factors in influencing organizational storytelling practices.

The following table presents an extract of the identified key storytelling factors, mapped across various academic sources. It is important to note that the table itself is not exhaustive, even within this study. Instead, it provides a selection of the most prominent factors that emerged in the research, illustrating how these factors have been explored and validated through different lenses and contexts.

**TABLE 5 – Identification of Key Storytelling Factors Across Literature <sup>1</sup>**

Author(s)	Year	Engagement and Memorability	Sensemaking and Explanation	Emotional Connection and Persuasion	Cultural and Identity Reinforcement	Change and Transformation	Cross-Cultural Communication	Aesthetic and Enjoyment	Leadership and Influence	Digital and Visual Storytelling
Louis, M. R.	1980									
Eisenberg, E. M.	1984									
Andrews	1987									
Ashforth & Mael	1989									
Boje, D. M.	1991									
Bruner, J.	1991									
Carroll, A. B.	1991									
Gioia & Chittipeddi	1991									
Fairclough, N.	1992									
Dutton et al.	1994									
Weick, K. E.	1995									
Chang, D. Y.	1996									
Barry & Elmes	1997									
Czarniawska, B.	1997									
Morgan & Dennehy	1997									
Gabriel, Y.	2000									
Hardy et al.	2000									
Heraclous & Barrett	2001									
Linde, C.	2001									
Phillips et al.	2004									
Maitlis, S.	2005									
Rhodes & Brown	2005									
Rouleau, L.	2005									
Bass & Riggio	2006									
Brown & Humphreys	2006									
Denning, S.	2006									
Buchanan & Dawson	2007									
Boje, D. M.	2008									
Mantere, S.	2008									
Tsoukas, H.	2009									
Sonenshein, S.	2010									
Balogun et al.	2014									
Beigi et al.	2019									
Joshi et al.	2020									
Ahuja et al.	2023									
Enaifoghe, A.	2023									
Hajjani & Crocco	2023									
Khdour et al.	2023									

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

While these nine factors serve as the core framework for understanding compelling organizational storytelling, it is important to acknowledge that they are not exhaustive. Storytelling within organizations is a multifaceted and dynamic process, influenced by evolving practices, cultural contexts, and organizational needs. Consequently, other factors may emerge in specific scenarios that were not the focus of this research. The purpose of this study was to

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed version, including descriptions and relevance of each factor, please refer to APPENDIX A – Key Storytelling Factors Across Literature (Full Table).

highlight the most prominent and consistently recognized factors emerging from the literature and the expert evaluations conducted here. However, future research may refine these factors or uncover new dimensions of storytelling that further enrich the discourse.

The next phase of the analysis applied the Fuzzy AHP method to rank these key factors. The resulting prioritization offers insights into which aspects of storytelling are most critical for engaging employees, reinforcing culture, and driving alignment within organizations. These factors were further categorized into four dimensions: Outcomes, Processes, Delivery Modes, and Sources, which help to contextualize their relevance and priority within organizational storytelling.

## **4.2 Ranking and Categorization**

After identifying the storytelling factors that contribute to more effective and efficient organizational communication based on the literature, 80 respondents were invited to assign importance weights to each factor. These respondents compared the factors in pairs using a linguistic evaluation scale (see Table 3).

The Table 6 below presents demographic information about the 80 survey respondents across several categories. In terms of gender, 76.25% of respondents were male, while 23.75% were female. Regarding age, 46.3% of respondents were between 35-44 years old, 23.7% were 55 or older, and 22.5% were aged 45-54. For education level, 47.5% had a postgraduate (specialization) qualification, 27.5% held a Master's or PhD, and only 2.5% had a high school education.

Most respondents (93.8%) worked in the private sector, with 2.5% in the public sector and 3.7% in NGOs or other sectors. In terms of their area of work, 58.7% were involved in administration, finance, marketing, or sales, 25.1% worked in communication, operations, HR, or IT, and 16.2% were categorized under "other." Most respondents (73.8%) held management or executive roles, while 17.5% were in operational or supervisory positions. In terms of experience, 65% of respondents had more than 15 years of experience, 22.5% had between 8-15 years, and only 1.2% had less than one year of experience.

**TABLE 6 – Demographic and Professional Profile of Respondents**

Category	N=80	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	19	23.75%
Male	61	76.25%
<b>Age</b>		
18-24	0	0%
25-34	6	7.50%
35-44	37	46.30%
45-54	18	22.50%
55+	19	23.70%
<b>Education Level</b>		
High School	2	2.50%
Undergraduate/Graduate	18	22.50%
Postgraduate (Specialization)	38	47.50%
Master's/PhD	22	27.50%
<b>Employment Sector</b>		
Public Sector	2	2.50%
Private Sector	75	93.80%
NGO/Others	3	3.70%
<b>Area</b>		
Admin/Finance, Marketing/Sales	47	58.70%
Communication, Operations, HR, IT	20	25.10%
Other	13	16.20%
<b>Position</b>		
Operational/Supervisory	14	17.50%
Management/Executive	59	73.80%
Consulting/Others	7	8.70%
<b>Years of Experience</b>		
Less than 1 year	1	1.20%
1-7 years	9	11.30%
8-15 years	18	22.50%
More than 15 years	52	65.00%

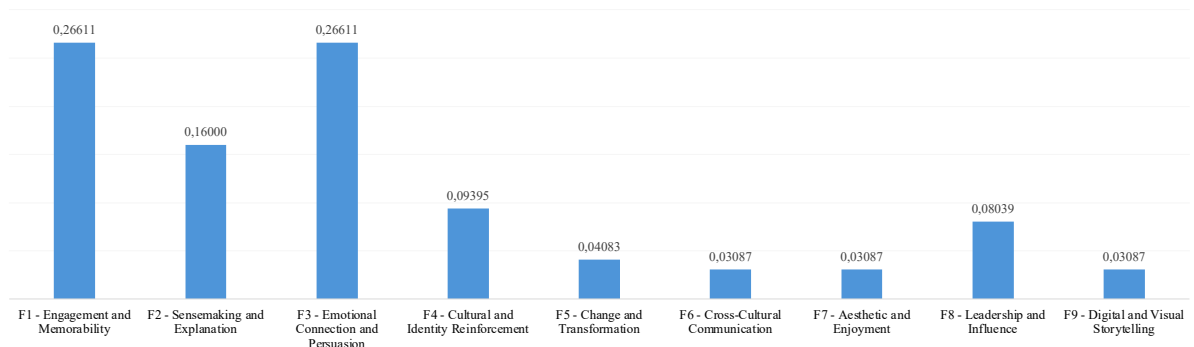
**Source: Author's own elaboration**

The analysis produced a ranking of storytelling factors using the Fuzzy AHP methodology. The following Table 7 and Figure 2 present the technical results with the normalized fuzzy vectors, offering a detailed mathematical breakdown of the factors. This table and figure serve as the foundation for deriving the rankings.

**TABLE 7 – Fuzzy AHP Analysis**

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8	Factor 9	Normalized Fuzzy Vector
<b>Factor 1</b>	(1;1;1)	(1;3;5)	(1;1;1)	(3;5;7)	(3;5;7)	(5;7;9)	(5;7;9)	(3;5;7)	(5;7;9)	(0,285;0,280;0,256)
<b>Factor 2</b>	(1/5;1/3;1)	(1;1;1)	(1/5;1/3;1)	(1;3;5)	(1;3;5)	(3;5;7)	(3;5;7)	(1;3;5)	(3;5;7)	(0,117;0,146;0,176)
<b>Factor 3</b>	(1;1;1)	(1;3;5)	(1;1;1)	(3;5;7)	(3;5;7)	(5;7;9)	(5;7;9)	(3;5;7)	(5;7;9)	(0,285;0,280;0,256)
<b>Factor 4</b>	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1/5;1/3;1)	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1;1;1)	(1;3;5)	(3;5;7)	(3;5;7)	(1;1;1)	(3;5;7)	(0,091; 0,090;0,096)
<b>Factor 5</b>	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1/5;1/3;1)	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1/5;1/3;1)	(1;1;1)	(1;1;1)	(1;1;1)	(1/5;1/3;1)	(1;1;1)	(0,044;0,037;0,042)
<b>Factor 6</b>	(1/9;1/7;1/5)	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1/9;1/7;1/5)	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1;1;1)	(1;1;1)	(1;1;1)	(1/5;1/3;1)	(1;1;1)	(0,039;0,030;0,029)
<b>Factor 7</b>	(1/9;1/7;1/5)	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1/9;1/7;1/5)	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1;1;1)	(1;1;1)	(1;1;1)	(1/5;1/3;1)	(1;1;1)	(0,039;0,030;0,029)
<b>Factor 8</b>	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1/5;1/3;1)	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1;1;1)	(1;3;5)	(1;3;5)	(1;3;5)	(1;1;1)	(1;3;5)	(0,063;0,076;0,086)
<b>Factor 9</b>	(1/9;1/7;1/5)	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1/9;1/7;1/5)	(1/7;1/5;1/3)	(1;1;1)	(1;1;1)	(1;1;1)	(1/5;1/3;1)	(1;1;1)	(0,039;0,030;0,029)

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

**FIGURE 2 – Fuzzy AHP Analysis Chart**

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

While the technical analysis in Table 7 above is crucial for methodological rigor, it may be complex for immediate interpretation. To make the results more accessible, Table 8 below presents the findings in a user-friendly format.

**TABLE 8 – Priorities of Storytelling Factors**

Storytelling Factors	Normalized Fuzzy Vector	Decision Weight
Engagement and Memorability	(0.285; 0.280; 0.256)	27%
Emotional Connection and Persuasion	(0.285; 0.280; 0.256)	27%
Sensemaking and Explanation	(0.117; 0.146; 0.176)	16%
Cultural and Identity Reinforcement	(0.091; 0.090; 0.096)	9%
Leadership and Influence	(0.063; 0.076; 0.086)	8%
Change and Transformation	(0.044; 0.037; 0.042)	4%
Cross-Cultural Communication	(0.039; 0.030; 0.029)	3%
Aesthetic and Enjoyment	(0.039; 0.030; 0.029)	3%
Digital and Visual Storytelling	(0.039; 0.030; 0.029)	3%

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

The table above simplifies the technical results by clearly identifying and ranking the key factors of storytelling in a more accessible, color-coded format. These factors are categorized into four distinct dimensions: Outcomes, Processes, Delivery Modes, and Sources, which help to interpret their relevance and priority within organizational storytelling. To provide a clearer understanding of how these dimensions interact within the framework of organizational storytelling, the color-coded system in Figure 3 below visually categorizes the factors based on their role and influence.

**FIGURE 3 – Colored Categorization of Storytelling Dimensions**

	<b>Outcomes</b> refer to the desired results of storytelling, such as Engagement and Memorability, Cultural and Identity Reinforcement, and Change and Transformation.
	<b>Processes</b> cover the mechanisms by which storytelling clarifies complex ideas, including Sensemaking and Explanation or Emotional Connection and Persuasion.
	<b>Delivery Modes</b> focus on the methods of conveying stories, from traditional formats to modern Digital and Visual Storytelling, as well as Aesthetic and Enjoyment.
	<b>Sources</b> represent the originators of storytelling, particularly Leadership and Influence and Cross-Cultural Communication.

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

The ranking revealed two factors at the top—Engagement and Memorability and Emotional Connection and Persuasion. These factors are critical in ensuring that organizational stories resonate emotionally with employees and leave a lasting impact. These results align with

existing literature, which consistently emphasizes the importance of emotional appeal and memorability in making stories compelling (Denning, 2006; Gabriel, 2000).

Sensemaking and Explanation followed closely, reflecting its role in helping employees interpret complex issues and aligning them with strategic goals. This confirms Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking, where stories help to reduce ambiguity and guide decision-making.

Cultural and Identity Reinforcement and Leadership and Influence were ranked next, indicating that storytelling also plays a significant role in shaping and maintaining organizational identity, while leaders' involvement in storytelling helps drive alignment between organizational values and actions. Although Leadership and Influence ranked slightly lower than Cultural and Identity Reinforcement, the small difference suggests that these factors are almost equally important in organizational storytelling, particularly in maintaining cultural cohesion and influencing employee behavior (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Boje, 2008).

Change and Transformation and the group of lower-ranked factors—Cross-Cultural Communication, Aesthetic and Enjoyment, and Digital and Visual Storytelling—highlight the peripheral but still relevant roles of storytelling in navigating change, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and adapting stories to digital platforms. While these factors did not rank as highly, they remain important in specific contexts, particularly in global organizations and those embracing digital transformation.

### **4.3 Interpretation of Findings**

The prioritization of Engagement and Memorability and Emotional Connection and Persuasion reflects the centrality of these factors in creating impactful organizational stories. This finding supports the idea that stories which evoke strong emotions and remain memorable are the most effective in driving employee engagement and aligning them with the organization's strategic goals (Denning, 2006; Gabriel, 2000). Emotional engagement fosters a deeper connection between the story and the audience, leading to a stronger alignment with the organization's mission and values.

Sensemaking and Explanation ranked next, underscoring storytelling's role in helping employees make sense of complex issues, navigate ambiguity, and connect their day-to-day



roles to broader organizational strategies. This finding aligns with Weick's (1995) concept of sensemaking, where stories help reduce uncertainty and provide a framework for understanding organizational challenges.

The close ranking of Cultural and Identity Reinforcement and Leadership and Influence indicates that both factors are essential to effective storytelling. Stories that reinforce an organization's culture and identity help employees feel connected to the organization's values and contribute to a cohesive culture (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Leadership-driven storytelling, while slightly lower-ranked, remains critical for ensuring that stories are aligned with the organization's strategic goals and communicated effectively across the organization (Boje, 2008).

Finally, Change and Transformation and the three factors tied at the lower end—Cross-Cultural Communication, Aesthetic and Enjoyment, and Digital and Visual Storytelling—indicate that while these elements are not top priorities, they still play important roles in specific organizational contexts. For instance, Cross-Cultural Communication is crucial for global organizations, and Aesthetic and Digital Storytelling are increasingly relevant in today's digital landscape. These findings suggest that while emotional and strategic alignment factors dominate, storytelling's delivery modes and adaptability to cultural and technological shifts are also essential in specific scenarios.

## 5 DISCUSSION

In this section, the empirical findings from the study are compared and contrasted with established literature in the fields of organizational communication and storytelling. The goal is to demonstrate how the study confirms, adds to, or contradicts key theories, and to highlight the contributions it makes to the understanding of storytelling as a strategic tool in organizational contexts.

### 5.1 Confirmations

The empirical findings strongly support several well-established theories in the literature, validating their relevance in modern organizational contexts. One of the most notable confirmations is Weick's (1995) concept of sensemaking. Both the literature and the findings from this study identified sensemaking as a central process through which storytelling helps individuals and organizations navigate ambiguity and complexity. The study's respondents consistently ranked sensemaking as a top factor in storytelling's effectiveness, reinforcing Weick's assertion that stories provide coherence and meaning during times of change (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). This demonstrates that storytelling plays a crucial role in helping employees make sense of uncertain situations, aligning well with Weick's idea that stories create order and guide action in organizations.

Similarly, Gabriel's (2000) emphasis on the role of emotional resonance in storytelling is supported by the findings. Emotional connection was frequently cited by respondents as a critical factor in making stories memorable and impactful, aligning with Gabriel's insights into how stories engage emotions to reinforce organizational values and behaviors (Gabriel, 2000). The study confirms that emotionally engaging stories foster a sense of belonging and increase employee commitment, reflecting Gabriel's argument that emotionally resonant stories have a powerful impact on cultural reinforcement and behavior alignment.

Additionally, Fairclough's (1992) framework on organizational discourse is confirmed by the study. Fairclough argues that language and narratives help construct realities within organizations, shaping both power dynamics and organizational identities (Fairclough, 1992; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). The empirical data support this theory, indicating that storytelling is an important tool for shaping organizational identity and aligning employees with strategic

goals. The data show that storytelling reinforces organizational culture by aligning employee behavior with the organization's core values, echoing Fairclough's idea that discourse constructs organizational realities and power structures (Fairclough, 1992; Hardy et al., 2000).

## 5.2 Additions

While the study confirms much of the existing literature, it also contributes new insights that extend the understanding of storytelling in organizations. One significant addition is the emphasis on digital and visual storytelling, a theme that emerged strongly in the empirical data. The rise of digital storytelling is touched upon in works such as Denning (2008) and Schwabe et al. (2019), but the findings from this study suggest that the integration of multimedia elements is now a critical factor in capturing audience attention and enhancing engagement (Mirkovski et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2002). Respondents particularly highlighted the use of digital tools and platforms to communicate stories effectively in a global, cross-cultural organizational environment, emphasizing how digital storytelling expands the reach and impact of narratives (Chou & Chen, 2020; Khdour et al., 2023). This suggests that digital storytelling has become a strategic necessity for organizations, particularly those operating in global markets, where reaching diverse audiences through digital channels is essential.

Another important addition is the systematic framework developed to rank and categorize the key factors that make storytelling compelling in organizational contexts. The Fuzzy AHP methodology (Chang, 1996; Chou & Chen, 2020) allowed for the structured ranking of factors such as engagement, emotional connection, sensemaking, and cultural reinforcement (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Gabriel, 2000; Weick, 1995). This framework provides a practical tool for organizations to optimize their storytelling strategies, bridging the gap between theory and practice. It offers leaders a structured approach to align storytelling with their strategic goals while enhancing internal communication and employee engagement.

The research also extends the understanding of cross-cultural storytelling, an area that has been explored in works such as Barker and Gower (2010). While existing literature discusses the challenges of navigating cultural differences in storytelling, this study expands on that by showing how leaders can use storytelling to foster inclusivity and unity across diverse cultural contexts. Respondents underscored the importance of adapting stories to resonate with culturally diverse audiences, revealing how storytelling can foster a shared sense of belonging

within multicultural organizations (Morgan & Dennehy, 1997; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011). This finding adds a practical dimension to the academic discussion on cross-cultural storytelling, revealing how stories, when adapted properly, can promote inclusivity and cohesion.

In addition, the research introduces new perspectives on storytelling's role in strategic contexts, particularly the role of storytelling in promoting change and transformation. While previous literature emphasizes storytelling's role in reinforcing culture and identity, this study sheds light on how stories can drive organizational change by helping employees make sense of transitions and uncertainties. Respondents identified the power of well-crafted stories in motivating employees to embrace new strategies and navigate change effectively, which adds to the theoretical understanding of storytelling's broader organizational impact (Gabriel, 2000; Weick, 1995).

In conclusion, this research makes several key contributions to the field of organizational storytelling. It confirms the importance of well-established factors such as emotional engagement and sensemaking while adding new dimensions, such as the growing significance of digital storytelling, the systematic categorization of key factors, and the expanded understanding of cross-cultural and strategic storytelling. These findings offer both theoretical advancements and practical tools for organizations to leverage storytelling more effectively.

### **5.3 Contradictions**

The study also revealed some contradictions with the literature, offering new perspectives on storytelling's role in organizations. A notable deviation from theoretical frameworks comes from the findings on organizational discourse. Fairclough (1992) and Hardy et al. (2000) suggest that organizational discourse tends to reinforce existing power structures, with language and narratives serving primarily to maintain the status quo. However, the empirical data indicate that storytelling can, in some cases, challenge and disrupt these structures. The prioritization of factors such as Engagement and Memorability and Emotional Connection and Persuasion suggests that storytelling is perceived as a tool that can promote inclusivity and challenge entrenched power dynamics, particularly in global organizations where diverse voices are encouraged to contribute their narratives (Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Näslund & Perner, 2012). This implies that storytelling is more dynamic than previously understood, capable not

only of reinforcing but also of disrupting organizational hierarchies depending on how it is utilized.

Additionally, the study challenges certain aspects of strategic narrative theory. While traditional views emphasize credibility as a primary factor in a narrative's success (Barry & Elmes, 1997), the findings suggest differently. The higher prioritization of factors related to Engagement and Memorability and Emotional Connection and Persuasion over Leadership and Influence indicates that strategic narratives should not only align with current organizational values but also present a vision for the future that inspires collective action. This aligns with Denning's (2005) emphasis on narratives that motivate and Gioia & Chittipeddi's (1991) focus on sensegiving to initiate strategic change. This points to a more dynamic understanding of how stories shape strategic direction beyond credibility.

## **5.4 Suggestions to Practice**

The research findings reveal practical ways for organizations to implement storytelling as a tool for enhancing communication, fostering engagement, and driving alignment with strategic goals. The following are three actionable steps leaders can take to effectively leverage storytelling in organizational settings:

### **5.4.1 Craft Emotionally Engaging and Memorable Stories**

To implement storytelling that resonates with employees, leaders should prioritize emotional connections. Research has shown that stories with emotional depth are more memorable and inspire greater engagement (Denning, 2006; Gabriel, 2000). In practice, organizations can begin internal communications, such as presentations or team meetings, with stories that highlight personal experiences or company milestones that resonate emotionally with employees. For instance, incorporating employee success stories, client feedback, or mission-driven achievements into regular updates or town halls can evoke emotional resonance, making these stories more memorable and shareable within the organization (Gabriel, 2000).

#### 5.4.2 Simplify Strategies and Facilitate Sensemaking with Storytelling

Storytelling is a critical tool for simplifying complex organizational strategies, helping employees make sense of changes or challenges (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). Leaders can introduce new initiatives or navigate transitions by connecting the company's history, values, and future objectives through storytelling. For example, when organizations face times of change, narrating how past challenges were overcome by staying aligned with core values can reduce uncertainty and align teams with strategic objectives. Drawing a clear connection between current actions and future success is crucial in helping employees make sense of and embrace strategic changes (Boje, 2008; Weick, 1995).

#### 5.4.3 Strengthen Culture with Values-Driven Narratives

Research highlights the power of storytelling in reinforcing organizational identity and culture. Leaders can use storytelling to regularly communicate narratives that reflect the organization's core values, thereby reinforcing desired behaviors (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Fairclough, 1992). For example, stories shared in leadership meetings or onboarding sessions that highlight how employees or teams have embodied the company's values, such as innovation, collaboration, or resilience, help solidify a cohesive organizational culture. These narratives should consistently align with the organization's strategic vision, ensuring that employees feel a strong sense of identity and belonging within the organization (Gabriel, 2000; Denning, 2008).

### 5.5 Reflections on the Research Process

Reflecting on the research process, several lessons have emerged that would shape the approach if the study were to be conducted again. While the research has provided valuable insights into storytelling's role in organizations, certain methodological and theoretical considerations could have been addressed differently to further enrich the findings.

Firstly, expanding the sample size and diversifying the respondent pool would offer a more comprehensive view of storytelling across various organizational types and cultures. The current study focused predominantly on organizations within a specific sector, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Including participants from diverse industries, countries, and organizational sizes would have provided a broader perspective on how storytelling is utilized

globally and within different cultural contexts. For instance, exploring storytelling practices in non-Western contexts could reveal alternative narrative frameworks, enhancing the study's cross-cultural relevance.

Additionally, incorporating more qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, alongside the quantitative Fuzzy AHP approach, would allow for a deeper exploration of storytelling's nuanced impact. While the Fuzzy AHP method effectively ranked key factors, qualitative insights would provide a richer, more contextual understanding of how these factors are applied in practice. Engaging directly with leaders and employees through interviews could reveal unique, context-specific storytelling strategies that would complement the empirical data, particularly in exploring the emotional and cultural elements of storytelling.

From a theoretical standpoint, exploring other frameworks in greater depth, such as narrative identity theory or discourse analysis, could broaden the lens through which storytelling is analyzed. While the study heavily relied on established organizational storytelling frameworks, incorporating alternative theories would expand the analysis. For instance, narrative identity theory could offer insights into how personal and organizational identities are constructed and maintained through storytelling, providing a more holistic view of the role narratives play within organizations. Similarly, discourse analysis could dissect the power dynamics and ideological structures embedded in organizational stories, adding another layer of depth to the analysis.

A longitudinal approach could also provide valuable insights into how storytelling evolves over time within organizations, particularly during periods of change or crisis. Examining the same organizations over several years would allow for a dynamic understanding of how storytelling adapts to shifting organizational landscapes, offering practical lessons for leaders navigating change.

Finally, placing greater emphasis on the role of digital and visual storytelling from the outset would yield essential insights into how storytelling practices must evolve in the digital age. As organizations increasingly communicate through digital platforms, integrating this angle earlier in the research design would have allowed for a more thorough examination of how digital transformation influences organizational storytelling.

## 6 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

### 6.1 Limitations

#### 6.1.1 Scope of Factors

While the present study identified nine key factors contributing to effective organizational storytelling, this set of factors is not exhaustive. Storytelling, as a tool for organizational communication, is multifaceted and continually evolving. Other factors, particularly those related to specific industries or contexts, may not have been captured in this study. As noted by Rhodes and Brown (2005), storytelling within organizations is a complex phenomenon, often shaped by contextual and environmental influences. Therefore, future research may identify additional factors that are equally or more relevant in different settings.

#### 6.1.2 Sample Size and Demographics

The sample for this study comprised 80 respondents, predominantly professionals in managerial or leadership positions. This demographic focus may introduce bias, as leaders and managers may prioritize storytelling differently than employees at lower levels. Studies have shown that perspectives on organizational phenomena can vary greatly between hierarchical levels (Dutton et al., 1994). Additionally, the sample was skewed toward male respondents, with 76% of participants identifying as male. This gender imbalance may have influenced the prioritization of certain factors, as research suggests that gender can impact perceptions of communication effectiveness (Andrews, 1987; Enaifoghe, 2023; Joshi et al., 2020). Consequently, the findings may not be fully generalizable to all organizational contexts.

It is also worth noting that the factor of leadership did not emerge as prominently as anticipated, despite its widely recognized importance in organizational storytelling (Barker & Gower, 2010; Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Denning, 2008). One possible explanation for this could lie in the demographic makeup of the respondents. With 92.5% of participants being above 35 years old and occupying leadership roles, it is possible that their familiarity with leadership as a construct may have influenced their responses. As suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003), respondent bias can emerge in various forms, including through cognitive limitations or social desirability, potentially leading leaders to prioritize factors other than leadership in this context. While this



remains speculative, it opens up an avenue for future research to further investigate how leadership is perceived in organizational storytelling.

### 6.1.3 Cultural and Linguistic Focus

The study's focus on Brazilian and Portuguese-speaking professionals also introduces a potential limitation. Storytelling is a culturally embedded practice, and its effectiveness can vary significantly across cultural contexts (Denning, 2006). This study does not account for cultural differences in storytelling practices, and the factors identified may not hold the same level of importance in other regions or within global organizations. Future research could explore how these factors translate to other cultural settings, following calls for more cross-cultural research in organizational communication (Barker & Gower, 2010).

### 6.1.4 Impact of Remote and Hybrid Work on Storytelling Effectiveness

One limitation of this study lies in the context in which the respondents provided their evaluations. With many professionals now working remotely, in hybrid setups, or in flexible office environments, the responses gathered may reflect their experiences in these new work settings. This could potentially influence how they perceive the relevance and effectiveness of storytelling factors, particularly in virtual or asynchronous communications. For example, Engagement and Memorability or Digital and Visual Storytelling may take on greater importance for employees working remotely, where face-to-face interactions are limited (Hajjami & Crocco, 2024). Conversely, the in-office respondents may prioritize factors like Leadership and Influence or Cultural and Identity Reinforcement, which are more closely tied to direct interpersonal interactions (Ahuja et al., 2023).

This shift in working environments suggests the need for future research to explore how storytelling techniques differ in effectiveness across various work settings. Further studies could investigate whether specific storytelling factors resonate more in virtual versus physical workplaces, or how organizations can better leverage digital platforms to enhance storytelling in remote or hybrid teams. As the nature of work continues to evolve, so too must the methods of storytelling within organizations. Thus, an important avenue for future research would be to assess how storytelling can adapt to these new environments, especially considering the

growing emphasis on Digital and Visual Storytelling as organizations increasingly rely on virtual communications (Kernbach et al., 2015; Mirkovski et al., 2019; Newman & Ford, 2020).

#### 6.1.5 Methodological Constraints

The Fuzzy AHP methodology, while effective in prioritizing subjective factors, has its limitations. Although fuzzy logic helps mitigate subjectivity, the results are still dependent on the accuracy of the respondents' pairwise comparisons. Saaty (2008) emphasizes that while AHP-based methods are robust, they rely heavily on the assumption that respondents have a deep understanding of the factors being compared. In this study, the technical nature of the methodology may have introduced a cognitive burden on the respondents, potentially affecting the consistency of their evaluations.

### 6.2 Future Research Directions

#### 6.2.1 Expanding the Set of Factors

Future research could extend the list of storytelling factors identified in this study. While this research identified nine critical factors, other important elements may emerge in different organizational contexts or industries. For instance, factors like innovation storytelling or sustainability storytelling have gained increasing relevance in recent years (Boje, 2008; Vaara et al., 2016). Expanding the factor set could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how storytelling can be used as a strategic tool across various organizational domains.

#### 6.2.2 Cross-Cultural and International Comparisons

Given the cultural focus of this study, future research should explore how storytelling factors vary across different regions or cultural settings. Cross-cultural studies, such as those by Barker and Gower (2010) and Denning (2006), have shown that storytelling norms and practices differ significantly between cultures. A comparative study across regions could reveal unique storytelling factors or alternative prioritizations in global organizations, providing valuable insights for multinational companies.

### 6.2.3 Broader Demographic Sampling

To achieve a more nuanced understanding of storytelling in organizations, future research should aim for more diverse sampling. Including non-managerial employees, freelancers, and even those working in non-traditional organizational structures could shed light on how storytelling functions at all organizational levels. Research by Linde (2001) has shown that stories are not only tools of the elite but are also used by employees to make sense of their work environments, suggesting that broader perspectives could enrich our understanding of storytelling dynamics.

### 6.2.4 Mixed-Method Approaches

While this study relied on quantitative methods, future research could incorporate mixed-method approaches. Combining Fuzzy AHP with qualitative research methods—such as interviews or ethnographic studies—could provide deeper insights into how storytelling factors are applied in practice. As noted by Boje (1991), organizational stories are often complex, and qualitative methods could capture the nuances that quantitative approaches might miss.

### 6.2.5 Longitudinal Research

Future studies could explore the evolution of storytelling factors over time. Given that organizational contexts and priorities shift, it would be beneficial to examine how the importance of these factors changes as organizations grow, transform, or face crises. Longitudinal studies have proven effective in understanding organizational change and storytelling's role in navigating that change (Weick, 1995, 2001; Maitlis, 2005; Buchanan & Dawson, 2007).

## 7 FINAL REMARKS

This research has successfully identified and prioritized nine key storytelling factors within organizational contexts, using the Fuzzy AHP methodology to objectively rank these elements based on expert evaluations. The findings demonstrate the critical role of Engagement and Memorability, Emotional Connection and Persuasion, and Sensemaking and Explanation as top factors driving effective storytelling. These results align with existing literature, reaffirming the importance of emotional resonance and clarity in aligning organizational messages with strategic objectives.

Interestingly, Leadership and Influence, often presumed to be a major driver of storytelling, was not ranked among the highest. This challenges the conventional belief of leaders being the exclusive or primary storytellers. Instead, the results suggest that storytelling is a skill accessible to all, as any employee can create compelling narratives if they resonate with the listener. This shifts the focus from seeing leaders as the sole narrators of organizational stories to a more inclusive view, where storytelling is a shared organizational responsibility.

While Digital and Visual Storytelling and Cross-Cultural Communication are emerging factors due to the global nature of work and increased reliance on digital platforms, the study finds that these are not yet prioritized over more traditional elements such as engagement and emotional connection. However, the growing importance of these factors suggests that future studies should explore their evolving role in virtual and hybrid workplaces.

Despite the robustness of the Fuzzy AHP method used to identify and rank these factors, the study is limited by the context in which the data was collected, particularly regarding the impact of remote and hybrid work settings on respondents' perspectives. Future research could explore how storytelling might adapt to these evolving work environments and assess the influence of technology in reshaping storytelling modes and methods within organizations.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on organizational storytelling by identifying and prioritizing key factors that can drive engagement, clarity, and alignment. It opens the door for further exploration into how storytelling evolves in an increasingly digital and dispersed working world, and it positions storytelling as a collective, inclusive practice rather than a tool reserved for leadership alone.

## REFERENCES

- ABUSAEED, S., KHAN, S. U. R., & MASHKOOR, A. (2023). **A fuzzy AHP-based approach for prioritization of cost overhead factors in agile software development:** *Applied Soft Computing*, 133, 109977. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.asoc.2022.109977>
- AHUJA, J., PUPPALA, H., SERGIO, R., & HOFFMAN, E. (2023). **E-Leadership Is Un(usual):** Multi-Criteria Analysis of Critical Success Factors for the Transition from Leadership to E-Leadership. *Sustainability*. <http://doi.org/10.3390/su15086506>
- ANDREWS, P. (1987). **Gender differences in persuasive communication and attribution of success and failure:** *Human Communication Research*, 13(3), 372-385. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1987.tb00110.x>
- ASHFORTH, B. E., & MAEL, F. (1989). **Social identity theory and the organization:** *Academy of Management Review*, 14(1), 20-39. <http://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4278999>
- BALOGUN, J., JACOBS, C., JARZABKOWSKI, P., MANTERE, S., & VAARA, E. (2014). **Placing strategy discourse in context:** Sociomateriality, sensemaking, and power. *Journal of Management Studies*, 51(2), 175-201. <http://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12059>
- BARKER, R. T., & GOWER, K. (2010). **Strategic Application of Storytelling in Organizations:** Toward Effective Communication in a Diverse World. *The Journal of Business Communication* (1973), 47(3), 295-312. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0021943610369782>
- BARRY, D., & ELMES, M. (1997). **Strategy retold:** Toward a narrative view of strategic discourse. *Academy of Management Review*, 22(2), 429-452. <http://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1997.9707154065>
- BASS, B. M., & RIGGIO, R. E. (2006). **Transformational leadership** (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- BEIGI, M., CALLAHAN, J., & MICHAELSON, C. (2019). **A Critical Plot Twist:** Changing Characters and Foreshadowing the Future of Organizational Storytelling. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 21: 447-465. <http://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12203>
- BOJE, D. M. (1991). **The storytelling organization:** A study of story performance in an office-supply firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36(1), 106-126. <http://doi.org/10.2307/2393432>
- BOJE, D. M. (2008). **Storytelling organizations.** Sage Publications.
- BROWN, A. D., & HUMPHREYS, M. (2006). **Organizational identity and place:** A discursive exploration of hegemony and resistance. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(2), 231-257. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2006.00589.x>
- BRUNER, J. (1986). **Actual minds, possible worlds.** Harvard University Press.

BRUNER, J. (1991). **The narrative construction of reality:** Critical Inquiry, 18(1), 1-21.  
<http://doi.org/10.1086/448619>

BUCHANAN, D., & DAWSON, P. (2007). **Discourse and audience:** Organizational change as multi-story process. Journal of Management Studies, 44(5), 669-686.  
<http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00703.x>

CARROLL, A. B. (1991). **The pyramid of corporate social responsibility:** Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders. Business Horizons, 34(4), 39-48.  
[http://doi.org/10.1016/0007-6813\(91\)90005-G](http://doi.org/10.1016/0007-6813(91)90005-G)

CHANG, D. Y. (1996). **Applications of the extent analysis method on fuzzy AHP:** European Journal of Operational Research, 95(3), 649-655. [http://doi.org/10.1016/0377-2217\(95\)00300-2](http://doi.org/10.1016/0377-2217(95)00300-2)

CHOU, T.-Y., & CHEN, Y.-T. (2020). **Applying Fuzzy AHP and TOPSIS Method to Identify Key Organizational Capabilities:** Mathematics, 8(5), 836.  
<http://doi.org/10.3390/math8050836>

CZARNIAWSKA, B. (1997). **Narrating the organization:** Dramas of institutional identity. University of Chicago Press.

CZARNIAWSKA, B. (1998). **A narrative approach to organization studies.** Sage Publications.

CZARNIAWSKA, B. (2011). **Narrating organization studies.** Narrative Inquiry, 21.  
<http://doi.org/10.1075/ni.21.2.12cza>

DENNING, S. (2006). **Effective storytelling:** Strategic business narrative techniques. Strategy & Leadership, 34(1), 42-48. <http://doi.org/10.1108/10878570610637885>

DENNING, S. (2008). **How leaders can use powerful narratives as change catalysts:** Strategy & Leadership, 36(2), 11-15. <http://doi.org/10.1108/10878570810857732>

DILLMAN, D. A., SMYTH, J. D., & CHRISTIAN, L. M. (2014). **Internet, phone, mail, and mixed mode surveys:** The tailored design method (4th ed.). John Wiley & Sons Inc.

DUTTON, J. E., DUKERICH, J. M., & HARQUAIL, C. V. (1994). **Organizational images and member identification:** Administrative Science Quarterly, 39(2), 239-263.  
<http://doi.org/10.2307/2393235>

EISENBERG, E. M. (1984). **Ambiguity as strategy in organizational communication:** Communication Monographs, 51(3), 227-242. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03637758409390197>

ENAIFOGHE, A. (2023). **The influence of culture and gender differences in communication:** Society's perception. SSRN Electronic Journal.  
<http://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v12i7.2720>

FAIRCLOUGH, N. (1992). **Discourse and social change.** Polity Press.

FAIRCLOUGH, N. (2003). **Analysing discourse:** Textual analysis for social research. Routledge.

FAIRHURST, G. T., & GRANT, D. (2010). **The social construction of leadership: A sailing guide.** *Management Communication Quarterly*, 24(2), 171-210.  
<http://doi.org/10.1177/0893318909359697>

FISHER, W. R. (1984). **Narration as a human communication paradigm:** The case of public moral argument. *Communication Monographs*, 51(1), 1-22.  
<http://doi.org/10.1080/03637758409390180>

FOUCAULT, M. (1972). **The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language** (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). Pantheon Books.

GABRIEL, Y. (2000). **Storytelling in organizations:** Facts, fictions, and fantasies. Oxford University Press.

GIOIA, D. A., & CHITTIPEDDI, K. (1991). **Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation:** *Strategic Management Journal*, 12(6), 433-448.  
<http://doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250120604>

GODOY, L. P., DOS SANTOS, A. V., CARDOSO DA SILVA, D. J., BOHRZ, S. R., DA SILVA WEGNER, R., & CASARIN, V. A. (2018). **Application of the fuzzy-AHP method in the optimization of production of concrete blocks with addition of casting sand:** *Journal of Intelligent & Fuzzy Systems*, 35(3), 3477-3491. <http://doi.org/10.3233/JIFS-17729>

GRANT, D., HARDY, C., OSWICK, C., & PUTNAM, L. (2004). **The SAGE handbook of organizational discourse.** Sage Publications.

HAJJAMI, O., & CROCCO, O. (2024). **Evolving approaches to employee engagement:** Comparing antecedents in remote work and traditional workplaces. *European Journal of Training and Development*. <http://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-10-2022-0103>

HARDY, C., PALMER, I., & PHILLIPS, N. (2000). **Discourse as a strategic resource:** *Human Relations*, 53(9), 1227-1248. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0018726700539006>

HERACLEOUS, L., & BARRETT, M. (2001). **Organizational change as discourse:** Communicative actions and deep structures in the context of information technology implementation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4), 755-778.  
<http://doi.org/10.5465/3069414>

HUMMEL, R. P. (1991). **Stories Managers Tell:** Why They Are as Valid as Science. *Public Administration Review*, 51(1), 31-41. <http://doi.org/10.2307/976634>

JOSHI, P. D., WAKSLAK, C. J., APPEL, G., & HUANG, L. (2020). **Gender differences in communicative abstraction:** *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 118(3), 417-435.  
<http://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000177>

KERNBACH, S., EPPLER, M. J., & BRESCIANI, S. (2015). **The Use of Visualization in the Communication of Business Strategies:** An Experimental Evaluation. *International*

Journal of Business Communication, 52(2), 164-187.  
<http://doi.org/10.1177/2329488414525444>

KHDOUR, N., FENECH, R., BAGUANT, P., & WAHID, F. (2023). **The power of organizational storytelling:** The story of a company in times of transformation. *Corporate Governance and Organizational Behavior Review*, 7, 204-210.  
<http://doi.org/10.22495/cgobrv7i3p16>

LINDE, C. (2001). **Narrative and social tacit knowledge:** *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 5(2), 160-171. <http://doi.org/10.1108/13673270110393202>

LIU, Y., ECKERT, C. M., & EARL, C. (2020). **A review of fuzzy AHP methods for decision-making with subjective judgments:** *Expert Systems with Applications*, 161, 113738. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2020.113738>

LOUIS, M. R. (1980). **Surprise and sense making:** What newcomers experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25(2), 226-251.  
<http://doi.org/10.2307/2392453>

MAITLIS, S. (2005). **The social processes of organizational sensemaking:** *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(1), 21-49. <http://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2005.15993111>

MAITLIS, S., & CHRISTIANSON, M. (2014). **Sensemaking in organizations:** Taking stock and moving forward. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 8(1), 57-125.  
<http://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2014.873177>

MANTERE, S. (2008). **Role expectations and middle manager strategic agency:** *Journal of Management Studies*, 45(2), 294-316. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00744.x>

MARTIN, J., FELDMAN, M. S., HATCH, M. J., & SITKIN, S. B. (1983). **The uniqueness paradox in organizational stories:** *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28(3), 438-453.  
<http://doi.org/10.2307/2392251>

MIRKOVSKI, K., GASKIN, J. E., HULL, D. M., & LOWRY, P. B. (2019). **Visual storytelling for improving the comprehension and utility in disseminating information systems research:** Evidence from a quasi-experiment. *Information Systems Journal*, 29, 1153-1177. <http://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12240>

MORGAN, S. J., & DENNEHY, R. F. (1997). **The power of organizational storytelling:** A management development perspective. *Journal of Management Development*, 16(7), 494-501.  
<http://doi.org/10.1108/02621719710169585>

NÄSLUND, L., & PEMER, F. (2012). **The appropriated language:** Dominant stories as a source of organizational inertia. *Human Relations*, 65(1), 89-110.  
<http://doi.org/10.1177/0018726711424322>

NEWMAN, S., & FORD, R. (2020). **Five steps to leading your team in the virtual COVID-19 workplace:** *Organizational Dynamics*, 50(1), 100802.  
<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2020.100802>



- PENTLAND, B. T. (1999). **Building process theory with narrative: From description to explanation.** *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4), 711-724.  
<http://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1999.2553249>
- PHILLIPS, N., LAWRENCE, T. B., & HARDY, C. (2004). **Discourse and institutions:** *Academy of Management Review*, 29(4), 635-652. <http://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2004.14497617>
- PIYA, S., SHAMSUZZOHA, A., AZIZUDDIN, M., AL-HINAI, N., & ERDEBILLI, B. (2022). **Integrated fuzzy AHP-TOPSIS method to analyze green management practice in hospitality industry in the Sultanate of Oman: Sustainability**, 14(3), 1118.  
<http://doi.org/10.3390/su14031118>
- PODSAKOFF, P. M., MACKENZIE, S. B., LEE, J.-Y., & PODSAKOFF, N. P. (2003). **Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies.** *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879–903.  
<http://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
- RHODES, C., & BROWN, A. D. (2005). **Narrative, organizations and research:** *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 7(3), 167-188. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2005.00112.x>
- ROULEAU, L. (2005). **Micro-practices of strategic sensemaking and sensegiving: How middle managers interpret and sell change every day.** *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(7), 1413-1441. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00549.x>
- ROULEAU, L., & BALOGUN, J. (2011). **Middle managers, strategic sensemaking, and discursive competence:** *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(5), 953-983.  
<http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00941.x>
- SAATY, T. L. (1977). **A scaling method for priorities in hierarchical structures:** *Journal of Mathematical Psychology*, 15(3), 234-281. [http://doi.org/10.1016/0022-2496\(77\)90033-5](http://doi.org/10.1016/0022-2496(77)90033-5)
- SAATY, T.L. (2004). **Decision making — the Analytic Hierarchy and Network Processes (AHP/ANP).** *J. Syst. Sci. Syst. Eng.* 13, 1–35. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11518-006-0151-5>
- SAATY, T. L. (2008). **Decision making with the analytic hierarchy process:** *International Journal of Services Sciences*, 1(1), 83-98. <http://doi.org/10.1504/IJSSCI.2008.017590>
- SCHWABE, G., RICHTER, A., & WENDE, E. (2019). **Special issue on storytelling and information systems:** *Information Systems Journal*, 29, 1122-1125.  
<http://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12258>
- SERPA, N. P., SILVA, D. J. C. D., WEGNER, R. D. S., STERTZ, E. D. S., TEIXEIRA, C. S., & LOPES, L. F. D. (2022). **Quality and sustainability in the production process: A study of bakeries using an integrated multi-criteria method based on fuzzy AHP and fuzzy TOPSIS:** *Environmental Quality Management*, 32(3), 251-262.  
<http://doi.org/10.1002/tqem.21906>

SMITH, F., & KEYTON, J. (2001). **Organizational Storytelling: Metaphors for Relational Power and Identity Struggles.** *Management Communication Quarterly*, 15(2), 149-182. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0893318901152001>

SONENSHEIN, S. (2010). **We're changing—Or are we?:** Untangling the role of progressive, regressive, and stability narratives during strategic change implementation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(3), 477-512. <http://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.51467638>

STRAWSON, G. (2004). **Against narrativity.** *Ratio*, 17(4), 428–452. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9329.2004.00264.x>

TAYLOR, S., FISHER, D., & DUFRESNE, R. L. (2002). **The Aesthetics of Management Storytelling: A Key to Organizational Learning.** *Management Learning*, 33(3), 313-330. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1350507602333002>

TSOUKAS, H. (2005). **Afterword: Why language matters in the analysis of organizational change.** *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 18(1), 96-104. <http://doi.org/10.1108/09534810510579877>

TSOUKAS, H. (2009). **A dialogical approach to the creation of new knowledge in organizations:** *Organization Science*, 20(6), 941-957. <http://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1090.0435>

VAARA, E., SONENSHEIN, S., & BOJE, D. M. (2016). **Narratives as sources of stability and change in organizations:** Approaches and directions for future research. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 10(1), 495-560. <http://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2016.1120963>

VAN HULST, M., & YBEMA, S. (2020). **From What to Where: A setting-sensitive approach to organizational storytelling.** *Organization Studies*, 41(3), 365-391. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618815523>

WEGNER, R. D. S., TONTINI, J., COSTA, V. M. F., MULLER JUNIOR, A., & SILVA, D. J. C. D. (2021). **Uma análise sobre a influência da liderança organizacional na gestão da inovação utilizando o método fuzzy-AHP:** *Revista de Administração da UFSM*, 14, 521-544. <http://doi.org/10.5902/1983465940719>

WEICK, K. E. (1988). **Enacted sensemaking in crisis situations:** *Journal of Management Studies*, 25(4), 305-317. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.1988.tb00039.x>

WEICK, K. E. (1993). **The collapse of sensemaking in organizations: The Mann Gulch disaster.** *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38(4), 628-652. <http://doi.org/10.2307/2393339>

WEICK, K. E. (1995). **Sensemaking in organizations.** Sage Publications.

WEICK, K. E. (2001). **Making sense of the organization.** Blackwell Publishing.

WEICK, K. E., SUTCLIFFE, K. M., & OBSTFELD, D. (2005). **Organizing and the process of sensemaking:** *Organization Science*, 16(4), 409-421. <http://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0133>

YBEMA, S., KEENOY, T., OSWICK, C., BEVERUNGEN, A., ELLIS, N., & SABELIS, I. (2009). **Articulating identities:** Human Relations, 62(3), 299-322.  
<http://doi.org/10.1177/0018726708101904>

ZADEH, L. A. (1988). **Fuzzy logic:** IEEE Computer, 21(4), 83-93.  
<http://doi.org/10.1109/2.53>

## APPENDIX A – Key Storytelling Factors Across Literature (Full Table)

Author(s)	Year	Key Storytelling Factors	Relevance
Ahuja et al.	2023	E-leadership, digital storytelling	Focuses on leadership in digital spaces, which ties into digital and visual storytelling in modern organizational settings.
Andrews	1987	Persuasion, gender differences in communication	Highlights engagement and memorability and emotional connection in persuasive communication, emphasizing gender's role in organizational storytelling.
Ashforth & Mael	1989	Social identity theory, organizational identification	This aligns with cultural and identity reinforcement, using stories to create a sense of belonging within organizations.
Balogun et al.	2014	Sensemaking, power dynamics in discourse	Deep exploration of sensemaking and explanation in organizations, focusing on how stories influence understanding and power relations.
Barry & Elmes	1997	Narrative strategy, strategic discourse	Change and transformation, leadership and influence, and sensemaking—stories are used to align organizational strategy with leadership goals.
Bass & Riggio	2006	Transformational leadership	Stories play a role in leadership and influence through transformational leadership, using narratives to inspire and influence change within organizations.
Begei et al.	2019	Changing characters, storytelling in future organizations	Looks at change and transformation as storytelling evolves in organizational contexts.
Boje, D. M.	1991	Story performance, sensemaking	Core exploration of sensemaking, engagement, and memorability, highlighting how storytelling is performed to drive organizational communication.
Boje, D. M.	2008	Storytelling organizations	Expands on identity reinforcement and emotional connection, showing how storytelling solidifies organizational identity and culture.
Brown & Humphreys	2006	Organizational identity, hegemony, resistance	Discusses cultural and identity reinforcement, how stories of resistance shape and challenge organizational power structures.
Bruner, J.	1991	Narrative construction of reality	Important for sensemaking and explanation, exploring how narratives help people construct meaning and navigate reality within organizations.
Buchanan & Dawson	2007	Organizational change, multistory process	Ties into change and transformation, emphasizing the multiplicity of stories during organizational change.
Carroll, A. B.	1991	Corporate social responsibility, stakeholder management	Cultural and identity reinforcement, showing how storytelling about corporate social responsibility reinforces an organization's ethical identity.
Chang, D. Y.	1996	Fuzzy AHP, decision-making in organizations	Connects to sensemaking and explanation, particularly in decision-making processes where narratives help clarify complex decisions.
Czarniawska, B.	1997	Institutional identity, organizational narratives	Cultural and identity reinforcement, focusing on how stories are used to create and maintain institutional identity.
Deming, S.	2006	Strategic storytelling, leadership narratives	Focuses on leadership and influence and change and transformation, exploring how strategic storytelling can drive change and leadership objectives.
Dutton et al.	1994	Organizational images, member identification	Cultural and identity reinforcement, stories are used to shape how employees identify with the organization.
Eisenberg, E. M.	1984	Ambiguity in organizational communication	Sensemaking and explanation, where ambiguity in stories can be used as a strategy to allow multiple interpretations and adaptability in organizations.
Emilghe, A.	2023	Cultural differences, gender in communication	Cross-cultural communication, focusing on how cultural and gender differences influence storytelling and communication in organizations.
Fairclough, N.	1992	Discourse and social change	Change and transformation, emphasizing how discourse and storytelling are part of broader social changes within organizations.
Gabriel, Y.	2000	Emotional stories, organizational fantasies	Central to emotional connection and persuasion, exploring how storytelling connects emotionally with employees, shaping engagement and organizational narratives.
Giaia & Chittipeddi	1991	Sensemaking, sensegiving during strategic change	Sensemaking and leadership are at the forefront, with storytelling being essential in guiding people through organizational changes.
Hajjani & Crocco	2023	Employee engagement, remote work storytelling	Focuses on engagement and memorability, emphasizing how storytelling affects engagement, particularly in remote work environments.
Hardy et al.	2000	Discourse as strategic resource	Ties into leadership and influence, showing how stories can be a strategic resource in organizational power structures.
Heracleous & Barrett	2001	Organizational change, deep structures in IT contexts	Relates to change and transformation, focusing on how narratives are central in IT-driven organizational changes.
Joshi et al.	2020	Gender differences in communicative abstraction	Cross-cultural communication and emotional connection, highlighting the role of gender in abstract vs. concrete communication through storytelling.
Khadour et al.	2023	Organizational transformation, storytelling	Change and transformation, how stories are used to navigate and influence organizational transformations.
Linde, C.	2001	Social tacit knowledge, narrative	Key for sensemaking and explanation, exploring how storytelling transfers tacit knowledge and helps in organizational learning.
Louis, M. R.	1980	Surprise, sensemaking in new organizational settings	Sensemaking through storytelling, particularly in helping newcomers understand and adapt to new organizational environments.
Maritz, S.	2005	Social processes of sensemaking	Focuses on sensemaking and leadership, showing how storytelling facilitates sensemaking in organizational settings.
Mantere, S.	2008	Middle management role expectations, strategic agency	Leadership and influence, focusing on how middle managers use storytelling to assert agency and navigate expectations.
Morgan & Demetly	1997	Power of storytelling in management	Emphasizes leadership and influence, exploring storytelling's power in management and leadership contexts.
Phillips et al.	2004	Discourse and institutions	Cultural reinforcement, showing how storytelling strengthens institutional structures and practices.
Rhodes & Brown	2005	Organizational narratives and identity	Focus on identity reinforcement, showing how organizational stories build and sustain identity.
Rouleau, L.	2005	Strategic sensemaking, middle managers	Sensemaking and leadership, focusing on middle managers using stories to make sense of and communicate strategic changes.
Sorensen, S.	2010	Progressive, regressive, stability narratives during change	Focuses on change and transformation, showing how storytelling reflects different trajectories during organizational change.
Tsoukas, H.	2009	Dialogical approach to organizational knowledge creation	Sensemaking and explanation, how storytelling plays a role in knowledge creation and dissemination.
Wick, K. E.	1995	Sensemaking in organizations	Central to sensemaking, particularly in how storytelling helps organizations navigate complex crises and changes.

Source: Author's own elaboration

## APPENDIX B – Questionnaire Questions

- O conceito de "Engagement and Memorability" ou "Engajamento e Memorabilidade" no storytelling refere-se à capacidade de uma narrativa de capturar a atenção do público e deixar uma impressão duradoura. Narrativas que conseguem engajar emocionalmente as pessoas tendem a ser mais memoráveis e impactantes, facilitando a transmissão de mensagens e o alinhamento com os objetivos organizacionais. Para você, qual o nível de importância que "Engagement and Memorability" possui em relação a:
- O conceito de "Sensemaking and Explanation" ou "Compreensão e Explicação" no storytelling refere-se à capacidade de uma narrativa de ajudar o público a entender e interpretar eventos, situações ou informações complexas. Ao proporcionar uma explicação clara e coesa, as histórias facilitam a compreensão e o sentido das ações e decisões dentro de uma organização. Para você, qual o nível de importância que "Sensemaking and Explanation" possui em relação a:
- O conceito de "Emotional Connection and Persuasion" ou "Conexão Emocional e Persuasão" no storytelling refere-se à habilidade de uma narrativa de estabelecer uma conexão emocional com o público, influenciando suas atitudes e comportamentos. Histórias que tocam as emoções das pessoas são mais eficazes em persuadir e motivar ações, tornando-se uma ferramenta poderosa na comunicação organizacional. Para você, qual o nível de importância que "Emotional Connection and Persuasion" possui em relação a:
- O conceito de "Cultural and Identity Reinforcement" ou "Fortalecimento de Cultura e Identidade" no storytelling refere-se ao uso de narrativas para fortalecer e promover os valores, crenças e identidade de uma organização. Por meio de histórias que refletem a cultura organizacional, as empresas podem reforçar o senso de pertencimento e identidade entre seus colaboradores, alinhando-os mais profundamente com os objetivos e valores da organização. Para você, qual o nível de importância que "Cultural and Identity Reinforcement" possui em relação a:
- O conceito de "Change and Transformation" ou "Mudança e Transformação" no storytelling refere-se à utilização de narrativas para facilitar e apoiar processos de mudança dentro de uma organização. As histórias podem ajudar a comunicar a necessidade de transformação, alinhar a equipe em torno de novos objetivos e mitigar a resistência, tornando as transições mais suaves e eficazes. Para você, qual o nível de importância que "Change and Transformation" possui em relação a:
- O conceito de "Cross-Cultural Communication" ou "Comunicação Intercultural" no storytelling refere-se à capacidade de uma narrativa de transcender barreiras culturais e ser compreendida por diferentes grupos de pessoas. Ao utilizar histórias que consideram e respeitam diversas perspectivas culturais, as organizações podem promover uma comunicação mais inclusiva e eficaz em contextos multiculturais. Para você, qual o nível de importância que "Cross-Cultural Communication" possui em relação a:
- O conceito de "Aesthetic and Enjoyment" ou "Estética e Satisfação" no storytelling refere-se à importância do aspecto visual e estético de uma narrativa, bem como ao prazer que ela proporciona ao público. Histórias que são visualmente atraentes e agradáveis de se ouvir ou ler tendem a engajar mais os espectadores, aumentando a receptividade e o impacto da

mensagem. Para você, qual o nível de importância que "Aesthetic and Enjoyment" possui em relação a:

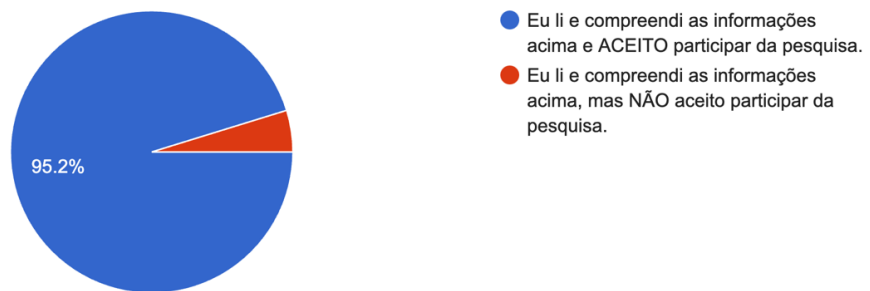
- O conceito de "Leadership and Influence" ou "Liderança e Influência" no storytelling refere-se ao uso de narrativas para exercer liderança e influenciar comportamentos dentro de uma organização. Líderes que utilizam histórias eficazes podem inspirar, motivar e guiar suas equipes, criando um impacto duradouro e direcionando as ações dos colaboradores em alinhamento com os objetivos estratégicos da organização. Para você, qual o nível de importância que "Leadership and Influence" possui em relação a:

## APPENDIX C – Participant Responses

### FIGURE 4 – Consent

Ao prosseguir para o questionário, declaro que estou ciente dos objetivos da pesquisa e que minhas respostas serão utilizadas exclusivamente ...istir a qualquer momento, sem qualquer prejuízo.

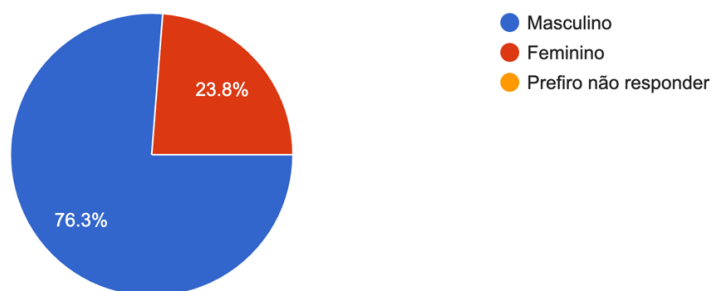
84 responses



### FIGURE 5 – Gender

Gênero:

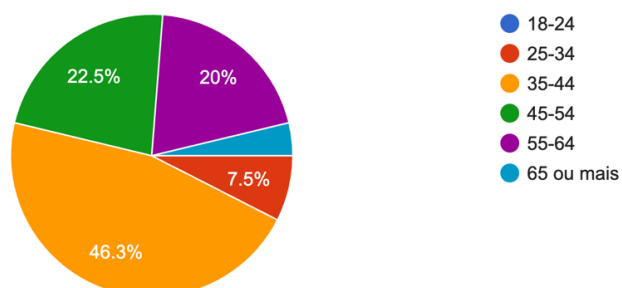
80 responses



### FIGURE 6 – Age

Idade:

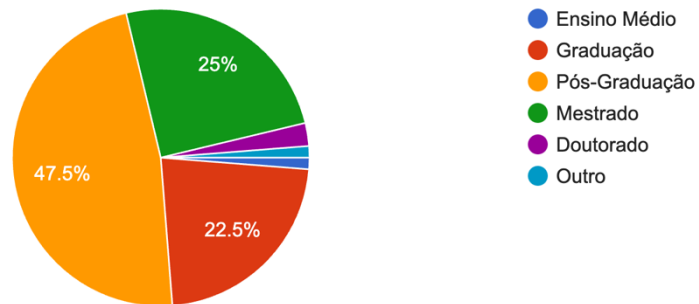
80 responses



**FIGURE 7 – Education Level**

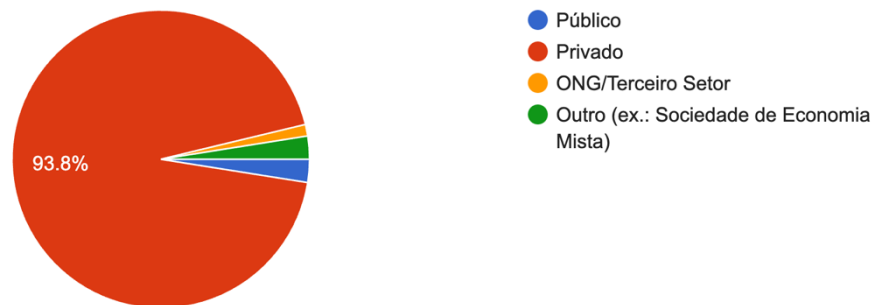
Nível de Escolaridade:

80 responses

**FIGURE 8 – Employment Sector**

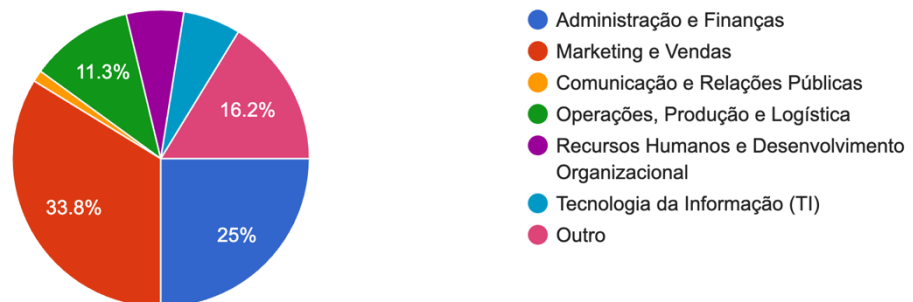
Setor em que Atua:

80 responses

**FIGURE 9 – Area**

Área de Atuação:

80 responses

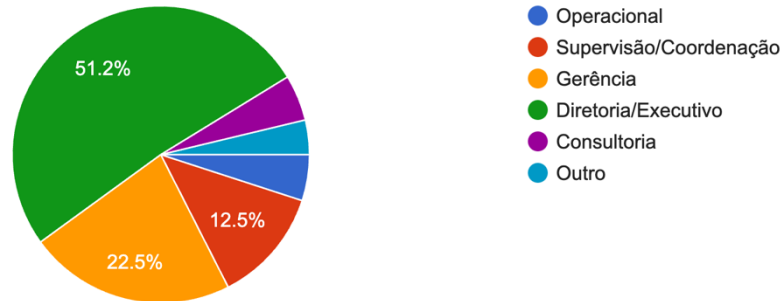




**FIGURE 10 – Position**

Cargo:

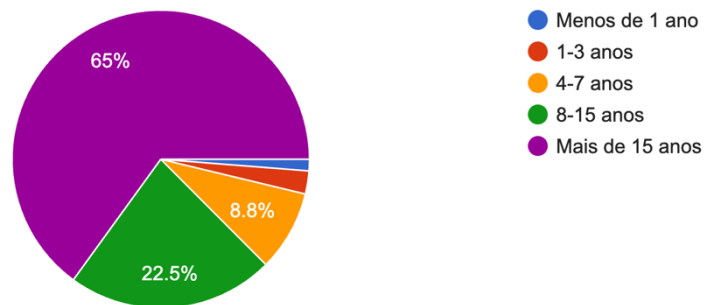
80 responses



**FIGURE 11 – Years of Experience**

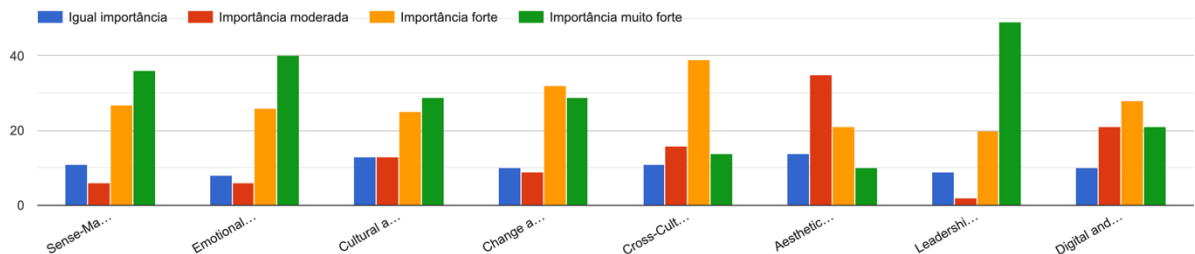
Tempo de Experiência na Área:

80 responses



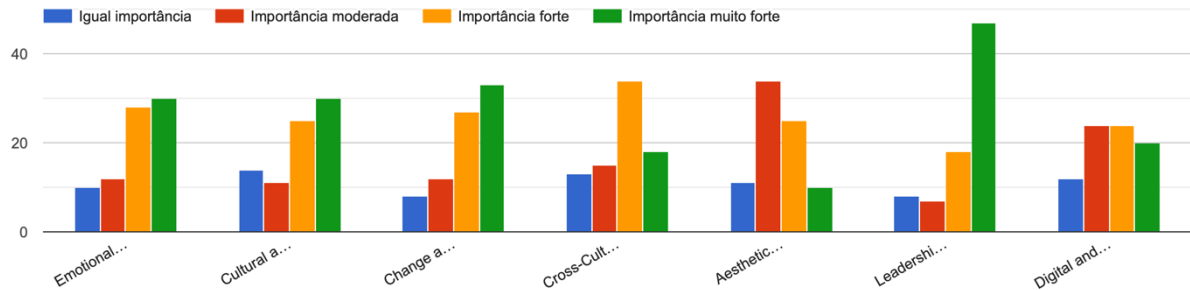
**FIGURE 12 – Engagement and Memorability**

O conceito de "Engagement and Memorability" ou "Engajamento e Memorabilidade" no storytelling refere-se à capacidade de uma narrativa de capturar a atenção do público e deixar uma impressão duradoura. Narrativas que conseguem atingir o nível de importância que "Engagement and Memorability" possui em relação a:



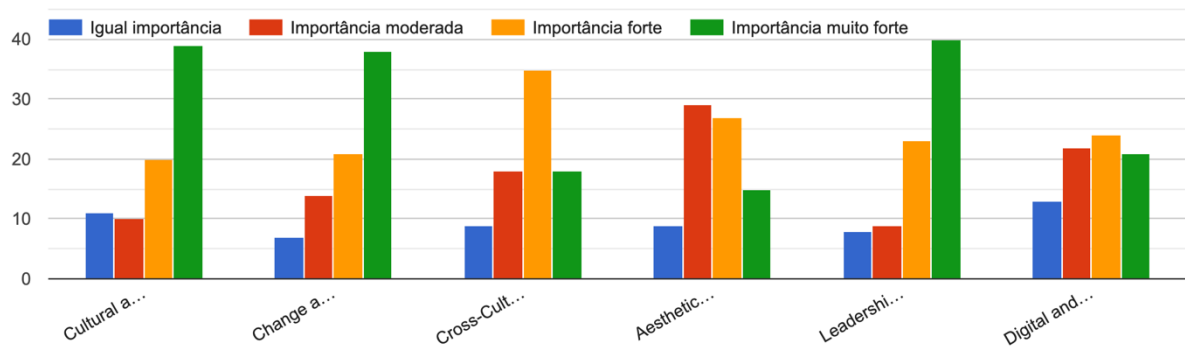
**FIGURE 13 – Sensemaking and Explanation**

O conceito de "Sensemaking and Explanation" ou "Compreensão e Explicação" no storytelling refere-se à capacidade de uma narrativa de ajudar o público a entender e interpretar eventos, situações ou ...importância que "Sense-Making and Explanation" possui em relação a:



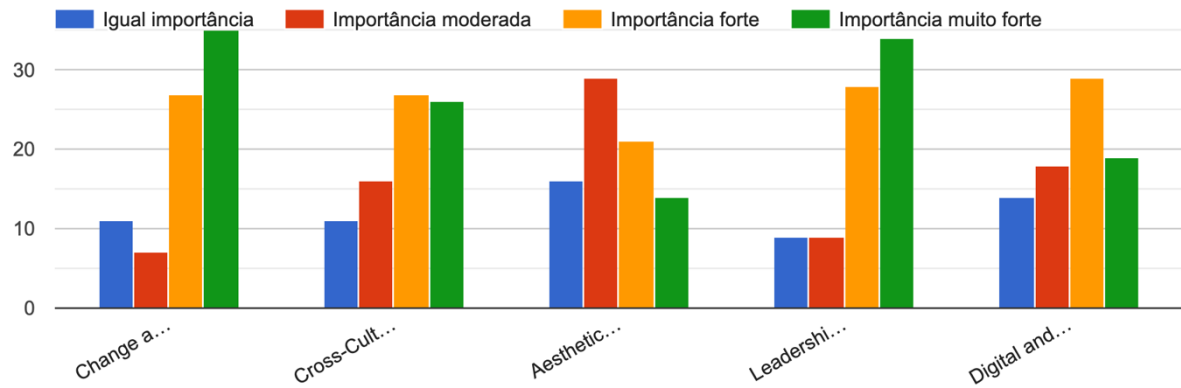
**FIGURE 14 – Emotional Connection and Persuasion**

O conceito de "Emotional Connection and Persuasion" ou "Conexão Emocional e Persuasão" no storytelling refere-se à habilidade de uma narrativa de estabelecer um...otional Connection and Persuasion" possui em relação a:

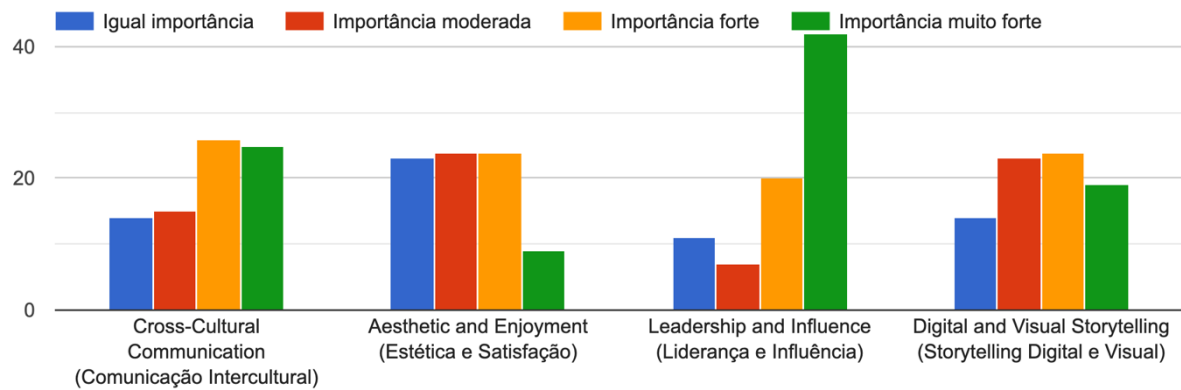


**FIGURE 15 – Cultural and Identity Reinforcement**

O conceito de "Cultural and Identity Reinforcement" ou "Fortalecimento de Cultura e Identidade" no storytelling refere-se ao uso de narrativas para for...al and Identity Reinforcement" possui em relação a:

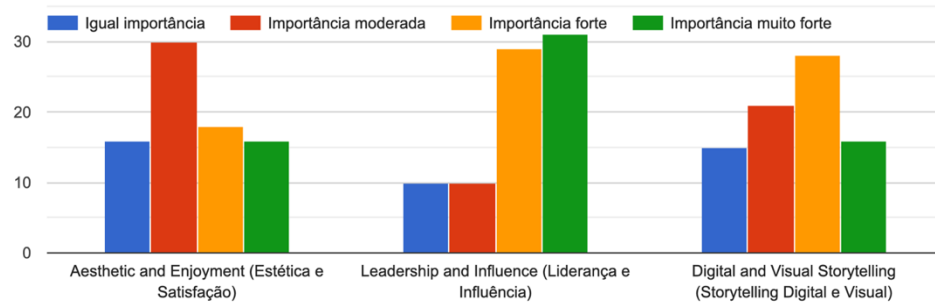
**FIGURE 16 – Change and Transformation**

O conceito de "Change and Transformation" ou "Mudança e Transformação" no storytelling refere-se à utilização de narrativas para facilitar e apoiar ...ue "Change and Transformation" possui em relação a:

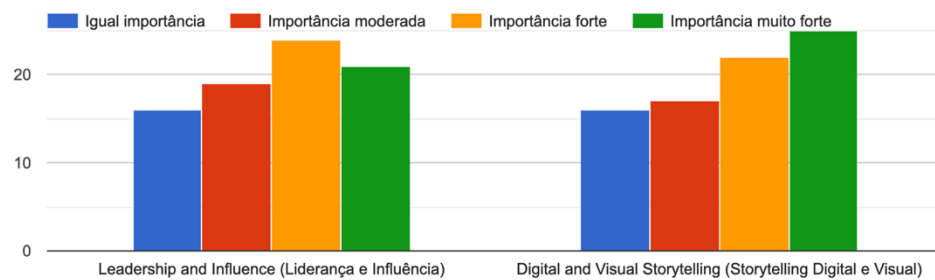


**FIGURE 17 – Cross-Cultural Communication**

O conceito de "Cross-Cultural Communication" ou "Comunicação Intercultural" no storytelling refere-se à capacidade de uma narrativa de transc...ross-Cultural Communication" possui em relação a:

**FIGURE 18 – Aesthetic and Enjoyment**

O conceito de "Aesthetic and Enjoyment" ou "Estética e Satisfação" no storytelling refere-se à importância do aspecto visual e estético de uma n...ue "Aesthetic and Enjoyment" possui em relação a:

**FIGURE 19 – Leadership and Influence**

O conceito de "Leadership and Influence" ou "Liderança e Influência" no storytelling refere-se ao uso de narrativas para exercer liderança e influenciar ...que "Leadership and Influence" possui em relação a:

