# Stories make digital content better: limiting hedonic adaptation as a strategy to enhance the experience appraisal

**Yassine El Bouchikhi**

*Universite Paris-Dauphine, PSL Research (DRM –UMR7088), France*

*ESSEC Business School, Department of management, France*

## ABSTRACT

To set up successful experiences, academics and managers need to identify and promote the "positive" experiential trajectories that lead to the enjoyable experiences such as flow states, presence, or immersion, and limit "negative" processes such as hedonic adaptation (HA) (Carù & Cova, 2007; Hoffman & Novak, 2009). Hedonic adaptation is psychological mechanism that occurs following prolonged exposure to a stimulus (Alba & Williams, 2013; Bao & Lyubomirsky, 2012). This process is often inferred, or measured with physiological apparatus like galvanic skin response (GSR) (Brechman, Bellman, Robinson, Rask, & Varan, 2016) but to our knowledge there is currently no measurement scale for hedonic adaptation despite its importance, most of the papers remain conceptual only. In this article, we distinguish between two types of digital contents: (a) contents with a narrative structure (ie: presence of storytelling like films), and (b) contents with non-a narrative structure (ie: rhetorical and information based, like documentaries). The literature suggests that both these contents can be negatively affected by the hedonic adaptation (HA). In this paper, we first propose a literature review on hedonic adaptation. Then, we present a conceptualization for this concept and demonstrate through two empirical studies the reliable psychometric properties of the new developed (HA) measurement instrument. In the second part of this paper, we demonstrate that contents with a narrative structure (ie: based on storytelling) are less prone to hedonic adaptation and hence are more positively evaluated by consumers during digital video consumption experiences.

**Keywords:** digital experience appraisal, immersion; hedonic adaptation; scale;

References

Alba, J. W., & Williams, E. F. (2013). Pleasure principles: A review of research on hedonic consumption. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *23*(1), 2–18.

Bao, K. J., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2012). Making Happiness Last: Using the Hedonic Adaptation Prevention Model to Extend the Success of Positive Interventions. *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Positive Psychological Interventions*, 371–384.

Carù, A., & Cova, B. (2007). Consumer immersion in an experiential context. *Consuming experience*, 34–47.

Hoffman, D. L., & Novak, T. P. (2009). Flow online: lessons learned and future prospects. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *23*(1), 23–34.