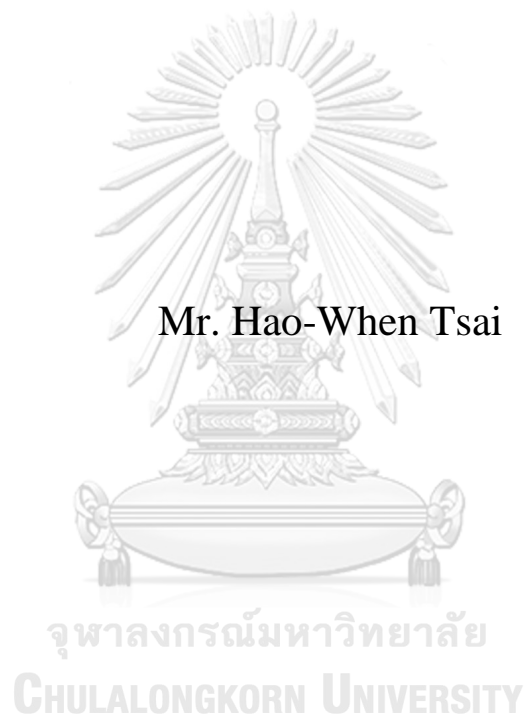Brand Communication with Transmedia Storytelling of *Riot Games*: Transmedia Engagement, Brand Attitudes, and Brand Experience.

Mr. Hao-When Tsai

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Communication Arts) in Strategic
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การสื่อสารแบรนด์ด้วยการเล่าเรื่องแบบทรานส์มีเดียของ *Riot Games* : ศึกษาการมี
ปฏิสัมพันธ์กับทรานส์มีเดีย ทัศนคติต่อแบรนด์ และประสบการณ์ต่อแบรนด์

นายเฮ่าเหวิน ไช่

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญานิเทศศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
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เฮ่าเหวิน ไช่ : การสื่อสารแบรนด์ด้วยการเล่าเรื่องแบบทรานส์มีเดียของ *Riot Games* : ศึกษาการมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับทรานส์มีเดีย ทัศนคติต่อแบรนด์ และประสบการณ์ต่อแบรนด์.
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การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีความมุ่งหมายเพื่อทำความเข้าใจการสื่อสารแบรนด์สินค้า (Brand Communication) จากความเกี่ยวข้องระหว่างการเล่าเรื่องข้ามสื่อ (Transmedia Storytelling) ของสารและผู้รับสาร จากการสำรวจพบว่า การศึกษาที่ผ่านมาส่วนใหญ่มุ่งเน้นไปที่การวางกรอบความคิดของคำว่า การเล่าเรื่องข้ามสื่อ ดังนั้น ในการศึกษาครั้งนี้จึงมุ่งเน้นไปที่การสำรวจและสืบค้นนิยามแนวคิดจากมุมมองเรื่องเล่าที่มีเกมเป็นศูนย์กลาง โดยเลือกใช้เกม Riot Games เป็นกรณีศึกษา เนื่องจากเป็นเกมที่ประสบความสำเร็จและได้รับความนิยมในระดับโลก งานวิจัยครั้งนี้ใช้การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพแบบผสมผสานวิธีทั้งการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพและการวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ ระหว่างการวิจัยเชิงเอกสาร (*qual*) และการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก (*QUAL*) จุดมุ่งหมายที่สำคัญของการวิจัยครั้งนี้ คือ การสืบค้นให้เห็นถึงทัศนคติและประสบการณ์ของผู้บริโภคที่เกิดขึ้นจากการปฏิสัมพันธ์กับเรื่องเล่าข้ามสื่อของแบรนด์สินค้าตามแนวคิดของ Jenkins' (2003) ที่ชี้ให้เห็นกรอบแนวคิดของการเล่าเรื่องข้ามสื่อที่ถูกนำมาปรับใช้ในฐานะเครื่องมือชี้วัดในการสำรวจกลยุทธ์การสื่อสารแบรนด์ของ Riot Games

จากผลการศึกษาวิจัยเชิงเอกสารกลุ่มตัวอย่าง 17 รายการ จาก 6 สื่อ และ และเลือกผู้ให้ข้อมูล 6 คนสำหรับการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก ผลการศึกษาครั้งนี้ชี้ให้เห็นถึงความสำคัญของการนำเอาเรื่องเล่าประยุกต์ใช้เป็นเครื่องมือในการสื่อสารของแบรนด์สินค้า เพื่อสร้างความสัมพันธ์ที่แน่นแฟ้นกับผู้บริโภค เช่น การผสมผสานความลึกลับเข้ากับความต่อเนื่องของเรื่องราว พบว่า สามารถที่จะเสริมสร้างทัศนคติและประสบการณ์ของผู้บริโภคในเชิงบวกได้ มากไปกว่านั้น ยังพบว่าศาสตร์ข้ามสื่อนั้นยังสามารถสนับสนุนให้เกิดการสร้างการมีเข้ามามีส่วนรวมและร่วมสร้างชุมชนของผู้บริโภคด้วย

ผู้วิจัยหวังเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่าผลลัพธ์จากการวิจัยครั้งนี้จะมีส่วนช่วยให้นักการตลาดมีความเข้าใจในเรื่อง การเล่าเรื่องข้ามสื่อมาใช้ และเข้าใจถึงวิธีการสร้างองค์ประกอบที่มีผลต่อการสร้างการมีส่วนร่วม ทัศนคติ และประสบการณ์ให้สามารถเข้าถึงผู้บริโภคได้อย่างมีประสิทธิ์ภาพมากขึ้น

สาขาวิชา	การจัดการการสื่อสารเชิงกลยุทธ์	ลายมือชื่อ
		นิสิต ....
ปีการศึกษา	2564	ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษา
		หลัก ....

Hao-When Tsai : Brand Communication with Transmedia Storytelling of *Riot Games*: Transmedia Engagement, Brand Attitudes, and Brand Experience.. Advisor: Dr. WARAPORN CHATRATICHART, Ph.D.

This study seeks to understand how brands communicate through the application of transmedia storytelling from the message and to the receivers. While existing studies mainly aim at conceptualizing the term 'transmedia storytelling', this study explores the term from a game-centric narrative perspective. Using Riot Games as a case study due to its global success and popularity, this research applies a qualitative mixed-method approach of documentary research (*qual*) and in-depth interview (*QUAL*). The investigation places special emphasis on undercovering consumer attitude and experience upon engagement with brand transmedia stories. To do so, Jenkins' (2003) concept of transmedia storytelling was adopted as indicators towards the exploration of Riot Games' brand communication strategy.

As a result, 17 products across 6 media categories were found from documentary research, and 6 informants were selected for the in-depth interview. Upon cross examination, the findings of this study illuminate the significance of narrative application as a way brands can communicate to form stronger connections with their consumers. Such as the incorporation of mysteries and the continuous efforts in story expansion were found to promote positive consumer attitudes and experiences. Moreover, the usage of transmedia was found to support consumer engagement and community formation.

It is hoped that the results from this research can contribute to marketers' understanding of transmedia storytelling and how components towards engagement, attitude, and experience can be more effectively designed to reach the consumers.

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Field of Study:	Strategic Communication Management	Student's Signature ....
Academic Year:	2021	Advisor's Signature ....

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Hao-When Tsai

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Chapters 1: Introduction

1.1 Significance of the Study

Humans are social animals and stories have the potential to foster connections between us and our world. While traditional ways of storytelling are still in practice, the new digital era has also brought about transmediality (Jenkins, 2007) in its forms through online blogs, videos, images – making information much more convenient, accessible, and interchangeable for consumers. Adopting this knowledge from a marketing communications perspective, storytelling provides a way for brands to persuade consumers. We all are eager to be captivated by stories that inspire us, hence the word "story" here also translate into brands' ideologies and values created by marketers (Sanchez, 2014). From the consumers perspective, stories also provide a way for them to connect with their brands. For instance, stories allow consumers to engage with brands in their own way, encourage their partaking, fosters fandom, and create room for world-building.

Modern storytelling, therefore, exists in a space where both the marketer and consumer have equal power in defining the story's outcome. This ideology can be understood through the convergence theory which describes a shift in control over media power from producer-driven to the inclusion of consumer-driven participation (Jenkins, 2006b). In short, marketing decisions are no longer only dependent on corporations but instead fantasies posed by fans in their bedroom can also become accountable to the finished product. Moreover, convergence not only considers where contents are made, but how these contents flow between platform to form engagement

and create a unison experience. As consumers shift towards a technological lifestyle, many businesses too have since expanded their storytelling platforms in hopes to reach a wider array of target audiences more effectively (Mohd Hasri, Md Syed, & Runnel, 2020). This method of expanding the core story universe through different media channels is called Transmedia Storytelling (transmedia storytelling).

Although the concept of transmedia storytelling was introduced into the field of study two decades ago (Jenkins, 2007), yet little efforts have been made to fully conceptualize the term because of its complexity (can be approached through multiple lenses). An example study conducted by Scolari (2009) explored transmedia storytelling through the lens of narratology and semiotics using one of Fox's series: *24* as a case study. From their findings emerged new categories that could enrich the analysis of transmedia storytelling such as considerations to single media consumers and/or multi-layer texts. Additionally, four strategies for transmedia storytelling were revealed to be effective on branding including micro-stories, parallel stories, peripheral stories, and related user generated contents. On the other hand, other researchers like Yang and Zisiadis (2014) explored how transmedia storytelling strengthens user participation through analyzing and comparing films of *Dark Knight* and *Prometheus*, and corporate campaigns of *Aflac Duck* and *Coca-cola*. Their results show that the use of multiplatform entertainment encourages user participation, whilst expanding story through fan culture can also positively affect brand advocacy and awareness. Together, this research shows that consumer's engagement towards transmedia storytelling may likely result in effective branding in some way – whether that be through the mechanism of storytelling, or the use of media still begs the question.

Other than engagement, attitude of consumers has proven to be manipulatable by transmedia storytelling (Sakamoto & Nakajima, 2013). In a study that experimented on augmented trading card game (ATCG) with narratives from a classic Japanese anime Yu-Gi-Oh, positive attitudes were discovered when consumers of the game played against virtual characters that they know well. Through a marketing lens, the researchers point towards how enjoyment of gameplay was still the foremost important factor of games as opposed to its story. Nonetheless, this study highlights the fact that consumer's understanding of story narrative elements (such as characters) can be used as incentives in producing positive attitude, and ultimately a motivation to continuously engage with the product, and perhaps even its transmedia product counterparts.

Furthermore, to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of transmedia storytelling, researchers should turn to the exploration of consumer brand experience as discussed in research on *Heineken*'s corporate communications by Sánchez (2014). Findings show that stories told through diversification of platforms have the capability to generate emotions, positive values, and heightened experiences for consumers. Through this corporal perspective, the use of transmedia allows multiplication of story's point-of-entry, meaning consumers are much more likely to engage with brands. However, since their research was one of the first to explore how transmedia storytelling shapes brand experience, further investigation is still needed to uncover its potential.

In retrospect, what most of these examples have in common are its case studies of being corporate campaigns and/or films. Fundamentally raising the question whether original game-stories through the process of transmedia strategy, are as effective in

application towards favorable branding? In addition, much research that is based on Jenkin's approach has predominantly focused on the application of transmedia storytelling from marketer's perspective. This research, on the contrary, seeks to study the topic of transmedia from two sources. First, from the source of the 'message', such as products and promotional materials distributed by the producer. And second, from the source of the 'receiver', and how the exposure to transmedia storytelling can motivate the movement of consumers across media thus forming consumer's knowledge of product brands.

1.1.1. Games and Stories

The gaming industry continuously grows with the advancement of technology. As explained in the laws proposed by Gordon Moore (1965), the numbers of transistors (signals amplifiers) in a given unit space of a microchip is estimated to double each year. As a result, the costs for electronics that utilize these chips also gradually become cheaper and more accessible to the public. Therefore, industries such as gaming benefit from the exponential growth that comes with the evolution of technology (i.e., augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR)). In the past, phones and computers may have been a luxury to many, however today they have become widely available and more affordable – making games too, a choice for all consumers. Whilst Moore's law remains significant to this day, some experts in the field also suggest that the law might potentially reach its limit sometime in the 2020s (Tardi, 2021).

Adopting the knowledge of Moore's law helps to explain the growing trend and its impact on the gaming industry. For instance, in the year 2021 alone the market value for the gaming industry worldwide has reached $178.37 billion US Dollars, and the

numbers are still estimated to climb higher over the coming years (Clement, 2021). In particular, the category of mobile gaming has seen a surge in users, estimating to reach a market worth of $169.70 billion US Dollars in 2025. In addition, contributing to the industry's growing success is *Riot Games'* products; including games, boardgames, movie, novels and comics that spans across multiple media outlets, stacking a total revenue of $1.75 billion US Dollars in 2020 (SuperData, 2021).

*Figure 1: **Global Video Market Value 2020-2025 (in Billions of US Dollars)***
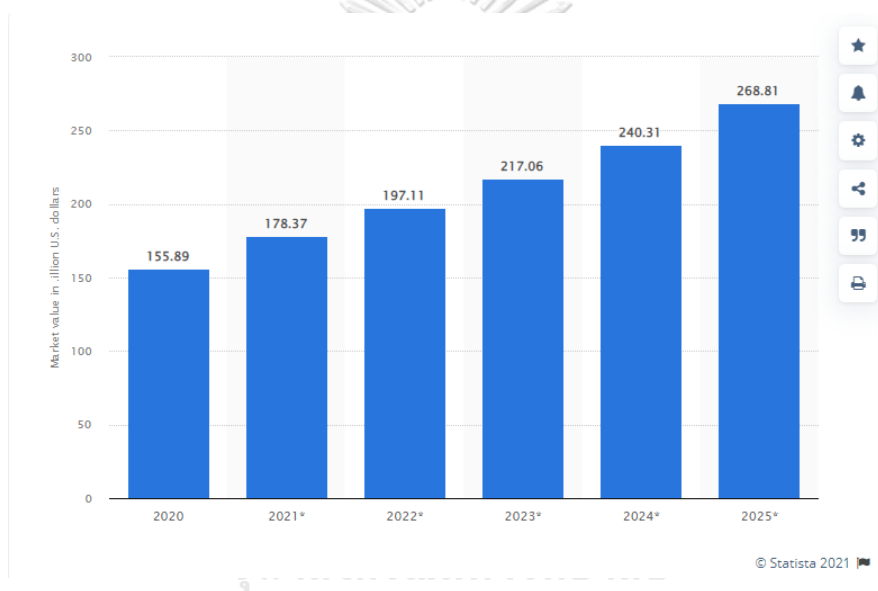
Source: Clement, J. (2021) Global video game market value 2020-2025.

https://www.statista.com/statistics/292056/video-game-market-value-worldwide

Riot Games is an American videogame developer, publisher and esports tournament organizer that was founded in 2006 by Brandon Beck and Marc Merrill. Since the release of League of Legends (League of Legends), Riot Games has become globally-renown and guided the acclaim of eSports scenes worldwide (Riot, 2017). Before their 'decade-anniversary event' in 2019, *Riot Games* had only League of Legends as a game that represented their brand. After years of development, Riot took

a risk by segmenting towards new target audiences while also maintaining their core followers by introducing new genres to the mix; including games like *Team Fight Tactics* (2019), *Legends of Runeterra* (2020), *Valorant* (2020), *League of Legends: Wild Rift* (2020), and more (ThePotatoWard, 2021) (See full list in *Figure* 2). Of all the new contents that were set to launch, most are strung from the same core narrative of *"Runeterra"* (the story world *Riot Games* created in League of Legends).

Figure 2: **Products of Riot Games 2021**
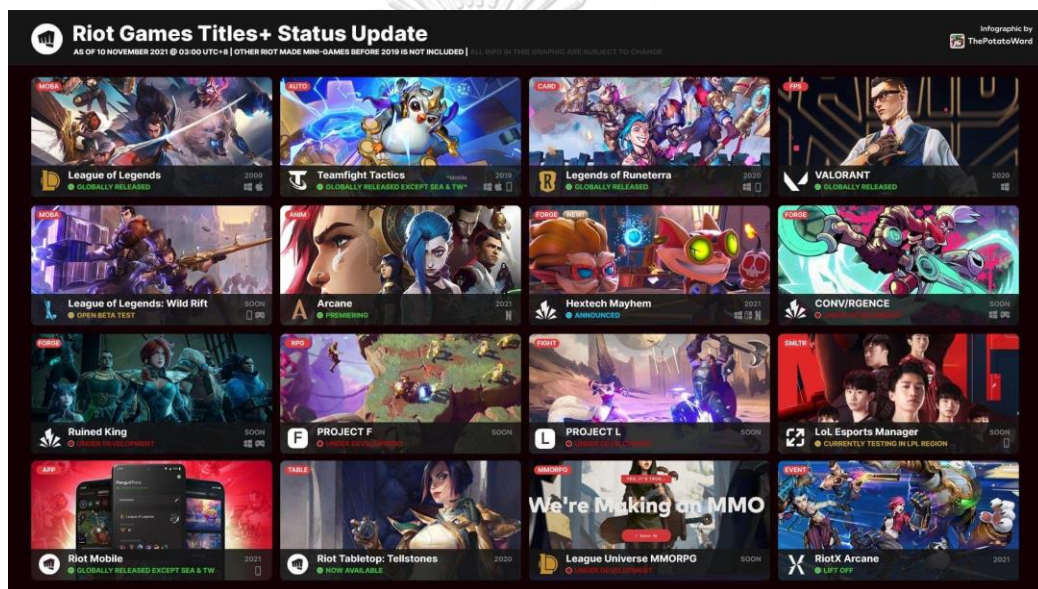
Source: ThePotatoWard, (2021), Facebook. Date Accessed March 2021.

https://m.facebook.com/ThePotatoWard/photos/a.170639776902806/9317767941224

3

With the goal of becoming "the most player-focused game company in the world"(Laurent, 2022), *Riot Games'* success is accredited to their marketing approach of 'constant communication' with their audience (Canton, 2021). Although several communication methods are taken by *Riot Games*, the narrative story of *Runeterra* has since been one of their core strategies and asset used to form connections between

audience and brand. To name a few, the Netflix series *Arcane* was inspired by the stories of popular characters from the game. In addition, when *Legends of Runeterra* was first announced, animated-shorts on YouTube were used as promotional materials for the game – which were also distributed across multiple channels. Proving that *Riot Games* heavily involves the use of storytelling and multiple media to communicate, connect, and serve their consumers. Therefore, this research assumes the establishment of narrative universe through transmedia storytelling as a basis of how brand communication is achieved. Moreover, it considers all products of *Riot Games* that utilize *Runeterra* as its core storyline as transmedia entities and have been chosen as the case study under scrutiny.

Since the launch of their game *League of Legends* in 2009, its popularity has risen as one of the most played games in the world hitting over 180 million monthly players in November 2021. Out of the majority are the Chinese players, spanning across 27 game servers alone in one country and approximately 75 million active monthly players (James, 2022).

Considering the popularity of *Riot Games* and its influence worldwide, the current research dives into the exploration of the brand's transmedia qualities, as well as consumer transmedia engagement, brand attitude and brand experience with *Riot Games*. The aim of this research is to explore consumers' engagement with transmedia storytelling, with the purpose of determining what brand attitude and brand experience forms from engagement with game-centric transmedia. Through understanding how elements of transmedia storytelling influence consumers, marketers can utilize the result to design more effective transmedia campaigns to produce favorable outcomes.

1.2 Research Objectives

1) To investigate the transmedia qualities of *Riot Games*' campaigns and products.

2) To explore consumers' engagement towards *Riot Games*' transmedia storytelling.

3) To explore consumers' brand attitude towards transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*.

4) To explore consumers' brand experiences towards transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*.

1.3 Research Questions

1) What are the transmedia qualities of *Riot Games*?

2) How do consumers engage with transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*?

3) What are consumers' brand attitudes towards transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*?

4) What are consumers' brand experiences towards transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*?

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research followed an exploratory descriptive design and applied a qualitative mixed-method (*qual*-QUAL) approach of documentary research (*qual*) and in-depth interview (QUAL*) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Morse, 2010).* To meet the

objectives of this research, a purposive sampling technique was used for data collection from both research methods. Online and offline resources gathered for documentary research were selected within an approximate two-year timeframe of October 2019 to December 2021. Furthermore, 6 respondents were selected to partake in the in-depth interviews following four qualifying criteria including:

1) between the ages of 18-30,

2) active consumer of *Riot Games*' products,

3) consume 3 or more products from *Riot Games*,

4) have been a consumer of *Riot Games*' product for more than 2 years.

Data of the in-depth interview was held and collected in May through conducting an online discussion using the Zoom application.

1.5 Research Framework

Brand Attitude

1) Authenticity
2) Conciseness
3) Reversal
4) Humor

RQ1

Transmedia Storytelling

1) Spreadibility/Drillability
2) Continuity/Multiplicity
3) Immersion/Extractability
4) Worldbuilding
5) Seriality
6) Subjectivity
7) Performance

   • Offers Backstory
   • Maps the World
   • Other characters'
     perspective/actions
   • Deepens Audience
     Engagement

RQ2

Transmedia Engagement

1) Loyalty
2) Degree of Attentiveness
3) Media Literacy
4) Participation
5) Extra-textual Activities

RQ4

Brand Experience

1) Sensory
2) Affective
3) Intellectual
4) Behavioral
5) Social

1.6 Operational Definitions

Transmedia Storytelling

Transmedia Storytelling refers to a process where story elements are systematically dispersed through multiple delivery channels with the purpose of forming a coordinated entertainment experience (Jenkins, 2003, 2007). Seven dimensions in total are used to validate the transmedia qualities of *Riot Games* including:

1) *Spreadibility vs. Drillability*: which is whether the product allows the audience to learn more about the story

2) *Continuity vs. Multiplicity*: indication to whether the story is canon

3) *Immersion vs. Extractability*: questions whether elements have been materialized in real-world context

4) *Worldbuilding*: which is whether the story is based on any named larger universe (that is expanding narratively)

5) *Seriality*: which is whether the story is divided into parts (and across media).

6) *Subjectivity*: which is the portrayal of stories through different points of view

7) *Performance*: which is whether the audience interacts with any if not all the prior elements of transmedia storytelling.

In addition, Jenkins argues that these dimensions must serve one or more of the following four functions including, backstory offering, mapping of the world, perspectives, and actions from other characters, and deepening of engagement.

Transmedia Engagement

Transmedia Engagement refers to cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses from the audience to the story world and related texts of transmedia storytelling. This research borrows five dimensions from Beddows (2012). The first is loyalty; higher degrees of loyalty mean a more engaged audience. The second is the degree of attentiveness which is the extent to which audiences can recall the story. The third is media literacy which is the degree of correspondence between audience understanding

of text and the text's intention. The fourth is participation which is a physical display of action from the audience relating to transmedia storytelling. Lastly, extra-textual activities are the evaluation of audience participation in an indirect way.

Brand Attitude

Brand Attitude refers to "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this research, attitude is measured based on informant's overall feeling towards transmedia storytelling, in varying degrees of negative-to-positive through four dimensions proposed by Chiu et al. (2012) including authenticity, conciseness, reversal, and humor.

Brand Experience

Brand Experience refers to as a subjective, internal consumer response; sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral and *social* responses that are evoked by brand-related stimuli. These stimuli include and are not limited to brand's design and identity, communications, packaging, and environments (Brakus, Schmitt, Zarantonello, & Simon, 2009). The social dimension was added to make-up for areas where behavioral dimension lack in incapsulating consumer-to-consumer interactive experience. Thus, in this research, five dimensions of sensory, intellectual, behavioral, social, and affective are used. Ultimately, brand experience is depicted through the overall value expressed by consumers of *Riot Games* and its brand.

1.7 Research Implications

1) Academically, results from this research can extend the body of knowledge surrounding transmedia storytelling with transmedia engagement, consumer attitude, and brand experience. Additionally, the results can also confirm existing theories, whilst providing foundation for further research in the same field of study.

2) Practically, the findings can generate evidence on how consumer attitude and brand experience is influenced by transmedia engagement. Results can better aid marketers to identify the most effective transmedia methods in reaching their target audience. This research also provides insights into consumer's cultural, entertainment and technological beliefs. Moreover, findings can allow marketers to holistically plan better campaigns towards the goal of generating favorable attitudes and brand experience.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The core concepts of this research lie in understanding how transmedia storytelling can be utilized to communicate the brand across different media, and how consumer movement between media is motivated by storytelling. As its complex mechanism borrows elements from multiple fields of study, transmedia storytelling should be fully understood before conducting further investigation. For instance, although this research draws upon the studies of narrative structure and flow of transmedia storytelling, it is important to note that its effects are to be viewed through a marketing perspective. Key literature relating to the variables of transmedia storytelling, transmedia engagement, consumer attitude, and brand experience are drawn from existing works of other researchers and discussed.

This research assumes that transmedia storytelling has a positive influence on consumer engagement, attitude, and experience. Furthermore, it is argued that the favorability of transmedia marketing has been deeply propelled by the emergence of convergence culture. Moreover, information on *Riot Games* and research surrounding transmedia storytelling and the gaming industry is later presented in the discussion. The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework that attempts to map out the approach of this research.

2.1 Transmedia Storytelling

2.1.1. What is Transmedia?

The mechanism of storytelling has progressively become a tool that is used to foster long-term engagement of modern consumers as pressure to maintain

relationships (brand-consumer) emerges. With technological advancements on the rise, new media platforms are branching channels towards more dynamic movement of contents in the market. In the literal sense, 'trans' means across (Cambridge, 2022), therefore 'transmedia' refers to contents that are used "across media". More typically, importance is placed on *what* is packaged inside media – such as story and structure, and its *effect* – such as audience engagement, rather than the media itself (Ciancia, 2013).

Jenkins (2003) wrote in a *MIT Technology Review* article that there has been a growing realization for the usage of various multimedia story communication tools to distribute contents in the future, with an emphasis for the entertainment industry. More generally, there are currently three large categories of story communication tools that are used by businesses to optimize audience engagements (Moloney, 2014), these are:

1) *Multi-media*: the oldest term of the three, describes a singular channel that uses an array of media like pictures, videos, and infographics to tell a story. Such as traditional and online newspapers.

2) *Cross-media*: the use of the same set of story contents across multiple media channels. Such as the popular "*Frappuccino Happy Hour Campaign*" by Starbucks.

3) *Transmedia*: a way in which multiple stories are told across multiple media channels. These stories may be unique or an extension of the main story but serve to create a cohesive story world. Such as Star Wars and its related franchises.

This research focuses on the third category of transmedia, more specifically the use of storytelling strategy in forming, connecting, and extending of brand stories. The following section, a definition will be proposed as well as a deeper look into the existing qualities of transmedia (storytelling).

2.1.2. Defining Transmedia Storytelling

Although the concept of transmedia storytelling has been around for decades, only in 2003 was this term popularized. Jenkins (2007) is seen today as the pioneer of the term transmedia storytelling, defining it as a process where story elements are systematically dispersed through multiple delivery channels with the purpose of forming a coordinated entertainment experience. Each product may include unique characteristics that contribute to the unfolding of the universe that is created.

In this perspective, therefore, individual contents are not supposed to feed audiences with complete overview of the entire story universe, but instead work in unison to compliment the comprehension of the story world. An example Jenkins (2007) gave was on *The Matrix* (1999) franchise which includes "three live action films, a series of animated shorts, two collections of comic books series and several video games" to paint the story. Yet more is to come, such as the release of *The Matrix Resurrections* in 2021.

In retrospect, Dr. Marsha Kinder (1991) was the first scholar who placed the term "transmedia" into literature in the book *Playing with Power*. Since then, other scholars have picked up and used the term in various contexts including transmedia branding, transmedia learning, 'transmedia intertextuality' which was later adopted and reworded by Jenkins to be transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2015). However, there are distinct

key differences between Kinder and Jenkin's notion of transmedia. Whilst Jenkin's notion of transmedia focuses on "narrative flow" across media and networking of fan responses to narrative, Kinder sees transmedia as a "deliberate movement" of contents between media mediums (Jenkins, 2011, 2015). The successful content movement across media for *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle* was an example Kinder used, thereby placing transmedia phenomena into literature.

Moreover, other scholars of transmedia storytelling explored the same realm of study under different terms, such as crossmedia storytelling (Dena, 2004a), distributed narrative(Walker, 2004), multi-channel storytelling (Dena, 2004b), cross-media intertextuality (Hardy, 2011), and deep media (Rose, 2016).

*Figure 3 : **Traditional Platform vs. Transmedia Storytelling***
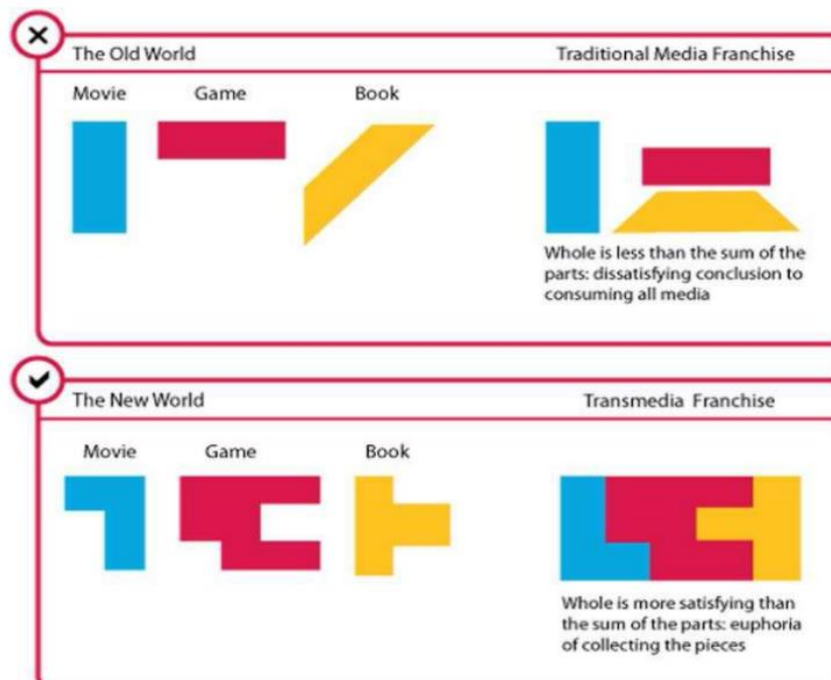
Source: Pratten, R. (2015) Getting Started with Transmedia Storytelling. *CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.*

Research in the field of transmedia storytelling has so far been focused on defining the term and developing frameworks (Yang & Zisiadis, 2014). Because of its complex mix between different fields of study, it is not suitable for transmedia to be scrutinized under any specific field of study. In the book *Getting Started with Transmedia Storytelling*, Pratten (2015) outlines the key differences between traditional multi-platform storytelling and transmedia storytelling (See *Figure* 3). The mechanism of transmedia storytelling attempts to draw emotional and participatory experience from the audience, whilst attempting to synergize with all content platforms.

2.1.3. Brand Communication through Transmedia Storytelling

In traditional narrative, stories are told in a linear fashion where one event follows the next in a sequential manner. On the other hand, transmedia narratives disregard the linear framework of storytelling allowing more freedom for stories to manifest from any given place and time in the story world. However, consumer's interest in one medium does not guarantee their investment across transmedia products (E. J. Evans, 2008). Peter Von Stackelberg (2011) outlines three models of transmedia narrative activity which transmedia audiences may face.

Figure 4 describes an "open world" where each red circle represents different structures of narrative content that exists in the same story universe. In this model, transmedia audiences are assumed to create an understanding of the story world through their own random engagements with narrative. Whereas *Figure 5* describes the branching of narratives, meaning there are some sequences to the stories, but transmedia audiences are given choices at given sections of the story. Lastly, *Figure 6* describes a parallel narrative. Transmedia audiences in this model are encouraged to

explore the constellations of narrative in the same universe but eventually lead them back to the core storyline. Together, these structures show various ways transmedia audiences can form their knowledge of any story world.

*Figure 4: **Open World Model***
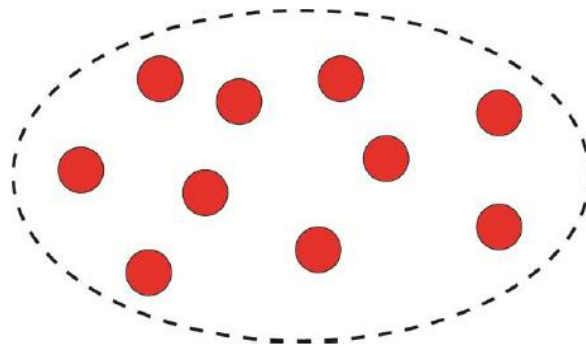
Source: Stackelberg, P.V. (2011) Creating Digital Narratives: The Structure and

Design of Stories Told Across Multiple Media

http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12648/1008

*Figure 5: **Branching Narrative Model***
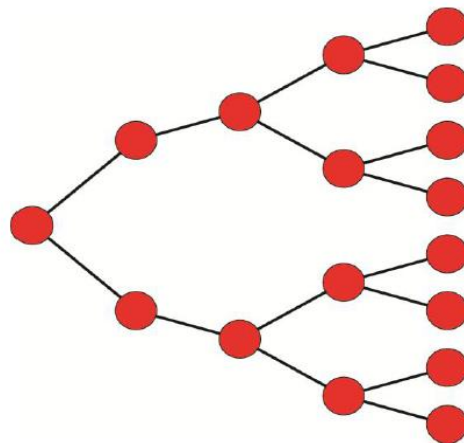
Source: Stackelberg, P.V. (2011) Creating Digital Narratives: The Structure and

Design of Stories Told Across Multiple Media

http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12648/1008

*Figure 6: **Parallel Narrative Model***
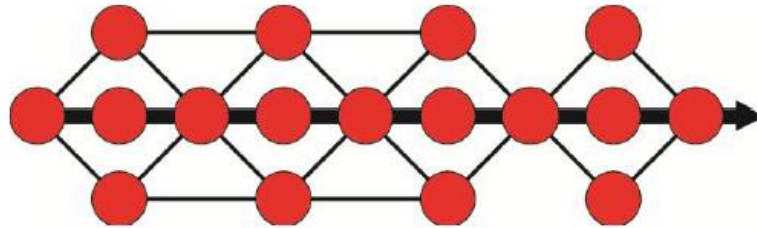
Source: Stackelberg, P.V. (2011) Creating Digital Narratives: The Structure and

Design of Stories Told Across Multiple Media

http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12648/1008

Since no consumers of media are the same, the use of transmedia in our modern

digital era has become a powerful tool for businesses to reach their consumers across

channels. As is the idea that some contents are much more suited for certain types of

media. Jenkins (2011) used popular TV-series *Glee* as an example, where the core of

their transmedia strategy in branding their product came from transmedia performance.

Short clips on YouTube, music on iTunes, and live performances all supported the

series in developing a cohesive *Glee* universe.

However, transmedia is not a form of branding but rather a tool that could be used

to develop brands (Jenkins, 2011). Bucker and Rutledge (2012) suggest three reasons

in their research why transmedia storytelling is an effective tool for branding and

marketing:

1) ***Persuasion:*** transmedia is immersive by nature thus encourages consumers

   intuitions to engage with the content.

2) ***Audience Connection:*** multiple platforms mean more point-of-entry for consumers, meanwhile also effectively expands a business's customer base.

3) ***Financial Impact***: transmedia redefines the meaning of ROI and product shelf-life (as stories continue to grow and companies can capitalize on this expansion).

Jenkins (2011) further notes that to some, transmedia is just another term for franchise. Johnson (2010), for example, defines franchise as "any successful, long-running intellectual property" like Charles Shultz's *Peanut*s gang. On the other hand, scholars like Dena (2009) argue that for franchise to be considered transmedia, both elements of economic and aesthetics concern – coined as *design ecology* – should be incorporated into the analysis. Jenkins further adds that contents identified as franchise are brands reproducing existing content in the attempts of brand product expansion, whereas transmedia represents a process of continuing story worlds with each new project. Hence to Jenkins, a brand's transmedia product can be considered franchise, though not all franchises can be considered transmedia.

To complicate the process further, Jenkins (2011) identifies internal issues of building transmedia contents with the act of licensing. On one hand, content owners seek expansion through transmedia, whilst media producers are faced with challenges to expand story beyond the licensed core text. As brands move more towards transmedia storytelling, consistency and coordination becomes crucial to their overall success (Johnson, 2010). However, both Dena and Jenkins agree if transmedia were to be solely analyze under the scrutiny of commodification that the term franchise can be freely used.

*Figure 7:**Transmedia Products of Star Wars***
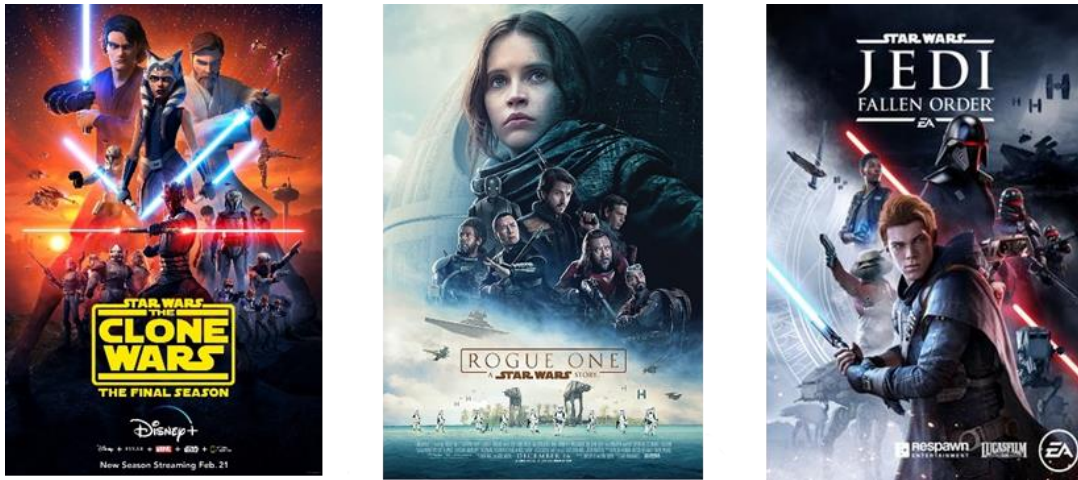
Source: Star Wars IMDb, 2021. Date Accessed January 2022.

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0458290/?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_0.

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3748528/?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_1

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5691474/?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_0

A classic example of a franchise that utilizes transmedia is George Lucas's *Star Wars*. The first movie was produced by Lucasfilm in 1977 and has since progressed to a total of nine core story episodes. Instead of simply replicating content, extensions of the stories such as animation: *The Clone Wars* (2008), movie: *Rogue One* (2016), and game: *Jedi Fallen Order* (2019) presented new narrative arcs to its core narrative (See Figure 7). Each of these products could be consumed on their own without the knowledge of the core story episodes and would still be complete. Lucas applied these extensions to further expand upon the story narrative in a way that would fulfill the fantasies of global Star Wars fans, but also reaching more audiences in the process.

More specifically, brands relation to transmedia storytelling has been explored through various perspectives in literature. Semioticians believe that brands are seen as a device that helps consumers make sense and give meaning to the stories that they are

exposed to (Scolari, 2009). In simpler words, brands would not successfully form without stories or narrative worlds to analyze. Therefore, it is significant that brands know how and what they are portraying in their stories.

This gap has been explored by Granitz and Forman (2015) where they indicated several requirements in stories that help attract consumers to brands: including, stories about brand history, stories about product reliability, and stories about the act of "giving back". These elements are experienced much more prominently in B2C brand stories, such as *developer updates* by *Riot Games*, and less relevant to the narrative core universe.

Ultimately, the goal of brand stories is to give a piece of mind to the consumers and make them feel good about their involvement with the brand. Nonetheless, stories are a way consumer connect with brands and by doing so in a transmedia fashion, marketers can persuade consumers towards positive attitudes and purchasing intentions (Granitz & Forman, 2015).

2.1.4. Dimensions and Functions of Transmedia Storytelling

To better understand how successful transmedia storytelling is crafted (by producers), Jenkins (2009, 2010) developed a guide of seven principles. The use of "versus" (vs.) below are meant to be read as two axes in a table and not as opposing terms (Pratten, 2015).

1) *Spreadability vs. Drillability***:**

    a. Spreadability refers to how easy it is for audiences to navigate through the dispersal of content while being able to grasp key information.

      b. Drillability (Mittell, n.d.; Pratten, 2015) refers to whether the presented transmedia content has the ability for audiences to dig deeper for meaning.

1. ***Continuity vs. Multiplicity***: both are measures for how 'canon' the contents are. Canon is defined as "information which has been authorized, accepted as part of the definitive version of a particular story' (Jenkins, 2010):

      c. Continuity refers to story world consistency from the canon.

      d. Multiplicity refers to "what-if" storylines. These parallel versions are considered transmedia as it encourages audiences to think deeper.

2) ***Immersion vs. Extractability***:

      a. Immersion refers to the effectiveness of replicating story world environment into real-world settings, for example themed parks (*The Wizarding World of Harry Potter*).

      b. Extractability refers to the effectiveness of replicating props from story world into real-world settings, for example cosplay (*Harry Potter*'s Magic Wand).

3) ***Worldbuilding*** refers to (1) fictional geography, for example its world map, and (2) the cultural geography, for example the language that they speak. Although these elements may not be directly related to the storyline, they provide transmedia audiences with an understanding of the universe.

4) *Seriality* refers to the distribution of story content into several chunks or chapters across multiple media, for example a cliffhanger at the end of a television-series. The content is therefore divided into seasons in the attempt to motivate audiences to come back for more.

5) *Subjectivity* refers to the portrayal of events through different character's point-of-view. For example, the musical *Wicked* (2003) that portrays the story of *Wizard of Oz* (1939) but through the perspective of Elphaba (the wicked witch of the west).

6) *Performance* refers to the interaction or activity between transmedia audience and the source, for example, role-playing and other user generated contents.

Several media franchises were discussed by Jenkins (2006) as an example that applied principles of transmedia storytelling. These include and are not limited to reality television: *American Idol* and *Survivor*, movie: *The Matrix* and *Star Wars*, and novel: *Harry Potter*.

When contents are reproduced under the influence of transmedia, there are two ways in which this could happen, either in the form of adaptation or the form of extension (Jenkins, 2011). Extension describes the process of adding narrative content as it shifts across media, whereas an adaptation is to retell a story through different media mediums. Although, to Dena (2009), the shift of media alone is enough to define transmedia as a shift confers a new way for consumers to engage with the product. The example includes the translation of *The Hunger Games* book (2008) into a movie. All decisions – cast, design, and direction – contribute to the continuum of storytelling.

With the effects of adaptation and extension, consumers of transmedia stories are faced with "additive comprehension", a term proposed by game designer Neill Young (Jenkins, 2007). Additive comprehension refers to the process of which consumers are challenged to rethink, revise, or reconstruct the holistic view of the main story universe every time that they are faced with new contents. These contents together lead to the ultimate transmedia storytelling goal of world-building. Jenkins (2011) also mentions that additional transmedia content should achieve at least one of the four following functions:

1) Offers backstory

2) Maps the world

3) Offers us other characters perspectives on the action

4) Deepens audiences' engagement

As quoted by Raphael "Raph" Koster, developer of Star Wars Galaxies (2003), "fans know Star Wars better than the developers do" (Jenkins, 2006b). Therefore, it is important in any transmedia projects that careful attention is dedicated to elements of world-building. As shown in research conducted by Fast and Örnebring (2017), *Transformers* (1984) an overt story world project was compared to one that is less explicit, *The Shadows* (1931). Results show that media fans are shifting their focus towards how brands holistically portray their universe rather than just the plot, and any slight changes to the fans' conception of the story world were met with resistance.

Together, the following seven principles will be used in this research as dimensions to transmedia storytelling in respect to *Riot Games*. Documents gathered

from both online and offline sources will be used as evidence to support the application of transmedia storytelling strategies. Whilst the four functions described in this section can be used as an indication to the larger-picture or goal of transmedia storytelling. Each function will be analyzed together with the results of the seven principles found through documentary research to determine transmedia storytelling.

2.1.5. Section Summary

Throughout research on transmedia storytelling, it has become clear that there are several contenders interpretating this field of study (Gomez, 2017; Jenkins, 2009, 2010; Pratten, 2015). Yet, there is no consistent framework used throughout literature for transmedia analysis. Nonetheless, researchers seem to all agree that transmedia storytelling is a strategy. The existence of companies like *Starlight Runner Entertainment* (brand narrative consultant and story world development company) is a significant example of the practical application and business's interest in transmedia in modern-day market. If the goal of transmedia is truly world-building, then from this perspective, it would not be the end-result that researchers should be after, but rather the evaluation of relationship between transmedia and consumers(Fast & Örnebring, 2017; Jenkins, 2006a).

In summary, transmedia storytelling refers to a process where story elements are systematically dispersed through multiple delivery channels with the purpose of forming a coordinated entertainment experience (Jenkins, 2003, 2007). Seven dimensions in total are used to validate products of *Riot Games* including: spreadability and drillability, worldbuilding, continuity and multiplicity, performance, subjectivity, immersion and extractability, and seriality. Documents retrieved and analyzed under

documentary research are described under these dimensions which together should serve at least one of the four functions of backstory offering, mapping of the world, perspectives, and actions from other characters, and deepening of engagement. The presence of transmedia storytelling, therefore, can be acknowledged through the identification of these dimensions within the given case study (See *Figure 8*).

*Figure 8: **Operational Meaning of Transmedia Storytelling***
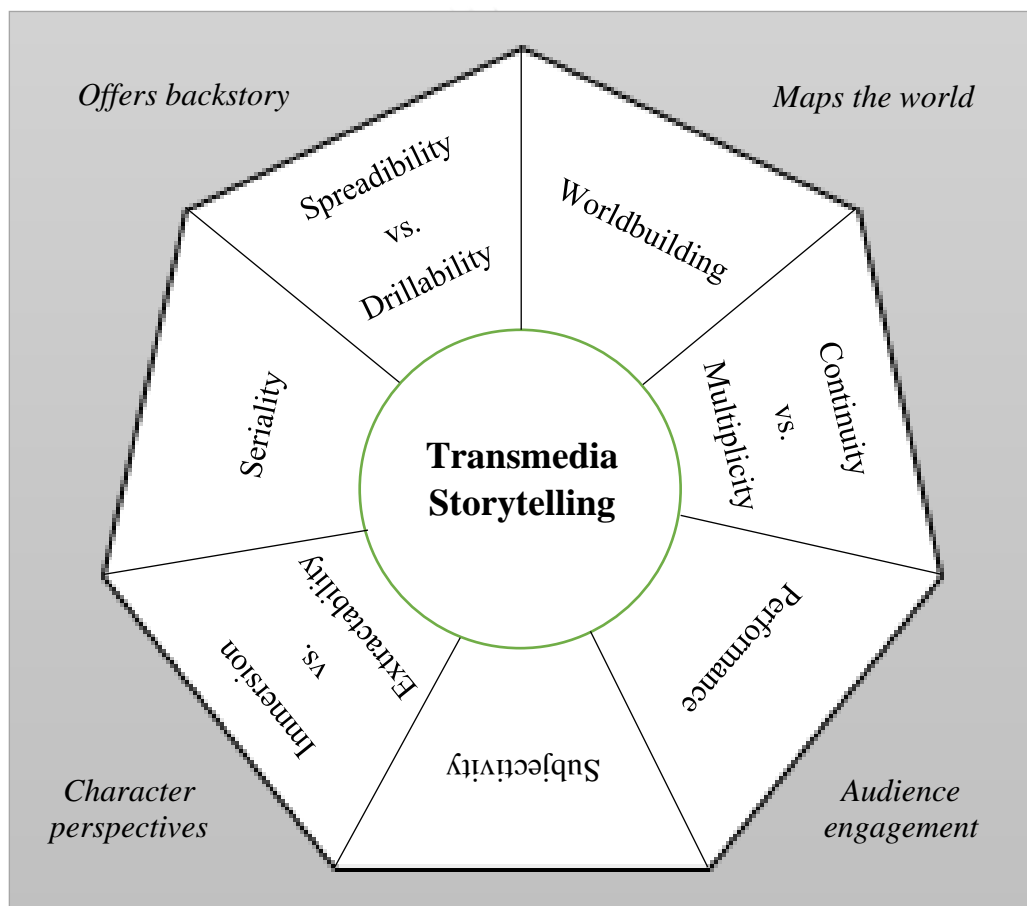
2.2 Convergence Culture

To better understand the transmedia phenomenon, this research presents a theory overview on convergence culture. This is because transmedia storytelling is a concept established on the assumption of this theory. For that reason, convergence in this research refers to the cooperation between multiple media industries creating a flow of media content across various platforms, and the migratory behaviour of audiences who would go anywhere to find these contents (Jenkins, 2006a).

There is a strong belief circulating in literature that the introductory of multiple media platforms has since blurred communication and stimulated audiences to become active participants in information search (Deuze, 2007; Jenkins, 2006a). Therefore, the following sections will provide insights into the different types of effects convergence has towards modern consumers and the current market environment in relation to transmedia storytelling.

2.2.1 Three Concepts of Convergence

In the book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide,* Jenkins (2006) introduced three main concepts that explain modern audience's engagement with the changing media landscape.

Concept One: Media Convergence

Physically, convergence represents a system of media that coexists together whereby contents are harmoniously interconnected with one another (Jenkins, 2006a) across one channel to another. However, media convergence does not only encompass the technological shifts, but also the relationship between all identities at play on a

mental level. For instance, how media companies choose to broadcast news, or by which method audiences process content (Jenkins, 2006a). As flows between content and platforms become inevitable, transmedia audiences are encouraged to become active seekers of information across media.

Contrary to Jenkins' beliefs, O'Donnell (2011) argues that convergence should not be considered as natural flow of content between media platforms, but instead, to place importance on the creators and the relationship between consumers and their understanding of the platform in which they engage. O'Donnell's (2011) research focuses on explaining the different perspectives of story world between two distinct companies on the production of videogames *Spider Man 3*. In this case, the effortless 'flow' of consumers through converging media is accredited to media producers' ability to manipulate contents cohesively. Therefore, the effects of convergence should not only be seen as an active process on the consumer-end, but also include the level of passion and dedication creators place to seamlessly converge stories into one.

While it is true that games can be replicated to look almost identical to the worlds portrayed in films (Jenkins, 2006a), videogames include elements such as game 'mechanics' that completely changes user-content interaction. Therefore, transmedia consumers who understand game mechanics would differ from those who do not – redefining the scope of convergence.

Concept Two: Participatory Culture

Participatory culture touch on the concept that modern day audiences are now also active participants within media, in "contrast with older notions of passive media spectatorship" (Jenkins, 2006a). Before, producers and consumers were perceived to

hold separate roles in the process, but the line has since blurred due to convergence. In the current media landscape, corporations still hold the greater power over consumers. Likewise, within the consumer population, some hold more power over others.

Buckner and Rutledge (2012) state in participatory culture that new media consumers express a willingness towards transmedia – consumers perceive media to be "experimental", relationships to be "fundamental" and collaboration to be "essential". General consumers through participation with transmedia are transformed into customers, fans, and brand advocates. This knowledge also clarifies that the opposite is also true, as Jenkins (2006) mention that producers of transmedia who fail to embrace participatory culture are likely to face declining faith from their consumers which would result to diminishing revenues.

Despite some assumptions that participatory culture is induced passively through the convenience brought by technological advancements, other research shows that it is possible to actively encourage consumers to become participatory. For instance, Li (2010) explores how learning-through-digital-game-building can help students develop better problem-solving skills and understanding of the subject matter (brands) better. Results from Li's (2010) research show that when consumers of video games become an active member of the game-building process, many felt like they were a part of a bigger community. Three salient elements of creativity, engagement, and new identity were noted by the researcher.

Overall, under the assumptions of participatory culture, the more consumers partake the more invested they become towards the subject. Thus, influencing the overall considerations businesses have make towards the success of their goals.

Concept Three: Collective Intelligence

Collective intelligence, a term coined by a French cybertheories Pierre Levy, is the process where consumers learn from one another. In other words, transmedia consumers individually do not hold all the answers, but answers are formed when they come together with their resources and combined skills (Jenkins, 2006a).

This technique has been used across multiple disciplinaries, with an emphasis found in the field of education (Fleming, 2013; Levy, 2015; Passig & Zoref, 2020). In addition, Jenkins (2006) goes on to say that consumers take lessons learned from collective intelligence, as gamers and fans, with them into their everyday lives.

On the other hand, this rise in informational power has also clearly set a disadvantage among gatekeepers as rules become obsolete in the eyes of transmedia consumers (Jenkins, 2006a). For instance, online streamers are now more prone to releasing 'theory' videos relating to stories of games or movies they consume. The more popular these videos become, the more participation it also promotes between consumers, leading to mass discussion and sharing of information. The disadvantage comes to businesses when the release of fan theories turns out to be true. As theories turn to 'spoilers' – and spoilers become potentially experienced-ruining for consumers, and even more destructive to fans – as depicted in the case of *"ChillOne"*[1] (Jenkins, 2006a).

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[1] "ChillOne", an example figure used by Jenkins in his book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* is a hardcore online fan of the show the Survivor. Whilst there are many different types of fan activities (both supportive and destructive to businesses), hardcore fans can go to extraordinary lengths to dig out answers to their questions. For example, fans of the Survivor, has found to go as far as searching for satellite images of the show's location, and watching taped episodes

2.2.2. Section Summary

This research adopts the theoretical perspective of convergence culture. Whereby, all existing media of a brand are assumed to be interconnected with one another and the information within each media flows effortlessly in unison. In addition, the use of these contents encourages consumers to actively engage with the product. And lastly, communities and fandoms are formed through engagement, each expanding the likelihood of contents and information sharing. In summary, the effects of convergence have proven to envelop around our lives (Bettiga, Boaretto, & Chen, 2013), yet multiple gaps in literature still present themselves on how transmedia storytelling exists effectively in our converging world.

2.3 Transmedia Engagement

The term "engagement" originated from the disciplines of psychology, sociology, educational psychology, and organizational behaviour (Brodie et al., 2011). However, in the fields of marketing, engagement describes the interaction or interactive experiences consumers have with brands (Brodie et al., 2011, 2013).

Since engagement can be analyzed from different scholarly lens, Gambetti and Graffigna (2010) classifies several differences of engagement in their research including consumer engagement (Vivek, 2009), customer engagement (Brodie et al., 2011; Doorn et al., 2010), advertising engagement (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010), and

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frame by frame to find hidden information. The "ChillOne" entered the online discussions during the show's sixth season and have claimed to have found and leaked information regarding the results of the show (which was highly classified). To some, the user was regarded as a hero for sharing the top secret, while others believed they were spoilers.

media engagement (Mersey et al., 2010). Whilst other forms of engagement, such as brand community engagement (Algesheimer et al., 2005), audience engagement (Beddows, 2012), and alternative definitions of engagement (Abdul-Ghani et al., 2014; Higgins, 2006), can also be found in literature.

2.3.1. **Defining Transmedia Engagement**

Even though there are multiple approaches to engagement, Schaufeli (2013) defines engagement as a component containing physical-energetic (vigor), emotional (dedication), and cognitive (absorption) elements. In other words, the concept of engagement in general can be indicated through three salient components of cognitive, emotion, and physical – which are also common dimensions found between the different types of engagements previously listed.

Before the year 2005, terms such as "consumer engagement", "brand engagement", and "customer engagement" were rarely found in literature because concepts of participation and involvement were preferred (Brodie et al., 2011). Upon research, "engagement" has been found to be the new term replacing its traditional counterpart keywords, as involvement and/or participation alone can no longer describe the nature of interaction between two parties, especially within the field of marketing. For instance, involvement refers to "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on their inherent needs, values and interests" (Solomon, 2020), and has been used more importantly in research relating to consumer-purchasing process (Beatty et al., 1988). Similarly, the term participation is used as synonyms in research to involvement (Dholakia et al., 2004). These terms, however, suggest a rather passive consumer approach to the engaged object. On the other hand, Mollen and Wilson (2010) clarify

that engagement takes involvement to an extra step by assuming that relationship between consumers and a specific object of engagement, such as brand, is proactive.

Moreover, 'audience engagement' is the term specifically used to describe engagement in transmedia context as it pertains to the relationship of film, television and videogame industries to content producers and consumers (Evans, 2019). Engagement is more complex within transmedia environments because the concept involves the consideration of multiple media forms (which are mutually exclusive from one another), and how these forms affect interaction (engagement as pan-medium). As a result, Evans (2016) suggests that levels of audience engagement can be measured through similarities (in texts) found in audience experience between platforms, meanwhile forgiving platform differences. This means even though brands may use various mediums to develop or portray their story, these contents can still be analyzed equally and reliably through texts.

In retrospect, the term 'engagement' was first found in newspaper reviews where critics of film and/or stage play would denote a worthwhile experience as "engaging". Additionally, a quick search online shows many lists of film categorized under the name of "engaging films" on IMDB.com. Although these do not denote what makes the films favorable, the term helps to incapsulate a general meaning of positive audience experience.

Whilst Jenkins (2013), as previously discussed, argue that engagement occurs mainly with fans, Evans (2016) on the other hand believes that this approach devalues the overall experience and relationship between audiences and the transmedia agent. Instead, a counterargument was proposed that non-fan activities should also be

considered as part of audience engagement. With this, Evans (2016, pg. 15) defines audience engagement as "the act of watching or playing, of seeking out more information about the story world". As descriptive as this may be, Beddows (2012) suggests a deeper conceptualization of audience engagement by incorporating the element of entry-point in their research. Entry-point refers to how audience members encounter transmedia texts, for example, if the audience chooses to engage through mobile gaming by engaging with *Legends of Runeterra* by *Riot Games*, they might lack the understanding of the story world players in *League of Legends* (the original game) might have. By considering entry-points, engagement levels become much easier to analyze, such as by observing the movement of audiences between platforms.

Therefore, Evans' approach to conceptualize transmedia engagement can be used as a basis of understanding the types of cognitive, emotion, and behavior consumers of transmedia products may have. Layering onto their proposition, this research will apply Jenkins' definition of transmedia engagement adapted by Beddows as a guideline.

2.3.2. Dimensions of Transmedia Engagement

As an attempt to operationalize the definition of transmedia engagement described by Jenkins in his book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (Jenkins, 2006a), Beddows' (2012) adapted five elements including audience engagement including, loyalty, attentive consumption, media literacy, participation, and 'extra-textual' activities, which are borrowed into this research. As a result, each dimension should be viewed on a spectrum of intensity rather than being closed-ended as each consumer may exhibit varying degrees of engagement.

1) Loyalty

A concept explored in correspondence with transmedia by many scholars (Beddows, 2012; Bowden, 2009; Brieger, 2013; Tosun & Donmez, 2018), and like engagement it is an elusive concept. Whilst Jenkins believes loyalty manifests from the core source, and every other action from fans are supplementary, it does not holistically capture the full essence of loyalty (Beddows, 2012). In addition, recommends scholars to find a better indication to loyalty through the exploration of audience behaviour, including those not necessarily relating to the core context, such as news, interviews, behind-the-scenes footages, and official websites. This approach has been seen to be taken by researchers like Andrejevic (2008) who claims that producers – with the realization of the magnitude transmedia has on consumer loyalty – started applying transmedia designs in the attempt to capitalize engagement.

Loyalty in marketing term describes a development in cognitive, affective, conative, and action inclination within consumers that translates to higher likelihood of purchasing (Jacoby et al., 1978; Oliver, 1999). These elements can almost be seen as ladders towards loyalty. For instance, cognitive phase is based on brand belief such as one brand is preferred over the other. Consumers upon experiencing repeated satisfaction would more likely believe that the brand is good therefore moving to the second affective phase. Affective phase describes an emotional connection consumer have towards the brand, thus forming attitude. If attitude is continuously positive, the third phase of conation occurs in which consumers translate positive experiences into the act of purchasing. Lastly, the action phase which refers to a state of motivation where consumers are ready to engage even if that means they would face challenges

(Kuhl & Beckmann, 1985). This commitment results from repurchasing, a marketing aspect to loyalty. Furthermore, following more recent research to loyalty shows trust as a salient component (Ballester & Alemán, 2001). Much research neglects the presence of abstract concepts such as consumer psychological processes, however it has been found that trust is as important to satisfaction and can affect consumer-brand relationships.

These examples imply that loyalty is more likely to form if consumers develop a relationship with brand. This is especially crucial in transmedia context as consumers are asked to engage with multiple platforms rather than individually. Therefore, the presence of loyalty indicates high levels of engagement (Beddows, 2012).

2) Attentive consumption / "Degree of Attention"

The second indicator to engagement is attentive consumption. There are several levels of attentiveness, the first is more obvious, where audience makes media its primary subject, and the second, where audience makes media its secondary subject while doing something else (Fisk, 1987, as cited in Beddows, 2012). An example of the latter case includes reading a book (doing something) while having the television on (secondary subject). However, as Beddows (2012) clarifies, this method only reveals the effectiveness of the media itself and not the relationship consumers have with media.

As a solution, in a thesis *Television 2.0: Reconceptualizing TV as an Engagement Medium,* Askwith (2007) suggests that attentiveness can be measured through "media users' ability to recall content-related details after consuming". This approach takes

consumer commitment into account, denoting high engagement if textual content can be recalled (Beddows, 2012).

3) Media Literacy

Media literacy refers to the audience's ability to produce as well as consume media (Beddows, 2012). It is perhaps one of the least indicative dimensions of all because media literacy is difficult to quantify. Nonetheless, Beddows (2012) argues that media literacy should not be neglected in any study that aims to understand consumers' point-of-view. This is because the level of media literacy is directly related to how much consumers can understand the text they are engaged with. Moreover, meaning-formation is a two-way street between reader and text, not only do researchers in this area have to understand the classification of readers, but also how the text itself is presented (Beddows, 2012). Together, these elements create another level of relationship that is unique to context. Thus structurally, the outcome lies not only with the readers themselves but is also shared with the producers. As a result, an understanding of media literacy can be used to measure the importance of context, and the magnitude of consumer's engagement towards those contexts.

4) Participation

Furthermore, participation is one of the dimensions relating to transmedia work but also can be borrowed as an indication of engagement. To reiterate, participation refers to a form of engagement which is both consumer-driven and culturally orientated (Beddows, 2012). As previously stated in this literature review, engagement includes participation, thus whenever consumers participate generally is indicative to high levels of engagement. Jenkins (2006) describes this notion to be linked to various social and

cultural phenomena and not by technology. In other words, convergence drives consumers to engage differently with media, whilst media exists statically. Fans are a huge driving force to media companies today, their cultural and social participation in the forms of cosplay, fan fictions and other user generated contents has since been a key to their success (Beddows, 2012).

5) 'Extra-Textual' Activities' (ETA)

ETA is defined as activities which are based on the consumer's relationship with the text, but which do not necessarily involve direct exposure to the text (Beddows, 2012). Ohlendorf (Heidbrink & Knoll, 2016) attests to this definition by stating the elements found in videogames are inspiration for audiences to create their own contents, meanwhile also being separate from the primary texts. This dimension is related to participation, such as creating and sharing of fan contents in the *Herobrine* case[2] which can be seen as a manifestation of 'connectedness' transmedia consumers have towards brand (Russell & Puto, 1999). Over time these activities multiply across platforms creating an ecosystem of transmedia works surrounding the topic. Hence, engagement would be stronger if more activities are identified from the results.

Since the power to engage is solely in the hands of consumers, research has shown that consumer-led engagements encourage positive environment to form, such as increasing relationship with peers (creating community and fan base), creating knowledge, information, and commodities (Charmaine, 2019).

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[2] A legendary character created by fans of popular videogame, Minecraft.

2.3.3. Section Summary

In this section, a general description of engagement is discussed as well as an outline to the foundations of how the term came to be used, particularly in the field of marketing. Whilst moving into defining a specific term for engagement reveals a gap in literature, since engagement has predominantly been explored through investigating consumer psychology, much is still unknown about how (and if) transmedia itself plays a role in strengthening engagement.

Moreover, this section has attempted to demonstrate that audience engagement can be understood through analyzing relationships between audience and text. Respectively, for the audience to engage, texts must first be present. It is, therefore, important to note that engagement is story driven. Once stories are established, engagement can be evaluated on scale of intensity.

Combining the findings together, this research redefines the definition of transmedia engagement as cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses from the consumers to the story world and related texts. In this case, story world refers to Runeterra of *Riot Games* and any products in-relation to this universe. The dimensions of media literacy, loyalty, and attentive consumption are to be used as measurements for cognitive components. While loyalty too, can be used as an indicator to affective component. Lastly, behavioral components will be analyzed through the dimensions of participation and ETAs. The overall result of the five dimensions will clarify whether the method of transmedia storytelling presented by *Riot Games* is effective in promoting transmedia engagement.

2.4 Brand Attitude

Attitude is a generic term used in the daily to express or describe a person's good or bad behaviour (for example, "that waiters got a bad attitude"). Likewise, in marketing psychology context, attitude refers to feelings that are directed at an issue, object or a display of behaviour which can either be positive or negative (Lutz, 1981). Attitude is a hypothetical construct which cannot be observed, therefore only by understanding the internal reactions of the individual can we begin to identify the meaning behind overt behaviour. However, it is important to understand that true measurements for attitude is not possible (Altmann, 2008).

2.4.1. Defining Brand Attitude

More specifically, attitude is defined as the general accepted and long-lasting assessment of something, someone, a group, a problem, or a concept on a scale ranging from unfavorable to favorable. Assumed to arise from beliefs, feelings, and prior behaviors connected to those items, attitudes provide summative evaluations of target objects (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2020). Attesting to this definition, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) further elaborate that attitude is not innate since birth, therefore, attitude must be an acquired propensity. In their view, behaviour translates into either favorable or unfavorable towards a given object. Fazio (1995) too describes attitude as a memory association between a specific object and a specific summary evaluation of that object. As a result, measurements of attitude are not close-ended, but rather quantifiable on degrees of negative (-) to positive (+). In addition, an attitude 'object' is an agent which feelings are dedicated towards, an element that is consistent throughout literature on the topic of attitude. These objects can either be physical, like

a person or organization, or non-physical, like an issue or situation. In the case of this research, the attitude object refers to transmedia stories presented within *Riot Games* case study and how consumers' engagement with these attitude objects (transmedia storytelling) causes the formation of brand attitude.

2.4.2. Dimensions of Brand Attitude

The applications of attitude in transmedia storytelling have yet been fully explored in literature (Tosun & Donmez, 2018). Marketing scholars have so far predominantly explored relationship on topics such as transmedia storytelling with engagement, brand image, and purchasing intention, whilst attitude a sub variable assumed from the results. For instance, Bhattacharya (2018) conducted research to compare the effectiveness between transmedia and IMC. Although experiments geared towards exploring purchasing intentions, results showed similarities in consumer attitude between transmedia and IMC campaigns. However, Bhattacharya also highlighted a major difference between the two marketing strategies: while the strength between IMC and purchasing decision is higher, transmedia showed stronger relationship on the effectiveness of 'story building' which coincides with earlier discussions.

Even though the concept of attitude is highly subjective, Chiu et al. (2012) attempted to understand transmedia storytelling elements that could influence attitude. Their research outlined the 4 elements as follows: authenticity, conciseness, reversal, and humor.

1) Authenticity

Contents exists if consumers believe in its authenticity, which refers to a sense of believing and associating story (from attitude object) with reality (Chiu et al., 2012). Authenticity is especially important in modern marketing as consumers are highly active in distinguishing difference between authentic and inauthentic contents (Brown et al., 2003), and even more so to fans.

Fictional stories require an abundant, rich, and varied facts to create their story world and meet consumers expectations (Hearon, 2004). For example, in the lore of the game League of Legends, authentic elements include a character name (*Luxanna Crownguard*), aged (20), who lives in a place (*Demacia*), in the world (*Runeterra*). These details altogether form a believable story that consumers can connect to, and with the support of other storylines create a cohesive universe that reflects the brand.

However, Chiu et al. (2012) mentions that authenticity is subjected to personal experiences, which means there may be different elements (known and unknown) that contribute to authenticity formation. Furthermore, if the story is displayed in a form of advertisement, story elements should resemble a mental picture of real life as much as possible to be accepted (Beverland et al., 2008).

2) Conciseness

Reinstein and Trebby (1997) define conciseness as a method where complete stories are presented as short as possible, while still able to cover its important key narratives. Therefore, fewer words promote the effectiveness of story as consumers can better remember the key concepts and reduces the likelihood of being distracted (Chiu et al.,

2012). This is especially true to research on affect-base attitudes as conciseness relates to attractiveness of the content. However, even stories that are concise can be boring once it is exposed repeatedly (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979). Nonetheless, if the content exposure is controlled, deleting redundant information from the content should increase conciseness and reduce boredom, resulting in favorable attitudes.

3) Reversal

Narratively, reversal refers to a climax or turning points within a story (Reichmann, 2003). When applied in the marketing contexts, the use of narrative reversals helps consumers understand product benefit by juxtaposing problems to actions within the story (Casebeer, 2008; Chiu et al., 2012). Therefore, a larger reversal implies a larger effect on attitude.

4) Humor

Finally, humor is the last dimension and can be defined in three distinct ways (Sternthal & Craig, 1973). Firstly, humor is a stimulus property which includes the uses of puns, understatements, jokes, or a similar technique. Secondly, humor can also be a type of response, such as laughter or smiles, elicited by the consumers after exposure to the stimulus. Lastly, humor is a perceptual response of the subject that triggers a change in consumers' internal feelings as information is registered through them. In summary, Chiu et al. (2012) suggests the third definition to be adopted in fields of marketing research. Furthermore, humor has shown to be an element commonly applied in advertising communication strategies and has found to be effective in enhancing consumer cognitive responses and brand liking (Alden et al., 2000; Cline et al., 2003). Although Chiu et al.'s (2012) approach to the relationship between transmedia and

attitude has been applied by researchers in advertising story context, Brieger (2013) attests to the viability of their construct for transmedia storytelling use. Nonetheless, attitude has also predominantly been used as a mediator in research to the investigation of transmedia branding. Transmedia contents have been found to be useful in influencing a change in brand attitude, but thus far has only been experimented on gamified applications (Feng, 2014).

2.4.3. Section Summary

Throughout this discussion, it has been proven that an association between brand attitude and transmedia storytelling has been registered by other researchers. To conclude, this research will borrow Fishbein and Ajzen' (1975) definition of attitude as "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object". The object in this case being the dimensions of storytelling: the narrative's authenticity, conciseness, reversals, and humor.

Questions relating to the effectiveness of Chiu et al.' (2012) framework shall be explored through gaming narrative. Additionally, whether attitude towards *Riot Games* is favorable or unfavorable using transmedia storytelling will be explored in this research.

2.5 Brand Experience

Brand experience is a concept that explains the sense of value in consumer's journey with the brand (Brakus et al., 2009), and value is what gives brands a sense of purpose in development. Without value there is no purpose for any brands to establish themselves in the market, as quoted by Smith (1776) a renowned economist and

philosopher: "*consumption is the sole end and purpose of all productions*". And more recently, documented in 2020-2022 research priorities of *Marketing Science Institute* (MSI), importance has been dedicated towards the area of brand experience, promotions, omnichannel communications, and how these elements affect the consumer journey.

2.5.1. Defining Brand Experience

Brakus et al. (2009) outlines three main points in the consumer's journey where brand experience has predominantly been explored in literature: 1) product search, 2) shopping and/or receiving service, and 3) consumption.

Firstly, product search generates product experience which is one of the factors consumers use to evaluate brand experience. To put it simply, product experience occurs when consumers look for or evaluate product through varied methods (Hoch, 2002). The product itself may be presented physically or virtually through media devices and advertisements (Hoch & Ha, 1986). Although experience has predominantly been deduced through investigating attitude, judgement, purchasing intents and recall (Brakus et al., 2009). Other researchers have also tried deducing from a product design-approach through emotional, meaning, and aesthetic implications (Desmet & Hekkert, 2007).

Secondly, experience can be evaluated from consumer interaction with the store's décor, personnel and related brand regulations that effect the consumer – together under the term service experience (Hui & Bateson, 1991). Research in this area has found that both emotional and physical dimensions play a role in evaluation of service experience, and ultimately value-creation (Sandström et al., 2008).

Lastly, consumption experience refers to when consumers use or consume products (Brakus et al., 2009). Consumption experience has predominantly been explored through hedonic dimensions such as feelings, fantasies, and fun, or as proposed by Holbrook & Hirshman (1982) – "the three Fs". However, this view could be argued to be outdated because modern consumers are more viewed as daydreamers who search for pleasurable adventures, responds emotionally to consumption situations, and purchase products to benefit their lifestyle, rather than as computer-like decision makers who follow a set of rules (Holbrook, 2000). Therefore, to replace the old claim, "the four Es" of experience, exhibitionism, entertainment, and evangelism, were proposed.

Even though experience can be generally summarized as an emotional reaction to an event, or as defined by Cambridge Dictionary (2021) as "something that happens to you that affects how you feel". Scoping this down to a brand-building perspective, the only definitions of brand experience in literature that provides dimensionality thus far is Brakus's (Skard, Nysveen, & Pedersen, 2011).

By summarizing the three approaches, Brakus et al. (2009) defines brand experience as subjective, internal consumer responses, such as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses that are evoked by brand-related stimuli. These stimuli include and are not limited to brand's design and identity, communications, packaging, and environments. Likewise, this definition will also be borrowed and adapted to the research at hand. In addition, the term 'brand-related stimuli' in this case refers to every other element that is not the product that contributes to how consumer experiences brand. These include and are not limited to Websites (Shim, Kwon, &

Forsythe, 2013), background design elements (Mandel & Johnson, 2002), use of color (Gorn et al., 1997), and even user generated contents (Sadek, 2021). Taking this into account of transmedia, brand-related stimuli include narrative stories across channel, related merchandises and more. Altogether, these elements appear as part of the brand's identity and design.

2.5.2. Dimensions of Brand Experience

Upon overlapping related literature surrounding the concept of experience, five dimensions including sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, and social, are identified for the use in the fields of marketing research.

1) Sensory

Sensory experience is defined as a reaction to one or more of the five human senses: smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound, caused by stimuli (Hultén et al., 2009). In a marketer's perspective, a stimulus refers to the different elements used in marketing to trigger knowledge of a product or a brand. For example, a logo, a slogan, an endorsed celebrity, or the use of a specific material. Our senses help us understand the world around us, form impressions, and build experiences. This is especially true in the new technological world that we live in as the importance of sensory experience has become even more significant than the past (Petit et al., 2015). As an example, with new involvements of the 3D virtual environments in ecommerce as an example, consumers are constantly challenged with the use of their senses.

2) Affective

Affective, or emotion, is a commonly used dimension in marketing research on different constructs. Throughout literature, the term 'affect' has been expressed in multiple ways including the terms 'feeling', 'affective reaction', 'emotional response', and 'feeling states' (Sumino & Harada, 2004). Although they may refer to the same thing, it is often defined differently. Thus, for the purpose of this research affective refers to any emotional reactions (i.e., sadness, anger, grief, happiness, love, excitement) transmedia consumers feel towards the stimuli.

3) Intellectual

Intellectual experience refers to any analytical thinking and imaginative thinking practiced by consumers due to an exposure to the stimuli (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). For instance, a game-character biography is released on the web, and upon reading this passage, the consumer begins to analyze the possible meaning of the context. In short, the stimuli cause the consumers to think.

4) Behavioral

Behavioral dimension includes any actions – both bodily and interactive experiences – between consumer and brand (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). For example, when consumers write blogs about the brand, or attend a live event hosted by the brand. Behavioral experience can be as big or small depending on the subject matter.

5) Social

The social dimension pertains to experiences gained from consumer-to-consumer interactions, or when they are removed from their private-state. These interactions can be found manifested in the form of word-of-mouth behavior or shared content creations. When combined with the right marketing tools, improving social experience (unpaid brand endorsement) has found to increase purchasing intentions (Sung, 2021).

In summary, this sub-section identifies five dimensions of sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, and social towards an approach to conceptualize brand experience. Questions relating to these dimensions are designed in correspondence to fit the research on *Riot Games*. In addition, the next sub-section investigates the current studies surrounding the topic of transmedia storytelling and brand experience.

2.5.3. Brand Experience and Transmedia Storytelling

Research shows good applications of transmedia stories can positively influence consumer brand experience (Brieger, 2013). Brand experience has also been explored alongside transmedia in various fields of study. Sanchez (2014) was one of the first to investigate the use of transmedia storytelling in a corporate (Heineken) study. Their research highlights the effectiveness of using diversification of media in corporate fields to enhance brand experience and values, as transmedia increases the point-of-entry for consumers to connect with brands.

If stories are the product and stimuli of experience, Lundqvist et al. (2012) claims that there is a "remarkable difference" between brands that tell stories and those that do not. When tested on a cosmetics brand, purchasing intention and positive attitudes

towards the brand were found to be boosted by the exposure of storytelling. The results also show that transmedia storytelling has the power to influence positive brand attributes.

On the other hand, Derbaix et al. (2017) explored transmedia and brand experience's relationship through cultural approach. Four main observations relating to affective and cognitive dimensions were used to evaluate experience, containing: imagination, empathy, degree of control over stimuli, and perception of time. However, experience is not always positive. Over-stimulation of any dimension has been found to lead to frustration, annoyance, or boredom which results in negative or loss of experience (Derbaix et al., 2017).

Finally, Granitz and Forman (2015) analyzed the degree of consumer's connection to brands by outlining the types of transmedia stories in correspondence to the type of media consumers prefer them in. Experience is positive when consumers of weak attachments learn about the utilitarian qualities of the brand, especially through traditional media. Whilst consumers that exhibit stronger connections to the brand (i.e., fans) prefer stories of experiential value through interactive media. In general, however, consumers all display an interest in hearing stories about brand's history, user's personal stories, and product reliability.

2.5.4. Section Summary

Modern research has started paying attention to topics of brand experience alongside transmedia storytelling, especially in the fields of marketing. However, most of the studies is based on their relationship alone. This research, therefore, attempts to fill the gap by experimenting in the context of narratives that spawn from games,

investigating into the specific dimensions that contribute to brand experience, and whether transmedia qualities of products is likely to foster positive brand experiences.

As discussed in this section, this research borrows and adapts Brakus et al.' (2009) brand experience definition as a subjective, internal consumer response; sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral and social responses that are evoked by brand-related stimuli. These stimuli include and are not limited to brand's design and identity, communications, packaging, and environments. The social dimension was added to make-up for areas where behavioral dimension lack in incapsulating consumer-to-consumer interactive experience. Altogether, these dimensions will be used in the exploration of consumer brand experience towards *Riot Games*.

2.6 Riot Games

Riot Games is an American videogame developer, publisher and esports tournament organizer that was founded in 2006 by Brandon Beck and Marc Merrill. From the release of *League of Legends* (League of Legends), *Riot Games* has become globally-renown and guided the acclaim of eSports scenes worldwide (Riot Games, 2017). Furthermore, since 2019, the company has introduced new genres to the mix, including books like *Realms of Runeterra* (2019), games like *Wild Rift* (2020), animations like *Arcane* (2021), and more. Of all the new contents that were set to launch, most are strung from the same core narrative of *"Runeterra"*[3].

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[3] The story world that was developed from League of Legends by Riot Games company.

2.6.1. The Lore of *Runeterra*

Good video games provide players with an authentic play-experience, whilst great video games also immerse the players into the story-world. In what is commonly used as "storytelling" in our daily language, "lore" is the equal term adopted by game developers to define storytelling in games.

Figure 9 : *Caitlyn - In-Game Model (from League of Legends) and Artwork (from Legends of Runeterra)*
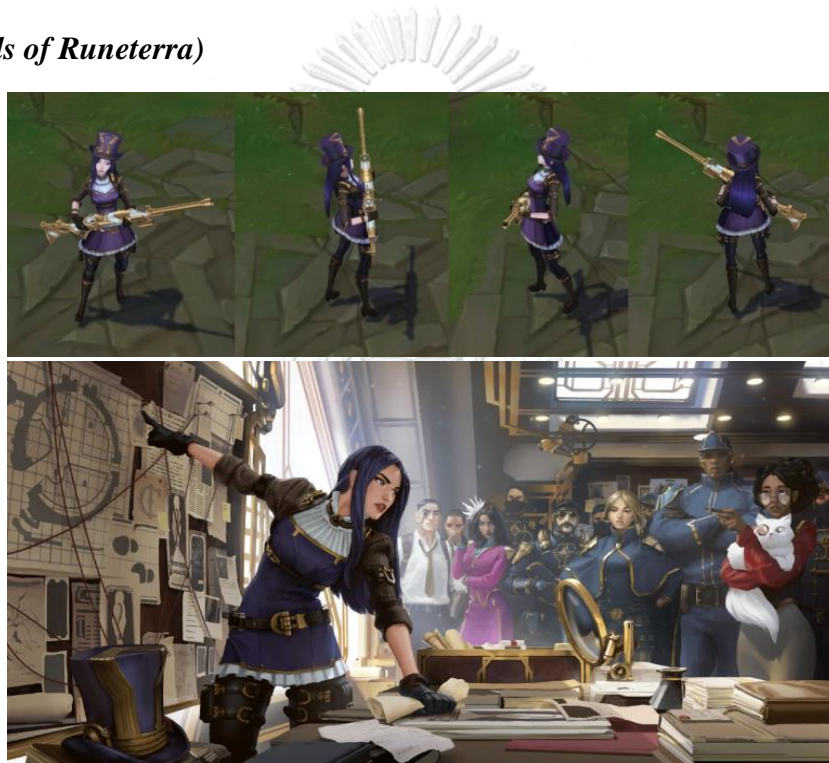
Source: Mr_Raymann (2021), New Caitlyn ingame models, Reddit. Date Accessed February 2022 (Bottom), and Obama-------Gaming (2021), Date Accessed February 2022 *https://i.imgur.com/Cz8js0e.png*. (Top)

League of Legends is set in the world called Runeterra, and like our world it is divided into regions, with a total of 13 different regions in the current universe (Riot Games, 2021). Within the game, there are also currently 156 playable characters –

called 'champions' – who are thoroughly designed to fit with the story world, with progressively more champions added to the mix over the years. Champions are given unique lore to flavor the core storyline: that is the aesthetics, voice-lines, and character background. These aspects that are unique to each champion are also kept true in the mechanics of their gameplay and not just in the written lore. An example like *Caitlyn*, a classic sheriff-themed champion who utilizes a sniper and traps (See Figure 9). In the game, her kit also revolves around laying down these traps and sniping down their foes. Together, these elements create strong characters that provide players with opportunities for stories and perspectives into the shared universe[4].

2.6.2. Marketing through Lore

The core story of *Runeterra* is not always this progressive. Back before 2014, *Runeterra* was perceived in a whole different light compared to the present. When *League of Legends* first launched, the core story was about a world where champions were at war with one another. The idea of the game centered around an arena where players (called *Summoners*) were able to select champions from a pool to battle for their side (Gilliam, 2018). Plunkett (2014) wrote in a gaming journal, *Kotaku,* that the reason for their lore update was because *Riot Games* felt stagnant with their existing core story which "ultimately restrict[ed] the narrative development". Fast forward to the present day, Riot Game's sole decision to overhaul their lore has been to drive brand growth through new products expansions like games, comics, and movies.

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[4] more on other champions and the complete lore overview can be found at universe.leagueoflegends.com

Like many stories we might have heard or read, elements of lore include tales or flavors from existing pieces of texts we might be familiar with. For instance, myths and legends is used as inspiration to construct *World of Warcraft*'s narrative (Krzywinska, 2008). Much of the borrowed style helps to create the ambience of the game and to act as a story component for the players. Likewise, *League of Legends* borrows elements of preexisting cultures in the world, such as *Ionia* with inspirations from Asia, *Bilgewater* invoking the pirates' aesthetics, and the baron desserts in *Shurima* to craft their lore (See *Figure* 10). Yet these elements exist under their own uniqueness. Familiar concepts, therefore, aid us to shape and understand the basic narrative of the story world.

*Figure 10 : **Places in Runeterra***
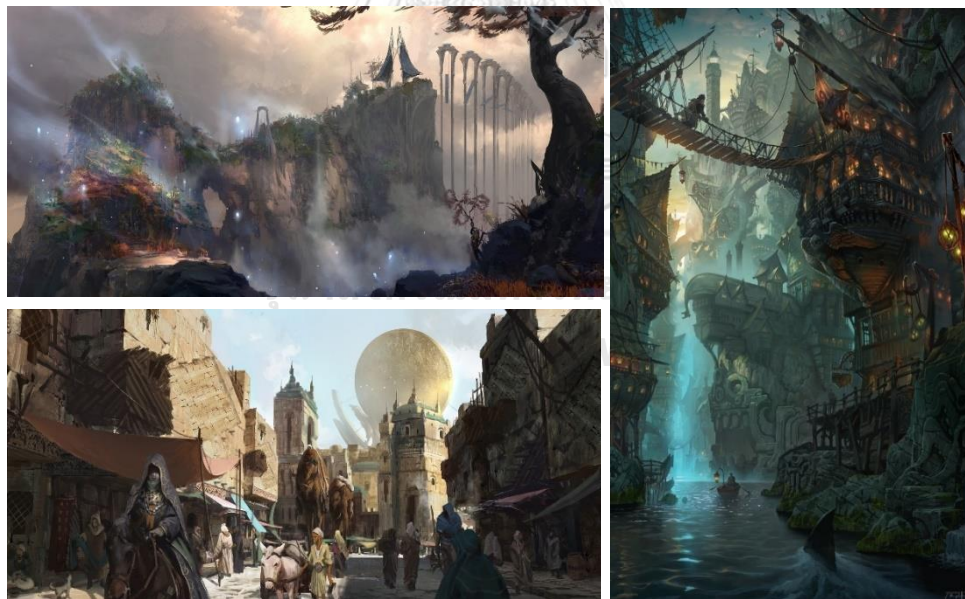
Source: Riot Games (2022). The Universe. universe.leagueoflegends.com

As Seara (2016) points out, one of the advantages of using lore is that it can expand the richness of the universe through in-depth branching story arcs of other existing entities within the principal narrative. However, this does not mean that only

fans of the lore can enjoy narrative-driven games, but rather suggests that lore is one of the many factors that contributes to consumer engagement with the brand.

Furthermore, a gap in research remains as not many works have been conducted that dive into the exploration of transmedia storytelling and gaming. One of the few papers found that directly uses *Riot Games* as an example studies the use of storytelling strategies in patch note documents (PND; that is the information on game updates). Although transmedia is not involved in their studies, Gursoy (2020) found that consumers of League of Legends are more likely to engage with the changes if the authors of PNDs included a distinct narrative voice. Also, the chosen narrative style for PNDs supports the brand in development and understanding of the game's story world.

Another paper by Veugen (2016) explored transmedia storytelling in the game Assassins Creed – which like League of Legends did not start off as a transmedia storytelling project. Veugen's research shed light on the difficulty of proving the effectiveness of transmedia storytelling on games than other sources because more commitment must be made by consumers to unfold the entirety of the story. Additionally, between games, films, comics, graphic novels, and novels that surround the same story universe, Veugen (2016) found from a survey of 471 respondents that 15.29% have consumed all three films, which is also the highest percentage of transmedia display in comparison to all the other media types. However, individually speaking, games are by far a more popular choice of consumption if the results disregarded transmedia.

Moreover, Wiik' (2019) research dives deeper into finding elements that influences consumer's motivation on choosing to consume or avoid games-centric

transmedia storytelling of the games *Defiance* and *Quantum Break*. Upon analysis of game consumers, their study summarizes 10 categories of motivation and 5 categories of avoidance of consumer towards transmedia storytelling of games (See *Figure* 11).

Figure 11 *: **Motivations to Avoid or Consume Game-centric Transmedia***

Motivations to consume	Motivations to avoid
Influencing the storyworld	Lack of quality
Exploring the storyworld	Previous experiences
Storyworld expansion	Lack of opportunities
Media related reasons	Lack of interest
Previous experiences	Dependency on other media
Quality of the product	
Variety and novelty of transmedia	
Immersion	
Connection between the different parts	
Genre and franchise preferences	

Source: Wiik, E. (2019) More interaction, more story, more lore: motivations related to game-centric transmedia. *Proceedings of DiGRA 2019*.

On the contrary, when comparing different source of origin of transmedia, the relationship between transmedia storytelling through TV dramas has been found to be unrelated (Simons, 2014). This is perhaps because consumers of TV dramas merely see broadcasting as a standalone medium and are disinterested in transmedia stories even if applicable. Evans (2008) demonstrates this notion that consumers of new media are more likely to relate their perception, engagement, and value of stories back to their traditional media impressions, like TV dramas. Thus, as new story arcs that form under transmedia influence from TV dramas, lacking its original agency (such as characters), engagement is more likely to drop. This is also true to Simon's (2014) research where respondents showed a lack of motivation to interact or to be immersed in the story world. Although both these works contradict Jenkin's (2008) notion of transmedia

story, their research suggests that television-centric transmedia stories could be more effective when applied in the form of crossmedia approaches.

Through the discussion of the research between Simon (2014), Evans (2008), and Wiik (2019), we may come to an understanding that perhaps the effectiveness of transmedia storytelling varies between consumers' media entry-point with that story. As shown in the findings of Wiik' (2019) research, game-centric transmedia focuses more heavily on narrative aspects of how the universe is portrayed. Therefore, to clarify, this research is not about transmedia contents of TV dramas, but rather understanding Runeterra as the universe that was pioneered from the gaming platform and beyond.
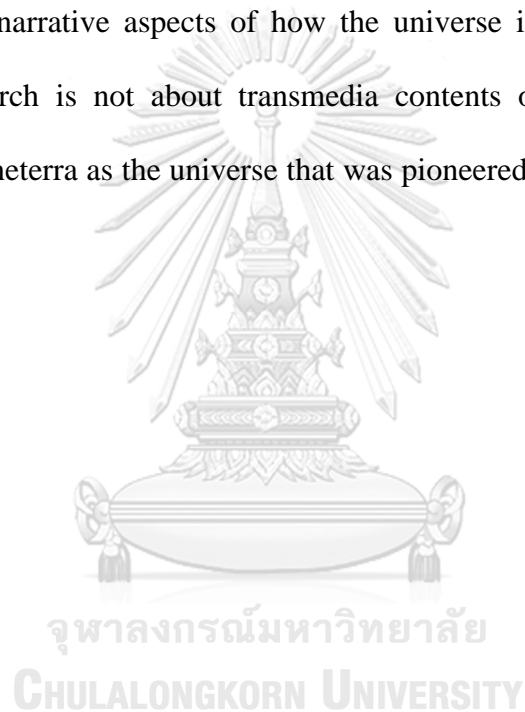
2.7 Research Framework

*Figure 12: **Summary of Key Concepts***

RQ3

Brand Attitude

1) Authenticity
2) Conciseness
3) Reversal
4) Humor

RQ1

Transmedia Storytelling

1) Spreadibility/Drillability
2) Continuity/Multiplicity
3) Immersion/Extractability
4) Worldbuilding
5) Seriality
6) Subjectivity
7) Performance

   • Offers Backstory
   • Maps the World
   • Other characters'
     perspective/actions
   • Deepens Audience
     Engagement

RQ2

Transmedia Engagement

1) Loyalty
2) Degree of Attentiveness
3) Media Literacy
4) Participation
5) Extra-textual Activities

RQ4

Brand Experience

1) Sensory
2) Affective
3) Intellectual
4) Behavioral
5) Social

Chapter 3: Methodology

Reliable research results depend on an attentive selection of appropriate research design. This research was an exploratory descriptive design and applied a qualitative mixed-method (*qual*-QUAL) approach of documentary research (*qual*), followed by an in-depth interview (QUAL*)* (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Morse, 2010) (See Figure 13). However, these approaches should be viewed together, as each method employed is a supplementary component to the other and provides a deeper insight into the questions asked. Thus, the neglection of any approach will render the results to be incomplete (Morse, 2010). In this chapter, justification is presented for the selected method designs, as well as details into how data is collected and analyzed. The selection and planning are fully conducted to obtain valid findings for further analysis and deeper understanding into transmedia consumers' attitude and experience with *Riot Games*.

Figure 13 *: **Overview of Research Approach***
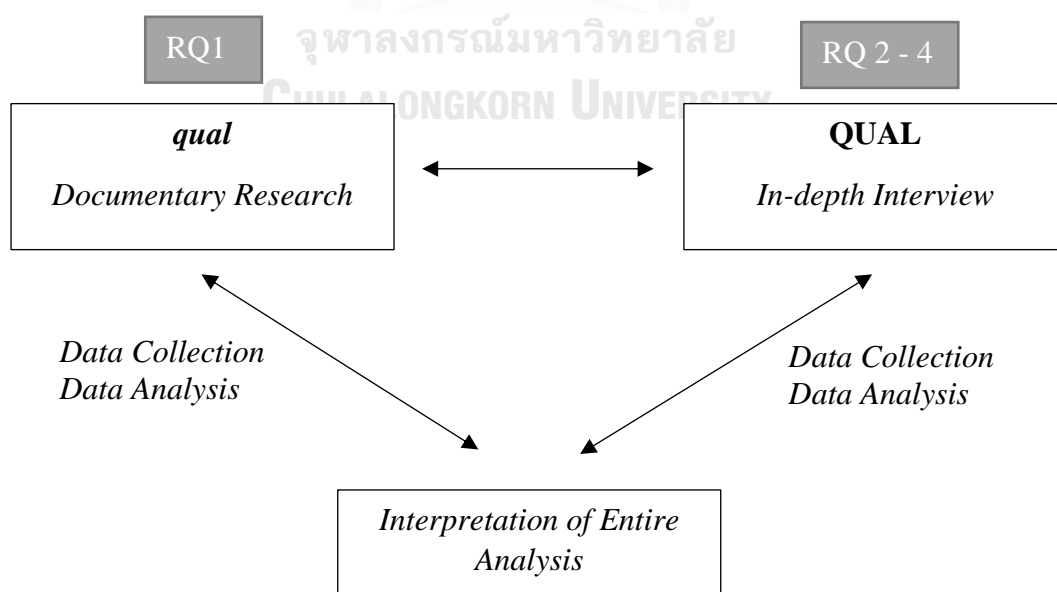
3.1 Mixed Method Approach

This subsection defines mixed-method approach, as well as discusses the advantages of this approach in comparison to traditional single method approaches. As the *qual*-QUAL design method that this research adopts is not commonly used, supplementary research findings and reasonings are given for this choice.

Morse and Niehaus (2009) define mixed-method approach as a process in a single study where techniques from a second or more methodological strategy is borrowed to compliment the first strategy, because one method alone cannot access some parts of the phenomena. Generally, there are six major designs of mixed-method approaches in research under four criteria, including implementation, priority, theoretical, and integration perspectives. Under these major designs, more typically the use of one qualitative and one quantitative method are utilized. This approach offers research advantage because, every method of data collection has its limitations, thus by introducing appropriate additional method into the mix would allow room to neutralize or even cancel out some of the disadvantages posed by certain methods. However, as Creswell et al. (2003) notes, mixed-method approaches are not only limited to these designs as researchers have the flexibility to innovate and choose between the types of designs – so long as it is justifiable and fits the research situation.

As the goal of this research is to provide rich description to the research questions and perhaps a development of a new theory, a qualitative approach is most suitable. As a result, Morse's (2010) qualitative mixed method approach (QUAL-*qual*) is adapted to fit the purpose of this research. Several advantages of qualitative mixed methods in support of this research include:

1) **Increased Depth of Knowledge:** through documentary research transmedia storytelling elements of *Riot Games* are analyzed. This result is compared to the attitudes and experiences of consumers through in-depth interview.

2) **Another's Perspective:** documentary research proposes a perspective from the content creators, whereas an in-depth interview dives into the psychology of the consumer.

3) **Different Levels of Analysis:** documentary research categorizes media contents; data are later used as supplementary component (*qual*) to analyze details from in-depth interview (QUAL).

4) **Unique Data from Selected Method:** other research approach would not have provided the same result.

Although Morse (2010) applies the QUAL-qual design, this research places its emphasis on the method of in-depth interview as the major research approach. To explain the justification behind this design, factors important in choosing a mixed method design written by Creswell & Creswell (2018) was referred to as guideline.

1) **Choice based on outcomes expected or intent:** the major approach (QUAL) was designated to in-depth interview as the aim of the study was focused on consumer-end. Documentary research (*qual*), therefore, provided supplementary data in validating *Riot Games* as a transmedia storytelling brand.

2) **Choice based on integrating the data together:** both approaches connect to one another to form a unifying research outcome. Without the documentary

analysis, the research was unable to explore consumer behaviour towards *Riot Games*.

3) **Choice based on the timing of the data collection:** data collection was conducted in a sequential manner. Documentary research must be conducted first followed by an in-depth interview.

4) **Choice based on a single research or team:** a single researcher was tasked to conduct the investigation under a specified time; therefore, the process is much more manageable in the form of a sequential design.

Subsequently, this research thereby proposed the application of qualitative mixed-method approach, specifically the *qual*-QUAL design to investigate the research questions at hand.

3.2 Documentary Research

3.2.1. Sampling Sample and Sampling Method

Documentary research is defined as a systematic approach to ("document") data collection and analysis for the purpose of investigating or understanding patterns and regularities (Mogalakwe, 2006). This method is not widely used as its effectiveness is oftentimes contested by other popular research methods, such as surveys and ethnography. However, its advantage of being more flexible and cost effective should not be simply overlooked.

In the most traditional form, 'document' refers to any artefacts where its central feature is an inscribed text (Scott, 1990). However, Deacon et al. (2021) suggest that

sources used in the fields of communication and media research are not confined to traditional documents, instead includes any other types of documents from statistical sources to sound recordings, to single images, to moving images and digital files. For this research, documents will refer to any references made on the selected study, including, and not limited to technical gameplay mechanics implemented by game designers.

Documentary research can primarily be found in social science research, its tools also has been found to be effective in the study of communications (Ahmed, 2010), especially if the research objective was to focus on the organization or understanding meaning of the material (Deacon et al., 2021). With these advantages, documentary research has been chosen for this research as the most appropriate method in exploring the rich resources of *Riot Games* that saturates both online and offline channels.

This research samples existing documents from October of 2019 to December of 2021 from which *Riot Games* official launch of their '10-Year Celebration' (transforming them into a transmedia brand). Although new data and content are still updated constantly today, limitation to timeframe was set for the purpose of data collection and research congruency.

Furthermore, documents were retrieved purposively from a list of media channels, including Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, gaming products (*League of Legends, Legends of Runeterra, Wild Rift, Team Fight Tactics*), official comics, novels, music, and *Riot Games* official websites. All sources were in English, limited to only those that were published by the company to ensure the reliability of quality results. Additionally, keyword searches were limited to only words that are related to elements

of 'storytelling' in relation to *Riot Games* and used specifically for social media. In addition, a guideline of Jenkins (2009, 2010) 'seven principles to successful transmedia storytelling' was utilized to evaluate the saturation of transmedia usage and the categorization document data. The result of this approach aims to define *Riot Games* as a transmedia brand, as well as understanding how *Riot Games* applies transmedia storytelling.

3.2.2. Research Instrument

Seven dimensions as well as the four functions of transmedia storytelling (Jenkins 2009, 2010) were adopted as a guideline for documentary research. As discussed in Chapters 2, the seven dimensions include: spreadibility/drillability, continuity/multiplicity, immersion/extractability, worldbuilding, seriality, subjectivity, and performance. Whilst together these elements point towards at least one of the four functions of worldbuilding, offer backstory, give perspectives on the action from other characters, and promote engagement.

Each raw data was collected through online search since details are mostly available and accessible through the computer. Online data, mainly on social media, are collected through an advance search engine with a list of keywords (See *Table 1*). Each piece of data is categorized into its respective years, source of data, and image (if any). All data screened by keyword search tool (if applicable) along with data collected from other respective sources is recorded. Lastly, the information is later analyzed through thematic analysis to understand patterns of how each transmedia storytelling indicator may be applied.

*Table 1: **List of Keywords***

2. Riot Games	3. Story/Storytelling/Lore	4. Champion Names[5]
5. Valoran/Shurima	6. Regions of Runeterra[6]	7. Wild Rift
8. League of Legend	9. Legends of Runeterra	10. Team Fight Tactics
11. Runeterra	12. Ruined King	13. Hextech Mayhem
14. Canon	15. Events	

3.2.3. Validity and Reliability

To achieve quality results meticulous attention should be placed on the aspects of validity and reliability throughout the entirety of the research. Not only do these aspects make the results trustworthy, but they also attest to its credibility. As this research applied two different qualitative approaches, two different considerations to validity and reliability were issued under three methods including, face, content, and construct validity.

Firstly, the disadvantages of documentary research approach were examined, such as bias in data selection, limited availability of data, and inaccuracies of original material (Ahmed, 2010). To prevent the research from these possible biases, Mogalakwe (2006) guideline of *Handling Documentary Sources* was borrowed as a checklist with every piece of data collected and used. The guidelines include 4 points: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning.

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[5] See Full List of Champion Names at leagueoflegends.com/en-us/champions/

[6] See Full List of Region Names at universe.leagueoflegends.com/en_SG/regions/

1) Authenticity

Authenticity refers to how genuine or degree of originality the document is. This is equal to how interviewers must first identify their respondents before verifying participation. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure the document's reliability. However, as Bailey (1982) suggests that generally data collection methods have no effect on the data being collected.

2) Credibility

Credibility refers to the level of distortion the document has undergone. If documents are deemed authentic (i.e., by the official publisher and not republished), then the chances are that the document is credible. The researcher must be sincere and choose to avoid forming any prior judgements.

3) Representativeness

Representativeness refers to how typical of its kind the document is. For example, if the documents gathered are from research or political figures, the information is more likely to be associated with the author's opinion. However, this is not true for all documents.

4) Meaning

Meaning refers to how clear and comprehensible the document is while being interpreted, because ultimately the goal of documentary research is to arrive at an understanding of the meanings and its significance in the documents at hand (Scott,

1990). Researchers should, in a consistent manner, use the literal meanings to assess documents.

Secondly, since the data retrieval is predominantly conducted by one research, the process will be further supported through face and content validity by the consultant of another expert[7]. However, it is noted by Nevo (1985) that face validity is subject to researchers' background and is relatively insensitive, by cross examining the content between one another increases the degree of reliability of the test results. Furthermore, construct validity can be certified through the reference of scholarly works (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). As this research borrows and follows dimension proposed by other established researchers, the dimensions therefore exist to a degree of validation and reliability.

3.2.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Documentary research was conducted by the researcher in the month of April 2022, prior to the process of in-depth interviews. This was to first ensure of the validity of this research as to prove that *Riot Games* is in-fact utilizing transmedia storytelling strategies. Besides Riot's official website (which includes information on games, blogs, and short stories on the universe), a total of 378 social media data sets were collected through online and offline sources. Each data entry is analyzed under the seven dimensions proposed by Jenkins (2009, 2010), and patterns are later extracted from overall data.

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[7] Dr Waraporn Chatratichart, Thesis Advisor.

3.3 In-Depth Interviews

3.3.1. Research Informant and Sampling Method

In-depth interviews are often chosen as the method of choice by researchers to explore respondent's feelings and/or perspective on a given subject (Guion et al., 2001). In this research, in-depth interviews were adopted as an approach to understand respondents' view on engagement, attitude, and experience with *Riot Games*.

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that respondents are qualified to partake in the interviews. From the beginning, respondents were screened and purposively selected according to their interest and involvement with products and marketing of *Riot Games* company. According to an online survey conducted by ITB eSports (2021), their main demographic segment ranges between 18-30 years of age. Thus, for this study a total of 6 respondents were selected, as research shows that an appropriate sample size for qualitative in-depth interviews ranges anywhere between 3-12 interviews (Bolderston, 2012; Guest et al., 2006; Seidman, 2006). To correspond with the data collection from documentary research, respondents are also required to have been an active consumer of *Riot Games* prior to October 2019. In summary, potential participants must meet the following selection criteria:

1) Respondents must be between 18-30 years of age.

2) Respondents must be active consumers of *Riot Games*' products.

3) Respondents must at least be a consumer of 3 or more products from *Riot Games*.

4) Respondents must have been active consumers of *Riot Games* for more than 2 years.

Although length of interview does not determine quality results, many qualitative researchers recommend interviews of at least one and a half hours (McCormack, 2004; Seidman, 2006). Thus, the in-depth interviews in this research were designed within the length of 90-120 minutes. After careful consideration by the researcher, selected respondents were then notified of the time and date for the interview.

3.3.2. Research Instrument

A Discussion Guide (see Appendix 1) was used by the interviewer containing questions relating to the variables of engagement, attitude, and experience based on the works of literature outlined in chapters 2. The discussion guide was constructed in a semi-structured format, meaning the interviewer had enough guideline to keep the answers relevant to the research but also allowing room for interviews to be relaxed and conversational (Guion et al., 2001). Structurally, guidelines of how to construct an in-depth interview were borrowed from Boyce & Neale (2006). As a result, a total of 13 core questions (in correspondence to the research indicators), divided into five sections, were issued in the interviews. Each of these sections covered a variable pertaining to either respondents' engagement, attitude, or experience with transmedia products of *Riot Games*.

The first section included a short briefing into the purpose of the research and introductory questions to obtain and reconfirm respondents' demographic data. This section also acted as an icebreaker to get the respondents used to the flow of conversation.

Section two delved into respondent's engagement with transmedia stories of *Riot Games*. Questions in this section were about the five dimensions of audience engagement suggested by Beddows (2012). These included loyalty, attentive consumption, media literacy, participation, and 'extra-textual' activities.

Section three pertained to respondents' attitude towards the engagement with transmedia stories. Attitude was understood through descriptions of favorable or unfavorable through four dimensions of authenticity, conciseness, reversals, and humor within the story narrative (Chiu et al., 2012).

Section four pertained to the overall brand experience formed through the engagement with transmedia stories. Brakus et al.' (2009) five dimensions of brand experience: sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, and social were adapted into questions to suit the purpose of this research.

Lastly, the fifth section concluded the interview with a debrief, asking the respondent for any other notes they would like to add, and thanking the respondent for partaking in the research.

3.3.3. Validity and Reliability

For in-depth interviews, face and content validity were tested through consulting expert[8] in the fields of research as part of the interview-question development process. Similarly, the construct validity can be proven using dimensions from existing scholarly works. To further lessen the degree of error, the researcher took extra precautions in

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[8] Dr Waraporn Chatratichart, Thesis Advisor.

creating a 'safe-environment' for selected respondents to feel comfortable, as trust-relationships foster honest conversations (Brink, 1993). Moreover, interview transcripts were recorded and thoroughly rechecked by respondents to validate accuracy.

3.3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

The in-depth interview was conducted in May via the Microsoft Teams application with 6 respondents. Each interview ranged between 90-120 minutes. Data was automatically transcribed by the application during the interviews. After each interview concluded, the transcripts are saved for further analysis. Patterns and themes were extracted from the data collection as suggested in a guide by Boyce & Neale (2006).

Following the raw data analysis, the thematic analysis approach is adopted as a method of identifying and conceptualizing the shared core ideas. Thematic analysis allows researchers to systematically draw codes and themes, designed specifically for qualitative research (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

To elaborate, themes are defined as important resurfacing data that have relation to the research question, and it is up to the researcher's discretion what themes are necessary (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These codes and themes can later be compressed into a series of frameworks as a way of reporting analytic observations. Thematic analysis is especially useful in this research as it can be suitably applied across multiple theoretical frameworks and research paradigms (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

3.4 Chapter Summary

After both research were conducted, a triangulation of the data from documentary research and in-depth interview was employed to enhance and reinforce each report's credibility. As triangulation, or examining a phenomenon through different methodological perspectives, has been argued to reduced biases of the research in comparison to those that utilizes a single approach (Denzin, 1970). Some researchers argue that triangulation strategy is less about proving validity, but rather an approach to expand and deepen knowledge (Mathison, 1988). Despite some of the debates surrounding this strategy, Flick (2004) suggests three instances where application of triangulation (specifically of qualitative research) would be most appropriate: 1) as a validation strategy, 2) generalization of discoveries, and 3) a route to additional knowledge – all of which corresponds to the objective of this research. Finally, Seale (1999) proposes that, if the researcher can maintain an appropriate degree of awareness throughout research planning, any methodological ventures can yield credible results.

To reiterate, this project therefore compares data compiled through documentary research with data from in-depth interviews under the form of methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1970). This form is also one of the most strongly associated strategy when researchers refer to triangulation (Flick et al., 2004). Data from both approaches are triangulated to clarify, support, extend, or even challenge the general concepts found in the research findings. Ultimately, this strategy is applied in attempts to strengthen research credibility.

The researcher also acknowledges the limitation this research has. As documents are collected and analyzed in a closed timeframe, the results will not be a direct representation of the engagement, attitude and experience posit by the consumers. Although the application of in-depth interview may allow the researcher to understand a generalized conception some consumers may have towards the use of transmedia storytelling, the assumption cannot be generalized to the entire population of consumers engaged with the documents. Hence, research findings in this manner should be treated as supplementary information as a step to enhancing the production of *Riot Games* brand, and knowledge for future investigations.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part pertains to findings on documentary research which are summarized and described under seven titles corresponding to the indicators of transmedia storytelling. The second part, reports of common themes from the in-depth interview are drawn and summarized pertaining to the three variables of transmedia engagement, brand attitude, and brand experience.

4.1 Documentary Research Finding

This research posits the assumption that *Riot Games* is a brand which exercises the use of transmedia storytelling proposed by Jenkins (2003). With the flexibility and range that documentary research brings, this method has been adopted as an attempt to better identify and understand patterns of transmedia storytelling usage within *Riot Games*. The results are divided into seven sections in accordance with the indicators of transmedia storytelling. In total, the researcher identified 17 products that contain elements of storytelling. These products are grouped together into 6 media categories as shown in *Table 2*. Together, examples from the list are pulled as evidence to identify the qualities of transmedia storytelling used by *Riot Games*.

*Table 2: **List of Product for Document Analysis***

1. Video Games
League of Legends
Team Fight Tactics
Legends of Runeterra
Wild Rift
Ruined King
Hextech Mayhem.
2. Social Media

Facebook
Instagram
Twitter
3. Novels & Comics
The Universe (website)
Zed
Realm of Runeterra
Garen First Shield
4. Animation
Arcane series (Netflix)
YouTube
5. Boardgames
Tellstones – King's Gambit
6. Music
The Music of League of Legends: Seasons 1-9
The League of Legends: Orchestral Works

The following subsections dive into the exploration of each indicator of transmedia storytelling, gathering data found from sources across *Riot Games*' product constellations as evidence. Finally, the findings are gathered and summarized in the conclusion.

4.1.1. Spreadibility vs Drillability

Findings conclude that all products listed in this research contain the core narrative that originated from the world of *Runeterra*. Therefore, *Riot Games* brand communicates through the dispersal of the story world across all other media entities. Consumers are much more likely to identify products of the same brand when the storyline is kept constant. Moreover, by highlighting certain product-specific mechanics, each product becomes unique in a way that adds deeper story related elements to the core universe. Overall, spreadibility is achieved through the dispersal

of both the narrative and the media platforms, and drillability is achieved through narrative specificity.

1) Spreadibility

League of Legends, launched in 2009, is an online team-based strategy game where two teams of five champions face off to destroy the other's Nexus (or base) (Riot Games, 2022). The core narrative of *Runeterra* was first developed from *League of Legends* and has since acted as the central source of storytelling distribution. *League of Legends* has had a 10-year run before the introduction of other gaming products under the same universe, meaning it has had longer exposure to the public. Most consumers who come to know of *Riot Games*, therefore, have been credited to the success and engagement with this popular MOBA (multi-player online battle arena) game.

As discussed in the Section 2.6.1 on the lore of *Runeterra*, the underlining story that all products are based on remains constantly the same today despite serving different product purposes. Over time, individual products also emerge characters and storyline of their own that are mirrored on to other products. For instance, even though *Team Fight Tactics* started off as a chess-game based on the *Runeterra* narrative, this game also introduced *Little Legends* (an avatar that players control in-game) (See *Figure* 14). From the beginning, these avatars seem to bare no tie to the core narrative of *Runeterra*. However, not until the update of *Legends of Runeterra* in December 2021 where these *Little Legends* started showing up on the artworks of *Legends of Runeterra*'s cards (See *Figure* 15). This not only shows that the main storyline used in new products from *Riot Games*, but also new story elements from new products are also well implemented back towards the main universe the brand is portraying.

Figure 14*: **Little Legend: Molediver from Team Fight Tactics***

Source: Colbert, I (2022). The Hiu. *https://thehiu.com/teamfight-tactics-little-legends-skins-list-how-to-get-eggs/* Date Accessed May 2022.

Figure 15: ***Molediver as Depicted in Legends of Runeterra***
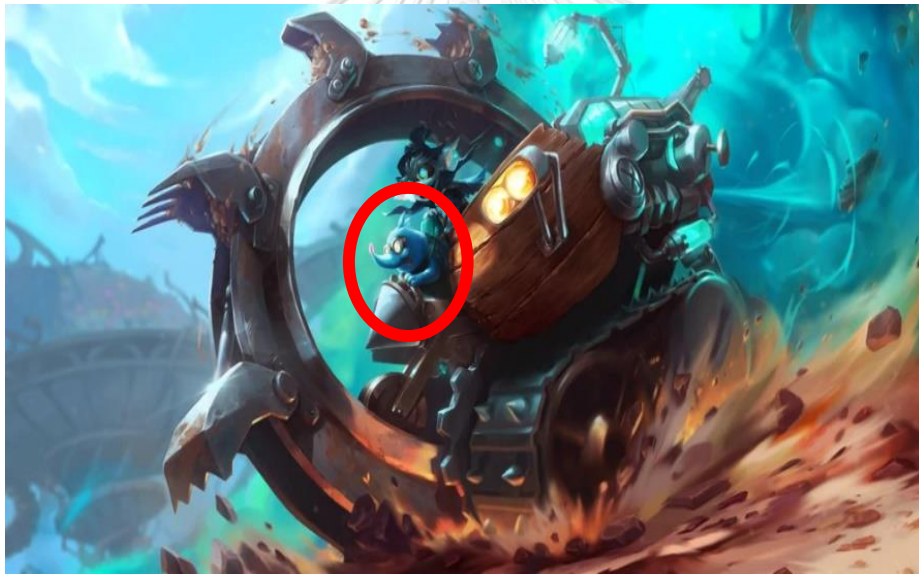
Source: Card Realm (2021). *https://lor.cardsrealm.com/en-nz/card/05bc079-lil-dipper.* Date Accessed May 2022.

Spreadability has not only affected how storytelling is presented but where these stories are. Since the beginning of October 2019 where this study situates, multiple new entry-points have been introduced into the brand, from games, to novels, to videos and more. Therefore, not only does *Riot Games* borrow and spread their narratives across

to many gaming platforms, but also utilized spreadibility of media to increase brand product constellation.

2) Drillability

This element of transmedia storytelling pertains to how much depth each piece of document may contribute to overall narrative of the brand. With this in mind, we turn towards the question of 'what makes each of these products unique from each other?'. Findings show that *Riot Games* attempted to build a cohesive universe through using the uniqueness of media to showcase as many characters as possible from different experience points, through 6 media categories including games, social media, novels & comics, animation, boardgame, and music.

a. Game Product

Starting from games, *League of Legends* offers consumer unique character designs that encapsulate who they are in the narrative story. Character design in this case refers to voice lines (what they say) – separated into interpersonal (what they say to other characters) and intrapersonal (what they say to themselves which only the players can hear) – artwork (images of how they look), skillsets (game-mechanic in relation to who they are), and in-game models (in-game 3D rendering) chosen by the producers to match the identity of the characters they are creating. For example, the champion *Jinx* as described in the universe as:

"*a manic and impulsive criminal from Zaun… lives to wreak havoc without care for the consequences. With an arsenal of deadly weapons, she unleashes the loudest blasts and*

brightest explosions to leave a trail of mayhem and panic in her wake…" (Riot Games, 2022).

Together with the other transmedia elements listed above (and shown in *Figure* 16 and *Table 3*), players have a more thorough understanding of the character and narrative.

Figure 16*: **Design Elements of Jinx from League of Legends.***
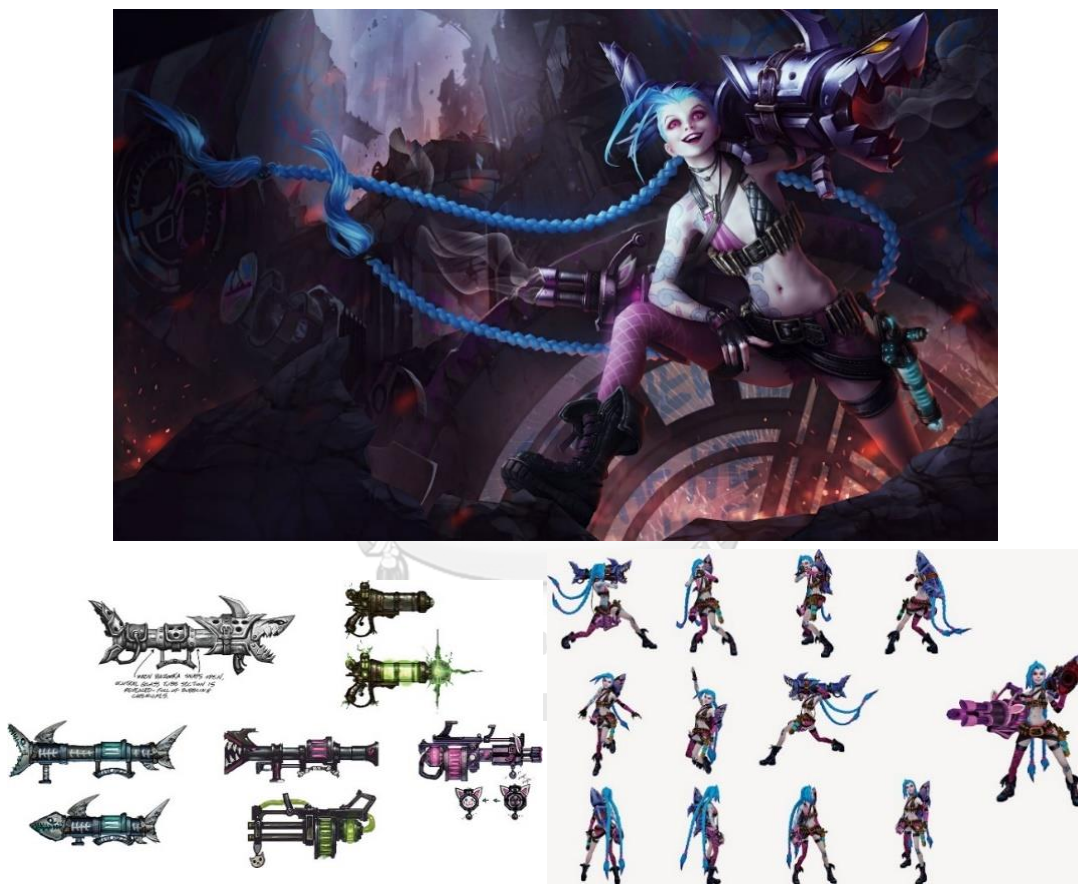
Source: Riot Games (2022). League of Legends.

https://universe.leagueoflegends.com/en_AU/champion/jinx/ Date Accessed May 2022.

*Table 3: **Voice Lines of Jinx from League of Legends***

Jinx's Voice lines	
Upon Moving In-Game	*"I need a new gun, but don't tell my other guns!"*
References to other Champions	*"You think I am crazy? You should see <u>my sister</u>" (referring to another champion, Vi).*

On the other hand, *Legends of Runeterra* offer consumers a different approach to how stories are told through an online card game format. The game introduces cards called followers (or side characters in *Runeterra*) and landmarks (iconic places in the story) as gameplay material. Consumers through playing the game are exposed to this feature which marks a new unique way that players can learn about their story. For instance, *Lux*'s storyline was given more context with the introduction to the *mage seekers,* anti-magic officers, in this game (*Figure* 17). Long before this *Legends of Runeterra* was playable, mage seekers were only mentioned briskly in her champion narratives understood from *League of Legends*. However, it is because of these follower cards that consumers of *Legends of Runeterra* learn more about them. The uniqueness of other games, such as *Team Fight Tactics* as mentioned before introduces *Little Legends* (animals that inhabit the story universe) and *Wild Rift* that puts all existing characters into rotatable 3D renders. As well as story-specific games such as *Ruined King* and *Hextech Mayhem* that magnifies part of a story within the larger universe in its own game for consumers to explore. These examples are evidence as to how *Riot Games* attempts to deepen lore on specific produces to further storytelling and consumer experience.

Figure 17*: Card Art - Mage Seeker and Magic Puriying Device.*

Source: Riot Games (2022). Legends of Runeterra. *https://playruneterra.com/en-us/*

b. Social Media Posts

Next are the findings on the drillability of *Riot Game*'s social media contents. By using storytelling-related keywords listed in Section 3.2.2 on research instrument, a total of 378 posts were found from the social media accounts. Through these posts, the researcher can conclude that storytelling via social media is mainly distributed as promotional materials with the purpose of redirecting consumers back to the story that makes the brand. These promotional materials may include anything from a fan's artwork to videos of them analyzing the lore to cosplays.

An example found from Twitter, shows a fan made artwork which encapsulates the story during the *Ruined King* event in July of 2021 (See *Figure* 18). This artwork pulls together storylines from across different game products to show the state of the story in conjunction with one another. To elaborate, the top left frame of the picture and bottom right frame of the picture depicts the story of characters that are fighting

alongside one another to combat the antagonist. These characters are found on *League of Legends* and *WildRift*. Meanwhile, the opposing panels from these two depict characters from *Team Fight Tactics* that are facing the same antagonist. Although these are situations happening on different media platforms, the depiction of story in one frame suggests a connection on a narrative level towards consumers. This artwork shows, for consumers of any games, that social media is utilized by *Riot Games* as a space where all stories across platform are promoted. Therefore, even if consumers do not engage with a specific product, social media is still able to drill new information they previously are not aware of through being exposed to storytelling posts.

Figure 18*: A Tweet by Riot Games*

Source: Twitter (2021). Riot Games. Retrieved on May 2022.

https://twitter.com/riotgames

c. Novel & Comics

Moreover, novels and comics are perhaps most saturated with storytelling as the product's purpose is to tell stories. In the center of all lore, the universe webpage (https://universe.leagueoflegends.com/en_US/) includes all short stories, comics and facts on characters and places within *Runeterra*. Although *League of Legends* is the game that first marketed lore, fans of storytelling have since moved to *the Universe* to find information regarding any events they are curious about. Other works which has been released during the scope of this research includes the *Zed* comics which depicts a deeper story on *Zed*'s character, *Realm of Runeterra*, a color annotated book that describes the geographical location of the world, and *Garen First Shield* a digital book that explains yet another story snippet. Stories found in this source are much more detailed in comparison to any media sources.

d. Animation Product

A large portion of storytelling is done through the success of Riot Game's animations. Out of the total of 378 story-related posts found on social media, 58 of these are videos on YouTube. Patterns showed that some of the most engaging videos are those that features an event happening in *Runeterra*, such as the season cinematic[9] videos which observably picked up over 100 million views (See *Figure* 19).

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[9] videos launched in the beginning of each year – normally the theme within the video will be associated with the event-story of that year.

Figure 19: *Screenshot from Riot Games YouTube*
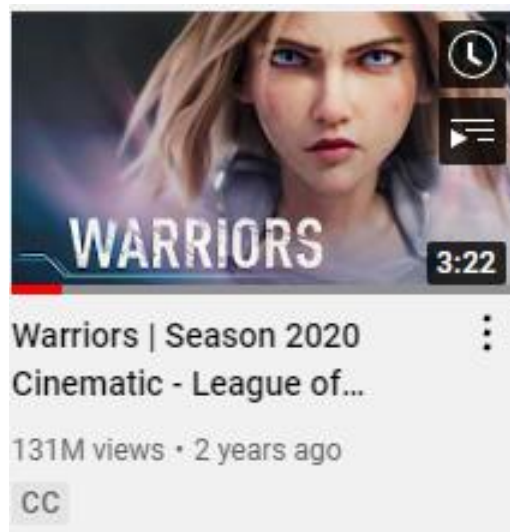
Source: YouTube (2021). Riot Games. Date Accessed May 2022.

Another example of animation which was launched on Netflix streaming platform in November of 2021 was *Arcane*, which was critically acclaimed by many reviewing sites such as Forbes (Tassi, 2021). *Arcane* was the first ever story-focused animation that *Riot Games* created that explored the relationship of several popular characters from *Piltover & Zaun* regions of *Runeterra*. Together, it can be summarized that drillability is pushed forward by animations of story specific characters. Perhaps the number of viewers who have seen these videos also points towards the effectiveness this medium has towards the application of transmedia storytelling.

e. Boardgame Product

Currently, the only boardgame product that is available by *Riot Games* is *Tellstones* which started selling in September of 2020. This memory board game was marketed to consumers of *Riot Games* through the linkage between the product and Runeterra storyline. To elaborate, *Tellstones* is said to be a boardgame in which the

characters in Runeterra play, therefore for consumers playing the game is to immerse them into experiencing their world. Furthermore, *Riot Games* also borrowed a character called "*Cithria the Bold*" from *Legends of Runeterra* (which was popular at the time) to be the product brand ambassador. Therefore, drillability is exhibited the design of this product, how the boardgame itself is marketed as a game that exists in the *Runeterra* story world is to introduce new levels of immersion toward consumers of the product.

f. Music

The storytelling of *Riot Games* is also reflected in the drillability of music, as it helps to engage consumers into the story world in ways texts cannot. From the findings, two albums were found to be relevant to this research. These albums include the music from *League of Legends*: *seasons one to nine*, and *League of Legends: orchestral works*. The music which is identified here is music specifically designed to go with the ambience of the game, enhancing character personalities, and the overall feeling of *Runeterra* universe.

Overall, it can be concluded that drillability is achieved from the use of or even the combination of media, rather than the storytelling aspects by *Riot Games*. The use of multiple media platforms allows transmedia consumers to be more immersed in the story world in comparison to traditional consumers of only one product type. *Table 4* summarizes this section's findings.

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Table 4: ***Product Drillability of Riot Games***

	Source	Uniqueness

Games	League of Legends	• Champion designs
		  o Voice lines
		  o Skill sets
		  o Artwork
		  o In-game model

	Team Fight Tactics	• Little Legends Avatar
	Legends of Runeterra	• Followers and Landmark card features • Flavor texts
	Wild Rift	• 3D Character Renderings (360°)
	Ruined King	• Deepening Lore on 6-champions • Storyline based game
	Hextech Mayhem	• Characterization of 2-champions
Social Media	Instagram Facebook Twitter	• A total of 378 posts across media • Promotional material through champion information and other user generated contents
Novels & Comics	The Universe	• Hub of all existing stories and artwork • In-depth stories and events happening in the core storyline
	Zed	• Development of Zed's character and story
	Realm of Runeterra	• In-depth introduction to regions of Runeterra, its environments, and living things.
	Garen First Shield	• Event based novella deepening lore on multiple characters in Demacia region

	Arcane	• First animated series focusing on development of multiple stories of characters in Piltover and Zuan regions
Animation	YouTube	• Multiple story-based short animations.
Boardgame	Tellstones: King's Gambit	• Promotion through characterization of Cithria
.Music	The Music of League of Legends: Seasons 1-9 League of Legends: Orchestral Works	• Ambience of game, characters, and Runeterra universe

4.1.2. Continuity vs. Multiplicity

In general, the dimensions of continuity and multiplicity examine whether story distribution across media are true to the origin story. Research shows that all products of *Riot Games* present continuity in two ways, first, in products that contain only the original lore, and second, in products that are made specifically to further the lore. Additionally, by using themed skins *Riot Games* can market alternative 'what-if' storylines that not only help enhance characterization but also create room for personalization, thus achieving the element of multiplicity.

1) Continuity

As mentioned in the previous section, continuity is exhibited in all of *Riot Game*'s franchises. From games to novels to animations, every medium in which narrative stories were presented are based on the *Runeterra* universe. However, there

are several products in this category that specifically expand upon parts of the core story. These include games such as *Ruined King* and *Hextech Mayhem*, all the novels and books, and the *Arcane* series. For example, *Ruined King* is a game launched to expand the lore of *League of Legends*, specifically under the *Ruination* campaign in 2021. This game was intended as a transmedia product that sets players into a new story chapter of *Runeterra*. According to game analyst Rishov "Vergil" Mukherjee (2021), *Ruined King*'s gameplay ranges between 21-35 hours depending on how the player chooses to play the game. Although the background set-up of the story is what players already know well, this game furthers the core story by featuring extended lore on six other *League* characters.

More specifically, continuity has seen to be pushed forward in two main ways. The first way is through expansion of new character stories that adds further layers and saturation to the overall world. The second way is through borrowing story lines of popular characters that already exist in the story world to products forward. In terms of *Ruined King*, as an example, although the purpose of the product is for consumers to learn more about the new character *Viego*, other characters like *Miss Fortune* and *Braum* are played as the protagonist of the game.

2) **Multiplicity**

Besides the main storyline, *Riot Games* also produces skins (character cosmetics) that are often tied to a non-canonical lore. However, this feature is only available on their gaming products and seen marketed across their social media platforms. According to the official *Riot Game*'s fandom page, there are currently 1379 available skins in *League of Legends*. Additionally, many skins are grouped together according

to their theme, for instance the *Pulsefire* skins that explore characters of *Runeterra* in an alternate post-apocalyptic universe, or *the Star Guardian* skins that reimagines characters of *Runeterra* as Japanese-style galactic superheroes. These game cosmetics were not only sold in *League of Legends*, but also available on other gaming platforms such as *Legends of Runeterra* and *Wild Rift*. Whilst some of these products have their own skin line, such as the *Stargazer* skins on *Wild Rift*, others more popular ones are available across all platforms, some of these include *Pulsefire, Arcade*, *Ruined* and *K/DA* collections.

Figure 20*:* ***Karma - Classic vs. Ruined Skin from Legends of Runeterra***
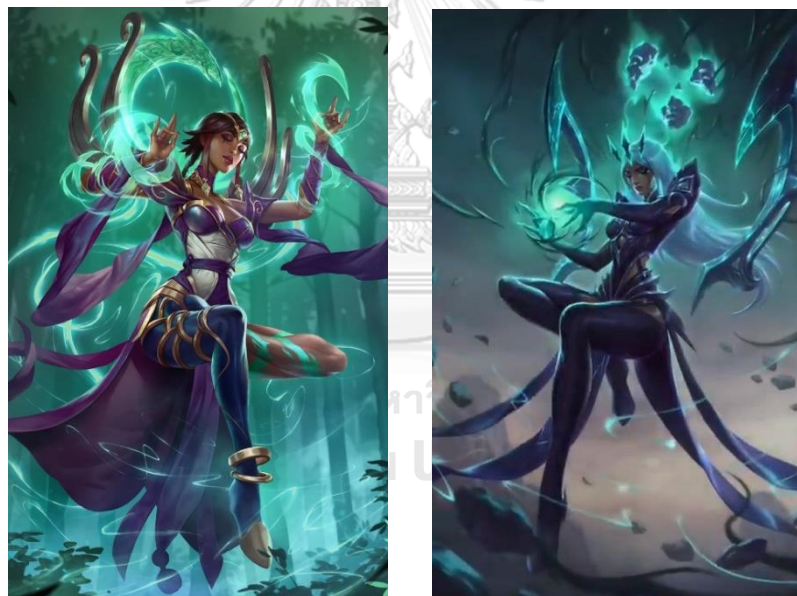
Source: Google Images (2022). Retrieved in May 2022.

In this case, an advantage of character cosmetics is that it offers consumers an outlet to personalize their gameplay while, at times, providing a connection for players back to the story universe. For example, Ruined skins explores an alternate timeline in the story where a few characters are possessed by a powerful dark magic (See *Figure*

20). Therefore, the introduction of this skin line allows consumers to stay connected to parts of the storyline development even if they do not choose to purchase or actively seek to understand the story. In sum, the extension of the skin feature reflects multiplicity, one of the indicators of Jenkin' transmedia storytelling, as it provides consumers a medium for which players can better visualize the story progression.

4.1.3. Immersion vs. Extractability

Despite being a company that focuses on game-development, *Riot Games* still manages to achieve a sense of immersion by incorporating the use of augmented reality and in-person events into their yearly campaigns. Although not producer-given, extractability has been found to be possible through evidence of cosplay.

1) Immersion

Immersion pertains to how immersive storytelling can be when taken out of the context of the product. In recent years, *Riot Games* have started giving importance to immersing consumers in the story world through other product promotional contents such as those shown in the *Sentinels of Light* story campaign and *Undercity Nights* event. To elaborate, a sense of immersion was created using interactive mobile virtual reality (*sentinelsunite.wildrift.leagueoflegends.com*) which allowed players to experience a story-related setting in a realistic manner. This feature was also an extension to part of the *Ruination* story-event in 2021 and was reported in a blog to be the first ever big immersive multi month story *Riot Game* has ever created (Reav3 & 84Slashed, 2021). In November 2021, *Riot Games* created an in-person event called *Undercity Nights* as part of the celebratory launch of *Arcane* series. In this event, the *Riot Games* team recreated literal scenes from the animation, allowing fans who attend

the special event to immerse themselves in the world of *Arcane* (See *Figure* 21). Product promotional contents, which can exist either as forms of events or experiences online, therefore, act as the entity which fulfills the criteria of immersion in Jenkins' transmedia storytelling.

Figure 21:***Post on Undercity Nights Immersive Event***
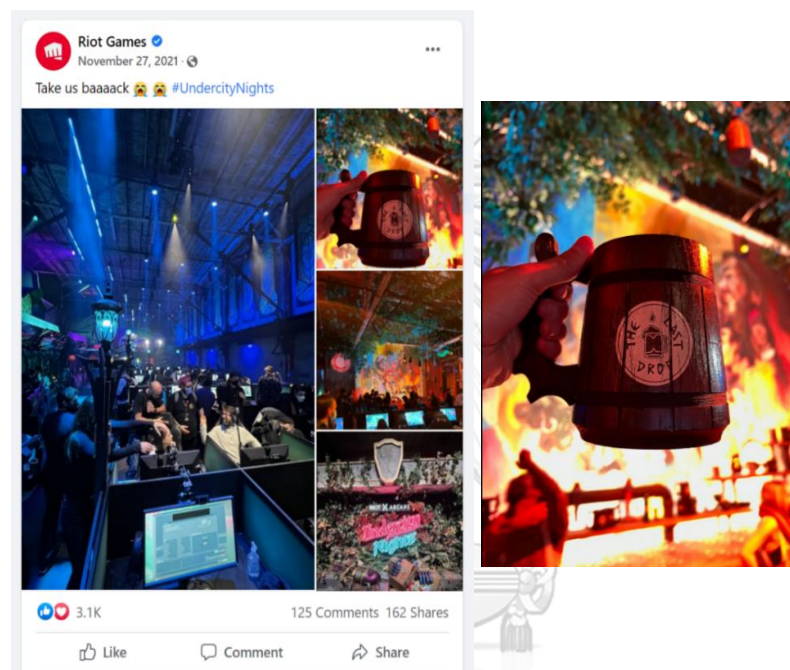
Source: Facebook (2021). Riot Games. Retrieved on May 2022

2) Extractability

In retrospect, the *Undercity Nights* event also included elements of extractability, such as 'the last drop' mug shown in *Figure 21* that was part of the series' prop. The more identifiable object of extraction often means a higher level of immersion can be achieved as consumers are surrounded by story props. However, these props don't always come from the producers of the brand but are consumer driven. For instance,

cosplay has shown to be one of the most prominent ways consumers engage with their brand in nonproduct-based context. Cosplay is a method of dressing up to look and feel like characters of a narrative story (See *Figure* 22).

Figure 22*: **Riot Games Fan Cosplay Competition***

Source: Riot Games (2022). *https://www.leagueoflegends.com/en-us/news/community/2022-state-farm-x-lcs-cosplay-contest/* Retrieved on May 2022.

Besides replicating character's clothing pieces, cosplay pieces often include props such as weapons, decorations, and gadgets that allow them to be the best version of the character as they can. In the context of *Riot Games*, cosplaying is a big part in the eSports scene, with a competition prize pool of up to $5000 USD given out by the company each year during eSports Final seasons. Furthermore, one of the main methods *Riot Games* use to connect storytelling to their fans is through reposting their cosplay efforts on social media. In sum, extractability can be seen on many instances such as the props found in producer-hosted events like *Undercity Nights*, but oftentimes more conveniently found in cosplays and other user generated contents. Additionally, these

products not only show levels of extractability of narrative, but also the commitment of

consumers towards the story world.

4.1.4. Worldbuilding

*Figure 23: **Book - Worldbuilding with Realms of Runeterra***

Source: League of Legends: Realms of Runeterra (2019). Melcher Media.

Transmedia storytelling is most effective when elements of real-world and fiction

merge into one cohesive entity. Opposite to immersion and extractability,

worldbuilding is facilitated by the depiction of cultural information in the narrative.

Cultural information includes but is not limited to geographical location, map of its

world, and language. From the findings, all the products from the category of novels

and comics, animations, and two games (*Ruined King* and *Legends of Runeterra*) have

been shown to include elements of worldbuilding. Patterns show that worldbuilding is

mainly achieved by narrative heavy media. For example, *Realms of Runeterra* is a book

that compiles information on different geographical region's histories within the

Runeterra (See *Figure* 23). This book also includes details of the different architecture, people, and creatures that inhabit the lands presented in the form of short stories. Thus, consumers that engage in these products can be assumed to have a better grasp on the entire ecosystem of *Runeterra* than those that do not.

4.1.5. Seriality

Seriality pertains to the division of storytelling, whether it is in the same or multiple platforms. It is particularly difficult to achieve in products which do not focus on storytelling as its main purpose. However, *Riot Games* can combat this challenge in two ways of, (1) presenting consumers with specialized products like single-issue books or story-specific video games, and (2) through the usage of story-events. Single-issue books are products such as *Realms of Runeterra* that contain worldbuilding information. Likewise, the *Zed* comics furthers a particular narrative story in a unique way that are not shared amongst other products. On the other hand, story-events are usually shorter gamified narratives that are implemented across the range of video game products for consumers to play-and-experience. These events help the brand to create more versatile products that fit seriality, thus also supports the continuity of storytelling.

Within the two-year period the research explores, seriality is also found through four story-events that have since taken place across the platforms of *League of Legends*, *Legends of Runeterra*, and *Team Fight Tactics*, and ten on *Wild Rift* (See *Table 5*). The four story-events being each year's main story campaigns. Although these stories may not flow directly between one narrative to another, each campaign pushed the narrative story of the universe forward and created more opportunities for consumers to actively engage each product in a more meaningful way. Similarly, these campaigns have also

been transferred to *Wild Rift*, but most are character-related, meaning instead of fully following the pattern that the other games did, this game included more substory-events that introduced new players to older playable characters. Altogether, transmedia storytelling is achieved through the inclusion of story-events, changing the nature of specialized products into products that can also tell stories.

Table 5: **Summary of Story-Events Across Riot Game's Videogame Platforms**.

Sources	Event Names
League of Legends	*Spirit Blossom*
Legends of Runeterra	*Ruination*
Team Fight Tactics	*Sentinels of Lights*
	Arcane
Wild Rift	*Yuumi's Adventure*
	Viegar's Arrival
	Path of Justice
	Frost and Flames
	Sentinels of Lights
	Rise Against Ruin
	Master of the Hunt
	Path of Ascension
	Yordle Expedition
	Noxian Brotherhood

4.1.6. Subjectivity

Transmedia storytelling's concept originated from films where story is specific; whereas game-stories are much more versatile as there is no single story that determines the direction of overall storytelling. Subjectivity refers to the inclusion of different character's points of view. The *Runeterra* universe is composed of multiple storylines of playable characters; therefore, naturally the element of subjectivity is easily found across product platforms (See *Table 6*). For instance, in gaming products, point-of-view

is established through the usage of character voice lines, consumers can learn about each character through what they say and how they interact with other characters. Other specialized games such as *Hextech Mayhem* introduce subjectivity through using *League of Legends* champions (*Ziggs* and *Heimerdinger*) as narrators in the story, hence the story that unravels within the game is through their point-of-view. For *Riot Games*, instead of focusing on any one story that exists within *Runeterra*, the company distributed different products that expand the narrative story from different character's perspectives. As a result, it can be assumed that consumers who engage in more of these products would form better understanding and depth of the *Runeterra* storyline.

*Table 6: **Summary of Point-of-Views Offered Across Riot Games' Products.***

	Source	How is POV formed?
Games	*League of Legends* *Legends of Runeterra* *Wild Rift*	Character Voice Lines
	Ruined King	Character Voice Lines Character-specific gameplay
	Hextech Mayhem	Character Narration
Social Media	*YouTube*	Multiple Character storyline depiction
Novels & Comics	*The Universe*	Multiple Short Stories
	Zed	Zed storyline depiction
	Garen First Shield	Multiple Characters storyline depiction

		Multiple Characters storyline depiction
Animation	*Arcane*	

4.1.7. Performance

Performance pertains to the level of active engagement consumers have towards the products. To increase this likelihood, *Riot Games* releases all their gaming products as 'free to play', meaning consumers do not need to purchase the games to be able to play them. On top of being free, many games launched after *League of Legends* are designed to be played and distributed across various media. For example, the *Ruined King* game was developed with the approach of reaching console-players, including the Nintendo Switch, Xbox, and PlayStation, but was also made available on Microsoft Windows. On the other hand, *Hextech Mayhem* was released alongside *Ruined King* on platforms such as the Nintendo Switch, Windows, Steam application and even promoted on Netflix. What this means is that consumers who are not used to computer games are now as likely to be exposed to the storytelling by *Riot Games*, but through their personal method of engagement. By marketing games under the *Runeterra* storyline through a transmedia approach, it can be said that *Riot Games* as a company is attempting to expand their consumer base.

Besides consumers of their main product of games, performance is measured in the form of Art (as shown in *Figure* 18), cosplay (as shown in *Figure* 22), and consumer products on social media. Although this research only sampled contents by *Riot Games*,

it is worth noting that fan contents like blogs and live streams also are accounted towards transmedia storytelling product of the brand.

4.1.8. Section Summary

Through documentary research this section provides an overview of *Riot Games'* products that were released between the timeframe of October 2019 to December 2021. Discussions on the transmedia storytelling qualities of *Riot Games* were raised and supported through documental evidence.

As a summary, several key points can be deduced from the data. From results of spreadibility, *Riot Games* utilized their strong universe found on *League of Legends* as the base for all their products. This narrative serves as the center point and guide for consumers for when they experience other products. Meanwhile it also acts as the hub where all transmedia entities converge into. The purpose of these product extensions is all either a replica of the original story world or the seriality of storyline. On the topic of transmedia, results from drillability showed that media platforms provide consumers a new way to experience *Riot Games'* stories. In addition, caters to media-specific audiences, such as the animated series for non-gamers. Furthermore, other products that are created under the consequence of transmedia storytelling strategy, such as fan contents are all examples to the level of performance that adds as an extension to the distribution of the entire story world.

These factors, when placed together show that for *Riot Games*, storytelling is a process which connects media to one another, and a place where consumers are encouraged to engage between different platforms towards worldbuilding. While media act as platforms that connect different consumers to the brand.

4.2 In-Depth Interview Findings

The purpose of this methodology is to understand consumer's transmedia engagement, brand attitude, and brand experience with *Riot Games* on a transmedia storytelling level. The first part of this finding outlines the demographic profile of informants. Then in the second part, thematic analysis of informant's transmedia engagement, brand attitude, and brand experience are presented in sections. The aim of this approach was to understand how brand communication is received by the consumers. To conclude, this section includes a summary of in-depth interview findings.

4.2.1. Demographic of Informants

Following the guidelines made for this research, selected informants must be between 18-30 years of age, be a current active consumer of 3 or more *Riot Games* products and have been a consumer for at least 2 years. In total, six informants ranging between the ages of 23-29 were selected to partake in the in-depth interview, with engagement exposure ranging between 2-10 years. All informants are male, Asian and are active consumers of the brand. To summarize, below are the demographic profiles of each informant.

1) *Informant One*: 23 years old, master's degree student, 6 years with *Riot Games* (with knowledge of *League of Legends, Legends of Runeterra*, and *Team Fight Tactics*).

2) *Informant Two*: 24 years old, pilot, 10 years with *Riot Games* (with knowledge of *League of Legends, Team Fight Tactics, Legends of Runeterra, Arcane*, and a few comics).

3) *Informant Three*: 24 years old, chief operating manager, 8 years with *Riot Games* (with knowledge of *League of Legends, Legends of Runeterra, Team Fight Tactics, Wild Rift*, and *Arcane*).

4) *Informant Four:* 25 years old, software engineer, 2 and a half years with *Riot Games* (with knowledge of *League of Legends, Wild Rift*, and *Arcane*).

5) *Informant Five*: 27 years old, interior designer, 8 years with *Riot Games* (with knowledge of *League of Legends, Team Fight Tactics, Wild Rift, Arcane*, and a few comics).

6) *Informant Six*: 29 years old, factory production manager, 2 years with *Riot Games* (with knowledge of *Legends of Runeterra, Wild Rift,* and *Arcane*).

4.2.2. **Consumer's Transmedia Engagement Towards Transmedia Storytelling of** *Riot Games*

Findings in this section are divided into five parts in relation to the elements of transmedia engagement (Beddows, 2012) discussed in chapters 2. These elements include loyalty, attentive consumption, media literacy, participation, and extra-textual activities.

1) Loyalty

Informants were asked questions on why they chose to engage with *Riot Games*' products, how and what they chose to purchase, and whether they trust the brand's representation holistically towards the loyalty indicator. Two patterns including suitability of visual designs and sense of familiarity were identified to be significant towards informant's loyalty towards their transmedia engagement.

a. Suitable Visual Designs

One of the themes identified from the interview finding pertains to the element of game aesthetics. In general, informants of *Riot Games* find that they are more likely to engage with products that are visually pleasing to them. These elements include, and are not limited to, the animation within gameplay and the art style. This pattern is especially apparent under the discussion of character skin designs (character cosmetics). One informant even suggested the potential where the right designs can make them appear to be 'cooler' or 'stronger' against other players in the game (where in reality these cosmetics do not actually provide any extra gameplay benefits). As a result, informants reported a stronger willingness to engage in the act of purchasing.

"I purchased a lot of skins… because they look cool. I think it's the point of getting skin[s]. For certain skins, it makes our gameplay feel better because of the animation and coloring, but in general it's the style."

(Informant One)

b. Sense of Familiarity

The second theme identified is the sense of familiarity consumers have towards the storyline, the style, and characters in the products. The findings showed that informants of *Legends of Runeterra* felt more connected to the game because of their previous story knowledge of characters from *League of Legends*. In addition, informants had grown attached to some of their most beloved game cosmetics, to the extent that their engagement towards new foreign products feel more personal once they acquired the same game cosmetics, they find familiar from previous products. As a result, informants expressed a higher sense of interest towards products that are familiar to them.

"The characters from Legends of Runeterra are from real characters based off League of Legends, and so makes a game more interesting because you get to see the characters having different abilities according to their lore."

(Informant Two)

In summary, loyalty is therefore expressed through consumer's liking of their product designs and familiarity to story and gameplay. Moreover, informants all revealed a great sense of trust towards the product brand mainly due to the consistency of storytelling the brand has been offering to them, in contrast to their complaints about *Riot Game*'s approach to gameplay balancing (their attempt to maintain fair gaming conditions against other players). If consumers find faults within gameplay but remain satisfactory towards brand products, this finding could allude to storytelling as the factor that maintains the bond between consumer and brand.

2) Attentive Consumption

A consumer's degree of attention can be explored in reference to how much content they can remember after the consumption of said media. Thus, informants were asked to recall what they know about the overarching lore that covers *Riot Game's* products. As a result, two patterns including a strong core narrative and use of story-events are identified.

a. A Strong Core Narrative

The first theme under attentive consumption is pertained to a sense of identity building in stories. Informants find storytelling much more impactful when character stories are tied to a specific location in the game universe. This mainly has to do with how informants can recall stories, as there are hundreds of characters to remember, information on where each character comes from in the main story therefore helps them track and retain story information. As an example, an informant while recalling said *"…Viktor created Blitzcrank, I think that's his origin story, and its tied back to Zuan (a place in Runeterra) where he is located" (Informant Three)*. Furthermore, informants reported the increase levels of believability towards the contents they consume if stories are saturated with detailed descriptions.

"I do like the story behind it. I think they also made a map – the universe – that showed where Leona is, or where Noxus is located. Those kinds of information help players to get engaged in this world."

(Informant One)

b. Storytelling through Events

Creating game-events surrounding a particular character's story is also a theme identified from the discussion of attentive consumption. Several informants reported that stories are easier to digest and remember when they are promoted or highlighted in a separate product, such as games (*Ruined King*) or video (YouTube). Story-events can also exist in specialized products such as *League of Legends* where gameplay never changes. Informants find that story-events help to make gameplay more enjoyable and help to encourage their learning of the story world.

"Ruined King and Arcane pops up very often when I think about lore. If say the Ruined King… I think because before the information on Shadow Isles is limited, but after this game came in, I finally can gather all the pieces of each storyline together… This created a lot of impression on me."

(Informant Five)

In summary, informants find it easier to recall story related information when the characters are introduced alongside a geographical location/their place of origin. Additionally, placing these story components in the form of story events can help to enhance the overall impression of stories.

3) Media Literacy

For media literacy, informants were asked to describe whether they produced their own content or have consumed products by other gamers in relation to *Riot Games*, as it is assumed that higher level media literacy consumers will exhibit increased product understanding. Results show limited evidence of consumers producing their own brand

related content besides a few artworks and personal gameplay montages. This is perhaps because the informants are disinterested in online content creating or simply to the lack of time. However, informants exhibited high interest towards consumption of other user generated contents pointing towards the power content creators have towards guiding product consumption.

a. User Generated Contents Guide Product Interest

Storytelling, and even the lack of story-depth, in product brand can result in consumer's curiosity leading them towards the quest of answer search. Informants across the interviews agree by consuming a variety of other gamer's media contents they become more aware of other products by *Riot Games*. For instance, an informant who follows *Legends of Runeterra* streamer's content became knowledge in the game *Ruined King* through watching their videos. Consequently, consumers create an ecosystem where information is saved and shared.

"I made comments on the subreddit and made some memes about the meta if it was funny… [Redditors] more so have a discussion on lore because sometimes the content that Riot produced may not necessarily be linked to the lore that people understand. So, we discuss them."

(Informant Six)

4) Participation

Informants were asked to recall how they first came to know of *Riot Games*, as well as describing factors that influenced their choices in engaging with the product

brand. Social pressure was found to play a significant role in motivating consumers to engage with products of *Riot Games*.

a. Social Pressure

Informant's participation has found to be catalyzed by peer pressure and the involvement they have within their community. Conformity played a significant role in controlling informant's behaviour as many reported that their engagement is influenced by the people around them that partakes in the same activities. For instance, one informant explained the reason of playing *Riot Games*. He elaborated that the victory of their country's eSports team in a championship p lead to everyone in middle school playing every single day of the week. Others reported that by participating in the norm activity, they have a topic to converse upon amongst their peers. Moreover, the opposite factor also seems to hold true, as informants who started playing before their peers mentioned they have invited others to join in their games when they found the game to be worthwhile.

"The story of the game connects well with all the characters… that's why I want to promote the games to others, so they can join me and play together."

(Informant Five)

5) Extra-Textual Activities

Extra-textual activities pertain to consumer actions that does not directly involve texts found from products of the brand. From the findings, besides *Riot Game*'s direct products, consumer's engagement with extra-textual activities is reported to be low. Instead, extra-textual activities have been identified to play a different role in promoting

engagement. With the purpose of improving overall gameplay experience, extra-textual activities can be found in the forms of game exploration through online resources, helping game developers improve gameplay through online discussions, and participating in the eSports scene as spectators.

A conclusion of the patterns found from this section, as well as a few key phrases used by informants, are shown in *Table 7* below.

*Table 7: **Factors Influencing Transmedia Engagement.***

Dimensions	Themes/Factors	Keywords & Phrases
Loyalty	a. Suitable Visual Designs	"Skins makes me look cool", "animation", "art style", and "it's aesthetically pleasing".
	b. Sense of Familiarity	"I was familiar with the playstyle", "characters I know of", and "designs I'm attached to".
Attentive Consumption	a. A Strong Core Narrative	"The map", "Universe", and "Linked to *Runeterra*".
	b. Storytelling through Events	"I saw one of the videos", "*Ruined King*", "Lore", and "*Arcane*".
Media Literacy	a. User Generated Contents Guide Product Interest	"entertainers", "educators", and "we discuss them together".
Participation	a. Social Pressure	peer pressure, "wanted others to join", and "everyone was playing".
Extra-textual Activities	n/a	n/a

4.2.3. Consumer's Brand Attitude Towards Transmedia Storytelling of *Riot Games*

Following Chiu et al.' (2012) definition of consumer's brand attitude, the findings in this section are divided into four parts of authenticity, conciseness, reversal, and humor.

1) Authenticity

Since elements contributing to authenticity may vary between people, informants were asked questions regarding their interest towards *Riot Games* narrative story and why they may be drawn to them. Informants report that elements of real-world examples and anticipation of story (animation) helps to improve story authenticity.

a. Elements of Consumer's Real-World Perspectives

It is apparent that informants became more invested in product brands if they can relate their narrative stories closely to consumer's real-world perspectives. Examples include the struggles between the rich and poor that are reflected in the series Arcane. The informants reported a deeper connection to the story if they feel the emotions that the product is trying to convey. Therefore, positive attitudes are achieved when stories are deemed close to, or authentic to, informant's real-world experiences.

"I think anything that Riot Games does is all relatable, even though they are set in fantasy settings, all the emotions that are felt throughout the lore are all human emotions and are all emotions you can sympathized or empathize with… I think that is why I really like League."

b. Anticipation of Stories

Even though informants did not come to know of *Riot Games* at the same time or have the same amount of exposure to their products, all informants reported that they notice a pattern to how the company markets their stories – especially with their video products. For instance, at the beginning of every year since 2019, *Riot Games* started releasing animations on YouTube (amongst other animated shorts) which incapsulates the year's core story theme. Because informants knew of this pattern, the anticipation for story animations has been mentioned as one of the reasons they continuously follow the brand. Furthermore, a few informants mentioned how they are always "*waiting to see more*" as *Riot Games* keep their stories continuous and open for interpretation. Anticipation could therefore be one of the most effective techniques to build for reaching and boosting positive brand attitude.

"Because I have played League of Legends for so long there is always this curiosity that I have between the stories and character designs."

(Informant Two)

2) Conciseness

In the interview, informants were asked whether the stories by *Riot Games* that they engage with were easy to follow. Findings show that consumers are more likely to have a positive brand attitude if gameplay or the stories they are exposed to consists of characters that they know well and is as closely related to the story found from *League*

of Legends as possible. By failing to do so, informants find that conciseness of storytelling is lost when smaller details of the narrative are missed.

a. An Identifiable Character

Every product of *Riot Games* center around the main protagonist that orchestrates the storytelling. Informants find themselves gravitating towards products such as the animated shorts (seasons trailer) or *Arcane* series as it contained characters that they know. As a result, informants find themselves comparing character identities across platforms. By doing so they form a better understanding of the story world and feel more connected to the game. For example, one of the informants reported his attitude towards *Riot Games* was better once he learnt that the characters of *Jinx and Vi* that he loved were well executed across media. Overall, the conciseness of stories also seems to bring a level of meaning to the gameplay experience.

"I would say I understand the story, but for the smaller details I might miss out because those kinds of events [that includes the smaller details] will happen during the year, but I might not be specifically playing it at time."

(Informant Six)

b. Staying True to *League of Legends*

Another pattern found under conciseness is how informants compare the stories they are engaging with what they know from the core story world found in *League of Legends*. Products which include looser ties with *League of Legends* resulted in lower levels of interest. As an example, one informant reported that his reason for a bad impression of *Team Fight Tactics* is because it lacked story elements that he grew to

love about *Riot Games*. In addition, informants were found to like stories that are canon more than any fan made stories.

"For me it's a hard question because I do enjoy a lot of stories. However, it comes back to League. For other stories to work, I think it must slide in with what League presented us."

(Informant Three)

3) Reversal

The reversal dimension, informants were asked to recall one of their strongest impressions of the story, to see what they can remember, and whether it had an impact on them. Findings revealed, unlike traditional storytelling where there is a beginning, middle, and end, informants find unique story platforms where individual characters have a narrative place of their own to be as significant as a story's 'climax'.

a. A Unique Platform for Characters

As there are many characters in the narrative universe of *Runeterra*, consumers naturally bond with only a few. By introducing more narrative contexts to perhaps a less well-known character in an isolated media platform allows these characters to be explored in a deeper level. To the informants, even with older characters, a unique platform for them has been found to reignite their love and passion towards said characters. For instance, a comic-volume on *Zed,* or producing a stand-alone character trailer for *Fiddlesticks*, consumers are given an opportunity to connect with these characters.

"A lot of background on Viktor was presented in Arcane, and he was a champion that I really like to play. The series sort of gives background on how he became the way he is, and it made me appreciate the character more."

(Informant Four)

4) Humor

To explore humor, informants were asked, with examples, if the stories they engage with made them feel any internal emotional changes that would affect their views on *Riot Games* as a brand in any way. Although the informants did not find *Riot Games* particularly humorous, positive attitude patterns were noted when informants talked about new stories, or when old stories were updated.

a. New & Updated Stories

Informants mention how excited and more invested they became when *Riot Games* introduces new storylines into the game. For example, the *Ruined King* narrative provided additional story content to the old existing lore of *Runeterra*. On the other hand, old lore is also consistently updated by the *Riot Games* team and has been found to affect informant's attitude in a positive light. One informant mentioned that his most memorable story was related to the update of the character *Gangplank*'s storyline. Overall, informants agreed that their attitude is most positive when their anticipation towards the addition of new characters into the story world is met.

"When they show off new characters, it makes you really want to try it out. I feel excited by it and would open the game just to learn more about the character."

(Informant One)

As a summary of the consumer's brand attitude indicator towards transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*, *Tables 8 c*oncludes the patterns that were identified by the researcher. When referring to *Riot Game*'s application of storytelling to the informants, the attitude found is generally positive. Informants' word choices ranged from "*I really like*", to "*very well*", to "*it made me appreciate*", and "*I really wanted to*". Therefore, under all four dimensions of brand attitude, the researcher interprets an overall positive attitude of informants towards Riot Games.

Table 8: ***Factors Influencing Brand Attitude.***

Dimensions	Themes/Factors	Keywords & Phrases
Authenticity	a. Elements of Consumer's Real-World Perspectives	"I sympathize and empathize with", "emotions", and "I feel connected with".
	b. Anticipation of Stories	"*Arcane*" and "They do animations so well".
Conciseness	a. An Identifiable Character	"I have this to compare them to" and "I understand the stories".
	b. Staying True to *League of Legends*	"*League*", "*League of Legends* presented", and "Originally"
Reversal	a. A Unique Platform for Characters	"Background" and "I got to know them through there".
Humor	a. New & Updated Stories	"New characters", "updates" and "patch".

4.2.4. Consumer's Brand Experience Towards Transmedia Storytelling of *Riot Games*

The last variable under study in this research is consumer's brand experience. Following Brakus et al.' (2009) guidelines, this section is divided into five parts including sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, and social.

1) Sensory

The first indicator of brand experience is sensory. Informants were asked which of the five human senses – sight, taste, sound, touch, or smell – they use the most to experience the products of *Riot Games*. Additionally, they were asked to give examples as to how these senses are engaged. Unanimously, according to all informants, sight and sound were the most experienced sensory. However, taste, touch, and smell were not experienced in the products they engaged with.

a. Sight

Informant's experience of sight is mainly through the elements of the visual design choices, texts that they read, and various images. Although the other senses could not be delivered through the product offerings by the company, most informants believed that visually the art choices Riot Games made had the potential to manifest the senses that are lost. For instance, one informant said somehow the visuals of the series made him imagine how bad the smell of the *Undercity* is like in the *Arcane* series merely through observation.

"I think the images we see decides the emotion that we feel… For example, with Jinx, they use crazy effects and colors to express that champion."

b. Sound

Reigning second to sight is their sound designs. Elements of sound design mentioned by informants include the use of suitable voice actors, in-game ability sound effects, and music videos. Like the consequences of good visual design, informants find that sounds, such as using the right intensity of lasers (sound effect) can effectively influence the way they feel about their game experiences. The opposite also holds true, as the usage of unsuitable sound seems to also shy informants away from playing or experiencing products.

"I feel like all their voice actors, all their sound effects, are all very well made."

(Informant Three)

2) Affective

Under the affective dimension, informants were asked to identify emotions that they may feel while engaging with different narratives across products of *Riot Games*. Two main patterns surfaced from the findings including the use of visceral voice lines to connect with consumers (on an emotional level) and creating a sense of mystery.

a. Visceral Voice Lines

Informants reported that the implementation of voice lines is designed in a sense that consumers of the products would immediately understand characters. These voice lines include ones that are intrapersonal in which they talked to themselves, but players can hear, and those that are interpersonal where they talk to other characters in the

game[s]. Informants reported that voice lines are fun to listen to and highly personalized to characters allowing them to better remember their experiences playing them.

"The voice lines are fun in Legends of Runeterra, mainly because it was the first product I engaged with. They made me realize "Oh, I understand the characters more now" or at least like how their personalities are like."

(Informant Six)

b. Sense of Mystery

Informants reported that they enjoyed the sense of mystery that many of the product storylines presented. Instead of being unsatisfied with the lack of story clarity, brand experience is facilitated by unanswered mysteries (that are later answered through story expansion). One informant mentioned, for example, that *Riot Games* usually teases aspects of a character somewhere in other existing character's story, art, or video before its release. This approach would then act as their fuel for anticipation and imagination. Thus, driving them to maintain a constant experience with the products.

"I think I've experienced a full spectrum of emotions except despair. How like the main storyline is very adventurous and very mysterious that makes me want to know more."

(Informant Three)

3) Intellectual

In terms of the intellectual dimension, informants were asked a series of questions which explore their level of analysis and/or imagination whilst engaging with the product's storytelling. They were encouraged to give examples of the kinds of thought they think or imagine about. Interview results shows that catchy dialogues and desire for story information creates a drive for consumers to search for more lore related content across platforms.

a. Catchy Dialogues

Informants particularly enjoyed interpersonal dialogues between characters, in comparison to intrapersonal singular voice lines, and find that these texts provoked them to think more deeply and imaginatively about the presented stories. The effectiveness increased if the dialogues are catchy to the consumers. For instance, one informant claimed that they would often hear their friends imitate or borrow certain lines said by game characters in their daily life situations.

"Like how Katarina and Garen would kind of tease each other [in Legends of Runeterra], and that makes me think like how they have a romance going on… it makes me analyze and image a lot like 'when did it happen?', 'when did they meet?', That kind of thing."

(Informant Three)

b. Desire for Story Information

As previously mentioned, mystery was a pivotal factor which informants find impactful on their experiences with the brand. Building up from the sense of mystery comes the desire for story information. Informants reported that they are more likely to search up information regarding storyline when they find gaps within the stories. A few method informants use to search for story information include listening to online streamers talk and reading more narrative materials that are available. This is particularly true for informants who were more acquainted with the entire story universe.

"Almost every single minute I find myself analyzing the story unknowingly. Sometimes when they release something that I feel is a bit incomplete, for example teasers to a new champion, I would search up information on them."

(Informant Five)

4) Behavioral

Informants were asked to name types of engagement they have with *Riot Games* as many as possible, as more product engagement across the brand would indicate a higher likelihood of positive experience. Results from the findings indicate the use of transmedia promotes inclusion as informants report to having better experience when they engage with familiar stories. Additionally, the use of popular culture on storytelling (even when stories are not canon) can be seen to positively impact player experience.

a. Sense of Inclusion from Transmedia

As consumers grow older with brand, so are their preferences for the types of games or media they consume. Informants reported feeling a sense of gratefulness and inclusion from *Riot Games'* decision on launching 'other' product types for them to stay connected to the story of *Runeterra*. For instance, an informant who used to play *League of Legends* daily with his school friend, but now has less time to engage with gameplay due to work. With the launch of the *Arcane* series, he can stay connected with the brand and story that he enjoys.

"I think it's good that they are focusing on different mediums because right now I don't really play video games as often but watch a lot of series on Netflix. For them to make the Arcane series was a good way to keep me connected to the League of Legends universe."

(Informant Four)

b. Referencing Popular Culture

Elements of popular culture when incorporated into the story world can increase the closeness consumers feel between fiction and the real-world. Multiple informants reported how being a part of the *K/DA* skin line[10], whether it's through cosplaying or owning of skin in-game, inspired their friend group to stay connected to the brand.

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[10] K/DA Skin line: are a cosmetic and design approach that took several existing characters from League of Legends and creating an alternative universe storyline in which they are pop stars starring in a popular Korean musical group.

"K/DA creates an area that connects franchise to the real world through their music or artworks. And I do know a lot of cosplayers who dress up as the characters from the game and when they materialize it into the real-world context, that's when they felt the deeper connection towards the products"

(Informant One)

5) Social

Lastly, the social dimension of consumer's brand experience directs informants to questions regarding their interactions with other consumers or fans of *Riot Games*. The examination on topics of discussion and/or feelings after discussion were asked. There are two prominent patterns which were taken from the findings. First, informants felt that stories are essential as a bridge between the product and the consumer's heart. In other words, stories give those products personal value to the consumer. Secondly, storytelling is also essential as it builds the foundation for community interactions. Without the element of story, the product of the same kind has seemed to lose its significance in the market.

a. Stories as Bridge from Product to Person

Most informants mentioned that stories are more of a way to relate their private self to the product. Thus, not many would choose to openly discuss the contents of story with other consumers. However, informants also reported that their knowledge of stories helps provide social opportunities. Whilst gameplay discussions are short-term, game stories can be discussed long-term, and act as a bridge bringing anyone from any

social background together. In terms of *Riot Games*, the topic of story discussions is mainly provoked by the launch of a new product or video.

"I would not say it's common to [discuss stories with others] but I still do. When there's big news like new characters, new comics, new series, or YouTube videos, then I talk about it. I feel a sense of community, like how everyone even though not from the same background still has the stories to relate to."

(Informant Three)

b. Stories that Grow Alongside Consumers

Gameplay that exists without story are enjoyable to consumers but does not provide the best all rounded experience. On the other hand, other media platforms without story are more likely impossible. From the findings, informants find themselves comparing products without a storyline to *Riot Games* products and found that they are more interested in the products of *Riot Games* due to the inclusion of story elements. For example, a few of the informants who were once a player of a similar game company reported shifting towards *Riot Games* because they felt like the game without story was repetitive over time and exhibits no growth besides gameplay changes.

"Storytelling helps to add a lot of value to games. I think for other games in the similar industry, I think they should be telling a story or even just include a good animation before each patch updates or product release. Then it would really draw more attention to the franchises."

(Informant One)

To summarize, patterns found for consumer's brand experience towards transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games* are gathered and presented in *Table 9.*

*Table 9: **Factors Influencing Brand Experience.***

Dimensions	Themes/Factors	Keywords & Phrases
Sensory	a. Sight	"Visuals", "Images", and "Effects"
	b. Sound	"Voice Actors", and "Sound Effects"
Affective	a. Visceral Voice Lines	I realized through listening- and "Voice lines"
	b. Sense of Mystery	Mysterious, "Curious", and "I don't know about-".
Intellectual	a. Catchy Dialogues	"What they said", "Dialogues", and "The lines where-".
	b. Desire for Story Information	"Unknowingly", "I find myself analyzing", "Theories", and "I search for"
Behavioral	a. Sense of Inclusion from Transmedia	"Connected", and "Different mediums"
	b. Referencing Popular Culture	"*K/DA*", and "franchise"
Social	a. Stories as Bridge from Product to Person	"I don't really talk to others", and "launch new products"
	b. Stories that Grow Alongside Consumers	"Value to games", "Story", "Community", and "Attention"

4.2.5. Conclusion

To briefly conclude the research findings on in-depth interviews, variables of consumer's transmedia engagement, brand attitude, and brand experience can be seen to be influenced by three large components categorizes under design elements, narrative structures, and community involvement with the transmedia brand. Observably, informants are pulled into brands initially through community involvements and alluring designs rather than narrative elements. In contrast, narrative seems to play a significant role in promoting positive brand attitude and brand experience. The results from this finding, however, should only be considered as insights into the research questions and should not be considered as a representation of the overall population.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The research on "brand communication through transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*" aims to investigate the brand's transmedia qualities, as well as consumer's transmedia engagement, brand attitude, and brand experience. This chapter is sectioned into three parts. First, the researcher summarizes key points from each dimension from the findings. Second, the paper forms a discussion pulled from existing evidence in the attempt to answer the research question. Whereby, findings from documentary research and in-depth interview are cross examined as part of the triangulation approach. Finally, the chapter will conclude with practical implications, limitations, and direction for future research to the overall study.

5.1 Summary

In sum, this research applied two qualitative methods of documentary research and in-depth interview. For documentary research, data was collected through a collection of online and offline resources. In addition, keywords search was employed through search engines on social media platforms, with a total of 378 storytelling posts found. All data collected were between the time frame of October 2019 to December 2021. Moreover, findings from documentary research were used as evidence to answer Jenkins' (2003) seven principles of transmedia storytelling. To understand from the consumer's perspective, the in-depth interview method was adopted to complement the overall findings of this research study. Six informants were selected purposively to partake in Zoom interviews that range between 90 to 120 minutes. The interview questions pertained to the three variables of transmedia engagement, brand attitude, and brand experience towards transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*. Results from these

interviews were later transcribed and analyzed under thematic analysis. In the following section, conclusions are provided as an outline to summarize the findings found from each dimension.

5.1.1. RQ1: What are the Transmedia Qualities of *Riot Games*?

It can be concluded that *Riot Games'* application of transmedia storytelling includes all seven qualities proposed by Jenkins (2003). The transmedia application allows spreadibility of narrative story that either serves as the continuity of *Runeterra* or alternate multiplicity storylines. Meanwhile, drillability is highlighted through platforms uniqueness. Seriality is presented through product story-events, and by portraying it from different points of view the brand achieves subjectivity. More recently, the addition of online promotional products and on-site events are evidence to immersion. With products circulating in this established transmedia ecosystem, extractability and performance occur in the forms of user generated content. Together, attempts of storytelling on all accounts contribute to the completeness of worldbuilding.

1) Spreadibility and Drillability

The spreadibility of *Riot Games* includes 17 products which were grouped into 6 main media categories. These are videogames, social media, novels & comics, animation, boardgames, and music. The findings demonstrate that *Riot Games'* spreadibility encompasses several media and not only limited to games. Narratively, all products span from the core narrative found from *League of Legends* serving as the connection forming the brand identity. On the other hand, drillability is achieved through narrative specificity and application of media specific features.

2) Multiplicity and Continuity

This research shows that multiplicity is achieved is through themed skins or character cosmetics that markets an alternative 'what-if' storyline. Elements of these skins are kept consistent to characterization allowing stories to stay relatively true to the essence of the original lore. Moreover, it can be assumed that continuity of *Riot Games'* storytelling is presented in two ways, first in products that contain original lore contents, and second, in products that contain stories to further the universe. Nonetheless, stories that further the universe oftentimes borrow well-known characters to popularize the new product.

3) Immersion and Extractability

Immersion presents itself as promotional products in *Riot Games'* yearly story campaigns. These products have been found in the form of augmented reality through phone experience and in-person events. Similarly, extractability are elements which can often be found in promotional product contents of immersion. However, more significantly extractability can be seen in the efforts of consumer cosplay and user generated contents. This action not only suggests levels of narrative extractability, but also the levels of consumer engagement.

4) Worldbuilding

It is found that, worldbuilding is demonstrated through products which are rich in narrative information, such as texts. Consumers that engage with these products are assumed to have more interest and better grasp on the entire story world than those that do not.

5) Seriality

Seriality is achieved through story-events in *Riot Games'* products. These events act like new chapters in a book, providing all their products (especially games) with a new way to prolong their shelf-life.

6) Subjectivity

All transmedia products of *Riot Games* are nonrepetitive as new perspective from a different character are presented in new stories. In games, subjectivity is presented to the consumers according to the character the consumer is playing.

7) Performance

All of Riot Game's main products (games) have been found to be free for the public, meaning the company encourages a higher likelihood of performance from the consumers. Other methods of the levels of performance are shown through art, cosplay, and user generated contents which can be seen on social media – all of which helps to promote the storytelling of *Riot Games*.

5.1.2. RQ2: **How do Consumers Engage with Transmedia Storytelling of** *Riot Games*?

For positive consumer's engagement with transmedia storytelling, brand's usage of visual design and sense of familiarity can help enhance their loyalty. Moreover, it is found that character and location information together within the narrative element promote attentive consumption. While more engagement with other non-direct products shows a level of consumer media literacy, resulting in higher likelihood of engagement

towards the original product brand. Participation dimension shows that consumers are more likely to conform under the influence of social pressure, whereas extra-textual activities are inconclusive of any patterns.

1) Loyalty

Loyalty is expressed through two main factors. The first factor pertains to consumer's judgement of the suitability of product visual designs. And the second factor pertains to whether the product promotes a sense of familiarity to them. Storytelling has been found to be significant in building a bond between consumer and brand even when experience is hindered.

2) Attentive Consumption

Information regarding storytelling can better be recalled when stories include characters that are introduced alongside geographical locations. In addition, attentive consumption can be prolonged using story events which acts as a story reminder to consumers.

3) Media literacy

The results of media literacy point towards a favorability of user generated contents in relation to *Riot Games'* products. The findings suggest the power that content creators hold towards guiding of storytelling interest and product consumption. Even without high personal involvement in self-produced fan contents, consumers should exhibit understanding of brand storytelling.

4) Participation

The results reveal the element of social pressure in influencing consumer participation. Consumers are more likely to engage with *Riot Games* if the community facilitates the environment. However, storytelling is observed to have a lower significance in participation.

5) Extra-textual activities

No patterns in extra-textual activities are found in this research, suggesting that this dimension may apply differently among consumers of *Riot Games*. Nonetheless, some actions relating to extra-textual activities are reported such as the interactions online between consumers and producers, attending eSports events, and exploration of online resources.

5.1.3. RQ3: What are Consumers' Brand Attitudes Towards Transmedia Storytelling of *Riot Games*?

Overall, consumers' brand attitude towards transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games* is positive, interpreting through their general word choice such as *"I really like"* and *"I appreciate"*. Although transmedia products of *Riot Games* are not found humorous, continuous updates to product story can play an important role to enhance brand attitude. Furthermore, authenticity is found to be the most significant dimension in influencing attitude through incorporations of real-world perspectives in the stories. The reversal dimension promoted using transmedia is seen to improve attitude by encouraging consumers to navigate between media platforms. Finally, attitude is

positive when stories are concise or in line with original story found on *League of Legends*.

1) Authenticity

There are two main patterns contributing to the authenticity of *Riot Games*. First, elements of consumer's real-world perspectives aids stories to feel more believable. And second, anticipation of stories encourages consumers to look forward to *Riot Games'* future projects. This is especially apparent in findings on video-related products.

2) Conciseness

Attitudes toward brand is likely to be more positive when stories are perceived to be closely related to the original story found in *League of Legends*. In addition, conciseness is further emphasized when consumers can identify characters on the platform they are engaged with.

3) Reversal

The findings reveal that reversal is facilitated by the seriality of transmedia product of the brand. New story lines emerging from new products are perceived by consumers as a significant pivotal moment in the narrative build up. Therefore, attitudes are affected by the introduction of these unique platforms. However, this research cannot conclude for certain if attitude is positive or negative.

4) Humor

The extensive result concludes that humor is not frequently applied in *Riot Games'* marketing. However, patterns reflect positive attitude among consumers when informants referred to the topic of new stories or old stories that are updated. Consumers therefore find a change in internal emotion through new storytelling presentations.

5.1.4. RQ4: What are Consumers' Brand Experiences Towards Transmedia Storytelling of *Riot Games*?

In general, consumers' brand experience towards transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games* is positive. Through active sensory engagement with sight and sound, consumers can experience other senses which are not intentionally presented in the products. Use of voice lines, especially catchy phrases, is helped enhancing affective and intellectual dimensions of brand experience. Furthermore, the sense of mystery is found to significantly affects experience. The application of transmedia also bridges the gap between consumers and brand allowing them to be more social, thus influencing their overall behaviour.

1) Sensory

Sight and Sound are two main experiences that consumers received by transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*. The other senses – taste, touch, and smell – are not literally presented. However, the elements such as sight and sound are carefully designed to create those missing senses.

2) Affective

Consumers experience an emotional connection through visceral voice lines and sense of mystery. Voice lines implementing across product platforms contain storytelling features. Moreover, the storytelling of *Riot Games* contains a lack of story clarity which promotes better brand experience because consumers are willing to strive for more content.

3) Intellectual

Regarding intellectual dimension, consumers received brand experience via catchy dialogues and their own desire for story information. Texts that are easier to remember are much more likely to be recalled by the consumers. Also, heightened levels of experience can be found when consumers exhibit the willingness to analyze the story.

4) Behavioral

It is found that the usage of transmedia strategies on storytelling positively influences behavioral dimension. Brand experience is therefore supported when consumers involve themselves between multiple media platforms. In addition, the use of popular culture is revealed as a useful mean in boosting impressions on brand experience.

5) Social

Stories act as a bridge that crosses between product to person and maintains sentimental values towards consumers. It is necessary for transmedia storytelling products of *Riot Games* to include stories. It is because brand experience is partially drawn from consumers engagement with storytelling. The other half of experience on social dimension pertains to discussions of functions of media platform rather than the story world.

5.2 Discussion

In this section, a discussion is formed through the orchestration of literature review and findings. Altogether, this section divides into four parts. The first part dives into a discussion of transmedia qualities of *Riot Games*. The second part dives into a discussion of how consumers engage with transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*. The third part discusses consumers' brand attitude with transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*. And the fourth part discusses consumers' brand experiences with transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*.

5.2.1. Brand Communication through Transmedia Storytelling

Jenkin's definition of transmedia storytelling was based on a phenomenon that was observed in the context of film stories back in 2003. The aim of this research explores narrative that originated from game-centric medium almost seem to be the direct opposite course to how the concept came to be. However, by adopting the seven principles of transmedia storytelling, this research posits the argument that narrative stories of different origins can also be strategized into a marketing practice as discussed

through *Riot Games*. This research, therefore, seeks to understand transmedia storytelling from the message sent.

To conclude, all seven principles of transmedia storytelling have been adopted by *Riot Games* to varying degrees as shown in the research findings. Specific to this study, it can be said that the use of transmedia storytelling points towards three marketing functions including the use of storytelling to enhance product relations, to promote product expansion, and to provide direction to product attention. These three approaches can also be seen as an attempt of *Riot Games* to communicate its brand by maintaining constant communication with their consumers and by worldbuilding. Ultimately, it can be implied that the use of transmedia storytelling helps strengthen their brand reputation.

1) The Use of Transmedia Storytelling to Enhance Product Relations

Findings from this research point towards the significance of brand communication through story in and of itself. Firstly, storytelling provides an element for products that relate or connect to one another. Through the exploration of the first four indicators of spreadibility, drillability, continuity and multiplicity, all transmedia identities were kept consistent to the original form of story world found from the original game of League of Legends. This approach is echoed with Koster (Jenkins, 2006a, pg. 162) saying that fans are speculative to any changes made to their beloved stories. As a result, justifies *Riot Games*' approach to maintain a degree of accuracy to original story while in the attempt to expand their product constellations.

Furthermore, in the exploration of multiplicity in *Riot Games'*, findings show that the basic essence of character traits remain closely intact to the original story even when

the company creates character cosmetics which no longer relates to the Runeterra universe. Thus, the findings are supported by Johnsons' (2010) claim, saying that, as brands storytelling become more widely spread across platforms, the consistency of story details must also become more precise. In hindsight, these approaches to maintain the key narrative identity across platforms also can also be interpreted as a method to enhance engagement through the offering of familiar established backstory, which is one of the functions of transmedia storytelling mentioned by Jenkins (2003).

2) The Use of Transmedia Storytelling to Promote Product Expansion

Secondly, stories provide a way for specialized products to continuously develop even after they are released to the public. A few examples are shown in the principles of subjectivity and seriality where parts of the main story are turned into smaller digestible stories that are marketed through various story-specific franchises and story-events. The analysis coincides with the study by Dena (2009) that illuminates the importance of dynamic storytelling in the usage of transmedia strategies. In other words, expanding a single narrative across a range of media products alone is not an effective approach to transmedia storytelling, but rather for brands to offer other character perspectives in the new products as one of the four functions Jenkins' (2003) proposes.

3) The Use of Transmedia Storytelling to Provide Direction to Product Attention

Lastly, immersion, extractability, and performance, pushes stories in a way that encourages brand to deepen audience engagement such observed in the use of skins, themes, and promotional products. At times, these elements can also be used to serve

any of the previously mentioned purposes interchangeably. For instance, skins or themes can be used as tools to connect consumers to products, and as a method to continue storytelling. The findings are in line with the previous study by Fast & Örnebring (2017) which suggested the key quality for transmedia brands is to strive for prolonged relationship with consumers, irrespective of the result.

From these findings it can be interpreted that *Riot Games'* attempt to expand products narratively across platform is a decision towards two goals. The first goal is towards maintaining constant communication with their consumers, and the second goal is towards the goal of worldbuilding. These goals work together in creating a more dynamic environment where consumers can better immerse themselves in the fictional world. In sum, these reasons can be assumed as *Riot Games'* goal of brand communication, an image of a brand which puts their consumers' needs and experience in the forefront (Laurent, 2022).

In retrospect, this result is also reflected in the claims to the benefits of using transmedia strategy as a marketing tool (Buckner & Rutledge, 2012). The story presented by *Riot Games* across media platforms persuades consumers to engage with their products, and to offer different ways to how stories can be experienced at the same time. By doing so, the brand also promotes exposure to the public through different point-of-entries to the product brand. And finally, propelling their single-purpose products, such as games, to yield continuous ROI through constant updates to the story world.

5.2.2. Improving Transmedia Engagement for Effective Brand

Communication

Turning the perspectives around, the following research questions seek to discuss and understand transmedia storytelling effects from consumer's point of view. This research is the first of many which assumes the relationship between transmedia engagement and transmedia storytelling. To illustrate how brands can better adapt themselves towards achieving positive outcomes for transmedia engagement, two groups of approaches (causal and consequential factors) have been summarized from the in-depth interview findings. By better understanding the factors affecting transmedia consumers, marketers can adopt more effective campaigns that cater to them.

Thus, from the findings it can be interpreted that there are two major groups of factors that effects consumer engagement with transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*. First are the 'casual factors', which are factors marketers have control over. These include the use of strong core narrative, the addition of story progression, the design elements and sense of familiarity. The second group consists of the 'consequential factors', which pertain to factors which marketers may not have as much control over. These factors include fan creations and social pressure.

1) **Casual Factors**

   a. **Strong Core Narrative**

The first group of elements are the causal factors which pertain to internally controllable decisions by brands that affect how consumers engage. Companies that

wish to practice the transmedia approach should start by focusing on a strong core narrative, as unique storylines allow consumers to recall brand contents better. This finding aligns with Askwith (2007) who suggested the importance of original story for brands, and for media to be designed around active mediums. This statement works in favor of transmedia storytelling quality of *Riot Games* as the brand centers its storytelling around active media of games. Consumers therefore are assumed to engage with transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games* through the act of playing. By being exposed to the games created by the brand, consumers are encouraged to search for storytelling hidden between products. Furthermore, as outlined by Stackelberg (2011), a strong story universe is created only if all existing media platforms are supportive of one another. Therefore, it can be assumed that orders of transmedia engagement towards *Riot Game's* product experienced by the consumer is insignificant as all storylines lead back to one cohesive story world.

b. Story Progression

The second causal factor pertains to the addition of story progression to the existing core narrative. As suggested by Scolari (2009), transmedia consumers look towards brands for meaning out of the core storyline between the product they offer. Thus, consumers also engage with transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games* through other methods such as watching, reading, and listening to the storytelling offered from the new products (after having played the games) with the expectation of learning something new about the story world. Brand communication can therefore benefit from a progressive take on story building.

c. Design Elements

While the first two causal factors relate more to consumer's narrative engagement, the third causal factor pertains to the element of design within media. The findings show consumers use their immediate judgement on the design choices to predict the product's quality. This result indicates while storytelling is effective in drawing in consumer engagement, design is much more impactful for creating instant impressions on consumers, especially if the designs feel familiar to them. These basic findings are consistent with the research by Dena (2009) who argues that effectiveness of transmedia works should always be evaluated from both the concerns of economic and aesthetics perspectives. In this case, while the research did not intend to explore deeply the concept of transmedia storytelling through both the economic and aesthetic approach, the result from informants still manages to point back towards these key findings proving a certain level of significance. In addition, not only does this research agrees to the finding from Granitz & Forman (2015) that the usage of transmedia storytelling results act of purchasing, but specifically the application of aesthetics could help improve consumer transmedia engagement. In sum, design aspects of any products may be used towards effective brand communication, as elements of design directly dictates consumer's engagement decision.

d. Sense of Familiarity

Adding to the element of design, engagement through transmedia can be enhanced through the transference of familiar elements between platforms. This idea is like products focusing on story progression but involving the borrowing of certain popular characters to attract consumers' interest. For instance, the results showed that

informants enjoyed the *Arcane* series as it borrowed well known characters from *League of Legends*. Instead of centering the show around new characters, the use of familiarity can rapidly encourage engagement. Therefore, this research sides with Evans (2016) that marketers should design their campaigns for all consumers and not just fans of the product because every consumer's opinion matters in the success of the brand. In other words, design elements should be considered holistically rather than specifically to fans.

2) Consequential Factors

Secondly, we turn to examine the consequential factors that push consumers towards transmedia engagement, which pertain to the elements in which marketers do not necessarily have control over.

a. Fan Creations & Social Pressure

With an established transmedia ecosystem as discussed in the casual factors, other types of engagement start to surface in the form of fan creations (i.e. videos, artwork, cosplays). Stories may take fans on a journey to recreate characters and moments that have value to them. Therefore, as Beddows (2012) describes, consumer participation is the most heightened form of engagement which is observably apparent in this research as most informants willingly experiment the various product constellations that *Riot Games* has to offer. Moreover, when a large amount of the population gathers to form a community of fans, it creates social pressure that has observably seen to further the likelihood of consumers engagement towards the brand. All things considered, under the assumption of convergence theory, these acts of engagement towards the brand are examples of the formation of participatory culture.

For example, from this research informants exhibited the need to engage in the effort to improve their own product experience. As a result, they would participate in interacting with the producers through platforms such as Reddit. And as Li (2010) suggests, this could be an approach by consumers to make sense of their place within *Riot Games*.

Looking back at the findings, this research agrees with Beddows (2012) that entry-points determines consumers understanding of the story world. As results indicate when comparing informants who first engaged with Riot Games through *League of Legends* to those that joined later through a more narratively detailed game like *Legends of Runeterra*, the informant who only had two years of exposure showed more interest and exhibited more knowledge on the narrative overall. However, in the case of *Riot Games*, most consumers come to know of their storytelling through playing which is why the first casual factor to engagement pertains to the act of playing. Although time is also a significant factor that influences decisions on entry-points, longer exposure to narrative (even under products that have limited resources) generates better understanding. However, most companies would perhaps prefer making a positive impression on consumers in the shortest amount of time rather than not.

5.2.3. Facilitating Brand Communication through Positive Brand Attitude

Authenticity in storytelling is the major factor which supports evidence of positive brand attitude and can be broken down into 2 levels of narrative features including the entire story world level and individual character level. In addition, brand attitude is enhanced when consumers notice story progression.

1) Authenticity: Story World Level

Brand attitude towards *Riot Games* is formed through the inclusion of real-world elements within the storytelling of transmedia products. Starting with the depiction of the entire story world which can be found in the authenticity dimension. Informants reported a better understanding of narrative when the story is within what they have personality experienced in the real-world. This finding coincides with the result found by Beverland et al. (2008) where stories which relates closely to consumer's real-world perspectives invites positive brand attitudes. Although their research studies the relationship of stories found in advertisements, the results suggest authenticity may be the key to enhanced brand attitude disregarding the purpose of storytelling.

2) Authenticity: Individual Character Level

The second level pertains to the depiction of individual characters found under the conciseness dimension. Similarly, results show that when emotions that are depicted within the story are justified with real human emotions, consumers would more likely exhibit positive attitude towards product consumption. However, when consumers experience elements of popular cultures (or what is perceived to be popular at the time) are involved in storytelling, attitude remains positive even without condition of authenticity. Therefore, to boost brand attitude, brands can incorporate levels of authenticity into their transmedia products as a method of communication. The two levels of narrative features – story world and character levels – can be applied unless the narrative is based off popular culture. In short, stories are the main element in transmedia storytelling which determines brand attitude. This result ties well with

previous studies where story building has shown to be the major factor contributing to the success of transmedia campaigns (Bhattacharya, 2018).

3) Story Progression

Additionally, attitudes are better towards transmedia product when consumers feel like the producers are trying to constantly improve the plot or move the story forward. For instance, informants find themselves comparing *Riot Games* products to other games of similar playstyle. In the interviews, they reported a much better attitude towards *Riot Games* due to story elements that were evolving with them as they grew attached to the brand. This theme is tied back to producers' attempt of product expansion to improve consumer engagement. Therefore, it can be interpreted that brands which portray themselves more progressively are more likely to benefit from increased engagement and positive attitudes. In retrospect to convergence culture, this finding agrees to O'Donnell 2011) that the effectiveness of transmedia application should not only be measured by how active consumers are, but also with the producer's effort in unifying all the products. With *Riot Games*, the constant development of the story world can be interpreted as one of the catalysts to the understanding of convergence theory.

5.2.4. Improving Consumer Brand Experience for Effective Brand Communication

The findings from the study highlight two major factors that contribute to positive consumers' brand experience with transmedia storytelling of *Riot Games*. The first factor pertains to transmediality, or the usage of transmedia products as a strategy.

While the second factor that has been found pertains to is the incorporation of mystery in their marketing approaches.

1) Transmediality as an Effective Tool for Brand Communication

Transmedia has seen to improve brand experience as stories are now available on different platforms. This expansion has also promoted a sense of inclusion which ultimately results in heighten brand advocacy and awareness (Yang & Zisiadis, 2014), which were also elements found from the results. Likewise, agreeing to the results found in the study by Sanchez (2014), the expansion of point-of-entries has also enhanced brand experience and provided sentimental values for the consumers. On the other hand, brand experience can be propelled even further if the narrative content is easy to remember or catchy. From the results of intellectual dimension, consumers showed a level of willingness to know the story more if they feel like what the characters are saying is enjoyable to mimic.

2) The Incorporation of Mystery in Storytelling

Nevertheless, one of the largest narrative themes which are documented in this study is the factor in the use of mysteries to create satisfaction. Documents retrieved from online and offline sources all contained elements of worldbuilding narratives. However, not a single narrative retrieved included a complete story which has an ending. For instance, *Arcane* season finale left the audience with a massive cliffhanger, *Team Fight Tactics* left players wondering about what the *Little Legends* are, and character stories are always continuing. Likewise, a sense of mystery has seen to largely affect informant's emotions which results in their desire to know more. Through the lens of convergence, consumer's curiosity has also catalyzed the rise of engagement.

Relating back to the discussion on fan contents and social pressure, as consumers develop the need to know, they undergo the process of collective intelligence as a method of gratification. From the findings, examples range from forum discussions to watching user generated contents of other fans (usually theory crafters). Although the results from this research do not report negative experiences felt by the informants, presumably there may exist ways in which the application of mystery may be unfavorable.

When comparing these results to the study by Derbaix et al. (2017), it must be pointed out that the mystery in this account is similar, if not related, to their definition of imagination and degree of control over stimuli (or enthusiasm). In other words, what informants may perceive to be the sense of narrative mystery in this study is the combination between the heightened imagination and enthusiasm they are experiencing caused by the lack of story information from the story world. Perhaps it is *Riot Games'* strategy to launch their products in observable patterns throughout the year, including teaser trailers which greatly allude to consumer's anticipation. If that is true from both accords, then it is highly advised for other companies that would like to exercise transmedia use to consider writing mystery into their narrative story world.

5.3 Practical Implications

Academically, this research attempts to integrate an understanding of transmedia storytelling in the context of game-centric narratives and expands the knowledge on brand communication in the marketing research realm. In addition, the elements highlighted in this study may be adopted for future academic research.

As to the general practical implications of this research, it is highly recommended for any story-driven brands to have a clear understanding of their own story world. Media platforms have proven to be effective in story distribution and should be viewed as friends of our marketing approach as it provides flexibility in how stories can be appropriated for an eclectic mix of target market.

For game companies that desire to practice transmedia strategies, media which can include deeper levels of narratives would be recommended as supplementary resources to the main product – the most effective media being video and animation products. While art design can further enhance the initial attraction of these products. It is also recommended that stories are written with an essence of mystery where answers to these unknown facts can be revealed in future products. On the same note, new product stories should constantly be introduced to the transmedia ecosystem of the brand, as well as maintaining continuous treatment to the older stories. Furthermore, each product that is launched should have its own purpose and unique contribution to the entire story world.

5.4 Limitations

The lack of research exploring the concept of transmedia storytelling with engagement, attitude, and experience variables is likely related to the difficulty of determining the research approach. Therefore, gaming products are a combination of gameplay and story design, where the significance of both elements should be equally weighted in the analysis. Henceforth, several limitations remain notable from the outcome of this study.

1) Understanding of Different Media Products

A two-year timeframe of data retrieval proves to be challenging, especially having to cross examine between multiple media mediums. The researcher must first have a good understanding of every media product before the consideration of documentation process.

2) Larger Pool of Informants

To improve the quality of results, a larger pool of informants can be added to the in-depth interviews. While six informants provided some great insights into the research questions, the results may not be a true representation of the population.

5.5 Direction for Future Research

1) Future research can consider examining specific qualities of transmedia storytelling in the direction of the usage of skin narratives found in this research, instead of the general story approach by the brand.

2) Since this research studied only from the perspective of Asian males age range between 23-29 years, future study can consider expanding to consumers of different cultures, age, or gender.

3) It is also a possibility for future research to compare *Riot Games* against other game-centric transmedia storytelling brands, to understand the validity of the results from a different case study.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: **Discussion Guide**

Introduction

Thank you for taking time to have this interview with me today. My name is Sony, and I am the key researcher in the thesis project that you are a part of today. Overall, this study is to explore the nature of your engagement with Riot Games as a transmedia brand, I will be asking you questions regarding your attitude and experience with the brand to capture an overall understanding and lessons that could be used for future investigations.

This interview should take no more than two hours or as long as it should. Also, I would like to ask for your permission to tape our session to ensure that all your important comments are well recorded. You can take your time to reflect upon each question as we go, but because we are taped, please also remember to speak clearly into your microphone.

With this project, all responses from you will be kept confidential. This means that the information that you share with me today will only be used for the purpose of this research only, and you will not be identified as the respondent. Please also remember that you are not forced to talk about anything that you are not comfortable sharing, and you may also ask to leave the interview at any time.

With all that I have said, do you have any questions so far?

Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Closing Remarks

Is there anything more you would like to add?

If there is nothing more to add, I will now conclude the interview here. Shortly after this I will send you a copy of our transcribed discussion for you to review – this is in case there are any points you would like to omit or clarify.

I would like to thank you again for your time. It was a pleasure.

No.	Concept	Dimension	Definition / Operational Definition	Question for Interview
-	**Demographic**	Age		Could you briefly introduce yourself?
		Gender		
		Ethnicity		
		Occupation		
-		Screening question		How long have you been an active consumer of Riot Games?
-				What products of Riot Games do you know of or have consumed?
-				To what extent do you consider yourself as someone who knows the lore behind league of legends universe?
1	**Engagement** *"Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral responses from the consumers to the story world and related texts."*	**Loyalty**	*a development in cognitive, affective, conative, and action inclination within consumers that translates to higher likelihood of purchasing*	1. **Cognitive** – There are many games out there in market that bare similar resemblances to Riot Games' games, could you tell me more why you chose to play Riots' games over the others? 1. **Affective** – How does it feel to be one of the many players in this community? 2. **Conative** – Can you tell me what are some of the things you have purchased from Riot Games? What aspects of it made you want to purchase these items? 3. **Action** – Were there any instances

				where you find yourself advocating for Riot Games? Can you explain why you would do that? Would you say that you put trust in Riot Games as a company?
2		**Attentive Consumption**	*media users' ability to recall content-related details after consuming*	As you might already know, Riot Games products are strung together by a series of lore. Personally, do you know the overarching lore behind the game? • If yes: what do you remember? • If not: why do you think you don't remember them?
3		**Media Literacy**	*the audience's ability to produce as well as consumer media*	1. Are there any contents you have made before that is related to Riot Games? What are they? 2. What are your thoughts on gamers who also produce their own media about the games?
4		**Participation**	*form of engagement which is both consumer-driven and culturally orientated*	1. Can you tell me more about <u>how</u> you first started playing the games? 2. Do you remember <u>what</u> factors made you consider playing the games?

		Extra-Textual Activities	*activities which are based on the consumer's relationship with the text, but which do not necessarily involve direct exposure to the text*	Besides being an active consumer of Riot Games through [their point-of-entry], how else do you participate in Riots' community? *(i.e., cosplay, blog, fan art, etc.)
5		**Authenticity**	*a sense of believing and associating story (from attitude object) with reality*	1. Why do you think you are drawn to the narrative story of the game? 2. What aspects of the lore are you drawn to?
6	**Attitude** *"A learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object"*	**Conciseness**	*a method where complete stories are presented as short as possible, while still able to cover its important key narratives.*	1. How easy do you find yourself following the game narratives? 2. Do you have any examples of the stories you find easy to follow? 3. …And those that are not as easy to follow?
7		**Reversal**	*a climax or turning points within a story*	1. Are there any memorable moments in the narrative that you particularly enjoy or remember well? 2. If so, what is the story? Please elaborate.

| 8 | | **Humor** | *a perceptual response of the subject that triggers a change in consumers' internal feelings as information is registered through them.* | 1. Stories can sometimes have a powerful impact on the readers, allowing them to feel several different emotions like grief, excitement, and laughter. Do you have any examples of instances through knowing the story that made you change your views (good or bad) about Riot Games as a brand? 2. Do you have any examples to add to that statement? |
| 9 | **Experience** *"Sensations, feelings, cognitions, behavioral and social responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environment"* | **Sensory** | *a reaction to one or more of the five human senses: smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound, caused by stimuli* | Any products that want to promote positive experiences, attention is usually placed on the stimulation of the five human senses. In terms of the products of Riot Games you have engaged with: 1. Which of the five senses - smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound do you use least to most? 2. Can you give examples of what ways you use these senses to engage with the brand? |

10		**Affective**	*any emotional reactions (i.e., sadness, anger, grief, happiness, love, excitement) transmedia consumers feel towards the stimuli*	What are some of the emotional reactions *(such as sadness, anger, grief, happiness, love, excitement)* you usually feel after engaging with the narrative story?
11		**Intellectual**	*any analytical thinking and imaginative thinking practiced by consumers due to an exposure to the stimuli*	1. How often do you analyze the story? 2. What do you analyze? 3. How often does the story push you to be imaginative? 4. What are some of the things you image?
12		**Behavioral**	*any actions, bodily and interactive experiences between consumer and brand*	1. Besides playing, what are some examples of actions you do with the brand? *For example, do you: • Participate in cosplays • Writing a blog • Attend or watch the playoffs • Purchase their comics, books, or merchandise 2. How have these actions added to your interest in the brand?

13		**Social**	*experiences gained from consumer-to-consumer interactions, or when they are removed from their private-state*	1. Do you find yourself interacting with other players like you about the narrative story? 2. If not, why? 3. If yes, what are these interactions generally about? 4. What are the feelings or outcomes do you get from these interactions?

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