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Transmedia Storytelling for Television in Taiwan:

Do Audiences Want to Engage?

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Abstract

Transmedia Storytelling is an often-discussed buzz word in entertainment circles, but currently there are very few cases of it in Taiwan's television market. Furthermore, there is very little literature or research done addressing this field in a way that would enable would-be producers to design a transmedia production to meet their targets successfully. The aim of this study was to gather empirical data on how likely consumers of television programs in Taiwan are to interact with transmedia content for their preferred TV programs.

This information should prove useful to producers to have a reference of what types of transmedia extensions to put time and money into and which platforms to target for maximum audience engagement. Additionally, any researchers that are interested in audience-side information on transmedia consumption and engagement in Taiwan should find this study of interest. This study employed the use of survey data and to generate some meaningful data about this topic. Now that the data has been gathered and analyzed, a clearer picture of audience engagement with possible transmedia productions in Taiwan has been shown.

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Chapter 1- Introduction

The following thesis will seek to take a detailed look at the potential use for transmedia storytelling in Taiwan's television programs. First it will introduce in detail the key definitions and terminology for successful transmedia productions for television and motion pictures. After introducing the background of transmedia storytelling and the terms used to discuss it, a review of the benefits of using this type of production will be presented, and then the possibilities for this type of production in Taiwan will be examined. Following this literature review, the problems, and research questions for this study will be defined in detail. The survey design and reasons will be clearly outlined before presenting and analyzing the data that was gathered. This analysis will then be applied to the theories and examples put forward in the literature review. This study should provide insight for professionals, academics, and policy makers who are interested in transmedia storytelling in Taiwan and the opportunities that it might present to various industries when used to enhance the way that stories are told on television.

1.1 Research Background and Motivations

A lot has been written about transmedia storytelling for U. S. and European television productions. Some researchers try to break down the successful productions into understandable formulas that can be used to craft future transmedia narratives. Others try to trace a history of the organic rise of transmedia from the spread of technology and the connected audience. So far little has been written in the way of measuring if there is indeed demand for the type of sprawling stories that are talked about in the literature about transmedia storytelling.

Because the author of this thesis is living in Taiwan, the motivation for this study is to measure if there is any demand for transmedia storytelling among Taiwan television audiences. Do consumers of television programs in Taiwan want to engage more with their favorite television programs? Is there a particular type of engagement that they are more interested in to learn about or explore their preferred programs more? By using the survey outlined in section 3.3 of this thesis, this thesis is trying to shed some light on the answers to the above questions and more.

1.2 Expectations

This thesis relies on transmedia storytelling as defined by Henry Jenkins and his notion of extensions adding "distinct and valuable contributions" to a narrative (Jenkins, 2006). From the following literature review and section 2.4 on Taiwan's tech and media environment, the author of this study expected to find that demand for this type of storytelling would be high. The general technological and media environment in Taiwan is perfect for the spread of multiplatform stories to emerge. One would think that in an environment with such high saturation of internet connectivity and smartphone usage, audiences would be very interested in engaging with their favorite shows on other platforms like Facebook, or dedicated mobile apps for extra content. It is definitely well suited for the same type of organic growth of transmedia engagement that was witnessed in the U.S.A. As people are more and more interested in consuming content on second screens in Taiwan, the type of "content anywhere" that Wachter explains in her book is the type of plan that producers in Taiwan should be striving to create (Wachter-Boettcher, 2012). Furthermore as section 2.4.1 mentions, there is also active government interest in promoting the type of creative digital content industries that go hand in hand with stories that spread across multiple mediums. This added benefit of having policymakers and government money interested in stimulating these types of productions are encouraging to someone looking at the viability of transmedia productions in Taiwan.

1.3 Summary

The data gathered from the survey employed in this research project was taken from average viewers of television programs in Taiwan. When the data from this survey was analyzed it became apparent that there is greater interest in engaging on some platforms over others. As section 4.2 shows there are types of extensions that are more likely to spur engagement by the respondents to this survey. Section 4.3 showed the types of secondary or tertiary platforms that are currently more favored to dig deeper into their preferred television programs.

As expected by the author, the data gathered and discussed in section 4.4 shows that if extensions are added in a way that furthers the audiences understanding of the narrative or the characters in it, they are more likely to engage with it. More than half of the respondents to the survey showed a preference to engage with this type of extension.

Future comparative research or more rigorous research into this question would be interesting for anyone interested in learning more about audience engagement with transmedia texts in general.

1.4 Contributions

There are two main contributions that this thesis can give to the academic world and the professional world. Academically speaking, there has been little written in English about audience engagement with transmedia stories in Taiwan specifically. Additionally, there is little to no research done looking into the demand for transmedia extensions in general. By designing this survey and conducting the research it is hoped that anyone interested in the topic of transmedia storytelling has further data to work with. It is also the authors hope that future research can build on this research.

From a professional or industry point of view the contributions of this research should be quite clear in three main areas. First, this thesis has conducted market research to show that audiences of television shows in Taiwan have a higher propensity to engage with some types of triggers over others. Second, the data shows that certain platforms are favored over others for this engagement. Finally, it is shown that if the content developed for these extensions adds to a deeper meaning or understanding of the principal narrative, more people will engage with it. It is the hope of this author that would-be producers of transmedia content in Taiwan can use this research to make more successful productions with deep engagement from their audiences.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section will explain what transmedia is and is not. It will provide the historical background for transmedia storytelling projects and will also provide some key terms and definitions that are used in academic discussions of transmedia.

2.1 Transmedia Storytelling Defined

Transmedia storytelling can sometimes be a somewhat vague term. There are several competing terms for using multiple technological platforms to tell different types of stories. People might use terms such as: cross-platform productions, digital storytelling, or second-screen and multi-screen adaptations, to name a few. Many of these different names incorporate the same logic that this study is interested in but geared for a different end product. Cross-platform projects usually favor one media over the other and are simply defined as "any content (news music, text, and images) published in multiple media/channels" (Veglis, 2012). Digital storytelling usually focuses more on the telling of personal or biographical tales or in education which use low end film or photo clips and an Internet connection so that marginal voices reach a larger audience (Matthews 2013; Wawro, 2012). Second- screen adaptations usually refer to the simple adaptation of a story into another format such as turning a movie into a video game. Transmedia storytelling for the purposes of this study is not the mere use of multiple entertainment platforms to tell a story but the way in which the story or story world is designed to be released across these platforms in a strategic and coordinated manner.

In this study, the term transmedia story telling will be used to define productions geared for television or the movie industry that are supported by secondary or tertiary entertainment platforms which help to develop more fully the story being told. There is a core vehicle (TV show) and other extensions that help to support the world or story being told in that main vehicle. For the purposes of this study, transmedia is not as Jenkins points out mere adaptation. It is not making a blockbuster movie into a video game that follows the same characters and plot on a different medium. Nor is transmedia storytelling franchising by way of complementary products, such as themed snacks,

clothing, or posters.

True transmedia storytelling involves the outlying platforms used in a way that make a "distinct and valuable contributions" to the original story or story world (Jenkins, 2006). What makes these types of contributions distinct and valuable will be discussed in the following sections.

2.1.1 Digital Convergence and Transmedia Origins

In his book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide,* Jenkins was one of the first to describe in detail the multiple ways that advances in technology and fan culture have changed the way that storytellers and audiences behave. (Jenkins, 2006) With the advent of the Internet, mobile phones and connected audiences, a culture of participation, engagement, or immersion has evolved and has been changing the way major films, and television shows are produced. The basis of these changes comes from the media convergence described as the "technological, industrial, cultural and social changes in the ways that media circulates within our culture. Comes common ideas referenced by the term include the flow of content between multiple media industries." (Jenkins, 2006) There has been a shift in the way major franchises and their producers need to think about developing a product:

> Whereas old Hollywood focused on cinema, the new media conglomerates have controlling interests across the entire entertainment industry. Warner Bros. produces film, television, popular music, computer games, Web sites, toys, amusement park rides, books, newspapers, magazines, and comics (Jenkins, 2006: 16).

This has led to a greater, industry-wide shift of standard practices for certain types of productions. The same principles of transmedia storytelling can and are used in several other industries such as advertising, political campaigns, journalism, and education, but for the purposes of this study, the focus as stated above will be limited to transmedia productions geared for television and motion pictures.

2.1.2 The Connected Audience

Chapters two and three of Jenkins' book will be especially influential for the

purposes of this thesis. In chapter 2, Jenkins outlines how advances in consumer technology have created "connected audiences" and goes on to describe how production companies can cater to this type of audience and participatory environment by taking an in depth look at the American singing contest show *American Idol*. This type of audience is able to influence how studios and production companies decide to put together new content. They are connected to each other through internet forums, social media platforms, and mobile apps. Therefore, producers seeking to capitalize on this need to think about how to coordinate in and across these platforms to better maintain their franchise. As he puts it:

> The experience should not be contained in a single media platform, but should extend across as many media as possible. Brand extension builds on audience interest in particular content to bring them into contact again and again with an associated brand (Jenkins, 2006: 69).

As convergence has continued over time and more and more social media platforms are available, this trend has become common practice in many poplar U.S. television shows. Chris Anderson also outlines this same shift in production in his book *The Long Tail*. The new media landscape that the modern and connected world is forces such as the "*democratizing* [of] *the tools of production.* The best example of this is the personal computer, which has put everything from the printing press to the film studio in the hands of anyone" (Anderson, 2006). This not only makes audiences connected, but makes audiences and fans potential producers as well. Frank Rose also describes how audiences are encouraged to go to fan websites, follow twitter feeds from favorite characters, and at each of these stages the advertisers behind the program have another point to get the attention of their intended consumers (Rose, 2011).

Now that the general background of transmedia has been presented, a look at how that can change how a story is told across different platforms will be looked at.

2.1.3 Transmedia Storytelling Extensions-From Story to World

In *Convergence Culture*, Jenkins outlines the use of transmedia storytelling and how it was utilized in the making of the major franchise *The Matrix.* This chapter clearly outlines the ways that a true transmedia production can unfold across different media

platforms that each bring their "distinctive and valuable" contributions to the story as a whole as Geoff Long, one of Jenkins' students puts it (Long, 2007). By making this type of contribution to an overarching story world, the "transmediality" of a production can be gauged by how much or how well a production can use " multiple media technologies to present information concerning a single fictional world through a range of textual forms" (Evans, 2011: 1) Bourdaa also explains the advantages that producers gain from this practice:

"The strategy of expanding a narrative universe is often used for two main reasons around TV shows. First of all, it allows producers and the channel to promote a show and make it known to the audience before the premiere. Then, it could be used to maintain a regular audience during the hiatuses or between episodes" (Bourdaa, 2012).

The following three figures are shown to graphically illustrate what is meant by this, Pratten provides the following illustration in his book *Getting Started in Transmedia Storytelling:*
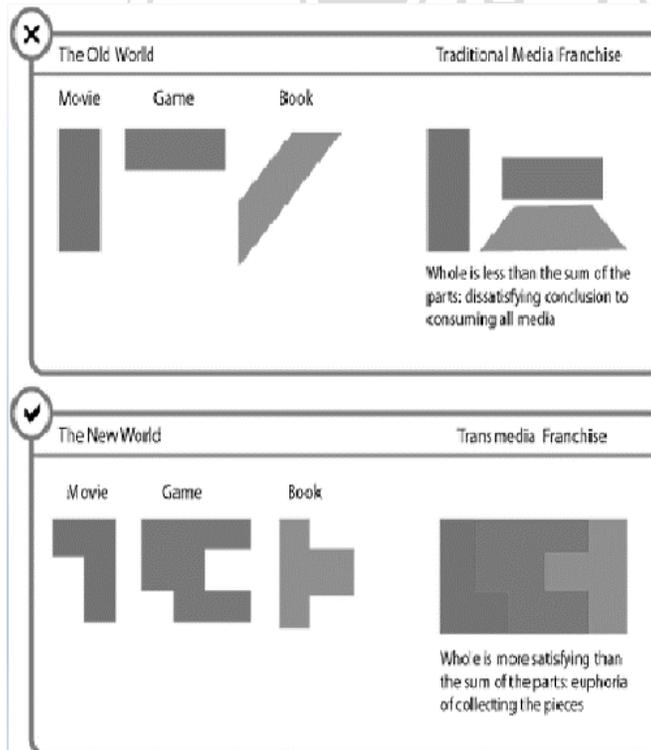
In this visual representation, Pratten highlights the difference between "old" media and "new". Before, maybe a franchise produced content for other platforms like books or video games but they were standalone productions. In the transmedia environment the production of these various components work in synthesis together to make a more complete experience for the audience.

Figure 1 Transmedia Storytelling Visualized 1

Peter von Stackleberg and Robert Pratten give us two more ways to visualize this type of production here:
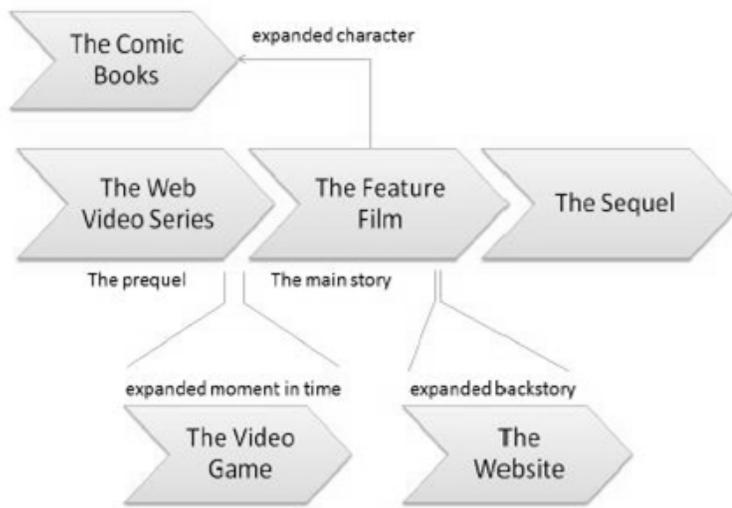
Figure 2 Transmedia Storytelling Visualized 2

Source: Pratten, 2011
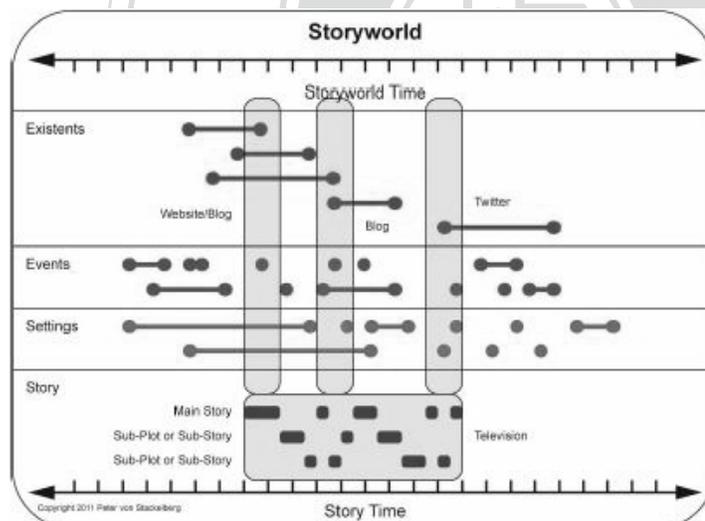
Figure 3 Transmedia Storytelling Visualized 3

Source: Stackleberg, 2011

Here we see two possible transmedia productions and how the various extensions of the story might look as released or developed over time. The additional content be it by video game, print media, website or other, might be released concurrently with the main story or in a sequentially depending on the producer's strategy or goals.

As Figure 3 shows, the extended content might also correspond to different time within the main story being told or the timeline of the story world. There are myriad of ways that the content might unfold on the platforms chosen for extensions to the main story.

These various platforms can be used in both official and unofficial ways to contribute to the main story or story-world. Fans can either start their own websites and forums dedicated to the characters from a certain project, or the producers themselves can establish these outlets in an effort to cater to their fans in ways that add the

aforementioned "distinctive and valuable" contributions to the franchise as a whole (Jenkins, 2006).

Now that the history of transmedia storytelling has been outlined and its basic logic has been explained, attention will be shifted to a more detailed look into the extensions that make for a rich transmedia production.

2.2 Terminology and Key Terms

As discussed above, the terminology in this field can sometimes be misleading or unclear. The following section will serve to better acquaint readers with the key terms and concepts that are used in academic circles to discuss transmedia projects. One of Henry Jenkins' students, Geoffrey Long, wrote a thesis on transmedia that provides a set of vocabulary to discuss both the types of tools used in a transmedia production to tie the multiple platforms together and also terms and questions that help to identify the "depth" of transmediality and ways to evaluate various transmedia extensions.

2.2.1 Long's Terminology

In his thesis, *Transmedia Storytelling: Business, Aesthetics and Production at the Jim Henson Company,* Geoffrey Long outlines the basics components of a transmedia franchise before using them to analyze his particular cases. This study will use his same terminology to discuss the cases presented hereafter. For Long, the key components for telling a transmedia story across multiple platforms lie in what he describes as "a combination of the use of Barthesian hermeneutic codes, negative capability and migratory cues to guide audiences across multiple media platforms" (Long, 2007). These three terms will be tackled in that order to better clarify what is meant by them.

2.2.2 Hermeneutic Codes (Transmedia Cues)

First, hermeneutic codes are the elements in a story that "introduce, further, and conclude the mysterious elements running through a text" (Long 2007: 61). He then provides a list of six different types of hermeneutic codes that can be employed to give an example of how they are used which is paraphrased here along with an example for each:

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1.   **Cultural:** Costumes, building, or other artistic work seen in the story that might reflect cultural aspects of the story world. An example of this might be uniforms worn in the TV show that makes the audience wonder about a character's status or rank in the story world.

2.   **Character:** Characters that are referred to in scenes but not shown or developed. Perhaps a terrible boss is always referred to but the audience never "meets" him on camera. Then they are left to wonder what his character is like.

3.   **Chronological:** These would be hints at events that precede or follow the events of the story being told. The main character may refer to a terrible famine or war that they just survived but not explain much about it.

4.   **Geographic:** References to places in the narrative but are not actually seen. Perhaps the protagonist is scared of venturing over the mountains to a distant land full of danger, but the audience never actually gets to experience where this place is.

5.   **Environmental:** Pieces of the story or scenes that show the nature or science that governs the story world. There could be animals that followed different evolutionary paths than on earth provoking the audience to wonder why or how.

6.   **Ontological:** The actual existence of the story world. The *Blair Witch Project* fits this code in that it was marketed as a true story, when in reality it was just a movie. This code is a rarer one to use as most TV programs and movies are known works of fiction (Long, 2007, 63-66).

The use of these tools in telling a transmedia story will enhance the consumer's interest in the story being told or the world in which it takes place. For simplicity sake, the terms listed above will be renamed as "<u>Type</u>-transmedia cue" (Example: Character-transmedia cue) later in the survey design and data analysis section.

2.2.3 Negative Capability

Second, negative capability is defined as "the art of building strategic gaps into a narrative to evoke a delicious sense of 'uncertainty, Mystery, or doubt' in the audience"

(Long, 2007:53). When hermeneutic codes combine with clever use of negative capability, the interested audience member might then find themselves wondering things like: Who/What/Where are these characters referring to and how can I learn more about it? The whole or partial answers to these types of questions are then answered in other parts of the transmedia story. The way the audience is directed to find these other platforms is by migratory cues.

2.2.3 Migratory Cues

The third component of a true transmedia story according to Long, is the use of migratory cues to direct the audience to one or more of the secondary or tertiary platforms being used to tell the story. These cues remain in their *potential* state are made from the hermeneutic codes, and negative capability. These cues are change into real form once an extension to another platform is made which in turn forms the true transmedia story that Jenkins referred to as one where "consumers must assume the role of hunters and gatherers, chasing down bits of the story across media channels." (Jenkins, 2006 "Transmedia Storytelling"). Being familiar with these components of a transmedia production will become useful when analyzing past or potential transmedia stories. Now, attention will be paid to the "depth" of a transmedia production.

2.2.4 Discussing the Depth of Transmediality- Hard, Soft, and Chewy

Long provides a set of three levels to describe the depth of a transmedia production. They are hard, soft, and chewy (Long, 2007: 21) A "hard" transmedia production is one that is designed as such form the start. And overarching story and its various transmedia extensions are designed before and production takes place. An example of a "soft version of transmedia production is one where the transmedia extensions are added after the success of an original story of some kind. "Chewy" productions are somewhere in between perhaps a production that started as a solo project, but its success justified developing it into a full blown transmedia production for any later material (Long, 2007: 20-21). Knowing these terms will be useful to describe case studies of transmedia productions and are good terms to know when trying to design transmedia elements for an already running production.

2.2.5 Successful Uses of Key Extensions

In the analysis and conclusion of his thesis, Long gave a couple more tools for the evaluation of transmedia productions. His "ten key takeaway concepts" are summarized here:

1.   Each extension needs to make a "distinct and valuable" contribution to the franchise as a whole

2.   Extensions need to stay true to the original story world. Extensions need to fit the "encyclopedia" or "bible" of the main story.

3.   A transmedia story is often more about a world than a single character in it. A rich and expansive universe leaves more options for the consumer to want to explore.

4.   Transmedia extensions should reflect the same tone or themes of the main vehicle.

5.   Consider when the decision to make it a transmedia story was made. This relates back to the ideas of hard, soft, and chewy discussed above

6.   Is the world created open or closed? Can the audience as participants create and add to it, or is it more restrictive? Knowing this will aid with decision about which types of extensions make sense for the production.

7.   Use the transmedia tools discussed above (hermeneutic codes, negative capability, and migratory cues) to create strong links between platforms.

8.   Answer questions from one medium as a starting point for an extension in a different medium. If there is doubt about a character's childhood from the TV show, perhaps an online comic extension would tell that story.

9.   Use the extensions to raise new questions. An extension should be used to resolve certain questions but also prompt more mysteries that push the audience further along the storyline

10.   Look for ways to visualize the relationships between extensions. This is good for the planning stages to guarantee cohesion across platforms. It is also useful on the consumer side, so that users can chart their progress through the story world in an easy to follow way (Long, 2007: 163-168).

2.2.6 Summary

Section 1.2 provided the key academic language to use when discussing transmedia projects and the bits and pieces that make them work. It also provided terms that aid in discussing the depth of transmedia as well as successful ways to employ the components. These terms will be used later in the data collection and analysis sections. The following section will outline a few ways that convergence has affected the business models available for a transmedia production.

2.3 Contemporary Examples of Transmedia Television Extensions

This section will provide short introductions of how four major U.S. television shows have employed various transmedia extensions in real life. It is hoped that these examples will highlight the four types of possible transmedia extensions explained in section 1.2.2 above. Part two of the survey that this thesis relies on will be aimed at gauging interest levels of television audiences in Taiwan to engage with these four types of transmedia productions.

2.3.1 Storyworld based Extension: The Walking Dead

AMC's *The Walking Dead* is a show developed from a series of comics by Robert Kirkman of the same name (Gaston, 2014). It follows a group of survivors trying to stay alive after a zombie apocalypse. It actively employs Long's concept of negative capability concept about the origins of the zombie virus and the state of the rest of the world. This makes for larger doubt and mystery about the greater story world that the show takes place in. It will serve as an example of how a rich story world might propel audiences to engage in a transmedia extension like a video game.

Telltale Game's video game *The Walking Dead: The Game* is for fans of *The Walking Dead* story world. The game revolves around a different group of survivors in a different location, but in the same dystopian universe as is shown in the show, but the two story lines don't intersect. The game was named game of the year in 2013 and has been downloaded over 8 million times (Misc, 2013).

A notable possibility of this larger story world approach to a transmedia extension is that the producers could choose to have the separate stories intersect at some future point. The creator, Kirkman hinted at this possibility in a recent interview "That door is always open for us, though whether or not we step through it remains a big question" (Gaston, 2014). This type of extension should highlight the type of engagement that can come from well thought out world-building extensions.

2.3.2 Character based Extension: Heroes

NBC's *Heroes* television show, which aired from 2006 to 2010, was a show that followed ordinary people with extraordinary powers on an adventure to save the world (Hibberd, 2007). The style of the show was like a superhero comic book and the accompanying website showcased an interactive comic, and SMS-based interactive game that was updated in between episodes where fans were encouraged to dig deeper into the story and the character relationships in the story world (Dickerson, 2007). The example of *Heroes* as a transmedia production serves to highlight how producers can use transmedia extensions to partner with advertisers and use product placement across different extensions thereby gaining extra financing for the story they are trying to tell while relying on consumers to engage with the different extensions and see more product advertising in the process.

Erin Gianini's article sums up how NBC's website worked to both further the plot of the show and promote products from partners:

"...the official NBC Heroes page, which provides an interactive comic book that fills in the gaps between episodes or provides additional character development. Yet, each of these online comic books features an ad for Nissan as its opening panel; the Nissan is in motion, as people stand to the side, astonished. Nissan thus becomes another superhero, a vehicular, evolutionary '9th Wonder'. Nissan is also integrated into the story. This product and story integration is the way in which Heroes serves both as an advertisement for Nissan, itself, and the network and as transmedia storytelling" (Gianini, 2014).

This example shows how television producers can partner with advertisers to develop more show-related content which explores characters and events in a deeper way which also adds to more product-related touch points.

2.3.3.1 Participation based Extensions: Defiance

Syfy's original television show, Defiance (2013-Present) is one of the more ambitious transmedia projects in recent history. It is a science fiction drama that is set in the future after an alien war leaves the earth largely destroyed (IMDb.com, n.d.) It was developed from the start as a transmedia production and is paired with an online game that runs in parallel to events in the show.

The unique and challenging part of a production like this is that the story worlds affect one another and events happen in one that affect the other. For example, if it starts to rain in the show, it also rains in the game. (VAST MEDIA - Analysis and strategy for Second Screen and Social TV, 2013). Likewise, events that happen in-game can affect the show's plot line and vice-versa. Players can be mentioned for their actions on the television show, and characters from the show make appearances in game. However, this type of production doesn't come cheap. The Defiance franchise is currently the most expensive show ever developed by the network, due to the fact of developing a game and show at the same time.

This example shows a transmedia production at its most participatory nature, and also to use Long's terminology a very "hard" type of transmedia production (Long, 2007). Now that a few contemporary examples of realized transmedia productions have been seen, attention will shift to a brief discussion of transmedia in Taiwan.

2.3.3.2 Participation based Extensions with Heavy User generated content: The Spiral

The in this section serves to show how a participation-based story can involve the mix of professionally produced content and user generated content (UGC) to weave together a common story based on audience engagement, but directed by the producers.

The Spiral was a Television show, interactive website, and live event that took place across European countries in 2012 involving the hunt for stolen art. (IMDb.com, n.d.) It led its audiences and fans on a mix of real and virtual treasure hunts as the story unraveled over time:

"Searching for the paintings – both fictitiously inside the series and in real public – unfolds the interactive and transmedia dimension of the Scandinavian crime series. The audience can join in on several online games on thespiral.eu and on Facebook, having to pass creative tasks in order to score and eventually approach the paintings. Even drawings are to be handed in, matching Beuys' philosophy of every-man-is-an-artist.

The action culminated in front of the European Parliament in Brussels on 9/28; the online game ended with the return of the paintings and the collective artwork's unveiling" (Honig Studios, 2015).

What makes this production stand out differently from the others is that it relies on the audience not only to participate in online and live events but additionally to create content that is later crafted into the overall story. The producers have defined a general path for the show to follow, but the content created by the audiences and certain plot points are driven by audience participation. This production has shown the ability of producers to get audiences from different countries, to participate and compete across various platforms if they enjoy the story. The added benefit for some producers is free or cheap content submitted by fans and information gathered on the audience members along with their interactions.

2.4 Transmedia Environment

Now that the basic components and theories behind transmedia storytelling have been discussed, and a few real life examples have been looked at, the topic of the transmedia storytelling environment in Taiwan specifically will be discussed. By taking a brief look at the technological trends and some policy issues from government, the future viability of transmedia productions can be examined. This section deals with both the current state of the telecommunications sector as well some of the regulatory issues at play in promoting or discouraging the growth of transmedia storytelling in Taiwan.

2.4.1 Environment for Transmedia Projects in Taiwan

The types of platforms that a transmedia production uses are widely available in Taiwan and used by many in Taiwan. Taiwan has a very broad and fully developed communications industry (Ferle, 2008). Internet availability to individuals has risen in the same way that that it did in the U.S. over its convergence period:
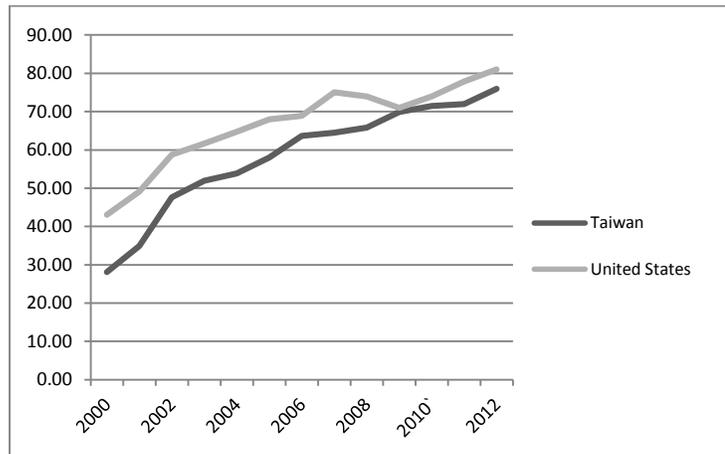

Figure 4 Percentage of individuals using the internet 2012

(Source International Telecommunication Union, 2012)

The stage of the economy and the prevalence of TV, motion pictures, internet connectivity and smartphone saturation shows potential for the crafting of stories told in the transmedia way. According to the National Communications Commission (NCC), 75% of all mobile phone accounts are connected to the internet through 3G or wireless broadband which could be used for creating the "connected audiences" described by Jenkins. (Institute for Information Industry) Taiwan smartphone owners ranked as the top users of internet globally in 2014 according to one survey by Yahoo Inc (Taiwantoday.tw, 2015). If a transmedia producer can design content that is friendly to the mobile experience, they can take advantage of the seemingly very friendly mobile environment in Taiwan. Secondary and tertiary applications such as mobile games or social media applications could be developed to bring a true transmedia experience to this connected audience.

One concrete example of how these different technological platforms can be coordinated to deliver a transmedia story in Taiwan is the case of the Fun Travel trial

conducted by HwaCom New Media in 2012 (Hsu, 2013). This limited trial involved combining a video on demand, main screen component along with a mobile app and in-person visits of travel sites in Taiwan. It demonstrated how different firms can work together to mutual benefit via a transmedia production. There are other examples of 2nd screen applications as well, but do to a linguistic barrier, the author of this study was unable to explore their use. However currently these extensions are more geared toward marketing, promotion, and behind the scenes content. They are not adding the distinct and valuable content in a true transmedia storytelling way.

The government also actively promotes innovation in the arts and the communication industry according to the TV and Radio Act as well as through Ministry of Culture. The creative environment is also very open and free in terms of content that can be produced (Ferle, 2008).

In addition to this freedom of expression, there are several policy-driven campaigns that government institutions are using to promote a more developed digital content ecosystem in Taiwan. The National Communications Commission (NCC) has outlined in its 2015 administrative plans the desire to:

"Design courses on program production and digital convergence and invite scholars and experts to provide their professional opinions to improve production quality and marketing potential of broadcasters" (NCC, 2015).

Furthermore, the Bureau of Industrial Development has launched the Digital Content Industry Development and Assistance Project (DCDA) with the goal to "subsidize...the creative digital content industry" (MOE, 2015). These are examples of top-down policy and monetary incentives that would serve to make Taiwan a friendly place to try building transmedia extensions with the support of grants or subsidies from various agencies.

Now some possible barriers to the development of transmedia productions will be discussed.

2.4.2 Barriers to Transmedia Projects in Taiwan

Even though there are several contributing factors for transmedia storytelling to catch on in Taiwan, there are also some things that might hinder its development. This section will

address some of those factors. As discussed earlier, various types of corporate sponsorship that can be used to help pay for a production. Direct advertising or product placement are ways to get this sponsorship, but traditionally the communications laws in Taiwan have been stricter than the U.S. equivalent when it comes to corporate sponsorship. According to the Radio and Television Act, advertising must be limited to 15% of total viewing time and product placement has traditionally been banned for local productions (Article 31, NCC, 2016). However this was recently changed in the Temporary Directions for the Sponsorship of Television Programs in December 2012 ("Mass Media", 2016). This new act seeks to encourage the growth of the media industry by allowing product placement in programs as long as it occurs in a "natural way" citing the successful partnerships made in other advanced countries' communications sectors.

Another possible obstruction to the creation of transmedia productions in Taiwan is merely being the first to the scene. In his book *The Art of Immersion* (Rose, 2011) Frank Rose also discusses the early stages of transmedia components for TV and motion pictures in the Hollywood arena and how producers and collaborators needed to learn by trial and error just what worked and what didn't sometimes by dumping money or time into projects that were unsuccessful. The example of Syfy's *Defiance* television and game being incredibly expensive to produce could make a very "hard" type of production a high risk gamble.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has provided the historical and theoretical background to discuss transmedia storytelling in general and how it might be used in Taiwan in particular. The discussion of Jenkins' work and other discussions of transmedia storytelling in section 2.1 helped track how digital convergence made this new type of storytelling possible. In section 2.2, Henry Long provided key terms to use when discussing a transmedia story's various components as well as vocabulary to use when comparing two or more different transmedia productions. Completed examples of transmedia productions also discussed in section 2.3 to provide concrete examples of ways that a story might be crafted. A brief

introduction to transmedia opportunities and barriers in the Taiwanese market was covered in section 2.4.

These sections all work together to properly frame the purpose of this study, which is to gather empirical data that will more fully explain how transmedia storytelling might be used in Taiwan. The following chapter will expand on the methodology and hypotheses of this thesis.

2.5.1 Notes on evolving technology

The literature and productions discussed above demonstrate just a few examples of how the logic of transmedia storytelling has played out in past and contemporary productions with past and contemporary technology and media platforms. Going forward and looking at the survey methods and results from this thesis, it should be noted that technology and the platforms used to access entertaining content will continue to evolve.

With this ever changing landscape though a transmedia producer will only have more tools and avenues to tell their story with, so it lies in the planning and structuring of the story, how and when it will be released and on which current platform that become important. Sara Wachter-Boettcher makes this premise very clear in her book about the future of content production and how producers should plan for various platforms, and ways to ensure maximum engagement with intended audiences (Wachter-Boettcher, 2012). Although various technical devices and standards will change with time and producers need to be ready for these changes, the core part of planning which medium or platform best fits what your audience consume with sight, smell, sound, or through interaction should lie at the center of the "bible" of the transmedia production (Ciancia, 2013).

Chapter 3- Research Design

This section will outline the research problem, specific questions of interest to this thesis and the methods used to gather and analyze the data for this study.

3.1 Expectations

Now that we have seen the underlying principles of transmedia story telling from sections 2.1 and 2.3 it should be clear how a narrative can be crafted using multiple types of media to provide the audience deeper understanding of a television show than if they watched the program only. There are also several ways that a producer of a show might choose to "push" the audience to explore those extensions. Section 2.3 gave several examples of completed transmedia productions to highlight this variety of ways for audience members to engage depending on the type of story being told.

Section 2.4 gave some insight on how Taiwan's media environment is favorable for transmedia stories to be told. There is freedom of expression to produce stories with any type of content. From a technological side, Taiwan is very well suited for stories that might flow from one device to another. Internet saturation and smartphone usage are very high making it easy for a potential audience member to follow a story on another platform for a deeper understanding of it or its characters.

Based on the above, this author expected to find that television audiences in Taiwan would be favorable to exploring their favorite programs in a more in depth manner if it was available. The three main questions for this study are to find out if there are type of transmedia cues that would be better suited to stimulating engagement, whether there is a preferred platform or media type to engage on, and if the extensions need to add to the overall story world to provoke engagement from the audience. These research questions will be laid out in more detail in the following sections.

3.2 Research Problem

Since there is not much actual use of transmedia storytelling currently in Taiwan television programs, the primary aim of this research is to gain an idea if there is any

demand for transmedia extensions. Are television audiences in Taiwan interested in engaging with the television shows that they like to watch? If so, what type of transmedia cues will lead to their engagement? Furthermore, is there a preferred platform that these extensions should be developed for. This section will detail the logic behind the research being conducted.

3.3 Research Questions

Here the specific research questions will be stated and explained in detail.

3.3.1 Question 1: What type of transmedia cues are likely to stimulate engagement by television viewers in Taiwan?

- Through the overall literature review and especially from section 1.2.3 some basic parts to successful stories told through transmedia have been discussed. The survey shown below is designed discover which types of Long's migratory cues are most effective to stimulate engagement from television audiences in Taiwan. Questions 5-20 are geared toward answering this question by asking questions about the respondents' favorite shows and their willingness to know more by taking action.

3.3.1 Question 2a: Which platform are viewers most likely to use to engage with a transmedia extension?

- Again, as outlined in the literature review above, a transmedia extension can be made in a variety of ways. It could be a website, animation, Facebook fan page, video game or other type of media. Questions 21-30 of the survey seek to answer which is the preferred type of media that television viewers would likely use in order to consume or connect more with their preferred shows.

3.3.2 Question 2b: Do viewers prefer simple or "distinct and valuable" engagement?

- In addition, questions 21-30 ask very similar question sets to get to the

heart of transmedia storytelling. As Jenkins' definition points out that a true transmedia component is one that adds a "distinct and valuable" contribution to the whole, questions 21-30 are asked in couplets aimed at seeing if the viewer is interested in merely in things related to their preferred shows, or if they are interested in these extensions when they add to overall understanding of the characters and stories being told.

3.4 Survey Design

This section will outline the design of the survey and the reasons for the design. The survey consisted of 31 questions. The target group for this survey was television audiences aged 18 and up, living in Taiwan. The reason for the age limit is due to the assumption that most people aged 18 and up would have control over what they watch and over their choice to access extensions on another platform without parental constraint. For this survey it was not important whether the respondents watch their program via terrestrial broadcast, cable television or accessed it through the internet. The purpose of this study was not to compare this type of data but rather to see the audience-side interest in engaging further with their favorite program whatever it may be and wherever they go to consume it.

The survey was divided into three parts. The first section was basic information on the respondent. The second was a section of 16 questions designed for research question 1. The third are 10 questions part deals with research questions 2a and 2b. Parts 2 and 3 both of these sections relied on a declarative statement and a four point Likert scale answer based on how much the respondent agreed or disagreed with the statement. It should be noted that while agreeing to seek out more information or agreeing to interact with some content on another medium, shows a positive intention, the "disagree" category might have been checked if the respondent did not understand the question or was not sure about their answer. The respondents were not primed in anyway about the idea of transmedia storytelling, 2nd platform experiences, or they may have never heard of things like this as options for exploring their preferred TV show more fully. For

this reason, the data analysis below focuses primarily on the amount of respondents showing positive intentions to the questions.

To define engagement in this study the questions were whether or not the person would "seek more information" when prompted by possible cues in their favorite television program. The second part of the survey has the same 4-point scale and asked how much the respondents agreed or disagreed with the statement about engaging with the content by visiting a website, purchasing print media, downloading a mobile application, or playing a video game. The idea or "seeking more information" or directly exploring one or another platform for extra content both count as "engaging" with a program from this authors viewpoint. Below the individual parts of the survey will be described in more detail.

3.4.1 Basic Biographical Data

Basic information on respondents was collected to see if there are any interesting variations according to sex, age, and level of education. An optional category was area of employment. These basic categories might prove interesting to see if answers vary across these categories.

3.4.2 Part 1- Types of cues and engagement

Measuring engagement from audiences can be difficult to categorize and Simons gives a great list of types of engagement in his thesis on transmedia, but for this particular study, simplicity was favored (Simons, 2014). For this part of the survey, the questions simply asks the respondent whether or not they would seek more information when prompted by a transmedia cue. At its most basic form this is what engagement is, after all.

Part 1 of the survey is designed to see if there is a type of transmedia cue that would be more effective in stimulating engagement by viewers. Just like the examples of different types of extensions was provided in section 2.3, these are focused on character, story world, and participation based extensions. A fourth set of questions is added for overt product marketing to see if engagement via showcasing products or services is any higher or lower than more "pure" transmedia engagement. Data about this extension type

and whether audiences would choose to engage would prove valuable to producers that may want to have product placement or corporate sponsorship featured in their programs. The figure below shows what Part 1 of the survey is looking at.
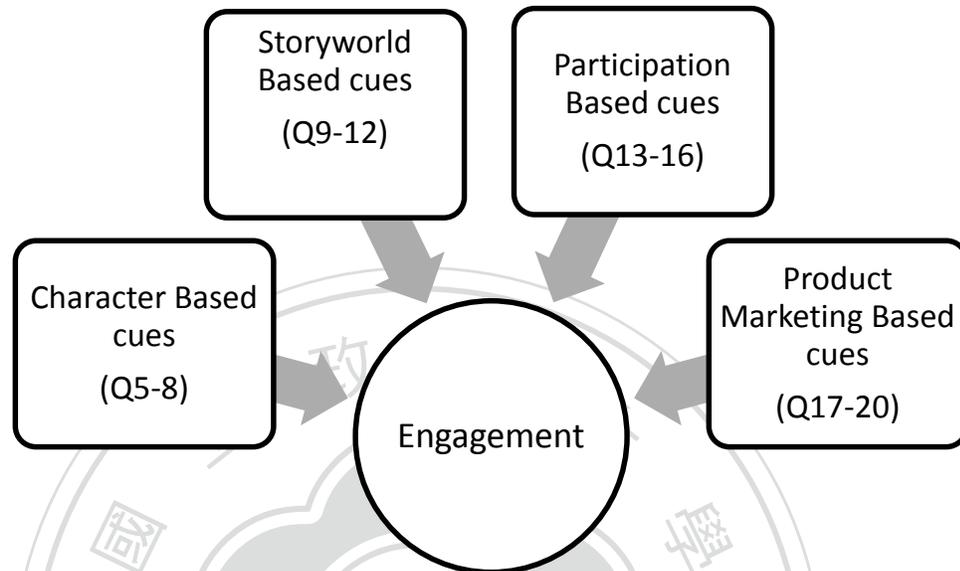

Figure 5-Triggers for Engagement

The above illustration should make clear what the first part of the survey is gathering data on. By drawing from Long's thesis and his categorizing of different types of transmedia cues, we can use the same logic to see what sparks engagement from audiences. (Long, 2007)

3.4.3 Part 2a Platforms for engagement

Part 2a of the survey is looking to see if any one platform is more likely to be used for engagement. If viewers are going to engage with a television show, is there a preferred platform for doing so? Knowing this would aid the transmedia producer to develop content that utilizes that particular platform. Section 2.3 showed some examples of contemporary transmedia productions which have used some or all of the following platforms to expand their narratives: Official websites, Facebook pages, Mobile apps, Print media and Video games. Below is illustrated what part 2a of the survey is meant to find.
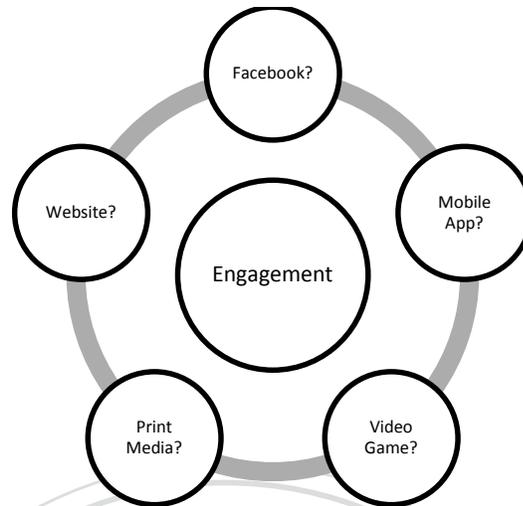
Figure 6-Platform Preference

The five platforms chosen for this part of the survey were done so for very specific reasons. Whereas print media like books or comics and video games would most likely entail spending money to access, platforms like official websites, mobile applications for smartphones and Facebook fan sites could be accessed free of charge. However, between the three just mentioned, choosing to download and install a mobile app is more time consuming than visiting a website, likewise accessing an official website takes a little more effort than joining a fan site on Facebook which is currently the number one social networking site. The data gathered from this section might point to barriers that different platforms might have for accessing transmedia extensions.

3.4.4 Part 2b- Simple engagement vs. "Distinct and Valuable" engagement

      Part 2b of the survey takes a look at two interests. First, it is looking to see if there is a difference between levels of engagement and the type of extension. Are audiences more interested in the type of "distinct and valuable" engagement that Jenkin's mentions in his book? (Jenkins, 2006) This part of the survey is demonstrated by the below figure:
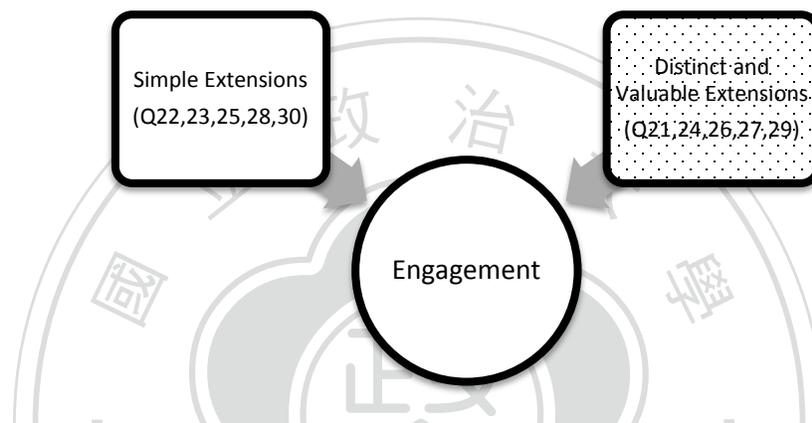

Figure 7- Distinct and Valuable Extensions

This last data section is of particular interest to the author of this thesis. Are fans of shows interested and willing to follow links or cues to extra content simply because it is related to their favorite show or are they more inclined to do so if that extra content will provide deeper insight or understanding of those narratives or the characters and story worlds in them? This at its heart is what "true" transmedia storytelling is all about, namely the "distinct and valuable" content discussed earlier.

3.5 Data collection and analysis

This section will explain how the data was collected and how it was analyzed. It will describe the ways that respondents filled out the survey and where they were found. It will also show how the data was looked at after being collected.

3.5.1 Data collection

The data for the survey was collected by two methods, an online survey utilizing the NCCU alumni Facebook page and in person data collection of convenience both on the NCCU campus and at different Metro locations in Taipei City. The data targeted Taipei residents over the age of 18 who watch TV programs. All data was collected from May 5th to May 25th 2015. Because this is an exploratory research project, there was no set number of respondents needed for hypothesis testing. However, a goal of 50-100 responses was targeted to provide a reasonable dataset to work with.

3.5.2 Data analysis

Due to the exploratory nature of this survey, no complicated statistical methods were employed to analyze the results. The data was entered in to a Survey Monkey account and basic percentages and averages were used to provide a better picture of what the research found.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has served to outline to purpose of this research, the specific research questions being looked at and the design of the survey. The next section will discuss the data that was gathered.

Chapter- 4 – Data Analysis

This chapter describes the analysis of the data obtained from the survey provide some discussion of what it might mean in relation to the research questions involving how television audiences in Taiwan would like to engage with their favorite shows on other platforms. After the data is presented a short summary will be given.

4.1 Sample Structure

A total of 128 responses were collected, however, only 108 could be used for the main question under study due to missing or skipped answers. The tables below show the breakdown by sex, age, and education level.

Answer Choices	Responses	
男	29.69%	38
女	70.31%	90
Total		128

Figure 4-Sample Gender

Answer Choices	Responses	
18-24 years old 歲	44.09%	56
25-34 years old 歲	38.58%	49
35-44 years old 歲	12.60%	16
45-54 years old 歲	3.15%	4
55-64 years old 歲	1.57%	2
Total		127

Figure 5-Sample Age

| Answer Choices	Responses	
High school 高中	1.56%	2
University 大學	71.88%	92
Graduate School 碩士	26.56%	34
Total		128

Figure 8-Sample Education Level

What should be noted form the above is that there was a higher percentage of responses from females for this survey. This could be due to the fact that females were more likely to fill out a form or that they were more concentrated in the sampling locations discussed above. As for age, the majority of this sample falls between 18-34 which is good for this study as this demographic should be more active on a receptive to engaging with new technology platforms.

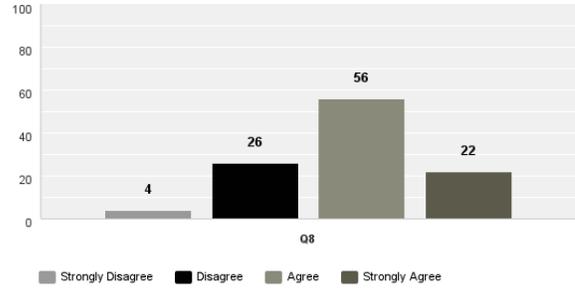## 4.2 Preference for type of extension

As mentioned in section 3.3.1 above, research question 1 is aimed at assessing whether audiences might respond to different types of transmedia cues in a different manner. Knowing which ones are more likely to trigger an audience to dig deeper would make it a preferred type of extension for a producer to put time or money into.

4.2.1 Character Based Extensions(Q5-8)

As noted in the survey design above, questions 5-8 of the survey were designed to find out if character based transmedia cues would stimulate engagement by the audience. These cues would be based on characters' actions, motivations and relationships and could be used to draw the audience to another medium to satisfy their interest in knowing more about the characters in their favorite shows.
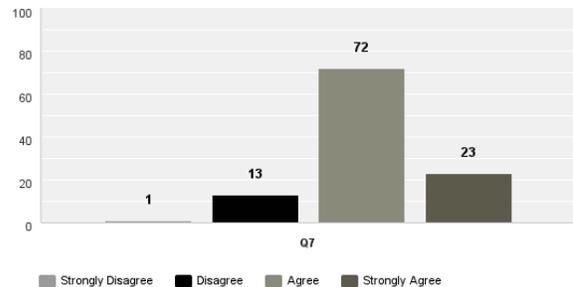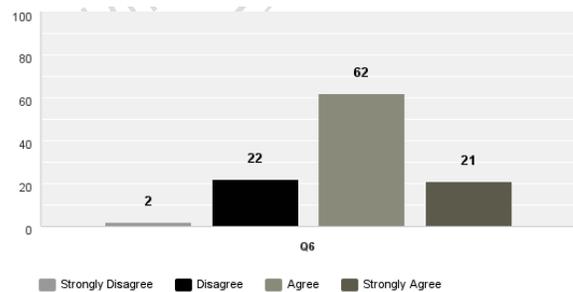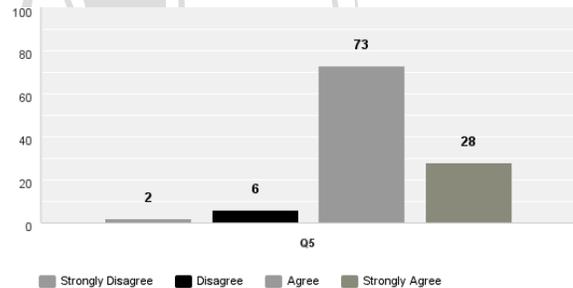
The sample in this showed a majority of interest on each of these type of cues as something that would provoke them to dig deeper. When averaged together, the responses showed 83% interest in engaging based on this type of cue. The other 17%

Figures 8-11 Character Based Cues

disagreed with the statement on the survey or perhaps did not understand the question.

This data shows the possible pay of creating rich characters with interesting back stories and complex relationships. That way fans of the show can be drawn in to explore these elements more deeply and be possible entry points to other platforms of the transmedia production.

4.2.2 Story world Based Extensions (Q9-12)
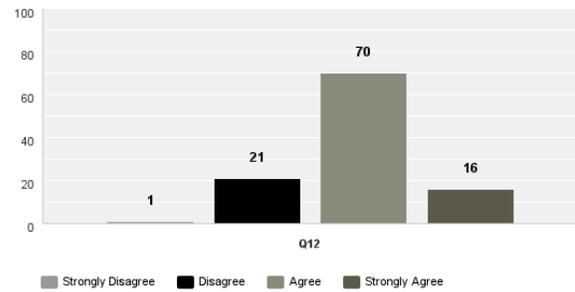
As discussed in the section on survey design, questions 9-12 were designed to see if a richer story world would create the type of negative capability for audiences to use as a cue to explore and engage with the television program. (Long, 2007) These cues might hint at places not yet explored on-screen or events from the past that are not seen on-screen. They also might just be unexplained
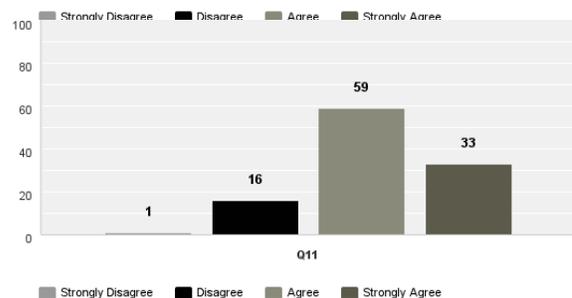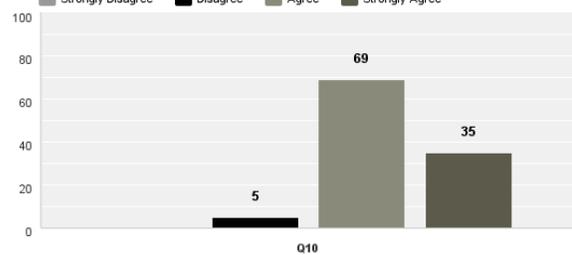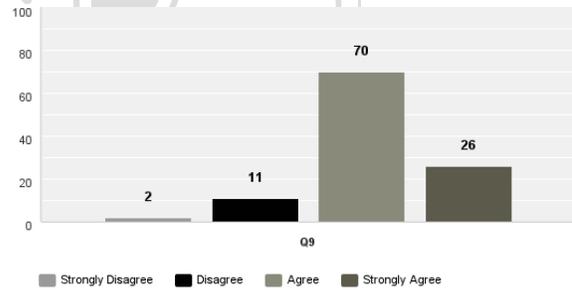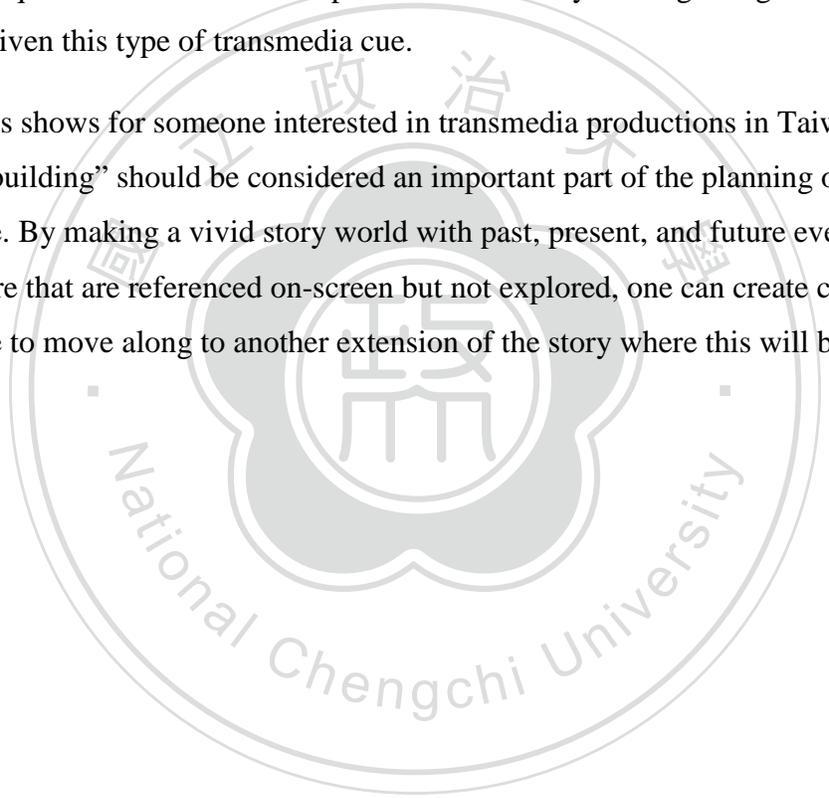
phenomenon of the world in which
the story takes place.

Figures 12-15 Story World Based
Extensions

The results of this survey showed a
clear majority of respondents as
willing to seek more information based on
these information gaps. When averaged
together, questions 9-12 showed a preference of nearly 86% agreeing to seek out further
action, given this type of transmedia cue.

What this shows for someone interested in transmedia productions in Taiwan is that
"world-building" should be considered an important part of the planning of a transmedia
narrative. By making a vivid story world with past, present, and future events, and places
to explore that are referenced on-screen but not explored, one can create cues for the
audience to move along to another extension of the story where this will be explored
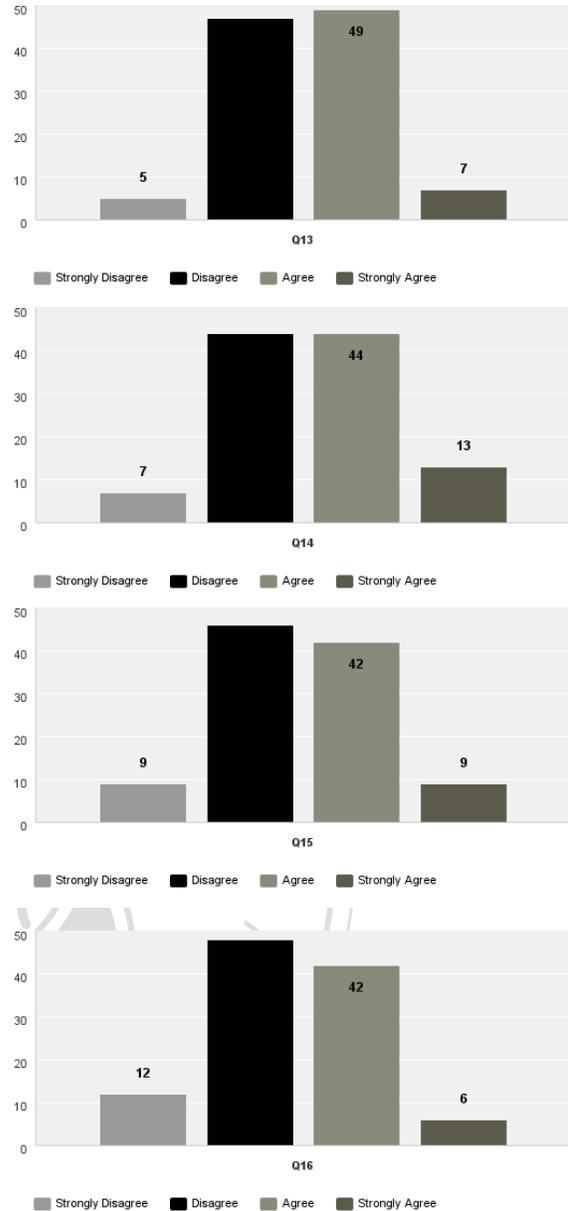more.

4.2.3 Participation Based Extensions (Q13-16)

As discussed earlier, question 13-16 were designed to see if television audiences were interested in the type of engagement that is participatory. They might be able to interact with the characters or influence events within the story such as in Sciyfy's *Defiance* show and video game discussed in section 2.3.3.1.   Or perhaps they play an active role in generating content like with the *Spiral* also mentioned in 2.3.3.2.

The figures to the right show the results from Q13-Q16.   All but, Q16 show a majority of respondents agreeing to look for more information based on participatory cues.   Q16 specifically mentions altering the relationships between characters in the show. Perhaps this type of participation was not

Figures 16-19 Participation Based Extensions

understood by the respondents or they do not wish to engage with characters in ways that alter the relationships they see on-screen. When averaging the results of these, the respondents of this survey agreed to this type of cue in a 50/50 manner.

Although three out of 4 questions show that more than 50% of respondents agree that they would look for more information on how to engage with their favorite show, these margins are less convincing than the previous two types of extensions. This could be due
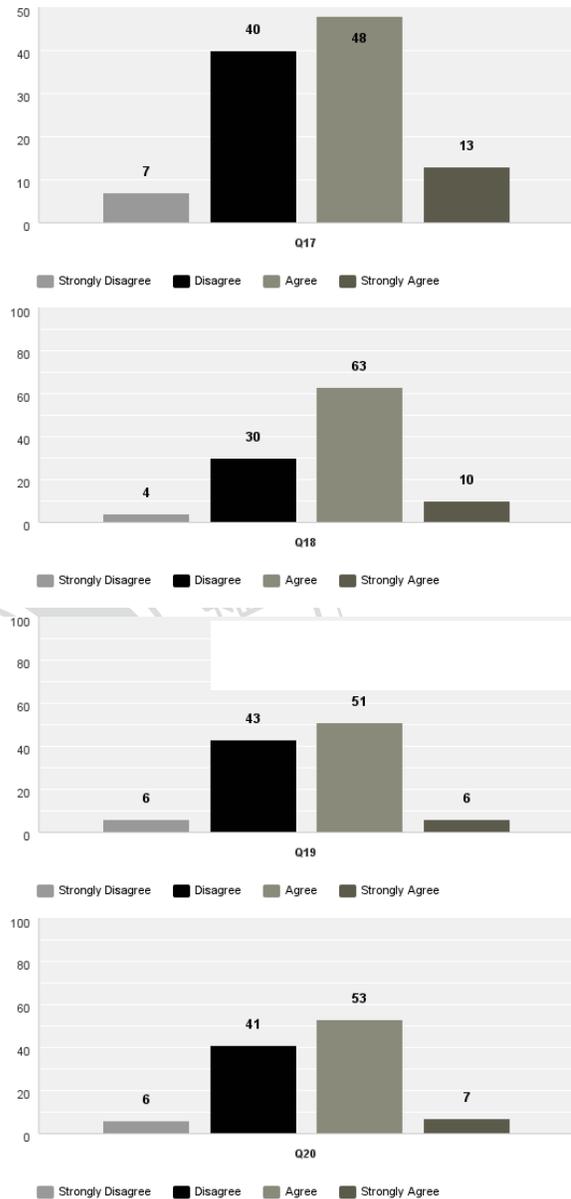
to doubt about what participation with a television program is or it might signal that audiences are less interested in participatory narratives in general.

4.2.4 Product Marketing Based Extensions (Q17-20)

Earlier it was explained that questions 17-20 were designed to see how likely audiences were to engage with a television show simply because of products or services shown in the show were of interest to them. While these are less "pure" in a transmedia storytelling way, producers of transmedia narratives might be able to use them in creative ways and secure corporate sponsorship for their productions.

For this type of cue, more than half of respondents answered that they agree to look for more information when encountering this type of cue. This survey showed that 63% of respondents would engage with this type of transmedia cue. The results of Q18 were the highest for engagement. This question dealt with the products or services that characters in the show use.

Figures 6-23-Product Marketing Based Extensions

The results of these four questions point to an interest in looking for more information about products and services both displayed in the show and used by the characters in the show. This information should help possible producers of transmedia productions think

about what products or services they might showcase on-screen or have their characters interact with. This also might be a place for producers to think about strategic partners that might be interested in funding their production in exchange for on-screen use of their product or service. The extensions developed for these products or services could be mutually beneficial to both parties if the audiences choose to engage with it.

4.3 Part 2a: Preferred platforms for engagement

The following charts show the breakdown for engagement by the five platforms discussed in the survey design section above. By knowing if there is a preferred platform for audiences to engage with their favorite shows on, producers can craft their content to better fit the preferred platform type.

4.3.1 Official website extension (Q21-22)

The charts to the right show the results of Q21 and Q22. These questions ask whether the audience would be interested in visiting an official website for their favorite show.

Both questions received a very strong majority of respondents agreeing to take action with this platform type.

Given the high saturation of internet
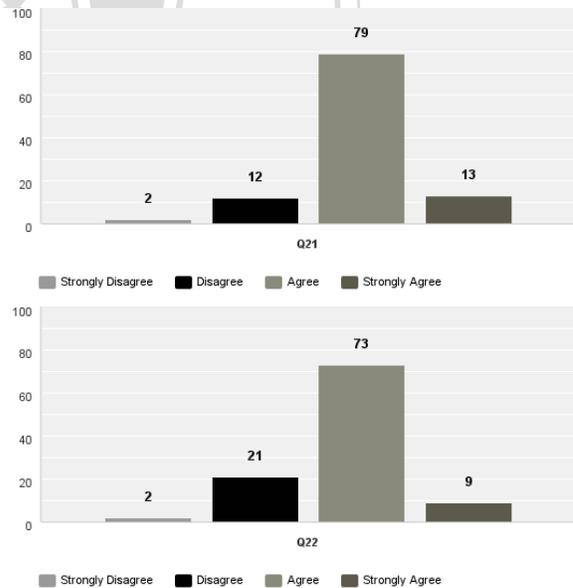
Figures 7-25-Q21-22

usage in Taiwan something like visiting a website for something you are interested is probably a pretty trivial action with a low cost to taking action.

4.3.2 Facebook page extension (Q23-24)

The charts in this section show responses for questions 23 and 24. They asked whether or not a respondent would use Facebook as a way to engage with their favored television program. Creating a Facebook page is a fairly easy and inexpensive thing for a producer.

Again, this platform shows that a majority of respondents would consider this as a place to explore their television program further.

Figures 26-27-Q23-24

As stated earlier in the survey design section, Facebook is currently the leading social networking site in the world and in Taiwan. The high rate of agreement for joining a Facebook page might be due to the fact that it is a very low barrier to entry of people are already logged in to the site for other purposes. This also makes it an inexpensive and viable platform for producers to create content for that is easily engaged with and spreadable via social networks.
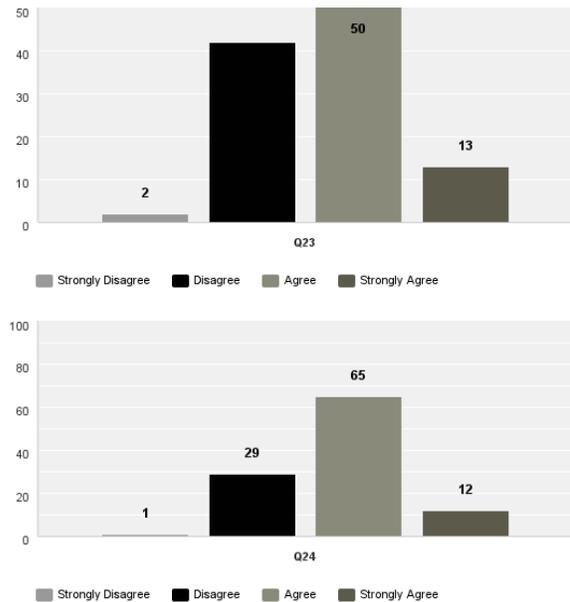
4.3.3 Mobile application extension (Q25-26)

The charts displayed here show the responses for questions 25 and 26. These questions asked whether a respondent would consider downloading a mobile application related to their favorite show.

The responses to the right show that less than 50% of respondents would agree to downloading a mobile application that relates to their favorite television program. Whether they actively disagreed to the prospect of downloading a mobile app or did not understand the question fully is not clear.

Figures 28-29-Q25-26

The results here are important to a would-be producer because of the cost of developing a mobile application both in terms of time and money. If the results of this survey apply to the larger population, a mobile application might be a very costly extension to develop with little promise of engagement from fans.
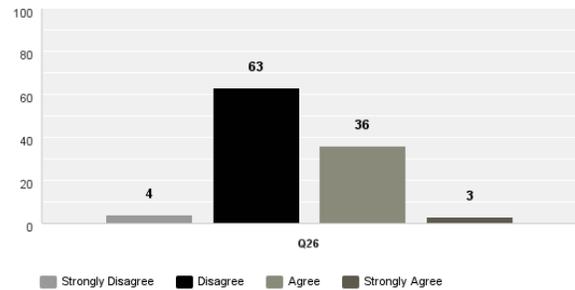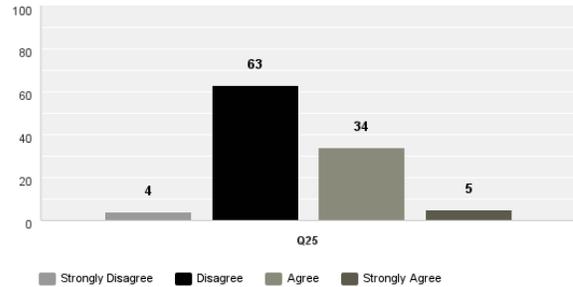
4.3.4 Print media extension (27-28)

The below figures show the results from questions 27 and 28. These two questions asked if a respondent would engage with print media such as a book, comic, or magazine related to their preferred television program.

The responses to this question show that a majority of respondents would consider purchasing print content related to their favorite show. There is not as large of a preference for this type of extension as for a website or Facebook page but there is some hope for the success of this type of extension.

Figures 30-31-Q27-28

The reason that this data is valuable is because it shows that if a story migrates to complementary print media in the form of a comic, book, or magazine there are audience members out there that would be willing to pay money for it. A more detailed survey might ask further questions to see which type of print media is more preferred so that a transmedia producer could target the one most likely to be used to engage with their intended audience.
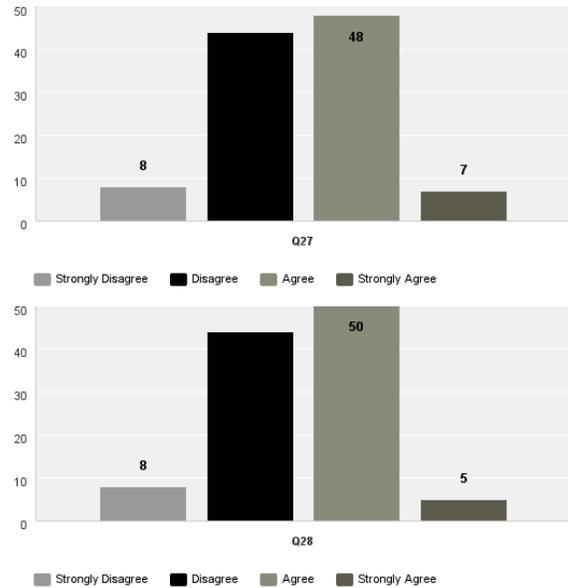
4.3.5 Video game extension (29-30)

The following charts show the results of survey questions 29 and 30. These questions asked if a respondent would consider playing a video game related to their preferred television program.

Like the results discussed in 4.3.3 above, the data here shows respondents answered in the "disagree" sections of the survey. AS stated earlier a "disagree" does not necessarily mean that they would actively not engage, perhaps they are confused by the question or what that type of extension would actually mean for their preferred TV program.

Figures 32-33-Q29-30

The results here are interesting for two reasons. First, as mentioned earlier in section 2.3.3.1 a television-plus-video game transmedia narrative is incredibly costly to produce. If there isn't strong audience support to explore an extension of this nature, that money could be better spent elsewhere. Second, as one of the two platforms to have a majority responding with disagree, is it from actual disagreement with this type of platform or merely not understanding what a video game extension of a TV show would look like?
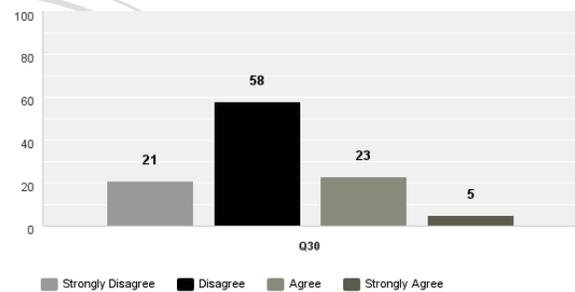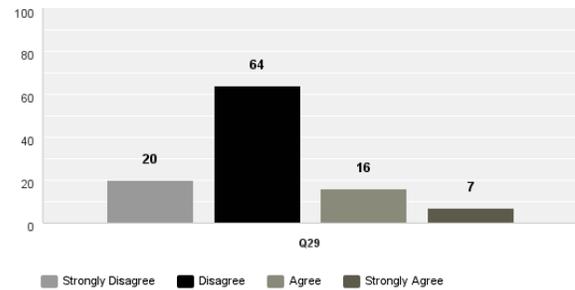
4.4 Part 2b: Simple versus "Distinct and Valuable" Extensions

Part 2b of the survey sought to look at if there was any difference between simple extensions and transmedia storytelling type extensions that add something "distinct and valuable" to the consumers understanding of the story. This data gets to the heart of the transmedia question. Do fans of shows actually want deeper meaning or understanding of their favorite shows or will they engage just for the sake of engaging.

4.4.1 Simple engagement (Q22, 23, 25, 28, 30)

To the right are the averaged results of questions 22, 23, 25, 28, and 30. These questions were designed to see if respondents would engage with content related to their favorite television program on various platforms. As mentioned in the section on survey design, these are part of the "couplet questions" designed to gather information on research question 2b. Do audiences show a preference for engaging with simple extensions or ones that are designed to give better or deeper understanding of the story as a whole?

Figures 34-38-Simple Engagement (Q22, 23, 25, 28, 30)

More than 50% of respondents agreed that they would engage with these extensions if they were a website, a Facebook page, or print media of some kind. The two extension type that did not have a majority of respondents responding positively were for downloading a mobile application and playing a video game related to the TV program.
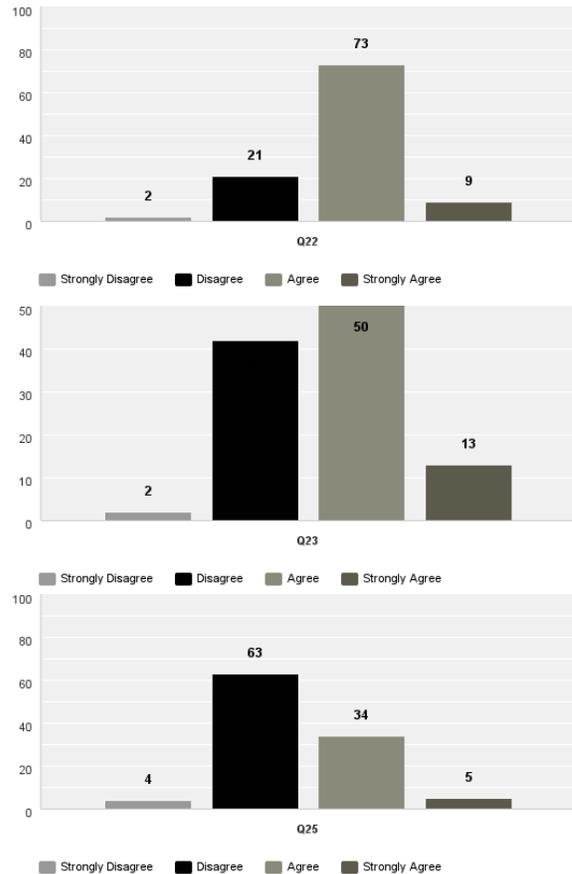
This data is interesting because it shows that audiences are favorable to engaging with extra content via the internet and would even consider paying for printed content related to their preferred TV shows.
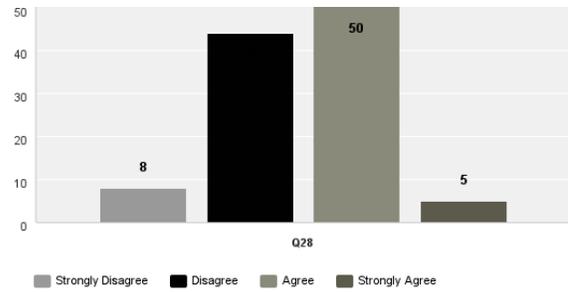
The two questions that did not have a majority of respondents agreeing to engage with the extension are interesting because they might show that mobile apps and video games are not good fits for transmedia
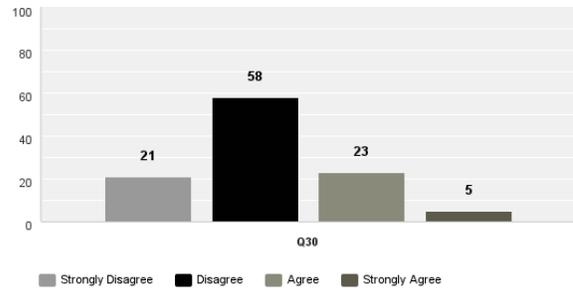
extensions in Taiwan. As mentioned earlier,

Figures 34-38-Simple Engagement (Q22, 23, 25, 28, 30)

the cost of developing either of these types of

content is quite high, so if this is case, a producer could well avoid wasting time or money on these platforms. However, this is a limited sample and perhaps these results are due to sample size or misunderstanding the question. The next section will look at the complementary questions to those just analyzed and compare the two sets.
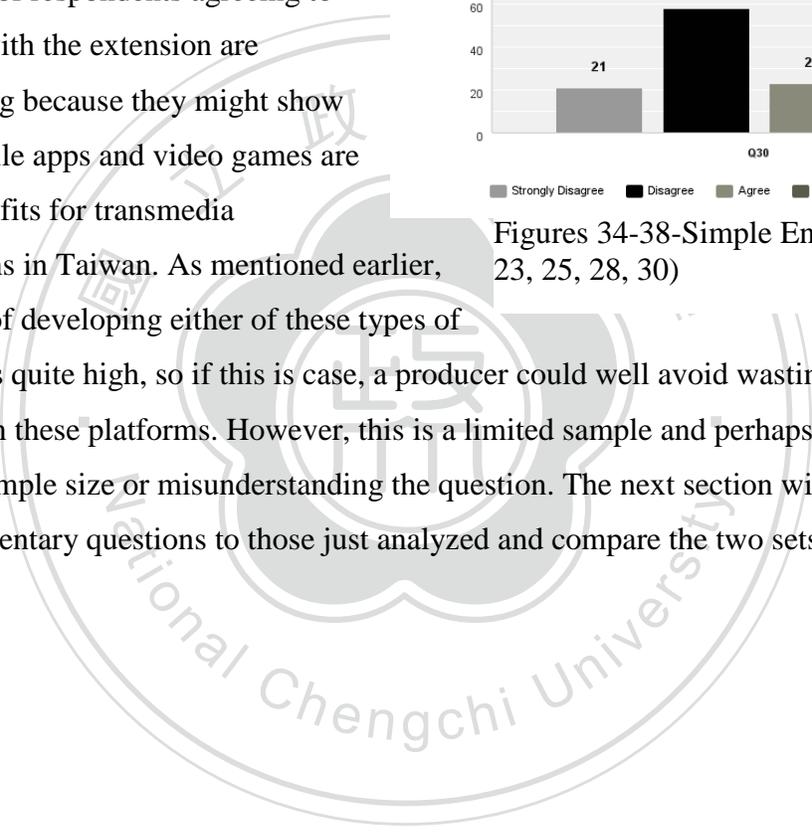
4.4.2 "Distinct and Valuable engagement"(Q21, 24, 26, 27, 29)

To the right and on the following page are the results from questions 21, 24, 26, 27, and 29. These questions were designed to ask if respondents would consider using another platform to access content that provides them with a deeper understanding of their preferred television program. These results show the respondents willingness to engage with more "pure" transmedia extensions that might add the "distinct and valuable" content that has been described in the literature review section and that is key to Jenkins' definitions of transmedia storytelling.

By looking at the results from the survey, we can see that among these five questions we see a similar pattern as with the responses to the simple extensions discussed in the above section. Websites, Facebook pages, and print media all show majority of respondents willing to engage with them, while mobile apps and video games had more respondents in the disagree section.
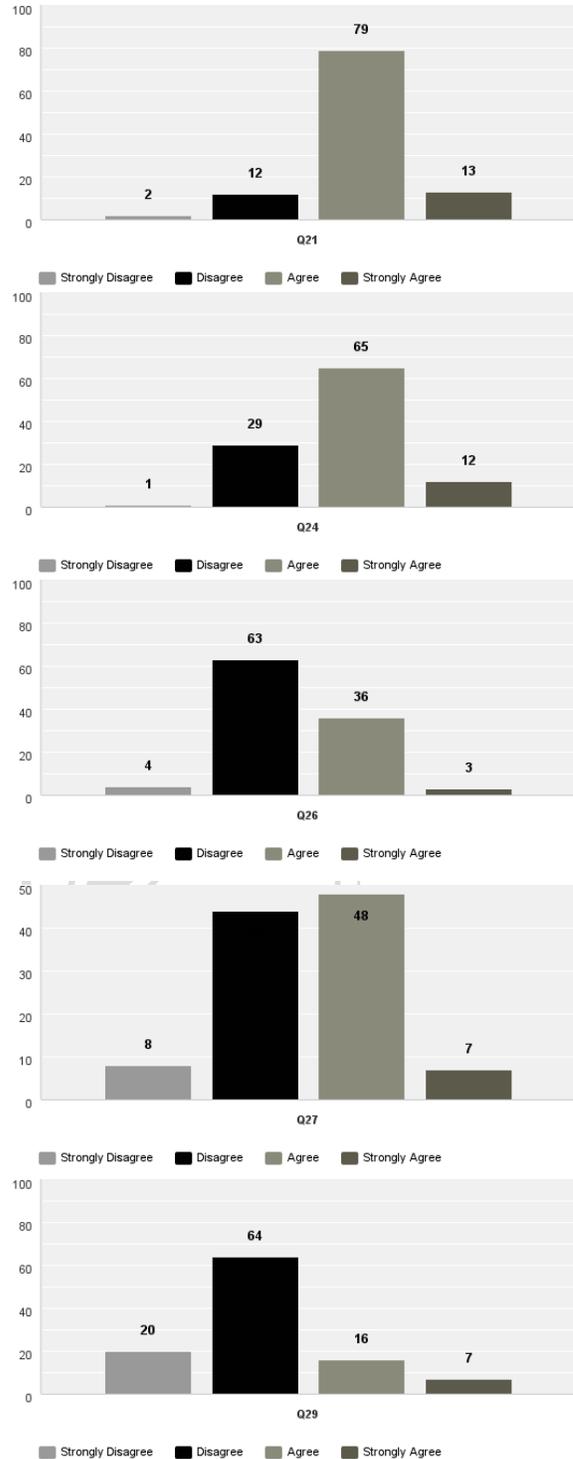
Figures 39-43-Distinct and Valuable Engagement (Q21, 24, 26, 27, 29)

This data is interesting for two main reasons. First, we can see again that if the correct platform is chosen for the transmedia extension, there seems to be a higher chance that audiences will engage with the content and in the case of print media, even pay for that content.

Second, if we compare the responses from section 4.2.1 to 4.2.2, we can see that there is a higher interest in engaging with the content if it adds to the understanding of the TV program. On the platforms that showed a majority of interest to engage (website, Facebook, and print media) all three showed a higher interest in engaging when the extension added something to the understanding of the audience's favorite TV program. This information should be useful to any producer of a transmedia narrative in that it shows that while fans will interact with simple extensions, they might get more interaction if those extensions add something "distinct and valuable" the overall story or world.
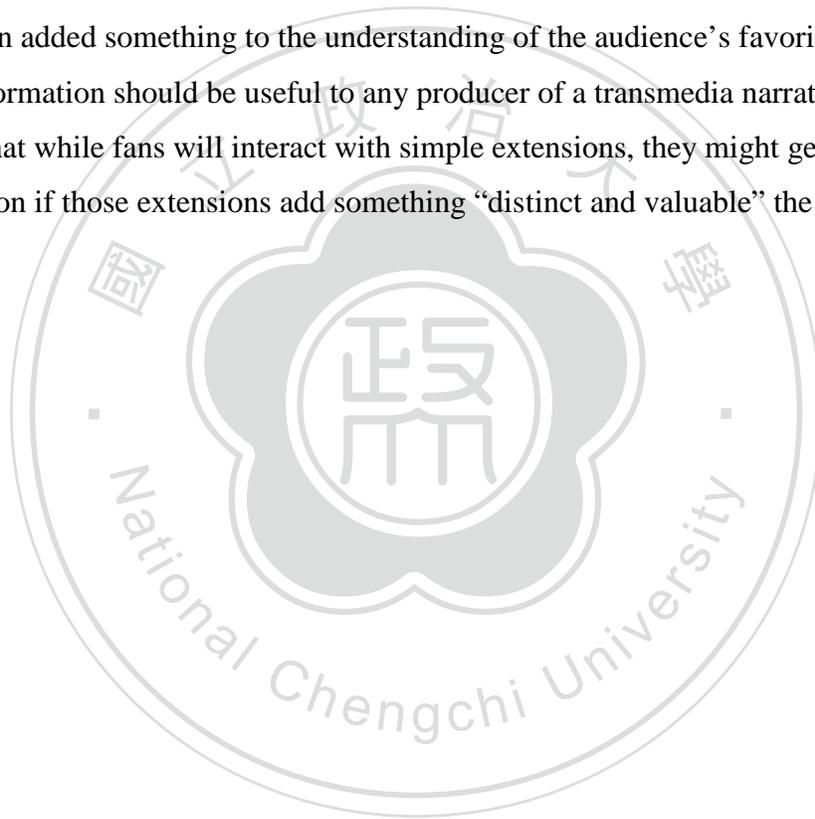
Chapter- 5 Conclusions and Future Directions

This chapter will serve to further discuss the overall topic under study, information gathered from survey and some areas for future research for professionals and academics interested in this topic. Now we should have a better idea of the basic logic behind transmedia storytelling and the various types of extensions that can be used to design a production that encourages its audience to engage with the program on secondary or tertiary platforms. The survey data gathered should also provide some information about what types of cues and platforms might make audiences in Taiwan engage with TV programs. The information collected should prove useful to those interested in transmedia in general and those interested in crafting transmedia stories for the Taiwan market.

5.1 Summary

The aim of this study was to gather information on audience interest in engaging with transmedia productions for television in Taiwan. As laid out in chapter 1, the author of this thesis expected that Taiwan with its highly developed media environment and digitally connected audiences would be a favorable place for transmedia stories to be produced and consumed. To measure interest from audiences for possible productions in the future, a knowledge of key terms and past productions of a similar nature was needed.

The literature review covered in chapter 2 served to give a framework of the history of transmedia storytelling as it evolved in the USA and Europe. As changes in technology evolved and audiences became more connected to one another through this technology, there was also a change in how some stories were crafted. These new transmedia narratives were designed to spill from one media platform to another to create a larger narrative or story world for fans to engage with. Long's thesis provided a way to talk about the type of cues that a producer might use to "migrate" the audience members to another platform. We then looked at some examples of completed and ongoing transmedia examples that use these types of cues and extensions for TV programs in the US and Europe.

After having a good framework of how to discuss transmedia storytelling and the possible extensions that might be used spread the story and the types of cues that might stimulate an audience to engage with these extensions, a survey was designed to gather information on what demand there might be for this type of story in Taiwan. What types of cues would be more likely to stimulate an audience member to seek more information? If they want to know more, what are the easiest platforms for them to use to dig deeper in to their favorite programs? And finally, are they interested in engaging with this extra content merely because it is related to their favorite program or because it gives them a better understanding of the story or the characters in it? The novel survey designed for this study tried to gather data on these questions.

By looking at the data from the survey employed in this study, many interesting things were found. Regarding the types of transmedia cues that can be used to make an audiences member seek out more information, it was seen that transmedia cues relating to characters in the program, and the story world were the cues that had the strongest indication that audiences would engage. Participation based cues and overt product marketing cues showed less strong interest in seeking out more information but still had more than 50% of the respondents agreeing that they would seek out more information (i.e. engage)

Regarding the second research question dealing with which platforms are more favorable for a fan to explore their it is seen that at least according to the population sampled in this survey, not all platforms are created equal. There was a lot of interest shown in engaging with an extension if it was on a website, Facebook page, or some kind of print media. For respondents of this survey downloading a mobile app or playing a video game related to their preferred TV program was not as popular of an extension type. This might be due to ambiguity in the question or that downloading or playing a video game involve a higher cost to explore. Or perhaps the sampled population is not one that prefers to use these types of media.

The last research question that this thesis sought to gather information deals with the very definition of a transmedia narrative and whether audiences are interested in extra content in general or content that deepens their knowledge or understanding of their preferred TV

program by adding the "distinct and valuable" content discussed in other studies of transmedia storytelling. By looking at the data from this survey it was shown that although respondents agreed to engage with the extensions on a website, Facebook page, or through print media, they responded more favorably to each of these possible extensions if they would add to a deeper understanding of their favorite TV program.

5.2 Contributions

The data gathered form this study has contributed to the academic field of transmedia study as well as for the various industries are related to that transmedia storytelling in Taiwan.

In terms of its academic significance, this thesis and the data gathered in it serves to expand on earlier works and help find ways to measure an audience's interest in engaging with multi-platform narratives before they are produced. By designing a novel survey to gauge this type of interest it is hoped that future research can expand on and improve the survey methods used here. Additionally, at the time of writing, this author is unaware of other research relating to audience-side data about transmedia storytelling in Taiwan.

As for this thesis and its contributions to the professional industry in Taiwan, there are a few insights that have been uncovered. First, there is now empirical evidence showing what type of transmedia cues would be most successful in making audiences want to know more. Second, the three platforms discussed in section 4.3 showed that they might be the easiest and most cost effective for a transmedia producer to develop their content for at least according to the sample population that this research got answers from. Third, according to the data gathered here, producers can see that if the content they design for their extensions adds a deeper understanding to the whole, their audiences will be more willing to engage with it. Next some recommendations for future research will be identified.

5.3 Recommendations

From the data gathered in this study, three things seem to be apparent for someone designing a transmedia narrative in Taiwan. First, audiences in Taiwan are interested in finding more information about their favorite TV programs. They seem to be more inclined to seek this information out if transmedia cues are developed for their favorite characters, the overall story world, or for product and services seen in the program. Second, websites, Facebook pages, and print media seem to be the most favored platforms to engage with this content. Third, if these extensions offer more insight or a deeper understanding to their favorite programs, they are also more likely to engage with that content, sometimes by making a purchase. These pieces of information should be useful to anyone interested in this topic academically or for making productions in the future. The limitation of this research will now be discussed below.

5.4 Limitations

There are limitations in this research mostly due to time, money, and linguistic ability. Sampling employed convenience sampling and an online survey, which could be improved upon in future studies. Future research should seek to sample a larger population. Also it might be interesting to get rich in depth interviews or focus groups conducted on the group under study. For people looking to dive deeper into these research questions the author has added some interesting directions that one might go for study in Taiwan or for transmedia in general.

5.5 Future studies in Taiwan

The author of this thesis has three suggestions for future research directions in Taiwan. First, a larger population could be reached and more robust data analysis performed. The current study tried to get a higher response rate by incentivizing the filling out of the online survey, but it did not produce more results. A better working skill of data analysis techniques would have also increased the usefulness of the data obtained from the survey.

Second, future research might want to look at how audiences access their favorite shows, obviously if they are accessing them from online sources that aren't related to the original producers or accessing them in a different order than the producers this might affect their ability to engage and enjoy the extra transmedia content. Simons mentioned this in his study of audiences in Belgium watching US television shows after they had been aired in the USA (Simons, 2014). This could pose a problem for producers seeking engagement or needing it to keep advertising partners happy.

Third a future study might want to employ the use of in-depth interviews with the target population. These interviews could ask questions about what the top programs are in Taiwan, why they are popular and if there are common themes within the content. This information would be great in testing the quantitative information gathered in this study. By combining the information gathered in this thesis with the above suggestions a very detailed view of audience consumption patterns would be seen which would be very valuable to any content producers.

5.6 Future Directions in General

The very nature of transmedia storytelling is a technology dependent concept. One where access to technology production on multiple mediums becoming cheaper over time, makes for storytellers to attempt never before seen productions. However, the need to make something spread across multiple platforms cannot take precedent over the need for a good story or world in the first place. Ciancia puts this into words quite eloquently when stating "Each platform can be thought of as an instrument, and it is up to the producer to make sure they play together as a symphony (Ciancia, 2013). Because of the ever evolving ecosystem of technology, various mobile apps, or social media platforms can and will change and so too will the types of stories and types of audiences that want to engage on those platforms. As the traditional broadcast platform for television evolves in different markets (such as the HBBTV-Next standard) so, too will viewing and consumption patterns in general. With a push for "content everywhere" as mentioned earlier, viewing behaviors and platforms for viewing might change along with it. But the logic of a story told in a transmedia way will persist. So too will the types of cues that push or pull an audience to another platform.

Finally, in a related manner, online video consumption is changing the way series are released and consumed. Engaging with television shows in between episodes is based on a traditional weekly broadcast model. Companies like Netflix in the USA are currently producing and releasing content in an "all you can watch" format that might prove difficult for producers to create transmedia content for ("Come Binge with Me", 2013). The way that mobile apps or internet based platforms can sync with exactly what a consumer is watching and when they are watching it would only lend to more ways for a story to unfold for the audience member. As Simons admitted in his writing on the reception in Belgium of U.S. produced transmedia texts: "Differences in reception between Flemish and U.S. transmedia TV drama, such as the lack of knowledge about and consumption of cross media and transmedia extensions for U.S. TV drama, might be the result of the delay in broadcast transmission and the much smaller-scale marketing campaigns of U.S. TV drama" (Simons, 2014). A future study might want to look at how a change in the way television shows are scheduled for release by region and if extra content is available and tailored to each region would affect the interest in engagement among the intended audiences.
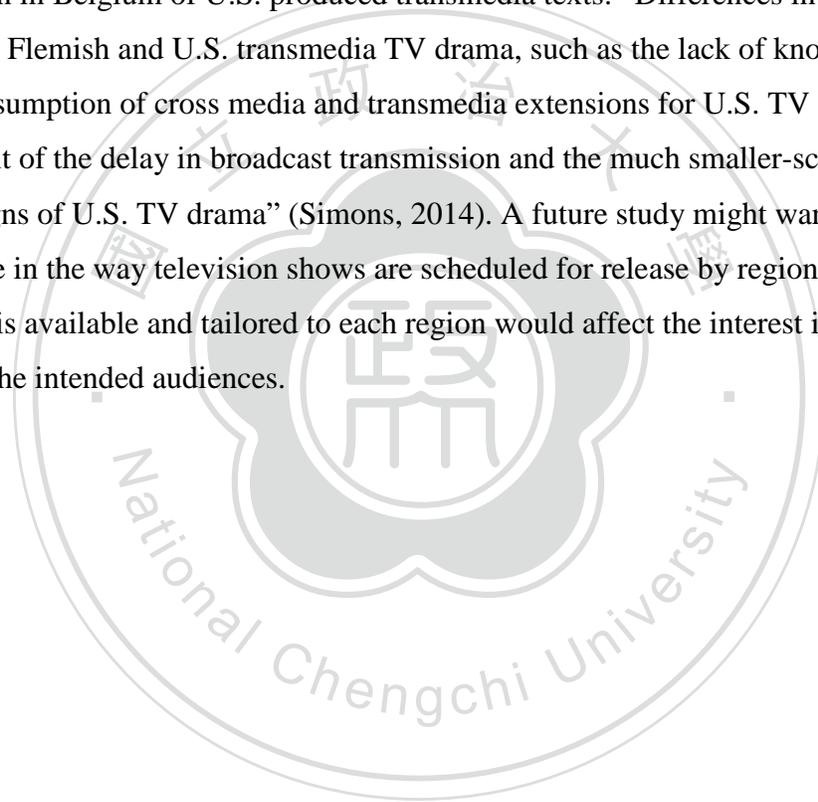
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Appendix

Survey Questions in Chinese and English

Dear Respondent,

I am conducting a survey to learn about television audiences in Taiwan. I sincerely invite you to complete the following questionnaire. It should take 10-15 minutes to fill out. The data collected will be used for my thesis. No personal information will be made public. Your answers will be kept in strict confidence. Please take the time to fill it out as accurately as possible. Your help is crucial to this research and I greatly appreciate your time and effort.

Thank you,

Mark Portwood

您好，

我正在做一份對於台灣電視的觀眾調查。我很誠摯的邀請您協助完成這份調查。所有的調查資料及數據收集將被使用於我的論文報告， 您的個人資料不會被公開且提供的調查資料將會是被保密的。請耐心地填寫並協助提供最適合的答案。您的幫助將會對我的研究報告有非常重要！非常感激您的耐心地填寫與協助。

感謝您

Mark Portwood

Part 1: Basic Information: <u>Circle one</u>

第一部分：基本資料（請圈選）

1. Sex: Male- Female 性別 ：男 ／ 女

2. Age: 年齡：

    a. 18-24 years old 歲

    b. 25-34 years old

    c. 35-44 years old

    d. 45-54 years old

    e. 55-64 years old

    f. 65-74 years old

    g. 75 years or older 歲或以上

3. Education Completed: 教育程度

    a. High school 高中

    b. University 大學

    c. Graduate School 碩士

4. Industry of current employment (optional) 目前公司 (

    a. _____

Type of Cue	Research Question 1: English	Research Question 1: Chinese	Source:
Character Based Cues	5. To better understand the characters in my favorite show, I will search out more information	對於我喜歡的戲劇中的角色們，我會去搜尋更多的資訊來幫助我了解他們。	Long, 2007
	6. To know more about the motivations of the characters in my favorite show, I will search for more information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，為了知道關於戲中角色他們的一些動機，我會去搜尋更多的資訊。	
	7. To know more about the relationships between characters in my favorite show, I will seek more information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，為了知道關於戲中角色他們互相的關係，我會去搜尋更多的資訊。	
	8. When the characters in my favorite show act in a way, I don't understand I will seek more information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，當戲中角色演的方式我不了解，我會去搜尋更多的資訊。	

Storyworld Based Cues	**9.** To better understand the world of my favorite TV show, I will search for more information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，為了知道關於戲中的世界，我會去搜尋更多的資訊。	**Long, 2007**
	10. If I saw something in the story-world of my favorite show and am curious about it, I would seek further information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若有一些事情是在戲中的世界引起我的好奇，我會去搜尋更多相關的資訊。	
	11. If characters in my favorite show talked about events that happened off screen, I would seek further information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若角色們談論有一些戲外真實發生的事件，我會去搜尋更多相關的資訊。	
	12. If there were places mentioned in my favorite show, but I didn't see them on-screen, I would look for more information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若戲中提到一些地方但我沒有看到，我會去搜尋更多的資訊。	

Participation Based Cues	**13.** If I could take part in the events of my favorite show, I would seek out further information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若可以參加一瀉相關活動，我會去找出更多的資訊。	Self- Designed
	14. If I could influence the outcome of my favorite show I would seek out further information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若有一些方式我可以去影響此戲劇的接下情節，我會去找出更多的資訊。	
	15. If I could interact with the characters in my favorite show, I would seek further information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若我可以跟戲中角色有互動機會，我會去搜尋更多的資訊。	
	16. If I could alter the character relationships in my favorite show, I would seek further information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若我有機會可以改變戲中角色們的關係，我會去搜尋更多的資訊。	

Product Marketing Based Cues	**17.** To learn more about the clothes the characters on my favorite show wear, I will search out information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，我想知道更多戲中角色的服裝，我會去搜尋更多的資訊。
	18. To learn more about the products or services that the characters in my favorite show use, I will search out more information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，我想知道更多戲中角色所使用的產品或設施，我會去搜尋更多的資訊。
	19. If the characters on my favorite show use a product that I am not familiar with, I will seek out further information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若戲中角色用的產品我並不是很熟悉，我會去搜尋更多的資訊。
	20. If a new app or service is mentioned on my favorite show and I am not familiar with it, I will search for more information.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若戲中角色提及新的應用軟體或電子服務設施我並不是很熟悉，我會去搜尋更多的資訊。

Self- Designed

Extension Type	Research Question 2a/2b: English *Distinct and Valuable Extension	Research Question 2a/2b: Chinese	Source:
Website	**21.** If there were an official website that added to the understanding of my favorite show, I would visit it.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若官方網站可讓我更了解此戲劇 ，我會上此網站閱覽。	Jenkins, 2006
Website	**22.** If there were an official website for my favorite show, I would visit it.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若有官方網站， 我會上此網站 。	Jenkins, 2006
Facebook	**23.** If there were an official Facebook page for my favorite show I would join it.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若有官方 Facebook 網頁， 我會加入此網頁。	Jenkins, 2006
Facebook	**24.** If there were an official Facebook page that added to the understanding of my favorite show, I would join it.	對於我喜歡的戲劇， 若有官方 Facebook 網頁可讓我更了解此戲劇 ， 我會加入此網站。	Jenkins, 2006

Mobile App	**25.** If there were a mobile app related to my favorite show I would download it.	對於我喜歡的戲劇， 若有相關應用軟體，我會下載。
	26. If there were a mobile app that added to the understanding of my favorite show I would download it.	對於我喜歡的戲劇， 若有相關應用軟體可讓我更了解此戲劇 ，我會下載。

Jenkins, 2006

Print Media	**27.** If there were a comic, book, or magazine that added understanding of my favorite show, I would consider buying it.	對於我喜歡的戲劇， 若有漫畫,書籍或雜誌可讓我更了解此戲劇 ，我會考慮購買 。
	28. If there were a comic, book, or magazine related to my favorite show I would consider buying it.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若有相關漫畫,書籍或雜誌 ，我會考慮購買。

Jenkins, 2006

Video game	**29.** If there were a video game that added to the understanding of my favorite show I would consider playing it**.**	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若有電玩可讓我更了解次戲劇 ，我會考慮購買。
	30. If there were a video game related to my favorite show, I would consider playing it.	對於我喜歡的戲劇，若有相關電玩，我會考慮購買。

Jenkins, 2006