Full Length Research Paper

An exploration of the limitations of transmedia storytelling: Focusing on the entertainment and education sectors

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Transmedia storytelling is a concept emerging in the field of communication and media. The concept was first popularized by Jenkins. He defined it as a representation of a process in which integral elements of given fiction are disseminated systematically through multiple media platforms. Even though many researchers have studied the concept, not enough studies have been done with respect to its limitations, especially in the context of the entertainment and education sectors. Therefore, this research study was meant to explore the limitations of transmedia storytelling as it relates to entertainment and education. Hence, the researcher sought to achieve two objectives: to explore the limitations of transmedia storytelling in the entertainment industry and to explore the limitations of transmedia storytelling in the education system. Qualitative research methods were preferred for this study. An exploratory research design was employed, with interpretivism adopted as the research paradigm. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 13 people to participate in this study. The methods of data collection included semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). The data that were collected were analyzed using a thematic approach. With regard to the entertainment industry, this study showed that the limitations included difficulties in collaboration between different media platforms, failure to take into account consumers who were not interested in more than one media platform as a source of various story elements, and inconsistencies regarding co-creation. In relation to education, the limitations included the fact that transmedia storytelling ignored the issue of cognitive maturity, ignored the credibility issues regarding various media platforms being sources of accurate academic knowledge, the slow pace at which transmedia projects are developed, and the disadvantages to learners who are neither able to access appropriate technologies nor able to use them.

Key words: Transmedia, transmedia storytelling, media convergence, new media.

INTRODUCTION

Transmedia storytelling is a concept emerging in the field of communication and media. It is otherwise referred to as multiplatform storytelling or transmedia narrative.

Jenkins (2007) came up with the concept of t a process in which essential transmedia storytelling and he defined it as representing a process in which essential elements of

fiction are diffused systematically across multiple delivery channels with the goal of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. In this case, he argued that each medium through which fiction unfolds makes its own distinctive contribution to the unfolding story. To explain the concept, he gave the example of *The Matrix*, arguing that the key bits of the film are disseminated through three live action films, a series of animated shorts, numerous video games and two collections of comic books.

Transmedia storytelling is touted as being fully participatory; that audiences are actively involved and are elevated to the position of social and creative co-creators. Importantly, it is argued that the design of transmedia fiction motivates audiences to engage with other audiences or participants and encourages them to seek out parts of a fiction from other platforms. In the process, the audiences are said to contribute to the narrative through adding content.

The concept of transmedia storytelling has been applied in various industries. For instance, Nazuk et al. (2015), have applied it in the form of digital storytelling to study its application as a teaching tool at a university. It has also been applied to be studied in fields such as corporate communication (Costa Sánchez, 2014), entertainment (Jenkins, 2010) and social change issues (Alexander and Regier, 2011), among others.

As discussed earlier, it is evident that the concept of transmedia storytelling has gained currency since Jenkins established it. Nonetheless, the focus of this study was on the critique of the concept; the majority of studies that have examined the use of the concept have failed to provide effective criticism. Many research studies had been done in the area of transmedia storytelling, with many of the studies focusing on its definition, on how it is distinct from other concepts such as crossmedia, and on how it has been applied in various research fields such as education, corporate communication, and marketing and branding. Unfortunately, no studies yet have been dedicated to the critique of transmedia storytelling. Consequently, little is known regarding the limitations of the concept. Importantly, the little that is known is not through a systematic study. Hence, this research was meant to undertake a systematic study to explore the limitations of the concept.

Research questions

The general objective of this study was to explore the limitations of the concept of transmedia storytelling. In this study, we set up the research questions as follows:

(1) What are the limitations of transmedia storytelling in the entertainment and media industry?
(2) What are the limitations of transmedia storytelling in the education system?

This study is justified on the grounds that transmedia storytelling is a relatively new concept and not much has been done to analyze it critically; most researchers who have studied it have failed to consider the need to criticize it through a systematic approach. This study has both practical and theoretical significance. The practical importance is that it broadens the understanding of various stakeholders with regard to the limitations of transmedia storytelling. In relation to theoretical significance, the results of this study contribute to the growing body of research literature on transmedia storytelling. This study lays a foundation on which future studies criticizing the concept will be based.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The definition of transmedia storytelling

Many scholars have discoursed and produced numerous literatures on the concept of transmedia storytelling. Jenkins (2007), who was the initiator of the concept, defined transmedia storytelling as a representation of a process through which integral components of fiction are systematically disseminated across a multiplicity of delivery channels, the reason of which is to create a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. He further explains that each media, through which different components of a fiction unfold, contributes uniquely to the story. He insists that each component of an unfolding story must be accessible on its own terms, as it contributes uniquely to the entire narrative system.

From another research by Jenkins (2011), he insists that transmedia simply means "across media" and it is a way of discoursing about convergence as a set of cultural practices. Hence, he views transmedia storytelling as rationality for deliberating about the flow of content across media, with most of the content serving a bigger purpose, deepening audience engagement, offering the perspective of others' characters, mapping the world, and offering back story. In support of Jenkins (2011), Kalogeras (2014) referred to transmedia storytelling as telling a story through a cross-platform, multiplatform or integrated media. Notably, in defining transmedia, different scholars have distinguished it from other related concepts. For instance, while contributing to the discourse, Moloney (2014), distinguished transmedia from concepts such as multimedia and crossmedia. In his

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opinion, he views crossmedia as a term created for theadvertising industry and defined it as the process of telling a story through different media outlets. According to him, crossmedia involve the dissemination of a story through many media channels without changing it. The implication, in this case, is that one story is wholly unfolded through different media channels and that audiences and consumers do not have to look for other media platforms to construct a complete story. He also defined multimedia, which he distinguished from transmedia. According to his definition, multimedia involves the use of many forms of telling a single story through a single channel.

Most importantly, borrowing from Jenkins' (2007), definition of transmedia storytelling, Moloney (2014) viewed transmedia storytelling as the telling of numerous stories that contribute to a story world, with each story being complete in itself, but making a crucial contribution to the larger subject of concern.

Limitations of transmedia storytelling as a concept

Different scholars have been interested in the critique of transmedia storytelling. Baarspul (2012) argued that transmedia storytelling, as defined by Jenkins, has a number of issues. He also argued that there exists an inconsistency between the definition of the concept and the practicality of its implementation. While criticizing the concept, he raised a question as to what is wrong with medium in the concept. The concern is with regard to what "medium" really is and how the content that flows through a given medium is formed. The criticism against transmedia storytelling further touches on the problem of narrative. The contention is that the definition provided by Jenkins (2007) for transmedia storytelling is imprecise when talking about "storytelling". The implication of "storytelling" is thought to be either the creation of a story in the general sense, to which "narrative" refers to the context of literature, or the narrative as constructed in retrospection by audiences from the actions that are presented to them.

Jenkins' transmedia storytelling has further been criticized with respect to how it applies to children. In this regard, Pietschmann et al. (2014) argued that transmedia storytelling is limited when children are the target audience, in the sense that it requires children to have the cognitive maturity required to be able to link narratives from different media platforms to experience a complete story world. They further argued that the structure of transmedia storytelling, by virtue of the unfolding of a fiction through multiple media platforms is intricate. This intricacy is what makes it limited when it comes to children as an audience. The researchers also contend that children lack the cognitive development necessary to use, comprehend and participate in transmedia franchise processes. Given these arguments,

it is apparent that the proponents of transmedia storytelling have not focused on the practical applicability of the concept. It seems that, when defining the concept, Jenkins and other scholars who have been interested in it have presumed that all audiences have the capability of making use of transmedia storytelling, that they are able to seek other media platforms to collect other components of a story to experience a complete story world. It seems that, from their perspective, Jenkins (2007) and other proponents of the concept have gotten it wrong. In this regard, the definition, as offered by Jenkins, can be viewed as generalist in nature. It can be argued that it does not take into account social and demographic dynamics of audiences, many of whom may not be able to make use of the concept in a real sense.

A number of scholars have also been interested in the challenges that are encountered in making transmedia storytelling projects. For instance, Hazboun (2014) conducted a study in which he sought to explore the challenges of making transmedia storytelling projects. From the study, he noted that creating a transmedia storytelling project is a good start, but what is done to make it effective after the creation is equally important. The researcher further noted that the after-creation activities determine the success of a transmedia storytelling project. However, it is important to note that the argument was made based on researching a personal experience of the researcher.

While contributing to the discourse, Dowd (2015) argued that coming up with transmedia storytelling projects requires careful analysis and considerations. He further argues that the managerial, production and creative initiatives that are involved in coming up with transmedia storytelling projects are intricate and, sometimes tedious. Notably, Dowd's (2015) argument tends to support that of Hazboun (2014). With regard to using transmedia creatively, Dowd (2015), argued that there is a rising generation of media savvy consumers who are adept at utilizing social media tools to search for information and that they are seekers of information who do not enjoy getting all of the content they need in one place, instead, they are happy to seek related content from other multimedia platforms. To support the argument, he gave the example of the film *Lost: Final Chapter* (based on ABC's TV series *Lost*) as being representative of a tremendous success in transmedia storytelling. He explained that the film was a success involving television and social media platforms. However, according to Weaver (2012), transmedia storytelling fails. He gave the example of *The Matrix*, a film that Jenkins used to prove his idea of transmedia storytelling, as one of the noble failures of the concept. In his argument, he noted that consumers who just wanted to watch *The Matrix* did not get the full story, due to their lack of interest in seeking elements of the film from other media platforms. The insinuation of his contention is that some consumers or audiences may not be interested in seeking

other media platforms to get missing elements of an unfolding story. Hence, it can be concluded that transmedia storytelling ignores the fact that some consumers may actually fail to look for other media to experience a complete story world. Importantly, Weaver's (2012) argument contradicts Dowd's position regarding consumers' perspectives. With regard to different aspects of transmedia storytelling, it seems that Jenkins (2007) presumes that all media platforms through which fiction unfolds are effective; that every medium can effectively tell a story that fits perfectly into an entire story world. The foregoing argument is supported by the fact that Jenkins and most other scholarly discourses on the subject have not touched on the effectiveness of different media. Even so, Dowd (2015) noted and urged that how media variations affect the weaving of fiction is an issue that must be delineated. He concluded his argument by positing that every medium through which a story unfolds has its own strengths and limitations. It is apparent that studies have not yet adequately focused on how limitations of media platforms affect how stories unfold and how such limitations affect consumers' desire to seek other platforms for completing stories.

Summary of knowledge gap

A survey of literature shows that no studies yet have been done to critically analyze the concept of transmedia storytelling. Additionally, those who have criticized the concept have not relied on any sound, scientifically obtained information, even though their arguments provide insights regarding the limitations of transmedia storytelling. Consequently, there is a significant knowledge gap regarding the understanding of the practical limitations of the concept. The failure to delineate the inherent challenges and limitations that are associated with the process of transmedia storytelling represents a significant knowledge gap that needs to be bridged through a systematic study.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this study, the researcher used an explanatory research design. An exploratory research design is the best qualitative study approach when studies that can be referenced, with respect to the subject of a study are scanty. The primary significance of such a research design is that it helps a researcher gain important insights and understanding that can be used for later investigations (Palmer et al., 2012), and the design also allows for flexibility regarding sources of relevant data. The subject of this study has not been studied adequately, resulting in the general lack of scientific knowledge on its limitations. Hence, an exploratory research design was adopted.

The target population includes stakeholders in the media, education and communication sectors. What informed population choice was whether transmedia storytelling had been implemented in the sectors; hence, they provided a fertile ground for this study. Nonetheless, the sample population only includes those who were conversant with the concept and those who had applied and experienced it. The sampling process was purposive. Purposive sampling is otherwise referred to as judgmental or subjective sampling (Ray, 2012). According to him the sampling approach is a non-probability sampling technique in which a researcher chooses research participants based solely on his or her own personal subjective judgment. The most important reason why the purposive sampling technique was preferred in constituting the sample population was that it enables a researcher to select individuals with only the required characteristics; a researcher is able to eliminate potential participants who do not possess qualifications or characteristics that may not be useful in the achievement of research objectives (Vogt et al., 2012).

It is important to note that finding potential participants who understood and had experience transmedia storytelling were not easy to come by. This could be explained by the fact that concept is still new. The first sampling process was conducted with respect to the entertainment and media industry. In this regard, five individuals who knew and had experience with transmedia storytelling in the entertainment context were recruited into this study. In the second sampling process, five education professionals were identified and recruited into this study. In the final sampling process, three communication experts with vast knowledge on the subject of transmedia storytelling were identified and recruited into this study. In total, 13 individuals constituted the sample population.

Two methods of data collection were used: semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The use of semi-structured interviews entails the employment of pre-formulated questions, to which there is no strict adherence during data collection (Hesse-Biber and Johnson, 2015). Semi-structured interviews are conducted with the understanding that new questions might arise during interviews, which is one of the reasons why the method was preferred. Importantly, semi-structured interviews enable researchers to probe for more information from interviewees (Schensul and LeCompte, 2013). Focus group discussions (FGDs) are organized discussions that provide discussants the opportunity to discourse on specific subjects of interest to researchers (Silverman, 2016).

There were number of reasons for choosing FGDs: they provide accurate accounts of a participant's experience, they help in testing new ideas that emerge, they help a researcher to obtain a wide range of information regarding a subject being studied, and they help a researcher identify points of convergence regarding participants' views and opinions (Silverman, 2016). During both the interviews and the FGDs, the responses of participants were recorded through a voice recorder. Both processes took place across five days: three days for interviews and two days for the FGDs.

Validity and reliability are traditional criteria that have been used to judge quantitative research studies (Briggs and Coleman, 2007). In the context of qualitative research, researchers are often concerned with credibility and transferability as alternatives to validity, and dependability as an alternative to the reliability of a study (Lichtman, 2010). Credibility is about the believability of the results of a study. In this regard, to ensure credibility, only individuals who had knowledge and experience regarding the subject of this study were recruited to provide needed data.

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings of a qualitative research study can be generalized or otherwise transferred to other populations or contexts (Lichtman, 2010). In order to ensure transferability of the results of this study, the characteristics of the target population were sufficiently described. Also, the focus and scope of this study were clearly delineated. It was noted earlier that dependability is the alternative to reliability in a qualitative study (Kumar, 2010). Dependability is about the results of the study being able to be replicated, if a similar study is conducted (Kumar, 2010). In order to achieve dependability of this study, the researcher documented all of the procedures that were

used in completing the study. Any study involving human subjects often has some ethical issues that, by necessity are required to be dealt with. Since this study involved human subjects, some ethical issues had to be addressed. Before the commencement of this study, the informed consent of the research participants was obtained to ensure that they participated voluntarily (Babbie, 2010). In this case, the participants were provided with all of the material information pertaining to the research to enable them to make an informed decision on whether to participate or not based on their own free will without undue influence. They were also informed of the purpose of the study and told how the data or information they provided would be used. The participants were assured that the information that they would provide would be used for only scholarly purposes and that the data would be kept confidential and away from third party accesses. Importantly, during the study process, the confidentiality and privacy of the participants were respected. The participants were allowed to discontinue their participation without any consequence, if they thought their participation would no longer be in their best interest. Finally, the participants who did not want their identities to be exposed were identified as anonymous in research finding (Waller et al., 2015).

Research paradigm

During this study, reliance was placed on the interpretivist research paradigm. Ontologically, the foregoing paradigm is underlined by the assumption that reality, as is known, is established through meanings and comprehensions that are socially and experientially experienced (Liamputtong, 2007). Epistemologically, interpretivism assumes that individuals cannot be separated from what they already know (Walther, 2014). Researchers and objects of investigation are associated in such a way that who they are and how they comprehend the world are crucial parts of how they understand themselves, others and the world (Walther, 2014). According to Halland (2013), interpretivism has a number of tenets, one of which is that knowledge or results are achieved in the course of investigation. Importantly, the paradigm is underlined by the claim that pragmatic and moral concerns are significant concerns when assessing interpretative science. In this case, fostering a discourse between researchers and respondents is viewed as very important. According to the proponents of this paradigm, it is through the foregoing dialectical process that a more informed and intricate comprehension of a social world can be established (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009). Finally, the paradigm posits that all interpretations are with respect to particular moments, meaning that they are located in specific contexts, or situations and time. The proponents have further posited that the interpretations are left open to re-interpretation and negotiation through dialogue (Takhar-Lail, 2014). The choice of this paradigm for this study was based on the foregoing postulations.

Methods of data analysis

During the data analysis process, a thematic approach was utilized. A thematic analysis is a method of data analysis in qualitative research that involves a series of steps in which different themes within qualitative data are systematically identified (Guest et al., 2011). Since the data were recorded in a voice recorder during the collection process, data transcription was done to change the data into text. During the process, various comments were inserted at appropriate places within the text. For instance, "voice raised" and "pause" were used to indicate where respondents' voices were raised, lower or where they paused after being asked a question. The comments were meant to determine the thinking of respondents through non-verbal cues.

According to Guest et al. (2011), after transcription, data analysis was conducted in six main phases. In the first phase, the researcher familiarized themselves with the data through reading and re-reading the transcribed text. In the process of reading and re-reading, an initial list of potential codes was generated to help in the identification of possible themes and patterns in the data. During the familiarization process, important data that tended to answer the research questions were marked.

The second phase of the thematic analysis involved the generation of the initial list of themes and patterns reoccurring throughout the data. It is important to note that the coding process proceeded through inductive analyses; such a process is cyclical in nature. It is important to further note that the codes that were initially generated were continuously refined throughout the analysis process. During the process, labels were used to reduce data by identifying only parts that would answer the research questions and help in achieving research objectives.

Phase three involved searching for emergent themes. After data coding, the next main task is to identify the dominant themes that relate to the research questions. During the process, themes that tended to be similar were merged into one. In doing so, the languages that were used by participants were taken into consideration, so that languages that tended to refer to the same thing were assigned the same code or label. The fourth phase entailed the review of emerging themes; the researcher focused on finding the relevant data that helped the study answer research questions and meet research objectives. Overlapping themes were further combined.

In the fifth phase, the researcher defined and refined the themes that were to be presented in the final report. At this stage, the themes that did not tend to answer the researcher's questions or meet research objectives were finally discarded. The final phase involved the production of the research report.

RESULTS

Limitations of transmedia storytelling in the entertainment industry

With respect to the limitations of transmedia storytelling in the entertainment industry, three main themes emerged from the interviews that were conducted. The themes were as follows:

(1) Difficulties in collaboration between different media platforms,
(2) Ignores disinterested consumers, and
(3) Inconsistency with regard to co-creation

Regarding difficulties in collaboration between different media platforms, two interviewees who worked in the entertainment industry, stated that they had trouble collaborating with other media platforms like television stations. The interviewees tended to concur that, with the stiff competition in the entertainment and media industry, owners of most media platforms were never collaborative, making it difficult to create a coordinated story world. One of the interviewees stated: Due to the stiff competition in the market, most owners of different media platforms always want to maintain their competitive edge in the market. To do so, they limit the amount of information they share with owners of other platforms. This makes it difficult to create a story world through different platforms. For example, as entertainment

producers, if we seek the collaboration of televisions, there are always issues with trade secrets and intellectual property. Dealing with such issues requires many expenditures, which has the potential to increase the cost margins to unmanageable levels. The upshot is that it also becomes difficult to sell such expensive products to customers who may not want to engage with different platforms due to prohibitive prices.

The earlier quote from the interviewee points to the existence of legal difficulties in relation to collaborations among different media platforms to create a story world. What this scenario implied is that stiff competition, the need to protect trade secrets and issues of intellectual property hindered the effectiveness of transmedia storytelling in the entertainment industry. During the FGD sessions, most discussants agreed that different entertainment producers faced numerous challenges regarding coordinating among different media platforms to contribute to a story world. Another important theme that emerged was that transmedia storytelling falsely presumes that all consumers of entertainment products would be interested in other media. One of the discussants got the support of many others when she stated. The fact is that many customers who purchase entertainment products, such as videos, would like to get the whole story of their preferred movies in a single media or from a single point without a hassle. Apart from that, not many young people, for instance, prefer reading fiction so that they can continue experiencing a story through video and comic books.

The argument earlier was supported by another discussant, who said: Yes, some consumers are just not interested in seeking other media platforms and this makes it difficult for them to experience the whole story. They just make a one-off purchase of a movie and hope to get the whole experience of a story from that same movie. They have no clue that the story unfolds through many other platforms and that they should seek such other platforms to experience a complete story world. Another discussant stated: The biggest challenge with transmedia storytelling is that most media platforms do not provide clues as to the existence of the elements of a story through other platforms. With the lack of a clue or a signal, most consumers end up with only a few elements of a story world.

From the findings earlier, it is evident that Jenkins' (2007), transmedia storytelling presumes that all consumers would automatically be interested in seeking elements of a story from other media platforms, ignoring the behavior of many consumers who either do not bother to seek other platforms or are unaware of the existence of other elements unfolding through other platforms. The result is that transmedia storytelling is not as effective as would be anticipated in its practical application, especially in the entertainment industry. Based on the foregoing findings, transmedia storytelling producers tended to lose revenue with respect to

consumers who neither sought parts of stories from other media platforms nor were aware of the existence of such parts and the platforms through which they unfolded. From the perspective of consumers, short-term fans who are only casually interested in an entertainment product are denied the opportunity to understand an entire story because of transmedia storytelling; this means that only hardcore fans who are motivated to seek more of a story from other platforms enjoy the experience of an entire story world.

The final theme was that, practically, there were inconsistencies with regard to co-creation in certain situations. This study revealed that co-creation in transmedia storytelling required that co-creators understood the plot of stories in which they participated in creating. The statements of others supported one of the research participants when he said: The whole aspect of co-creation requires many things. One, all participants must understand the plot of the story being unfolded. Two, participants must be interested in participating in the process. Three, the original producers must leave their stories open-ended to allow participation. The problem that arises is underscored by the fact that most consumers may not understand fully the plot of the story and, in the process of contributing in the creation process, they are most likely to produce inconsistencies. The inconsistencies have the potential to result in disjointed elements contributing to a story world. The finding insinuates that co-creation in the context of transmedia storytelling does not work in many instances and the result may not be an intended, complete, and coherent story world.

Limitations of transmedia storytelling in the education system

This study was also interested in exploring the practical limitations of transmedia storytelling within the education sector. In this regard, the analysis process generated three main themes that got the support of all four educational professionals who were interviewed. The themes were:

(1) Transmedia storytelling requires cognitive maturity,
(2) Learners who having no access to technology are at a disadvantage,
(3) Credibility of media platforms, and
(4) Development of transmedia storytelling is slow

Data revealed that cognitive maturity was very important in the whole context of transmedia storytelling. The essence of the concept is that audiences or consumers are supposed to seek elements of a story from different multiple platforms through which it unfolds, in order to experience a whole story world. In this respect, the academic professionals who participated in the FDGs tended to agree that transmedia storytelling did not work

for children who had not matured cognitively. They mentioned the example of children in elementary schools, who still needed to depend on instructions from their teachers or guardians on what to do during their learning stages. One of the professionals said: Unlike adults or mature children who are able to think on their own, some children, such as those in elementary schools, are largely not able to interact with different media platforms in search for other elements of a story relating to education. In fact, they are never aware of whether the stories coming to them through different media are incomplete and contributing to an entire story world.

Another professional stated that: Transmedia storytelling only works with regard to mature school-going kids or students. Generally, children who are below the age of five years can never understand the working of transmedia storytelling. The data also revealed that transmedia storytelling was limited in respect to young children due to its complexity. Most of the respondents tended to concur with the fact that, to experience transmedia storytelling, individuals need to have advanced media skills, which young children lack; this represents a significant limitation of transmedia storytelling as a concept in education. Unfortunately, Jenkins (2007), in his many discussions, has not discussed this issue. The data showed that transmedia storytelling only favors learners in countries where technological integrations and usages are relatively high. According to the interviewees who were interviewed regarding the application of transmedia storytelling, it only favors learners in developed countries where the majority of learners have access to technologies that provide multimedia through which pedagogical stories unfold. In the words of one of the interviewees: As you know transmedia storytelling is a concept that has spread so fast around the globe and it is being tested in various sectors, including education. Transmedia storytelling is largely technology-assisted and the problem is that it does not work effectively where learners have no access to enabling technologies. This finding implies that transmedia storytelling only works well where there are enabling technologies. Being significantly technology dependent, transmedia storytelling is not useful to learners who have no access to technologies, much less the prerequisite knowledge that is required to use the technologies. In this regard, the failure of transmedia storytelling tends to be in the lack of sufficient non-technology media platforms through which pedagogical stories may unfold.

The issue of the credibility of certain media platforms emerged as an important theme during this study. Some of the research participants were concerned that it was difficult to do an appraisal of certain platforms through which pedagogical information flowed. For instance, one of the participants said that: In the education setting, the source of information or materials from which learners get knowledge needs to satisfy certain criteria. They should be scholarly sources such as books published by educational or research institutions, research reports, journals and seminal reports on academic matters. Unfortunately, when some learners, especially in high schools and below, are allowed to obtain information from different platforms without being guided, they may end up with inaccurate knowledge. What is important to note, in this case, is that knowledge obtained from different platforms may end up making an entire story world of which some parts are inaccurate. In that sense, there is the potential for misinformation from sources that are not academic or lack scientific backings.

The foregoing finding implies that transmedia storytelling should be used carefully in pedagogical contexts. It is important to note that, even though the majority of the participants who were interviewed agreed with the statement earlier, they thought that further studies should be done to determine whether the problem of credibility was affecting many educational institutions using the transmedia storytelling concept. The final theme was that the development of transmedia storytelling projects for use in classes could be very slow, time consuming and expensive. In such a scenario, the result implies that pedagogical transmedia storytelling resources were limited.

DISCUSSION

This study generated a number of findings with regard to limitations of transmedia storytelling in the context of the entertainment industry. One of the findings was that the concept ignored disinterested consumers, meaning that some consumers might not be interested in seeking other parts of a story from other media platforms. The finding implied that some consumers would be satisfied with a story from only one media platform, making them miss the other parts of a story world unfolding through other platforms. Notably, the finding supports the arguments of Weaver (2012), who gave the example of *The Matrix* to explain how some consumers might not be interested in seeking other parts of the story from other multimedia platforms.

This study also revealed that there were difficulties in terms of collaboration between different media platforms. Notably, the scholarly literature that was reviewed did not discuss this point; hence, this was one of the new contributions to the growing body of literature regarding limitations of transmedia storytelling. Additionally, this study showed that inconsistencies were experienced with respect to co-creation. Again, this finding was not a feature of any of the literature that was reviewed, implying an important theoretical contribution to the already existing body of literature. In terms of pedagogy, the study findings indicated that transmedia storytelling had a number of limitations, especially with regard to the cognitive development of children. According to the results of this study, children who were cognitively

immature could not make use of transmedia storytelling, a finding that supported the argument of Pietschmann et al. (2014).

According to the foregoing researchers, transmedia storytelling fails when children are the target audiences. They further contended that children lacked the kind of cognitive development that was necessary to use, comprehend and participate in transmedia franchise processes.

During this study, it was also discovered that learners with no access to enabling technology found it very difficult to use transmedia storytelling as a learning tool. Notably, previous researchers did not come up with the same finding.. This study also revealed that the credibility of certain media platforms through which pedagogy could take place could not be verified to ensure that they contributed to an entirely accurate story world. Finally, this study revealed that, in the context of education, the development of transmedia storytelling was slow, maybe because it is tedious. This finding tends to be underscored by Dowd's (2015), argument that managerial, production and creative initiatives that were involved in coming up with transmedia storytelling projects were intricate and tedious. Dowd's (2015) study could explain the slowness in the process.

Conclusion

This study sought to achieve two objectives: to explore the limitations of transmedia storytelling in the entertainment industry and to explore the limitations of transmedia storytelling in the education system. To achieve the foregoing objectives, qualitative research methods were used. The data that were used in this study were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The choice of the foregoing methods was necessitated by the fact that this study was exploratory in nature. Using the methods, this study yielded a number of limitations that were associated with transmedia storytelling in both the entertainment and educational contexts. In relation to entertainment, three main themes emerged: difficulties in collaboration between different media platforms, the concept ignored disinterested consumers, and inconsistency with regard to co-creation. With respect to education, the following themes emerged: transmedia storytelling requires cognitive maturity, the concept disadvantaged learners having no access to technology, credibility of media platforms, and development of transmedia storytelling was slow.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of practical and theoretical recommendations are important, based on this study. The findings of this study have shown the limitations of transmedia Story

telling in both the entertainment industry and the education sector. In this regard, implementers of the concept should come up with strategies to overcome the limitations. For instance, before applying the use of the concept in education, it is important to ensure that there are enough technologies available so that all students can take advantage of the concept during learning. On theoretical grounds, it is important to note that qualitative methods were used in this study. Such methods are inherently subjective and may not yield objective results that can be generalized to different populations. In essence, a qualitative study generates results that can only be appropriately generalized to the population from which a sample has been drawn. Hence, it is recommended that future studies with a similar focus should employ the use of quantitative methods. Importantly, one of the limitations of an exploratory study is that it neither offers conceptual distinction nor presents an explanatory relationship between variables. In light of the foregoing, it is important to recommend that future studies use quantitative methods and that future researchers focus on the link between transmedia storytelling and success factors in entertainment and education sectors.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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