Chapter 15
Fans' Narrations:
A Study on the Reproduction Practices of Branding Stories in the Context of Participatory Culture

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ABSTRACT

In today's world, with the development of technology, brands have turned to new communication means and methods apart from traditional communication tools like television, newspapers, magazines, cinemas, etc. in order to differentiate and escape from their competitors in an increasingly competitive environment. Storytelling and social media are the leading ones among these tools and methods. Thus, brands aim to create branding process and brand loyalty through the strategic communication they have established in social media with consumers. The concept of participatory culture has expanded thanks to digital communication technologies and social media. Fans who have an important place in the storytelling of transmedia reshape a story, associate it with their own lives, and recreate it by producing it again through various media, especially social media. Thus, in this study, it is aimed to reveal how the transmedia storytelling which has been awarded with fan comments in the context of participant culture contributes to brand communication, image, reputation, and marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The complex media environment we are in is changing viewer expectations about when, where and how information is consumed. The convergence of media improves new narration forms of narrative that are presented through multiple media (Stackelberg & Jones, 2014). Thus, the participation of fans with their own narratives in digital games and social media to the content created by comic books, books, movies, television series is getting more common day by day.

Fans have a significant role in transmedia storytelling. Particularly with the emergence and development of the internet and social media, fan groups have become the forefront and become a phenomenon. Fans are people who are socially organized and produce with collective intelligence, make them popular culture products and share them. Individuals share their own concepts and narratives in fan groups (Baym, 2007).

Today, transmedia storytelling is one of the most common strategies of media companies. The rapid development of digital media technology makes transmedia storytelling a preferred option. Professional hardwares and softwares offer low-cost tools for transmeda storytelling which is beyond the crawling stage anymore (Von Stackelberg & Jones, p. 59).

Social media is a medium in which the participant culture is most commonly produced and shared. Popular content is produced and shared by fans on social media. Social media is a place which is open for participation. Everyone who is interested in social media can create and share stories thanks to "participation", a special feature of its own. Fans of a brand are creating communities in the social media to have information about the brand, share their experiences, communicate with brands and other consumers, comment on the brand, and follow the brand's campaigns and products.

The main aim of this study is to reveal the way in which transmedia storytelling, which has been featured with fan comments in the context of participatory culture, contributes to brand communication, image, reputation and marketing. In the study, the concept set that constitutes the theoretical framework was established, and then the results of the user commentary on the social media in the selected examples were used to reveal the storytelling, and the functions of these expression templates on the brands were emphasized.

TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING

A Latin origined term, the transmediation has been used as a new whole meaning term (Falzon, 2012), which is larger than the parts at the same time, indicating features that are simultaneously created and distributed for multimedia applications in the last two decades. American scientist Marsha Kinder is the first person who suggested the term Transmedia. Henry Jenkins, on the other hand, became the first to introduce the term "Transmedia storytelling" (Zimmermann, 2014). Transmedia storytelling is one of the technological and imaginary approaches of the transmedia paradigm. Henry Jenkins's work on Transmedia Storytelling (2003) has shown that transmedia storytelling can be described as "a specific narrative structure that is transmitted and expanded through different languages (verbal, iconic etc.) and media (cinema, comic books, television, video games, etc.) It is not just transmedia storytelling that serves in the context of the narrative world. In addition to Transmedia storytelling, cross-media, multimedia, hybrid media, transmedial interactions and intermedia define the same semantic experience (Scolari, 2009). According to Pennington (2010), transmedance differs from multiple platforms. Unlike the cross-media, where content is on various platforms, transmedia storytelling means that a narrative is presented on different channels with their different perspectives. Transmedia, which is among the semantic practices, therefore encourages multiple literacy, which has the ability to interpret different media and discourse. Our minds do not like accidental situations or objects. Thus, our minds naturally connects some familiar parts one another subconsciously. There are signs and indicators in the source of the images that feed people's imagination. According to Dinehart (2008); "In Transmedia works, the viewer / user / actor transforms the story through his natural cognitive psychological skills and removes

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