Transmedia Narratives in Advertising
An analysis of the Marvel Cinematic Universe

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ABSTRACT

Despite the countless number of studies conducted over the years on transmedia narratives and its distinct story worlds, there is a distinct gap in research in combining transmedia narratives with advertising. More so, in the advertising for Blockbuster movies. This research analysed these transmedia advertising narratives in Blockbuster movies in the context of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The Marvel Cinematic Universe has been the subject of countless transmedia studies due to the multi-platform nature of its story world universe. The main aim of this research was to understand whether the advertising side of the story world would exhibit a transmedia narrative storyline, that mirrored its fictional counterpart. The PESO framework was used to segregate and analyse data in an organized manner. This was an unconventional data collection method, however it was necessary as the nature of transmedia requires a multiple platform analysis. A qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the advertisements and extract meaning using the directed content analysis approach. Main categories derived from theory helped uncover patterns present in the advertising data. The main findings of the data concluded that there are transmedia narrative storylines present in Marvel's Blockbuster movie advertising in recent years. Furthermore, that the transmedia narrative storylines in advertising are a recent phenomenon as Blockbuster movie advertisements analysed from previous years did not yield the same results as recently released movies. The results of the study concluded that transmedia advertising narratives have become a separate story world with recent movies, having a distinct universe and narratives of their own.

KEYWORDS: *Transmedia Advertising, PESO , Movie Marketing, Marvel, Audience Performance*

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The modern-day film industry can trace its beginnings to just over a hundred years ago. Cinema was just an infant industry birthed into existence through Thomas Edison's invention of the motion picture camera in 1897 (Kerrigan, 2010). It soon came to be understood that demand for this type of product could be heavily stimulated through repetitive images and representations (Staiger, 1990). This understanding is needed as the focus of this research lies in how films are advertised and marketed. As the popularity of this new form of entertainment increased, industry professionals had soon come to realise that supply needed to be increased in order to meet the demands of the evolving public taste (Kerrigan, 2010). The official rights to this form of technology was first introduced in the United States and has historically since led to the subsequent domination of the global film industry by Hollywood (Kerrigan, 2010). Films originated in the United States have dominated global cinema sales and these patterns have remained constant for the entire history of film production and consumption.

In order to narrow the research a more specific genre of movies was investigated. Alongside many genres of movies, the genre chosen was *Blockbusters*. The term Blockbuster implies a movie with high production values intending to earn and amass "unusually large amounts of money" (Hall, 2014). These are forms of globally dominant movies having a monopoly on the financial aspect through ticket sales (Hall, 2014). First used in the 1950's, the phrase had caught on in a variety of different news and media outlets to describe movies that earned above average money for the time period, distinguishing them from other movies (Gomery, 2003). Blockbuster movie production has since become a utilised strategy in film marketing spearheaded by Lew Wasserman who was responsible for reinventing the way major motion pictures are advertised (Gomery, 2003). As the focus of this paper will be on the advertising of films, a look at Wasserman's strategy is interesting as it revolutionised the way feature films are advertised. He proposed abundant, repeated and mass saturated advertising on *all* major publicly accessed forms of medium at the time. The exploration of this type of mass advertising using a variety of mediums will be the core idea behind this paper. The gap in research to be explored is the existence of a coherent narrative between this multi-media mass advertisements for blockbusters. Wasserman's tactics of repeated mass advertising, implemented by Steven Spielberg in the 1970's, proved to be the formula for transforming a film into a blockbuster, as Jaw's (1975) earned a spectacular $36 million (over

$200 million if adjusted for inflation as per 2018) within its first 3 weeks at the domestic US box office (Gomery, 2003).

The introduction of blockbuster strategies has thus drastically changed how movies are advertised and marketed, the main implication of the term being the intention behind production. These types of movies are purposefully designed and marketed in order to become blockbusters, making them a distinct genre on their own (Hall, 2014). Thus, it is fair to say that blockbuster film advertising is a distinctly separate form of advertising than a regular film marketing strategy. It involves higher returns on higher investments and intense marketing dynamics.

Nowadays, in the heavily saturated media landscape with advertising content, media professionals and advertisers have realised that there is a shift from a more "push" or traditional form of advertising to a more "pull" or digital form of advertising (Caldwell, 2004). This "push" to "pull" scenario has led to advertisers striving to grab audience attention and encourage audience engagement. One of the ways advertisers are doing this is by creating transmedia narratives in order to attract and re-gain audience attention in this over-saturated market. As much as it has changed approached to advertising, this concept of transmedia can no longer be seen as a novelty. Multiple studies offer an extensive analysis of the phenomenon of transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2006; Edwards, 2012; Moloney, 2014), and its application to the development of a movie's storyline and narrative, and advertising strategies (Matteo & Zotto, 2015; Scolari, 2009; Tendrich & Williams, 2014)

As mentioned, there is literature present about transmediality (Jenkins, 2006; Edwards, 2012; Moloney, 2014) and the existence of research on transmedial advertising and marketing (Matteo & Zotto, 2015; Scolari, 2009; Tendrich & Williams, 2014) but there is much less known about how this theory is applied to the advertising of blockbusters. We have limited knowledge about how this theory is applied to the advertising of blockbusters. Furthermore, the tactics used for the narrative storylines have not been applied to assess blockbuster advertising.

The gap in research to be explored is the existence of a coherent narrative between this multi-media mass advertisements for blockbusters. Scolari (2009) particularly suggests in his research into transmedia narratives, that further investigation into specific areas of transmedia experiences is required in order to establish unique properties, limits and

possibilities of telling a transmedia story through different avenues. For the purposes of this paper, the further investigation within the transmedia paradigm is thus extended to advertising, particularly blockbuster movie advertising. As transmedia narrative is becoming more prominent as a framework for applicable theory rather than only explaining one media outlet (Jenkins, 2006; Zeiser, 2015) it is important to conduct this research in order to understand which unique components of media and media distribution allows for the use of transmedia theory, and how these new avenues add towards the theory of transmedia.

In order to understand this phenomenon and fill the gap in the literature Marvel Studios' blockbuster strategy will be analysed. This leads us to the introduction to our research question:

RQ: "How does Marvel Studios' blockbuster movie marketing use transmediality in advertising campaigns?"

In order to answer this research question, the researcher will conduct a qualitative content analysis to investigate the various platforms of transmedia advertising convergences and whether they display elements and characteristics of transmedia Marvel Studios have utilized in order to promote their movies. In order to support the research question, three hypotheses have been presented by the researcher which will be used to investigate transmediality in advertising, its scope, possibilities and limitations. These hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Marvel's advertising campaigns reflect the transmedia nature of its movie narratives.

H2: Marvel's multi-media advertising strategies for a movie, form one cohesive narrative.

H3: Audience participation contributes to Marvel's cohesive advertising narrative.

As Marvel Studios have showcased their unique marketing strategies in recent years with their Marvel Cinematic Universe Franchise. Having shaky beginnings and going bankrupt in 1996, Marvel Entertainment and Marvel Studios owe their success to the Walt Disney company who had bought Marvel Entertainment Inc. for $4 billion in 2009 (Calandro, 2010). This acquisition has played a big part in allowing Marvel Studios to dive into their

own comic book characters, such as *Spiderman* and *Wolverine*, allowing them to proceed by making big risk movies anticipating huge returns. Disney's financial stability allowed Marvel to make this first step into blockbuster territory due to the safety net cast by bigger studios if a project were to fail (Calandro, 2010). This safety net was provided to Marvel Studios after the renegade success of Iron Man (2008) which caught Walt Disney Studios' attention. This movie proved that Marvel Studios had the potential and the infrastructure to venture into the blockbuster arena (Burke, 2018). However, Marvel Studios ventured above and beyond single production blockbuster movies. As Burke, (2018) puts it in his book, "Marvel was the first company to fully utilize a conglomerate structure to develop a sustainable transmedia story" (pp. 15). They have cemented themselves as a transmedia franchise having their stories "unfold across multiple media platforms" (Jenkins, 2006). Where the stories are not representative of existing ones but rather expanding elements of moving parts that add on together to form the main picture (Burke, 2018). Through the various film releases that Marvel has produced since the year 2008, it has actively invested into a transmedia storytelling narrative with its various characters rights that are part of the larger cinematic universe. Previous literature and research is abundant on the transmedial nature of story narratives especially within film franchises. However, this paper aims to work with previous research to explore the gap in literature with regards to new areas of the transmedial narrative.

This transmediality becomes pertinent in storytelling when balancing the active participation of the consumers and fans of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The careful negotiation between the mass audience and the ardent fan-base paves way to a successful transmedia narrative (Burke, 2018). Therefore, this paper also aims to examine how the audience participation lends to the transmedia nature of Marvel's advertising. As Scolari (2009) further suggests that future research should concentrate on content co-creation by the users in these transmedia "expansion strategies" referring to the economic and financial side of a transmedia narrative i.e. advertising and marketing. User participation using various media has not been touched upon in other research projects and it is suggested as future projects by works relating to the transmedia ecosystem (Jung, Lee, You, Nam, 2016).

As Marvel releases at least one movie per year, these movies become part of the whole cinematic universe and are one of the components that fuel the cinematic universe's narrative (Taylor, 2014). Marvel has since banked on the economics of continuity, that its

previous comic media content had provided, where events from one story are either dispersed throughout the narrative or crossover to other singular stories within the same universe (Taylor, 2014). However, in this narratively led film content strategy there is a glaring gap in research with regards to the marketing dynamic of transmedia. Behind the scenes, the cinematic narrative is supported by the advertising and marketing structure; however, there is a lack of specific studies on how advertising reflects the transmedia nature of its content source. As Deuze (2016) mentions in his paper about the future of advertising, that transmedia modes of storytelling in advertising and marketing are new forms of creativity and opportunities that indeed need to be explored as they showcase an important future role of advertising. Furthermore, the social relevance of the study lies in exploring new forms of persuasive advertising in modern cultural contexts, due to the technological shift from traditional advertising (Hackley, 2018).

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Towards a Transmedia Narrative

As discussed in the introduction of the paper, film advertising includes some specificities and components that carve it different from other forms of entertainment and media advertising. Kerrigan, (2010) aptly describes film marketing strategies as a continuous journey through different stages of the movie production rather than a singular burst of advertising campaigns. This gives weight to and furthers the concept of a narrative stronghold for the execution of advertisements. The advertising of a film tends to follow a narrative journey through different media platforms. As technological advances started occurring in rapid succession for the past 30 years, drastically transforming the media environment (Matteo & Dal Zotto, 2015). Individuals were being exposed to a myriad of different advertisements from several different sources. Thus, marketing practitioners had sought to develop new and effective ways to engage with and advertise to consumers (Matteo & Dal Zotto, 2015). In the past, traditional advertising brought on the advent of a narrative structure and storytelling technique in advertising. This was adopted as sought-after strategies for branding by multinational companies in order to increase brand recognition and to separate themselves from other heterogeneous products in the market (Fog, K., Budtz, C., & Yakaboylu, B. 2005).

As individuals started to drift away from traditional media outlets, media companies' business models were severely threatened as more people shifted to the technological age discarding broadcast for internet, consuming content through various secondary screens (Zeiser, 2015). This paved way for advertising across different mediums for a singular message for the brand to be advertised. This ongoing trend took elements from previous marketing generations of narrative structured advertising and adapted it to fit today's digital age, transforming narrative structure towards the digital structure (Edwards, 2012). In terms of storytelling, these bursts of advertisements can produce a heightened form of storytelling and allow the shortening of narrative formats to fit in with the medium the advertisement is being broadcasted in (Freitas, 2010). The nature of film advertising is hinged upon the fact that promotional strategies and marketing plans need to occur in a very limited and short amount of time. The product life cycle of movies released is relatively short compared to other entertainment products. This lends to the idea that marketing strategies work around the assumption of the shortened lifespan and are thus more concentrated in bursts and series in order to receive the most amount of revenues in the shortest amount of time (Lane &

Husemann, 2004). Thus, when analysing the narrative structure of a film's advertising and marketing strategy, it is critical to understand that such endeavours are bound by a limited time frame. This time frame can start with the first announcement of the movie and typically ends when the movie is eventually stopped appearing in major cinemas. These short burst of advertisements and the crusade for the most amount of revenue acquired in the shortest amount of time is a relatively new phenomenon, and this shift and transformation of old media to new and the gradual flow of information across a myriad of media platforms lends to the definition of a convergence culture (Edwards, 2012). As Henry Jenkins (2006) states, cross media ownership across different media industries, in this case film, led to the birth of a convergence culture wherein the notion of an active audience lending to the story is interwoven.

Discussing the notion of convergence culture in his book, Henry Jenkins (2006) notes the rising of a transmedia storytelling concept and explains it as "story unfolds across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (95-6). To clarify the concept further, there needs to be a distinction amongst similar types concepts that have emerged, due to various scholars forming discourses about transmedia around their particular fields.

Cross media storytelling – often misinterpreted as transmedia – differs in the approach to the content and how it is distributed across platforms. Peterson, (2006) refers to cross media productions as utilization of physical mediums to coordinate communications and other content. The author further states, that cross media productions use a variety of different media platforms in order to divide up and assign a particular communication goal to a platform.

Adding onto defining transmedia by defining what it is not, Poulter (2004) talks about the production of digital content across multiple mediums as the multi-platform approach. This approach is more of a collaborative effort, mirroring some of the similarities from cross platform distribution, wherein each medium is orchestrated to reach the largest amount of audience. Additionally, however, each medium in a cross-platform strategy in turn enhances the content contributed by all the other media (Naik and Raman, 2003; Taylor et. al, 2013) however, this does not suggest a narrative structure to the content, notions which are heavily present in a transmedia design. Cross media productions however do intersect with transmedia in one aspect of content distribution. Boumans (2011) states in his report that

more media forms are not so much being adapted to the content but rather the utilisation of different platforms is the integral part of the content itself. In a transmedia narrative structure, the implementation of different platforms in itself is the core assumption that lends to much of its theory bringing the "interconnection between multiple media platforms" (Bourda, 2013). This indicates initial dissimilarities between transmedia and other similar studies. The difference lies in the ability of multiple platforms to convey a singular story or message, building a transmedia story-world (Moloney, 2014).

2.2. Transmedia Storytelling

Henry Jenkins (2006) first described Transmedia Storytelling as "core parts of the story dispersed across multiple media channels, with each making a unique contribution to our experiences of the whole." Although the theory had initially been proposed to address the narrative aspect of a transmedia story within an individual context, it has since been developed and has contributed to the understanding of different logical paradigms. From education, mobilisation to budgeting and branding. Transmedia elements cannot be further seen as just encapsulating one area of media distribution, rather as a theory in itself that is applicable to different scenarios (Zeiser, 2015). As Bourdaa (2013) states in his research, the complexity of the story and the narrative it unfolds can be very closely associated to transmedia storytelling. If it is a "story" which is being told then it comes with the implication that the storytelling itself needs to have complexities that warrant the creation of the story's universe around it (Bourdaa, 2013).

Other complexities dictating the telling of a transmedia story are the center of Clarke's (2010) paper on the narration strategies of the hit television show Lost (2004). Clarke offers discussions on the serial narration of complex narratives in the show and how these sequential events offer to complete the narrative over several weeks. This notion of sequentialism is harder to define when discussing the aspects of transmedia narratives as the idea of self-contained media content being intelligible even when divided towards separate parts has been the building block for the defining transmedia as each medium accomplishes what it is good at (Jenkins, 2006). However, continuity instead of a sequential process reinforces the complex narrative that transmedia stories try to achieve by cultivating narrative elements into the universe like plot and characters (Bourdaa, 2013). This type of continuity is impertinent for a transmedia story to be told as it helps maintain a consistent framework and narrative, wherein there are no drastic variations between each of the media platforms in

terms of portrayal of individual personas (characters) or in film situational dynamics (plotlines). As transmedia narratology is more nuanced to describe, the continuity aspect of this form of storytelling can be seen described using two different lenses. On one hand continuity can be temporal in nature where storylines are presented in a chronological order (Bertetti, 2014). However, the more common type in transmedia narratives is the temporal *discontinuity*. This is where the narrative does not flow down a straight path nor is presented in a chronological order. Events and narratives are presented in a randomized order with narrative cohesion having no influence on the sequence of events (Bertetti, 2014; Eco, 1985). This is in line with the classical notion of transmedia wherein individual's elements of the narrative have to make sense on their own, so it does not matter in which sequence they are presented in. Transmedia storytelling "consists in the diffusion of a dense message across different media" and it does this by using complex narratives spanning multiple stories and individual character arcs and themes translated and projected onto different platforms (Gomez, 2011).

Reiterating Henry Jenkins' core transmedia assumption, Bourdaa (2013) gives more insight into the transmedia narrative by stating that it is not the adaptation of a singular storyline across multiple platforms, but rather the building of a universe that is made richer by the introduction a platform. This newly introduced platform in turn represents an additional element to the story and the transmedia universe (Bourdaa, 2013). However, as the topic of transmedia is a much debated one, and all sides do not agree on the containment of narrative stories or the inclusion several different stories for the universe to be transmedia. The Producers Guild of America (PGA) determines three broad criteria for definition that dictates whether a project is transmedia in nature. The first criteria by the PGA states that a transmedia project or franchise should consist of at least three or more storylines (in the same universe), should form a narrative in any of the following platforms: Film, Television, Short Film, Broadband, Publishing, Comics, Animation, Mobile, Special Venues, DVD/Blu-ray/CD-ROM, Narrative Commercial, Marketing rollouts and other technology. And finally should not be repurposed material identical to the other platforms, wherein the same content is broke down and used in the same way on other platforms (PGA, 2010).

2.3. Transmedia and The Audience

Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope released in the year 1977 can be seen as one of the most well-known cultural phenomena of today's age. From the release of the film to the current

years, the participation of fans has not wavered. An example being during the August of 2010, fans of the Lucasfilm's franchise came together in order to reenact the whole movie in 473 different fifteen second clips collectively uploaded onto the official website (Voigts & Nicklas, 2013). This collaborative effort building on existing movie themes but also generating new content can be looked at as playing a small part in the grand scheme of convergence culture. As Jenkins (2006) describes convergence as the flowing of content across different media platforms, he shows more emphasis on the fact that these convergences in the new digital age have to be understood within the context of technology, industry, culture and the society. As convergence occurs through individuals through their social interactions with each other, transmedia projects cannot exist in a vacuum due to the fact that the core concept of the storytelling is made for the fans and users making them the main target group (Bourdaa, 2013). In turn, these projects form a something called a collective intelligence through which information is collected and distributed. In this scenario, a single individual does not possess all the information present but rather the group at a large contributes the whole (Levy, 1997). Within the transmedia framework, collective intelligence plays an important role in addressing the transmedia narrative as a whole. Collective intelligence refers to the idea that a singular person does not have all the information at a certain point but rather the information is divided thus making a collective intelligence wherein the different knowledge that others have acquired contributes to the main storyline (Edwards, 2012). This notion aligns closely with the typical idea behind a transmedia theory wherein distinct elements, that make sense autonomously, also provide a greater meaning when combined. The idea this collective intelligence stems from the notion of a participatory culture. As explained by Jenkins (2012), participatory culture is the co-creation of a product or an idea with the audience as the key producers. The audience take an active part in the creation and consumption of media content thus sometimes willingly or by force having companies to relinquish the control. In the context of the Marvel Cinematic Universe and the Marvel movie franchise, collective intelligence plays a significant role in addressing the audience impact on the marketing narrative.

Thus, the transmedia framework, in lieu of previous literature, relies heavily on collective intelligence, the participatory audience which is part of it and the spreadable content they interact with and produce (Tenderich & Williams, 2014). Creating a transmedia story is heavily integrated with the value of the brand and in turn generating a brand loyalty by strengthening relationships amongst consumers and owners (Tenderich & Williams,

2014). Thus, transmedia as a concept and strategy has to co-exist within a framework designed with audience participation and relationship in mind. It is very rare that a transmedia story can exist without there being active audience participation and spreadability. Engagement and the encouragement of consumers in the participation of the storytelling is one of the defining features of transmedia branding and is where common mass advertising severely lacks and is limited (Tenderich & Williams, 2014). To gain a more in-depth knowledge of transmedia branding, a look at successful transmedia branding strategy for Old Spice is worth the mention. This campaign was for Old Spice body wash designed by the parent company Procter & Gamble. It had been advertised on several different media outlets such as YouTube, Twitter, broadcast television and live talk shows. This campaign illustrated some of the main design elements of transmedia branding with significance shown to the narrative of the advertisements, the participation of the audience and the brand itself (Tenderich & Williams, 2014).

As Tenderich & Williams (2014) explain, the Narrative aspect of branding refers to how individual elements tie up together in a coherent fashion in order to portray a story. These are stories people find engaging, likable and meaningful. If media is spread, in this context, towards more than 2 outlets, it is regarded as transmedia in nature as the message is now part of a bigger network. This is similar to one of the broad categories defined by the Producers Guild of America (PGA) defining a transmedia story. Old Spice did this by portraying a story with a scenic setting of a man denoting a strong sense of masculinity, and reaffirming that through different outlets wherein customised replies to audience question would be portrayed by the same man in the form of various different videos (Fournier & Avery, 2011). After the Narrative is presented to the world, it is now up to the audience whether they decide to engage in it and make it spreadable. Participation, from individuals can range through an array of different activities from liking a tweet, sharing content on social media to spreading through word of mouth or making their own fan content. Lastly the brand itself is the main criteria for a transmedia story across platforms as it helps differentiate from other similar products. When diving into a transmedia campaign, the transition from one medium to another may sometimes lead to the brand itself losing its core meaning and value. To be expressive in the form of a narrative storyline in its campaign, a brand thus has to have a "protagonist" or a symbol charging the storyline forward to make sense and be coherent across all mediums (Tenderich & Williams, 2014). Old Spice maintained the main actor Isaiah Mustafa as the face of the campaign, both when releasing the advertisements and later

while interacting with consumers and helping with the spreadability (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

Transmedia projects are usually represented by three main types of transmedia categories. Transmedia native content refers to the unique and original storylines and that are then divided and distributed amongst multiple different platforms and offer different financial returns for the company. Marvel's movies franchises like the Avengers are a perfect example of this. These transmedia stories are considered to be interlinked and to have narrative relations between them in order to qualify being transmedia (Ryan, 2015). Secondly, Transmedia Marketing refers to a series of advertising content that is created and distributed in order to promote one singular product. For this thesis, a combination of these two concepts for transmedia native content and transmedia marketing will be utilised. The collaborative, Native advertising content, refers to the advertisements being designed in such a way where they mould themselves to the surrounding platforms of which they are a part of. For example, content similar content distributed to Facebook and Twitter would engage with the platform's algorithms, interface and design differently in order to maximise the impact of the content (Campbell & Marks, 2013; Kim, Pasadeos & Barban, 2001). This native advertising content combined with the classical notions of transmedia formulates the idea of advertisements on different platforms being native as well as working towards a shared narrative structure.

Lastly, there also exists the third type of transmedia category namely, Transmedia Technology platforms. A big example of transmedia technology platforms is Netflix, where there is the option to view content across a myriad of devices and there are "multiple platforms across which producers and audiences distribute content" (Zeiser, 2015). However, this categorisation implies a technological outlook for transmedia narratives and would thus not be relevant for the research conducted in this paper.

2.4. Elements of a Transmedia Narrative

In his 7 principles of Transmedia Storytelling, Jenkins (2009) mentions Spreadabilty (vs. Drillability) as one of the first principles wherein the ability or the degree to which content is shareable makes it transmedia in nature. As Mills (2012) defines spreadability, it is the facilitation of the spread of a campaign between platforms in a manner which is with ease. To define the idea of spreadability further, there are two distinct parts of spreadability theory. These two components is what forms the spreadability of content. These are the likeability of

content and the shareability of content. The shareability aspect of spreadability is from the perspective from the sender or in this scenario the marketeer whereas the likeability depends on the audience themselves and whether they find the content likeable enough to share it (Mills, 2012). A part of spreadability inherently assumes engagement from the audience to make media spreadable it needs to resonate with the audience in a way which makes them want to spread it. Spreadability of content cannot rely on a singular aspect but rather is dictated by marketing strategies, technicalities, audience participation, motivations, content features and characteristics (Mills, 2012). Spreadable media, thus if successful, enjoys the success from the exposure it creates. However, spreadable media has key requirements for it to spread to multiple audiences, namely its availability, portability, relevance and repetitiveness of content (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013). It is crucial to look at spreadable media within the context of an engagement-based model it helps researchers understand how the audience uses content to consume it, reshape it, generate and redistribute new content (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013). The idea of ensuring this kind of spreadable content stems from defining "immersive story worlds" (Ford, De Kosnik, and Harrington, 2011). Other various industries that delve into sequential and world build storytelling (comic books, soap operas, etc.) are built on these immersive world rules wherein they recognise that there are several different ways to engage and interact with the narrative that is being shown, thus opening up a multitude of different streams for obtaining revenue (Ford, et.al, 2011)

For example, different platforms provide different content for the users and each brings in a distinct revenue based on the type of content advertised and the engagement it fosters. Thus, transmedia narratives are of great interest to any marketeer who want to keep their audience engaged through intertextual derivation of meanings (Davis, 2013).

A well-designed transmedia narrative would require audience engagement through the form of participation (Green & Jenkins, 2011). In this subsection of the transmedia narrative, members of the audience provide a contribution with their own content that gives meaning to the whole narrative at large, thus demonstrating that the individual is deeply engaged with the content of the transmedia universe (Davis, 2013). In this way, media convergences kickstarted the route to transmedia marketing and opened new possibilities to audience interaction and participation. There are complex interactions that occur between the audience and the brands and need to be addressed as they are both part of what forms a transmedia collective. Within the context, the audience is considered not just to be consumers but rather

co-creators of online content. This audience individually perceive media and then adapt and modify using their own discursive resources (Raphael & Lam, 2016).

To describe makes a transmedia narrative inherently transmedia is a challenging undertaking more so as new literature and research paves the way to new forms of analysing transmedia content, an absolute framework may yet not be defined. Jenkins (2010) talks about how the topic of transmediality inherently is the investigation of an intersection between different theories of research, and the tools to research these completely separate fields are often methodologically autonomous and disconnected. Thus for this research and the development of an analysis framework, multiple elements of what makes a transmedia project were borrowed from several authors. This multiplicity provided a holistic outlook towards defining and identifying transmedia narratives without being biased towards a singular author or research work.

To reiterate a transmedia narrative, Scolari (2009) defines it as a "particular narrative structure that expands through both different languages and media." Further, there is the detailing of how transmedia is not the mere adapting of content from one medium to the next, but the construction of the transmedia world through these different mediums (Scolari, 2009). These different mediums help the storyworld of the narrative flow and unfold through these distinct platforms (Dena, 2009). This classical transmedia definition paves way to the analysis of transmedia narratives. In one of his seminal works, Jenkins (2009) detailed the Seven Core Concepts of Transmedia Storytelling. Some of these core principles align with the aims of this research and will be the foundational tones for the analysis of transmedia project being analysed. The first core principle mentioned by Jenkins is: Spreadability vs. Drillability. In this context "vs" does not mean one or the other concept but rather Jenkins uses this format to indicate opposing sides of the same issue contextualised through the transmedia narrative. This sign does not indicate that content has to either be spreadable or drillable to be transmedia, but rather these characteristics as a whole give nature to transmedia projects. Spreadability, as discussed previously in this paper, refers to a degree where content is shareable, not necessarily as long term engagement, but that the spreadable media is eye catching (Mittell, 2009). This form of media relies on audience participation and active participation in order to facilitate the spread of content. Spreadability is an important factor in determining the transmedial elements of a story as the spread of information through different platforms is facilitated by the people. It is crucial to understand how the spread of

media impacts or the way the information is being disseminated impacts the transmedia narrative. On the other side of the coin lies drillability. Where spreadability refers to the rapid dissemination of information, drillability deals with how richly and deeply users and the audience probe into understanding the complexities and the dynamics of the transmedia storyworld (Mittell, 2009). Drillable media engagement rates are significantly lower than spreadable media, however there is more time spent by the audience on drillable media than on spreadable media (Mittell, 2009). Although in the context of these principles, these two notions of spreadability and drilliability are posed at opposing ends of the spectrum, it is possible and historical for transmedia products and projects to have both spreadability and drillability present in terms of their engagement (Graves, 2017). The presence of both spreadability and drillability in a transmedia project allows for a dispersal of relationships the audience has with the text, this means that various individuals are allowed the chance to interact with the main material as well as the material that exists on the borders of the narrative story in a cursory or in-depth manner (Graves, 2017).

Secondly, Jenkins explains the transmedia importance of Continuity vs. Multiplicity. Continuity refers to the sequential presence of events wherein each narrative addition gives meaning to the dimensions of the story. This is where the narrative structures showcase their plausibility. On the other end of the scale lies Multiplicity in transmedia narratives, this indicates addition to the universe in the form of alternate realities or different versions of the same story. The usage of similar characters and storyworld is still present so as to not stray too far from the basic material (Caddell, 2009). Multiplicity of characters and stories allows multiple variations to be interwoven and present in the other iterations across the different platforms. This migration from one platform to the other can be identified in both through content and the migratory nature of the audience as well (Freeman, 2014).

Continuity, in the context of a transmedia narrative, can again be understood by its temporal discontinuity previously mentioned in this paper. The main storyline or narrative exists in this strategy; however, other events are added in a non-chronological manner. These elements still add to the complete narrative and are not events that are separate from the storyline (Bertetti, 2014; Eco, 1985). However, these elements are possible to add due to the nature of expansion in a transmedia project. The expansion of the universe allows for "interstitial mircrostories" (Scolari, 2009) to be created which fill the spaces in the main storyline (Bertetti, 2014; Eco, 1985).

Thirdly, World Building is listed as a strong element of the transmedia project. This notion states that for a story which is transmedia in nature, it needs to be able to maintain a multitude of characters and their individual narratives across a multitude of media. This also in turn leads to the participation of fans trying to identify and appreciate as many singular elements of the narrative structure as possible in order to map them, bringing in a distinct form of audience engagement (Caddell, 2009; Jenkins, 2009). World building in a transmedia narrative governs the movement of not just plot and character arcs through different platforms but the movement of visual elements as well (Klastrup & Tosca, 2004). Content in a transmedia context has to be able to maintain in its own story, when faced with the dispersion across different platforms. The world building needs to be strong enough that it can sustain being divided and spread and still retain its meaning and while also contributing to the main storyline (Gambarato & Tarzia, 2017). In this way the main goal of world building is not to move the plot or story forward in the narrative but rather to get a deeper understanding of the world and its nuances (Pratten, 2011).

The fourth core principle listed is the Seriality of the narrative. A transmedia narrative deals with the notion of separate parts of a distinct whole. These separate parts are then dispersed not through a singular platform but rather dispersed through a multitude of various media outlets (Caddell 2009; Ndalianis 2004: 31-69; Mittell 2009). Seriality then refers to the how the narrative is broken down and distributed across these platforms. It does not allude to the chronological flow of the story in serial order (Pratten, 2011).

The last core principle to be touched upon in this research is the notion of Performance. Transmedia structures and projects should inherently be able to encourage fans to produce their own user generated content and to contribute to the narrative as a whole. This contribution to the narrative by its audience is a key part in the forming the transmedia narrative. These user-generated material could be either content that is explicitly inviting consumers to partake in the creation of content or ideas that push users to involve themselves into this content creation (Caddell, 2009). The performance of a user refers to how much of an effort fans put into contributing to the narrative in terms of creating fictional writings, doing mashups of videos or taking part in role-playing of the character or story arcs related to the universe (Pratten, 2011).

As mentioned before in this paper, transmedia narratives cannot exist in a vacuum of storytelling and are, in rapid succession, being used for the explanation and understanding for

various different industries. Advertising and marketing falls under this new industry introduction for the use of transmedia storylines. As Pintado & Estupinan (2016) state, the multidimensional nature and the substantial reach of transmedia collectives and narratives rapidly caught the attention of the advertising world. Some researchers suggest that the notion of transmedia storytelling was birthed through previous forms of common advertising that businesses would use in order to strengthen their relationship with their consumers, though it may not have been giving the particular name yet (Villena, 2014). With this base, Pintado & Estupinan (2016) explain transmedia narrative elements by stating five distinct and basic elements, which are common to every narrative. When these four narrative elements are implemented and analysed under the guise of the digital age, specifically the language of advertising, they are each expanded. These expansions help define the five elements further and to ultimately ascertain what makes a transmedia narrative.

The expansions of these five narratives for the digital age are distinguished through as per the following table:

Table 2. Expansion of Narrative Elements in Transmedia.

	Key Elements	Term Definitions
	Creation of new territories	Whether content moving from one platform to the other is consistent and non-divergent from the original story Whether the movement of content from one platform to the other enhance any of the other narrative elements that are on their own.
Expansion of Narrative Elements	Redefining characters and the relationship between them	Whether the characters and the relationship that are present are transformed through entry into different media channels

		If what and how they convey establishes constant engagement from the audience.
	Stories with a metanarrative (universal) component	Whether the content is addressing and drawing attention to its own narrative storytelling Whether conflicts within the storyline are not bound to their platforms
	Stories told to encourage participation	Whether there is a presence of invitation for engagement from the audience.
	Stories designed in terms of multi-mediality	Whether the content itself has been designed to for multi-mediality through its multilinear narratives and new forms of expressions

Source: Pintado & Estupinan (2016)

2.5. The PESO media Framework

The PESO framework is a well-known marketing tool used for planning and analyzing advertising strategies and public relations (Waddington, 2019). Media practitioners and media relations scholars have touted this model as being an effective method for categorising media content (Bayles, 2015). Evolving from the media trinity of Paid, Owned and Earned format (Burcher, 2012), matures an advanced form of categorisation which includes Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned media. The new addition of the "Shared" media was added into

the model to accommodate for the ubiquity of social media technologies that have become a strong presence in marketing strategies in recent years (Macnamara, Lwin, Adi & Zerfass, 2016). This model will help understand what to measure, within the context of transmedia advertising by designating aspects of the transmedia strategy into these 4 polished categories. Paid media in this context refers to the forms of media that are paid to be advertised by a corporation to different media platforms. This type of media advertising is the most common and tested form of media advertising and errs on the side of a past traditional forms of advertising (Macnamara, et.al, 2016). Earned media refers to the content that is a form of editor publicity wherein the buzz is generated interviews, media and press releases and other tactics involving interaction and relations with the media (Stephen & Galak, 2012). Owned media refers to the organisation's own sources and media outlets to advertise their brand in the form of their own magazines, websites, blogs, tv channels, etc. Lastly, Shared media refers to the type of media that accommodates the input and contribution of the fans, followers and consumers through popular social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Tumblr, Instagram, Pinterest, etc. (Macnamara, et.al, 2016). In terms of transmedia entertainment, the PESO Framework can help the researcher guide their research through these categories in order to sort and focus what needs to be investigated.

Given that the goal of this thesis is to understand the transmedial nature of advertising for Marvel's film strategies spanning across multiple platforms, it is important to recognise the various aspects of paid, earned, shared and owned media in order to get a complete outlook by hitting all of these aspects in terms of the collection of data.

As each of the components in the PESO framework have a different relationship with its content, the researcher thought it would be interesting to see how each the specific categories impact with the content. For example, marketing professionals are the ones responsible for and have immediate control over the paid and owned forms of media, whereas earned forms of media are deemed to be more trustworthy than paid media (Nielsen, 2015)

3. Method

3.1. Research Design and Methodology

In order to answer the research question, and investigate the transmedia nature of the various Marvel Studio advertisements for their movies, a qualitative method was selected. A qualitative research method was particularly useful for this study as one of the fundamental aspects of qualitative research, to derive qualitative meanings, aligns with the purposes of the study, which is to understand transmedia storytelling within the context of film advertising that the Marvel Cinematic Universe employs. The core assumptions of qualitative research according to Flick (2018), is to analyse and understand a social phenomenon that is occurring as a natural process on its own without researcher interference. Thus, the aim of the research was to analyse the independently occurring processes of movie advertising and understand patterns and meanings through data gathered.

Additionally, a qualitative analysis provides a richer and deeper comprehension of the phenomenon and the process of meaning making behind it which is later analysed through using distinct qualitative analysis methods. The study sought to analyse and understand whether a narrative structure was being established through the various advertising platforms, eventually leading to a transmedia narrative.

Quantitative research for the analysis of these units would have relied on numerical data and results in order to prove the transmedia theory. Whereas, the qualitative content analysis allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the inherent social phenomenon and to derive meaning and connect different elements of advertising storytelling to each other that would have otherwise been analysed separately and not in relation to one another.

The study relied on the collection and analysis of Marvel's advertising content that exists online and is readily available to the researcher as well as to the casual audience. Thus a qualitative content analysis was undertaken for this research. The collection of transmedia qualitative content for this research was, however, not a conventional one.

Hence, for this research, a combination of different media sources were used in order to extract the most relevant data for the analysis. The collection of this data was driven by the PESO framework. The PESO framework encapsulates Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned media advertising content and has helped guide the research in order to successfully

categorise multiple platforms and types of data to collect from each of the sources. A table depicting all 16 of the various categories and the units of analysis for each of the movies analysed can be found in Appendix A. These 16 categories were divided into 4 broader elements of the PESO framework. These are:

PAID: TV Spots & SuperBowl Commercials, Theatrical Release Trailers

EARNED: Entertainment News Articles, Entertainment News Videos, Red Carpet Interviews.

SHARED: Media Panels (Exclusively Comic Con), Partnerships with other brands, Official Facebook Posts, Official Twitter Tweets, Visual Fan Content in the form of replies on Facebook, Visual Fan Content in the form of replies on Twitter, Original Fan Content on Twitter, Original Fan Content on YouTube.

OWNED: Official Marvel Posters, Official Trailers, Official Featurettes.

These categories were decided on after looking at various PESO Framework models. The researcher understands that for a PESO model there are various different interpretations and definitions in order to allocating media into one of the 4 categories. However, the researcher has chosen Spinsuck's PESO model built through Professional Development for PR and Marketing pros (Dietrich, 2018) as it provided with the overall best representation of the dataset and incorporated social media platforms and digital media into the framework.

Further description about the sampling and data collection procedure for each of the categories will be described below in the "Sample" section of the paper (3.2).

To analyse what kind of qualitative content analysis to conduct next, the researcher first turned to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), who state that there are 3 distinct approaches to qualitative content analysis. Out of these, the most appropriate approach for this research is a directed approach to qualitative content analysis. The main aim of this type of content analysis is to "validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 5). Thus, with this study, the researcher aimed to validate the theory of transmedia narrative within the context of Marvel's advertising and to extend part of its theoretical understanding towards the marketing realm. Directed content analysis approach allowed the deduction of main categories and subcategories from existing theory (Mayrin,

2000, 2014) (Assarroudi, Nabavi, Armat, Ebadi & Vaismoradi, 2018) which in this scenario would be the transmedia narrative framework theories described in the theoretical framework. However, the directed approach for content analysis also allows for the emergence of new main categories from the data itself that the existing categories might not have proposed (Elo & Kyngas, 2008;Assarroudi, et.al., 2018). Directed content analysis requires that codes be formulated before the data analysis process, thus the analysis being solely theory-driven (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005;Assarroudi, et.al., 2018). These codes will emerge from the existing theoretical framework and theory leading to a deductive approach to the research.

A ground-up method was not employed as it would entail the emergence of new ideas from the analysis of data itself. This was done due to the nature of the study dealing with transmedia. As the researcher aimed to examine how the elements of transmedia narratives in theory fit in with Marvel's cross-media advertising and whether they exhibit transmedia tendencies in particular ways, the directed approach seemed the most fitting as it allowed for existing theory to establish main categories and definitions, which would then be compared and contrasted against the codes emerged from the analysis of the data itself (Assaroudi, et.al, 2018) This would give a deeper and richer insight into the transmedia narrative theory by forming categories and recognising emerging themes and patterns (Elo and Kyngas, 2008; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009)

Referring back to the research hypothesis for the paper mentioned in the introduction part of this research, the researcher is aware that the "testing" of hypothesis is not a route taken by many qualitative studies and is usually the selected route for quantitative studies (Chigbu, 2019) However, there is a substantial section of the research community who believe that formulation of a hypothesis should be part of qualitative research since it is scientific in nature the same as quantitative research (Chigbu, 2019). The "testing" of these hypotheses may not be similar as quantitative and qualitative fundamentally deal with numbers vs textual assessments. In the context of a qualitative study, there are hypothesis do not function as a tool to disprove or prove the assumptions, but rather to validated or invalidated these assumptions through "verification, proving, confirmation, refutation, disproving, acceptance or rejection," (Chigbu, 2019, p. 10). The formulation of these qualitative research hypotheses are viewed in three distinct ways: firstly it is attributive wherein descriptions of a scenario, situation or event is explained. Or it can be associative

thus predicting an outcome through the hypothesis, or lastly a qualitative hypothesis can be causal where they create an understanding of relationships (Chigbu, 2019). For this research, the hypothesis constructed are attributive as the help in describing the scenario and situation of the transmedia narrative within the Marvel Studios' marketing strategies.

3.2. Sampling

The distinct characteristic upon which the selection of movies was made was that they had to be blockbusters films. The movies would have to garner above-average earnings at the box office for this status. Thus to satisfy this criterion, Marvel's top-grossing movies of all time at the time of retrieving the data were selected.

Initially the top 5 highest grossing movies were selected for this research. However, after further consideration towards the data collection process, it was decided to omit one of the movies, which was Avengers: Age of Ultron (2015). Upon initial investigation of the source material, it was shown that the movie Age of Ultron gave no new information or insight into the phenomenon than its counterparts and since it was in the middle range, being released in 2015, it had no linkages or comparability as a stronger comparison could be made between Black Panther/Infinity War (2018) Versus Avengers Assemble (2012)/Iron Man 3 (2013).

After the omission of this movie, four movies remained at the top and their box office revenue at the time of data collection is as follows:

1. Black Panther (2018). Box office Earnings: $700,059,566

2. Avengers: Infinity War (2018). Box office Earnings: $678,815,482

3. Iron Man 3 (2013). Box office Earnings: $459,005,868

4. The Avengers (2012). Box office Earnings: $409,013,994

(Box Office Mojo, 2019).

Thus, the time period under which the research units were collected had to be led by each of the movie's release date. Historically, Marvel has always released its movies in April, and it is true for this data set as well with the exception of Black Panther which was released on the 29th of January 2018.

As the range of these falls under the years 2012-2018, the earlier ages of Marvel's advertising will be analysed through The Avengers (2012) and Iron Man 3 (2013) and the more recent advertising strategies will be researched through Avengers: Infinity War and Black Panther both of which were released in the year 2018.

The social platforms used to retrieve data were limited to Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Facebook and Twitter were selected as source platforms due to the fact that Marvel Studios have shown more familiarity and digital presence within these platforms related to their marketing campaigns (Clapper, 2015). YouTube was selected as a source as selected news channels and media panels released videos on these platforms making it more efficient to retrieve verified data. Furthermore, other platforms such as Marvel's official webpage and different entertainment news magazines were also used to retrieve data for this study. Marvel's official webpage provided the content under the OWNED section of the PESO framework, wherein Marvel posts content on channels they own and have complete narrative control over. Entertainment news magazines provided part of the EARNED research units needed in the form of articles written about the movie during its advertising campaign.

As the study called for data that allowed for the exploration for a transmedia narrative, various different platforms were chosen as the sources for the data to be collected as per stated by the PESO framework. The framework suggested a general outline of what to include in each of the categories when obtaining data from the internet or social media. This framework was further interpreted according to the researcher's own background knowledge and pre-screening of available data and resources. Platforms were chosen as being the representatives of each of the PESO framework criteria for each of the categories (See Appendix A). The criteria chosen for selecting each of the units varied per platform. As the criteria differed from the initial proposal proposed, the following is a description of all the changes that were made and the logical reasoning behind each of those decisions.

Initially, starting with the PAID category, during the proposal the definition of this category was interpreted differently by the researcher (Burcher, 2012). Facebook and Twitter were to be used to collect 25 sponsored advertisements from the each of the official Facebook and Twitter accounts of the respective movies. However, it came to light after the initial data collection period that the sponsored posts for Twitter and Facebook were not readily available as information about sponsored posts from the movies official Facebook and Twitter account were not made available to the public. Due to Facebook's transparency laws

however, the only data in relation to sponsored content which was available were Facebook advertisements under the "active" advertisements section for each page. Unfortunately, this was not useful for the research as this option only displayed advertisements that the accounts were currently running. At the time the data was gathered, this was not possible for the movies being analysed as all the active adverts were for the movie Avengers: Endgame which was to be released on the 27th of April 2019. Furthermore, reviewing Twitter and its policies led to a similar situation wherein sponsored content such as "Twitter Cards" were not publicly available or accessible (Twitter, 2019). Additionally, 30 second video clips of TV spots paid for by Marvel to appear on selected United States broadcasting Networks for each of the movies (iSpot, 2019) and trailers were selected that were theatrical release trailers for each of the movies. This investigation into the PAID form of media from Marvel unearthed that PAID media is more likely to have less of an explicit outlet in terms of advertising or promotions and there did not seem to be a straightforward procedure as a researcher to detect whether a certain promotional campaign on a platform was paid for by the head company. In order to dispel doubts about this categorisation, the researcher had made an attempt at contacting Walt Disney Studios' head office to get in touch with the President of Marketing, Mr. Asad Ayaz. Unfortunately, there was no official reply from the Walt Disney Studio office or the individual. In light of this, the PAID advertisements category was kept to a minimum of theatrical releases and TV spots. The TV Spots were all selected based on the criteria of advertising being explicitly paid for and advertised in the United States. The Super Bowl, or the Big Game as it is sometimes referred to as, is a popular cultural event famous for its halftime advertisements and performances. Over 111 million people watch the Super Bowl annually hence making it a suitable selection for analysing Marvel's paid advertising for the masses on broadcast television (Perez, 2019). A Super Bowl commercial costs around $5 million per 30 seconds (Huddleston, 2019). Four official 30 second Super Bowl commercials corresponding to each of the four movies were retrieved for this stage of the data collection process. As the Super Bowl event usually occurs in February, two months prior the official release of Marvel movies, a pre-Super Bowl TV spot for the movie Black Panther (2018) was released on January 24th (iSpot, 2019) as the movie's release date was set on the 31st of January. This TV spot was made conjunction with Lexus for the SuperBowl and a shortened 30 second version was released for the following month of the Super Bowl. This shortened version was used for the analysis of the Black Panther (2018) TV Spot.

Furthermore, one theatrical release trailer for the domestic region of the United States was chosen for each of the 4 movies. Theatrical release trailers in the digital age have shifted to becoming the same as the officially released trailers on YouTube. Thus, this step will be repeated further when the individual official trailers for the movies are being analysed as well. Proceeding to the EARNED aspect of the media PESO categorisation, 3 main research unit categories were formulated.

Firstly, print media articles were chosen in order to obtain earned advertising content that Marvel Studios and Disney Studios had not paid for. These were articles that the writers or the publishers had written without displaying any explicit advertising sponsorship from the studios. To narrow down the list of media articles to analyse, various different sources were considered in order to list down three distinct top entertainment news magazines and online newspapers. These were Entertainment Weekly, People Magazine and Variety as they collectively provided a broad range of entertainment industry and pop culture perspectives and had different target groups. This selection provided a varied look towards the type of advertising content "earned" by each of the four movies. For each of the four movies, one article was chosen from one of the three news sources, adding up to 3 articles per movie and 12 articles in total. The retrieval of this information proved to be systematically challenging to the researcher and required extensive research and data filtering. A unique complication for two of the of the websites (Entertainment Weekly & People Magazine), was that there was no functionality on their website providing the possibility to sort the article chronologically or access the archives of certain periods or years. Thus, for the content of these two online magazines, Google tools were used to limit the search to a particular date range. The date range chosen for the collection was three months before and three months after the premiere of each of the movies in the United States. This date range was chosen as it provided the researcher with a search range of 6 months in total equally considering promotions and advertisements before and after the movie's release date. The search term used in Google after the application of the date range was "name of the movie" followed by "name of the online magazine." For example, a search query pursuing articles from Entertainment Weekly for the movie Iron Man 3 released on April 24th 2013, would have the date range January 24th 2013 to July 24th 2013. The query itself would be "Iron Man 3" "Entertainment Weekly" in quotation marks to get a match with the articles with the exact phrasing and to remove unwanted results. Once the results were obtained, a random selection was made by the researcher to select one article for each of the movies. This prevented

researcher bias in obtaining the results. However, the third magazine (Variety) provided a search and filter tool on their website making it easier for the researcher to obtain data. The search query was entered by filling in keywords from each of the movies into the search bar of the online magazine to filter results. Once the results were present, they were sorted by "Published Date (oldest first)." The results were then sorted further to exclude mainly picture and video articles. Out of the remaining articles, a random article was chosen by the researcher to prevent researcher bias. When the article was picked for each of the movies, it was further analysed to check if it fits within the 6 months period of the movies' release established before. Additionally, the researcher had to check whether the article itself related to the movie and was the main topic being discussed in the article. There were instances where the movie was merely mentioned in an article and the topic of focus was something else entirely. If all the prerequisites were met, then the article was kept as data. In the event that this was not the case, the next random article chosen would be selected and the process repeated until the desired results were obtained.

The second research unit category in the EARNED section of the framework entertainment news channels. These were used to collect data about how entertainment news channels interviewed and talked about movies with actors without the monetary value attached to the situation. These were videos retrieved from news channels wherein the studios did not explicitly pay to have their content broadcasted, but rather the news channels themselves recognised the movies as newsworthy and initiated an interview with them. This was understood through the lack of company logos for Marvel Studios in the video. Thus the title of and EARNED marketing content for this particular category.

For the selection of these particular research units, the top entertainment news channels were chosen from a list of top entertainment news channels online (Cision, 2011). YouTube was used as a source for these entertainment news channels and their official verified channels on YouTube were used to retrieve the data. The top entertainment news channels used for this research were: Access Hollywood and Entertainment Weekly. One video from each of these channels was to be selected for each of the movies. Totaling the number of videos to 8 videos. However, for the movie Avengers released in 2012, there was no available video from Access Hollywood thus it was replaced with a video from TMZ as it was third on the list for the top news entertainment channels online. After deciding in each of the news outlets for the retrieval of data, a systematic method was applied, similar to the

process applied for retrieving news articles in the previous section. For each of the movies, a search was conducted on YouTube with the "name of the movie" followed by "name of the entertainment news channel." As YouTube did not allow for setting custom date ranges for search queries, this part of the process had to be done manually by the researcher. For example, a search query for the movie Avengers: Infinity War from the news channel Access Hollywood would appear as: "Infinity War" "Access Hollywood" on YouTube's search bar. As the results were gathered, they were sorted by most viewed. This would ensure that this particular piece of content was successful in terms of audience viewership which gives drive to the main idea behind the research about advertising and mass viewing.

After this initial step was taken with the results, a manual analysis of the metadata for the top result videos by the researcher indicated the date on which they were published. This date was necessary to look into as the research was looking into a 6-month window for results. This window was selected in order to make comparisons between movies released in different years possible and also to prevent overlapping of advertising campaigns and promotions by Marvel. The videos that matched these criteria were compiled by the researcher, and to further prevent researcher bias, two random videos were selected for each of the movies from two different entertainment news channels. An additional criterion established was that the videos had to be from a verified channel on YouTube. This was accounted for by checking the "verification tick" next to the channel's name on YouTube.

The last research unit category in EARNED section of the Framework was "Red Carpet Interviews." Four videos, one interview to represent each of movies at their respective premieres, were chosen. These red carpet interviews are done by different companies, event hosts or freelancers (as per the logo present) and are not paid for by the Marvel Franchise. These were selected in a similar process to the news interviews via YouTube. All red carpet advertisements were available on YouTube. These were not officially tied with marvel and were thus used per the date range previously mentioned for each of the movies. Data was gathered by entering the search term the movie name followed by "red carpet" as a key word. Manually data scraping allowed the researcher to go through the results to eliminate search results which were from official channels and YouTube. settings allowed the videos to be sorted according to views. The views were chosen because it allowed for the collection of data from the highest viewed video. Once this was established, one video with a red carpet

interview at the premiere of the movie was chosen for each of the movie totaling at 5 videos for the data sample as a whole.

Then onto the third major element in the PESO framework, SHARED, with 8 unique research unit categories. This is the largest element in terms of number research unit categories in the PESO framework. Choosing the categories to be present in this framework were reliant upon the third hypothesis and what units should be measured in order to study it. The hypothesis dealt with the audience side of the transmedia story and how they contribute to the overall transmedia storyline. Other parts of these categories, for example media panels, which were not audience generative, were selected because they dealt with Marvel engaging with the audience directly. This refers to the content created in order to garner engagement from the audience and content that is designed specifically for this reason. These are: Media Panels at Comic Con Conventions, Partnerships with other brands, Top Facebook Posts, Top Twitter Tweets, User Generated Fan Content on Facebook, User Generated Fan Content on Twitter, Original Fan Content Twitter & Original Fan Content Facebook.

To begin, Media Panels for Comic Con conventions were chosen as these were the initial points of contact with the audience in the stages of a movies release. The Comic Con Panels are one of the first official platforms where anticipated movies are announced a good deal before the movie's actual release (Dinh, 2019) Marvel has historically announced the oncoming release of most of its movies in the popular hall H6 of the Comic Con (Dinh, 2019). As Comic Con is non-profit organisation and Marvel Studios are voluntarily there as guests, the media panels were put in the SHARED category as both the parties end up benefiting from the exposure. After deciding on Comic Con media panels, the collection of each of the videos was a fairly easy procedure. There was the matter of retrieving the videos from YouTube, where all official Comic Con panels are uploaded. The following pattern for a search term was entered for each of the movies: "Name of the Movie" "Comic Con". This search yielded the full panel discussion for each of the four movies listed for this research paper. The videos were thus selected from these search results; however it was made certain that the panels were held in the United States. There were instances of other Comic Con panels being held in France, Italy and various other countries. These were not included in the data as they did not serve the purpose of the research study with the aim to focus the research in the United States. The selected Comic Con panels ranged in length from 20 minutes to an hour. As this range exceeded the overall data allowance of the research paper and would have

also exceeded the number of overs needed to provide for data analysis, these panels were thus restricted to 5-7 minutes each. To get an average of the whole video as highlights, parts from the beginning, middle and end of the video were chosen to an accumulative 5-7 minutes for each of the four movie panels.

Secondly, the partnerships with the other brands were determined through various sources, as the paper did not allow for the analysis of all possible sources that the brand had partnered with, 2 major partnerships per movie were listed and chosen. These were discovered through various internet searches and research into the marketing tactics and for each of the movies.

It was revealed through this how each of the movies had a separate partnerships and where they aired these distinct partnership advertisements. A combination of image advertisements and videos were selected for this research as some adverts were only done with an image while others partnered had a complete advertising video dedicated to them. For the movies Avengers (2012) and Black Panther (2012) two videos each were chosen whereas for Avengers: Infinity War (2018) and Iron Man 3 (2013) a video and an image were chosen for each of the movies.

Thirdly, Top Facebook posts were selected for each of the movies. Initial draft proposals suggested the collection of content from Marvel Studios' official social media accounts. However, upon further investigation it was revealed that each of the movies, apart from the Marvel Studios account, had their own official social media profiles. Analysis of these accounts with the main Marvel Studios account indicated more personalised content in terms of the movie being advertised. Thus, in order to make the data collection process more efficient, easier and centrally located, the decision was taken to gather data from the individual official movie accounts. This was done for both Facebook and Twitter accounts. For Black Panther the Facebook account "Black Panther Movie" page and for Twitter "TheBlackPanther" account was taken into consideration. For Avengers: Infinity War (2018) and Avengers: Assemble (2012) The Facebook page and Twitter profile named "Avengers" was selected. This is the name Marvel has used to advertise all Avengers movies in the series and there was not an existence of individual pages or accounts for the Avengers movies. Lastly, the collection of data from Iron Man 3 representing social media accounts proved to be a unique scenario. Iron Man (2008) was the first Avengers movie to be released my Marvel, thus the collection of posts and tweets for the movie led on these accounts started in

2008. This made the appearance of the accounts resemble fan accounts if not for the blue verification mark on the pages and profiles. These now official Marvel pages and profiles have been advertising all four Iron Man movies under the name "IronMan" on Facebook and "Iron_Man" on Twitter. The legitimacy of all these accounts being official Marvel accounts was checked through the distinct blue "tick" marks that Facebook and Twitter have introduced to indicate that the accounts is verified and thus official.

Going back to the retrieval of official Facebook posts, after the pages for each of the movies was narrowed down, a search term was entered into the Facebook advanced search options to get the filtered results. First, the section for "Posts From" was chosen based on the movie which was being analysed. For example: if the movie in question was Avengers: Infinity War (2018), then this section would include the name of the page "Avengers" as this page would provide the official information and limit the search results to only hits on this particular page. Secondly, the dates of the posts were chosen as per how previous search results were collected. This date range was three months before and three months after the movie, providing a sufficient window to analyse all the ongoing advertisements and campaigns during that time. Lastly, the option to indicate "Top Posts" was selected in the search criteria. This was done in order to get the top-most liked, shared, commented posts within the given criteria. After these parameters were met, the search term was added, and the results obtained. The search term was a unique term used to obtain results for each of the movies. The search term was entered with quotation marks into the search bar as that allowed for a exact phrase retrieval. The following search terms were used for the four movies: "Infinity War" "Black Panther" "Iron Man 3" and "Avengers".

After obtaining the search results, and the posts being sorted for the top results, a total of 20 posts were selected for all the movies combined. Divided, four top Facebook posts were selected per movie. These were the top results after all the necessary criteria as mentioned above was met. The next unit category was Twitter tweets from official Marvel movie accounts. A similar process was applied when collecting tweets from these accounts. Twitter's web based advanced search allows for similar criteria to be input in order to filter results as Facebook's application allowed. In the advanced search, a "words" section is present and the option "all these words" is selected, and the search term is entered here. The search term for each of the movies is a representative of the movie. The search term for each of the movies on Twitter were as follows: "Black Panther", "Infinity War", "Iron Man 3" and

"Avengers". Second, in the "from these accounts" section of the advanced search panel, the official movie accounts as mentioned before, were entered. Lastly, Twitter provides a date range option to filter the tweets as well, these tweets were restricted again to a six-month window, 3 months before the movie's release and 3 months after the movie's release. Once the criteria were entered and the results available, a further filtering selection was made in order to display the "top" tweets within the given conditions. Out of these top tweets, four tweets were selected per movie totaling up to 20 top official tweets for all of the movies.

In the next unit category, the researcher wanted to assess how users responded to the narrative of official posts by replying with their own visual content. This user generated content in reply to official posts and tweets was recorded for all four of the movies. These were replies by social media users on these official tweets which were previously selected in the unit category official Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. Referring back to the audience replies as content on Facebook posts, a total of 41 images were procured from these the 20 Facebook posts analysed. However, these were not equally divided amongst all of the movies. As Black Panther (2018) yielded the most amount of results with 30 image replies followed by Infinity War (2018) which yielded 11 images. The remaining 2 movies each had no image replies.

Then moving onto audience replies as content on Twitter tweets. In this platform, the images were more abundant in nature as a total of 105 images were collected across all the movies. However, similar to Facebook's post distribution, a majority of the image replies were from Black Panther (59 images), Infinity War (32 images) and Iron Man 3 (14 images). The last movie Avengers (2012) did not provide any images. Further, onto official fan content retrieval for Twitter, a total of 15 tweets per movie was finalised and a using the advanced search option on Twitter, words matching the keywords for each of the movies were used within the date spanning 6 months to collect the data. Top tweets were selected as an option to be displayed and the researcher had manually gone through each of the first 15 tweets for each of the movies in order to select them. For original YouTube fan content, the similar keyword system was used wherein the name of the movie was entered into the search to yield results filtered for "view count" once present, the researcher manually selected the first video which was not affiliated with any brands or merchandising. Official accounts were discarded from this search as the initial search results yielded a considerable amount of official advertisements and promotions.

Finally, the last major element in the PESO framework is OWNED forms of advertising media. This category was defined by having three distinct sub-categories. These were: Posters on Marvel's official web page, Official trailers on Marvel's official web page and Marvel's featurettes on their official website. For the OWNED part of this framework, in order to reduce any chance of misconstruing where the data came from, all official data present on Marvel's official website was considered to be OWNED as it was presented by the official channels of Marvel Studios. All the aforementioned categories of data were collected through the movie's official page linked to the Marvel studios page at Marvel.com/movies.

3.3. Operationalisation

For the research question stated at the beginning of this paper, three distinct hypotheses were listed in order to qualitatively assess them. These hypotheses were as follows:

> *H1: Marvel's advertising campaigns reflect the transmedia nature of storyworld narratives.*

> *H2: Marvel's multimedia advertising strategies for a movie, form one cohesive narrative.*

> *H3: Audience participation contributes to Marvel's cohesive advertising narrative.*

In order to address these hypotheses and operationalise the terms used to investigate the phenomenon, a table was created by merging together distinct theories from authors such as Pintado & Estupinan (2016), Jenkins (2009) and Mittel (2009). These main concepts were divided into measurable aspects and related to answering the aforementioned hypothesis.

To reiterate the research question: "How does Marvel Studios' blockbuster movie marketing use transmediality in advertising campaigns?"

The aim of the study is to analyse the distinct blockbuster movie marketing and how transmedia narratives are used (if at all) for Marvel's advertising campaigns. In order to make the research questionable answerable in terms of definite parts, 3 hypotheses were constructed to answer the research question. These hypotheses are unusual for a qualitative research study but reasonings for this decision have been previously mentioned in this paper. Focusing on the first hypothesis formulation, the following operationalisation was done for key terms in the statement. This hypothesis refers to the advertising campaigns reflecting the

transmedia nature of regular storyworld or narrative. The notion of "transmedia nature" is addressed in the paper through various perspectives and different scholar's insights into the phenomenon. For this research, to formulate a matrix to define the elements for transmedia, Pintado & Estupinan's (2016) research was borrowed from to define five overarching themes of a narrative expansion in terms of transmedia. In order to connect these terms to the advertising narrative and to define them further, these five major overarching themes were linked to the core principles of transmedia storytelling in media by Henry Jenkins (2009). These linkages can be found in the table below listing down the main categories, subcategories, the theoretical definitions, the coding rules and the anchor samples. Also known as the categorisation matrix, this table helped the researcher in the analysis process in order to pick out the relevant categories to compare to the generic categories emerging from the data.

Out of these categories, the first hypothesis in the research can be assessed using the main categories "Creation of New Territories" and "Defining Characters and Relationships". As the first hypothesis aims to answer the similarities between transmedia storyworlds and Marvel's advertising campaigns, using the theory for world building strategies would be apt. World building strategies are borrowed from quintessential fiction narratives wherein a fictitious world is built with its own rules and criteria. However, in terms of transmedia, this world building strategy extends to occurrence of events, characters and visuals across media platforms. World building is a vital aspect as it provides the foundations for a transmedia narrative storytelling. Thus, it would be used to assess the two main criteria. The other main criteria being "defining relationships and characters" which will include the assessment of world building as well, however with the focus on the characters movements governed across a multitude of media.

The second hypothesis predicts that the multi-platform marketing strategy that marvel employs is done in a way which forms a cohesive narrative in itself separate from the narrative of the movie. This hypothesis will be assessed by analysing the main categories "Stories with a metanarrative universal component" and "stories designed in terms of multi-mediality". For the first hypothesis, the first main category aims to analyse the multiplicity of the media narratives across multiple platforms. Multiplicity in these narratives allow for iterations and versions of the base material to be woven into various platforms. The second main category "stories designed in terms of multi-mediality" assess if the narrative platforms

accommodate for the spread of a transmedia story by analysing the continuity of certain elements wherein additional elements are added to the story, or in terms seriality where the sum of the parts form a distinct whole. These 2 main categories help in assessing the second hypothesis to understand whether a cohesive narrative is formed.

Lastly, for the 3rd hypothesis, the assumption is that audience participation plays a part in the formation of this cohesive narrative in terms of transmedia. In order to ascertain this assumption the category chosen was "stories told to encourage participation" and in order to assess this category in terms of notion of advertising, performance structures, spreadability, and drillability were defined. Performance structures indicates the lengths to which users go in order to create their own user generated content based on the original narrative. Spreadability and drillability as defined earlier in the paper are understood as the ease with which content is spread and the depth with which the audience is made to understand the content, respectively. These three sub categories help studying the third hypothesis which presents audience participation as a being a part of the transmedia cohesive narrative. Performance, spreadability and drillability are all sub categories that have audience participation as a focal point. This audience participation is analysed in three distinct ways to ascertain how audience participation contributes to Marvel's cohesive advertising narrative.

3.4. Data Collection

This paper takes on an approach to the directed content analysis looking through Assaroudi, et.al, (2018) research and suggested method for the approach. Their detailing of the organisation phase of the data collection is what will be utilised here.

The authors of the paper suggest initially to have an appropriate sampling strategy for the collection of the data. This sampling strategy needs to be able to reach the point of saturation and to also be justified within the context. These criteria regarding the sampling and collection of data have been discussed in the next section titled "sampling".

Secondly, starting with the organisation phase the authors suggest the development of a formative categorisation matrix. In this categorisation matrix, previous research and theory present in the theoretical framework will be applied in order to extract the main categories and the associated sub categories.

After the extraction of the main categories and sub categories from the theory, there should be a definition provided for these categories based on the literature and previous research on the topic. This definition should be precise and not subjective to the researcher. Once the definitions are finalised and decided upon, coding rules are established which require the researcher to describe the properties of each of the main categories. These coding rules are again based on theoretical underpinnings and definitions. These coding rules allow the researcher to examine the distinct differences between each of the main categories, hence allowing for the research to be robust in terms of trustworthiness (See Appendix B). Following the development of this customised categorisation matrix using the current study's theoretical framework, the analysis of the complete data was conducted.

After the collection of the data, as listed in the sampling section, data from each of the categories of the PESO framework was loaded onto the ATLAS.ti qualitative data research software. Four separate projects were created using this research software, each representing one of the four movies being analysed for this paper: Black Panther (2018), Avengers: Infinity War (2018, Iron Man 3 (2013) and Avengers: Assemble (2012). Subsequently, after loading the data to its respective projects, each sample of data was analysed by the researcher separately. As the data was not of a uniform nature, certain liberties had to be taken in order to keep the analysis of the data similar and comparable. Social media posts both by the company and the users were practically within the same category in terms of analysing. They were all screenshots of text which were sometimes accompanied by visual features. However, movie trailers, featurettes, and news readings provided a distinct predicament wherein they were the same format but contributed different material. A trailer and teaser for the movie was more visual and auditory whereas an interview with a news channel was more textual in a way which could be understood as dialogue. To overcome this situation and to have an unbiased analysis and coding, visual elements from the videos were not analysed for their aesthetics. They were taken into consideration if the speaker mentioned them and they had an impact on the way the particular video played out. An in depth visual analysis was not done because visual discourse analysis was not part of the research. Auditory queues however, in the form of speech were all taken into account and coded accordingly. These, as Assaroudi, et.al, (2018) mention, were the preliminary codes given to each of the individual data items. The process of giving these items their preliminary codes mirror the process of grounded theory coding wherein data is labelled and concepts that emerge from the data are marked down based on their properties without interference from theoretical backing yet (Khandkar,

2009). These are emergent patterns and ideas from the data itself that the researcher labelled and coded. However, with grounded theory approach go, this is where the similarities with data coding stop. After performing the open coding for all the data collected for the four movies, the preliminary codes were further categorised by the researcher based on "meanings, similarities and differences" (Assaroudi, et.al, 2018) and these codes were then labelled the generic categories (Elo & Kyngas, 2008).

The result process of the research arises from the comparison and the establishing of links between the main categories (extrapolated from the theoretical data) and the generic categories (arising from the open coding of the collected data). Since the research aims to justify and provide a linkage between transmedia narratives and Marvel Studios' advertising, this particular content analysis seemed apt for the research.

4. Results and Analysis

For this chapter of the study, the focus will be on the key findings of the directed analysis performed on the data. The analysis for each of the four movies was structured according to the cateogorisation matrix (Appendix A) from where the main categories emerged. The categorisation matrix includes elements which make a transmedia narrative possible to achieve. This matrix was used by the researcher in order to compare and contrast against the generic categories that emerged from the data. The results would establish connections, examine differences and nuances between the main categories and the generic categories and would provide answers for the three hypotheses that drove the research. The process of examining the hypothesis was done in order to answer the following research question:

"How does Marvel Studios' blockbuster movie marketing use transmediality in advertising campaigns?"

The analysis was conducted for all four movies in three parts. Firstly, generic categories were fitted to the main categories and subsequent reasoning and discussion that led to the decision was discussed. This was done for all the main categories derived from theory as can be seen in the categorization matrix (Appendix A). Secondly, the codes present in the generic category were analysed alongside the differences for each of the four movies, further comparing and analysing each movie to understand the degrees of similarities between the main and the generic categories. Lastly, the hypothesis framing the research paper were addressed after observing the results, and assumptions made to the outcome of the data.

4.1. Black Panther (2018)

4.1.1. Creation of New Territories

Creation of new territories in the categorisation matrix (Appendix B) was coupled with the sub-category world-building. World-building, refers to the movement of characters, visuals and themes across content in order to maintain the larger narrative (Gambarato & Tarzia, 2017; Pratten, 2011) During the analysis, the researcher grouped together two sets of coding categories for this main category. As coding rules per Pintado & Estupinan (2016)'s *creation of new territories* state: content moving from one platform to another may not be divergent in storyline and that the movement should enhance each individual element independently.

Thus, the data-emergent generic categories that fit the main categories the most were "*creation and execution of story world*" and "*distinct story world characteristics*".

In the generic category *"creation and execution of the story world"* that emerged from the analysis of advertisements for Black Panther (2018), content that indicated a presence of production and external elements regarding film advertising were grouped together. Codes present in this category referred to actors and crew from previous movies often giving weight to the linking of different story worlds. Some of these codes were "actor's presence in other movies uses" "referencing other works by the director" "actor's from other MCU movies present" amongst others. As the coding rules for the main category suggest, content moving from one platform to the other should be consistent in keeping the main storyline non-divergent. The use and reference of cast and crew from previous MCU related movies was understood by the researcher as the advertising narrative being standard across multiple platforms in various scenarios (Gambarato & Tarzia, 2017). Furthermore, the creation of the story world also had codes such as "referring to the comic", "costume design" and "creator of comics". The comic book codes here can be related to the consistency within the narrative, additionally with the costume design presented in the advertisements following recurring uniformed ideas throughout.

Secondly, the generic category "*distinct story world characteristics*" refers to codes grouped together that showcased advertising content exclusive to the narrative world of the particular movie. The coding rules as per Pintado and Estupinan (2016) for this main category state that the movement from one platform to the other should enhance these particular narrative elements independently. The key codes present were "fictional country named", "weapons on screen", "high gear costume" and "introduction of people from fictional country". In these advertisements, these codes indicate individual elements from the storyline across platforms in a continuum. For example, the advertisements feature the fictional country of Wakanda, introduced in the movie Black Panther (2018). These codes depict characteristics of the fictional country separate from the main storyline, across platforms. Additionally, weapons and costumes shown through different platforms depict their own story, and ultimately add to the bigger narrative, but are showcased as exclusive individual elements to the story. For example, characters using high gear technology in the form of weapons and costumes alludes to aspects about the characters without hinting at the bigger story.

4.1.2. Defining relationships and Characteristics

"*Defining relationships and characteristics*", the second main theoretical category, borrows elements of world building from the previous main category. The key difference being the focus of world building on characters and their distinct characteristics and movement across platforms. A vital observation was made by the researcher in terms of defining a main character. For movies like Black Panther (2018) and Iron Man 3 (2013) it was easier to distinguish the main characters as their names are in the title of the movie. However, for movies like Avengers: Infinity War (2018) and Avengers: Assemble (2012) it became harder to distinguish main characters, thus a collective ensemble generic coding category was created for them to account for the collective appearance. This would help in distinguishing the narrative journeys through the platforms.

For the main category the researcher paired two distinct categories emerging from the data named "*character identities and journeys*" and "*main character journey and focus*". *Character identities and journeys* refer to the collection of codes that included any other characters in the MCU except the main characters. Main character for this movie was Black Panther, or T'Challa (Black Panther without a suit). *Character Identities and journeys* proved to be the largest generic coding category group in Black Panther comprising of 118 codes. Key findings from codes indicated characters maintaining their characterisations. This was evident with codes like "character in costume", "character skill described", "relations to other characters", "character history with Marvel", "character qualities", "characters performing archetypal gesture". The coding rules state that the characters should not be transformed through the entry into different media platforms. By looking at the previous assigned codes and the related content, it became evident that there was consistency within these aspects such as the costume worn by individual characters being the same or the archetypal gesture performed by the characters being replicated exactly by the others. In terms of character relationships, there were codes emergent from the advertisement that displayed more familial structures in comparison to the other three movies analysed. Codes such as "Familial relations referenced" and "familial relations explained" were popular codes as the theme reflected through different advertisements. Character specific posters of Facebook, gif replies by the audience on Twitter and partnership brand advertisements indicated these elements of familial relations across platforms. The coding rules by Estupinan & Pintado (2016) stating that the characters should not be transformed through different platform entries was proven

true for Black Panther's advertisement specifically through the example of its partnership brand advertisement. The partnership brand's (Audi) advertisement had aspects of it coded as "familial relations" which were, as mentioned before, present in other platforms as well. The familial interaction in the partnership brand's advertisement had presented characters in scenes which were not part of the movie. However, by still having the element of familial relations in the advertisement, they managed to maintain the character's coherency towards the overall picture as the characters showcased similar attributes to their reproductions on other platforms (Gambarato & Tarzia, 2017)

4.1.3. Stories with a metanarrative universal component

For the main category "*stories with a metanarrative universal component"* the sub-category of *multiplicity* is looked at closer, as it takes into account the myriad of different versions of a story that are interwoven across a myriad of platforms. It is achievable when the content brings attention back to its own narrative and the storyline does not exist or is not bound to a singular platform (Caddell, 2009). For this main category the researcher paired it with the two distinct generic categories that emerged through grouping certain open codes. These generic categories were "*movie scenes in multiple formats*" and "*part of an external universe*". The codes within each category was chosen and categorised if it, either exhibited the element of content not being bound to singular platform, and/or having a comparison with external elements to bring light to its own narrative.

Firstly, the generic coding category "*movie scenes in multiple formats*" exhibited the malleability of the content being advertised. It was clear from the formation of this category that the content advertised was not meant to be restricted to just one platform. Either this was an active decisions by the producers or the original content itself had inherent characteristics allowing it to move freely between platforms. Either way the content, for example the clips of movie scenes displayed, were shown through various different channels. Open codes like "movie scene described", "screencap of the movie", "scenes from the movie" and "action clip" showcase the variation and the use of content from the movie in different formats such as gifs (Graphics Interchange Format), movie stills as Facebook posts, exact description of movie content through the earned article reviews, emojis on social media showcasing memorable scenes from the movie, specific parts of the trailers being distributed across platforms in the form of shortened teasers and SuperBowl commercials. All of these indicate the travelling of movie scenes in multiple formats for advertising the film.

The second generic category "*part of an external universe*" represents codes that had the element of inclusion and reference of external characters and stories in the context of the movie. For example, *"Wakanda Forever"* used as a slogan for Black Panther was also used to compare three other superheroes alongside the Black Panther with the same caption for the movie. This could be understood independently, apart from the narrative of the movie, as the integration of aspects of the movie with an external universe. Additionally, external elements such as DC Studios was also used as a comparison point to compare other non-MCU superhero franchises with Black Panther. There were also instances of the audience using "non-MCU character gifs" in reply to the Facebook posts made by the official movie account. This was performed through content having the relation to the individual character's background acting history. These gifs showcased a completely different franchise or movie wherein the same actor was present and combined the two together. This act also indicates the understanding of the confines of the storyline for the user as well, as they are bringing attention to the external part (outside the MCU) elements to denote emotions for things happening within the narrative. These elements indicate an acceptance of the coding rules for the main category by Pintado and Estupinan (2016) wherein the content is bringing attention to its own narrative by contrasting it with external elements.

4.1.4. Stories told to encourage participation

The main category "*stories told to encourage participation*" can be defined as two sided. One side is the performance of the users and their engagement with the material and the other is how marketeers for the movie have invited this form of engagement from the users. In line with the categorisation matrix (Appendix B), there exists the notion of drillability referring to how in depth the audience analyse the given content (Mittell, 2009). For this particular main category, there were three generic categories that fit the notion of encouragement of participation on both sides. The three that emerged from open codes were "*audience engagement and urging participation*" "*audience generated content*" and "*social justice themes*".

The generic code "*audience engagement and urging participation*" for Black Panther was grouped according to how marketeers encouraged participation within either the fan community or the general audience and how the audience responded to these companies urging participation (note: this does not include audience generated content and if the audience responded with their own fan made content, as this was put in a different generic

category). For this generic category formed, in terms of the marketeers engaging consumers, a particularly recognisable trend was the use of hashtags for distinct characters and the movie. Hashtags are a way of engaging with consumers as each hashtag creates a linkage amongst everyone using the hashtag on the platform. Distinct hashtags (accompanied by an animated version of the character or symbol) gives the audience a chance to interact with the element and use it themselves when talking about the movie. In regards to Facebook posts, there are texts provided with quotes from the movie along with similar hashtags used on Twitter's platform. In terms of interviews with the cast, open codes have indicated instances of the cast mentioning and talking about the power of social media and bringing attention to how the fans have helped in constructing and moving this world forward. The researcher considered this a part of urging participation from users through praising and showing their awareness for the users existence. Further, codes in this category indicate marketeers providing links and ending official trailers with the movie's hashtag as well as the release date specified, urging consumers to interact through all channels. The audience was also urged to participate in a fanart competition for the movie and one of the fans drawings was also displayed in order to encourage other users to tag their own black panther fanart with a distinct hashtag. Lastly, inclusion of links to other websites in in official promotional material is present urging the audience to directly buy tickets for the movie.

However, on the audience side of engagement, a peculiar pattern was distinguished in terms of the type of engagement exhibited. The audience would reply to these forms of tweets and pictures on social media in mostly GIFs originated from the movie itself. There would be several gif replies to tweets with the audience posting moving images or scenes from part of the movie. This appeared numerous with characters doing the archetypal gestures from the movie. This gesture was used a lot by the audience apparent in codes which showed excitement and enthusiasm. This indicated audience interaction with the movie in terms of replies on a much deeper level as it provided for an understanding of the scenes and the characters the scene is a part of. Further analysis also indicated codes that accounted for the frequent use of character and movie hashtags by the audience when talking about the movie. There were also elements of parody in the open codes within this form of participation, but not as many instances as in audience generated content. Individuals would reply with a text added for humour purposes onto the already existing official poster, or in one of the instances, reply to a image tweet by marvel studios with a zoomed in picture of the same image with their own humorous caption for entertainment purposes. This can also be

regarded as audience participation and interaction with the content to a degree which convinces the researcher that drillability of the content was achieved, wherein a deeper meaning of the content is understood and appreciated by the users. The audience in open codes also played a part in encouraging other people to watch the movie enthusiastically, several clips and shots from the black panther movie were included in replies wherein people urged other people reading to watch the movie. These notions align with two of the coding rules in the main category. Assumptions about invitation of engagement from the marketeers and the drillability of content are addressed and acknowledged positively with this generic category.

The second generic category was "*audience generated content*". This main category crucial in understanding how the audience interpret the narrative and how they choose to adapt to the narrative universe. This category was compiled with the open codes that included fanart from the audience, people adorning the costumes worn by the characters in the movie and posting it online. Parody of official scenes, posters and material was also a recurring theme. Musical parodies played on the words from other songs in order to explain the narrative of the movie's plot. Over the top editing of scenes was also employed in order to denote an emotional reply (known as reaction images). Overall, audience generated content for the movie was prolific and in depth as the material and characters were understood enough in depth for the fans to spend the time drawing, creating material and posting humorous parodies of the content. As the coding rules suggest that for a transmedia narrative to be present in advertising, there should be a presence of user generated content that utilizes elements from the film's universe itself. This was apparent in the codes mentioned before as audience generated content has indicated the explicit use of the narrative's central elements.

4.1.5. Stories designed in terms of multimediality

Closely aligning with multiplicity, the main category "*stories designed in terms of multimediality*" aimed to uncover how stories were designed for multiple media through their continuity and seriality. The continuity in the narrative refers to the ongoing of the story and additions to the story with every new platform entry. Seriality refers to the elements of story being distinct parts of a much larger whole (Bertetti, 2014; Caddell, 2009;Eco, 1985).

For this main category the generic categories that emerged to fit in were "*part of a universe and linking story worlds*" and "*consistency of themes*"

For the first generic category "*part of a universe and linking story worlds*" the researcher compiled references to when there were reinforcements towards the bigger plot of the MCU. The MCU in general was mentioned quite often throughout the advertising of the movie and there occurred frequent comparisons and references to other movies in the MCU. For example, how storylines from previous movies such as Captain America: Civil War (2016) affect the events of the Black Panther movie. This gives credit to the notion of seriality from the wherein the given element is just one part of the whole, however released in a temporal discontinuation (Caddell 2009; Ndalianis 2004: 31-69; Mittell 2009). This happens as events of the movie are related to other MCU events, adding to the story to make it a complete narrative. There is also a constant reinforcement of "part of a bigger whole" as a code on itself through actors in the interviews promoting the movie, they are a part of reinforcing the ideal of a seriality where distinct parts come together as a whole (Pratten, 2011).

In the generic category "*consistency of themes*", the coding was initially categorised with open codes based on aesthetics that indicated a presence of similar hues and tones. Klastrup & Tosca, (2004) state that the movement of visual elements, not just plot and characters, provides for world building in a transmedia narrative. Black Panther's advertising used distinct tones the distribution that reflected across several different characters and posters and different platform advertisements for Facebook. These themes were blue and gold depicting certain characters. Additionally, apart from the aesthetic, repetitive archetypal gestures from the movie had appeared along the same number of times as the marvel logo appeared in the promotions. This iconic gesture from the movie was used in several different advertisements as well as audience reactions. This contributes to the consistency of themes in the movie and is often accompanied by the text "*For Wakanda*" which is a repetitive dialogue often used in the movie. Furthermore, there are also repetitive quotes from the movie used across platforms consistently with the same scenes, these are used as reaction images deriving meaning on their own as well as advertising for the movie itself. This generic category allows in assessing the seriality and continuity of the narrative, as seen through examples, seriality and continuity is present in the form of multiple entry content as well as consistent themes present in the advertisement.

4.2. Avengers: Infinity War (2018)

For the movie Avengers: Infinity War, the researcher finalised a total of 12 generic codes from the open codes. As the movies and the collection method of data from the movies were of a similar nature, the generic coding categories for Avengers: Infinity War tied closely with the Black Panther movie with only minor changes to the generic coding categories.

4.2.1 Creation of New Territories

For "*creation of new territories*" as a main category the researcher chose two distinct generic categories that matched the description and the coding rules for the creation of new territories. These were "*distinct world characteristics*" and "*creation and execution of story world*". This is achievable if the content is able to build a world or a story through its elements by moving the elements from one platform to the other in a manner which enhances the stories individually and also allows for the enhancement of the narrative elements (Gambarato & Tarzia, 2017).

For the movie Infinity War, these characteristics were found in "*distinct world characterisitcs*" wherein elements tied to the movie were used throughout. One of the frequent assigned codes were "using props related to the MCU characters". These props were used to denote a specific character element and would be consistent throughout the storyline. For example, the use of Thor's hammer or the use of The Hulk's big green hands as toys can alludes to the recognisation of these characters, as these items represent them. This is further reinforced by the code "wielding weapons that represent characters" where there is a consistency of the characters and their weapons used in movies showcased throughout the advertising campaign having a life of its own. Further in the "*distinct world characteristics*" generic category, codes were put together that exhibited objects used in the movie, specific dialogues said in the movie and referring to the plot of the movie. These codes together indicate that these separate elements enhance the story by either taking the dialogues out of context and using it as a meaning making on its own, referring to objects used in the movie for explaining other concepts or using other media or by referring to parts of the plot of the movie itself gives more weight to the world building around the movie through these advertisements, allowing the content to not diverge and completely negate the main storyline.

The second generic category "*creation and execution of story world*" the researcher grouped together codes that referenced the creation or behind the scenes of the narrative and

the advertising and production side of the story. Firstly, as Marvel is a comic book based franchise, there were elements of the origin of the stories mentioned. In the codes collected, "referring to comic book origins" and "giving credit to the creators" the individuals responsible for making the movie are referred to and credited. The shift from comic book to movie is laced with the notion of accepting the story building by not changing the original content but adapting from it. There were also instances of codes coming up that had "policing what is said about the movie", "not revealing plots from the movie" and "not revealing scenes from the movie" which leads the researcher to deduce that such acts are also done to confine storylines to one movie. This indicates a general flow of keeping the consistency of the movie and also enhancing the elements of the movie by not revealing what it is happening to it. However, in terms of "*creation and execution of story world*" for Infinity War the existen codes did not fit in nearly as well with the main theoretical category as one would hope. It included codes such as "availability of 3D viewing", "Inter MCU character relations" but these do not add to the theory or provide more information about the creation of new territories.

4.2.2. Defining characters and relationships

For the theorised category *"defining characters and relationships"*, the characters their identities and their journeys were grouped together in order to analyse whether the characterisations remain the same throughout the advertising campaign with new entries into the different media platforms and additionally whether these characters form an engagement with the audience through their multiple entries. The two generic codes that emerged were "*character identities and journeys*" and "*collective character setting*"

For the generic code "*character identities and journeys*", the researcher collected the open codes such as "MCU character interaction scenes", "description of MCU characters" and "character posters" that showcased the characters' identities and journeys while keeping them consistent. The code description of the character pertains to the qualities and attributes of the characters that remain the same all throughout the different platforms of advertising. Further, the character posters (advertised on Facebook) strengthened each character's motivations and displayed their unique skills which remain unchanged. There are also codes pertaining to the aesthetic such as "presenting MCU character in costume" which indicate the reinforcement of the character itself and their individual and distinct identities. Other codes present are "inter character relations MCU" and "interaction with other characters in the

MCU" and the content proves that even when moving from their own storylines to interacting with other characters the character description and motivation remains the same throughout. The inter relations bring on more for the individual characters to showcase the difference and provide conflict in the advertisements. This is apparent in the codes related to the antagonist. The antagonist's motivations are made clear along with the antagonist being framed against the protagonists in the code "antagonist addressing MCU characters" and "antagonist motivations". Understanding the coding rules for this category, one of the rules was the content moving from one platform to the other should be consistent and non-divergent from the original storyline. This was found to be present with the codes mentioned above pertaining to distinct features of the characters, who through the course of the advertising campaign through media platforms remain unchanged.

Since there is not a singular main character in Infinity War, but rather a collection ensemble cast of the main characters, the researcher decided to group these ensemble interactions and settings in a generic category of its own known as "*collective character setting*". This generic category showcases codes like "ensemble shot" "MCU characters working together" "niche ensemble within the movie" "referring to the ensemble team within the MCU". The ensemble is a an amalgamation of all the characters that had previously worked in a number of marvel movies and are now working together as a team. There are codes such as "partnership between MCU characters" which delivers on their unified goal while also maintaining their own individual character arcs with "equal space provided to all main MCU characters". According to the coding rules from the categorisation matrix, movement between these platforms should enhance components that exist on their own. By advertising an ensemble team, there is a unique outlook onto the collective strategy of the Avengers as a singular concept and not through each of the individual movies they are all a part of. This advertising of the collective enhances these elements on its own and does not need to be contextualized by other media to be understood.

4.2.3. Stories with a metanarrative universal component

For the main category "*stories with a metanarrative universal component*", there is an element of multiplicity wherein versions of the same story play out in multiple formats and are not bound solely to their own platform (Caddell, 2009). For this particular category the researcher chose the two generic categories of "*movie scenes in multiple formats*" and "*part of an external universe*". These categories together support the idea of versions of the same

story (the movie Infinity War) playing out in various different settings (in the form of gifs, trailers, screenshots, images etc.).

In the generic category "*movie scenes in multiple formats"* the most popular code was "scenes have an ensemble cast" code wherein scenes from the movie have been positioned and advertised particularly because they have an ensemble cast in their shot. This is done with exclusively scenes from the movie and were advertised on Facebook as a series of pictures forming promotional material. The second most popular code was "GIF reply". A particularly interesting finding about GIF replies was the fact that it was solely performed by the users and that the majority of the users used the GIF reply feature by replying with scenes from the movie itself. Scenes of characters, characters in action, or a mid-action sequence were all "GIF-ed" and presented in the replies from the audience. This indicates and supports the notion of a multiplicity of a view wherein different versions of the story play out in different platforms while also maintaining its connection to the source material. This is present as audience content not solely in the form of GIFs but also in the form of "imitating movement action from MCU movie", "description of the movie's plot" "description of scenes" and "alluding to plot". All of these showcase various versions of the story in terms of how people have interpreted or parodied it. It still maintains the version of the movie and is still interwoven within the storyline through contributing to the narrative by taking part in it.

Secondly, there is the "*part of an external universe*" generic category. This generic category emerged through putting together codes that brought attention to the MCU via non MCU related media. Examples of codes such as these are: "referencing the movie in the context of other media" "MCU characters from a different medium" or "non MCU related image" all elements by themselves do not necessarily declare partnership with the Marvel Cinematic Universe or Infinity War. However, most of the coded content is contextualised through what is happening to its narrative while bringing attention to its own storyline. For example the code "non MCU related image" has the image of a lady from another media shown looking happy then looking distressed. This on its own does relate to anything Marvel; however, with the caption provided and the context understood, the image is supposed to denote the feelings of the user after watching the final scenes of Avengers Infinity War. Another example is the code "referencing movie in the context of other media" wherein images from various shows and cartoons are shown having a lot of people in it and the caption reads "infinity war 2018" referring to the ensemble cast Marvel is generally known

for. Again showing the use of and external universe to bring attention to the narrative of the story world.

4.2.4. Stories told to encourage participation

For the generic code "*stories told to encourage participation*" the audience performance structures of the narrative alongside the engagement invited from the marketeers for the spread of information should be part of moving the advertising campaign forward. Alongside, there should be the presence of content generated by the users that add to the narrative element of the story world. The researcher finalised two generic categories that fit in with the stories that are told for the main category. These are "*audience engagement and urging participation*" and "*audience generated content*". For the generic code audience engagement and urging participation, two sides of the same coin were looked at. Firstly the audience side of the engagement followed by the tactics of urging participation by the marketeers.

From the generic category "*audience engagement and urging participation*", looking at the audience perspective, one of the codes that came up quite often (19 times) was "humorous element" in the replies from the audience to all the social media posts and content. This element of humour was most prevalent and would describe a form of engagement wherein the audience participate in groups by making the content likeable and funny. This was done through a lot of "memes" created by people to be funny and entertaining and to make the content their own. Another familiarity in the content was that a lot of it was the movies own versions edited to denote a certain emotion as is apparent with another code that was used "image used to showcase emotion" or "gif reply denotes positive feelings". Some of the codes used like "repeated viewing" "image showing comparison" "praising movie" "critiquing movie plot" " expressing enthusiasm for the movie" and "praising aspects of the movie" all denote a sense of deeper understanding about the complexities and idiosyncrasies of the narrative. This makes the narrative, across platforms drillable in nature as it allows for the audience to be able to dig deeper into the meanings and reason it themselves within the platforms (Mittell, 2009). From the marketeers side of urging participation, there is a curious notion of engagement from the audience that is more prevalent than in the previous movie advertising for Black Panther. For the movie, the similarities with Black Panther's advertisements were the hashtags used for advertisements. These hashtags are used for official promotional material as well as after trailers and teasers for the movie. The other similarities include the code "urging audience to get tickets" for the

movies through their social media links. These social media links are present in the links to Facebook and Twitter along with other sales such as "urging audience to buy BLU-RAY" or "urging audience to buy the movie". There is also a "movie contest hashtag" asking audience to participate with a chance to win the BLU-RAY for the movie. All of these tactics provide a sense of getting the audience engaged to the media. One unique tactic employed to make content spreadable spreadable is urging the audience to "be a part of history" by collectively referring to the movie as more than a movie and a part of history they are inviting engagement in a broader sense and promoting spreadability, by being part of a community.

The second generic category "audience generated content" emerged due to the amount of sole audience created content found on social media platforms. The goal for this main category is to analyse whether there is a creation of audience content utilising elements from the narrative itself. This was apparent in the codes, "fanart", "parody of movie", "changing official promotional material", "replicating MCU character powers" and "posing in front of official movie posters" to name a few. These indicate an explicit use of the story's narrative and distinct elements from the MCU for the audience to form their own content. Fanart has been used countless times, especially on Twitter, to replicate a scene from the movie, to draw the ensemble cast together, or to draw the characters in their costume. This type of audience generated content lends to the storyline by expanding the audience involvement of it as they interact with the material and make it their own.

4.2.5. Stories Designed in terms of multimediality

"*Stories designed in terms of multimediality*" signifies the continuity and seriality of the narrative being maintained. Continuity adds elements to the story making it understandable with its distinct parts whereas seriality maintains notion of separate parts, being dispersed across platforms still forming a distinct whole (Bertetti, 2014; Eco, 1985). For this particular main category the 2 generic codes the researcher decide upon was "*part of a universe and linking story worlds*" and "*consistency of themes*". The coding rules for this particular main category indicate that the content should be uniformed across the platforms in terms of its continuity and seriality.

The codes present in the generic category "*part of a universe and linking story worlds*" give evidence to the fact that there is a continuity of events, albeit at a temporal discontinuity. There are codes present that indicate "events in other MCU movies",

"discussing potential plot of future MCU movies", "referencing dialogue from previous MCU movies", "comparing movie to previous MCU movies" this notion of being part of a universe and linking different storylines gives understanding to the continuity of the narrative in a uniformed manner. Elements are referenced together from the past and to the future at random times but they still give addition to the complete storyline. For example, the code "referring to plot development in future projects" refers to the building of the current plot. This gives light to the seriality notion wherein there are separate parts of a distinct whole. The code "greater than the sum of its parts" was used in this generic category as well and can be used to understand the seriality within the elements providing a part of the greater MCU. There are "referring to the marvel universe" wherein the greater whole is mentioned in relation to the smaller parts such as the movie.

Further, the second generic category "*consistency of themes*" has similarities with Black Panther and showcases a consistency of theme throughout the marvel universe. There is consistency in the Marvel logos being present with the title font of the movie being similar patterned and themed. Another code that appeared for the movie "referring to tropes of other MCU movies" and it showcases the consistency of Marvel using it's movie tropes throughout, now reflected in its advertising. This showcases the existence of continuity and the consistency of the advertising format.

4.3. Iron Man 3 (2013)

4.3.1. Creation of New Territories

For the main category "*creation of new territories*" the 2 main generic codes used were similar to the ones used for the previous movie. These were "*distinct movie characteristics and elements*" and "*creation and execution of story world*"

Firstly, the code "*distinct movie characteristics*" was compiled as a generic code due to displaying similar codes such as "suits are featured", "image relating to events in the movie", "suit in action", "interacting with the suit", etc. There was a peculiar similarity between these codes when grouping and it was in reference the Iron Man "suits" being distinct features about the movie. This is understandable as the movie is about the main character Iron Man whose driving force and major individual characteristic is the ability to invent, wear and operate the iron suit, technological highly capable and powered suit. This suit has been featured heavily in all the movie's promotional material. From the posters, to

the trailers, stills and audience created content on YouTube for the movie, all have had the suit featured in their specific content. The suit itself is a very distinct characteristic of the movie. The suit moves through these multiple platforms seamlessly and maintains the same visuals (the distinct red and gold of the iron suit throughout). In terms of coherency and consistency towards the bigger picture and storyline, the suit is unchanged in how it works and how it is depicted. The codes "development of the suit", "discussing specifics about the suit", "specificities about the suit", "showing how the suit works", "progression of the suit" all indicate a consistency to how the suit is presented in the overall context of the film from all sides of fans, creators to the writers. Additionally, each of these codes indicate an addition to the storyline in terms of how the suit is operated and how it works. This can be considered enhancing individual elements on their own in terms of world building (Gambarato & Tarzia, 2017) however it is not much of an enhancement in this sense as there the degree of enhancement for the element seems quite low.

The other generic category that the researcher compiled were individual codes that the researcher labelled "*creation and execution of the story world*". The creation of the story world, included codes such as "countdown to the movie", "talking about production", "referring to the directors of the movie" and "actors referring to their characters". Creation and execution of the story world in this scenario featured how the story was built, through directors and actors and how the production made for the story world to come together. In this scenario, there was a presence of additional elements to the story followed by consistency to the plot in the form of "actor's agency in the character's narrative", "actor's referring to their characters by name", "actors talking about the scenes from different perspectives", "asking actors question relating to how the character would act" all relate to an additional element of the story where something is revealed about the characters from the actor's perspective that was not present in the movie itself. This adds to the narrative and also maintains the consistency as it is not something that is straying too far away from the original storyline, but something that supports the events and the scenes that exist in the storyline via actor's interviews in in promotions and advertising (Gambarato & Tarzia, 2017).

4.3.2. Defining relationships and characteristics

For the main category "*defining characters and relationships*", the researcher chose to include two generic categories " character identities and journeys" and "main character journey and identity".

Firstly, for "*character identities and journeys"*, the coding rules suggest that the character cannot transform from the introduction into different media platforms and that the character's coherency should remain towards the bigger picture. This is rule is adhered by the advertising of Iron Man 3. Codes such as, "referring to character relations in previous MCU movies", "bringing attention to previous MCU events with specific characters", "discussing character motivations", "describing characters" and "talking about character attributes" amongst other things, suggest that there is attention brought back by the marketing team on how the character was previously and how that will affect the character's story now, in the same universe. There is no indication of a drastic changing of the character with introduction to new media platforms and character coherency is kept by reiterating the character's motivations through interview and panels, describing the characters against what they have been through in previous versions through teasers, trailers and the Comic Con panels.

The second generic category used was "*main character journey and identity*". This was possible to ascertain in the case of Iron Man 3 as it had a distinct presence of a main character where the story was centered around them. Unlike the previous movie, Avengers: Infinity War. Similar to the character's journeys described before, the main character's storyline and inclusion mirrors the different platform advertisements of him. The main character is discussed in terms of personality, character development and motivations, all of which have been consistent throughout platforms. Thus, reinforcing the ideal that these aspects of the main character have not been transformed through the integration into different media platforms.

4.3.3. Stories with a metanarrative universal component

For this particular main category, the two generic categories used were "*movie scenes in different formats"* and "*part of an external universe*".

For the generic code "*movie scenes in different formats*" the researcher selected the codes that emerged from the advertisements. These were, "describing scenes from the movie", "fighting scenes from the movie", "describing plot" and "still from the movie" grouping them together due to the presentation of the movie in different formats. These formats, when compared the previous movies are indeed much limited. There does not seem the be the avid use of the GIF reply features or GIFs in general. Furthermore, there less stills from the movie and less screenshots that emerged from the movie. In terms of multiplicity

there did not appear to be additions to the universe in different ways where each platform ads something to the narrative. Some emergent codes indicated, "action scene from the movie" and "fighting scene from the movie" wherein it was solely the trailers which showed the movement of the story in the form of action. There did not appear to be discernable evidence of multiplicity or the advertising drawing attention to its own narrative. There is also the Pintado and Estupinan's (2016) main category coding rule that suggest the story not being bound to the platform. This would be true for Iron Man 3 but there was a lack of evidence in the content gathered to prove this. As *movie scenes in different platforms* was allotted only 11 codes and most of them from the trailer reinforces the idea that other platforms for the movie's content were not used as completely as the ones for Black Panther (2018) or Avengers: Infinity War (2018).

For the second generic category "*part of an external universe*", there is a sense of bringing attention to the own narrative while highlighting external media. This was also seen as examples in the previous movies for Avengers Infinity War and Black Panther. Highlighting the key codes compiled in this category, "comparing main character to other non MCU characters", "merging different mediums with the movie" and "referring to other fictional non-MCU items" all add to the element of understanding and bringing attention to the narrative of the movie by contrasting it with the external elements. This was done through comparing the actions of the main character Tony Stark from Iron Man 3 to Bruce Wayne (from a different franchise) in terms of character wealth, similarities and motivations. These indicate an explicit understanding and attention brought onto its own storyline by the advertising narrative. However, it is still lacking stories being performed in a way which results in them not being bound to a singular platform. There is no evidence that these same stories are being following a storyline in a way which is consistent and pertains being malleable through different platforms.

4.3.4. Stories told to encourage participation

For this main category, the two generic categories formulated and sorted were similar to the ones done for the previous movies as well. These were "*audience engagement and urging participation*" and "*audience generated content*".

For the first generic category formulated, "*audience engagement and urging participation*", there were readily some discrepancies from the first two movies which were

both released in 2018. In the coding and analysis for Iron Man 3, there was a very limited engagement from the audience's side. There was little to no interaction in terms of social media responses from the audience. This category was mostly categorised with how the marketeers for the movie urged participation and tried to engage with the audience. In terms of the engagement and stories told to encourage participation, the format of these advertisements indeed display characteristics of inviting people for participation. For example: "asking audience trivia questions", "asking audience about the movie", "urging audience to use hashtag", "posing question to the audience related to the character", "asking people what to do", "facebook link provided" and "asking the audience for an answer" all indicate to a platform where the infrastructure to encourage the audience to participate is present. However, as the lack of results analysed by the researcher concluded, there does not seem to be the appropriate amount of audience response for such an infrastructure that invites the audience to participate. Thus, for the main category coding rules stated by Pintado & Estupinan (2016) to be fulfilled, the first part of the invitation from the advertisers to generate the engagement is present but there is a lack of immediate audience response to those tactics.

Next the researcher aimed to see if there was audience response through the second generic category of "*audience generated content*". This the generic category emerged taking in content individually produced by the audience from Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. In terms of the amount of content in comparison to the other movies, the audience generated content for Iron Man 3 was fewer and limited in numbers. There was "fanart", "personalised text on image", "fanmade posters" and "replicating movie scene" which were the biggest codes founded for audience content creation. These were instances of one each and did not specify a regular pattern. However, where the content was lacking in numbers it rose up in drilability. There was a definite presence of the audience generated content using elements from the movie implicitly proving a deeper knowledge of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Audience engaged with the content by "imitating official promotional material" by using elements from the film's narrative and customising it keeping the film's criteria in mind, they "combined movie elements with humour elements" and had "inside jokes with the movie events" which shows a deeper understanding of the universe than just a superficial viewing.

4.3.5. Stories Designed in terms of multimediality

For the main category "*stories designed in terms of multimediality*" in the Iron Man 3 universe, the researcher used two generic categories to link this main category to the

emergent data. These two generic categories were: "*part of a universe and linking story worlds*" and "*consistency of themes*".

For the generic category "*part of a universe and linking story worlds*", some of the most occurring codes in this category were "comparing movie to previous MCU movies", "referring to events from other MCU movies", "referring to future MCU projects", "merging of storylines" and "bigger universe" to name a few. From the initial stages of analyses, there was a strong sense of continuity present in the advertising for Iron Man 3. The movie being the third one in the installment was already banking on the success of the two previous Iron Man movies. The notion of seriality for this particular film deals with breaking up the narrative into distinct parts for dispersion and has been done for Iron Man 3 on three separate occasions (Caddell, 2009; Mittell, 2009). However, as that was the initial assessment for the movie's seriality, when it comes to advertisements and promotional material for the movie it becomes more challenging to discern a pattern. In terms of the continuity for the movie's advertisements there were codes present that indicated the presence of additional elements within the generic category of "part of a universe and linking story worlds". The codes present such as "naming previous MCU movies", "inside jokes referencing other MCU events", "difference between previous MCU movies and this one", "mentioning previous MCU movies" to name a few. All these codes indicate the additional information gathered in the narrative about the story world at large apart from just about the movie itself. There are also mentions of the "comic book imagery" being used further linking story worlds and driving the sense of continuity within the universe by releasing information steadily in a way which affects the overall storyline. Events from the previous MCU movies are referenced to explain the happenings of the current movie and this is what forms the advertising strategies of Iron Man 3 as well. "Referencing other MCU events", codes like these refer to the addition of new elements to better understand the current narrative and its origin. The story of Iron Man 3 starts after the "Battle of New York", that occurred in the previous movie, and how the character deals with the repercussions of it. The advertisements add to this sense of continuity by constantly "detailing character development in previous MCU movies" in order to give context and additional meaning to the story. Then in terms of seriality for the generic category and dividing the story into different parts while also maintaining a uniformed narrative, there does seem to be the notion in the advertisements that this movie is one part of a distinct whole. A stark comparison with the other movie's advertising wherein the movies were an amalgamation of the distinct parts. Iron Man 3 is advertised as "progressing the

MCU" and in "reference to the MCU franchise" being part of a "bigger universe" and the movie being a "continuation of previous movies" lends some idea to the advertisements for the movie aiming at seriality of the movie's narrative as not dispersion of different elements across various platforms but the concentration of an element of the bigger story (i.e. Iron Man 3) and dispersing that across multiple platforms.

4.4. Avengers: Assemble (2012)

4.4.1 Creation of New Territories

For the last and fourth movie analysed for this research the researcher chose two generic categories to represent the main category. These generic categories were "*distinct movie characteristics"* and "*creation and execution of the story world*".

For "*distinct world characteristics*" the open codes present in this generic category were: "dialogue from the movie", "referencing war" from the movie, "referring to elements from the movie" and "referencing fictional places in the movie". These showcase world building in terms of narrative storytelling wherein separate content is consistent and non-divergent from the original storyline (Gambarato & Tarzia, 2017; Pratten, 2011). In this scenario "referencing dialogue from the movie", for example, has instances of advertising on Facebook and Twitter and original audience tweets from utilising the film's dialogues verbatim in different formats. Furthermore, in terms of visual elements for the movie, "distinct movie title" is a popular code as it pertains to the usage of the "Avengers" movie title in the same manner across all the platforms it is being shown in. Additionally, coherency to the main storyline across multiple platforms is maintained by utilising "character specific props" and "showing character specific props". These props have become and iconic signature for every individual main character in the movie and are featured almost like main characters on their own. For example, Thor's hammer or Captain America's shield is advertised as being a part of the MCU and throughout the promotional campaigns are shown as being consistent with the characterisation of the superheroes, lending to the adherence of consistent narrative storytelling, while moving from different social media platforms to trailers and teasers to interviews.

The second generic category is "*creation and execution of story world*". This category was formulated in order to understand whether behind the scenes features that were present in the advertisements accommodated for the world building strategies, allowing the content to

move through various platforms without losing coherency for the bigger storyline (Gambarato & Tarzia, 2017). For this category, codes such as "comic book origins", "doing justice to the comics", "keeping true to the comic characterisations", "referencing actor's dialogue from the movie", " actor revealing things about the movie" and more, allude to the fact that there was a decision made to move these storylines from one format to the other. This is highlighted in the advertising wherein the movement of these different advertisements still maintains "actors talking about their characters" and "actor revealing things about the movie". However, there does not seem to be explicit proof in the data gathered with respect to the narrative bringing attention to its own storyline in the advertisements, as Pintado & Estupinan (2016).

4.4.2. Defining relationships and characteristics

For this main category the generic categories chosen were "*character identities and journeys*" and "*collective character setting*".

For the first generic category "*character identities and journeys*", the key codes were "referring to character's traits", "character's name", "character interactions", "character personality", "characters from MCU", "character in costume", "antagonist motivations", "character using their own skills", "character growth from previous MCU movies", "character arc through MCU movies", "description of characters" and "referring to character's presence in other MCU movies". All these codes allude to the character identities and journeys being robust enough to be the same throughout different platforms (Gambarato & Tarzia, 2017). Character personality and character traits are explained and described in the advertisements. This would mean that the character is moving across platforms while also maintaining its individualism as its character properties are explicitly stated. This is apparent in the flow of character arcs across multiple MCU movies while also maintaining their character goals, personalities and motivations. Furthermore, the codes in this category also allude to the fact that they enhance specific elements in these advertisements when they are on their own. For example, "referring character origins" displays a background for the character in one of the interviews with the film's star by also maintaining the main storyline, giving this piece of the narrative importance on its own.

The generic category "*collective character setting*", was introduced to account for the collective ensemble cast present in the Avengers movie. As this movie does not have a main

character like Iron Man 3 and Black Panther, the existence of an ensemble team or characters will be understood as a character on its own. For this generic category the chosen codes were "naming the ensemble team", "forming a team with MCU characters", "formation of the ensemble", "balancing all the character arcs" and "the ensemble as a trope". This formation and execution of the characters should ideally indicate that the characters or the ensemble is not transformed out of its element when moving through platforms. In the case of this generic category there are signifiers like naming the team, forming the team with distinct characters from the marvel universe, and elaborating on each of the character's arcs for the story to be consistent in its characterization, allow for the understanding that these remain permanent through different platforms. Furthermore, this generic category also showcases the much used code "the ensemble as trope" wherein the researcher noticed a peculiar phenomenon. There was the trope, exclusively used by the audience, to base the main characters from the ensemble into caricatures of other media. This took the distinct characteristics from the Avengers Ensemble team and places them in different media settings. For example, for the animated show Adventure Time, a fan made the characters from the tv show dress and correspond to certain MCU ensemble characters in the fanart. This indicates characterisations that the narrative was willing to explore has reached the audience and the audience analysed these elements of the story world in depth, making content corelating to external elements through showing understanding of the MCU.

4.4.3. Stories with a metanarrative universal component

For this main category the selected generic codes by the researcher were "*movie scenes in multiple formats*" and "part of an external universe"

For the generic category "*movie scenes in multiple formats*" codes included in the category were "scenes from the movie", "still from the movie", "detailing plot of the movie", "scene progression detailed", "IMAX viewing availability" and "scene descriptions" amongst others. For these codes they were compiled because they exhibited the viewing or experiencing of the distinct movie scenes in a variety of different platforms and mediums. For stories to have a metanarrative universal component, there should exist an aspect of multiplicity in the advertising storyline wherein additional elements intersect with the main

storyline across multiple platforms, and each draw attention to their own unique element and are not bound to their platforms (Caddell, 2009). For the movie Avengers Assemble, even though aspects were present of movie scenes being in multiple formats, it was difficult for the researcher to connect these to multiplicity and to ascertain the uniqueness of them. For the previous movies especially Black Panther (2018) and Infinity War (2018), there was more evidence suggesting that the stories were told with a metanarrative universal component. However, with regards to the Avengers movie, the multiplicity in terms of additional story elements crisscrossing with several different platforms was lacking. The codes present in this generic category were mostly scenes from the trailers depicting scenes from the movie. There did not seem to be a wide variety of platforms being explored in terms of multiplicity. Furthermore, in terms of not being bound to the platform, there were limited but instances of scenes such as teaser scenes, trailer scenes, movie stills on Facebook by Marvel Studios and description of scenes from articles that made the story transcendent towards other platforms. The lack of diverse platforms in this case can be understood through looking at the movie's release year, 2013. In comparison to movies released in 2018, there was a lack of social media engagement and online advertising for movies to how it is now for more recent movies.

The second generic category "*external universe*" shows how combining elements with the external universe brings out attention to the content's own narrative, as the coding rules suggest. A peculiar finding from this category was the emergence of the ubiquitous codes "putting other characters in MCU elements" and "putting other characters in official MCU posters" this trend was not apparent or present in any of the three movies analysed. This usage of external elements brought on explicit usage of the story's own narrative to fit in with external elements. For example, the usage of the popular British boy-band One Direction as edited pictures to fit in with each of the main characters of the MCU ensemble. Another example being Disney characters fitted with MCU character counterparts. This shows an understanding of the narrative on itself and the attention brought to the own narrative.

In terms of multiplicity another new generic code emerged called "*additional elements added to story*" this was not present in the previous three movies and was called for after the Avengers movie in 2012 re-released the movie in theatres with an additional post credits scene. This post credit scene was part of the narrative and thus was advertised heavily

as well. This was mostly present in the news articles that were analysed. This painted a picture of this additional element to the story that were woven and advertised across these news articles to be introduced as a new scene.

4.4.4. Stories told to encourage participation

The main category of "*stories told to encourage participation*", refers to marketeers making content that invites the users to engage with and interact with (and how these users engage and interact with the content advertised) and additionally this main category deals with the performance of the users and their ability to produce user generated content.

The first generic category for this is "*audience engagement and urging participation*". Like the previous movie Iron Man 3, there existed a decent amount of urging participation from the audience in this generic category codes were used such as "movie hashtag used", audience "relatedness to the characters", "relating to the characters" "enticing people to watch the movie", "facebook link provided", "showing exclusive new footage to the audience" and "urging audience to look at image". These were all arguably used to urge the audience to participate and take part in social media engagement. However, on the other side of the coin, the audience engagement for these social media posts was very limited or in some instances non-existent. Audience displayed a lack of interaction with the content put forward from the advertisers on movies official social media. In terms of audience participation, there were codes present that talked about the "enthusiasm of the fans" however this was not explicitly present in the advertising content analysed.

In terms of the "*audience generated content*" however, codes present in this generic category were "using the MCU template for own content", "fanart", "putting other characters in MCU elements", "fan-made content", "putting other characters in official MCU posters" and "character parody" to name a few. This audience generated content interacts with the storyline by co-opting them with external media. This is how a majority of the audience generated content for Avengers has been performed. The audience generated content focuses on the individual specifics of the characters and their personalities and aims to project those onto other characters. In terms of drillability, there does not seem to be much of an in depth analysis of the narrative frameworks of the movie storyline within the audience generated content. Where it was in depth for the previous movies it proved surficial for this one. There are codes like "personalised text on character image" from the MCU depicted by the

audience but the text does not refer to the MCU or the character and is just humorous in its wording not contributing to the universe or the narrative in a way which advances the characters or the story, or showing an in depth understanding of the character itself.

4.4.5. Stories Designed in terms of multimediality

Lastly in terms of this main category, two final generic codes were connected for the category and these were "*part of a universe and linking story worlds*" and "*consistency of themes*". The main category's aim is to understand whether the media content designed by the advertisers has been designed from a multimedial perspective that keeps in mind the continuity and the seriality of the movement of the content.

For the first generic category the codes present indicate "*part of a universe and linking story worlds*" the codes used to group them together into this category were "merging of different storylines for one purpose", "combining different main characters into one movie", "referencing the marvel universe", "referring to previous marvel movies", "sequential progress of stories", "expansion of the marvel universe" and more within the same stream. These clustered codes can be understood as pushing forward the continuity and uniformity of the advertising story world (Bertetti, 2014; Eco, 1985). Codes in the category such as "reference to previous MCU movies", "continuation of plot through future MCU movies" and "scenes from other MCU movies" put together a picture of a bigger universe and overall narrative. These codes present allow for the presentation of the universe in a temporal discontinued direction. Advertisers simultaneously market future MCU projects, scenes from other MCU projects, the continuation of current MCU plotlines into future projects. These are all interconnected storylines but ones which are not presented in one platform along a sequential manner. In terms of seriality for the advertising narrative, in comparison to the other movies, this Avengers movie was advertised more often as "merging of storylines" presumably because the movie was the first of its kind combining superheroes from different narratives. Thus the advertisement displayed distinct aspects of merging storylines and different parts coming together to form a definite whole. Aspects such as "representative of the comics" "scene from previous MCU movies", "interlocking stories", "convergence of MCU storylines", "referring to other MCU movies" and "merging of different storylines for one purpose" all signify the separate parts of the holistic picture in advertising pointing towards something bigger. Different areas of advertising reveal different

parts of the storyline as seen before in the codes and how each of them affect the coming together of the storyline at large.

The second generic category "*consistency of themes*" has codes that emerged from combining codes which exhibited similarities and patterns throughout the advertised content. This generic code was then used to understand whether content was uniformed and if this contributed to the advertising narrative. Some of the key codes from this category were "repetitive dialogues from the movie used", "humour element", "using phrasing from the movie" and technical aspects like "release date specified", "marvel logo" present and "Disney referenced". The non-technical aspects from this category are uniformed in the sense that they do not differ from the movie and are consistent everywhere. The humour element in Marvel movies is a big selling point and has also remained one in these advertising strategies. However, in terms of adding to the narrative, the codes to not represent stronger aspects of differentiating between different elements of the advertising story, thus it cannot be said each part contributes to the narrative because a singular part is not adding anything to the narrative.

4.5. Relating Hypotheses to Results

This section of the thesis will aim to relate and link the hypotheses with the results analysed in the previous section. The researcher will address all three of the hypotheses that guided this research and, linking it back to the results obtained, answer the main research question posed for the study.

In order to begin the analysis of the hypothesis, a reiteration of the first hypothesis is as follows:

H1: Marvel's advertising campaigns reflect the transmedia nature of a story world narrative.

For the first hypothesis, the term story world narrative was operationalized through Pintado & Estupinan's (2016) study that listed five of the various narrative expansion elements for a transmedial advertising story world. Out of the five broad categories used for the overarching themes of the results, the two used to answer this hypothesis were "Creation of New Territories" and "Defining Characters and Relationships". These were selected for the first hypothesis as the sub-categories for each of these main categories was world

building strategies. World building strategies governs the movement of characters, stories, visual elements across multiple platforms whilst also maintaining coherency and non-divergence towards the original storyline (Caddell, 2009; Jenkins, 2009). It also emerges from the assumption that each element introduced into the new platform is used to enhance other elements to exist independently. The category of Defining Characters and Relationships from Pintado and Estupinan's (2016), was also chosen to analyse and answer this hypothesis as it corresponds with the world building strategies, similar to the ones noted for creation of new territories, however these only correlate with the characters in the story and their movement across various platforms. These two categories combined, showcase the world building and character concepts in their descriptions and thus are the most suitable for analyzing the story world narrative.

The results of analyzing these two categories within the context of the four movies led to interesting initial findings. For the "creation of new territories", the movie Black Panther (2018) displayed certain distinct story world characteristics and consistencies in their advertising as listed through the codes in the results. These consistencies helped understand part of the advertising campaign for the movie wherein elements such as referring to other projects in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and maintaining the consistency of the universe gave meaning to the world building strategies. The advertising strategies for Black Panther (2018) also showcased the enhancement of independent elements in the advertising through the introduction onto various platforms. In contrast, The Avengers (2012) did not indicate patterns of narrative elements that made sense on their own without an overall context. There was however a presence of consistency within the distinct characteristics of the story world, these were limited to the ensemble characters present in the movie. The distinct characteristics emerged from the continuation of the characters from the other movies forming an ensemble team in this one.

Furthermore, the same pattern was detected in Iron Man 3. The consistency of the world building was present but limited to certain aspects of the story world. In terms of Iron Man 3 this was present only for the iron man suit which was consistent throughout. Similarly in the creation and execution of the story world, there were very limited aspects of individual elements that made sense on their own without a narrative context. This is in quite stark contrast to elements found in Avengers: Infinity War (2018) wherein consistency of the characters and the storyworlds remained uniformed throughout the advertising campaign

alongside distinct storyworld characteristics enhancing the story by giving individual elements in the story their own meaning. Movie dialogues used in Infinity War and Black Panther, both released in 2018 were used in various situations without context, instilling meaning into unrelated images. Inversely, movie dialogues for Iron Man 3 (2013) and The Avengers (2012) both released before 2014, showcased dialogues being used verbatim within the context of the movie scenes.

To answer the second part of the hypothesis, the character's and their relations is the other side of the coin which aims to answer the story world building and how the transmedia story world can be assessed through characters and their main characters story arcs. For the movies Black Panther (2018), In terms of the main character, there was consistency in the characterization as made clear by the results and more importantly consistency within the character's narratives and relationships. Elements present for the characters did not require additional information to be understood, and was used throughout the advertising campaign at various stages to refer back to the movie individually. This was mirrored in the advertising for the movie Avengers: Infinity War (2018) released in the same year. Although a lack of main characters due to an ensemble cast being present, the advertising campaign managed to include motivations and character posters for all the main ensemble team, keeping them in costume and decontextualizing aspects of them thus not confining them to one platform, thus elements that can be understood through various platforms. This was however not the case for the two other movies released before 2014, Iron Man 3 (2013) and The Avengers (2012). For Iron Man 3 (2013), even though the results indicate that the main character himself was consistent throughout the platforms and that various different platforms did not transform the character's identity through the advertising campaign, there is no overall indication of individual characteristics adding something to the narrative that is uncontextualized and provides something to the narrative on its own. Further, with the case the of The Avengers (2012) there was an involvement of the characters in an ensemble to be able to provide for an ensemble team that remains consistent throughout and provides a consistent overall storyline and has elements which allow for it to be understood independently on its own.

This showcases that movies, if they are old do no show transmedia narratives, however if they are older and an ensemble they are more likely to show characteristics of a story world narrative.

The second hypothesis for this research was as follows:

H2: Marvel's multimedia advertising strategies for a movie, form one cohesive narrative.

Forming one cohesive narrative in the hypothesis was operationalized using two of the categories from Pintado and Estupinan's (2016) study. These two categories were "stories with a metanarrative universal component" and "stories designed in terms of multimediality". These two categories were specifically selected to represent this hypothesis as each of the categories outlined the provide theoretical definitions that support the interconnectedness of storylines. The aim of formulating this hypothesis was to understand whether Marvel's advertising campaigns across platforms for blockbuster movies form an interconnectedness and continuity within each of the platforms. The sub-categories that helped answer the main categories were: The multiplicity, continuity and seriality (Caddell, 2009; Bertetti, 2014; Pratten, 2011).

In terms of the multiplicity to bring cohesiveness to the advertising structure (Caddell, 2009), Black Panther (2018) as per the results, displays a depiction of movie scenes in various different platforms from descriptions to audience generated GIFs, the movement of the original source material occurs through advertising in different platforms and formats. This scenario of multiplicity closely resembles that of Avengers: Infinity War. In terms of multiplicity in multiple formats, the scenes from the movie have seen similar distribution across platforms as Black Panther (2018). Gif replies being one of the most popular categories, the results indicated that through these outlets, the various versions of the story, both through the audience and the marketeer's side arose and contributed to the narrative by involving elements of the movie in the content.

Multiplicity was achieved through the development of the storyline not being bound to just one platform (Freeman, 2014). However, there were stark discrepancies between the previous two movies and Iron Man 3 (2015) and The Avengers (2012). In terms of multiplicity, although the same generic category, "movie scenes in multiple formats" was used for Iron Man 3 (2013) and The Avengers (2012), the category failed to provide evidence of a additions to the narrative through different platforms, or the narrative not being bound to a platform. The context of the category changed for the two latter movies. These did not

actively negate multiplicity with information proving the opposite, however the lack of presence for multiplicity in the content was understood as the absence of it entirely.

The other category used to assess the cohesive nature and answer the hypothesis was stories designed in terms of multimediality. These were defined through their continuity and seriality where elements of the advertising narrative gave new information and supported other elements alongside adding giving meaning to the larger advertising storyline through its distinct parts. Through the results it is apparent that for Black Panther (2018) and Avengers: Infinity War (2018) that there was an explicit presence of continuity and seriality in the advertising narratives. With emerging categories such as consistency of themes and part of a universe linking story worlds. Evidence, that suggested the advertising narrative was designed in terms of multimediality, included elements such as repetitive quotes, consistent themes from the movie and regular tropes used allowed for the continuation of the storyline in a manner which was congruous with all the other elements present.

In terms of seriality, both Black Panther (2018) and The Avengers (2018), displayed seriality in terms of referencing and linking other Marvel Cinematic Universe elements to their storylines, explicitly referring to being part of a bigger whole. There were several instances wherein the content itself referred to the universe as being a distinct part of the entire Marvel Cinematic Universe, leading to the notion of seriality in the two movies' advertising content.

Surprisingly, this notion of seriality and continuity was also present in advertisements for Iron Man 3 (2013) and The Avengers (2012). There was evidence of sequential advertising being present, owing to the linking of story worlds in the narrative advertising. Separate parts of a distinct whole were present for Iron Man 3 advertisements wherein the movie was the third installment of its own franchise, its advertisements mirrored this by referencing its existence in previous MCU movies across platforms. The Avengers adhered to seriality as well by the advertisements depicted various different characters and their scenes in different platforms, never fully depicting the picture but also adding to the eventual narrative with each individual element in the advertisement. Continuity in terms of consistency of elements was also present in The Avengers (2012) with the addition of elements that remains constant throughout the advertising campaign.

Thus for the second hypothesis about Marvel's advertising forming a cohesive narrative, the results indicate that in the scenario for all four of the movies, the analysis indicates that the advertising narratives correspond with the theories of seriality and continuity and exhibit elements in the Marvel Universe advertising which indicate to part of a cohesive narrative. This cohesive narrative however, is contains parts of multiplicity as well. This is why it cannot be said that the second hypothesis is fulfilled for two of the movies as the aspects of multiplicity were not present for Iron Man 3 (2013) or The Avengers (2012).

Addressing the third and final hypothesis for this research, the hypothesis aimed to uncover the answer to an audience participation as contribution to the narrative. It is as follows:

H3: Audience participation contributes to Marvel's cohesive advertising narrative.

The third hypothesis centers around the audience participation and its contribution to the multimedia advertising narrative.

Audience participation in this scenario was operationalized in terms of one of the main categories in Pintado & Estupinan's (2016) narrative transmedia extension which was "stories told to encourage participation". These stories were linked to theories of performance structures wherein there is a presence of user generated content that uses the elements displayed by the advertising narrative for the creation of their own content, and the drillability which is the depth with which the audience is *made* to engage and how the audience engages with the advertising narrative.

For Black Panther (2018) and Avengers: Infinity War (2019), the audience participation in terms of transmedia structures was present in the form of GIFs, audience replies and interactions with the advertising content distributed by Marvel. This type of audience participation was especially unique as it combined distinct aspects of the narrative storylines (i.e., the movies) with the audience content. The audience would actively utilize these elements present through the advertising narrative and derive their own meanings through it. This is one of the core assumptions of a transmedia performance from the audience, if whether the content itself utilized elements from the narrative universe (Pintado & Estupinan, 2016). Furthermore, audience created content for the two movies indicated the presence of drillability and the audience engaging deeply with the media, understanding its nuances and projecting those nuances onto the content they created. Drillability is crucial in

understanding the audience participation and to assess the hypothesis as it focuses on the understanding of transmedia narratives as being understood actively spread by the audience (Mittell, 2009).

For Iron Man 3 (2013) and The Avengers (2012) the notion of audience participation in a transmedia performance context was limited to non-existent. The amount of audience interaction with the advertising content was negligible and extremely unbalanced in relation to the advertising prompts and content from the marketers urging participation. The audience displayed a lack of engagement and interaction on social media websites with the content advertised to them. In terms of audience generated content, in comparison to Black Panther (2018) and Avengers: Infinity War (2018), Iron Man 3 (2013) has less instances of audience generated content occurring throughout the advertising campaign. However, the limited content that was present did indicate a definite presence of drillability, allowing for a deeper understanding of the narrative by the audience. In contrast, for The Avengers (2012), there were no instances detected of drillability within the audience generated content. Content leaned towards a superficial understanding of the narrative as elaborated by the codes in the analysis of the results.

As the hypothesis present states that audience participation contributes to Marvel's cohesive advertising, the results have shown a difference through analysis. The audience participation contributed to Marvel's advertising narrative in terms of how in depth the audience analysed the content and how engaged they were with the advertising narrative storyline. Movies released in 2018 have shown a definite audience participation both in terms of transmedia performance narratives and drillability of the audience generated content. However, as the movies start to get older, there are gradual detachments from the audience participation side. Iron Man 3 there was audience generated content but no audience engagement and going down further to 2012, for The Avengers, there was no audience generated content or audience engagement with regards to the advertising narrative.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Conclusion and Discussion

In conclusion, the aim of this research paper was to understand, through a directed qualitative content analysis, whether transmedia practices were present in the advertising narratives of Marvel's blockbuster movies. Through the retrieval of main categories via previous theoretical research and emergent categories from the advertising data analysed, the researcher made linkages within these two categories for each of the four movies.

To reiterate the research question:

"How does Marvel Studios' blockbuster movie marketing use transmediality in advertising campaigns?"

Results were obtained by formulating 3 distinct hypotheses. Each of these hypotheses dealt with: Audience participation, a cohesive interconnected narrative & resemblance of a story world narrative. The results showcased discrepancies between Marvel movies released in 2018 and movies released before 2014. Older movie advertisements, when analysed against the five categories in the transmedia narrative framework, did not form complete linkages with the categories. On the other hand, the two movies' advertisements released in 2018 made strong linkages with all five categories of the transmedia narrative framework. This sheds some light on Marvel's evolving transmedia advertising narratives wherein the forward progression of movies is lending to a more transmedial advertising narrative. However, movies that are older are more likely to display a story world narrative in their advertisements if the movie is an ensemble.

The results further indicate Marvel advertising in a cohesive and interconnected manner via invitation for engagement from the audience. These particular results was surprising as the invitation for engagement was present in all four movies' social media advertising. This indicates a part of Marvel's current transmedia advertising strategies that have remained constant through 2012-2018. This is interesting to note as audience participation is one of the five main categories in a transmedia narrative framework. This gives light to the fact that components of transmedia narratives have been utilized by blockbuster marketing in the past, but their occurrence simultaneously is what drives the transmedia narrative forward.

Furthermore, the results indicate the occurrence of an interconnected story world, in the form of advertisements. These advertisements, independent from the movie they are advertising, have formed their own story worlds, narratives and engagement. The advertising has become an extended, if not separate, part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe and have exhibited strong patterns of story world narratives on their own.

To answer the question about how Marvel uses transmediality in its advertising, it can be concluded that Marvel had used aspects of transmediality in its earlier movies, however these were selective in terms of audience participation and world linking did not provide or a complete transmedia narrative. These were not interlocking stories where advertisements had their own narratives. They did not have a universe of their own narrative as movies being released as recently as 2018 have. As seen with the movies released in 2018, it is shown how Marvel uses transmediality in its advertising. Through linking the emergent categories with their transmedia counterparts, this paper has aimed to answer how transmediality exists in a blockbuster's advertising narrative.

5.2. Limitations, Validity and Reliability

Limitations of the study stem from the methodological aspects of the particular research. As the researcher was conducted for a Master's degree program, there were requirements on the amount of data collected for analysis. This proved to be a challenging task in terms of analyzing transmedia elements as it required advertising content from various different platforms in multiple formats. Thus, the open coding for multi-media content had to be uniformed in ways which would prevent a researcher bias. The validity of the research is heightened due to this discrepancy in the format of the units of analysis. The researcher explained every decision taken to collect the data explicitly so as to not ruin the validity of the research. In terms of reliability, a pre-testing of the categorisation matrix was conducted in order to ascertain whether the categories derived from theory would indicate linkages with the generic codes present. Initially, the movie Black Panther's (2018) generic codes were derived and compared against the main categories. Once these categories provided linkages in the form of broader categories, the categorisation matrix was ready to use. However, as this is a qualitative study, no two independent researchers would arrive at the same conclusion, thus making it challenging for the results of the study to be replicable. This is one of the limitations of the study, as there was no inter-coder reliability.

5.2. Future Research

Future research in transmedia narratives would benefit from analyzing blockbuster movies advertising on a case by case basis and eventually doing a comparative study to ascertain patterns. As the scope of this study was limited, it was not feasible to undertake such a research. However, research in this area would prove relevant in terms of doing in depth narrative analysis of movie advertising and making cross-movie comparisons. Furthermore, transmedia advertising narrative theory should be subsequently applied to other formats to assess the presence of transmedia narratives in various entertainment products. Finally, this research has aimed to detect transmedia storytelling in blockbuster advertising. However, future research can benefit by taking the next step to analyse how these transmedia stories occur and are performed by the marketers.

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Appendix A: Data Collection According to PESO Framework

	Black Panther (2018)	*Avengers: Infinity War (2018)*	*Iron Man 3 (2013)*	*The Avengers (2012)*	Sample Size
PAID					
TV Spots (Super bowl Commercials)	30 second Super bowl commercial	30 second Super bowl commercial	30 second Super bowl commercial	30 second Super bowl commercial	5 videos
Inclusion of Theatrical Trailer releases	1 trailer (no official theatrical trailer)	1 trailer (no stated theatrical trailer)	1 trailer (no stated theatrical trailer)	1 trailer (no stated official theatrical trailer	4 videos
EARNED					
Print Media Articles	People, Entertainment & Variety Magazine	People, Entertainment & Variety Magazine	People, Entertainment & Variety Magazine	People, Entertainment & Variety Magazine	15 articles
Entertainment News Videos	Access Hollywood and Entertainment Weekly	Access Hollywood & Entertainment Weekly	Access Hollywood and Entertainment Weekly	Entertainment Weekly and TMZ	10 videos
Red Carpet Interviews	One video red carpet interview	One video red carpet interview	One video red carpet interview	One video red carpet interview	5 videos
SHARED					
Media Panels (Comic Con)	Official comic Con panels	Official Comic Con Panels	Official Comic Con Panels	Official Comic Con Panels	5 videos
Partnerships with other Brands	Lexus and Synchrony Bank partnership videos (2)	Lego Poster (1 Image) Subway Tv Commercial (1 Video)	Lego Poster (1 Image) Subway Tv Commercial (1 Video)	Acura and Dr. Pepper Partnership videos (2)	
Facebook Top Posts from Official Movie Accounts	Top 4 posts from Black Panther official Facebook page	Top 4 posts from "Avengers" official movie page	Top 4 posts from "Iron Man" official Facebook page	Top 4 posts from "Avengers" official Facebook page	20 posts

Twitter Top Posts from Official Movie Accounts	Top 4 tweets ranging from specific dates from the official black panther movie account	Top 4 tweets ranging from specific dates from the official Avengers movie account	Top 4 tweets ranging from specific dates from the official Iron Man account	Top 4 tweets ranging from specific dates from the official Avengers movie account	20 posts
User Generated Fan Content in reply to top official Facebook posts	30 image replies in total	11 image replies in total	0 image replies in total	0 image replies in total	41 images
User Generated Fan Content in reply to top official Twitter tweets	59 image replies in total	32 image replies in total	0 image replies in total	0 image replies in total	105 images
Original Fan Content on Twitter	15 tweets audience original content (images)	15 tweets audience original content (images) (the infinity war blooper real was released in July and clouded the results thus the dates of selection was movie a little before a month)	15 tweets audience original content (images) Same as AUO. However, there was a struggle with finding fan content	15 tweets audience original content (images) Al to of fan content specifically the merging kind.	75 images
Original Fan Content on YouTube	Black Panther: 1 video (5 mins) on how to do the stunts shown in Black Panther using parkour	Infinity War: 1 video Animated retelling of the scenes from the movie and depicting how it should have ended instead	Iron Man 3: 1 Video, Fan made video of a baby partaking in Iron Man's Iron Suit Interface	Avengers: 1 Video Fan Made Song Parody for the Avengers using the hit song of the year 2012 "What Makes You Beautiful" by One Direction.	5 Videos

OWNED

Posters on Marvel's Official Webpage	Official Poster from the website	Official Poster from the Website	Official Poster from the Website	Official Poster from the Website	5 Poster Images

Official trailers on Marvel's Official Page	Official Black Panther Trailer	Official Infinity War Trailer	Official Iron Man 3 Trailer	Official Avengers Trailer	5 videos
Marvel's Featurettes on Official Website	Black Panther Featurette	Infinity War Featurette	Iron Man 3 featurette	Avengers Featurette	5 videos

Appendix B: Categorization Matrix

Main Categories	Sub-categories	Theoretical Definitions	Coding Rules
Creation of New Territories	*World Building Strategies*	World building governs the movement of characters, storylines and narratives and visual elements of a story across a multitude of media, while maintaining coherency towards the bigger picture	Is achievable when content moving from one media platform to the other is consistent and non-divergent from the original story. Is achievable when movement of content from one platform to the other enhances any of the other narrative elements that are on their own.
Defining Characters and Relationships	*World Building Strategies (Character Focused)*	World building strategies for characters governs the movement of specific characters across a multitude of media, while maintaining character's coherency towards the bigger picture	Is achievable when characters and relationships that are present are not transformed through entry into different media platforms Is achievable when the characters and relationships establish engagement from the audience
Stories with a Metanarrative Universal Component	*Multiplicity*	Multiplicity indicates additions to the universe in the form of different versions of the story, and for these versions to be woven across storylines in various different platforms	Is achievable when content is addressing and drawing attention to its own narrative storytelling and when developments within the storyline are not bound to their platforms

Stories told to encourage participation	*Performance structures of Transmedia & Spreadability*	Refers to the ability or the "performance" of the users to produce their own content using the original storyline to produce their own user generated content. Spreadability refers to the ease with which information is disseminated across platforms	Is achievable when there is a presence invitation (by the marketeers) for engagement from the audience. Content has characteristics that encourage the spread of information. Secondly, when there is a presence of user generated content utilizing elements from the narrative universe
	Drillability	Drillability refers to how richly and deeply users and the audience probe into understanding the complexities and the dynamics of the transmedia storyworld	Is achievable when content characteristics encourage audience to recognize the deeper meaning behind the narrative aside from the surficial
Stories designed in terms of multi-mediality	*Continuity*	Refers to the addition of elements pertinent to understanding the narrative, usually in a temporal discontinuity	Whether the content itself has been designed for multi-mediality through its continuity, seriality, multilinear narratives and new forms of expressions. Content should be uniformed across multiple platforms and should additionally contribute to the other parts' narrative.
	Seriality	Refers to the breaking down the narrative for dispersion to different platforms, making them separate parts of a distinct whole	