

THESIS

THE USE OF PARATEXTUAL DEVICES IN BROADCAST PROMOTION:  
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SEASON THREE OF *GLEE* ON FACEBOOK

Submitted by

Rachel Timmons

Department of Journalism and Technical Communication

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Master's Committee:

Advisor: Kirk Hallahan

Scott Diffrient

Rosa Martey

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## ABSTRACT

### THE USE OF PARATEXTUAL DEVICES IN BROADCAST PROMOTION: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SEASON THREE OF *GLEE* ON FACEBOOK

This study analyzed all Facebook posts during the third season of the Fox Broadcast Network television show *Glee* (n=763), from August 2011 to May 2012. The study illustrated that Facebook posts can be considered valuable paratextual devices (Gray, 2010b) that can be used in the promotion of a television program. The program's promoters, who served as Facebook Page administrators, used Facebook for three purposes: build viewership, enhance the live-viewing experience, and build brand awareness and engagement.

Visual paratexts, such as images and videos, were used more widely than text-based paratexts. Some of the most frequently employed paratexts included previews/sneak peeks/promos, cast-member specific posts, spoilers or teasers, and music video clips.

Posts were about equally split in terms of being related to specific episodes versus the show in general. Almost half of the overall posts displayed high interactivity, which prompted the users to leave the Facebook platform. These posts can be valuable if the show is interested in building brand awareness and enhancing the viewing experience, not just increasing post and Page likes. Surprisingly, posts contained about an equal number of explicit and implicit calls-to-action. Explicitness did not vary based upon the interactivity level, except for low-interactive posts, which had more implicit commands.

The average number of Facebook "likes" for a post was roughly 10 times the number of "comments" or "shares," a finding that was not surprising, because "liking" a post is intrinsically simpler than commenting or sharing. Posts that were episode-specific tended to have more likes,

comments, and shares overall. Of those posts that were episode-specific, posts published before and after an episode received more feedback than posts published during an episode. The study also found that longer text could discourage feedback, as posts with longer word counts received fewer likes and comments.

In today's digital world, it is easy for users to access, replicate, and share content. Thus, paratexts become the promotional currency used by promoters and the audiences they enlist to help promote a text. It's a trend that society can expect to be continued in the context of entertainment television as well as in other cultural and artistic art forms.

The research suggests that additional exploration is needed to analyze the role of Facebook (and other social media) in television viewership and engagement. As the television landscape shifts more to the online and mobile realms, advertisers and broadcasters need to understand the effect that social platforms can have on the understanding of the text.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study investigated how entertainment television programs use social media as a form of broadcast promotion over three different time periods: before, during, and after an episode airs. These three different phases have the potential for illustrating three different promotional agendas: to increase viewership before an episode, to engage the viewer and heighten the viewer experience during an episode, and to reinforce brand identity after an episode. While audience sizes for programs continue to grow, the number of competitors continues to grow as well. The greater number of competitors, the more critical effective promotion becomes (Eastman, 2000b, p. vii).

Traditional broadcast promotion usually focused on the “before,” ultimately striving to increase viewership or “tune-ins.” This increased viewership would then increase exposure to the advertisements, thus maximizing audience and increasing overall advertising revenue for the television distributor. The ultimate goal was to build long-term loyalty to a program or network (Eastman, 2006). Evolving technologies, however, have changed the way that television corporations promote a show. In this new wave, television moved into the digital arena, which has led to an increase in online and virtual activity. This extended environment provides an extra forum for broadcast promotion to occur, sometimes without viewers being fully aware of it. Moreover, shows can promote an episode concurrently with the broadcast with the use of social media and mobile applications.

With the push toward online content, television marketers can focus on increasing show (or brand or corporate) involvement and loyalty and keeping viewers engaged and involved, rather than focusing on drawing in viewers by using promos for the show. Gray noted that in

today's media environment, programs need to spend "as much if not considerably more time and energy telling the world about their shows and bringing audiences to the network presentation of them as they must in creating the shows in the first place" (Gray, 2010a, p. 54). The use of social media allows broadcast promoters to advertise all types of content at different promotional times. Initial research found that it is not uncommon for a television show to use many social media platforms in order to connect with fans and viewers, facilitate user-generated content, and inform about upcoming events and episodes. This transition is becoming more apparent as television shows use social media as their primary method for communication with the audience. Viewers "follow" these shows on numerous social networking sites, including Twitter, Get Glue, IMDB, mobile applications, Facebook, and Tumblr, among others. Greenberg (2010) notes that,

the experience of watching TV is already shifting from a lean-back to a lean-forward activity, driven largely by consumers who – while viewing – also surf the Web or text and chat. By harnessing exploding trends in utility-driven marketing and interactive TV viewing, marketers can give value to consumers, particularly in the areas of commerce and social (e.g., co-viewing and gaming) networking. (para. 7)

Though it is apparent many broadcasters are using social media platforms as a promotional tool, it is unclear whether or not these platforms are using it effectively.

This study argues that each promotional post on Facebook can also be viewed as a paratextual device. The term *paratext* and *paratextuality* were first used by Genette (1987/1997) to discuss the surrounding materials of a literary text – including the covers, title pages, dedications, and font (Gray, 2010b) – that "prepare us for other texts." The notion of paratextuality has been around for a long time, even if the term has not been used widely in communication research – specifically television programming. Cross-media, cross-promotional, cross-content publishing, and broadcast synergy all have similar designations as paratextuality.

Cross-media advertising in television is a popular promotional method because broadcast promoters have recognized the changing media landscapes and additional advertising and programming competition. Broadcasters must identify these challenges while continually meeting viewers' needs. In order to beat the competition, broadcast promoters need to understand the audience. Copple Smith (2014) states that cross-media promotion is necessary in the current television landscape, because "'success' in media requires cultivating success in producing both commodities of content and audience. Crucial to this process is not only developing an audience commodity, but more specifically developing an audience commodity which is easily defined and which is attractive to advertisers—viewers who are likely to consume the goods advertisers are trying to sell," (Copple Smith, 2014, p. 209).

Ien Ang (1991) explains that "television does not have the means to coerce people into becoming members of its audience," therefore "audiences must constantly be seduced, attracted, lured," (see Copple Smith, 2014, p. 290). Thus, it is important for television promotion to utilize additional promotional strategies, including cross-promotion, to build an audience, engage the audience, and reinforce program branding.

Cross-promotional content also helps the viewer fully understand the meaning of the text – or television program. However, this study does not aim to analyze the making of meaning; rather, this study looks specifically at the different posts on a Facebook Page, and if there is a relationship between variables of these posts.

Examples of television media promotion might include trailers, previews, merchandise, websites, and social media fora. While a more in-depth discussion of paratexts will be described in Chapter 2, it should be noted that this study will use Gray's definition of this term: "Paratexts are not simply add-ons, spinoffs, and also-rans: they create texts, they manage them, and they fill

them with many of the meanings that we associate with them...a paratext constructs, lives in, and can affect the running of the text,” (Gray, 2010b, p. 6). Gray (2010b) claims that everything related to a text could be considered a paratexts; thus, promotional material is a paratext.

### **Purpose and Rationale**

This study investigated the level of interactivity required from promotional posts on Facebook and how that related to the time that the post was published (i.e. before, during, or after an episode). As mentioned previously, the term paratext has been widely researched in communication literature; however, the term has been historically applied to written works, as opposed to audio-visual media, such as television and film. Birke and Christ (2013) note that a paratext “brings into view the question of how readings are circumscribed by factors that are usually seen as marginal (or even external) to the text, and it supplies a vocabulary to talk about these aspects,” (p. 66). Therefore, any aspect of promotion could be considered a paratext. These promotional items, which may be considered “marginal, “or even ignored by consumers, are important in the overall understanding of the text. This study considers a promotional post a paratext.

The importance of understanding the use of paratexts in broadcast promotion is fundamental to broadcasters who are constantly interested in grabbing more viewers, and thus additional advertisers, for television programs. Taxonomizing paratexts is something that has not yet been done in communication research; although Gray (2010b) offers two terms to distinguish the different moments of paratextuality (i.e. *entryway* and *en media res*), but he does not classify the different times that a paratext is received by the audience. For instance, a trailer to a movie and behind-the-scenes footage on a DVD both influence the way that a viewer understands the main text; yet, the different periods that the paratext is received can influence the audience in

different ways. This difference in the process and period is what this study is looking at. If the level of interactivity in a paratext and difference in time that a paratext is published influences how viewers react to the formal text, the results could change the future of broadcast promotion, especially for program television. As described in more detail in Chapter 2, Fox Network's *Glee* provided a useful context for researching promotional devices on social media, due to its wide use of social media sites (Twitter, Myspace, YouTube, and Facebook, among others), and the consistency of the posts on these outlets.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes an overview of broadcast promotion; the uses of internet, mobile and social networking sites in broadcast promotion; interactivity; social media; Facebook; and paratextuality.

### **Broadcast Promotion**

Interestingly enough, there is little discussion about the history of broadcast promotion in communication studies. Whether this is due to the ubiquitous nature of the topic is unclear; however, the importance of understanding the history of this concept is vital. The main strategy of broadcast promotion is to encourage people to tune in to a program by using both on-air and off-air methods. *On-air promotion* uses a station's own airtime to promote a show or program, while *off-air promotion* uses promotional tools and activities to grab viewers' attention outside of the television viewing experience (see Bergendorff, 1983). Thus, people are exposed to the related promotional messages through a process of incidental exposure during their daily lives. Subsequently, there are two different types of promotion: *image promotion*, which enhances the brand name and audience reception, and *program promotion*, which creates awareness (Eastman, 2000a). Although these two different types of promotion have different goals – reception and retention – they both focus on the same strategies: acquire more of an audience, take away a competitor's audience, and retain an audience (Eastman, 2000a). These strategies are aimed at three target groups: affiliates, audiences, and advertisers (Eastman, 2006).

Eastman (2000a) identified five industry changes that contributed to the need for broadcast promotion: the rising costs of program production, the increased number of channels, the rise of online media, deregulation, and the adoption of new technologies. The origins of

media promotion can be traced to the rise of mass circulation newspapers, including the stunts and promotional exploits of reporters such as Nelly Bly, which were used to boost circulation. Early in the development of the medium, motion picture producers came to use advertising and publicity to promote attendance. Advertising, including the use of early movie magazines, prominently featured production stills from the movies, which repurposed images and scenes audiences would see on the silver screen and in print. Promotional activities included the creation of stunts, the rise of the “star system” and culture centered on entertainment celebrities, and the emergence of the modern “fan.”

Promotion started to take off with the advent of the radio in the 1920s (Bergendorff, 1983). As the number of competitors on the airways increased, the need to grab viewers became more significant. As the technology shifted in the 1950s and 1960s, and television became the popular medium, broadcast promotion was again used to differentiate the local competition and pull in viewers. Yet, the importance of broadcast promotion started to become even more apparent by the mid-1990s when the number of television competitors started to increase on both the domestic and international fronts (Eastman, 2000a).

It is clear that the importance of broadcast promotion continues to become more evident as the competition continues to become more intense. The number of competitors in network promotion is at an all-time low, with only four major competitors vying for control of the media market, but the number of programs is constantly increasing. Furthermore, the risk of online competitors is now a factor as well. Even though new technology has changed the way broadcast promotion is performed, the need for it will never fade, and the traditional strategies will continue to dominate: increase your audience while reducing your competitor’s audience.

## **Uses of Internet, Mobile and Social Networking Sites in Broadcast Promotion**

Although the Internet, mobile applications, and social networking sites are popular topics in communication research, published material about how these new technologies are used in broadcast promotion is slim. Indeed, media program is a topic that has been largely neglected as a topic of academic research. This realization is very disconcerting, as more users are turning to online and mobile venues, and more media industries are feeling the need to become digital. Is broadcast promotion different online than it was traditionally?

The biggest change of broadcast promotion in recent years is the adoption of cross-promotion strategies (Eastman, 2006) due to the advent of new communication technologies. The use of online and mobile media for marketing is a relatively new concept that is currently growing in popularity. It is almost impossible to think of a television program, entertainment or not, that does not have an outlet on one of the major social media platforms or availability on a mobile device. Ferguson (2000) believes that “increasing audience size – the primary function of program promotion – remains one of the powerful forces driving broadcast and cable networks to use the web at the present time” (p. 324).

Companies first started realizing the importance of extended interaction with television shows back in the 1970s. Several companies, including America Online and Time Warner, developed interactive products that would allow a television viewer to interact with others through multiple platforms; America Online created AOL TV, which allowed users to surf the Internet while watching television, and Time Warner invented the Qube, which turned the remote into a telephone (Wohn & Na, 2010). However, both of these devices could not maintain a huge audience and failed shortly after development. It wasn't until the Internet became a

ubiquitous medium when broadcast promoters realized the importance of using these platforms to interact with fans and viewers.

The convergence of social media and television explains the “the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 2). Jenkins (2006) calls this movement the “convergence culture,” and cites examples such as the *Lost* and *Survivor* as models of television shows using social media as a supplement, not a replacement, to entertainment content. Caldwell noted that the television industry continues to emphasize “keeping viewer-users engaged long after a series episode has ended,” (see Spigel, 2004, p.51).

One of the key differences with traditional broadcast promotion and current broadcast promotion is the use of push and pull media messages. Traditionally, broadcast promotion used push messaging, which pushed content onto viewers, whether that person is interested or not (Eastman, 2006). In this new digital arena of broadcast promotion, many of the messages are pulled, or purposely sought out by the viewer. Websites, blogs, and social media sites are available “at the user’s convenience and can be instantly printed and manipulated by most computers” (Eastman, 2006, p. 11). These changes in broadcast promotion do not signify a complete restructuring of previous methods; instead, the use of social networking sites simply adds another platform for marketing to occur (see Greer & Ferguson, 2011). While traditional broadcast promotion allowed a program to promote itself before an episode aired, social networking sites have created the opportunity to promote during and after exposure to a program as well. This extension can increase engagement and brand reinforcement by using more interactive features than traditional promotion. These interactive features have the potential to

keep users and viewers on a site or platform longer; therefore, exposing them to more promotional messages (see Gregson, 2008).

Various social media platforms are being used for entertainment television promotion as well. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter (see Greer & Ferguson, 2011), GetGlue, Tumblr, and Google+ are a few of the numerous new digital technologies being used for promotional tools. Furthermore, paid services, such as Hulu, perform dual functions – by distributing content for a fee and promoting television and movie series. Future research should inquire about broadcast promotion on other digital technologies.

### **Interactivity**

Interactivity is a concept that gained notoriety as new communication technologies become more ubiquitous. It is usually associated with new media and communication technologies; however, it can also be applied to different areas including psychology and sociology (see Kiouisis, 2002). Interactivity is important to producers of online content and advertisers because of the belief that increased interactivity will lead users to return to a website, referring others to the site, and purchasing from a site (see McMillian, 2002; Bezjian-Avery et al., 1998; Sundar et al., 1998).

A consistently cited definition comes from Rafaeli (1988): “[Interactivity is] an expression of the extent that, in a given series of communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to even earlier transmissions” (p. 11). This definition presumes that interactivity is a one-sided process, with the sender or producer of the message taking the most control (also see Sundar 2004). Conversely, McMillian (2000) found that interactivity may reside primarily in the eye of the beholder. In investigating websites that had added more interactive features (for a list of

interactive features see McMillan, 2002, Table 5), McMillan found that users did not always believe that the site was interactive. However, in this same study, McMillan found that when a user reacted positively to the content on a website, the user was more likely to view the site as interactive. McMillan (2000) noted that “while the capacity to carry out two-way communication and other technical aspects of a medium may help to facilitate interactivity, the uses that individuals make of evolving media may better explain the interactive process” (p. 71). Although different than Rafaeli’s definition, McMillan’s definition of interactivity also views the process as one-sided.

Ultimately, interactivity’s definition is very unclear, as different researchers have used the term as an “independent variable to describe a medium (e.g. Kayany et al., 1996) and as a dependent variable gauging people’s perceptions (e.g. Wu, 1999)” (Kiouisis, 2002, p. 356). These two diverse concepts cause much confusion among researchers, and might possibly cause an incorrect measurement of data in a study. The difference between interactivity-as-process and interactivity-as-product is described in detail by Stromer-Galley (2004), who notes that while these two concepts elude to two different phenomena, both matter in communication research. Interactivity-as-process refers to human-interaction; Stromer-Galley (2004) notes

Studying interactivity-as-process entails a research focus on human interaction. Of interest in this line of inquiry is: Who is talking and what are they talking about? Is there reciprocity between sender and receiver, or does the receiver fail to respond? How are role, power, identity, ritual, and other contextual factors negotiated? Is information exchanged and conflict managed; if so, how? (p. 392).

Interactivity-as-product refers to user interactions with technology (also see Sundar et al., 2010); Stromer-Galley (2004) stated that

Studying interactivity-as-product entails a research focus on user interactions with technology. Of interest to this line of inquiry are the quality and prevalence of features site producers make available (e.g., multimedia, click polls, hyperlinks, feedback forms)

and how users engage those features. Measurement of interactivity-as-product can focus on the range of interactive experiences afforded by the medium...” (p. 392).

This study will use the interactivity-as-product definition in order to measure the features of a Facebook Page, which will be described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Kiousis (2002) explicated interactivity and provided a clear definition for future researchers. First, however, several conditions needed to be met:

First, there must be at least two participants (human or non-human) for interactive communication to transpire. Further, some technology allowing for mediated information exchanges between users through a channel must also be present (e.g. telephone or computer chatroom). Finally, the possibility for users to modify the mediated environment must exist (Kiousis, 2002, p. 370).

After clarifying these conditions, Kiousis (2002) defines interactivity as

the degree to which a communication technology can create a mediated environment in which participants can communicate (one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many), both synchronously and asynchronously, and participate in reciprocal message exchanges (third-order dependency). With regard to human users, it additionally refers to their ability to *perceive* the experience as a simulation of interpersonal communication and increase their awareness of telepresence (p. 372).

Thus, interactivity is made up of three elements: properties of technology, attributes of communication contexts, and user perceptions. As new communication technologies continue to evolve, this hybrid definition will hopefully provide researchers with a clear conceptual and operational definition for future research. Although researchers still disagree about the true definition of interactivity (see Bucy & Tao, 2007), this study will use Kiousis’ definition.

In literature, interactivity has both been measured as an ordinal and categorical construct. Researchers that measured it as a categorical variable labeled the artifact as either yes, having interactivity, or no, not having interactivity. Alternatively, interactivity can vary by degree, thus it would be beneficial to classify it as an ordinal construct. Various levels of interactivity could

be labeled as high, medium, and low (see Sundar et al., 2010; Bucy & Tao, 2007). This study looks at interactivity as an ordinal variable.

### **Social Media**

Social media is a broad term to describe an array of web- and mobile-based technologies that feature interactive capabilities, allow users to communicate with others and are highly dependent on user (versus professionally) generated content. Hallahan (in press) identified at least three broad categories of social media based on their purpose. Network-oriented social media facilitate communication between people – family, friends, and colleagues – and center around the exchange of personal information – whereabouts, activities, status updates, etc. Examples include social networking sites, which include media sharing sites such as YouTube, Flickr and Pinterest. Collaboration-based media are primarily based on the exchange of non-personal information, often for utilitarian purposes, whether in a home or work setting. Examples include forums (chats and bulletin boards), blogs, wikis, webinars and web-conferencing, and other collaborative tools found on Intranets and Extranets. Entertainment-based media are used primarily by people for diversion but can involve interactions. Examples include digital games, online contests and virtual world sites such as Second Life.

Facebook, the focus of this study, is an example of a social networking site, a particular type of social medium. Hallahan (in press) suggested that SNSs are online communities that enable users to connect with others with similar interests. Participants can exchange ideas, express their personal identity and often develop a sense of common or group identity. Common characteristics of social networking sites include: *member registration*, *personal spaces* for members to post/share information, *messaging systems* (where members can communicate with the entire membership or with individuals), *media sharing* (the ability to post to photos or

videos) and *information assessment* (such as search, tagging, rating, and recommendation systems). Some social media sites provide diversions such as games and contests.

### **Facebook**

Founded in 2004, Facebook is the most popular social networking site in the world, with 845 million monthly active users in December 2011 (Facebook, 2012). “Mobile devices also facilitate access to this network, with 200 million users accessing Facebook at any given time from a mobile device” (see Ginory et al., 2012, p. 40). Originally intended for only those with a university email address, the site became public in 2006 and anyone with a valid email address could join. In recent years Facebook has become the standard for friends, new and old, to get in touch and keep in touch.

Facebook is made up of profiles that contain user-generated content. At least some of a user’s profile has to be displayed to the public, including the network the user is connected to, an email address, and a profile picture. “Facebook emerged as the architectural equivalent of a glasshouse, with a publicly open structure, looser behavioral norms and an abundance of tools that members use to leave cues for each other” (Papacharissi, 2009, p.199). Each user has a profile, which provides a News Feed that displays a live-stream of information about other users, and their profile page, which shows “the ongoing, flowing conversation between you and your friends” (see Dubrofsky, 2011, p. 116). In January 2012, Facebook unveiled a new profile layout, Timeline. While Timeline uses many of the same functions that the previous profile-page attended to, there are certainly some differences. Timeline urges users to “share your story” by making it easier to view old content (back to 2006, or when the user created the profile) and hide content, as well as feature specific information. Ultimately, it gives users more control over what followers and the public can see. According to Waddingham (2013): “(Timeline) also shares the

content in more places on Facebook: as well as posting content in the News Feed like most shares, the stories are shared in the ticker and on a user's Timeline.”

In 2007, Facebook developed Pages, a profile-like landing page for businesses, brands, and organizations. Pages allow these entities to connect with fans and clients who “like” their product, ultimately striving to increase exposure and engagement. Facebook estimates that by the end of 2011, there were more than 37 million Pages that had 10 or more likes (Facebook.com, 2012). Facebook has clearly changed the way businesses market themselves, by reducing fandom to a single click. In March 2012, Facebook converted all Pages to the Timeline format.

Research on Facebook is very popular in the social sciences arena (see Dubrofsky, 2011). Previous research looked at profile content (see Kim et al., 2010) and Facebook group content (see Park et al., 2009; Ginory et al., 2012). Research also looked at how both users and industries use Facebook (see Kim et al., 2010; Ginory et al., 2012; Sachs et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2009). Areas of research include political communication, health, media, film, education, and psychology, among others. Ultimately, it would be difficult to come across an area of communication research that has not yet addressed Facebook and the new media wave. At the time the study was approved, published articles have not looked at how entertainment television shows use Facebook to promote the show. Since many television shows have a Facebook presence, it would be useful for future research to delve into the different uses of Facebook for promotion, and how those promotions are changing viewership.

### **Paratextuality**

Paratextuality is a concept that has been studied widely in communication research; however, the concept was originally largely focused on written materials. More recently, research of paratexts has extended into other visual media, including film and television. Genette

(1987/1997) and Gray (2010) have discussed this concept in detail. Paratextuality is a concept that should be fully explored in future research endeavors, as it is extremely important to producers of content. The extension of paratexts will only increase as the number of promotional platforms increases.

The concept was first developed by Genette (1987/1997) who believed that the surrounding materials of a literary text – including the covers, title pages, dedications, and font (see Gray, 2010b) – were important factors in how the reader perceives the text. Genette reduces the phenomena of paratextuality to one short formula: “paratext = peritext + epitext” (Genette, 1987/1997). In his research, Genette specifically looked at books as the formal text; however, the research can be extended to cover various forms of media. According to Genette (1987/1997), paratexts are everything that surrounds and extends a text, and make the text presentable for the audience. Paratexts are the “fringe of the...text which in reality controls one’s reading of the text” (see Genette, 1987/1997, p. 2). Genette (1987/1997) goes so far so assert that a “text without a paratext does not exist and never has existed” (p. 3).

Gray (2010b) built on Genette’s analysis of paratexts and extends the term to cover other forms of media. For instance, he lists ads, previews, trailers, interviews, discussions, news, reviews, and merchandise, amongst others, as examples of paratexts. Some researchers have called these terms “extra texts” or “secondary texts” (see Fiske, 1987; Brookey & Westerfelhaus, 2002; Lain & Treat, 2010); however, this suggests that these additional devices merely compliment, rather than to work concurrently to provide meaning to the formal text. Some of these researchers believe that these “extra texts” are used more for commercialism and profit than developing a text (Brookey & Westerfelhaus, 2002). Others view the “extra texts” as providing additional story-telling information that is central to plot development. Nonetheless,

this definition is more suited to transmedia storytelling (see Jenkins, 2006), rather than the grander scheme of paratexts.

Some research studied paratexts in relation to video games. Specifically, Consalvo (2003, 2007, 2009) looked at paratextuality in relation to how users interpret video games. Consalvo (2009) argued that paratexts “surround contemporary digital games, shaping them, limiting them, giving them form, and encouraging (as well as discouraging) particular forms of play and sense-making” (p. 410). Walsh and Apperley (2009) continued on this idea and noted that “rather than taking place in a vacuum, gameplay occurs in the context of the culture of videogames” (p. 4). Thus, the paratexts work together with the text, rather than outside of it. Consalvo (2007) also asserts that paratexts should be viewed as central to the experience [of the media] rather than periphery.

Gray (2010b) notes that although it might sound natural to call these items peripherals (or extra texts) to the formal text; that would suggest that they are removed and separate from the actual text, when in fact they are part of the text. “Paratexts are constructed, live in, and can affect the running of the text” (Gray, 2010b, p. 6). Gray mostly looks at film and television paratextual examples, rather than in a social media context, citing examples like *Lost*, *Six Degrees*, and *Lord of the Rings*.

The concept of paratextuality is becoming popular in television and film studies. While there are similarities between literary and television paratextual research, there are many differences in the way the primary text are created (see Stanitzek, 2005). Stanitzek (2005) found that written texts have “structures for individual works...a book has two covers, a title, and imprint, and so on...” (p. 38), while television programs, on the other hand, lack the structure and boundaries to clearly define the literary work (or text). Stanitzek (2005) claims that notions

of paratextuality are weakened for television programming because instead of being centered on the work and its integral communication, it has a multiplicity of references, such as other programming, the station, and the format (2005, p. 39). According to Stanitzek, the differences in the boundaries between written and televised/visual mediums provide some difficulty in applying the concept of paratextuality.

Nonetheless, this researcher believes that paratexts are now a necessity in the ever-evolving television marketplace. “Movies and television shows have to be big hits in the first week, rather than getting time to build positive word-of-mouth. They also have to figure out multiple ways to be profitable for their parent company -- hence the soundtrack, the computer game and the line of action figures,” (Thomas, 2010).

This study builds upon Genette’s and Gray’s definitions of paratexts and recognizes that every aspect of a text is considered a paratext. More specifically, this research will look at promotional messages, artifacts, posts, and devices, and how they all prepare the audience for the text and extend their understanding of the text. However, this study does not aim to analyze the making of meaning; rather, this study looks specifically at the different texts and determines if there is a relationship between variables of these posts.

The use of promotion is to foremost increase the ratings for the show; yet, the promotional material has an incredible impact on how the show is received by viewers. “It is an industry truism that the best program without promotion has no audience,” (Eastman, 2000a, p. 4). More importantly, as Gray (2010b) notes, “promotion suggests not only the commercial act of selling, but also of advancing and developing a text,” (p. 5). Research about paratexts has not fully investigated actual promotion activities by broadcasters. Furthermore, there is little to no research suggesting that a social media platform could be considered a paratext for a television

show. This study expands on a program that is newer to communication research: Fox Network's *Glee*.

Since Facebook opened up its platform to organizations in 2006, television program promoters have started to use the platform to market their programs. Viewers can “like” a show, comment, get updates, review content, and interact with other viewers. Using community forums, like Facebook Pages and other social networking platforms, can influence the meaning taken from a show (see Fernandes et al., 2010). Facebook, and other social networking sites, act as a paratextual platform for aggregating program content, while maintaining engagement with the viewer. Although this study is going to look at a Facebook Page as a paratext itself, as well as a platform for other paratexts, future research should elaborate on this notion.

This study extends theorizing about paratexts by proposing a taxonomy or categorization of *paratext devices* that might be used in broadcast promotion. A device can be defined as a conventional practice or means used to achieve a particular dramatic effect. The argument is that various specific artifacts can be classified and thus their use better understood. Although theorists such as Gray (2012) have not embraced typologies in studying paratexts, research in other areas, such as framing theory and framing devices (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) illustrates the potential value of such an approach. In this study, a Facebook post published by the *Glee* Page administrators will be referenced as a paratextual device. Although a television show “is not the sum of the whole text,” (Gray, 2010b, p. 7) to keep terms separate in this paper, “formal text” will reference the main text, and in this instance the television show *Glee*.

### **Paratextual Devices on Facebook**

Table 2.1 indicates a taxonomy of paratextual devices that might be found on a television program's Facebook Page. The three-by-three table is organized by the level of interactivity

(low, medium, and high) and the period of time (before, during, and after an episode) the paratextual device was published. These are general examples of paratextual devices used by television programs. Specific applications of these posts could be adapted for other industries, or might not be relevant to them at all.

**Table 2.1 Sample Paratextual Devices for Broadcast Promotion used by Television Programs in Facebook Posts**

	Before	During	After
Low Interactivity	Reminder to tune-in New cover photo/profile picture Share	Tune in now “Who is watching?” (Like)	Watch last week’s episode Other SNS promotions “Like if you watched” Share
Medium Interactivity	Spoilers Teasers Behind-the-scenes Messages from cast Previews	Comment if you are watching Preview of current episode	Full music video performances Polls Recaps Actor’s Facebook Pages Spin-offs Comment if you watched
High Interactivity	Contests/games/polls Create a fan page	Check into GetGlue/Miso Use a #hashtag on Twitter *Vote Now	Social causes Merchandise Song purchases Contests/games/polls Create a fan page

*\*These activities would be found in a live show, not a pre-taped episode.*

The paratextual devices in Table 2.1 were organized by a high, medium, and low interactivity scale, and whether the devices were expected to be found before, during, or after an episode of the television program. The interactivity scale was modified from Sundar (2010) and Kiouisis (2002). These researchers recognized that the interactivity level should depend on the properties of the product, rather than the user experience. The levels of low, medium, and high depended upon “the number of such modalities available for user interaction on an interface” (Sundar et al., 2010, p. 4).

The period of time when the post was published depended on the Facebook post’s publishing time in relation to the time the episode first aired. Before posts include anything up to the first East Coast live-airing of the episode; during include the two hours during the episodes

premiere (the two-hour span included both West Coast and East Coast viewings); and after included anything after the second live-episode (the West Coast episode) aired.

In developing the actual study, the researcher developed the list and definitions of each of the possible paratextual devices they expected to find on the *Glee* Facebook Page; these definitions are presented in Chapter 3, Table 3.1.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

### Research Questions

Based on the conceptualization of the aforementioned concepts (broadcast promotion, uses of Internet, mobile and social networking sites in broadcast promotion, interactivity, social media, Facebook, and paratexts), the following four research questions were established.

**RQ1: How does *Glee* use paratextual devices on Facebook before, during, and after an episode?**

With traditional broadcast promotion, promotion was limited to before an episode premiered. With the advent of new communication technologies, how has the availability of concurrent promotion affected audience engagement?

**RQ2: To what extent is interactivity important in promotion and how does it vary before, during, and after an episode of a primetime entertainment show like *Glee*?**

It is clear that interactivity varies on different posts on a Facebook Page. While some posts command a user to “like” the post, others ask the user to visit a different website to interact with the show. Does the level of interactivity in a post matter in broadcast promotion, or are their efforts lost on the viewer? Since it has been established that the advent of new communication technologies in broadcast promotion allows shows to promote during an episode, shows can strategically use interactive posts to engage with the viewer. Does the difference in interactivity levels before, during, and after an episode affect the promotional efforts?

**RQ3: To what degree does the show include an explicit call-to-action and how do these calls-to-action vary based on interactivity level?**

Some posts on Facebook ask for a specific call to action, such as “click here” or “tell us.” Other posts are vaguer in their commands and imply that users perform actions. Does the implicitness or explicitness of a post’s call to action vary with the level of interactivity in the post?

**RQ4: How would feedback mechanisms (comment, like, share) relate to the period of when the post was published and the level of interactivity?**

Feedback mechanisms on Facebook, such as commenting on a post, liking a post, or sharing a post, are useful in determining when users were engaged in the post. It would be important to note if posts that perform at certain times with a certain level of interactivity are able to grab more users than others.

***Glee* as a Case Study**

As a case study in the use of paratextuality in social media by broadcast producers, Fox Networks’ *Glee* was selected for examination in this study. In 2011, during season three of *Glee*, Trendrr, a now defunct website acquired by Twitter that collected social media statistics about network and cable programs, listed *Glee* among the top three of social media mentions during the week an episode aired. In 2013, after the data collection for this study, Trendrr was actually acquired by Twitter (Delo, 2013). *Glee*’s active social media use made it a prime candidate for analysis.

In May 2009, *Glee* first aired on the Fox television network. *Glee* was a musical-comedy that focused on a high school glee club and its members’ struggling to accept themselves and one another. The show earned several awards, including an Emmy, a Golden Globe, and a Peabody

award, among others, for its outstanding writing and focus on issues of sexuality, loss, and society.

*Glee* was unique in that the season one premiere episode aired at the end of a broadcast network's regular season, right after the season finale of *American Idol*. "Within hours of its broadcast premiere, those viewers who had missed it—or who simply wished to watch it again—could, in a variety of ways, see it immediately online, legally and free of charge. Fox eagerly used the Internet as a means of promoting the new show" (Perren, 2010, p. 73). The summer following the premiere gave the show the opportunity to build a brand by using extensive promotional messages on various platforms. Although these platforms included offline and online venues, the use of social media, especially Facebook, helped create a community of fans. That summer, a "gleek" was born (the nickname given to a *Glee* fan).

Despite the increased engagement on other platforms, the show had been well-known for its avid social media presence. To date, *Glee*'s Facebook Page currently has over 22 million fans, while the show's Twitter account has almost three million followers. *Glee*'s Myspace page is focused on showcasing the show's musical traits and marketing the *Glee* albums; currently the show has over 1,200 songs available for listening. The increased availability of the show on social media platforms allowed the show to build a huge wave of support, mostly from teenagers and young adults. Although the show performed fairly average during weekly television ratings (average rating of 1.9 for 18-49 for the week of December 4, 2011), the show was avidly discussed on social media forums, making it very popular with the younger demographic. Some critics claimed *Glee* would not have been as successful without the intense social media use (see Sabbagh, 2011, p. 16).

This study explored data only from season three of the show. Although season three received mixed reviews from critics and viewers (Doyle, 2010), there are various reasons for its selection in this study.

Also, while *Glee* used Facebook during all six of its seasons, it is possible that there is a maturation of Facebook strategy as the Facebook platform itself becomes more sophisticated. Subsequently, the use of Facebook for businesses and organizations has become more ubiquitous, inviting various groups to create Pages to engage fans. The increase in Facebook “likes” is obvious as well; during the data collection for this study (from August 2011 to May 2012), the number of likes on the *Glee* Facebook Page increased from 17 million to over 20 million. At the time the study was launched, the 2011-2012 season was the most recent, and was chosen for data collection.

## **Analysis**

### **Overview**

This study used a content analysis of the official Facebook posts published during the third season of the Fox television show *Glee*, from August 1, 2011, to May 31, 2012. The researcher considered this the official *Glee* Facebook Page because of the direct link from the official *Glee* sub-site on the Fox Broadcasting Network website. Although the page presently displays a blue verified checkbox next to the page title, this verification symbol was not available at the time of data collection. This icon, or badge, signifies the page is verified by Facebook; verified items can include “celebrities and public figures, global brands and businesses, and media,” (Facebook.com, 2015). The universe of the study included all posts from season three of *Glee*.

Posts from August 2011 through May 2012 were analyzed. The unit of analysis for this study was an individual post published by the page (*Glee*) itself. The posts were downloaded in monthly intervals, resulting in a total of ten months. The total data collected included 764 published posts.

Content analysis is defined as “a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables” (see Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 156). A content analysis is used to describe communication content, test message characteristics, compare media content, assess the image of groups in society, and establish a starting point for studies of media effects (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). This methodology is also used frequently to analyze content on social media sites. Surveys are often used as a method to analyze Facebook data (see Park et al., 2009); however, content analysis is also frequently used to evaluate Facebook content (see Fernandes et al., 2010). At the time of data collection, very little research had analyzed how television shows specifically use Facebook Pages to promote a show and brand. However, the use of additional social platforms to promote television viewing is a popular topic in current communication research (see Giglietto & Selva, 2014 and Buschow et al., 2014).

### **Artifact Selection**

The study employed a census of the *Glee* season three posts. A census was used because it gave the best representation of the type of posts on Facebook. Season three was selected because, at the time of data collection, it was *Glee*'s most recent season. The data collected was from August 1, 2011 to May 31, 2012; this time frame was selected because it allowed for a complete analysis of all of the season three posts. Although season three of *Glee* did not premier until September 20, 2011, looking at posts in August ensured that all pre-season promotional

data was collected for season three. The content was only collected from the Timeline front-page postings by the show itself; in addition, the study used Facebook's option to look at "Posts by Page" rather than "Highlights," "Friend Activity," or "Posts by Others." Only posts by page administrators were looked at; this included comments by Facebook users on the posts, but excludes original posts to the Page by viewers.

Feedback mechanisms – such as likes, comments and shares – were only counted if posted before the end of the following month after the artifact was published. For instance, data for March was collected at the end of April. This cutoff was decided after selecting a random sample of two posts from each month and determining that no users were commenting on a post after a month of the artifact being posted. Thus, the number of likes, comments, and shares for each artifact are complete and accurate.

### **Artifact Retrieval and Archiving**

The content was archived using the software SnagIt. SnagIt is a screen-capture software that views content on a computer screen and saves it as an image, video, or text. This study used the software to capture the content as an image. It is important to archive *Glee*'s Facebook posts to ensure that no content is removed or deleted from the site when data is analyzed. Each month, from August 2011 to May 2012, was collected separately and saved as an image at the end of the following month.

### **Variables**

Specific variables were selected based on the four research questions mentioned above. The variables were: month, day, mode, episode-specific, type-of-post, period, interactivity, length, link, call-to-action, explicitness, and feedback or engagement mechanisms.

**Number**

In order to clearly differentiate each post, each post was labeled by a specific number. The month's numerical value was followed by an ordinal value, starting with 01. For example, the first post in November was numbered 1101, followed by 1102, followed by 1103, etc.

**Month**

The month was the month that the post was published. The month was found at the top of the artifact. The artifact was also organized under the month that it was published.

**Date**

The date was the date that the post was published. The date was found at the top of the artifact next to the month.

**Mode**

The mode was the type of media found in the post. The media included text, audio, video, images/graphics, or a thumbnail preview. The mode also included multiple types of media (e.g. video and text).

**Episode-Specific**

This variable referred to whether the posting was episode-specific or not episode-specific. The posting did not have to reference the most recent episode. If the posting is episode-specific, the researcher also coded for period of the post (before, during, or after an episode).

**Type of Post**

Table 3.1 refers to the specific paratextual devices (posts or artifacts) that were found on a *Glee*'s Facebook Page. This summary was developed from Table 2.1; however, several items were left-out after a preliminary analysis of the Facebook posts on *Glee*'s Facebook Page. For instance, the paratextual device "messages from the cast," which appeared in Table 2.1, was

included in a more general category: cast-member-specific posts. Fan pages were also combined in to a more general category: social media posts.

**Table 3.1 Summary of Paratextual Devices for Broadcast Promotion used by Television Programs in Facebook Post**

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*Behind-the-scenes:* Revealing information that is done outside of “public view.” These postings include photos/videos of episodes, and may be posted before or after an episode airs.

*Cast-member specific:* Postings that promote a specific cast-member. These postings can relate to an upcoming movie the actor/actress is in, a magazine feature, the actor/actresses website or Facebook Page, a single or album from the actor, etc.

*Character-related postings:* These postings are related to specific characters on the show. They might include a link to a character’s Facebook Page, a YouTube montage of several scenes featuring a character, or a quote from a specific character from the most recent episode.

*Contests, games, polls:* These contests, games, and polls are applications both on the Facebook platform and on external websites. The winners of some of these contests can be announced on varying platforms (including on television after an episode is broadcast).

*Cover photo/profile picture:* The cover photo and the profile picture are the first images that a fan will see of the brand. Although these have changed minimally throughout the seasons, changes usually indicate an upcoming special episode or a reminder to tune in.

*Cross-promotion of other social media sites:* These postings remind users to follow other official social media pages. These include GetGlue, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, among others, and may also include other official Facebook Pages.

*Cross-promotion of related television shows:* Posting cross-promoting other television shows related to the formal text, including spin-offs, reality shows, and other corporate programs. These include information specifically about the contestants and cast, as well as the show itself.

*Music video clips:* These video clips showcase music number performances that have been performed during the episodes.

*Previews/Sneak Peeks/Promotions:* Postings that showcase a preview/trailer to the subsequent episode.

*Purchases:* Postings that take users to purchase paraphernalia, including merchandise and songs, both through the main corporation and through other separate organizations.

*Recaps:* Promotional posts that direct users to a full episode recap of the most recent episode.

*Reminder to tune-in:* Postings that remind fans and followers to tune in to the subsequent episode. These postings might also occur while an episode is airing to remind viewers to tune in.

*Social causes:* Postings that reveal information about social causes that are supported by the show. These might ask viewers and fans to donate time or money, or read about what groups the show is affiliated with and how the show assists these groups.

*Spoilers/Teasers:* Postings that spoil, ruin, or identify specific plot-related information for viewers before an episode airs.

*Status updates:* Posts that remind users to “like my status” (LMS) if they are watching or watched the most recent episode. Statuses might also include simple conversational reminders to “have a nice day,” or something that does not include a specific call-to-action.

*\*Vote Now (call-in, log-on):* Ask the viewers to call in at the last 5 minutes of the episode to vote for their favorite contestant, or vote online.

*Watch full episodes online:* These postings take fans and followers to a webpage where they can view full episodes after an episode airs.

*\*These activities would be found in a live show, not a pre-taped episode.*

## **Period**

This variable indicated when the post was published relevant to an episode. It included the times before an episode aired, concurrently while an episode aired, or after an episode aired. Some posts also fit within multiple categories, such as before and after an episode aired, etc. If the post was not episode-specific, the researcher put a 9 for the period variable to signify that it was not relevant to a specific episode.

## **Interactivity**

The level of interactivity was based upon a low, medium, or high scale. The operationalization was adopted from Sundar et al. (2010), who characterized interactivity by the product, rather than as a process, and Kiouisis (2002) who recognized that interactivity should be based on objective properties of the product not the user-experience. The levels of low, medium, and high depended upon “the number of such modalities available for user interaction on an

interface” (Sundar et al., 2010, p. 4). This scale does not have an option for “no interactivity,” as the researcher felt the Facebook platform could not exist without some sort of interactive features.

#### *Low Interactivity*

A low interactive feature was characterized commanding users to perform only a single action, or only included a single stimulus. For instance, a single picture on the page, asking the user to “like” the status, or just providing text in a post all had low interactive features.

#### *Medium Interactivity*

A medium interactive feature asked the user to actively engage through more than one action on the same platform (Facebook Page), or included more than one stimulus on the same platform (Facebook Page). For example, a video, a link to a website, a Facebook poll, and a command asking for a comment all had medium interactive features.

#### *High Interactivity*

High interactivity required the user to leave the Facebook platform, or perform multiple actions on various platforms. In this variable, users were usually fans of the show, and wanted to commit to sharing their loyalty with the brand. Purchasing merchandise, playing a game, and logging in to another social media platform all had high interactive features.

### **Length**

For this variable, the number of words in a regular post were counted. Many posts and comments were quite short; thus, words were judged to be an adequate measure of the length of the post.

For purposes of this study, word count rules included combining numbers – such as 8/7c, which was counted as one-word; words with a hyphen were counted as only one word; titles did

not count in word-length (including titles of notes, photo albums, and links); words that appeared as a teaser to an article did not count toward length.

**Link**

This variable signified whether there was a hyperlink in the post. A hyperlink takes a user to another webpage or a different part of the same page, typically by clicking on the hyperlink (Smith & Nelson, 1994). Usually, this was done through text; however, images and videos that are embedded, but have links attached, were considered hyperlinks.

**Call-to-action**

Call-to-action referred to the command in the artifact or post. After doing preliminary research, the nine most-commonly referenced action words on *Glee* posts were decided. These action words included broader terms that can also reference other actions or activities (see Table 3.2). This list was not meant to be conclusive, but gave a strong reference for coders. If a post had a command word other than the nine most-common actions, then the coder chose “other.”

**Table 3.2 List of Call-to-Action Verbs That Appeared in a Facebook Post**

<b>Call-to-Action</b>	<b>Other Terms</b>
Click	Click, Go, Visit, Like
Purchase	Purchase, Download, Buy, Get it Now, Donate
Watch TV	Watch TV, Watch an Episode, Tune in
Join a Community	Join, Create, Log-in
Listen (Audio Only)	Listen, Hear
View Video Online	Watch a Video, Preview, Take a Look, Check Out
Read	Read, Review
Comment	Comment, Tell Us, Caption
Play a Game or Contest	Take a Quiz, Participate, Play, Vote, Start a Game
View Image Online	Take a Look, Check Out, See

## **Explicit vs. Implicit Call to Action**

This variable looks at the explicitness of the command in the Facebook posting. The explicit commands are associated to the show. If the artifact directly states to perform an action, the artifact would be labeled “explicit.” An explicit command is direct, unequivocal, clear, and not vague. If the post’s command was indirect, or implied, the artifact would be labeled “implicit.”

## **Feedback Mechanisms**

Liking, commenting, and sharing are mechanisms for users to exhibit feedback on Facebook items. Alhabash, S. & McAlister named these feedback devices “affective responses.” “Social media users express their affective responses to online messages in ways that are visible to others,” (Alhabash & McAlister, 2014, p. 3).

The data for feedback mechanisms was collected on the last day of the following month, when the entire month was collected as a “snapshot”; this ensured there were no changes to the data during analysis.

If the researcher was the Facebook Page administrator, they would have additional access to Facebook Insights, the analytics provided by the company; these insights provide more powerful tools than what could have been used to access relationships among likes, comments, and shares. However, access was limited to the data available to all users. This study presumes that the likes, comments, and shares data the external user sees is available to the Page admin.

### *Likes*

According to Facebook, a “like” is a way to “give positive feedback and connect with things [users] care about” (Facebook.com). In this study, likes included the actual count of “likes” on a published post. This number was found directly under a post.

### *Comments*

A comment is a response from the user on the actual post. Alhabash and McAlister (2014) believed commenting is the most cognitive demanding response on Facebook, as it “involves evaluation and decision making following deliberation and articulation of the user’s opinion about the message,” (Alhabash & McAlister, 2014, p. 5). Comments included the actual count of comments on a published post. This number was found directly under a post.

### *Shares*

Sharing is a way for users to show others content they find interesting. Users can share content in a variety of ways: on their own Timeline; on a friend's Timeline; in a group; on a Page that user manages; or in a private message (Facebook.com). Shares indicated the actual number of users who reposted this information. This number was found directly under a post, on the right-hand side.

## **Coding Pretest and Reliability**

In order to develop reliability with this study, a pretest and informal reliability review were used. Reliability is important because the study should be able to be repeated with same materials and measurements, while coming to the same conclusion (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Emergent coding was used, which “establishes categories after a preliminary examination of the data” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 165). After establishing the variables, a pretest of the data was performed to ensure that all of the variables were exclusive. A random collection of 30 posts from November 2011 were collected and analyzed. An advisor looked over the pretest and verified that all of the data was thorough and exclusive.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study, beginning with a description of the artifacts and then an examination of the four research questions. Additional analyzes also are presented in order to better understand the role of paratextual devices on *Glee*'s Facebook Page.

### **Description of Artifacts**

A total of 764 posts were collected from 10 months representing *Glee*'s third season, August 2011 to May 2012. Of these, one was a duplicate post and was eliminated from the analysis; this resulted in 763 useable posts for analysis.

### **Posts by Month**

November 2011 had the highest number of posts, with 97 postings, followed by May 2012 (95), December 2011 (85), and February 2012 (79). This is not surprising because November, February, May and July are “sweeps” months. During these four months, Nielsen, the international ratings company used by broadcasters and advertisers (Nielsen.com), collects data on television viewing in households to help stations and advertisers determine advertising rates. Television shows collaborate with the networks and push original – and gimmicky – programming to entice viewers (Kenneally, 2014). Since November, May, December, and February had the greatest number of posts, it could be assumed that this is due to them being “sweeps” months.

March had the lowest number of posts, with only 40 items. Since there were no episodes during the month of March (Episode 58 aired February 21, 2012; Episode 59 aired April 10, 2012), the low number of posts can be attributed to that fact.

**Table 4.1 Facebook Posts by Month**

---

*n*=763

<b>Month</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Percent</b>
August 2011	76	10.0
September 2011	78	10.2
October 2011	61	8.0
November 2011	97	12.7
December 2011	85	11.1
January 2012	75	9.8
February 2012	79	10.4
March 2012	40	5.2
April 2012	77	10.1
May 2012	95	12.5
Total	763	100.0

---

### **Mode of Posts**

The most popular mode, or format of media in the post, was a thumbnail preview created from placing a hyperlink directly in a post, which resulted in one-third (34.3%) of the posts (see Table 4.2). Posts that included videos with texts resulted in 23.4% of the posts; video posts were a popular format for paratextual devices since *Glee* is a visual and audial medium. Text only posts resulted in 19.8% of the posts; these postings were popular methods to remind users to tune-in to a television show, or log on to a social network without including additional images or videos.

“Other” items included Facebook Notes and thumbnails previews without text. Facebook Notes provide users the ability to type a rich-text document within the Facebook platform; many times, Notes are used as a substitute for blogs. Regularly, *Glee* used to the Facebook Notes feature to remind fans that an upcoming episode’s songs were now available for purchase on iTunes.

**Table 4.2 Mode of Posts**

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*n*=763

<b>Mode</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Percent</b>
Thumbnail From Hyperlink with Text	262	34.3
Video, Text	179	23.4
Text (only)	151	19.8
Image, Text	70	9.2
Image/Graphic (only)	57	7.5
Other	42	5.5
Audio, Image, Text	1	.1
Video (only)	1	.1
Total	763	100.0

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### **Paratextual Devices Used**

The most popular paratextual device for both episode-specific and non-episode-specific was Previews/Sneak Peeks/Promos, making up 13.8% of the overall posts (see Table 4.3). Previews/Sneak Peeks/Promos include video clips or images of upcoming plot scenes that allow Facebook fans to see something before it is widely available. However, these posts are not limited to only episode-specific posts; *Glee* might post a promo for an entire season in order to entice viewers. Cast Member Specific posts were the second most popular post (12.7%), followed closely with Contests, Games, and Polls (11.5%). Spoilers or Teasers constituted 8.3% of the overall posts. These posts differ from Sneak Peeks, in that they give away a pivotal plot point. *Glee* frequently used this tactic after an episode had aired, to entice viewers to watch an episode they may have missed. Music Video Clips (7.9%) were another frequently used paratext; this makes sense considering the main text is a television show with song and dance. *Glee* also frequently used Behind-the-Scenes posts (7.7%) to show cast members interacting in a candid

manner; these posts would also show some upcoming plot points, but the focal point would be on how the cast members interacted behind the camera.

**Table 4.3 Type of Posts**

<i>n</i> =763		
Type	<i>n</i>	Percent
Previews/Sneak Peeks/Promos	105	13.8
Cast Member Specific	97	12.7
Contests, Games, Polls	88	11.5
Spoilers or Teasers	63	8.3
Music Video Clip	60	7.9
Behind-the-Scenes	59	7.7
Purchases (songs, merchandise)	41	5.4
Tune-in Reminders	39	5.1
DUAL: Tune-in Reminder and Social Media	34	4.5
Status Update	26	3.4
Social Media	24	3.1
Character Specific	23	3.0
Cross-Promotion of a Show that is Not <i>Glee</i> -Specific	22	2.9
Other (single)	19	2.5
Awards and Recognition	19	2.5
Recaps	14	1.8
Social Cause	14	1.8
Cover Photo	6	.8
Other (dual)	5	.7
Watch an Episode Online	2	.3
DUAL: Tune-in Reminder and Cross-Promotion that is Not <i>Glee</i> -Specific	2	.3
Status	1	.1
Total	763	100.0

### Episode-specific versus General Posts

The number of episode-specific posts versus general (non-episode) posts was fairly even (see Table 4.6); 377 posts were episode-specific, while 386 posts were not related to an episode.

This might signal that the show is just as interested in promoting a single episode as it is promoting the overall *Glee* brand.

**Table 4.4 Posts Based on Episodes versus General Posts**

<i>n</i> =763		
<b>Post Type</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Percent</b>
Episode Specific Post	377	50.6
General Post	386	49.4
Total	763	100.0

**Period of Post (Before, During or After Telecast)**

Of the 763 posts, 386 were not associated with a specific show, while an almost equal number were related to a specific episode and appeared before, during or after the show. As shown in Table 4.4, of the 377, nearly two-thirds appeared as promotions before the telecasts. Only one-eighth appeared during the show, and only about one-quarter after the show.

**Table 4.5 Period of Postings Related to an Episode**

<i>n</i> =377		
<b>Period</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Percent</b>
Before	235	62.4
During	47	12.5
After	95	25.2
Total	377	100.0

*Note: 386 other posts were not related to a specific episode*

**Interactivity**

As described in Chapter 3, the level of interactivity for each type of post was classified as a low, medium, or high scale. A low interactive feature was characterized by the command asking users to perform only a single action, or only included a single stimulus. A medium interactive feature asked the user to actively engage through more than one action on the same

platform (Facebook Page), or included more than one stimulus on the same platform (Facebook Page). High interactivity required the user to leave the Facebook platform, or perform multiple actions on various platforms. Because the typical users are fans of the show, it was assumed they were motivated in various degrees to demonstrate their loyalty with the brand.

Not surprisingly, almost half of the posts, at 45.9%, had a high interactivity level (see Table 4.5). Medium posts made up almost 34% of the posts, while low interactive posts comprised about 20% of the posts. The effects of interactivity here will be examined as a part of RQ2.

**Table 4.6 Interactivity Levels**

<i>n</i> =763		
<b>Interactivity Level</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Percent</b>
Low	154	20.2
Medium	259	33.9
High	350	45.9
Total	763	100.0

### **Explicitness of the Calls-to-Action**

If the artifact had a command that was direct, unequivocal, or clear, the artifact was labeled “explicit.” If the post’s command was indirect, or implied, the artifact was labeled “implicit.”

The explicitness of the call-to-actions in the posts was equally distributed (see Table 4.7); 376 of the posts were labeled as explicit, with 17 of those also including a dual explicit/implicit call-to-action. Posts with no text (graphic only) have only implicit calls-to-action. This is because this research project only measured the plain text in a post, not text embedded in an image. However, 10 posts that only had a graphic were mistakenly marked as having an explicit call-to-action. These posts were not included in the overall explicit-post analysis.

**Table 4.7 Explicitness of Calls-to-Action**

---

*n*=763

<b>Post Type</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Percent</b>
Explicit	359	47.1
Implicit	387	50.7
Both	17	2.2
Total	763	100.0

---

### **Calls-to-Action**

The call-to-action in a post refers to the command or suggested action to take in the text or the graphic. Overall, urging users to view a video online was the most frequently used call-to-action, making up over 25% of all posts (see Table 4.8). The popularity of this command is consistent with the most popular types of posts, such as previews and sneak peeks, spoilers, and music video clips (see Table 4.3). According to Table 4.8, only one of the video command posts was published as a graphic only (without any text). This suggests that inviting a user to watch a video online is not a clear enough order without providing additional text. Reading was the second most-frequently used call-to-action overall (19.4%). Notably, 15 out of the 147 reading commands did not include text. The “reading” command usually asked a fan to read an online article or blog post about the show; a few posts asked the user to read an entire magazine that featured a cast member.

Asking the user to view an image online was the third most-asked action of all posts (13.1%). These images were frequently spoilers or teasers on the Facebook platform; sometimes images were grouped together in albums. Apparently, the format of the post did not matter for viewing an image online; the split between text and graphic and graphics only was fairly even among the 99 posts.

For posts that only contained a graphic (no text), viewing an image online made up 58.5% of those calls-to-action; asking the user to purchase an item represented 19.1% of those calls-to-action; asking the user to read made up 16% of graphic-only posts.

**Table 4.8 Calls-to-Action by Type**

Call-to-action	Overall (n=757)		Text and Graphic (n=663)		Graphics Only (n=94)	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
View Video Online	196	25.9	195	29.4	1	1.1
Read	147	19.4	132	19.9	15	16.0
View Image Online	99	13.1	44	6.6	55	58.5
Play	75	9.9	75	11.3	-	-
Watch TV	45	5.9	45	6.8	-	-
Purchase	38	5.0	20	3.0	18	19.1
DUAL CTA: Watch TV and Join Community	35	4.6	35	5.3	-	-
Click	30	4.0	30	4.5	-	-
Other (dual)	30	4.0	28	4.2	2	2.1
Comment	22	2.9	22	3.3	-	-
Join a Community	21	2.8	19	2.9	2	2.1
*Other Relevant Actions	16	2.1	15	2.3	1	1.1
Listen	3	.4	3	.5	-	-
Total	757	100.0	663	100.0	94	100.0

\* Six other calls-to-action were not show-specific actions nor paratext-specific actions (such as “Have a Happy Thanksgiving”). These were deemed not relevant and excluded from the analysis.

### Word Counts of Posts with Text

The length of posts was measured only for posts that contained original or accompanying text from a Facebook update (see Table 4.9). The length of posts was not measured for items with text embedded only within the image, text on link-thumbnail-previews, or from Facebook Note previews.

**Table 4.9 Text-Based Posts v. Graphic Only Post**

---

*n*=761

<b>Post Type</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Posts that include original text	667	87.6
Posts with no text (graphic only)	94	12.7
Total	761	100.0

---

For text-only posts (see Table 4.10), lengths were slightly longer for non-episodic posts compared to posts related to episodes (non-episodic:  $M=20.05$ ,  $SD=9.47$ ; episodic:  $M=18.44$ ,  $SD=7.74$ ;  $F_{(1,665)}=6.39$ ,  $p \leq .001$ )).

Posts that have higher interactivity levels have moderately more words at a significant level (low:  $M=17.97$ , moderate:  $M=18.12$ , high:  $M=20.56$ , overall:  $M=19.30$ ;  $F_{(2, 664)}=6.96$ ,  $p=.001$ )). A post hoc (LSD) comparison showed no significant difference between low and medium levels of interactivity, but there was a significant difference between low and high ( $p=.003$ ), and medium and high levels of interactivity ( $p=.002$ ).

There was no significant difference among the lengths of posts that included text whether they appeared before, during, or after an episode (only episode-specific posts were considered) (Before:  $M=19.31$ , During:  $M=17.50$ , After:  $M=17.06$ ;  $F_{(2, 308)}=2.78$ ,  $p \leq .06$ , n.s.).

Posts with text that contain explicit calls-to-action also had significantly more words than posts with implicit calls-to-action (Explicit:  $M=22.15$ , Implicit:  $M=16.19$ ;  $F_{(1, 647)}=81.81$ ,  $p \leq .000$ ).

**Table 4.10 Word Counts for Text-Based Posts, by Types of Posts**

<i>n=667</i>					
<b>Post Type</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>	<b><i>F</i></b>	<b>(sig.)</b>
Posts that include text	667	19.30	8.73		
(a) By Episode (n=677)					
Non-Episodic	355	20.05	9.47	6.39	p=.001
Episodic	312	18.44	7.74		
(b) By Interactivity Level (n=667)					
Low	141	17.97	8.57	6.96	p=.001
Medium	195	18.12	6.92		
High	331	20.56	8.73		
(c) By Period (n=311)					
Before	187	19.31	8.21	2.78	p=.06, n.s.
During	46	17.50	4.75		
After	78	17.06	7.82		
(d) By Explicitness (n=649)					
Explicit	349	22.15	9.78	81.81	p=.000
Implicit	300	16.19	6.18		

*Mean numbers of words (word count ranged from 1-72)*

### **Feedback Mechanisms (Likes, Comments and Shares for Each Post)**

Feedback or engagement mechanisms, such as liking, commenting, and sharing, are the only publically accessible measures for external users to view the popularity of a post. Table 4.11a summarizes the cumulative descriptive statistics for total likes, comments, and shares at the time the analysis was conducted. The mean counts were likes  $M=7,020.10$ , comments  $M=540.40$ , and shares  $M= 338.00$ .

Table 4.11b breaks down the counts by decile and illustrates in each case that the median scores were substantially lower than the mean scores, which appears to be skewed by very high counts for certain posts.

**Table 4.11 Feedback Mechanisms/Information Sharing by Percentiles***(a) Descriptive Statistics*

	<b>Likes</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Shares</b>
M	7,020.10	540.40	338.00
SD	7,875.20	1,222.80	856.30
Minimum	82.00	15.0	0
Maximum	96,555.00	21,126.00	8,839.00

*(b) By Decile*

<b>Deciles</b>	<b>Likes</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Shares</b>
10	2,400.30	118.20	.00
20	2,979.20	154.20	.00
30	3,504.00	195.30	.00
40	4,029.60	234.40	30.00
50	4,725.00	295.00	61.00
60	5,728.80	368.60	102.60
70	7,028.30	488.70	166.70
80	9,239.20	635.80	320.60
90	12,987.60	974.40	845.20
100 (Maximum)	96,555.00	21,126.00	8,839.00

**Research Questions****Paratextual devices used before, during, and after an episode**

RQ1 examined the use of paratextual devices before, during, and after an episode. Episode-related posts (n=377) were analyzed by period – before, during, or after an episode. As noted previously, and shown in the subtotal column of Table 4.12, the most common posts overall were previews/sneak peeks/promos of episodes, music video clips, and behind-the-scenes clips, with 95, 57, and 44, respectively.

For posts appearing before an episode, the most frequent were previews/sneak peeks/promos, music video clips, and spoilers/teasers, with 94, 32, and 27, respectively. During an episode, the most common were combined tune-in reminders and social media reminders, just

tune-in reminders, and social media reminders, with 28, 15, and 3, respectively. After an episode, the most commonly used devices were behind-the-scenes clips, music video clips, and status updates, with 31, 25, and 13, respectively.

**Table 4.12 Type of Post by Period**

*n=377*

Type of Post	Before	During	After	Subtotal	Not Episode Specific	Overall Total
Previews/Sneak Peeks/Promos	94	0	1	95	10	105
Music Video Clips	32	0	25	57	3	60
Behind-the-scenes	13	0	31	44	15	59
Tune-in Reminders	21	15	0	36	3	39
DUAL: Tune-in Reminder and Social Media	5	28	0	33	1	34
Spoilers/Teasers	27	0	3	30	33	63
Purchases	18	0	1	19	22	41
Status	4	0	13	17	10	27
Recaps	1	0	12	13	1	14
Contest, Games, Polls	5	0	3	8	80	88
Cast Member Specific	4	0	2	6	91	97
Social Media	2	3	0	5	19	24
Cross Promo (show not related to <i>Glee</i> )	3	0	0	3	19	22
DUAL: Tune-in Reminder and Cross Promo (show not related to <i>Glee</i> )	2	0	0	2	0	2
Other (single)	2	0	1	3	16	19
Other (dual)	2	0	0	2	3	5
Watch Episode Online	0	0	1	1	1	2
Social Cause	0	1	0	1	13	14
Awards/Recognition	0	0	1	1	18	19
Character Specific	0	0	0	0	23	23
Cover Photo	0	0	1	1	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>763</b>

*Also includes data that is not episode specific*

Table 4.13 shows the paratextual devices the researcher predicted should appear on the *Glee* Facebook Page compared with paratexts that were actually found, by time period and interactivity level; this table is an update of Table 2.1. Predictions that were met, and had more than five posts in that time period, are highlighted in bold; items that appear in italics were added after the data analysis. A strikethrough indicates a device not found in data collection or during that time period, or types that were disbanded after data collection. Items that were found in the data collection during that time period, but had fewer than five posts during that time period, are shown in parentheses.

**Table 4.13 Paratextual Devices Actually Used in Promotion**

	Before	During	After
Low Interactivity	<b>Reminder to tune-in</b> <del>New cover photo/profile picture</del> <del>Share</del>	<b>Tune-in now</b> <del>“Who is watching?” (LMS)</del>	(Watch last week’s episode) <del>Other SNS promotions</del> <b>“LMS if you watched”</b> <del>Share</del>
Medium Interactivity	<b>Spoilers/Teasers</b> <b>Behind-the-scenes</b> <del>Messages from cast</del> <b>Previews</b> <i>Music Video Clips</i>	<del>Comment if you are watching</del> <del>Preview of current episode</del>	<b>Full music video performances</b> (Polls) <del>Recaps</del> <del>Actor’s Facebook Pages</del> <del>Spin-offs</del> <del>Comment if you watched</del> <del>Behind-the-scenes</del>
High Interactivity	(Contests/games/polls) <del>Create a fan page</del> <del>Purchases</del>	<del>Check into GetGlue/Miso</del> <del>Use a #hashtag on Twitter</del> <del>Tune-in and connect on social</del> <del>*Vote Now</del> <del>Social Cause</del>	<del>Social causes</del> (Merchandise/song purchases) (Contests/games/polls) <del>Create a fan page</del> <del>Behind-the-scenes</del> <del>Recaps</del>

*This table’s an update of Table 2.1. The researcher compared paratexts anticipated verses paratexts located*

*\*These activities would be found in a live show, not a pre-taped episode.*

*Strikethrough indicates device not found in data collection or dissolved after preliminary data collection.*

*Bold indicates device predicted and found in that time period, with greater than five posts.*

*Italics indicate paratextual device found in data collection, but not anticipated.*

*Parentheses indicate device found in data collection, but had five or fewer posts during time period.*

## **Impact of Interactivity**

RQ2 sought to examine the extent to which interactivity is important in promotion and how the use interactive devices varied before, during, and after an episode of a primetime entertainment show like *Glee*.

Combining data reported in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5, the interactivity of posts was compared with the respective time period to see if there was any significance in the level of interactivity of posts before, during, and after an episode. Table 4.14 summarizes the results for the episode-specific posts and included the comparable results for the non-episode-specific posts in the shaded region. Posts that were episode-specific (n=377) constituted 49% of the total number of posts. A chi-square test suggests that the distribution of counts for the nine cells that comprise the episode-specific subtotal are statistically independent and not equally distributed ( $\chi^2_{(4)}=58.85, p=.000$ ).

Overall, 235 – over 60% – of the episode-related posts were before an episode. This might be due to the show wanting to engage viewers before an episode, so the viewers are reminded to tune-in, when they might have been engaged in another activity. Most episode-related posts that were posted before an episode had a medium level of interactivity. Indeed, the largest paratextual devices before an episode were previews/sneak peeks/promos and video clips. These two devices were deemed to have a medium level of interactivity generally featuring embedded videos from YouTube, or a Facebook photo album.

No posts during an episode had medium interactivity. This suggests that the page manager believed moderately interactive posts, such as watching a music video, would take away from the live episode. On the other hand, most of the posts during an episode – 32 posts – had high interactivity levels. This suggests that activities such as connecting on a second screen, actually might enhance or compliment the live-television experience.

Of the 95 posts after an episode, more than half – 55 posts – had a medium interactivity level. Only 24 of those posts had a low interactivity level, while even fewer 16 posts had a high interactivity level. Medium interactive posts include video and image postings; these make sense

for post-viewing paratextual devices. However, the lack of high-interactive posts was surprising, considering watching an episode online and reading a recap on another website are both frequently highly interactive actions.

The higher number of posts before and after an episode – compared to during an episode – could also be attributed to the larger amount of time for posts to be published. There is only a two-hour window for posts to appear during an episode; this accounts for both the East Coast and West Coast airings. Traditionally, American broadcast networks use two time zones to broadcast, even though there are four recognized time zones in the contiguous United States. Even so, while it is possible for people on the East Coast to spoil plot lines online for people on the West Coast, this effect wouldn't wholly affect the type of information posted by the Page administrators. In addition, the Page administrators were clearly aware of the differences in viewing time, as they made references to the differences in East Coast and West Coast airings (see Figure 4.1).



**Figure 4.1**

An overwhelming number of the non-episode-specific posts (235 of 386) had a high interactivity level. While most of the high-interactive posts during an episode were probably second-screen viewing requests, these non-episode-related posts most likely featured links to external content, such as episode recaps, music purchasing information, or articles about cast members.

**Table 4.14 Interactivity of Paratextual Devices by Time Period, Including Non-Episode-Specific Posts**

*n=377*

Interactivity Level	Period			Subtotal	Not Episode Specific	Overall Total
	Before	During	After			
Low	41	15	24	80	74	154
Medium	127	0	55	182	77	259
High	67	32	16	115	235	350
Total	235	47	95	377	386	763

*Table includes non-episode-specific devices for comparison. ( $\chi^2_{(4)} = 58.85, p=.000$ )*

Table 4.15 analyzes the type of post by interactivity level. For the most part, paratexts were heavily featured in one interactivity category (low, medium or high). This suggests that most posts were the same type of post with different or updated content. For instance, almost all of the Spoilers/Teasers were high interactive posts (52 of the overall 63). These posts were usually links to content on an external website, providing detailed plots synopses of future episodes or seasons.

Only a few of the paratexts had varied levels of interactivity. For instance, cross-promotions of other shows had different levels of interactivity; this could be because some of these posts were single status, others featured a video clip for the television program, or other posts simply linked to external content (such as the other show's webpage). Since the posts with varied interactivity levels were not common, it can be assumed that *Glee* determined the format for the type of post, and stayed consistent for user experience.

**Table 4.15 Type of Post by Interactivity Level***n=762 (Excludes one missing post)*

<b>Type of Post</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Total</b>
Previews/Sneak Peeks/Promos	11	73	21	105
Cast Member Specific	15	26	56	97
Contest, Games, Polls	14	14	60	88
Spoilers/Teasers	3	8	52	63
Music Video Clips	0	51	9	60
Behind-the-Scenes	5	38	16	59
Purchases	1	14	26	41
Tune-in Reminders	37	1	1	39
DUAL: Tune-in Reminder and Social Media Reminder	0	0	34	34
Status	26	0	0	26
Social Media	1	6	17	24
Character Specific	0	5	18	23
Cross Promo (show not related to <i>Glee</i> )	9	7	6	22
Awards/Recognition	11	0	8	19
Other (single)	4	5	10	19
Recaps	8	2	4	14
Social Cause	0	5	9	14
Cover Photo	6	0	0	6
Other (dual)	1	3	1	5
Watch Episode Online	0	0	2	2
DUAL: Tune-in Reminder and Cross Promo (show not related to <i>Glee</i> )	1	1	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>762</b>

**Use of Explicit versus Implicit Calls to Action**

RQ3 evaluated the use of explicit versus implicit calls-to-action in a post based on interactivity level. As reported in Table 4.7, the number of explicit and implicit posts was fairly even, with 359 explicit posts and 387 implicit posts; 17 posts were coded as having dual explicit and implicit calls-to-action that were excluded in the analysis.

Table 4.16 combines the findings reported in Tables 4.5 and 4.7. A chi-square test shows that the frequencies reported in the inside cells are statistically independent and not equally distributed ( $\chi^2_{(2)} = 7.49, p \leq .024$ ). In addition to wide differences among the low (149), medium (254), and high (343) interactive posts, there were significantly fewer explicit low-interactive posts (57) than implicit low-interactive posts (92). There were a few different types of posts that might account for the differences in the explicit versus implicit low interactive posts. For instance, cover photos, spoilers, and purchases were types of posts that had implicit calls-to-action. Interestingly enough, tune-in reminders were also featured more frequently as implicit calls-to-action than explicit calls-to-action; *Glee* may have found it more beneficial to provide a subtle call-to-action to get users to watch the show, rather than coming across too strong.

**Table 4.16 Use of Explicit Calls to Action by Interactivity Level**

<i>n</i> =746			
<b>Interactivity Level</b>	<b>Explicit</b>	<b>Implicit</b>	<b>Total</b>
Low	57	92	149
Medium	126	128	254
High	176	167	343
Total	359	387	746

*Frequencies (cross tabs) with chi square*  
 $\chi^2_{(2)} = 7.49, p \leq .024$

**Predictors of Engagement Measures (Likes, Comments and Shares)**

RQ4 examined the possible predictors for levels of feedback mechanisms (likes, share and comments). As reported in Table 4.11, the average number of likes (M=7,020.16, SD=7,875.23) on a post were greater than user comments (M=540.41, SD=1,222.85) and shares (M=338.61, SD=856.31).

Notably, all three measures were highly correlated: likes-comments ( $r=.235$ ), likes-shares ( $r=.461$ ), comments-shares ( $r=.138$ , all  $p=.000$ ), but could not be combined into a single reliable

index of engagement (Cronbach's  $\alpha=.22$ ). This is not surprising, since users engaging in one of these engagement activities reduces the probability of them engaging in another (see Alhabash & McAlister, 2014).

**Episode-Specific versus Non-Episodic Specific Posts.** When posts were analyzed based on whether they were episode-specific versus non-episode-specific, there were significant differences for all three engagement measures in favor of episode-specific posts based on comparisons using a student t-test. As Table 4.17 shows, a t-test determined that viewers liked posts that were episode-specific ( $M=8,899.14$ ,  $SD=9,477.98$ ) more than non-episode-specific posts ( $M=5,199.61$ ,  $SD=5,336.82$ ;  $t_{(758)}=6.657$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Viewers also made more comments about episode-specific posts ( $M=630.10$ ,  $SD=719.12$ ) compared to non-episode-specific posts ( $M=453.52$ ,  $SD=1,559.36$ ;  $t_{(758)}=1.994$ ,  $p=.047$ ). Subsequently, viewers were inclined to share more episode-related posts ( $M=549.03$ ,  $SD=1,115.00$ ), compared to posts that were not episode-related ( $M=134.73$ ,  $SD=395.49$ ;  $t_{(758)}=6.868$ ,  $p=.000$ ).

**Table 4.17 Comparison of Mean Use of Feedback Mechanisms by Users Based on Whether Post Was Related to a Specific Episode or Show in General**

*n*=760

	<b>Episode-Specific</b>	<b>Not Episode Specific</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Likes	8,899.14 (9,477.98)	5,199.61 (5,336.82)	7,020.16 (7,875.23)	-6.66	758	.000
Comments	630.10 (719.12)	453.52 (1,559.36)	540.41 (1,222.85)	-1.99	758	.047
Shares	549.03 (1,115.00)	134.73 (395.49)	338.61 (856.31)	-6.87	758	.000

**Engagement Before, During, and After an Episode.** The period of time during which an item was posted also a significant impact on the number of likes, comments and shares.

For likes, a one-way ANOVA comparing the mean likes during the three time periods proved to be statistically significant (one-way  $F(2,371)=5.230$ ,  $p\leq.006$ ). A post hoc (LSD) comparison suggested that more likes were generated before versus during an episode (Before  $M=8,813.85$ ,  $SD=9,023.66$ ; During  $M=5,320.38$ ,  $SD=2,314.54$ ), post hoc comparison  $p\leq.020$ ). Additionally, the number of likes after an episode was higher than during an episode (After:  $M=10,723.75$ ,  $SD=9,462.32$ ; During  $M=5,320.28$ ,  $SD=2,314.54$ , post hoc comparison  $p\leq.001$ ). But, there was no difference between the number of likes before and after an episode (post hoc comparison  $p=.096$ ).

For shares, a similar pattern of statistically significant difference was detected (one-way  $F(2,371)=5.587$ ,  $p\leq.004$ ). Shares before an episode were significantly higher than during an episode (Before  $M=635.40$ ,  $SD=1,246.24$ ; During  $M=49.43$ ,  $SD=64.23$ ; post hoc comparison,  $p=.001$ ). Additionally, the number of shares after an episode were significantly higher than during an episode (After  $M=565.09$ ,  $SD=968.51$ ; During  $M=49.43$ ,  $SD=64.23$ ; post hoc comparison,  $p=.009$ ). Notably, there was no significant difference between the number of shares before and after an episode (Before  $M=635.40$ ,  $SD=1,246.24$ ; After  $M=565.09$ ,  $SD=968.51$ ; post hoc comparison,  $p=.601$ , n.s.).

Comments displayed a different pattern, but the period of time an item was posted still had a significant influence on the number of comments (one-way  $F(2,371)=13.683$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Unlike the data for likes and shares, for comments there was no significant difference between the number of comments before an episode compared to comments during an episode (Before  $M=503.20$ ,  $SD=435.88$ ; During  $M=613.13$ ,  $SD=360.93$ ; post-hoc comparison,  $p=.324$ ). However, there was a significant difference in the number of comments during and after an episode (During  $M=613.13$ ,  $SD=360.93$ ; After  $M=947.81$ ,  $SD=1,180.50$ ; post hoc comparison,

p=.007) and before and after an episode (Before M=503.20, SD=435.88; After M=947.81, SD=1,180.50; post-hoc comparison, p=.000). Obviously, actually watching an episode is essential in generating user comments, which explains why there are more comments after an episode than during or before an episode.

**Table 4.18 Comparison of Mean Use of Feedback Mechanisms by Users by Time Period**

<i>n</i> =374						
	<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>sig.</b>
Likes	8,813.85 (9,023.66)	5,320.38 (2,314.54)	10,723.31 (11,978.33)	8,854.75 (9,462.32)	5.23	.006
Comments	503.20 (435.88)	613.13 (360.93)	947.81 (1,180.50)	628.76 (719.19)	13.68	.000
Shares	635.40 (1,246.24)	49.43 (64.23)	565.09 (968.51)	544.09 (1,112.00)	5.59	.004

**Engagement and High, Medium and Low Interactivity Levels.** Interaction level was also a significant predictor for the number of likes, comments and shares for each posts, but the patterns differed (one-way  $F_{(2,757)}=44.19$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Table 4.19 suggests that for likes, high involvement posts (M=4,274.90, SD=2,636.50) generated about half the number of likes as medium involvement posts (M=9,720.63, SD=10,989.16) and low involvement posts (M=9,720.63, SD=10,989.16); post hoc comparisons both  $p=.000$ ). There was no significant difference between low and medium involvement posts (post hoc comparison,  $p=.453$ ). A similar pattern was detected for comments (one-way  $F_{(2,757)}=34.61$ ,  $p=.000$ ). High involvement posts generated the least number of comments (M=288.00, SD=280.32), compared to medium involvement posts (M=475.06, SD=365.76) and low involvement posts (M=1,222.73, SD=2,528.72; post hoc comparison, both  $p=.000$ ). Notably, the difference between means for the low and medium interactive posts approached but did not reach the level of significance (post hoc comparison,  $p=.053$ ). Interestingly, differences were also detected for shares (one-way

$F_{(2,575)}=45.11, p=.000$ ). Medium involvement ( $M=730.03, SD=1,248.81$ ) generated the most user engagement – and was significantly higher than either low involvement posts ( $M=163.08, SD=321.66$ ) or high involvement posts ( $M=129.54, SD=489.94$ ; post hoc comparisons, both  $p=.000$ ). The difference between low involvement and high involvement posts was not significant (post hoc comparison,  $p=.669$ ).

**Table 4.19 Comparison of Mean Use of Feedback Mechanisms by Users by Message Interaction**

<i>n=760</i>						
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>sig.</b>
Likes	9,720.63 (10,989.16)	9,148.96 (9,128.52)	4,274.90 (2,636.50)	7,020.16 (7,875.23)	44.19	.000
Comments	1,222.73 (2,528.72)	475.06 (365.76)	288.00 (280.32)	540.41 (1,222.85)	34.61	.000
Shares	163.08 (321.66)	730.03 (1,248.81)	129.54 (489.94)	338.61 (856.31)	45.11	.000

**Presence or Absence of Textual Cues.** When posts were analyzed based on whether or not they contained textual cues, viewers ultimately tended to engage in posts that contained a textual cue, except when liking a post. As Table 4.20 shows, a t-test found that although viewers liked posts that were episode-specific ( $M=7,025.65, SD=7,479.39$ ) slightly more than non-episode specific posts ( $M=6,982.26, SD=10,251.26$ ), the difference was not statistically significant ( $t_{(758)}=.05, p=.960$ ). However, viewers commented more on posts that contained a textual cue ( $M=567.13, SD=1,301.03$ ), compared with posts that did not contain a textual cue ( $M=355.63, SD=307.52; t_{(758)}=1.58, p=.000$ , equal variances not assumed). Likewise, viewers were also more apt to share a post that included a textual cue ( $M=360.41, SD=911.34$ ) instead of a post not containing a textual cue ( $M=187.79, SD=189.79; t_{(758)}=1.85, p=.000$ , equal variances not assumed).

**Table 4.20 Comparison of Mean Use of Feedback Mechanisms by Users by Presence of Textual Cue**

*Based on new categories from Table 4.7*

*n=760*

	<b>Text Cue</b>	<b>No Text Cue</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Likes	7,025.65 (7,479.39)	6,982.26 (10,251.26)	-0.05	758	.960
Comments	567.13 (1,301.03)	355.63 (307.52)	-1.59	758	.000
Shares	360.41 (911.34)	187.79 (189.16)	-1.85	758	.000

When considering only the 667 valid cases when the post contain a text (not a graphic-only post), the length was negatively related to the number of likes. In other words, shorter text generated more likes ( $r=-.142$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Similarly, regarding comments, the length of text and number of comments were negatively related ( $r=-.111$ ,  $p=.000$ ). However, the number of words had no impact on the likelihood that a post would be shared ( $r=-.019$ ,  $p=.628$ , n.s.). In other words, excessive text could be a discourage engagement, at least in the case of likes and comments.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate how entertainment television programs use social media as a form of broadcast promotion over three different time periods: before, during, and after an episode airs. Chapter Five provides a review of the findings and examined the implications for the entertainment television industry. Finally, this chapter presents limitations of this study, and recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of Findings**

A total of 763 posts were collected and analyzed from 10 months representing *Glee*'s third season, August 2011 to May 2012. "Sweeps" months – November, May, December, and February (Kenneally, 2014) – all had the highest frequency of posts. Overall, the top paratexts included previews/sneak peeks/promos (13.8%), cast member specific (12.5%), and spoilers or teasers (8.3%).

The most popular format was a thumbnail preview created by placing a hyperlink directly in a post. This parallels the high number of highly interactive posts; almost half of the posts, at 45.9%, had a high interactivity level (see Table 4.5). The researcher was surprised to find such a large number of high interactive posts, since these posts draw users away from the Facebook platform; these posts were usually created when sharing unoriginal content from another site. If the *Glee* Page administrators were interested in gathering more feedback mechanisms – such as likes, comments, and shares – this posting strategy could have been detrimental to that goal. However, if *Glee* is interested in engaging fans and expanding the brand, then this strategy could have been beneficial.

The numbers of episode-specific posts versus general (non-episode) posts were fairly equal (see Table 4.6), which was unexpected. Clearly, *Glee*'s marketing plan also involved promoting the show's brand, rather than solely using the Facebook platform to get audience members to tune-in. Thus, the show is not only interested in promoting the main text.

Findings for RQ1 found, as expected, most of the posts related to an episode were posted before an episode. From a marketing perspective, this makes sense, as the *Glee* Facebook administrators wanted to draw users to tune-in to the main text. The fewest posts related to an episode were during an episode; this strategically makes sense, as the brand wants to engage viewers in the episode without drawing attention elsewhere. There is also a two-hour time period during which posts could be published during a live episode. Subsequently, the most common type of post during an episode asked the user to log in to a social media account and tune-in to the live episode on the television. Asking users to log on to an additional social media account to connect with other viewers suggests that the *Glee* brand believed that second-screen viewing engages viewers rather than taking away from the main text. The researcher was also astounded at the lack of recap posts, and posts reminding users to watch the previous episode.

Overall, *Glee* did not post only explicit calls-to-action to generate feedback; *Glee* found it useful to post subtle, or implicit, calls-to-action as well. These invited the viewer in to the *Glee* brand without coming across too strong. While the overall numerical data for explicitness was very even, there were more low-interactive implicit posts (92) compared to low-interactive explicit posts (57).

Viewing a video online was the most frequently featured call-to-action (25.9%, see Table 4.8). This implies that *Glee* found it useful to focus on posts that were most closely related to the main text. Since *Glee* is a television show that is founded on musical elements, this makes sense.

Music video clips and television show previews are frequently used paratextual devices that require the user to view the video on the web.

Reading was the second most-frequently used call-to-action overall with 147 posts. The researcher was surprised to find that reading was the second most used call-to-action. Most posts that required reading were from articles, which required users to leave the Facebook platform – a highly interactive function. The researcher did not have access to data about whether or not these posts were actually clicked; however, the frequency of these posts suggests that *Glee* found them useful content for viewers, and continued to post this type of content.

Asking the user to view an image online was the third most-asked action. These requests included both graphic-only posts, as well as graphics with supplementary text. Again, the main text is a visual medium, and the use of image-based paratexts builds on the text.

### **Paratextual Devices Used**

Ultimately, results of this study indicate that paratexts can be used effectively to generate interest with audience members if they stay close to the main text. Visual paratexts, such as images and videos, were used more widely than text-based paratexts. Surprisingly, *Glee* posted an equal number of posts that were related to a specific-episode, compared to posts that were not related to a specific episode. Although it makes sense to market specific-episodes, it is also important to build brand awareness and promote the franchise. Likewise, with the evolving landscape of television consumption, *Glee* could not (and should not) assume that every fan is watching the show in real-time. Thus, by promoting additional content – such as character-development, information about cast members, and merchandise – the show could continue to build a loyal fan-base and keep consumers engaged whether or not an episode is airing.

The most common posts overall were previews/sneak peeks/promos of episodes, music video clips, and behind-the-scenes clips. The most common posts before an episode were previews/sneak peeks/promos, music video clips, and spoilers/teasers. The most common posts after an episode were behind the scenes video clips and photographs, music videos, and status updates. As mentioned earlier, these posts all stayed close to the main text. When posts were related to an episode, they were more frequently posted before an episode; the show posted more external links – high interactive posts – rather than original content within the Facebook platform.

The most common posts during an episode were tune-in reminders and social media reminders. These findings were not at all surprising. For one, the lack of diversity for types of posts during an episode might suggest that *Glee* did not want to distract users from paying attention to the episode. Instead, they strategically used types of posts to enhance, or supplement, the episode. The emphasis of social media reminders is not a revelation either. Social TV is highly topical in communication and marketing research. Broadcast networks are trying to determine how much emphasis to put on social media marketing, including Facebook. According to Mashable (*Social TV*, 2014), Nielsen reported that 84% of smartphone and tablet owners say they use their devices while watching TV. Likewise, the Interactive Advertising Bureau released a television study indicating about 16% of viewers share content via social media while they watch television (Knight, 2015). Flurry, a mobile application tracking website now owned by Yahoo!, reported that mobile phones have now surpassed television as a “time-suck” (Brustein, 2014). As of 2014, Flurry tracked mobile phone use at more than 3 hours and 45 minutes a day, which surpasses the 3 hours and 30 minutes of television viewing. However, Brustein notes that researchers have a hard time determining how if mobile apps are pulling people away from

television, or just supplementing the viewing. “New media habits have essentially created more time in the day: People idly flip through content on their smartphones while halfway paying attention to whatever is playing on their televisions,” says Brustein (2014). Indeed, broadcasters and advertisers are not sure whether users are actively or passively engaging in extra (paratextual) content on their mobile devices; however, advertisers and broadcasters should realize there is definitely value in extending the viewing experience to the user’s mobile devices.

The researcher was surprised to find a high number of posts related to shows outside of the *Glee* universe. There were 24 total posts that cross-promoted a show other than *Glee*. Most of these show were Fox-centric, such as *X Factor* and *New Girl* (see Figure 5.1).



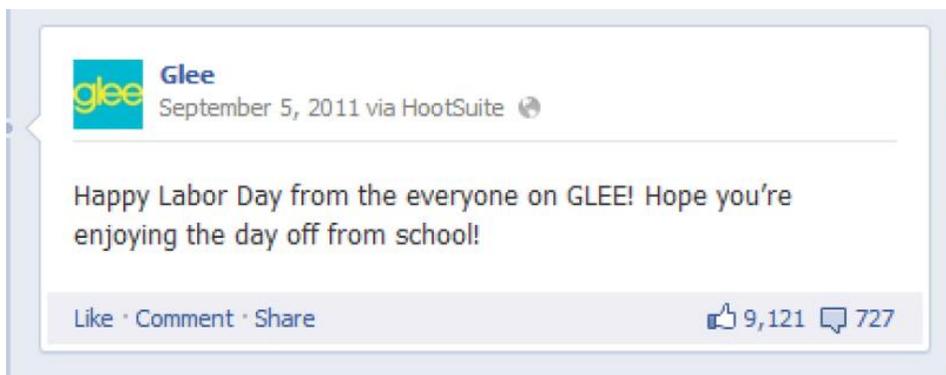
**Figure 5.1**

### **Interactivity**

RQ2 investigated the importance of interactivity in promotion, and how *Glee* used differences in interactivity levels on the Facebook platform. The study found that almost half of the posts (45.9%) exhibited high interactivity levels (see Table 4.5). This was surprising, because these highly interactive posts required the user to leave the Facebook platform and visit an external page. However, these results might signify that it was faster or easier for the *Glee* page administrators to share outside content that has already been created, rather than develop original content. By comparison, low interactive posts only made up 20.2% of the overall posts (see Table 4.5). The researcher assumes that low interactive posts, such as a single status reminder

(see Figure 5.2), were not as valuable to the *Glee* brand as medium- and high-interactive posts. These posts usually did not provide any additional information about the show, the characters and cast, or single episodes. Instead, these posts merely reinforced the *Glee* brand persona. Analysis for RQ3 found that there was little difference in the explicitness of a post and the interactivity level, except when looking at low-interactive posts. Remarkably, low-interactive posts had more implicit calls-to-action compared to explicit calls-to-action.

Interestingly enough, *Glee* still received lots of engagement on low interactive posts. One example generated more than 9,000 likes and 700 comments (see Figure 5.2). Thus, the lack of low interactive posts is not clear.



**Figure 5.2**

The researcher would suggest that the most interesting factor regarding interactivity is the complete lack of posts with medium interactivity during an episode. The researcher predicted that *Glee*'s Facebook Page would ask users to live-comment during the episode; or, the show might post additional scenes or video clips of the current episode during an episode. Several factors could explain in to this lack of data. For example, medium interactive posts (such as watching a music video) could take away from the live episode. This contrasts with the high number of low and highly interactive posts that, potentially, enhance the live-television event.

Also, as mentioned previously, administrators are limited in time for publishing posts during an episode.

It was not surprising that most postings fit into one distinct interactivity category. It is presumed that *Glee* realized what types of posts were effective, and continued using those types of posts. For instance, there tended to be a pattern of the type of posts during the week of a new episode. Usually starting the week prior to the new episode, *Glee* posted a promo or preview for the subsequent episode, followed a music-video clip, a reminder to tune-in the day before, a reminder to purchase songs from the new episode – with a link to iTunes, a tune-in reminder during the episode, a post for the #GleekoftheWeek winner, a recap, and a clip of behind-the-scenes footage. Although *Glee* did not use this same pattern for every episode, the pattern was used very frequently. This suggests that the show recognized a useful way to engage with viewers, and decided to continue with that method.

### **Feedback Mechanisms**

Although *Glee* was definitely interesting in drawing both new and returning viewers to a television episode, another important goal for the brand was to increase engagement within the Facebook platform. Feedback or engagement mechanisms, such as liking, commenting, and sharing, are the important measurable terms for both internal and external users to view the popularity of a post.

Facebook Page strategists have been divided about the importance of feedback mechanisms for a while: Is quality or quantity more important on a brand's Page? The answer, this researcher suggests, is both. While quality content is important – and that is what drives fans to respond to posts on Facebook – larger numbers of likes, comments, and shares tells the administrators a few things. For one, the administrator now knows what type of content is the

most popular with fans. The response might also inform administrators what specific call-to-action, or the explicitness of the command, resonates with fans. In Figure 5.3, the screenshot shows a photo that received over 67,000 likes.



**Figure 5.3**

High numbers of user engagement through feedback mechanisms also helped with the virality of a photo (see Alhabash & McAlister, 2014). When a photo is liked, commented, or shared by a user, that information is also displayed on that user's Facebook News Feed for friends to witness. Thus, while a Page's fan-base might limit the reach of a post, the reach is extended to additional Facebook users – and potential new fans – if a post is liked, commented on, or shared.

Hallahan (in press) notes that many users on social media are easily swayed to follow the majority's opinion. Thus, if a post already has a lot of feedback, users would assume that the post must be popular or important and provide feedback on the post, possibly without even reading the post. Hallahan (in press) also notes that "users will only click on only one option in a

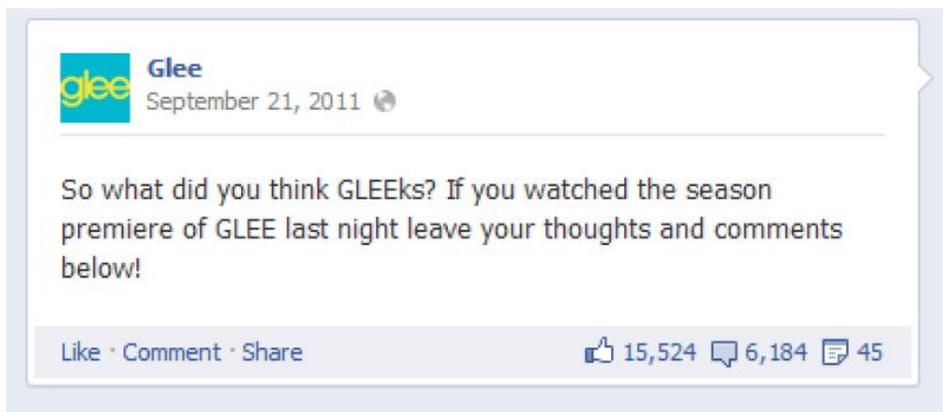
message – they will either seek information or engage in conversation via link, or share a message with a friend, or simply like it.”

Ultimately, the mean number of likes on posts (7020.10) was higher than comments (540.40) and shares (338.00). The high rate of likes, compared to shares and comments, is not surprising. The action of “liking” a post is intrinsically simpler than commenting and sharing; the action only takes a single click. Alhabash & McAlister (2014) noted that users might also be more inclined to simply like a post, especially if they are using the Facebook platform on their phone. “An individual using a smartphone to check Facebook or Twitter might find it functionally easier to click the ‘like’ button on Facebook, and the ‘retweet’ button on Twitter. Other behaviors may require greater motor engagement through repeated sequential clicks,” (p. 15).

Traditionally, Facebook assigned different weights to content within a post. For instance, Facebook punished users for posting calls-to-action that requested the user to like, comment or share. This is called “like-baiting,” or “like-gating” (Haydon, 2015). Recently, research had suggested that including an image within a post would increase reach, which could potentially (and hopefully) increase engagement. However, even more recently, research suggests that posting and uploading original videos holds more weight than an image. This algorithm change might have to do with Facebook’s growing rivalry with YouTube and Google (Cicero, 2015).

There were several factors that influenced the number of likes, comments, and shares on a post: For one, posts that were related to an episode tended to get more engagement (see Table 4.17). Of these posts that were episode-related, those posted before and after tended to get more likes, comments, and shares.

Interactivity level also factored in to the number of likes, comments, and shares on a post. For likes, low and medium interactivity posts garnered almost double the number of likes compared to high interactivity posts. Concerning comments, there were more comments on low interactivity posts. Several posts on the *Glee* Page with low interactive features specifically asked users to comment. For instance, the low-interactive post, as shown in Figure 5.4, asked users to comment about the previous night's episode.



**Figure 5.4**

However, regarding shares, there were far more shares on medium interactivity posts compared to low and high interactive posts. Since most music video clips, behind-the-scenes footage, and promos had medium interactivity levels, the researcher can speculate that those types of paratexts were the types of posts users were most interested in sharing.

The study found that the length of a post might also affect the feedback. Overall, posts with less text received more likes and comments. Figure 5.5 illustrates a post with longer text lengths, with a lower number of likes, comments, and shares (compared to the average).



**Figure 5.5**

### **Implications**

Ultimately, paratexts are an important concept in understanding media communication. Promos, book excerpts, previews, and trailers have historically been used as promotional tools that enhance a main text, and thus are considered paratexts. These paratexts provide a similar experience to what a consumer or user will experience in the primary text, and they provide a framework of specific message content that broadcasters can use in promotion. Paratexts have the authority to “highlight themes identified as attractive by marketers and promoters, and subvert those designated as culturally troubling.” (Cavalcante, 2013, p. 99).

Even more so, single posts on a social media site can be considered paratexts. Each one of these paratextual devices helps the user define and engage with the text. These items also

provide control over what aspects of the text the promoters want to highlight with the viewers. For instance, a post that emphasizes a certain character's story development provides additional insight to fans and viewers, and tells them to focus on that feature of the text.

“[A] paratext, in sum, manages the reader's purchase, navigation, and interpretation of the text in its specific mediation. Individual elements serve one or more of these functions, which, moreover, closely interact and impact on one another,” (Birke and Christ, 2013, p. 68).

In today's digital world, it is easy for users to access, replicate, and share content. Thus, paratexts become the promotional currency used by promoters and the audiences they enlist to help promote a text. It's a trend that society can expect to be continued in the context of entertainment television as well as in other cultural and artistic art forms.

Paratexts are taking on new media realms, especially as society moves to an era where promoters are more heavily focused on transmedia storytelling. Moschini (2014) cites *Glee* when he discusses the “webridization” of the show, implying that the show uses online outlets and language, including social media sites, to develop additional paratexts, and continue and evolve a television show's narrative.

The “webridization” of the show is evident also in its franchise structure – a global brand that fully exploits transmediality and social media. Indeed, the series' creators have given life to a sort of ‘ecosystem’ where *Glee* fans, the so-called Gleeks (from the combination of “glee” and “geek,” a person addicted to new technologies), can pass from television to online music stores, from web platforms to mobile applications.

Moschini (2014) goes even further to state that fans are part of the narrative and storytelling process, which he refers to as “expanded transmediality.” Again, he sites *Glee*, stating that some storylines and character development were developed after getting fan input online. While Moschini (2014) does not specially reference the *Glee* Facebook Page, Facebook was noted as a source of expanded transmediality for the show *Psych* in a later section.

Moschini claims that viewers who do not consume all aspects of these transmedia outlets cannot fully comprehend or enjoy the text; however, this researcher does not believe users need to fully absorb every transmedia device to enjoy a text. This researcher believes the term “webridization” will be more significant to broadcast promotion research, taking in to account a promoter’s reliance on online media to promote and advertise the text, enhance a live-viewing experience, and increase brand awareness and engagement with viewers and fans.

### **Limitations**

This study found intriguing answers to the research questions and was valuable because it used a census of posts for an entire season of a primetime entertainment television show. (Surprisingly, it found only one duplicate post during those ten months.) However, there are several limitations to this study; ultimately, these limitations might give insight into other research paths delving on a similar topic.

This study only analyzed posts during one season, and only looked at one television show. This study also was completed several years after the observed activity took place. Since this study was completed, Facebook implemented several changes in the functionality of Facebook Pages, the layout of the website, and its algorithms for selecting posts on News Feeds. At the time, under 10% of all organic posts (not promoted or suggested posts) reached fans. Facebook’s algorithms have also made videos more valuable than other types of posts (Ross, 2015). Thus, this social media research only provided a “snapshot” of activity applicable at the time rather than generalized results that might be found in the future.

Likewise, provided the conceptualization, the results might not be transferrable to other television shows, especially those outside of the music/comedy genre.

The researcher was also limited to content that was publically available on the Facebook Page, since the researcher did not have access to what a Page administrator can access. In order to take advantage all Page metrics, future researchers should have Page administrator access and visit the Facebook Insights tab. Insights provide information such as engagement, fan demographic information, Page referrals, and guides for optimizing a post (such as when to post and what content to include). More importantly, Page administrators can also view total post reach, which calculates the total number of people who have seen a post in their News Feed; this number includes the original post, as well as shares (Facebook.com).

Perhaps the biggest limitation of the study was the reliance of the researcher as a single coder. As an exploratory study, coding was completed by the researcher without the involvement of a second coder. The reliability of the study could be enhanced through a properly trained second coder, which was not practical due to limitations in resources.

There were also some issues with the conceptualization, specifically with the definition of some of the variables. After concluding the data analysis, the researcher realized the calls-to-action and explicitness of a post were subjective issues, and would need to be reevaluated in future research. For instance, the “Read” variable in the call-to-action category could be misconstrued as either reading the actual post or reading an article. In this study, the researcher determined that the reading call-to-action implied that the user was reading content on an external source, such as an article. In another example, the researcher had issues with the “Click” variable. In this case, every post could code as a “Click,” because, in most posts, the user has to click perform another action – such as reading, viewing an image, or begin watching a video. Meriam (1995) notes that issues with reliability are frequent in the social sciences, because behavior or feelings are difficult to replicate.

Interactivity was another variable that could have been conceptualized differently. According to Adami (2015), “interactivity of a (site) is intended to define what the (site) enables users to do there.” Thus, a three-ordinal construct might not be suitable or comprehensive enough for analyzing posts on the ever-evolving Facebook platform. For instance, when users click on an external link on Facebook’s mobile application, instead of taking users to an external site, the application brings a pop-up window featuring the content with an “X” in the upper-left corner. This allows users to easily exit external content and get back to the Facebook platform, without having to press a back-button, or re-enter the application.

This study used Sundar’s (2010) and Kiousis’ (2002) constructs of interactivity, by organizing the variable with a low, medium, and high scale. However, this study could have also used other nomenclatures. For instance, interactivity could have been analyzed on a binary scale, with a yes or no answer depending on whether the post included content within the Facebook platform, or linked to content outside of Facebook (on-site vs. off-site). This study could have continued to look at interactivity as an ordinal variable, however using simple on-site, complex on-site, and off-site as the variables.

### **Future Research**

The collaboration between social media and television has provided a limitless platform for promotion and for future research. Future research could compare other television shows, and how they use paratextual devices on Facebook. For instance, how do live-voting shows use paratextual devices on Facebook to connect with fans?

Social media platforms, such as Facebook, assist in not only making the fan community – literally, the platform is a physical space for discourse – but also building upon the brand. “Fandom is much more than regular viewing and engagement with a television show. It is a

framework of taste, an identity and the sense of belonging to a particular community: those who consume and deeply get involved with a specific cultural product,” (Segado et al., 2015, p. 230). Television has always been social; but these social platforms allows for a central location for fans to discuss and debate with other viewers who are interested in the program.

While other forums and platforms allow for open communication about various topics relating to the television program, these paratextual devices posted by the television shows’ Page administrators categorizes the type of discussion from fans on the posts. Future research should analyze the how these devices influence or affect fandom, or evaluate the meaning in the posts, and how that meaning influences fandom feedback.

Future research will need to take in to the account of the changes on the Facebook platform. For instance, the reach on Facebook’s organic posts is now very minimal. Facebook attributes this decline in organic reach due to the growing number of pages and the increased amount of content shared (Facebook.com). Due to this decline, Facebook has started to push its paid advertising models. For instance, a Page can boost a post, or pay for a promotional advertisement; these advertisements are charged by either pay-per-view or pay-per-click options. Future research could investigate why broadcasters might pay to promote one show over another.

Since this research was conducted, more organizations are paying attention to Facebook analytics. In fact, Facebook has started to provide more valuable information on its Facebook Insights for Pages. These metrics can tell Page administrators when to post, the demographics most interested in the content, and what type of information will draw the most engagement. This study did not look at when posts were published; however, that data could affect a post’s engagement or reach potential.

This study solely looked at the Facebook platform as the mode for connecting with audience members. However, future research could analyze a number of different social platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter. In fact, Twitter is now considered one of the largest platforms for social television viewing. Some 85% of people who use Twitter during primetime hours reported tweeting about TV (Midha, 2014). Many television shows place hashtags related to episodes in the lower-right corner during the episode. This promotional tool draws viewers to the social platform to engage and interact with others watching the same show. In fact, Twitter is considered one of the strongest second-screen social applications available. Many of original, stand-alone mobile applications for connecting with other viewers in real-time, such as GetGlue and tvtag, are no longer in business, because they could not compete with Facebook and Twitter.

Consequently, considering the implications of using social media posts as paratextual devices in broadcast promotion, the researcher suggests that this area is further developed. There is still little to no research that considers individual Facebook posts as paratextual devices. As the social realm becomes even more connected to the television industry, promotional posts – whether they appear on Twitter, Instagram, Vine, or another social networking site – will have additional implications for the main text.

Presently, this was a good time to conduct this study, as publishers are expanding their use of social media for promotional purposes. Promoters and broadcasters are mostly likely wondering: what is the value of creating and maintaining a brand community on Facebook? Wallace et al. (2014) notes that many promoters put too much emphasis on the value of a Page “like.” Fans of a Facebook Page might like a page for various reasons; their research categorized four types of fans: the fan-atic, the utilitarian, the self-expressive and the authentic (Wallace et

al., 2014). Thus, a “like” does not necessarily signify brand loyalty, media consumption, and Additional research should analyze the importance of “liking a television show on Facebook, and the meaning or significance to the brand. Ultimately, Facebook is an important platform for television promoters because it brings viewers together in a closed arena to discuss a like-topic. As mentioned earlier, these individual Facebook posts act as a promotional currency for television promoters. Posts shared by fans – and shared to friends of these fans – use word-of-mouth promotion, which might be deemed more credible than posts pushed to consumers directly from the business or organization. Until communication research has determined the specific value of a fan on Facebook, these “likes” should be viewed as marketing opportunities for television promoters.

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APPENDIX A: CODING SCHEME FOR THE USE OF PARATEXTS ON FACEBOOK

**Variable Name: Month**  
**Variable Label: Month of the post**

ACTUAL COUNT (MONTH 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

---

**Variable Name: Day**  
**Variable Label: Day of the month**

ACTUAL COUNT (DAY 1-31)

---

**Variable Name: Mode**  
**Variable Label: The type of media in the post**

1 – Audio (only)  
2 – Video (only)  
3 – Image/Graphic (only)  
4 – Text (only)  
5 – Audio, Image, Text  
6 – Video, Text  
7 – Image, Text  
8 – Thumbnail preview from hyperlink, text  
9 – Other

---

**Variable Name: Episode-Specific**  
**Variable Label: If the post is episode-specific or not**

0 – Not episode-specific  
1 – Episode-specific

---

**Variable Name: Type-of-Post**  
**Variable Label: The category of the post.**

1 – Cover photo  
~~2 – Profile picture~~  
~~3 – Photo album photo (whole album or single photo)~~  
4 – Status reminder (LMS, click “like”, etc.).  
~~5 – Status~~  
6 – Behind the scenes  
7 – Spoilers or teasers  
8 – Previews/Sneak peeks/promos  
9 – Recaps  
10 – Tune in reminders  
11 – Watch an episode online  
12 – Music video clips  
13 – Purchases (songs, merchandise)  
14 – Social cause  
15 – Social media (Facebook app, Twitter, GetGlue, YouTube channel, etc).  
16 – Contest, games, polls, quizzes  
17 – Cast member specific  
18 – Character specific  
~~19 – Article~~  
~~20 – Facebook note~~  
21 – Cross-promotion of a show, music, or movie that is not *Glee*-specific.  
22 – DUAL: Tune-in reminder and social-media reminder  
23 – DUAL: Tune-in reminder and cross-promotion that is not *Glee*-specific  
24 – Other (single type)  
25 – Other (dual)  
26 – Awards/recognitions

**Variable Name: Period**

**Variable Label: When the post was published relevant to an episode**

- 1 – Before
- 2 – During
- 3 – After

If the post does not relate to an episode, or if it appears multiple times, LEAVE BLANK!

---

**Variable Name: Interactive**

**Variable Label: The level of interactivity in the post**

- 1 – Low
  - 2 – Medium
  - 3 – High
- 

**Variable Name: Length**

**Variable Label: Number of words in the post**

**ACTUAL COUNT**

---

**Variable Name: Link**

**Variable Label: Hyperlink in the post**

- 0 – No
  - 1 – Yes
- 

**Variable Name: Call to Action**

**Variable Label: The type of command in the post (see Table 3.1 reposted right).**

- 1 – Click
  - 2 – Purchase
  - 3 – Watch TV
  - 4 – Join a Community
  - 5 – Listen
  - 6 – View Video Online
  - 7 – Read
  - 8 – Comment
  - 9 – Play
  - 10 – View Image Online
  - 11 – DUAL CTA: Watch TV and Join Community
  - 12 – Other
  - 13 – Other (dual)
- 

**Variable Name: Explicit**

**Variable Label: If the post issue explicit or implicit commands to watch the show**

- 1 – Explicit
  - 2 – Implicit
  - 3 – Two commands; one explicit, one implicit
- 

**Variable Name: Feedback - Likes**

**Variable Label: How many likes the post had**

**ACTUAL COUNT**

**Variable Name: Feedback - comments**  
**Variable Label: How many comments the post had**

**ACTUAL COUNT**

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**Variable Name: Feedback - Shares**  
**Variable Label: How many shares the post had**

**ACTUAL COUNT**

---

**Table 3.1: List of call-to-action verbs that may appear in a Facebook post.**

<b>Click</b> Click, Go, Visit, Like	<b>Purchase</b> Purchase, Download, Buy, Get it Now, Donate	<b>Watch TV</b> Watch TV, Watch an Episode, Tune in
<b>Join a Community</b> Join, Create, Log-in	<b>Listen (Audio Only)</b> Listen	<b>View Video Online</b> Watch a Video, Preview, Take a Look, Check Out
<b>Read</b> Read, Review	<b>Comment</b> Comment, Tell Us, Caption	<b>Play a Game or Contest</b> Take a Quiz, Participate, Play, Vote, Start a Game
<b>View Image Online</b> Take a Look, Check Out, See		