8-2021

Corporate Social Advocacy on the BLM Movement: A Content Analysis of Corporate Responses via Instagram

Oromidayo Racheal Tunji-Ajayi
East Tennessee State University

Corporate Social Advocacy on the BLM Movement: A Content Analysis of Corporate Responses

via Instagram

_____

A thesis

presented to

College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Brand and Media Strategy

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Brand and Media Strategy

_____

by

Oromidayo Tunji-Ajayi

August 2021

_____

Dr. Susan E. Waters, Committee Chair

Dr. Stephen Marshall

Dr. Chase Mitchell

Keywords: csr, corporate social advocacy, Black Lives Matter, content analysis, Instagram,

framing, priming, signaling

ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Advocacy on the BLM Movement: A Content Analysis of Corporate Responses

via Instagram

by

Oromidayo Tunji-Ajayi

Black Lives Matter (BLM) has been a concern in the US since 2013, thereby becoming an increasing interest. Several US corporations' attention has been drawn to BLM due to its radical strategy on social media to facilitate engagements. Research shows that a company's engagement in activism by taking a stance on socio-political issues often records growth. Also, scholars have focused on corporate responses to BLM through the lenses of the implications or intentions of the brand's engagement. This study, however, analyzes 236 corporate Instagram BLM posts through the lenses of the attributes of their responses. It is assumed that brand responses should be significant in respect to clarity and intentionality. Therefore, to answer the research questions, a five-coding scheme was created. Results suggested that a brand's frequency of responses to BLM, direct reference to BLM, and response content influence followers' engagement and speak volumes of their stance while addressing BLM.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my best friend and husband, Damilola Akamo. You have been such an inspiration to me when writing this paper. To my family, the Tunji-Ajayi family, thank you for your support and words of encouragement. I appreciate the privilege you all gave me in pursuing this degree. Lastly, I dedicate this research to all the black lives that were lost due to any form of racial injustice. Your lives will always matter!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 1. Introduction

As policymaking and law enforcement keep changing, there are increasing differences in opinions and acceptance of these changes among citizens. As a result, many become social actors expressing their grievances to influence public issues (Johnston, 2014). These public issues may be associated with political, cultural, religious, or socio-economic concerns posing to oppress majorly the minorities found in a society. All of these were what brought about social movements (Snow, 2013). The most reoccurring area of many social movements, especially in the US has been to address inequalities or discrimination of any form. This involves areas regarding racial inequality, gender inequality, income inequality, sexual orientation discrimination, etc (Griley, 2018). Moreover, because of contrasting views on human rights and socio-political matters, social movements will keep existing (Schulz, 2017). The essence of a social movement, therefore, has been to address social illness found in a society that is related to injustice, inequality, and discrimination (Mongiello, 2016). It is also called activism because the movement involves using specific actions like protests and demonstrations to either support or oppose issues arriving from the ruling parties (Earl et al., 2017).

An example of one of the most powerful trending social movements globally is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Although it began as a hashtag #blacklivesmatter in 2013 in response to the murder of a black teenage boy, Trayvon Martin, it grew in becoming a movement after gaining popularity in 2014 due to the wrongful killing of another black teenage boy. Both deaths were caused by white men ("Black Lives Matter", n.d.a). Although still a decentralized system of operation, the BLM movement became official and nationally recognized after three black female organizers - Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi created it to be a network ("Black Lives Matter", n.d.a). Since then, the movement has been dedicated to

addressing police brutality and systemic racism against the black community. BLM further

gained international recognition after the 2020 George Floyd killing that led to global weeks of

protests. This has made BLM a type of movement that has changed the narrative about social

movements' history globally due to its impact and changes it brought to politics and police

reform (Haworth, 2020). Some of its most outstanding impacts are the acceptance rate of the

movement worldwide and the use of social media to aid engagement, awareness, and

mobilization (Mundt et al., 2018).

As stated earlier, BLM gathered momentum due to how it was originated from a hashtag

online. The use of social media for social movements has contributed to the increase in public

involvement (Chapman, 2016). Consequently, the BLM movement is a form of digital activism

using social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to scale up mobilization,

community building, and information sharing (Mundt et al., 2018). This has prompted and

encouraged many people, especially the youths to join the conversation about violence, police

brutality, and anti-black racism using related BLM hashtags (Mundt et al., 2018). The effect of

running BLM as a form of digital activism explains the extent to which people's attention can be

framed and primed, and the signal it may communicate about those who participate in the

movement (Apampa, 2020). For instance, the BLM Movement on Instagram allowed many

users, supporters, or activists as the case may be to create and relate with BLM content based on

the features of the platform. The implication of this, therefore, positions the movement to

become a discussion and forces many to get engaged (Victor et al., 2017). The engagement

eventually brought about the circulation of various narratives and opinions that led to awareness

about the movement. It also made one know the stances of the public either in support or against

(Edrington & Lee, 2018). So as BLM became a digital social movement, many sectors like

businesses and brands have spoken out to communicate their views. This is identified to be a corporate practice known as corporate social advocacy or corporate activism.

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved to be an asset to both corporations and society at large. By corporations, I mean either corporate brands, private or government-owned companies, small or large businesses, or profit or non-profit organizations (Brex, 2020). Although from a long but rich history, CSR remains relevant to date for several reasons that have contributed to strategic implications. One of its implications is initiating or providing solutions to existing problems, thereby making CSR's adoption inevitable (Sprinkles & Maines, 2010). There are many sides to CSR with Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA) being one of the most practiced. CSA involves corporations' willingness in taking a stand on controversial issues within a society (Eilert & Nappier Cherup, 2020). In this context, this means brands getting involved in sociopolitical activism like the BLM movement despite being risky with uncertain outcomes (Bhagwat et., 2020). Brands who declare support to the BLM movement are oftentimes items of debate on whether they are genuine with their support or not. This can sometimes be difficult to attain (Yim, 2021). However, it has been established that brands who partake in activism or CSA project themselves to be those who quest for change in issues that may affect their stakeholders, e.g., Customers (Parcha, & Kingsley, 2020).

The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to analyze corporate Instagram posts indicating responses to the BLM movement. It is a question of "Which", "What", "How" but not why brands choose to respond to the movement the way they did. This study aims to find out the strategies and tactics used in communicating their stance towards BLM using their Instagram accounts. 236 Instagram posts were content analyzed from 24 sampled brands, and exploring this path contributes to the discussion on corporate responses to social movements.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter consists of different sections that serve as the pillars of discussion for this paper. First is an in-depth conceptualization of the terms used in this study to narrow down definitions and aid proper understanding. Several past works are reviewed to discuss and elaborate on the contextualization of these terms. Areas covered in this section include the concept of CSR and CSA; explanations about social movement and the Black Lives Matter movement; and the involvement of social media. Furthermore is a discussion on the three theoretical frameworks, each serving as the foundation of the study's hypothesis and relevant research questions.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Brief History of CSR

In the past, the only aim of a business owner was to make a profit for themselves. Now, there is a sense of responsibility for companies to give back to their employees, partners, and responsible was because, firstly, it could promote profit maximization, and secondly because on a moral stand, it is the right thing to do (Chaffee, 2017). In addition, the evolving expectations of society gave rise to the changes in business behaviors whereby corporations' goals and understanding shifted from profit-making to sharing values (Agudelo et al., 2019). This gave rise to the concept of CSR being an ideal way of promoting goods or services while enhancing the state of society (Noble, 2020). It is, therefore, important to briefly address the foundation and progression of CSR to promote better understanding before deeply defining what CSR entails.

While CSR gained importance in the 1960s, Spector believes that its roots began between the years 1945-1960 during the aligning of business interests with free-market capitalism (Spector, 2008, in Carroll & Shabana, 2010). The rationale behind CSR has always been what a

business wants to gain from its involvement in CSR activities. But as the concept advanced, it went beyond just profit-making to doing good to business employees, stakeholders, and society in general. In 1960 when social movements like consumers' rights, civil rights, environmental activism, women's rights, etc. were predominant, businesses felt the need to communicate changes for a happier society. This subtly birthed the foundation of CSR practices in the 1960s. Then in the 1990s, the whole concept of CSR became generally accepted all over the world. "At the end of 1990, it was discovered that nearly 90 percent of the *Fortune 500* companies listed CSR as one of the basic elements of their organizational goals, actively reporting the CSR events held by these corporations in their annual reports" (Lee, 2008, in Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2011, pg. 534). To date, businesses encounter significant pressure to improve their CSR functionality. In fact, there is a growing competition among companies to embark on sustainable and productive impacts regarding social, educational, environmental, governance, and economic issues because it has become a sort of business survival in the current economy (Leonard, 2019; Sustainability Academy, 2012).

Conceptualization of CSR

The impact of CSR has rapidly grown over the years, shifting from optional to mandatory for many companies in various countries. As a result of this, CSR practices have shifted from just profit-making responsibility to being proactively responsible to three basic "Ps": The People, the Profit, and the Planet (Dodd, 2016). This has resulted in different definitions by different scholars (Tennant, 2015). Although the name 'Corporate Social Responsibility' seems to be the umbrella term for the concept, varying nomenclatures such as Social Responsibility, Corporate Responsibility, Corporate Citizenship, Sustainability & Responsibility, etc. have sprung up over time due to context usage (Carroll, 2015). The concept of CSR has been argued to be a voluntary

13

adoption of obligations by corporations to a set of persons other than their

stockholders, hence the definition of CSR as "the voluntary actions that a corporation

implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders,

including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole" (Coombs &

Holladay, 2012, p. 8). An opposing notion states that these obligations could be too broad to

apply to the constituent groups if there are no laid down criteria to agree on for CSR decision-

making (Jones, 1980). Either way, the practices of CSR are expected to be both internally and

externally observed such that there are no claims that the company is only socially responsible to

the society but fails to set things right within the company. Policies set aside to carry out

the CSR practices should also be geared towards improving the workforce and the workplace

conditions or environment (Juneja, n.d.).

One major reason leading to the controversial adoption of a single definition for CSR is

the difficulty in choosing from the wide range of CSR definitions biased toward specific interests

(Dahlsrud, 2008). CSR is, however, referred to as a 'win-win' outcome for both the company

and the community because strategies put into actions by companies are designed to promote

beneficial, yet ethical programs for its employees, consumers, stakeholders, and the society at

large (Corporate Finance Institute [CFI], n.d.; Green & Peloza, 2011). It is "a self-regulating

business model that helps a company be socially accountable—to itself, its stakeholders, and the

public" (Chen, 2019, para.1). Although these definitions are similar, one needs to put into

consideration the field, purpose, and parties involved to establish a definition. For

instance, CSR's underlying purpose has always been to produce and distribute wealth (Smith,

2011). A company that is into a clothing line may be encouraged to provide and distribute

clothes to the less privileged or underdeveloped communities. This can be tagged as a

philanthropic CSR. Another company involved in chemical or energy usage may deem it fit to protect the environment and natural features from deteriorating. This is an example of an environmental CSR. Further research, however, argued that the above examples can be summed up as CSR activities or principles. Some call them types of CSR while others call them the dimensions of CSR. As a result of these, some scholars explain CSR as a theory or system consisting of many parts that even if it is possible to apply them separately, it is best to implement all holistically (Brin, 2019; Smith, 2011).

Research shows that brands or companies who have holistically incorporated CSR into their policies and practices have more potential of recording more awareness, engagement, and ROI. The success of this, generally, determines the perception of a brand or company's reputation within and outside (Waters, 2016). This has made a significant debate about CSR resulting in continuous expansion and application of corporations (Burke & Logsdon, 1996; Carrol, 2015; Lai et al., 2010). Moreover, improving and resolving social conditions requires a corporation to be responsible economically, legally, ethically, and philanthropically, each having varying impacts on the business in question (Brin, 2019; Carroll, 2016; Dahlsrud, 2008). CSR also extends to corporations taking a public stance on social, labor diversity and practices, political, racial, and environmental issues (Leonard, 2019; Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020). This is otherwise known as Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA); a subset of CSR and the area this study will focus on moving forward. Although both CSR and CSA are concerned about meeting or responding to the needs of the society, to narrow the focus and differentiate interpretations for this study, CSR is taken as the broader operation for companies while the CSA is addressed as an action or driving force for CSR in the market space (Fripp, 2017; Miller, 2016; Visser, 2008).

Conceptualization of Corporation as a Brand

While some believe there is a difference between corporation and company, or company and brand, others believe that they can be used interchangeably. Few argue that although they overlap, they should be seen as different entities due to their structures (Chron Contributor, 2020; Measures, 2019). Although a corporation is used here as the generic name for any type of company or firm (Brex, 2020), the term brand is the chosen name used for this study to differentiate products and/or services produced by a parent company (Brown & Dacin, 1997). It is defined as a single or specific entity that can stand on its own and still be identified by consumers based on the meaning it provides (Kay, 2006). Brands in this context are referred to specific product or service provided by a particular firm which may have other brands under them. Although some scholars argue that CSR is different from Brand Social Advocacy (BSA), for this study, it will be considered as same (Grohmann & Bodur, 2015).

Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA) as a CSR

Corporate Social Advocacy (CSA) is often referred to as Corporate Social Activism, Corporate Activism, or Corporate Sociopolitical Activism by some organizations because they all involve corporations engaging and demonstrating support for or against a public issue to contribute solutions to collective problems (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Dodd, 2016; Eilert & Nappier Cherup, 2020). CSA is known to be an initiative, otherwise, an action of CSR that makes substantial contributions in the political process to influence societal changes (Dodd, 2016). The concept has grown to have a new face due to the impact of the millennials and Gen Z such that activism activities may not only be done outdoors (e.g. street protests) but could be observed online (e.g. social media platforms) (YPulse, 2020). CSA is "when a company comes together to use its audience, social media platforms, and business strategy to support a

cause, whether social, political, or environmental" (Rosenthal, 2019, para. 4). Advocacy groups, simply known as activists, are constantly targeting companies to get engaged in social movements or activism (Davis & White, 2015; Den Hond & De Bakker, 2007). Advocacy here, according to RealityScience (n.d.) simply indicates the growing interests of corporations to seek social justice for a group of people who are either discriminated against or disadvantaged, at the same time, members of the general population or stakeholders. It is a business approach or activity to promote social change and equal rights privileges on behalf of these sets of people by influencing decision-making within bodies responsible (RealityScience, n.d.).

The act of CSA reflects the alignment of the company's activities to its views on controversial issues. This means that the programs or activities of CSA must be authentic, i.e., be in alignment with the company's values and be consistent (Ayers, 2018; Kuligowski, 2020). Among these controversial issues in society are LGBTQ discrimination, abortion rights, criminal injustice, racial inequality, marriage inequality, climate change debate, gun control, etc. (Ayers, 2018; Dodd, 2016). The insatiable increase of social expectations has pressured companies to leave social footprints by engaging in social issues that are divisive and shaming in nature. This engagement could come in the form of promotion or protests (Levick, 2018). Davis and White (2015) stated that because the world changes, it is expedient that businesses change too to reflect social values. CSA is the act of corporations engaging and championing controversial issues to influence the decision-making of the society (Austin et al., 2019). The efforts of CSA may be spelled out as being voluntary to the society from the company's point of view even though stakeholders expect brands to be interested in contentious issues that affect them (Hanson, 2020). One of the reasons for corporations engaging, addressing, or supporting a controversial issue is to hold a stance on socio-political matters. Therefore, Dodd

and Supa (2014) refer to CSA as "an organization making a public statement or taking a public stance on social-political issues" (p. 5).

Corporations taking public stances could come in various forms, and they are formally planned and communicated to the public such that the people are clearly aware of the organization's contributions towards socio-political affairs. These forms most times emphasize financial donations (Dodd & Supa, 2014). Corporations taking stance on socio-political issues, however, could be a complex and challenging engagement because they are expected to act on what they are standing for or against, show integrity, courage, and transparency, and create work policies and marketing campaigns that are all-inclusive, that is, not offending or leaving anyone behind (Levick, 2019). Besides, CSA is seen to be risky because some corporate stakeholders may not fully appreciate the involvement of the company in public controversial issues. It often does not have direct or immediate relevance to the company too unlike CSR, which involves campaigns or initiatives done by corporate organizations to serve the interest of the public and the organization simultaneously (Dodd, 2018; Dodd & Supa, 2014). Also, arguments and questions such as what motivates companies to partake in activism, when should they get involved, and why should they be involved in CSA are raised daily (Corstens, 2019; Rouse, 2018). An example is if CSA has a salient impact on consumers' attitudes and behavior towards a brand or corporation's product or services. According to Miller (2016), some corporations' responses or campaigns involving advocacy may be an element of brand marketing or public service. It is, however, used to promote a common social good. Research shows that a company's behavior towards societal issues is perceived by both customers and potential customers as being transparent and visible, thereby making these customers more knowledgeable about the brand or company (Paine, 2020).

On the contrary, other scholars believe that although CSA could be a deceitful stunt for marketing, some companies or businesses adopt CSA to genuinely advocate changes in the government's policymaking process on public and social issues (Maks-Solomon, 2020). These companies, without being formally controlled or regulated by external advocacy groups, are devoted to giving back to society by mitigating social or moral pressing issues rather than making profits (Juneja, n.d.). Few brands or companies, however, integrate the CSR initiatives into their marketing strategies such that partaking in CSA activities serves as the mediator for customer loyalty and an increase in ROI. That is, to these companies, the purpose of adopting CSA is an exchange to benefit valuable and quality relationships from customers (Yeh, 2015; Young, 2020). This could be a CSA benefit among many others like the promotion of public trust and the company's reputation, enhanced credibility, an attitude or perception change towards a brand or company, birth of internal changes in the workplace, attracting new employees with great talents, etc. (Borden, 2019; Hanson, 2020; Hayden, 2017; Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020). Above all, the essence and impact of CSA most times is an aftermath effect of a social movement because social movements incite the engagements of corporations in social issues (Georgallis, 2017).

Social Movement

With a long rich history, the concept of social movement has brought about many changes to the evolving system and affairs of the US. One major successful social movement that occurred in the country was the Abolitionist Movement in the 1880s - a fight against the inhumane use of Africans as slaves (Paletz et al., 2013). The success of this pursuit of equity laid a foundation for more social change in political and economic affairs in the US (ThoughtsCo., n.d.). Social movements became more predominant in the 1960s whereby many countries in the

world were facing a sort of transformation and revolution caused by societal conflicts (Della Porta & Mattoni, 2015). Among them include the Civil Rights movement, the Labor movement, the Women's Rights movement, etc. Although there are different approaches to the definition of a social movement, they all share similar criteria which include 'an informally organized group of people, active participation towards political issues, aim at achieving specific collective goals' (Opp, 2009; Shah, 2014; Turner et al., 2020). All of these bring about the various theories and types of social movements. Those who engage in a social movement are people who most times identify themselves as the oppressed whereby they publicly make their grievances known (Snow, 2013). These grievances vary according to pressing and current concerns ranging from political, cultural, religious, socioeconomic, and environmental issues to inequalities of any kind (Snow, 2013; Tilly & Wood, 2020). Therefore, social movement is the "collective action by a group of people with a shared or collective identity based on a set of beliefs and opinions that intend to change or maintain some aspect of the social order" (Bell, 2013, para. 1).

The idea behind a social movement is a reaction towards obvious unrest in society. This means it is either to stop, oppose, modify, support, suggest, or create complete changes in the existing affairs of a society (Shah, 2014). Members of a social movement are focused on achieving a specific goal to either implement or prevent a change to the identified unrest (Turner & Killian, 1957). A social movement is said to be "a continuous phenomenon that thrives on the ability of the progressive community to capitalize on political opportunities and translate such opportunities into social change" (Bostic, n.d. para. 4). Here, the intention to create change is a result of an organized effort against those who display resistance (Aberle, 1966). That is, according to Mongiello (2016), although the stakes of embarking on a social movement may be indefinite or high, the purpose of social movement centers around impacting changes on the

governing policies of the society (profit and nonprofit organizations inclusive) which may come in different approaches. The following approaches or categories distinguish a social movement type from another: method of techniques used (violent or peaceful), duration (days, weeks, months, years, etc), range or level reached (local, national, global), type of change expected (revolution, reform, redemptive), how much change (little, radical), targets (government, police, companies), etc (Aberle, 1966; Boundless Sociology, n.d.).

It is, however, worthy to note that there is a difference between a social movement and a social movement organization (SMO) (Boundless Sociology, n.d.; McCarthy & Zald, 2017). While both have the intention of achieving similar goals to effect a social change, the former refers to the informal groupings of either individuals or organizations. The latter is a component of a social movement serving as the formal alliances of a specific set of people to either achieve narrower or broader goals compared to that of a social movement (Zald & Ash, 1966). A social movement can also be defined as an ongoing process of an emerging organization made up of a loosed set of people (Özbilgin, & Erbil, 2021) as opposed to a social movement organization that is already established with formal structures (Davis et al., 2005). Illustrations include the Civil Rights movement which has several organizations like CORE, NAACP, etc; the LGBTQ movement with SMOs like the National LGBTQ Task Force and the LGBT Foundation; the Animal Rights movement with SMOs such as PETA, FARM, etc (McAdam, & Scott, 2005). Records show that many social movements and/or SMO have made history due to their outcomes. Some of these social movements paved way for newness because they went beyond a movement to an organization – social movement organizations (Della Porta & Diani, 2020). These organizations or movements become a social pressure for corporations to create initiatives, forcing them to engage in societal concerns (Georgallis, 2017). A common example of the link

between social movements and corporate social responses is the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM).

Black Lives Matter as a Social Movement

Founded in 2013 by three radical black women from the United States - Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, Black Lives Matter emerged as a hashtag phrase (#blacklivesmatter) on social media as a response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, a white man responsible for the death of Trayon Martin, a young black boy ("Black Lives Matter", n.d.a; Tillery, 2019). Black Lives Matter's (n.d.a) states the following:

> Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, Inc. is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives. (para. 1)

Because the goals of the movement are oftentimes time-bound and change occasionally, the BLM 2020 Impact Report website (https://bit.ly/3yzgXpG) provides some past and current goals of the movement. Although, in Garza's (2020) words, "You cannot start a movement from a hashtag. Hashtags do not start movements—people do" (p.xi). According to Anti-Defamation League [ADL] (2020), two other black men, Michael Brown and Eric Garner were murdered in New York and Missouri, respectively by police officers in 2014. These three African-American men were reported to be unarmed, two out of them killed as a result of police shootings. This led to a street protest causing both national and international recognition of BLM (ADL, 2020). Moreover, it has been observed that the Black Lives Matter protests became rampant in countries

or places generally where blacks are being killed by policemen (Camp & Heatherton, 2016; Williamson et al., 2018).

Afterward, the movement became mostly dedicated to condemning police brutality and laws and policies responsible for the unfair support of police violence against blacks (Clayton, 2018). The movement expanded in 2020 after another death of a black man was recorded following a viral video showing how a policeman knelt on his neck till he passed out (Cappelli, 2020). The wrongful murder of this black man known as George Floyd triggered millions of people to come out and protest, making it the largest protest in US history to have occurred simultaneously (Buchanan et al., 2020; Cheung, 2020a; Haworth, 2020). This protest also attracted the attention of other countries across different continents who got moved and decided to show their support by holding street demonstrations as well (Haworth, 2020). BLM, therefore, rapidly became popular for addressing the constant illegal violence and racial-related police brutality against the black community (Haworth, 2020; Kirby, 2020).

BLM has a call to action based on political and ideological will aiming to bring liberation and freedom to all kinds of black lives. This includes the black LGBTQ community, the homeless black folks, and the unemployed blacks (Taylor, 2016). Among the goals of BLM is to empower the black community and position them in leadership roles such that they are involved in the political process of the country (Faust et al., 2019). For over six years, BLM has grown to develop more than 40 networks across the United States, UK, and Canada based on a solid well-defined intention to eradicate marginalization and avoid ill practices being fought against ("Black Lives Matter", n.d.b). These 40 chapters have successfully organized and gathered relevant resources needed to keep fighting for black people (BLMLA, n.d.). The call affirms black people all over the world a commitment to end the systematic target against them. BLM

activists and local chapters, however, come up with activities when necessary (BLMLA, n.d.).

These include creating awareness about the movement, coordinating conversations, contributing

and donating to vulnerable black lives, holding protests, sponsoring petitions, social media

campaigns, etc. (Bonilla & Tillery, 2020).

Currently, the BLM movement is known to be a non-profit organization widely

recognized as the Black Lives Matter Global Foundation with a grassroots structure ("Black

Lives Matter", n.d.a). Although there are many other nonprofit organizations and groups

affiliated with the movement which majorly serve as a coalition representing the interests of

blacks globally, they all act as partners and donors to the #blacklivesmatter movement ("Black

Lives Matter", n.d.c; Hasa, 2020). This has resulted in several debates and theories arguing what

type of social movement the BLM movement falls under (Clayton, 2018; Mundt et al., 2018).

While some believe it is a collective behavior, others argue that it is a type of resource

mobilization theory based on a social identity effect (Almeida, 2019; Bonilla & Tillery, 2020;

Tillery, 2019). Another set of people say BLM is an example of a new social movement theory

demanding both reform and revolution; which indicates a form of rhetoric for political

mobilization (Çetinkaya et al., 2020).

Also, besides the social media involvement in BLM, some other factors contributed to the

amplification of the movement being popular (Özbilgin, & Erbil, 2021). This can be majorly

traced to the events that occurred in the US in the year 2020. Among them is the fact that people

have been in their homes because the country is on lockdown. This made many idle, more active,

and aware of happenings via TV and social media news (Cheung, 2020b; Özbilgin, & Erbil,

2021). Also, the fatal shooting of Breona Taylor in March and the perceived assumption that

Floyd's killing in May was a deliberate act made it the last straw of systemic black killings by

the police in the US (Cheung, 2020b). Lastly, the effect of COVID-19 and the recent unjust killings of blacks in the country gave rise to a break in silence addressing the hidden realities of racial and ethnic minority group discrimination (Altman, 2020). This is evident in the protest demonstrations that took place in several locations in the country and the world at large (Bonaparte, 2020; Haworth, 2020). With a 93% record of peace and no destruction during protests, the organization is radically known for seeking justice for those who might have been either wrongfully killed or arrested by police officials (Kaur, 2020). All of these constitute BLM meeting the criteria of a social movement, leaving a significance in the history of social movements in the US and the world at large.

The Role of Social Media in BLM Movement Messaging

The peculiarity of BLM as a social movement is the involvement of social media. By extension, BLM is also referred to as digital activism. One of the most common activities online or digitally is the use of social media. Around 223 million US citizens are discovered to have a social media account as of 2008 to 2020 records according to Statista (Tankovska, 2021). This means the implication of social media usage is a huge reliance, sharing, and consumption of information (Cox, 2017). As a result, many people have taken advantage of this opportunity to create awareness and share information for societal discourse (Cox, 2017). Digital activism is not an exception whereby advocacy publicity and mobilization have become a major trend on social media platforms (Grimes, 2019). Digital activism is the use of digital tools and technologies such as social media to scale socio-political issues that require advocacy (Mattoni, 2017). In other words, it is observing social movement from a media-centric approach. It is also called online or internet activism because of the use of electronic communication gadgets like phones, SMS, computer, etc (Rees & Mitchell, 2020). This style of activism is many times explored when the

target audience or the number of activists are large and distant and there is difficulty in accessing one another (Gilbert, 2021). So, digital campaigns are collectively organized online but coordinated by a certain initiator or authority (Rees & Mitchell, 2020). Moreover, this approach of advocacy has encouraged more political participation among youths (Hsaio, 2021).

BLM as digital activism is simply the act of using social media to mobilize like-minds in a movement to achieve certain objectives (Michaels, 2020). Started as a hashtag - #BlackLivesMatter on Facebook in 2013, it evolved from there to become a social movement and then an organization (Arnold, n.d.; Asmelash, 2020). This makes it a social media movement observed mostly on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram platforms using the #blacklivesmatter or #blm alongside other BLM related hashtags (#ICantBreathe", #SayHerName", etc) to advocate for the civil rights of the black people (Anderson, 2016; Apampa, 2020; Tillery, 2019). Although with a decentralized system of government, what was known to be an online movement grew to become a global organization and network with the mission to stop white supremacy and combat anti-black racism (Michaels, 2020). With several protest demonstrations ranging from 2013 to 2020, BLM has grown beyond just a hashtag or movement but a slogan and symbol demanding from society, the value of black lives just as white people's lives are being valued (Bonilla & Tillery, 2020; Faust et al., 2019; Turan, 2020). However, the use of hashtags is still prominent when interacting with the movement online (Ince et al., 2017).

Contextually, using social media for the BLM movement is majorly to scale up mobilization, participation, and effect change (Mundt et al., 2018). Scaling here means expanding and strengthening the movement through social media to social media for "building connections, mobilizing participants and tangible resources, coalition building, and amplifying alternative narratives" (Jost et al., 2018; Mundt et al., 2018, p. 1). When the #blacklivesmatter

was trending then, it was only communicated via Twitter because it happened to be the only social media platform with the hashtag feature (Edrington & Lee, 2018). This made the movement strategic and accessible for many people. However, presently, almost all the popular social media platforms are used for BLM discourse but Twitter remains the most focused platform for BLM research (Anderson, 2016; Wilkins et al., 2019). There is little to no works on other platforms but this study focuses on Instagram.

Since the inception and active protest demonstrations of BLM, many companies have taken their stances for or against the issues being addressed by the movement (Schulz, 2017). Some have shown support either by publicly making statements regarding the movement, actively campaigning on media platforms, financially supporting the cause, or revisiting their work ethics and policies in terms of inclusion and diversity (Rae, 2020; Togoh, 2020). Corporate social justice messaging on social media platforms has been in form of posts and they are used to convey their responses regarding the BLM movement.

Theoretical Framework and Research Hypotheses

This study examined three interconnected theories that are developed through the lenses of brands using social media as a tool for activism messaging communication. They are explained to examine the media effects brands' communication behavior online has on their consumers while responding to the BLM movement. Firstly, the theories serve as the structured approach used in explaining and supporting the research problem. Also, they serve as the guidance for three hypotheses development which eventually leads to the six research questions; both are then tested by established variables. The theories discussed in this section are Framing, Signalling, and Priming. It is, however, worthy to note that the research questions found under each theory may not necessarily be related but are as a result of the hypothesis stated.

27

Framing Theory

The question I pose to framing theory is based on how the information is presented. Framing is associated with the Agenda Setting theory and is identified to be the second level adaptation of Agenda Setting (Bajracharya, 2018; Sonnett, 2019). To a certain extent, framing theory is also connected to priming as both deal with the cognitive psychological processing of information consumption (Wang, 2007). Originated between the 1950s and 1970s, framing theory was only addressed as a psychological concept by Gregory Bateson. Thereafter, the whole framing theory idea became more recognized when it developed into a sociological study by Erving Goffman (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). So, while some scholars argue that Bateson is the founder of framing theory as he was the first to postulate and define it in 1972, other scholars attribute the origin to Goffman because he is believed to have expanded Bateson's research (Arowolo, 2017; Handelman, 2012). Defining framing in the context of the mind as an anthropologist, Bateson (1972) stated that learning can not occur without communication and that the mind is a metaphorical frame where messages collected are processed (Bateson, 2000). He went further to contend that we perceive the world based on what we have created in our minds if it is in a familiar context situation. So psychologically, he defines the framing process as a "spatial and temporary bounding of a set of interactive messages" (Bateson, 2000, p. 191).

Nonetheless, still about how one perceives the world or society, Goffman (1974), explained that the response displayed when one recognizes an event is implied based on certain primary frameworks which determine the interpretation of that event. He went further to state that, "each primary framework allows its user to locate, perceive, identify and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defines in its terms" (p. 21). This illustrates how frames are used in understanding information received. Either from a natural or social perspective, how

framing theory works is psychological. The framing theory is, therefore, generally defined as "how something presented to the audience (called "the frame") influences the choices people make about how to process that information" (Arowolo, 2017, p. 2). Notwithstanding, it can be observed in this definition that the concept of the framing theory has been introduced to media works of literature (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). Past scholars discovered that the use of frames were being rampant in contributing to media manipulation, thereby causing the application of framing theory in the media and communication field up till today (Clermont, 2020; "Framing Theory", 2019; Marwick & Lewis, 2017; Parenti, 1997). As a result, framing theory is referred to as an example of media effect (Oliver et al., 2020; Scheufele, 1999).

When news or a particular subject seems to be trending and of wide dependence, it is because the media packaged the situation in a manner that implies importance (Oliver et al., 2019). The media goes beyond deciding what the public should view but controls how it should be viewed, hence emphasizes the situation (Hallahan, 2008). As a result, the public gets influenced by what their minds have been framed into. Some examples of frames used by the media are politics, stereotypes, advocacy, climate change, etc (Baysha & Hallahan, 2004; Garland, 2015). The building of these frames has to do with how topics or issues are placed in societal discourse despite having many other current issues in the society (Oliver et al., 2019). For example, election and BLM may be the current news in the US but if almost all the news media push a narrative that makes the election less important than BLM, the public may unconsciously place more attention on the latter (Leopold & Bell, 2017). The result of this simply suggests that framing theory contributes to frames comparison or competition (Hallahan, 2008). E.g. Blacks vs Whites, Trump vs Biden, etc This shows the power of framing as the

audience of news media are left to organize what they have been informed with into something meaningful (Arowolo, 2017; Entman, 2010).

Consequentially, social media is not exempted from the use of frames. It has been established as aforementioned that framing is a media effect of how information is presented. Various social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram have become tools in communicating trending issues in the society, hereby causing bias in what the audience is exposed to (Bonilla & Tillery, 2020; Hallahan, 2008). The use of Instagram to push the BLM narrative caused the attention of many users, hence led to several reactions and responses. A typical example of the framing of BLM is the use of hashtags (Clark et al., 2018; Ince et al., 2017). Hashtags were framed into different words like #blm, #blacklivesmatter, and #saytheirnames, and these served as a medium of access to BLM information, updates, and opinions (Bolsover, 2020; Edrington & Lee, 2018). Therefore, the more one comes across these hashtags, the more exposure and knowledge known about the movement. One of the sets of the public who eventually got attracted by these frames and became actors of the framing effect was companies. No company, especially US companies would have denied been unaware of BLM. So to make sense of these frames, some brands had to join the conversation by showing their support, resulting in the first hypothesis and first two sets of the study's research questions.

H 1. The framing of the BLM movement on Instagram will draw brands' attention.

RQ 1. Which brand chose to respond to the BLM movement via their Instagram profile?

RQ 2. How often do brands' post BLM-related content compared to Non-BLM content?

In the process of interpreting these frames, brands are expected to highlight the BLM movement using certain frames (called strategies in this study) to communicate their

understanding of the BLM frames. This may hereby set the tone of how their customers should perceive the movement, hence, leading to the next theory of this study – The signaling Theory.

Signaling Theory

The question I pose to signaling theory is based on why the information is presented. There are different types of signaling theory assumed to have been developed by different scholars based on their fields (BliegeBird & Smith, 2005; Karasek III & Bryant, 2012). However, the concept most relevant and closest to the media field is the one emerging from the business/economic field which is, therefore, attributed to Michael Spence's works in the 1970s. According to Spence (1974), he proposed that market signaling involves an information asymmetry that occurs during communication between a prospective employee/buyer and an employer/seller. Information asymmetry here means there is no prior equal knowledge of information between the two parties during the first contact in communication. But that, the one who sends the signal (employee/buyer) is required to suggest or convey persuading but honest information (Spence, 1974). Meaning, signaling is described as a market behavior whereby the information received determines the behavior or response. In his "Job Market Signaling" paper, Michael illustrated that the primary interest given to an employee by an employer during a job-hiring process is based on what has been perceived (Spence, 1973). This means although an employer can not instantly observe the hiring-power attributes of a potential employee until during and after being hired, if the observed yet unaltered attributes (signals) are perceived, it is left for the employer to use their subjective assessment in judging the signals received (Spence, 1973). Although observable attributes can be manipulated by the employee or sender of the signal, they can be reduced (BliegeBird & Smith, 2005; Taj, 2016).

In simpler terms, the signaling theory is a process of information communication between a sender (initiator of the signal) and a recipient (receiver of the signal). This means no signaling effect without the receiving of information by the recipient (Gartzke et al., 2017). The simple essence of signaling theory deals with the credibility of information conveyed ("Signaling", n.d.). To illustrate, signaling theory is simply saying that although information has been passed to a receiver, it is only the sender that knows the true intention of the message sent. Therefore, if there is a bridge in communication or a misinterpretation from the receiver, there is likely to be an issue like mistrust, conflict, etc (Przepiorka & Berger, 2017). Many receivers most times perceive signals as something that will benefit them but it is uncertain if it would or not. This is the reason why signaling theory requires the sender of a signal to try and establish a persuasive effect ruling out deceit that may be perceived by the receiver (Przepiorka & Berger, 2017). Hence, the information communicated needs to be simple, understood, and not contradictory. Moreso, the whole idea of signaling theory has Spence posed it is also applicable to corporate practices like CSR and CSA. One major way companies may want to position themselves positively to society and reduce information asymmetry through CSR practices is by using CSA as a signal to their stakeholders (Moratis, 2018; Westra, 2021). The aim of applying signaling theory to this thesis is to make inferences on the style of corporate social justice messaging indicating their responses to BLM.

The effect of signaling theory is suggested to be a win-win for both parties. While it may be a way of revealing a brand's identity, increasing reputation, or attracting sales, the signal should leave a positive advantageous effect on shareholders/stakeholders too (Park & Jiang, 2020). Many companies or corporations in general, are built on funds gotten from investors and/or shareholders (Su et al., 2016). This alone is enough reason for them to be skeptical about

CSA involvement, especially if the action they plan requires a financial commitment to the activism in question. Above all, silence may not be an option to reduce risks attached to CSA. Investors may want to be convinced that the purpose of engaging in corporate activism would not lead to a loss for them (Bhagwat et al., 2020). A company's record may, however, signal cues about its authenticity. For instance, a brand's revenue or profit can signal a message about their financial ability and strength if they promise donations to CSA activities like BLM Martinelli & Psychogyios, 2014). The recognition of a brand's value and mission statements over time can either reduce or increase the strength of the signal value their stakeholders may perceive (Maktoufi et al., 2020). Edson and Charsky (2021) concluded that while it is expedient that companies are expected to take account of their stakeholders' differences in activism, the ultimate goal should be that there are no clashes with what the company stands for (values, work policy, etc). This means before a brand decides to engage in corporate social justice messaging, they need to consider all factors and differentiate the less important ones from the most important ones (Edson & Charsky, 2021). Whereby there may be no matches of activism messaging with the social identities of their stakeholders (consumers, employees, investors, etc), more considerations must be done in minimizing backlash from the affected parties (McCarthy, 2013).

However, even though many consumers believe that corporations should engage in controversial activism like the BLM, LGBTQ, and Abortion movements (McCarthy, 2013), they expect that they are authentic with it. That is, the impression perceived externally (outside the workspace) should align with the practices going on internally (within the workspace) (Park & Jiang, 2020). This may justify the disparity that may exist between social identities (what someone stands for or with). There are also arguments about some brands' engagement being

virtual signaling (Ken, 2020; Plante, 2020). Virtual signaling "is essentially the act of making it known that you, in theory, support a cause—even if you aren't actually doing anything to further it" (Sager, 2020, para. 1). Employees are most times the ones who pressure companies to take a stance on socio-political issues so there are possibilities for a company to engage in virtual signaling as they know remaining silent may not be an option (Stern, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020). Nevertheless, partaking in activism should not just be to join the bandwagon or be portrayed well, but to create a long-lasting change (Kamin, 2019; Parcha & Kingsley Westerman, 2020). However, other researchers argue that the higher the cost or strategies used, the guarantee that the signal passed is genuine (Karasek III & Bryant, 2012; Salahshour, 2019). These findings led to the proposal of the second hypothesis and research questions for the study.

H 2. The clarity of brands' stance may be perceived and interpreted based on their response strategies.

RQ 3. What is the frequency of brands' responses directly referring to BLM compared to indirect responses?

RQ 4. What message theme is often communicated in their BLM responses?

RQ 5. What post format do brands frequently use in conveying their BLM responses on Instagram?

The signaling theory is applied in this study to observe, examine, and then assume the signal flow contained in behaviors between brands (their responses) and their customers or followers (engagements). The concept of signaling in brands' responses is to identify the hidden message in their communication frames such as Instagram posts which may require one to intuitively discern the content.

Priming Theory

The question I pose to priming theory is based on what information is presented. The term 'priming' is referred to as a concept that comes before Agenda Setting theory ("Priming", n.d.). The idea of priming was first declared publicly by Iyengar, Peters, and Kender in 1982 after they carried out experiments in their research titled, "Experimental demonstrations of the "not-so-minimal" consequences of television news programs". Their findings revealed that importance is given to what is prominently shared in the news media. An illustration is if the people have little to no knowledge about electoral candidates, and the media plays a major role in influencing their minds before they can make political decisions. These decisions are, therefore, made as a result of the information shared by the media (Iyengar, 2008). Generally, and in simple terms, "Priming is a phenomenon in which exposure to one stimulus influences how a person responds to a subsequent, related stimulus. These stimuli are often conceptually related words or images" ("Priming", 2012, para. 1). Since the origin of priming, psychologists refer to the term when describing pre-activations of patterns that act as the stimulus when processing present or current information (Bermeitinger, 2016). In other words, it is a memory reaction that requires triggering before a human response or behavior (Bermeitinger, 2016).

Although priming is known to have a long history in cognitive and social psychology literature, the concept is also relevant to media communication. This is why priming is addressed more as an effect rather than a theory (Molden, 2014; "Priming", n.d.) judging based on the endpoint of Iyengar et al., (1982) and Iyengar (2008) findings. Hence, in terms of media, the priming effect is defined as the influence or changes that occur in people's thoughts and judgments due to reliance on the information presented by the media (Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2007). The effect becomes easier because the information has been stored in the brain, and so

humans are expected to behave based on what their minds have processed, interpreted, and remembered. The priming effect may occur at different levels, especially if the media places more emphasis on a particular event to influence the public perception about that event. Some of these levels of effect are content that comes in various forms and may be interconnected (Bermeitinger, 2016; Cherry, 2021; Dunn, personal communication, September 10, 2019). I categorized them into five parts; Appearance priming (positive or negative), Degree priming (vague or simple), Associated semantics priming (conceptual or linguistic words), Accessibility priming (easy or difficult), Speed priming (slow or quick), and Time (short or long). For example, if the memory of the word 'red' is positive and of a clear situation, it may be easy for one to access in the brain, thereby causing quick remembrance of the word even though the effect may last for a relatively short time.

Much of the research in priming theory has examined the role media plays before an effect takes place. Many times, the effect is associated with the intensity of media usage (Mieczkowski et al., 2020). For this reason, there is no priming effect without the involvement of media because the effects occur as a result of media content consumption. Media here could be in traditional or digital form but this paper focuses on digital media such as social media platforms like Instagram. In context to this study, priming is referred to as an effect, and it is seen as what information brands present on their media platforms, and how this information may be perceived by their followers/consumers. Many consumers expect to see corporations engaging in CSA by sharing corporate messaging on activism. While some may argue that this may influence consumers' purchase decisions, it may be difficult to conclude the intention of corporates' involvement in activism like BLM (Edson & Charsky, 2021). However, before a

company may decide on engaging in CSA, it means that there are already ongoing discussions on the advocacy issue.

Moreso, it has been established that the effect of priming is reacting based on a preceding stimulus. Therefore, brands engaging in CSA activities are by intervention, priming their followers or consumers on ongoing debates on the media about activism like the BLM movement. Discussing the priming effect is to explore what brands used in communicating their responses to the BLM discourse which eventually prime the public on the BLM discourse. Brands causing a priming effect by responding to the BLM movement on their Instagram pages may not be intentional, but it can be agreed that because there will be a certain level of engagement with their media content, priming is inevitable. This, therefore, resulted in the third hypothesis and last research question for the study.

H 3. How a brand chooses to respond may impact variations in the engagement levels.

RQ 6. What is the level of audience engagement between BLM Post Strategies?

a. Between Direct and Indirect BLM posts.

b. Between each BLM message theme.

c. Between BLM post format.

The more brands talk about the movement, the more prominent it becomes, hence more reception, more stimulation. In the long run, the priming effect of their activism messaging strategies influences the degree of the interpretations given to the BLM movement. Furthermore, the exposure of BLM to brands' customers can reactivate, promote, and increase the chances of certain actions or behaviors from them.

Chapter 3. Method

Content Analysis

To collect data for this research, the technique of content analysis was explored. Using a content analysis research method means a scientific tool "for making replicable and valid inferences from texts or other meaningful matter to the context of their use" (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 24). For proper preparation, organization, description, and evaluation of collected content, many researchers have adopted the content analysis method because it promotes both qualitative and quantitative sourcing of data among many other advantages (Neuendorf & Kumar, 2015; Nicholas, 2021). This makes content analysis a social science approach used systematically to identify and collect recorded communication which may come in form of texts, images, audio, or videos (Hall & Valentin, 2005; Luo, 2021). It involves the gathering of existing and observable content to generate insights on various themes like people's activities (Hall & Valentin, 2005). However, due to the nature of this study, it is expedient to relate content analysis to online applications such as social media platforms because they are channels for human communication. A common area to derive recorded communication is from social networking sites e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc. (Lai & To, 2015). These platforms serve as archives for different information which can later be broken down into levels and interpretations, depending on the goal of the researcher (Schwartz & Ungar, 2015).

Contextually, content analysis is used to measure any communication content through a process of systemic selection, sampling, coding, and analysis of mediated content (Treadwell, 2013). The content analysis method was chosen because it is suitable to observe and analyze patterns of communication content. It also helps the researcher make inferences about the effects and purpose of the content created. The content analysis helped me identify and collect relevant

information to examine corporate's brand-generated content (any form of content posted by brands on a social media platform) indicating responses and support towards the Black Lives Matter movement. Therefore, to gain a better understanding of the study and answer the research questions mentioned earlier, 236 Instagram posts from 24 US different brands were analyzed. The content analysis of these posts was conducted to collect and interpret both latent (hidden meaning) and manifest (tangible meaning) information, therefore making this research both quantitative and qualitative. The Instagram posts analyzed were from May 25th to June 21st, 2020 - serving as the peak and busiest weeks of the BLM protests in the year 2020 (Buchanan et al., 2020). Asides from the reasons mentioned earlier in chapter 2, using the Instagram platform as a source of data for this study was specifically because of its functions and features in relation to digital activism and branding (Chapman, 2016; Basit, 2020; Thompson, 2020).

Sampling

This section is presented in two parts; The unit of observation - Instagram profile and post selections, and the unit of analysis - brand selection. Firstly, explanations are given on the strategy used in selecting the Instagram accounts followed by what is included and excluded. Second is the criteria and justification for the selection of sampled brands.

Selection of Instagram Profiles and Posts

This study's scope is restricted to the feed posts alongside the captions found on each brand's Instagram profile. According to Muntinga et al., (2011), consuming, contributing, and creating are types of levels of brand-related content activeness that motivate users of social media to interact with brands. However, for this study, the level of engagement has been restricted to the online behavior of brand followers or consumers in terms of consumption and contribution. For the Instagram platform, likes and comments are examples of contribution

engagement (Bakhshi et al., 2014) while viewing is an example of consumption engagement (Muntinga et., 2011). Likes, comments, and views are the only examples of engagement levels obvious to an Instagram page visitor. This means that engagement such as sharing, downloading, reposting, etc can not be accessed or assessed by someone visiting an Instagram profile. This is why this paper focuses only on likes, comments, and views (for video content).

However, to collect and sample each brand's Instagram content that is relevant to this study, content excluded includes the profile photo section, stories, number of followings, bio description, highlights, reel, IGTV, and tagged. While Instagram handles, the number of followers, posts, likes/views, and comments were included. To determine which Instagram profile to consider, the handle has to be verified. The Instagram profiles of each brand were searched based on what they are popularly called by consumers irrespective of whether the username is for the corporate brand or a divisional product (service). E.g. Pepsi is different from PepsiCo is commonly referred to as Pepsi, Walt Disney as Disney, and Facebook is known majorly for the Facebook app. Meanwhile, a brand's variant's username account was not considered. Using established variables, each post content was studied in its entirety (caption, likes/views, & comments) to identify the strategies brands used in responding to the BLM movement.

Selection of Brands

Brands were selected using a simple random technique. A simple random sampling design is used when every member of a population has an equal chance of being selected to represent the entire population (Taherdoost, 2016). With the target population being US brands, these brands were selected from a ranking list named Tenet 2020 Top 100 Most Powerful Brands (as seen in Figure 1). A purposive search was made to obtain a ranking list with the motive of

40

sampling brands that have records of CSR and CSA qualities. This means brands that are perceived to be strong, valuable, of good reputation, and widely recognized. The TENET list met this motive based on the methodology criteria used in selecting their brands (TENET, 2020). Therefore, a set of 23 brands out of 100 were randomly selected based on the researcher's following criteria: (1) Must be US-owned or publicly operated in the US, (2) Must be among the largest US brands (using Fortune 500 as a reference), (3) Must represent a specific industry sector, and (4) Must have a verified Instagram profile. Meanwhile, the 24th brand which is Instagram was included and sampled because it serves as the source of data for this thesis.

Figure 1

A Snippet of Tenet 2020 Ranking of US 100 Most Powerful brands

Top 100 Most Powerful Brands of 2020

Each year, Tenet Partners analyzes the data in the CoreBrand® Index (CBI) to determine the Top 100 Most Powerful Brands based on high awareness and positive brand perceptions. The full annual report we released earlier this year reflected the Top 100 BrandPower rankings based on data obtained through the end of 2019.

The events of 2020 have upended life as we know it and as a result, drastically changed the way brands are perceived. Because of this, we've updated the Top 100 BrandPower rankings to take into account additional data from Q1 and Q2 of 2020. These reflect the ongoing impact of the pandemic, adding current context to the comprehensive analysis that can be seen by downloading the full report.

Company	Rank Change	Q2 2020 BrandPower Rank	2019 BrandPower Rank	Industry
Apple Inc.	1 ▲	1	2	Information Technology
Coca-Cola Company	-1 ▼	2	1	Consumer Staples
The Walt Disney Company		3	3	Communication Services
PepsiCo Inc.		4	4	Consumer Staples
Google-Alphabet	1 ▲	5	6	Communication Services
Microsoft Corp.	-1 ▼	6	5	Information Technology
American Express Co	2 ▲	7	9	Financials
Amazon.com Inc.	4 ▲	8	12	Consumer Discretionary
International Business Machines	1 ▲	9	10	Information Technology
Johnson & Johnson	-3 ▼	10	7	Health Care
Facebook, Inc.		11	11	Communication Services
Visa Inc.	1 ▲	12	13	Information Technology
Mastercard Inc.	1 ▲	13	14	Information Technology
The Hershey Company	-6 ▼	14	8	Consumer Staples
Campbell Soup	2 ▲	15	17	Consumer Staples
General Mills	-1 ▼	16	15	Consumer Staples
eBay Inc.	3 ▲	17	20	Consumer Discretionary
Kellogg Co.	-2 ▼	18	16	Consumer Staples
Twitter, Inc.		19	19	Communication Services
Colgate-Palmolive	-2 ▼	20	18	Consumer Staples
Morgan Stanley	1 ▲	21	22	Financials
Bank of America Corp	2 ▲	22	24	Financials
Bristol-Myers Squibb	4 ▲	23	27	Health Care
Harley-Davidson	-3 ▼	24	21	Consumer Discretionary
Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc		25	25	Consumer Discretionary
Exxon Mobil Corp.	-3 ▼	26	23	Energy
Nike	-1 ▼	27	26	Consumer Discretionary
McDonald's Corp.		28	28	Consumer Discretionary
General Electric		29	29	Industrials
Pfizer Inc.	7 ▲	30	37	Health Care

Source: Tenet 2020 Top 100 Most Powerful Brands

Note: Click for a larger view

Only US brands were considered because according to Bedford (2020) in the STATISTA graph, the United States happens to be the leading country with the most valuable and strong brands. Also, the primary location of the BLM movement and 2020 BLM famous protest is in the US (Black Lives Matter, n.d.b). It is assumed that when a company or brand is large based on revenue (as seen in Figure 2), they are expected to observe more CSR activities (Ketola et al., 2009), especially when external factors like the government influences their CSR decision-making (Vashchenko, M. (2017). A corporate brand may be identified in more than one industry but the brands sampled had to be a representation of a particular industry. In total, 13 industries and/or sectors were represented in this study. Lastly, to achieve collecting posts that will be content analyzed, there had to be an establishment of Instagram usage by the sampled brands. Although this sampling may not be many in size, it can be useful in terms of the quality representation of powerful brands in the US.

Figure 2

A Snippet of Fortune 2020 Ranking of America's Largest Companies

1	Walmart	$523,964	1.9%	$14,881	123.1%	$236,495	$321,803.3	-	2,200,000	-
2	Amazon	$280,522	20.5%	$11,588	15%	$225,248	$970,680.1	3	798,000	3
3	Exxon Mobil	$264,938	-8.7%	$14,340	-31.2%	$362,597	$160,696.3	-1	74,900	-1
4	Apple	$260,174	-2%	$55,256	-7.2%	$338,516	$1,112,640.8	-1	137,000	-1
5	CVS Health	$256,776	32%	$6,634	-	$222,449	$77,375.8	3	290,000	3
6	Berkshire Hathaway	$254,616	2.7%	$81,417	1924.8%	$817,729	$442,897.1	-2	391,500	-2
7	UnitedHealth Group	$242,155	7%	$13,839	15.5%	$173,889	$236,555.2	-1	325,000	-1
8	McKesson	$214,319	2.9%	$34	-49.3%	$59,672	$21,845	-1	70,000	-1
9	AT&T	$181,193	6.1%	$13,903	-28.2%	$551,669	$209,387.5	-	247,800	-
10	AmerisourceBergen	$179,589.1	6.9%	$855.4	-48.4%	$39,172	$18,221.4	-	21,500	-

Source: Fortune 500 2020 America's Largest Companies

Note: Click for a larger view

Below is Table 1 showing brief insights of the sampled brands that met the above criteria; thus,

presented alphabetically alongside their industries and Instagram details.

Table 1

Sampled Industries and Brands Showing their Instagram Profile Information

	INDUSTRY SECTOR	BRAND NAME	INSTAGRAM HANDLE	NO. OF POSTS	NO. OF FOLLOWERS
1	Retail	Amazon	@amazon	2,110	3.1m
2	Transportation	Amerian Airlines	@americanair	1,557	1m
3	Financial Services	American Express	@americanexpress	481	424k
4	Technology	Apple	@apple	815	25.7m
5	Telecommunication	AT & T	@att	2,194	365k
6	Beverage	Coca-Cola	@cocacola	236	2.7m
7	Health	CVS Health	@cvshealth	376	7,641
8	Entertainment	Disney	@disney	6,151	30.1m
9	Energy	Exxon Mobil	@exxonmobil	208	85.9k
10	Social Media/SNS	Facebook	@facebookapp	638	3.9m
11	Logistics	Fed Ex	@fedex	461	200k
12	Transportation	General Motors	@generalmotors	1,215	525k
13	Technology	IBM	@ibm	283	383k
14	Social Media/SNS	Instagram	@instagram	6,794	395m
15	Fast Food	McDonald's	@mcdonalds	195	4.1m
16	Technology	Microsoft	@microsoft	341	3.2m
17	Entertainment	Netflix	@netflix	3,894	27.2m
18	Apparel	Nike	@nike	790	153m
19	Beverage	PepsiCO	@pepsi	567	1.7m
20	Apparel	Ralph Lauren	@ralphlauren	5,920	12.5m
21	Fast Food	Starbucks	@starbucks	2,218	17.9m
22	Retail	Target	@target	1,900	4.5m
23	Telecommunication	Verizon	@verizon	1,252	229k
24	Financial Services	Visa	@visa_us	57	62.7k

Coded Variables

To categorize the type of brand responses to BLM on Instagram, a deductive close coding style was explored. This means using a pre-established coding scheme to measure emerging themes and frequencies of observable data (Yi & ProjectUX, 2018). The purpose of doing this is to aid understanding, interpretation, and counting while categorizing each Instagram post. Five variables were categorized into subcategories (as shown in Table 2). Although there was no prior coding manual overview to enable content categories easy, out of the five variables (as shown in Table 2) used for this study, two were adapted from Schulz (2017) based on her study on "The analysis of corporate responses to the Black Lives Matter movement". They are *Presence of Response* and *Reference to BLM*. The other three variables were, however, inspired by Opinium's (2020)'s "Ways in which brands should respond towards the BLM movement showing authenticity". I further developed all these to suit and achieve the objectives of the research. The research being more qualitative than quantitative, enabled the me to focus on both interpretation and counting of the data measured by the variables (Luo, 2021). Therefore, the variables used for this study were to answer each research question and code the unit of observation. Inferences were made to the observed themes and words of each Instagram post (latent), alongside quantifying the occurrence of observed information (manifest). Individual Instagram posts were analyzed using the subcategories of each variable category, thereby serving as the level of analysis for each research question.

Table 2

Coding Manual Showing Protocol for Corporate Responses Strategies

VARIABLE LEVELS	VARIABLES	POST IDENTIFIERS	VARIABLE SUBCATEGORIES	DESCRIPTION
100	PRESENCE OF RESPONSE			If the post contains a BLM response.
		0	No	If no, no further analysis.
		1	Yes	If yes, proceed to other levels.
200	FREQUENCY OF POST TYPE			To count occurrences of post types and engagement levels.
300	REFERENCE TO BLM		(For post & caption)	The level at which the ENTIRE brand's post MOST prevailing response is related to the BLM movement.
		0	Non-BLM	Not referring to BLM in any way.
		1	BLM Direct	The post indicates a direct link to BLM as a movement alongside affiliated groups.
		2	BLM Indirect	The post generally addresses problems about freedom, racism, and/or police brutality of the blacks but not as a movement.
		3	Counter BLM	The post is against BLM or implying a prejudiced remark to criticize the movement.
400	RESPONSE THEME		(For Direct & Indirect BLM posts ONLY)	What the KEY message indicates in the BLM-related posts.
		0	None of the below	The post is indicating a message besides the below mentioned.
		1	Information Sharing	The post shows just statements indicating support but no active actions taken.
		2	Donations & Resources	The post indicates the brand donating funds or making pledges in support of the movement.
		3	Education & Awareness (External)	The post indicates providing educative/empowerment/sensitization services/partnerships to the public to support BLM

			The post indicates revisiting the	
		4	Company Rebranding (Internal)	The post indicates revisiting the brand's policies/products/services to encourage inclusion & diversity within the workspace.
		5	More than one of the above	Combination of two or more of the above in a single post.
500	POST BY FORMAT TYPE		(For Direct & Indirect BLM posts ONLY)	This describes the type of feed pots posted in terms of format style
		0	Blank	A post showing a blank color ONLY.
		1	Text	A STATIC post containing ONLY written or typed words.
		2	Image	A combination of pictures and words/either or both animate & inanimate pictures.
		3	Video	A MOVING post that has either sound, image, text, or all.
		4	Gallery	A post having more than 1 slide is analyzed as one.
		5	Others	Any other format type besides the above-mentioned.

*Note: (*See Appendices A and B for examples and picture illustrations).

Level of Analysis

To determine the response type of each Instagram post and measure the research

questions, each level of analysis was coded using the coding manual. As seen in Table 2, For the

Presence of Response level, each Instagram post was analyzed to know if the post was indicating

a response to BLM or not. So if a brand posted five times within the study time frame and has at

least one BLM response, it is coded as 1 that the brand responded to BLM. But if none of the

posts indicate a BLM response, the brand is automatically coded as zero with no further analysis.

The Frequency level was analyzed to record the patterns and occurrences of the Instagram post

characteristics. Afterward is comparing the frequencies of BLM and non-BLM patterns between

brands and weeks. The Frequency variable was also used in counting the number of direct and

indirect BLM responses; how often a BLM response theme occurs; how often a BLM post

format was observed; and the engagement levels. For the 300 level – Reference to BLM, this is

to analyze if the post and the caption as a whole have any link to the movement indicating the brand's vocality of their stance. It answers the question, is the post non-BLM, direct BLM, indirect BLM, or counter BLM?

Level of Response Theme explains the message technique used by brands in responding to the movement. A brand may choose to either respond to BLM by sharing information, donating to the movement, creating educative awareness to the public, adjust and revisit the company's values and mission, or do more than one of these. Each sampled post was analyzed to categorize what type of theme was found in their responses, or how the Instagram post was interpreted by the researcher. Level 500 – Post Format, however, measures the type of format brands used in communicating their responses towards the BLM movement on Instagram. This means how the response was presented for public consumption in the form of either a text, image, video, more than of these at once, or any other form.

Data Collection and Procedure

The collection of the ranking list where sampled brands were selected from was done on February 20, 2021, and remains valid except removed or adjusted by authors/publishers. The unit of observation, that is, Instagram brands' posts collection began June 8, 2021, and ended June 11, 2021, with a record of 236 Instagram posts in total from 24 different brands. These were brands' posts dated from May 25, 2020, to June 21, 2020, indicating the BLM movement protest timeline in the US (Bettis & Studley, 2020). Although each brand's number of posts and followers were initially collected on February 24, 2021, to record current changes due to the Instagram posts collection date, an update was made on the 6th of June, 2020. Besides the posts collected, links, likes/views, and comments of each sampled post were also collected for the analysis process.

While analyzing, Instagram posts that had no response or BLM message were coded as zero (0) while posts excluded for each level were coded as not applicable (NA). This was only for posts that already had zeros for both levels 100 & 300. But their likes/views and comments were collected. Data collected were measured in sum counts, percentages, and charts for proper counting, comparison, and evaluation using Excel statiscal functions. All these procedures were achieved using the coding manual.

Intercoder Reliability

To confirm the reliability of the coding process, I initially coded each Instagram post after the coding scheme was developed. I did two rounds of coding before assessed by a second coder after brief training. Selected entry at every 5th interval was tested first by the second coder independently arriving at 20% of the total Instagram posts collected. Thereafter, a random sample of 10% of the total Instagram posts was assessed making it 30% in total. Using Cohen's kappa to ascertain the coding reliability, the result showed an accepted level greater than $\kappa = .9$ which indicates an almost perfect agreement (McHugh, 2012).

Chapter 4. Results

This research aims to observe the content strategies and techniques used by the sampled brands to communicate their responses toward the BLM movement. In achieving this, variables were developed to measure these strategies while analyzing the 236 Instagram posts from 24 brands sampled. The coding scheme designed for this paper, therefore, was to test the hypotheses earlier stated and answer the research questions. The research questions, however, were to examine two contents – Manifest and Latent. While the manifest findings will be explained in this chapter, the latent content will be qualitatively discussed in the next chapter. The former means reporting the obvious findings in terms of frequency variations and distribution of each variable, and engagement levels. This will be in counts, percentages, and charts. The latter, on the other hand, will be to interpret existing but hidden information perceived by the researcher based on the first findings. The Excel functions and formulas were used for data analysis. Below shows the results of the findings.

H 1. The framing of the BLM movement on Instagram will draw brands' attention.

The first hypothesis predicted the possibility of brands with an Instagram presence reacting to the movement going on on the platform, resulting in the first two research questions.

RQ 1. Which brand chose to respond to the BLM movement via their Instagram profile?

The first variable category is Presence of Response with subcategories 0 = No, 1 = Yes. A brand that has at least one BLM post indicating response to the movement between May 25, 2021, and June 21, 2021, is counted to have responded to the movement. This means that although a brand may have five BLM posts within the study time frame, the five posts are counted as 1 to variable Presence of Response. The results discovered that out of 24 brands (N = 100%) sampled, 3 brands (n = 12.5%) had 0 response recorded as seen in Table 3 and Figure 3.

Therefore, to answer RQ 1, 21 brands (n = 87.5%) chose to respond to the BLM movement via their Instagram profile while Exxon Mobile, General Motors, and Pepsi didn't respond.

Table 3

Brands' Presence of Response in Counts

S/N	BRAND INSTAGRAM HANDLE	Response (0 = No) (1 = Yes)
1	@amazon	1
2	@americanair	1
3	@americanexpress	1
4	@apple	1
5	@att	1
6	@cocacola	1
7	@cvshealth	1
8	@disney	1
9	@exxonmobil	0
10	@facebookapp	1
11	@fedex	1
12	@generalmotors	0
13	@ibm	1
14	@instagram	1
15	@mcdonalds	1
16	@microsoft	1
17	@netflix	1
18	@nike	1
19	@pepsi	0
20	@ralphlauren	1
21	@starbucks	1
22	@target	1
23	@verizon	1
24	@visa_us	1
	Total	21

Figure 3

Brands Presence of Response in Percentages

Presence of Response

■ Yes ■ No
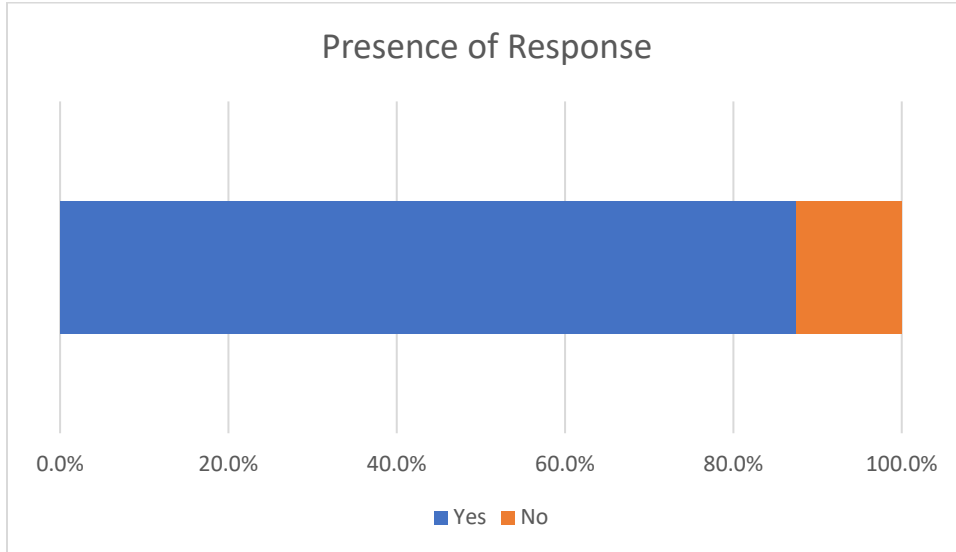
RQ 2. How often do brands' post BLM-related content compared to Non-BLM content?

The second variable category is Frequency and this is to identify the number of times a variable subcategory occurs. For this question, the goal is to find out the total number of BLM and Non-BLM posts; the number of BLM and Non-BLM posts by a brand, and compare their totals by weeks. 236 posts consisting of both BLM and Non-BLM content were analyzed. Table 4 shows that more Non-BLM posts were made compared to BLM posts with a difference of 32 posts. That is, Non-BLM was 134 (57%) and BLM 102 (43%) of the total posts. It also reveals that the AT&T brand had the highest number of BLM posts with a record of 44% of the total BLM post collected, and the Instagram brand coming second with a record of 9%. This means that within the study time frame, AT&T posted BLM content 45 times while still posting 30 unrelated content on their Instagram page. Table 4 also shows that Exxon Mobil made no post at all within the study time frame while General Motors and Pepsi did but not anything related to the movement. Five other brands, however, posted at least one BLM content but had 0 Non-

51

BLM posts throughout the time frame studied. Namely; Coca-Cola, FedEx, McDonald's, Nike, and Ralph Lauren.

Table 4

Total Frequencies of BLM (also in percentages) and Non-BLM Posts Per Brand

BRAND INSTAGRAM HANDLE	BLM Count	Non-BLM Count	BLM+Non-BLM	% of BLM
@amazon	2	4	6	2%
@americanair	1	15	16	1%
@americanexpress	1	2	3	1%
@apple	2	1	3	2%
@att	45	30	75	44%
@cocacola	2	0	2	2%
@cvshealth	2	4	6	2%
@disney	3	9	12	3%
@exxonmobil	0	0	0	0%
@facebookapp	5	9	14	5%
@fedex	1	0	1	1%
@generalmotors	0	7	7	0%
@ibm	1	1	2	1%
@instagram	9	11	20	9%
@mcdonalds	2	0	2	2%
@microsoft	1	1	2	1%
@netflix	7	21	28	7%
@nike	2	0	2	2%
@pepsi	0	2	2	0%
@ralphlauren	2	0	2	2%
@starbucks	4	4	8	4%
@target	5	2	7	5%
@verizon	4	10	14	4%
@visa_us	1	1	2	1%
Total	**102**	**134**	**236**	**100%**

Week 1 had the highest number of posts (n = 84) recorded by brands and week 4 coming second with n = 78 Instagram posts out of 236 total posts. Comparing how often BLM and Non-BLM posts were made per week, weeks 1 recorded the highest number of Non-BLM posts (n = 76) and the lowest number of BLM posts (n = 8), while weeks 2 and 4 had a tie of the highest

number of BLM posts (n = 34) but week 2 recording the lowest number of Non-BLM posts (n = 2). For weeks 3 (n = 38) and 4 (n = 78), the two types of posts (BLM and Non-BLM) had differences of 14 and 10, respectively. All these can be observed in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Comparison of Total Number of Non-BLM vs BLM Posts Per Week
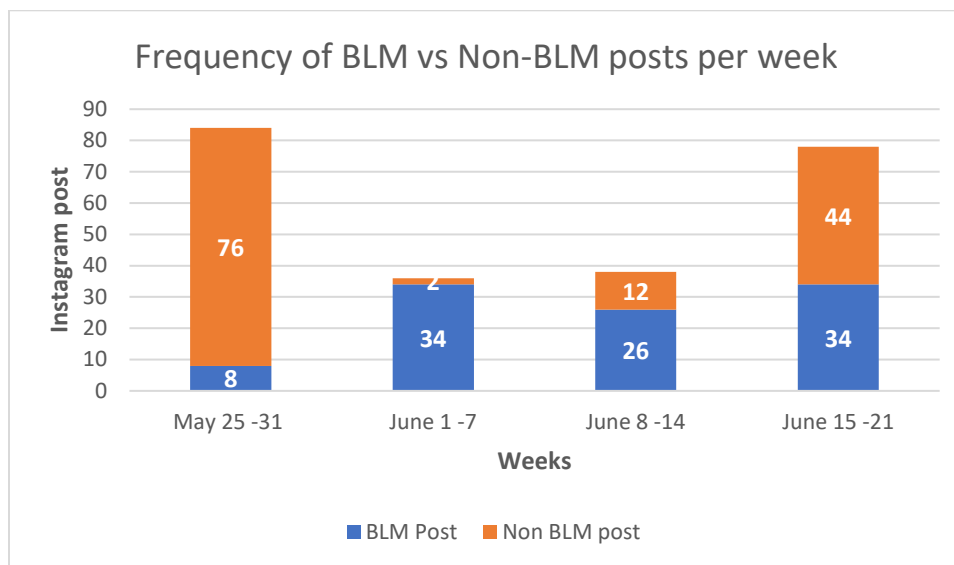
H 2. The clarity of brands' stance may be perceived and interpreted based on their response strategies.

The second hypothesis suggested that what and how brands decide to communicate their responses to the BLM movement influences the public's perception about their stance authenticity. This hypothesis is only applicable to BLM posts (not Non-BLM posts) indicating responses found in brands' Instagram pages. Research questions 3, 4, and 5 respond to this hypothesis.

RQ 3. What is the frequency of brands' responses directly referring to BLM compared to

indirect responses?

The third variable category is Reference to BLM with subcategories 0 = Non-BLM, 1 =

Direct BLM, 2 = Indirect BLM, and 3 = Counter BLM. All of these are types of BLM posts

(except Non-BLM) that are expected to have content that either refers directly, indirectly, or

against the movement. Table 5 displays that out of 102 BLM posts, 57 were directly referring to

BLM while 45 posts were indirectly linked to BLM. No post was recorded to have been against

the movement. To answer question 3, Direct responses were often given by brands while

addressing BLM compared to the Indirect ones.

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Reference to BLM

BLM Posts	Frequency	%
Direct	57	56%
Indirect	45	44%
Counter	0	0%
Total	**102**	**100%**

RQ 4. What message theme is often communicated in their BLM responses?

The fourth variable category is Response Theme with subcategories 0=None of the

below, 1 = Information Sharing, 2 = Donations & Resources, 3 = Education & Awareness, 4 =

Company Rebranding, and 5 = More than one of the above. These five types of themes were

used to analyze each BLM post before categorizing them. This research question requires

knowing the underlying theme that makes up what is being communicated as a response to BLM.

The result revealed that Education & Awareness (n = 51) was the most message theme often

communicated at least once in brands' responses, making it 50% of the total Message Themes

identified. Information Sharing (n = 27) appeared to be the second most message theme used at least once per brand in their responses, comprising 26% of the total Message Themes recorded. The Company Rebranding theme (n = 1) took the last position of what message is communicated. More than one of the above (n = 9) means that at least one type of theme was found alongside another type in a brand's response. This means that the subcategory shares a mutual relationship with either Information Sharing, Donations & Resources, Education & Awareness, or Company Rebranding. Therefore, some brands communicated their responses with more than one key message, summing up to 9% of the total BLM messages. See Table 6 and Figure 5 for results.

Table 6

Frequency and Percentage of Each Message Themes

Message Themes	Frequency	%
None of the below	7	7%
Information Sharing	27	26%
Donation & Resources	7	7%
Education & Awareness	51	50%
Company Rebranding	1	1%
More than one of the above	9	9%
Total	**102**	**100%**

Figure 5

Pie Chart Illustrating Numerical Proportions of Each Message Theme
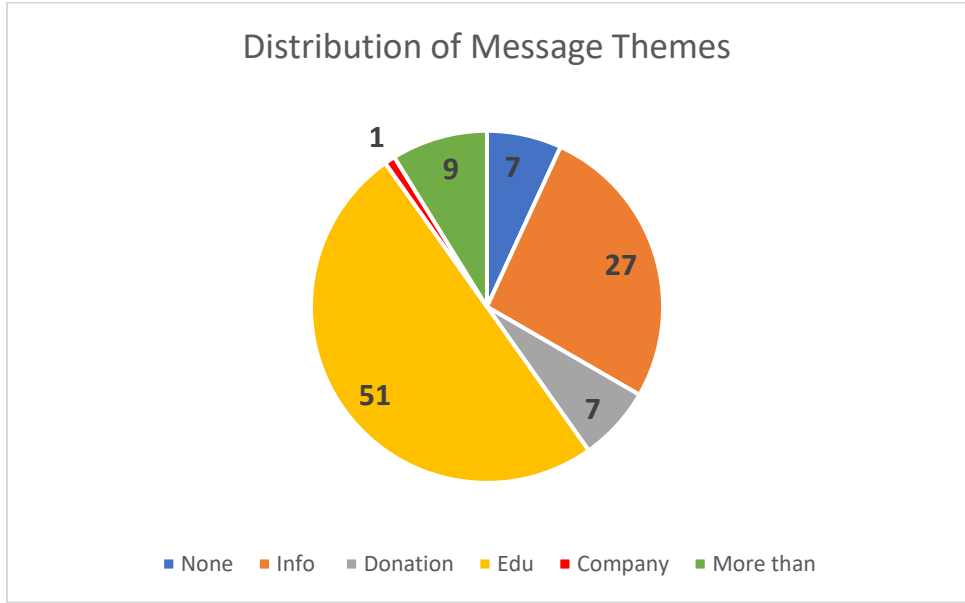
Distribution of Message Themes

Legend: None, Info, Donation, Edu, Company, More than

Values shown: 1, 9, 7, 27, 51, 7

RQ 5. What post format do brands frequently use in conveying their BLM responses on Instagram?

The fifth variable category is Post by Format Type with subcategories 0 = Blank, 1 = Text, 2 = Image, 3 = Video, 4 = Gallery, and 5 = Others. These five types of formats were also used to analyze each BLM post. This research question was asked to measure how brands' responses were shared or posted on their Instagram platforms. Table 7 and Figure 6 show that brands' responses to BLM were often more communicated in form of video (n = 33), followed by Image (n = 28), Text (n = 25), and Gallery (n = 14) taking the fourth position. n = 2 Blank posts were recorded while there was no input for Others as shown in Figure 6. Therefore, 32% of the total BLM posts were in video format as seen in Table 7.

Table 7

Frequencies and Percentages of Post Format Types

Format	Frequency	%
Blank	2	2%
Text	25	25%
Image	28	27%
Video	33	32%
Gallery	14	14%
Others	0	0%
Total	**102**	**100%**

Figure 6

Pie Chart Illustrating Numerical Proportions of Each Post Format
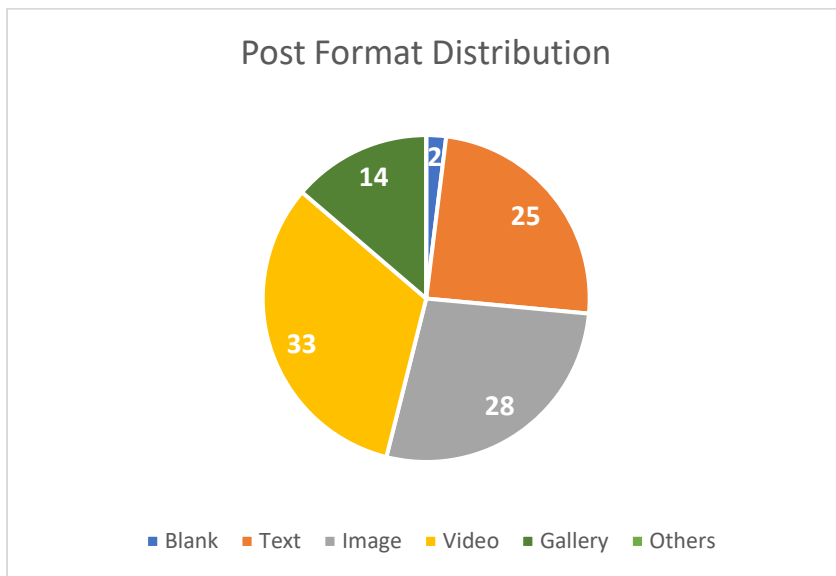
Note: No input for Others as it is 0

H 3. How a brand chooses to respond may impact variations in the engagement levels.

The third hypothesis stated a tentative proposition that there may be a causal relationship between each response strategy of the brand and the behavior of customers. This means if a brand chooses to be direct with their responses, or choose a message theme, or a post format, there is a likelihood for the engagement level of each strategy to be influenced. Under this hypothesis is research question 6 in three parts (a, b, & c).

RQ 6. What is the level of audience engagement between BLM Post Strategies?

This question was measured using the second variable. As stated in question 2, the Frequency variable is to identify the number of times a variable subcategory occurs. For this question, the goal is to find out the level of engagement between strategies used by brands, and to know which metric often indicated audience behaviors to the BLM content posted. The strategies are in three categories: the Reference style (Direct and Indirect posts), the Message Themes, and the Post Formats. The engagement levels were obtained using the likes, comments, and views (for video posts) metrics. As shown in Tables 9, 10, and 11, the Views metric is seen to be the most common audience engagement, followed by Likes. To find out the total outcome for audience engagement, each metric was summed up. The result showed that approximately 39,654,046 engagements were accounted for the way brands' audiences reacted to their BLM responses. The differences in the level of engagement between strategies are recorded below. Note that all engagement metrics are rounded up to their nearest thousandths.

    a. **Between Direct and Indirect BLM posts.** For the Direct BLM posts, they had more engagement in terms of Likes and Comments, while the Indirect posts had more Views engagement. But for the total engagement, the Indirect BLM posts had more. See Table 8 for results.

Table 8

Level of Audience Engagement Between BLM Direct and Indirect Posts

BLM	Total Posts	Likes	Views	Comments	Total Engagement
Direct	57	9,743,864	6,559,760	271,003	**16,574,627**
Indirect	45	2,905,661	20,075,002	98,756	**23,079,419**
Total	**102**	**12,649,525**	**26,634,762**	**369,759**	**39,654,046**

 b. **Between each BLM message theme.** As displayed in Table 9, for this category, posts

   that communicated Education & Awareness had more Likes and Comments engagement,

   followed by Information Sharing, and Company Rebranding coming last for Likes. For

   Comments, None of the below options appeared last. Information Sharing recorded more

   Views compared to other themes, while the Donations & Resources theme appeared last.

   In total, the Information Sharing theme got more audience engagements compared to

   other themes with None of the below getting the lowest engagement.

Table 9

Level of Audience Engagement Between Message Themes

Themes	Frequency	Likes	Views	Comments	Total Engagement
None of the below	7	9,286	1,742	991	**12,019**
Information Sharing	27	4,335,850	16,906,951	122,410	**21,365,211**
Donations & Resources	7	1,207,550	0	27,394	**1,234,944**
Education & Awareness	51	6,877,269	7,758,769	183,757	**14,819,795**
Company Rebranding	1	0	521,000	1,350	**522,350**

More than One of the above	9	219,570	1,446,300	33,857	**1,699,727**
Total	**102**	**12,649,525**	**26,634,762**	**369,759**	**39,654,046**

    c. **Between BLM post format.** The format with the highest Likes and Comments

engagement was Gallery, followed by Text, and Others coming last for the whole

metrics. Video had 0 records because the Likes metric does not apply to the format for

the Instagram platform, making it the format with the highest Views engagement. In total,

BLM posts in form of Video recorded the highest level of engagement, followed by

Gallery, and Text. See Table 10 for results.

Table 10

Level of Audience Engagement Between Post Formats

Format	Frequency	Likes	Views	Comments	Total Engagement
Blank	2	6,129	0	707	**6,836**
Text	25	4,967,321	0	114,512	**5,081,833**
Image	28	1,678,643	0	38,662	**1,717,305**
Video	33	0	26,634,762	81,963	**26,716,725**
Gallery	14	5,997,432	0	133,915	**6,131,347**
Others	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total	**102**	**12,649,525**	**26,634,762**	**369,759**	**39,654,046**

Chapter 5. Discussion

Discussion of Findings

As the BLM movement remains a hot topic in the United States, corporations are pressured more by the society to contribute to the discussion (Gelles, 2017). Moreso, the pressure from stakeholders has made many corporations or brands respond to BLM hurriedly and sometimes, unplanned (Parcha et al., 2020). Even though the concept of CSA had been investigated in the past, there are still ongoing debates on the many approaches to CSA activities (Brenstad & Solsnes, 2019). This paper aimed at contributing to the CSA works of literature addressing how companies communicate their stances on controversial issues via social media platforms (Apampa, 2020; Edrington & Lee, 2018; Park & Jiang, 2020; Testarmata, 2018). Corresponding with past studies, the findings of this research showed that using social media for CSA practices can attract public attention, perceptions, and engagements. Although this thesis focused on analyzing corporate responses, the intention was not to conclude on the 'Why' of the responses. Therefore, besides the 'What' aspect, this paper emphasized more on the 'How and Why' aspect of brands' responses towards the BLM movement. The 'What' was to identify the content shared or posted by brands regarding the movement, the 'How' was to identify and examine the tactics and styles used while responding, while the 'Why' was to assume the reasons behind the strategies used. The findings of these are reviewed in this section.

I argued that while it is a great development that corporations are increasingly getting involved in sociopolitical activism, it is expedient that brand responses reflect significance in terms of clarity and intentionality. This means that brands are expected to be deliberate about their responses such that it signals a clear message to their stakeholders. So through the lenses of the attributes of their responses, this study analyzed 236 Instagram posts indicating brands'

responses towards the Black Lives Matter movement. Variables were developed to measure each research question, and results indicated which brand responded, what they responded with, and how they responded using three strategies. The strategies here refer to *Reference to BLM, Response Theme, Post Format,* and their *Frequencies*. The findings, although, did not generate reasons for the brands' responses, I drew meanings and interpretations based on the data collected and analyzed in chapter 4. This chapter, therefore, simultaneously discusses the latent content deduced from the manifest content found in the above chapter.

Latent Implications of Findings

First, I assumed that the way BLM information are being presented on Instagram will attract the attention of brands who are present on the platform. Results showed that this assumption is realistic. Hypothesis 1 speculation of brands responding due to BLM's activism on Instagram is supported based on the outcome of research questions 1 and 2 findings (Mourougan & Sethuraman, 2017). RQ 1 asked the brands that chose to respond to BLM and results showed evidence (manifest) that 21 out of 24 brands responded via their Instagram pages. This suggests (latent) that many brands are in support of the movement by going as far as communicating their stances in favor of what the movement fights for and/or against. RQ 2 asked how often brands posted *BLM content* compared to *Non-BLM* within the study time frame. Results revealed that Non-BLM contents were more than BLM but with a difference of 32 posts (manifest). Also, the first week (May 25-31) recorded the most Non-BLM posts while weeks 2 & 4 (June 1-7/15-21) had the most BLM content. This is, however, justifiable as the study time frame was a month, and brands were not expected to have been posting BLM content all through while putting sales on hold. More so, part of June being analyzed was a month for Pride's and Fathers' Day

celebrations so some of the Non-BLM posts had content related to these celebrations. This may be assumed to have affected the result, thereby causing a digression from the BLM issue (latent).

Secondly, hypothesis 2 suggested that the clarity of brands' stance may be perceived and interpreted based on their response strategies. This simply means that the strategies employed may affirm the vocality of brands' solidarity towards BLM. Findings indicated that this hypothesis is significant too as one may conclude that based on the results for questions 3, 4, and 5, the responses speak volumes of brands' clear intention of supporting BLM (Mourougan & Sethuraman, 2017). For RQ 3, it sought to assess the prevalence between brands' *Direct* and *Indirect References* to BLM. Table 5 showed Direct reference represented 56% of the BLM contents posted by brands (manifest). Being more than Indirect reference, findings suggest that brands were straightforward, sincere, and plain about their support (latent). RQ 4 asked the *Message Theme* that was often identified in brands' responses. Six Message Themes were considered. The Education & Awareness theme (n = 51, 50%) had the most communicated message as shown in Table 6 and Figure 5, and Information Sharing (n = 27, 26%) coming second. The None of the below and Donations & Resources had a tie of n = 7, 7% while Company Rebranding came last with n = 1, 1%. More than one of the above Message Theme appeared n = 9 times (manifest).

When a brand is identified to engage in CSA, many people expect them to respond with actions, e.g., donating funds. The issue is not the most case for these sampled brands based on the above results. Therefore, the Latent information of RQ 4 suggests that companies or brands saw it necessary to educate their stakeholders about what was happening (BLM), thereby making them aware of the steps they could take while also deciding to be for or against the movement. The Information Sharing theme was defined as brands communicating their support to BLM with

their stakeholders either through official statements or the press. This theme coming second implies or signals that the brands deemed it fit to carry their customers along on what they feel about the movement. Both themes are, however, performing the same thing, which is instigating attitude change of their stakeholders. I perceive that the brands also want their customers to take active roles in the movement, hence the influence in the last theme's result becoming third. For the Company Rebranding theme coming last, this may be because, before the 2020 BLM movement, companies already had necessary changes and adjustments to their work policies. Lastly, for RQ 5, the question was to know the common format used in communicating responses. The Video subcategory (n = 33, 32%) appeared to be the most frequent format used and this is explainable because it grabs attention, increases awareness, and more effective judging based on the most prevailing themes recorded above (latent) (Sparksight, 2016).

The third and last hypothesis predicted that strategies used by brands when responding may impact variations in the engagement levels. After examining the three strategies (see Tables 8, 9, & 10), results reflected that there are clear differences in the level of engagement per strategy (Reference, Theme, and Format). Therefore, the hypothesis is supported (Mourougan & Sethuraman, 2017). Engagement levels were measured through the Likes, Views, and Comments metrics. With a total of approximately N = 39,654,046 engagements, Indirect (n = 23, 079,419), Information Sharing (n = 21,365,211), and Video (n = 26,716,725) were the strategies with the highest level of engagements. These outcomes were recorded because they were apparently influenced by the number of Video formats used in each subcategory. This was possible because it has been established that videos tend to attract more engagement (Tran, 2020). posts as strategies with the highest engagement had more post count. This, therefore, confirms hypothesis

3 that the way brand chooses to respond may affect the differences in engagement level between strategies used.

Limitations

Even though there were attempts to overcome some limitations mentioned below, I encountered few limitations while conducting this research, and these may be considered as potential limitations for future studies. Firstly, although justifications were stated earlier, the content analysis, the sampling method, and the sampling frame (ranking list) where the brands were selected may have influenced the scope of the study. While content analysis is popularly used by social researchers, a potential limitation is influencing the researcher's decision when collecting, analyzing, and interpreting human communication (Hall & Valentin, 2005). This influences the reliability of the research findings because it tends to validate the hypothesis and sentiments of the researcher. For the sampling method- simple random sampling, although this style may be easy for a small population, choosing from the ranking list may have restricted the number of brands that could have been sampled from the US, thereby resulting in the number of Instagram posts analyzed. Nevertheless, using this sampling technique increases the chances of population representation, and reduces sampling bias sampled brands (Robinson, 2019).

Furthermore, content analyzing BLM or brands' responses from Instagram is new as there are little to no existing works on this platform. In addition, the choice of Instagram and exemption of other social media platforms restricted this study from collecting data from other platforms where some brands may have responded instead. Some brands or members of the public may be more active on other platforms like Twitter and/or Facebook than Instagram (Dixon & Dundes, 2020; McElwee, 2021). Also, many social media platforms aside from Instagram have responded to the movement, thereby framing various brands to react

(Hutchinson, 2020). So only samples of corporate responses collected from Instagram or the time frame studied may not be enough to conclude on the results gotten from the variables analyzed. Lastly, some companies or brands still struggle with social disclosure participation. For instance, companies donating actively to the movement but not announcing it is a limitation that couldn't have been avoided (Patten & Zhao, 2014).

Recommendations

For future research, the above limitations could be considered for proper direction and planning, enhancing more reliable and valid findings. This thesis majorly focused on the face value of strategies used by brands while responding to BLM, using Excel to conduct simple statistical data analysis. Future studies may, however, want to go further in investigating the intent, effect, or implications of these strategies using a more complex statistical package like Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The study time frame could be extended as well to cover other dates when the brand responded to BLM. Some brands also responded but via their official website so this could be a platform for content analysis, alongside any of their social media platforms. Furthermore, in an attempt to contribute to this new area of study, I advocate that future researchers consider doing a comparative analysis between old and new generation brands to examine the authenticity of their CSA activities. This is because new generations seem to be the most active set of people in activism (Tyson et al., 2021; YPulse, 2020). Lastly, a larger sample size of the population may be considered to increase representation.

Conclusion

The Black Lives Matter movement has always focused on addressing anti-black racism in the US but the 2020 George Floyd protests sparked up a new and strong perception about the

movement. This attracted the attention of the entire nation; generating many reactions that were either in support or opposition. Companies that decide to engage in socio-political issues are oftentimes questioned because it is difficult to conclude the viability and authenticity of their interventions (Dodd & Supa, 2015; Yim, 2021). However, the theoretical frameworks of this paper explained that the information presented by brands can, firstly; prime the minds of their stakeholders on what to think; frame them on how to think; then lastly, create impressions signally why to think that way. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the strategies used by brands when responding to the BLM movement via their Instagram pages. It also went further to determine the engagement level of these strategies. According to the findings of this study, several companies supported the movement and saw it necessary to respond. Findings revealed that although the legitimacy of a brand stand-taking may be perceived to be either authentic or fake, brands were very strategic in how they responded. This in return affected the audience behavior while engaging with these BLM responses.

It is evident that brands maximize social media platforms like Instagram to communicate CSA practices. But, it can not be concluded if they do perform this to attract engagement or gain good credibility from their stakeholders. Actually, conducting a social media campaign on the BLM movement is not enough evidence to measure a brand's intention or corporate values (McElwee, 2021), but one may conclude that their advocacy or response validates the whole essence of the movement. The bottom line of brands' responses is that they choosing to post, discuss, or support BLM contribute a significant impact on the racial justice issues existing in the country. Also, CSA engagement remains a risky decision to make because the outcomes are not certain. So, brands choosing to get involved in the BLM movement or CSA, in general, may ensure that their stances are consistent, clear, and in alignment with their core values to affirm

genuine intentions. To sum up, there are studies on why corporations get involve in CSA practices which may cut across many reasons. This study, however, did not conclude on the reasons but included subjective assumptions of some of these reasons. Based on a content analysis of 24 corporate Instagram Pages from Tenet's "Top 100 Most Powerful Brands", this paper found that brands' strategies first determine their stance on the BLM movement which then affect the level of audience engagement of these strategies.

References

Agudelo, M. A. L., Jóhannsdóttir, L., & Davídsdóttir, B. (2019). A literature review of the history and evolution of corporate social responsibility. *International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility, 4*(1), 1.

Almeida, P. (2019). *Social movements: The structure of collective mobilization*. Univ of California Press.

Altman, A. (2020, June 4). *Why the killing of George Floyd sparked an American uprising*. Time. https://time.com/5847967/george-floyd-protests-trump/

Anderson, M. (2016, August 15). *The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter emerges: Social activism on Twitter. In Social Media Conversations About Race*. Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech. https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2016/08/15/the-hashtag-blacklivesmatter-emerges-social-activism-on-twitter/

Anti-Defamation League [ADL]. (2020, June 2). *Black lives matter: From hashtag to movement*. https://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/black-lives-matter-from-hashtag-to-movement.

APAMPA, O. (2020). Social media movements: A data-driven analysis of gender issues, social advocacy, climate change and environmental communication on selected online social media platforms.

Ardèvol-Abreu, A. (2015). Framing theory in communication research. Origins, development and current situation in Spain. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, (70), pp. 423 to 450). http://www.revistalatinacs.org/070/paper/1053/23en.html DOI: 10.4185/RLCS-2015-1053en

Arnold, E. K. (n.d.). *The BLM effect: Hashtags, history and race.*

    Reimagine. https://www.reimaginerpe.org/21-2/arnold-BLM

Arowolo, O. (2017, March). Understanding framing theory. *Mass Communication Theory*, *3*(6),

    4. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.25800.52482

Asmelash, L. (2020, July 26). *How Black Lives Matter went from a hashtag to a global rallying*

    cry. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/26/us/black-lives-matter-explainer-

    trnd/index.html

Austin, L., Gaither, B., & Gaither, T. K. (2019). Corporate social advocacy as public interest

    communications: Exploring perceptions of corporate involvement in controversial social-

    political issues. *The Journal of Public Interest Communications*, *3*(2), 3-3.

Ayers, J. C. (2018, April 24). *From responsibility to advocacy: Finding the right CSR balance*

    for your company. Ketchum. https://www.ketchum.com/from-responsibility-to-advocacy-

    finding-the-right-csr-balance-for-your-company/

Bajracharya, S. (2018, January 6). Framing Theory.In *Businesstopia*.

    https://www.businesstopia.net/mass-communication/framing-theory.

Bakhshi, S., Shamma, D. A., & Gilbert, E. (2014, April). Faces engage us: Photos with faces

    attract more likes and comments on Instagram. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference*

    on human factors in computing systems (pp. 965-974).

Basit, A., Nurlukman, A. D., & Kosasih, A. (2020, May). The effect of social media destination

    branding: The use of Facebook and Instagram. In *Tarumanagara International*

    Conference on the Applications of Social Sciences and Humanities (TICASH 2019) (pp.

    23-27). Atlantis Press.

Bateson, G. (2000). *Steps to an ecology of mind: Collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology*. University of Chicago Press.

Bateson, G. (1972). The logical categories of learning and communication. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 279-308.

Baysha, O., & Hallahan, K. (2004). Media framing of the Ukrainian political crisis, 2000–2001. *Journalism Studies*, *5*(2), 233-246.

Bedford, E. (2020, November 18). *Most valuable nation brands worldwide in 2020 (in billion U.S. dollars)*. Statista. *https://www.statista.com/statistics/322423/most-valuable-nation-brands/*

Bell, K. (Ed.). (2013). *Social movement*. Open Education Sociology Dictionary.Retrieved January 12, 2021, from https://sociologydictionary.org/social-movement/

Bermeitinger, C. (2016). Priming. In *psychology and mental health: Concepts, methodologies, tools, and applications* (pp. 42-88). IGI Global.

Bettis, S., & Studley, L. (2020, June 10). *Black Lives Matter: A 2020 protest timeline*. The Rocky Mountain Collegian. https://collegian.com/2020/06/category-news-black-lives-matter-a-2020-protest-timeline/.

Bhagwat, Y., Warren, N. L., Beck, J. T., & Watson IV, G. F. (2020). Corporate sociopolitical activism and firm value. *Journal of Marketing*, *84*(5), 1-21.

Black Lives Matter. (n.d.a). *About. https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/*

Black Lives Matter. (n.d.b). *HerStory*. https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/

Black Lives Matter. (n.d.c). *Partners*. https://blacklivesmatter.com/partners/

Black Lives Matter Los Angeles [BLMLA]. (n.d.). *Who we are*. https://www.blmla.org/who-we-are#ourteam

BliegeBird, R., & Smith, E. (2005). Signaling theory, strategic interaction, and symbolic

capital. *Current Anthropology*, *46*(2), 221-248.

Bolsover, G. (2020). Black Lives Matter discourse on US social media during COVID: Polarised

positions enacted in a new event. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2009.03619*.

Bonaparte, Y. L. (2020). Meeting the moment: Black Lives Matter, racial inequality, corporate

messaging, and rebranding. *Advertising & Society Quarterly*, *21*(3).

Bonilla, T., & Tillery, A. (2020). Which identity frames boost support for and mobilization in the

#blacklivesmatter movement? An experimental test. *American Political Science

Review, 114*(4), 947-962. doi:10.1017/S0003055420000544

Borden, J. (2019). *Consumer attachment and corporate social advocacy: Leveraging political

behaviors to bolster organization-public relationships*. (*ALL*. 1111) [Doctoral

dissertation, Syracuse University]. https://surface.syr.edu/etd/1111

Boundless Sociology. (n.d.). *Social movements: Types of social movements*. Lumen Learning –

Simple Book Production. Licensed under Creative Commons.

https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/chapter/social-movements/

Bostic, P. H. (n.d.). *Social movement*. Learning to

Give. https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/social-movement

Brenstad, I. M. S., & Sølsnes, M. V. (2019). *Does corporate activism affect brand equity? An

event study on 55 American brands* (Master's thesis, Handelshøyskolen BI).

Brex. (2020, April 14). *6 types of corporations: Which is right for your startup?*

https://www.brex.com/blog/types-of-corporations/.

Brin, P., & Nehme, M. N. (2019). Corporate social responsibility: Analysis of theories and

models. *EUREKA: Social and Humanities*, (5), 22-30.

Brown, T. J., & Dacin, P. A. (1997). The company and the product: Corporate associations and

    consumer product responses. *Journal of Marketing*, *61*(1), 68-84.

Buchanan, L., Bui, Q., & Patel, J. K. (2020, July 3). *Black Lives Matter may be the largest*

    movement in U.S. history. The New York Times - Breaking News, World News &

    Multimedia. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-

    crowd-size.html

Burke, L., & Logsdon, J. M. (1996). How corporate social responsibility pays off. *Long range*

    planning, *29*(4), 495-502.

Camp, J. T., & Heatherton, C. (Eds.). (2016). *Policing the Planet: Why the policing crisis led to*

    black lives matter. Verso Books.

Cappelli, M. L. (2020). Black Lives Matter: The emotional and racial dynamics of the George

    Floyd protest graffiti. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, *9*(10), 323.

Carman, A. (2020, November 12). *Instagram redesigns its home screen for the first time in*

    years, adding reels and shop tabs. The

    Verge. https://www.theverge.com/2020/11/12/21561099/instagram-reels-shopping-home-

    screen-tab-update

Carroll, A.B. and Shabana, K.M. (2010). The business case for corporate social responsibility: A

    review of concepts, research, and practice. *International Journal of Management*

    Reviews, *12*(1), pp. 85-104. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2009.00275.x

Carroll, A. B. (2015). Corporate social responsibility: The centerpiece of competing and

    complementary frameworks. *Organizational dynamics*.

Carroll, A. B. (2016). Carroll's pyramid of CSR: Taking another look. *International journal of*

    corporate social responsibility, *1*(1), 1-8.

Çetinkaya, H., Douglass, F., & Davis, A. (2020). Black lives matter, Covid-19 and the scene of
     politics. *The New Pretender*.

Chaffee, E. C. (2017). The origins of corporate social responsibility. *U. Cin. L. Rev.*, *85*, 353.

Chapman, K. J. (2016). *Digital activism: How social media prevalence has impacted modern*
     activism (Doctoral dissertation).

Chen, J. (2019, November 27). Corporate social responsibility (CSR).
     https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/corp-social-responsibility.asp

Cherry, K. (2021, June 18). *Priming and the psychology of memory*. Verywell Mind.
     https://www.verywellmind.com/priming-and-the-psychology-of-memory-4173092.

Cheung, H. (2020a, June 7). *George Floyd: Huge protests against racism held across US*. BBC
     News. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52951093

Cheung, H. (2020b, June 8). *Why US protests are so powerful this time*. BBC
     News. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52969905

Chron Contributor. (2020, September 4). *Difference between company & brand*. Small Business.
     https://smallbusiness.chron.com/difference-between-company-brand-26198.html

Clark, A. D., Dantzler, P. A., & Nickels, A. E. (2018). Black Lives Matter: (Re) framing the next
     wave of black liberation. In *Research in social movements, conflicts, and change*.
     Emerald Publishing Limited.

Clayton, D. M. (2018). Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement: A comparative
     analysis of two social movements in the United States. *Journal of Black Studies, 49*(5),
     448–480. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934718764099

Clermont, H. (2020, July 29). *How to protect yourself from media manipulation on energy issues*
     and other contentious matters. The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/how-to-

protect-yourself-from-media-manipulation-on-energy-issues-and-other-contentious-

matters-142708.

Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2011). *Managing corporate social responsibility: A communication approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

Cornet, V. P., Hall, N. K., Cafaro, F., & Brady, E. L. (2017). How image-based social media websites support social movements. In *Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA '17). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 2473–2479. DOI:https://doi.org/10.1145/3027063.3053257*

Corporate Finance Institute (CFI). (2020, August 14). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) - Types and business

benefits. https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/other/corporate-social-responsibility-csr/

Corstens, G. (2019, August 12). *Corporate activism. Why is this a thing, and what does it mean for us?* Medium. https://medium.com/@gijscorstens/corporate-activism-why-is-this-a-thing-and-what-does-it-mean-for-us-b9216cc9d9eb

Cox, J. M. (2017). The source of a movement: making the case for social media as an informational source using Black Lives Matter. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *40*(11), 1847-1854.

Dahlsrud, A. (2008). How corporate social responsibility is defined: An analysis of 37 definitions. *Corporate social responsibility and environmental management*, *15*(1), 1-13.

Davis, G. F., McAdam, D., Scott, W. R., & Zald, M. N. (Eds.). (2005). *Social movements and organization theory*. Cambridge University Press.

Davis, G. F., & White, C. J. (2015). The new face of corporate activism. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, *13*(4), 40-45.

Della Porta, D., & Diani, M. (2020). *Social movements: An introduction* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Della Porta, D., & Mattoni, A. (2015). Social movements. *The international encyclopedia of political communication*, 1-8.

Den Hond, F., & De Bakker, F. G. (2007). Ideologically motivated activism: How activist groups influence corporate social change activities. *Academy of management review*, *32*(3), 901-924.

Diani, M. (1992). The Concept of Social Movement. *The Sociological Review, 40*(1), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1992.tb02943.x

Dixon, P. J., & Dundes, L. (2020). Exceptional injustice: Facebook as a reflection of race-and gender-based narratives following the death of George Floyd. *Social Sciences*, *9*(12), 231.

Dodd, M. D. (2016, April 18). Corporate activism: The new challenge for an age-old question. *Institute for Public Relations*. https://instituteforpr.org/corporate-activism-new-challenge-age-old-question/

Dodd, M. (2018). Globalization, pluralization, and erosion: The impact of shifting societal expectations for advocacy and public good. *The Journal of Public Interest Communications*, *2*(2), 221-221.

Dodd, M. D., & Supa, D. W. (2014). Conceptualizing and measuring "corporate social advocacy" communication: Examining the impact on corporate financial performance. *Public Relations Journal*, *8*(3), 2-23.

Dodd, M. D., & Supa, D. (2015). Testing the viability of corporate social advocacy as a predictor of purchase intention. *Communication Research Reports*, *32*(4), 287-293.

Earl, J., Maher, T. V., & Elliott, T. (2017). Youth, activism, and social movements. *Sociology Compass*, *11*(4), e12465.

Edson, T., & Charsky, D. (2021). Developing authentic corporate activism initiatives.

Eilert, M., & Nappier Cherup, A. (2020). The activist company: Examining a company's pursuit of societal change through corporate activism using an institutional theoretical lens. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *39*(4), 461-476.

Entman, R. M. (2010). Framing media power. In *Doing news framing analysis* (pp. 347-371). Routledge.

Faust, A., Johnson, D., Guignard, Z., Adechoubou, S., Harlos, C., Fennelly, M., & Castañeda, E. (2019). Black Lives Matter and The Movement for Black Lives. In *Social Movements*, 1768-2018. New York, NY: Routledge. pp 240-253.

Fortune. (n.d.). 2020 America's largest companies. 66th Edition. Fortune. https://fortune.com/fortune500/2020/

Framing theory and media manipulation. (2019, April 14). Exploring your mind. https://exploringyourmind.com/framing-theory-and-media-manipulation/.

Fripp, G. (2017). *Drivers of corporate social responsibility (CSR)*. Marketing Study Guide. www.marketingstudyguide.com

Garland, C. (2015). Framing the poor: Media illiteracy, stereotyping, and contextual fallacy to spin the crisis. *TripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society*, *13*(1), 5-10.

Gartzke, E. A., Carcelli, S., Gannon, J. A., & Zhang, J. J. (2017). Signaling in foreign policy. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.

Garza, A. (2020). *The purpose of power: How we come together when we fall apart*. One World. https://books.google.com/books?id=JgLlDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

Gelles, D. (2017, August 19). The moral voice of corporate America. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/19/business/moral-voice-ceos.html

Georgallis, P. (2017). The link between social movements and corporate social initiatives: Toward a multi-level theory. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *142*(4), 735-751.

Gilbert, E. (2021, April 6). *The role of social media in protests: Mobilising or polarising?* 89 Initiative. https://89initiative.com/the-role-of-social-media-in-protests-mobilising-or-polarising/

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press.

Green, T., & Peloza, J. (2011). How does corporate social responsibility create value for consumers? *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 28*(1), 48–56. https://doi.org/10.1108/07363761111101949

Griley, E. (2018). Social movements and social movement theory. In Santos, J., Meek, A., & Wilcox, K (Eds.), *The Sociological Eye 2018 (pp.* 58-65). *Journal of the Sociology*. https://bit.ly/3dXVfUo

Grimes, A. (2019). #BlackLivesMatter: How a hashtag maintains a movement: A content analysis of the Black Lives Matter hashtag on Twitter.

Grohmann, B., & Bodur, H. O. (2015). Brand social responsibility: Conceptualization, measurement, and outcomes. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *131*(2), 375-399.

Hall, C. M., & Valentin, A. (2005). Content Analysis. In Ritchie, B. W., Burns, P. M., & Palmer, C. A. (Eds.), *Tourism research methods: Integrating theory with practice* (pp. 191-209). Cabi.

Hallahan, K. (2008). Strategic framing. *The international encyclopedia of communication*.

Handelman, D. (2012). Postlude: Framing hierarchically, framing moebiusly. *Journal of Ritual Studies, 26*(2), 65-77. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44368856

Hanson, K. M. (2020). *Capitulation or progress? The impact of Chick-fil-A's 2019 sponsorship decisions on corporate social advocacy and brand equity* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon).

Hasa. (2020, June 17). *What is the difference between Black Lives Matter and movement for Black Lives*. Pediaa.Com. https://pediaa.com/what-is-the-difference-between-black-lives-matter-and-movement-for-black-lives/

Haworth, A. (2020, November 23). *The global fight for Black lives*. Marie Claire. https://www.marieclaire.com/politics/a34515361/black-lives-matter-international/

Hayden, T. (2020, March*). Corporate social responsibility, advocacy, and branding*. MP&F. https://mpf.com/corporate-social-responsibility-advocacy-branding/

Hsiao, Y. (2021). Evaluating the mobilization effect of online political network structures: A comparison between the Black Lives Matter network and ideal type network configurations. *Social Forces*, *99*(4), 1547-1574. https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soaa064

Hutchinson, A. (2020, May 31). *How social platforms are responding to the #BlackLivesMatter protests across the US*. Social Media Today.

https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/how-social-platforms-are-responding-to-the-blacklivesmatter-protests-acros/578908/.

Ince, J., Rojas, F., & Davis, C. A. (2017). The social media response to Black Lives Matter: How Twitter users interact with Black Lives Matter through hashtag use. *Ethnic and racial studies*, *40*(11), 1814-1830.

Iyengar, S. (2008). Priming theory. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*.

Iyengar, S., Peters, M. D., & Kinder, D. R. (1982). Experimental demonstrations of the "not-so-minimal" consequences of television news programs. *American political science review*, *76*(4), 848-858.

Johnston, H. (2014). *What is a social movement?*. John Wiley & Sons.

Jones, T. M. (1980). Corporate social responsibility revisited, redefined. *California Management Review, 22*(3), 59–67. https://doi.org/10.2307/41164877

Jost, J. T., Barberá, P., Bonneau, R., Langer, M., Metzger, M., Nagler, J., Sterling, J., &Tucker, J. A. (2018). How social media facilitates political protest: Information, motivation, and social networks. *Political Psychology*, *39*, 85-118.

Juneja, P. (n.d.). *Corporate social responsibility*. Management Study Guide (MSG). https://www.managementstudyguide.com/practicing-socially-responsible-practices-internally.htm

Kamin, T. (2019, December 12). *Virtue signaling and the dangers of social media activism*. The Kenyon Collegian. https://kenyoncollegian.com/opinion/2019/12/virtue-signaling-and-the-dangers-of-social-media-activism/.

Karasek III, R., & Bryant, P. (2012). Signaling theory: Past, present, and future. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, *11*(1), 91.

Kaur, H. (2020, September 4). *About 93% of racial justice protests in the US have been peaceful,*
a new report finds. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/04/us/blm-protests-peaceful-
report-trnd/index.html

Kay, M. J. (2006). Strong brands and corporate brands. *European journal of marketing*.

Ketola, T., Blombäck, A., & Wigren, C. (2009). Challenging the importance of size as
determinant for CSR activities. *Management of Environmental Quality: An International*
Journal.

Kirby, J. (2020, June 12). *"Black Lives Matter" has become a global rallying cry*.
Vox. https://www.vox.com/2020/6/12/21285244/black-lives-matter-global-protests-
george-floyd-uk-belgium

Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Sage
publications.

Kuligowski, K. (2020, August 19). How to *make your corporate activism really count*. Business
News Daily. https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/15772-meaningful-corporate-
activism.html

Lai, C. S., Chiu, C. J., Yang, C. F., & Pai, D. C. (2010). The effects of corporate social
responsibility on brand performance: The mediating effect of industrial brand equity and
corporate reputation. *Journal of business ethics*, *95*(3), 457-469.

Lai, L. S., & To, W. M. (2015). Content analysis of social media: A grounded theory
approach. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, *16*(2), 138.

Leonard, K. (2019, February 12). *Four types of corporate social responsibility*. Small Business.
https://smallbusiness.chron.com/four-types-corporate-social-responsibility-54662.html

Leopold, J., & Bell, M. P. (2017). News media and the racialization of protest: An analysis of

    Black Lives Matter articles. *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: An International Journal*.

    https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/EDI-01-2017-

    0010/full/html#sec004.

Levick, R. (2019, December 18). *The new "rules" Of corporate social activism*. Forbes.

    https://www.forbes.com/sites/richardlevick/2019/12/18/the-new-rules-of-corporate-

    social-activism/

Liang, H. and Renneboog, L. (2017). On the foundations of corporate social responsibility. *The*

    Journal of Finance, 72, 853-910. doi:10.1111/jofi.12487

Luo, A. (2021, February 15). *Content Analysis: A Step-by-Step Guide with Examples*. Scribbr.

    https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/content-analysis/.

Maks-Solomon, C. (2020, July 8). *Corporate activism is more than a marketing gimmick.* The

    Conversation. https://theconversation.com/corporate-activism-is-more-than-a-marketing-

    gimmick-141570

Maktoufi, R., O'Connor, A., & Shumate, M. (2020). Does the CSR message matter? Untangling

    the relationship between corporate–nonprofit partnerships, created fit messages, and

    activist evaluations. *Management Communication Quarterly, 34*(2), 188–212.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318919897059

Martinelli, F. & Psychogyios, K. (2014). *CSR reporting as a signal of good management Do*

    investors really care? [Master's thesis, Stockholm School of Economics].

    http://arc.hhs.se/download.aspx?MediumId=2291

Marwick, A., & Lewis, R. (2017). Media manipulation and disinformation online. *New York:*

    Data & Society Research Institute, 7-19.

Mattoni, A. (2017). A situated understanding of digital technologies in social movements. Media ecology and media practice approaches. *Social Movement Studies*, *16*(4), 494-505.

McAdam, D., & Scott, W. R. (2005). Organizations and movements. *In Social movements and organization theory*, (Pp. 4-40*)*. Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (2017). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. In *Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Essays* (pp. 15-46). Taylor and Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315129648

McCarthy, M. (2013). *Americans conflicted about corporate involvement in political and social issues, new study reveals*. Global Strategy Group. http://globalstrategygroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/3-27-13-Release_GSG-Study_Business-and-Politics_Do-They-Mix.pdf

McElwee, K. (2021, January 29). *The Fortune 100 and Black Lives Matter*. Medium. https://towardsdatascience.com/the-fortune-100-and-black-lives-matter-f8ef1084f7b6.

McHugh, M. L. (2012, October 15). *Interrater reliability: The kappa statistic*. Biochemia medica. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3900052/.

Measures, A. (2019, February 6). *The difference between a corporation & a company*. Small Business. https://smallbusiness.chron.com/difference-between-corporation-company-5182.html.

Michaels, N. (2020). Posting about BLM made it a movement pushing for real change.

Mieczkowski, H., Lee, A. Y., & Hancock, J. T. (2020). Priming effects of social media use scales on well-being outcomes: The influence of intensity and addiction scales on self-reported depression. *Social Media+ Society*, *6*(4), 2056305120961784.

Miller, B. (2016). Corporate advocacy. In C. Carroll (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of corporate reputation* (pp. 163-166). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9781483376493.n69

Molden, D. C. (2014). Understanding priming effects in social psychology: What is "social priming" and how does it occur?. *Social cognition*, *32*(Supplement), 1-11.

Mongiello, M. M. (2016). Powerless in movement: How social movements influence, and fail to influence, American politics and policy.

Moratis, L. (2018). Signaling responsibility? Applying signaling theory to the ISO 26000 standard for social responsibility. *Sustainability*, *10*(11), 4172.

Moura-Leite, R.C. and Padgett, R.C. (2011). Historical background of corporate social responsibility. *Social Responsibility Journal*, *7*(4), pp. 528-539. https://doi.org/10.1108/1747111111117511

Mourougan, S., & Sethuraman, K. (2017). Hypothesis development and testing. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, *19*(5), 34-40.

Mundt, M., Ross, K., & Burnett, C. M. (2018). Scaling social movements through social media: The case of black lives matter. *Social Media + Society*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118807911

Muntinga, D. G., Moorman, M., & Smit, E. G. (2011). Introducing COBRAs: Exploring motivations for brand-related social media use. *International Journal of advertising*, *30*(1), 13-46.

Neuendorf, K. A., & Kumar, A. (2015). Content analysis. *In The International Encyclopedia of political communication*, *(pp. 1–10)*. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118541555.wbiepc065

Nicolas, A. (2021, February 18). *A quick guide to content analysis*. Research Prospect.

    https://www.researchprospect.com/content-analysis/.

Noble. (2020, May 05). What is Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and why does it matter?

    https://nobledigital.com/what-is-corporate-social-responsibility-csr-and-why-does-it-

    matter/

Oliver, M. B., Raney, A. A., & Bryant, J. (Eds.). (2019). *Media effects: Advances in theory and*

    research. Routledge.

Opinium. (2020, July 15). *US Brand & Marketing Study: Responding to Black Lives Matter*.

    Advertising Week 360. https://www.advertisingweek360.com/us-brand-marketing-study-

    responding-to-black-lives-matter/

Opp, K. D. (2009). *Theories of political protest and social movements: A multidisciplinary*

    introduction, critique, and synthesis. Routledge.

Özbilgin, M. F., & Erbil, C. (2021). Social movements and wellbeing in organizations from

    multilevel and intersectional perspectives: The case of the# blacklivesmatter

    movement. *The SAGE handbook of organisational wellbeing*.

Paine, K. (2020, February 25). *6 reasons why corporate social advocacy is good for your brand.*

    The Measurement Advisor. http://painepublishing.com/measurementadvisor/6-reasons-

    why-a-csa-strategy-is-good-for-your-brand/

Paletz, D. L., Owen, D. M., & Cook, T. E. (2013). *American government and politics in the*

    information age. Flat World Knowledge.

Parcha, J. M., & Kingsley Westerman, C. Y. (2020). How corporate social advocacy affects

    attitude change toward controversial social issues. *Management Communication*

    Quarterly, 0893318920912196.

Parenti, M. (1997). Methods of media manipulation. *The humanist*, *57*(4), 5.

Park, K., & Jiang, H. (2020). Signaling, verification, and identification: The way corporate social

advocacy generates brand loyalty on social media. *International Journal of Business*

Communication, 2329488420907121.

Patten, D. M., & Zhao, N. (2014, June). *Standalone CSR reporting by US retail companies.*

In *Accounting Forum 38*(2), pp. 132-144). Taylor & Francis.

Plante, T. G. (2020, July 15). *Virtue signaling, implicit bias, and the recent black lives matter*

movement. Markkula Center for Applied Ethics. https://www.scu.edu/ethics-

spotlight/ethics-and-systemic-racism/virtue-signaling-implicit-bias-and-the-recent-black-

lives-matter-movement/.

Priming. (n.d.). Communication Theory. https://www.communicationtheory.org/priming/.

Priming. (2012, April 13). Psychology Today.

https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/priming.

Przepiorka, W., & Berger, J. (2017). Signaling theory evolving: Signals and signs of

trustworthiness in social exchange. In *Social dilemmas, institutions, and the evolution of*

cooperation (pp. 373-392). De Gruyter Oldenbourg.

Rae, M. (2020). *How Will BLM Change Corporate Activism?*. SAGE Publications: SAGE

Business Cases Originals.

RealityScience. (2017, February 12). *Social advocacy & CSR*. http://reality.science/advocacy/

Rees, A., & Mitchell, K. (2020, May). *Digital and Online Activism: Responsibility*. RESET.

https://en.reset.org/knowledge/digital-and-online-activism

Robinson, N. (2019, March 2). *Advantages & disadvantages of simple random sampling*.

Sciencing. https://sciencing.com/advantages-disadvantages-of-simple-random-sampling-

12750376.html.

Rosenthal, A. (2019, August 30). *The 5-minute guide to corporate social advocacy*. Capterra.

https://blog.capterra.com/guide-to-corporate-social-advocacy/

Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R., Klinger, M. R., & Roskos-Ewoldsen, B. (2007). Media priming: A

meta-analysis. In *Mass media effects research: Advances through meta-analysis*, 53-80.

Psychology Press.

Rouse, M. (2018, December 21). *Corporate activism*. Tech Target.

https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/corporate-activism

Sager, J. (2020, June 3). *What is virtue signaling? How to make sure your activism is about the*

cause. Parade. https://parade.com/1046700/jessicasager/what-is-virtue-signaling/.

Salahshour, M. (2019). Evolution of costly signaling and partial cooperation. *Scientific*

reports, *9*(1), 1-7, 8792. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-45272-2

Scheufele, D. A. (1999). Framing as a theory of media effects. *Journal of communication*, *49*(1),

103-122.

Schulz, M. (2017). An analysis of corporate responses to the Black Lives Matter

movement. *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, *8*(1), 55-65.

Schwartz, H. A., & Ungar, L. H. (2015). Data-driven content analysis of social media: A

systematic overview of automated methods. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of*

Political and Social Science, *659*(1), 78-94.

Shah, S. (2014, January 21). *Social movements: Meaning, causes, types, revolution and role*. Sociology Discussion. https://www.sociologydiscussion.com/social-movements/social-movements-meaning-causes-types-revolution-and-role/2248

Signaling: The Language Peacocks, Gazelles, and Humans All Speak. (n.d.). Farnam Street. https://fs.blog/2019/11/signaling-countersignaling/

Smith, R. E. (2011). Defining corporate social responsibility: A systems approach for socially responsible capitalism.

Snow, D. A. (2013). Social movements. *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*.

Sonnett, J. (2019). Priming and Framing: Dimensions of communication and cognition. In Brekhus, W. H., & Ignatow, G. (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of cognitive sociology*. Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190273385.013.13.

Sparksight. (2016, October 5). *6 benefits of using video in your social media strategy*. https://sparksight.com/blog/online-marketing-blog/6-benefits-video-social-media-strategy/.

Spector, B. (2008). Business responsibilities in a divided world: The cold war roots of the corporate social responsibility movement. *Enterprise & Society*, 314-336.

Spence, M. (1973). Job Market Signaling. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 87*(3), 355-374. doi:10.2307/1882010

Spence, M. (1974). *Market signaling: Informational transfer in hiring and related screening processes* (No. 143). Cambridge: Harvard university press.

Sprinkle, G. B., & Maines, L. A. (2010). The benefits and costs of corporate social responsibility. *Business Horizons*, *53*(5), 445-453.

Stern, K. (2020, September 24). *This does feel like a different moment: As public support for*

    Black Lives Matter drops off, will corporate America stay the course? Vanity Fair.

    https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2020/09/will-corporate-america-stay-the-course-with-

    black-lives-matter.

Su, W., Peng, M. W., Tan, W., & Cheung, Y. L. (2016). The signaling effect of corporate social

    responsibility in emerging economies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *134*(3), 479-491.

Sustainability Academy. (2012, November 12). *CSR awards: The new*

    competition! https://sustainability-academy.org/csr-awards-the-new-competition/

Taherdoost, H. (2016). Sampling methods in research methodology; how to choose a sampling

    technique for research. *How to Choose a Sampling Technique for Research (April 10,*

    2016).

Taj, S. A. (2016). Application of signaling theory in management research: Addressing major

    gaps in theory. *European Management Journal*, *34*(4), 338-348.

Tankovska, H. (2021, April 14). *Share of U.S. population who use social media 2008-2021*.

    Statista. https://www.statista.com/statistics/273476/percentage-of-us-population-with-a-

    social-network-profile/

Taylor, K. Y. (2016). *From #BlackLivesMatter to black liberation*. Haymarket Books.

TENET. (2020, January). *2020 top 100 most powerful brands*.

    https://tenetpartners.com/top100/most-powerful-brands-list.html

Tennant, F. (2015, November). *The importance of corporate social responsibility*. Financier

    Worldwide. https://www.financierworldwide.com/the-importance-of-corporate-social-

    responsibility

Testarmata, S., Fortuna, F., & Ciaburri, M. (2018). The communication of corporate social

    responsibility practices through social media channels. *Corporate Board Role Duties and*

    Composition, *14*(1), 34-49.

Thompson, M. (2020). Digital activism and storytelling. *Resist and persist: Essays on social*

    revolution in 21st century narratives.

Tillery, A. (2019). What kind of movement is Black Lives Matter? The view from Twitter. *The*

    Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics, 4(2), 297-323. doi:10.1017/rep.2019.17

Tilly, C., & Wood, L. J. (2020). *Social Movements, 1768-2008*. New York, Routledge.

Togoh, I. (2020, June 3). *Corporate donations tracker: Here are the companies giving millions*

    to anti-racism efforts.

    Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/isabeltogoh/2020/06/01/corporate-donations-

    tracker-here-are-the-companies-giving-millions-to-anti-racism-efforts/?sh=7be59fae37dc

Tran, T. (2020, July 21). *The Ultimate Breakdown of Social Video Metrics for Every Platform*.

    Hootsuite. https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-video-metrics/

Treadwell, D. (2013). Content analysis: Understanding text and image in numbers. In

    Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry, 215-232. Thousand Oaks, CA:

    SAGE Publications.

Turan, C. (2020, June 19). *A timeline of the Black Lives Matter movement*. Cosmopolitan.

    https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/reports/a32728194/black-lives-matter-timeline-

    movement/.

Turner, R. H., & Killian, L. M. (1957). *Collective behavior* (Vol. 3). Englewood Cliffs, NJ:

    Prentice-Hall.

Turner, R. H., Smelser, N. J., & Killian, L. M. (2020, November 19). *Social movement*. Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-movement/additional-info#contributors

Tyson, A., Kennedy, B., & Funk, C. (2021, May 26). *Climate engagement and activism*. Pew Research Center Science & Society. https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2021/05/26/climate-engagement-and-activism/.

Vashchenko, M. (2017). An external perspective on CSR: What matters and what does not?. *Business Ethics: A European Review, 26(4), 396-412.*

Visser, W. (2008). Corporate social responsibility in developing countries. In *The Oxford handbook of corporate social responsibility*.

Vredenburg, J., Kapitan, S., Spry, A., & Kemper, J. A. (2020). Brands taking a stand: authentic brand activism or woke washing?. *Journal of public policy & marketing*, *39*(4), 444-460.

Wang, A. (2007). Priming, framing, and position on corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *19*(2), 123-145.

Waters, S. (2016, February 6). PUBR 5320 lecture: Corporations social responsibility. *Module 4.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0mL0MAYx3s&feature=youtu.be

Westra, E. (2021). Virtue signaling and moral progress. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, *49*(2), 156-178.

Wilkins, D. J., Livingstone, A. G., & Levine, M. (2019). Whose tweets? The rhetorical functions of social media use in developing the Black Lives Matter movement. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *58*(4), 786-805.

Williamson, V., Trump, K., & Einstein, K. (2018). Black Lives Matter: Evidence that Police-Caused Deaths Predict Protest Activity. *Perspectives on Politics, 16*(2), 400-415. doi:10.1017/S1537592717004273

Yeh, Y. P. (2015). Corporate social responsibility and service innovation on customer loyalty. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*.

Yi, E., & ProjectUX. (2018, July 23). *Themes Don't Just Emerge - Coding the Qualitative Data*. Medium. https://medium.com/@projectux/themes-dont-just-emerge-coding-the-qualitative-data-95aff874fdce.

Yim, M. C. (2021). Fake, faulty, and authentic stand-taking: What determines the legitimacy of corporate social advocacy? *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1-17.

Young, C. (2020). *The impact of Ben & Jerry's corporate social advocacy on corporate reputation and brand loyalty* (Doctoral dissertation, Syracuse University).

YPulse. (2020, July 14). This is how gen z & millennials have changed activism. https://www.ypulse.com/article/2020/07/14/this-is-how-gen-z-millennials-have-changed-activism/

Appendix A: Variables with Examples

Each brand's post was coded based on the mentions of the below phrases and clauses.

A. Presence of Response

- No

- Yes

B. (If answered Yes) **Frequency of Post Types/Strategies**

E.g. Number of BLM and Non-BLM posts

Number of Likes/Views and Comments for each strategy

Number of times a variable subcategory was used, etc.

C. Reference to BLM

- Non-BLM: Fathers' Day celebration, Pride Day celebration, etc

- Direct: mention of any murdered black person, tags of affiliated BLM groups, blacks, black community, #blm, blm, #blacklivesmatter, black lives matter, #saytheirnames, #icantbreathe, etc.

- Indirect: juneteenth, blackout Tuesday, police brutality, racism, racial inequality/discrimination/injustice, unity, etc.

- Counter: #alllivesmatter, all lives matter, #whitelivesmatter, white lives matter, etc.

D. Response Theme

- None of the below: marketing, sales, etc

- Information Sharing: release of statements, stand in support, giving updates about and from the BLM organization, etc.

- Donations & Resources: financial donations to affiliated BLM groups, provisions of useful resources to BLM, donating to black-owned businesses, etc.

- Education & Awareness: organizing seminars, sensitization, and programs for the general public, inciting attitude change towards blacks, launch new developments, make documentaries, etc.

- <u>Company Rebranding:</u> employing more blacks, adjusting brand values and missions, encouraging or supporting black employees, producing more black inclusive products, etc.

- More than one of the above

E. Post by Format Type

- <u>Blank:</u> plain white, black, red, etc colors, etc.

- <u>Text:</u> public statements, graphic designs having texts alone, screenshots of typed words, etc.

- <u>Image:</u> photographs of humans, animals, things, cartoon pictures, shape images mixed with words and/or texts, etc.

- <u>Video:</u> gifs, memes, humans or animals making sounds, moving images with sounds, etc.

- <u>Gallery:</u> 1 post having up to 10 slides with a combination of one or more examples mentioned above.

- <u>Others:</u> audio, etc.

Appendix B: Instagram Post Illustrations of Variables

Figure 7

Sample of a Non-BLM Post

Figure 8

Instagram Post Showing Samples of a Direct Post and Donations & Resources Post
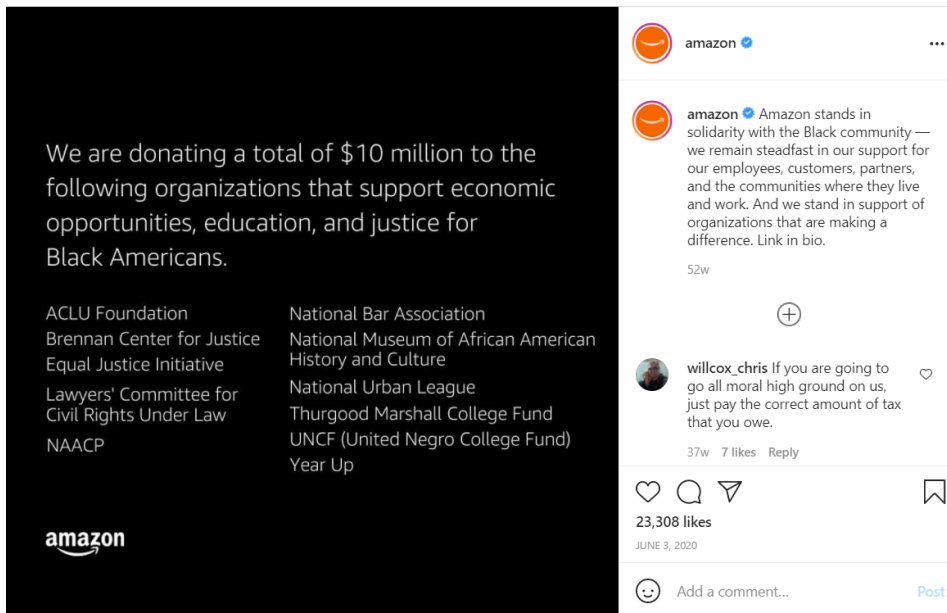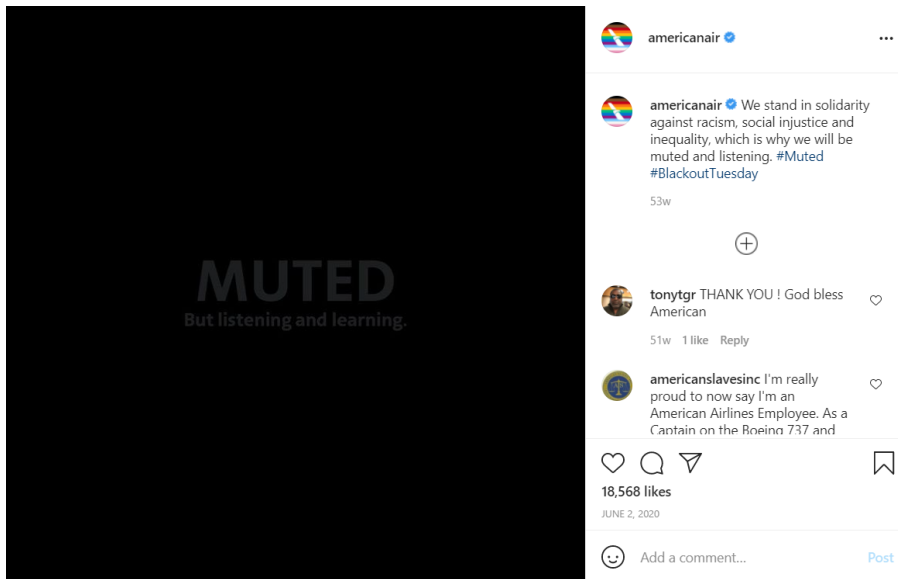
Figure 9

Sample of an Indirect Post

Figure 10

Sample of None of the Below
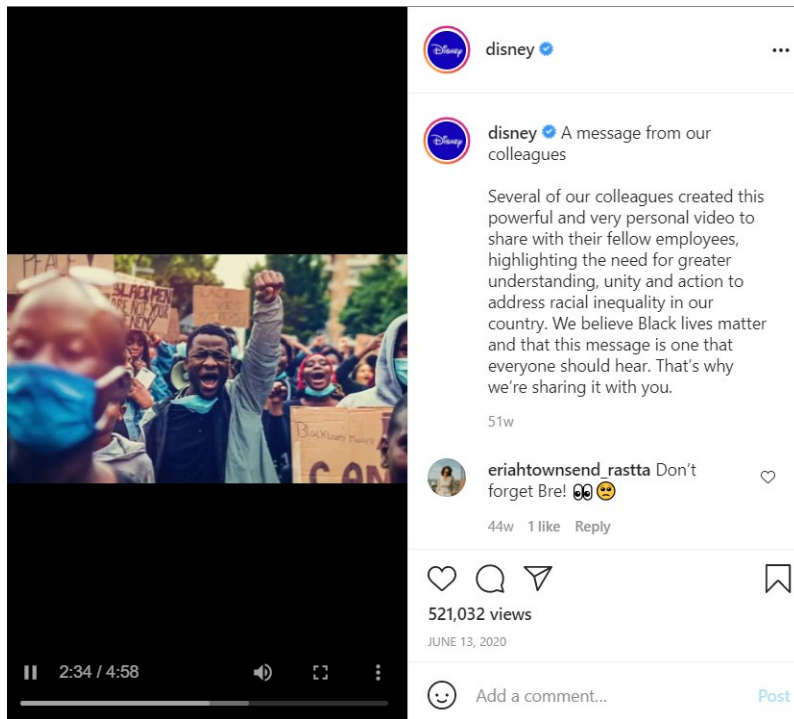
Figure 11

Sample of an Information Sharing Post
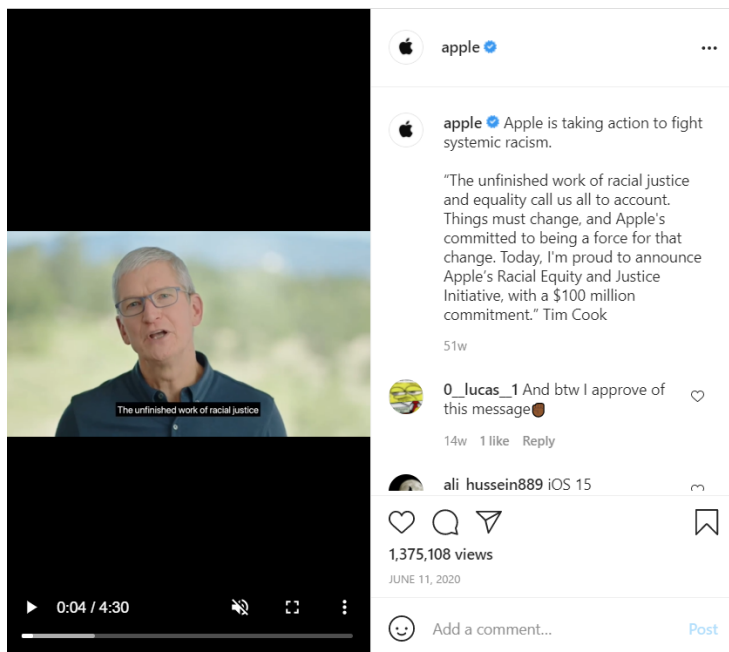

Figure 12

Sample of an Education & Awareness Post
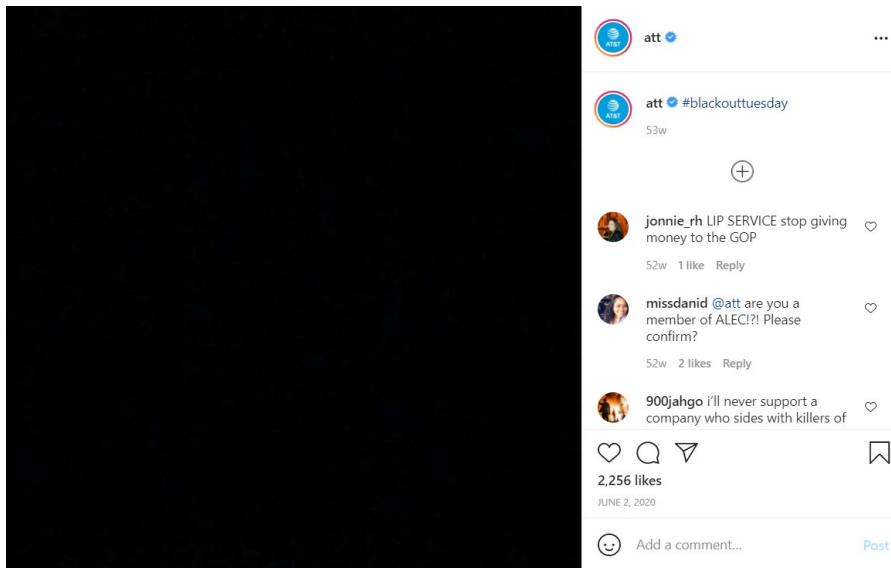
Figure 13

Sample of Company Rebranding

Figure 14

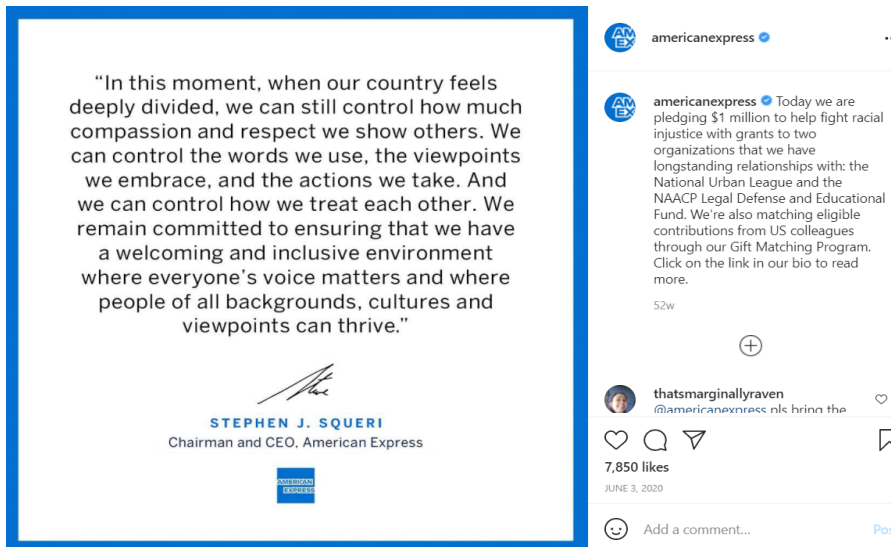*Instagram Post of Samples of More Than One of the Above and a Video Format*
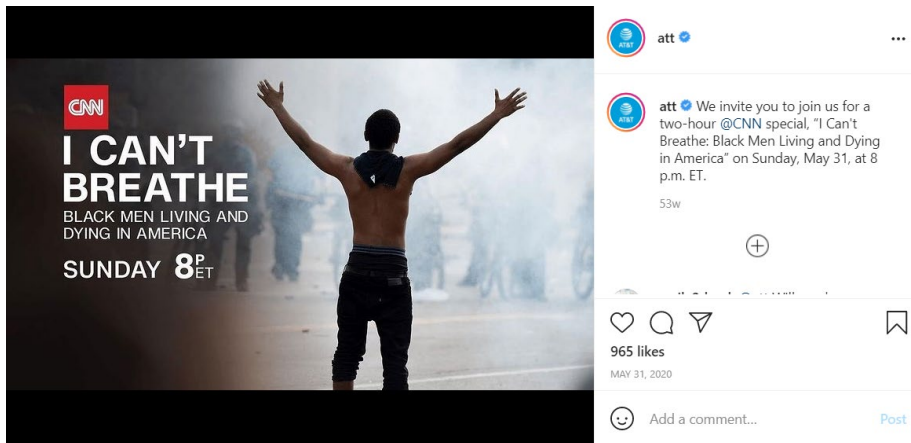
Figure 15

Sample of a Blank Post

Figure 16

Sample of a Text Format

Figure 17

Sample of an Image Format

Figure 18

Sample of a Gallery Format

VITA

OROMIDAYO TUNJI-AJAYI

Education: M.A. Brand and Media Strategy, East Tennessee State University,

Johnson City, Tennessee, 2021

B.A. Ed. English and Education, Obafemi Awolowo University,

Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria, 2016

Professional Experience: Graduate Research Assistant, East Tennessee State University,

College of Arts and Sciences, 2019-2021

News Intern, Bond FM Radio Station, Lagos, Nigeria, 2018-2019

(Per time)

Public Relations Specialist, Ifegrafits & Arts Company, Ile-Ife,

Osun State, Nigeria, 2018 – 2019 (Per time)

Honors and Awards: High Achieving Student Inductee, Honor Society, Washington,

D.C., 2021