

From what made the “Red Man Red” to *Moana*: Exploring how BIPOC members of Generation Z interpret Disney’s corporate history.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the people who never get to see themselves in media, may your voices be heard; may your stories be seen.

Abstract

This thesis investigated how BIPOC members of Generation Z understand corporate racial diversity statements and how their understanding is informed by organizational history. Focus groups were conducted at a large Midwestern university with questions exploring participant sentiments surrounding corporate racial diversity statements and organizational history, broadly as well as looking Disney's initiatives specifically.

Findings demonstrate that people hold a critical but understanding attitude towards racial diversity statements and organizational history. Furthermore, people are still willing to engage with companies if it suits their needs.

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Introduction

The spring of 2020 was a turning point in corporate engagement in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts (Hill et al., 2020). That year on May 25, George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) officer. The reckoning that followed saw millions of people demanding large scale social change to address social and racial injustice (Zaiets et al., 2020). Significant public pressure was directed towards corporations to address racial injustices writ large (Spewak, 2020; Kerber et al., 2020; Zheng, 2020). Businesses heard the calls for reform and many of the most recognizable companies and brands attempted to respond to stakeholders' concerns. Microsoft and Uber donated money to the Minnesota Freedom Fund and the Equal Justice Initiative, respectively (Hessekiel, 2020). Companies and sports organizations changed their logo/mascot from racially offensive depictions (e.g., Uncle Ben's Rice; Olson, 2020; Washington Redskins; Belson & Draper, 2020). Some companies changed their name to demonstrate their commitment to racial justice (e.g., Aunt Jemima changed to Pearl Milling Company; Alcorn, 2021).

While trust in most major institutions has waned (e.g., government, media, and nonprofits), the public's trust in business has increased. In the years 2020-2022, The Edelman Trust Barometer found that business is the most trusted public institution and the only institution that people believe to be credible and able to solve societal problems (Edelman, 2020; Edelman, 2021; Edelman, 2022). The reports indicate that public trust businesses to solve social problems more than other institutions. In particular, Gen Z experiences many stresses surrounding their work, such as financial stability, workplace

burnout, as well as the sustainability efforts of their employers (Deloitte, 2022), and they look to their employers and the companies that they work for to address these concerns.

Gen Z is particularly relevant to this study for two main reasons. First, this generation, born between 1993 and 2005 (Turner, 2015), is one of the most racially diverse populations (Parker & Igielnik, 2020). Issues of corporate racial diversity may be particularly salient to them due to the potential personal impact on their generation. Second, they are relevant as consumers and as up and coming employees in the workplace (McKinsey and Company, 2020). It will be important to understand their perspectives on corporate racial diversity efforts as they hold the potential to influence the marketplace from these two different perspectives.

For corporations, this newfound trust and the events of 2020 put the issues of social and racial injustice in the forefront of the broader conversations about corporate social responsibility (CSR) including what social issues corporations should take the lead on. Corporate racial diversity statements typically fall under the authority of CSR, which broadly is a practice that has been shown to communicate corporate values (O'Connor & Shumate, 2010), address stakeholder expectations (Capizzo, 2020) and can help shape stakeholder attitudes and behaviors towards the company (Lee & Tao, 2020; Overton et al., 2021). Broadly, CSR is used to build relationships between a company and its stakeholders (Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010), which could help address the wave of public outcry for businesses to attend to racial injustice. To be sure, DEI initiatives are not a new phenomenon in CSR. Herdman and McMillan-Capehart (2009) looked at the way that diversity programs were deployed and how they were perceived by employees. del Carmen Triana et al. (2010) examine workplace racial discrimination and how that is

impacted by organizational efforts to support diversity. Both studies argue that organizational efforts to address racial diversity hold the potential to create a more diverse workplace. However, the events of 2020 and a renewed stakeholder demand for corporate accountability regarding DEI led to an increase in racial diversity statements and organizational initiatives to address systemic injustices (Reuters Staff, 2020; Wertley & Baker, 2022).

Addressing DEI issues is complicated by many factors including organizational history. This thesis is grounded in the corporate historic responsibility (CHR) framework advanced by Janssen (2013). Her framework considers how organizations with negative histories communicatively address their past and considers the impact of organization statements and actions from the perspective of an external stakeholder. She outlines four requirements for organizations to address their past responsibly. First, organizations should communicate respect for victims' and their descendants' memories and identities (Janssen, 2013). Second, "CHR requires an attitude of remorse" (Janssen, 2013, 70). Third, CHR demands accountability for corporate history. And fourth, corporations must commit to justice in the present and future (Janssen, 2013). Janssen argues that these four steps allow organizations to bridge the past to the present and prioritize stakeholder desires in responding to irresponsible histories.

As Janssen's framework intimates, current CSR activities may be hindered by a corporation's past actions. In essence, a corporation's past informs what it can reasonably claim responsibility for in the present. This is complicated further when the social issue a company advocates for (e.g., DEI) is an issue for which they were agents in perpetuating inequities in the past (Repko et al., 2020). For example, JP Morgan Chase, whose recent

policies attempt to increase hiring of Black professionals, have historic policies that have, “made it harder for Black American to get lower interest rates, qualify for mortgages or access capital” (Repko et al., 2020). In these instances, the historic behavior of a corporation is juxtaposed against its current CSR actions thus leading stakeholders to ponder how to balance a corporation’s current stance on DEI issues with its historically racist past. Researchers have noted the importance of history in evaluating current CSR initiatives as well as providing critical context to solving vexing social issues (Stutz, 2018; Phillips et al., 2020). However, many companies prefer to “forget” or “mis-remember” their histories in an attempt to sidestep historic misdeeds (Coraiola & Derry, 2020). While there is a consensus that a link exists between organizational history and current CSR, the literature is sparse (Stutz, 2018; Phillips et al., 2020). Phillips et al. (2020) calls for the meaningful integration of history and CSR, understanding the past as a fluid state that can reemerge in the present to challenge and push up against existing understandings of history.

In addition to the limited research on organizational history and CSR, there is a paucity in research focused on racial diversity and CSR. Several notable exceptions exist including the work of Waymer and Logan (2021) and Logan (2016). However, this research is primarily focused on consumers. Certainly, there is value in studying consumers; however, organizations exist in the broader milieu which suggests non-consumers have expectations of corporations attempts to address DEI issues including racial diversity. As the global reckoning in the wake of George Floyd’s murder reminds us, current DEI statements and actions are understood through the lens of history (Janssen, 2013) and identity (Patino, 2014).

This current study enters the conversation about race by exploring the corporate responsibility to address organizational history. Specifically, this study uses qualitative methods to investigate how BIPOC members of Gen Z understand corporate racial diversity statements and how organizational history informs their understanding. This is of importance because the majority of studies do not query publics on their interpretations relying instead on analysis of corporate documents (e.g., Janssen, 2012; Waymer & Logan, 2021). Relatedly, this is the first study that I am aware of that interrogates BIPOC members of Gen Z interpretations of racial diversity statements. I do so in two interrelated ways. First, I explore the constructs in a non-context specific manner. Then, this study will focus on the Disney corporation. Disney provides a generative case for three reasons. First, it has a contentious history, with their early movies including racist themes and imagery (Benhamou, 2014). Second, they have worked to build a more racially sensitive product and organization over time culminating in 2020 when the company engaged in extensive CSR communication about their history and racial justice issues (The Walt Disney Company, 2021). Finally, the company is highly recognizable, which ensures that the public is familiar with their brand and efforts (Nunan, 2020). The brand is particularly relevant to members of Generation Z, as they are some of the most popular users of Disney+ (Stoll, 2023). Their transition towards a more racial sensitive company and their recognizability will prove useful for a case study.

The remainder of the thesis is organized as follows. Beginning in Chapter 2, an overview of the literature is offered that unpacks the research on historical corporate social responsibility (HSCR) thereby situating this study in the broader CSR context. Within this chapter, the literature that focuses specifically on racial diversity as a form of

CSR is summarized. In chapter 3, an abbreviated case study of Disney will be offered that pays specific attention to the portrayal of marginalized racial communities in their films as well as this evolution over time. Disney is the focal organization in this study and the case study provides an overview of the study's context. Following Chapter 3, the methods used in this study will be explicated. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the focus group data and answers the research questions posed in Chapter 2. The thesis concludes with Chapter 6 and a discussion of the findings as well as an articulation of potential limitations of and the larger implications of the research.

Literature Review

The study focuses on organizational history, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and race. This literature review begins with an exploration of the research about organizational history. Then, it considers existing activist efforts in the field of CSR, before addressing corporate historic responsibility and how race is generally understood in the field. It will conclude with an overview of the Walt Disney Corporation, this study's focal company.

Organizational History

Organizational history is understood as the strategic retelling of the past (Foster et al., 2017). The literature outlines three different approaches to historical construction: realist, constructivist, and co-constructive (Foster et al., 2017; Etter et al., 2015; Lubinksi, 2018). The first two approaches are closely aligned and often presented together. The realist construction adheres to a more realistic lens, prioritizing historical accuracy, while the constructivist attempts to build a narrative that serves the organization (Foster et al., 2017). In both approaches, the locus of power lies at the

management level. Managers are the organizational actors who are authorized to write and create the organization's history. The history must be accepted by the larger audience, be it internal to the organization or external publics, but the audience has little control in the construction process itself (Foster et al., 2017). This leaves the historical construction of an organization to the powerful actors within those organizations.

In contrast to the realist and constructivist approaches, the co-constructional approach posits that organizational history evolves over time and is informed by multiple perspectives (Lubinski, 2018). Organizations and publics are both involved in the historical construction process (Etter et al., 2015; Lubinski, 2018). Etter et al. (2015) brings attention to how corporations are no longer in charge of their own histories with the rise of Wikipedia-esque websites. On this site, organizations may share their organizational history, but it is allowed to be edited by a member of the general public. This democratizes information sharing by allowing people who have lived experience with a corporation to add it to the organization's information docket, as opposed to leaving the historical storytelling all to the business managers (Etter et al., 2015). By allowing both the organization and the public to contribute in this way, organizational history takes on a form that is not unilaterally produced by a single source. It also serves a check on corporate power by ensuring that potentially contradictory lived experience is shared.

Lubinski (2018) expands the co-constructional approach to historical construction by looking at additional factors of influence on organizational history, such as audiences, pre-existing historical narratives, and experienced social practices. The findings support the co-constructional approach, suggesting that audiences do not passively take in

organizational history (Lubinski, 2018). Historical construction involves the audience and also accounts for the fluidity of history. Historical narratives are always in dialogue with past and present accounts and may change depending on the audience being engaged (Lubinski, 2018). While this article highlights a more inclusive approach to historical construction, it still locates organizations as the control tower to creating organizational history. The additional factors identified here, however, ultimately serve the organization rather than the audience.

Foroughi et al. (2020) takes a slightly different approach to the co-constructive approach by first considering organizational memory as a prerequisite for organizational history. Similar to Etter et al. (2015), the authors posit that organizational memory is a socially constructed process, largely defined by lived experience (Foroughi et al., 2020). Organizational memory can be further understood through four categories: functional, interpretive, critical, and performative. The functional category understands memory as a tool. The interpretive and critical categories consider the external influences on memory, looking at stakeholder perception and power dynamics, respectively. Last, the performative category views organizational memory as an “ongoing enactment of the past” (Foroughi et al., 2020, p. 1736), which sees the past as in conversation with the present. Even though the authors are looking at organizational memory here, they envision it as the components that create organizational history. Overall, Foroughi et al. (2020) emphasizes organizational history as being composed of varying perspectives, not a dominant one. However, the author highlights that even in a co-constructivist perspective, the organization is the creator of organizational memory and history, which is only later subject to influence from external audiences. The literature emphasizes a co-

constructional approach to organizational history, but there is an imbalance within the setup. Organizations are the ones constructing the narrative, and the public responds to what they create. The literature fails to fully consider the experience and understanding of external audiences. As the term implies, organizational history is made by the organization for the organization.

The literature on organizational history calls attention to the fluid nature of the co-constructional approach. Bastien et al. (2020) problematize how history is understood foundationally in the American context, which is through a Western perspective. This conceptualization of history others Indigenous communities, reinforcing stereotypes and stigmas which have harmed the relationship between organizations and indigenous communities (Bastien et al., 2020). The author advocates for an indigenous understanding of the past, one that is circular and relational as emphasized in the co-constructional approach, but also one that maintains cultural authenticity (Bastien et al., 2020). If the idea of history being fluid suggests that present understandings of events have the potential to reshape previous understandings of those events, then the cultural context of today also has the potential to re-explain the events of the past. As an extension of the co-constructionist approach, Bastien and colleagues make clear the importance of both the temporal and cultural context of the organizational history presented.

Corporate Historic Responsibility

Organizational history and CSR come together under the theoretical umbrella of corporate historic responsibility (CHR). Janssen (2013) introduces the framework of corporate historic responsibility (CHR), which looks at corporations with undesirable histories. Organizations of this nature may have to address this past when building

legitimacy for their organization in the present. However, many organizations have deflected responsibility or attempted to address the issue in a shallow manner, leaving the harmed communities with little reconciliation. Framing this, Janssen offers four key components for organizations to address their corporate past in a historically responsible manner. The first point demands respect for victims' and their descendants' memories and identities. By remembering victims and their descendants, an organization honors the harm they have done and the lives that were affected as opposed to deflecting, which negates the harm that has even existed. The second states that, "CHR requires an attitude of remorse" (p. 70). This can be demonstrated through a variety of actions, but at large acknowledges and takes responsibility for injustices sustained. Most importantly, remorse shows the public that an organization has changed. Third, CHR demands accountability for corporate history. Accountability "looks like" an organization providing information about their past, present, and future. But, the larger goal of accountability is, in sharing this information, for the company to face judgment and the consequences of their actions. The fourth and final component of CHR is a demand for corporate commitment to justice in the present and future. CHR requires that historic responsibility is sustained through efforts over time. By committing to an attitude of justice, the company demonstrates that changes were made from the "system" that allowed for atrocities to transpire. Additionally, by honoring the injustice in the future the company positions itself with an attitude of social consciousness. Adhering to these steps, an organization can be in conversation with its past in a meaningful way that allows it to maintain legitimacy into its future.

Stutz (2018) finds that the use of history in CSR is selective, if not, non-existent. CSR borrows history for its own benefit. This does not necessarily imply that the information is warped, but instead indicates a lack of meaningful integration between history and CSR efforts (Stutz, 2018). Stutz argues that the field of CSR cherry-picks historic information that will supplement its own agenda. The author further problematizes the ability of CSR practitioners to create their organization's histories unchecked and challenges the field to integrate history critically as a possible avenue to solving greater societal problems (Stutz, 2018). Seeing that history has largely been manipulated to benefit the field, a realist and constructivist interpretation, the integration of a critical lens may allow the field to address larger institutional issues. This author's push to integrate history addresses the one-sidedness found with the current co-constructional approach, encouraging practitioners to re-envision their use of history.

Phillips et al. (2020) further advocates for the meaningful integration of history and CSR. The study examines the overlap and intersection of the past, history, and CSR, dividing their thoughts into three perspectives: the past-of-CSR, the past-in-CSR, and the past-as-CSR. The first perspective considers the history of CSR in thought and practice, realizing that CSR does not give proper weight to its own history. The authors encourage a greater consideration of history in future work. The second perspective, the past-in-CSR, suggests bringing CSR and history closer together by using history to supplement CSR ideas and norms. History, therefore, would be able to challenge, critique, or add to CSR work. The past-as-CSR looks at how the past is understood and utilized in the present. This perspective understands the past as a fluid state that can be challenged and changed by new information and modern interpretations. This article highlights the

inherent and necessary connection between history and CSR, offering a mechanism for the field of CSR to more critically examine and more meaningfully incorporate history into the practice (Phillips et al., 2020). While this integration stands to benefit corporations, it does leave out the perspective of the public, who is believed to be co-constructor in the understanding of history. Both articles call for the presence of organizational history in CSR. However, as the literature on organizational history showed, historical construction does not grant equal weight, if any, to external audiences. To move forward with this effort, not only should history be integrated into CSR, but the perspectives of external audiences should be integrated into history as well.

While Stutz (2018) and Phillips et al. (2020) advocate for the integration of history and CSR, Coraiola and Derry (2020) argue that history can be a form of corporate social irresponsibility (CSI). Their study examines the strategic efforts of U.S. Big Tobacco to forget their history. Tobacco corporations worked together to maintain a meticulous log of information that was unfavorable to itself in order to allow them to remember the information they were working hard to forget (Coraiola and Derry, 2020). The authors find that these efforts are a double-edged sword. By engaging in these strategies whereby companies withheld information from the public, but maintained a record of their knowledge, they may “forget” their past, but in doing so participate in additional irresponsibility. This article makes evident the harm that organizations face when they avoid their own, oftentimes problematic, histories. While some corporations may be able to get away with this for a while, as U.S. Big Tobacco was able to, eventually the information will come to light. Although this article does demonstrate the

overlap of history and CSR, it focuses more on the detrimental effects that can be had when historic CSI is kept in the dark.

Janssen (2012) takes this a step further, looking at the efforts of Aetna to apologize for their historic involvement in slavery. The author notes the defensive communication on behalf of the corporation in Aetna's attempt to apologize for their past. In this case, prioritizing legitimacy in lieu of accountability damaged Aetna's reputation. Overall, this article shows the repercussions of corporate apology that fails to reconcile with the appropriate audiences. Janssen demonstrates the efforts and subsequent failure of an organization to apologize when talking about an incident from their past. The author shows that by approaching the issue with defensiveness and ego, Aetna failed to address the needs of the public and take accountability.

The literature on organizational history envisions history as a co-constructed idea, but it largely fails to address non-organizational perspectives, focusing largely on self-serving approaches. This stance ultimately creates a corporate-dominant sphere of the construction of organizational history that is more constructivist than co-creational. Stutz (2018) is one of the few articles that addresses this pitfall, calling any individual engaging with CSR to meaningfully integrate it with history to advance the field beyond self-serving. Other studies push back against this dominant narrative (Stutz, 2018; Foroughi et al., 2020; Bastien et al., 2020), but the fact remains that when it comes to organizational history, the field is not giving weight to other experiences and understandings beyond their own.

The aftermath of the murder of George Floyd showed the world the power that the public holds in shaping organizational efforts. The public demanded change, and

corporations delivered on this request, save for the quality of the delivery. There is clear a symbiosis between corporations and the public, whereby corporations rely on the public for approval and the public looks to corporations to address their societal concerns. However, this corporate-consumer relationship is not reflected in the literature. This study argues for the broader consideration of non-organizational actors and seeks to examine this perspective as it relates to corporate racial diversity statements.

CSR, CHR, and Race

Corporations adopt a wide variety of issue foci under the broad umbrella of CSR. As the introduction stated, DEI has become in demand in society following the murder of George Floyd. There was renewed public demand for companies to address any racism that was related to their organization. To respond, companies changed their racially offensive names and logos (Alcorn, 2021) and donated money to racial justice organizations (Hessekiel, 2020) as a demonstration of their commitment to be racially conscious. Additionally, companies released diversity statements (Reuters Staff, 2023; Wertley & Baker, 2022). Within these statements, they often addressed race specifically, but they did not address their own organizational history (Wertley & Baker, 2022).

Racial Diversity Statements

The literature on corporate racial diversity statements explores trends within, as well as what audiences are looking for in corporate racial diversity statements (Sterbenk et al., 2021; Maiorescu-Murphy, 2022). Sterbenk et al. (2021) finds that corporate racial diversity statements often emphasize the systemic nature of racism and their “ongoing commitment” to address it. The two ideas go hand-in-hand with one another. If racism is deeply rooted in the institutions of our society, then corporations need to be consistently

and continuously addressing the issue. The authors see this framing as an attempt to push back on the idea that companies are all talk and no walk when it comes to race (Sterbenk et al., 2021). However, by framing these efforts as ongoing, corporations may sidestep the historical patterns that do not align with the statement. The article does not explore the actual efforts of corporations over time that would evidence their ongoing commitment to the cause, as they indicate in their statements. Although corporations may desire to be and present themselves as well-meaning actors, they fail to demonstrate adequate follow up to their corporate racial diversity statements.

Maiorescu-Murphy (2022) also analyzes diversity efforts of companies, looking at five American companies' engagement on Twitter, finding that consistency across communication is key with corporate diversity communication. The author outlines two different approaches to diversity communication: CSR-centered or business-centered (Maiorescu-Murphy, 2022). The former takes a more genuine approach to CSR, making an organizational effort regardless of financial gain, while the latter engages with CSR for the primary purpose of helping the business. Businesses employ either approach during the different time periods, but it was the businesses that maintained a CSR-centered approach during both periods that had the greatest user agreement with the corporate diversity statement (Maiorescu-Murphy, 2022). This highlights the significance that the perceived motive of the CSR communication has the broader perception of the business. Businesses that consistently prioritize CSR no matter the cause fare the best against other organizations. The study additionally found that cases of user disagreement with corporate diversity statements arose when companies had a poor reputation or previous misdeeds against minority groups (Maiorescu-Murphy, 2022).

The academic literature suggests that corporate racial diversity communication must be community-influenced, long-term, and consistent. However, these articles also point out the lack of historical context for these statements. As Sterbenk et al. (2021) draws attention to, the emphasis of “ongoing efforts” fails to address any historic malpractice from the corporations. Similarly, Maiorescu-Murphy (2022) shows that online users disagree with corporate statements when a corporation has previously discriminated against minority communities. This warrants further exploration of how corporate history impacts the understanding of corporate racial diversity statements produced in the present. These articles illustrate that modern CSR and CSA efforts might not be fully informed by history in a way that allows companies to be accountable to their own previous engagements and actions.

Beyond Diversity Statements

Racial diversity statements are one way that corporations communicate their commitment to social responsibility. A related body of research has examined corporate racial initiatives beyond diversity statements. The literature is presented in chronological order to better understand the evolution and progression of CSR efforts to race.

Patino et al. (2014) conducts a study looking at consumer opinions on CSR activities. They find that consumers support companies with CSR activities that benefit their group identity, looking at the factors of gender, race, and household income (Patino et al., 2014). The study additionally looks at how the overlap of these variables may impact consumer opinion. Findings show that while most consumers agree that people should not be discriminated against, their support was largely distributed based on their personal identity (e.g., a Black person making 100k is more concerned with race and

employee discrimination, whereas a Black person making 50k is more concerned with charitable efforts of an organization; Patino et al., 2014). This finding calls attention to how people respond to different CSR efforts. Not every BIPOC person supports racial causes if there may be another organizational cause that can benefit them in another way. This study also considers an external perspective, by looking at stakeholder response. The proposed study will build on this literature, examining the understanding of corporate racial diversity statements from external stakeholders.

Waymer and Street (2015) look at the overlap of race and history, studying the presence and historical significance of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The authors argue that these institutions serve as reminders of the racialized history of the U.S. They discuss the inception and evolution of HBCUs, highlighting how they were understood and perceived in society. HBCUs were first seen as useful for educating Black communities, but as the U.S. has attempted to move into a post-racial era, some believe them to be dated relics (Waymer & Street, 2015). Georgia Senator Seth Harp suggested the merging of two HBCUs with two predominantly white institutions, attempting to “close this chapter – not forget it” (Waymer & Street, 2015, p. 155). However, in proposing this, the senator would eradicate the historical significance of HBCUs. This study establishes a connection between memory, public relations, and race, showing how people are more inclined to forget a racial moment than to remember it. By arguing for the maintained existence of HBCUs, the authors demonstrate the effort to move into a post-race society while also upholding the significance of honoring and remembering the past. Although this article is not centered in an organization as will be explored in the proposed study, it shows the necessity of history when discussing the

topic of race. Remembering the history of race helps remind people in the present of past transgressions and informs future action.

The literature also discusses corporations' responsibility to race as well the actions that companies have taken to move the effort forward. Logan (2016) studies the initiatives of a large corporation attempting to engage with racial justice advocacy. This study analyzes the Starbucks' Race Together campaign through the lens of critical race theory (CRT). The author opens by addressing the need for more racial discourse in the profession following a legacy of exclusion and therefore absence. She finds that the campaign followed the four tenets of critical race theory: 1) centering race in the analysis, 2) acknowledging that dominant groups often have a hard time recognizing the discriminatory role of race in society, 3) valuing the voices and lived experiences of racial minorities, and 4) maintaining a commitment to racial equality (Logan, p. 98, 2016). By adhering to these tenets, the author argues that Starbucks is able to show a sincere effort in engaging with racial discourse, albeit in an imperfect manner. The author furthers that corporations should use their power and resources to address racial inequality. She uses a real life example of a company addressing race to highlight how other companies may follow suit and potentially do better with future initiatives.

Logan (2019) builds on the idea of corporations responding to issues of race in society with a new framework, corporate responsibility to race (CRR). She argues that corporations have a duty to speak out on issues of race due to their power in the marketplace. Corporations have also historically benefited from Black people for their monetary potential, in the past and present. Logan's CRR framework includes three points. First, it prioritizes societal wellbeing over a profit motive. While companies need

money to function in society, they should not place greater value on profit when trying to address issues of race (Logan, 2019). Second, it necessitates a focus on race, but also acknowledges intersectionality. The author does not advocate for the erasure of nuance within racial identity, instead she posits that this framework should be inclusive to other identity traits other than race (Logan, 2019). Last, Logan (2019) states that within a CRR approach, corporations should operate ethically. Corporations were first granted personhood under the Fourteenth Amendment in 1886 (Logan, 2019). Logan (2019) points out that this Amendment was originally designed to protect newly freed slaves, and by appropriating it to defend powerful entities, corporations should use this power to benefit the greater society (Logan, 2019). The author does call attention to the potential issues of corporations addressing the topic of race, stating that they could broaden their audience base and potentially gain financial reward for this effort. However, she advocates that corporations still engage with this work, as they have historically contributed to the problem (Logan, 2019). In this argument, the author draws a connection between social issues and corporate history. The legacy that a corporation has should not only be looked at for historical purposes, but it should also dictate how those companies move forward into the future. If a company has a history of harm, it is their duty to repair that damage (Logan, 2019). The perspective in this study considers corporations generally, but the proposed study will examine the response of a single corporation responding to its past. Additionally, it takes the research a step further by looking past what corporations do to consider how external audiences understand corporate racial diversity statements (Logan, 2019).

Waymer and Logan (2021) move the literature in a different direction by examining how a company is able to side-step its contentious history regarding social justice issues in order to engage with those same topics in the present day. In the early 1990s, Nike came under fire for the use of sweatshops to manufacture their products. This earned them the reputation of human rights violator. However, through the success of the *Dream Crazier* and *Just Do It* campaigns along with other advocacy efforts, Nike was able to enhance their credibility and legitimacy, taking a stand on these issues. By addressing relevant issues such as race and gender rights, Nike was able to favorably shift its public perception. Although this study does not focus on race exclusively over time, it clearly shows how a company can reframe its perception by engaging new efforts focused on race. In this study, the authors use a critical PR approach to examine the campaigns from Nike. The proposed study will use focus groups to understand public perceptions of a different company's effort to reframe its social justice efforts.

These studies look at organizational efforts to address race, finding that companies will talk about race, but fail to address their own history with the topic. With exception to Patino et al. (2014), the studies do not address an external perspective, which is what this thesis aims to do. This study will bridge the gap using CHR to address how organizational efforts on race may be affected by history and to further study the external perception of the elements.

Abbreviated Case Study: Disney

This study uses Disney as a case study to gain insight into how BIPOC members of Gen Z understand racial diversity statements. Disney provides a suitable case study due to its prominence in media, its history, and its recent efforts to address it. Disney is

an extremely recognizable company to the general public, which will ensure that participants have at least heard of the organization. It also has produced racially harmful films in its past that it is now trying to address. This piece of their history and the corresponding efforts are well-suited to the focus of this study on organizational history and racial diversity statements.

First, it has a contentious history, with their early movies including racist themes and imagery. Second, they have worked to build a more racially sensitive product and organization over time culminating in 2020 when the company engaged in extensive CSR communication about their history and racial justice issues. Finally, the company is highly recognizable, which ensures that the public is familiar with their brand and efforts.

Disney Overview

The Walt Disney Company, more commonly referred to as Disney, is a multi-billion-dollar mass media conglomerate. The company was founded in 1923 by brothers, Roy, and Walt Disney. The company's first feature film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, was released in 1934 (D23, 2022). The film became one of the highest grossing films at the time (Nash Information Services, LLC., 2023). That initial success was followed with the releases of *Fantasia*, *Bambi*, and *Cinderella* in the 1940s and 50s (D23, 2022). Then, on July 17, 1955, Disney opened its first theme park in Anaheim, California: Disneyland. This park, which remains in operation today, was wildly successful, featuring characters and rides themed from their movies (D23, 2022). The company later opened additional parks in Orlando, Florida in 1971, Tokyo in 1983, Paris in 1992, Hong Kong in 2005, and Shanghai in 2016 (D23, 2022).

By the 21st century, Disney had produced several hundred films, ranging from *The Little Mermaid* to the *Avengers* franchise (D23, 2022). Popular animated releases include *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King*, both of which were brought to Broadway in 1997 and 2000, respectively (D23, 2022). Today, Disney is the third largest media conglomerate in the world with over \$67 billion in revenue and subsidiaries in broadcasting, publishing, and music (Fortune Staff, 2022).

Disney films and racial depictions

The company's popularity, however, is not universal. Its films have a history of depicting racially offensive imagery and themes (Towbin et al., 2004; Breaux, 2010; Benhamou, 2014; Islam & Akter, 2020). Although they were well-received by certain publics at the time of their initial release, as evidenced by their box office successes (Nash Information Services, LLC., 2023), the passage of time offered the opportunity for other publics to recognize and express a more critical view of the films (Towbin et al., 2004; Benhamou, 2014).

The company originally vaulted their racially harmful films, removing them from streaming services, only to later unvault them in 2019 (Altman-Devilbiss, 2021). It should be noted that the date they were originally put in the vault was not found. The public was not given the space to react or respond to the vaulting of Disney films, since they were not notified that Disney had taken the action. These films included *Peter Pan*, *The Aristocats*, *The Jungle Book*, *Lady and the Tramp*, *Dumbo*, and *Swiss Family Robinson*, to name a few. In the press, Disney spoke of this as a teachable moment, where they can address their previous misgivings in a way that does not attempt to hide (Tinubu, 2019).

Examples of racist imagery and content in Disney movies are extensive. For example, *Dumbo* (1941) features a crow character named Jim Crow, a term that was used as a racial slur in the late 1800s and later used to define an American movement to maintain segregation (Pilgrim, 2012). Other films, such as *Peter Pan* (1953), *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), and *Aladdin* (1992), include racist stereotypes against Indigenous, Asian, and Arabic communities, respectively (Dean, 2020). These films were all produced and released between 1941 and 1992, but Disney's racially offensive content is not held exclusively to this time; *Pocahontas* (1995) and its sequel were released in 1995 and 1998, respectively (D23, 2022). It is important to note that *Pocahontas* is not one of the films that Disney deems as racially harmful. Although the public has identified the films and its themes as racially harmful (Pewewardy, 2022), Disney did not include the disclaimer that appears on their other racially harmful films on this one. Nevertheless, these examples demonstrate Disney's early misgivings when addressing marginalized communities, and highlight their organizational history riddled with racist offenses. All the aforementioned films remain available on Disney+, as well as for purchase on YouTube, Amazon Prime, Vudu, Redbox, and Google Play. Movie availability can also be found in Figure 1.

In contrast to the films above, the *Song of the South* (1946), is the only film that is no longer available to the public. *Song of the South* has been labeled as Disney's most controversial film (Spencer, 2019). The film follows the story of a young boy who learns lessons from a former slave, featuring racist dialects references. The official term Disney uses is "vaulted" meaning the film has been permanently put in Disney's vault. This terminology is of importance because Disney has vaulted films for a period of time (e.g.,

Fantasia (1940), *Cinderella* (1950), *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), *The Jungle Book* (1967), and *The Little Mermaid* (1989)) and then re-released them. After its initial release in theaters in 1946, *Song of the South* was not released for wider distribution and is no longer available on any streaming services.

Disney today

Today, Disney positions itself as a diversity-forward organization (Disney Impact-Diversity and Inclusion, 2023). They have worked to revamp the CSR initiatives, as well as create media that reflects this shift. The Disney Social Responsibility webpage explains their diversity and inclusion commitment as follows,

“The Walt Disney Company is committed to developing and retaining a diverse workforce, fostering a company culture that is welcoming and respectful, creating content and experiences that resonate with our global audiences, and collaborating with community organizations to make our industries more accessible to all,” (Disney Impact-Diversity and Inclusion, 2023).

Disney expresses a commitment to integrating diversity and inclusion into their content as well as their efforts with underrepresented communities (Disney Impact-Diversity and Inclusion, 2023). Within these efforts, Disney highlights the importance of transparency and accountability, stating that they have increased their metrics for underrepresented groups in their content and the organization as a whole (Disney Impact-Diversity and Inclusion, 2023).

As part of their commitment to diversity and inclusion, Disney added a disclaimer to many of their movies that have been identified as being racially insensitive. As noted earlier, while some of the films were temporarily vaulted, all apart from *Song of the*

South, are currently available on the company's streaming platform, Disney +. The disclaimer reads:

This programme includes negative depictions and/or mistreatment of people or cultures. These stereotypes were wrong then and are wrong now. Rather than remove this content, we want to acknowledge its harmful impact, learn from it and spark conversation to create a more inclusive future together” (BBC, 2020).

The content warning appears at the very start of each movie included in this study. The disclaimer is on the screen for 13 seconds. The message displays white text on a black background.

Proponents of the company argue that the disclaimer demonstrates an attempt to hold themselves accountable, instead of addressing the issue behind closed doors, as many companies do, Disney chose to speak on this publicly (Tinubu, 2019). There has also been concern over the effectiveness of the disclaimer, particularly when thinking about its reception by children. Hemant Shah, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, studies the portrayal of race and ethnicity in film and media and voiced concerns about the harmful scenes in Disney movies and the new disclaimer (Pietsch, 2020). He said that white children are likely to internalize these stereotypes, while children of color are likely to recognize themselves in these negative portrayals. He generally does not believe that children are going to understand the disclaimer (Pietsch, 2020).

Disney has also had its fair share of recent public scandal related to race. In 2020, John Boyega, a lead actor in the new *Star Wars* sequence, spoke out about the racism that he experienced while filming (Desta, 2020). Boyega expressed his disappointment and

frustration with the company for having overstated and overhyped his role, along with the roles of other BIPOC actors, but then creating one-dimensional storylines for their characters in the actual films (Desta, 2020). In 2022, Disney also had an issue when a drill team from Texas performed at one of the parks, chanting, “Scalp ‘em, Indians, scalp ‘em” (Guardian News and Media, 2022). Disney apologized for the performance, stating that the audition tape submitted was different from what was performed. They said they have instituted protocol to ensure that this does not happen again (Guardian News and Media, 2022).

Disney films/artifacts

Beginning in the early 2000s, Disney has featured a wider array of races while avoiding racist stereotypes used in earlier films. In 2009, Disney had its first Black princess with the release of *Princess and the Frog*. The film followed the story of Tiana, a young Black woman working hard to make her dreams come true in New Orleans. The film received praise and criticism for featuring a Black princess, but she took the form of a frog for most of the film, defeating the purpose of representation in this case (Golding, 2021). In 2016, Disney released *Moana*, featuring a Polynesian princess without a love interest; a distinct departure from the princesses (Lapin, 2016). *Black Panther*, 2018 marked another major milestone, as one of Disney’s first major motion pictures with an almost entirely Black cast (Smith, n.d.). Other animated films, such as *Coco*, 2017 and *Raya and the Last Dragon*, 2021, depict Mexican and southeast Asian cultures, respectively, advancing Disney’s effort to be more racially and ethnically diverse. Their newer films can be seen as an extension of their corporate efforts to be more racially diverse.

Taken together, the history and modern practices of Disney show a shifting and complex organizational approach to racial diversity. For this reason, Disney is ideal for this study. Their history is not uniform in that they maintain the racially insensitive stance of their past, nor do they solely acknowledge their recent efforts to be racially inclusive. They acknowledge and address both. This leaves space for exploring how the public understands this shift in identity and how they understand Disney’s past as it measures up against its present. Additionally, the breadth and stature of Disney makes the organization ideal. It is relatively well-known and holds a significant place in media where findings may hold implications for other media organizations.

Figure 1.

Film	Release Date	Negative racial content	Availability
Fantasia	1940	A Black female centaur is portrayed as a slave to other centaurs. The Black centaur wears braids in her hair, hoop earrings, and has large red lips, as was done in minstrel shows.	On Disney+, available for purchase on YouTube, and Apple TV
Dumbo	1941	Crows act in a manner reminiscent of minstrel shows. The main crow is named Jim Crow.	On Disney+, available for purchase on YouTube, Apple TV, and Amazon Prime
Song of the South	1946	The movie portrays positive relationships between enslaved people and their slave owners.	N/A
Peter Pan	1953	Plays into stereotypes of indigenous people, such as the idea that they are red-skinned and smoke heavily; men	On Disney+, available for purchase on

		are portrayed as unattractive while the women are sexualized.	YouTube, Apple TV, and Amazon Prime
Lady and the Tramp	1955	Features two Siamese cats that portray stereotypes of East Asian people. This includes slanted eyes, as well as broken manner of speaking.	On Disney+, available for purchase on YouTube, Apple TV, and Amazon Prime
The Jungle Book	1967	The ape, King Louie, is seen as a caricature of Black people, further portraying stereotypes against Black people.	On Disney+, available for purchase on YouTube, Apple TV, and Amazon Prime
The Aristocats	1970	One of the characters plays the piano with chopsticks and sings a song where the “l” sound is replaced with an “r,” a device used to mimic an East Asian accent. This is amongst other offenses against East Asian people.	On Disney+, available for purchase on YouTube, Apple TV, and Amazon Prime
Aladdin	1992	The entire film portrays the Middle East as a mysticized place. The men are portrayed as brutish and sneaky, while one of the only women shown wears a revealing outfit.	On Disney+, available for purchase on YouTube, Apple TV, and Amazon Prime

Summary and Research Questions

The existing research highlights the relationship between CSR, organizational history, and issues of racial diversity. In addition, market data shows that Generation Z has distinct sets of CSR expectations and experiences with corporations and racial diversity (McKinsey & Company, 2020). The summarized literature also highlights the gaps present in the literature thus signaling a need for greater exploration of history’s influence on organizational efforts, specifically with CSR and race related organizational

efforts. Finally, the aforementioned section presents Disney as an appropriate context for studying the concepts in this study. Grounded in this literature, the current study asks a series of interrelated questions:

RQ1: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z understand corporate racial diversity statements?

RQ1a: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z understand Disney's corporate racial diversity statements?

RQ2: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z explain the relationship between corporate racial diversity statements and organizational history?

RQ2	a: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z explain the relationship between Disney's corporate racial diversity statements and its organizational history?
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RQ3: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z want corporations to address their racially harmful histories?

RQ3a: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z want Disney to address their racially harmful history?

Methodology

This study used focus group interviews to understand how BIPOC members of Generation Z understand organizational racial diversity statements and how this is informed by organizational history. This study took a case study approach exploring the efforts of Disney. Six focus groups were conducted with a maximum of seven

participants. Each focus group lasted approximately an hour and a half. While it is ideal to collect data until saturation is reached (Kreuger & Casey, 2000), the amount of focus groups conducted were determined by research funds.

Focus groups

This study conducted six focus groups consisting of five to six participants. Participants were assigned to focus groups based on the availability of their schedules. Each focus group lasted approximately 90 minutes. The goal of the focus groups was to gain an understanding of how BIPOC members of Gen Z understand organizational statements on racial diversity and how this understanding is impacted by an organization's history. Participants were asked two sets of questions: the first pertained to general understanding and sentiment towards organizational racial diversity statements and history and the second specifically addressed understanding and sentiment towards Disney. The full question set is listed in Appendix D.

Focus groups were selected for this study for two reasons. First, focus groups are well-suited to address the topic of race. While race is a hotly debated idea, it is also a socially constructed one (Smaje, 1997). By allowing participants to discuss this topic in a group setting, focus groups were able to model the social environment in which race is constructed. Participants were able to share their own ideas while engaging with and responding to the thoughts of others. Second, focus groups allow for collective discussion (Jugenheimer et al., 2015). People tend to understand organizational statements subjectively (Suchman, 1995). Each individual built their own understanding of an organizational statement. However, it was the coalescence of these understandings that

impacted the broader perception of an organization. The utilization of focus groups allowed for the exploration and coalescence of individually held ideas.

Participants

Participants were self-identified BIPOC members who also belong to Gen Z. This population was chosen based on race and age. Historically, corporate environments have negatively affected BIPOC employees in corporate public relations roles (Edwards, 2013; Len-Rios, 1998) as well as in newsrooms (Douglas, 2021; Nishiwaka et al., 2009; Pritchard & Stonbely, 2007). If corporations are changing their outlook to be more racially inclusive, it will be important to hear the ideas of the potentially affected population. While BIPOC members of Gen Z were not required to be employed at the time of the interview, it is likely that they will be a part of the workforce at some point in their life (Bloomgarden, 2022), and furthermore, affected by these corporate stances.

It is additionally important that people belonging to Gen Z are included in this study as they are relevant to the marketplace as both employees and buyers. Bloomgarden (2022) reported that 27% of the workforce will be Gen Z by 2025, an increase from the current 13% (Kaplan, 2022). McKinsey and Company (2020) also described Gen Z as on the rise for defining shopping and consumer habits. They are situated in a spot where they themselves are entering the marketplace as buyers, but they are still able to influence their parents and older generations (McKinsey & Company, 2020). This positionality makes this generation influential for the marketplace. Understanding their attitudes towards companies through their thoughts on corporate racial diversity statements can hold implications for their behavior as well (Kim et al., 2020).

Participants were recruited in three different ways: an undergraduate research pool, poster distribution, and outreach to racially identified student groups. The undergraduate student research was utilized to home in on the Gen Z element of the target population. Posters were distributed on the second floor of the student union and on posters boards around campus (Krueger & Casey, 2000). These locations were chosen due to the high traffic of BIPOC and Gen Z individuals, respectively. Last, the primary researcher reached out to racially identified student groups to relay the research opportunity to their organizations. This was intended to target the BIPOC population desired for this study.

Participants were students at a large Midwestern university located in an urban center. The site provided access to members of Gen Z and was in close proximity to the primary researcher thereby minimizing the overall cost of the research project. In total, six focus groups were conducted and 26 people participated in this study. The focus groups were conducted over three weeks in March 2023. Focus group participants ranged in number from 2 -7 in each group.

All participants were members of Gen Z, with birth years ranging from 1998 to 2004. All participants self-identified as BIPOC. There was a range of racial identities, but the majority of participants were Black. There were 10 Black participants, nine Asian participants, two Hispanic/Latine participants, two biracial participants, two multiracial participants, and one “other.” In terms of gender, there were 21 women, three men, and two gender expansive participants.

Participants anecdotal familiarity with Disney ranged from one participant who proclaimed they would be a “Disney adult” to several participants who had limited

engagement with Disney content. A formal method to determine participants' familiarity with Disney was considered but ultimately ruled out due to time constraints and concern of assigning focus group assignment.

Participants received a \$40 Amazon gift certificate upon completion of a focus group. In addition, if participants registered for the study through the undergraduate research pool, they received extra credit for the class that they were assigned. The amount of extra credit was at the discretion of the instructor for their class.

Data collection

Prior the study being conducted; a mock focus group was executed. This focus group helped the researcher hone the interview guide. In addition, participants in this mock focus group gave insights into what Disney clips they understood. The data from this focus group is not included in the analysis of this study.

There were two instruments used in this study: an anonymous demographic survey and an interview guide. The first instrument was used to gather demographic information on participants (Krueger & Casey, 2000). This survey asked about participants' race, gender, and age. Intersectionality is the idea that a person's identity traits are best understood when examined together (Collins & Bilge, 2020). When having BIPOC look at racial diversity statements, it was important to further consider the influence of their other identities. However, since these other identifiers were not addressed in the organizational statements, race remained the primary identifier considered.

The moderator used an interview guide. This was used to guide focus group discussions in a natural progression to ensure that participants addressed the different groups of questions (Tracy, 2013). The guide also ensured a certain level of consistency

across the focus groups conducted. It is also important to note that I, the primary researcher, am a woman of color. This may impact the comfort levels of participants during the focus groups.

Data was collected using three different methods: audio recording, researcher notes, and participant notes. Audio recordings of each focus group were recorded and stored in a locked password secured laptop. Audio recordings were acquired with participant consent. These recordings allow for maximum accuracy when transcribing interviews and, therefore, subsequent coding (Stewart, D. W. et al., 2007).

The primary researcher took notes during each focus group session. Notes were taken on ideas and statements of relevance to the research questions.

Participants were also given small notepads, which they used to jot down their responses to different questions or general thoughts (Fonteyn, M. E. et al., 2008)). Since these focus groups address a sensitive topic, it is possible that participants might not feel fully comfortable voicing their opinions. If this happens, it is favorable to offer them an alternative means to share their ideas regarding the discussion questions. By using multiple means of data collection, this study sought to most accurately gauge the sensemaking of racial diversity statements.

Focus Group Procedures

To begin, focus group participants were asked about their thoughts and opinions on CSR, corporate irresponsibility, corporate racial diversity, and organizational history. The first half of the focus groups explored participants' understanding on these topics void of a specific corporate context, and the second half focused on their understanding of these themes within the scope of Disney specifically. Within the second half,

participants were shown three sets of artifacts from Disney. First, they were shown three of Disney's diversity statements, which were pulled from the Disney Impact and Diversity webpage (Disney Impact-Diversity and Inclusion, 2023; See Appendix E for full statements). Second, participants were shown a disclaimer that Disney displays before select films, in which they acknowledge the content in the films are racially harmful (See Appendix F for full statement). Last, they were shown four short clips from earlier Disney films that are racially harmful and display the disclaimer. The film clips shown to participants were from the movies *Peter Pan*, *The Jungle Book*, *The Aristocats*, and *Aladdin*. Each clip was approximately one minute in length (See Appendix G for links to films; see Appendix D for full interview guide).

Data analysis

The analysis and interpretation of this data followed an iterative approach. This approach allowed the data to be understood through its emerging themes as well as to be informed by ideas in the existing literature (Tracy, 2013). Analysis was hand-coded by myself, the author of this study. Analysis began with data immersion, in which all the transcribed data is read through to gather a sense of the information present. This was followed by preliminary coding in which initial codes were identified in the transcripts. Next, first cycle coding was conducted in which preliminary codes were assigned to emerging concepts (Saldaña, 2013). I engaged in descriptive and in vivo coding during this cycle. Descriptive coding was used to identify the topics within the transcripts, while in vivo coding was used to capture the essence of what was specifically spoken by participants (Saldaña, 2013). In vivo coding used the words of participants to define the code itself (e.g., diversity according to white people was something directly stated by a

participant and is its own code). pull direct quotes from participants to define the under

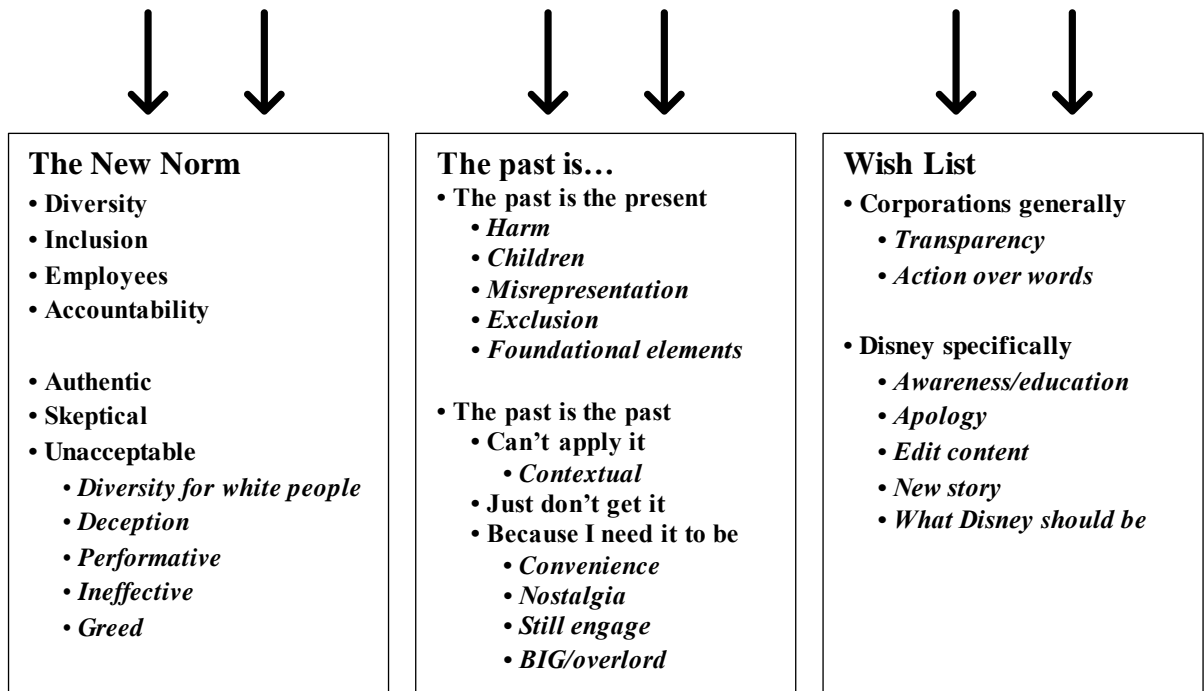
Both coding styles were used to ground the analysis in the direct text of the transcripts (Saldaña, 2013). During this cycle of coding 32 codes were identified. This was followed by a second round of coding in which the original 32 codes were consolidated into nine smaller themes (Saldaña, 2013). Throughout this process, analytics memos were used to track the progress of developing codes and to help develop the ideation of emerging themes (Tracy, 2013).

Findings

This study sought to answer three interrelated research questions. This chapter provides the results of my data analysis and answers the research questions posed in this study. All participants have been assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity. Overall, the results indicate that participants look for racial diversity efforts from organizations and consider racial diversity statements as important to broader organizational efforts. They had varying thoughts of what the past meant to an organization’s present, and they also shared ideas about how companies might address racially harmful organizational histories. My analysis identified three primary categories that explain how BIPOC members of Gen Z understand racial diversity statements. Each category contains sub-categories that add depth and dimension to my analysis. The categories (The New Norm, The Past Is..., and Wish List) and the subcategories are unpacked in the subsequent sections. A visual representation of the codes and their subcodes are seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

<p>RQ1: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z understand corporate racial diversity statements?</p> <p>RQ1a: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z understand Disney’s corporate racial diversity statements?</p>	<p>RQ2: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z explain the relationship between corporate racial diversity statements and organizational history?</p> <p>RQ2a: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z explain the relationship between Disney’s</p>	<p>RQ3: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z want corporations to address their racially harmful histories?</p> <p>RQ3a: How do BIPOC members of Gen Z want Disney to address their racially harmful history?</p>
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The New Norm

The first set of discussion questions sought to understand RQ1 and RQ1a, which asked how BIPOC members of Gen Z understand corporate racial diversity statements, for corporations generally and Disney specifically. The questions asked within this section asked participants to share their understandings of CSR, CSI, corporate racial diversity statements, and organizational history void of a Disney-specific context. The findings show that participants believe in a “New Norm” for corporate efforts to be seen as responsible and racially diverse. When asked what makes a company socially responsible, one participant stated,

“To me, I guess it’s diversity, inclusiveness, and those kinds of traits are being presented in their company and in a corporate structure, in a way that people outside of the [organization] can see it” (FG1, p. 2, T.J.).

Another participant framed her understanding of diversity and inclusion in the reverse, describing a socially irresponsible company as one that lacks these two elements. She detailed the following when asked about what make a company socially irresponsible,

“If they're [companies] not doing something to attract people from a diversity to have a conversation in a table, because how else will you learn what the whole world is like community races, ages, and just overall people. I think it's irresponsible to not have diversity enough to say work at” (FG 6, p. 3, Margaret).

Overall, participants wanted to see corporations engage with marginalized communities and incorporate them in their organizations.

The New Norm further encompasses the codes of diversity, inclusion, accountability, and the fair treatment of employees within organizations.

Diversity and Inclusion

Within in their understanding of the New Norm, participants discussed looking for corporations to discuss and include within their organizations historically marginalized groups, such as BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and immigrant communities.

Participants expressed that they wanted to see members of these communities occupying roles in an organization at all levels. Several focus groups noted that BIPOC employees are localized to entry level positions, which they did not understand as fully inclusive.

“Companies that have BIPOC individuals higher up in their headquarters and they’re making an effort to include women and non-binary individuals. I think

that is socially responsible because you need to be able to get those types of input in order to serve, you know, the world or U.S. or other companies” (FG3, p. 1, Holly).

Focus groups expressed similar thoughts on social responsibility and diversity in the context of Disney. Focus groups had positive discussion surrounding some of the efforts that Disney has made to be more racially diverse. One participant called attention to the positive impact that Disney can bring when they create racially diverse content.

“The movies that they have out, like Princess and the Frog, that impacted a lot of young Black girls who watched it, especially having you know a princess who looked like them” (FG5, p. 19, Berna).

Employees

When addressing the New Norm, several focus groups also discussed the treatment of employees as an avenue for both socially responsible and irresponsible companies. A handful of participants brought up employees when discussing what makes a company socially responsible. This participant responded with agreement to a fellow focus group participants when discussing what she was looking for from a company when it comes to employees.

“Paying good wages, not having any underpaid worker where they’re custodians or whatever” (FG3, p. 2, Josie).

The requirement to treat employees well also transferred to Disney. There were a few focus groups that discussed the fact that Disney does not particularly treat their employees well. One noted that Disney has gone through several rounds of layoffs despite being an extremely successful company.

“I feel like Disney is kind of a notorious company for not treating their employees too well. At least that’s what I’ve heard of, that Disney is a terrible company to work for. They’re constantly laying off their workforce in order to have more money” (FG3, p. 27, Holly).

This idea was reiterated by another participant in a different focus group, who made a comment in passing about how Disney has its employees work outside all day.

“[Disney] is moving closer to inclusivity with representation, but at the same time, in the theme parks they’re underpaid low wages” (FG2, p. 33, Aura).

To which another participant replied,

“Under the sun all day” (FG2, p. 33, Marisa).

Accountability

Participants addressed accountability when thinking of the New Norm and what makes a company socially responsible or irresponsible. Participants wanted to see the company demonstrate responsibility for their actions. If a company said they were going to change, they wanted to see that it did. This participant spoke about what she was looking for when a company tries to demonstrate its support: follow-through.

“I think that a lot of times how they respond to current events to deal with that-kind of like how they act during pride month or during a protest or something like that. If they stand in solidarity or if they even talk about it at all or if they speak up against it, that can kind of tell you a little bit about them” (FG2, p. 4, Ella).

This comment was met with agreement from other participants who expanded on the idea of accountability by discussing examples of companies’ efforts that they saw as skeptical or performative.

Focus groups also expressed that they wanted to see follow-through with Disney's efforts as well. A couple focus groups brought up the ride at Disneyland, Splash Mountain, that is currently undergoing renovations to change the theme of the ride from the racially harmful *Song of the South* to a *Princess and the Frog* theme. One focus group was discussing the ride's transformation from a racially harmful theme to a racially positive one.

“The fact that they're acknowledging that it was bad. Well, it was bad, and they did say that, and they're putting the Princess Tiana ride in place of that. I feel like just that fact that they're using that ride specifically is good too because you're taking one ride that was glorifying slavery and changing it to a ride that's uplifting Black culture in a positive way” (FG4, p. 28, Eva).

The other participants in the focus groups could agree with the point that she was trying to make. They noted that it may be difficult and untimely for Disney to bring up an issue that happened so long ago. The action of this change was seen as enough by this focus group.

The ideas of diversity and inclusion, employees, and accountability substantiate participants' understandings of the New Norm they have for corporations when it comes to CSR and racial diversity.

Within this New Norm, three distinct subcategories were present in the data that showed differences in how participants interpreted the New Norm: authentic, skeptical, and unacceptable.

Authentic

One of the stances that participants took when looking at the New Norm was an authentic one. There were no participants who whole-heartedly believed in the benevolent efforts of a company to be socially responsible and racially diverse, but the majority of participants understood at least some part of corporate efforts to be better than nothing. These participants believed the motives of CSR and racial diversity to be genuine, at least on a bare minimum level. Conversations addressing racial diversity brought up the idea of addressing and taking accountability for one's own organizational history.

“I think [organizational history] should be addressed and then take steps into trying to at least become better to show that it's been acknowledged and they're like trying to change for the better instead of just saying, ‘You know, this is what happened. I'm sorry.’ Those are just words” (FG1, p. 13, Vic).

This was in line with responses from other participants across the different focus groups when evaluating authenticity. Many participants stated that they wanted to see Disney address what they had done and to demonstrate this with actions.

Several participants believed the efforts of Disney to be genuine. They believed in the authenticity of these responses, even if they thought that Disney's response was slightly lackluster. Participants who fell into this sub-category spoke of Disney's efforts to introduce new characters and to rewrite new storylines as genuine. One participant reflected on the transformation that Disney has gone through over the years.

“So, I have pretty much seen most of all of the movies that came out. But they're trying, I think Frozen was them kind of mocking themselves in terms of...I don't

know the Prince Hans trope, and everything like how she falls in love the day of’ (FG3, p.19, Holly).

Several participants spoke about the film *Encanto*, as a good example of Disney’s genuine efforts to be diverse. This participant captured the sentiment expressed across a few of the focus groups.

“The people that did the voices of the characters were all Colombians, most of them, and they took into consideration everything that they said about the graphics, the people, the looks. So, I know that has happened the last couple of years, and I’ve seen it” (FG6, p. 29, Margaret).

Other conversations across focus groups surrounding *Encanto* discussed the authenticity as seen through the diversity of the voice actors and the characters in the movies. There were two participants who stated that they were Colombian and that the representation in the film struck a chord with their families as well.

Many participants could situationally see corporate efforts as genuine, for both corporations generally and Disney, but this sub-category was the minority stance within the focus groups.

Skeptical

Another stance that participants took when understanding the New Norm was a skeptical one. More often, the majority of participants questioned the motive of corporations’ efforts to be socially responsible and racially diverse. While “authentic” participants saw corporate efforts as an act of good faith, skeptical ones were largely unsure of what to think about corporate efforts.

“I also think they can use it as a front. They can say they’re committed to racial diversity, but are you really committed to racial diversity?” (FG3, p. 5, Holly).

Another participant commented, questioning the depth of corporate efforts to be socially responsible and diverse.

“But if you look at the corporation itself, the practices in the office are inclusionary within the workplace. If you look deeper, are you really doing what you’re kind of putting out there in your advertisement? I mean your ads or your logos, or your advertisements? And these are things you kind of say like the company embodies that?” (FG2, p. 4, Aura).

This skeptical lens carried over when applied to Disney as well. Participants could not discern the motive of the company, and therefore could not assign full meaning to it.

Participants saw Disney’s efforts but could not help questioning their intent.

“Like they acknowledge the harmful impact and learn from it and spark conversation, but what are they doing to ignite those conversations? What are they doing to acknowledge the impact?... What are you doing outside of this?” (FG1, p. 63, Mariam).

A participant in another focus group noted,

“They have Epcot, like representation of different cultures and different parts of the world. But how accurate is this? So that’s one of the parts of them, is it really a global audience? Or is it more catered towards within-in-state, I guess” (FG2, p. 42, Aura).

This sub-category outlined the thoughts of participants who were skeptical towards companies’ efforts to be socially responsible and racially diverse.

Unacceptable

The final stance that a majority of participants held was that the corporate responses were unacceptable. They often understood corporate efforts to be socially responsible as *inauthentic*. Instead, participants engaged with CSR and corporate racial diversity from a place of genuine disbelief. They understood attempts to be corporate efforts as diversity, but according to white people, performative, deceptive, ineffective, and/or motivated by greed.

“Diversity according to white people.” There were a few participants who made the explicit connection to “diversity according to white people,” but around half of the focus groups discussed the idea of “diversity according to white people.” This idea was defined by participants words as diversity efforts that cater to and prioritize a white audience, which limited the impact of the racial diversity efforts for BIPOC communities. These attempts were more often associated with responses to Disney’s diversity efforts, specifically. Participants, all of whom were BIPOC, did not see these efforts as meaningful or impactful. In a conversation about “diversity according to white people,” one participant spoke on how Disney prioritizes whiteness.

“All they’re doing is using a story that was based off a white character and adding a Black character... Now we see little skits of Princess Tiana on the little Disney shorts, or the Barbie dolls, of the way she looks on pjs and stuffed animals as a very, very light-skinned princess that’s different from the movie. It just goes to show how at the end of the day Disney itself, especially when it comes to their movies, prioritizes whiteness” (FG2, p. 36, Winnie).

Other participants expressed their agreement with the idea that Disney prioritizes whiteness, additionally addressing the fact that the main family in *Princess and the Frog* are portrayed as working for a white family.

“Diversity according to white people” was also associated with the way that Disney’s media represented people both visually and in story. A few participants spoke about the “more diverse” stories that Disney has produced, acknowledging their progress, but also addressing the censorship and editing of the stories that ultimately diminish their authenticity.

“No matter what they do, or they claim that they do, they’re catering for white people. You can’t take a part of a culture and change it as you please because you think that ‘Oh this is really a process.’ That’s not authenticity. You’re just catering to the white people that you’re making the movie for” (FG2, p. 45, Amy). A participant who had shared that she was born and raised in Southeast Asia commented on a Disney portrayal of a Southeast Asian story.

“It’s almost like they’re trying to represent a culture, but that’s not the reality. It’s almost a portrayed image of this environment. I think *Raya* was one of them about Southeast Asian culture. I get it, it’s fictional, but there’s still scope to actually guard the reality of Southeast Asia where I grew up” (FG2, p. 42, Aura).

Although other participants could not relate to her experience growing up in Southeast Asia, they abundantly agreed with the idea that Disney’s choices when representing different races and cultures are designed to cater to white audiences.

Performative. Participants, who took an unacceptable perspective, also understood corporate efforts as performative. They described companies’ efforts to put

forward efforts to be socially responsible or diverse as being done for the wrong reasons. Discussion surrounding this idea also touched on the lack of accountability from companies and on tokenism as potentially being enacted by a company. One participant used Victoria's Secret as an example discussing the dissonance that is found in their efforts to be more diverse.

“For example, Victoria's Secret, they're going through with their new brand. Then, I think about how their CEO is a woman and they're doing more size inclusivity and showing more skin tones and different body types. But there's still that lack of acknowledgement about their past and how they did just push a skinny white woman with the image they had. I feel like they haven't done a good job of addressing it” (FG6, p. 8, Malcom).

Fellow participants pushed back on this idea a little, expressing that so long as a company was learning from their past that an acknowledgement was not entirely necessary.

Within the context of Disney, participants noted that an effort was made, but the effort was potentially made for the wrong reasons. The misalignment of motive and action made it difficult for participants to understand corporate efforts to be responsible and diverse in a positive light. During the focus groups, participants read three of Disney's diversity statements. The following is a participant's response to the second statement.

“I also disliked how they talked about retaining a diverse workforce--that's in the second one. Also 'celebrating an inclusive and respectful world' because they really promote the stereotypical American” (FG2, p. 51, Winnie).

Almost every focus group echoed this dislike of the phrase “celebrating an inclusive and respectful.”

The participants were also shown a disclaimer that Disney added to their racially harmful films as well as clips from some of those films. After engaging with both artifacts, the same participant noted,

“Going back to the statements, even though they say that they are inclusive, they’re being inclusive of all the negatives of a culture” (FG2, p. 81, Winnie).

Deception. Participants additionally understood corporate efforts to be potentially deceptive. Corporate deception was when a corporation withheld information or was not being fully transparent. A few participants brought up this idea when looking at organizational history; one discussed how she prioritized companies being forthright about their past.

“I feel like the biggest thing is when you’re not addressing controversy or you’re shying away. I guess it makes sense for them to be ashamed of their mistakes, I guess, but at the same time, I don’t know, I think it’s good to clear the air” (FG4, p. 4, Lilly).

Participants recognized deception within Disney’s efforts as well, but their attitude presented with an air of disappointment. A handful of participants expressed that they felt as though their “feelings have been manipulated.” As though they had expectations for Disney that the company defied.

“I don’t feel like I’ve been informed at all as to the responsibility. I feel a bit like I’ve been played, like my feelings have been manipulated. Maybe there’s some

truth to some or most of the things that they say, but I can't see it" (FG6, p. 32, Lane).

Ineffective. In the unacceptable perspective, participants suggested that organizational efforts to be responsible or diverse were often ineffective. Throughout conversation, they noted that companies may attempt to remedy their irresponsibility or their organizational history, but the efforts did not do what they intended or were not as progressive as hoped. Instead of understanding this from an "at least they tried" mentality, participants saw this as a failure on behalf of the company and an area that needed to be further addressed.

When asked about how corporations should address their negative histories, a participant used the University of Minnesota as an example of how *not* to address an issue. He described a scenario when there was a race-related conflict on campus that the administration effectively did nothing to address.

"Joan Gabel put out one of her stupid emails where like nobody reads that shit, and it means nothing" (FG1, p.13, T.J.).

The participant continued to say,

"I don't think anything really came about that. We just acknowledged it and then you just kind of moved on. It doesn't feel like the university progressively is doing something" (FG1, p. 14, T.J.).

Many participants saw the same ineffectiveness in corporations generally in Disney as well. They saw both entities putting forth efforts that did not ultimately address the issue they were intended to. When asked about what Disney should do to address

their negative history, one participant stated that Disney's efforts were not substantial. She expected them to do much more.

“There needs to be a whole lot more than just statements, especially for a content company. I go to your company for content, to watch things, not really to read up on breaking news about you, not to read your statements, just take in your content. Along with the disclaimer, there just needs to be a while more done. It's just not enough” (FG6, p. 45, Lydia).

Other participants in the focus group agreed with this statement, expressing that Disney needs to be doing more and that their actions need to match their words. The lack thereof meaningful action ultimately damages their attempt to be more diverse.

Greed. Last, participants who took an unacceptable stance discussed greed as a potential motivator for why companies would want to be socially responsible or diverse. They conversed about the idea that companies may act responsible or attempt to promote diversity with self-serving, financially oriented motives. There were also a handful of participants that understood greedy efforts as wrong, but they were also understanding as to why a company would lead with that motive.

“I feel like objectively if we were a company, I don't want to air out all the dirty laundry of the company. At the end of the day, they are in the business of making money. They're basically like we need to put ourselves first and continue that flow of money coming in. But I do think morally it is the right thing to do, like to acknowledge what you've done and have a conversation about it” (FG4, p. 28, Lilly).

Conversations around Disney defined greed in the same way, however, participants seemed less gracious towards Disney than with other corporations.

Discussions around corporations were understanding that companies need to make money, but for Disney participants saw the company as enabling harm by choosing profit. One participant noted that Disney likely keeps up their old, racially harmful films purely for the sake of monetary gain.

“I think they know they can still profit off of it [racially harmful films], and by adding the statement it’s like, ‘Oh we know it’s bad, but we’re not gonna take it down because we can teach people from this.’ No, I think it’s, ‘We can have more movies on our site, and we continue to profit off of these stereotypes and everything” (FG3, p. 35, Holly).

This was echoed in a different focus group, in which a participant expressed the same sentiment: Disney is doing it for the money.

“I feel like they probably just did this, so they don’t have to take them down and lose money” (FG5, p. 35, Berna).

The category defined the unacceptable stance, which disbelieving participants held towards corporate efforts to be socially responsible and racially diverse. The majority of participants took this stance, ultimately understanding that corporations’ intentions were misplaced and defined my ulterior motives.

The Past is...

The second set of questions addressed RQ2 and RQ2a, which sought to understand how organizational history shapes BIPOC members of Gen Z’s understanding of corporate racial diversity statements. This question set examined how participants understood organizational history broadly, but it also specifically looked at responses to Disney and its corporate history. Participants were asked about their existing thoughts on Disney, before being asked to engage with Disney’s racial diversity statements. They

were also shown a disclaimer added to Disney racially harmful films along with actual clips from those harmful films. Participant responses fell into two main categories: the past is the present and the past is the past.

The Past is the Present

The past is the present is the idea that what happened in the past is still relevant in the present. Focus groups defined this as the idea that organizational history cannot be overlooked because it is still shaping the reality of today. Within these responses, participants discussed the ways in which organizational history may show up in present company efforts as well as how the past may be creating issues for Disney.

Harm. One way that the past is relevant today is through harm. Participants described this as the way an organization may cause, less often physical but emotional or social harm for a group of people. When looking at organizational history generally, participants discussed how irresponsible organizations may be engaging with actions or efforts that are harming people today. One participant brought up Wells Fargo and their 2016 scandal as an example, when thinking about what makes a corporation socially irresponsible.

“I just think about Wells Fargo and how they were screwing over a lot of their customers. So, I guess lying and committing fraud is irresponsible” (FG1, p. 5, T.J.).

Within the same focus group, a participant mentioned the idea of organizations thinking that there may be too many people of color. The harm here is not enacted onto white people, but BIPOC communities when people prioritize white populations.

“I remember there was a school, I think Morris. It was a different campus. There’s a dean who said there’s too many people of color, and they’re scaring away other white students from coming it” (FG1, p. 16, Vic).

Participants also talked about how harm appears with Disney specifically, but focused more on how their older film content may depict harmful imagery and stereotypes that younger audiences may not understand, but nevertheless internalize. The majority of focus groups said that even though Disney added a disclaimer to their harmful films, people may still be hurt. This participant reflected on the implementation of the disclaimer to racially harmful films.

“I do think it’s necessary to include this, but it’s hard because you can’t trust what you’re saying. If they’re impressionable youth watching this, those films, you can’t trust, and they read the statement that they’re going to understand it and that the parents are gonna take the time to explain it to them” (FG3, p. 48, Holly).

Another participant echoed this thought,

“It seems like this company just sees the words and that they don’t take actions to protect the diversity and in my personal taste. So, if you didn’t see the words, you may see something that may seem to damage the diversity” (FG6, p. 45, Zina).

Children. When talking about harm, participants often brought up children as potential audiences for Disney, focusing on how their past content may be harmful for children to watch today. Although Disney caters to a varied audience, a fair amount of their audience is children. Due to their lack of socialization and understanding of complex topics, such as racism or stereotypes, children may not understand the harmful

ideas in older Disney media, putting them in a vulnerable position where they may internalize racist or stereotypical depictions as real and true.

“If you think about Disney’s audience, those are kids. How much are they really going to care about this quote [added Disney disclaimer]? They’re just gonna see the movie. They’re gonna go based on what the little characters do” (FG6, p. 36, Margaret).

Every focus group discussed that the added disclaimer is unlikely to be understood as intended by children and does not protect children from the imagery in the films. Another participant called attention to the potential internalization that young viewers might experience.

“But lots of these kids probably can’t read at all. And even fewer of them are going to read this and be like, ‘Oh, okay, I will recognize the harmful stereotype they’re in.’ I don’t really believe that kids will do that... People put on Disney movies for their children. So, if parents just have Disney+ to put on movies for their kids, there is content in there that is very sensitive and harmful. The kid is not going to be aware, especially if they’re never interacted with the people that it’s trying to represent or even worse if they belong to that group and they see it and are harmed by it” (FG6, p. 36-37, Lane).

One participant brought up the fact that children today less often engage with older Disney movies. While she acknowledged that even if one child watched the film, it would be wrong, she also noted that the likelihood is slim.

“I feel like if you’re talking about lots of youth like my little sister, she does not watch the old Disney movies. She doesn't watch Aladdin, and she doesn’t watch-

she's never seen *Jungle Book*. She won't watch anything made before 2010.”
(FG3, p. 49, Holly).

Misrepresentation. Misrepresentation is another way that past transgressions remain relevant. Participants discussed this idea when talking about the visual representation of ethnic and racial groups in Disney movies, either through visual depiction or the storyline. Every focus group and the majority of participants brought up the inaccurate and harmful depictions in the Disney films. Participants were able to see that these portrayals did more than offend the group of people portrayed. The misrepresentation dehumanized these people on a grand scale.

“In Peter Pan, I really didn't like that most of the representations of indigenous people had their eyes obscured because it feels dehumanizing. Like it feels like they're more props to the scene, whereas the characters look like people” (FG6, p. 59, Lane).

Almost every participant wrote about misrepresentation in their hand-written notes, making note of the visual stereotypes in the older Disney films. The following quotes are directly from participants' hand-written notes.

Eva (FG4, p.1):

“Made the Native people seem inferior because they were not speaking proper English...Made the young Native girl perform for Peter Pan (white man)...Did not accurately represent Native people...Made me think they appear were Black people wanting to be like white people...Saying Black people aren't human, civilized.”

Aura (FG2, p.1):

“Sexualization of indigenous...Purify her on the platform...devil...‘Barbaric = hey it’s home.”

While there were some depictions that participants did not understand, there were many more that they could identify as being racially harmful and stereotypical.

Exclusion. The conversation on misrepresentation ran parallel to the conversation on exclusion. Participants spoke to the fact that misrepresentation can and often does occur because companies do not have the right people in the room. Misrepresentation persists because marginalized people have and still are kept out of decision-making processes.

“They only hire people of color for that [DEI positions] and they don’t hire people of color anywhere else. It’s like they’re only who are they working for? Like they’re just hitting their quota, but they’re keeping them very localized” (FG2 p. 13, Ella).

A participant later commented,

“I feel like these mistakes happen because you guys don’t have the proper people looking over these things. For instance, like you said, they [Disney] realized that it was racist, but it’s like what they need to realize if you had the right people in the room to look over it” (FG2, p. 31, Tania).

Another participant expanded on this comment by connecting this act of excluding BIPOC members from the metaphorical decision room to the way that Disney sees itself.

“They [Disney] love to exclude people of color, queer people, and disable people because that’s not what looks the best. So, you really don’t see a lot of Disney seeing literally any type of disability in any sense because that’s not as pretty on

the outside, and they have to appeal as lighthearted and magical and fun” (FG2, p. 51, Winnie).

Two focus groups engaged in conversation that understood exclusion and ostracization as the same. These participants have seen employees and/or people of marginalized communities locked into “diverse work,” which is work focused specifically on diversity efforts; this largely excludes them from meaningful integration into the company. One participant was talking about how companies use BIPOC employees to speak on the validity of their organization’s diversity efforts.

“That in itself is a form of exclusion because they're like the only one being asked to talk about the positive experience when nobody’s asking the white people, for example, is a big deal” (FG1, p. 25, Mariam).

Other participants within this conversation also noted that isolating employees of color to address issues of diversity and inclusion could pigeonhole these employees into this work and actually limit diversity effort as a whole.

Foundational elements. Another idea discussed in “the past is the present” was the foundational elements of an organization, such as the CEO or an origin story. Participants talked about how the origin of an organization, or the reputation of the CEO may hold implications for an organization. When thinking about corporations generally, one focus group brought up the example of Elon Musk.

“Elon Musk is under a lot of scrutiny right now for a lot of things that he’s done and that’s not necessarily the company itself, but I think he as its CEO, very much has an impact on the company’s image” (FG4, p. 3, Edgar).

There were a couple focus groups that brought up Walt Disney as the CEO and founder of The Walt Disney Company, and there was one focus groups that mentioned that he was a Nazi. One focus group who discussed the impact of Walt Disney brought up the renovation of the Disneyland ride, Splash Mountain, and how racist the reference film, *Song of the South* was. They talked about Walt Disney as the founder and CEO in a similar manner to the conversation on Elon Musk, describing how the CEO of an organization can impact reception of their company.

“Yeah, Walt Disney wasn’t the greatest” (FG4, p. 12, Edgar).

“Yeah, I heard he was not a good person, I don’t know, maybe I just never really engage with Disney stuff” (FG4, p. 12, Lilly).

“I knew he wasn’t like a good person, but I didn’t know about that” (FG4, p. 12, Eva).

The past is the present largely spoke to the idea that issues from a company’s past can be and still are relevant to an organization today and speak to the larger issue of companies addressing their past.

The Past is the Past

While there were a number of elements from the past that participants deemed as relevant to the present, there was a greater number of elements from the past that participants were willing to overlook. Participants recognized that certain media items were a product of their time, and that times have changed. Others were not able to recognize the harmfulness of content because time had changed, and last, there were participants who overlooked the past because they wanted to.

Can't apply it. In the focus groups, participants viewed issues of the past as so different from the present that the issues they encompassed as non-applicable.

Contextual. Participants touched on the idea that context matters. The 1950s, 1970s were a different time than today in 2023. There are things and ideas from those times that were socially acceptable then but would not be today. Because of this context differential, participants believed that you could not hold those past moments against a company today.

“I feel like if we look too far back the standards of what was correct ethically, it's completely different. It was okay to do stuff like that, but now it's completely different and you need to be more inclusive. I think there's a line between how far back something is” (FG6, p. 12, Carla).

The same level of understanding transferred to Disney. Participants believed that the time and the people as well that made up Disney at the time of their harmful films have changed, and that the Disney that produced movies like *Song of the South* would have never produced a movie like *Encanto*.

“With these statements, how they're recent, you can see that Disney's ideology is changing. If we looked at all Disney films, over the years, you can blatantly see the changes in diversity and inclusion and representation” (FG4, p. 52, Eva).

Another participant highlighted the fact that the people who created the racially harmful content are no longer with the company. She explained that blame cannot not be placed entirely on Disney when most of the bad actors are no longer there to continue enacting harm.

“The creators of those movies, I’m assuming are dead, right? So, it’s still a new Disney. I hope that they’re implementing new things to make these things not happen. It’s like I can be but I’m being mad at people who are dead” (FG2, p. 95, Winnie).

One participant agreed with this statement, stating that we cannot blame the people who are in the organization now, we can only ask that they do better.

Just don’t get it. Across all focus groups there were participants who could not recognize the harms in Disney films, specifically when looking at their earlier, harmful films. Participants were so removed from the original context in which the movie was created that they were not able to understand the harm in the film. One participant stated that she did not understand the stereotypes shown in the films, noting the cultural differences. She earlier stated that she was an international student.

“In the videos, I didn’t see something wrong, maybe because of the culture difference. This shows what the stereotype might be, so I don’t know what was wrong” (FG1, p. 55, Hannah).

A participant from another focus group talked about her confusion at the stereotypes in the films, but also expressed a desire to learn about what made the content harmful.

“I would like to know, like people from these races specifically, to see their point of view. I will say because it’s hard for me to talk-I know I like diversity in society and the diversity group, but I would like to know their exact point of view because sadly I grew up with this and thought it was normal” (FG6, p. 44, Margaret).

While some people could infer what was wrong with the films, there were a good number of participants who just did not know if/what stereotype they were looking at. This was noted verbally as well as in their hand-written notes. For two of the films shown, *Jungle Book* and *Aladdin*, a participant wrote in her notes that she really liked the film and would like to learn more about why it was wrong, stating,

“I thought this was fire. I would want to learn more about the groups affected & hear why is it wrong” (FG6, 91-97, Carla).

Another participant left in their notes a question mark that was underlined (FG2, line 125, Aura). This fell in the portion of their notes where participants were responding to the racially harmful Disney films and is understood as the inability to recognize the harmful depiction being shown.

These two ideas, Can't apply it and Just don't get it, are connected to one another through the element of time. It is time that allows participants to grant grace to these companies, and it is also time that keeps participants from understanding the harm that is right in front of them.

Because I need it to be. Lastly, participants took the stance that “the past is the past because I need it to be. This idea spoke to the fact that participants engaged with a company because it was convenient to them. Some spoke of the fact that they held great nostalgia towards Disney, and subsequently they still wanted to engage with the company. They also addressed the tremendous amount of effort that it would take to meaningfully cut Disney out of their life, since the organization is so enormous.

Convenience. If a participant liked a company's product or it was particularly convenient to access, like with Amazon or Uber, they were willing to overlook the

company's misdeeds, past or present. In this scenario, they prioritized convenience. When speaking on companies generally, a participant brought up Chick-fil-A and Abercrombie as examples of companies that are not the most ethical but are very convenient in terms of access.

“When I think of Abercrombie, I never really knew the history of them, but now Abercrombie is the first brand where I found jeans that fit me and that fit my family who are more curvaceous people. So, it's like yeah, they might be trying to change to please the idea that they are inclusionary, but I really like their clothes so even if they're bad, I'll still shop” (FG2, p. 18, Winnie).

A participant in the same focus group introduced SHEIN as another example, noting that sometimes convenience is because there are no other options.

“SHEIN is as bad as it is, it is really the only thing that some people can afford. To be like, ‘You cannot shop there.’ Then it's like if you don't shop at SHEIN, where else are you gonna go?” (FG2, p. 24, Amy).

This idea appeared less for Disney, as the reasons for still engaging with Disney was through more of an emotional appeal.

Nostalgia. Because I need it to be also included participants experiencing a strong level of nostalgia. Participants spoke about how earlier films, such as Aladdin, held sentimental value and they struggled with the idea of completely letting these artifacts go, even knowing about the harmful stereotypes.

“Aladdin played a really big part in my childhood, and it's a movie that I love a lot. I watch it now, I'm like, ‘This is fucked up,’ and I recognize that it's fucked

up, but it was still really important to me as a kid... That doesn't just disintegrate” (FG2, p. 84, Amy).

There was also an expressed sentiment of wanting to be able to share the films with future generations. One participant held these movies so closely that she wanted her children to be able to watch them.

“I would want my children to be able to watch Peter Pan. I want them to be able to watch Aladdin and stuff like that” (FG4, p. 42, Eva).

Still engage. Parallel to both these conversations was the willingness to still engage with a company or its content despite the error in its past and present. Even with their critical stances towards CSI and harm, participants did not want to have to stop engaging with the companies that they liked, were convenient, or that they were sentimentally connected to.

“I won't lie, I will be one of those Disney adults. I'm not gonna lie, I really do love Disney. Now I can acknowledge that was all fucked up, but I loved Disney before when I didn't even notice these things because socially you don't even think about it when you're like five watching Aladdin. You don't even think about it. Now I can acknowledge that it's wrong, and even though I can acknowledge it; it's wrong and it was fucked up. I don't think I could sit here and be like 'Yeah I could never watch a Disney movie again'” (FG2, p. 84, Marisa).

There were more neutral stances on desire to still engage with Disney. One participant noted that the issue was not great enough for her to remove the company altogether.

“I don’t think it’s important enough to me where I’m gonna disengage from all of Disney as a company” (FG4, p. 55, Lilly).

A participant in different focus group noted that the discussion made her reflect more poorly on Disney as a company, but that she would likely forget about the topics brought up in a short amount of time.

“I would say I feel slightly worse, but I feel like a month from now I won’t really have anything to say about it, if that makes sense. Of course, I’ve learned more about Disney’s history and the things they’ve done in their messaging and stuff like that, but I feel like I kind of already had an underlying taste of all of this” (FG5, p. Monica).

The final idea addressed in this quote, that of participants already having an idea of all of this for Disney, was expressed in other focus groups’ discussion as well.

BIG/overlord. When thinking about “Because I need it to be,” participants also spoke to the largess and domination of a company. Participants discussed that if a company is large and holds a lion’s share of the marketplace, such is the case with Disney, it can be rather difficult to avoid interacting with it in day-to-day life. A participant noted that it can be difficult to avoid large companies, even if they have a poor history.

“I kind of expect big companies to have a shady past. I feel like I can’t avoid using your service so I’m going to look past it” (FG4, p. 16, Lilly).

Conversation with this idea mainly focused on the magnitude of Disney and how much a person would have to remove from their life to stop interacting with it altogether. This idea relates to convenience, speaking to the idea that it would be deeply

inconvenient to remove all these companies from everyday life. A participant noted well the largess of Disney as a company, stating,

“They have so many different divisions, from the parks to all the television channels and companies they own. They record music, Disney Channel. They have products of toys and stuff, and there’s so many things that I’m not even mentioning, Superhero movies-Marvel, that’s theirs. And ESPN, ESPN is theirs as well” (FG2, p. 56, Nadia).

A participant later addressed this idea in the focus group, discussing how this largess makes them too big to fail.

“I also think that they don’t have the ability to be canceled because of how big of a corporation they are, how much media control they have over mass media, and the influence they have over what people consume... So many people die for Disney, because of that they're never going to crumble, and if something bad does happen, it will eventually get swept under the rug because of how big of a corporation they are” (FG2, p. 60-61, Winnie).

This thought was furthered with a participant noting that to remove Disney from your life, you would need to remove more than you might think.

“There would be so many things that you would have to stop doing, if you were to cancel Disney you can't Hulu, watch a movie. You feel like you can't do anything” (FG2, p. 61, Ella).

Wish List

This final section focused on how BIPOC members of Gen Z want corporations to address their harmful histories. These questions asked participants what they think

companies should do in lieu of their existing or failed attempts. Participants spoke to what they are looking for from corporations generally as well as what they believe Disney should do, specifically.

Corporations, generally. These responses from participants touched on what they wanted to see from corporations on a broader level when it comes to engaging with social responsibility and/or racial diversity. Participants expressed that they want companies to be transparent with their efforts and responses. They want to see a prioritization of actions over words, and they also want companies to bring awareness to the issue.

Transparency. Focus groups expressed that they wanted to see companies be forthright with their information. When discussing corporations' historical behavior, one focus group discussed that the nature of the action did not matter so much as how the company responded to it. They would rather see a company be forthright about its past than have a third party dig up the dirt.

“Yeah, I think that’s more responsible in a way, but I do like leaking” (FG1, p. 9, Vic).

In a different focus group, a participant highlighted transparency as one of the primary things that he looks for from a company when evaluating if they are socially responsible or not. Participants just wanted to see companies know their history and own it.

“When I think of socially responsible companies, it’s more so the ones that they- every company is going to make mistakes, just like every person can make

mistakes- those who own up to them and then address them right away” (FG4, p. 1, Edgar).

Actions over words. The focus groups also discussed wanting to see actions over words. In these conversations, participants would discuss how a company would *say* something, but never *do* anything. They prioritized companies that would support their words with actions. To demonstrate authentic change, participants wanted to see companies walk their talk. They wanted evidence that they were doing what they 2.

“There’s other people where it’s in their policy, but they never actually stood a ground and actually walked their talk, if that makes sense. When it became a trend, that’s when they were kinda making it seem like this is something we’ve always done. It’s like you’ve always done it on paper, but you’ve never actually taken action and done it” (FG2, p. 8, Tania).

Disney, specifically. When looking at Disney’s corporate racial diversity statements, participants could acknowledge that the statement appeared well-written, but without obvious and express action to follow-up, the statements did not hold much water.

“These three different statements touch all the bases, like theoretically. In a vacuum, you can’t read this and pick out anything wrong other than those specific words that we only know because of our unique experiences and our unique standpoints. They hit all their bases. They knew what they were talking about from a marketing and PR standpoint” (FG2, p. 49. Ella).

Awareness/education. With the racial diversity statements, participants also discussed the addition of external links or educational information to further substantiate

the statements. The addition of this information is intended to further educate and bring awareness to an issue. Although this participant did not fully support the diversity statement, they saw the validity of the attempt.

“The statement, like it just doesn’t fix things, but it does help educate people if they want to learn more about why it’s wrong” (FG1, p. 52, Vic).

Participants also wanted to see the return for the communities afflicted. This participant stated that she would like to see how Disney’s efforts are benefiting the people they actually hurt.

“I think the thing that they should have done: keep all the Pocahontas stuff, acknowledge that was bad and allocate that money to Native American people. You know what I mean? Because it’s still being absorbed by the company” (FG2, p. 69, Winnie).

Apology. Participants also talked about what they wanted to see with Disney content. They were looking for an apology, for Disney to create a new story, or to edit the harmful content out of the film. Although not discussed at length, focus groups did mention that when attempting to move forward and be socially responsible, a company should apologize. They should express remorse before being able to move forward with their new initiatives. One participant suggested the following as a response from Disney, particularly as the company remakes its harmful films.

“It is a bigoted depiction and we depicted mistreatment. We hurt other cultures. It was wrong, and we’d like you to watch this movie” (FG4, p. 61, Edgar).

Edit content. As mentioned, focus groups suggested that Disney edit out the harmful content. Instead of scrapping an entire movie, they talked about how Disney

could remove a scene, especially if it was not integral to the plot. In this way, they can keep some of the older movies that people love while minimizing harm for viewers.

After reading the diversity statements and disclaimers and watching the racially harmful clips, participants noticed the dissonance between what Disney was saying and what they were showing. One participant commented,

“So why not just edit that out? It really wouldn’t be hard to just get rid of that part of the movie. It really wouldn’t alter the plot in any way. It just wouldn’t be there. You don’t have to be like, ‘Oh we can’t do that movie.’ I understand that, but you can take down the part that disrespects culture” (FG2, p. 75, Amy).

Participants often spoke about editing the content as a way to save movies that held sentimental value or that they simply enjoyed.

“No, I feel like just cutting the scenes would be better, but I also feel like the songs are such a bop, so I don’t know” (FG3, p. 51, Josie).

New story. Focus groups also introduced the idea of Disney creating a new story for BIPOC communities. Recently, Disney has been remaking some older films with BIPOC cast members, which is progress in terms of representation. However, they wanted to see more innovation when it came to inclusion. They wanted to see cultures highlighted in this effort.

“Yeah, I would much rather see an original story that provides a good depiction of whatever people or culture that was misrepresented in the past” (FG6, p. 50, Lane).

Another participant later commented on the fact that many cultures have existing stories that Disney could utilize to honor and celebrate different cultures.

“I totally agree with that because there’s many different cultures that have different mythological stories, different creation stories, and different cultures have so many different stories. Even real history could get made into a very good movie” (FG6, p. 51, Lydia).

What Disney should be. There were a couple participants who spoke on what they believe Disney *should* be. They were not necessarily talking about what Disney is or what Disney was, but what it would be at its best. All these suggestions for what Disney should do fed into the idea of what Disney should be. Throughout the focus groups, there were participants who spoke on what they believed Disney should be--inspiring and magical. Without taking these steps, Disney’s identity is misaligned from how people understand it *should* be. If Disney were to take these steps to address their content meaningfully, they would realign themselves with their favored public image.

“I feel like Disney movies there’s kind of supposed to be inspiring, you know? I don’t know how to describe it, just supposed to be inspiring” (FG3, p. 37, Josie).

A participant commented in a different focus group,

“I feel like the magic gets lost a little bit, and Disney is like this whole magic concept. So sometimes it can get lost but for sure they cannot even go as close and they should show something that actually gives an emphasis to the little kids that may see that movie because we watched it, but they haven’t” (FG6, p. 50, Margaret).

Summary

Broadly, the findings show that focus group participants were largely critical of efforts towards corporations generally yet held an understanding, almost forgiving attitude towards corporate racial diversity statements and organizational history for

companies they liked, including Disney. The majority of participants were harsh critics when it came to looking at the social responsibility and racial diversity efforts from a corporation.

Participants indicated a New Norm exists when it comes to looking at social responsibility and racial diversity. Participants described this concept through ideas such as diversity and inclusion, employees, and accountability. Within the New Norm, there were varying degrees of believers: authentic, skeptical, and unacceptable. Authentic believers were few and far between and were largely specific to the organizational effort. On the other hand, many participants found corporate efforts to be of questionable motive. Skeptical participants aired more uncertain than not, indicating that participants were not entirely trusting of organizational efforts. The majority of participants held an unacceptable stance, which was defined by ideas such as “diversity according to white people,” performative-ness, deception, ineffectiveness, and greed. This stance transcended general companies, applying to Disney as well. Participants were more forgiving towards corporation generally with greed, and towards Disney with deception and ineffectiveness.

Most participants characterized “the past as the past” and most often took this stance because they needed it to be. They “needed the past to be the past” for reasons of convenience, but also financial burden. The “Because I need it to be” sub-category was defined by convenience, nostalgia for the company, and when a company holds a large share of the marketplace, all of which fed into a willingness to still engage with the company. Participants were also willing to leave the past behind when they could reason that the context was different, the issue no longer applied to today, and when they could

not recognize the issue. For participants, time allowed them to forgive and forget. A smaller group, however, considered “the past as the present,” which was the idea that organizational history holds impact today. Participants identified harm, children, misrepresentation, exclusion of marginalized communities, and foundational elements of a company as issues of the past that still hold weight in the present day.

Participants also described their Wish List, in terms of what they are looking for from companies when attempting to address their past and be more socially responsible and racially diverse. Within the sub-category of corporation generally, participants were looking for transparency and for corporations to put their money where their mouth is and take some action. This points to the significance of addressing organizational history in a way that demonstrates honest change. For Disney specifically, participants stated that they were looking for Disney to apologize, edit their content, create new original storylines, and to promote awareness and education on their previous harm. They wanted to see Disney make changes to their content that would allow for harm to be minimized and for pathways to be created that would allow for learning. These four ideas all supported discussion of the final sub-category, which is what participants believed Disney should be. This final category was defined by the ideal that participants held for Disney as a company, who they are when they are at their best.

Discussion

This study demonstrates that BIPOC members of Gen Z believe corporations should address racial diversity and should do so in a meaningful way. Their thoughts and opinions were largely unaffected by organizational history. There were some elements that participants saw as relevant to today, such as harm, misrepresentation, and the

foundational elements of an organization, but the majority of participants let the past be the past out of need. BIPOC members of Gen Z are understanding that corporations do not always align with the previous iterations of their organization, but they expect that to be reflected in the words and actions of a corporation. Similarly, these ideas transferred to The Walt Disney Corporation. Focus group participants expressed their desire to see meaningful action to substantiate Disney's corporate racial diversity statements. However, there were times when participants were more lenient with Disney, due to the nostalgia they held towards the company.

This chapter begins by addressing major findings of the study. It then compares the findings to the current academic literature and reviews practical applications. The study will conclude by discussing directions for future research and the limitations of the study.

Major Findings

The findings from this thesis offer three overarching, interconnected conclusions. The first finding is that BIPOC members of Gen Z are critical. Throughout the focus groups, participants were quick to criticize the quality of corporate efforts to be socially responsible and racially diverse. They saw corporate efforts, such as racial diversity statements and diverse hiring practices, as performative and ineffective. In their eyes, companies were engaging with racial diversity for the wrong reasons, and because of this, the efforts being put forth failed to meaningfully enact change. Companies fail to walk their talk, as noted by several participants. Additionally, their understanding of corporate efforts left participants skeptical of corporate efforts to be socially responsible or racially diverse, for corporations generally and specifically. Participants spoke of general corporate efforts with an air of distrust, as they were unsure if a company was engaging

with these efforts to create change or for financial gain. They also often name specific companies when speaking on CSR and racial diversity efforts. They named organizations such as the University of Minnesota, Victoria's Secret, and Disney, without prompt. In these conversations, they shared a similar sentiment for corporations generally, stating that the efforts from these companies were hollow and failed to meaningfully address the issues they were attempting to resolve, if they took action at all.

The second main finding is that BIPOC members of Gen Z are conflicted. Participants described companies negatively but still used the products and services of these companies they disagreed with. Across all the focus groups, participants discussed the various shortcomings of companies when it comes to socially responsible, as is the case with Chick-fil-A, Uber, and Amazon, but they also detailed their unwillingness to remove these companies from their day-to-day life. They explained that for reasons, such as the financial accessibility of the company or brand loyalty, they could not and would not stop engaging with these companies. This was particularly salient with companies that were more tightly woven into the fabric of society, such as Disney or Amazon. The more integrated a company was, the more subsidiaries it had, the less likely participants were to cut them out of their lives. They were willing to let the past be the past to avoid going through the effort of disengaging with socially irresponsible companies.

The third main finding is that BIPOC members of Gen Z are disappointed, but not surprised when it comes to racial diversity efforts from corporations. In the focus groups, several participants noted that corporate racial diversity efforts cater to a white audience or are created with a white lens. The efforts ultimately prioritize white comfort and understanding, which limits and harms the potential impact for racial diversity efforts.

Participants expressed a sense of disappointment and frustration when speaking on the prioritization of whiteness in racial diversity efforts. However, their language indicated that they were used to unfulfilled promises from organizational actors proclaiming to address issues with racial diversity. This aligns with the two previous findings in that participants were disheartened by the lack of follow through, but because they do not believe in corporations' ability to address racial diversity, they were okay with still engaging with them. This stands contradictory to the idea that people look to corporations to address social issues (Edelman, 2020; Edelman, 2021; Edelman, 2022). When it comes to racial diversity, BIPOC members of Gen Z do not see corporations as trustworthy actors to deliver on racial diversity initiatives.

Theoretical Implications

This thesis converges and diverges from Janssen's theoretical framework. Janssen (2013) outlines four tenets for how corporations can address their harmful organizational histories. These tenets are designed to allow corporations to address their past in a way that supports the future of their organizations.

The first tenet of the framework demands respect for victims and their descendants' memories and identities (Janssen, 2013). This diverges slightly from the findings of this study in that the majority of participants did not speak of the people affected or harmed by the older, racially harmful Disney films in terms of victims or their descendants. This may have been due to the fact that the artifacts they were shown were animated portrayals of different racial and ethnic communities. However, participants did discuss the impact for BIPOC communities in the present day. Focus groups described how the older films may shape children's understanding of BIPOC communities, and several participants noted that they themselves may have been impacted from having

watched the harmful Disney films when they were young. A few participants did expressly state that they wanted to see Disney talk about how their corporate efforts would give back to the communities harmed in their older films, which aligns with the continuity of descendants in the first tenet, but the frame has shifted away from victims and descendants to broader racial communities.

The second and third tenets require an attitude of remorse to address corporate history responsibly and demand accountability for corporate history, respectively (Janssen, 2013). The findings of this thesis converge with the second tenet, but places greater priority to the third tenet. Participants expressed that they were looking for an attitude of remorse and accountability from corporations when addressing their histories, but there was a heavier emphasis on accountability rather than remorse. They emphasized that they wanted to see follow through from corporations when addressing their organizational histories, with a few participants going as far to say that they did not need remorse if the company was demonstrating actionable changes within their organization. Across the focus groups, participants saw remorse as a bonus but described accountability as a necessity. The findings of this study support the second tenet by acknowledging remorse but may not see remorse as a core tenet for addressing organizational history. On the other hand, the findings prioritize the third tenet by focusing on accountability.

The final tenet of Janssen's framework is a demand for corporate commitment to justice in the present and future. To demonstrate historic responsibility, corporations must use sustained efforts over time. The findings neither diverge or converge from the final tenet of an orientation towards justice in the present and future. Participants stated that

they wanted to see corporations make changes in the present, but they did not indicate an explicit orientation towards justice or explicitly address the future. Some of the findings support that participants were implicitly oriented towards justice, as could be seen through their suggestions to give back to the harmed communities or their desire for Disney to edit out harmful content and/or create new original content. These suggestions offered imply that corporations and Disney specifically would be making their wrongs into rights, which aligns with the idea of justice. The suggestions also hold a level of permanence that indicate that the future would maintain these changes. Overall, this thesis offers new insight to Janssen's framework, and to possibility that while BIPOC members of Gen Z align with some of the original tenets of the framework, they may hold different priorities for corporate address of history.

The findings from this study also support the literature on DEI statements. Both Maiorescu-Murphy (2022) and Sterbenk et al. (2021) support the idea of consistency across DEI statements, with the latter specifically addressing corporations "walking their talk" (Sterbenk, 2021). Participants were quick to note discrepancies in the DEI statements from Disney, with one focus group going as far to state that they thought the statements were from different years, as opposed to all existing at the same time in the present. The findings also highlighted the desire of participants to see actions over words with social responsibility and racial diversity. This study adds to the literature by supporting the finding that non-organizational actors want to see action and they want it to align with what is being said as well.

The findings from this study also speak to who has a say when it comes to organizational history. The existing literature determines that organizational history

should be co-constructual (Etter et al., 2015; Lubinski, 2018; Foroughi et al., 2020); however, this study shows that this is not the case. The findings demonstrated that BIPOC members of Gen Z have thoughts and opinions on organizational history and corporate racial diversity, but these are not reflected in existing corporate efforts, as seen through participant criticism expressed towards current corporate efforts. It is also important to note that Disney has the power to vault and unvault their content without consult from the public. Furthermore, the public does not have the chance to respond to this as Disney does not publicly announce when this happens. This further exemplifies the lack of voice that the public is granted and the strength of corporate influence when building organizational history and racial diversity.

Practical Implications

This study also holds implications for corporations and stakeholders. First and foremost, it shows that racial diversity statements need to employ evidence-based, visible action to garner the trust of BIPOC members of Gen Z. Participants expressed strong skepticism and disbelief towards companies' efforts to be socially responsible and racially diversity, emphasizing the desire to see accountability and words over actions in these corporate efforts as a way to validate the motive and quality of the efforts. The findings indicated that BIPOC members of Gen Z do not believe in corporations' ability to create meaningful racial diversity efforts, which may affect the corporate-consumer relationship. Therefore, it is important for corporations to provide the evidence needed for participants to see their efforts as meaningful.

A second practical implication is that organizational history is often overlooked by stakeholders. This is not because stakeholders do not care about past irresponsibility, but because they do not always have the choice or desire to avoid the company that

enacted it. People, especially younger people, are not as financially stable as older generations, and participants discussed having to opt for cheaper, more accessible and at times less socially responsible companies. Additionally, they discussed how brand loyalty and nostalgia will bring them back to organizations that may not have the best history. Participants will keep engaging with a company with a harmful history simply because they lack the desire to disengage. For companies with problematic histories, this may mean that they do not need to do anything to address their past so long as they work to maintain the corporate-consumer relationship. This may further explain why Disney has not elected to vault all their racially harmful films. They know that consumers are loyal to the brand and hold deep nostalgia for their company; therefore, they do not need to remove the racially harmful films out of fear of retaliation. However, if companies really want to build a dialogic relationship with consumers, they need to be willing to listen to their needs, regardless of consequence. This study demonstrates a way to do that as well as offers findings as to what a select set of consumers are looking for from companies when it comes to racial diversity statements and address of organizational history.

The final implication is that corporations need to address the idea of “diversity according to white people.” Participants discussed how racial diversity efforts prioritize whiteness. However, if corporations want their racial diversity efforts to be meaningful and seen as legitimate by the communities they are trying to help, they need to prioritize BIPOC voices and perspectives. This issue of “diversity according to white people” is not just an issue with Disney’s DEI efforts. Mystal (2023) calls attention to the fact that DEI roles are often symbols, not solutions. DEI officers are expected to address issues of race across all levels and roles within an organization, but their solutions are seldom listened

to by often white, organizational leaders (Mystal, 2023), demonstrating the frivolousness of the role. Corporations will need to move beyond white comfort for racial diversity to be meaningfully integrated into the corporate realm.

Future Research and Limitations

As with all research studies, this research has limitations which can provide opportunities for future research. There were two main limitations to this thesis. The first limitation is that the study only looked at some of Disney's content, both for the films and the racial diversity statements. For the sake of time and setting, this was beneficial, but it could be interesting to see how participants react to the racial diversity efforts if they saw Disney's CSR page, viewed more of their film content, or interacted with more of their content generally. Disney is such a huge company, so they have a variety of different artifacts to look at, such as Disney Channel, the parks, Disney stores, and Disney+, to name a few.

Future research should explore other companies' racial diversity efforts as well as other racial diversity artifacts beyond racial diversity statements. There were other companies brought up by participants, such as the University of Minnesota, Chick-fil-A, and Victoria's Secret. It may be worth exploring how people feel toward these companies' racial diversity efforts, and if the same understandings apply.

Additionally, future research should explore other issues parallel to racial diversity, such as gender, sexuality, and ability. Participants mentioned other marginalized groups, such as the LGBTQ+ and differently abled populations, so it would be worth exploring if discussion of these topics is something that people look for from an organization in terms of DEI communication. Within this idea, future research should explore the varying factors that may impact the discussion and subsequent understanding

of different issues, such as visibility and geographic context. Race is both a visible and socially constructed concept, meaning that a different, less visible DEI issue may warrant different address and that understanding of race may vary based on location.

The second limitation is that participant recruitment occurred predominantly through the SONA system, which is an undergraduate research pool for the Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication. These students study media, advertising, and public relations, which may have made them better equipped to address the focus groups topics. This pool of students is predominantly women, which does not accurately reflect the gender demographics of society.

Future research should address this by exploring perspectives from different age groups and cross comparing the way that different generations feel towards the statements. Participants brought up that the disclaimer at the start of Disney's racially harmful films may not be intended for younger audiences, but the now adults who watched the movies as kids. Research could also conduct a longitudinal study to see if opinions change over time. There were some participants who mentioned wanting or not wanting to show these movies to their kids. When the time comes, will they show these movies? Will this response from Disney stand the test of time, or will the company change it down the road to accommodate the societal attitude of the time?

It would also be relevant for future research to explore how white people feel about Disney's racial diversity efforts. One of the codes was "diversity according to white people." Do white people see these diversity efforts as well-intended? Do they engage with the diversity content? Answering these questions could better identify Disney's intended audience for this content.

Conclusion

This study sought to address two critical gaps in the research about corporate historic responsibility. First, this study asked publics about their perceptions of CHR. This is a departure from the majority of research, which focuses on consumers (CITE). Second, this study extends publics further by seeking the insights of BIPOC members of Gen Z. Drawing from these contributions, this study finds that BIPOC members of Gen Z are both critical, but conflicted when understanding corporate racial diversity and organizational history. Even when Gen Z can acknowledge the irresponsibility of a company or its past, they must grapple with their financial reality (e.g., managing limited personal funds), often leaving them to make the financially responsible decision in lieu of the socially responsible one. Finally, BIPOC members of Gen Z were disappointed with corporate racial diversity efforts though they were not surprised by the poor delivery. This ultimately speaks to the fact that BIPOC members of Gen Z do not trust companies to deliver on racial diversity. They are not disappointed in corporations because they never saw them as legitimate actors within racial diversity in the first place. Companies are simply not the place where BIPOC members of Gen Z see justice flourishing.

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Appendices

Appendix A
Recruitment flier

Share your opinions about corporations & racial diversity!

 **Do you identify as a member of the BIPOC community?**

 **Are you a member of Gen Z? (born between 1996 and 2005)**

If you answered yes to both, then you qualify to participate.

PROJECT DETAILS:

Sign Up for a Focus Group date of your choice.

Focus groups last 90 minutes.

You will earn a \$40 Amazon gift card for your time.

FOR MORE INFO, EMAIL CHRISTINA AT

HARIS010@UMN.EDU

A University of Minnesota research project.

Appendix B

Undergraduate Research Pool information

Earn \$40 for your opinions about corporations and racial diversity! Do you identify as a member of the BIPOC community? Are you a member of Gen Z (1996-2005 birthdate)? If you answered “yes” to both questions, you qualify to participate. The project looks at how BIPOC members of Gen Z understand corporate racial diversity statements. You will share your opinions in a 90 minute focus group session which will be held in XXX Hall. You can choose the date and time of the focus group you want to participate in.

Appendix C

Demographic survey

Demographic Survey

This survey is intended to collect the demographic information of participants. This will be used in data analysis. Any identifiable information will not be shared with the public.

Question 1: Birth year

- 1996
- 1997
- 1998
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002
- 2003
- 2004
- 2005

Question 2: Gender

- Man
- Woman
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Agender
- Gender non-conforming
- Gender fluid
- Gender queer
- Prefer not to respond

Question 3: Race

- Black
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latine
- Indigenous
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Biracial
- Multiracial
- Prefer not to respond

Appendix D

Interview guide

- 1) Welcome and Introductions (3 minutes) - WELCOME SLIDE
 - a) Individuals are welcomed to the group.
 - i) Find a seat
 - ii) Fill out a name plate
 - iii) Get refreshments if so desired.
 - b) Moderator Introduction: moderator introduces self as a graduate student seeking help with master's thesis research.
 - i) Before we begin, I would like to ask you all to please silence and put away your phones. If you need to use your phone, I ask that you please step into the hallway.
 - c) Participant Introductions. Participants introduce themselves--first name, and what they would like to be called
- 2) Focus group procedures (3 minutes) - USE FOCUS GROUP VIBE SLIDES
 - a) Moderator provides study information and focus group guidelines.
 - i) **Today we're going to be talking about** corporate racial diversity statements and organizational history. What we are looking for here is really just your honest thoughts and opinions. In this focus group, there are no right or wrong answers. You may disagree with someone, and that is okay. We still want to hear what you have to say. Also, if you disagree with someone feel free to respond to them and talk about what it is you disagree on or what you're thinking. I am really here to facilitate discussion and ask the questions. What matters most is your honest and authentic participation.
 - ii) **To begin, everything shared here is confidential** and any identifiable information used in the study will be anonymized. Each participant will be given a pseudonym. Data and recordings will be stored in a password protected computer and file system.
 - iii) **As you can see, you have been** provided with a paper and pencil. These can be used throughout this session as a note sheet for yourself-- if you have a thought and don't get the chance to share. There also may be times when you are prompted to write down what you think before discussing the question as a group. These items will be collected at the conclusion of the interview. Also please be sure to put your (name) on them. Your information will be anonymized no matter what but just so we can match your notes to what you've said.
 - iv) **On that note, I would also like to say that** the session is being recorded. The recording is used to help ensure that an accurate account is taken of what is said today and serves as an extension of my memory and notes. Also, I will be taking notes during the focus group. If you see me write something down, this is not necessarily because someone has said something right or wrong, but it's more so to help me better remember certain parts of discussion or to potentially ask follow-up questions later
 - v) **Throughout the focus group please** try your best to speak one at a time. We want to hear all of your thoughts, but it is best if we let each person finish

before anyone else responds. I also cannot stress enough how much we want to hear *your honest* thoughts. Even though I am here, the idea is for you to have a conversation around corporate racial diversity statements and organizational history. If someone says something that intrigues you, do not hesitate to engage with them.

- vi) So, the plan for the sessions is to have some discussion, take a short break, and then resume discussion.
 - vii) Does anyone have any questions or concerns before we get started?
- 3) Discussion questions (15 - 20 minutes)
- a) Racial diversity & CSR:
 - i) What things can companies do that make you think they are socially responsible?
 - ii) What things can companies do to make you think they are socially irresponsible?
 - iii) What do you think when you hear companies say they are committed to racial diversity?
 - b) History:
 - i) If a company was socially irresponsible in the past, how much does that matter to you?
 - ii) When you think about a company's history, what things matter to you?
 - iii) Does it matter how long ago the irresponsible behavior happened?
 - (1) Some people have told me that they expect companies to make changes within 10-15 years after identifying an issue. What do you think about this timeframe?

---- 10 minute BREAK ---- (Disney questions after the break)

- 4) Disney Case Questions (40 - 50 minutes)
- a) CSR and History Questions
 - i) Would you describe Disney as a socially responsible company or a socially irresponsible company or both?
 - (1) What events/experiences led to your assessment?
 - b) Racial diversity statement questions:
 - i) Elicitation using Disney's statement as a prompt—consider likes, dislikes, and how you feel about the statements.
 - (1) What do you like and dislike about this statement?
 - (2) Does this statement make you think Disney is more or less socially responsible? Why or why not?
 - (a) Tell me more about how this makes them irresponsible.
 - ii) ****Show disclaimer****
 - (a) In 2020, Disney added this disclaimer to several films.
 - (i) Right now, there are approximately 13 films with this disclaimer (ON DISNEY+).
 - (b) Does this statement make you think Disney is more or less socially responsible? Why or why not?

- (c) It's come up in other FGs who the audience of the movies are and who are they trying to talk to with the disclaimer.
- (2) Now we will watch clips from several of the films that Disney added the disclaimer to. For reference these films are Peter Pan, The Jungle Book, Aristocats, and Aladdin. All these films are currently available Disney+, for purchase on Amazon Prime and YouTube
 - (i) Show film clips from Disney films - Set up slide for each film.
 - (b) Peter Pan
 - (c) The Jungle Book
 - (d) Aristocats
 - (e) Aladdin
- c) Review of CSR, HCSR and statements
 - i) How do you interpret Disney's racial diversity statement after seeing these film clips?
 - ii) How important is Disney's content history (like the movie clips we saw) to you today?
 - (1) Do you know that Disney is remaking some of these films (e.g., The Jungle Book, Aladdin with Peter Pan on the way), what do you think about that?
 - iii) Is Disney including a content disclaimer an appropriate response?
 - (1) If not, what do you think Disney should do?
- 5) Summary Questions
 - a) Do you feel better or worse about Disney about our discussion today?
 - b) Was there anything that you wanted to talk about that you feel like was missed?
- 6) Closing remarks - THANK YOU SLIDE (2 minutes)
 - a) Thank you for participating in this discussion. I appreciate everyone's willingness to share their thoughts about Disney, their race-related initiatives, and history. I want to assure you all that anything said here today will remain confidential and any information used in the final paper will be anonymized.

Appendix E

Disney DEI statements

“Disney is committed to celebrating an inclusive, respectful world. We create authentic and unforgettable stories, characters, experiences, and products that capture the imagination of our global audiences.”

“The Walt Disney Company is committed to developing and retaining a diverse workforce, fostering a company culture that is welcoming and respectful, creating content and experiences that resonate with our global audiences, and collaborating with community organizations to make our industries more accessible to all.”

“Across our platforms, we champion storytelling that reflects the world around us and helps us develop meaningful relationships with our consumers. We strive to present genuine, authentic, and respectful storytelling. To do so, we engage individuals, families, and communities across the globe, and we embrace different perspectives in our filmmaking, both in front of and behind the camera.”

Appendix F

Disney disclaimer

“This programme includes negative depictions and/or mistreatment of people or cultures. These stereotypes were wrong then and are wrong now. Rather than remove this content, we want to acknowledge its harmful impact, learn from it and spark conversation to create a more inclusive future together.”

Appendix G

Links to YouTube videos shown in focus groups

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxex2_NBvQU – *Peter Pan*

<https://youtu.be/zB2yz8TSaeY> – *The Jungle Book*

<https://youtu.be/LeXIbVovojM> – *The Aristocats*

<https://youtu.be/wR2qfTWrX3w> – *Aladdin*

Appendix H
Codebook

Short Description	Detailed Description	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Atypical Exemplars
Diversity	Code this if unit references diversity broadly or historically marginalized communities, such as BIPOC, LGBTQ+, or immigrant communities	-May use the word diversity, people of color, or race -May mention a marginalized community -This may reference, but is not limited to, the specific community through media representation or in a business setting	-Does NOT include reference to stereotypes -Does NOT include reference to racism -Does not include performative or tokenism references to historically marginalized groups	“Colorful people”
Inclusion or inclusivity	Code if this unit references the general inclusion of historically marginalized groups	-May use the word inclusion or inclusivity -May refer to sentiment of feeling included of the express action of including people or groups in work or media representation	-Does NOT include reference to the lack of inclusion -Does NOT include the failed attempt of a group to be included -Does NOT include reference to performative inclusion	-May mention accessibility -There were a few participants who noted this code in Disney’s diversity statements, citing it as a point they liked
Accountability	Code this if the unit refers to an action or	-May use the words responsible	-Does NOT include the	

	statement demonstrating responsibility for one's actions or the need or action of being beholden to another group of people	or accountable -MUST demonstrate that a person or organization is beholden to another group	lack of accountability -Does NOT include reference to irresponsibility -Does NOT include reference to a failed attempt at accountability -Does NOT include performative or tokenist actions	
Exclusion, lack of inclusion	Code if this unit refers to the intentional or unintentional removal or shut out people from a time, space, or opportunity	-May describe an instance in either a workspace of in media representation -may include failed attempts to include particular groups -May describe an instance with historically marginalized communities -May include reference to ostracization	-Does NOT include reference to harming a group -Does NOT include reference to the impact that is sustained in the exclusion -Does NOT include reference to performative inclusion -Does NOT include the idea of editing harmful content	
Skepticism	Code if this unit refers to the sentiment of questioning motive or intention of a group	-May be phrased in the format of a question -MUST include some sentiment of	-Does NOT include reference to anger -Does NOT include general confusion	

	This is WHY - motive	doubt or confusion -May refer to confusion surrounding the motive of an action or statement -May involve distrust towards an entity	towards an idea or question	
Harm/impact	Code this if the unit refers to act of causing ill effect onto another person, group, or entity in a physical, emotional, or structural manner with apparent effects	-May include reference to oppression -May refer to power dynamics between two entities	-Does NOT include reference to deceptive acts	
Transparency	Code this if the unit refers to transparency or the quality or action of being honest and forthright with information Characteristic ascribed to an action, but not limited to the action itself	-May include the word transparent or honest -MUST include the discussion of open information	-Does NOT include addressing past behaviors when brought to attention by outside parties	
Deception	Code this if the unit refers to the act of lying, withholding information, or not being transparent	-May include the word transparent, lying, or	-Does NOT include misrepresentati on of a group of people	

	Deception is a pejorative			
Consumers	Code if this unit refers to actions or statements from a company that indicate that their motives are genuine This is a judgement on behalf of the participant--the way they understand the sentiment of an organization's words or actions	-May include reference to people who buy from the brand - May include reference to consumer values - May include expectations that they have for businesses or other entities	-Does not include address of children as a group that may potentially interact with a business - Does NOT include reference to employees or people who are considering an organization from the lens of a potential employee	
Employee	Code this if the unit refers to experience or expectation of people discussed through their association to their workplace or their relationship to their job	-May include reference to people who are currently employed at an organization -May include reference to how people view an organization through the lens of a potential future employee	-Does NOT include reference to CEO or founders of an organization -Does NOT include reference to people who interact with an organization broadly	
Children	Code this if the unit includes mention of how children may or may not see the warnings; the distinct audience of children VS	-May refer to children as related to parents - May discuss the harm or	-Does NOT include reference to children generally	

	others; role of parents in helping children understand content	impact felt by this group - May include reference to the internalization of the representations shown through content		
Authentic	Code if this unit refers to actions or statements from a company that indicate that their motives are genuine This is a judgement on behalf of the participant--the way they understand the sentiment of an organization's words or actions	-May include reference to genuine-ness - May include reference to an opposite understanding of performative	-Does NOT include reference to skepticism surrounding performative actions - Does NOT include reference to "actions speak louder than words" or any statement of similar sentiment	
Performative	Code if this unit reference doing something for the wrong reason The WHAT is being done and it is a judgment. Performative is used as a pejorative	-May include the word performative -May include reference to the lack of accountability on behalf of a person or organization -May include reference to tokenism	-Does NOT include reference to "actions speak louder than words" or any statement of similar sentiment	-May discuss the idea that a company could be doing too much with regard to diversity -May reference the phrasing of "too many people of color" -Discussion of tokenism is not exclusive to race

Ineffective	<p>Code if this unit refers to words or actions that attempt to address a situation, but fail to</p> <p>The WHAT is being done and it is a judgment.</p> <p>Performative is used as a pejorative</p>	<p>-May include reference to an effort made on behalf of an organization that the participant perceives to not address the situation or problem adequately or fully</p>	<p>-Does NOT include reference to performative actions done on behalf of an organization</p> <p>-Does NOT include address of “actions speak louder or words” or another phrase implicating this sentiment</p>	<p>-May include mention that Disney should add the disclaimer to more movies, such as Pocahontas and the Lion King, as examples where Disney should address stereotypes</p>
Greed	<p>Reason for not dealing with history; reference to still being able to access movies</p>	<p>-May include the words greed, money, or capital-</p> <p>-May include reference to prioritization of economic success over social progress</p>	<p>-Does NOT include mention of harm to external audiences</p>	
Convenience	<p>Code if this unit refers to the motive behind an individual’s or company’s choices or actions being that of ease</p> <p>For individuals, this may include mention of what is easiest for options</p> <p>For companies, this may look doing the bare minimum</p>	<p>-May include reference to disregard for a company’s actions so long as the individual’s needs are prioritized</p> <p>-May include reference to comfort</p> <p>-May mention quality of product or preference for a product</p>	<p>-Does NOT include mention of discomfort generally</p> <p>-Does NOT include reference of performative or tokenism</p>	

		(i.e., brand loyalty)		
Contextual, timeliness	Code if this unit refers to the time or broader social context of the words or actions of a company	-May include justification of past harmful actions due to the fact that it was acceptable at the time -May include justification of current initiatives due to the rise of an issue in modern society -May include reference to the recency with which an issue is being addressed	-Does NOT include reference to the past generally	
Apology	Code if this unit refers to the act or sentiment of a company apologizing or expressing regret or guilt about previous actions	-May include reference to a suggested action from a participant	-Does NOT include reference to performative actions from a company	
Actions speak louder than words	Code if this unit refers to a statement expressing the sentiment of granting value to words when they are accompanied by actions	-May use phrases such as actions speak louder than words -May use the phrase walking over talking or some	-Does NOT include reference to apology only	

		variation of this -MUST mention both words and actions in the sentiment		
Awareness, education	Code if this unit refers to the act of bringing awareness about a marginalized group or using educational efforts as a solution to past harm	-May include reference to educating people about a marginalized group -May include reference to providing resources to people as a way to bring awareness about a group	-Does NOT include reference to actions that are perceived as performative	
Misrepresentation	Code if this unit refers to inaccurate or offensive portrayals of a people or culture	-May include reference to inauthentic portrayals of a person or community -May include reference to colorism -May include reference to dehumanizing portrayals of the group in question -May include stereotypes of a group, not exclusive to visual portrayals	-Does NOT include reference to tokenism	

<p>“Diversity according to white people”</p>	<p>Code if this unit refers to the lens through which the diverse representation is created being inaccurate or inauthentic, either in story or visual representation due to a white understanding or audience</p>	<p>-May include discussion of the creators of “racially diverse” content -May include reference to the lack of authenticity in the portrayal of a group of people -May include reference to the audience that is being catered to</p>	<p>-Does NOT include reference to whiteness or white people generally</p>	
<p>Not recognizing harm</p>	<p>Code this if the unit refers to confusion surrounding the problematic nature of Disney content</p> <p>This is an action that participants experience; they do not need to recognize the film per say, but the racial insensitivity within it</p>	<p>-May include the explicit expression that the participant does not understand what they are seeing -May include reference to the sentiment of confusion towards a statement or piece of media</p>	<p>-Does NOT include reference to only stereotypes</p>	
<p>What Disney <i>should</i> be</p>	<p>Code if this unit refers to idea of what Disney should be</p> <p>This is a judgment on behalf of the participant; it may not be what</p>	<p>-May mention magic, inspirational, or other sentiments that align with these words as</p>	<p>-Does NOT include reference to economic responsibilities of the company -Does NOT include reference to a single</p>	

	Disney but how they imagine them to be	descriptors of Disney -May include reference to the place that Disney holds in people's lives broadly	individual as a representative for the whole company - Does NOT include reference to employee treatment	
Nostalgia	Code if this unit refers to a sentiment of longing for the past expressed by a participant regarding their attitude towards a company	-May include reference to engaging with content as a youth -May include reference to really loving movies in the present day -MUST include in sum that the content being addressed holds a special place for them	-Does NOT include mention of liking content generally -Does NOT reference past contact with content only	
Foundational elements	Code if this unit refers to the CEO, the foundation of a company, or an authoritative figure within an organization as they relate to the organization, they serve	-May include reference to the CEO of a company -May include reference to powerful figures within an organization -May include reference to the foundational story or character of	-Does NOT include reference to employees generally	-May include discussion of partnerships with a company -This idea speaks to facets of a company that may impact the way that it is perceived -Does NOT need to be about the company itself, but components of it

		an organization		
BIG, overlord	Code if this unit refers to the largess, dominance, or power of an organization	-May include reference to the size of the organization -May include reference to the dominance of the organization in the marketplace -May include reference to power of the organization in society, culturally, or over people	-Does NOT include reference to marketplace generally -Does NOT include reference to an organization's popularity -Does NOT include reference to the content/products of the organization	-May include discussion of the government being the only entity large enough to supervise/regulate Disney as a company
Editing content	Code if this unit refers to the removal of content from films as a solution to past racially harmful content	-May include mention of the phrase "edit it out" or another expression sharing a similar sentiment	-Does NOT need to mention specific clips of content	
Create a new, original story	Code if this unit refers to the creation of new storyline as a solution to past racially harmful content This suggests that Disney needs to be inventive with their content. Recreation of	-May include mention of a new story -May include reference to the need for a story to be changed -May include mention of replacing an old story with a new original storyline	-Does NOT include reference to creating different content to replace the old harmful content	

	their old movies does not suffice			
Still engage	<p>Code this unit if it refers to a lack of care whether or not a company addresses their harmful content or past</p> <p>The participant does not hold a particular whether an issue is addressed</p> <p>This is an attitude towards the company, its actions, and/or its stance</p>	<p>-May include a lack of surprise towards Disney</p> <p>-May include an indicated sentiment that this was expected of Disney</p> <p>-MUST indicate a willingness to still engage with a company despite issues</p>	<p>-Does NOT include reference to a feeling of powerlessness on behalf of consumers</p> <p>-Does NOT refer general disinterest in Disney</p>	
Expected, not surprised	Code if this unit refers to the idea that a certain response was expected of the company, with specific reference to Disney	<p>-May include reference to a sense of helplessness or the inability to affect change</p> <p>-May include reference to a general disinterest whether there is change--the sentiment is more detached than indifference</p> <p>-May include reference to the fact that this was expected of</p>	<p>-Does NOT include a sentiment of interest in the future or trajectory of Disney as a company or towards companies generally</p>	

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