THE POWER OF OWNING YOUR NARRATIVE AND

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT NARRATIVE HAS ON SOCIETAL VIEWS

THROUGH MEDIA PERCEPTION

by

Anika Ayana James

Liberty University

A Dissertation Proposal Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Communication and the Arts

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand Black narrative within media communication, particularly how media's narrative and cultural viewpoints affect society's perception of the BIPOC culture and perspective. To understand the feelings and effects of false narratives and false ideology on the community, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews and panel interviews with 10 members of the BIPOC community during the months of November and December 2021. The results show

Keywords: Black Narrative, Fishers' Narrative Paradigm, mediated communication

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the very pulse of my own narrative, my wife, and my children! Nadia, you are my love, and better half, you have been my blessing throughout many storms always encouraging me to achieve greatness, and because of your support, I am a better me. My children Justin, Mackney, Jordyn, Carmelo, and Jayden, I do all that I do so that I can make a better way for you. I hope that I have served as the best example for you to surpass. I love you all with all my heart, I am who I am because of each one of you.

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I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Professor Carol Hepburn. You have been a guiding force throughout this process for me. There were times I truly felt the urge to admit defeat, but you encouraged me to push through. I found your words of wisdom both encouraging and productive. Your thoughts and views were constructive, honest, and helped make me a better student and writer. I would not have reached this far in my academic journey if it were not for your guidance, and I take this time to thank you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BIPOC   Black Indigenous People of Color

BLM   Black Lives Matter

HBCU   Historically Black Colleges and Universities

PGM   People of Global Majority

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

There is a great deal of crisis facing our modern world, and many individuals may argue that politics, lack of cultural awareness, and even economical differences are threats to our societal unity (Greene-Moton et al., 2020; Davison, 1983). One of the fundamental issues that can be agreed upon is how communication affects the way we engage and interact in these social, political, and cultural environments (Eveland et al., 2003). This has been an ongoing issue for the past century, but it has become more prevalent, and clearly destructive, in our modern time. It is a well-known statement that humans fear what is unknown or misunderstood. Sadly, this lack of understanding of other cultures has led to the spread of false and misguided information (Carleton, 2016). As such, the social structure of our modern world in the past 20 years, in specific, has been shown to be easily manipulated and influenced by what is called 'false narrative' or the inaccurate presentations of people, events, and cultural differences by individuals, groups, organizations that have power over others (Mahesh, 2018; Castro, 2017). These false narratives can shape societal perceptions as a whole and can affect the way people communicate and interact with each other.

This qualitative ethnographic case study intends to explore the importance of individual narrative and how individual voices are silenced by others to 'own another's narrative.' The concept of "owning one's narrative" is not new (Gervais, 2020). Owning one's narrative can best be explained as a communication speech act where one person tries to describe or explain how, why, when, where, or what another person thinks, feels, or believes about themselves or the world in which they live. When another person tries to speak on behalf of someone else, they superimpose one voice and worldview on top of another. In this way, they not only hold power

over the individual, but if allowed to develop further, then one voice can represent a dominant view, whether accurate or not, for all of society. By owning another person's narrative, the individual or entity speaking ends up silencing the voice of the other person, and as a result, supplants their own worldview and perspective.

Background of the Problem

'Owning one's narrative' is not just a phrase that is said to help others understand the power of narrative; it is a belief that must be exercised and understood particularly, within the BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) culture and community (Punti et al., 2021). Sadly, the identity of individuals that make up this portion of society believes that their narrative has been co-opted or adopted by the societal narrative of others. And as with the practice of co-opting another person's own voice, many of these narratives have not been correct or flattering. The false misrepresentation of the BIPOC narrative has created costly issues within the community ("BIPOC analysis of culture and community in a time of crisis," 2020). According to Mahesh (2018), "False narratives get solidified into commonly accepted truths due to the body of knowledge that gets built up over time cross-referencing material based on false narratives" (para. 8). More so, the author states that once a false narrative is accepted by the mainstream, it is almost impossible to correct the information. In fact, Mahesh (2018) notes that false narratives "linger in the public mind" (para. 1) for a very long time.

Why does this matter? Scholars, writers, journalists, and others studying narrative, specifically BIPOC narrative, believe that through these misplaced and misguided narratives society is influenced by racial disparities (Corley, 2021; Balco, 2020; Siemaszko, 2021; Johnson, 2008). Furthermore, these misguided narratives easily raise fears which in turn can lead to racial tension, even to hatred of individuals or entire communities. In recent years, the killings of

BIPOC individuals such as Daunte Wright, Andre Hill, Manuel Ellis, Trayvon Martin, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and countless others, were misrepresented in the media. False narratives were provided, and disseminated through mass and social media, and sadly, millions of people accepted what they read online or heard through TV and Cable news (Corley, 2021; Siemaszko, 2021; Balco, 2020). Many within the BIPOC community believe that fear of the unknown, and the lack of cultural knowledge inflamed these tragic events (Corley, 2021; Siemaszko, 2021; Balco, 2020).

Situation to Communication

It can be a challenge to understand the importance and value of narrative without fully exploring the larger construct of what is communication and what makes communication effective or "good." There are many features that contribute to effective communication. Communication is simply defined as the delivering of information, but effective communication can only be defined when that information is received by your audience (Keats, 2018). Ineffective communication, conversely, is a waste of time and emotion and often results in misunderstandings, which in turn, can lead to a loss of relationships (Monae, 2022). For example, when communicators fail to connect well and let emotions drive their conversations and messages, it can create an environment where the message is difficult to receive and understand.

Good communicators do not just "want to be heard;" they want to be understood. Good communication is direct; it presumes that one is being clear and straightforward in the way in which they are sending and receiving messages. Good communicators understand what they are trying to say; they use the least number of words to explain their meaning in the simplest of terms (Stahl, 2018). Good communicators get their message across because they not only know

what they intend to say but how to say it well. They consider their audience, and in this way, they make sure the message they are sending is not about them, but it is about the person they are engaged in dialogue with. Tone, emotion, and attitude factor in how well the message comes across. In short, one's actions will either promote or nullify the words one chooses to use (Monae, 2022). Effective communication saves time, emotion, and even relationships when it is done correctly. Furthermore, when considering competence and its role in effective communication, what matters is how well the audience has received the information they are given (Robbins, 2017). Effective communication, therefore, changes the dynamics of a conversation. It allows individuals to have a better understanding of the subject matter being discussed and creates clarity and awareness that may not have existed before.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of communication is to form and keep relationships, convey feelings, and solve problems (Lipovtsev, 2019). Many communicators use this practice to make decisions, give information as well as reduce stress. A good communicator can use the act of communication to persuade others and shape and influence popular opinion. This is where the idea of controlling individual or group narratives comes into play and underscores the importance of how controlled narrative and the power and effect it has on the social structure of our communities and country becomes paramount.

But what is narrative? What do we mean when we discuss the power of narrative and its influence on social understanding and cultural acceptance? Narrative is simply defined as "a spoken or written account of connected events" (Lexico.com, 2021). In layman's terms, a narrative is a story. Stories and storytelling are part of the human connection, and according to Fisher (1987), "storytelling is a universal function" (as cited in Littlejohn et. al, 2011, p. 144).

Fisher explains that narration or the act of narrating a story is common across all cultures and regional boundaries. Humans share messages and create and recreate social truths through the act of telling stories (p. 144). More so, Fisher (1987) believes that storytelling is central to his paradigm or theory, whereby meaning is created concurrently between audience and communicator. Identification and interpretation of both message and meaning are acts that lead to understanding. In his theory, truths are affirmed through the telling and retelling of stories, and in this way, the 'truth' about the human condition can "transcend temporal and cultural differences" (as cited in Littlejohn et. al, 2011, p. 144).

Similarly, Neil Postman (1985) discusses how humans understand the role of communication and narrative. Understanding how individuals are perceived by others and viewed by themselves explores how individuals can either benefit from or be hurt by technological advances. Postman believed that we must grow with our technological advances, or we will falter because of it. In his controversial book, Postman, Neil (1996) writes about narrative and the power and influence narrative can have on how children are educated and indoctrinated in social, cultural, economic, and political values. He writes, "The idea of public education depends absolutely on the existence of shared narratives and the exclusion of narratives that lead to alienation and divisiveness. What makes public schools public is not so much that the schools have common goals but that the students have common goals. The reason for this is that public education does not serve the public. It creates a public" (p. 17). In other words, narratives can be inclusive or exclusive and designed for the purpose of either enfolding groups or for creating divides.

There have been many scholarly and popular news articles written on how narrative affects the perception of society. Minahan (2016) discusses the narrative effect of using short stories to deepen our learning and understanding of narrative. Natanson (2006) focuses on harnessing the power of narrative by using the reading and writing of narrative across content areas. Hunter et al. (1994) examined in detail the hidden voices of BIPOC men and what that means for the complexity of manhood and the understanding of manhood within the BIPOC culture. The point is that while researchers have looked at narrative, false narrative, and the power of voice in scholarship, most information about controlling narrative has come from popular news sources and current events. There is a seemingly large gap in scholarship that focuses precisely on false narratives within the BIPOC community.

This study aims to provide insight into the experiences and feelings of not owning one's narrative through the discussion and conversation with prominent BIPOC voices on the matter of narrative, false ideology, self-identity, and other issues related to how the media has co-opted the narrative of individuals and groups, and how the false and misrepresentation of these people has been characterized in social, political, and cultural areas of society.

The Case of George Floyd

The most recent example of a false narrative spread through mass and social media occurred during the killing of George Floyd in 2020. Floyd, a Black man was arrested on suspicion of owning a counterfeit $20 bill. The arresting officer was white. Derek Chauvin had served with the Minneapolis, Minnesota police department for close to 20 years. The encounter occurred in the Powderhorn Park neighborhood, where after Chauvin detained and handcuffed Floyd, events took place that led to his death. The resulting case led to protests around the globe

demanding justice for Floyd. This case highlighted the ongoing struggle between police department tactics and police incidents of brutality, specifically targeting Black men.

However, despite the events of this case, the reported details of how the incident occurred and what took place (who did what and when), varied depending on the media outlet. Initially social media and news reports represented Floyd as a criminal, suggesting he was the one who was conducting check fraud. Yet in another report, a newscaster said that his drug use was a contributing factor. The reporter even went to the extreme to state that there were reports that George Floyd killed himself. These reports, many filled with misinformation, painted a picture of George Floyd that stood in contrast to the truth.

In many ways, the media-controlled narrative was used to justify the fact that this Black man was murdered without cause. Nathanson (2006) explains that a narrative is a form of discourse, and like the simple definition above, the narration tells a story. We know that the use of narrative, according to Fisher (1987) and Postman (1996; 1985) is one of the oldest ways humans use to communicate what they perceive and understand about the world and their experience with it.

Researchers like Minahan (2016), Natanson (2006), Hoeken (2017), and others, have examined how narrative, and more importantly the feeling of narrative, affects society and social structure. Narrative can enfold an audience and a great narrator or orator can effectively create social change. Throughout history, there have been examples of great orators who have risen in popularity, and who have proved the ability to speak in a way that not only persuades and influences but can build community connection and rally citizens toward action.

Politically, some of America's finest orators have been presidents. Abraham Lincoln (16th President, 1861-1865), Franklin Delano Roosevelt (32nd President, 1933-1945), Harry Truman

(33rd President, 1945-1953), to name a few, rose to power, and were able to use rhetoric to change the course of human events. Likewise, in recent years, Ronald Reagan (40th President, 1981-1989), who is remembered as "The Great Communicator" because of the way in which he could speak to the camera and deliver national addresses that challenged political misconceptions and alter world events. Bill Clinton (42nd President, 1993-2001) was also known for his way with words. But, in speaking about the powerful influence of a president on Black communities, no one else comes to mind other than President Barack Obama.

President Obama, the 44th president of the United States (2009 to 2017), was a tremendous orator, and through his words he was able to effectively rally others to enforce change. Despite past experiences and racial tensions in this country, President Barack Obama was able to change history by becoming the first and only African American to hold the highest position in the land. The right words and narrative can have an amazing impact on others when used in a profound way.

Much of what is missing in society today is the ability to comprehend things that are not easy to understand, and this is in large part because of the misinformation given to us by those in power, be that political, social, or cultural. Unfortunately, as the saying suggests, "power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely," those with the most power is entrusted by society to use that power wisely. If, however, a message that is contrary to the truth is shared publicly, like in the case of false narratives (Mahesh, 2020), then people who receive that message are misled and may or may not know the difference. As Mahesh (2020) states, what results can be the development of a belief system that is skewed and based solely on misconceptions. Much of what is believed today about the BIPOC community is based on decades of misrepresentation and false narratives (Johnson, 2008). Whether in the media or press, the false narrative has

become part of the ideology and belief system of many people worldwide (Gulick, 2016; Johnson, 2008). This practice leads to perceptions that create negative stereotypes about people within the BIPOC community. It also spreads a false ideology that can be used to judge others. In turn, this false narrative and ideology serve to create division within the societal structure. Organizations such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) have spoken out extensively on the issue of misrepresentation and misinformation. More so, they have highlighted how this kind of behavior can have a detrimental effect on those within the BIPOC community (Roberts, 2018).

The problem with communication as it relates to this study is the fact that BIPOC voices are routinely marginalized in mainstream and social media (Cargle, 2019). Media bias toward BIPOC is not a new phenomenon (Gray, 2020). BIPOC voices have been silenced for years, but the way in which media (mass and social) have manipulated individual and group narratives have become far more grossly obvious than in earlier generations (Gray, 2020). Partly this is due to the nature of social media, and the instant availability of user-contributed commentary whether in the form of imagery, text, and video.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative ethnographic case study was to examine how the narrative within mass media and social media has influenced the cultural belief that has shaped the narrative and viewpoint surrounding the BIPOC community. To understand the feelings and effects of false narratives and false ideology on the community, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews and panel interviews with 10 members of the BIPOC community during the months of November and December 2021. These individuals were chosen because of their influence and their knowledge of narrative and media bias. The participants ranged in age from

22 to 60 and consisted of both men and women from all segments and industries including the political, social, cultural, and entertainment spheres.

The researcher hoped that at the end of the study, opportunities for open dialogues would be available. Her desire was to create avenues of communication that would allow for a more correct view of the BIPOC voices and narrative. It was hoped that through this exploratory study, new insight would be gleaned to enable greater media accountability. Ultimately, since the option for change comes from those in power, it is hoped that by limiting the practice of delivering false or misleading narratives, a more correct and open conversation between various individuals and groups can be achieved. This change in attitude, behavior, and practice could be the start of a better social structure within society.

Significance of the Study

The ideology of understanding individual narrative and being able to transcend that narrative to other areas is a dynamic many people within society still have difficulty with today, especially as technology advances, and we become more reliant on mass media and social media for information. Whether it is within a personal or professional setting individual narrative is particularly important. Communication is a shared responsibility in both a professional and private capacity. With all the many ways to communicate, organizations and individuals alike must work hard to get their agenda across. This new technological era makes it even more challenging.

Mediated Forms of Communication

When exploring the concepts of technology and mediated forms of communication, it is important to discuss how technology shapes and influences the way communication happens. Forms of communication including mass media, social media, and media bias all play an

important role in the approach of individual narrative and how one might "own" another person's view or perspective.

Mediated communication refers to communication that is based on technology. This can be anything from emails, texting, voice, and video conferencing. All these methods are the beginning of mediated communication. These methods introduced us to the use of social media platforms to communicate and expand communication practices. Although our practices of communication today may be more advanced, basic communication is still a very vital and important practice within our society.

Technology and Miscommunication

The adage that says "too much of anything is never good" can be applied to communication, in general, and to miscommunication in specific. Some may argue that the more technologically advanced humans become, the more technology has consumed the way in which we communicate with one another. Technology today allows us to communicate in ways that were unthinkable in the past. Platforms such as social media have increased the spread of technology and allowed us to create diverse and multi-leveled forms of communication. This advancement in technology and its use as a common means for messaging has also led to greater chances for miscommunication between sender and receiver.

Most people will agree that technological advancement has helped individuals to communicate, interpersonally, organizationally, and interculturally. More so, technology has made it possible for people to communicate globally, and as such, it is now easier than ever to share messages across the globe with individuals as well as groups. With the positives aside, as more and more people use technology to enhance the speed and accuracy of communication, the more opportunity there is for misinformation and false narratives to be shared electronically.

More so, unless there are some means to validate and ensure the accuracy of messaging content, there is a strong possibility, that these same messages whether they are good, bad, or indifferent, are blinded received, and accepted as truthful. Since there is no filtering of information to understand a source's reliability, many people will simply accept what they hear as truth regardless of what is being said and of who is saying it to them. Unfortunately, many people simply choose to hear, act, and conform to the information presented to them without ever taking the time to see if the messenger is trustworthy. Furthermore, so many people are addicted to their technological devices, and as a result, they no longer communicate well with one another outside of this environment (Fosslein et al., 2020). Studies have shown that even when people are in the same room, often they are not listening to one another because they are occupied by their smartphones or other electronic devices. This preoccupation leads to isolating attitudes where they distance themselves from those around them. Likewise, this practice distorts people's ability to have real conversations, preferring to live in a falsified sense of what they see on social media -- a social media-derived reality. Technology, while a good thing, has also provided a way for people to edit, polish, and remove conversations prior to sending them. In many ways, technology today has given them the power to change the reality they see for themselves as well as for those with whom they communicate.

Mass Media and Social Media

When we examine the role of mass media versus social media, mass media or otherwise known as traditional media has authority, credibility, and recognition ('credibility and media,' 2019). Traditional media speaks to a broader demographic, particularly the older generation. Traditional media generates brand awareness with strategic advertisement placement. Digital media allows for information to be issued through word of mouth at a rapid speed. This means

information is not always verified prior to reaching the masses. Digital media allows the individual to connect with like-minded audiences and share information on a global scale. It allows for instant feedback and criticism. Innovative ideas relayed to the audience are more common and conversations about topics are sustained at greater length through the discussion amongst the audience on the various platforms.

When looking at cultural bias in the media, there are several questions that must be answered or examined. As communicators, it is vital to understand the purpose of media and to ensure that everything must be done without the influence of societal assumptions (Whitenton, 2017). From an educational and professional perspective, a communicator must figure out if the media is biased. They must also consider if communicators sense that bias is created from the presentation of media or if it comes from the perception of society. This leads us as communicators to explore if media perpetuates stereotypes, and lastly to decide what obligations media must challenge within the social norms and what can be done to diversify media in society. Understanding these challenges can better aid in understanding narrative and how to accurately portray narrative.

Narrative as we understand it is a spoken or written account of connected events or stories. Everyone has a story to be told, an identity tied to their own experiences, both individually and collectively. This experience is shared and then accepted and confirmed through communicative speech acts. This happens in most cultures (ethnic groups) as well as general society. The issue and argument that exist are that while this fact is true for a non-BIPOC society, it is not true for those who make up the BIPOC culture. The "dominant culture" subverts the story of BIPOC by usurping the individual's version with one that is more culturally accepted.

Narrative has played an exponential role over the past 50 years (Dray, 1971). It is a widely held statement that "he who controls that narrative, controls the perception" (attributed to Edward Bernays, 1928). The concept of narrative is easily defined as "a spoken or written account of a connection of events or stories" (Jordan, 2018). Narrative, therefore, is utilized to set precedence for events, to categorize cultural practices, and of course, as a means used to define individuals' beliefs, values, and perceptions. In the 21st century, the most influential use of narrative is found through mass media such as radio, film, and television and through social media, whereby images, stories, and news reports play a major factor in how the public comes to view things and how they form an opinion on the value of a person or in the cultural importance of events or movements (Ryan, 2012). Throughout history, the method of using narrative as a way of controlling the population and influencing them to act in certain ways was commonplace (McCall et. al, 2019). We have seen repeated events where one nation, government, or political leader used narrative to exercise control over society.

Much of what we perceive with gender, race, culture, and even religious practice is controlled and understood by the masses based on the narrative that has been told to us (Ryan, 2012). Much of what we have learned and believed is based on what we have heard and how media, whether social media, radio, film, or television, perceives the situation. Sadly, what that perception says is not always correct, and at times, can contrast an individual's or collective cultural group's lives and beliefs, leading to further distortion of the truth of their own narrative. This widespread practice of controlling another person's narrative begs the question of how we as individuals, can control a narrative based on things and incidents that are far removed from our knowledge and understanding? This ongoing practice by the media has influenced American society for decades (Ryan, 2012). We saw examples of this type of control in the 1950s with the

protests of Jim Crow laws and in the 1960s and 1970s when individuals protested the Vietnam War. The influence of media to control the social narrative has been widely practiced, and unfortunately, this cycle continues today (Ryan, 2012).

As we explore the role media plays in societal perceptions and attitudes, reviewing such incidents as the recent case of George Floyd (2020) and others gives us a better insight into why racial tensions are still prevalent throughout American society. In the Floyd case, the media had video footage, eyewitness testimony, and a recording of this dying man's last words, and still the narrative aimed at destroying his character. There was no compassion for what this man or his family endured. As the case unfolded and the officer responsible for George Floyd's death, Derek Chauvin, was examined and questioned, it was discovered that he had a history of being violent. This fact combined with many other documented incidents involving law enforcement, particularly the way police have interacted with BIPOC members of society has amplified the tension and unrest seen in the current social climate. The media has an obligation and responsibility in how information is shared with the public. They can at times be reckless as they "spin" the "narrative." In the BIPOC community, a common belief is that they [the media] do this simply because of the power they wield.

Additionally, social, and cultural clashes have led to the creation of certain groups and organizations purposed for one pursuit: to change the perceptional shift in how average Americans think and feel about BIPOC voices. Of these groups and organizations, one has taken a larger role. The Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM) has been in existence since 2013 and was formed shortly after the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murder (Blacklivesmatter.org, 2021). According to the organization's (2021) website, "Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, Inc. is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to

eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black

communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating

space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate

improvements in our lives" (para. 1).

American social media aligning with the country's social unrest would be an understatement.

BLM has used social media and mass media to influence how Black voices are perceived within

society, and so far, has been shown to be effective in keeping all forms of media accountable.

Their impact has been a welcome change. Yet not everyone agrees with the methods of

movements like this one, nor do they believe in the agenda of its organizers. The fact remains

that organizations such as BLM feel that radical tactics are the only way to shed light on

America's weakest aspects. There is a belief held by many who are for the Black Lives Matters

Movement that what the organization stands for is not fairly represented in the media. Lucas

(2020), points out it would be difficult for any online discourse to remain silent on this matter.

Social media platforms as discussed earlier in this paragraph, have become over saturated with

posts about protests with live footage and protest marches, hashtags, and fundraisers to assist in

legal aid of arrested protesters and victims' families. While it is exciting to see individuals using

their freedom of speech and exercising their voice, it is hoped that this will convince more

individuals to speak out and fight for a fairer and more accurate narrative.

This is more so felt by many in the BIPOC community, that the media in general, has

perpetuated an image and a narrative that says that the BLM organization must be against White

Lives to support Black Lives. Yet, in all actuality, the organization has made it noticeably clear

that they are not against the police, and they are not against white lives (Gerstmann, 2020).

Again, according to the website, the BLM founders (2021) state,

1. We are a collective of liberators who believe in an inclusive and spacious movement. We also believe that to win and bring as many people as possible with us along the way, we must move beyond the narrow nationalism that is all too prevalent in Black communities.

2. We must ensure we are building a movement that brings all of us to the front.

3. We affirm the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. Our network centers those who have been marginalized within Black liberation movements.

4. We are working for a world where Black lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise.

5. We affirm our humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression. (Paras. 2-5)

It is, however, a clear fact that many BIPOC lives are still under attack by the police and others from within society, and therefore organizations and movements like the BLM are necessary. Their active participation in standing for those in the BIPOC community is essential for all those Black lives who feel that they do not have a voice among white society.

When attempts are made to control another person's story or narrative or efforts are targeted to marginalize the most disenfranchised of our communities, then the individuals, families that make up BIPOC communities, do not grow or even prosper.

Therefore, it is the intention of this study to understand the cultural clash that is at present fueling a divide between BIPOC and Caucasian or the white culture. The hope is that at the outcome of this study, new knowledge will be gleaned, which will influence and impact communities, so that the very people using mass and social media as a means for control of the

narrative of those most vulnerable, will be stopped. The power of BIPOC voices and the stories they tell DO matter.

Research Questions

With this background and context in mind, the following research questions will form the foundation of this qualitative ethnographic case study:

RQ 1: How does the media narrative affect the perception of Black voices in modern society?

RQ 2: What role, if any, does the media's narrative play in promoting and encouraging past and current racial tension within the social structure of society?

RQ 3: How does a poor or false narrative directly influence the relationship between racial tension and profiling?

Definitions

For this study, the following definitions will serve for clarification of concepts and constructs.

1. **Black Lives Matter (BLM)-** A political and social movement protesting incidents of police brutality and all racially motivated violence against black people.

2. **Assimilation**- The process of taking in and fully understanding information or ideas not necessarily aligned within your own culture.

3. **Gentrification**- The process of renovating or improving an area or district so it conforms to middle-class standards.

4. **Narrative**- A spoken or written account of a series of related events or experiences either fictional or non-fictional normally told from the presenter's perspective.

Summary

Chapter one introduced the topic and scope of the dissertation including the background, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the research questions, and definitions. Chapter two will present a review of the literature including a discussion of the theoretical framework, related scholarly studies, and published news articles.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

Chapter two presents an understanding of narrative and societal perspectives as they relate to media narration. First, I will discuss the theoretical framework that will help guide an understanding of the topic. Next, I will discuss the literature that supports and supplies background information on the value and importance of the study topic. Finally, I will include a discussion of other sources that support the research aim, and that help to clarify the rationale for this study.

A Reminder of the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how the narrative within mass media and social media has influenced the cultural beliefs and viewpoints regarding the BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) community and culture, and to understand how acknowledging the responsibility and ownership of narrative changes, alters or finds one's place in societal views and feelings. By owning one's own narrative, each person knows and is the author of their own story.

We Cannot "Not" Communicate

Communication theorist, Paul Watzlawick (1972), is quoted as saying, "One cannot not communicate," suggesting that every person communicates, and that it is impossible to not engage in some form of human communication. Furthermore, he believed that just as humans cannot "not" communicate, they cannot "not influence" others through their communication acts. What this means is that "communication is inevitable" (Griffin, 2012, p. 184). Looking at Watzlawick's five axioms explains at an extremely basic level, why humans communicate and why this influence, good or bad due to human communication comes naturally, simply through

the act of speaking and making meaning through words and actions. Watzlawick (1972) focuses on many interesting aspects of communication through his axioms, one that I find particularly interesting is the first axiom, ***you should communicate***. It posits that in every action -- activity, or inactivity -- in word or silence, there is a message, and that message has value. Individuals engage in communication from the moment they perceive or meet one another, knowingly or unknowingly. Non-verbal communication or cues are a more honest perception of human communication. No matter how we may approach some interaction between ourselves and others, the temptation to communicate is too strong. Whether we communicate directly or indirectly, use verbal or non-verbal behaviors, we are communicating with one another. More so, according to Watzlawick (1972), communication is interactional, and within the communication cycle, there is "communication about communication" (as cited in Griffin, 2012, p. 184) taking place. In short, while we are communicating, we are projecting relationship messages that speak directly to how we see ourselves, how others see us, and how we see others "seeing us."

Communication is complex. It is a process, and through the various acts involved in speaking with or for others, we create meaning, share information, and show our views and perspectives that help us understand the world and our place within it. Littlejohn and Foss (2011) describe the naturalness of communication when they write that "communication is one of those every day activities intertwined with all of human life" (p. 3). In many ways, communication is "central to human life" (p. 3). In short, every person communicates; in fact, they communicate in a way that is native to their own cultural or ethnic group. Even animals have a unique way of communicating with each other, often with a mixture of vocal or physical behaviors (Beecher, 2021). Humans communicate with other humans using similar means: vocal, physical as well as through behaviors, actions, or deeds. Thus, the way we speak, the way we interact with others,

and the way we tell stories (project our narrative) is a crucial factor in how we receive and respond to all forms of human communication.

Fundamentals of Communication

The fundamentals of communication can be broken down into basic principles and goals. Learning to focus attention on the party you are communicating with is one of the first lessons in basic communication. Another aspect is sharing attention with another person and learning to branch that attention out and concentrate on other people. Lastly, you want to be opened to developing shared ideologies and behavioral exchanges.

Characteristics of Communication

There is communication, and then there is effective communication. One characteristic of effective communication is delivering a clear message. In addition, being correct, complete, and precise in your message. Another characteristic is reliability, this is particularly true when looking at narrative. This plays a major part in consideration to the recipient of your communication.

Models of Communication

There are three types of models within communication, linear, interactive, and transactional. Linear only looks at one-way communication while interactive looks more at two-way communication; transactional looks at two-way communication where the message gets more complex as the communication progresses. There have been great orators from the past and present who have utilized these models to get their points communicated to the masses. Aristotle utilized the linear model; he used the five elements of communication to argue how best to analyze communication. Osgood-Schramm preferred the interactive model; using coding Osgood believed that information should be interpreted in real-time. Lastly, Barnlund was a huge

proponent of the transactional model; highlighting the role that both private and public cues played in impacting messages.

Types of Communication

Just like there are models of communication there are also types of communication. These types of communication set the bases of how we interact with one another. The basic types of communication are visual communication, verbal communication, informal and formal communication, and lastly written communication. Visual communication can simply be any visual aids, drawings graphic designs, etc.; it grabs the attention of the audience through picture. Verbal communication is more widely used these days through TV, radio, or social media platforms; it is communication spread through word of mouth. Informal and formal communication are memos, letterheads, emails, etc. Lastly, there is written communication. This is the oldest form of communication, and it could be your print newspapers and magazines.

Communication in a Changing World

In America today, mass media, radio and film, and social media depict how race and ethnic issues are related through the imagery and published stories. These stories or narratives are often created by white Americans to communicate, illustrate, and dominate the true story held by non-white Americans.

The spinning of narrative to gain favor or insight fear or "concern" is nothing new. This has been the issue that has created the need for research like this. When narrative is created by those who cannot understand or know your struggle, they create fear in society that leads to incidents like what happened to Eric Garner and Tamir Rice just to name a few. Eric Garner a 43-year-old Black man was allegedly selling loose cigarettes and was confronted by the police. The officer held him in a chokehold that did not release him despite him expressing he could not

breath eleven times. Tamir Rice was only 12 years old, playing with a toy gun in the park, within two seconds of arriving at the park officers fatally shot Rice and "tackled" his 14-year-old sister to the ground, handcuffed her and placed her in the back of a police car. Both incidents and so many more, are shaped because of the narrative spun for most people of color. There is a fear and concern that is created when dealing with individuals of color that is not present when dealing with the white population of society. This perception affects the way society views the BIPOC community and especially how those of us in the BIPOC community view ourselves.

The current world we occupy, with our heavy reliance on technology and mediated communication, has created a unique environment that supports the basis for this study. Both media and social media have proven to be the main catalyst in the way we perceive and shape narrative. It is how society views cultural beliefs and even how many individuals view themselves and the cultures in which they are associated. This is particularly true within the BIPOC community.

Truth and diversity are an essential part of media performance, and the depiction supplies consensus for an evaluation of how it stands for people of color (King, 2019). Evaluating media narrative is important because of the dependence societal views have on the sense of reality and realistic portrayals of groups being represented. The use of narrative by mass media outlets, including social media, radio, television, and film is extremely important especially when examining ethnicity and race. This is so because the media tends to be the primary source of experiences that indirectly support racial attitudes and beliefs in balanced structures.

Accuracy in the way these narrations and depictions are shown is a particularly important part of the media narrative when reviewing the quality of illustrations and storylines standing for the lives of people who are non-White Americans. Because many of these individuals tend to be

misrepresented, usually because of cultural biases, and a misunderstanding of racial relations. They are then often depicted negatively in the media. It is essential that the BIPOC community develop a positive self-image and personal identity. Without a positive self-image and personal identity, the continuous negative images, such as poverty-stricken, gang bangers, gold-diggin women, etc., can directly influence their social reality. These negative depictions hinder the development of the self-image and personal identity, which in turn propagates the misinformation and manipulation of how non-BIPOC (particularly European or European decent) members of society view Black people.

Self-Communication and Perception

Having active perception in a conversation is vital to effective communication. Active perception allows you to notice cues that may be otherwise missed the sounds, smells, and the feeling of the general surroundings. This will assist in pinpointing general parts of conversations that may be missed or overlooked. Our feelings about ourselves have a profound influence on how we as individuals communicate with others. Take an example of an individual who is a firm believer in a topic they discuss, they believe themselves to be right on all matters; this inherently means any individual who disagrees with them, by default believes them to be wrong. If you cannot move past this perception, then it is impossible to be critical or even non-biased about information being presented to you.

Identity Management

Identity management theory (see Cupach and Imahori) focuses on how we as individuals manage ourselves in a variety of situations. For much of the narrative, the individuals do not create particularly false narration described in such narration; the issue is it could be amplified by the behavior of these individuals based on that narrative. A prime example is having an

exceptional child that has been surrounded by images and perceptions that for all intents and purposes tell them they and others who look like them are less than exceptional. Over time and continuous conditioning of this not only will society begin to see them as lacking, but they themselves will believe this to be true as well. This leads to the curiosity of societies influence on media perception or media perceptions influence on society.

Understanding Culture and Co-Cultures

Let us first understand what culture is within a social structure. Simply put, it is a term which umbrellas the social behavior and norms found in human society. This includes knowledge, various beliefs, arts, customs, laws, and habits of these individual groups. So, when we look at Co-cultures you are examining a group whose beliefs and behaviors help to distinguish them from the larger culture they belong to. The differences between the two co-cultures are a collection of smaller groups of individuals who share a commonality within the larger constructs of the societal groups they occupy.

Values and Norms

Norms regulate a standard of behavior with individuals within society. Values are cultural standards that are set based on society's need for an organized and social life. The issue arises when there is a standard group of individuals who sets the values and norms that speak for the collective, but they themselves have a very narrowed viewpoint of society. If your scope is narrow and you lack the information to make decisions for cultures and communities you have extraordinarily little knowledge and connection with, then you are writing a story and telling a narrative that is false and destructive to the culture and society.

The Power of Language

Language creates influence, particularly in media and social media communication. A charismatic speaker simply utilizing their oratory skills can build people's hopes, stamp out or even create fear, hatred, and forgiveness (Ng et al., 2017). There are many forms of language, whether, spoken or written words, physical cues, or facial expressions, language plays an important part in how we communicate within social structures. Some of the most influential people that played a key role in shaping the narrative, particularly in the struggles faced by the BIPOC community were great orators, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr, and former President Barack Obama, just to name a few. They were able to make their audience understand and relate to the struggles, oppression, and dysfunction that embodied a race of people that much of the population they were addressing could not relate to. However, their words and vivid descriptions made a difference towards closing the divide in racial disparities.

Through their eyes a society that was once blinded to the perils and plights of some, could now understand the degradation that was taking place. Utilizing the language of civil and human rights gave power back to those that were lacking in power and gave birth to the possibility of social change.

Theories of Human Communication

Littlejohn and Foss (2011) state that "theories provide explanations that help us understand the phenomenon of communication" (p. 3). More specifically, they define a theory as "any organized set of concepts, explanations, and principles that depict some aspect of human experience" (p. 19). Communication researchers and scholars use theories to help to "understand, explain, interpret, judge, and participate in the communication happening around us" (p. 19). Thus, theories are created by people for the purpose of organizing facts and to present some

"truth" (p. 20). Theories are not foolproof, nor are they always correct or correct in what they seem to interpret. They offer just one of many perspectives on how we choose to see the world.

Robert T. Craig (1999) suggested a way to group communication theories and placed them together in categories so that they would be better organized. Craig considered himself a pragmatist or someone who saw practical value in the use of theory. His conceptualization in the field of communication is now considered to be one of the most coherent views of theory. In his foundational article, Craig suggested that there were seven traditions from which theories could be organized or mapped: semiotic, phenomenological, cybernetic, sociopsychological, sociocultural, critical, and rhetorical.

For the purposes of this study, phenomenology or the "study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2021) will be used to help explain and describe the phenomena of 'owning one's narrative.' Since phenomenology studies individual experience or the things of experience, this proposed research study fits within this traditional framework. Additionally, because this study is interested in how mass media and social media narratives shape and influence the cultural experience of Black and white audiences, the rhetorical tradition also offers theoretical support for the study outcomes. The rhetorical tradition encompasses "all the way humans use symbols to affect those around them and to construct the world in which they live" (Littlejohn et. al, 2011, p. 61).

Phenomenological and Rhetorical Lenses

Phenomenological Tradition

The phenomenological tradition is communication as the experience of self and others through dialogue (Littlejohn et al., 2011). It is assumed that individuals who practice

phenomenological tradition understand their experiences or interpret the world by using personal experience. One example of this is an individual understanding a stove is hot after they have been burnt by the hot stove. Basic understanding of this concept is that individuals gain understanding of a concept or ideology through experience. Communicators can understand narrative by being immersed in the culture or community they are portraying.

Rhetorical Tradition

The rhetorical tradition focuses on how people conceive the nature, scope, and function of rhetoric (Littlejohn et al., 2011). Rhetoric tradition looks at how theory, practice, and critique of rhetoric has been intertwined and impacts individuals' views of government, citizenship, morality, and quality of life. If the five basic underlying principles of rhetoric are present, the text, author, audience, purpose, and setting, the situations may differ, but the intent of the communication will remain the same.

Selected Theories

There have been many theories that help to explain varied ways of communication. For this research study, two such theories will be used to help explain and describe the phenomenological understanding of how narrative is used in communication. The first is Grounded Theory, and the second is, Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm (1987).

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory, simply put, is the methodology that has been applied to qualitative research and involves constructing hypothetical scenarios and theoretical processes through the collection and analysis of data (see Glasser and Strauss). Grounded theory bases its foundation on inductive reasoning. This research utilizes grounded theory by examining the research questions and collecting the necessary data. As this is collected, and reviewed, concepts become

easier to understand and comprehend. This concept is a general way of thinking, but also probably one of the more effective ways to prove research.

Fisher's Narrative Paradigm (1987)

Fisher's Narrative Paradigm (1987) is more of a communication theory that focuses strongly on storytelling and news reporting. This theory has played a significant role in examining narrative and the effect narrative has on those it is portrayed. This theory focuses on the complex interaction and narrative between humans. In this research, these two theories would be the most effective to examine the use of narrative and exploration of how narrative by the media affects how society reacts to the individuals being portrayed.

Walter Fisher is a famous theorist most noted for his theory on humanities ability of storytelling or as he refers to it narrative theory. He is credited as the founder of narrative theory. Fisher obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa in 1960 and continued his academic journey as a professor. His most notable achievement was his formulation of narrative approach to rhetoric and communication theory. He was the 1979 award winner of the Golden Anniversary Monograph Award from the Speech Communication Association, in was in this award-winning article that Fisher introduced narrative theory to the field of communication.

In Fishers Narrative Paradigm, Fisher emphasized the importance of communication taking place via storytelling or reporting of events. This theory focused on humans being natural storytellers and emphasizes that a good story is more convincing than a good argument. This narrative proves that human beings are not rational, and proposed that narrative is the basis of communication, because of this theory it is evident that rather than produce evidence or construct a logical argument human beings would be more engaged in elaborate stories.

Because humans are traditionally storytellers who pass on information from generation to generation, whether it be religion or traditional tails. It is safe to say that narrative is based on cultural perspective. Narrative shares its relevance in both the real and fictitious world. Fisher makes key points in his narrative that humans are symbolic individuals who use their ability to tell a story to evoke emotional connections and create shared bonds to powerful ideas. Another perspective that Fisher points out are how stories socialize human behavior in acting and believing in a common way whether it be religion, politics, or just societal views. These stories are used to create values and goals in addition to establishing identification within a social structure, this gives the order to the human experience.

Stories are meant to give a better understanding of the world around us. Storytellers or narrators have a certain power because individuals in society can relate and identify with the actions and characteristics of the individuals involved. This idea of relatability is often viewed in media and social media platforms. Throughout this research, the examples and discussion from the panel exhibit exactly what Fisher explains in his narrative paradigm.

Fisher believed that any form of communication that influences attitudes, behaviors, or beliefs should be seen as a story. Narration, as defined by Fisher, is a symbolic action, word or act that has order or meaning to those who live, create, and interpret it. There are four definitional concepts that can be derived by digging deeper into Fisher's narrative paradigm. The first is that *the story is rooted in time and space*, the second is that *the story covers every aspect of life*, and the third is that *the story is related to linguistic and non-verbal messages*, and finally, *the story and all forms of communication are considered*.

Fishers Narrative Paradigm is a widely shared perceptual framework. Humankind has moved from a rational world paradigm to a narrative paradigm. In the rational world paradigm, humankind was guided by the following principles:

- Humankind is rational in nature.

- Decisions are based on discussion.

- The speech situation is a specification of the process of discussion.

- Rationality is based on how well known and how well you can reason.

- The world is a set of logic puzzles that can be solved through rational analysis.

The narrative paradigm contrasts with this and is based on various principles.

- Everyone is a storyteller.

- Reasonable decisions are made based on communication conditions, media, and genres.

- The rationality of the story is determined by the consistency and fidelity of our story.

- History, biography, culture, and personality determine what is considered justified.

The story of a human judge is based on the rationality of the story. The two forms used to test this are story consistency and story fidelity. When it comes to story coherence, there are some basic things society needs to determine if a story is flexible.

- First, is the story connected? How likely is the story to the audience? Make sure the narrator does not omit vital details, tamper with the facts, or ignore plausible details.

- Second, the coherence of the story must correspond to what society perceives to be related to its worldview.

This brings us the fidelity of the story and there are some principles that can help us understand this.

- The story must be consistent with the experience of the audience.

- The story must provide a valid reason for future action.

- Finally, people tend to be attracted to reports that fit what they consider to be true or humane.

Values set the logic of the story of good reason, there are five themes related to values,

- The value embedded in the message.

- The relevance of these values for decision making.

- The result of adhering to these values.

- Interference with the audience's view of the world.

- Adaptation to what the viewer believes is ideal based on behavior.

Related Literature

The following review of literature includes a discussion of the influence media and technology plays within the context of the narrative and societal perception. In this research, we will examine how media narrative controls societal perspective and what effect that plays on the social structure and those that perceive the narrative to be accurate. The research will also show how this narrative and perception affects those who are marginalized within society due to these inaccurate, or racially based narratives.

Being Ethically Sound

Technological advances have increased our ability within society to communicate more effectively. The culture of today's media, particularly its social media maintains a tremendous influence on today's social constructs. The portrayal of individuals within our society plays a leading role in the media and on major social media platforms. Having a voice within the culture helps not only the individual or specific organization vocalize their need to be heard, but also sets the stage for many to follow. Media in any form radio, television or film and social media platforms have the distinct honor of giving individuals the ability to express their voice within the culture. This idea is a key point in social makeup, much of which, based on society's beliefs and views can be built or destroyed. Media can portray individuals and cultures according to a narrative that is not always accurate or entirely their own. By enacting video production and giving a platform for individuals to express their thoughts and beliefs, podcast being one such example, individuals are given an opportunity to have more control over their narrative or the ability to be portrayed in a more productive way. By learning more about interviews, media, and video, it is interesting to view how a change in narrative or a change in how narrative is controlled can be a determination about how individuals are viewed and treated solely based on requirements and social norms. This leads to the question of whether it is possible for communicative platforms to alter the perception of how individuals or the individuality of persons are viewed within society. In the last decade society has proven that this is possible. We have seen it in the racial tensions within society due to the images and stories that were perpetuated by the viewpoints of social media entities, radio, and film.

The ideology of ethical practices being performed in research is not always founded. Gathering facts proves difficult within most organizations. Most of the information collected is

based on opinions and views. This can be considered circumstantial depending on who or where the information is coming from. When looking at this behavior and the behaviors that make for successful communication, it is beneficial to see what creates great management practices and phenomenal organizational skills. Stevens (2008) states, "Communicating the code's precepts in an effective way is crucial to its success" (p. 601). Examining a variety of behaviors and practices of communication is imperative to learning how to express the information being given as well as received.

There is a desire to have organizations hold themselves and individuals morally accountable for their actions, putting the right individuals in place is extremely important. These individuals must be willing and able to follow the guidelines and policies of the company or organization. They must not be willing to stray from the message being set for or proved by the social structure.

Effective Communication

Communication is based on a variety of concepts. There are eight extremely basic concepts of communication. The first would be, ***who is sending and who is receiving the message***. Interpretation is everything, therefore the way a message is relayed plays a significant role in how a message is perceived. The next concept would be the message itself, ***what is being sent, and what that means for the receiver***. Next, would be ***the code***, followed by ***the channel*** and then ***the medium***. The code is an effortless way to formulate messages specific to your audience, while the channel is the means of passing or transmitting the code and the medium is the means of communication in which to send the channel. The noise and environment also play a key role in how things get communicated and lastly feedback, how what you have communicated is perceived and translated to others and by others.

The overall tone of society today screams change. Nike, the world's largest athletic apparel company and one of the most valuable brands among sports businesses, ran a fantastic promotional advertisement that spoke directly to society's need for change and social justice. The musical score was somber, but it helped to push the message the advertisement tried to convey to the public. The title of the advertisement was, "For once, don't do it Nike" (Nike, 2020). It was an ingenious play on words. Not only did the corporation of Nike let society know that injustice of any kind will not be tolerated by the organization, but they let the movement Black Lives Matter (BLM) and the individuals represented by BLM know that they stand united.

Nike managed to keep a serious tone to the advertisement without making a mockery of its message. There have been other organizations that have tried to do the same and have been unsuccessful in their efforts. Social media tends to manifest as public opinion and these practices shape journalistic routines (McGregor, 2019). It is important to not only understand the message that the company is trying to convey to the public but as the producer and director of these advertisements, the product must be clear and concise and in line with the organization's beliefs and behaviors.

The way information is presented plays a key role in how it is perceived. The tone in which a message is given can make a promotion a success or failure. With the social climate as volatile as it has been, Nike knew that they could not "ride the fence" with their statements; they would need to be forthright and direct with the message they wanted to convey. The tone could not offend or be perceived as dismissive, nor could they take a humorous approach to such a serious matter. The severity of today's social climate is more than just a statement for many. It is a matter of life versus death and Nike with this promotional video has proven to its loyal customers, supporters, and the public that they not only understand, but support the change.

For many watching the Nike video, it stirs up emotions to call for change. After watching the promotional video, it makes you see that even on a global scale change is inevitable. It is a feeling, that as a person faced with racial injustice daily you are not in this fight alone. Nike understood that it is not just a fight for Black and brown people, this is a cry for societal change and restructure everywhere. The need for change is now and Nike sparked a flame in society.

Companies and their brands have faced the impact of negative online and compliant behavior (Pfeffer et al., 2013). In the past, social media controlled how society perceived a lot of the negative images and discussions that flood their pages and timelines. Today social media acts as a conduit to social action, news, entertainment, and a host of other platforms. It gauges societal perceptions, attitudes, and feelings.

The comments under the video promotion tell a different story. It is surprisingly apparent that the reaction it was meant to invoke was not the reaction it garnered. Instead, many individuals were upset, and outraged, and felt that the organization tried to exploit the situation, the movement, and Black and brown people. O'Conner et al. (2015), go into detail about this when they say, "to seize profitable opportunities in social networks, people must first spot the opportunity" (p. 123).

Many individuals use social media to build awareness, motivate, and shape their behavior of individuals (Lai, 2019). In the video in question, Nike is calling for social action and change, and the message is a call for action on a global scale. The video points out and acknowledges the racial injustice within society and asks for individuals to not only acknowledge the wrong but to aid in correcting it. Nike states in the video to not pretend that you do not see that there is a problem in America, and not to turn your back on racism. The video points out all the innocent lives being lost, and the way society excuses this behavior. The video points out that this

behavior does not just affect the minority community, but that it affects us all. It concludes by asking the audience not to sit back and continue to be complacent, but to acknowledge and accept that they can be a part of the change. It is long argued if the benefits of using social media in society outweigh the drawbacks (Hemsley et al., 2018). Nike took a chance that their advertisement would not offend but show solidarity. Only time will tell if the risk was worth it in the end.

Due to the nature of the video, taking any other approach could have been disastrous. By utilizing humor as opposed to the serious tone they chose to take, the intended audience could have taken offense given the seriousness of the movement. Utilizing social media platforms enables a diverse group to share their ideas on a variety of issues and topics (Hampton et al., 2011). This makes it easier to get your point across to a mass amount of people in a limited amount of time.

While humor is a fantastic way to break the ice on difficult conversations, in the wake of our current social climate where individual communities feel as if they are being hunted and targeted, humor is no longer proper or called for when discussing such matters. Schulman (2018) emphasizes the use of humor to communicate and pursue individuals to understand and relate to the information you are sharing. By invoking humor, you can create common ground and release any uncomfortableness.

Other companies have tried to garner the same response to current social issues from advertisements and instead completely missed the mark. One such company is Pepsi Co., where one of their advertisements shows Kendall Jenner, a popular model, and social media maven, portrayed as a protester for social justice. The advertisement was met with a great deal of backlash and Pepsi pulled the commercial. Pepsi claims it was meant to be a short film about

letting go and following your passions to appeal to the younger demographics. The advertisement has a strong resemblance to a scene captured on television of a young African American female protestor approaching police officers.

Blake (2018) states that it is important for video content to clearly communicate with the audience and end any ambiguity. When a company uses video to reach their audience, they must first understand the problem they want to solve. Pepsi did not do this and instead offended and disrespected the audience they were targeting.

Then vs. Now

The current social climate makes us all responsible today. We are all in charge of the biggest transgression to much of the audience viewing Nike's promotional video. It was the negative publicity of Nike in the past being accused of using child labor but trying to take the moral high road on the current issue of racial discrimination, not only our actions but our reactions as well. We can no longer sit idly by and allow wrong to go unchecked or excuse behaviors for fear of our seclusion. It is no longer okay to allow racial slurs, jokes, and the like to continue to dictate social cues. Society calls for ownership and responsibility not only of your thoughts and deeds but also of your actions.

Controlling Your Own Narrative

Controlling the individual narrative is a major proponent of communication. Social structures will take on the narrative of what society believes to be morally or ethically correct based on emotion and hearsay rather than information. By focusing on a variety of communication aspects this behavior can be alleviated. This is the only way positive communication practices can be built.

Finding narratives is when we focus on who or what image is being projected. It could be from a gender normative stance, or identities within the workplace. Making distinctions between how someone finds and what that individual is capable of is not a new concept. This has been a struggle in the world of minorities, women, and LGBTQ just to name a few. One aspect of dealing with these roadblocks is simply confronting them head-on and redefining what these stereotypes mean.

According to Mihai (2017), "The analysis of the managers' communicational behavior, which has as its aim fulfilling of tasks and organizational objectives, by collaborating with people" (p.103). In this way, the author is explaining, that working with others it is more beneficial for the work and task being conducted. Strategic communication emphasizes working with the group to reach a common goal. Through communicating a like-minded ideology for the greater good of the masses pushing forward towards one common goal a communicational behavior can be reached. There must be a balance that will promote an intense sense of productivity and create a balance.

Controlling individual account is a significant defender of correspondence. Social structures will assume the story of what society accepts to be ethically or morally right dependent on feeling and noise instead of verifiable data. By concentrating on an assortment of correspondence perspectives this conduct can be reduced. This is the main way positive correspondence practices can be assembled. Recognizing stories is the point at which we center around who or what picture is being expected. It could be from a sexual orientation standardizing position, or characters inside the work environment. Making qualifications between how someone distinguishes and what that individual is fit for is anything but another idea. This has been a battle in the realm of minorities, ladies, and LGBTQ just to give some examples. One part

of managing these detours is just by defying them head-on and rethinking what these generalizations mean. Mihai (2017) asserts "the investigation of the chiefs' communicational conduct, which is the point of satisfying assignments and hierarchical targets, by collaborating with individuals" (p.105). This means that there will always be a point of contact within the communication hierarchy that does not always correlate to the concepts and practices of the communication profession.

Key correspondence stresses working with the gathering to arrive at the shared goal. There must be a parity that will advance a solid feeling of efficiency and make an equalization. Moral research in a conventional sense is not constantly proven. It is hard to get genuine data on moral practices inside associations. A great part of the information is gossip or general conclusion and accordingly not realities but close to home perspectives.

In looking at the conduct and what codes make up fruitful social administration, it is anything but difficult to see the viability of what establishes great administration. According to Stevens (2008), "Imparting the code's statutes in a powerful manner is vital to its prosperity" (p. 601). In other words, much of what society feels is based on what society sees. Taking a look at the conduct of correspondence from a moral angle inside the administration field, it is basic that administration not just holds their workers to a specific standard but are happy to hold themselves to similar or better expectations.

There is an ethical commitment that organizations need to make the best decision and act in specific manners with regards to their association. Accordingly enlisting the correct sort of executives is principal. They should hold fast to and keep the organization's esteems and convictions available to the representative needs and recommendations. They cannot be

pretentious and must be happy to stand up in the interest of the organization and the individuals spoken to by the organization.

Summary

The greatest limitation that media faces would have to be deciding whether we entertain for elevation, fact finding or simple exploitation. In the research I am conducting, and studying, this conclusion is a matter of interpretation, based on who will oversee the narrative. All we can do as a civil society is take the information we are given and try to expound on it, with the intent of making things better. Society's current state shows us the damage that can be incurred if we are not mindful of our actions or words, particularly with the power of media when dealing with narrative in the public eye. If we do not begin to better ourselves for humanity, then we run the risk of seeing society decline at a rapid rate, largely because of misrepresentation, and biases affecting our view of others.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Chapter Three presents a review of the methodology on the topic. First, I will present the choice of approach. Then, I will discuss why this approach is the best method to use to explore the research questions proposed in Chapter One's Introduction. I will include a discussion on the process for selecting participants as well as supply an interview guide for the panel interviews, I will host as part of this study.

Methodology

The research method utilized in this study is qualitative phenomenological and ethnographic research. Qualitative research utilizes a variety of methodologies to draw conclusions for the specific research. Some of the more popular means and ones that I will be utilizing in this research are interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. Through interviews there will be an opportunity to sit with individuals one on one and ask questions that will assist in guiding the research. I will also utilize focus groups; this will enable me to ask questions that will generate discussion with a particular group of individuals. Lastly, I will observe participants, and in doing so I will record what I have seen, heard, and encountered in detailed field notes to better document my research study.

Utilizing qualitative research, through phenomenology and ethnography, I feel I can best capture this study. Qualitative research tells a story and paints a picture that many can relate to. It is through this form of study that we can gain the best insight to narrative. Through panel discussions I can gather a more diversified view of the subject matter. There are many reasons why I chose to utilize the route of a panel discussion. A panel discussion allows for the spontaneity you expect from a face-to-face in person discussion. Gaining reaction and insight

from fellow panelists aids in the expression and exchange of ideas. Panel discussions allow individuals to get a multitude of perspectives on a given topic, panel participants can express their viewpoints and back any research they may have had on the subject matter (Abdullah et al., 2014).

Phenomenology gives insight into the various individuals and experiences within the phenomenon of the narrative research. According to Lindlof et. al (2019), phenomenology is concerned with how individuals live their experience, and how they share that experience with others. Using a phenomenological approach, individuals can understand diversity in a more open frame of mind. If we look at individuals selected to represent a large group of people, but they have no ties to those people and are far removed from those they are chosen to represent, how can they accurately represent them? Former President Donald Trump is a prime example of that born and bred in the wealthy upper class of society that makes up around 1% of the population. How can you be the voice of a society that 99% of the population cannot relate to?

I went back and forth between narrative research and ethnographical research. I felt that ethnography would be a sounder option. Ethnography goes more in depth with the cultural characteristics of a particular group of people. Wolcott (1988) states that "ethnography means, literally, a picture of the way of life of some identifiable group of people" (as cited in Punch, 2014, p. 127). In short, ethnography is a qualitative method that seeks to understand culture through the lens of the participant and the participant observer. Spradley (1980) defines culture as a "shared set of meanings or a cognitive map of meanings" (as cited in Punch, 2013, p. 127). While I am looking at media bias in my study, more importantly I am looking at how others are framing the individual and cultural narrative. A great deal of narrative is derived because of cultural bias, therefore utilizing ethnography will help individuals gain better understanding of

the cultures they are discussing. This could be the changing factor to determine how narrative is shaped and issued.

Initially, I was on the fence about whether I wanted to take a qualitative approach or a more quantitative approach to my research. Understanding the different concepts of these studies helps researchers figure out how they would like their research to go, but more importantly, the choice in study design can decide whether the outcome of the research produces the right type of success. For example, in my research of the narrative within the media of urban youth and how these narratives affect not only urban youth, the choice of methodology also gave me a new perspective on research in this field and the best way to approach it. Through interviews and panels, I will gain a better understanding of narrative and perception.

The purpose of studying how narrative is controlled and how it works particularly in media and with urban Americans, became increasingly important, especially during these critical times. By understanding the viewpoint of an individual, one can make the research more humanistic. The ideals and beliefs shown are not necessarily frowned upon. Sharing these beliefs could make the study geared more towards individual viewpoints therefore it is necessary to be mindful of these issues. The study can utilize both quantitative and qualitative research methods and garner results that would be beneficial. The only issue is which method would produce the greatest results.

With the qualitative method of research, it is important to understand the needs of the potential audience. This I have found increasingly accurate in my research. By examining the characteristics of the qualitative method, it helps me understand the theory more fully. The qualitative method is usually conducted in natural settings, with multiple sources of data, and participants meaning plays a major part in the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study

helped to put the research into perspective and give more of a worldview. This type of research aids in taking a more realistic worldview. By utilizing this approach, I conducted interviews with media outlets that perpetuate this behavior and that continue to allow members of the BIPOC community to feel a sense of inferiority in their day to day lives.

Quantitative methods however focus more on worldviews and how individuals deal with life in general. This type of research allows the researcher to be more direct with the obtaining and explaining of data. This can cause a lot of opinions in the research. This type of research will give you a better understanding of the general principles of research and how it operates on a general basis. Quantitative research explores methods like surveys and interviews to get a greater understanding of the data. This is critical in the participation and ethics of the parties involved. For there to be surveys, individuals must be willing to participate and be seen in a new light. There is a certain level of vulnerability and honesty that must transpire for this method to be successful and the study to be successful.

Both methods play a significant role in research, and both have their own unique way of combating that research. Both methods have been used in many ways over the years and both can be extremely valuable in research. Oral research plays as important a role as written research, sometimes even more so, because people tend to believe far more what they see than what they read.

The modern technological society has made the current world amazingly fast paced. Over the last decade or so the way individuals communicate has changed dramatically. Digital marketing has become the new norm, instead of laptops and desktops more people are utilizing phones and tablets to create and view video content (Bowman, 2017). The independence of creativity and promotion takes on new meaning in this modern-day society. The younger

generation is more technologically savvy and can produce, develop, and promote businesses, products, and projects right from their smart phones.

Video can give an organization personality, the content of videos connects our hearts as well as our minds (Wise, 2017). Videos create stronger presence between the audience and the product the company or organization is trying to promote because you can now access videos from anywhere; this becomes increasingly more important to individuals presenting a product to the masses. There are many ways people try to connect with their audience: videos, utilize commonalities, emotions, places or even things to draw in public perception and create bonds with the targeted audience. In doing this successfully, the organization can increase productivity. As co-founder of an online Caribbean radio station; I even have a show that I air on the station weekly. I realize in more recent times that the use of video in the form of live feeds made my audience grow. It gave the community I air to, more interaction with the program.

Visuals allow the audience to be connected, you can post information and send flyers or alerts, but a video lets the audience feel as if they are part of the experience; it is inclusive. It is not a surprise that brands are gearing more to video content. Social media utilizing video makes the concept easier to understand, it makes the consumer feel as if they are having a one on one or face to face with the organizers of the product (Muralidharan, 2019). This connection is making the target audience feel more personalized.

A Biblical Perspective

When we look at visual media and storytelling from a Christian perspective, we must think of the ethical standpoints of communication particularly in the current social media age. Many ads, products, etc., that utilize social media visual platforms tend to stretch the truth to achieve maximum marketability. The issue that is faced when looking at marketing of any kind,

but particularly visual marketing is more of a moral dilemma. Just as we explained this through biblical perspective, "Do not be misled: "bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God I say this to your shame" (1 Corinthians 15: 33-34).

The ability to enable individuals to have a platform to express their thoughts and concerns without judgement or reproach is significant. The message that establishing your own narrative and ability to express your thoughts and behavior is priceless in media and entertainment. Society has not been very forthcoming in allowing individuals, particularly Black individuals to establish and live in their truth. "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves" (Romans 13: 1-2).

Right and Wrong

Schulman (2016) speaks on the importance of telling the truth and having a world of your own. He speaks on moralities' ability to imply a judgment about what is right or wrong. The lack of ability for individuals to tell their own story, 'own their own narratives,' has been prevalent for an exceptionally long time. For example, all that is happening today with Black Lives Matter (BLM), speaks to a climate and need for change within society. So many are frustrated with the current portrayal of individuals within society and are now ready for a change. Media, particularly social media, and video enable people to establish such change. There are people in society who have argued that the violence and anger are too much that people are over the top in the way they are behaving; still others will argue that society's lack of understanding for ALL its

people has driven people to such behaviors. That all the frustration and anger being depicted is a direct result of the poison that has been injected in society over decades and even centuries of unjustified behavior.

Technique

By protesting, marching, using various social media platforms, the techniques have already begun to combat the growing disparities within the media about the minority population within society and the behavior that has been attributed to managing the minority population by those in power. This movement has weaponized protestors and creates a growing platform which has sparked not only nation-wide outcry but a global one as well (Altman, 2015). By opening discussions and having tough conversations and no longer burying society's hurt and pain, it leaves avenues for progressive change. This generations' society will no longer stand by and allow injustice to go on. Real change needs to take place and video, radio, media, and social media platforms are taking up the cause to continue pushing for REAL social change.

<center>**Review of Purpose Statement**</center>

The purpose of communication is to form and maintain relationships, to convey feelings and solve problems. Many communicators utilize this practice to make decisions, give information as well as reduce stress. A good communicator can use the act of communication to persuade others and shape popular opinion. This is where the idea of controlling narrative comes into play and the importance of understanding controlled narrative and the power and effect it has on the social structure.

There have been articles written on how narrative affects the perception of society on various individuals and organizations. Nathanson (2006) explains in his journal article that narrative is a form of discourse which tells a story. We know that the use of narrative is one of

the oldest forms or ways to communicate one's perception of what is transpiring around them. Several individuals and organizations have examined how narrative, and more importantly the perception of narrative affects society and social structure. Narrative can draw in an audience and a great narrator or orator can effectively create social change.

Much of what is missing in today's social structure is the ability to comprehend things we do not understand. This is in large part because the information given to us within society is skewed and created by our own false narratives and misconceptions. Much of which is based on decades of misrepresentation whether in the media or press. This leads to perceptions that create the negative stereotypes and false ideology we use to judge others and create division within our own societal structure. Organizations such as Black Lives Matter has spoken extensively on these issues and has highlighted how this behavior affects those within the community.

As such, I am studying the narrative within media communication because I want to find out how media's narrative and perspective affect society's perception of individuals and/or groups of individuals to understand the influence media narrative plays within our society and how to establish a more transparent and accurate depiction.

Sampling and Approach to Selecting Participants

For this study, I selected a variety of individuals from within the urban diaspora to shed light on the use of narrative and the ability to give voice and create imagery based on perception. I used a multistage sampling technique to poll individuals from different areas. I polled six individuals from six separate locations: Northern US, Southern US, East Coast, West Coast, Caribbean, and Europe. I then divided them into subgroups and identified their roles or genre (actor, musician, author, dancer), sex (male or female), age, ethnicity (Latino, African American, Caribbean, other minority groups). By identifying and understanding narrative we can

then understand why we label others. This will allow us to break away from these stereotypes and false narratives and allow for a more accurate depiction of society.

I know that bias is a major issue in research and particularly in researching narrative in individual communication. The general idea behind response bias is referring to the many factors that take place during the survey process; these factors affect the way responses are provided (Lavrakas, 2008). Response bias can stem from several factors: one-sided response, lack of practical participants, use of social media, and researchers' personal bias. These biases can form the researcher's perception and taint the data. This could also sway the audience and participants from remaining neutral. This would severely impact the research and have catastrophic results on any data obtained by the research.

A one-sided response to a study can leads to misinformation of a subject matter or participant. If this occurs, it could cause conclusions to be drawn by the researcher that are inaccurate and would therefore create false information within the research. A common example is individuals who feel race and gender are no longer a factor in society. If you are conducting a study on the current turmoil in society and use this as a premise for your study, the data will be based on false information only seen and experienced by one perspective. The truth is that the characteristics we exhibit, physical, or otherwise have always affected the way individuals are viewed in society.

A lack of participants is also a major factor in response bias. If your participation is limited, then the data collected is limited and this may not give an accurate depiction of the information being researched. One example of this is conducting a poll and getting one result. This does not serve as a correct measure from which to gauge data.

Social media is a very sensitive environment when looking at obtaining research because much of what is posted on social media is based primarily on an individual's perception. This can create false and inaccurate data. This can be detrimental to a research study, creating misleading information and false responses based on this inaccurate information. Social media platforms, because they are subject to interpretation and are geared towards supporting influencers, the data on these platforms are not accurate enough to utilize in research. By basing research on social media platforms, it leaves the data to popular opinion and not information. This could destroy the credibility of a study.

The last factor I would say is the researcher's own personal bias. This can be from cultural differences, upbringing, and/or firsthand experiences. Society has a way of portraying things to shape our everyday way of thinking. Depending on our experiences, one individual's perception of a person, situation, or experience can be vastly different from someone else's. When conducting research, these viewpoints become critical in how we perceive a study and the participants. When researchers allow for their own bias to get involved in the research it can be disastrous. Many times, this happens unknowingly by censoring topics or points based on the researcher's own views and hindrances and not so much what benefits the research. By hindering the data, you cannot get accurate information on the study, and this skews the results.

Nature of the Study

There is a sense of responsibility in society when it comes to media and the transfer of information. Particularly when we are discussing social media. When asked the question, does social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc., contribute to a more equal way of communicating within society by bypassing big media and allowing users to be more direct by going from the sender to the receiver? The short and direct answer is yes! However, to

understand this we first must understand the platform of social media. Social media is simply interactive computer-mediated technologies that help the creation or sharing of information, ideas, interest, and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks. Social media platforms have become the main source for much of today's communication practices. A great deal of society has some form of social media access and uses this form to express views, ideas, share news, and opinions. This is a way for society to feel connected and express various ideologies. We have seen social media platforms utilized in a variety of ways, during recent times.

One of the most prominent examples of the power media plays in communication particularly through social media is in politics and entertainment. Social media has proven to be a political catalyst for many. We have seen Twitter, Facebook, and many others come under fire in recent times throughout the last election (Kirk, 2020). Many of the topics and information that were put out by these outlets were looked at by most as freedom of expression, but for some, they viewed this information as "fake news" and the political parties became popular for this phrase throughout society and the current administration.

While many believe social media impact to be a massive part of how society views and thinks about much of what takes place within society. The true effects on society by social media are still not fully understood. When we try to understand this ideology of "fake news," we first must understand what that is. Fake news is simply information that has been deliberately fabricated and issued to deceive and mislead others into believing falsehoods or doubting variable facts (McGonagle, 2017). What must be understood is that anyone with access to the internet and therefore social media platforms has the potential to be a reporter of news or public opinion. Once information is put out on these platforms it has the potential to be viewed by

millions. This was particularly true throughout the 2020 presidential race. Social media outlets

such as Twitter and Facebook came under fire, particularly for their role throughout the 2020

election. It was a true test of democracy and free speech (Wang et al., 2017).

In my own experiences in the use of social media and the consumption of news, I have

spent a great deal of time sharing and passing information from media such as radio and press

through a variety of social media platforms. I recognize that not every platform or entity can be

dependable in the information they put out or the sources that they share. Many outlets are

beginning to clamp down on such entities to cut the amount of fake news. This will have a

significant impact on society and social media outlets (Ordway, 2017). In my experience, social

media can affect and change the social structure around them. I saw persons better known as

influencers utilize their social media presence to create movements in a matter of minutes. While

many argue that utilizing social media platforms for various things like news, political agendas

are not democratic this is not always true. Some individuals share fake news and storylines for

fun and do not take the platforms of social media seriously, for them it is strictly entertainment

(Mercier, 2020). Instead of acting on our fears of social media deterring our democracy we

should look at it for what it is, another platform to express ideas, views, and conversation.

For many social media platforms are used to pass news and information to a massive

amount of people at any given time. For others, we have grown to understand that much of what

we see on social media platforms is subject to interpretation and based on individual opinion.

Social media platforms, we understand can be vehicles for social change, but they can also be

viewed as hindrances, or for the most recent outgoing political party, as false. It is all relevant

and subject to popular opinion. Social constructs are built and destroyed based on the things we

hear and see on various social media platforms. There is an ethical responsibility to ensure we

are putting out information that is correct, beneficial, and will progress the social structure we build. I believe that although the outgoing political party were against much of the social media platforms' role in today's politics, they still understood their importance. I do not see the practice of reporting and posting news and entertainment on social media platforms slowing down in the future, if anything I see the way we receive information through social media advancing and getting better over time.

Review of Research Questions

There are several factors to consider when putting qualitative research together, the first was how to convey your research to others, another was the expectation of change throughout the research. As your research grows your theories will evolve and new questions may arise. Lastly, you want to focus your research on the main concept or focal point of the study, this enabled me to isolate my thoughts on a single topic and achieve the most from my research. Focusing on multiple sides of the same topic can become overwhelming for the researcher and the reader alike, it can take away from the main goal of the research. Therefore, signposts become an important part of the research; signposts allow the individual to focus on the specific information the researcher is trying to convey.

After learning more about signposts, it is easy to see how research methods and hypotheses could be considered signposts because they can focus the statement of purpose about the main aim of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This serves more as guidelines to deal with the questions and issues that arise throughout the research.

While the purpose statement gives you an overall view of the research, the research question itself and hypothesis give more of a direction the study will take. Therefore, it is important to focus on the main concept. Spreading yourself too thin will not allow the researcher

the ability to fully explore the topic. In formulating your research question or developing your hypothesis you can gain a better approach to your research. The first step in this process would be to find the difference between a research question and a hypothesis. A research question is designed to seek the answer or purpose of the research, while a hypothesis is information the research is designed to prove or disapprove. Once this is established it is easier to create a signpost within the research.

The central question should focus on exactly what the research is about, it should not stray away from that. The research question becomes the signpost in the research to make it possible for the reader to focus more on the direction and focal point of the research. When you start to get more into the crux of the research the signpost becomes clearer and more frequent. These signposts help to aid throughout the research. The first signpost you will find in research will be within the introduction, this is where the researcher gives key facts about what this research will entail (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is also where the research question can be found, this sets the direction that the research will go. It also helps to establish the type of method that will be utilized.

In both factors, the research question and hypothesis you can see the significance of signposts. The signpost in both is a fantastic way to show and suggest what data the researcher is putting out. Signposts will continuously be a terrific way to focus the research for both the reader and the researcher. In the introduction of this topic, I discussed that the following research questions that formed the foundation of this qualitative study.

RQ 1: How does the media narrative affect the perception of Black voices in modern society?

RQ 2: What role, if any, does the media's narrative play in promoting and encouraging past and current racial tension within the social structure of society?

RQ 3: How does a poor or false narrative directly influence the relationship between racial tension and profiling?

Identifying voice and narrative within the BIPOC community is something that has not been easily accessible. For decades, the narrative talked about most of the urban population has been skewed to fit majority interest. Taking ethnic individuals from the population both public figures and nonpublic figures and examining how they are portrayed within the context of societal viewpoints based on the narrative that has been placed for them. We want to not only dismantle incorrect information that make up these viewpoints but create a platform to give voice for individuals to express and develop their own narrative and not live with the stigma of the one that was created for them. There is a growing consensus about the ongoing presence of negative perception of blacks in media, the influence of these images plays a major part in the youth objecting or endorsing these images (Adams-Bass et al., 2014).

Process and Procedures

Qualitative samples and interviews will be conducted with individuals within the urban community both on and off a social platform in addition to organizations creating a dynamic for establishing platform and narrative. Conducting an online survey and doing face to face interviews will establish a base line for this research. This research is particularly important because it gives a voice to a community and population of individuals who for the greater part of time, historically, have been forced to be silent.

For instance, the role of Black males and Black male masculinity in the community. If we look at societal views, society will have us believe that the ideology of masculinity and male leadership is obsolete within the Black community, this would be a major fallacy (Hunter et al., 1994). The truth is when a demographic has no control over their narrative then the power to define who you are and what you stand for is lost.

Some of the issues that would present itself with a study such as this would be lack of participants willing to share their story. In addition to limited historical information to gather a foundation or baseline for the study. Time may also present an issue, the amount of time required to accumulate the necessary data may work against the study.

Throughout this research my main goal is to study the narrative within media communication with aspiration of finding out how media's narrative and perspective affect society's perception of individuals or groups of individuals as well as to understand the influence media narrative plays within our society and how to establish a more transparent and accurate depiction.

Guiding Research Objective

The guiding research objective of this study is to gain understanding that society is shaped and driven by the images and beliefs to which they are exposed. The way individuals, places or organizations are projected decides how they are treated and received. This allows for individuals to be accepted or rejected based on someone else's perception or interpretation of the individual. There is no other platform where this is vastly practiced than on the platforms of social media.

We live in a technologically charged society, this world of instant gratification is driven using social media and social media marketing. Society is now categorized as digital natives,

there is not a moment where social media or the use of technology is not prevalent in day-to-day activities, from the moment individuals wake until they end their day in sleep social media and technology are actively present (Tuten et al., 2017). There are thousands of social media platforms society utilizes on a day-to-day bases, five of the most highly utilized would have to be Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat.

Facebook

According to the numbers published by Kellogg, there are currently 2.45 billion active users of Facebook monthly, that is almost half of the earth's population (Kellogg, 2020). This makes it currently the most popular form of social media for all ages in societal use. Facebook allows for connections to be made with family, friend, and acquaintances no matter the distance of separation between them, they can share photos, post, status updates, etc. this enables people to stay connected and relevant within each other's lives (Alabash et al., 2017). Some of the issues Facebook has experienced is that it is difficult to remain relevant with the changing generation, Facebook has become a tool for an older generation. The more modern generation finds the app outdated and does not speak to their social media platforms or usefulness.

Twitter

Twitter is yet another social media platform that has garnered significant use; Twitter has approximately 330 million monthly users (Kellogg, 2020). Twitter is used within a corporate setting and is engaged in exploring both large and small business opportunities. It allows for business to grow and explore ideas between various business owners and entrepreneurs. The negative side of Twitter is that it lacks the advancements and progression of other social media sites. It does not captivate the attention of the social media generation.

TikTok

TikTok with over 1.5 billon monthly users, the majority under the age of thirty, TikTok

has grown to be a social media app phenomenon. The positive factors are the freedom of self-

expression and creativity. The negatives are more of a political matter, the origins of TikTok

beginning in China caused many issues to arrive during the conflicts between China and the

United States (Socolow, 2019).

Instagram

This social media platform has proven to be exceedingly popular among the younger

generation. With over one billion active monthly users ranging from 18-34 years of age

(Kellogg, 2020). Instagram targets users of a younger generation. The positive of Instagram is it

falls right in line with this fast paced, now generation. The ability to post a picture or video and

go, no explanation or long passages makes the instant gratification this generation craves, a

perfect combination. The negative is the limitation of just posting a picture or short video that

leads viewers to believe in false realities.

Snapchat

Snapchat has only 360 million monthly users, this social media site is used to target and

market to the youngest of society, the most active tend to be in their early teens spending

upwards of 30 minutes daily (Kellogg, 2020). This social media site is easy to navigate and run,

it is a fun app for all ages, individuals get to see who watches their snap stories. The negative of

Snapchat is, the audience is limited and so are the time limits that stories are available for view,

in addition to the fact that it encourages immoral behavior and can be very addictive (Gaille,

2018).

It is my hope through this study that the research can establish a more genuine and direct method for individuals to understand, conceptualize and respect, ideas, people or places that may be different than what they are used to. Allowing for the understanding of differences to be normalized.

Importance of Engagement

One of the most important aspects of visualization is being able to understand and interpret the information that is being presented. Effective storytellers can relate to their audience through emotional connections (Robertson, 2015). Without this basic understanding the data and shared information hold no meaning. Ensuring user engagement is a prerequisite to understanding the graphics and information being expressed (O'Reilly, n.d.). Researchers have a responsibility for relaying information to not only capture their audience but putting information out that is relatable and easy to understand. As individuals we process information differently, the way we perceive, comprehend, and even interpret information is all dependent on how the information is presented to us (Kirk, 2019). Allowing individuals to feel connected to the information presented creates a more bonded experience between the researcher and their audience.

Importance of Understanding

Once you can understand the information being presented to you, it is easy to gain a sense of connection and build familiarity and trust, this can help solidify certain communicated aspects of learning (Boris, 2017). While the importance of understanding seems like an extremely basic concept, this concept can also be the source of great controversy. Information can quickly turn to misinformation if data is construed. Understanding overlooks any potential lack of information others might have on the data provided (O'Reilly, n.d.).

Importance of Memorability

It is not enough to be engaged or even understand the research being presented, your research needs to be memorable to have lasting effect and change. By hooking the audience to the research and information being presented you create a memorable experience and are therefore, better able to engage that audience in the research information provided (Gernsbacher, 2018). Most people live in the moment, they may understand a concept for that time being, but if it is memorable then this is lasting. The memorability examines just how memorable the visual content is to the individuals it is presented to (O'Reilly, n.d.).

Qualitative Interview Process

There are three ethical principles which are utilized by researchers to guide approaches to human subject research: autonomy, confidentiality, and beneficence. These principles aid as a moral foundation in the communicative research process. In this era of technology, it is exceedingly difficult to remain true to ethical principles, especially when individuals are working from a Christian perspective. It is easy to fall into a space of what is known as situational ethics, there is a responsibility for communicators to "do no harm," particularly Christians in the communication field, the Bible speaks out against situational ethics, "considering a particular context of an act when evaluating it ethically, rather than judging it according to absolute moral standards" (Rosenthal, 2017). This is emphasized in The Beatitudes, "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. [12] Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12).

Punch (2014) breaks down the three ethical principles by instilling the moral and ethical obligation individuals must maintain within society to be fair in the way they relay their communication. Using these three methods allows for this to be possible:

Autonomy: "Responsible gatekeeping involves understanding research, sensitivity to the setting and care for the participants" (Punch, 2014).

Confidentiality: Or trust, "in their work, researchers are entrusted with information about participants, much of which is of a personal and sensitive nature" (Punch, 2014).

Beneficence: "Research is commonly expected to minimize the risk of causing harm, to carry out worthwhile and potentially beneficial work and to distribute any benefits and risks non-discriminatorily throughout a research project and beyond" (Punch, 2014).

When you look at the Bible there is no room for ethical perspective, what's right is right and what is wrong is wrong. When you look from a biblical perspective, right and wrong are found by who and what God symbolizes and stands for, by mere coincidence of what God stands for. The Bible, being given by God and being all valid, cannot have an arrangement of morals that would challenge the idea of God. Situational morals discover good and bad to satisfy the dominant part or a solitary individual out of narrow-mindedness. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

Looking at the US Office of Health and Human Services' federal policy on research misconduct, it was fascinating to see the research on how much information was covered up with reports of public egregious misbehavior. It plays such a key role in what is currently taking place in today's current state of society, multiple nations are faced with a global pandemic and transparency and ethical morality are necessary. However, in many instances there are reports of false numbers and claims on the accuracy of what is truly the status of what is currently taking

place. This leads to lack of credibility and trust with the public and society begins to doubt those that govern them.

It is our duty and responsibility as Christians to not only work to an ethical and moral status that is honorable and fair, but also to hold others to that same standard. To treat people with the same level of standards we wish to be treated. As Christians we must remain impartial, not enforce moral judgement and be neutral in collecting data to give the most exact and ethical information when communicating to society. Impartiality is the first step to reaching good ethical practice in communication, "do not judge or you too will be judged. For in the same way, you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measures you use, it will be measured to you" (Matthew 7:1-2). There is a difference between passing judgment and showing ethics, we would be wise to know the difference.

I will conduct a panel discussion using a group of individuals from diverse populations who have had a great deal of experience dealing with narratives and forms of media. Many of these individuals will be former colleagues & associates. If I should fall short of the desired number of participants, I will also gather the rest from social media networks to keep a more diverse perspective. I will use the information gathered in the panel discussion as the foundation for my research.

In this era of modern technology, the idea of getting more of society to take part in studies is increasingly difficult. Society moves at an amazingly fast pace, and many do not have the time or desire to take part in such activities. Many individuals do not want to dedicate the time or effort necessary to conduct the type of research needed for an effective study. When selecting individuals or trying to get individuals to take part, the main objective is making the process as stress-free as possible. Working with individual preference, time and personal

comforts would make the likelihood of participation greater. Letting individuals feel like their

contribution to the research brings value to the research is a bonus. If individuals feel like their

time is wasted, they are less likely to take part. Individuals are more compromising if they feel

their efforts are voluntary and not mandated (Swain et al., 2015).

       There are other ways to address the area of recruiting willing participants as well,

enabling monetary compensation is another way. By providing people with financial

compensation for their time it is believed that they are more likely to be willing participants in

research studies. Though the opposite can also be said for paid participants, some researchers

feel that these participants can also taint the research by not really giving honest information, but

information that is more favorable to the researcher. This now taints the data and makes the

research lose its integrity. It is difficult, but possible in modern society to achieve the level of

ethical integrity in most research studies, there are so many obstacles both the researcher and

participants face throughout the study that evaluate that integrity.

       One strategy to improve recruitment would be to select individuals who have a similar

passion for or against the study, but a desire to share and receive information. This would enable

both the participants and researchers to take part in the process for the purpose of knowledge and

research. Another fact would be to try to keep all individual biases out of the recruitment

process. This will ensure that the research is being conducted with the best candidates possible.

Being ethical in research is imperative but you cannot always expect all questions of ethical

research, (Colnerud, 2015). Therefore, how research is conducted is equally as important as what

we do during the research.

       One concern would be if participants will give inaccurate information during research

therefore skewing the data. This is a very real concern for a lot of researchers throughout the

research process. The integrity not only of the data but the participants as well are imperative. It is important to be able to trust the information and its source. Participants and or researchers giving false or misleading information make the research information no longer valid. Much of this is attributed to biases and false information.

Another concern would be bias in research, a notable example is in my own research and studies examining narrative and how narrative is used and viewed. It is easy to see how individual misconceptions can get in the way of research. Much of the societal view can be swayed by the information put out through media, upbringing, or individual day to day interaction. This all plays a part in the way we perceive things and therefore changes the narrative based on individual experience.

Summary

Research practices entail skillful planning and effective communication, reduction of risk, and creation of benefits, as these issues pertain to the stakeholders in the research (Bickman et al., 2009). Research improves the knowledge and study of the researcher. Ethics is an important foundation of all research; researching an ethical form will ensure that those taking part in the research are protected appropriately. Where there is a greater ability to share information with a hefty sum of people at a faster and rapid rate more concerns arise (Jordan, 2019). A subject requires that their information be managed with the utmost security and protection, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity that are essential to research.

According to Bickman et al. (2009), privacy deals with access to individual information, while confidentiality is simply an extension of that privacy and how that information should be managed. This brings us to anonymity which means keeping the individual's identity and information out of the public eye. Confidentiality can be a complex topic, in the age of

technology, it is difficult to have information with secure and ethical means (Practical Ethicist, 2015). Technological advances give way to an insurmountable amount of people having a vast amount of access at a rapid pace. It is exceedingly difficult to keep the ethical concerns of research in such a social media-driven society.

Chapter three presented the method for the study. It included a discussion of the research method selected along with the theoretical framework and tradition. Additionally, it included a discussion of ethnography and how the interview panel participants would be selected for the study. Chapter four will discuss the results of the study once the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) approval is obtained and the panel interviews are completed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Overview

Chapter Four presents the results of this qualitative phenomenological and ethnographic research study. First, the purpose of this study will be discussed, and readers will be reminded of the research questions used to guide this qualitative analysis. Next, the process used to interview the participants involved will be described, and the individuals who consented to be a part of the discussions presented. Finally, the results of the interview sessions and group panel discussions will be considered. Chapter Five includes an explanation of the overarching theoretical, methodological, and practical implications, followed by a discussion of the limitations and suggestions for further study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how mass and social media stories influenced the cultural beliefs that shaped the black story and society's outlook. Upon completion of this study, the researcher hoped to open a dialogue and create an avenue of communication that will allow for a more correct view of the black narrative. The hope was that by enabling media to take greater accountability for what they say and do, we can limit the practice of delivering false or misleading narratives and promote a more exact and open conversation between various individuals and groups. As a result, this behavior change can be the start of a better social structure within society.

Review of Research Questions

The following research questions have guided this qualitative phenomenological and ethnographic research project.

RQ1: How does the media narrative affect the feeling of Black voices in modern society?

RQ2: What role, if any, does media's narrative play in promoting and encouraging past and current racial tension within the social structure of society?

RQ3: How does a poor, false narrative directly influence the relationship between racial tension and profiling?

Process and Procedures

Qualitative interviews with individuals from within the urban community both on and off social platforms were conducted during November and December 2021. Interviews were scheduled in 30-minute increments for each participant in the study. Each participant was asked the same series of questions and was given the freedom to express their individual opinions on the subject matter. All the interviews were conducted and recorded via Microsoft Teams, a business software application used for communication between individuals and groups. Participants for this research study were recruited via social media posts. They were asked to agree to take part in an individual interview and a group panel discussion.

I received several responses from various individuals who were interested in taking part in the study. On the final day of the selection process, I placed all the male names in one jar and all the female names in another. I then randomly selected five females and five males to take part. I ended up with a remarkably diverse group in age ranges, educational backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, and occupational backgrounds. This diversity created a unique discussion for this study. It also tailored the direction of my questions during the interview process. Several participants answered the same question in vastly different and unique ways. The viewpoints on the topic played a significant role in the process and procedure of this research study, and it also played a crucial role in how I approached much of the research. The diverse responses brought distinct aspects to how I advanced this study. I had one wild card in the pack,

and his perspective was highly controversial. So much so that at the panel discussion, things got extremely heated, and I had to do my best to redirect the conversation without derailing the opinions of my participants. It was an exciting point of view and gave me a great deal to think about.

At the end of this research, I am hoping that I can give my readers another way to view the narrative. At the minimum, I would like the reader to view narrative and its importance with a more responsible perspective. I want the audience to look with closer lenses at the presented narrative and not just take things at face value. I would also like those portraying the narrative to take more care and responsibility in the information they are putting out to society.

Participant Selection and Information

I had a fantastic time conducting this study. The participants came from a wide segment in the entertainment, media, and public sector. They were made up of males and females of various age ranges. The participants were able to tell from their perspective and experiences what they found to be the issues in how narrative is portrayed in the media, particularly in the BIPOC community, without the censorship of media influence. They were able to speak and express themselves freely. Below is a description of each of the ten participants and pertinent background information.

1. **Dr. Carole Embden-Peterson (55-year-old/ F)**

   Dr. Embden-Peterson is a renowned journalist from Jamaica. She ran the television news and current affairs department and then segued into starting the first column newspaper in Jamaica, the Jamaican Observer. After migrating to the United States in 1995, Dr. Embden-Peterson has been involved in media, training, and development here in the US, teaching communications at Athens Technical College, all

while owning and working in a small business dealing with media training and development.

2. Sunita Jadusingh-Leath (37-year-old/ F)

Ms. Jadusingh-Leath began her career in media with media marketing. She entered the media and entertainment field as an intern at Bad Boys Records and turned that internship into a full-time position in media marketing. She then entered media entertainment on the television side, securing a job with Nickelodeon.

3. Candace Renee (38-year-old/ F)

Ms. Candace Renee is an established actor currently living between California and Atlanta. She began performing at the age of four, attending Performing Arts conservatories, Faith Acting Studios, and Amazing Grace Conservatory in Los Angeles and Marymount Manhattan College. She received her BA in Theatre/Acting. Ms. Candace Renee has been praised for her voice-over work and walk-on roles in some of the most profound TV and movie films, *Law, and Order*, *Westworld*, & *Star Trek: Into the Darkness*, to name a few. These days, you can catch her as one of the lead characters in the hit Tyler Perry's sitcom *Bruh*.

4. Dr. Vernon Ruffin (45-year-old/ M)

Dr. Vernon Ruffin is a Neurophysiologist who is an expert in neurophysiology research. He is a graduate of one of the oldest Historically Black College and University's (HBCU's) Virginia Union University (VUU). After achieving his Doctoral degree, he went back to VUU as a professor and now teaches biology and research techniques and all things relating to his field of study.

5. Dr. Phillip Smith (60-year-old/ M)

Dr. Phillip Smith is a research fellow and professor at Columbia University in NYC, originally from the UK through Jamaican heritage.

6. **Saquan Jones (45-year-old/ M)**

Mr. Saquan Jones is a former politician; he is a writer, director, and independent film producer. He has been awarded several accolades from the Sundance film festival and many other independent outlets. He is an activist and proud HBCU graduate.

7. **Shenea Brown (37-year-old/ F)**

Ms. Shenea Brown was born and raised in the Bronx, NY; she has been a school psychologist for the last five years. She is the only Black school psychologist in the district of Westchester County and the owner and operator of HER Collective LLC, intending to bring women together to celebrate women, collaborate, connect, and create events that we no longer see.

8. **Shawn "Pee Wee" Neverson (44-year-old/ M)**

Pee Wee is a comedian from NYC, a voice-over artist, and a musician. He has been in entertainment for over 16 years and is an HBCU graduate attaining a bachelor's degree in speech and drama with a minor in history.

9. **Candace Tiana Nelson (46-year-old/ F)**

Ms. Candace Tiana Nelson is a public servant; she serves the community. She is enthusiastic and wears many hats. Currently, Candace sits and serves as the Special Projects Officer for the Department of Health Care Finance. She manages a multimillion-dollar project to integrate health and human services programs. Ms. Candace Tiana Nelson is also currently the President of Ward four Democrats of Washington DC. She is also serving as the Commissioner for Single-member District Six.

10. Justin Fullerton (22-year-old/ M)

Mr. Justin Fullerton is an up-and-coming model and independent fashion designer. The owner, creator, and operator of Mind2Matter. Mr. Fullerton is a self-taught designer enthusiastic about art and fashion. Local fashion bloggers often capture him, on film sporting a Mind2Matter original design in most NYC fashion scenes.
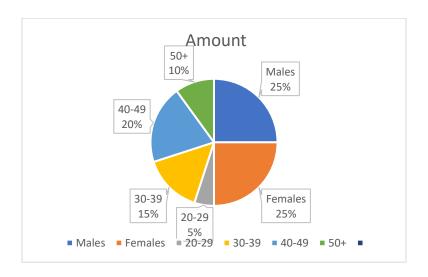

Figure 1 Demographics of Participant

Interviews in November & December 2021 and Interview Protocols

The questions asked to each participant during the interview are listed below. In asking these questions, I wanted to address more about my dissertation research, and I also wanted to explain why I chose this dissertation topic. These questions and the information I received from the participants and research show the contribution this study can have in communication. It also examines the limitations of the research and where the research can go in the 10 years.

Interview Questions

1. What has been your biggest challenge in dealing with media or social media platforms?

2. How did you overcome it?

3. In your experience as a Black male/female, who has had experience on various media platforms, do you find that you have been given a chance to express your thoughts & ideologies truly and honestly?

4. What are the stigmas you have faced based on societal views and perceptions that the media has influenced?

5. Do you feel narrative controls society, or does society control narrative, particularly in the BIPOC community, and how can this be rectified?

Individual Interviews

While conducting the interview, I was able to speak to the participants candidly and hear their honest and unbiased opinions on the topic at hand. Their opinions varied, but one constant I heard was that the stories portrayed in the media had specific problems with the way Indigenous people were portrayed.

The narrative itself is flexible. We give credit and life to the narrative. The more open the individual's belief, the less likely the story will be constrained or distorted by ignorant idealism. Storytellers are a very intricate part of dissecting narrative. As humans, we are impressionable and vulnerable to information relayed to us. This vulnerability begins in childhood and increases as we get older. The difference is in adulthood, and it is imperative that we dissect, dig deeper, and not fail to inform. When we open our viewpoints and experience new things throughout our lives, we can go through what I call a mental shift in feeling about how things and people we thought should be one way turn out to be entirely something else. Patrick Zeis shows an example of this in his journal article. One example he discussed is Nelson Mandela, when he was released from prison in South Africa, after completing 27 years behind bars. At the time of his release, he

was 71 years of age, originally sentenced to life in prison for his role in the Umkhonto we Sizwe militia. Once released this charismatic leader brought light and knowledge to the masses about his time in prison as opposed to approaching this lengthy prison stay with bitterness. Mr. Mandela did not hold on to resentment or anger for being in prison for so long. He chose to view it from a unique perspective and was often quoted as saying, "Forgiveness liberates the soul… Resentment is like drinking poison and hoping it will kill your enemies" This leader would go on to persevere and become the president of the same country that imprisoned him for all those years. Mandela was able to shift his perspective in a productive way.

When I talked to the participants, there was a general sense of underestimation or bad and misrepresentation of narrative, especially in the media of people who looked like them. This belief plays a significant role in how they interact with society as well as how societal expectations have affected them. Many of my participants discussed the imagery on television throughout the crucial stages of their life and how that imagery affected them. Participants ranged from 22 to 60 years of age and were a mix of males and females from both the United States and the Caribbean; this added to a fascinating feeling and dynamic of how narrative and perception affected and shaped their lives.

Despite the age and cultural differences, many of my participants felt that shows like *The Cosby Show*, *Different World*, and *Family Matters* had a significant impact and shifted how they saw themselves and how they were seen and portrayed in society. Many of these individuals could see themselves and their families represented in the sitcoms. This ideology affects how we think about others and how others feel about us. Take an example from my own life; I grew up in a middle-class family, I went to Catholic school for a large majority of my life. My mother ensured that my sister and I wanted for nothing.

As a young child at the dinner table, I remember my mother saying to us when we would not finish the meals set before us, "You are wasting food when there are starving children in Africa who would die for what you have!" This idea would be coupled with the infomercials of starving African children and European voices begging for society to donate just a few cents to feed a village. I did not realize the drastic impact this had on my psyche until adulthood when I worked for the United Nations. I met dignitaries, Ambassadors, and Educators from these same countries in Africa who looked like me. It was unfathomable, and it shattered the imagery and thought process I had for so many years.

We see this thinking throughout life; some of my participants recalled the imagery in America growing up on the West Coast in the 80s and 90s during the height of the Crips and Bloods gang turmoil and how that was synonymous with any individual from the West Coast. The thought process was everywhere in California looked like South Central, Los Angeles. Every person of color was thought to be gang-affiliated; in the same breath, my East Coast participants were experiencing a comparable situation with the Crack epidemic. It was perceived that every person of color knew or was related to someone addicted to drug or other substances. In addition, the 'hood' was the only way people of color lived, and any individual of color either sold drugs or knew and affiliated with someone who sold drugs. This perspective was the beginning of film, TV and music glorifying and further pushing this imagery through gangster rap, movies like *New Jack City*, *Menace to Society*, and *Boyz in the Hood*; television further enforced these stereotypes with shows like *The Wire*, *Empire*, and *Power*.

These images made it impossible for anyone to see people of color as anything other than the way they were portrayed through Television or film. When dealing with narrative, there is a thought process that to create a "single story," you show people as one thing, as only one thing,

repeatedly, and that is what they become. Power plays a significant role in the way we think and perform. Power is the ability not just to tell another person's story but also to define that person (Weir, 2017). Nigerian writer and author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie stated, "Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and malign. But stories can also be used to empower and humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can repair that broken dignity." (Adichie, 2022). If you want to dispossess a people, you change the story, evolving individual perception.

Start the story with the enslaved Africans and not the colonial creation of enslavement, and you have a vastly different account. Start the story with European renaissance and not Moors or Druid exploration, and you have a different story. The consequence of the "single story" is that it robs people of dignity, makes recognizing our equal humanity difficult, and emphasizes our differences rather than how we are similar. When we reject the single story and realize there is no single story about any one person or place, we regain a kind of paradise.

Figure 2 Timeline of Racial History in the US

Interview Insights

I wanted to bring together a group of scholars who came from diverse backgrounds; from African American and Black studies, Neurological Scientist, Politics, Film, and Business Entrepreneurs, to jointly discuss the trauma and effect racial viewpoints have on narrative and how narrative affects racial views. This practice goes as far back as the colonization of the Americas, which allowed for the enslavement of Indigenous populations and exploiting enslaved

African and Native populations. More so, exploitation often coincides with the concept of racialization, individual and group trauma, and narrativization of traumatic events by people within and outside marginalized communities.

As opposed to what we all know as firsthand experiences caused by traumatic experiences, the social-historical consciousness of narrative leads to what is known as trauma narrative (Mambrol, 2018). It deals with historical oppression and psychological and physiological trauma, which leads to a community-wide risk of adverse colonial subjugation.

Figure 3 Racial Timeline
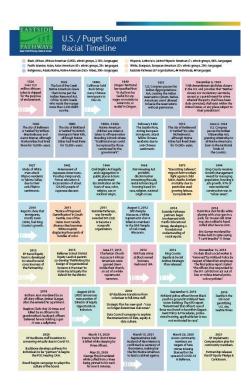
Much of the historical narrative, particularly the narrative of the BIPOC community, has been told and written in the first-person point of view. This perspective allows the information that the reader or audience receives to be seen only through the eyes of the narrator. The audience belief is based on the presenter of the information, so the understanding of the individuals being

described, conflict, or even general circumstances are based on whatever is being relayed by the narrator.

Dealing with Social Media and Various Media Platforms

When doing the individual interviews, the participants had a very wide and diverse view when it came to the topic of the power of owning your narrative and understanding the impact narrative has on social views through media perception. One of the most exciting beliefs came from our youngest participant, Justin, when discussing the challenges, he faces when dealing with narrative and media perceptions. He found that it requires consistency of almost 24/7 posting on social media platforms and keeping followers entertained to gain the tracks needed to remain relevant. The issue with this, according to Justin, is it comes off as fake and not genuine. Due to this factor, the message he is trying to convey cannot come across as a true message. On the reverse side of this, unlike many of my other participants, he has not experienced much media backlash or negativity based on his ethnicity or cultural background. Especially post George Floyd, he viewed this social injustice as a new opening of doors for young Black people now more than ever before.

When I spoke to actor Candice Renee, she had a distinct perspective on dealing with media and social media platforms. She saw that this new age of social media and media's feeling of who and what is relevant is based more on the number of followers and not on the individual's talent and skills. When we look at the subject matter from this point of view, we understand more thoroughly why narrative is subjective and not objective.

Media has a way of portraying individuals in a light that is not always genuine but is what the "people" want to see. This perception and desire to quelch the ideology of getting followers and likes can lead to misguided and false narratives. When speaking with two of our participants,

Justin Fullerton, an avid creative living in NYC and active in the fashion district, also Candice Renee, acclaimed actor from Los Angeles. They expressed those actors, and many other creative people are forced to alter their creativity to fit some social norm based on a viewpoint that does not necessarily align with their views and perceptions of what they stand for or feel.

Dr. Phillip Smith talks about this very issue when he gives the example of his brother in the United Kingdom UK who was gunned down by the police in his home and how much influence the media had in the outcome of that situation. As explained by Dr. Smith, the problem speaks volumes to how narrative controls how society reacts in various conditions. Dr. Smith's family is still dealing with the ramifications of this case and what the media portrayal means for his brother's legacy. The stereotype of Black men and the false narratives surrounding mental illness and distress further worsened this situation. The media's fast-paced turnaround did not allow the family to correct the false narrative, grieve effectively, or even mourn in a suitable manner. They found out through social media precisely what happened, and social media and societal bias controlled how that information was conveyed to the masses.

I had an opportunity to interview a seasoned journalist as one of my participants, Dr. Carole Embden-Peterson. She had an interesting take on social media and media in general and the role narrative plays within it. The biggest challenges Dr. Embden Peterson found were the gatekeepers and one's ability to oversee those gatekeepers. Especially coming from a private semi-controlled media entity, pushback can be continuous and politically motivated. The media seems to have moved from a more objective to a subjective viewpoint. Social media can be a solid force to get information. However, social media is not always the most reliable source of media. The younger generation seems to believe in social media wholeheartedly, while the older generation uses social media but backs it up with traditional forms of media.

In this technologically driven era, belief is everything (Danaher 2020). This belief was a narrative that I found resounded amongst my participants. It was even more prevalent amongst the Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) community. One of my participants, Shenea Brown, said it best. She said, "When navigating social media and media in challenge, you have to know who you are." People's identities get lost. They lose a sense of who they are when conforming to social media and media norms, and this is where the issue begins. Looking at the images and profiles showed in media and the amount of time we spend on social media, it is easy to get lost, misguided, and even feel low self-esteem based on these images. We find this, particularly with young people, media imagery is difficult enough for adults to navigate, with all the traumas and issues that make up many adults' personalities that may have gone unchecked. Many young people are misguided and left to their own devices, so, we see a great deal of unparented children having to navigate the world and particularly these media imageries alone. The biggest challenge we face in media and social media platforms is representation, seeing ourselves portrayed in the media light (Bailey et. al., 2020). When we see imagery of ourselves, it is not always positive. As one of our participants, Sunita Jadusingh-Leath stated, the biggest challenge is changing the narrative. This idea of changing the narrative is complicated because we do not see Black and brown people represented in a positive light within media. Another participant Candice Tiana Nelson expressed these same concerns. She made a valid point that individuals are not in control of how people perceive them. If belief is reality, then this feeling must be as close to reality as possible. One of the main things we must understand, as Dr. Vernon Ruffin pointed out, is that messages on social media are not for every person. The 'correct' message must get to the 'correct' people.

Overcoming Adversities

One of the most successful ways of staying grounded amidst adversity in this fast-paced era of social media and entertainment media, in general, is supporting good people around you and staying true to your foundation. One of my participants, Shawn PeeWee Neverson, found this helpful when dealing with media and beliefs he faced while on his various comedic tours. One of our most controversial participants, Saquan Jones, felt like all hope of moving past these negative images is no longer existent. He believed that anyone over the age of twenty-five is too engrossed in stereotypes that have been fed to us to change our viewpoints on whether positive imagery could even take place or even influence how society perceives people of color or how people of color view themselves within society.

Many of my panelists did not agree with this thought process. Many of the panelists thought it was easier to overcome the stereotypes and adversities within social media and media platforms, especially post-George Floyd. Many of my participants believe the very opposite of Jones, they feel that new doors have been opened and pathways have been created in recent years, making overcoming adversity easier.

Panel Discussion

The panel discussion took place on various dates over five weeks (see table below). Each participant was given 30 minutes to express their views and opinions in an uninterrupted forum. There was no coaching or priming of information to suit the nature of the research.

Table 1 Participant Information

PARTICIPANT NAME	DATE OF INTERVIEW	TIME OF INTERVIEW
Dr. Carole Embden-Peterson	13 Nov 2021	1130-1200
Sunita Jadusingh-Leath	13 Nov 2021	1215-1245
Candace Renee	14 Nov 2021	1430-1500

Dr. Vernon Ruffin	17 Nov 2021	1900-1930
Dr. Philip Smith	25 Nov 2021	0900-0930
Saquan Jones	27 Nov 2021	1100-1130
Shenea Brown	28 Nov 2021	0900-0930
Shawn "Pee-Wee" Neverson	04 Dec 2021	1000-1030
Candice Tiana Nelson	04 Dec 2021	1100-1130
Justin Fullerton	06 Dec 2021	1000-1030

Expressing One's Ideologies in Media

The biggest issue in expressing one's ideology is staying true to oneself and one's beliefs. Many of our participants felt that currently, particularly with the overutilization of social media, everyone is given a chance to be truthful with what they believe within themselves. If one can call it an issue, the issue that may arise is that everyone is allowed to express their ideologies and beliefs on social media platforms. If enough people have opposing opinions, it is easy to be discredited. Many of my participants agree that post-George Floyd, they have more of a voice now than they have had in the past. People are now more willing to hear the voices of the BIPOC culture. The ideology of keeping your head down and not making waves regarding culture seems to be disappearing with each generation.

This behavior change can also be viewed as ambiguous. For example, Dr. Smith explained it best when he said that as a Black man, particularly during his time as a student, researching the concept of Black lived experiences, there are views and experiences that may be difficult to articulate to someone who has never lived these experiences. There are things that one may know innately that others demand you explain that you may never have had to explain. For example, when someone rolls their eyes or pushes up their lip towards me, it is non-verbal

communication, but I know exactly what they are telling me. How do I now describe this to someone who has no idea what this means? If I am unable to explain it, then I am the one who is unable to be descriptive as opposed to them being the ones unable to understand cultural tones? Therefore, the journey to be authentic is a challenge when working in a world that does not see or value the Black culture or experience. Many of us have been authentic and able to express ourselves, now if this authenticity has been valued and received is another story.

Reality is Perception

The idea that media has an impact on belief and reality has had dangerous underlined conditions for that BIPOC community, particularly in media and social media outlets (Auxier, 2020). There is a hindrance to being genuine in a time, and era where belief is not always reality. Many individuals are pushing a fantasy, and this is not always a good thing.

Media has an impact on belief and reality within society. We live in a cancel culture; politicians, celebrities, and public figures are intimidated by this and feel as though their voices are limited. Media is aware of the power they yield; they must be more consciously aware of just how much of an impact they have. The media's words and narratives have a great amount of power to the extent that entire cultures, ethnicities, and religions can become compartmentalized based on a single viewpoint or narrative.

Not everyone becomes subjected to what they see on social media, but some individuals are fighting this mental warfare, and social media adds to this issue. The impression is given that there is a need for many to change their body, hair, eyelashes, etc. There is a desire to lead with a certain type of beauty aesthetic, so individuals are viewed in a certain way or taken with a certain amount of seriousness in the media. This message is encouraged on the media platforms and social media platforms as well. The belief of this culture of "beautiful people," needs to hold on

to a certain look that affects both males and females. Access to media platforms is too readily available, especially to the young people in this generation (Auxier et. al, 2021).

Dr. Smith gives another great encounter to explain this, he remembers giving lectures and the class would be in awe, however, there were never any questions or feedback. One day he asked one of his colleagues why this was happening, what was he missing. Dr. Smith could see that he had the attention of the class but there was a disconnect for some reason. This colleague of his stated, "it's because Phillip they are just in awe of this black man who speaks with a British accent" it creates this dissonance in them, so what is happening is people aren't listening to what he is saying because they are stuck with the accent, it does not match their definition or belief. Media platforms are just a representation of life; it is important to build reputations with individuals to give life to those representations. Media usage can help or hurt or to hurt the message being put out by individuals. It must be clear that whatever information is put out in media, stays out in media. If you can grab the people, you can get your message across earnestly and honestly. Dr. Embden-Peterson speaks in-depth about media portrayal and its effects on society, particularly young Black, and brown youth. The narrative seen is based on stereotypical views and society pushes this agenda. This makes it difficult to break away from these unrealistic views, the code of ethics and responsibility no longer exists on what media can and cannot display; this is destructive to society.

Society's Control on Narrative or Narrative's Control on Society

Looking at the narrative of George Floyd's situation, which played a significant role in what happened to him and how society reacted to it. With the verdict, things reversed, and we saw how society was able to gain control of the narrative. This took on a vastly distinct perspective for cooperating media entities, sponsors, etc. Some were successful and others failed

miserably and completely missed the mark. One of the most notable failures to this was Pepsi in 2017; they came under backlash for their commercial featuring Kendall Jenner, the advertisement totally missed the mark and instead of coming across as empathetic to the Black Lives Matter Movement, the advertisement was an insensitive mockery in the height of so much racial tension. You saw a shift, companies were now under the magnifying glass to do better, by their employees, audiences, etc. This situation and all the situations prior to this made society, particularly the BIPOC community take a stand.

More "minority" voices were brought to the forefront. Major organizations, businesses, and brands are creating more diversified groups and giving voice to create better narratives with the creation of DNI, Black Affinity Groups, LGBTQ Community Organizations, etc. It is giving voice to the masses that you can no longer shove individuals into a box or dismiss or sweep under the rug what you as a society are not ready or willing to deal with. Things are different and people now have voices and opinions, and they demand an opportunity to be heard, it is there and in your face. People no longer feel like they cannot speak up, they are starting to gain more control of their voices; social media has played a major part in this.

Our panelists agree that the media dominate the story. It is a major influence on what people think and believe. This society is extremely reactionary to information by media, social media, and especially influencers. There must be accountability for these "news carriers." There is no more responsibility for the truth behind the narrative. The ideology of "fake news" has taken on new meaning. In our current society, this has posed a major issue, particularly for the BIPOC community. If you are focused on one type of platform or media outlet, you will only get news and narrative coming to you in one way, so it is imperative to view different forms of media platforms. In addition, we need to begin to hold these platforms accountable.

Actress Candice Renee made an excellent point when she said, "when we are extremely vocal then the narrative can control things, but when we aren't it goes the other way." Unfortunately, the BIPOC community must be vocal if we want our narrative heard and controlled accurately, we must be louder than anyone else.

Dr. Phillip Smith looked at this question in another way; he chose to look at how we define society. He says we assume that society is the dominant voice, but the dominant voice is not necessarily society and most definitely not the dominant group. He spoke about another term instead of looking at culture from a Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) perspective, he looks at it through the ideology of, People of Global Majority. It is a term that is now being used increasingly to describe people of the Black and Indigenous population, who for years have been considered ethnic minorities. As a group of people, they make up 80% of the world population, which makes them the global majority (2019 Revision of World Population Prospects) that respect as a Black man, my narrative within that group makes perfect sense. However, that same narrative does not make sense in the minority who have had no dominance in the society for an exceptionally long time, and so they inform and influence the narrative.

Interviewer Reflection

As a young child growing up in the Bronx, that is when I realized life was different for me than my school friends. A young Black girl, living in a middle-class neighborhood and attending a Catholic school with children who did not look like me. First-generation American from a Caribbean household (my family all hailed from Jamaica), and I now was thrown into a purely Italian environment. My world was vastly different from theirs, but these were my friends and counterparts; they were my social circle. When I watched TV or movies with these friends, I saw a lot of my life mirrored on film but again none of them looked like me and the ones who did, their

life never mirrored mine. In films such as *New Jack City, Boyz in the Hood,* and *Menace to Society* to name a few; the individuals portrayed were drug dealers, hustlers, or "hood females" that seemed uneducated. My mother was an educated woman from the Caribbean islands who had earned her place in corporate America. These portrayals made no sense to me.

As I grew older, shows like *The Cosby Show* and *Different World* took on new importance for me. I was given a new perspective on the way to see things. I knew that there was a place for me and that it was okay for someone who looked like me to live a certain kind of life. The American Dream was attainable, and it was no longer a "white" ambition for my life. It was because of the show *Different World* that I ended up attending an HBCU. A proud graduate of Virginia Union University, and I understand just how powerful words and imagery can change individuals and how those words and images are portrayed and managed within society.

I knew I wanted to show the importance of how narrative could shape the viewpoints of the masses and if given too much freedom without responsibility the dangers such power could create. We see this in all the recent activities with the Black Lives Matters Movement. This was also prevalent in the past presidency with former President Donald Trump. The information put out by media as 100% fact, the information was not vetted or verified and this is the turn that has taken, particularly in the social media platform (Yaraghi, 2019). There is no accountability or consequences for these media outlets' actions, but there are consequences for individuals that are targeted by the narrative being put out.

Prior to conducting the individual interviews with my participants, I spent a great deal of time researching, reading, and examining a variety of historical and media documents and seeing how narrative in literature, print, social media, film, and photography affect the way narrative is portrayed to the masses. In doing so, I also examined how this portrayal affected the way

individuals are viewed and treated in the same society. The results were overwhelming, and over the course of generations, there was extraordinarily slight change.

During the interviews, I allowed my participants to speak clearly, and I recorded them. I did not take notes or summarize at that time. At the end of all the interviews, I went back and reviewed the recordings and drafted the summary of information I was given, and I went into detail of the experiences my participants had with belief and narrative. Many of my participants went into precise accounts of how media and belief may have personally affected them.

By allowing participants the freedom to express their opinions, without interruption or coercion, gave more validity to the participants' narrative and brought awareness to the importance of this research. After interviewing the participants and recording their responses, I then broke down each interview question into specific categories and analyzed the information given to me. I also took the participants' responses, looked at, contrasted, and compared all the information given to me. The last thing I did after analyzing all that data was to summarize what each participant said for the various questions asked. Once I had all that data, I then sent a poll to decide the date and time of the panel discussion with all the selected participants. In doing so, I could get a full range of understanding the power of owning your narrative and understanding the impact narrative has on societal views through media belief.

Summary

Chapter Four presented the results of the study. The participants were described, and the interviews and group panel discussions were explained. The purpose of the study was affirmed again, and readers reminded of the research questions used to guide this qualitative analysis. The results of the interview sessions and group panel discussions were presented. Chapter Five will describe in detail the overarching implications gleaned through this research effort. Additionally,

the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications will be discussed along with a brief

conversation covering limitations and probable future research studies.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Overview

Chapter five will describe the overarching implications gleaned through this research effort. Remember that a good communicator can use the act of communication to persuade others and shape popular opinion. This is where the idea of controlling narrative comes into play and the importance of understanding controlled narrative and the power and effect it has on the social structure. Much of what is missing in today's social structure is the ability to comprehend things we do not understand, this is in large part because the information given to us within society is skewed and created by our own false narratives and misconception. The purpose of this study is to understand Black narrative within media communication particularly how media's narrative and cultural viewpoint affect society's perception of the Black culture and perspective. When we examined the results in Chapter four, we gained an understanding that narrative has a direct correlation in the way individuals and circumstances are perceived in society.

Discussion of the Results

The goal of this study was to understand the power of owning your narrative and understanding the impact narrative has on societal views through media perception. The initial research was based on the individual interviews that were conducted in November and December. An analysis was made based on the research through media and social media outlets, and the data collected from our ten participants. All ten participants were interviewed under the same circumstances and protocols. The interview was designed around five extremely specific questions that addressed one single problem. The questions focused on the effects narrative had on shaping public opinion and how that affected the individuals that were narrated.

Each interview was recorded and transcribed, and each transcript was dissected to collect the pertinent information for the study. Based on the information collected by the individuals being interviewed, individuals could discuss in the panel how the issue of narrative perception reflected positively or negatively within society. Once the individual interviews were completed, it was easier to combine the results and create a baseline for the group panel discussion. This new platform gave an open forum for all the participants to voice their opinions, concerns, and experiences for us to have an educated discussion on the subject matter.

The participants in this research addressed the three key issues in the research questions (Identified in Chapter four). At least 35% of the participants approached this study from a phenomenological perspective, by using the experience of phenoms to describe what was happening. Another 25% approached this research study with a more ethnographical approach, describing cultural characteristics of a group of people. The other 40% of participants had a more mixed perspective using both types of frameworks to describe the issue.

Qualitative research was used to give a more descriptive view on the social and cultural experience of narrative. It is the aspiration that through this study, individuals will begin to understand the significance of the ideology of understanding individual narrative and being able to transcend that narrative to other areas of life. In addition, it would play a key role in how they are viewed and how that transcends in how individuals are viewed, how they progress, and even how they perform. Lastly the goal is to compare a variety of communication aspects and the effects they have on today's social constructs.

Implications

Theoretical

  Utilizing theoretical implications, as the researcher I was able to analyze my findings and

contemplate whether narrative profoundly affects society's perception or not. I realized that the

earlier stages of exploration in this research showed that it was possible to affect the outlook

society has on people, cultures, and situations, particularly when we look at the Black Indigenous

People of Color (BIPOC) as we deal with how narrative is perceived. Just like in any beginning

stages of a study, the initial research used similar instances, stories and situations to gain insight

into the concept of the research. The results were extremely broad and needed to be narrowed

down and focused to fit the research. Although the exploration part of any research is vital, the

information received is not always credible, it is usually vague and incomplete. One of the

benefits of exploration is that it sets a foundation and framework to answer the problem solving

in greater detail.

  Theoretical implications allowed me as the researcher to move the study to a more

observant viewpoint. We can now set a foundation to see more generalized examples of narrative

and its effects. By examining the transcripts and using the observations of the participants the

research can analyze and break down the elements of the cause-and-effect narrative has on

societal views. Utilizing this implication helped me to realize if my research was confirmed or

falsified. Based on the interviews and supporting cases and situations I could confirm that

narrative plays a significant role in societal feeling.

Methodological

  Although this method is not new, I was able to set up a function to define meaningful

problems for investigation by suggesting types of methods for exploring these problems and to

provide types of explanations. I started my research process with grouping similar and relevant portions of the interview transcript. This process allowed me to target more keenly the nature of my research. This method of breaking up the interview into more relevant means allowed me to gain a better understanding of what my participants were discussing.

This implication made the connections between my participants much more relevant. It was easy to compare or contrast between each of the participants views and opinions. Comparing my participants that are 40 years of age and older with my participants that are 39 years of age and younger; it was interesting to see the disparities in viewpoints and behaviors. This process allows visibility through transparency. This has uncovered other implications and underlined problems rooted in the issue of narrative and its effect on societal perceptions.

Practical

As I round out the results of the group panel discussion, it gave me a better look at the outcome or result. The research gained from talking with participants has shown that narrative can be an effective tool in swaying public opinion. It also shows that narrative can be a major factor in how individuals portray and view themselves. Some participants felt that the changing of the social tides allows for more opportunities for narrative to be redirected and controlled by the demographics being narrated. Still other participants thought that society has been fed false narrative for too long and therefore it is an impossibility for this narrative to change, therefore the image and feelings society has cannot change.

There are limited possibilities of how this issue can be corrected through instruction. The key is that society must stay away from imposing their views based on a false or misguided narrative and media outlets need to take more responsibility for the information they are putting out to society. Because narrative is mostly implications, it is imperative that the individuals that

are being narrated have a say and control over their narration. For example, during our panel discussion, one of our panelists made a generalized description based on the look and mannerism of another panelist. His over-generalization was completely incorrect and had nothing to do with the question that was asked but was a direct reflection of the topic at hand. Because of this panelist's ignorance, the entire mood of the panel changed; he assumed an inaccurate narrative of another panelist and he created his own narrative based on his assumptions. This over-generalization unknowingly brought relevance to this research, enabling me to see firsthand how images in media affects how society views us and more importantly how we view one another. The way I was able to help navigate through these opposing views was to function as a moderator and mediator throughout the panel discussion. I was able to bring light to the various generalizations that were made and narrow down what was factual and what was based on assumption. It was my duty to ensure that the panelists understood the task and remained in line with the intended discussion.

As a moderator in this research project, it is my job to ensure that the ideas about narrative being expressed are clear and justified viewpoints. The role is to engage the participants and raise questions to evoke scholarly discussion on the subject matter. This takes place whether all participants agree or not. It is not my duty to judge or correct my participants, but simply to ensure that each participant's voice is heard regarding the subject matter. Qualitative research method is all about the 'why' of the subject and not so much the 'what.' The focus of this method relies on the direct experience of human beings. By obtaining information through firsthand observation, it makes the study more authentic. The data is nonnumerical and focused more on ethnography and phenomenological analysis. This was more so a study of individuals and understanding their social reality.

Context to Previous Research

The idea and thoughts of narrative and the control of narrative are not new topics of conversation. Many scholars, film makers, entertainers, and journalist have battled with this topic for generations. How individuals are perceived particularly in media, television and film plays a significant role in how they are perceived and managed within society. We build narrative and we give importance to what we feel individually is important; narrative is flexible and takes shape by the narrator based on their firsthand experiences. As an audience when we have a certain expectation of what a narrative is doing, that can color or change how we view said narrative.

The more our world grows and expands the less a narrowed perspective of narrative affects the audience viewing this narrative. For many Black individuals like me, we must begin to conceptualize our race at an extremely immature age. This is not the same for most individuals outside of the BIPOC community. There were talks that took place in my home that I noticed most of my white friends did not experience, but it was not unique to other Black children I came across. Those talks were particularly geared to what it meant to be a Black person in America. A prime example of this was protocols for if I was stopped by the police for no obvious reason, I was instructed to make no sudden moves, answer yes sir/ma'am, no sir/ma'am and do whatever I was instructed to do by the police officer). It was then followed up with the same statement I have heard from every elder in my family, "Always remember Anika, you are a Black girl who comes from Caribbean roots, you have to work twice as hard if you want to receive the same recognition as your white peers"

I did not need my mother or the elders in my family's constant warnings of racial disparities, all I needed to do was turn on the television. I remember being in the ninth grade and

watching as a Black man was victimized and pulled from his car and brutally beaten by a mob. In my mind this is what I saw, I could not believe such a thing could take place and not on national TV but there it was. That "mob" was in all actuality the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and that "victimized" Black man to justify this action was portrayed as a drunk, resisting arrest and evading the police; his name was Rodney King. This was the start of the LA riots and the moment I realized people that looked like me would never be viewed, treated, or seen as anything more than the image that others portray of us.

I realized that this power of narrative and being a part of the BIPOC community meant that my skin color told a story to people of who I was without me even opening my mouth. Not having the distinction of shining on my individual merit as my white peers were able to. I would not be seen as Anika the young lady who at the time was extremely shy, but had a deep creative side, a passion for music and public speaking. What they would see instead is a "Black, female, child from immigrant parents" in that order and this viewpoint would be associated with whatever that statement meant to them.

The thing that I found most interesting was that despite the curiosity of my white peers about my ethnicity and culture, their questions, though sometimes ignorant, were very innocent and non-offensive. The issue was never with them, but with the adults surrounding them. It was in their treatment and offside comments that ignorance and hatred reared their ugly heads. Whenever children would express their curiosity, it would be the adults around them who would shush, or change subjects, or do some other unspoken gesture that let me know there was an issue, some unspoken message that I was somehow wrong because of how I looked or where my family was from.

Part of why this study is so important and why this topic has caused so much conversation in the past is the effect this thinking and behavior can have on individuals portrayed in narrative, on the society perceiving this narrative and even on how the individuals portrayed feel about themselves and others that look like them. As research shows, solving such a complex problem takes time, it requires understanding the root cause and effect, and breaking down to the core the best way to tackle these issues.

Future Recommendations

If others would like to take this study further here are some suggestions for ways that this research can be broadened or enhanced.

1. Academic Recommendations – How to further this study in the world of Academia.

2. Utilize a different population and culture

3. Focus on limitations of the research

4. The study was a qualitative study so approaching it from a quantitative study would give a different viewpoint.

5. Branching out further with related topics gathered from this study.

6. Practical Recommendations – This is how the study can be implemented in real world scenarios

7. More responsibility for media outlets and social media when relaying information and narrative to the public

8. Greater control for individuals and their narrative

The goal of this research was to establish a better way of understanding and interpreting narrative. The future recommendations suggest ways that this can be accomplished. This will not

happen overnight, the use of narrative to control, alter, or manipulate societal view has been in effect for generations. With the change and growth in technology, we have seen the mass effects of this and the dangers of such irresponsibility.

Summary

In conclusion what we derive from this study is, narrative is a major way in which description is given about person, place, situation, etc. It provides a way for society to view and understand circumstances that they may or may not encounter. The narrator has a job to ensure that they are giving accurate and accountable information.

Narratives hold power, and as society grows so does the knowledge and ability, we must gain information. Utilizing these outlets to bring information to individuals worldwide is a sure sign of changing times, it allows for individuals in the most remote parts of the world to see, understand and be immersed in things taking place in the biggest cities in the world and vice versa. However, if that narrative is skewed or falsified in any way it changes not only the perception of the viewer but over time can change how the individuals portrayed even see themselves. This is the power narrative yields and why it is so important to focus on the validity of the information we are giving and receiving.

Going forward it is imperative that social media, radio, film, and television outlets are held to a certain standard. There needs to be accountability for the information that is programmed to and within society. There is a danger to having so much control and so little responsibility. Just as it is important to prove these things, it is equally important to ensure that individuals have greater control over the narrative being created for and about them. Particularly in the BIPOC community, we need to take control of our narrative. It controls how we are

viewed, the responses society has towards and about us, as well as the ideals and behaviors we have about ourselves.

This current cycle of negative imagery can be changed because life is constantly changing but it will not happen overnight, and it will not happen without work, struggle, and progress. It is not an easy task, but it is a doable task. Together we can work to change this viewpoint. It will not be easy, simple, or straightforward, but it can be done, and I believe with every generation and the changing outlook on society by each, we are well on our way to achieving this goal.

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