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Abstract

This study explores the declining viewership of nationally broadcasted awards shows through the Oscars in connection with Millennials and Generation Z's call for diversity and inclusion. This thesis utilizes relationship management theory and corporate reputation theory to explore the current relationship between the Oscars and the Millennial and Generation Z generations.

Through a mixed methods qualitative and quantitative process, this study seeks to determine whether Oscars viewership would benefit from the adoption of diversity and inclusion initiatives.

#OSCARSSOWHITE:

MILLENNIALS, GENERATION Z AND OSCARS VIEWERSHIP

By
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B.A., North Carolina Central University, 2016

Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Science in Public Relations

Syracuse University
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Acknowledgements

In an interview, comedian and actress Mo’Nique detailed why she holds her NAACP Image Award in higher regard than her Oscar, because growing up she never saw people like her winning Oscars (Calloway, 2014). I related to it, as the only live awards show I commit to watching every year is the BET Awards because other national live shows fail to adequately recognize the contributions of black Americans in entertainment. I started to wonder if others thought the same and then I read a headline about the Oscars having its lowest viewership in 2020 and the idea for this research just came to me.

First, I have to thank God and Jesus for living in my heart and blessing me with the discipline to complete this project. Faith kept my eyes awake when I had to deviate from reading the law for six hours to reading and researching about the Oscars for another six hours.

I also must thank my advisor, Dr. Regina Luttrell for her invaluable support and encouragement throughout this process. I could not have done this without her.

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Lastly, I must thank my parents, Maurice and Paula Thomas for everything they’ve done for me. A special thanks to my big sister Orianna Thomas who had to sit through hours of me talking about this and rambling on about this stuff when she cares nothing about it. Additional shout out to my little brother Maurice Jr., because his existence encourages me to think beyond my own generation.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The Oscars is one of the four highlights for entertainment lovers each year.

Entertainment enthusiasts regard the Emmys, Grammys, Oscars and the Tony Awards as highlights because these awards shows demonstrate the best in television, music, film and theater (Rose & O'Donnell, 2015). The Oscars is the yearly awards show recognizing excellence in film (Rose & O'Donnell, 2015). However, since 2015 the Oscars has seen a consistent decline in its viewership (Statista, 2020). Over the last two decades viewership has dropped almost 50% with 46.33 million viewers in 2000 to just 23.6 million viewers in 2020 (Statista, 2020).

The “Oscars so white” hashtag of 2015 critiqued the Oscars based on diversity equity and inclusion (Ceron, 2019). The hashtag noted the lack of people of color nominated for the show's most coveted awards (Ceron, 2019). The hashtag brought the conversation of the lack of diversity and inclusion in the entertainment industry back to the forefront (“Diversity & inclusion”, 2018). While there have been multiple discussions over the nine-decade history of the awards, the continued high viewership of the awards suggests that previous conversations surrounding the lack of inclusion were not significantly impactful (J.T., 2016; Statista, 2020).

It should be noted that television viewership overall has been declining and there are other reasons that suggest the continued declining viewership of the Oscars specifically, including the prevalence of awards shows and the length of the live event (Atkinson, 2018; Bianco, 2018). The decline in viewership since the “Oscars So White” hashtag suggests that there may be a link between the continued decline and the lack of inclusion in the nominations and winners of the awards (Ceron, 2019).

The hashtag coupled with the continued decline suggests that younger audiences are disaffected from the Oscars, specifically Millennials and Generation Zers. A generation is

defined as “a special cohort-group whose length approximately matches that of a basic phase of life, or about twenty-two years” (Alexander Agati, 2012; Strauss & Howe, 1991). The Millennial generation is cited for coming of age during terrorism and the rise of social media (Rainer & Rainer, 2011). Generation Z is known for growing up in the digital age, with many members having never experienced life without reasonably accessible internet access for those in more developed countries (Seemiller & Grace, 2016; Chayko, 2021). Millennials and Generation Zers occupy most of the space of the Oscars’s target audience (Otterson, 2019). The Oscars target audience includes individuals between the ages of 18 and 49, as the oldest Millennials are just now passing 40 and some of the oldest Generation Zers are 18, Millennials and Generation Zers occupy a large portion of the age range of the Oscars target audience (Otterson, 2019).

Millennials and Generation Zers value diversity, equity and inclusion in their employment and buying decisions and it is not uncommon for these groups to call out brands for their lack of inclusion (“For Millennials”, 2015; Levin, 2019; Rankin-Gomez, 2011; Shaw, 2019). Their consistent decline in live viewership of the Oscars suggests that they expect diversity, equity and inclusion practices from their entertainment outlets as well (Maxouris, 2020).

Diversity, equity and inclusion practices in the Oscars would include having more underrepresented groups involved in the nomination process of the awards and more underrepresented groups winning awards. Public relations practitioners are in the position to implement these practices and initiatives in organizations (McDonald, 2009). For the Oscars to adopt impactful inclusion initiatives, its public relations practitioners will need to be on the front line of adopting inclusive practices. Increasing viewership will also aid in the Oscars maintaining its reputation.

While there is an abundance of research on the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives for corporations, there is a gap in the research in applying these same practices to live broadcasted events such as the Oscars. As entertainment enthusiasts have historically regarded Oscar winners as the best in film, it is appropriate to analyze this awards show. This research will utilize relationship management theory and corporate reputation theory to discuss the current relationship between the Oscars and the Millennial and Generation Z generations and how a more inclusive approach by the Oscars may increase its Millennial and Generation Z viewership allowing the Oscars to maintain its relevance.

First, this thesis will present a literature review that defines Millennials, Generation Zers, types of diversity and inclusion initiatives regarding awards shows and the Oscars. The literature review will also examine viewership, Twitter and describe relationship management theory and corporate reputation theory. The literature review will close with a summary of the literature and the research objective and questions. Next, this thesis will detail the methodology that will be used for this research, then the results and conclude with the conclusion.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Millennials

The technical name for individuals born in the 1980s and 1990s is Generation Y, however they are commonly referred to as Millennials in society (Rainer & Rainer, 2011). They are the generation that has experienced the rise of the internet and the influx of social media (Rainer & Rainer, 2011). There is academic disagreement on the actual dates for Millennials with some research stating that the generation began as early as 1977 and others stating as late as 1992 (“Introduction”, 2009; McGlynn, 2005). Howe and Strauss, generational researchers, note Millennials were born between 1982 - 2004 (2000). Gene Twenge (2017) on the other hand dates Millennials, as individuals born between 1980 and 1995. This research used Twenge’s generational cohort dates.

Research shows that Millennials value brands that stand for more than their bottom line (Millennial Marketing, n.d.). This could be in part because Millennials are among the most racially and ethnically diverse adult generation (Luttrell & McGrath, 2016; Rainer & Rainer, 2011). In order for brands to attract Millennials they should demonstrate a commitment to practices besides profits (Hunt, Ramon, Tran, Sargent, & Roychourdhury, 2018). For many Millennials one of these items is diversity, equity and inclusion. Research states that diversity, equity and inclusion matter to younger populations, which would include Millennials (Hunt, et al, 2018).

Generation Z

Following the Millennial generation is Generation Z. Individuals born arguably as early as 1995 and as late as 2015 are even more diverse than the Millennial generation that preceded them (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). This generation possess billions in spending power and are likely to flock to brands that reflect their personalities (Luttrell & McGrath, 2021; “How

generation z,” 2016; Williams, 2015). Generation Zers recognize that there is more to identity than the traditional approaches and language that previous generations have used (Levin, 2019). Generation Z is the most diverse group in American history (Levin, 2019). The great diversity among the generation encourages them to be more accepting of differences than prior generations (Levin, 2019).

In an article published the day before the 2019 Oscars, research suggested that Generation Zers were among those mostly likely to watch the Oscars (Fitzgerald, 2019). While the article qualified that assertion by suggesting that the nominations of films like *Black Panther* played a role in Generation Z’s interest, Generation Z was still almost twice as likely to watch the show over Millennials (Fitzgerald, 2019). Even though Generation Z values diversity, equity and inclusion from entertainment outlets, other factors may heavily weigh on determining whether a member of Generation Z will watch the Oscars or not.

Inclusion Initiatives

Diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives are described as strategies used by brands and corporations to increase the diversity in appearance and cultural mindset of their organizations (“CEO Action”, 2018). Studies show that companies that are more diverse perform better internally and externally than companies that are less diverse (Dieter, 2019). With the advent of social media and other platforms for corporations to speak directly to their consumer base and the increased publication of incidents of criticism of corporations, it is important for brands to have clear and direct inclusion goals (Shaw, 2019).

Research shows that Millennials considers a company’s culture of diversity when making career and spending decisions, demonstrating just how heavily Millennials value diversity and

inclusion practices (Kochbar, 2017). As Generation Z also values inclusion, it is likely they also consider such in their decision making (Levin, 2019).

In September 2020 the Oscars announced new guidelines for films and filmmakers to be considered for awards (“Academy establishes,” 2020). The new guidelines require a film to meet two out of four “representation and inclusion standards” (“Academy establishes,” 2020). The guidelines include having individuals who identify as a woman, a racial minority, LGBTQ+ and/or with cognitive or physical disabilities serve in the cast or the production team (“Academy establishes,” 2020). Even with this announcement stark criticism followed as these are “easy hoops for most modern movies to hump through” allowing for white males to still control (Rose, 2020). This suggests that the bare minimum of change is all that is required to meet the hurdle set forth in the guidelines. Additionally, these guidelines are limited to films that want to be considered for the “Best Picture” category and they do not go into effect until the 2024 awards (Rose, 2020; Rottenberg, 2020). The new guidelines suggest that the Oscars have recognized it has an inclusion problem, but no real commitment to changing it.

Race and Gender

Race: Race pointedly is determined by the color of skin, but it can also encompass attire, music and language preferences (Bugingo, 2018). Equality in racial representation has been an ongoing issue for the entertainment industry (J.T., 2016). While the Oscars usually recognize black film stars and creators in a relatively similar percentage to the current American population that solely identifies as African American, the Oscars has failed in recognizing Asian, Hispanic and “other” raced Americans (J.T., 2016). At the time J.T. (2016) conducted his analysis African Americans comprised 12.6% of the population and were nominated by the Oscars at 10%. Hispanic Americans made up 16% percent of the population and were recognized at 3% (J.T.,

2016). Asian Americans are recognized at 1% and “other” raced Americans at 2% (J.T., 2016). These statistics demonstrate the problem the Oscars has in recognizing the talent of non-white actors, actresses, creators and contributors in film.

These statistics are even more complex when reviewing the types of roles and movies that lead to non-white persons being nominated. Most portrayals by African Americans that garnered Oscar nominations involved stereotypes that have been rejected by African Americans or period pieces with a heavy emphasis on slavery (Thorp, 2016). While *Black Panther* gaining a “Best Picture” nomination in 2019 was a step toward recognizing non-stereotypical films by African Americans, the film that won was *Green Book*, a period segregation piece that was widely denounced by the family of the black man whom the film was based upon (Dove, 2019). The idea that actors and actresses of color must be portrayed in somewhat discriminatory avenues or tell traumatic stories to garner recognition still exists.

Gender: American society historically has recognized two genders, man and woman (Godman, 2018). Changing attitudes is leading to more of America to recognize that other genders such as non-binary exist (Oakley, 2016). The entertainment industry has been accused of not being gender inclusive; further women have been unfairly treated and unfairly compensated in the industry (Weinstein, 2019). Women, non-binary and other genders are also underrepresented in the Oscars (Levitt, Shoard, & Clarke, 2020). Categories that are not gender specific are heavily dominated by men (Levitt, et al, 2020).

These are only two of the many physical and non-physical characteristics that distinguish individuals in the American population. Millennials and Generation Zers require organizations to at the very least evaluate all avenues of inequality and make strides toward equity. Other characteristics include sexual orientation, differently abled, age and religion. Gender and Race

have been the focal points for research about inequality in entertainment in the past and therefore serves as an appropriate starting place for analysis for this study.

Viewership

Viewership refers to the number of people who watch a live broadcasted event (Nakutis, 2008). Viewership is important for awards shows, such as the Oscars because it carries significant weight in attracting advertising and investment dollars for the event (Adgate, 2019). Television continues to be “one of the most popular mediums for advertising” (Messineo, 2008). Television is an “important point of socialization and cultural production” for those that engage with it (Messineo, 2008). As noted above, viewership of the Oscars has been declining regularly for the last two decades (Kobasic, 2019). Targeting viewership of the Oscars through Millennials and Generation Zers is important because of the positive outcomes that targeting niche audiences has in the television market (Messineo, 2008).

Overall television viewership is on the decline (Atkinson, 2018). Since the turn of the 21st century viewership of the Oscars has fluctuated. In the years since the adoption of the “Oscars So White” hashtag, the show has seen a consistent decline (Statista, 2020). From 2000 to 2009 the show drew in an average of over 39.6 million viewers (Statista, 2020). From 2010 to 2014 average viewership rose to just over 40.5 million viewers (Statista, 2020). The continued decline begins in 2015, from 2015 to 2019 every year viewership declines, except for a bump in 2019 (Statista, 2020). Average viewership in those five years was down to just under 32 million viewers (Statista, 2020). The 2020 Oscars only garnered 23.6 million viewers, the lowest this century (Statista, 2020). These numbers, nor Nielsen reports about awards show viewership factor in those who may livestream the event using an online platform (Whitten, 2015).

Entertainment articles suggest several reasons why Millennials and younger generations, including Generation Z, are no longer watching awards shows. One of the many reasons is the Oscars refusal to recognize films that are only released on streaming sites such as Netflix and Hulu (Keller, 2017). The Oscars does not consider movies released solely online, which are favored mediums of Millennials and Generation Zers (Hamilton, 2017; “Young generation,” 2019). However, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Oscars allowed films to “skip a theatrical release entirely,” though that exception is not expected to remain past the 2021 Oscars (Buchanan, 2020).

Another reason asserted was the prevalence of awards shows (Moylan, 2016). Audiences are not restricted to the Oscars to determine the best in film suggesting the irrelevance of the show. African American audiences can turn to the BET Awards or the NAACP Image Awards to determine the best for them, those looking for excellence that is LGBTQ inclusive can turn to the GLAAD Awards, etc. (Branch, 2008). Audiences who feel they are not represented at the Oscars do not have to rely on the Oscars to tell them the best in film.

There is also an argument that there are too many awards shows competing for the attention of the same audience (Moylan, 2016). A common denominator throughout articles studying the decline in Oscars viewership specifically highlight the lack of diversity in the nominations and awards winners while mentioning some of the other arguments discussed above (Ceron, 2019). This research intends to focus solely on diversity, equity and inclusion as a means of increasing Millennial and Generation Z viewership.

Twitter

Twitter is integral in determining the relationship between audiences and brands (Dennis, 2014). It is a unique platform that allows users to share their views about live broadcasted events

in real time. Brands should have a social media presence to interact with the Millennial and Generation Z populations (Campaign Monitor, n.d.). The “Oscars So White” hashtag began on Twitter, demonstrating how viewers use Twitter to interact and discuss live events, specifically the Oscars (Ceron, 2019).

Twitter is important to viewership as well. Twitter allows users to connect with other viewers and the program in real time (Weller, Bruns, Burgess, Mahrt, & Puschmann, 2014). Social media operates as “a second screen” during television programs, especially live programs (Weller, et al, 2014 pg. 240). Twitter represents “a phenomenal opportunity,” by providing brands with a “means of inconspicuously observing the activities of television audiences” (Weller, et al, 2014 pg. 245). The conversations that take place on Twitter can encourage people to turn on the television and just as easily encourage people to turn the television off (Shelter, 2013). As the Oscars has seen consistent decline since the “Oscars So White” hashtag, there is a potential link between the decreased viewership and viewers unhappiness with the show as seen on Twitter (Ceron, 2019; Statista, 2020).

Public relations practitioners monitor conversations on social media to determine how to create and curate messaging (Evans, Twomey, & Talan 2011). Monitoring the Twitter conversation about the Oscars is critical to determining how those who watch the show in real-time feel about the broadcast. Understanding the Twitter conversations that Millennials and Generation Z are having about the Oscars will enable the producers of the Oscars to better curate their content to increase viewership from these populations.

Relationship Management Theory

Relationship management theory is a four-component theory of trust, satisfaction, commitment and control mutuality between a brand and its audience (Water & Bortree, 2012).

Relationship has been defined as “the state which exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political and cultural well-being of the other” (Maxwell & Carboni, 2014). This research will explore some of the components to describe the relationship between the Oscars and Millennials and Generation Zers.

Trust centers on the “general expectation that the word of another can be relied upon” (Berndt & Brink, 2004). Satisfaction means the benefits of the relationship outweigh the costs of that relationship (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000; Ledingham, 2006). Commitment centers on the long-term desire between the parties to maintain a valuable partnership (Berndt & Brink, 2004). Control mutuality is about shared control between a brand and its publics (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000). To that end, this research will focus on trust and satisfaction. Trust is important to evaluate because trust “is seen as a phenomenon which contributes to the strength of interpersonal relationships” (Svensson, 2001 pg. 431). Satisfaction is also crucial in determining the relationship between the Oscars and Millennials and Generation-Zers because their declining viewership suggests dissatisfaction and distrust with the awards show from these populations.

As public relations practitioners are critical in managing the relationship between brands and their target audiences, understanding how to effectively manage that relationship is crucial for practitioners. In the awards show space, it is important for practitioners to understand audience expectations allowing the Oscars producers to reasonably meet those expectations. In order to strategically plan effective communications, relationship management theory allows public relations practitioners to build and evaluate relationships between brands and their publics. In the awards sphere this theory will enable practitioners to understand, manage and

meet audience goals. Meeting audience goals is likely to increase viewership as the show would present content that the audience wants to see.

Corporate Reputation Theory

Corporate reputation theory explores the idea that the reputation of a brand impacts consumer-decision making (Puncheva, 2008). Overall, it has been described as “a relatively stable, issue specific aggregate perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and further prospects compared against some standard” (Walker, 2010).

As “reputation is often issue specific” a brand can have many reputations depending on the topic in question (Walker, 2010). This makes corporate reputation theory very valuable in determining if the Oscars has retained its historical social significance with Millennials and Generation Z and whether the show can benefit from inclusion initiatives. The Oscars reputation with Millennials and Generation Z helps determine current sentiment about the Oscars and highlights opportunities for change. Understanding the reputation of the Oscars regarding Millennials and Generation Zers may reveal a link with the declining viewership of the Oscars.

Public relations practitioners are often charged with regulating an organization’s reputation (Murray & White, 2005). These practitioners are the ones who respond actively report on the reputation, propose and implement strategies to enhance the reputation and mitigate crises internally and externally (Murray & White, 2005). The practical implications of corporate reputation theory make it appropriate to utilize in a public relations study such as this one.

Summary of Literature Review

There has been research on the benefits of diversity, equity and inclusion in attracting Millennials as consumers or participants. As Generation Z is now entering the workforce and obtaining buying power, research about this latest generational cohort is increasing as they also

value diversity, equity and inclusion in their decision making. Relationship management theory helps to determine the current relationship between a brand and its audience, highlighting opportunities to improve that relationship. Corporate reputation theory describes how having a positive relationship with a brand's audience can improve brand loyalty (Puncheva, 2008). These two theories together can show how gaps in communication can lead to ineffective content. For the Oscars that would include its viewership.

As stated above, there is little academic research concerning the benefits of diversity, equity and inclusion practices to awards shows in increasing their viewership. There are several entertainment-based mediums that suggest a link between the lack of diversity and inclusion to the continued low viewership of the Oscars. Therefore, this research will attempt to determine whether the Oscars could increase their viewership by adopting diversity and inclusion practices with the following research objective and questions in mind.

Research Objective & Question

RO: to determine Millennial and Generation Z sentiment regarding the Oscars.

RQ: why have younger audiences stopped watching the Oscars?

RQ: would Millennials and Generation Zers watch the Oscars if the programming was more diverse and inclusive?

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Method

This was a mixed, qualitative and quantitative study. The quantitative data was gathered through an original survey that was distributed using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Surveys are the common method used when conducting research using relationship management theory or corporate reputation theory (Maxwell & Carboni, 2014). A survey is also proper here because it will provide more detailed information about whether Millennials and Generation Zers are watching the Oscars and the cultural significance of the Oscars to these two segments of the public. Surveys allow for general information gathering about sentiment and allow for opportunities for participants to provide more detailed responses regarding their opinions on certain topics.

The qualitative data was collected via social listening by conducting a Twitter analysis using Social Studio. Social Studio is a social media analytics site that I used to gauge Twitter sentiment about the Oscars (Garcia, 2020; “Social Studio,” n.d.). Social Studio enables users to “manage, schedule, create, and monitor” their social media efforts (Garcia, 2020; “Social Studio,” n.d.). The Twitter data collection was based on Twitter conversations about the announcement of the nominees of the 2021 Oscars. A Twitter analysis was most appropriate because this method provided detailed information about Millennials and Generation Zers who watch and follow the Oscars in real time.

Recruitment

Participants received a minimal monetary incentive to complete the survey via MTurk. Additional recruitment was conducted through personal connections via posting the link on

personal social media accounts. No incentive was provided for recruitment outside of MTurk. The goal was to recruit at least 500 participants.

Data Collection Site

The online survey was distributed using MTurk. The survey was built using Qualtrics. Participants were able to access the survey either on their mobile device, desktop or laptop.

Sample

Participants were limited to individuals who were at least 18 years of age, capturing the entirety of the Millennial generation and all adult-age Generation Zers. As MTurk and social media accounts were used for the survey distribution, no geographical regions or locations were specifically targeted.

The Twitter sample was limited to responses from those who are at least 18 years of age. The hashtags #OscarsSoWhite, #Oscars2021, #Oscars and any other relevant keywords were used to limit results. The sample will be looking at sentiment from the 18-25 age range to determine Generation Z's attitudes about the Oscars. There will be a separate sample looking at sentiment from the 26-41 age range to determine Millennials' attitudes about the Oscars. The analysis will be limited to tweets between the day of the announcement of the nominations to the Friday after the announcement.

Instrument

A 29-question survey was used to measure participants' attitudes about the Oscars. The basis for the survey question came from principles found in relationship management theory and corporate reputation theory. Social Studio will be used to conduct the Twitter analysis.

Validity

The survey was pre-screened with a small group of individuals whose ages place them in either the Millennial or adult Generation Z generations before being submitted for IRB approval and then distribution. Those who were used in the pre-screen provided helpful feedback regarding the questions to ensure that the final survey was clear, inclusive and contained adequate questions to address the research questions and objectives stated above.

Data Analysis

The analytics function provided by Qualtrics was the mode of analysis for the survey responses. Social Studio's analytics function was used to conduct the analysis of Twitter.

Timeline

The IRB Exempt application for this study was submitted March 1, 2021. IRB Exempt approval was granted on March 11, 2021. The survey was released via MTurk on March, 11, 2021 once exempt status was granted. The survey closed on March 20, 2021 after 679 responses were received. Survey analysis began on March 20, 2021. The data from Twitter about the Oscars will be collected from March 15 to March 19 running every weekday from the announcement. The Twitter analysis began on March 20.

Chapter IV: Survey Results and Discussion

Overall

Demographics: Through the recruitment methods, the survey garnered 679 participants. Of those 679, 53% identified themselves as men, 44% women, 1% gender-fluid with 2% preferring not to identify themselves. The racial background of the participants was 44% white, 10% black or African American, 7% Hispanic or Latinx, 25% Asian American or Pacific Islander, 1% Native American or Indigenous, 4% mixed-race, 5% other with 4% preferring not to say. It was important to inquire about the racial background of the participants because an individual's race plays a part in how that individual views issues of race including whether or not issues around race even exist. It was equally critical to inquire about the gender identity of participants for the same reasons.

Overwhelming the film-related awards show participants watch is the Oscars. This finding suggests that when it comes to rewarding excellence in film, the Oscars remains the preferred show to view. That assertion is further supported by the fact that 49% of participants watch the show every year with an additional 22% mentioning that they watch the show "every now and again."

Relatedly most participants continue to watch the Oscars in some capacity. In the last decade only 32% of participants have stopped watching the Oscars suggesting that the Oscars have generally not lost the interest of the public. Of the 32% who have stopped, most stopped after the 2018 show. Only 35% of that 32% stopped after 2015. This lessens the impact of the "Oscars So White" hashtag. Only 2% of participants stated they watched the show only in 2019, cutting against the assertion that the nomination of films like *Black Panther* heavily contributed to bringing viewers back to the show. It should be mentioned that 22% of participants reported

that they have watched the show within this millennium, just not every year, this means that those participants may have just tuned in for a show or two and it is unknown which years they watched.

There is a consensus that those who are nominated and/or win the awards reflect high quality talent in film. This suggests that the Oscars have maintained its notoriety and prominence. There is also a consensus that women and people of color who have been rewarded by the Oscars have given performances and contributions worthy of an Oscar. For women the consensus was 65%, whereas for people of color 56%.

In recognizing the achievements of women and people of color, over half of participants agreed that if more women were nominated beyond woman-specific categories they would be more inclined to watch the show. It was 49% for people of color. It should be noted that the responses to these questions garnered a 31% and 30% respectively neutrality response. This means that only 20% of participants were against more gender and racial inclusion. A major finding from participants revealed that almost 60% would be willing to watch the show if the Oscars included nominations from content released solely on streaming services. Another finding reveals that gender inclusion includes consideration and spaces for non-binary/gender-fluid/intersex people.

Collectively, at first glance it appears that diversity, equity and inclusion may play a role in whether individuals choose to view the Oscars.

The survey concluded with two open-ended questions. One asking participants to choose which facet of diversity; race, gender, non-binary, they would prefer the Oscars focus on; the other inquired whether diversity, equity and inclusion played a role in participants willingness to watch the Oscars. Those findings are discussed generationally below.

Generationally

Millennials: Individuals who described themselves as being Millennials were 82% of the total participants. As the target audience of the Oscars includes the entirety of the Millennial generation their responses make up most of this discussion.

Almost half of millennials were unwilling to express an opinion on whether awards should remain gender specific. For those that were willing to offer an opinion, most believe that gender-specific awards make the show seem more “fair” and allow more people to win. This suggests that gender-neutral categories run the risk of being overrun by those who identify as men regardless of other genders rightfully and even more so deserving performances. This is seen currently in the limited number of women who have been nominated and won in the gender-neutral categories that already exist (Rose, 2020). They also see the current regime of gender-specific awards as means for transgender film contributors to be included without having to “out” themselves as long as they are free to be considered in the category of the gender they identify as. In responses to this question the idea of those who fall outside the categories of man or woman, regardless of being transgender, was mentioned by those who believe that categories should not remain gender-specific. The specific inclusion of additional genders suggests that a more complicated category system needs to be in place and simple gender-neutral categories may not be enough to fix the Oscars gender problems.

Millennials had the highest percentage of all other generations and age groups that believes the Oscars adequately recognizes women and people of color. They also had the highest percentage of belief that more recognition of women would encourage them to watch the show, falling behind Generation Z by 9% when it came to people of color for the same thing. Just over half believe that there should be additional categories to recognize gender-fluid/non-

binary/intersex and transgender persons if the current gender-specific scheme is to remain in place. The statistics suggest that Millennials are considering diversity, equity and inclusion when they consider the Oscars. It seems as their approach is based in effectuating change.

In response to the question of what element participants felt is most important to be addressed by the Oscars the most mentioned element was non-binary/gender-fluid/intersex at 20%, people of color and none followed both at 19%, women at 17%, all elements at 12%, not applicable at 8% and transgender at 3%. Three responses mentioned recognition for individuals with disabilities, two explicitly stated that they do not watch or care about the Oscars and one response mentioned that just displaying more categories of winners such as “stunt persons” is the most important thing for the Oscars to address to make the show more interesting to watch.

Ultimately, the “none” responses were not because these elements do not matter. There were a few responses that suggested that if these groups want to be recognized they need to do a better job, the Oscars has already done enough to address these elements and that these elements are “not real.” The main reason participants answered “none” was because they view the Oscars only for entertainment. To them the show should be about talent and nothing more. They also raised a concern that explicitly addressing these elements will hinder the prestige and genuineness of the Oscars.

Over 70% of responses expressed a dissatisfaction with the Oscars inclusiveness. Those who felt that all elements need to be addressed mainly said so because they feel that no one element should be held as more important than another. They also mentioned that all should be addressed to be reflective of today’s arguably global society. There was also a claim that having the Oscars be more representational makes the show more interesting to watch as it makes it more competitive helping the show to maintain its relevance.

Those that felt women were the most important element said so because women are half the population and should be recognized at the same rate. By limiting the significant portion of women's wins to women-specific categories there is a reinforcement of the idea that women do not have what it takes to compete with men. Women have been and continue to be talented enough to compete with and beat out men competitors, the Oscars needs to reflect that fact. Lastly there were mentions that women have waited long enough to be recognized at the same rate as men.

Several of the reasons supporting the idea that women are the most important element were the same reasons for selecting people of color as the most important element. Participants believe that people of color have waited long enough for their just-do and their presence in society is significant and the Oscars should reflect that. Participants also mentioned that addressing the people of color element opens the door for other elements to be addressed better than the other way around because addressing people of color would be rooting out the racism that could still permeate in addressing the representation of women. Addressing this element first also encourages more recognition for foreign films. The Oscars holds itself out as recognizing worldwide excellence in film, that cannot be true without robust inclusion of foreign-led and foreign-based films. Given the Oscars own history of racism and the reality of 21st century society, people of color deserve to be addressed first. Participants pointed to the contributions of black and Asian creators and performances specifically. It should be included that there were several mentions of intersectionality of the elements with several participants highlighting that women of color are the actual element that needs to be addressed first. If that is addressed all other elements are automatically addressed as well.

In response to the question of whether diversity, equity and inclusion play a role in participants' decision to watch the Oscars; 33% said yes, 23% said no, 14% said slightly, another 14% said no solely because they see the show as only for entertainment, 5% said sometimes but it does not deter, 2% said no because the show is not inclusive anyway, less than 1% said no because they feel the Oscars is already inclusive with the remaining 8% citing other reasons why they will not watch the Oscars either in real time or at all.

Interestingly those who answered sometimes or slightly said so with caveats. The consensus is that so far it has not stopped these participants from watching the show but as the years go by it is becoming a concern that would result in no longer viewing the show. A common word was "disappointed" meaning that participants are continuously dissatisfied in the Oscars in its failure to be diverse, equitable and inclusive. Additionally, those who cited other reasons as to why they did not watch the Oscars included the idea that the lack of diversity, equity and inclusion was a "good/better excuse" to not watch the show. These other reasons included the idea that they only watch for the fashion, that the show is boring, an "ego stroke for the elite" and too long.

Those that answered "yes," said so because they do not want to watch a program that does not recognize the world we live in. Recognition in film should be reflective of all the people that contribute to and enjoy those films. These considerations are important in ensuring the fairness and relatability of the show. However, even in considering this, participants expressed that there needs to remain a focus on talent. This means that the Oscars cannot nominate substandard films to fill a diversity quota. The Oscars committees should adequately research and objectively consider all films in a new way as the current standards continuously fail to recognize the exemplary work of diverse filmmakers. Having something as significant as the

Oscars recognize diverse works helps to improve conversations about diversity, equity and inclusion allowing for the Oscars as a brand to maintain its notoriety and build its reputation as a leader in the conversation.

Given the wide age range of millennials the diversity in the findings is not surprising. The fact that most participants mentioned dissatisfaction with the show’s current standards on diversity, equity and inclusion and the expressed agreeance in watching if more diverse nominees exists supports the idea that in order to attract Millennial viewers the Oscars should be more diverse, equitable and inclusive.

[Table 1: Notable Responses from Millennials*]

Q28: Which of the elements – women, non-white, non-binary/gender-fluid – outlined in this survey do you feel is most important to be addressed by the Oscars	Q32: Do diversity, equity and inclusion play a role in your decision to watch the Oscars?
<i>“Still should be based on merit with no special exceptions, otherwise merit will be given to sub-par films with artificial enjoyment”</i>	<i>“[Yes], it’s disheartening to watch mediocrity win instead of well-meaning people of color, mediocre men over women and the non-binary ignored”</i>
<i>“I think all of them need to be addressed in some form. It doesn’t make sense to pick categories to help and leave others where they are”</i>	<i>“No, if we think about it we’re being prejudiced. We have to recognize talent, not appearance”</i>
<i>“Women, non-white. It’s gone on long enough. They’re older to the fight and deserve to be addressed first. These can easily be shuffled into current categories without having to build new brackets....in the next 5-10 years.”</i>	<i>“No. I came to the conclusion a while ago that the Oscars and the like are just ego-stroking shows for megalomaniacs”</i>
<i>“None, actors should be recognized for their work”</i>	<i>“No, I simply don’t care enough about them. But probably the lack of equity would be a good reason not to watch them”</i>
<i>“Non-white. The Oscars has been overwhelmingly whitewashed”</i>	<i>“Yes, I feel like diversity is solely lacking and that is unfortunately why I don’t watch anymore</i>
<i>“The Oscars so white thing is pretty accurate”</i>	<i>“Yes, people can relate more”</i>

<i>“The system of awarding should change”</i>	<i>“They don’t but they will in the future. I can’t continue to support something that doesn’t recognize my people”</i>
<i>“It seems like it always white men winning. We need a more diverse nominee selection, and more women/non-white women need to be recognized for their contribution to film especially because they tend to be glossed over. Having diversity is very beneficial to society and those who are influenced by them”</i>	<i>“Absolutely. Everything about this country is whitewashed why would I watch an awards show that has purposefully chosen to exclude minority groups and uplift more white people who are cool with the continued oppression of these groups. Watching is like we’re okaying systemic racism”</i>
<i>“Non-white. I feel that performances by POC aren’t as recognized as performances from people that are white”</i>	<i>“It does not play a decisive role, but it would certainly encourage me to watch more Oscars”</i>
<i>“Non-white women because [white women] still have a lot of privilege”</i>	<i>“No, I watch the Oscars because I enjoy celebrities. I am blind to those meaningless identities”</i>
<i>“None of it, as the Oscars is about movies and art, not the expression of oneself”</i>	<i>“No, I like awards ceremonies that address these issues but not in explicit and overused ways”</i>
<i>“All of them have been historically neglected and deserved to be represented and recognized”</i>	<i>“Sometimes; it’s not exciting nor accurate to watch an awards show that essentially states that all the best performances were done by one group of people”</i>

some comments were edited for clarity and grammatical correctness

Generation Z: As the literature review suggests, Generation Z has an even stronger desire for diversity, equity and inclusion from the Oscars than Millennials do. Participants who identified themselves as members of Generation Z accounted for 5% of total participants. Though small the findings from these participants suggest that while current standards and slight modifications may hold Millennials, that is insufficient for Generation Zers.

In response to the question of which inclusion element is the most important to be addressed Generation Zers overwhelming answered “non-white.” Issues of race need to be addressed by the Oscars if the Oscars intends to maintain its relevance with this generation. Generation Z feels that race is the most because of the prominence of the discussion of racial

equity in society. The Oscars should be taking advantage of the conversation to break ties with its “discriminatory” past and be a voice of change.

Generation Z revealed that all facets of diversity are considered in deciding whether to watch the Oscars. This builds upon the assertion that they are committed to living in a world where the standards are just as diverse as they are. Only two responses from Generation Zers suggested that elements of diversity are not real and therefore do not matter. Generation Z is aware and demands that organizations like the Oscars rewards work from creators of all walks of life. This population also included substantial conversation on how to best recognize the achievements of transgendered persons while still respecting their privacy.

[Table 2: Notable Responses from Generation Z*]

Q28: Which of the elements – women, non-white, non-binary/gender-fluid – outlined in this survey do you feel is most important to be addressed by the Oscars	Q32: Do diversity, equity and inclusion play a role in your decision to watch the Oscars?
<i>“non-white, white men are the norm at the Oscars and more needs to be done to ensure that movies from all perspectives, not just while male perspectives are seen”</i>	<i>“Somewhat. I don’t actively avoid watching awards shows with the same stereotypical nominees, but it does seem less interesting”</i>
<i>“if we focus on one gender or one ethnicity, it won’t be fair”</i>	<i>“Yes, I’m tired of seeing everything whitewashed”</i>
<i>“The Oscars is very white patriarchy”</i>	<i>“Yes. I think it plays a role in everything I do. I have understood the importance it has in peoples lives. Supporting is the least I can do.”</i>
<i>“I think they are all equally important”</i>	

some comments were edited for clarity and grammatical correctness

Prior to Millennials: While the purpose of this survey was to explore the opinions and attitudes of Millennials and Generation Zers findings regarding individuals older than Millennials were also made. It is unknown what specific generation these participants belong to as no additional inquiry into their ages was made. Participants who fell into this category made up the remaining 13% of total participants. Individuals older than Millennials occupy some of

the space in the Oscars target audience (Otterson, 2019). Additionally, based on the dates for this research, April Reign, the individual who created the “Oscars So White” hashtag, is older than a Millennial (Ugwu, 2020; Workneh, 2016).

Responses were relatively the same regarding which element of diversity the Oscars should address, no one element beat out another. Participants who said “none” said so because they feel that the Oscars has to go to best performance and to consider anything else would render the awards “meaningless.” Those who responded “women” said so because of their presence in the population and a belief that a focus on women will pave the way for other diverse groups to be recognized. Those who responded “non-white” said so because of the way this country has treated racially minority groups and specifically mentioned the lack of recognition of Asians and films from non-white countries. There was the least amount of discussion about non-binary/gender-fluid/intersex and transgender persons from this category. This category believes that individuals who identify themselves as such should be given their own categories, so they are not forced to conform with current standards. Participants who said “all” noted that to adequately address all inequalities no one can be more important than another.

Participants leaned more “no” in responding to the question about whether diversity, equity and inclusion contribute to their decision to watch the Oscars. They see the Oscars as just a means of entertainment with some noting that a strive for inclusion would hinder their inclination to watch the show. While some would like to see more categories that are reflective of the society in terms of representation, they hesitate considerably fearing that undeserving performances will be rewarded to fulfill a diversity quota. These elements do not factor in their final decision to watch the show; however, they are tired of seeing the same people win and tired of little-known films being nominated.

Ultimately, this group is likely to continue to watch the Oscars. The introduction of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives seems to not statistically impact whether these groups will view the show. It should be noted that participants in this group are dying out and are not the focus of the Oscars. Their want for “tradition” should not be heavily considered in determining whether diversity, equity and inclusion is going to improve Oscars viewership.

[Table 3: Notable Responses from generations prior to Millennials*]

Q28: Which of the elements – women, non-white, non-binary/gender-fluid – outlined in this survey do you feel is most important to be addressed by the Oscars	Q32: Do diversity, equity and inclusion play a role in your decision to watch the Oscars?
<i>“I don’t think they should address any of these elements. The best person should win, no matter who they are”</i>	<i>“I am going to watch the Oscars, so nothing would play a role in my decision”</i>
<i>“Probably non-white, but I do feel non-white actors are recognized fairly well [by the] Oscars”</i>	<i>“Sometimes. Depends on how well each category is represented”</i>
<i>“I am not sure. A good performance knows no boundaries. There is no need to be politically correct”</i>	<i>“NO. I feel now a black woman has to win or no one will be happy and everyone will be called old and racist for supporting the actual best actor, director, music, etc”</i>
<i>“Women and gender-related issues, because they are often overlooked, despite having Actress categories”</i>	<i>“It seems like a display of white privilege and opulence sometimes which turns me off”</i>
<i>“I don’t know”</i>	<i>“No, because it would be hard to articulate a standard”</i>
<i>“Yes, definitely because it is a prestigious award [All]”</i>	<i>“I would still most likely watch, but I do like to see a variety of people recognized”</i>
<i>“I don’t like these categories. I feel like those who win the awards now are only getting it because they are female or non-white. I haven’t liked most of the movies put out lately. They need to be based on [the] quality of the movie, not the skin color of who made or starred in the movie. I think it is more segregated now because they are scared to give an award to a while male who made a stunning movie that people enjoyed. Everyone is trying to be so equal, [that awarding a non-binary person that delivered their lines well]</i>	<i>“No, I just don’t feel they are relevant”</i>

<i>but it didn't make sense with the rest of the movie [is more important]."</i>	
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some comments were edited for clarity and grammatical correctness

Connection to Research Objective and Question

RO: to determine Millennials and Generation Z sentiment regarding the Oscars

These populations continue to hold the Oscars in high regard. They currently believe that the Oscars rewards those who have excelled in film. However, the continued proliferation of the establishment, length and predictability of the show and the lack of diversity and inclusion is igniting an idea that the Oscars is out of touch with these populations. The Oscars have not done enough to reward non-American films or recognize films on mediums these populations enjoy, most notably streaming services. For these reasons it appears that the Oscars high regard is tenuous and without immediate and substantial changes, there will be a growing disregard for the Oscars. These generations currently trust the Oscars to show them the best in film, but that trust is faltering and is becoming non-existent when coupled with considerations of diversity, equity and inclusion.

RQ: why have younger audiences stopped watching the Oscars?

It appears that younger audiences collectively have not stopped watching the Oscars. However, they are on their way. Both Millennial and Generation Z participants explicitly stated that if the Oscars continues with its historical standards of longevity, not being diverse and inclusive and awarding the awards to the same people, they are going to stop watching. There is also strong evidence that the Oscars not nominated movies from streaming services which younger audiences prefer. The results also present the assertion that it may be time for Nielsen to update its viewership standards to include online live viewers and those who watch highlights from official sources such as an organization's official YouTube page.

RQ: would Millennials and Generation Z watch the Oscars if it was more diverse and inclusive?

Based on responses it is likely that if the Oscars were more diverse and inclusive these generations would be more inclined to watch. As the results state, over half of both of these generations stated that if more shows were more diverse and inclusive, they would be more likely to watch.

Survey Limitations

The survey did not inquire about the types of roles women and non-white people were nominated and rewarded for. Those considerations may possibly alter this analysis as participants would have had to think more critically in formulating their responses. As stated above, participants were mostly individuals who identified themselves as white and as a man. This research may look different if focused solely on certain racial and gender demographics. Additionally, Generation Z only made up 5% of participants suggesting that the attitudes across the generation may be more diverse than the results reflected above. Further research in this area should include a larger population of Gen-Zers.

Chapter V: Twitter Results and Discussion

The nominees for the 2021 Oscars were announced on March 15, 2021 (Arkin, 2021). The nominations this year are a lot more diverse than they have been in the past with critiques pinpointing the COVID-19 pandemic as a major contributor, as the Oscars was forced to recognize more content offered on streaming services (Arkin, 2021). This year's nominations also include the first time two women have been nominated in the "Best Director" category (Arkin, 2021). Critics also contribute the recent diversification of the nominations to the Academy's mitigation of bad press following the creation of the "Oscars So White" hashtag (Arkin, 2021).

Overall

Key Words: the keywords included Academy Awards, Oscars, Oscars 2021, Oscars2021, OscarsSoWhite, The Academy, The Academy Awards and The Oscars. Keywords that were excluded were Emmys, Grammys and Tonys. These words were excluded because some people refer to multiple awards shows as part of "The Academy" and those responses needed to be excluded to keep the focus on the Oscars. Originally an additional keyword of "Oscar" was used, however such was removed as the total posts doubled with most not having any reference to the Oscars as they referred to individuals named Oscar.

Total Posts: approximately 358,000 over a four-day time span with most posts during the 24-hour time span of the announcement of the nominees from March 15 to March 16. As the week went on, the number of posts dropped significantly.

Collective Sentiment: The overall sentiment was viewed as "positive" at 74%. Negative sentiment never overtook or equated with positive sentiment. On March 15 negative sentiment was at 27% in comparison to positive sentiment at 73%. By the closing date of this analysis on

March 19 negative sentiment was only 32%. The closest negative sentiment got to positive sentiment was on March 18 where negative sentiment rose to 40% of the Twitter conversation.

Top 10 Countries: the countries discussing the nominees and the Oscars during this period were mainly unknown at 39% with the United States at a close second with 30%. The remaining top eight countries; Brazil, United Kingdom, India, Japan, Canada, Argentina, Spain and Mexico controlled significantly less in comparison to the unknown origin and the United States groups.

Top five Languages: the languages that dominated the Twitter conversation were English, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese and French.

Generationally:

Sentiment: The overall positive sentiment from Millennials and Generation Z regarding the nominations directly aligns with the finding from the survey that these generations presently still enjoy the Oscars. Posts from users 18-20 were 78% positive, 21-24 were 76% positive, 25-34 were 78% positive and 35-44 were 81% positive. Users 25-34 controlled almost half of the conversation. This age range consists of the eldest Generation Zers and most Millennials. The statistics suggests that users are overwhelmingly satisfied with the crop of this year's nominations. Critics cite some of this to the diversity improvements to the nomination committee (Arkin, 2021).

Word Cloud: Using the age specification generated by Social Studio, word clouds were generated to provide insight on what specific things younger populations are saying. The most common words from the 18-20 age range that were judged as negative included over 10% of non-English words proving the global relevance of the Oscars remains even with younger audiences. Notable inclusions are swear-words, "paradox," "unbearable" and "weird." For

positive, common words include “best,” “Asian” and “women.” The word “black” appears in both categories but was more positively mentioned. Common negatively viewed words from the 21-24 age group included “Hollywood,” “denuncia” (which means “complaint” according to Google Translate) and “arruina” (which means “ruin” according to Google Translate). The positively viewed included “nominated,” “best,” “Asian” and “history. Responses from those in both age ranges are Generation Zers.

The most common words from the 25-34 differ as this age group encompasses the eldest Generation Z and most Millennials. The negatively viewed includes “black” and “best.” There were specific mentions of the film *Judas and the Black Messiah*, a film that falls out of typical Oscar nominated works (Arkin, 2021). The word “black” was also mentioned among the positively viewed, however the overall mention was considerably more negative. The word “Asian” was also found in both categories, however it was mentioned considerably more positively. Other positive inclusions were “women,” “woman” and “director.” The 35-44 age range negative words include “black” and “best” with specific mentions of “racist,” “OscarsSoWhite,” “colorblind” and the *Judas and the Black Messiah* film. Positive inclusions are “women,” “history” and “best.” Specific mentions include “Asian,” “black” and “recognition.” This age group includes posts from users older than Millennials.

Discussion: Responses from the wholly Generation Z age groups suggest that the Oscars continue to be a worldwide impactful event. The use of words like “history” and “director” in a positive light suggest that the current diversity improvements are received well. Additionally, the use of the word “congratulations” builds upon the idea discussed above that the Oscars has maintained its significance to younger generations. Responses that include users in the Millennial generation further shows that this population is struggling with its understanding of

diversity, equity and inclusion in connection to the Oscars. However, the majority positive sentiment reaffirms that Millennials are pleased with the Oscars and approve of the steps the show has taken thus far in recognizing diverse performances.

Overall, the Twitter analysis aligns with the survey results. Millennials differ in their approach to inclusion in the Oscars space with most sentiment being that inclusion is important. Generation Zers agree that inclusion is the best way and current standards will not be enough in the long run.

Social Studio Limitations

Social Studio does not classify Millennials and Generation Z the way these generations have been classified by age in this thesis. Conclusions drawn from Social Studio were based on the four categories of ages that compile all adult Generation Zers and the entirety of the Millennial generation. These categories are 18-20, 21-24, 25-34 and 34-44. Some of the results included contributions from other generational cohorts.

Additionally, sentiment analysis can be flawed (Chauhan, et al., 2020). Specifically, Social Studio does not account for sarcasm or colloquial understanding of language in its sentiment determinations. This means that some tweets such as tweets that were simply asking users to voice an opinion on who they think would win in a particular category were judged as negative even though they are not.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

The Oscars should create and adopt robust and meaningful diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives to maintain its relevance. Doing so is also likely to improve viewership from the target audience. Although Millennials are not wholly onboard with diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and are skeptical of the best way to implement those initiatives, their continued positive leaning and Generation Z's overwhelming support suggest that as time goes on, these initiatives are necessary. Generation Z requires these initiatives. As Generation Z gets older and begins to occupy more space in the target audience these strategies will have to exist.

The Oscars likely has until Generation Z is the dominant generation to implement these strategies. To protect the brand externally, the Oscars should not wait until that time to develop and implement the initiatives. Regardless, it cannot wait that long to address the elements of race and women as Millennials are already unsatisfied with the Oscars regarding race and gender.

However, it is important to keep in mind that several other factors may also be contributing to the decline in Oscars viewership. As mentioned above, the failure to nominate streaming content may be impactful in current and future Oscars viewership. Out of all participants, 60% mentioned that they would be more willing to watch the Oscars if it nominated content that is only available on streaming services. Also, overall television viewership is on the decline and this study only looked at the Oscars. Lastly, all results were limited by the lack of Generation Z participation.

Further Research

As stated above this research only scratches the surface of diversity, equity and inclusion in the awards space. The research results suggest that ample attention needs to be given to issues of those whose gender identity falls out of the traditional constructs of man or woman. Sooner

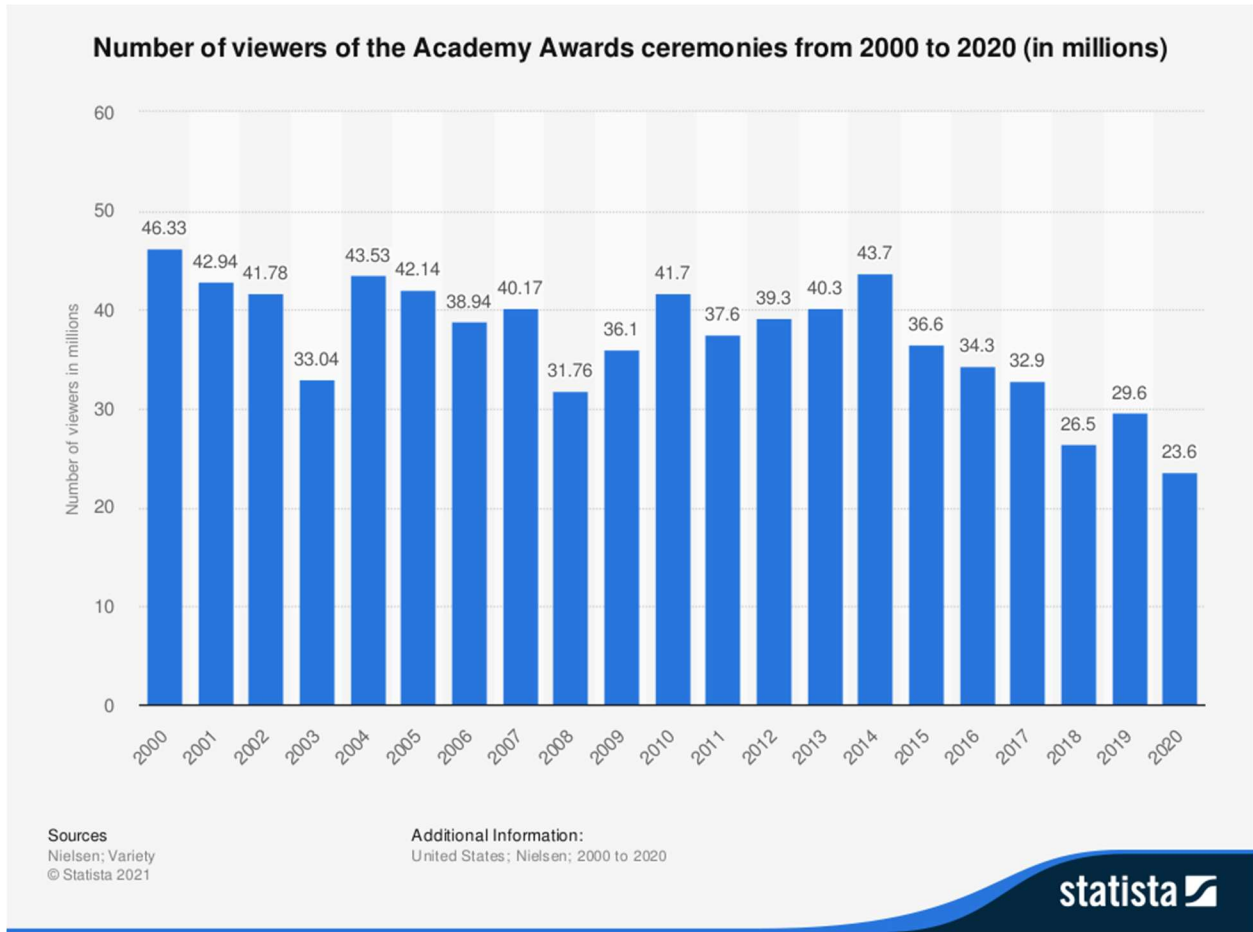
rather than later all awards shows are going to have to address how they recognize gender.

.Additional research is needed to determine the impact of the kinds of roles diverse filmmakers are nominated and awarded for. And the importance of recognizing content solely on streaming services.

APPENDIX

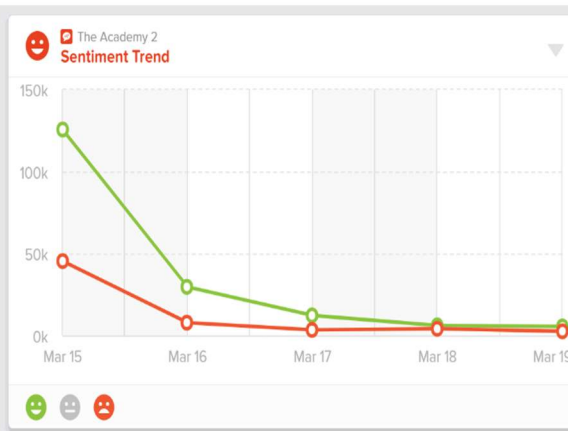
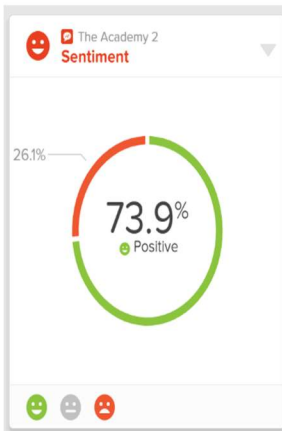
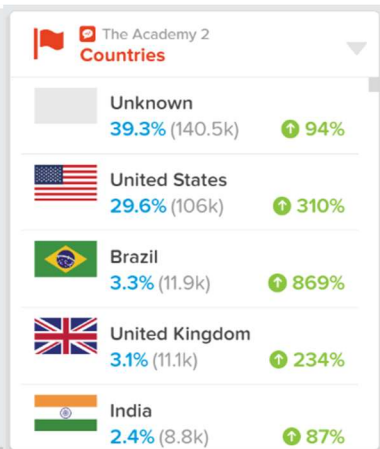
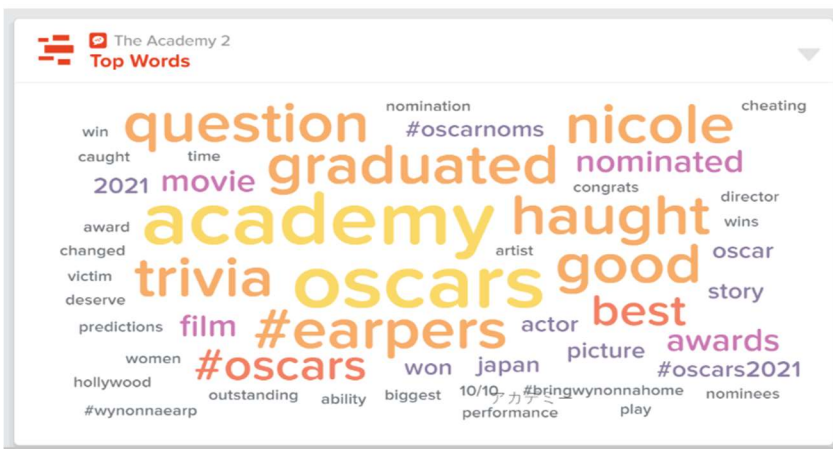
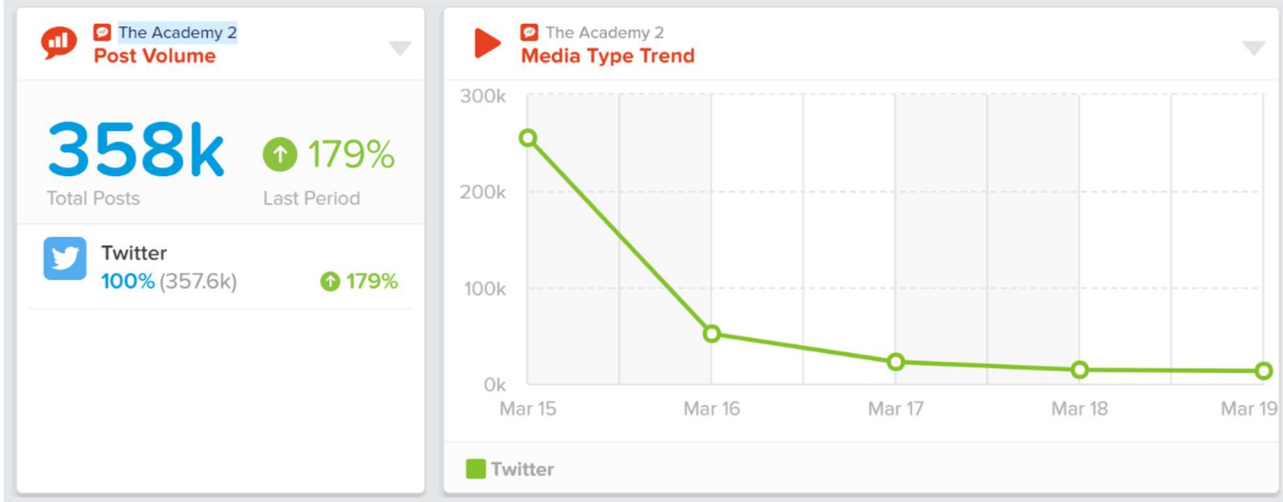
Statista

all information regarding Oscars viewership was based on the 2020 Statista report below. Statista bases its report on Nielsen (Statista, 2020)

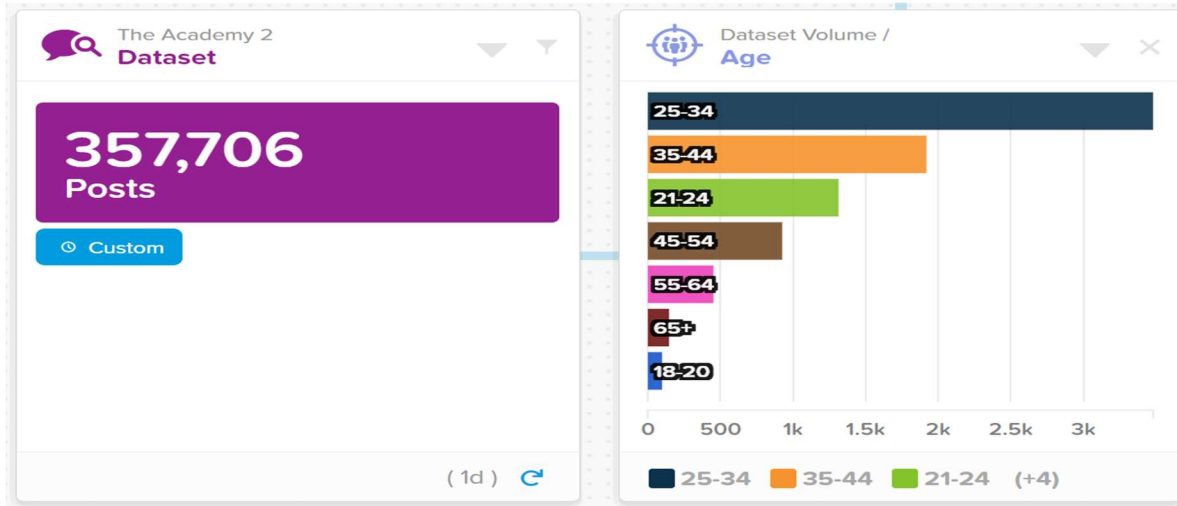


Social Studio

Overall



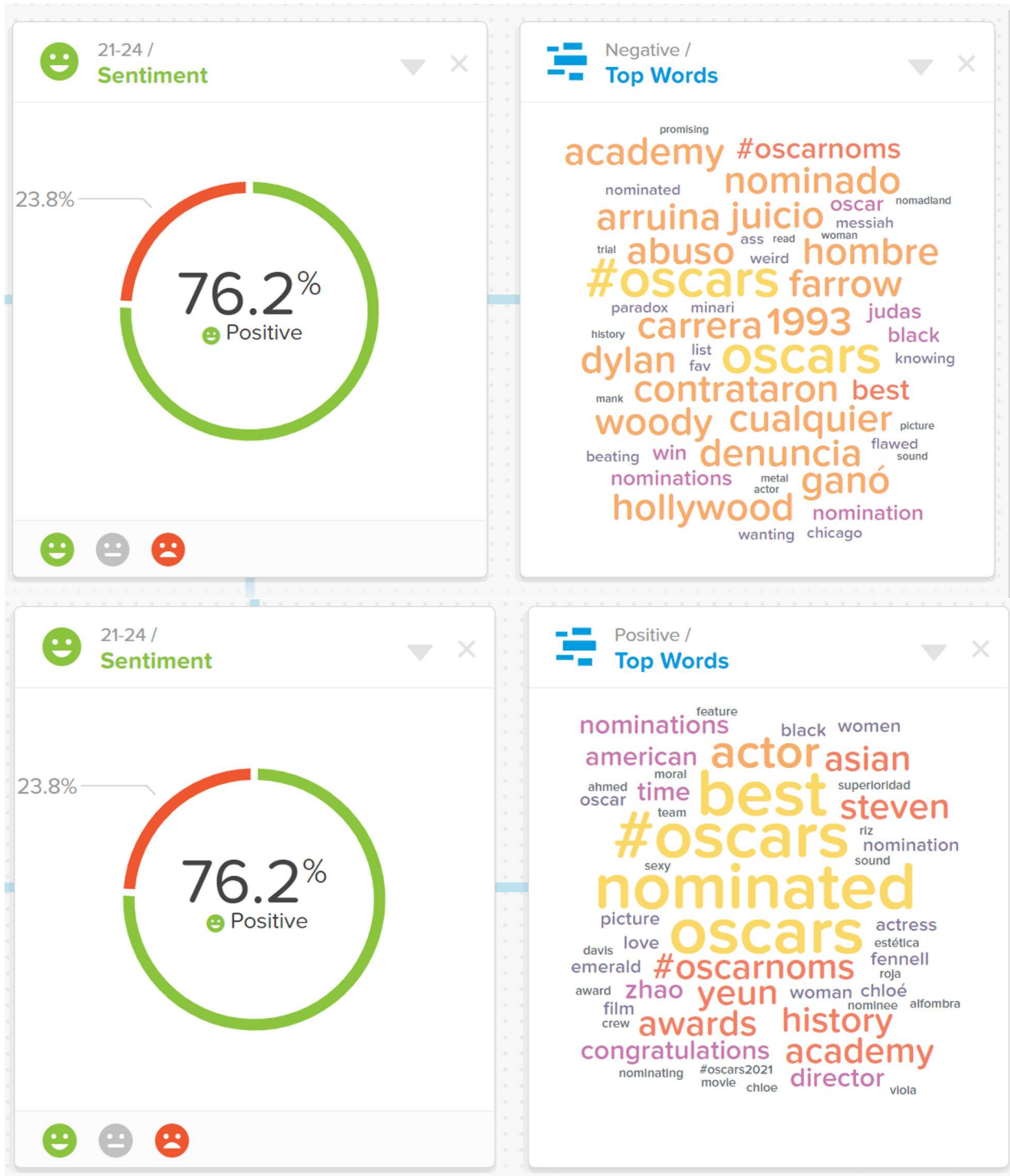
Age Groups



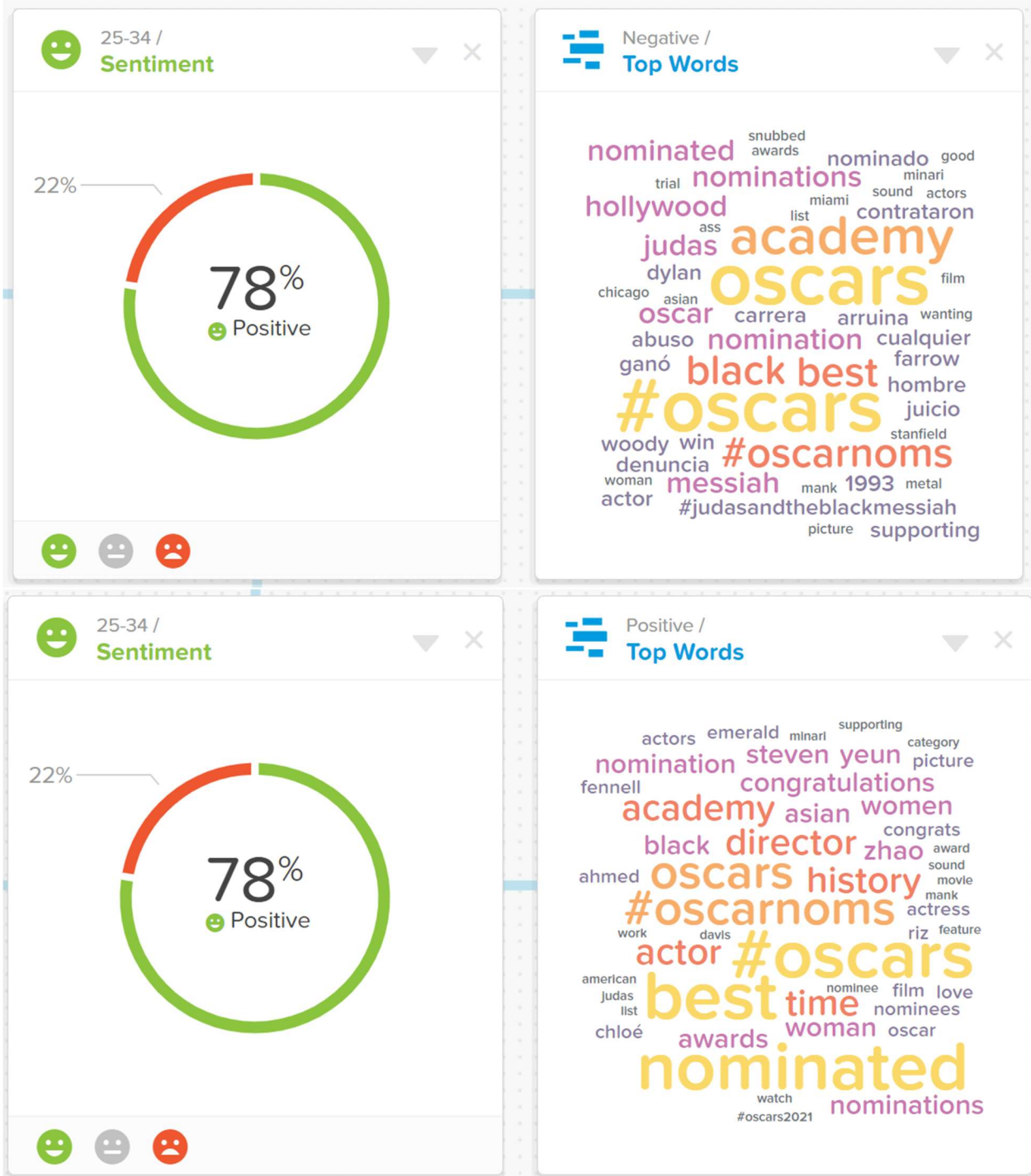
18-20: Sentiment and Word Cloud



21-24: Sentiment and Word Cloud



25-34: Sentiment and Word Cloud



IRB Approval Form



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD MEMORANDUM

TO: Regina Luttrell
DATE: March 11, 2021
SUBJECT: Determination of Exemption from Regulations
IRB #: 21-063
TITLE: *#OscarsSoWhite: Millennials, Generation Z and Oscars Viewership*

The above referenced application, submitted for consideration as exempt from federal regulations as defined in 45 C.F.R. 46, has been evaluated by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the following:

1. determination that it falls within one or more of the eight exempt categories allowed by the organization;
2. determination that the research meets the organization's ethical standards.

It has been determined by the IRB this protocol qualifies for exemption and has been assigned to category 2. This authorization will remain active for a period of five years from **March 10, 2021** until **March 9, 2026**.

CHANGES TO PROTOCOL: Proposed changes to this protocol during the period for which IRB authorization has already been given, cannot be initiated without additional IRB review. If there is a change in your research, you should notify the IRB immediately to determine whether your research protocol continues to qualify for exemption or if submission of an expedited or full board IRB protocol is required. Information about the University's human participants protection program can be found at: <http://researchintegrity.syr.edu/human-research/>. Protocol changes are requested on an amendment application available on the IRB web site; please reference your IRB number and attach any documents that are being amended.

STUDY COMPLETION: Study completion is when all research activities are complete or when a study is closed to enrollment and only data analysis remains on data that have been de-identified. A Study Closure Form should be completed and submitted to the IRB for review ([Study Closure Form](#)).

Thank you for your cooperation in our shared efforts to assure that the rights and welfare of people participating in research are protected.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracy J. Cromp'.

Tracy Cromp, M.S.W.
Director

DEPT: Public Relations, Newhouse II - Room 363

STUDENT: Marissa Thomas

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Survey

3/1/2021

Qualtrics Survey Software

Introduction and Definitions

Regina Luttrell and Marissa Thomas are conducting original research in completion of a thesis entitled #OscarsSoWhite: An Examination of Millennials, Generation Z and Oscar Viewership. The thesis focuses on the relationship between the Oscars and its target audience of Millennials and Generation Zers.

The purpose of the survey is to gain insight on young adults' attitudes regarding the Oscars. Those insights will then be used to formulate conclusions of how the Oscars can maintain its relevance and reputation and increase its viewership. The survey will highlight generational differences to allow for more specific and beneficial recommendations. Furthermore, the research intends to discover whether the Oscars can benefit from more comprehensive diversity and inclusion practices in its nomination and selection processes.

Below is a survey with a variety of questions that should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be recorded by Qualtrics Software and administered by Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk). Your personality identity will remain confidential as confidentiality is secured by Qualtrics Software that assigns a research number to your completed survey.

Whenever one works with email or the internet that is always the risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology being used. It is important for you to understand that no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the internet by third parties.

Participation in this research is voluntary and will assist the researcher in learning more about generational perceptions of the Oscars. You should be aware that there is no risk and/or directly expected benefits that will result in the participation of this research. If you have questions about the survey at any time, then contact Marissa Thomas at mthoma29@syr.edu.

By clicking the "yes" button below, you are consenting to participate. In doing so you are acknowledging that you are **at least 18 years old** and you understand that you can discontinue participation in this research at any time.

Please **do not** take this survey more than one time.

I thank you for reading this consent form and/or agreeing to take this survey.

For the purpose of this survey the following words mean as such

- Women: refers to anyone who self-identifies as a woman
- Non-Binary/Gender Fluid: refers to anyone who does not self-identify as a woman/man/transgender man/transgender woman
- Non-white: refers to anyone who does not identify as white
- Biennial: every two years/every other year
- Entertainment: television, radio, film, music, theater, sports, video games

Millennial or Gen Z?

Are you a Millennial (born 1980-1995)?

https://syracuseuniversity.ca1.qualtrics.com/Q/EditSection/Blocks/Ajax/GetSurveyPrintPreview?ContextSurveyID=SV_eyW4YInsbm2Xlp0&ContextLibr... 1/8

- Yes
- No

Are you a Generation Zer (born 1996-2003)?

- Yes
- No

The Awards Shows You Enjoy

How many awards shows do you watch regularly (annually or biennially)?

- 1 to 3
- 4 to 7
- 8 to 10
- More than 10
- I don't watch awards shows

Why do you watch entertainment awards shows (select all that apply)?

- Music performances
- To see celebrities/celebrity updates
- To see fashion
- To see who won each award presented
- I don't watch awards shows

Do you watch entertainment awards shows live?

- Yes
- Yes, but using a streaming service and/or link
- Yes, some on tv and others using a streaming service and/or link
- No, but will watch later
- No, but will watch highlights later
- I watch some live and others later
- I don't watch entertainment awards shows

Awards shows categories should remain gender specific?

- Yes (please explain)
- Neutral (please explain)
- No (please explain)
- No opinion
- Prefer not to answer

What awards shows do you watch that have at least one film-related category?

- (Write In)
- I don't watch awards shows with at least one film-related category
- I don't watch awards shows

The Oscars Generally**Do you watch the Oscars every year?**

- Yes
- Every now and again
- Rarely
- I used to, but now I don't
- I have never watched the Oscars

When did you stop watching the Oscars?

- I still watch the Oscars every year
- I have watched the Oscars since 2000 just not every year
- Since 2018
- Since 2015
- Since 2010
- Since 2005

- Since 2000
- Since 2000 I only watched the Oscars in 2019
- I have not watched the Oscars since before 2000

The Oscars adequately rewards high quality talent in film.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

You are more likely to watch Oscar winning films.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

If the Oscars included nominations of films solely on streaming services, I would be more likely to watch.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

The Oscars regarding Gender and Race

The Oscars adequately recognizes women who have excelled in film.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

The Oscars adequately recognizes non-white persons who have excelled in film.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

If the Oscars nominated more women in categories beyond woman-specific categories, I would be more likely to watch the Oscars.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

If the Oscars nominated more non-white persons, I would be more likely to watch the Oscars.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree

Agree
 Strongly Agree

If more women won in categories beyond woman-specific categories, I would be more likely to watch the Oscars.

Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Somewhat Disagree
 Neutral
 Somewhat Agree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

If more non-white people won, I would be more likely to watch the Oscars.

Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Somewhat Disagree
 Neutral
 Somewhat Agree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

There should be additional categories to specifically recognize the achievements of non-binary/gender fluid persons at the Oscars?

Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Somewhat Disagree
 Neutral
 Somewhat Agree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
 Other (please explain)

There should be additional categories to specifically recognize the achievements of transgender persons at the Oscars

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other (please explain)

There should be additional categories to specifically recognize the achievements of non-white persons at the Oscars?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other (please explain)

Additional

Which of the elements - women, non-white, non-binary/gender fluid - outlined in this survey do you feel is most important to be addressed by the Oscars? Please explain why.

Do diversity, equity and inclusion play a role in your decision to watch the Oscars? Please explain why.

Demographics

What gender do you self-identify as?

- Man
- Woman
- Transgender Man
- Transgender Woman
- Non-binary/Gender Fluid
- Other
- Prefer Not to Say

How do you racially identify (select all that apply)?

- White (non-Hispanic or Latinx)
- Black or African American (non-Hispanic or Latinx)
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Asian American or Pacific Islander
- Native American or Indigneous
- Mixed-raced
- Other
- Prefer Not to Say

What is your highest educational background at this time?

- No High School Diploma/GED
- High School Diploma/GED
- Associate's Degree
- Pursuing Bachelor's Degree
- Pursuing Graduate/Professional
- Graduate/Professional Degree

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