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Is All Well in the Kingdom? A Framing Analysis of Disney’s Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Sustainability Messaging

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by

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**ABSTRACT**

Environmental sustainability is becoming an important conversation in many sectors of life, including sustainability practices within corporations. Because the Walt Disney Company is such a massive force in American culture, as well as a continuously-expanding global corporation, it is important to examine their messaging surrounding environmental sustainability, as well as corporate social responsibility, to see how they outline their current practices and goals for the public to review and how they contribute to the broader sustainability conversation through this outlining process. I conducted a textual analysis of this messaging, employing a critical perspective and a lens of framing theory, to see which frames Disney employed within the messaging and how they used these frames to present themselves as good environmental stewards. I found that Disney uses three distinct frames in their messaging: the legacy of the company, future-focused protection and stewardship, and emphasizing scope and celebrating accomplishments. These frames are utilized to present Disney as a company that has been dedicated to stewardship since its founding, that wishes to steward the environment in its current state for future generations to improve, and that has taken on and accomplished many large projects to this end.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Walt Disney Company is a massive cultural force. With theme parks around the world, many successful film franchises and their own streaming service, the “house of mouse” has truly gone global. Due to this globalization, Disney’s gross profit in 2019 actually increased by 3.16% from the previous year, for a total gross profit of $27.552 billion (Disney Gross). In the midst of all this expansion and profit, Disney has been hard at work decreasing emissions, reducing waste and increasing conservation efforts all across the company, yet the media giant has not voiced many of these endeavors in the public eye. Other large corporations put out entire advertising campaigns to tell the world about their sustainability, such as BP and Shell with their renewable energy efforts, and other brands like Coca Cola and Starbucks seeking to reduce waste (Gwynn, 2020; Vos). Yet Disney, this highly influential company for American culture, has not.

It is important to examine the environmental sustainability messaging Disney has released on their corporate website, purely because of the cultural force the company has become. Disney is one of the most recognizable and influential brands in the world, and because of this position of power, they must carefully consider the messaging they release to the public, as it could have a profound impact. The messaging Disney develops could be used as an example for other corporations to follow, and as more and more corporations focus on marketing surrounding their sustainability efforts, this topic is becoming increasingly salient to the general public. Image really is everything, but actions always speak louder than words. Disney’s recent actions to help the environment are mainly detailed in the messaging on their corporate website and their annual CSR reports, and using framing theory, these are the documents I will analyze.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

The promises and statements that corporations make to the public surrounding different areas of concern are commonly referred to as corporate social responsibility, or CSR. CSR was first introduced as a concept in the 1950s, when Howard Bowen published his book, *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman.* Bowen believed that “the several hundred largest businesses were vital centers of power and decision making and that the actions of these firms touched the lives of citizens at many points” (Carroll, 1999). As more joined the CSR conversation in the 1960s, Keith Davis became another influential figure, as he expanded the definition to include a company making decisions beyond their modus operandi, and others hinted at an intimate relationship between a corporation and a society, some even claiming that corporations exist to serve society (Carroll, 1999). Over time, CSR researchers have moved from looking at CSR’s effects on society at large to an analysis of CSR’s effects on profit; there are not solid numbers proving that CSR increases profits, but it has become a rational thought process in the American corporate culture (Lee, 2008). In fact, surveys of different corporations have indicated that 80-90% of them believe that CSR needs to be a priority in their business agenda (Lee, 2008).

Today, many corporations, including Disney, issue CSR reports, which detail steps the company has taken to fulfill their responsibilities to their employees and to the public. Corporate websites, also, may link to a social responsibility page, with resources detailing their practices for stakeholders, investors and the general public. In one study, Holly Ott and her colleagues found that among websites of corporations, non-profits and universities, over half of the corporations studied had a sustainability page (Ott, 2016). Much research has been conducted surrounding effective CSR communication and how companies can ensure a positive public response to their CSR efforts. Scholars have struggled to pin down one practice that truly makes CSR communication effective but have rather brought forth many different perspectives. In their study Sora Kim and her colleagues identified six key dimensions of effective CSR communication: informativeness, third-party endorsement, personal relevance, message tone, consistency and transparency (Kim, 2018). These six dimensions provide a simplified guide for analyzing CSR communication. Informativeness is extremely important to foster public trust, third-party endorsement provides credibility, personal relevance helps consumers feel more connected to the brand (Villagra, 2016), especially through advertising (Ford, 2017), message tone influences perception and attributions from the public, and both consistency and transparency build reliability in the public eye. It is critical for companies to examine their own CSR communication in light of these six factors to ensure best practice, as well as examining their CSR communication from all angles. In one study, Anna Dudenhausen and her colleagues identified two perspectives on corporate responsibility: the public image, how the public views the company, and the corporate self-image, how the company views itself. The authors argue that if those two perspectives drift too far apart, the legitimacy of the company is at risk, and many companies in their study deviated in those two perspectives (Dudenhausen, 2020).

CSR communication can be very persuasive, especially today when the world is so much more environmentally conscious, and a company must assume a stance in their CSR reports to best harness its persuasive power (Fuoli, 2018). This stance depends on a few different factors, including the industry in which the company participates, the company’s own history with CSR practices and the values of the company’s target audience (Collins, 2007; Li, 2019). Another study found that consumer skepticism surrounding a company’s altruism, or their willingness to give without receiving anything in return, was the largest indicator of negative attitudes toward CSR messaging (Rim, 2016). Visually arousing, negative images were found in one study to have the most effect on consumer attitude (Chung, 2019). Transparency, especially for companies in stigmatized industries like oil, is very important to reduce consumer skepticism (Lee, J., 2020).

A consumer’s response can also be influenced by their own media consumption and beliefs toward sustainability (Lee, T.H., 2019; Lerro, 2018). Many agree, though, that ambiguous phrasing is a good way to avoiding criticism (Ihlen, 2015), and the fact that a corporation has a sustainability page on their website in the first place will automatically assuage consumers and stakeholders (Parcha, 2017). Another way a company can have effective CSR communication is by engaging both on their website and on social media. If a brand presents itself as warm and competent on social media, which provides an opportunity for an open discourse, then consumer’s questions surrounding their CSR practices can be answered directly (Prooijen, 2019). To examine this, Anne Reilly and her colleagues did a study on the highest- and lowest-ranked companies on Newsweek’s Greenest Companies ratings for 2014, and they found that the highest-ranked companies engaged with the public vastly more often in both formal settings, like press conferences/releases, and informal settings, like social media (Reilly). The depth and breadth of the research surrounding effective CSR communication is a testament to the importance of it for companies in any industry, and the PR officials tasked with writing up this information, as well as the marketing officials making it available to the public, are hopefully aware of this fact (Signitzer, 2008; Susnienė, 2016).

In this day and age, one of the most important aspects of CSR communication is environmental sustainability. With the renewed buzz surrounding climate change, big businesses have become a target for activists, who claim that either the corporation’s practices are not sustainable, or the practices corporations claim to be implementing are a falsification of the truth (Dhanesh, 2019). This falsification is commonly referred to as “greenwashing,” making the company seem greener, or more environmentally concerned, than they really are. Much research has been done on greenwashing campaigns and their true effectiveness. Studies have shown that no matter the product, the perceived integrity of the claims made by the company is the true predictor of consumer attitude, and greenwashing in general is more of a risk to a company’s reputation than an advantage (de Jong, 2018; de Jong, 2020). In one study, Emily Plec and her colleagues examined a certain environmental campaign from ExxonMobil and said that the greenwashed frame of the campaign “stifles criticism and discourages examination of ideologies of consumption” (Plec, 2012). It is through a framing lens that I will perform my analysis of similar materials provided by the Walt Disney Company to determine how they are choosing to enter the sustainability conversation.

**Framing theory**

Framing is a broad area of communication and has many definitions. The seminal work on framing theory was done by Erving Goffman in 1974. Goffman postulated that in a society there are primary frameworks, created by the people living in that society, that can be shifted in meaning depending on the context in which they are utilized. Jokes, for example, shift a framework from everyday life into a non-serious tone. Goffman writes that people “develop a corpus of cautionary tales, games, riddles, experiments, newsy stories, and other scenarios which elegantly confirm a frame-relevant view of the workings of the world” (1974). In other words, people use frameworks and the tones in which they are presented to organize their experiences, and when a person has developed a set of primary frameworks, that set is used consistently. “Indeed, in countless ways and ceaselessly, social life takes up and freezes into itself the understandings we have of it” (Goffman, 1974).

A more modern definition of framing comes from a study done by Fàtima Cuadadro and her colleagues on frames used to present Alzheimer’s disease in the media. They define frames as “tools used in communication to present a theme which is comprehensible for diverse audiences so that they focus attention on central elements usually shared by society” (2020). Another great definition comes from a study by Randall Waller and his colleagues on how SeaWorld lost credibility after the 2013 documentary *Blackfish* was released. They define a frame as “an organizing core concept, developed through elaboration and repetition and supported by rhetorical elements such as metaphors, slogans and arguments” (2020). In other words, frames present complex concepts in the context of common societal elements to better help people understand someone’s perspective. Frames organize complex thoughts in a way that is more easily understood by someone receiving a message. Once a person develops consistent frames in their own minds, they will then apply those frames to many different messages they receive on a daily basis. Frames are similar to psychological schema, in the sense that they help people organize and categorize messages and arguments they entertain every day.

One of the reasons why framing is so difficult to define is that it is a very intrinsic practice for anyone; most communicators in any field will use frames to place themselves or their arguments in a favorable light, and many scholars even argue against calling framing a theory due to its intrinsic breadth (Chernov, 2019). This can sound very similar to agenda setting theory, but they are different, in that frames are more psychological than rhetorical (Chernov, 2019). Frames play to people’s existing mental schemas and help them to more easily categorize an incoming message from an outside source, or sender (Cuadadro, 2020). In the corporate setting with which my research is concerned, it is helpful to examine CSR communication, more specifically environmental sustainability communication, to figure out the frames that corporations are employing to reassure the public that they are using the best environmental sustainability practices possible. Research has shown, however, that strategic communication like CSR is drifting away from foundational communication theories (Lock, 2020).

**The Walt Disney Company and CSR Communication**

Today, the Walt Disney Company is almost unrecognizable from its humble beginnings. Walter Elias Disney and his brother Roy founded the Disney Bros. Cartoon Studio in 1923 and burst onto the animation scene in 1928 with the premiere of “Steamboat Willie,” the first cartoon with synchronized sound, and the first appearance of the beloved Mickey Mouse (Disney). In 1929, the brothers’ partnership split into four different companies: Walt Disney Productions, Ltd.; Walt Disney Enterprises; Liled Realty and Investment Company; and the Disney Film Recording Company. As their technological innovation grew, so did their success. They continued to make shorts and movies, with Walt still holding the record for the most Academy Award wins (22) and nominations (59) for a single individual in history (Walt). They founded WED Enterprises, now Walt Disney Imagineering, and opened theme parks around the world. It wasn’t until 1986, under the leadership of Michael Eisner and Frank Wells, that Walt Disney Productions was renamed as The Walt Disney Company (Disney). Today, the company boasts ownership of multiple film & television studios, six theme parks across three continents and the rights to Mickey Mouse, one of the most recognizable and beloved cartoon characters ever created.

Disney movies are meant for audiences of any age, mainly due to the timeless stories and human narratives they weave into the films, and their mission statement is a testament to how much they still value those stories, even after all these years: “The mission of the Walt Disney Company is to entertain, inform and inspire people around the globe through the power of unparalleled storytelling, reflecting the iconic brands, creative minds and innovative technologies that make ours the world’s premier entertainment company” (Disney). And premier they are, with some even calling the media giant a monopoly (Heinz, 2019). They are not far off; one is hard-pressed these days to watch anything that does not have credit to the Walt Disney Company embedded in the end title. But up to this point, American culture has seemed perfectly fine with letting Disney buy and produce whatever they want; due to their long history in the media industry and the classic stories they have created, Disney has become an essential part of the American experience (Bemis, 2017).

As a media giant and a huge cultural force, Disney places a large emphasis on how they influence culture. On their corporate website, Disney has a page entitled “Social Responsibility,” with various sections detailing how the company addresses things like social impact, environmental sustainability, content & products, and diversity & inclusion, as well as a link to their 2019 CSR report (Social). Not every company’s CSR statements are the same; it would make sense for each company to adjust their content in that area based on their industry and their values. For example, because Disney values families and children, they have a section in their CSR report detailing how their content & products encourage healthy living and emphasize diversity and responsible marketing.

The Walt Disney Company has been in the news recently for their implementation of new environmental sustainability practices, specifically their drastically reduced energy consumption and waste diversion. Research has shown that the news media, organizational PR and the public have multidirectional conversations surrounding CSR communication and can influence each other in different ways (van de Heijkant, 2018). In terms of the interpretation of CSR messaging, the news media has a positive effect on the public, and organizational PR has a positive effect on the news media (van de Heijkant, 2018). So even though an organization might not want a lot of press surrounding their CSR practices, as that can sometimes be interpreted as bragging about their accomplishments, a positive review in the news can help a company’s reputation. In an article published in the *New York Times*, reporter Bruce Horovitz discussed Disney’s efforts to build a new solar plant to increase their use of renewable energy, in addition to the five-megawatt facility in central Florida shaped like Mickey’s head. He says that Disney, “with one eye on its global reputation and another on its customers’ increasing focus on sustainability…is emerging as a renewable energy force” (Horovitz, 2018). Another positive review came from *Forbes*, when Jake Hiller sat down with Angie Renner, an environmental integration director at the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida. Renner detailed some of the practices being implemented around the park, including the two solar plants, using renewable fuel for their entire bus fleet and, Renner’s personal favorite, energy reduction. She says, “One of my favorite large-scale LED projects that we have here is when we light up Cinderella Castle with 170,000 LED lights for the holidays – it only uses the energy of about four coffee pots” (Hiller, 2019).

These glowing reviews are a testament to how devoted Disney has become to reducing energy and making their theme parks more environmentally friendly, but every star has their critics. One critic from *The Guardian* argues that while Disney’s efforts to increase sustainability are admirable, the tourism giant must ultimately change its business model to really make any difference. Since the primary method of transportation visitors use to access the theme parks are cars and airplanes, despite Disney’s efforts to use renewable energy in the parks, both of these methods consume precious fossil fuels and emit many tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year (Pearce, 2009). Although this is a valid criticism, and one that I’m sure Disney has heard before, the critic still praises the company for their energy and waste reduction efforts within the operations they can control, and this is the data on which my analysis will focus. I will examine Disney’s materials and verbiage on their website surrounding their implementation of environmental sustainability measures through a framing lens to determine how the well-established company is responding to the sustainability conversation. To this end I employed two research questions, as follows:

RQ1 What frames did Disney use to present their pro-environmental efforts?

RQ2 How did Disney use frames to present themselves as a pioneer of good environmental behavior?

**METHODS**

For my research on the different frames the Walt Disney Company employs in their environmental sustainability policies, I conducted a textual analysis of the materials present on the Walt Disney Company’s corporate website related to their recent policy changes and CSR data, including their 2019 CSR report and the verbiage presented under the Environmental Sustainability subhead on the corporate website. I chose a textual analysis because it is the process of making assumptions about how people might interpret a certain text, and this process will enable me to not only examine the written materials for word choice, but also examine how the word choices might influence the general public and other corporations as they read (McKee, 2003). I took a critical perspective to this analysis, recognizing Disney’s position as a cultural force and examining the language of that power present in the text. It is key for the analysis to see how Disney uses the cultural power they possess to shape their messaging. I looked at the materials present through the lens of framing theory, as defined by Fatima Cuadadro, et. al. (2020), and Randall Waller, et. al. (2020), in that frames present complex concepts in the context of common societal elements to better help people understand someone’s perspective. The materials I mentioned above were chosen because these all represent recent messaging that Disney has created as a corporation and that is readily available for overview by any member of the public.

I accessed the chosen texts through the Wat Disney Company’s corporate website. I looked at the entire Environmental Sustainability subhead, located underneath the Social Responsibility header, and I also downloaded the PDF format of the 2019 CSR report, the link to which is available by clicking on the Social Responsibility header and scrolling down to a section entitled “Reporting.” I read through the selected texts, firstly to familiarize myself with the messaging surrounding CSR and environmental sustainability, then looking at the language and visuals within to see how they might be interpreted by the public, per a textual analysis, and to see how Disney utilized their cultural power to potentially enhance their messaging, employing a critical perspective. Comparing Disney’s messaging with the definition of frames outlined above, I uncovered three frames in my initial research used throughout the messaging: the legacy of the company, future-focused protection and stewardship, and celebrating accomplishments.

**ANALYSIS**

In my framing analysis of The Walt Disney Company’s 2019 CSR report and environmental sustainability materials on their corporate website, I uncovered three key frames that were present throughout, and I will organize the subsequent analysis in sections covering each of these frames, regarding the legacy of the company, future-focused protection and stewardship, and celebrating accomplishments.

**Legacy of the company**

The first frame I uncovered was multiple references to the legacy of The Walt Disney Company itself. Disney has a long legacy of community engagement and concern about conservation going back to its founding, which they are able to use to their advantage in framing their CSR and environmental sustainability efforts. In the CSR report, Disney said that its CSR approach was “built upon the company’s long and enduring legacy of engagement in our workplaces and communities and our actions to protect the environment. We continue to believe in operating our company with the highest standards of integrity” (2019). Disney uses this statement to show that they were concerned about CSR even when CSR was not yet a researched concept; they were well aware of their organizational power early on and they desired to use that power to better the immediate community and the world around them. Disney is also saying here that they have had good business practice all throughout their almost 100-year history and have conducted their public engagement affairs with integrity that entire time. This legacy of good business practice makes Disney stand out amongst other companies, whether in media or in any other industry, and this good reputation has allowed them to grow and expand their business beyond anything the media world has ever seen. But, as Walt used to say, we must never forget that this was all started by a mouse. Mickey Mouse, at 92 years old, is one of the most recognizable figures in the world, and Disney recognizes that fact, as he is the unofficial spokesman for the entire company and is often present at press conferences where big announcements are being made. So, when Disney built their first solar plant close to Epcot in Walt Disney World in 2016, they decided to use Mickey’s legacy to make a statement and build the five-megawatt facility in the iconic shape of Mickey’s head, 22 acres in total (Horovitz, 2018). This statement is combining the historic legacy of the company with the new technology of renewable energy, and when you click on the “Environmental Sustainability” subhead on the corporate website, that solar facility is the first image you see.

A view of a large building with a mountain in the background

Description automatically generated

Fig. 1: The Mickey-shaped solar facility just outside Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL, which is prominently featured in Disney’s marketing on their corporate website.

More nods to the company’s legacy are seen throughout the website. For example, when discussing conserving fuel, the accompanying image is a steam train at Disneyland in Anaheim, CA, which according to the site is now run on biodiesel made from recycled cooking oil. Any long-time Disney fan recognizes the nod to the company’s legacy, specifically the legacy of Walt himself, as he loved steam trains ever since he was a child.

A close up of a truck

Description automatically generated

Fig. 2: The beloved Disneyland steam train, used to promote Disney’s use of biodiesel.

Also, when discussing sustainable design, the site references the new expansion of the Grand Central Creative Campus in Glendale, CA, which has won a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, award. This very modernly designed building sits near a site where the vast majority of the company’s legacy has been built: the animation studio. This amalgamation of the old with the new is present throughout Disney’s facilities and business practice today: advance technology in all areas, while hearkening back to the age-old characters, animated or otherwise, that generations of people have come to know and love as their own. Disney is able to use this legacy frame throughout all of their business practice, but especially when discussing environmental sustainability and CSR practices, as their organizational history lends itself to showing the company in a very favorable light.

**Future-focused protection & stewardship**

Another frame that Disney utilizes in delivering their messaging is protection and stewardship of the environment, with constant improvement to the methods for doing so. Disney, like many other corporations, recognizes that they alone cannot save the planet. They are unable to undo harm done to the environment in the past, by them or by others. But they are able to work with what they have: the current state of the environment plus their own resources. Using these two things, Disney claims they are able to protect the environment as it is now, steward what they can and keep the current environmental state at a baseline for future generations to hopefully improve upon. Their messaging is largely future-focused, celebrating accomplishments but always expressing optimism for future improvement. Disney defines this baseline for future generations to improve upon in their own CSR report using three targets for environmental stewardship: reducing greenhouse gas emissions, minimizing waste and conserving water resources (2019). These targets are associated with a percentage reduced of the named resource, and Disney says they want to reach these percentages reduced by 2020. The fact that Disney has set goals for reducing the percentages points to this desire for constant improvement; an integral part of their messaging is that they are always pushing themselves to be better than they were the previous year.

A picture containing text

Description automatically generated

Fig. 3: The targets Disney has outlined for their efforts surrounding environmental sustainability, as detailed on their corporate website.

In the CSR report, Disney details the governance over their CSR and environmental sustainability practices, which are primarily overseen by the Chief Financial Officer, in coordination with the CEO, the chief HR officer, the General Counsel and each of the business segment leaders. There is also a separate Environmental Governance Council which oversees the integration of environmental considerations into business operations and strategy, and this council reviews business developments regularly to make sure they are addressing relevant issues. According to the report, this reviewing process “is underpinned by assessments of business impact, the interests of external stakeholders, and opportunities to positively impact society” (2019). The presence of these governing bodies, plus them being so involved in everyday business practice, suggests that Disney has the desire to steward the planet in all aspects of their business and constantly improve the ways in which they do so.

Disney is also “engaged in funding the regeneration and protection of natural areas like forests and reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere through investment in high quality, certified Natural Climate Solutions” (Environmental). These projects are scalable, “developed using peer-reviewed protocols grounded in science and resulting in verified emissions reduction”, and there are over 25 of them across the world (Environmental). Through these projects Disney says they have planted millions of trees and saved 1 million acres of forest to combat the effects of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions across the globe. This “regeneration and protection of natural areas” ensures that these forests will be here to continue producing the oxygen needed for all of our planet’s inhabitants to thrive. Deforestation has been an issue for many years, and Disney clearly recognizes that, as they have invested vast amounts of resources into projects protecting and regenerating forests, which are integral to our planet’s overall health. This frame of future-focused protection and stewardship, with constant improvement, is used to show that Disney wants to use their resources to preserve nature as we know it, not trying to fix past harm but stewarding what is left, so that the planet’s health may be maintained during our lifetime, not degraded further. The website says that the company “is committed to protecting the planet and delivering a positive environmental legacy for future generations as we operate and grow our business” (Environmental). This shows an acknowledgement of Disney’s responsibility in delivering that positive legacy and their hope for future generations to improve upon what they built, as well as optimism for continued business growth, which is a logical hope for any corporation.

**Celebrating accomplishments**

Throughout the CSR report and the corporate website, Disney loves to emphasize the scope of the environmental sustainability efforts they have made, using multiple figures and powerful, decisive language to show how large these projects are and how much they have contributed. Showing scope of projects is not a new trick for corporations, but there is a difference between actually taking on large projects and exaggerating what you have done to make your own endeavors look better or more impressive to the public, and the temptation is there for many. Disney makes claims throughout about how much they have done to help the environment and improve their current business practice, and they provide data to back up their claims. The data are presented in a transparent way; there is no room in the CSR report or on the website for exaggeration, nor would that be becoming of a corporation like Disney who is so family-oriented at its core. The three targets I previously mentioned – reducing emissions, minimizing waste and conserving water resources - were set based on a 2012 baseline, and Disney was very close to reaching all of them at the time the CSR report was published. They define these targets as “an important tool that help measure our progress and guide our ambitions,” and it seems that Disney has some ambitious people at the helm of these operations. For reducing emissions, Disney’s target was a 50% reduction from the 2012 baseline, and in 2019 they had reached 47%. Their target for minimizing waste was a 60% reduction, and in 2019 they had reached 57%. And for conserving water, they had reached their goal in 2018 of keeping their water consumption flat compared to 2013 levels, and they kept it flat again for 2019 (2019). These transparent targets show the true scope of what a global corporation like Disney can accomplish when the appropriate measures are put in place, and the fact that they present these numbers to the public shows a desire to emphasize the data behind what they have done as a means of building trust and rapport.

The large numbers continue throughout the CSR report and the website, as Disney cites their new 50-megawatt solar facility that was brought online in 2019. This facility is close to the Mickey-shaped one that was built in 2016, right behind Epcot in Walt Disney World, and it now powers two of the four Orlando parks, and brings the number of acres of solar panels at Walt Disney World up to 292 (Environmental). Another Walt Disney World innovation comes with their bus fleet, as it now runs on 50% renewable diesel fuel made from Disney’s own recycled cooking oil. For Disney’s natural climate solutions projects, of which there are 25 across the globe, they have created 800 jobs, planted over 9 million trees, “reduced greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to removing 900,000 cars from the road” and protected over 1 million acres of forest (Environmental). This powerful language and use of large numbers are utilized throughout the messaging, along with repeated use of the word “all,” and using verbs like “eliminated.” The last thing Disney wants us to think is that these environmental efforts are isolated to certain departments; this is a huge overhaul of the entirety of their operations and their business as usual, and they are going to show us all of the ways in which this is done. A little bit of bragging is justified in this situation, but there is a difference between bragging and celebrating accomplishments; bragging is done in an attitude of superiority, whereas anyone can celebrate accomplishments and encourage others to meet those same goals. Within the CSR report and the materials from the website, Disney is celebrating their accomplishments and informing the public in a transparent and dignified manner, which is becoming of a legacy corporation like Disney, and they emphasize throughout that they alone cannot save the planet, which points to their desire for other corporations to follow in their footsteps and implement similar environmental targets to measure progress and contribute to the greater good.

**DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS**

Within their messaging surrounding corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability, Disney utilizes three distinct frames to present their accomplishments to the public. They emphasize how environmental awareness and conservation have been a part of the company’s legacy since the beginning, and this legacy guides their practices even today. They see themselves as protectors and stewards of the environment and are hopeful that their efforts will leave a positive legacy for future generations to work from and continue to improve upon. They emphasize the scope of what they have accomplished as a form of celebration and encouragement for other large corporations to have hope that they too can make a lasting impact on the state of the environment as we know it, if they implement the proper measures to do so. From my research on Disney’s use of these frames, I deem all of them able to be used as effective tools of presenting their CSR and environmental sustainability practices. I am not sure whether the people at Disney who developed this messaging had ever studied Goffman’s framing theory, but what they produced lends itself well to a framing analysis, as three clear frames emerged from all they had written.

I think looking at frames within other aspects of Disney’s CSR practice besides environmental sustainability would be fascinating research, as their CSR umbrella is much broader than this paper had time or space to address. I also think a quantitative analysis of Disney’s targets compared to other corporations who produced similar CSR content would be eye-opening as to how Disney has or has not set itself apart from other global companies, in terms of environmental sustainability practice. Other global corporations can definitely learn from what Disney has done, both in terms of messaging and in terms of their actual environmental milestones, in that transparency and encouragement to others are key to successful messaging, and that time and resources dedicated to the betterment of the environment are always beneficial, no matter what the company’s history of environmental sustainability is.

A wise baboon once said that the past can hurt, but you can either run from it or learn from it. There is always room for learning, reconciliation and future improvement in any circumstance, but especially with treating the environment well. We only have one home planet, and the ones who emerge as the most concerned about treating her well will be the ones to triumph in the end, and this research has concluded that the Walt Disney Company is certainly on that path.

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