

Spring 2018

How Celebrities like Beyonce Use Social Media to Influence Effective Charitable Change

Blake Bussie
blakebussie@siu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/gs_rp

Recommended Citation

Bussie, Blake. "How Celebrities like Beyonce Use Social Media to Influence Effective Charitable Change." (Spring 2018).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Research Papers by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu.

HOW CELEBRITIES LIKE BEYONCE USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO INFLUENCE
EFFECTIVE CHARITABLE CHANGE

by

Blake Bussie

B.S., Marketing, Southern Illinois University, 2016

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Science

Department of Mass Communication & Media Arts

in the Graduate School

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

May 2018

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

HOW CELEBRITIES LIKE BEYONCE USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO INFLUENCE
EFFECTIVE CHARITABLE CHANGE

by

Blake Bussie

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Science

in the field of Professional Media and Media Management

Approved by:

Dr. Kavita Karan, Chair

Graduate School

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

April 6, 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
LIST OF TABLES.....	ii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	iii
MAJOR HEADINGS	
CHAPTER 1 – Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER 2 – Methods.....	9
CHAPTER 3 – Results	13
CHAPTER 4 – Discussion	31
CHAPTER 5 – Conclusion.....	33
REFERENCES.....	35
VITA	37

LIST OF TABLES

<u>TABLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Table 1	13

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>FIGURE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Figure 1	14
Figure 2	15
Figure 3	16
Figure 4	17
Figure 5	19
Figure 6	20
Figure 7	21
Figure 8	23
Figure 9	24
Figure 10	25
Figure 11	27
Figure 12	27
Figure 13	28
Figure 14	29

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Celebrities are known for their money, fame, and exaggerated power when it comes to the entertainment industry. But what happens when they use these attributes to benefit the lives of others? A person whether they are famous or not shouldn't provide excuses or reasoning's to do charitable things, but this comes into question when referencing celebrity activism for social change. People not only question a celebrity's generosity, but want to know their reasons or motives. "Causes are to celebrities what corporate social responsibility is to business" (The Guardian, 2015). Some celebrities are praised for their willingness to help, and others are judged by their own personal agendas to increase their popularity and keep their reputations. If they are able to reach the public on a platform that they support, why shouldn't they be able to speak out freely and openly?

Lady Gaga and Oprah Winfrey (Lofton & Weber, 2012) are prime examples of celebrities who use their wealth, fame, and influence to better help promote or create awareness for the various charities that they support. We define 'charitable awareness' is communicating to the public with a charity that a person supports. Lady Gaga formed her own movement called "Born this Way," where it was her goal to help end bullying and oppression of teenagers who are a part of the LGBTQ community. She's shown not only creating, but also promoting her cause via many marketing outlets like social media, in order to make a difference (Hyunji & Willson, 2017). People forget that celebrities have opinions, feelings, and most importantly a voice. In this paper we study

world famous singer Mrs. Beyoncé Knowles-Carter not only as a promoter of supporting charities but also as an activist, which Beyoncé qualifies to a great extent.

Beyoncé – A Singer and a Social Activist

Beyoncé is one of the biggest performing artists in the world. She is known for being a dancer, a singer, an actress and a businesswoman. What many people tend to ignore is not her singing voice, but her speaking voice. This means when she speaks on issues aside from her singing career. This is what she believes in and how she takes action to make sure that people hear her when she feels she needs to be heard. Many are not aware that Beyoncé has her own charitable foundation called “BeyGood.” BeyGood is a charitable campaign that Beyoncé founded in order to support several political and social causes like the disaster relief efforts (Houston, Haiti, New Orleans), women’s rights, LGBTQ rights, the arts, and many more. She also partnered with several charitable organizations, disaster relief funds, and political outreach campaigns to further invoke awareness and donations. She started a full-fledged campaign to help Houston, Texas by serving and providing food, shelter, and a sizable donation to the city. She’s also partnered with Hillary Clinton on her campaign to support her as President, as well as Obama. She’s partnered with Global Citizens, Chime for Change, and RED in support of their many causes to help international girls with receiving an education, men and women with AIDS, and women’s rights. She supported the Let’s Move campaign of Michele Obama and went to schools to promote exercise and fitness among school kids. There is a never ending list of charitable accomplishments and campaigns that she has been involved with, but I want to focus on how she communicates, the strategies that she uses to make her voice heard and how it brings

about effective change within' the community and more so the world. Beyoncé has a reputation for not being afraid to speak out on things she believes in. The most recent that ended in a "scandal" involved her support for the Black Lives Matter movement during her 2015 Super Bowl performance with Bruno Mars (Gammage, 2017). She was subjected to severe criticism and unnecessary lashing because the public not only felt she shouldn't be expressing herself during an event like the Super Bowl, but to also not "attack" police officers. When all she did was support and speak out for an organization that isn't being listened to (Chu, 2016). Beyoncé is the fourth most followed person on Instagram with 113 million followers. That's 113 million potential donations, volunteers, or impressions being made for several different causes that she promotes. Social media is the connecting network for anything and everything. It has become an instrumental promotional tool for many businesses, entrepreneurs, and even celebrities so they are able to further open a gateway to whatever product, service, or cause they want people to know about.

For my research, the objectives are to find out the many charitable causes that Beyoncé supports, study the marketing and communication strategies, particularly through social media that is used to reach the large audiences and the impact of these strategies on a select group of her social media followers in changing their behaviors in supporting and donating to her charities. I will do a quantitative analysis by conducting a survey for Beyoncé's Instagram followers exclusively to discover if Beyoncé's promotional efforts and personal contributions influenced those individuals to react or participate in her campaigns. I hope to provide enough evidence to find out whether Beyoncé and celebrities indeed create an environment on social media, where people

are able to support her when she outwardly speaks her voice to better the world, and successfully blocking any negative implications the public may have about her and her celebrity activism efforts (Panis & Van den Bulk, 2012).

Literature Review

Research is extremely scarce when dealing with public perceptions of celebrity activism, even though their main aim is to grab the attention of a wide audience for a social cause. A study by (Panis & Bulck, 2012) provides in depth knowledge based on celebrity influence and the effect it has on the general public. A sample of one thousand adults conducted in an Internet survey to see how the general public perceives celebrities support social causes; the results had showed that the group of celebrity supporters, who have the reputation for the highest engagement, were the most attentive and engaged. Majority of the respondents believed that the celebrities engaging and contributing to these social organizations had a motive. The data had also shown that older respondents didn't respond as well as the younger adults since the younger audiences are more prone to following celebrities and their social lives and causes. This resulted in questioning celebrities and their involvements with different charitable and social causes. It's assumed they are trying to achieve more attention when they have no interest in these parts of society. It's extremely understandable to question celebrities and their true motives due to them being stereotyped by society as greedy and selfish, but this research is to gain an alternative perspective to celebrities and how the things they do stem from good intentions and honesty.

You're Born to Be Brave (Click, Lee & Willson, 2017), explores fan's and their relationship with Lady Gaga, her messages dealing with politics and philanthropy within'

the “Little Monster” community, and her overall influence when it involves her activism. A sample size of 45 Little Monsters was attained and thorough interviews were conducted. Click, Lee, and Willson’s findings found that fans could be empowered by celebrities politically and socially, especially through social media. The fan communities that are online and networked are extremely supportive and overwhelming engaged. The results clearly state that Gaga’s following is loyal and trusting of her values and views on society. They believe in her voice and her mission and that’s evidence of the kind of relationship that fans and celebrities have. Gaga and her goodwill relate to her fans and therefore they respect and support her through it all, just like Beyoncé and her following.

The article named, *The Legacies of Oprah Winfrey: Celebrity, Activism and Reform* (Lofton & Weber, 2012), highlights television host icon, actress and philanthropist Oprah Winfrey and how she has managed to be a life-changing figure, even in the twenty first century. The Oprah Winfrey Show had reached over 40 million viewers and was aired on 150 countries. She soon built an empire, including her network, the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN). In depth, the article explains Oprah’s influence and how she re-invented celebrity culture. That she exemplifies true celebrity activism by not getting and receiving all the money you can, but by making a difference with all the money you have. The feel good article really makes one appreciate the value of some celebrities and their intentions because they truly are trying to make a difference in the world.

Pop Culture without Culture (Gammage, 2017) reflects on the 2016 Super Bowl halftime show, where Beyoncé was a featured artist beside Bruno Mars to the

headlining performance of Coldplay. After the Beyoncé made a political statement during her performance, she was condemned for being anti-American. Instead of her usual fan craze, the public slammed the artist for her celebration of Black culture all over social media. Gammage writes how the public is showing marginalized treatment of Beyoncé, by prohibiting her from supporting and speaking out on Black issues. It shows how Black popular artists are stripped from supporting their own culture due to certain groups who believe they should stay within' the mainstream of their work, which is being a pop star and nothing else. The article examines Beyoncé's stance of Black culture and Black Lives Matter and the responses that she was subjected to. Beyoncé is a celebrity yes, but does that just mean entertaining people and nothing more? Celebrity activism has its place in society because celebrities like any other person on Earth, have the right to have an opinion, a voice, and the means to support whatever organization they wish to support.

This piece from the Daily Beast Company (Chu, 2016) speaks against those who are vocally punishing Beyoncé for taking a political stance at the Super Bowl on February 7, 2016. Chu expresses his frustrations on how celebrities are hyped up by the public to essential "do more" and then ultimately go against that when they actually have something to say and or fight for. Chu explains how it can be extremely possible that Beyoncé is trying to steal the limelight on this issue to gain political and social acceptance by being a part of the conversation, but believes she is truly supportive of the causes that she makes statements about. The statement was wearing outfits resembling the Black Panthers and putting their fists up in Black solidarity. Being that Beyoncé is a celebrity entertainer where she found a major platform to communicate

her beliefs and support for a movement, suggests she is truly trying to make a difference and even more so to send a message for something she believes in.

Celebrity activism involving celebrities inserting themselves in social issues online is a growing area of research. The article *One Tweet to Make so Much Noise* (Ellecessor, 2016) targets celebrity activism through social media and its connections to the public. The deaf American actress Marlee Matlin serves as a reform activist expressing her issues technologically. With her being an actress, activist and also deaf, she creates perceived authentic respect toward the community based on her fame and her own disability. Matlin's actions draws upon digital media, online activism, and celebrity culture in a new light by standing out more compared to traditional celebrity activism based on her experiences. In relation, Beyoncé does not randomly donate money to gain recognition, she donates and supports causes that she truly supports, giving her more support within' the community who can also relate.

A study by (Bennett, 2013) touches on how celebrities use social media to mobilize different audiences to be more engaged with their activist causes. Celebrities like Lady Gaga have millions of followers on social media platforms and use this online tool to secure their fans and create a more philanthropic network. Gaga is an actively engaged user and uses the power of her activist efforts to influence and inspire her followers to engage them. This study expands on Gaga's fandom, her massive reach, and how social media used by Gaga has been re-interpreted and reconfigured celebrity activism. Based in the literature this study posits the following research questions.

Research Questions

- Do followers respond positively to Beyoncé's content on activism through social media?
- Does Beyoncé's social content encourage people to be active charitable activists themselves?
- Do celebrities like Beyoncé waste their time trying to promote charitable causes via social media?
- Do celebrities like Beyoncé have a place to be involved in charitable activism?

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODS

Methodology

I compiled my primary data using a quantitative method by producing a survey that I composed using the survey software tool called Qualtrics. The study focuses on discovering whether Beyoncé Instagram followers engage and interact with her Instagram messages pertaining to her celebrity activism. In order to gain a more accurate analysis, I decided on achieving raw data based on the customized questions. The audience I wanted to attract to my study was particularly narrow being that I only targeted Instagram users who follow Beyoncé. Originally, my primary method to disseminate my questionnaire was through the social media platform Instagram itself. By using my own personal Instagram account, I entered Beyoncé's profile and sought out her followers that I did and did not personally know. I used the direct messaging function on Instagram to send Beyoncé followers the following message:

"Hi! I'm Blake Bussie, a graduate student at SIU. I'm currently conducting a survey involving Beyoncé followers and whether or not they interactively engage with her Instagram posts referencing charity/causes that she supports. I would greatly appreciate if you could take this anonymous survey for my research report. It will take you about 5 minutes. Thank you so much!" (link to survey)

Once the message was sent, I awaited their response to taking the survey or not. After achieving 60 respondents, I decided to try another method to receive more Beyoncé Instagram followers.

Southern Illinois University uses an online system called “Desire to Learn” or “MyCourses” that connects students with their teachers for class purposes. It also carries various other outreach purposes, due to the high volume of students who open and use MyCourses. The university, organizations, departments, and even students are eligible to request an announcement through MyCourses. In order to promote my questionnaire, I connected with the administrator JP Dunn to use the same message I composed for Instagram to use on MyCourses. The announcement was titled, “Do you follow Beyoncé on Instagram?” which ultimately opens the floor to followers to proceed to take my questionnaire.

Questionnaire Layout & Design

The questionnaire was created and developed using the statistical analysis software called Qualtrics. Qualtrics measures and quantifies all the data accumulated from the survey. The questionnaire had a total of 15 questions. The questionnaire consists of multiple-choice selections, text entry (other, location), and a matrix table. The opening statement of the questionnaire involved myself stating who I am and the specifics of my research and how it is strictly for Instagram users who follow Beyoncé only. The questionnaire would take around two to five minutes and is completely anonymous. I then continue to give the contact information for my advisor and I, which leads to them taking the questionnaire. After completion, they are met with the Human Subjects committee message, addressing them with any concerns. Each question is

based off of the respondents and their relationship with Beyoncé on social media. The questions are has followed:

1. Location?
2. How old are you?
3. How often do you open Instagram on a daily basis?
4. Are you a fan of Beyoncé?
5. Do you like, comment, or share Beyoncé's Instagram posts?
6. How likely are you to buy Beyoncé's merchandise or a product that she promoted?
7. Has Beyoncé ever influenced you to buy her merchandise or a product that she has promoted?
8. What merchandise or product have you bought that Beyoncé promoted?
9. How often on Instagram do you see Beyoncé post about any sort of charitable cause
10. What charitable causes have you seen Beyoncé support on Instagram?
11. How likely are you to pay/donate to a charity or cause that Beyoncé has promoted?
12. Have you ever made a donation to a charity/cause that Beyoncé has promoted on Instagram?
13. What was the donation?
14. Do you believe Beyoncé genuinely cares about the causes she promotes?
15. Is celebrity activism a way for celebrities to improve their reputation and image?

The questions are designed to target Beyoncé Instagram followers and discover their user trends. By asking if they're fans, if they visually see her posts on their timelines, and their Instagram frequency, this brings out more confirmation on whether Beyoncé followers have or don't have in depth engagement with her posts. Providing

evidence of their engagement better helps me identify if Beyoncé truly makes a difference with her Instagram activism posts.

Sample Design & Size

The sample design was purely Instagram users that follow Beyoncé. The concept of this research is to provide evidence that Beyoncé followers are interactive with her Instagram posts involving her activism so the demographic for this was extremely close-knit. It was my challenge to prepare a sample size that only catered to the social media platform Instagram that currently has over 800 million uses worldwide. Within' that came the Instagram users who follow Beyoncé, who has 113 million followers. Following Beyoncé gives access to her profile and subjects each follower to her posts showing up on their timelines. After disseminating the questionnaire for a total of a week and a half, I achieved 291 respondents. Majority of the respondents were from Carbondale, Illinois and from the ages 18 to 25 years old.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Table 1

Number of Respondents by State or Country

States/Country	Number of Respondents
Illinois	228
Missouri	6
Indiana	4
Maryland	4
Tennessee	2
California	2
Georgia	2
New York	2
Minnesota	2
Iowa	1
Ohio	1
South Carolina	1
North Carolina	1
Nevada	1
New Mexico	1
Texas	1
China	1
England	1
Canada	1
Hungary	1

Out of the 291 respondents, 263 indicated their location, which included the city, state, and/or country. The most respondents came from Carbondale, Illinois with 199 respondents. Different North American cities included; Rockford, IL, Chicago, IL, Downers Grove, IL, Ferguson, MO, Waukegan, IL, Bristol, WI, St. Louis, MO, Fayetteville, NC, Greenville, SC, Las Vegas, NV, Los Angeles, CA, Detroit, MI, Macomb, IL, Minneapolis, MN, Houston, TX, Columbus, OH, Atlanta, GA, Marion IL,

Jackson, TN, and more. Other cities out of North America included; Windsor, Canada, London, England, Shanghai, China, and Budapest, Hungary.

Based on the acquired locations from respondents, the pool is primarily from Illinois with a focus on Carbondale, IL. The questionnaire was disseminated primarily in Carbondale so the amount of respondents makes sense. Carbondale is home to Southern Illinois University leaving many of the respondents to be older teen, younger adults in college being that I plastered the questionnaire on the universities' student communication portal.

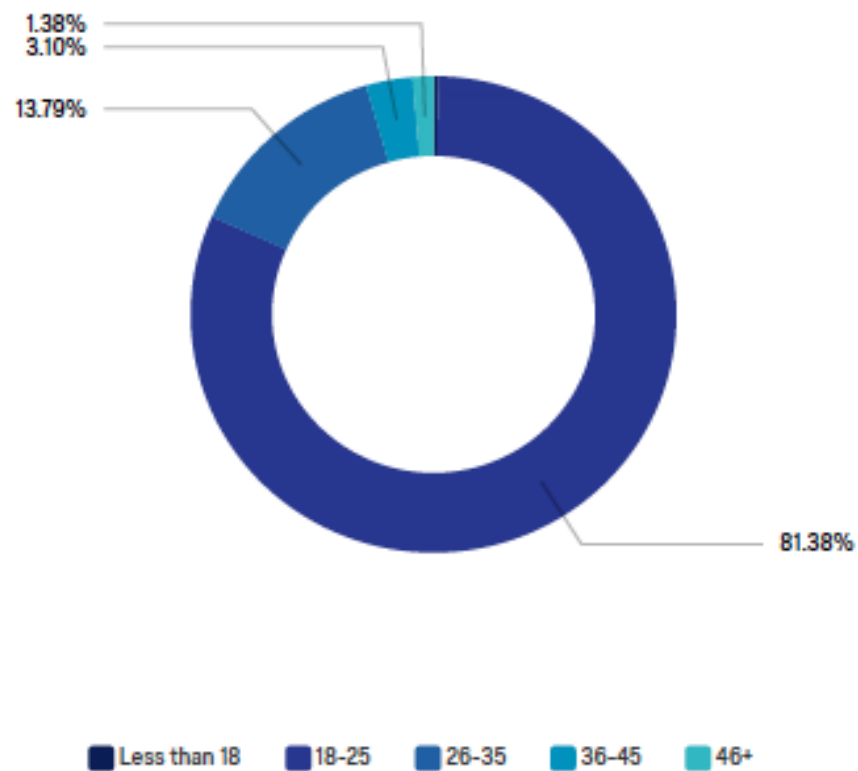


Figure 1. Respondent's Age

Of the 291 respondents, 236 (81.38%) are 18 to 25 years old, 40 (13.79%) are 26 to 45 years old, 9 (3.10%) are 36 to 45 years old, and 4 (1.38%) were 46 and older, while one respondent stated they were under the age of 18 years old. As stated earlier, many of the respondents originate from Carbondale, IL, which is located in a college town. Instagram is highly used by people from the ages of 18 to 29 years old by 59% (York, 2017), configuring with the age range in this data.

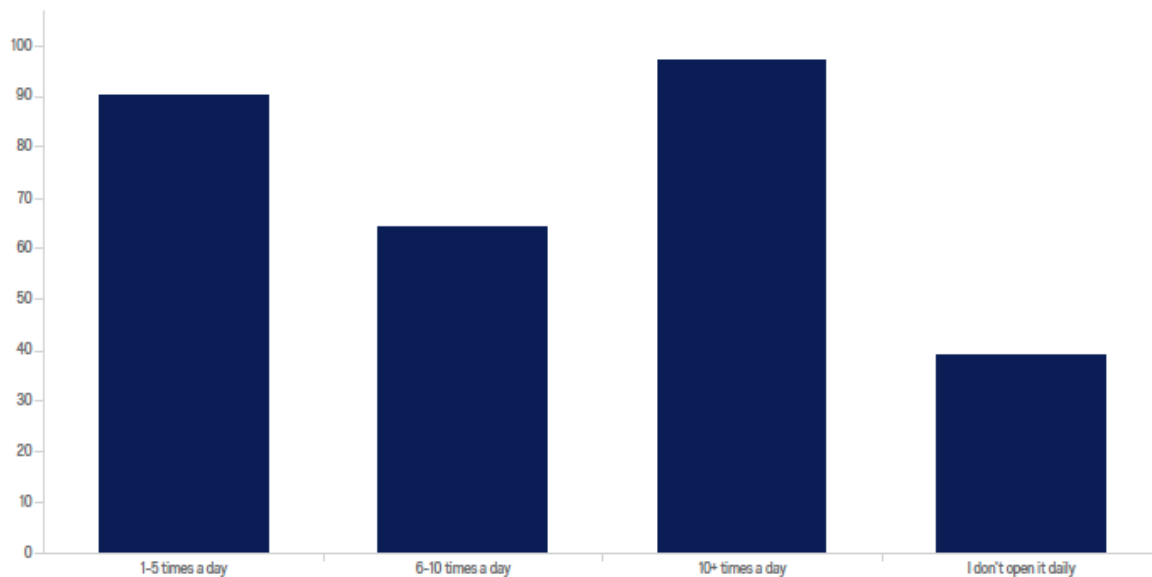


Figure 2. How often do you open Instagram on a daily basis?

Respondents were asked how often they open Instagram on a daily basis. 90 (31.03%) said they opened it 1 to 5 times daily, 64 (22.07%) said they opened it 6 to 10 times a day, 97 (33.45%) said they open Instagram 10 or more times a day, while 39 (13.45%) said they don't open Instagram on a daily basis.

This question is essential to know so I can better understand the respondent's usage of the application Instagram. If their frequency to get on the application is high, then they have a better chance of seeing Beyoncé's Instagram posts within their feed. If

it is low, then I know they that they aren't using Instagram and therefore not engaging with Beyoncé's Instagram posts. Only 13% don't interact with Instagram daily but majority of the respondents (87%) get on Instagram at least once a day.

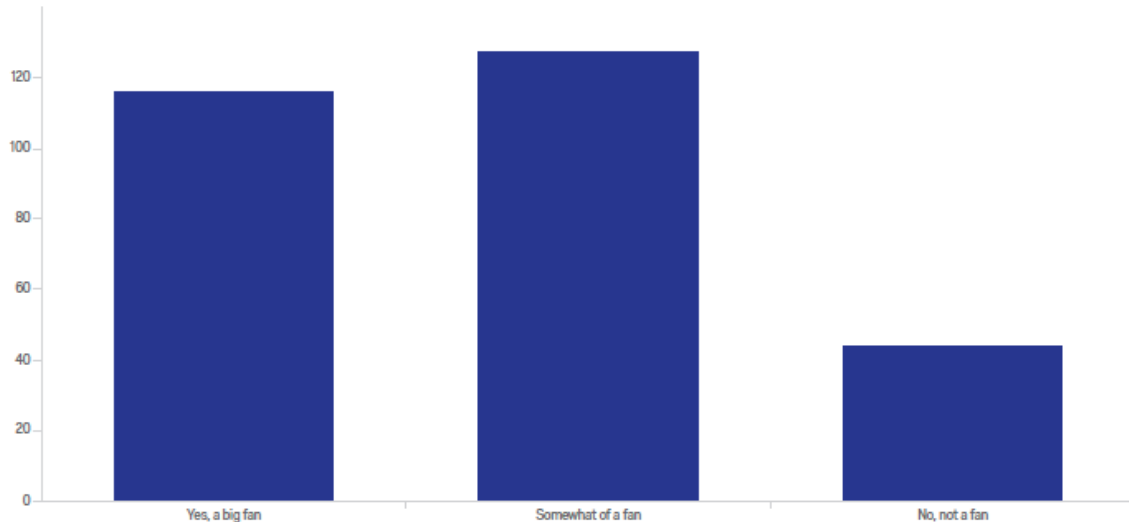


Figure 3. Are you a fan of Beyoncé?

Respondents were asked if they are a fan of Beyoncé. 116 (40.42%) said yes, a big fan, 127 (44.25%) stated they are somewhat of a fan, and 44 (15.33%) said they were not a fan. People can perceive the definition of a “fan” in many different ways. Collins Dictionary defines a fan as, “a person enthusiastic about a specified sport, pastime, or performer; devotee,” (collinsdictionary.com). Based on this definition and the data, majority of the respondents are not a fan. A lot of respondents enjoy Beyoncé, but not to the extent of being a fan. Understanding who is a fan and who is not confirms if a person will interact with a celebrity enough to donate to a cause they promote. Fans are deemed as loyal and devoted to that figure they worship and are no doubt more likely to interact with Beyoncé and what she has to say or promote. With this, the data can show that majority of respondents do enjoy Beyoncé as a celebrity, but it doesn't confirm

whether enough of them engage with her social media to actually reach into the wallets and pay. It's definitely more likely that the 243 respondents who are fans and somewhat fans might buy into Beyoncé's celebrity activism.

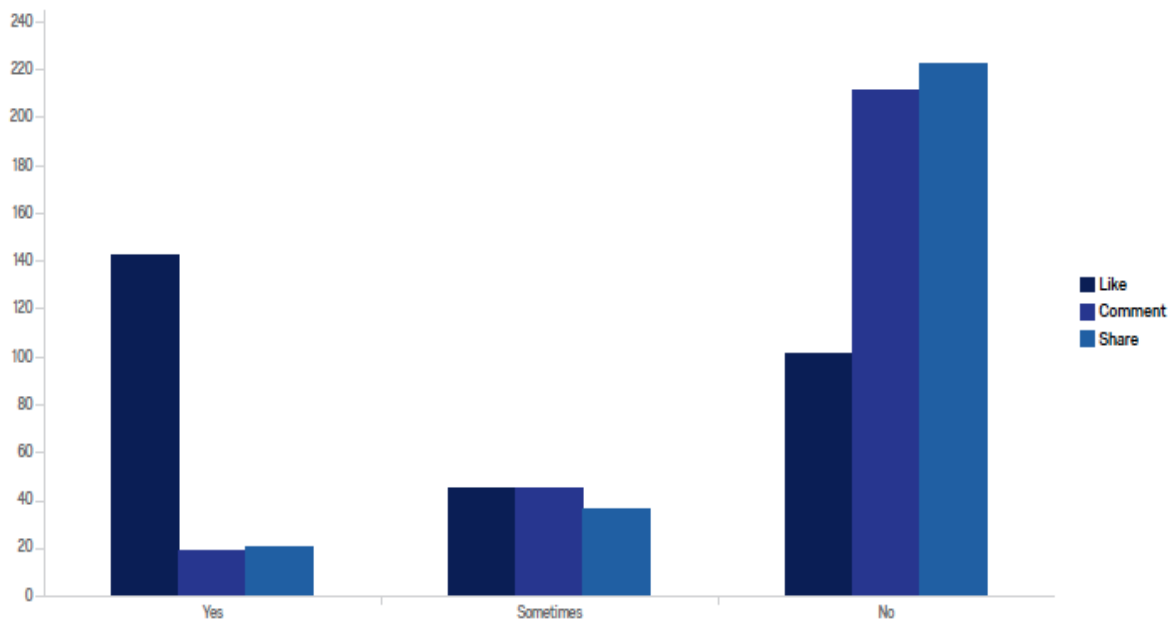


Figure 4. Do you like, comment, or share Beyoncé's Instagram posts?

Respondents were asked if they like Beyoncé's Instagram posts. 142 (49.31%) indicated that they do like Beyoncé Instagram posts, 45 (15.63%) respondents indicated they sometimes like her Instagram posts, while 101 (35.07%) have never liked a Beyoncé Instagram post.

Respondents were also asked if they comment Beyoncé Instagram posts. 19 (6.91%) said they do comment, 45 (16.36%) said they sometimes comment on her Instagram posts, and 211 (76.73%) have indicated they have not commented on her

Instagram posts before. Lastly, respondents were asked if they share Beyoncé Instagram posts. 20 (7.19%) indicated they do share Beyoncé Instagram posts, 36 (12.95%) indicated they sometimes share her posts, while 222 (79.86%) have not once shared a Beyoncé Instagram post.

To like, share, or comment builds interaction and engagement on social media. It's a definite scale when you think about engagement. When someone scrolls through an Instagram post and "likes" a photo, they will double tap like and keep scrolling through their feed. If one comments on a post, they are more engaged with what is going on. They liked or even disliked the photo well enough, that they stopped and decided to insert a text message. Either way, that's engagement. Sharing constitutes that you not only like the post, but you like it enough to share it amongst your own following. The data shows that majority of respondents only like Beyoncé Instagram posts rather than share or comment. The data also shows that 97 (33%) respondents said no to ever liking, sharing, or commenting on a Beyoncé Instagram post, leaving 194 (66%) respondents who have liked, shared, and/or commented on a Beyoncé Instagram post. This data shows that majority of the respondents have seen and even engaged with a Beyoncé Instagram post, whether it be about her daughter Blue, events she attends, or her even activism.

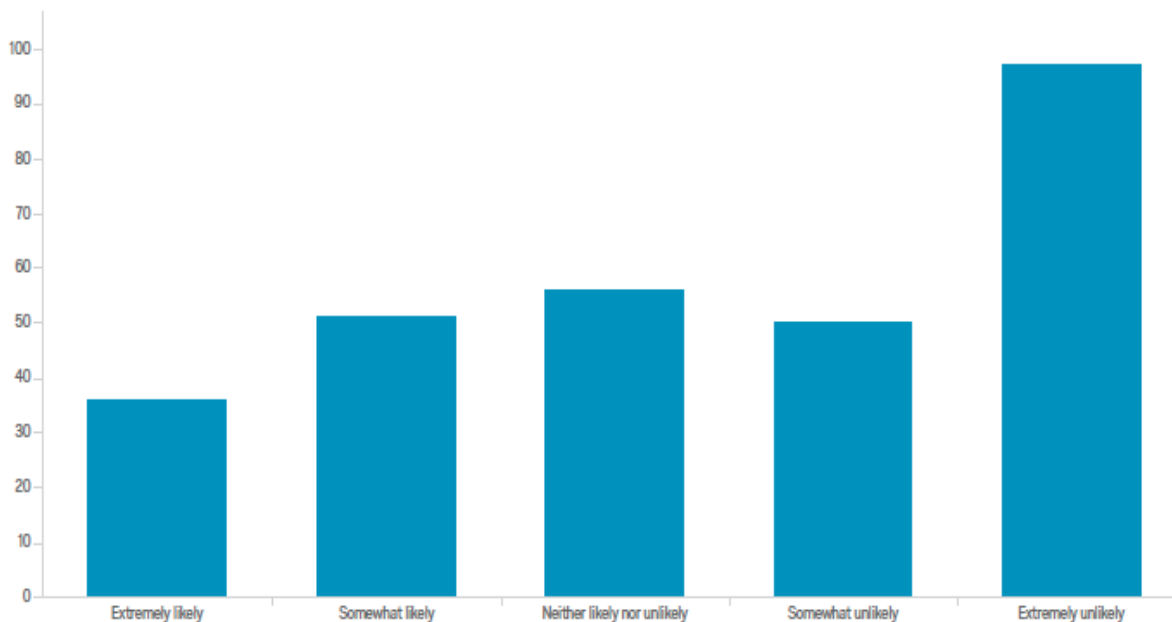


Figure 5. How likely are you to buy Beyoncé's merchandise or product that she promoted?

Respondents were asked how likely they would be to buy something Beyoncé promotes and or owns. 36 (12.41%) said they are extremely likely to purchase, 51 (17.59%) said they are somewhat likely to purchase, 56 (19.31%) said they are neither likely or unlikely to purchase, 50 (17.24%) said they are somewhat unlikely to purchase, and 97 (33.45%) said they are extremely unlikely to purchase anything Beyoncé owns or promoted.

This question was asked to measure the influence that Beyoncé has when it comes to her generically promoting herself or a product she endorses. If people are willing to buy Beyoncé merchandise or a product she promotes, then it can be likely that they would buy into a charitable cause that she is trying to promote as well. Based on the results, 147 (50%) of the respondents said they would not buy into what Beyoncé is selling while 87 (30%) respondents are open to it. This shows that the majority of

respondents are not willing and/or are unsure on whether they would buy into a product that Beyoncé promotes. This is neither good nor bad because many might believe buying material things aren't as essential as donating to charity.

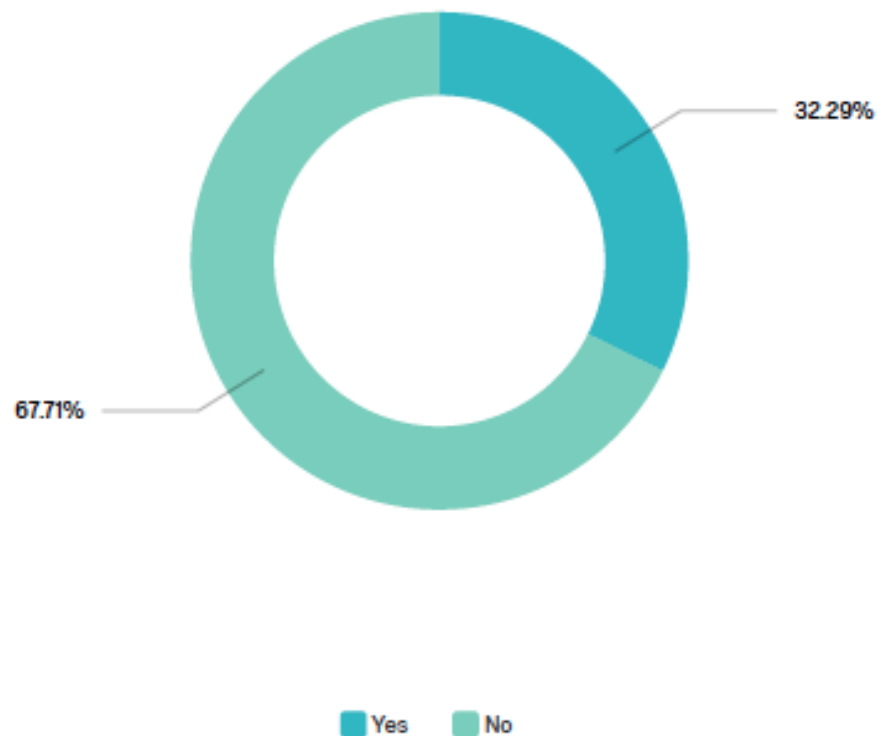


Figure 6. Has Beyoncé ever influenced you to buy her merchandise or a product that she has promoted?

After asking if respondents have ever been influenced by Beyoncé to purchase her merchandise or a product she promoted, 93 (32.29%) said they have been influenced while 195 (67.71%) respondents said Beyoncé has not influenced them.

This question is to confirm the number of the respondents Beyoncé has actually influenced when it comes to purchasing merchandise she owns or a product she promotes. Confirming who has actually bought into her merchandise can help find out Instagram followers who are not only dedicated Beyoncé fans, but are also the ones willing to buy into her celebrity activism efforts. 195 respondents have not bought anything from Beyoncé, which can lead to majority of the people not engaging with her charitable efforts, but again it depends on what they promote and why they promote it that influences people to pay.

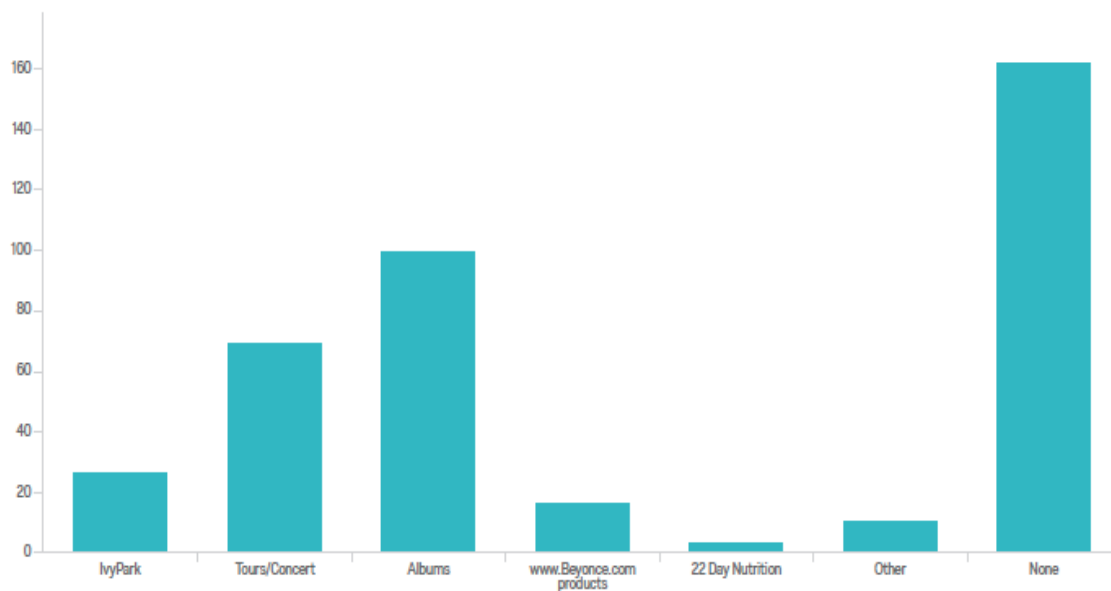


Figure 7. What merchandise or product have you bought that Beyoncé promoted?

Respondents were asked to clarify what merchandise or product they bought. 26 (6.75%) said they purchased IvyPark, 69 (17.92%) have bought tickets to see one of her concerts, 99 (25.71%) have bought an album from Beyoncé, 16 (4.16%) have bought merchandise from her website, 3 (0.78%) have bought the Beyoncé endorsed

product 22 Day Nutrition, and 162 (42.08%) have never bought merchandise that Beyoncé owns or promoted.

Based on the “other” option, out of the 10 (2.60%) respondents, 3 mentioned purchasing her older clothing brand, Dereon. 2 respondents mentioned buying tour merchandise at her concert they attended. 1 respondent had bought Beyoncé films, and the last 1 has bought her perfume product (Heat). This leaves 3 respondents who did not express what they purchased that Beyoncé owned or promoted.

Understanding what people bought into can confirm how willing they are to dig into their pockets for Beyoncé. It can judge their true fan identity and confirm out of the 93 people who are majorly influenced. Beyoncé is known as a businesswoman for owning several lines of clothing like Dereon, IvyPark, and her assortment of products on beyonce.com. There have been 44 instances where a respondent bought into the clothing aspect while there have 168 have bought into her primary form of entertainment, which is being a performer or musician. This confirms respondents buy into her as an artist more than any of her side business ventures that Beyoncé is involved in.

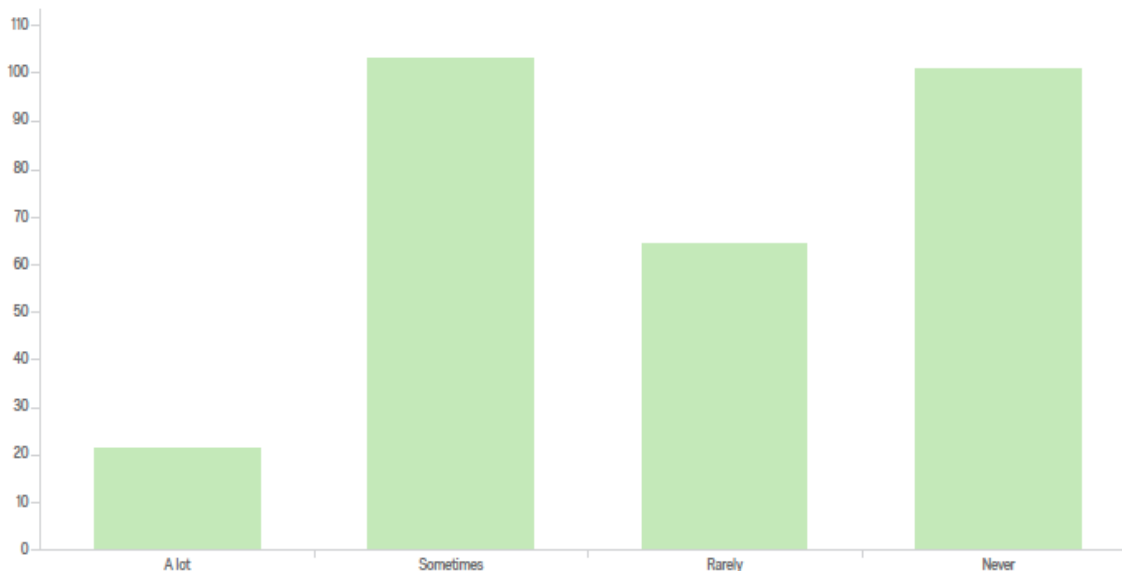


Figure 8. How often on Instagram do you see Beyoncé post about any sort of charitable cause?

Out of the 291 responses, 21 (7.27%) said they see Beyoncé post a lot, 103 (35.64%) said they sometimes see her post, 64 (22.15%) say they rarely see her post, and 101 (34.95%) say they have never seen her post anything in regards to philanthropy.

A total of 188 Beyoncé Instagram followers have definitely seen her post something in regard to charitable causes where 101 have never seen her post anything charitable at all. This question is important because this not only provides evidence that Beyoncé indeed does post about charitable causes on her Instagram, but he shows that people are also seeing the posts. Confirming that respondents are indeed seeing her posts and having it come across their feed shows a higher chance of people engaging with her charitable Instagram posts.

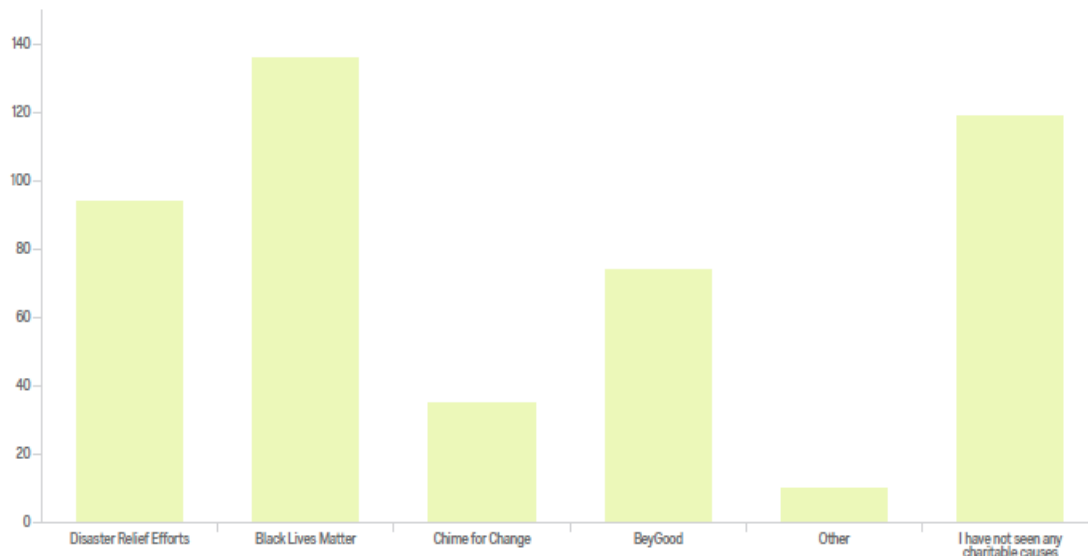


Figure 9. What charitable causes have you seen Beyoncé support on Instagram?

Based on the selection I gave, out of the 291 respondents, 94 (20.09%) have seen Beyoncé post about disaster relief efforts, 136 (29.06%) have seen her post about Black Lives Matter, 35 (7.48%) have seen her post about Chime for Change, 74 (15.81%) have seen her post about her personal charitable organization BeyGood, and 119 (25.43%) have not seen her post about any charitable causes.

Based on the “other” option, out of the 10 (2.14%) respondents, 2 said Global Girls/Freedom of Girls, 1 said BeyGood, 1 said getting out to vote, and the last said scholarships for HBCU college women. This leaves 5 additional “others” who did not indicate what they saw.

In conjunction with respondents seeing the charitable posts, it’s important to reveal exactly what it is that they are looking at. This drives respondents to gauge the significance of the posts that they are seeing. I set up a selection of Instagram posts that Beyoncé has shared on her personal Instagram account to confirm who has seen

what posts. Majority of the respondents have seen her post in regards to supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. This confirms that Beyoncé had driven a lot of support toward the Black Lives Matter movement and many of the respondents were reactive to that. 119 confirmed that they have not seen any charitable posts that Beyoncé has made when they do indeed follow her. This shows that there can definitely be more followers engaged with her posts if they were able to see them. It's 119 possibilities missed due to the timing of everyone's Instagram feed.

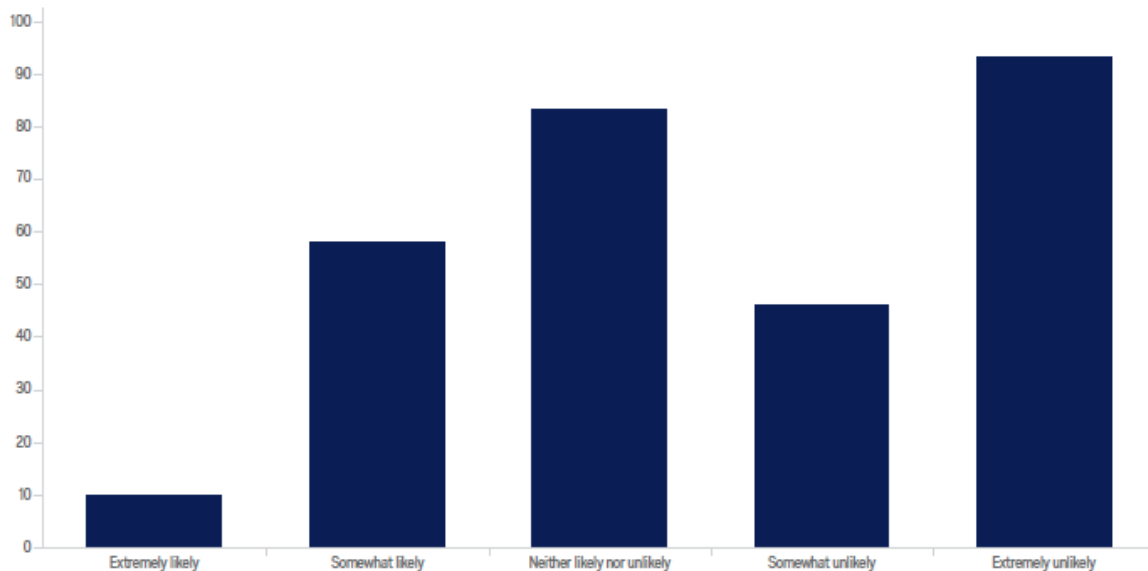


Figure 10. How likely are you to pay/donate to a charity or cause that Beyoncé has promoted?

Out of the 290 respondents who answered the question, 10 (3.49%) said extremely likely, 58 (20%) said somewhat likely, 83 (28.62%) said neither likely nor unlikely, 46 (15.86%) said somewhat unlikely, and 93 (32.07%) said extremely unlikely.

This question really drives home to see who out of the respondents would be willing to donate or pay for a charity that Beyoncé promotes. 68 (23%) respondents are

willing to pay or donate to a cause that Beyoncé promotes because they have respect and belief in Beyoncé. This really shows how she influences her followers to actually consider donating for her, for these causes. The majority of the respondents aren't likely to donate to causes she promotes whether they have actually seen them or not. This can be concerning to the research if respondents aren't willing to actually engage Beyoncé advances. People might have different reasons as to why they would not be likely to donate like believing she's not genuine, not having the money, or not being interested in donating to a specified charity.

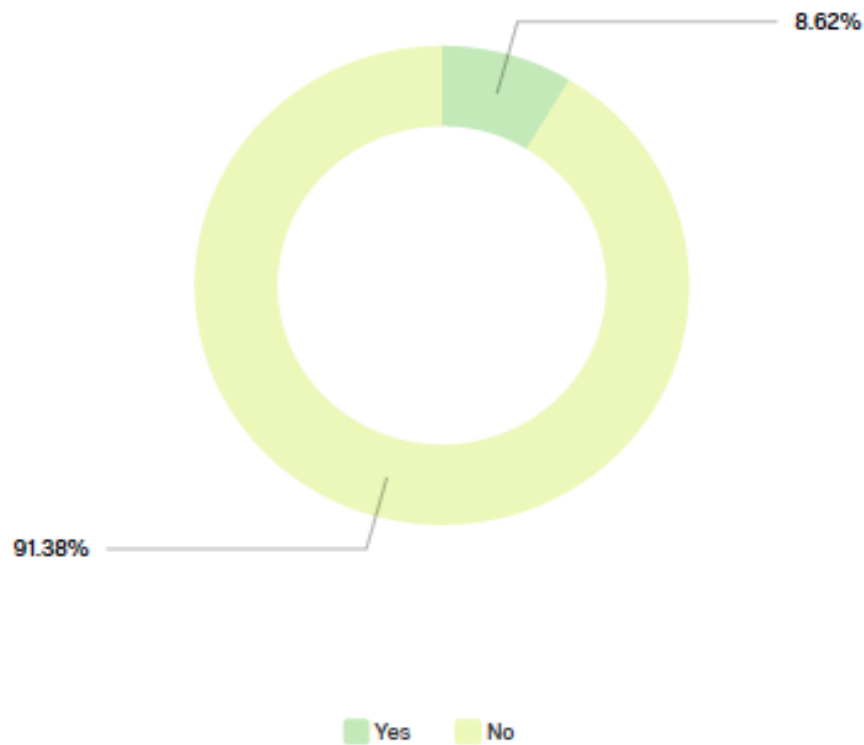


Figure 11. Have you ever made a donation to a charity/cause that Beyoncé has promoted on Instagram?

Of the 290 respondents, 25 (8.62%) said yes, they have made a donation where 265 (91.38%) said they have not made a donation that Beyoncé has promoted on Instagram. This question confirms the actual amount of respondents who have actually taken action and donated to a cause that Beyoncé has promoted. The 8% believe in these charities, believe in Beyoncé, and want to support both by engaging with her Instagram posts and donating.

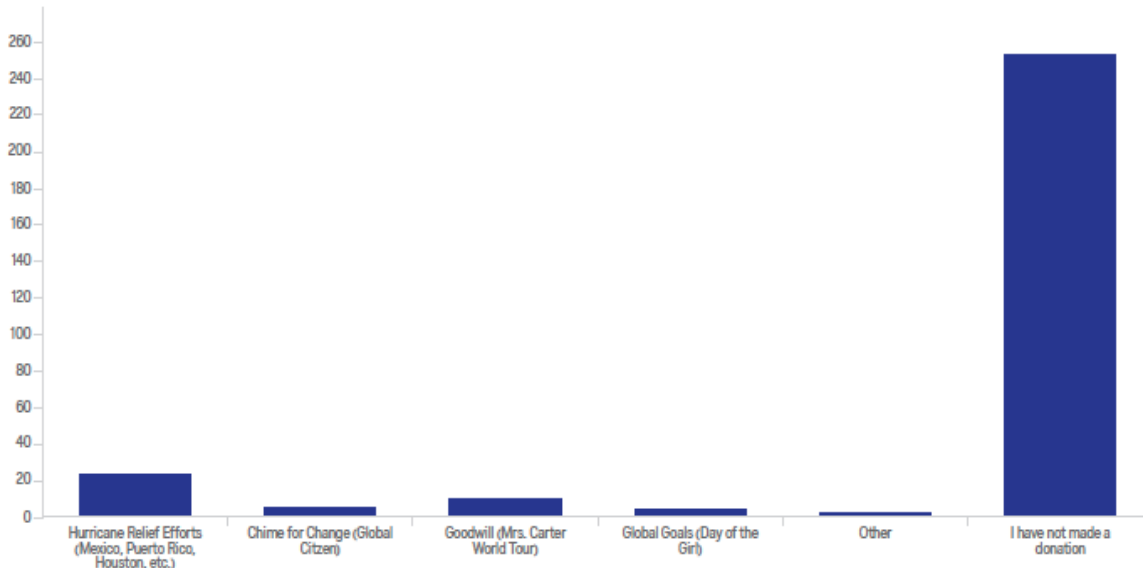


Figure 12. What was the donation?

Based on the organizations that Beyoncé promotes on Instagram to further promote awareness, 23 (7.74%) respondents have donated to hurricane relief efforts, 5 (1.68%) have donated to Chime for Change, 10 (3.37%) have donated to Goodwill, 4 (1.35%) have donated to Global Girls, and 253 (85.19%) have not made a donation to any of these causes.

Based on the “other” selection, out of the 2 (0.67%) respondents, 1 had indicated they donated hamburger helper toward a food drive Beyoncé had during her second world tour. 1 respondent had not indicated their donation. Similarly, this compares to understanding what people bought what Beyoncé had promoted. This time it’s confirming the specified charities that respondents have donated to the charity that Beyoncé supports and promoted. Hurricane relief efforts, Chime for Change, Global Girls, Goodwill, and many more all charities that she supports and respondents have actually donated to. This confirms that Beyoncé posting on Instagram does indeed have an effect on her followers to engage and take action with her. Although many have not actually donated to a cause she promoted on Instagram, many respondents are willing to do so.

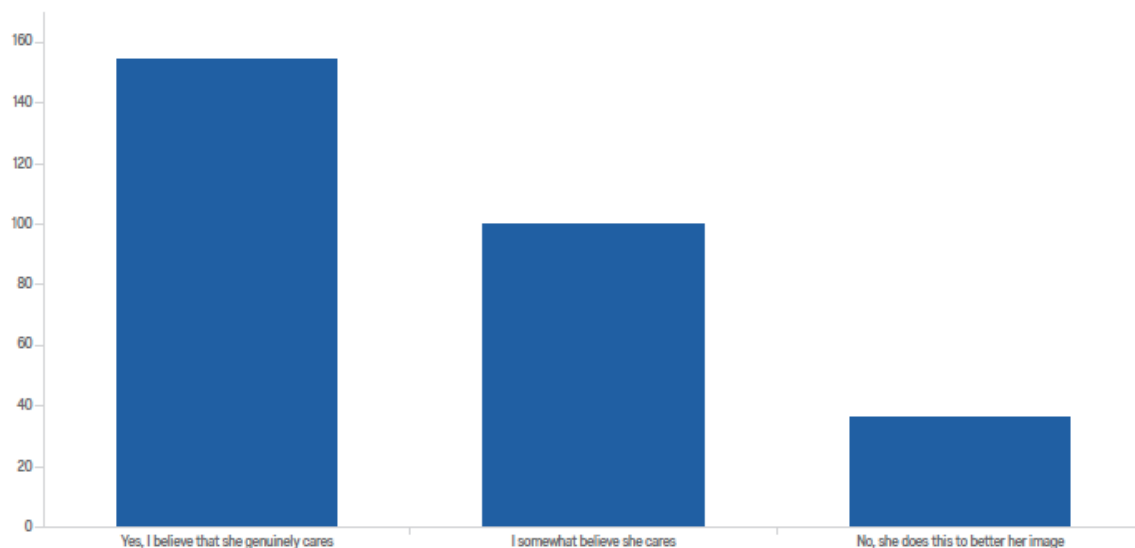


Figure 13. Do you believe Beyoncé genuinely cares about the causes she promotes?

Based on the 290 respondents, 154 (53.10%) genuinely believe she cares, 100 (34.48%) somewhat believe she cares, and 36 (12.41%) do not believe she cares and only does this to better her image. This question really reveals the heart of Beyoncé and

her followers. This coincides with the public not being in tuned, with celebrities and being cautious about their advances (Song, 2017). It all depends upon the celebrity and the perceptions their audiences give. According to these respondents, over 50% believe Beyoncé cares and over 30% believe she somewhat cares which confirms that Beyoncé is seen as a genuine celebrity who actually cares about the causes she promotes. This data brings out potential, that people might be more likely to engage with Beyoncé because they actually believe in her generosity as an icon.

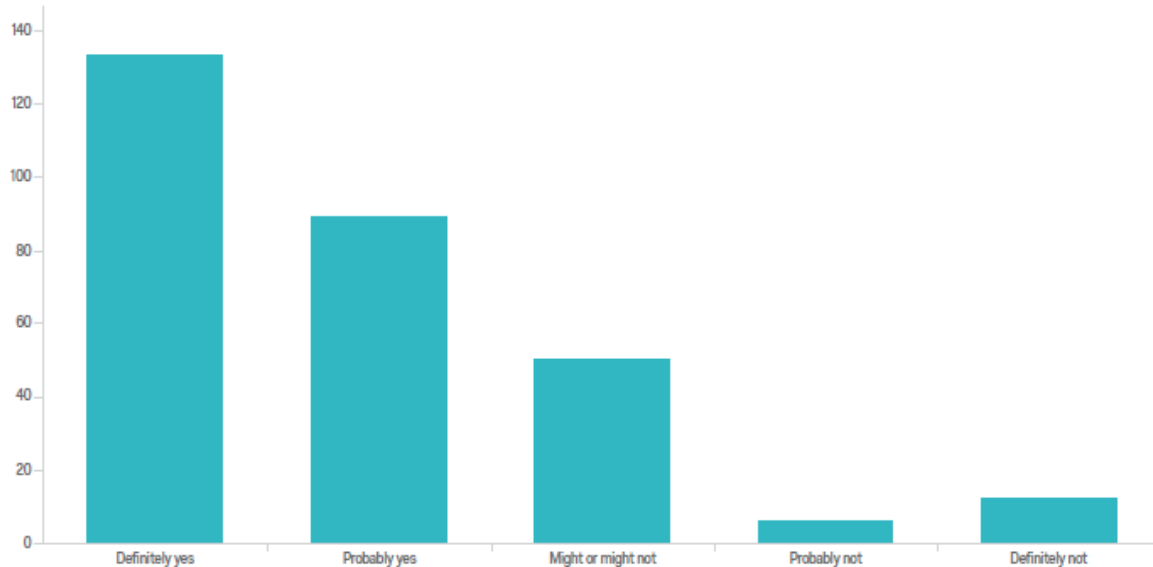


Figure 14. Is celebrity activism a way for celebrities to improve their reputation and image?

Out of the 290 respondents, 133 (45.86%) believe she does do this for her image, 89 (30.69%) say she probably does this for her image, 50 (17.24%) might or might not believe she does this for her image, 6 (2.07%) believe probably does not do this for her image, 12 (4.14%) believe she definitely does not do this for her image.

Celebrity activism is seen as a way for celebrities to boost morale and gain a larger fan base. A celebrities model is like a business, they need to keep a solid reputation and social responsibility to exceed in their business goals (Guardian, 2015). Although a celebrity does need to keep a reputation clean, people are still responsive to the way celebrities carry themselves while dealing with humanitarianism. If there is scandal and/or a disaster that a celebrity is dealing with, and decides to donate a million dollars to a random charity, people are less responsive to engaging with that celebrity. This is not the way people respond to Beyoncé.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the questionnaire, Beyoncé does create effective charitable change on Instagram. Respondents have confirmed that they do indeed see the Instagram posts and their relevancy to different charity organizations that Beyoncé supports like Global Girls and Chime for Change. Majority of respondents are frequently using Instagram, creating a demand for people to get on and actually see the posts. Beyoncé is effectively able to communicate with people by achieving hundreds of likes, comments, and shares which boost the overall morale of her content and a greater chance for people to donate. On average Beyoncé accumulates over a million likes per photo which gives notice to followers on what she's posting and what their interests are based on her content.

Followers are not extremely responsive to buying her own merchandise, products she promotes, and even the charities she promotes. The sole focus really roots down to age identification and money. The primary fan base of Beyoncé and Instagram range from 18 to 25 years old where they are either in or just out of college. College students have debt, bills, rent, and jobs that don't give them enough money to actually donate the way they would like to. A lot are most likely in the position of their lives to just having fun, finding jobs, and paying off their bills. They wouldn't be in a place where they can freely donate to a charity, whether they support it or not. The data shows that the 18 to 25 year olds are her biggest users and fans, but aren't as present when it comes to her activism. This also brings up the fact that many people see Beyoncé as an entertainer and that's all. That they would rather focus on purchasing her music and clothing lines

instead of supporting a cause she promotes. Some haven't even acknowledged that she posts about her activism on Instagram, and even with the data being heavily tilted to a small sample size that have actually donated, Beyoncé was still able to pull in over 50 donations using her platform on Instagram ranging from all ages from 18 to 46.

The platform Instagram might not be the greatest social media tool to promote her causes on, but she definitely still gains effective social media interactions based off of the posts she has made on Instagram. Improvements for this study would be to measure Beyoncé's other social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to see if they achieve for social activity. There is no doubt that celebrities need to engage in social responsibility to better their reputations and images, but the data show that respondents believe in her voice to post and engage her followers on Instagram, that she actually cares. This gives ways to more possibilities for donations and more engagement when Beyoncé is involved. The data definitely shows that if the 18 to 25 year old respondents were a little older making a living with a stable income, they would be more willing to donate to a cause Beyoncé promotes. Beyoncé has credibility, followers, and enough cause to further promote on the subjects that she cares about.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The study brings forth important conclusion on the celebrity activism and the reactions of followers and fans towards promoting social causes, particularly through the social media platform Instagram. Do followers respond positively to Beyoncé's social media activism content? They most definitely do. Not only are respondents likely to pay or donate a cause that she promotes, but also majority genuinely believe in the content that she posts on social media. Yes, people do believe she does it boost her reputation, but that's every celebrities goal. It's another story when respondents believe in her generosity. Does Beyoncé's social content encourage people to be active charitable activists themselves? Beyoncé's social media content does encourage people to be activists themselves because every person who donated for the freedom of girls (Global Girls), to Goodwill, to those who lost their homes in Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Houston, they've all been influenced as active activists within their own community.

Do celebrities like Beyoncé waste their time trying to promote charitable causes via social media? They absolutely do not waste their time. Just from promoting her efforts for Hurricane Harvey relief efforts, she was able to raise three million dollars through various channels, including through Instagram (Gibbs, 2017). The 50 respondents who said they donated also prove that social media influenced them, and celebrities were not wasting their time to promote social causes through social media. Do celebrities like Beyoncé have a place in being involved in charitable activism? Celebrities definitely have a place in being activists. They have changed so many lives, not just Beyoncé but Oprah (Lofton & Weber, 2012) Lady Gaga (Bennett, 2013), and

even Ellen. Celebrities can tend to make things complicated when they get too involved, but Beyoncé focuses on the causes that she cares about, the ones she knows will make a difference. Respondents are again, receptive to her caring abilities. Therefore, the philanthropic activities of celebrities are appreciated and is also creating awareness and influencing people to participate as social activists and donate to important social causes.

REFERENCES

- Panis, K., Van den Bulck, H. (2012). Celebrities' Quest for a Better World: Understanding Flemish Public Perceptions of Celebrity Activism. *Javnost The Public*. Vol. 19, No 3. <http://javnost-thepublic.org/article/2012/3/5/>
- Click, A. M., Lee, H., Willson, H.W. (2017). You're Born to Be Brave: Lady Gaga's Use of Social Media to Inspire Fans Political Awareness. *Sage Journals*. Vol. 20 Issue 6. doi: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1367877915595893>
- Lofton, R. K. Weber, B. (2012). The Legacies of Oprah Winfrey: Celebrity, Activism, and Reform in the Twenty-First Century. *Celebrity Studies*. Vol. 3 Issue 1. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2012.644724>
- Gammage, M. (2017). Pop Culture Without Culture: Examining the Public Backlash to Beyoncé's Super Bowl 50 Performances. *Journal of Black Studies*. Vol. 48 Issue 8. doi: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0021934717729504?ai=1gvoi&mi=3ricys&af=R>
- Chu, A. (2016). Beyoncé's Black Lives Matter Tribute Defies the Laws of Celebrity Activism. *The Daily Beast*. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/beyonces-black-lives-matter-tribute-defies-the-laws-of-celebrity-activism>
- Elcessor, E. (2016). One Tweet to Make so Much Noise: Connected Celebrity Activism in the Case of Marlee Matlin. *Sage Journals*. Vol. 20 Issue 1. doi: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1461444816661551>
- Meyer, D. (1995). The Challenge of Cultural Elites: Celebrities and Social Movements. *Wiley Online Library*. Vol. 65, Issue 2. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1995.tb00412.x>
- Kwon, J. (2017). Between Hyorish and Hyorism: A Korean TV Star and Social Media Activism. *Sage Journals*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476417742519>
- Blickley, L. (2015). How Celebrities Are Using Social Media in a More Positive & Passionate Way. *The Huffington Post*. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/02/celebrities-social-media-for-good_n_6979790.html
- Song, S. (2017). Katy Perry, "Witness," and the Question of Celebrity Activism. *Teen Vogue*. <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/katy-perry-witness-the-question-celebrity-activism>

Oxford Australia. (2017). *Celebrity Activism: Do We Really Need Another Hero?* Oxford University Press, Australia. <https://blog.oup.com.au/2017/03/08/celebrity-activism-do-we-really-need-another-hero/>

McMaster, A. (2017). These 9 Celebrity Activists Used Their Star Power for Good in 2017. *Global Citizen*. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/celebrities-impact-top-2017-activism/>

Bennett, L. (2013). If We Stick Together We Can Do Anything: Lady Gage Fandom, Philanthropy, and Activism through Social Media. *Celebrity Studies*. Vol. 5, Issue 1-2. doi: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19392397.2013.813778?journalCode=rcele20>

York, A. (2017). Social Media Demographics to Inform a Better Segmentation Strategy. *Sprout Blog*. <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/>

Gibbs, A. (2017). Beyoncé's BeyGood Houston to Help Hurricane Harvey Relief. *Media & Entertainment, Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adriennegibbs/2017/08/31/beyonce-beygood-houston-to-aid-with-hurricane-relief/#4fe957a980e9>

VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Blake Bussie

blakebussie@yahoo.com

Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
Bachelor of Science, Marketing, May 2016

Research Paper Title:

How Celebrities like Beyoncé Use Social Media to Influence Effective Charitable
Change

Major Professor: Kavita Karan