

“Democratization of Cultural Capital through Social Networks – The impact of Human Values on cultural audiences’ consumption” - Abstract

Keywords: Cultural Capital, Social Networks, Cultural Consumer Behaviors, Human Values

Introduction

According to the 2018 Global Digital report, there are more than 4 billion people around the world using the Internet. Social media use continues to grow rapidly too, and more than 3 billion people use Social Networks each month. That’s a clear fact that none marketing practice nor scientific research can ignore. Despite the surging use of Social Media in cultural and arts institutions (Hausmann, 2012), no empirical studies so far have put the emphasis on the concept of Cultural Capital and the impact of the new technologies on the knowledge, behaviors, and habits that push cultural audiences to behave then consume in a certain way. Our aim is to test whether the use of Social Network changes consumer’s attitudes and cultural consumptions. We will provide new evidence concerning the system of beliefs, attitudes, actions and reactions that explain and motivate consumer behaviors in the cultural context. Our findings will represent an open window on the mind of cultural audiences and will be useful for cultural managers in order to better understand the attitudes of their public.

Methodology and stage of completion of research

For doing so, we have designed an online survey composed by 11 closed questions concerning the Social Networks frequency of use, the Cultural Activities and the Cultural Awareness scales in order to measure the Cultural Capital of respondent. In add, we have considered the Human Value Scale of Schwartz and some control variables such as gender, age, education on occupation of respondents.

We have launched our study on February 2019 and we have collected 554 valid replies.

Main findings and points of reflections

After running several analysis using Structural Equation Model, we can confirm our hypotheses. As expected, the participation in cultural activities and the cultural awareness of respondents are positively correlated to the Social Network frequency of use as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn. That means that the more cultural audiences use Social Networks, the more they will participate in Cultural Activities and the have higher level of Cultural Awareness.

Furthermore, some interesting information are collected thanks to the use of control variables. In particular: males and audiences with a wage tend to participate more in Cultural Activities and the less are respondents educated, the more they spend time on Social Networks. Then, another interesting point is represented by the generational effect, because it seems that the less are respondent aged, the more they spend time on Social Networks and participate in Cultural Activities.

Conclusions

For going deeper in our understanding, we conclude this research with some moderator analysis for demonstrating that the System of Values have an impact on the relationship between the Social Network Frequency of use and the Cultural Capital level of respondents. At the end, we can argue that whom participate more in Cultural Activities and have high scores of Cultural Awareness is most interested in values like Power, Conformity, Universalism and Hedonism.

They can help cultural managers to use in more strategical way the power of Social Networks. This study represents a starting point for future research on the impact and consequences of the use of Social Networks in our fast-changing world, especially in a particular context such as the arts and cultural field.

Theoretical background, list of references and all details of analysis are available upon request.