

## **Cultural consumption in higher education institutions: the faculty of communication sciences of the Universidad Autonoma de San Luis Potosí**

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Received January 6, 2017; Accepted June 21, 2017

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### **Abstract**

Cultural consumption is a field of research specific to communication, because the expressive nature and interactive components of it, allow us to investigate and evidence trends, cosmogonies, characters and even the intimately human aspect of social groups, through the processes Of appropriation of the cultural products they generate in themselves and which in turn reflect, reproduce, transcend and empower. The identity spaces that higher education institutions represent are not only the expression dimensions of science and knowledge but also the genesis of those paradigms that will allow the transformation of society. Discovering the state of cultural consumption in the object of study, will allow in subsequent scenarios, to draw inferences, projections and contributions not only to the universe of university curriculum that belongs to it, but also to innovate in educational updating, redefinitions of academic work and even to pay Delimitation of the communicator profile in Mexico and Latin America.

### **Communication, Local Development, Culture, Cultural Consumption**

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**Citation:** VARGAS-NERI, Juan Fernando & ORTÍZ-ALVARADO, Francisco Jesús. Cultural consumption in higher education institutions: the faculty of communication sciences of the Universidad Autonoma de San Luis Potosí. ECORFAN Journal-Republic of Peru 2017, 3-4: 12-21.

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## Introduction

The analysis of cultural consumption contributes to the understanding of social and political processes, the shaping of subjectivities and the construction of collective identities, the symbolic elaboration of differences and similarities in the contemporary world. The student of Communication Sciences to be a factor of social change and future leader of public opinion, must commit to acquire a wide range of linguistic and iconographic possibilities to understand the realities in which society is immersed. To the extent that it consumes culture, it will increase its possibilities for reflection and the imaginaries to which it must go or transform to design and implement expressive networks of high efficiency.

For the Communication to take place in environments full of information, as is the essence of today's society, it is necessary to clarify its distinctive marks, since it will provide the actant with discursive characteristics, which will lead it to use the data obtained from its immediate environment for the benefit of own and collective.

In this way, it is necessary to identify the activities that the student of said discipline is carrying out in terms of cultural consumption, since by pointing out the way in which they are appropriating discursive qualities, it allows the collegiate bodies to innovate and update the institutional curricula, with the purpose of assuring and increasing the quantity and quality of the materials with which the subjects construct their professional imaginaries.

The logic of consumption has led to the emergence of a changing individual, without deep ties, with personality and fluctuating gestures (Lipovetzky, 2006) giving rise to multiple interpretations of reality. Consequently, the research focuses on identifying the cultural materials that students in that area of knowledge are consuming. It is not intended to analyze the contents with which it is related, only trends will be framed when approaching journals, books, movies or even when exposed to public and / or private television.

## Justification

The research is based on the premise of knowing what cultural materials students of the Faculty of Communication Sciences consume, since being agents of change and opinion leaders within their social contexts, it is important to identify the profile in terms of appropriation of books, films and television materials to which they come, since it is from them that they build their messages, which are replicated in the social body. Within the entity of higher education object of study, cultural consumption has not been addressed in this way, so that by knowing the written and audiovisual elements of which the student appropriates, intervention strategies can be generated within the curricula in order to promote and promote the approach to literature, film and television.

The ignorance of the cultural materials with which future professionals socialize, is undoubtedly a problem that must be addressed, since by not clearly identifying these elements, the university does not have the certainty of forming integral agents of social change, that innovate and enrich the contexts in which they develop.

**Problem**

There is a total ignorance of the cultural materials that the students of the Degree in Communication Sciences are consuming, with this it is not possible to identify if the integral development of said subjects is being carried out after passing through the institution, in such a way It is vital to know what materials are being exposed in order to design strategies that help strengthen their academic, professional and personal development.

**Hypotesis.**

There is no significant follow-up and catalog in the amount of cultural materials consumed with respect to the first, third, fifth and seventh semester students.

**Objectives****General objective**

Identify the behavior that students of the Faculty of Communication Sciences of the Universidad Autonoma de San Luis Potosí show regarding cultural consumption, with respect to their semesters studied.

**Specific objectives**

Contrast the level of cultural consumption of the university students of the career of Communication Sciences, in relation to the semester to which they belong.

Determine the frequency of consumption of cultural products of students at the School of Communication Sciences of the Universidad Autonoma de San Luis Potosí.

**Theoretical framework**

The activities performed by the agent within the context in which it develops, involve filling meaning with the signals with which it refers to the subject, in this case the culture, in this way gives an expressive meaning, differentiating it from the one that does not has the intention that the Issuing Agent (AG), has assigned to the Receiving Agent (AR), because it becomes relevant, exercising expressive work - activity designed to indicate and give meaning to that thing - provides perceptible qualities to what you do reference, this is the expressive use of the subject, allowing the AR, to find the differences that the AE identifies in the object to which it refers. According to Serrano's reflection:

The relevant states of the subject can be derived from the interaction of some actor, these actions are called: expressive work, activities designed to make a subject relevant to indicate things. The expressive work of an actor makes the subject relevant and intervenes on the perceptible qualities of the subject, granting an expressive use to the subject matter with figure value in a perceptual background. The expressive operations, have origin in the relevant use that the communicative agent grants to this matter, which the other agent allows him to differentiate that matter from the others (1982).

Cultural consumption becomes the expressive substance of man, because by filling works with a specific meaning, he gives value to the figure he has constituted from communication. The perceptual background is the created environment, but it loses importance, because the meaning of the culture is of greater relevance when having a subject in front of a certain number of books, journals and films of any kind: the figure will be that which of your communicative experience choose and the rest will become part of the perceptual fund.

The daily activities in which the agents operate have an important communication load, since the interaction based on significant signals for both allows the sharing of experiences and culture, helping to strengthen the cultural taste or modifying it. In the moment in which two subjects coincide in a certain place and begin an interaction, they share information that nourishes the culture of both, exerting an expressive work, the praxis of the communication becomes a living agent of the development of each one of the particularities with the that the individuals formed the society, with it the culture and its consumption. For Malinowski (1973) different cultures are functional, coherent and integrating; each closed element should be analyzed considering others, study social facts and how they are organized to meet their needs. Durkheim understood the phenomena which he called social facts, which can only be studied from sociological perspectives; he defines them as: ... the ways of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual and possessing a power of coercion by virtue of which they impose themselves on him (1956) ... In this way they are a key piece for the cultural attainment of the individual. The language is made up of constituent units that must be identified, isolated and related to a large number of meanings; Cultural phenomena are considered as a product of a system of meaning that is explained only in relation to other structural elements as if it were he who dictated the meanings. Foucault holds:

Power is not an institution or a structure, or a certain force with which certain people are invested; it is the name given to a complex strategic relationship in a given society. "Power in the substantive sense does not exist [...] The idea that there is something situated in -or emanated from- a given point and that this something is a "power", seems to be based on a wrong analysis [...]"

In reality means relationships, a network more or less organized, hierarchical, coordinated. "(2001, in Dreyfus, 2001).

Zapata-Salcedo believes that power also has an economic relationship with society and the city. The marked accent of urban consumption in a capitalist context and in a consumer society, necessarily and analytically relates culture to the economy (2011). The strong bond between the capital and the culture of a society, affects the way of acquisition in which an individual represents their customs or social situation, in the same way as it satisfies their present or future needs. Mansvelt (2005) proposes that the study of consumer activity allows to elucidate the reasons for the relationship between economy and culture, the symbolic, the material and its expressive implication at various geographical and social levels. Lipovetzky himself warns of the emotional component of the process of cultural and symbolic appropriation of social reality, the logic of consumption has led to the emergence of a fundamentally voluble individual, without deep ties, with personality and fluctuating gestures (2006).

Consumption is directly linked to personality factors, with a way of understanding life that is projected on personal values and attitudes. Given the multiplicity of consumer objects exhibited by the media, the individual turns to himself, seeks his welfare, becomes administrator of his alimentary, aesthetic, affective needs, etc. Immersion in this process is carried out through persuasion and seduction, appealing to health, beauty, safety and well-being, and invoking feelings and needs of all kinds. Today, at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, consumption is largely subjected to affective identifications with those products and brands that know how to project the "identity" entity of the consumer and reinterpret it appropriately (Sarramona, 2011).

For authors like Bourdieu (1998) consumption is interpreted as a set of cultural practices that serve to establish social distinctions and not a simple means of expressing differences, in reality it is the place where they are constructed; Consumption involves symbols, signs, ideas and values and these are the product of the conditioning of class and habitus, that is, the mental structures through which they apprehend the social world and guide its practices. (1996: 134). Habits are vital in the configuration of preferences and the different classification systems that guide the practices of cultural consumption, which functions as distinctive signs and symbols of distinction. Cultural consumption can be approached from economic, political, anthropological or sociological perspectives and even in the current investigative, communicative field, since to date there is no definitive sociocultural theory that explains it; it can be delimited as that set of socio-cultural processes in which the appropriation and uses of the producers are made, from this the consumption is understood, first of all for its economic rationality; it is the place where the process initiated to generate products is completed, where the expansion of capital is carried out and the labor force is reproduced (Canclini, 2005), consequently, it does not turn out to be the social or individual preferences that define who consume or how they do it, but it is the paradigms that determine these trends, based on the logic in which cultural goods are distributed. Consumption is, consequently, a place where conflicts between classes, originated by the unequal participation in the productive structure, continue with the purpose of the distribution and appropriation of goods ... consuming is to participate in a scenario of disputes over what the society produces and by the ways of using it (Canclini, 2005).

Cultural consumption can even be understood as that social space, where a concept of differentiation and distinction between groups arises, where each subject consumes what he can according to his personal, economic, social, cultural, religious and personal possibilities. their needs to be located and established in a certain internal or external position in the group of belonging or reference, since consumer goods in this sense function as elements and vehicles of differentiation, distinction and recognition. According to the postulates of García (1999), an approach to the theoretical definition of cultural consumption can be found by visualizing it as an agglomeration of causes with which the individual acquires symbolic information from the immediate learning area, in turn forming mental structures that help to the configuration, construction and deconstruction of his imaginary (Canclini, 1999).

### **Research Methodology**

The research is of a quantitative nature, of controlled and exhaustive measurement of both the phenomenon and its behavior. Social reality will be analyzed in the birth and cultural consumption is reproduced, addressed from the technical stage, as it will provide specific or tactical information, with characteristics that will lead to the strategic interpretation of results.

### **Kind of investigation**

According to Hernández, Fernández and Baptista (2004), it will have a "non-experimental" character since it will focus on the evaluation of a phenomenon within a certain time. The object of study will not be extracted from its context, nor disturbed in its daily life; on the contrary, it will be applied in the space-time in which the actions of the individual are developed.

A situation will be prepared in which the identification units will be exposed in groups separated by generations. These circumstances will be in direct contact and will produce a stimulus to obtain results. Mertens points out that non-experimental research is appropriate for variables that can not or should be manipulated (2010, in Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2014). The design will be transeccional, descriptive and exploratory, since a data collection will be carried out in specific moment of the time, because it pretends to investigate the incidence of the modalities and levels of the cultural consumption in the population object of study.

### **Theoretical Methods**

The instrument for gathering information will be the survey, consisting of eight closed questions for multiple choice answers and five open questions, as these provide more extensive and useful information, as well as opinions and attitudes when there are no possible answers from the informants or the idea that you have of your perceptions is insufficient. The tool will be applied to all regular undergraduate students - 356 - divided into four odd semesters from first to seventh, of the Faculty of Communication Sciences (FCC) of the Universidad Autonoma de San Luis Potosí (UASLP), in the period August / December 2014, whose ages range between 17 and 24 years, of both sexes, socio-economic levels ABC, in a self-administered context, that is to say that there are no intermediaries and the answers are marked by the informant, the Questionnaire will be delivered to answer it. This unit of analysis to be investigated with a population survey denotes a cultural study of the people who make up a specific group.

### **Results**

Structuring the object of study by semesters, in the specific case of the first, 54% corresponded to the female sex and 46% to the male; The consumption of television products with a frequency of 10 hours a week is up to 89% of the subjects, while the remaining 11% allocates a maximum of 20 hours. In this behavior, the spectrum of preferences is 72% for cable television systems, 15% for open signal and 13% for satellite services, where the most identified genres were all those national and international audiovisual productions aimed at entertainment (51%), informative (30%) and sports (19%). In the filmic aspect, Communication students consume from one to nine films per month up to 67% and nine or more at a level of 33%, with the genres of comedy and science fiction being the most chosen and the least mentioned. Western, erotic, biographical and musical. In the editorial category, they consume from one to three monthly books (61%) and from three to seven to 39% resulting in the most recent and mentioned "Love in the Time of Cholera" (40%), "Aura" (27) %), "Devil Guardian" (19%) and "Seven Decapitated Skeletons" (14%); they shared statistics (50%) for those who read journals and those who do not, being the most consumed in the month "Very Interesting" (50%), "Process" (26%), "Quo" (13%) and "Cosmopolitan" " (eleven%). For third-year university students, 53% corresponded to females and 47% to males; the consumption of television products with a frequency of 10 hours per week is up to 94% of the subjects, while the remaining 6% devotes a maximum of 20 hours. In this behavior, the spectrum of preferences is 76% for cable television systems, 13% for open signal and 11% for satellite services, where the most identified genres were all those national and international audiovisual productions aimed at entertainment (75%), informative (18%) and sports (7%). In the filmic aspect.

Communication students consume from one to nine films per month up to 79% and nine or more at a level of 21%, with the genres of comedy, science fiction and drama being the most chosen, and the less mentioned the western, the erotic and the biographical. In the editorial category, they consume from one to three monthly books (72%) and from three to seven to 28% resulting in the most recent and mentioned "Harry Potter" (43%), "The Hunger Games" (24%), "Love in the Time of Cholera" (19%) and "The Metamorphosis" (14%); for those who do not read journals it obtained 51% and those who do it showed a remaining 49%, being the most consumed in the month "Very Interesting" (35%), "National Geographic" (27%), "Process" (24%) ) and "Quo" (14%). In the case of the university students of the fifth semester, 45% corresponded to the female sex and 55% to the male; the consumption of television products with a frequency of 10 hours a week is up to 94% of the subjects, while the remaining 6% allocates a maximum of 20 hours. In this behavior, the spectrum of preferences is 65% for cable television systems, 20% for open signal and 15% for satellite services, where the most identified genres were all those national and international audiovisual productions aimed at entertainment (53%), informative (31%) and sports (16%). In the filmic aspect, Communication students consume from one to nine films per month up to 79% and nine or more at a level of 21%, with the genres of comedy, science fiction and suspense being the most chosen, and less mentioned the western, the biographical and the infantile. In the editorial category, they consume from one to three monthly books (89%) and from three to seven to 11%, resulting in the most recent and mentioned

"El Perfume" (29%), "El Resplandor" (21%), "The Foreigner" (21%) and "The Divine Comedy" (29%); for those who do not read journals, it obtained 57% and those who do it showed a remaining 43%, being the most consumed in the month "Very Interesting" (47%), "Process" (25%), "National Geographic" (15%) and "Quo" (13%). Finally, Communication students of the seventh semester, 50% corresponded to the female sex and 50% to the male; the consumption of television products with a frequency of 10 hours a week is up to 93% of the subjects, while the remaining 7% devotes a maximum of 20 hours. In this behavior, the spectrum of preferences is 73% for cable television systems, 20% for open signal and 7% for satellite services, where the most identified genres were all those national and international audiovisual productions aimed at entertainment (67%), informative (27%) and sports (6%). In the filmic aspect, Communication students consume from one to nine films each month up to 80% and nine or more at a level of 20%, with the genres of romantic comedy, science fiction and drama being the most chosen, and the less mentioned the western, the biographical and the erotic. In the editorial category, they consume from one to three monthly books (78%) and from three to seven to 22%, resulting in the most recent and mentioned "Fifty Shades of Gray" (43%), "The Hunger Games" (29%) and "El Principito" and "La Silla del Águila" both with a final of 14%; for those who do not read journals it obtained 39% and those who do it showed a remaining 61%, being the most consumed in the month "Cosmopolitan" (34%), "Very Interesting" (29%), "National Geographic" (20%) ) and "Vogue" (17%).

## Conclusions

Based on the premise that research is not aimed at evidencing consumption reasons or evaluating the contents of cultural variables, the results of the surveys are exclusively aimed at detecting the state that the phenomenon has among university students. They study Communication and how it behaves throughout the semesters of the Degree. It is important to point out that the selection of some of the materials consumed is determined by the contents of the courses taken at the time of the application of the tool or by the academic recommendations of the teaching body that teaches them, since the range of responses was due to extra / curricular activities such as homework, essays or group exhibitions by students. It is evident that cultural consumption changes as the semester increases or decreases, however the fluctuations are not significant, that is, there are no relevant growth patterns, at least statistically speaking, towards the last levels of the career. This exposure to both media and national and international content, can generate greater intellectual wealth on the part of the budding communications, as the interaction with various discourses, it exercises even more in the understanding of the different languages that as an expressive professional should implement in its radius of labor action, because when perceiving reality in the vastness of its manifestations, it will increase its potential as an agent of social change. According to the semi-annual and institutional percentages obtained, it is evident that at least in the case of those who make up the student body under study, the state of their cultural consumption exceeds the national average in terms of acquisition or appropriation of bibliographic or editorial content.

Consequently, the percentage of individuals who consume less television per week, increases and maintains as they progress per semester, while those who spend more hours decreases considerably in third, fifth and seventh, compared to their peers first. Communication students privilege predominantly those television products whose content is focused on entertainment, even above the news, that a first observation could be favored due to its disciplinary field: even starting from high preferences in first, they decay towards third and then they go back to increase in fifth, to finally diminish again towards the closing of their academic formation. Regarding the cinematographic variable, those individuals who consume less films per month, are statistically more numerous from first to seventh, even the percentages increase as the student moves to another semester, that is, the profile of the comic consumes more films when it enters to the race that when it leaves it, this in regard to those who are exposed in less monthly amount to this type of productions; In contrast, young university students who see more films per month in the first semester, are higher in proportion than those who are studying the seventh and, in addition, this trend decreases from the third year and continues until the end of their training. In the same way, the most mentioned genres from the first, maintain their presence until seventh with barely significant changes, that is to say, their consumption in cinema matters does not change in content preferences at any moment of their transition through the degree even when the subjects of Visual and Sonora Education, as well as audiovisual themes, seem to have no influence in this sense; this circumstance is identical in terms of its initial resistance to musical or erotic films or short films, that is, when the student attends the first semester, he does not modify his position to explore other languages and approaches in the variable addressed, but his reluctance to investigate.

Other cinematographic grounds are conserved throughout the four years of the race. When considering the element of analysis of bibliographic consumption, the percentage of students who read less amount of books per month, are much higher in numerical proportion than those who read more and this is conserved during the four semesters, that is, the purchasing habits and reading of this type of material is not modified substantively as members of a higher education institution, even those who read less increases towards the end of the career: an average student of Communication enters reading the same amount as when he graduates and in many cases this practice is reduced. Regarding the three most mentioned titles of recent appropriation, it can be inferred that they were selected - during the period of application of the tool - by academic commission, teaching suggestion or response to external influences such as fashion movies or editorial marketing. Among the conclusions of the variable journals, it can be seen that young people in the first semester consume more of these cultural products than their peers in the third and fifth, but in a smaller scale than their seventh counterparts, who place the monthly publication as the first choice. "Cosmopolitan", in comparison to the rest of the student community, who in that same position located print media for scientific dissemination. From a global perspective, it can be assured that the students of the Faculty of Communication Sciences of the UASLP, prefer to consume more books than television programs, more journals of national circulation or their equivalents of international publishing franchises in Spanish than movies; they choose to expose themselves to more journals than television programs; more movies than books, more books than journals and movies than television programs.

It is interesting to note that all subjects who prefer television products do so above films, books and journals; in the same way, for the first and fifth students who weigh mostly the films that the three remaining options, while their peers second and seventh prefer books than the other units of analysis. Of the electronic media that were handled as variables in the present research - television and film - the second of these was the most important in terms of cultural consumption of all students regardless of academic level assignment, while of the printed vehicles of communication - books and journals - the preferred one was the first. Ultimately, it was the bibliographic materials, the cultural consumption medium par excellence of the entire university community under study, since not only the time dedicated to the exhibition exceeds that of others, but also the number of books exceeds - in percentage - to the films, journals or television programs that are consumed in a certain temporary space.

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