

The Importance of Engaging Customers in the Process of Revitalising Culture and Art in the Age of COVID-19

Komal Janiyani

Bachelor of Arts,

Lady Shri Ram College for Women, New Delhi

Abstract

The worldwide Coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented uncertainty and obstacles for the arts and entertainment sector, necessitating a long-term strategy to determine the future of art consumption. Surprisingly, there has been a rise in interest in cultural and artistic content, highlighting the importance of online presence during lockdowns. Immediate support for creators and mediators through activities like surveys and data collection is crucial while providing financial and organizational assistance. This opinion article focuses on the disruption to established purchasing patterns and emphasizes the need for comprehensive research to identify sustainable alternatives. Understanding consumer engagement, preferences for cultural activities, perceptions of digital experiences, loyalty and satisfaction with cultural products and services, and the impact of art on consumer well-being are vital for the recovery process.

Keywords: *Purchasing patterns, Consumer engagement, Creative disciplines, Digitalization, Recovery methods, Preferences for cultural activities*

Introduction

The WHO declared a worldwide pandemic on March 11, 2020, prompting communities to take extreme measures, such as temporarily cancelling financial, artistic, and recreational endeavours and closing non-essential organizations like museums and galleries. Ironically, the shutdown sparked interest in online arts and entertainment, demonstrating constant connectivity's ever-increasing value. While the economy is projected to recover slowly from the epidemic and its aftermath, the cultural sector is predicted to take the longest. Due to the importance of interpersonal and experiential factors, it is difficult for producers and consumers to make well-informed decisions regarding arts and culture. Adding to the already complicated nature of the problem is that the cultural sector comprises a wide range of creative disciplines and consumer practices. Many museums and other cultural institutions have prioritized using digital technology to continue providing essential services to artists, employees, and visitors during the government shutdown. Government and NGO surveys are undertaken to collect data that can be used to lobby for more financing for the ailing industry.

Although suppliers and nonprofit intermediaries have received much of the spotlight, consumers' roles are not to be forgotten, especially in the longer-term recovery process. This article highlights the importance of future studies focusing on consumers by discussing four timely issues: the collection of data on cultural behaviours, the analysis of how satisfied customers are with digital cultural content, the examination of client devotion and participation in artistic endeavours and culture; and the recognition of the emotional and mystical advantages customers derive from interacting with artistic creations. Cultural actors' activities are bolstered by conceptual and practical foundations from the literature on tradition in times of catastrophe and contextual advertising theory.

Exploring the Dynamics of Art Consumption during Economic Challenges

The global spread of the COVID-19 virus has created great unpredictability and obstructions for the creative industries. Artists have a long history of finding seclusion beneficial, so it may come as a surprise that times of crisis frequently result in more excellent creative production. Expressionism and modernism are only two major art movements that emerged during social and economic turmoil. The decline in quality, the forgery of works of art, and the illicit trade are all consequences of political unrest. Art and culture are significant during trying times since they provide solace and much more.

Despite difficulties, many people engage in creative and cultural pursuits during times of crisis. In contrast to the high-end art market's resiliency, the "lipstick effect" shows that people prefer low-cost cultural events that may be held outside. There is a window of opportunity for corporations and cultural organizations to reevaluate their income models and make required changes. However, unpredictability and limits caused by global crises in the sector impact innovation and resources. Cultural institutions are vulnerable during economic downturns since they rely on public funding worldwide and individual support in the USA.

In contrast to the 2008 financial crisis, the COVID-19 epidemic has resulted in the temporary suspension of cultural activities and the closure of cultural facilities. Because of this structural ambiguity, supply-side scheduling, making decisions, and production have been disturbed, while various individual responses have hampered demand-side clarity. Decisions are being made with a focus on procedure rather than desirable results.

Individual, group, in-person, online, offline, public, private, on-site, and virtual aspects all impact how art and culture are consumed. Group, in-person, and public consumption of art have been severely harmed by the closure, as have art's social and experiential components. On the other hand, free and open-access digital private home consumption has grown in popularity.

Cultural institutions' methods of crisis management have varied, which has led to a lack of uniformity in reopenings after periods of closure. Museums and art galleries are progressively reopening with social distancing measures in place, but the future of the performing arts, theatres, entertainment venues, celebrations and opera is doubtful. The necessity for in-person attendance presents obstacles for the performing arts in meeting distance constraints.

As public authorities and politicians struggle with reopening plans to protect the safety of artists, organizers, and spectators, the future of cultural industries is questionable. The lack of standardized direction for cultural operators contributes to uneven recovery.

Art Consumption in the Age of Pandemic: Exploring Consumer Patterns and Experiences

The essay emphasizes the importance of public and consumer consideration in the cultural sector's recovery. It proposes four avenues for future consumer research to aid cultural organizations and businesses adapt their practices in similar circumstances.

Firstly, obtaining reliable data on consumer behaviour in the cultural sphere is crucial for cultural operators to understand consumption patterns and make informed decisions. Understanding why people attend cultural events and purchase cultural products in unusual situations is essential for long-term financial health and for reducing insolvency risks. Cultural operators may also need to adapt to changing spending patterns because individuals are more risk-averse during crises.

Secondly, there has been a surge in demand for digital cultural content that can be accessed from home during the pandemic. Cultural organizations and enterprises have developed virtual exhibitions, online performances, and open access to archives. However, challenges such as inefficient digital transitions, the temporary need for fully online formats, and expanding the audience base must be addressed.

Thirdly, the essay highlights the varying levels of preparedness for the digital transition among cultural organizations and enterprises during the crisis. Museums and theatres struggled to adapt to the new digital environment, while sectors prioritizing innovation and digitalization experienced financial gains. Future studies should explore the potential and consequences of digitization, particularly its impact on audiences and consumers. Collaboration with experts in computer science and digital technologies can be valuable. The pricing of digital content and the viability of charging for online access must be reconsidered by intermediaries to ensure cultural consumption maintains its symbolic and social significance. Balancing offline and online activities is crucial, as physical interactions build cultural capital, while digital consumption encourages creative and participatory engagement. Research should focus on experiential and digital encounters in the arts to help cultural organizations meet consumer expectations and navigate supply restrictions. It is essential to understand the impact of virtual events on new audiences and their level of engagement with arts and culture, considering factors like digital device access and the value of hands-on experiences for learning.

Conclusion

From what has been described, audiences seem to impact the cultural sector's road to recovery significantly. Even if the epidemic has temporarily halted direct access to the art while increasing online access, artists and artistic companies still need financial and logistical assistance. To customize interventions and evaluate corporate structures, sector-specific recovery methods are required. The following consumer-focused research directions are proposed to address the demand side of the recovery: systematic and reliable data gathering on utilization patterns; evaluating the emotional significance of consuming digital art; fostering client retention and active involvement within cultural frameworks; and acknowledging the role of cultural institutions in promoting individual happiness. It is advised to work in tandem with other entities, such as schools, scientists focusing on mathematics, and public service organizations. To recover from the recent economic downturn, the arts and entertainment business must thoroughly comprehend consumer behaviour to predict requirements, grasp expectations, recognize new consumption patterns, and make informed judgements. It is suggested that governments conduct cultural policy surveys and businesses do commercial governance and strategy surveys.

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