

Topic Selection Process Example

Area of Study - Degree in Media, Communication and Performing Arts

3 topics suggested by our researcher with brief description of each topic

1) *To what extent are [*a given demographic*] engaged in the consumption of performing arts in, and what factors influence engagement levels?*

Effective public relation activities are dependent upon a sound understanding of the public sector they are targeted at. In order to promote economic development within the performing arts sector, organisations need to first determine to what extent people are currently interested or involved, and what factors promote or inhibit engagement. This is the premise for the proposed topic, which would investigate the behaviours and attitudes of [*a given demographic*]. The key research questions would seek to determine current levels of engagement and to understand factors that inhibit or predispose individuals to attend a performance (cost, education, age, cultural or social values, etc.,). Ideally this kind of dissertation would involve the distribution of a survey, but could be done using secondary data from published surveys or case studies. The latter would take the form of a qualitative analysis of behaviours and attitudes within the selected demographic, with a view to developing informed public relation initiatives.

* This could be a region (such as inner city London), an age group (e.g. teenagers, young adults), or a particular social, cultural, religious, or family group*

- In the absence of a specific request, I would pick a group based on the availability of a suitable case study.

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2) How can social media networks be best utilised to promote attendance and support of amateur performing arts productions?

There is a wealth of literature published on public relations and social media networks. This project would make use of existing theoretical frameworks to analysis primary data, and provide empirical evidence either supporting or refuting them.

Raw primary data would be taken from live example(s) of a production(s) being promoted on open forums (there are plenty to choose from). The project would take the form of a summative evaluation, intended to inform the development of future promotional activities undertaken by similar organisations and groups.

3) Do mainstream *theatre* promotions contribute to social exclusion?

Grisolíaa et al., (2010: Cultural Trends, 19(3) p. 225-244) looked at regional attendance at theatre in the UK and found that attendance positively correlated with education and professional occupation categories. Lower education and socioeconomic status negatively impacted attendance. This project would investigate how promotional materials may discourage theatre attendance amongst individuals who do not typically attend theatre performances or who may perceive themselves as deficient in cultural capital. This dissertation topic would comprise of textual analyses of promotional materials (posters, reviews, etc.,). The main research questions would be “do current public relations activities primarily cater to the

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university-educated middle classes?” and if so, “how are these messages interpreted by those who members of this social group?”

Theatre could (if requested) be substituted for other performing arts, such as ballet, opera, etc., that are typically associated with predominantly university-educated middle class audiences.