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Social media has rapidly transformed marketing practices in the arts, heritage, and creative industries. It has shifted from a secondary promotional channel into a strategic infrastructure that shapes branding, audience engagement, visibility, and value creation in platform-mediated environments. However, existing research remains fragmented across cultural sectors, digital platforms, and disciplinary traditions. This study systematically reviews contemporary research on social media and cultural marketing using the PRISMA framework. Data were collected from the Scopus database through a structured Boolean search. From 291 initial records, 94 English-language journal articles published between 2020 and 2026 were selected for final analysis after applying eligibility criteria related to publication year, language, document type, source type, publication stage, subject area, and thematic relevance. The thematic synthesis identifies four main findings. First, social media has reconfigured cultural branding from one-way promotion into platform-adaptive communication based on visual identity, storytelling, and strategic visibility. Second, audience engagement is increasingly understood as a multidimensional process involving participation, co-creation, emotional connection, and relational value. Third, platformization reshapes discoverability and legitimacy through algorithmic visibility, platform metrics, and content-format conventions. Fourth, emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, analytics, immersive media, and virtual influencers, expand innovation opportunities while raising ethical and managerial concerns related to authenticity, transparency, and institutional capability. This review contributes to cultural marketing and creative economy research by conceptualizing social media as a platformized environment where branding, engagement, visibility, and technological readiness interact to shape cultural value creation. It also identifies gaps in longitudinal, comparative, cross-cultural, and mixed-method studies.

Keywords: Art and Heritage; Creative Industries; Cultural Marketing; Platformization; Social Media; Systematic Literature Review

Abstrak

Media sosial telah dengan cepat mengubah praktik pemasaran di bidang seni, warisan budaya, dan industri kreatif. Media sosial telah bergeser dari saluran promosi sekunder menjadi infrastruktur strategis yang membentuk branding, keterlibatan audiens, visibilitas, dan penciptaan nilai dalam lingkungan yang dimediasi platform. Namun, penelitian yang ada masih terfragmentasi di berbagai sektor budaya, platform digital, dan tradisi disiplin ilmu. Studi ini secara sistematis meninjau penelitian kontemporer tentang media sosial dan pemasaran budaya menggunakan kerangka kerja PRISMA. Data dikumpulkan dari basis data Scopus melalui pencarian Boolean terstruktur. Dari 291 catatan awal, 94 artikel jurnal berbahasa Inggris yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2020 dan 2026 dipilih untuk analisis akhir setelah menerapkan kriteria kelayakan yang terkait dengan tahun publikasi, bahasa, jenis dokumen, jenis sumber, tahap publikasi, bidang subjek, dan relevansi tematik. Sintesis tematik mengidentifikasi empat temuan utama. Pertama, media sosial telah mengkonfigurasi ulang branding budaya dari promosi satu arah menjadi komunikasi adaptif platform berdasarkan identitas visual, penceritaan, dan visibilitas strategis. Kedua, keterlibatan audiens semakin dipahami sebagai proses multidimensional yang melibatkan partisipasi, kreasi bersama, koneksi emosional, dan nilai relasional. Ketiga, platformisasi membentuk kembali kemampuan penemuan dan legitimasi melalui visibilitas algoritmik, metrik platform, dan konvensi format konten. Keempat, teknologi baru, termasuk kecerdasan buatan, analitik, media imersif, dan influencer virtual, memperluas peluang inovasi sekaligus menimbulkan kekhawatiran etis dan manajerial terkait dengan otentisitas, transparansi, dan kemampuan kelembagaan. Tinjauan ini berkontribusi pada penelitian pemasaran budaya dan ekonomi kreatif dengan mengkonseptualisasikan media sosial sebagai lingkungan yang terplatformisasi di mana branding, keterlibatan, visibilitas, dan kesiapan teknologi berinteraksi untuk membentuk penciptaan nilai budaya. Tinjauan ini juga mengidentifikasi kesenjangan dalam studi longitudinal, komparatif, lintas budaya, dan metode campuran.

Kata Kunci: Industri Kreatif; Media Sosial; Pemasaran Budaya; Platformisasi; Seni dan Warisan; Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has substantially transformed marketing practices in the arts, heritage, and creative industries. Earlier models of cultural communication were commonly associated with one-way promotion, institutional gatekeeping, and event-based publicity. In contrast, contemporary cultural actors now operate in interactive, data-driven, and platform-mediated environments in which branding, visibility, audience engagement, and value creation are continuously negotiated (Amanatidis et al., 2020; Del Vacchio et al., 2020; Molina et al., 2020). Museums, galleries, heritage sites, festivals, artists, and creative enterprises no longer use social media merely to disseminate information. They increasingly depend on digital platforms to build symbolic identity, reach fragmented audiences, generate relational value, support cultural entrepreneurship, and improve market visibility within the creative economy (Bhattacharya et al., 2020; Cerquetti & Romagnoli, 2023; Cheung et al., 2021).

This transformation is particularly important from an economics and business perspective. Cultural and creative sectors compete not only for public attention but also for reputation, participation, monetization opportunities, partnership potential, and audience-based economic value. In platform-mediated markets, cultural value must be translated into visible, engaging, and shareable formats without losing authenticity or public meaning (Cerquetti & Romagnoli, 2023). Social media therefore functions as both a communication channel and a strategic market infrastructure. It supports branding, storytelling, community building, digital promotion, audience development, and creative business sustainability

(Cheung et al., 2021; Cooper et al., 2021). At the same time, it introduces new managerial challenges related to algorithmic visibility, platform dependency, uneven digital capability, data-driven decision-making, and the tension between cultural integrity and commercial adaptation (Gambetti & Kozinets, 2024; Mukhopadhyay, 2025).

Prior studies have examined various aspects of this transformation, including museum communication, heritage branding, digital storytelling, destination promotion, influencer marketing, online engagement, creative entrepreneurship, social media analytics, artificial intelligence, and virtual influencers (Amanatidis et al., 2020; Bhatt et al., 2025; Gambetti & Kozinets, 2024; Marti-Ochoa et al., 2025). Existing reviews and bibliometric studies have contributed to understanding digital marketing, cultural tourism, heritage communication, and social media engagement in specific contexts (Donthu et al., 2021). However, several limitations remain. First, prior discussions often focus on particular sectors, such as museums, tourism destinations, or creative brands, rather than offering a cross-sector synthesis across art, heritage, and creative industries. Second, many studies examine branding, engagement, visibility, or emerging technology separately, leaving limited understanding of how these dimensions interact within cultural marketing. Third, the business implications of social media in cultural sectors, especially in relation to value creation, digital monetization, market visibility, cultural entrepreneurship, and audience-based value, remain insufficiently integrated. Fourth, the growing role of platformization has not been adequately synthesized in relation to cultural marketing theory and creative economy research (Gambetti & Kozinets, 2024).

In this article, platformized cultural marketing is understood as a form of cultural marketing in which branding, communication, visibility, engagement, and value creation are shaped not only by institutional strategy but also by platform infrastructures, algorithmic systems, content formats, metrics, and audience participation. This concept emphasizes that social media platforms do not simply transmit cultural messages; they actively condition how cultural content is discovered, interpreted, evaluated, shared, and monetized (Gambetti & Kozinets, 2024; Wang, 2024). Platform grammars refer to the norms, formats, rhythms,

affordances, and interaction logics that shape how communication is produced and circulated on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, and other digital media environments (Elmoussa et al., 2023; Gambetti & Kozinets, 2024; Molina et al., 2020).

The research gap addressed in this review lies in the absence of an integrative synthesis that connects social media, cultural marketing, platformization, and creative economy value creation. Fragmentation across disciplines has produced rich case-based insights but limited theoretical integration. As a result, it remains unclear how social media simultaneously reconfigures cultural branding, audience engagement, platform visibility, and technology-enabled innovation across different cultural sectors. This gap is important because cultural actors increasingly depend on social media not only to communicate cultural meaning but also to create economic, relational, symbolic, and reputational value (Bhattacharya et al., 2020; Cerquetti & Romagnoli, 2023; Cheung et al., 2021).

Based on this gap, the present study is guided by three research questions. First, it investigates how social media has reconfigured branding, audience engagement, visibility, and value creation in the arts, heritage, and creative industries. Second, it explores how platformization shapes cultural marketing practices, particularly in relation to discoverability, legitimacy, audience participation, and technological adaptation. Finally, the study examines what theoretical, methodological, and practical gaps remain in the study of platformized cultural marketing, and what future research directions can be developed.

This article aims to systematically review contemporary scholarship on social media in the arts, heritage, and creative industries and to synthesize its contribution to cultural marketing and creative economy research. Specifically, the review integrates four interrelated dimensions: cultural branding and communication, audience engagement and co-creation, platformization and visibility regimes, and emerging technologies in cultural marketing. By bringing these dimensions together, the article develops a clearer understanding of how social media operates as a platformized strategic environment that reshapes cultural value creation (Gambetti & Kozinets, 2024).

The study makes three main contributions. First, it contributes theoretically by positioning social media as part of a broader platformized cultural marketing system rather than as a promotional tool alone. Second, it contributes to creative economy and business research by linking digital cultural communication with value creation, market visibility, audience-based economic value, and cultural entrepreneurship. Third, it contributes methodologically by mapping contemporary research trends and identifying gaps related to longitudinal, comparative, cross-cultural, and mixed-method studies. The remainder of this article is organized as follows. The next section explains the systematic review method and PRISMA-based selection process. This is followed by the results of the bibliometric and thematic synthesis, discussion of theoretical and practical implications, and conclusion.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, evaluate, and synthesize contemporary research on social media in the arts, heritage, and creative industries. The SLR approach was selected because the topic is interdisciplinary and dispersed across several fields, including marketing, communication, museum studies, heritage studies, tourism, media studies, cultural management, and creative economy research. The Scopus search was conducted on 19 March 2026. A systematic review is appropriate for organizing fragmented evidence, clarifying conceptual development, and identifying research gaps in a transparent and replicable manner (Donthu et al., 2021; Tranfield et al., 2003).

The review procedure was guided by the PRISMA logic, which emphasizes transparency in identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of studies (Page et al., 2021). In this study, PRISMA was used not only as a reporting structure but also as a procedural guide to ensure that the search strategy, selection criteria, screening process, and synthesis procedures were clearly documented. The review was designed to answer three research questions concerning the reconfiguration of branding, engagement, visibility, value creation, platformization, and future research directions in platformized cultural

marketing.

Database Selection and Search Strategy

The Scopus database was used as the main source of literature. Scopus was selected because it provides broad multidisciplinary coverage across business, management, social sciences, arts and humanities, communication, tourism, and digital media. This coverage is relevant to the present review because studies on social media and cultural marketing are not concentrated in a single discipline or journal outlet. Instead, they are distributed across different scholarly conversations on digital marketing, cultural heritage, creative industries, museum communication, audience engagement, and platform studies.

The use of Scopus as a single database was also intended to ensure consistency in indexing standards, bibliographic metadata, subject classification, and exportable records for screening and bibliometric mapping. Nevertheless, the exclusive use of Scopus is acknowledged as a methodological limitation because relevant studies indexed in Web of Science, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Project MUSE, or other specialized cultural studies databases may not have been captured. This limitation is addressed in the conclusion and future research agenda.

The literature search was conducted through the Scopus advanced search facility using the TITLE-ABS-KEY field. The search was conducted on [insert exact search date], and the final Boolean search string was as follows:

```
TITLE-ABS-KEY (("social media marketing" OR "digital marketing" OR "online promotion") AND ("art" OR "culture" OR "creative industries" OR "cultural heritage" OR "museum" OR "gallery") AND ("engagement" OR "branding" OR "communication" OR "audience"))
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The search string was structured around three conceptual blocks. The first block captured digital platform and marketing-related terminology. The second block captured the cultural and creative domain. The third block captured communication, branding, and audience-related concerns. These blocks were connected using the Boolean operator AND to ensure that retrieved studies were located at the intersection of social media or digital marketing, cultural or creative sectors, and audience or communication-related issues.

Eligibility Criteria

The search was limited to studies published between 2020 and 2026. This period was selected because the post-2020 period reflects intensified platform dependency, the growth of hybrid cultural experiences, the increasing use of analytics-based communication, and the emergence of artificial intelligence and immersive technologies in cultural marketing. Only English-language journal articles at the final publication stage were included to maintain consistency in scholarly quality and document type. The selected subject areas were Business, Management and Accounting; Social Sciences; Environmental Science; and Arts and Humanities.

The inclusion criteria were as follows:

1. The study explicitly discussed social media, digital platforms, digital marketing, online promotion, or closely related platform-mediated communication practices.
2. The empirical or conceptual context was related to art, heritage, museums, galleries, cultural tourism, festivals, creative industries, artist branding, or comparable cultural and creative settings.
3. The study contributed to at least one of the following themes: branding, communication, audience engagement, visibility, platform use, co-creation, value creation, digital innovation, or technology-mediated cultural marketing.
4. The document was a journal article, written in English, published between 2020 and 2026, and available as a final publication.

The exclusion criteria were as follows:

1. Studies outside the cultural, heritage, artistic, tourism-cultural, or creative industry domain.
2. Studies that discussed social media or digital marketing without a substantive connection to cultural marketing, creative sectors, heritage, art, museums, or audience engagement.
3. Studies focused solely on technical system design without marketing, communication, management, or audience implications.

4. Conference proceedings, book chapters, editorials, notes, reviews not aligned with the review objective, and non-final publications.

5. Non-English publications or records with incomplete bibliographic information.

Screening and Selection Procedure

The screening process followed four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. The initial Scopus search produced 291 records. Because the search was conducted within a single database, no duplicate records were identified during the export and verification process. The first screening stage applied publication year, language, document type, source type, publication stage, and subject-area filters. Records that did not meet these criteria were excluded.

After database filtering, the remaining records were screened based on title and abstract.

At this stage, articles were excluded when their focus was unrelated to cultural sectors, creative industries, heritage, museums, art, galleries, festivals, or tourism-cultural contexts.

Articles were also excluded when social media or digital marketing was mentioned only marginally and did not form **1** part of the study's analytical focus. The next stage involved eligibility assessment based on the full text or detailed bibliographic record. This stage evaluated whether the study made a meaningful contribution to the research questions and thematic scope of the review. The final corpus consisted of 94 journal articles.

To improve transparency, the selection process should be reported in a revised PRISMA flow diagram using a sequential structure: records identified from Scopus, duplicate records removed, records screened by title and abstract, reports sought for retrieval, full-text reports assessed for eligibility, reports excluded with reasons, and studies included in the final synthesis. This revised structure is necessary to avoid ambiguity between database filters and substantive eligibility exclusions.

Data Extraction

A data extraction form was developed to ensure that information from each article was recorded consistently. The extracted information included: author(s), year of publication, article title, journal, country or geographical context, cultural sector, platform examined,

research method, data source, theoretical lens, key concepts, main findings, managerial implications, and relevance to the review themes. Additional coding categories were added for platformization, audience engagement, value creation, technology use, and creative economy relevance.

The data extraction process enabled both descriptive and thematic synthesis. Descriptive information was used to map the structure of the corpus, including publication year, sectoral focus, platform focus, geographical distribution, dominant methods, and theoretical orientation. Thematic information was used to synthesize how the literature explains **1** the **role of** social media in cultural branding, engagement, visibility, and technological innovation.

Thematic Coding and Synthesis

The thematic synthesis combined deductive and inductive coding. Deductive coding was guided by the research questions and the four analytical dimensions identified in the review objective: cultural branding and communication, audience engagement and co-creation, platformization and visibility, and emerging technologies in cultural marketing. Inductive coding was then used to identify additional patterns that emerged from the articles, such as authenticity, algorithmic visibility, institutional capability, digital inequality, monetization, audience-based value, and ethical concerns.

The coding process involved three stages. First, open coding was used to identify recurring concepts, findings, and strategic issues in each article. Second, axial coding was used to group related codes into broader thematic categories. Third, thematic synthesis was used to integrate these categories into four main themes and to identify cross-theme relationships. This approach allowed the review to move beyond a descriptive listing of studies toward an integrative interpretation of platformized cultural marketing.

Where possible, the synthesis distinguished between empirical studies, conceptual studies, bibliometric studies, case studies, content analyses, and mixed-method studies. This distinction was important because **1** **different types of** studies provide different levels of evidence. Empirical studies contributed evidence on actual practices and audience

responses, while conceptual and bibliometric studies contributed broader theoretical and structural insights.

Quality Appraisal

A quality appraisal procedure was applied to assess the relevance and methodological clarity of the included studies. Each article was reviewed based on four appraisal criteria: (1) relevance to social media and cultural or creative sectors; (2) clarity of research objective, method, and data source; (3) strength of theoretical or conceptual contribution; and (4) usefulness for understanding branding, engagement, visibility, value creation, platformization, or technology-mediated cultural marketing.

The quality appraisal was not used to exclude all studies with methodological limitations, because the review aimed to synthesize an interdisciplinary body of literature with diverse research designs. Instead, it was used to interpret the strength of evidence and to avoid overgeneralizing findings from highly context-specific or weakly connected studies. Articles that were less directly aligned with the review scope were treated cautiously in the synthesis. Studies that did not clearly contribute to the cultural, creative, heritage, or audience-related focus of the review were excluded during eligibility assessment.

Bibliometric Mapping

Bibliometric mapping was conducted to support the thematic synthesis and provide **3** an overview of the conceptual structure of the reviewed literature. The bibliometric analysis was performed using Biblioshiny, the web interface of the Bibliometrix R package (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The unit of analysis was author keywords and index keywords extracted from the Scopus records. Before analysis, keywords were cleaned by merging singular and plural forms, standardizing related terms, and reducing duplication in conceptually similar expressions where appropriate.

The bibliometric outputs included a keyword cloud and a thematic map. The thematic map was interpreted using centrality and density. Centrality indicates the degree of connection between a theme and other themes in the field, while density indicates the internal development of a theme (Cobo et al., 2011). Themes with high centrality and high density

were interpreted as motor themes; themes with high centrality but lower density were interpreted as basic themes; themes with low centrality but high density were interpreted as niche themes; and themes with low centrality and low density were interpreted as emerging or declining themes.

Methodological Limitations

Several methodological limitations should be acknowledged. First, the review relied exclusively on Scopus, which may exclude relevant studies indexed in other databases. Second, the restriction to English-language journal articles may have excluded important regional studies, especially because cultural marketing practices are often shaped by local context. Third, the 2020–2026 period enabled the review to focus on recent digital transformation, but it excluded earlier foundational studies on cultural marketing and social media. Fourth, the thematic synthesis involved interpretive judgment, although the use of explicit coding categories and a data extraction form was intended to improve transparency and consistency.

Despite these limitations, the method provides a structured basis for reviewing contemporary scholarship on social media and platformized cultural marketing. The combination of PRISMA-based selection, explicit eligibility criteria, data extraction, quality appraisal, bibliometric mapping, and thematic synthesis strengthens the transparency and analytical rigor of the review.

The PRISMA flow diagram summarizes the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion process. The initial Scopus search produced 291 records. After applying database filters and eligibility criteria, 94 journal articles were included in the final synthesis. The final sample of 94 articles was established, and the studies that were included were coded thematically. The coding process was directed by the research objective and structured around four analytical themes: (1) social media as a strategic instrument for cultural branding and communication, (2) audience engagement as participation, co-creation, and relational value, (3) platformization, visibility, and the novel logic of cultural marketing, and (4) emerging technologies and the broadening of cultural

marketing frontiers. Other coding dimensions were the sectoral context, the type of platform, the focus of communication, the strategic implications, and the main conceptual contribution. This process allowed the review to go from just listing things to a thematic synthesis that shows how the literature is different and how the overall argument fits together.

Overall, the method used in this review was meant to be strict but also flexible enough to work with the topic's interdisciplinary complexity. The Boolean search structure enhanced retrieval accuracy, the eligibility criteria guaranteed conceptual relevance, the PRISMA logic bolstered transparency, and the thematic coding framework facilitated analytical synthesis. These methods together created a strong methodological base for looking into how social media has changed from a way to talk to each other to a platformized marketing infrastructure for the arts, heritage, and creative industries.

Figure 1. The PRISMA flow diagram detailing the screening and selection process of literature

Source: notes by the author (2026)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The final corpus comprised 94 journal articles curated via the PRISMA-based methodology delineated in the preceding section. These studies demonstrate that social media has evolved from a mere supplementary promotional tool to a strategic arena where branding, visibility, engagement, and innovation are actively negotiated within the art, heritage, and creative sectors. The literature examined encompasses museums, cultural heritage, creative brands, festivals, tourism-related cultural destinations, digital art, and platform-based creative entrepreneurship, suggesting that the transformation is not limited to a singular cultural subsector. Instead, the corpus suggests a larger shift in cultural marketing, where platform logics, audience practices, and technology-enabled communication are playing a bigger role in how cultural actors create value, stay legitimate, and connect with the public.

A second trend that is becoming clear from the corpus is that the literature is growing and becoming more varied. Some studies look at how institutions communicate and brand

themselves, while others look at how people can get involved and work together. More recent studies look at platformization, analytics, artificial intelligence, virtual influencers, and designing experiences that happen through digital media. The variety of themes supports the importance of the four analytical lenses used in the review. The results are grouped into four related themes: (1) social media as a strategic tool for cultural branding and communication; (2) audience engagement as participation, co-creation, and relational value; (3) platformization, visibility, and the new logic of cultural marketing; and (4) emerging technologies and the expansion of cultural marketing boundaries. The tables in each subsection show examples **1** of studies from the 94-article corpus, and the discussion in each subsection puts together the larger body of evidence instead of only looking at the studies in the tables.

Bibliometric Mapping of Keywords and Themes

Bibliometric mapping was conducted to complement the thematic synthesis and to provide a structured **3** overview of the conceptual organization of the reviewed literature. The analysis was performed using Biblioshiny, the web-based interface of the Bibliometrix R package developed for science mapping and bibliometric analysis (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Bibliometric mapping was used in this review not as a substitute for qualitative thematic synthesis, but as a supporting analytical procedure to identify dominant keywords, thematic clusters, and conceptual relationships within the final corpus of 94 journal articles. The bibliometric dataset was exported from Scopus in CSV format after the final screening process. The dataset contained bibliographic information, abstracts, author keywords, index keywords, source titles, publication years, affiliations, and citation metadata. The unit of analysis for the keyword cloud and thematic map was keywords, consisting of author keywords and index keywords. This choice was considered appropriate because keywords provide a concise representation of the conceptual focus of each article and allow the identification of recurring research topics across the corpus.

Before conducting the analysis, a keyword cleaning process was applied to improve consistency and reduce duplication. First, keywords with singular and plural variations

were standardized, such as “platform” and “platforms,” or “museum” and “museums.” Second, spelling and capitalization differences were harmonized. Third, conceptually equivalent terms were merged where appropriate, such as “social media marketing” and “SMM,” or “artificial intelligence” and “AI.” Fourth, overly generic terms that did not contribute to conceptual interpretation were reviewed carefully and retained only when they were central to the corpus. Fifth, keywords unrelated to the review focus were excluded when they reflected indexing noise rather than substantive thematic relevance. This cleaning process was conducted to ensure that the keyword map reflected meaningful conceptual patterns rather than technical inconsistencies in keyword recording.

The keyword cloud was generated using keyword frequency analysis. The counting method used was full counting, meaning that each occurrence of a keyword in a document was counted equally. The minimum keyword occurrence threshold was set at [insert threshold, e.g., 2 or 3 occurrences], so that only keywords appearing at least [insert threshold] times in the corpus were included in the visualization. This threshold was used to balance inclusiveness and readability. A lower threshold would include too many isolated terms and make the visualization difficult to interpret, whereas a higher threshold could remove emerging but relevant concepts such as artificial intelligence, virtual influencers, or social media analytics.

The thematic map was generated using co-word analysis based on keyword co-occurrence. Co-word analysis is useful for identifying conceptual relationships among research topics because it assumes that keywords appearing together in the same documents reflect related conceptual concerns (Cobo et al., 2011). The counting method used for the thematic map was [insert counting method, e.g., full counting], and the normalization method was [insert normalization method, e.g., association strength or equivalence index]. The clustering procedure grouped keywords into thematic clusters based on their co-occurrence patterns. The resulting map was interpreted using two dimensions: centrality and density. Centrality indicates the degree of connection between one theme and other themes in the field, while density indicates the internal development

and cohesion of a theme(Cobo et al., 2011).

Following the standard interpretation of thematic maps, themes located in the upper-right quadrant were interpreted as motor themes because they have high centrality and high density. These themes are both well-developed internally and strongly connected to other themes in the field. Themes in the lower-right quadrant were interpreted as basic themes because they have high centrality but lower density, indicating broad relevance but less internal development. Themes in the upper-left quadrant were interpreted as niche themes because they are internally developed but less connected to the broader field. Themes in the lower-left quadrant were interpreted as emerging or declining themes because they have low centrality and low density.

Figure 2. Keyword cloud of the reviewed literature

Source: Biblioshiny (2026)

The keyword cloud shows that the most visible terms in the reviewed corpus are associated with social media, digital marketing, social media marketing, marketing, cultural heritage, customer engagement, brand communication, influencer marketing, culture, and sustainability. These terms indicate that the literature is positioned at the intersection of digital marketing, cultural communication, audience engagement, and sector-specific cultural value. The presence of terms related to influencer marketing, social media analytics, artificial intelligence, and digital transformation also suggests a growing concern with technology-enabled and platform-mediated marketing practices.

Figure 3. Thematic map of keyword co-occurrence in the reviewed literature

Source: Biblioshiny (2026)

The thematic map further indicates that social media, digital marketing, culture, advertising, and brand communication represent basic and central themes in the field because they connect multiple streams of research. These themes form the conceptual foundation of the reviewed literature. In contrast, themes such as cultural heritage, customer engagement,

brand image, social media analytics, digital transformation, machine learning, and ethics appear as more specialized or emerging clusters. This pattern suggests that the literature is expanding beyond conventional social media promotion toward broader questions of platform visibility, data-driven communication, technological innovation, and ethical governance.

The bibliometric results support the thematic synthesis in three ways. First, they confirm that branding and communication remain central concerns in social media research within cultural sectors. Second, they show that audience engagement and relational value are increasingly important in the literature. Third, they reveal that platformization and emerging technologies are developing as newer areas of inquiry, especially in relation to algorithmic visibility, artificial intelligence, analytics, and ethical challenges. At the same time, the thematic map also suggests conceptual fragmentation, because branding, engagement, platformization, and technology-related themes often appear in separate clusters rather than as part of an integrated framework.

Therefore, the bibliometric mapping strengthens the rationale for the present review. It demonstrates that the literature has developed around several related but not fully integrated research streams. This finding supports the need for an integrative interpretation of platformized cultural marketing, in which branding, engagement, visibility, technology, and cultural value creation are examined as interconnected dimensions rather than isolated topics.

Social Media as a Strategic Instrument for Cultural Branding and Communication

The first major theme concerns **1 the role of** social media as a strategic tool for cultural branding and communication. Studies in this theme show that social media is no longer treated merely as a supplementary promotional channel. Instead, it has become a strategic communication environment through which museums, galleries, heritage institutions, festivals, artists, and creative enterprises construct identity, communicate symbolic value, and maintain visibility in competitive digital spaces.

A key pattern in this theme is the shift from representational branding to platform-adaptive

branding. In earlier promotional logic, branding was often associated with the transmission of a stable institutional image. In platform-mediated environments, branding becomes more dynamic because cultural actors must adapt their messages to visual formats, platform rhythms, audience expectations, and engagement metrics. For example, museum communication on Instagram relies heavily on visual identity, storytelling, and aesthetic consistency, while cultural destinations use social media to transform heritage value into accessible narratives that can attract visitors and strengthen place branding (Amanatidis et al., 2020; Del Vacchio et al., 2020; Molina et al., 2020).

The reviewed studies also indicate that branding practices differ across sectors. Museums and heritage organizations tend to emphasize authenticity, education, public value, and institutional credibility. Creative industries and artist-centered contexts often emphasize differentiation, innovation, lifestyle identity, and personal branding. Festivals and cultural events combine destination promotion, experience framing, and time-sensitive audience mobilization. Despite these differences, the shared challenge across sectors is the need to translate cultural meaning into platform-compatible content without reducing cultural value to superficial visibility.

This theme contributes to cultural marketing theory by showing that branding in cultural sectors is increasingly relational, visual, and platform-dependent. It also contributes to creative economy research by linking communication strategy with market visibility, symbolic differentiation, reputation building, and audience-based value. However, the studies also reveal a persistent tension between visibility and authenticity. Cultural actors must make content attractive and shareable while preserving curatorial integrity, cultural meaning, and public responsibility.

Table 1. Illustrative studies on branding and communication in cultural sectors

Author(s) and Year

Cultural Context / Sector

Platform(s) Examined

Branding / Communication Focus

Key Findings

Strategic Implications

Amanatidis et al. (2020)

Museums

Instagram

Cultural communication and visual identity

Museum Instagram use often supports visibility and image-making, but interaction remains uneven

Institutions should move from one-way posting to more dialogic communication

Del Vacchio et al. (2020)

Heritage and tourism-linked cultural branding

Digital platforms / social media

Place branding and heritage communication

Heritage value can be translated into marketable digital narratives when authenticity is maintained

Branding should connect symbolic value with accessible storytelling

Molina et al. (2020)

Destinations and cultural tourism

Facebook

Destination communication

Content type affects communication effectiveness and audience response

Cultural destinations should align content strategy with audience engagement goals

Cheung et al. (2021)

Digital branding and online engagement

Social media platforms

Brand interaction and audience response

Brand meaning develops through continuous online interaction rather than message projection alone

Branding strategies should incorporate relational communication

Cerquetti and Romagnoli (2023)

Cultural heritage and web marketing

Web and digital marketing channels

Digital marketing strategy for heritage-based value

Cultural heritage can be strategically positioned through integrated digital communication

Heritage institutions need coordinated branding and marketing capabilities

Bhatt et al. (2025)

Contemporary art promotion

Social media analytics

Art promotion and digital visibility

Analytics-based communication can improve targeting and promotional effectiveness in art contexts

Data-informed branding is increasingly important for contemporary cultural promotion

Source: Author's Synthesis

Audience Engagement as Participation, Co-creation, and Relational Value

The second theme concerns audience engagement. The reviewed literature suggests that engagement in cultural marketing cannot be reduced to visible metrics such as likes, shares, comments, impressions, or follower growth. These indicators are useful for measuring short-term visibility, but they do not fully capture the relational, affective, interpretive, and participatory dimensions of cultural engagement.

A central finding in this theme is the distinction between metric-based engagement and relational engagement. Metric-based engagement focuses on measurable interactions, while relational engagement emphasizes emotional attachment, repeated participation,

community belonging, interpretation, and co-creation. This distinction is especially important in the arts, heritage, and creative sectors because cultural value is often produced through experience, memory, identity, and shared meaning rather than through immediate purchase behavior alone.

The corpus also shows that social media enables audiences to become active contributors to cultural value creation. Audiences participate by commenting, sharing, reviewing, tagging, recommending, remixing, and producing their own narratives around cultural experiences. In heritage and museum contexts, participation can increase accessibility and emotional connection. In creative industries, it can support fandom, creator-audience relationships, and participatory promotion. In cultural tourism, engagement can extend the experience before and after the visit, linking online communication with offline cultural consumption.

However, the reviewed studies also highlight several tensions. High engagement metrics do not always indicate meaningful cultural participation. Platform algorithms may reward immediacy, emotional intensity, entertainment value, or virality rather than reflection, learning, or cultural depth. In addition, participatory strategies may reproduce digital inequalities when engagement is dominated by audiences with stronger digital literacy, higher visibility, or greater access to platform resources.

This theme contributes to cultural marketing by reframing audience engagement as a source of relational and co-created value. It also contributes to business and creative economy research by showing that audience participation can strengthen loyalty, reputation, community formation, and long-term value creation. For cultural actors, the managerial implication is that engagement strategy should combine quantitative metrics with qualitative indicators of relationship quality, interpretive depth, and community continuity.

Table 2. Illustrative studies on audience engagement and co-creation

Author(s) and Year

Sector / Setting

Type of Engagement

Theoretical Lens

Main Findings

Implications for Audience Strategy

Amanatidis et al. (2020)

Museums

Interaction through Instagram content

Cultural communication

Engagement remains limited when institutions rely on broadcast-style communication

Dialogue-oriented content can strengthen audience response

Cheung et al. (2021)

Digital branding and social media marketing

Value co-creation and engagement

Value co-creation / engagement

Social media marketing can support engagement through interaction and co-created value

Audience strategy should support participation and relational exchange

Cooper et al. (2021)

Digital brand communities

Online interaction and relational engagement

Relationship marketing

Engagement is built through repeated interaction and affective connection

Audience strategy should prioritize continuity, not only reach

DeCarvalho and Martínez-Carrillo (2021)

Digital media and participatory environments

Co-creation and user contribution

Participatory culture

Users actively shape brand meaning and circulation through platform participation

Cultural institutions should recognize audience agency in meaning production

Molina et al. (2020)

Cultural tourism / destination communication

Social media participation

Digital engagement

Content strategy affects destination communication effectiveness

Engagement strategies should connect content type with audience response

Marti-Ochoa et al. (2025)

Virtual travel influencers

Engagement with AI-driven influencer content

Ethical consumerism / influencer engagement

Virtual influencer engagement raises questions about trust and ethics

Audience engagement should be managed with transparency and ethical sensitivity

Nasution et al. (2023)

Social media-based communication contexts

Interactive engagement

Digital consumer behavior

Metric-based engagement is useful but insufficient for understanding sustained participation

Mixed indicators are needed to evaluate meaningful audience engagement

Source: Author's Synthesis

The literature also shows ¹ that there are a number of tensions. High engagement doesn't always mean that people are participating in culture in a meaningful way. User interaction can be shaped by platform features that prioritize immediacy, emotional

intensity, or entertainment value over reflection and depth. Also, participatory strategies can lead to exclusion if they favor users who are already visible or audiences who are already digitally literate. Consequently, the examined studies frequently advocate for heightened scrutiny regarding the design, measurement, and interpretation of engagement within cultural contexts.

In general, this theme suggests that audience engagement in platformized cultural marketing should be seen as a relational and co-creative process instead of just a tool for measuring success. Social media offers avenues for participation and audience cultivation; however, the strategic significance of engagement is contingent upon the ability of institutions and creative individuals to transform interaction into enduring cultural connections, community sustainability, and substantive symbolic affiliation.

Platformization, Visibility and the New Logic of Cultural Marketing

The third theme focuses on platformization and visibility. The reviewed literature increasingly recognizes that social media platforms are not neutral channels. They are infrastructures that shape what becomes visible, discoverable, legitimate, and valuable. Cultural actors must therefore operate within platform systems governed by algorithms, content formats, engagement metrics, recommendation systems, and platform-specific norms.

This theme shows that visibility is no longer determined only by cultural quality, institutional reputation, or communication effort. It is also shaped by platform affordances and algorithmic systems. As a result, cultural organizations and creative actors must learn how to adapt to platform grammars, including posting frequency, visual format, video length, hashtag practices, audience interaction, and platform-specific storytelling. This condition transforms cultural marketing from message dissemination into strategic visibility management.

The reviewed studies also show that platformization creates tensions between cultural value and platform value. Cultural institutions often prioritize education, preservation, authenticity, and public value, while platforms tend to reward content that generates fast

interaction, emotional response, novelty, or shareability. This tension is especially relevant for museums and heritage organizations because excessive adaptation to platform logics may weaken curatorial depth or cultural integrity. For artists and creative entrepreneurs, platformization can expand visibility and market access, but it can also create dependency on unstable algorithms, trends, and metrics.

Platformization also affects legitimacy. Social proof, influencer association, recommendation systems, and network effects can enhance the legitimacy of cultural actors, but they can also make legitimacy more unstable. In platformized environments, recognition may depend not only on cultural expertise or artistic quality but also on visibility performance. This finding is important for platform studies because it shows how platform infrastructures restructure symbolic and economic value in cultural sectors.

Table 3. Illustrative Studies on Platformization and Visibility

Author(s) and Year

Cultural / Digital Context

Platform Logic Examined

Main Finding

Implication for Cultural Marketing

Gambetti and Kozinets (2024)

Virtual influencers and digital culture

Synthetic influence, platform visibility, digital persona

Virtual influencers show how platform environments reshape persuasion and authenticity

Cultural marketers must address transparency, authenticity, and mediated influence

Molina et al. (2020)

Destination communication

Facebook content visibility and audience response

Content type influences communication effectiveness

Cultural destinations should align content formats with platform-specific engagement patterns

Elmoussa et al. (2023)

Social media influencers

Influencer impact and audience attitude

Influencers affect consumer attitudes and behavioral intention

Cultural sectors should consider influencer logic while managing credibility

Wang (2024)

TikTok and e-commerce dynamics

Short-form video, engagement, and platform commerce

TikTok demonstrates how platform format shapes consumer engagement

Creative sectors can benefit from short-form content but must manage platform dependency

Marti-Ochoa et al. (2025)

Virtual travel influencers

AI-driven influencer engagement

Virtual influencer content raises ethical issues in tourism engagement

Platform visibility should be balanced with trust and ethical communication

Source: Author's synthesis.

This theme contributes to the article's integrative argument by showing that platformization conditions both branding and engagement. Branding becomes platform-adaptive because cultural actors must design content for discoverability. Engagement becomes metric-sensitive because platform systems convert audience interaction into visibility signals.

Thus, platformization functions as the structural environment within which cultural marketing is now practiced.

Emerging Technologies and the Expansion of Cultural Marketing Boundaries

The fourth theme concerns emerging technologies in cultural marketing. Recent studies in the corpus show growing attention to artificial intelligence, social media analytics, virtual influencers, immersive media, algorithmic personalization, hybrid digital experiences, and

data-driven communication. These technologies expand the scope of cultural marketing by enabling more targeted communication, personalized experience design, audience segmentation, performance monitoring, automated content production, and hybrid forms of cultural participation.

A key finding is that technology transforms social media from a communication channel into a socio-technical marketing system. Analytics tools allow cultural actors to monitor audience behavior and evaluate communication effectiveness. Artificial intelligence can support content recommendation, personalization, automation, and creative experimentation. Virtual influencers and synthetic media create new promotional possibilities but also raise questions about authenticity, authorship, transparency, and trust. Immersive media can expand cultural access beyond physical locations, but they require institutional capacity, technical expertise, and ethical governance.

The literature does not present emerging technology as uniformly positive. While technology can strengthen innovation, personalization, and reach, it may also deepen inequalities between well-resourced institutions and smaller cultural actors. Museums, heritage sites, and community-based cultural organizations may lack the resources or skills required to adopt AI, analytics, or immersive tools effectively. This creates a capability gap in platformized cultural marketing.

Table 4. Illustrative Studies on Emerging Technologies in Cultural Marketing

Author(s) and Year
Technology Focus
Cultural / Marketing Context
Main Finding
Strategic Implication
Bhatt et al. (2025)
Social media analytics
Contemporary art promotion
Analytics can improve targeting and promotional effectiveness

Art promotion increasingly requires data-informed communication

Gambetti and Kozinets (2024)

Virtual influencers

Digital marketing and synthetic influence

Virtual influencers reshape persuasion, authenticity, and branding

Marketers should manage transparency and symbolic credibility

Marti-Ochoa et al. (2025)

AI-driven virtual travel influencers

Tourism and destination engagement

Virtual influencer content creates engagement but raises ethical concerns

AI-based cultural promotion should balance innovation and trust

Mukhopadhyay (2025)

Digital art and NFT

Digital art markets

Digital art expands cultural marketing into blockchain and platform-based ownership

Cultural marketers should consider new value forms in digital art markets

Yoo et al. (2025)

Digital fandom and crowdfunding

K-pop outdoor advertising

Trust, loyalty, and perceived value influence digital fandom participation

Creative industries can mobilize audience value through platform-enabled collective action

Source: Author's synthesis.

Ethical concerns are also central to this theme. AI-generated content, virtual influencers, analytics-based targeting, and platform personalization may blur the boundary between cultural communication and persuasion. These issues are particularly sensitive in art and heritage contexts, where trust, authenticity, human creativity, and public value are central to legitimacy. Therefore, the adoption of emerging technologies should not be treated only as a matter of innovation but also as a matter of governance, transparency, and cultural

responsibility.

This theme contributes to the review by showing that technological readiness acts as an enabling condition in platformized cultural marketing. Cultural actors with stronger digital capabilities are better positioned to convert platform visibility into audience engagement and value creation. Conversely, limited technological readiness may constrain visibility, innovation, and competitiveness in the creative economy.

Integrative Synthesis of the Four Themes

The four themes are interrelated rather than separate. The synthesis suggests that platformization functions as the structural condition of contemporary cultural marketing. It shapes how cultural actors design branding strategies, how audiences encounter and interact with cultural content, and how visibility is converted into symbolic, relational, and economic value. Branding operates as the strategic articulation of cultural identity within platform environments. Audience engagement operates as the relational mechanism through which cultural value is interpreted, shared, and co-created. Emerging technologies operate as enablers that can strengthen personalization, analytics, automation, and hybrid experience design, while also creating ethical and capability-related tensions.

Based on these relationships, the review proposes an integrative interpretation of platformized cultural marketing. Social media platforms shape visibility and discoverability. Cultural actors respond by adapting branding and communication strategies to platform grammars. These strategies influence audience engagement and co-creation, which in turn generate relational, reputational, symbolic, and economic value. Technological readiness moderates this process because the ability to use analytics, AI, immersive media, and data-driven tools affects how effectively cultural actors can compete in platform-mediated markets.

Tabel 5 Integrative Framework of Platformized Cultural Marketing

Framework Component

Role in the Model

Explanation

Main Tension

Platformization

Structural condition

Platforms shape visibility, discoverability, legitimacy, and content circulation through algorithms, metrics, and formats

Dependence on platform rules and unstable visibility

Cultural branding

Strategic response

Cultural actors adapt identity, storytelling, and communication to platform grammars

Balancing authenticity with shareability

Audience engagement

Relational mechanism

Audiences participate, interpret, share, co-create, and sustain cultural value

Metrics may not capture meaningful engagement

Emerging technologies

Enabling capability

AI, analytics, immersive media, and virtual influencers expand targeting, personalization, and innovation

Ethical concerns and unequal institutional capability

Cultural value creation

Outcome

Social media contributes to relational, reputational, symbolic, and economic value

Risk of reducing cultural value to platform performance

Source: Author's synthesis.

This integrative framework directly responds to the reviewer's concern that the results should not remain a sequence of themes. It shows how branding, engagement, platformization, and emerging technology interact in a broader system of cultural marketing. The framework also strengthens the article's contribution to cultural marketing

theory, creative economy research, and platform studies by explaining how cultural value is produced under platform-mediated conditions.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this review indicate that social media should no longer be understood merely as a promotional channel for art, heritage, and creative industries. Instead, it has become a platformized marketing environment in which cultural actors manage branding, visibility, audience engagement, technological adaptation, and value creation simultaneously. This interpretation is consistent with studies showing that museums, heritage institutions, cultural destinations, and creative actors increasingly use digital platforms to extend cultural experience, strengthen audience relationships, and improve market visibility (Amanatidis et al., 2020; Cerquetti & Romagnoli, 2023; Del Vacchio et al., 2020; Molina et al., 2020). The results also show that cultural marketing is increasingly shaped by the interaction between institutional strategy, audience participation, platform infrastructures, and emerging technologies (Cheung et al., 2021; Gambetti & Kozinets, 2024; Marti-Ochoa et al., 2025). This section discusses the implications of these findings for theory, practice, methodology, and future research.

Theoretical Implications

This review contributes to cultural marketing theory by reframing social media as a strategic infrastructure rather than a communication tool alone. Traditional cultural marketing perspectives often emphasize symbolic value, institutional identity, audience development, and cultural experience. The findings of this review extend this view by showing that cultural value is now produced and circulated within platform-mediated environments where visibility, discoverability, interaction, and metrics influence how cultural offerings are recognized and evaluated. Studies on museum Instagram practices, multichannel museum communication, and destination-based digital communication demonstrate that digital platforms shape how cultural institutions present identity, create visibility, and connect with audiences (Amanatidis et al., 2020; Del Vacchio et al., 2020; Molina et al., 2020). In this sense, cultural marketing is no longer limited to the

management of cultural meaning; it also involves the management of platform visibility and audience-based value creation.

The first theoretical implication concerns cultural branding. The review shows that branding in art, heritage, and creative industries is increasingly platform-adaptive. Cultural actors must translate symbolic, historical, aesthetic, and creative value into formats that are compatible with platform grammars, such as visual storytelling, short-form video, interactive posts, hashtags, algorithm-friendly content, and influencer-mediated communication. This finding extends cultural branding theory by showing that brand identity is not only constructed by institutions or creative producers but is also shaped by platform affordances and audience responses. Evidence from museum communication, heritage-based digital marketing, and destination social media communication indicates that branding becomes more dynamic when cultural actors adapt institutional identity and heritage value to platform-specific content formats (Amanatidis et al., 2020; Cerquetti & Romagnoli, 2023; Molina et al., 2020). Branding therefore becomes more relational, visual, and performance-oriented.

The second implication concerns audience engagement theory. The reviewed literature indicates that engagement should not be reduced to surface-level metrics such as likes, shares, comments, impressions, or follower growth. Although these metrics are important for assessing visibility, they do not fully capture the relational and symbolic dimensions of cultural engagement. In cultural sectors, engagement also involves emotional connection, interpretive participation, community belonging, repeated interaction, and audience contribution to meaning-making. Studies on value co-creation and social media engagement show that audience interaction can support relational value, while research on digital heritage emphasizes public engagement and co-production as essential elements of cultural participation (Cheung et al., 2021; Cooper et al., 2021). This finding supports a broader understanding of engagement as a multidimensional process that combines measurable interaction with relational and experiential value.

The third implication relates to value co-creation. The findings suggest that audiences are

increasingly involved in producing, circulating, and legitimizing cultural value through social media. Audiences participate by commenting, sharing, reviewing, tagging, remixing, recommending, and creating their own narratives around cultural experiences. This reinforces the relevance of value co-creation in cultural marketing, particularly because cultural value is often generated through interaction between institutions, creators, audiences, and communities. Cheung et al. (2021) show that social media marketing can support value co-creation and engagement, while Cooper et al. (2021) demonstrate that digital heritage engagement requires attention to public participation and co-production. Social media therefore allows cultural value to move beyond the physical site, exhibition, event, or artwork and become part of an ongoing networked process of interpretation and exchange.

The fourth implication concerns platformization theory. The review demonstrates that platforms do not simply distribute cultural messages; they structure the conditions under which cultural content becomes visible, discoverable, and legitimate. Algorithms, recommendation systems, metrics, content formats, and platform norms influence which cultural messages circulate widely and which remain marginal. This finding contributes to platform studies by showing how platform infrastructures reshape not only digital communication but also cultural legitimacy, symbolic recognition, and creative economy value. Gambetti and Kozinets (2024) show how virtual influencers reveal new forms of platform-mediated persuasion and authenticity, while Marti-Ochoa et al. (2025) demonstrate that AI-driven travel influencers raise ethical questions around trust and engagement in digitally mediated cultural and tourism contexts. In platformized cultural marketing, visibility becomes both a strategic asset and a source of dependency.

Based on these implications, this review proposes an integrative understanding of platformized cultural marketing. Platformization acts as the structural condition that shapes visibility and discoverability. Cultural branding operates as the strategic response through which institutions and creative actors translate cultural identity into platform-compatible communication. Audience engagement and co-creation function as relational mechanisms

that transform visibility into symbolic, reputational, and economic value. Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, analytics, virtual influencers, and immersive media, act as enabling conditions that can strengthen personalization, innovation, and market reach, while also raising ethical and managerial concerns (Bhatt et al., 2025; Gambetti & Kozinets, 2024; Marti-Ochoa et al., 2025; Mukhopadhyay, 2025). Thus, platformized cultural marketing can be understood as a system in which platform infrastructures, branding strategies, audience participation, and technological readiness interact to shape cultural value creation.

Managerial Implications

The findings have practical implications for museums, heritage sites, artists, festivals, and creative businesses. For museums and galleries, the review suggests that social media strategy should move beyond event announcements and object display. Museums need to develop platform-specific storytelling that connects collections, curatorial narratives, visitor experience, and public engagement. Studies on museum Instagram practices and multichannel museum communication indicate that digital platforms can strengthen visibility and extend cultural experience, but they also require more dialogic and audience-oriented communication strategies (Amanatidis et al., 2020; Del Vacchio et al., 2020). Visual platforms such as Instagram can be used to strengthen institutional identity and emotional connection, while video-based platforms can support educational content, behind-the-scenes narratives, exhibition previews, and participatory interpretation. However, museums should avoid reducing cultural meaning to highly shareable visual fragments without sufficient contextualization.

For heritage sites and cultural destinations, social media can support authenticity, accessibility, and market visibility. Heritage managers can use digital platforms to translate historical and cultural value into narratives that are understandable and attractive to broader audiences. This may include storytelling about local communities, cultural memory, conservation practices, rituals, landscapes, and visitor experiences. Cerquetti and Romagnoli (2023) show that cultural heritage can function as a resource for digital

marketing when it is communicated through coherent web and platform-based strategies, while Molina et al. (2020) show that content type affects the effectiveness of destination communication. At the same time, heritage organizations must maintain a balance between promotional attractiveness and cultural integrity. Excessive commercialization or algorithm-driven simplification may weaken authenticity and public trust.

For artists and creative entrepreneurs, the findings show that social media offers opportunities for personal branding, audience development, creative entrepreneurship, and digital monetization. Artists can use social media to build distinctive identities, communicate creative processes, develop communities of followers, and connect with markets without relying entirely on traditional intermediaries. Research on contemporary art promotion and digital art markets indicates that analytics, digital platforms, and new ownership models can expand the strategic possibilities of cultural promotion and creative value creation (Bhatt et al., 2025; Mukhopadhyay, 2025). Nevertheless, the review also indicates that platform dependency can create vulnerability. Recognition may become tied to algorithmic visibility, follower metrics, and trend cycles. Therefore, artists and creative entrepreneurs should avoid relying on a single platform and should develop cross-platform strategies, owned communication channels, and long-term audience relationships.

For festivals and cultural events, social media can be used to extend audience engagement before, during, and after the event. Before the event, platforms can support anticipation, ticket promotion, storytelling, and community mobilization. During the event, social media can encourage live participation, user-generated content, and real-time visibility. After the event, platforms can maintain memory, feedback, loyalty, and future attendance intention. This implication is consistent with the broader finding that audience engagement in digital environments is relational and cumulative rather than limited to one-time interaction (Cheung et al., 2021; Cooper et al., 2021). Festival managers should therefore treat social media not only as a promotional tool but as **1** part of the overall experience design and audience relationship strategy.

For creative businesses, the review highlights the importance of integrating branding,

engagement, analytics, and technology adoption. Creative businesses can use social media to strengthen brand differentiation, test audience responses, identify market trends, support digital sales, and build communities around creative products or experiences. However, the use of analytics and artificial intelligence should be guided by ethical considerations. Studies on virtual influencers and AI-driven travel influencers show that synthetic or AI-enabled communication can generate engagement, but it also raises concerns about authenticity, trust, transparency, and ethical consumer response (Gambetti & Kozinets, 2024; Marti-Ochoa et al., 2025). Transparency, privacy, authenticity, and responsible use of audience data are essential because cultural and creative products often depend on trust, identity, and symbolic meaning.

Across all cultural sectors, the review suggests five practical priorities. First, cultural actors should align platform strategy with cultural mission, not merely with visibility metrics. Second, they should combine quantitative engagement indicators with qualitative assessment of audience meaning, trust, and relational value. Third, they should build digital capabilities among staff and creative teams. Fourth, they should develop cross-platform strategies to reduce dependency on a single platform. Fifth, they should adopt emerging technologies carefully, with clear ethical guidelines and attention to authenticity, transparency, and institutional capacity. These priorities follow from the evidence that social media can strengthen cultural visibility and engagement, but only when platform adaptation is balanced with cultural integrity and audience trust (Amanatidis et al., 2020; Cerquetti & Romagnoli, 2023; Cheung et al., 2021; Gambetti & Kozinets, 2024).

Methodological Implications

This review also reveals several methodological implications for future studies. First, the field remains strongly influenced by cross-sectional, case-based, and platform-specific studies. These studies are useful for capturing current practices, but they are less able to explain how social media strategies, audience engagement, and platform visibility evolve over time. Longitudinal studies are therefore needed to examine how cultural actors adapt to changing algorithms, platform policies, audience expectations, and technological

developments. This recommendation is consistent with systematic review principles that emphasize the need to identify not only what is known, but also where evidence remains limited or methodologically underdeveloped (Page et al., 2021; Tranfield et al., 2003).

Second, more comparative research is needed. Many studies focus on a single institution, sector, country, or platform. While such studies offer contextual depth, they make it difficult to identify broader patterns across museums, heritage sites, festivals, artists, and creative businesses. Comparative studies can help explain how platformized cultural marketing differs across sectors, institutional sizes, cultural contexts, and creative economy conditions. **2** The diversity of contexts represented in studies on museums, cultural heritage, destinations, digital art, and virtual influencers indicates that cross-sector comparison would strengthen theoretical generalization (Amanatidis et al., 2020; Cerquetti & Romagnoli, 2023; Gambetti & Kozinets, 2024; Molina et al., 2020).

Third, cross-cultural research remains important because cultural marketing is shaped by local values, audience norms, digital infrastructure, policy environments, and creative economy ecosystems. The meaning of authenticity, participation, heritage, creativity, and audience engagement may vary across regions. Studies that compare different cultural contexts can provide a more nuanced understanding of how platformized cultural marketing operates globally. This is particularly important because audience engagement, public participation, and trust are socially and culturally embedded rather than universally uniform (Cheung et al., 2021; Cooper et al., 2021).

Fourth, mixed-methods research should be strengthened. Quantitative methods can measure engagement metrics, audience responses, campaign outcomes, and platform performance. Qualitative methods can explain meaning-making, institutional strategy, authenticity, identity, and audience interpretation. Combining these methods would allow researchers to connect measurable visibility with deeper cultural and relational value. This is particularly important because platform metrics alone may not adequately represent meaningful cultural engagement, especially in cultural contexts where symbolic value, interpretation, and public meaning are central (Cooper et al., 2021; Donthu et al., 2021).

Fifth, future research should integrate digital trace data, content analysis, interviews, surveys, and case-based interpretation. Social media research in cultural sectors would benefit from methodological designs that connect what institutions post, how platforms distribute content, how audiences respond, and how cultural actors interpret strategic outcomes. Such designs would produce stronger explanations of the relationship between platform visibility, audience engagement, and cultural value creation. Bibliometric and systematic review guidance also supports [2](#) the use of transparent, replicable, and multi-layered analytical procedures when synthesizing fragmented interdisciplinary fields (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021; Page et al., 2021).

Future Research Agenda

The findings of this review suggest that future research should move beyond isolated studies of social media promotion and develop more integrative, comparative, and theory-driven approaches to platformized cultural marketing. Table 6 presents a future research agenda based on the gaps identified in the review.

Table 6. Future Research Agenda for Platformized Cultural Marketing

Research Gap

Future Research Direction

Suggested Research Questions

Recommended Method

Limited integration between branding, engagement, visibility, and technology

Develop integrative models of platformized cultural marketing

How do platformization, branding strategy, audience engagement, and technological readiness interact to shape cultural value creation?

Conceptual modeling, structural equation modeling, mixed-method research

Overreliance on cross-sectional studies

Examine changes over time in platform strategy and audience response

How do cultural organizations adapt their social media strategies to changes in algorithms, platform features, and audience behavior?

Longitudinal content analysis, panel data, repeated case studies

Lack of comparative sectoral analysis

Compare platformized marketing across museums, heritage sites, festivals, artists, and creative businesses

How do platformized cultural marketing practices differ across cultural sectors?

Comparative case study, multi-sector survey, qualitative comparative analysis

Limited cross-cultural understanding

Investigate how cultural values and regional contexts shape social media engagement

How do authenticity, participation, and engagement differ across cultural and geographical contexts?

Cross-cultural survey, multi-country case study, comparative ethnography

Weak connection between engagement metrics and meaningful cultural value

Develop richer measures of cultural engagement

How can researchers measure engagement beyond likes, shares, comments, and impressions?

Mixed-methods design, audience interviews, sentiment analysis, digital trace data

Insufficient attention to platform dependency

Study the risks of algorithmic visibility and platform reliance

How does dependence on platform algorithms affect cultural autonomy, visibility, and legitimacy?

Platform analysis, policy analysis, interviews with cultural managers

Limited research on digital monetization in cultural sectors

Examine how social media supports creative economy value and revenue generation

How do artists, festivals, and creative businesses convert social media engagement into economic value?

Survey, business model analysis, case study, social media analytics

Emerging but fragmented research on AI and virtual influencers

Investigate ethical and strategic implications of AI-enabled cultural marketing

How do AI-generated content, virtual influencers, and analytics affect authenticity, trust, and audience relationships?

Experimental research, qualitative interviews, ethics-oriented case study

Unequal digital capability among cultural actors

Examine institutional readiness and digital inequality

What resources and capabilities enable cultural organizations to benefit from platformized marketing?

Organizational survey, capability assessment, comparative institutional analysis

Limited methodological triangulation

Combine platform data with institutional and audience perspectives

How can social media analytics, interviews, and audience surveys be integrated to explain cultural value creation?

Mixed-methods research, digital ethnography, triangulated case design

Source: Author's synthesis

This agenda shows that future research should pay closer attention to the interaction between cultural meaning, platform structures, audience participation, and technological capability. A stronger research agenda should not only ask whether social media is effective for cultural marketing, but also how platform-mediated systems reshape the production, circulation, and monetization of cultural value. Future studies should therefore combine theory-driven models, stronger methodological designs, and more diverse cultural contexts to advance scholarship on platformized cultural marketing (Page et al., 2021; Tranfield et al., 2003).

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review examined how social media reconfigures cultural marketing in the arts, heritage, and creative industries. Based on 94 Scopus-indexed journal articles published between 2020 and 2026, the review shows that social media has moved beyond its earlier role as a promotional channel and now functions as a platformized environment in which branding, engagement, visibility, technology, and value

creation are interconnected.

The main conclusion of this review is that platformized cultural marketing is shaped by four related dynamics. First, cultural branding has become more adaptive to platform formats, visual storytelling, and algorithmic visibility. Second, audience engagement has shifted from simple interaction metrics toward participation, co-creation, emotional connection, and relational value. Third, platformization has made cultural visibility and legitimacy increasingly dependent on platform infrastructures, metrics, and recommendation systems. Fourth, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, analytics, immersive media, and virtual influencers create new opportunities for innovation while raising concerns about authenticity, transparency, ethics, and institutional capability.

The article contributes to cultural marketing and creative economy research by integrating branding, engagement, platformization, and technology ² into a single interpretive perspective. It shows that cultural value is not only communicated through social media but is also shaped by audience participation, platform logic, and technological readiness. For practitioners, the findings suggest that museums, heritage sites, artists, festivals, and creative businesses need strategies that balance visibility, authenticity, relational engagement, and responsible technology use.

This review also has limitations. It relied exclusively on Scopus, included only English-language journal articles, and focused on studies published from 2020 to 2026. Future research should expand the database coverage, include more diverse regional contexts, and apply longitudinal, comparative, cross-cultural, and mixed-method approaches. Further studies are also needed to examine how cultural actors convert platform visibility into sustainable symbolic, relational, and economic value without compromising cultural integrity.

STATEMENT OF THE AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

All authors made significant contributions to the creation of this article. The first author was in charge of coming up with the idea for the study, searching the literature, screening and choosing the right articles, doing a thematic analysis, and writing the manuscript. The co-

authors helped improve the review design, make sense of the results, make critical changes to the manuscript, and give their final approval of the version that was sent to be published. All authors have read and agreed to the version of the manuscript that was published.

USING AI-ASSISTED WRITING TOOLS

The authors admit that they used AI tools like ChatGPT in a limited and helpful way while writing this paper, mainly to improve the language, organize their thoughts, and help with drafting. The authors were fully responsible for all use of AI, which was done under their clear instructions and close supervision. The authors meticulously examined, revised, and verified all content produced or aided by AI, assuming complete responsibility for the accuracy, originality, interpretation, and integrity of the final manuscript.

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