

# Culture, heritage and tourism as study fields for communication: a systematic review of recent Hispanic literature

***Cultura, patrimonio y turismo como campos de estudio para la comunicación: una revisión sistemática de la literatura hispánica reciente***

***Cultura, patrimônio e turismo como campos de estudo da comunicação: uma revisão sistemática da literatura hispânica recente***

# 3

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## Valeriano Piñeiro-Naval

University of Beira Interior

Valeriano Piñeiro-Naval is an European Doctor in Audiovisual Communication by the University of Salamanca. Currently, he is part of the *LabCom – Communication and Arts* of the University of Beira Interior, where he uses a national postdoctoral grant from the *Foundation for Science and Technology* (Ref. SFRH/BPD/122402/2016) of Portugal.

vale.naval@labcom.ubi.pt  
orcid.org/0000-0001-9521-3364

## Ricardo Morais

University of Beira Interior

Ricardo Morais is a Doctor in Communication Sciences and Master in Journalism from the University of Beira Interior, where he works as an assistant professor in the Faculty of Arts and Letters teaching the subjects of radio and television journalism. He is also an integrated member of the *LabCom – Communication and Arts*.

ricardo.morais@labcom.ubi.pt  
orcid.org/0000-0001-8827-0299

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## Abstract

Interdisciplinary communication research with very diverse thematic interests has grown exponentially. The purpose of this study is to observe the space they occupy and how the fields of culture, heritage and tourism are addressed in the articles published in the main Hispanic communication journals during the 2013-2017 period. Methodologically, the techniques of bibliometry and meta-research were combined to address aspects such as authorship or financing of studies and identify the objects of study, theories or methodologies used in the 120 manuscripts that formed the sample.

## KEYWORDS

Culture, Heritage, Tourism, Research, Communication.

## Resumen

*La investigación en comunicación, de naturaleza interdisciplinaria y con intereses temáticos muy diversos, ha crecido exponencialmente. El propósito del estudio radica, pues, en observar qué espacio ocupan y cómo son abordados los campos de la cultura, el patrimonio y el turismo en los artículos publicados en las principales revistas hispánicas de comunicación durante el quinquenio 2013-2017. Metodológicamente, se combinaron las técnicas de la bibliometría y la meta-investigación*

*para abordar, así, aspectos como la autoría o la financiación de los trabajos, e identificar los objetos de estudio, las teorías o las metodologías empleadas en los 120 manuscritos que conformaron la muestra.*

## PALABRAS CLAVE

*Cultura, Patrimonio, Turismo, Investigación, Comunicación.*

## Resumo

*A pesquisa em comunicação, de natureza interdisciplinar e com interesses temáticos muito diversos, cresceu exponencialmente. O objetivo do estudo é, portanto, observar que espaço eles ocupam e como os campos da cultura, patrimônio e turismo são abordados nos artigos publicados nas principais revistas de comunicação hispânicas durante o período de cinco anos 2013-2017. Metodologicamente, as técnicas de bibliometria e meta-pesquisa foram combinadas para abordar, também, aspectos como autoria ou financiamento de obras e identificar os objetos de estudo, teorias ou metodologias utilizadas nos 120 manuscritos que formaram a amostra.*

## PALARAS-CHAVE

*Cultura, Patrimônio, Turismo, Pesquisa, Comunicação.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, it is possible to affirm that research in the area of communication has experienced high growth (Fernández-Quijada and Masip, 2013), especially if it is compared with other disciplines belonging to the field of social and human sciences. This development has taken place in parallel with that of the “network society” (Castells, 2006), increasingly conditio-

ned by the “Internet galaxy” (Castells, 2001) and by the use of the Information and Communication Technologies – hereinafter, ICT – that have become the leading agents of the 21st century. In the opinion of Marinho and Vicente-Mariño (2018), the continuous and accelerated social and technological transformations have moved communication studies to a prominent place in the scientific aspect worldwide.

Another reason that motivates this circumstance lies in its interdisciplinary nature, resulting from a permanent intersection and feedback with other academic disciplines such as anthropology, economic sciences, political sciences, psychology or sociology (Pfau, 2008). In addition to highlighting its intrinsic interdisciplinary nature, it is analyzed by experts both from the perspective of integration (Wallerstein, 2005; de-la-Peza, 2013) and fragmentation (Craig, 2008; Calhoun, 2011). It is necessary to underline another very attractive characteristic that studies in this area bring together: their particular multidisciplinary nature, since the potential they exhibit to be articulated with other epistemological domains is practically unlimited.

If it is true that this double nature - interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary - helps to understand the importance that scientific literature in communication has acquired, it also allows us to notice the many challenges it faces, since it can and should contribute both to the analysis and to the understanding and reflection of some of the central issues of today's society. It is in this complex scenario where this initiative is located, whose main purpose is to observe what space it occupies and how the fields of culture, heritage and tourism are addressed in the articles published in the main communication journals at the Hispanic level.

## 1.1 STATE OF THE ART

Although the number of studies where the association between these three fields and communication has increased, we cannot ignore the fact that this approach is, as a general rule, recent and of uneven origin. Before continuing with this brief review of the state of the art, it is clear that we do not consider delving into an exhaustive characterization of its domains. However, it is necessary to clarify that, as far as culture is concerned, it is conceived as "a set of

ideas - values, attitudes, and beliefs -, practices - of cultural production - and artifacts - cultural products, texts -" (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 369). In this context, the notion of culture has always been closer to communicative research, especially if we consider a specific sense of the term: one that explores the creation, dissemination and interpretation of messages with certain cultural meanings.

Both heritage and tourism are closely related to each other and represent newer niches for informational studies. Probably, the pioneers in watching the encounter between communication and tourism were Boyer and Viallon (1994), who pointed out the multiple labels that the tourist phenomenon presented at that time at the multidisciplinary level; among them: "idle behavior" from psychology, "consumerism" from economics, "elitism" from anthropology or sociology, "evolution of post-industrial society" from history, or "migratory phenomenon" from geography. Along these same lines, Marujo (2012) affirms that the complexity of tourism from a cultural, economic, political and social point of view exceeds the borders of a single field of knowledge, highlighting the need to deepen its communicational aspect.

It is convenient to emphasize that when we refer to any of these realities, we are referring to complex and multidimensional concepts, that is, "constructs". Regarding tourism, Osorio (2016) recalls that "types of tourism respond to different and diverse activities with respect to relationships with the environment and people (...) This makes approaching tourism as a discipline requires different methodological and theoretical tools" (p. 288). As for heritage, it allows us to discuss the links between the past and the present, providing us with historical depth in a changing world (Bessière, 1998). At the typological level, "it can be natural - relating to an environmental ecosystem -, or cultural -

pertaining to the social and human context -, and cultural heritage in turn can be tangible or intangible" (Piñeiro-Naval, Igartua and Rodríguez-de-Dios, 2018, p. 2).

This heterogeneous dimension of the notions of culture, heritage and tourism contributed to the development of academic initiatives where all three are connected. As Marujo (2015) argues, during the 1990s there was a great emergence in the observation of synergies and dysfunctions between them. This current of research materialized in the creation of specialized scientific journals, which generated "a wide bibliographic production that includes epistemological analyzes, case studies, theoretical approaches and a great critical mass that provide the basis for initiating a scientific dialogue on the relationship between tourism, culture and nature" (Osorio, 2016, p. 286).

Together, these academic coordinates allow us to warn the emergence and profusion of multiple scientific documents that deal with the interrelation between culture, heritage and tourism in the current information society. As Carvalho (2018) expresses, "the advent of new information and communication technologies expanded not only interest, mediation and dissemination of heritage, but also boosted the growth and transformation of tourism activity" (p. 28) and, we might add, cultural.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Academic production on a subject is considered to act as a reliable symptom of the attractiveness it generates in the scientific community (Pérez-Montoro, 2016). Consequently, the goal of this project was to document the research related to the fields of culture, heritage and tourism, published during the 2013-2017 pe-

riod in the main Hispanic communication journals. Based on the main purpose, the following specific objectives were raised:

- O<sub>1</sub>: describe the production from the bibliometric point of view.
- O<sub>2</sub>: identify the elements that organize this work at a theoretical and methodological level.
- O<sub>3</sub>: compare the fields of Spanish and Latin American publication.

Two techniques such as bibliometry and meta-research were combined, "a quantitative descriptive method linked to the techniques of content analysis, specially designed to investigate how the "format" of a scientific article is organized as a means of communication and dissemination among specialized audiences" (Saperas and Carrasco-Campos, 2019, p. 222). This methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2012, 2015) allowed addressing aspects such as authorship or financing of articles – bibliometric items – and identifying the objects of study, theories or methodologies used in the publications of the sample. With what criteria was this sample designed? It was designed according to a multi-stage plan (Neuendorf, 2016) organized in different phases.

Initially, Spanish and Latin American journals with the highest impact index in 2017 were selected, these were present in the international database of *Scimago Journal & Country Rank* in the communication category<sup>1</sup>. It was stipulated that the journals had to appear in the first two quartiles to be considered of impact, which generated a total of 7 headers: *Comunicar*, *El Profesional de la Información*, *Communication & Society*, *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*,

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, access the following link: <http://bit.ly/2rc6ELb>.

*Cuadernos.info, Comunicación y Sociedad* and, finally, *Palabra Clave*. Likewise, a five-year period was reversed until 2013 to make a cross-section with a certain chronological perspective.

Once the journals that acted as data collection units were identified, the next step consisted of downloading and storing all the documents available on the journals' websites, except for editorials and reviews. This procedure generated a total of:  $N = 1548$  articles (Piñeiro-Naval and Morais, 2019). After their exhaustive examination,  $n = 120$  publications were mentioned and referred to any of these fields: culture, heritage and/or tourism. A data that constituted 7.75% of the total.

## 2.1. ANALYSIS AND PROCEDURE VARIABLES

To undertake the objectives, an analysis procedure was designed inspired by similar empirical initiatives (Caffarel-Serra, Ortega-Mohedano and Gaitán-Moya, 2017; Goyanes, Rodríguez-Gómez and Rosique-Cedillo, 2018; López-Bonilla, Granados-Perea and López-Bonilla, 2018; Martínez-Nicolás, Saperas and Carrasco-Campos, 2019; Piñeiro-Naval and Mangana, 2018, 2019; Walter, Cody and Ball-Rokeach, 2018). The following variables were contemplated:

A total of 17 items were treated: 4 basic identification items, 5 bibliometric items and 8 analytical-operational items, whose response options will be detailed in the results section. Note that the values of items 3 and 4 were extracted as independent variables from the *Scimago Journal & Country Rank* repository, which facilitated their subsequent crossing with the data obtained here.

Finally, it should be clarified that a team of two analysts participated in the coding process, precisely the authors of this manuscript. After

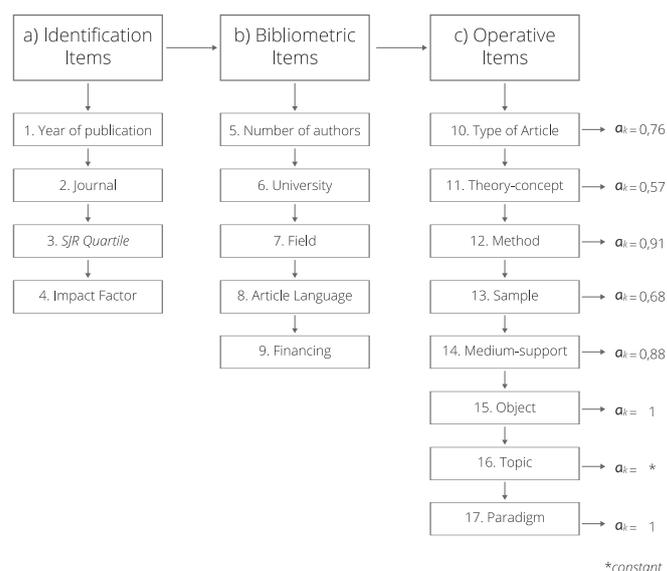


Figure 1. Scheme of the analysis items.

this process, a random subsample of 10% of the cases ( $n = 12$ ) that both coders analyzed were selected to check the reliability of their work. The parameter used to calculate the reliability was the "Krippendorff's Alpha" (Krippendorff, 2004, 2011, 2017), found using the "macro Kalpha" (Hayes and Krippendorff, 2007) for SPSS, version 24. The average reliability of the 8 operating variables were satisfactory:  $M(\alpha_i) = 0.83$  ( $SD = 0.16$ ), see Figure 1.

## 3. RESULTS

First, the timeline shown in Figure 2 reflects the annual evolution of both the average of published articles and their impact factor:

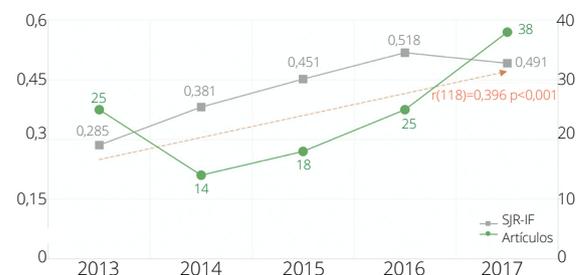
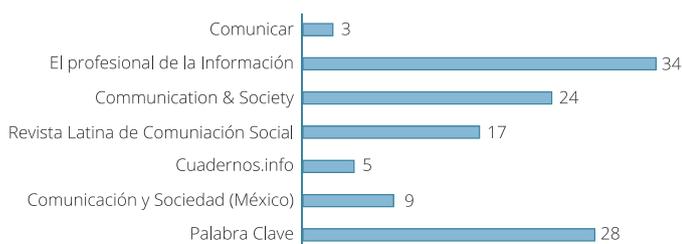


Figure 2. Timeline with the annual evaluation of the articles and their impact.

As of 2014, there is a constant increase in the number of manuscripts published annually, whose average amounts to:  $M_{articles} = 24$  ( $SD = 8.17$ ); as well as its impact factor ( $M_{SJR-IF} = 0.435$ ,  $SD = 0.201$ ). In 2017, there was a slight decrease compared to the previous year. Similarly, the correlation that occurs between both parameters is statistically significant [ $r(118) = 0.396$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ], which shows that the more publications, the more impact academic production gets. It should also be said that this production is usually indexed in the first quartiles of the SJR ranking: 9.2% of the articles in the first quartile, 76.7% in the second, 7.5% in the third and 2.5% in the fourth. Finally, only 4.2% of the publications were not indexed in that year. The sample of 120 publications is distributed as follows according to the identified journals:



**Figure 3.** Number of documents according to the selected journals (frequencies).

The most active headers in the dissemination of manuscripts related to culture, heritage and tourism in the Hispanic sphere are *El Profesional de la Información* from Spain and *Palabra Clave* at the Latin American level. As regards the universities of the authors, a total of 71 were identified, among which the following stand out:

Universities	Articles
Universidad Pompeu Fabra	6
Universidad Complutense de Madrid	5
Universidad Carlos III de Madrid	4
Universidad de Santiago de Compostela	4
Universidad Rovira i Virgili	4
Universidad de Chile	3
Universidad de Navarra	3
Universidad del País Vasco	3
Universidad Internacional de La Rioja	3
Total	35

**Table 1.** Most prolific universities.

These 9 institutions, all of them Spanish except for one Chilean, represent only 12% of the total number of universities identified but account for 29% of the publications. If we continue to profile authorship, we find that their average amounts to:  $M_{authors} = 1.8$  ( $SD = 0.93$ ). This data correlates with the impact factor [ $r(118) = 0.158$ ,  $p = 0.085$ ], although only tendentially. For this reason, it could not be asserted that a greater number of authors necessarily leads to a greater impact of the works. The field<sup>2</sup> to which they usually subscribe is communication (60%), followed by library and documentation (9.2%) and language and literature (8.3%). However, a lot of interdisciplinarity is perceived, as can be seen in the following table:

<sup>2</sup> The authors' field, when not explicit, was inferred from the affiliation data to a specific department or faculty.

Field	%	Field	%
Communication	60 <sup>3</sup>	Interdisciplinary <sup>1</sup>	3,3
Library and Documentation	9,2	Geography and History	2,5
Language and literature	8,3	Marketing	1,7
Advertising and Public Relations	5	Psychology	1,7
Art and Design	4,2	Education and Pedagogy	0,8
Journalism	3,3	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2.** Disciplines to which the authors belong

The languages in which the articles are written have the following distribution: 41.7% in Spanish, 30% in Spanish and English and 25% in English only. These data show the clear will of editors and authors to internationalize the academic production, since 55% of publications in Hispanic impact journals are available in English. From the bibliometric point of view, the latest data has to do with the extra funding of the research, present in only 33.3% of the documents. On the other hand, there is a statistically significant correlation between having extra financing and the impact factor [ $r(118) = 0.203, p = 0.026$ ], this will increase as researchers have more resources for projects.

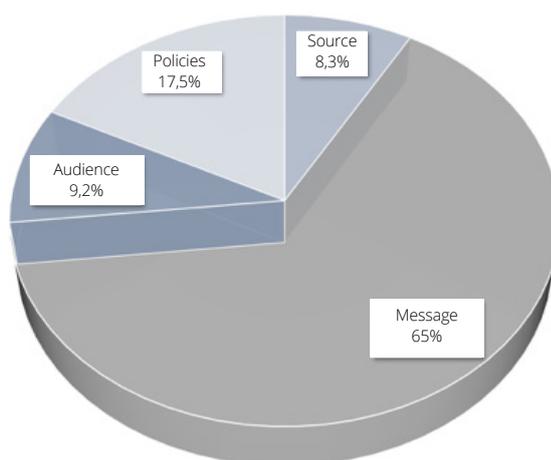
At the analytical-operational level, the publications are usually empirical (75.8%) or theoretical-essayist (20%). Proposals that focus on the explanation of a methodology barely reach 4.2%. Table 3 includes both theories and concepts and the methods used:

Theories / Concepts	%	Methods	%
Narrative-cinematic theories	14,2	Case study	25,8
Cultural Studies	9,2	Discourse Analysis	10
SCR / Branding	5	Content Analysis	6,7
Transmedia	4,2	Survey	5
Web Design Concepts	3,3	Heuristic Analysis	5
Web 2.0	3,3	Methodological Triangulation	5
Social Identity Theories	1,7	Economic analysis	4,2
Media Literacy	1,7	Bibliometric Analysis	3,3
Infotainment / Politainment	1,7	Interview	2,5
Theory of Uses and Gratifications	0,8	Automated Content Analysis	1,7
Media Ecology	0,8	Experiment	0,8
Engagement	0,8	Delphi method	0,8
Others	1,6	Others	5
Does not use theoretical framework	51,7	It is not an empirical work	24,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

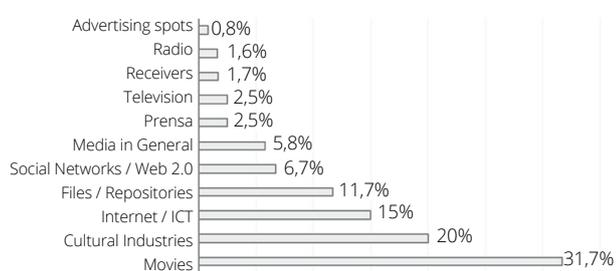
**Table 3.** Theories, concepts and methods used (%).

<sup>3</sup> The "interdisciplinary" category addresses cases in which there are several authors and all of them belong to fields clearly differentiated from each other.

As can be seen, the most used theories have to do with the construction of cinematographic narration (14.2%) and cultural studies (9.2%). Although it is striking that more than half of the manuscripts (51.6%) do not appeal to any kind of conceptual apparatus. On the other hand, the most recurrent methods are the case study (25.8%) and the discourse analysis (10%). If we divide them into qualitative (62.6%) and quantitative (37.4%), we immediately notice the prevalence of the first versus the second. The type of sample used in those empirical items (remember, 75.8% of the total) is commonly non-probabilistic (65.8%) versus probabilistic (10%). The main media are shown in figure 4:



**Figure 5.** Study objects addressed in the publications (%)



**Figure 4.** Media protagonists of the investigation (%)

Movies and series, as well as the rest of the cultural industries, are the most recurring media. Their total represented more than half of the documents (51.7%). The objects of study, in their broadest sense, serve the following percentage distribution:

The message (65%) is, without discussion, the protagonist of academic production versed in culture, heritage and tourism. It is followed very far by the policies (17.5%) of the communication linked to these areas. In what proportion each one of the subjects is attended? The following table shows the percentages related to these thematic domains, together with the epistemological paradigms to which the 120 publications observed adhere:

General topics	%	Paradigms	%
Culture	55	Positivist	34,2
Heritage	22,5	Cultural	33,3
Tourism	9,2	Rhetorical	24,2
Interrelation	13,3	Critical	8,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.** General topics and epistemological paradigms (%)

Culture is the subject that attracts the most attention from researchers (55%), while the positivist (34.2%) and cultural paradigm (33.3%) are practically tied. Finally, it is of great interest to outline the type of publications that are disseminated in both Spanish and Latin American journals:

Comparative Parameters	% Total	Origin of the Journals	
		Spain	Latin America
Type of publication:			
Empirical	75,8	82,1+	64,3-
Theoretical-essayists	20	12,8-	33,3+
Methodological	4,2	5,1	2,4
Theoretical-conceptual support:			
Does not have	51,7	53,8	47,6
Does have	48,3	46,2	52,4
Research Methods: <sup>4</sup>			
Quantitative	37,4	46,9+	14,8-
Qualitative	62,6	53,1-	85,2+
General topics:			
Culture	55	42,3-	78,6+
Heritage	22,5	32,1+	4,8-
Tourism	9,2	11,5	4,8
Interrelation	13,3	14,1	11,9
Epistemological paradigms:			
Positivist	34,2	44,9+	14,3-
Cultural	33,3	32,1	35,7
Critical	8,3	7,7	9,5

4 To create the "research methods" comparison variable, governed by a nominal scale where: 1 = quantitative and 2 = qualitative, the original "methods" variable that was initially governed by a multi-categorical nominal scale had to be recoded, see Table 3.

Rhetorical	24,2	15,4-	40,5+
Publication Financing:			
No financing	66,7	60,3-	78,6+
With financing	33,3	39,7+	21,4-
<b>N</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>42</b>

**Table 5.** Comparison of headers based on their geographical origin (% per column).

Note: - Statistically lower value (analysis of corrected standardized residue) + Statistically higher value (analysis of corrected standardized residue)

Based on the data reflected in Table 5, Spanish journals are the ones that publish the most empirical works compared to Latin Americans, most represented by theoretical-essayist proposals [ $\chi^2(2, N = 120) = 7.37, p = 0.025, v = 0.248$ ]. From the point of view of the conceptual substrate, there are no statistically significant differences between the articles of some headers and others [ $\chi^2(1, N = 120) = 0.424, p = 0.515, v = 0.059$ ]. At a methodological level, there is a greater use of quantitative methods in publications from Spanish journals and qualitative methods in Latin American journals [ $\chi^2(1, N = 120) = 8.34, p = 0.004, v = 0.303$ ]. In turn, they usually contain a smaller proportion of studies with extra funding compared to their Spanish counterparts [ $\chi^2(1, N = 120) = 4.12, p = 0.042, v = 0.185$ ]. Regarding the topics, Spanish publications generate greater production around heritage, while Latin Americans focus more on cultural issues. [ $\chi^2(3, N = 120) = 17.03, p < 0.001, v = 0.377$ ]. Finally, the paradigms also show remarkable contrasts. Positivist paradigms prevail in Spanish journals and in rhetoric are more common on Latin American journals [ $\chi^2(3, N = 120) = 14.80, p = 0.002, v = 0.351$ ].

Finally, the average impact factor also indicates statistically significant differences [ $t(118) = 9.06, p < 0.001, d = 1.78$ ], since the 4 headers

of Spain ( $M_{SJR-IF} = 0.53$ ,  $SD = 0.16$ ) surpass in this aspect the 3 Latin American ( $M_{SJR-IF} = 0.26$ ,  $SD = 0.13$ ); and they do it through a "high" effect size (Cohen, 1988; Johnson *et al.*, 2008).

## 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

To be more clearly interpretable, the main ideas that emerge from the data collected are described below.

At the bibliometric level, the total number of documents identified about culture, heritage and tourism amounted to 120, that is, around 8% of the total publications included in the magazines of the sample in the five years analyzed. This means a corpus that is not negligible if we stick to the multidisciplinary nature of scientific literature in communication, which causes a great thematic dispersion. The trajectory of this production is ascending, which confirms an increasing interest on the part of the academic community. This interest also translates into a high impact, although it is true that it experiences a slight setback in the last year analyzed: 2017. These considerations should be interpreted with caution because the present analysis is not longitudinal but transverse, so it would be necessary to observe a longer time period to indicate evolutionary trends more reliably. On the other hand, the universities to which the most prolific authors belong are located in Madrid and Barcelona, the two academic poles of reference at the national level. The co-authorship does not reach on average the two authors, although it is true that there is a very remarkable interdisciplinarity. According to Table 2, a dozen areas of belonging and a fairly high internationalization were identified through the use of English. There is also a lack of extra funding for these types of initiatives, an absolutely negligible aspect if we take into ac-

count the association between resources and impact: the more the first increases, the more the second will do.

From an analytical point of view, it is worth mentioning that there are many empirical works about cinema and other cultural industries, where the message is the object of the main study. The most recurrent theories have to do, precisely, with the construction and analysis of cinematographic narratives and the tradition of cultural studies. It is necessary to verify that no specific conceptual apparatus is used in more than half of the articles, which constitutes a weakness that should be corrected. The case study and discourse analysis prevail with regard to methods, that is, qualitative techniques. This causes that the samples also tend to lack probabilistic criteria for their design, since they conform more to a convenience model. Although the positivist paradigm is predominant, both cultural and rhetorical are very close to it. Likewise, culture as a general theme is reaffirmed in its position of primacy with respect to heritage and tourism. Recall that in this sense, it was already anticipated in the section of the state of the art that culture has always been closer to communicative research than the other two domains.

In addition to outlining a global portrait of scientific production, another objective was to establish comparisons. Spanish magazines, among which *El Profesional de la Información* stands out, publish more manuscripts on audiovisual heritage, museum archives and digital humanities. They are mostly empirical and positivist, where quantitative methods prevail. These investigations that exhibit a high impact index also tend to have extra funding with greater assiduity. Latin American magazines, among which *Palabra Clave* stands out, refer more to issues related to cultural industries and multicultural movements. They rely on the rhetorical

or the qualitative empirical paradigm for the approach to publications of a theoretical-essayist profile. These documents have a lower impact index compared to their Spanish counterparts and a lower trend of additional financing.

Finally, it is necessary to insist on the inter and multidisciplinary nature of communication research. The variety of approaches and thematic richness are, without doubt, two strengths of this type of publications. However, it would be convenient for them to appeal to more robust theories or concepts. At the methodological level, it would be interesting to explore quantitative techniques, especially if we look at the particularities that digital society entails from the perspective of (hyper) abundance of data. These can be studied thanks to techniques such as automated content analysis or network analysis. It would also be important to analyze the capital role that users play in the current media world, whose peculiarities are observable thanks to surveys or experiments. This would cause the message and the receiver to share the protagonism in a more balanced way and, consequently, that diversity remains the predominant note in the field of communication, intimately related to culture, heritage and tourism. de la comunicación, íntimamente relacionado con la cultura, el patrimonio y el turismo.

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