

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING POLISH IDENTITY IN THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

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Abstract

The survey research study described in this article was launched in Fall 2018 to assess the determinants of Polish identity among first and second-generation American born individuals of Polish descendant -- the generation first born in the United States whose parent(s) was/were born in Poland -or- the second generation born in the United States whose grandparent(s) was/were born in Poland and whose parent(s) was/were born in the United States. The study took place in the northeastern United States. The article begins with a brief literature review on the subject followed by a description of the research methods used, findings that pertain to a target audience, and a strategy for promoting Polish identity with this target audience. This strategy should prove useful to Polish cultural organizations in the northeastern United States (and perhaps elsewhere) in their efforts to develop programming that successfully promotes Polish identity with their audiences.

Key words: *Promoting Polish Culture, Polish Cultural Organizations, Survey Research, Northeast United States*

INTRODUCTION

The survey research study described in this article was launched in Fall 2018 to assess the determinants of Polish identity among first and second-generation American born individuals of Polish descent -- the generation first born in the United States whose parent(s) was/were born in Poland -or- the second generation born in the United States whose grandparent(s) was/were born in Poland and whose parent(s) was/were born in the United States. The study took place in the northeastern United States. The article begins with a brief literature review on the subject followed by a description of the research methods used, findings that pertain to a target audience, and a strategy for promoting Polish identity with this target audience. This strategy should prove useful to Polish cultural organizations in the northeastern United States (and perhaps elsewhere) in their efforts to develop programming that successfully promotes Polish identity with their audiences.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration patterns have changed to the extent that a smaller percentage of people are living in their birth country now than at any other time in history [Esses, Medianu, Hamilton, & Lapshina 2015]. The number of immigrants worldwide reached 258 million in 2017, with the United States hosting the largest number of immigrants at approximately 50 million [United Nations 2017]. In Canada, it is projected that by 2031 almost half of the country's inhabitants will have a foreign-born parent or be foreign-born [Statistics Canada 2011].

Moving to a foreign country generally necessitates some level of acculturation that inevitably alters a person's original cultural identity [Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik 2010]. Glinka and Brzozowska (2015) describe changes in cultural identity as "the process through which immigrants define their place and role in a host society, make sense of themselves and their actions" [Glinka & Brzozowska: 53-54]. Gone, Miller and Rappaport (1999) describe changes in cultural identity as a negotiation process in which immigrants face two competing reactions: a) cultural conservation, the level of importance attached to an immigrant's native identity and its preservation, and b) intercultural interaction, the extent to which immigrants learn and appropriate aspects of the host culture [Berry 2001]. Ellis and Chen [2013] suggest that an immigrant's identity negotiation is influenced by their level of interaction with the new community, their age at the time of immigration, feelings of fitting in, and the difference between their native cultural values and the values of the new community [Ellis & Chen 2013].

According to the 2017 United States Census Bureau, more than 9 million people (about 2.77% of the population) living in the country reported having Polish ancestry. Since World War II, the cultural identity of these Polish-Americans has been influenced by a steadfast devotion to religion and a specific style of social interaction reflected by the communities where they choose to reside, family customs, language, food and music [Swastek 1944]. It still is.

For many Polish immigrants in the United States, the parish Catholic church has meant more than a place to exhibit religious devotion. It has been a communal epicenter for the support and development of every stage of their lives. Children taught at parish schools in Polish neighborhoods often receive considerable instruction about Polish language and customs. The objective is to preserve their identity, culture, and religious values [Matten 2014]. Lewandowska (2008), who

studied the identity of second generation Poles born in Great Britain, found that Polish cultural identity was effectively preserved and transmitted by the Polish church, especially with children attending Saturday School where they were educated on Polish language, history, geography, and cultural traditions. The same influence of the Saturday Schools is evident among Polish immigrants in the United States.

Many Polish immigrants tend to live in Polish neighborhoods initially where the maintenance of their cultural identity is facilitated. These immigrant communities are “an urban village, a face-to-face/day-to-day world of kinship and friendship [with] common values, attitudes, language, and traditions” [Bukowczyk 1987: 35]. Later, once they begin to assimilate more fully into the American culture, many move out of these neighborhoods into suburban areas that are more multi-cultural. Underrepresentation of one’s cultural background in these new communities affects the degree they may hold on to their cultural identity. When a group feels ethnically underrepresented they often try to fit in with what they perceive as the majority culture. Under these circumstances their original ethnic traditions, language, and cultural values may begin to wane [Puloka 2010]. However, Poles, compared to many other ethnic groups, tend to have more friends that share their ancestry resulting in the “popular opinion that Polish-Americans are clannish” [Rokicki 2000: 91]. Even after they move to the more multicultural suburbs, Poles still tend to “visit the core communities for ethnic foods and shopping, Polish language church services, Saturday Polish schools for their children and cultural programs and events” [Jaroszynska-Kirchmann 2011: 108]. This helps keep their Polish identity alive.

Glebocki (2012) states that the geographical location of Polonia is not a determinant of intensity of connection to Polish roots or to Poland, what is important is their connection through family ties, the Internet, and the Polish language publications and media. Though the role of the Polish language press in strengthening Polish identity has shrunk considerably over time in the United States, online blogs and discussion forums, websites, and social media allow many immigrants to maintain social, economic and political interests with colleagues, friends and family in Poland on a daily basis. In addition, ease of travel allows many to live transnational lives. This certainly helps to strengthen their sense of Polish ethnicity.

Rokicki’s (2000) found that, among Polish immigrants, the “family home is a crucial factor that shapes an individual’s cultural identity. Home is a place [where] traditions, ceremonies, symbols, and values are assimilated through intentional or accidental learning and imitation of behaviors” [Lewandowska 2008: 214]. Women are particularly important in this regard. “Immigrant women in general are considered the guardians of ethnicity and religion within families and the main transmitters of ethnic culture to young generations” [Jaroszynska-Kirchmann 2011: 104]. Parents who are firmly engrained in their natal country’s cultural values tend to raise their children acknowledging their Polish background and language. Parents whose ties to Polish have diminished, are less apt to do so. Marrying outside ones ethnicity or religion is a strong predictor of cultural assimilation. Yet, “the preference for Polish (or at least Roman Catholic) spouses remains consistently high [among younger Polish-Americans]” [Jaroszynska-Kirchmann 2011: 110].

Temple’s (2010) found that Poles consider speaking their language a vital part of being Polish. The Polish language is seen as an instrument not just for communicating, but as helping to “differentiate between “us” and “others” in terms

of values” [Temple 2010: 301]. In Brazil where the use of the Polish language was forbidden for a time by the state, the clandestine use of the language changed it from being just a means of communication to more of a shared symbol of pride in their heritage [Juergensmeyer, 2018]. Miodunka’s (2003) found that immigrants who use the Polish language within social or organizational settings are much more apt to spread ancestral traditions, values, and identity among young generations. Yet, Puloka’s (2010) study about cultural changes in first and second-generation immigrants coming to America, found that developing a bicultural identity is contingent on being fluent in both country’s languages. Immigrants to the United States feel pressured to learn English and adopt American customs. They sometimes sense negative perceptions that U.S. born native English speakers have towards multilingualism. Immigrant parents often feel pressure to downplay the importance of their children learning the Polish language. This can quickly precipitate an erosion of their original cultural identity.

American consumerism has greatly influenced the culture of Polish immigrants. Kasprzak (2011) noted that American clothing styles are often quickly adopted and buying an American car is often seen as a sign of prosperity for Polish immigrants. Yet, Polish immigrants seem to resist assimilating American food habits to some degree. They may use readily available ingredients, but they tend to maintain an affinity for traditional Polish dishes [Kasprzak 2011]. In addition, many Polish immigrants tend to maintain their liking of traditional polka music. According to Jackson (2004) “Polka music possess a special power to promote Polish Americanness” [Jackson 2004: 64]. The lyrics often promote Polish heritage and highlight traditional values having to do with love and marriage.

As discussed above, the preservation of their cultural identity as Poles among Polish immigrants to the United States is influenced by (among other things) their devotion to religion, the communities where they choose to reside, intermarriage, the ease of online communication and travel, the women in the household, family customs, language, and the food they choose to eat and music they chose to listen to. It is well known that moving to a new country inevitably alters a person’s original cultural identity and practices. Polish cultural identity among Polish immigrants to the United States prior to the 1980s was thought to be a struggle to maintain in the face of mainstream American melting pot acculturation pressures. It still is. Yet, since the 1980s a new wave of Polish immigrants including post-Solidarity exiles and young professionals started arriving in the United States. Some of these immigrants have higher socio-economic status than previous Polish immigrants. This allows them to mix more smoothly in American society. These individuals also tend to have “a firm focus on the homeland, follow events there, and react to crises through social and political mobilization” [Jaroszynska-Kirchmann 2011: 107].

As stated earlier, the process of maintaining one’s cultural identity is affected by a) the level of importance an immigrant assigns to preserving their native identity and b) the extent they adopt aspects of the host culture [Gone, Miller & Rappaport 1999]. It is a blend of these two competing processes that will help create an immigrant’s cultural self-image going forward. The issue today may not be preservation of one’s cultural identity in a pure sense. The objective may be to find ways to help cultivate what Herbert Gans (1979) referred to as “symbolic ethnicity” reflected by “practices involving nostalgic and simplified representation of the ethnic past; selective celebration of certain rituals of passage or ethnic holidays;

consumption of ethnic foods, support for ethnic politicians, and interest in support of the Old Country [Jaroszynska-Kirchmann 2015: 198].

The level of importance a Polish immigrant to the United States assigns to preserving their native cultural identity can be influenced by the myriad Polish cultural organizations in operation today. Helping these organizations to develop programming that successfully promotes Polish identity with their audiences is important. Understanding who their primary target audiences are, what programming will best match their audiences' interests, what persuasive messages will best resonate with these audiences, who might be considered the most credible sources of information with these audiences, and how best to deliver information to them are key components necessary for developing an effective promotional strategy [Tyson 2017].

2. SURVEY RESEARCH METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

Participants were first and second-generation American born individuals of Polish descent - the generation first born in the United States whose parent(s) was/were born in Poland -or- the second generation born in the United States whose grandparent(s) was/were born in Poland and whose parent(s) was/were born in the United States. A sample frame comprised of members from five Polish cultural organizations was used for the survey. The survey was administered online through SurveyMonkey.com. The survey was sent via email with an introductory statement to a) 380 Central Connecticut State University students who had taken courses in the past in the university's Polish Studies Program, b) 80 members of The Polish American Congress Connecticut Division, c) 142 members of The Polish American Foundation of Connecticut, d) 100 members of The Kosciuszko Foundation New England Chapter, and e) 350 members of The Polish Genealogical Society of the Northeast – for a total of 1052 people. A reminder email was sent one week later. A notice about the survey was also posted on the Facebook page of The Polish Genealogical Society of the Northeast. A reminder post was placed one week later. In all instances, recipients were instructed to share the link to the survey with other first and second American born individuals of Polish descent living in the northeast United States. Recipients were instructed to click on a web address that took them immediately to the survey questionnaire. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. It was available for two weeks from October 8-22, 2018. Completed surveys numbered 603.

It needs to be noted that though sampling procedures and the size of the respondent sample for the survey would indicate that findings could be generalized to Polish cultural organizations in the northeast U.S., the fact that 69.7% of survey respondents were female and their average age was 64.5 indicates there is some bias in the sample. The fact that the average age of the sample was somewhat high, probably indicates that few college age students in the sample frame responded to the survey. With college students removed, membership in the other four organizations was 55% female and 68% were above age 60 indicating sampling bias is of less concern at least concerning age. As subsequent analyses show, the target audience, those who identify with their Polish heritage “a great deal” and put at least “a lot” of emphasis on the importance of their Polish heritage with children they have/raise, consists of 75.7% women with an average age is 63.1. In terms of gender and age, though the analysis procedures allowed for younger age and less women in the target audience, analyses indicate that the most effective group to

target is very similar to those that responded to the survey; i.e., women over age 60. These are the ones most apt to respond to the survey. They are also the ones most apt to respond positively to messages promoting Polish ethnicity.

3. THE TARGET AUDIENCE

An effective promotional strategy nearly always begins by defining a target audience. Once the target audiences is identified, programming that best matches their interests, persuasive messages that best resonate with their thinking, sources of communication they consider most credible, and methods for delivering information they most prefer can be identified. The overall promotional strategy is much more apt to achieve its objectives when it is uniquely tailored to a specific audience segment. It follows that the more narrowly defined the audience segment, the more targeted a promotional strategy can be and the more likely that strategy is to achieve its objectives. Yet, fewer people are reached as the focus narrows. The challenge is to seek a large enough group so there will be a significant impact, yet a narrow enough focus so that you will realize results [Tyson, 2017].

The target audience selected for the following analyses was defined a priori as a) those who identify with their Polish heritage “a great deal” and b) put at least “a lot” of emphasis on the importance of their Polish heritage with children they have/raise. It is thought that these individuals will be more apt to respond most positively to promotional messages and importantly, that they would help diffuse the information they received to others that did not fall within the target audience; i.e., they would serve as opinion leaders mobilizing those around them. The segment that met these criteria included 145 individuals (24% of all survey respondents); 75.7% are women and their average age is 63.1. Nearly three quarters (73.1%) are second generation U.S born people of Polish descent (their parent(s) was/were born in the U.S.).

4. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE TARGET AUDIENCE AND ALL RESPONDENTS

All statistics listed below are displayed in the order Target Audience versus All Respondents (respectively). As can be seen, there are slight to moderate difference across a vast number of factors between these two groups.

- The target audience consists of more women (75.7% vs 69.7%).
- A greater number of target audience respondents had all four grandparents born in Poland (61.1% vs 46.8%).
- A greater number of target audience respondents had three of four grandparents born in Poland (14.6% vs 9.7%).
- A greater number of target audience respondents had both parents born in Poland (21.4% vs 10.9%).
- A greater number of target audience respondents had mothers/fathers raised in Poland (18.8%/20.1% vs 10.9%/13.3%, respectively).
- Fewer members of the target audience respondents are second generation U.S. born people of Polish descent (73.1% vs 80.6%); i.e., more are first generation U.S. born (21.4% vs 10.9%).
- A greater number of target audience respondents come from conservative families (grandparents and parents) (average 57.4% vs 49.6%), and are conservative themselves (33.3% vs 31.5%).

- Target audience respondents come from families (grandparents and parents) that read/wrote/spoke more Polish at home (average mean value 1.93 vs 2.43, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all) and read/wrote/spoke more Polish themselves at home (mean value 3.60 vs 4.19, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all).
- A greater number of mothers/fathers of target audience respondents were raised in Polish neighborhoods (85.4%/70.2% vs 64.9%/64.9%, respectively).
- Target audience respondents come from families (grandparents and parents) that interacted more with people of Polish descent (average mean value 1.42 vs 1.84, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all) and interacted more with people of Polish descent themselves (mean value 2.68 vs 3.33, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all).
- A greater number of target audience respondents come from families (grandparents and parents) that consider themselves Polish (average 64.0% vs 46.4%), and consider themselves Polish (17.5% vs 8.2%).
- A greater number of target audience respondents consider themselves either Polish or Polish-American and less consider themselves American (17.5% vs 8.2%, 68.5% vs 54.7%, 11.9% vs 32.6%, respectively).
- Target audience respondents come from families (grandparents and parents) that embrace their Polish heritage more (average mean value 1.32 vs 1.69, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all) and do so themselves (mean value 1.00 vs 2.19, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all).
- Target audience respondents come from families (grandparents and parents) that express their ethnicity by celebrating more holiday traditions (average mean value 1.46 vs 1.91, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all) and do so themselves (mean value 1.94 vs 3.05, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all).
- Target audience respondents come from families (grandparents and parents) that express their ethnicity through more consumption of Polish foods (average mean value 1.44 vs 1.84, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all) and do so themselves (mean value 1.97 vs 2.89, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all).
- Target audience respondents come from families (grandparents and parents) that express their ethnicity by attending more commemorative events (average mean value 2.36 vs 2.70, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all) and do so themselves (mean value 3.35 vs 3.96, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all).
- Target audience respondents come from families (grandparents and parents) that express their ethnicity through more membership in Polish cultural organizations (average mean value 2.77 vs 3.06, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all) and do so themselves (mean value 3.58 vs 4.02, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all).
- Target audience respondents know more about Pre-WWII Polish history, WWII Polish history, Post-WWII Polish history and Contemporary Polish history (mean values 2.65 vs 2.99, 2.37 vs 2.70, 2.54 vs 2.93, 2.86 vs 3.36, respectively, on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all).
- As can be seen from the Table 1, target audience respondents are more interested in all potential program topics (mean values that are reported were assessed on 1-5 scale, a great deal to not at all).

Table 1: Interest in Program Topics

Interested in establishing...	Target audience	All respondents
...contact with organizations in Poland that can assist you with genealogy research about you Polish ancestors	1.97	2.16
...contact with organizations in the U.S. that can assist you with genealogy research about you Polish ancestors	1.99	2.23
...contact with organizations in the U.S. that offer workshops or publications about Polish language, history, culture	2.28	2.86
...scholarly contact with people in the U.S about Polish language, history, culture	2.41	2.96
...scholarly contact with people in Poland about Polish language, history, culture	2.56	3.10
...contact with organizations in Poland that offer workshops or publications about Polish language, history, culture	2.77	3.29
...contact with business/industry organizations in Poland that might have similar interests	3.48	3.90

Source: own processing, 2018

5. A STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING POLISH IDENTITY IN THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

Based on the review of literature and the survey findings, the following recommendations are offered for promoting Polish identity in the northeastern United States. These recommendations may help Polish cultural organizations in the northeast United States and perhaps elsewhere in the world better develop and disseminate programs that successfully promote Polish identity.

Noted in the literature review is the fact that more recent Polish immigrants tend to mix more smoothly in American society, but they also tend to maintain strong social and political attachments to Poland. This bodes well for at least cultivating a sustained sense of “symbolic ethnicity” involving basic and nostalgic views of their ethnic heritage, celebration of certain holiday and religious rituals, consumption of ethnic foods, and interest in the history and culture support of Poland.

5.1. The Target Audience

The primary target audience includes influential individuals that are most apt to respond positively to promotional messages delivered by Polish cultural organizations; i.e., those most apt to appreciate and retain aspects of their native Polish culture and share the importance of this with future generations. The assumptions are a) that this group will benefit from interactions with Polish cultural organizations by cultivating a greater appreciation for their Polish heritage and b) influence their family members, friends and colleagues of Polish descent to benefit from the same appreciation of Polish culture. Prioritizing this group as the target audience does not mean that the strategy is “singing to a choir” whose motivations are already in line with your objectives. It more likely means that the strategy will influence those most apt to be sympathetic to your messages which should in turn motivate them to follow through with their inclinations and hopefully help promote Polish culture with others. This allows you to use limited resources

most wisely by targeting the “low hanging fruit” – those whose effective assistance is most easily secured. The objective is to get members of the target audience to follow through with their inclinations, help them cultivate a stronger appreciation of their Polish heritage, and to help them share this with others.

The target audience group comprised 24% of all respondents to the survey. They are defined by a) the fact that they identify with their Polish heritage “a great deal” and b) put at least “a lot” of emphasis on the importance of their Polish heritage when raising children. Members of the group have at least one parent or grandparent born in Poland. Approximately three quarters have at least three grandparents born in Poland. They themselves were born in the United States. Nearly three quarters are second generation U.S born people of Polish descent (their parents were born in the U.S.); slightly less than one quarter are the first generation U.S born. Yet, it should be noted, when compared with all respondents to the survey, members of the target audience are slightly more likely to be the first generation born in the United States.

As might be expected based on the literature, they come from families that read/wrote/spoke the Polish language at home a lot; yet they themselves use the Polish language only a moderate amount (albeit more than non-target audience members). Not surprising, based on the literature, the group tends to be female and older. Three quarters of them are women and their average age is about 63. As supported by the literature, they are more apt to have relatives in Poland that they are at least moderately familiar with. The literature suggests that the widespread use of internet-based communication and ease of travel facilitates this. The target audience is also more apt to come from families that were raised in Polish neighborhoods and who interacted a lot with fellow Poles. They themselves tend to interact more often with people of Polish descent too. As might be expected, they are more apt to come from families that considered themselves Polish and they are more likely to consider themselves Polish, or at least “Polish-American”. In addition, as stated in the literature, they tend to celebrate holidays in the Polish tradition, consume Polish foods, attend Polish commemorative events, and join Polish cultural organizations more often. In essence, they are more closely connected to their Polish heritage than respondents who are not in the target audience.

As supported by the literature, the vast majority of the target audience come from Catholic families and consider themselves Catholic. When compared with all respondents to the survey, they are more apt to come from what they label as “conservative” families and one third consider themselves conservative. In terms of occupation and formal education, there is no difference between those in the target audience and those who are not. Yet, they do tend to be better educated concerning Pre-WWII Polish history, WWII Polish history, Post-WWII Polish history and Contemporary Polish history than respondents who are not in the target audience.

5.2. Suggested Program Themes

In order of most to least interest, assessed on 1-5 scale, a great deal of interest to not at all interested, the primary target audience consider the topics presented in Table 2 of greatest interest.

Table 2: Priority Program Topics

Interested in establishing...	Target audience
...contact with organizations in Poland that can assist you with genealogy research about you Polish ancestors.	1.97
...contact with organizations in the U.S. that can assist you with genealogy research about you Polish ancestors.	1.99
...contact with organizations in the U.S. that offer workshops or publications about Polish language, history, culture.	2.28
...scholarly contact with people in the U.S about Polish language, history, culture.	2.41
...scholarly contact with people in Poland about Polish language, history, culture.	2.56
...contact with organizations in Poland that offer workshops or publications about Polish language, history, culture.	2.77
...contact with business/industry organizations in Poland that might have similar interests	3.48

Source: own processing, 2018

Polish cultural organizations may want to prioritize their programming based on these findings. Especially popular in this age of inexpensive DNA-based ethnicity testing is genealogical research which these organizations could help facilitate. It should be noted that the target audience gave “contact with business/industry organization in Poland that might have similar interests” an average rating of only 3.48 meaning it is of less than moderate interest.

5.3. Messages to be Communicated

Promotional messages to the target audience need to be designed in a way that appeals to an older, female, second generation U.S. born audience who tend to be conservative politically and active in the Catholic church. The initial challenge is to secure the audience’s attention and heighten their interest in the organization’s mission. Messages that address family history, the celebration of holidays in the Polish tradition, the preparation and consumption of favorite Polish foods, attendance at Polish commemorative events, and interactions with Polish cultural organizations should resonate effectively with this audience. Messages should recognize that the audience strongly identifies with their Polish heritage, consider themselves Polish or Polish-American, and have strong relationships with people living in Poland. Because the target audience tends to have above average knowledge and interest in Pre-WWII Polish history, WWII Polish history, Post-WWII Polish history and Contemporary Polish history, messages that address these issues should peak their interest.

Once the audience’s attention and interest has been secured, the objective changes to helping them perform the role of opinion leaders in the community; i.e., the role of influencing others to have greater appreciation for their Polish identity. Closely associated with this is helping them form positive attitudes about the organization. Messages describing the history of the organization, its present mission, its structure, and opportunities for involvement need to be communicated clearly.

Messages that promote the benefits of involvement and alleviate any concerns about involvement will help the audience form intentions to become involved. Once intentions to becoming involved have been formed, it will be the organization's responsibility to minimize any potential barriers that might block a person from following through with their intentions (e.g., minimize membership fees, structure meetings and activities at convenient times in convenient locations, design programs at a comfortable level of sophistication, provide opinion leader training, coordinate and facilitate their activities in the community).

5.4. Preferred Sources of Communication

The perceived credibility of the source of communication greatly affects the efficacy of promotional messages. Sources that are viewed by the audience as knowledgeable and trustworthy are more persuasive. Research findings suggest that because of the audience's close attachments to people who consider themselves Polish (or at least Polish-American), sources that have active ties to Poland may be considered most credible. In addition, because of the target audience's interest in religion, active members of the Catholic church may prove to be effective sources. Research findings also suggest that the target audience has interest in hearing from scholars of Polish history and from organizations that promote Polish culture and perform Polish genealogical research. Representatives from these three groups should also prove to be effective sources of information.

5.5. Preferred Communication Channels

In order of most to least effective, assessed on 1-5 scale, extremely effective to not at all effective, the target audience consider a) Polish culture social events/fairs/parades, b) websites of Polish cultural organizations, c) social media posts by Polish cultural organizations, d) word-of-mouth through friends and acquaintances, and e) general social media networking as their preferred communication channels. These five communication channels were rated between 2.12 and 2.54 meaning they are perceived to be just slightly less than "very effective". It needs to be noted that Polish language television, Polish language radio, Polish language newspapers, and Posters put up in local shops were considered to be the least effective – rated between 3.01 and 3.52, between "somewhat effective" and "not so effective." Use of these channels as a means of communicating with the target audience should be employed with some skepticism.

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