

Department of Marketing



Research Seminars Series

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Consumptive Work: Consuming to Work in Coworking

Abstract: This article introduces the concept of consumptive work as practices that enlist consumption in productive value co-creation in the workplace. Consumer research has historically paid little attention to the role of consumption in the workplace. This research examines the recent re-entanglement of consumption and work in the knowledge and digital economy to understand the productive role of consumption in the workplace. It relies on an ethnographic study of coworking spaces in two global cities, Paris and London, over four years. The findings show that consumptive work is constituted of three practices: the (1) flexibilization, (2) avocationalization, and (3) platformization of work. The materiality and doings of consumptive work sustain consumer experiences of empowerment, self-actualization, and entitlement. However, consumptive work also entails a darker side through the instrumentalization of leisure and care, as well as new lifestyle and body exclusions. We build upon the perspective of the consumption of work to showcase the productive value of consumption in workplaces, as well as its signification value. Consumption transforms work into an experience and incorporates exchange as an essential work activity. We contribute to research on consumption in the workplace, the relation between consumption and workplace alienation, and workplace, home and the market.