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## PARTICIPATION OF THE YOUNG GENERATION IN CULTURE

Nowadays, participation in culture is not only about the consumption of provided cultural content but also involves the creation of content. It plays an important role in human life, especially for young people, due to its impact on their well-being. This paper aims to identify forms of participation in young people's culture. For this purpose, an analysis of the literature on the subject is performed, and a survey of students is conducted. The results of this research showed that respondents are primarily interested in activities that allow them to spend time with their peers, while participation in culture using the mass media, as well as in "high culture," is not of particular interest to them. Respondents claim that they commonly use modern technological solutions, but the Internet cannot replace personal participation in cultural events.

**Keywords:** culture, young people, participation, forms of cultural activity.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Culture, which is the entirety of the "material and immaterial achievements of society" (Borys, 2021), values and ways of conduct adopted in communities, passed on to other communities and to subsequent generations (Gruchola, 2010), is one of those aspects of human life which man can live without, but they will not develop. Cultural needs, which are higher-order needs, are important for the development of an individual's personality. This is why participation in culture is so important, especially for young people shaping their value system.

Culture has incalculable importance for society – it is one of the factors that influences the emergence and development of social life (Kasperkiewicz-Morlewska, 2020). It provides emotions, aesthetic experiences, and enables adaptation to new conditions (Jurkiewicz, 2022). It is a common space of values and symbols which gives meaning to the community. Culture emphasizes the diversity of individual groups as well as individuals. It is focused on meaning, based on subjectivity, emotions and intentions. It offers a means of self-expression and enables the individual to pursue lifelong learning by experiencing the joy of discovery and exploration (Gonçalves, 2016). Being a combination

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of reproduction, processing and creation, it is an essential factor of social change (Szara, Frejtag-Mika, 2021).

Different expectations towards culture arise from individuals for whom it is no longer autotelic in nature, dedicated only to free time, but has become a means to achieve goals. When undertaking cultural activities, one expects an opportunity to create social relationships, but also to have entertainment and relaxation. Hence, culture should offer many experiences. Therefore, new phenomena should be noticed within it, which is a consequence of, among others, changes in lifestyle, development of new technologies or increase in the subjectivity of citizens (Bachórz, Stachura, 2015).

The aim of the paper is to identify forms of participation in culture among young people. To achieve the goal, an analysis of the literature on the subject was carried out in the field of economics, management, sociology, culture and health sciences; reference was also made to the existing data of the Central Statistical Office. Our own empirical research was also conducted on a group of representatives of the young generation - students of the Institute of Economics and Finance of the University of Rzeszów, using a survey questionnaire developed on the basis of the tool used in studies on participation in culture conducted by the Central Statistical Office.

The first part of the study, based on the analysis of the literature on the subject, presents the issue of participation in culture and emphasizes its importance for the individual, taking into account the role of modern technologies. The empirical part presents the results of the conducted survey. The forms of participation in culture preferred by the respondents, their use of modern technological and IT means in participation in culture, differences in participation in cultural events between urban and rural residents, and conditions and barriers determining these activities were analyzed and assessed.

## 2. THE CONCEPT AND MEANING OF PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE

The importance of culture for an individual is reflected by participation in it. Participation in culture, i.e. "inclusion of an element in a culturally regulated situation" (Cichosz, Lewicka, Molesztak, 2018) involves not only the consumption of cultural content, but also, among others, is based on their experience, assimilation, analysis, interpretation, modification (Rapior, 2024), exchange and use (Krajewski, 2011). Participation in culture is, therefore, characterized by a functional aspect, related to participation in the offer of cultural institutions, and an intellectual aspect as it is important for the development of an individual, their interests and abilities, but at the same time it enables the satisfaction of needs (Molesztak, 2015). It has an inclusive character, which results from changes in the interpretation of culture (Bachórz, Stachura, 2015), which is no longer treated as an autotelic value due to its impact on the economic (Jurkiewicz, 2022; Kutwa, 2022) and social aspects (Kutwa, 2022) the activity of individuals and the development of the economy. This impact is considered in three dimensions (Błaszczak, Banaszak, 2020):

1. economic, which emphasizes the economic effects related to culture (Sanetra-Szeliga, 2018) since the consumption of cultural products leads to an economic boom in the creative sectors. Moreover, participation in culture, as a result of the development of individuals' creativity (Ilczuk, Krzysztofek, 2011), contributes to the improvement of the quality and increase in the value of human capital, which in turn is one of the determinants of economic growth (Roszkowska, 2013).

2. The quality of life of individuals as the consumption of cultural content is significant for the well-being of individuals for whom post-material values are important. Participation in culture activates social and civic activities, enables building social relationships and social advancement; has an impact on physical (Cohen, 2006; Cohen, Perlstein, Chapline, Simmens, 2006) and mental health (Cohen, 2006; Cohen et al., 2006; Daykin, Mansfield, Meads, Julier, Tomlinson, Payne, Grigsby Duffy, Lane, D'Innocenzo, Burnett, 2018; Fancourt, Steptoe, 2018; Fancourt, Steptoe, 2019);
3. The foundation of social order as the consumption of culture is a form of inclusion in social and public life. It serves the activation and inclusion of excluded social groups, alleviates social inequalities, and contributes to the growth of subjectivity (Bachórz, Stachura, 2015). It is associated with tolerance, openness to others, trust, as well as a sense of justice.

For an individual, participation in culture means active participation in important spheres of life that they perceive as related to culture (Bachórz, Stachura, 2015). It takes various forms of involvement, including those made possible by the development of new media (Nosal, 2011):

1. institutional participation, regarding the use of the offers of cultural institutions, such as theatre, cinema, cultural center, museum or philharmonic, as well as its frequency.
2. Mass communication, i.e. content transmitted by the media (including television, radio, press, books, Internet).
3. Everyday activities during which the individual is not only a recipient of cultural content, but also becomes a producer (e.g. playing a musical instrument, running a blog, making amateur films or getting involved in organizing events, etc.).

The presented forms show that participation in culture goes beyond the institutional context. It means, in particular, one's own lifestyle, an ability to identify with external objects and critical activity. It is motivated by interest, which results in being a competent, conscious recipient (instead of only consuming cultural products) (Bachórz, Stachura, 2015).

Transmission via modern technological and IT means plays an important role in participation in culture, and is one of the main cultural determinants (Hysa, 2016). The development of new media makes it easier for cultural institutions to reach recipients, enables individualization of the offer, and contributes to the formation of new recipient behaviors. As a result, participation in culture is expanded and the recipient becomes a more active and engaged participant in the circulation of cultural content. It is involved in the process of creating this content, at the same time transferring it outside the institutional system. He absorbs them and creatively modifies them, creating new cultural texts in place of their reproduction. As a result, the boundary between the creator and the recipient of culture disappears, and a complementary creator-work-recipient relationship is created (Bachórz, Stachura, 2015).

New technologies cause a decline in interest in traditional forms of culture, resulting in the "deinstitutionalization" of culture (Hysa, 2016), leading to limited contact of an individual with cultural goods. Modern communication solutions play a particularly important role in the lives of young people, which they use widely and their availability is obvious to them.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

The basic research question the answer was sought to in the conducted empirical research was: what forms of participation in culture do young people prefer?

The following specific questions were also formulated:

RQ1: Is participation in culture using modern technological and IT means a basic form for young people?

RQ2: Are there differences in cultural participation between urban and rural residents?

RQ3: What are the conditions and barriers to young people's participation in culture?

The research was conducted in February-March 2023 at the University of Rzeszow. It was attended by 193 students of the third year of the first cycle and the first and second year of the second cycle at the Institute of Economics and Finance, majoring in Economics and Finance and Accounting. Respondents completed the online survey questionnaire provided via Google Forms. Participation in the study was voluntary.

The research tool was a questionnaire developed on the basis of the individual questionnaire on population participation in culture DS-58 I, used in research conducted by the Central Statistical Office (GUS, 2020). The tool used included 27 closed, single- or multiple-choice questions, including those with the option to provide one's own answer regarding various forms of cultural activity. This study presents selected research results.

Table 1. Sociodemographic profile of the survey sample (n=193)

Characteristics	Items		Percentage
Gender	Female		78.2
	Male		21.8
Place of residence	Rural areas		51.3
	Urban area up to 20K residents		10.9
	Urban area up 20K–99K residents		10.9
	Urban area up 100K–199K residents		20.2
	Urban area up 200K–499K residents		5.7
	Urban area with 500,000 residents and more		1.0
Education level	Father	primary school	2.1
		basic vocational school	59.6
		secondary school	25.4
		post-secondary school	2.1
		college	10.4
	Mother	primary school	4.7
		basic vocational school	29.5
		secondary school	28.0
		post-secondary school	10.4
		college	26.9

Source: own research.

The majority of respondents were women, who constituted 78.2% of the respondents, and men – 21.8%. The presented proportions determined according to the gender criterion correspond to the structure of students and result from the specificity of the fields of study in which the research was carried out. The average age of the respondents was 23.25 years. Most respondents were rural residents (51.3%), the rest (48.7%) lived in the city, but there was a large variation in its size in terms of the number of inhabitants. The presented

structure of respondents according to place of residence reflects the agricultural character of the region, which is characterized by the lowest percentage of population in cities compared to other voivodeships in the country, amounting to 41.15% (as of June 30, 2022) (Bank Danych Lokalnych, 2024).

The respondents grew up in families where the vast majority of parents had no more than secondary education – primarily basic vocational education, then secondary and higher education. The least number of respondents' parents completed post-secondary school or completed primary education. The characteristics of the group of subjects taking part in the survey are shown in Table 1.

#### 4. THE RESEARCH RESULTS

Respondents were asked about the importance of culture for them. In their statements, 92% of them said that it was important (for 23% even very important), and not very important for only 8%. None of the respondents indicated that culture was completely unimportant. The obtained results emphasize the awareness of the importance of culture in the lives of the surveyed people.

Then they were asked about particular forms of cultural activity, first of all in the form of reading/listening to books. During the year preceding the survey, the vast majority of them (86%) read at least one book in paper version, 58.5% of respondents read the digital version of the book, and only every fifth listened to the book. Such results indicate attachment to the classic reception of the book. Reading it in paper version gives experiences that cannot be provided by modern solutions, including: in the form of audiobooks. The reason for reading literature was primarily interest, which was confirmed by 84.5% of respondents.

Unlike books, magazines and daily newspapers are not of great interest to respondents – the vast majority of them do not read paper newspapers at all, and slightly more than half read them in digital versions (Table 2). Modern solutions are also used more often by them to read information published in magazines.

Table 2. Reading newspapers and magazines

Question and opinion	Structure of answers (%)	
	in paper version	in digital version
How often do you read daily newspapers?		
daily	0.50	7.30
once or several times a week	2.10	20.70
less than once a week	15.50	24.80
I don't read	81.90	47.20
How often do you read magazines?		
weekly	0.00	6.70
once or several times a month	5.70	21.80
less than once a month	17.60	20.70
I don't read	76.70	50.80

Source: own research.

Data from the Central Statistical Office emphasize the differences in expenditure on the purchase of cultural goods and services per person in a household, taking into account the place of residence - in cities they are not only higher, but at the same time they constitute a larger share in the average household expenditure on culture (GUS, 2022; 2023). The results of the conducted research did not show significant differences in reading books, newspapers or magazines between young people living in rural or urban areas, regardless of the form of using these cultural articles. However, it should be emphasized that the level of expenditure was not examined. Instead, the cultural activity was taken into consideration. At the same time, young people living in rural areas visit the library/reading room more often than respondents living in cities - almost every fourth respondent living in the countryside uses this form of cultural activity at least once every six months, including 11% of respondents at least once a month. This solution reduces spending on purchasing, especially books. In the case of respondents who live in cities, these values are 11.7% and 5.3%, respectively.

Taking into account other forms of participation in culture using the mass media, it should be noted that these are not popular solutions among respondents. Among the above-mentioned forms, respondents are most likely to watch films at the cinema. They also like to listen to the radio (Table 3). Research participants are not interested in watching a TV program or renting movies for a fee. In the presented aspects, there are no differences between those living in the countryside and in the city.

Table 3. Participation of young people in culture through mass media

Question and opinion	Structure of answers (%)
How often do you watch a TV program?	
I don't watch	34.7
less than once a week	32.1
once or several times a week	25.9
daily	7.3
How often in the last 12 months did you use various forms of paid movie rental?	
I didn't use	45.1
1 – 3 times a year	15.0
once every 2-3 months	7.8
once or several times a month	19.7
once a week or more often	12.4
How often do you go to the cinema?	
I don't go	7.8
1 – 3 times a year	52.3
once every 2-3 months	31.1
once or several times a month	8.8
once a week or more often	0.0
How often do you listen to the radio?	
I don't listen	15.0
less than once a week	20.7
once or several times a week	32.1
daily	32.1

Source: own research.

Among the forms of cultural activity in which one can participate primarily in person, respondents most often participate in social gatherings, meet to dance, and also like to visit historical monuments (Figure 1). They participate in sports events as spectators, but they also take an active part in the activities of sports and recreation centers, as well as cultural and community centers. In turn, the areas of their least cultural interest include events such as: opera/opera, circus events, magic shows, acrobatics shows, revues, as well as ballet/dance performances (over 90% of respondents did not participate in events of this type at all).

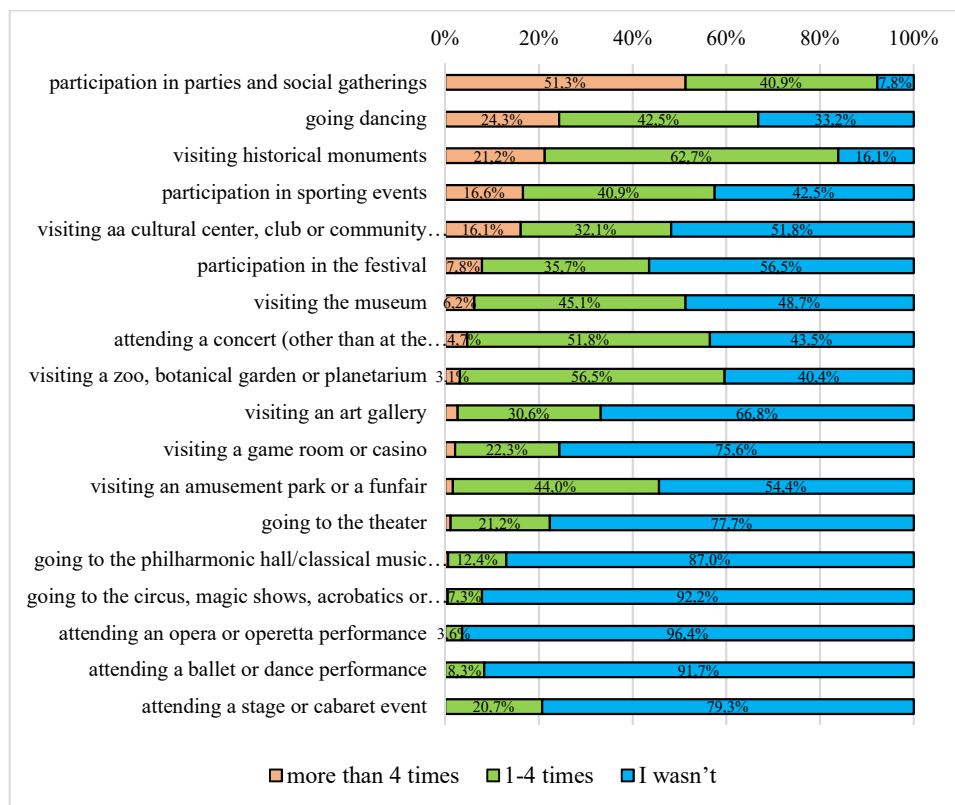


Figure 1. Participation of young people in cultural events throughout the year  
 Source: own research.

The obtained results prove that young people are most interested in activities that allow them to spend time with peers and provide pleasure. They participate to a negligible extent in events that are described as "high culture".

In the cultural activities mentioned above, one can see the difference between the activities undertaken by the surveyed people living in the countryside and in the city. Rural residents go to museums much less frequently (56.6% of respondents had not been there in the 12 months preceding the survey compared to 40.4% of city residents), they also visit historical monuments less often (18.2% and 13.8% of respondents did not visit them at all).

People living in the countryside are much more likely to go dancing (to a disco, club, dance hall) – almost every third respondent went dancing at least 5 times in the year preceding their participation in the research compared to 19.1% of respondents from the city. Amusement parks and funfairs are also of greater interest. 52.5% of rural residents and 38.3% of urban residents were there at least once in the 12 months before participating in the study. In other cases, respondents gave similar answers, regardless of their place of residence (differences in answers were not significant). The received distribution of responses results from the limited access of rural residents to cultural institutions, and therefore there is an increasing interest in events organized cyclically and widely available.

Modern forms of communication play an important role in the cultural participation of young people. Respondents commonly use computers, primarily for professional or university purposes. The research showed that they also used the Internet in the context of their cultural activities. They use it to play movies, music, play computer games (86.5%), search for information related to culture (72.5%), listen to the radio or music or watch TV via this channel (68.9%), reading online or downloading files with newspapers or magazines (49.7%), buying CDs, books and other cultural products (37.8%). Only 1% of respondents do not use the Internet in the above-mentioned areas.

At the same time, using the Internet cannot, in the opinion of most respondents, replace direct participation in cultural events in the area of "high culture", such as going to museums/exhibitions, going to the theater or concerts, but also participation in sports events (Figure 2). However, watching television, reading newspapers and magazines, and listening to the radio are activities that can be completely or at least partially replaced by

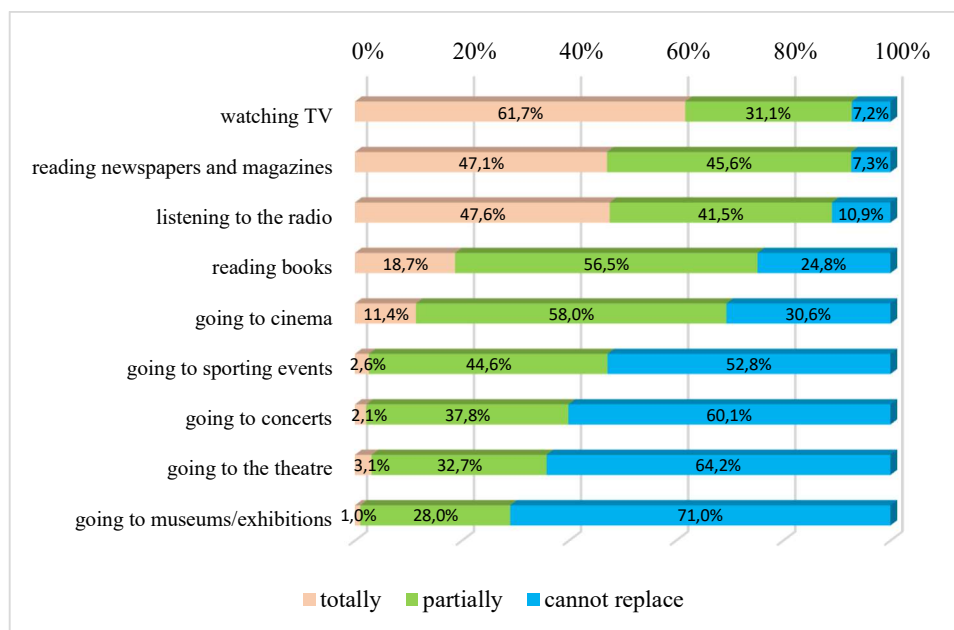


Figure 2. Possibility of replacing cultural activities via the Internet

Source: own research.



using the Internet. Partially, in the opinion of most respondents, online activity can replace reading books or watching films at the cinema. The responses received show that young people appreciate direct contact with culture and the experiences and emotions related to it.

The results of the conducted research proved that young respondents were conscious participants of culture because the basic motive for cultural participation is their interests, which was confirmed by 81.3% of them. Next, an opportunity to spend time with friends was mentioned (66.8%), i.e. culture is treated as a form of entertainment, spending free time, and then the recommendation of family or friends (52.3%), and the pursuit of learning something new (50.8%). The inner need to participate in cultural life was a stimulus for only almost every fourth respondent. Promotional activities in the form of attractive advertising aroused interest and encouraged 14.5% of study participants to participate in the cultural event.

Respondents also pointed to barriers that discourage participation in cultural events. The main factor limiting their cultural participation are ticket prices, which was indicated by 72% of people. Next, the main issues mentioned were the mismatch between the topics of events and their own interests (49.2% of responses), lack of time (35.2%), and the possibility of spending free time in a different, more attractive way (27.5%).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Participation in culture is important for an individual's development. This issue should be even more focused on young people because of the influence of culture on their well-being. The changes taking place, primarily in the form of universal access to modern technological solutions, change the form of participation in culture, which makes culture recipients actively involved in the process of its creation, instead of merely passively receiving the available cultural offer. This solution is particularly attractive to young people who create cultural content using available information and communication tools. Therefore, it is necessary to include young cultural participants in research (Zhang et. al., 2024; Duche-Pérez, 2023; Filiciak M. et.al., 2010).

The aim of the paper was to identify forms of participation in young people's culture. The conducted research showed that participation in culture through the mass media was not of particular interest to the surveyed students. In relation to reading, young people prefer reading books, which gives them experiences that cannot be provided by modern solutions. These solutions are preferred in relation to the reading of newspapers and magazines, which, however, young people are not interested in. It should be emphasized that in this area of cultural activity there are no differences between urban and rural residents.

Young respondents, however, are primarily interested in activities that allow them to spend time with their peers and provide pleasure, such as socializing or dancing together. They participate to a negligible extent in events that are described as "high culture". With regard to direct, personal participation in cultural events, place of residence is a factor differentiating the type of preferred cultural activities. This is due to the limited availability of cultural institutions for rural residents, which is why they actively participate in publicly available and periodically organized events.

Even though young people use modern technology on a daily basis, in the opinion of respondents, it cannot replace direct participation in "high culture" events, such as

going to museums/exhibitions, theaters or concerts. However, using the Internet may be a substitute for participating in culture through mass media, especially watching television, reading newspapers/magazines or listening to the radio, which are not popular activities among the surveyed group.

The results of the conducted research proved that young respondents were conscious participants of culture because they participate in it primarily due to their interests. At the same time, the costs associated with purchasing tickets for specific events, as well as the topics of these events that are inappropriate to their interests, limit participation in them. Therefore, it is necessary to consider greater individualization of the offer of cultural institutions and the establishment of direct dialogue by cultural institutions in order to attract young recipients.

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