

University and non-formal education

Liliana Georgeta Popescu^{1,*}

¹Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Industrial Engineering and Management Department, 550025, Victoriei Bld. no.10, Sibiu, Romania.

Abstract. Young students place great importance on their personal, professional and educational development alike but in the same time are actively involved in leisure activities. Through non-formal and informal activities the university can help students to develop new skills, can change or increase certain preferences regarding cultural consumption, sports and recreational activities. This paper presents the results of a study based on students attending universities across three cities. It aims to demonstrate that during the years spent at university, students are significantly less influenced by their parents in terms of behaviour and cultural preferences; instead these aspects as well as recreational activities are undertaken by universities and their group of friends and colleagues. For a meaningful analysis and correct interpretation of data, specific tools of quality management were used.

1 Introduction

The current European cultural situation of youth targets mechanisms such as: juvenility (extension of lifestyles of young people throughout the entire life cycle), acculturation (opening young people to the diversity of cultural expressions at a higher level than in adults), marketing (the development of goods and cultural products in the global market), consumerism (simultaneity of the quality of the producer and consumer culture), individualization (expanding the social category of youth in terms of identity), fragmentation (diversification trends in youth culture in heterogeneous groups), globalization versus localization (interdependence and reduced distances combined with a focus on immediate interactions with the environment), transculturalism (increased identification of the marginalized and cultural hybridization), social activism (using culture against forms of discrimination), engineering (development of digital practices as everyday practice) [1].

Young students have various interactive ways and practices of cultural consumption, influenced to a large extent by the use of new technology that allows them to access culture channels that are "dynamic and often informal" [2]. Worldwide there are studies that indicate that there isn't a complete replacement of old practices with new ones, but rather there is a change in the way in which the cultural consumption is done and that new technologies carry out a democratization of access to cultural content [3]. In this regard, students use new technologies in order to obtain information mainly about leisure and

* Corresponding author: liliana.popescu@ulbsibiu.ro

opportunities of school education, jobs and occasional study trips and work but are also interested in social issues (globalization, human rights, social commitment and voluntary) [4].

2 Leisure activities of students

According to the Eurobarometer (published in 2015) carried out at EU level, on a sample of 13,000 young people aged between 15 and 30 years, who were questioned about their participation in society, focusing on their involvement in cultural activities 80% of the respondents to the survey answered that they went to the cinema or a concert in the last 12 months [5].

At a national level, in 2015 young respondents to a survey by the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training [6] chose to consume dynamic, varied, interactive types of culture: 70.7% used culture in the public space through going to the cinema, while 61.6% of young people went to music or entertainment shows, and almost 50% went to the theatre.

Festivals are the main types of cultural activities where young viewers are passive consumers of culture. According to the latest study by the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training in 2015 on a sample of 375 young people age between 14 and 30, the factors that lead young people to attend festivals to the greatest extent were: the possibility to share this experience with other family members - 52.7%; the opportunity to relax and stand out - 46.1%; opportunity to meet people with similar preferences and cultural habits - 42.7% (Table 1). Young people want to experience the festivals in a personal way as much as possible and view them as a leisure activity, their very nature being one of celebration, festivity and are something attractive because it is perceived as "special occasion", as something which brings several "opportunities" together [6].

Table 1. Determining factors of youth participation in festivals [6]

How important are the following aspects when you decide to go to a festival?	not important	Not very important	Important enough	Very important
The opportunity to go with other family members	1,0 %	9,2%	37,1 %	52,7 %
The ability to relax / rest / detach	1,5 %	8,6 %	43,8 %	46,1 %
Opportunity to meet people like you with the same cultural preferences, habits etc.	2,4 %	14,5 %	40,4 %	42,7 %
Famous artists are performing	3,3 %	12,4 %	41,8 %	42,5 %
Ability to learn new things, to enrich your knowledge	0,7 %	14,1 %	43,9 %	41,3 %
The opportunity to experience more cultural products in one place (music, film, dance, theater, etc.)	3,4 %	11,7 %	45,2 %	39,8 %
To have free access	4,6 %	18,4 %	38,1 %	39 %
The opportunity to experience new things	4,5 %	8,6 %	48,2 %	38,7 %
To take place outdoors	4,5 %	22,6 %	37,5 %	35,4 %
To be recognized as a festival with tradition	6,7 %	20,9 %	37,4 %	35 %

The opportunity to experience different cultures and habits other than your own/where you live	3,4 %	13,3 %	48,9 %	34,4%
The ability to see / help / get involved in events and activities that typically you would not have access to	4,7 %	8,9 %	56,4 %	28,9 %

3 Case Study

This case study was conducted by the network of University Cultural Centers from Romania, institutions, which, in association with young people, students and student organizations implement movements that allow young people to become cultural actors, with access to knowledge and to the practice of culture and creation. The activity of University Cultural Centres is to ensure conditions for students to be able to express their initiatives in a complex way, and to show the depth of the student energy and thought. As a culture provider, the University Cultural Centres have to always be innovative, cultural offerings must be always attractive, creative and interactive.

This study follows the relationship between young people and culture, focusing on issues such as the access of students to culture, the level of public cultural consumption, the role of cultural education in access and increasing youth interest in culture.

University Cultural Centres annually organize festivals for national or international students on different areas: music, dance, folklore, fashion and fashion design, literary, visual arts, etc. These types of events are composed of creator-students, performers, producers of culture but also of those who passively consume culture (spectators). For both groups the events deliver cultural education. It should be emphasized that the University Cultural Centre includes all cultural areas, therefore the only cultural institution where the resulting cultural product is as much a concert as show of folklore, as theatre, as dance, as music, etc.

Students represent the category of youngsters who place great importance on their personal, professional and educational development, but are also actively involved in leisure activities. Practical reasons why young people pursue artistic or creative activities, according to a study undertaken in universities from Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca and Ploiesti on a sample of 500 students, are shown in Figure 1.

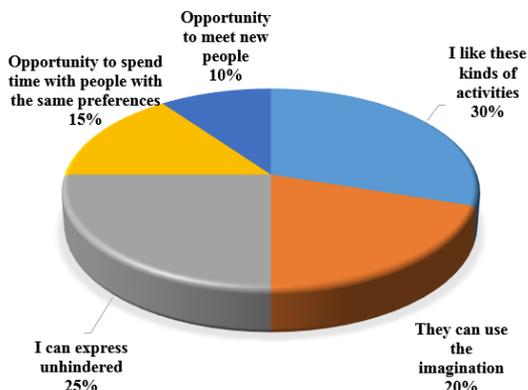


Fig. 1. Reasons why young people practice artistic activities.

According to the questionnaires drawn up annually by the University Cultural Centre of Sibiu the members of the bands and groups working in the institution, 350 respondents said they are interested in learning something new (35%), the institution supports their launch /

promotion at national level (24%), the institution offers them the chance to visit new places by participating in national and international festivals (20%), they have the opportunity to spend time pleasantly in a group of friends (10%) that want to develop ideas outside the university (10%), others (1%). (Figure 2.)

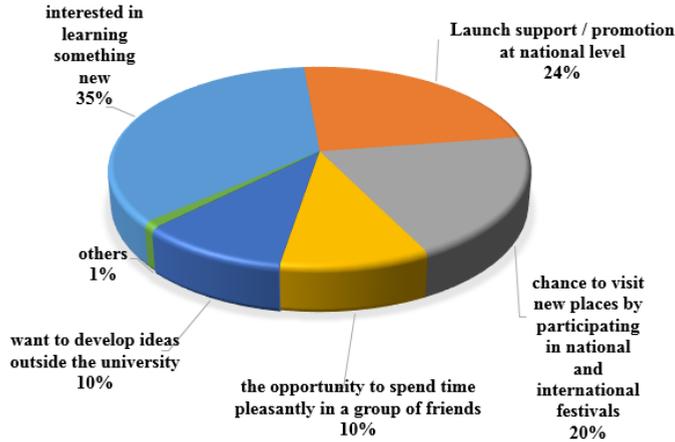


Fig. 2. Reasons for students working in artistic societies.

Nationally the most common leisure activities of young people, regardless of the age or gender are photographing and filming. (Figure 3, Figure 4).

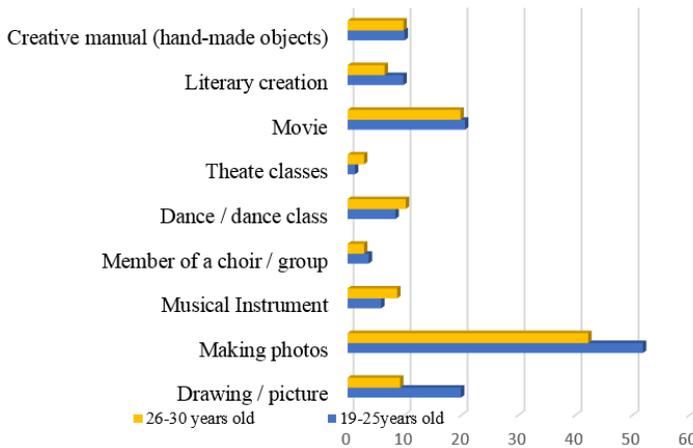


Fig. 3. Youth arts activities, analysis by age.

The graph in Figure 3 contains the values for the answers "YES, I have done..." and the distribution by gender (female / male) responses to the questions asked is shown in the graph in Figure 4.

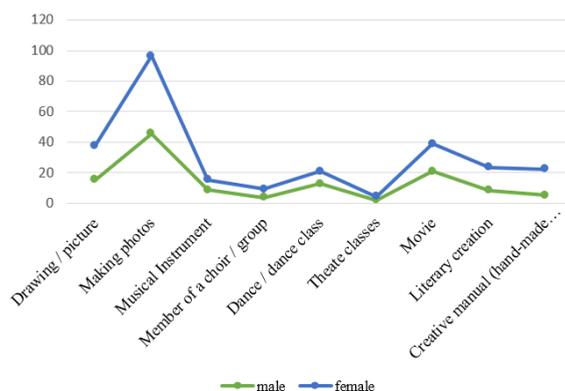


Fig. 4. Youth arts activities, analysis of gender categories.

Having in view these results, and the results from other studies [7, 8] the universities or the universities cultural centres could develop new extra-curricular activities, non-formal activities for students in these fields. Photography is the most appreciated activity whatever the field of study in which students are enrolled. Also, they are interested in learning something new. Students and students' associations have to be stimulated by the universities or by the university cultural centres to develop extra-academic activities by:

- providing support for the operation of the educational process;
- development and support of the creative activity;
- support the practical training of students;
- involvement of students in the formative process modernization;
- increasing artistic competence of students.

The problem linked to the students' involvement in projects remain open for the future.

A quality management system, an essential component of the overall management for any organization, must allow actions and procedures for continuous quality improvement [9]. The ways for involving students in the formative process modernization is achieved by:

- defining the priority directions of development consistent with existing human resources and infrastructure and tightly correlated with the students' demands;
- identifying and organizing new extra-curricular activities taking into account the space used;
- boosting enrolment in such activities through their participation in various national or local events;
- identifying resources for financing to increase participation in domestic and international competitions fundraising.

Art and culture forms multiple and constantly changing, according to tastes, places and period. They are, in a way, part of the heritage of the past, present and future, personal and collective, to which successive generations contribute. There is a kind of reflection of each society. Students through their practice of culture and their capacity for initiative, exploration and innovation, build and play a role in these cultural developments. It is therefore important to allow access to culture in all its forms and to promote their possibilities for creative activity including in new areas [1].

4 Conclusions

Knowing how young people spend their time outside the university is very important in terms of offers and services provided by cultural or other organizations. Considering the lack of extensive research on the relationship between young people and cultural activities,

as well as the constant development of new technologies and its implications in leisure practices, there should be an increased focus on the offer that cultural centers put forward and they should adapt based directly on the requirements of young consumers.

Currently there is a change in the way in which the cultural consumption and new technologies is accomplishing a democratization of access to cultural content. This study followed the relationship between young people and culture centered on issues such as the access of young people to culture, the level of public cultural consumption, the role of cultural education in access and increasing youth interest in culture.

References

1. https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Coe_youth/Participation/COE_charter_participation_ro.pdf, Carta Europeană revizuită privind Participarea tinerilor în viața locală și regională, Congresul Autorităților Locale și Regionale din Europa
2. ***, Interarts Foundation, *Access of Young People to Culture*. Final Report, European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (2010)
3. ***, Observatorul Cultural Basc, *Young people, culture and new technologies*, 11
4. D. Pozzolo, *Youth and cultural consumption in Piemonte – a first glance*, in Osservatorio Culturale del Piemonte, (www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/culture/pratiques-culturelles/consommation-piedmont.pdf)
5. ***, Comisia Europeană, Flash Eurobarometer 408, Tinerii din Europa, http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/2015/docs/youth-eurobarometer_en.pdf (2015)
6. C. Croitoru, *Barometrul de consum cultural 2015 Preferințe, practici și tendințe*, (Editura Pro Universitaria, București, 223 2016)
7. G.M. Moraru, L. G. Popescu, M.V. Zerbos, Proceedings of International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conferences on Social Sciences and Arts, Bulgaria (2015)
8. L.G. Popescu, G.M. Moraru, Proceedings of 10th International Technology, Education and Development Conference, Spain, 7675 (2016)
9. L.G. Popescu, Proceedings of EDUlearn - 7th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies, Spain, 0681 (2015)