

INSTRUMENTAL VALUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A PROMOTER OF SME IN RURAL TERRITORIES

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Abstract. The modern world is characterised by two trends: globalisation and accentuation of cultural heritage, which are quite closely interrelated. The more the similar features become apparent under globalisation, the more people tend to show their local distinctions. At the same time, a distinctive feature caused by causal relationships may be observed as well: owing to the interaction of the mentioned trends, favourable conditions emerge for the development of small entrepreneurship and crafts. The authors conducted a survey of young individuals (aged 15-24) in Poland (n=200), Lithuania (n=100) and Latvia (n=174) and came to a conclusion that the demand for the instrumental value of cultural heritage might be assumed as one of the factors promoting small entrepreneurship and crafts, to a greater or smaller extent, in all the countries involved in the present research.

Key words: cultural heritage, instrumental value, small entrepreneurship, crafts.

JEL code: M31, L83

Introduction

Rural development problems are a persistent focus for both political and economic bodies of the European Union. The EU Rural Development Policy 2007-2013 was focused on improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, the environment, the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy (Rural Development....). The Parliament of the European Union has appealed to continue this policy in the second decade of the 21st century promoting the rural area as a place for diverse and inclusive development of economic and living space to maintain rural communities (European Parliament resolution (2010/2054(INI)). It has to be taken into consideration that rural areas represent 93% of the territory of the EU-27, with 20% of the population living in predominantly rural areas and 38% in significantly rural areas (ECORYS. Study on..., 2010). As the number of individuals employed in agriculture declines owing to agricultural production modernisation, an

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essential role is played by the diversification of economic activities in rural areas, and small entrepreneurship and crafts obviously emerge as one of such economic pathways, which exploit cultural heritage as a product (both as a good and as a service). The aim of the research: to assess the prospects for preserving the cultural heritage from the viewpoint of young members of society. To achieve the aim, the authors set three tasks: to identify similarities and differences in the viewpoints of young individuals regarding the cultural heritage as a value; to locate the places for obtaining information on the phenomenon examined and to assess the opportunities for the development of small entrepreneurship and crafts in rural areas. The method of research: a survey of 15-24 year-old youths (n=200 from Poland, n=100 from Lithuania and n=171 from Latvia) was conducted to obtain information. The data acquired in the survey give insight into the attitudes to cultural heritage among the general public and within each respondent group and reveal the key activities for raising the popularity of cultural heritage both among the general public and especially among the youth. The data were processed employing the methods of descriptive statistics.

Methodology of the research. Theories on globalisation and cultural capital served as the theoretical basis. One of the major changes taking place on the global scale is designated as globalisation. Economists (Reinert E.S., Frankel J.A.), sociologists (Gidens A., Castells M., Jameson F., Luke M., Steger M. B.) and national identity researchers (Tomlinson J., Popovic D.M., Muizniece L.) write about globalisation as an important phenomenon. All the authors designate globalisation as the modern world's development process that is characterised by the interaction of all spheres and expansion beyond the national boundaries. One of the leading researchers of globalisation, Manfred Steger, underlines that „the transformation powers of globalisation reach deeply into all dimensions of contemporary social life” (2013). Globalisation is characterised by two trends of change. The first one is the growing flow of goods, services, capital, money and individuals among countries, the trend of equalisation that emerges from the transfer of techniques and technologies from others, which is usually viewed as a positive trend. However, a number of negative effects of this process are highlighted, especially in the social sphere – the increasing geographical movement of labour force and the formation of ethnically and nationally mixed societies (Reinert E.S., Castells M., 1997). John Tomlinson writes that “globalization has been associated with the destruction of cultural identities, victims of the accelerating encroachment of a homogenized, westernized, consumer culture” (Tomlinson J., 2003:269).

Consequently, as a response process to this second globalisation trend, the trend of preserving and strengthening the national identity and of appreciating the cultural heritage emerges to ensure their transfer to next generations, stressing the role of cultural heritage in preserving the local identity. The national identity is strongly associated with the national country, a single ethnic community and a single culture, whereas globalisation erases these traditional boundaries, supposing that national identity and cultural uniqueness are possible

only in relation to some locality, whereas globalisation as deterritorialisation (decreasing the role of territory) melts national uniqueness (Muizniece L., 2005).

The concept of heritage leads us to a discussion of the continuity between past and present. Heritage provides historical depth and a permanent pattern in a perpetually changing world. Heritage is part of the present, and at the same time holds promises for the future; the problem of the past is a modern one (Besiere J., 1998). Cultural heritage valuation is based on two main categories – cultural-historical values and socio-economic values (Szmelter I., 2013).

The European Heritage Days forum (2008) initiated by the European Council/ European Commission declares that the concept of cultural heritage continues developing and the totality of the elements that relate to cultural heritage expands and points that heritage is a mediator to support identity but heritage is also part of everyday life (European Heritage Days).

In this regard, the European Expert Network on Culture has prepared a report on publications that focus on analyses of social and economic values of cultural heritage. This document points that many authors distinguish the difference between the intrinsic value of heritage as collective memory of the society and its instrumental value, which is expressed in the social and economic value of cultural heritage (European Expert Network on Culture).

Having the main aim of the present research – to explain the prospects for the cultural heritage from the viewpoint of young members of society –, it is understandable that the research focuses mostly on the prospects of the socio-economic value of cultural heritage, which helps build smart living territory. Earlier research studies conducted in Latvia presented a close interaction of the cultural heritage with small entrepreneurship and crafts (Jeroscenkova L., Kruzmetra M., Rivza B.). The purpose of the authors is to assess this phenomenon in a broader territory, which opens up possibilities for comparison – the identification of similarities and differences as well as of pathways for the perfection of processes.

Especially this activity expanded with initiating the government-funded research project “Rural and Regional Development Processes and Opportunities in the Context of Knowledge Economy” whose one of the key goals is the development of a strategy for smart rural and regional development to obtain an integral vision, including social and economic values of cultural heritage (EKOSOC-LV 5.2.3.).

Research results and discussion

In identifying opinions, young individuals' choices are examined by an objective factor – this segment of society will shape and determine future processes both in general and in individual spheres of life. In the present research, this refers to the prospects of preserving the cultural heritage as a value.

1. Similarities and differences in the viewpoints of young individuals regarding cultural heritage as a value

In all the three countries, all the youths surveyed, without exception, recognised cultural heritage as a value to be preserved. Yet, among the youths, cultural heritage is dually perceived, which is outlined as a research problem by a relatively large number of scientists (Dümcke C., Gnedovsky M.). One of these aspects is the classification of cultural values into intrinsic and instrumental values, in which the former ones are understood as historical values that mainly serve for the purpose of preserving both the ethnic and territorial identity, while the latter ones mostly pursue contemporary socio-economic values oriented towards practical uses (Szmelter I.).

Table 1

Percentage distribution of the assessments of cultural heritage

Country	Cultural heritage as a value	Including as an:	
		intrinsic value	instrumental value
Poland	100.0	19.5	63.0
Lithuania	100.0	34.0	57.0
Latvia	100.0	28.7	37.4

Source: authors' calculations based on the survey data

According to the survey, the youths in all the three countries mainly focus on cultural heritage as a usable value. Unfortunately, the level slightly differs in each country, with the maximum observed in Poland and the minimum in Latvia. Even though the instrumental value of cultural heritage is preferred, at the same time, the youths are quite interested in cultural heritage as a factor shaping individuals' sense of belonging.

2. Information on the space for acquiring cultural heritage

On the one hand, a huge increase in cultural activities is observed in an information society, in which individuals are presently living; culture becomes increasingly important to the modern society. On the other hand, the role of ICT (information and communication technologies) in spreading information and in contributing to the exchange of cultural riches increases (Castells M., 2000). Today, mass media play a tremendous economic role in the field of cultural heritage as well. The more information and more explicit and specific information the sources of information have, the better people understand and the greater interest they have in this phenomenon. If information seekers are interested in the instrumental value of culture, the available information makes a link between the demand for instrumental cultural heritage and the supply of existing or potential business flows.

Table 2

Percentage distribution of the sources of information on cultural heritage (several replies possible)

	Internet portals	TV channels	Various newspapers	Advertising stands	Web pages	Lectures
Latvia						
All respondents	60.2	74.5	33.0	40.1	16.3	25.2
incl. men	68.3	75.0	38.3	13.3	23.3	23.3
women	58.1	74.4	31.6	47.0	14.5	25.6
Poland						
All respondents	88.0	62.5	13.5	20.0	36.0	30.5
incl. men	88.9	33.1	14.8	17.3	30.9	25.9
women	87.3	68.9	12.6	21.9	39.5	33.6
Lithuania						
All respondents	43.0	62.0	13.0	18.0	23.0	53.0
incl. men	42.9	42.9	14.3	28.6	42.9	42.9
women	43.5	65.9	12.9	16.5	20.0	55.3

Source: authors' calculations based on the survey data

The data obtained in the survey show that the youths use a wide range of sources to get information on cultural heritage as a value, preferring such modern information sources as TV shows and Internet portals. This is possible due to quite good ICT available in all the three countries where the youths were surveyed for the present research (Measuring...). To get information on cultural heritage values, far fewer youths use traditional sources such as newspapers, advertising stands and lectures, which are usually the information channels preferred by older individuals.

Yet, the youths quite critically assess the information available in information sources, saying that, first, it is insufficient (47.4% in Latvia, 26.5% in Poland and 31.0% in Lithuania), second, advertisements are too monotonous/unattractive (36.3% in Latvia, 47.5% in Poland and 17.0% in Lithuania) and, third, the advertisements are ineffective from the perspective of marketing (64.9% in Latvia, 53.0% in Poland and 43.0% in Lithuania). In general, the youths would wish more information on cultural heritage products and particular purchase sites of goods/services, the available assortment, specifics of goods or services and the development of the goods and services offered. These demands confirm the increasing interest of the new generation in the instrumental side of cultural heritage values.

3. Interest in cultural heritage and in opportunities for developing small entrepreneurship and crafts in rural territories

If the society, including the community of young people, is interested in the instrumental values of cultural heritage, there is an opportunity to offer these values to the society as goods or services. Analysing the purchase sites of cultural heritage products mentioned by the respondents, two nuances may be observed; first, various fairs prevail and, second, purchase sites of products related to gastronomic interests, including sales held directly on farms, are significant.

Table 3

Purchase sites of cultural heritage products

Country	At specialised stores	At the market place	At a supermarket's section for organic goods	From farmers	At a green fair
Latvia	23.4	33.3	8.8	24.6	43.9
Poland	16.0	40.0	18.0	21.0	4.5
Lithuania	27.0	35.0	16.0	17.0	39.0

Source: authors' calculations based on the survey data

Farmer's markets play an increasingly greater role in purchasing healthy food but healthy food, to a great extent, is a product with cultural heritage specifics that has been consumed before various modern additives were introduced in production (Vecchio R.). Farmer's markets or green fairs play also an economic role. Scientist Alicia Miller writes that "for most small-scale farmers and producers, the local farmers' market is the engine of their business. The opportunity to sell direct to customers offer not only a fair price for their products, but also a chance to develop personal relationships with their customer base, many of whom will return week on week. (Miller A.).

If taking into consideration that a great deal of the respondents who used the shopping sites mentioned in Table 3 recommend them to other individuals, usually to their relatives and acquaintances, one can predict an increase in activities of small entrepreneurship and food crafts in rural territories. Youths in Lithuania are most proactive towards attracting new purchasers (79.9%). Youths in Latvia and Poland present lower readiness for such an activity, yet, of the surveyed youths, 40.0% in Poland and 52.6% in Latvia are ready to do it.

Table 4

Readiness to recommend other members of society to buy cultural heritage products, %

Country	Total	Including	
		men	women
Latvia	52.6	46.3	54.9
Poland	40.0	40.7	39.5
Lithuania	79.0	71.4	80.2

Source: authors' calculations based on the survey data

Women present slightly greater interest in cultural heritage as a value and in the instrumental value of it, which might be explained by the gastronomic part of cultural heritage that was in the spotlight of public attention due to the increasing popularisation of healthy lifestyle. The survey results confirm that this fact corresponds to the opinions of youths in all the three countries.

Conclusions, proposals, recommendations

1. In the opinion of youths from all the three countries, cultural heritage as a value is important, which one more time confirms the known fact – the increasing role of

cultural heritage is the overall trend on the global scale. At the same time, there are several distinctions, which, as one can see, are determined by individuals' sense of belonging to a particular territory. The cultural and historical approach is mainly specific to Lithuania (34.0%), while the instrumental one is observed in Poland (63.0%). However, in Latvia, a great deal of youths (33.9%) had no opinion on the dual perception of cultural heritage values.

2. Just like in any sphere of activity, in the field of cultural heritage, too, the information base providing accessible, broad in scope and interesting information, given the demands of information users, plays an essential role. The survey data make us think that the present quantity of information and the quality of it do not fully satisfy youths in any of the countries researched. Information is needed in greater quantities and of higher quality, which sets certain standards for information systems in Poland, Lithuania and Latvia as well.
3. An important precondition for economic growth is the equilibrium of demand and supply. In the community of youths, an increase in the demand for cultural heritage as a product indicates greater opportunities for small entrepreneurship and crafts, as particularly demand contributes to starting up a business or its expansion. There are special opportunities for food crafts, the expansion of which is very important for the rural territories with small agricultural holdings.
4. It would be useful to expand research on this problem in order to, first, explain the opinions of different generations by analysing in detail the opinions both on the historical aspect of the value of cultural heritage and on the socio-economic vision on the value of cultural heritage. Besides, no less important is to examine how small entrepreneurship and food crafts develop if using cultural heritage as a product.

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