



## The Adult Cultural Awareness Competencies Development through the Theatre Art

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### Abstract

*The article seeks to reveal the attitudes of adults towards cultural awareness through the art of theatre. Theatre arts are a unique way to cultivate cultural awareness, revealing the harmony of the world around us and understanding the environment in all senses. A quantitative survey of adults conducted in Lithuania showed that people's attention to culture and cultural awareness is increasing. The results confirmed, that cultural awareness is important pursuits of adult cultural. The majority of the respondents assess these pursuits as important is statistically significantly related to theatre art: watching performances in theatre or recreation centres.*

Keywords: adults, culture, competence, cultural awareness, pursuits.

### Introduction

Cultural awareness is person's competence which manifests itself by the ability preserve cultural diversity and participates in socially valuable cultural expression activities.

*Research aim* is to reveal adults' attitude to cultural awareness through theatre arts.

*Research methods.* Theoretical and empirical analysis methods: scientific literature analysis and quantitative research. Questionnaire survey method was applied using semi-structured questionnaire.

Statistical data analysis methods were used aiming at processing the obtained empirical research data. Questionnaire data were statistically processed using program software's IBM SPSS Statistics. Performing the quantitative research, descriptive and multivariate statistic methods were applied: cluster, correlation and structural modelling of equations.

### Theoretical framework

Adult participation in cultural life, which undoubtedly develops awareness, general literacy, and improves knowledge and competencies (P. Freire, 1994). The adult participates independently in the process of cultural education. The role of culture in the development of a holistic personality is widely emphasized in the work of many classical philosophers and educators (Clayton et al. 2008; Byram, 2004; Forrest, 2003; Taylot, 2003). Adult participation in cultural activities stems from the need to act, as experience is the basis of his or her learning. In other words, artistic activity usually responds to a person's social, cultural-social needs. From the very beginning of human culture, theater, as part of art, has been an essential element of the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual state in cultural life (Kim, 2005; Landy, 2007). Thus, it can be assumed that art, specifically theater, is an instrument of cultural awareness of adult viewers (Chodzkieńė, 2012; Melnikova, 2007).

If participation at the theatre performance is considered to be education of adult-spectator's awareness, it is worth remembering G. Foley's (2007) approach to adult education where he discusses learning from four different perspectives. First, learning as acquisition, where competence, understanding, awareness, wisdom, and etc. are acquired by a person through his/her learning experience. Second, learning as reflection, where learners actively construct their knowledge which creates new meanings and realities. Third, learning as participation, where attention is devoted to human's ability to meaningfully participate in everyday work of a concrete community. Fourth, learning which emerges during common physical process, which challenges the current person understands and is expressed as a change process, emerging from relations between people and everything that participates in a concrete situation: people, special layout, movement, tools and things (Foley, 2007, p. 69). These four perspectives are merged into one universal definition of learning which speaks about learning as a change process that brings adult person's attitudes into question, develops his/her professional competences, and allows acquisition of new knowledge.

### Methodology

The aim of the research is to reveal the attitude of adults to the art of theater through cultural awareness.



**Research methods:** Theoretical analysis. The type of quantitative study used. A questionnaire survey was conducted. The research questionnaire consists of 11 blocks of questions and 5 additional questions.

The article uses only the part of the questionnaire that is dedicated to finding out about theater art and cultural literacy. Statistical data analysis methods are used to process the obtained data.

**Survey participants:** 593 adult respondents of various ages. The age span was from 18 to 59 ages.

## Research findings

The majority of the respondents assess these pursuits as important: reading books in leisure time (76.3 perc.), watching performances at the theatre (70.0 perc.), reading newspapers and magazines in leisure time (67.5 perc.), watching movies at the cinema (59.4 perc.), watching performances in recreation centers (58.5 perc.), watching movies on TV (56.8 perc.), attending pop music concerts or listening to pop music in other ways (55.55 perc.), visiting museums (50.7 perc.), and attending art exhibitions (50.2 perc.).

Pursuits	Very important		Important		Not very important		Unimportant at all	
	N	perc.	N	perc.	N	perc.	N	perc.
Reading books in leisure time	204	35.3	237	41.0	109	18.9	28	4.8
Reading newspapers and magazines in leisure time	146	25.3	244	42.2	151	26.1	37	6.4
Visiting art exhibitions	81	14.4	201	35.8	209	37.3	70	12.3
Visiting museums	81	14.4	205	36.3	217	38.5	61	10.8
Attending classical music concerts or listening to classical music in other ways	64	11.7	179	32.7	222	40.5	83	15.1
Attending pop music concerts or listening to pop music in other ways	74	13.1	240	42.4	198	35.0	54	9.5
Attending folk music concerts or listening to folk music in other ways	55	10.0	156	28.5	236	43.1	101	18.4
Attending performances at the theatre	123	21.7	274	48.3	133	23.5	37	6.5
Attending performances in recreation centers	86	15.5	239	43.0	175	31.5	56	10.1
Watching performances on TV	53	9.7	156	28.7	252	46.3	83	15.3
Watching movies at the cinema	96	17.1	237	42.3	184	32.9	43	7.7
Watching movies on TV	110	19.4	269	47.4	156	27.5	32	5.6

Correlation coefficients and factor analysis performed show that the respondents can be characterized as having a general (often positive) attitude to art and the related leisure pursuits which foster their reading pursuit, attending art events, watching movies, and etc. Kendall  $\tau_b = 0.82^{***}$ . Those who admit that attending art exhibitions is important also consider attending classic music concerts or listening to classic music in other ways to be an important leisure pursuit (67.3 perc.  $\tau_b = 0.56^{***}$ ). It was interesting to find out how watching performances is related to other leisure pursuits. Correlations show that those who assess watching performances at the theatre as important, most often find watching performances in recreation centers important as well (78.6 perc.  $\tau_b = 0.66^{***}$ ); however, the correlation with the leisure pursuit watching performances on TV is considerably weaker:  $\tau_b = 0.29^{***}$ . It appears that people attend performances not only to satisfy their artistic needs but for other reasons as well, for instance, need to communicate with others.

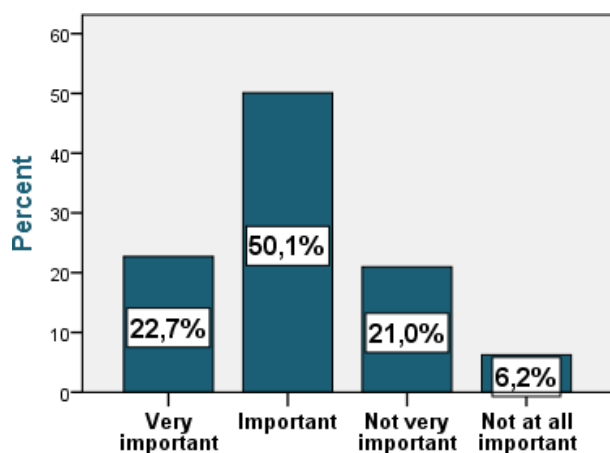


Fig. 1 Respondents' opinion on the importance of attending performances at the theatre or recreation centre

As such leisure pursuits as watching performances at the theatre and at recreation centers are closely interrelated, therefore even 73% of the respondents consider watching performances to be important. Kendall  $\tau_b$  correlations coefficients indicate that the importance of the pursuit watching performances at the theatre or recreation center is first of all related to the following leisure pursuits: attending art exhibitions ( $\tau_b = 0.49^{***}$ ), visiting museums ( $\tau_b = 0.49^{***}$ ), attending classical music concerts or listening to classical music in other ways ( $\tau_b = 0.46^{***}$ ). The second group consists of such leisure pursuits as reading books in leisure time ( $\tau_b = 0.40^{***}$ ), attending pop music concerts or listening to pop music in other ways ( $\tau_b = 0.38^{***}$ ), attending folk music concerts or listening to folk music in other ways ( $\tau_b = 0.37^{***}$ ), watching movies at the cinema ( $\tau_b = 0.36^{***}$ ), watching performances on TV ( $\tau_b = 0.32^{***}$ ), and reading newspapers and magazines in leisure time ( $\tau_b = 0.28^{***}$ ). The importance of the pursuit watching performances at the theatre or recreation center is related to the importance of the pursuit watching movies on TV; this relationship is considerably weak but statistically significant:  $\tau_b = 0.19^{***}$ .

Table 2 Relationship between importance of cultural awareness and reasons for attending a theatrical performance applying Kendall tau-c coefficient

Reason of attendance	$\tau_c$	p
I like theatre art	0.20	< 0.001
It fosters my creative self-expression	0.19	< 0.001
It enhances my thoughts and feelings leading to acquiring better knowledge about the surroundings	0.17	< 0.001
It is my leisure time pursuit	0.12	0.005
I cannot refuse invitations from other people to attend a performance	0.09	0.004
I perceive theatre art	0.09	0.011
It is an opportunity for me to learn about my strengths and weaknesses	0.08	0.022

It was analyzed how attending a theatrical performance, reasons that enhance people to attend a theatrical performances as well as reasons for not attending a theatrical performance are related with the respondents' gender, age, educational background and place of residence. No distinct gender differences were found ( $p < 0.01$ ); with the increase in age, there is increase in attending a theatrical performance more often ( $\tau_b = 0.14^{***}$ ), respondents admit more often that they like theatrical art ( $\tau_b = 0.18^{***}$ ), that it is a form of communication ( $\tau_b = 0.18^{***}$ ) and a leisure time pursuit ( $\tau_b = 0.11^{**}$ ). On the other hand, with the increase in age, the percentage of respondents who state that performances do not interest them ( $\tau_b = -0.14^{***}$ ) and that theatrical performances are not brought to the respondent places of residence ( $\tau_b = -0.11^{**}$ ) declined. Educational background is more clearly related to the frequency of attending a theatrical performance ( $\tau_b = 0.23^{***}$ ) as well as to some other reasons for



attending: people like theatre art ( $\tau_b = 0.24^{***}$ ), consider it to be a leisure time pursuit ( $\tau_b = 0.19^{**}$ ), a form of communication ( $\tau_b = 0.19^{***}$ ), performance enhances their thoughts and feelings leading to acquiring better knowledge about the surroundings ( $\tau_b = 0.15^{***}$ ), they understand theatre art ( $\tau_b = 0.14^{***}$ ). The type of place of residence is related at 0.01 level of statistical significance only to the understandable reasons for not attending a theatrical performance: lack of theatres nearby ( $\tau_b = 0.20^{***}$ ) and lack of theatrical performances brought to the respondent's location ( $\tau_b = 0.11^{**}$ ).

Summarizing the research data, it was observed that the respondents with higher education and older age are more likely to visit the theater.

## Conclusions

The disclosure of adults' attitudes towards cultural awareness and education in theater art revealed:

- In all cases, cultural awareness pursuits are positively correlated with each other. From this it can be concluded that all the pursuits in question are more or less related to cultural awareness in such a way that pursuits and cultural awareness are strengthened without contradiction with each other.
- The generalized factor of the respondents' abilities shows that with the increase of age and the decrease of the population in the respondent's place of residence, the assessment of cultural awareness abilities slightly deteriorates. The assessment of cultural awareness abilities is positively correlated with the assessment of the importance of cultural awareness and is positively correlated with the frequency of theater attendance.

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