# **Economic Consequences of Student's Views** on Cultural Heritage Goods

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#### Abstract:

**Purpose:** The purpose of the research was to anticipate the choices declared by current students in order-to evaluate the significance of these choices in formulating regional development policies and programs.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The cultural heritage value was analyzed from the respondents' awareness of their individual needs. The question then arises as if and to what extent students of non-humanistic faculties are aware of the personal benefits gained from utilizing cultural heritage components and how they define the needs satisfied by these manifestations. The survey aimed to examine to what extent the issues of cultural heritage goods utilization were considered in terms of the interests of the modern generation of technical university students.

**Findings:** It was determined to what extent the perception of cultural heritage goods among graduates-to-be of non-human studies is driven by economic thinking.

**Practical Implications:** To be used by government officials to promote cultural heritage. **Originality/Value:** Since current students' social and economic choices will affect the future economy, their views should be taken into-account when designing and implementing regional development policies and programs that involve cultural heritage sustainability.

**Keywords:** Cultural heritage goods, economic and social choices, development policies and programmes.

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#### 1. Introduction

In the 19th and 20th centuries, those who aimed at regaining independence or political independence of small nations believed in the significance of cultural heritage and the need to promote it among the dominated communities. Selected elements from the past were used to develop a system of values, which inspired generations to sacrifice to regain independence. After meeting this goal in the last decade of the 20th century, the interest in cultural heritage changed. At that time, economic considerations seemed to be more justified and significant. According to one of the theories developed in the course of theoretical discussion about the change in the meaning of cultural heritage, "the future economic success of the heritage will depend on the fantasies of the millennials and the 'Z' generation" (Musialik and Śmietański, 2019). By choice, the term "creativity" has not been used to address potential consumers of cultural heritage and those involved in the creative industry. The research aimed to examine to what extent the current generation of technical university students was interested in cultural heritage. It was assumed that economic reasons for preserving its manifestations depend not only on humanists but also on those whose professional life will be related to technical, economic, and medical fields.

Furthermore, the authors assumed that interest in cultural heritage stems from personal preferences, beliefs, and individual needs. Defining the "need" as a sense of lack of good that shapes consumer preferences and activity, the authors referred to cultural heritage goods as the means for satisfying the higher-order needs (Malik, 2016). Meeting the need is necessary for the functioning and development of the individuals and society and is expressed in various declarations and activities, programs, and plans.

Francis Fukuyama suggested the increasing importance of identifying the reasons for individual economic decisions (Fukuyama, 2019). The authors also argued that the future financial choices of current students would affect the economy. Therefore, they should be considered when designing and implementing regional development policies and programs related to cultural heritage. From the economic point of view, *beneficial aspects* of cultural heritage are defined as the consumption of public local place-based goods, both non-excludable and non-rivalrous (Holcombe, 1997). However, some forms of cultural heritage utilization may become the so-called club goods. When those, who benefit from public goods, do not pay for them, the problem of easy rider occurs. Additional social costs generated by this issue reduce prosperity and economic growth. The solution of the easy riding problem requires the intervention of authorities by imposing the institutional order where the market mechanism fails (Malik and Ciesielska, 2011).

The research aimed to identify these choices and assess their significance in formulating regional development policies and programs.

Two concepts that were first introduced two hundred years ago defined the principles of social functioning. According to the first theory, national wealth is based on

individual egoism, and according to the other concept, state formation is based on collective effort. The first assumption led to the formulation of the term homo oeconomicus in classical economics, emphasizing the significance of material values and the principles of developing them. The second theory highlighted spiritual values, which were also subordinate to individual material needs. Accepting one of these concepts as dominant - among other factors - divided the European countries into the western part, where the assumptions of the classical economy were developed, and the central-eastern part, where issues of restoring statehood were related to cultural heritage. The political and systemic transformation of the 1990s resulted in the dominance of ideas introduced by classical economics. However, according to some critical notions developed in the 21st century, the concept of homo oeconomicus has not addressed emotional factors which influence decision-making. As a result, the term homo neuroeconomics was developed. It can be defined as "[...] driven mainly by emotions and emotional experiences [...]" (Wawrzyniak, 2015).

The assets of current generations have been accumulated due to the set of values assigned to the legacy in the past centuries. Answering the question to what extent specific aspects of material or non-material culture goods satisfy the needs of certain social groups may become a potential source either for development or limitation. The mere fact of the existence of a specific good is not enough to consider it a development resource. It has been commonly believed that "we all intuitively sense that the heritage handed down to us by our ancestors should be protected and cared for, should make us proud and should be preserved for future generations" (Kobyliński, 2019). The international recognition of this term was reflected in the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society adopted in 2005. The document emphasizes the role of "[...] cultural heritage in developing a peaceful and democratic society as well as in sustainable development and promotion of cultural diversity[...]" (Article 1 section c)" (Kobyliński, 2019), (Council of Europe Framework, 2005).

The project entitled "European Heritage Days" was launched at the Council of Europe and the European Union's initiative to promote regional diversity resulting from this heritage. It was assumed that the activity of local communities is essential to the practical preservation of heritage (European Heritage Days, 2019). This initiative was endorsed mainly by state institutions aiming to protect the cultural heritage from the past. Plans and proposals for new editions of this project are sometimes presented from the institutions' activities mentioned above. However, this does not identify the benefits that contemporary individual recipients may gain from the knowledge about the past and care for preserving its artifacts. Nowadays, diversity and multiculturalism are gaining in importance, and they are intensified by migration flows influencing socio-economic processes (Maj and Kubiciel-Lodzińska, 2020; Kubciel-Lodzińska and Maj, 2021). Cultural heritage and cultural background play a crucial role in organization management as they influence, i.e., the value system of particular employees, which affects their functioning in organizations (Maj, 2017) and processes like innovation and networking (Sauberer *et al.*, 2015).

The authors examined the value of cultural heritage goods in terms of respondents' needs. The question arises whether and to what extent students of non-humanistic faculties recognize personal benefits in utilizing cultural heritage and how they define the needs satisfied by these goods. The authors also investigated to what extent economic benefits play a role in students' perception of cultural heritage.

# 2. Research Methodology

The qualitative research was initiated by a review of publications presenting contemporary economic tendencies related to cultural heritage. Then, in the second half of March 2021, the research was carried out among students at a technical university located in the capital city of one of the multicultural Polish provinces. The survey was conducted using the "Ankieter" [Interviewer] platform provided by the university. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions designed based on the answers provided by academic teachers who also participated in a similar survey. The results of this study were published elsewhere (Musialik and Malik, 2020).

According to Miroslav Hroch, who is a Czech historian at Charles University in Prague, references to the past, myths, memorial places, and cultural traditions which in the 19th century were components of "cultural heritage" inspired ethnic communities (dominated, non-ruling) to shape national awareness and aspire to gain independence (Hroch, 2003; Kilias, 2001). In the 1920s and 1990s, this idea was successfully adopted in Central and Eastern Europe. After over 25 years since the last systemic changes were introduced, it has been discussed how students' participation in cultural heritage fulfils their needs in a country which 30 years ago entered the path of social and economic transformation by developing a capitalist market economy.

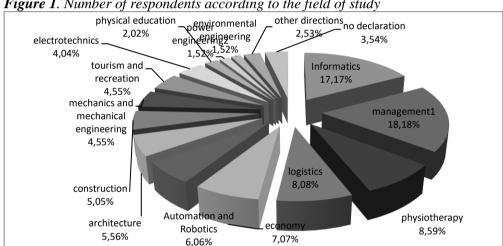
A questionnaire containing twelve close-ended questions was administered to a group of technical university students. The survey was designed to examine the understanding of the term "cultural heritage" and the extent and forms in which respondents participate in its manifestations. Some survey questions were designed to evaluate the willingness to participate in manifestations of cultural heritage. Some were designed to define the needs satisfied by participation in cultural heritage, and some addressed the amount of money spent on meeting these needs. The survey also examined both current and future willingness to engage in cultural heritage.

The survey was carried out between 15 and 31 March 2021. It was addressed to students due to the role of their predecessors (academics) from over a century ago in determining the significance of cultural heritage in shaping attitudes essential in developing the national identity of many European nations.

The questionnaire was addressed to 5362 students. However, it did not attract much interest. The answers were provided by 198 respondents, which constituted 3.69% of all students invited to participate in this study. The number of respondents indicates that this topic is not popular among students.

Most of the participants (72.2%) were aged between 20 and 25 years, and 8.6% were aged under 20. Most of the respondents belonged to the "Z generation" - a group of people born after 1995. Most of the participants lived in Opole (72.2%), as well as Silesia (9.1%) and Lower Silesia (7.6%) Provinces. More than half of the respondents (104 people, 52.5%) lived in urban centers. One hundred four respondents were male, and 91 were female. In three cases, the gender of the respondent was not indicated.

The two largest groups of respondents studied at faculties of management (18.2%) and IT (17%). The study also included students of physical therapy (8.6%), logistics (8.1%), economy (7.0%), automation (6.1%), architecture (5.6%) and construction (5.0%). The remaining respondents have been studying tourism and recreation, mechanics, energy, environmental engineering, and physical education (Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Number of respondents according to the field of study

Source: Own calculations based on a survey result. Individual respondents have been studying in the fields of transport, aviation, security engineering and biometric engineering.

## 3. Results

## 3.1 Ways of Identifying the Definition of Cultural Heritage

Provided with the definitions of cultural heritage, the participants were asked to choose the most accurate one. The most significant number of participants selected the definitions which referred to the past. According to 66.2% of respondents, "cultural heritage" may be defined as "goods of culture, science and art left behind by previous generations." 63.1% of participants defined cultural heritage as "[t]he resource of tangible and intangible assets including spiritual, historical and moral values," and 43.9% of students participating in the study described it as "real estate or movable property, its parts or units, created by men or related to human activity and the testimony to the past era or event."

A less substantial number of students selected the definitions referring to the present. According to 33.3% of respondents, *cultural heritage* may be defined as "the relationship (cultural, identifiable, social, and economic) of a person with the place where it exists," and 30.3% of participants defined it as a "resource of the past which has been used today."

# 3.2 Personal and Social Perception of Cultural Heritage

Over 2/3 of the respondents (72.7%) considered cultural heritage necessary, whereas it was unnecessary according to 5.1%. 22.2% of the participants were uncertain about its significance ("difficult to say," "I do not know," or no indication). The significance of cultural heritage was considered as positive among those respondents who reported it as "very important" (23.7%) and "important" (51.5%). Among respondents who reported it as definitely unfavourable, some of them declared it "does not matter" (3.0%) and is of "little importance" (20.7%). In terms of preserving cultural heritage, 51.0% of respondents believed it should be preserved, and according to 36.9% of the cultural heritage should be "adapted to new functions."

When defining the current social role of cultural heritage, respondents pointed at "pride and uniqueness of the place of residence" (35.9%) and strengthening the sense of community (26.3%). Less emphasized proposals included the educational role of cultural heritage in civic development and small homelands (15.2%), a source of positive social models (12.1%), and a factor facilitating intergenerational communication and cooperation (7.6%). The smallest group of participants (0.5%) indicated the benefits of stimulating regional entrepreneurship. There were three times more people who did not recognize the role of contemporary cultural heritage in stimulating regional entrepreneurship (1.5%).

# 3.3 Cultural Heritage as a Resource

More than half of students who actively participate in cultural heritage were encouraged by their parents to do so (53.8%). Some students were encouraged by personal initiative (23.1%), teachers (17.3%), and to a small extent, by cultural institutions (5.8%). In terms of ways of using cultural heritage, most people declared visiting monuments (86.9%), visiting museums (73.7%), eating traditional food (62.6%), reading books (60.6%), watching theatre performances (43.9%), and visiting galleries (31.8%). The smallest group of respondents indicated that heritage could play a role in the development of enterprises (8.6%).

## 3.4 Participation in Cultural Heritage and Benefits of It

More than half of the respondents (58.6%) indicated they use manifestations of cultural heritage. Some participants were indecisive and answered either "I do not know" (18.2%) or "do not know" (17.7%). Some respondents admitted they do not use cultural heritage (4.5%). In terms of benefits of cultural heritage, social benefits

were indicated most often (51.5%), followed by personal benefits (43.9%) and economic profits (3.5%). Among social benefits, respondents indicated developing a sense of national bond (25.8%), stimulating local social activity to preserve heritage (21.2%), and creating opportunities for recreation and leisure (19.9%). Fewer participants highlighted the influence of heritage on overcoming social problems (12.7%) and conditioning social capital (6.9%). Interns terms of personal benefits gained from the cultural heritage were defined as a source of knowledge (29.9%), inspiration for artistic activity, and opportunities for recreation and leisure (26.4%), as well as developing one's own identity (22.6%). Significantly fewer participants emphasized personal benefits resulting either from material value (5.7%) or stimulating business activity (2.9%) (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Respondents' views on the types of benefits provided by cultural heritage

	Types of benefits										
No.	Personal			Social			Economical				
	Total										
	Number	%		Number	umber %		Number	%			
1.	87	43.9		102	51.5		7	3.5			
	In detail										
	Personal		Social			Economical					
	Description		%*	Description	on	%*	Description		%*		
2.	Defining identity		22.6	Sense social bon	of nds	25.8	Stimulus economic developmen	of nt	23.8		
3.	knowledge	of	29.9	Social capital		6.9	Designing products creative ind	in ustry	19.0		
4.	The materi value artefacts	al of	5.7	Possibility of recreation and leisure		19.9	Art and as market	ntiques	9.5		
5.	Stimulating business 2.9 activity		2.9	Social activity for heritage		21.1	Real estate turnover on the antique goods market		14.2		
6.	Inspiration for artistic 2 activities, recreation		26.4	Source of solutions for social problems		12.7	The functioning of traditional crafts and agriculture		19.0		
7.	No indication -		-	No indication	l	13.6	No indication	on	14.5		

Note: \* % of numbers in the group

Source: Own calculations based on the survey results.

Participants who highlighted economic benefits also noticed the impact of cultural heritage on economic development (23.8%), designing products in the creative industry (19.0%), functioning of traditional crafts and agriculture (19.0%), turnover

of the monument real estate market (14.2%). According to the respondents, cultural heritage had the lowest impact on the art and antique market (9.5%).

Few indications of economic benefits most likely resulted from the limited experience of respondents due to their age, student status, and the fact that they usually are professionally inactive. Less than half of the participants (42.9%) indicated some forms of economic exploitation of cultural heritage such as tourism industry (63.5%), providing products and services (21.2%), the creative industry, non-free forms of education (5.9% each) and traditional agriculture (5.8%).

## 3.5 Personal Responsibility for the Condition of Cultural Heritage

Over half of the respondents (58.6%) declared taking responsibility for the future of cultural heritage. One in four participants (40.4%) hesitated before answering this question, and the remaining respondents either did not express their opinion (0.5%) or refused to take such a responsibility (15.7%).

When determining one's monthly financial share in the maintenance of cultural heritage in March 2021, one in four persons indicated a range of up to 1.0% of monthly income, and one in five respondents estimated this amount between 1.0% and 5.0% of the available budget.

**Table 2.** The level of material contribution to maintain cultural heritage among the respondents

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		Period					
No.	% of monthly income	Currently		In the future			
		Number	%	Number	%		
1.	0,0 - 1,0	51	25.8	32	16.2		
2.	1,1 - 5,0	41	20.7	39	19.7		
3.	5,1 - 10,0	17	8.6	25	12.7		
4.	10.1 -5.0	3	1.5	14	7.1		
5.	Other	6	3.0	4	2.0		
6.	No answer	80.0	40.4	84	42.4		

**Source:** Own calculations based on the survey results.

Some respondents declared an increase in their spending by allocating from 5.1% to 15.0% of the available budget to preserve cultural heritage in terms of future choices. However, the number of respondents who did not answer this question also increased. Technical students seem to be hardly interested in issues related to cultural heritage. They rarely see it as an opportunity to satisfy their identification needs. The declared commitment was limited to those needs among which cultural heritage is not a significant personal value.

Students who study at technical universities were provided with a systematic humanities curriculum only in high school. For this reason, theoretical knowledge

about cultural heritage should be integrated with its practical application. In addition, the recipient of cultural heritage should not be left alone to recognize the role of an individual and social aspects of cultural heritage. Answering the questions of the purpose of contemporary cultural heritage and what needs it satisfies can stimulate a narrow group of those who preserve it and those who consume it.

Some economists consider the attitude towards cultural heritage as one of the 'soft' development factors. This term has been used to define the creativity and innovation of a specific local community, as well as the intensity, diversity, and quality of cultural activities, available recreational and leisure services, the quality of both humanly developed and natural environments as well as entrepreneurial and creative conditions along with the civic involvement of citizens, a sense of identity of local communities with the city or region in which they live, based on cultural premises and historical tradition, as well as citizens' development aspirations (Brdulak, 2020). Academic teachers should also be educated in this regard (Öztemiz, 2019), as they influence professional knowledge and the social attitudes of their students. Furthermore, they are experts in shaping regional policies.

#### 4. Conclusion

Such efforts to highlight the needs satisfied by cultural heritage may be rejected and left to unknown events. Under such circumstances, the benefits of maintaining cultural heritage may be undermined or omitted in the collective effort to preserve and nurture it. Therefore, the expenses necessary for its preservation may be questioned. This approach has already been reflected in demands for eliminating history and theology from university education programs by Polish political parties. This approach was justified by the fact that students who graduate from these programs are often unemployed.

This attitude indicates the lack of awareness of the role of historical knowledge, which is part of cultural heritage, in the functioning of society. This also proves the decreasing awareness of the benefits of cultivating cultural heritage. It is necessary to consider at what stage developing sensitivity to cultural heritage as the quality of the local community was neglected.

The question of what individual and social benefits are gained from the protection of cultural heritage remains open. Is preparing graduates for professional life the only role of universities? Should "higher education" be narrowed down only to professional specializations? Should we expect only certain professional behaviors from people with "higher education"? Do their personal choices not affect the microand macroeconomic welfare? Should shaping attitudes/behaviors become the domain of individual freedom? Answers to these questions inevitably lead to other questions: Who is responsible for shaping attitudes essential in creating sustainable development and social well-being? To what extent is the education system responsible for this? Is

this space not for popularizing local solutions based on the manifestations of local cultural heritage?

Some studies have already shown the possibilities of developing creative industries (Santagata, 2009). However, no studies discuss the aspect of demand. It is essential to shape the attitudes of those whose interests will allow to develop and influence niche economic ventures, enhance the identity of local communities, develop economic networks, and impact the employment market. The creation of values applies to material benefits and these gains, which satisfy the need for self-actualization, identity, and pride in work (Barczak, 2013). The impact of cultural heritage on the development of the local economy will depend on stimulating the demand for its manifestations. In turn, manifestations of cultural heritage may be preserved only by acknowledging the benefits they offer to its recipients. The task of defining these values rests on those who introduce economic development plans and programs.

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