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DOES CULTURAL PARTICIPATION MAKE US HAPPIER?

FAVORITE LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND HAPPINESS IN A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF THE SERBIAN POPULATION

Abstract: *Research on the contribution of leisure activities in general and specifically cultural participation to personal wellbeing represents a relatively new and promising line of research. Results, however, are mixed - partly due to various definitions and measures of key variables, as well as their complexity and many confounding variables. This research was conducted on a sample representative for the general population of Serbia (N=1521). As potential predictors of wellbeing, we investigated a number of socio-demographic variables (gender, age, education level, employment status, financial status), subjective health status, and a list of leisure activities selected based on past research from leisure and cultural participation paradigms. A principal component analysis revealed six latent dimensions of leisure activities that were labeled as: 1) cultural participation (in a strict sense), 2) movies & entertainment, 3) folk & family, 4) outdoor activities, 5) sport, 6) e-books & e-news. A stepwise linear regression showed that subjective happiness was best predicted by a higher subjective health status, higher financial status, and higher education level, while from the domain of leisure activities, significant positive predictors were 'folk & family', 'outdoor activities', and 'cultural participation' components. Results are discussed in*

light of the complexity of examined phenomena, as well as practical implications for policy decision making.

Key words: *Cultural Participation; Consumption; Happiness; Wellbeing; Leisure*

*Introduction*¹

Despite a long-lasting tradition of theoretical debates on the meaning of happiness, until several decades ago empirical research was mostly focused on material wellbeing. The expectation was that higher income leads to greater happiness – results, however, show this is not necessarily the case². According to the recently developed *consumption model*, people derive more satisfaction from the so called ‘experiential consumption’ compared to material purchases, which is further explained in that experiential consumption and preferences for some specific activities enhance social relations and, moreover, form an important part of a person’s identity³. In line with that, empirical data from the *leisure paradigm* show that the quality of leisure activities contributes to general satisfaction with self and life, and personal wellbeing⁴. But what about the specific role of cultural participation in making people happy?

A general assumption is that cultural participation has favorable effects on a person’s development, especially impacting introspection, emotions, experience of one’s own identity, others, and environment⁵. Still, there is scarce empirical data to

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- 1 This study is a part of the research project “Cultural participation of general population in Serbia”, Center for Study in Cultural Development, 2019.
 - 2 Easterlin, R. A. Does economic growth improve the human lot? Some empirical evidence, in: *Nations and households in economic growth: essays in honor of Moses Abramovitz*, eds. David, P. A. and Reder, M. W. (1974), New York and London: Academic Press; Filimon, N. (2018) *The impact of culture and leisure on the happiness of Spanish people*, Social Observatory of “la Caixa”, 04, pp. 28–38; Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., Sachs, J. D. and De Neve, J. E. (Eds.) (2020) *World Happiness Report 2020*, New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network. <https://worldhappiness.report/>
 - 3 Gilovich, T., Kumar, A. and Jampol, L. (2015) A wonderful life: Experiential consumption and the pursuit of happiness. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25(1), pp. 152–165.
 - 4 Mannell, R. C. and Kleiber, D. A. (1997) *A social psychology of Leisure*, State College, PA: Venture Publishing; Newman, D. B., Tay, L. and Diener, E. (2014) Leisure and subjective well-being. A model of psychological mechanisms as mediating factors, *Journal of Happiness Studies* 15, pp. 555-578.
 - 5 Ivić, I. and Marjanović, A. (1986) *Traditional games and children of today*, Belgrade OMEP Traditional Games Project, OMEP World Organisation for Early Childhood Education in collaboration with Yugoslav National committee of OMEP, Institute of Psychology, University of Belgrade; Marjanović-Shane, A., Ferholt, B., Miyazaki, K., Nilsson, M., Rainio, A. P.,

support claims on the specific contribution of culture and arts to personal wellbeing⁶, although more and more research is being conducted on this subject in recent years⁷.

Results from the Italian population showed that variables related to cultural participation are amongst the best predictors of personal wellbeing – just after health-related variables, and even outperforming some socio-demographic variables (e.g. job, age, income, education)⁸. Empirical data from the UK and Spain also confirm the positive effect of cultural (and sport) participation on satisfaction with life and general feeling of happiness⁹, and another study demonstrated that a specific art-related activity (i.e. higher motivation for listening to music) predicted subjective wellbeing¹⁰. In contrast, a study from British Columbia showed that arts-related predictors had a very small impact on the quality of life¹¹, while another study from the UK (United Kingdom Household Longitudinal Study) revealed that some culture-related activities, such as heritage and active-creative leisure activities, were positively related to life satisfaction, but this was not the case for participation in popular entertainment, theatre, and museum/galleries.¹² To add to the complexity of the problem, some recent studies revealed

Hakkarainen, P., Pesic, M. and Beljanski-Ristic, Lj. (2011) *Playworlds - An Art of Development*, pp. 3–32.

- 6 Galloway, S. (2006) Cultural Participation and Individual Quality of Life: A Review of Research Findings, *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 1, pp. 323–342.
- 7 Including interest of European Commission, see report on Cultural Statistics 2019; <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/10177894/KS-01-19-712-EN-N.pdf/915f828b-daae-1cca-ba54-a87e90d6b68b>
- 8 Grossi, E., Sacco, P. L., Tavano Blessi, G. and Cerutti, R. (2011) The impact of culture on the individual subjective well-being of the Italian population: An exploratory study, *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 6(4), pp. 387–410; Grossi, E., Tavano Blessi, G., Sacco, P. L. and Buscema, M. (2012) The Interaction Between Culture, Health and Psychological Well-Being: Data Mining from the Italian Culture and Well-Being Project, *J Happiness Stud* 13, pp. 129–148.
- 9 Filimon, N. (2018) The impact of culture and leisure on the happiness of Spanish people, *Social Observatory of "la Caixa"* 04, 28–38; Wheatley, D. and Bickerton, C. (2017) Subjective well-being and engagement in arts, culture and sport, *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 41, pp. 23–45.
- 10 Morinville, A., Miranda, D. and Gaudreau, P. (2013) Music Listening Motivation Is Associated With Global Happiness in Canadian Late Adolescents. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts*, 7(4), pp. 384–390.
- 11 Michalos, A. C. (2005) Arts and the quality of life: An exploratory study, *Social Indicators Research*, 71, pp. 11–59.
- 12 Brown, J. L., MacDonald, R. and Mitchell, R. (2015) Are People Who Participate in Cultural Activities More Satisfied with Life? *Social Indicators Research*, 122, pp. 135–146.
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a positive (and authors even claim causal) relationship between cultural attendance, cultural participation, and wellbeing, but also emphasized the moderating role of some personality traits such as neuroticism and extraversion¹³.

In fact, empirical studies on the relation between cultural participation and personal wellbeing represent a relatively new line of research – and also a complex one, particularly given the complexity of wellbeing per se (its different definitions and measures) and many factors that impact it. What contributes to personal wellbeing is a decades-old research problem during which time wellbeing was understood sometimes through more cognitive parameters (e.g. how people rate satisfaction with life or some specific life domains), and sometimes through more emotional aspects (e.g. how people felt during the last week(s)). One specific approach places special focus on the phenomenon of subjective happiness as a personal state which is presumed to be relatively stable in time and relatively independent on external factors (e.g. while some people may feel unhappy despite favorable material goods, others may feel very happy despite unfavorable life conditions). This understanding of personal happiness should allow for comparisons across local communities and cultures, and the instrument constructed to measure subjective happiness is also very easy to use (contains only four items and has been translated to several languages¹⁴). However, while subjective happiness was examined in Serbia¹⁵, as were leisure activities (especially in youth¹⁶), and cultural participation¹⁷, these constructs were not examined jointly so far.

13 Węziak-Białowolska, D., Białowolski, P. and Sacco, P. L. (2019) Involvement with the arts and participation in cultural events—Does personality moderate impact on well-being? Evidence from the U.K. Household Panel Survey, *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 13(3), pp. 348–358.

14 Lyubomirsky, S. and Lepper, H. S. (1999) A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation, *Social Indicators Research*, 46, pp. 137–155.

15 Jovanović, V. (2014) Psychometric Evaluation of a Serbian Version of the Subjective Happiness Scale, *Social Indicators Research: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal for Quality-of-Life Measurement*, 119(2), pp. 1095–1104.

16 Pešić, J., Videnović, M. and Plut, D. (2012) Leisure and positive development of youth: The time use analysis. *Psihološka istraživanja* 15(2), pp. 153–168; Pešić, J. and Videnović, M. (2017) Leisure from the youth perspective: A qualitative analysis of high school students' time diary, *Zbornik Instituta za pedagoška istraživanja* 49 (2), pp. 314–330; Stepanović, I., Videnović, M. and Plut, D. (2009) Obrasci ponašanja mladih tokom slobodnog vremena, *Sociologija*, 51(3), str. 247–261.

17 Cvetičanin, P. (2007) *Kulturne potrebe, navike i ukus građana Srbije i Makedonije*, Niš: Odbor za građansku inicijativu; Cvetičanin, P. i Milankov, M. (2011) *Kulturne prakse građana Srbije: preliminarni rezultati*, Beograd: Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka.

Additionally, the concept of cultural participation is also a complex one, usually incorporating activities of *cultural production* (engaging in art or a creative hobby) and two types of cultural consumption: *public cultural consumption* (visiting cultural institutions or events) and *private cultural consumption* (reception of cultural content at home)¹⁸. Moreover, studies on cultural participation usually make a distinction between cultural habits (what people do) and cultural needs or interests (what people like to do even though they might not necessarily do that from various reasons). While the former seems to relate more directly to behavior, the later might be more appropriate to avoid the confounding effect of obstacles (e.g. poor cultural offer, lack of time, illness, etc.).

In this study, conducted on a representative national sample in the Republic of Serbia (persons aged 16 and older), we explored the contribution of favorite leisure activities to subjective happiness, while also taking into account some socio-demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, education level, employment status, financial parameters) and personal health status, as these variables were previously shown to impact personal wellbeing. We were specifically interested in exploring the role of cultural participation in predicting subjective happiness.

Our main aims were:

1. To explore the patterns of favorite leisure activities across the general population. Starting from the list of leisure activities, we aimed to extract latent dimensions, i.e. examine whether some general patterns of favorite leisure activities exist.
2. To examine the contribution of extracted patterns of favorite leisure activities to subjective happiness, along with the contribution of socio-demographic variables.

Method

Variables and their operationalization

1. The list of leisure activities was defined based on past research in the cultural participation paradigm, and also from the leisure paradigm¹⁹. Since we were specifically interested in cultural participation, we selected those activities that represent cultural production and the two types of cultural consumption. We also included

18 Morrone, A. (2006) *Guidelines for Measuring Cultural Participation*, Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics; Cvetičanin, P. cited manuscript.

19 Cvetičanin, P; Pešić & Videnović; Stepanović, Videnović & Plut; cited manuscripts

some typical activities from the leisure research, such as spending time on the Internet, in nature, walking, socializing, sport, etc. (Table 1). It is also important to emphasize that we did not ask participants what they actually do in their leisure time, but about their preferred leisure activities (i.e. “What do you like to do in your leisure time? Please rate each activity on a scale from 1 (I don’t like at all) to 5 (I like it very much)”). This was to avoid interference of obstacles, such as if a participant was not able to do a certain activity due to some external (e.g. cultural offer) and/or temporary reason (e.g. being busy). Thus, we were focused more on cultural needs/interests than on cultural habits.

2. Socio-demographic variables:
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Education level (less than elementary school, elementary school, high school, college/university, postgraduate)
 - Employment status (employed, unemployed, high school students, university students, retired, others)
 - Financial status (monthly personal and household income, the amount of money that a person is capable to spend for cultural participation per month)
3. Personal health status (“How would you rate your general health condition?”) measured by a 5-point Likert scale (1=very bad, 5=very good)
4. Wellbeing – we decided to investigate subjective happiness²⁰ in order to focus on the subjective experience of one’s inner state rather than on cognitive components of happiness (e.g. how satisfied one is with the quality of life or some specific domains, where many external parameters interrelate). The instrument that measures subjective happiness had already been translated and used in a Serbian sample, showing good psychometric properties²¹. It consists of four items that participants rated on a 7-point Likert scale, evaluating how happy they were in general, as well as compared to other people.

20 Lyubomirsky, S., & Lepper, H. S., cited manuscript.

21 Jovanović, V. cited manuscript.

Procedure and sample

Data analyzed in this paper represent a part of a larger field study conducted in October-November 2019 on a representative sample (N=1521) of the general population (16 years of age and older) in Serbia stratified by regions (Belgrade 22.7%; Vojvodina 22.1%, Šumadija and Western Serbia 27.2%, Southern and Eastern Serbia 23.0%). Fifty interviewers visited selected homes and offered participants to self-complete the questionnaire or provided assistance in case a participant was not capable to read/write the answers²².

Results

First, we will present the descriptive statistics for each variable, also commenting on preliminary analyses of relations between potential predictors and subjective happiness (e.g. to simplify the further analysis, we merged some categories). Then, we will present the results of the regression model for predicting subjective happiness.

Gender and age. The sample included 46% of males. Youngest participants were 16 years old and the oldest were 80 (average age $M = 41.5$), with the distribution in line with the official statistics from the Republic of Serbia²³. There were no differences between males ($M=5.02$, $SD=1.20$) and females ($M=5.08$, $SD=1.17$) in subjective happiness ($t(1509) = 1.12$, $p = .27$), while age and subjective happiness were lowly negatively correlated ($r = -.145$, $p < .001$). Unlike in past research (Batz & Tay, 2018), the interaction between gender and age in predicting subjective wellbeing was not significant.

Education level. The majority of participants (52.5%) had completed a high school, while 9.2% had completed an elementary school or less, and 38.3% completed various kinds of colleges or university studies (college 11.0%, university studies 21.0%, MA 5.9%, PhD 0.4%). Due to the uneven distribution across education level categories, as well as preliminary results regarding subjective happiness, for the purpose of further analysis we will use merged categories (those which did not differ in subjective happiness levels: (1) elementary school & less; (2) high school; (3) college, university & postgraduate education. The three merged categories significantly differ from each other on subjective happiness ($F(2, 1508) = 19.82$, $p < .001$).

22 More about the procedure and sample in: Mrđa, S. i Milankov, M. (2020) *Kulturna participacija građana Srbije*, Beograd: Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka.

23 <https://www.stat.gov.rs/sr-Latn/vizuelizacija/interaktivni-grafikoni/mapa>

revealing that more highly educated participants rated their subjective happiness higher.

Employment status. The sample included employed (61.9%), unemployed participants (13.4%), university students (7.5%), high school students (2.0%), retired people (12.0%) and the category of “others” which included disabled people, housewives and other inactive roles (3.2% in total). To simplify further analysis, we will use two merged categories of employment status in line with the results of ANOVA which showed that (1) employed and high school/university students rated subjective happiness higher compared to (2) unemployed, retired, and “others” ($F(4,1500)=13.30, p<.001$).

Income and expenditure. We asked participants about their total monthly household income, personal income, and the amount of money they are capable to spend for cultural participation (amount for CP). As expected, all these measures are highly positively correlated with $r = .52$ for household and personal income, $r = .49$ for the amount for CP and household income, and $r = .42$ for CP and personal income (Spearman coefficients, $p < .001$ for all correlations). To avoid interactions with other variables (such as employment status, age, etc.), in further analysis we will only use the amount for CP. Moreover, for the purpose of further analysis, we categorized this variable into three categories: ‘less than 1000 RSD’ (21.2%), ‘1000-3000 RSD’ (47.5%), and ‘more than 3000’ (31.3%), which differ on subjective happiness in a way that those capable to spend a higher amount of money on cultural participation rated their subjective happiness as higher ($F(2,1353)=31.05, p<.001$).

Subjective estimation of personal health condition. Overall, participants in the sample evaluated their health as good Mean=3.96, SD=0.87 on a 5-point Likert scale. This variable is moderately correlated with subjective happiness ($r=.34, p=.01$).

Favorite leisure activities. Looking into leisure activities separately, the least popular are listening to jazz and classical music as well as practicing any kind of art, but also reading e-books (each with a mean score below the average for the whole scale). On the other hand, the highest number of participants reported spending their leisure time in social and outdoor activities, while of cultural consumption activities watching movies was the most common.

To address our first aim, we conducted a Principal component analysis with Oblimin rotation, which revealed 6 components explaining a total of 62.01% of variance (percentage of explained variance per component is given in Table 1).

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Descriptive Statistics	Components (item loadings)							
	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
going to theater	3.69	1.07	0.76					
going to cinema	3.90	0.96	0.55	0.60				
going to museum or gallery	3.41	1.07	0.83					
tour of cultural and historical monuments and archeological sites	3.59	1.04	0.70					
listening to classical music	2.88	1.16	0.78					
listening to jazz music	2.83	1.16	0.76					
listening to rock music	3.41	1.24	0.64					
listening to folk music	3.43	1.13			0.66			
internet surfing	3.90	1.08		0.76				
social networks	3.53	1.25		0.78				
reading e-books	2.86	1.22						-0.71
reading e-news	3.24	1.19						-0.81
watching TV	3.77	1.03			0.69			
watching movies	4.24	0.81		0.48				
reading books	3.77	1.09	0.74					
reading news	3.55	1.03			0.52			-0.50
engaging in some artistic activity (painting, singing, dancing...)	2.99	1.24	0.58					
clubbing	3.04	1.25		0.71				
going to restaurant, coffee bar	3.92	1.00		0.70				
family gathering (birthdays, celebrations, weddings...)	4.00	0.92			0.72			
going to sport events (e.g. football or basketball matches)	3.38	1.29					0.85	
visiting a friend for chat	4.31	0.74		0.43		-0.59		
going for a walk	4.23	0.86				-0.89		
staying in nature / hiking	4.04	1.02				-0.79		
playing sports	3.46	1.20					0.85	
Percentage of explained variance			27.04 %	11.64 %	7.65 %	5.77 %	5.65 %	4.27 %

Table 1. Favorite leisure activities and their latent structure; Note. Favorite leisure activities were rated on 5-point Likert scale; Loadings lower than 0.40 omitted.

Component 1 was labeled ‘cultural participation’ as it is best described by the selected list of activities related to cultural participation in a strict sense; component 2 ‘movies and entertainment’, component 3 ‘folk and family’, component 4 ‘(no) outdoor activities’, component 5 ‘sport’, component 6 ‘(no) e-books & e-news’. For the purpose of further examination of the contribution of various styles/preferred leisure activities, we calculated average scores for the groups of items with highest loadings on each component. For three items with a similar loading on more than one component, the decision was made based on the higher loading and item content, while the loading on the other component was interpreted as a secondary loading (e.g. going to cinema loaded to ‘cultural participation’ component in line with the theoretical meaning of the concept of cultural participation, but the same item had a higher loading to the component described by entertaining activities such as watching movies in general, on TV, online etc.).

Subjective happiness. Overall, participants reported high levels of subjective happiness, Mean=5.03, SD=1.18, for a 7-point Likert scale, which is in line with previous results on a student sample in Serbia²⁴ and somewhat higher than the score reported in the World happiness report²⁵.

Regression analysis

Due to the multicollinearity of predictors, we employed a stepwise linear regression with the following predictors: subjective estimation of health condition, gender, age, employment status, education level, the amount for CP, and the six components of leisure activities, while subjective happiness was the criterion variable.

After six steps, the best model explained 15.8% of variance, showing a positive contribution of subjective estimation of health condition, amount for CP (if one can spend more than 3.000 RSD compared to lower categories), education level (those with elementary school or less rated lower subjective happiness compared to those with higher education), while from the domain of leisure activities, significant positive predictors were ‘folk & family’, ‘outdoor activities’, and ‘cultural participation’ components (see Table 2).

24 Jovanović, V. cited manuscript.

25 Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., Sachs, J. D. and De Neve, J. E. (eds.) (2020) *World Happiness Report 2020*, New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network. <https://worldhappiness.report/>

Model (6th step)	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.	Model R	Model R ²
(Constant)	1.77	0.29		6.21	0.00	0.40	0.16
Health status	0.41	0.04	0.30	11.53	0.00		
Outdoor activities	0.15	0.05	0.09	3.05	0.00		
Amount for CP (more than 3.000 RSD)	0.23	0.07	0.09	3.39	0.00		
Folk & family	0.16	0.05	0.10	3.65	0.00		
Cultural participation	0.12	0.04	0.08	2.71	0.01		
Education (elementary or less)	-0.24	0.11	-0.06	-2.15	0.03		

Table 2. Regression model for the list of predictors of subjective happiness for the sixth step of the stepwise linear regression

Discussion and conclusion

Generally speaking, what makes us happy is a matter of our subjective experience, while how we spend our leisure time is a matter of our interests and possibilities. Are these two phenomena mutually related so that happiness can be predicted by our favorite leisure activities? And what is the role of cultural participation in these interrelations?

The results of this study were obtained on the sample representative for the general population of the Republic of Serbia older than 15 years of age (gender and age distributions fit official statistics for Serbia). While this kind of sample allows for analyses within specific socio-demographic groups, in this paper we were focused on general patterns of leisure activities and their possible contribution to wellbeing, beside the effect of classical socio-demographic variables.

Amongst listed leisure activities, the most popular ways to spend leisure time are social and outdoor activities, while movies are the most popular among cultural consumption activities. This is pretty much in line with past research in the Serbian population (where a question on favorite leisure activities was open-ended) when more than 60% of participants reported watching TV, socializing with friends, reading books, walking, resting, and playing sport.²⁶ Going to cinema was amongst the highest rated activities both in past research and our study, but a closer look into latent dimensions showed that interest in movies belongs with entertainment (together with internet surfing, clubbing, and visiting coffee shops and restaurants) more than with cultural consumption in a stricter sense, which is better described by an interest for theater, classical and jazz music, museums, galleries, monuments, and archeological sites. Apart from these two dimensions (cultural participation and movies & entertainment),

²⁶ Cvetičanin, P. (2007) *Kulturne potrebe, navike i ukus građana Srbije i Makedonije*, Niš: Odbor za građansku inicijativu.

we also revealed four other latent dimensions of favorite leisure activities: folk & family (TV, folk music, family gathering), outdoor activities (walking and nature), sport (watching and practicing), and e-reading (books and news). To address the main aim of this study, we further examined whether these dimensions contribute to personal wellbeing/subjective happiness.

Following past research in this paradigm, as potential predictors of wellbeing, we selected socio-demographic variables, as well as health status which is expected to contribute to wellbeing more than other predictors –indeed, our results confirmed that expectation as this variable had the highest contribution to prediction. The best model predicting subjective happiness also includes outdoor activities, high (compared to lower) financial status, folk & family, cultural participation in a strict sense, and a negative contribution of elementary education level (compared to high education). From the list of socio-demographic variables, the best predictors were, therefore, a higher financial status, but also a higher education level.

It is important to mention that in case of complex and subtle variables such as subjective happiness, even small percentages of explained variance (such as those obtained in the present study) are significant and should be taken into account in policy decision making. In other words, besides the obvious (and expected) role of health and wealth, it is also important to invest in education, and even more so in promoting leisure activities that make us happier: socializing with family, but also cultural participation. These results are in line with past research which showed that a sense of connection with other people, especially family, but also friends and social networks, makes people happier²⁷. Moreover, cultural participation often includes socializing, thus further contributing to happiness²⁸. From the policy point of view, it is worthwhile to mention that for over a decade various cultural programs have been implemented in order to help people feel better, such as projects in the framework of “Arts on Prescription” for people experiencing mental health problems and social isolation²⁹ or the “Happy museum” project for a broader audience³⁰. Speaking of importance of cultural participation for policy decision making, it is worth mentioning the empirical data which show a positive correlation between

27 Barker, C. J. and Martin, B. (2011) Participation: the happiness connection, *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 7(1), pp. 1-16.

28 Fujiwara, D. and MacKerrow, G. (2015) *Cultural activities, art forms and wellbeing*, Manchester: Arts Council England.

29 Bungay, H. and Clift, S. (2010) Arts on Prescription: A review of practice in the UK, *Perspectives in Public Health*, 130(6), pp. 277-281

30 See project page: <https://happymuseumproject.org/>

cultural participation and socially desirable engagement. To illustrate, an analysis from four longitudinal studies showed that young people who participated more in cultural activities, had a better academic achievement, as well as a higher level of voluntarism and socially desirable activities in general. This was true for the group of high, but even more so for the group of students with a low socioeconomic status³¹.

Speaking about limitations of this study, an important note is that we were primarily interested in general patterns of favorite leisure activities and their contribution to subjective happiness. While it is also expected that the results would be specific for certain groups (e.g. male vs. female, young vs. old people, etc.), these analyses fall out of the scope of this paper, and should be examined in more detail in future publications. Besides, we did not examine cultural habits (what people do) but needs or interests (what they like to do), leaving the direct effect of art-related activities on happiness an open question. Another limitation of our study is that we did not include other psychological (or more specifically personality) variables, which have been found to be moderators in all these paradigms (i.e. wellbeing, leisure, and cultural participation) – and moreover, empirical results indicate that the effect of cultural participation on life satisfaction and life constrains depends on personality traits, namely neuroticism and extraversion³². In addition, research also shows that profound aesthetic experience is related to personality trait openness to experience³³. Personality effects have also been revealed in the experiential consumption paradigm suggesting that socio-demographic data are not sufficient to predict preferences for one experiential activity over another³⁴. Finally, it is important to emphasize that all these data (both from our own and the past studies that we referred to) had been collected before a global COVID-19 pandemic impacted the way we interact with our social and physical environment. For future studies, it would be interesting to examine the specific contribution of digital art and cultural participation to subjective happiness, and, moreover, how people perceive the role of art and culture in uncertain

31 Catterall, J. S., Dumais, S. A. and Hampden-Thompson, G. (2012) *The arts and achievement in at-risk youth: Findings from four longitudinal studies*, Washington: National Endowment for the Arts.

32 Węziak-Białowolska, D., Białowski, P. and Sacco, P. L. (2019) Involvement with the arts and participation in cultural events—Does personality moderate impact on well-being? Evidence from the U.K. Household Panel Survey, *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 13(3), pp. 348–358.

33 Silvia, P. J., Fayn, K., Nusbaum, E. C. and Beaty, R. E. (2015) *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 9(4), pp. 376–384.

34 Mehmetoglu, M. (2012) Personality effects on experiential consumption, *Personality and Individual Differences*, 52, pp. 94–99.

changing environments as a possible tool for supporting their health and wealth.

Given the complexity of both the concepts of ‘cultural participation’ and ‘subjective happiness’ on the one hand and their interrelations including on the other hand many possible external and internal moderators on the other hand – the accumulation of empirical data provides the necessary support to a better theoretical understanding of these phenomena as well as informed policy decision making. Studies done on large and representative samples are particularly useful, as their results are highly generalizable.

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**ДА ЛИ НАС КУЛТУРНА ПАРТИЦИПАЦИЈА
ЧИНИ СРЕЋНИЈИМ?**

**ОМИЉЕНЕ АКТИВНОСТИ У СЛОБОДНО ВРЕМЕ И СРЕЋА
НА РЕПРЕЗЕНТАТИВНОМ УЗОРКУ ГРАЂАНА СРБИЈЕ**

Сажетак

Истраживања о доприносу активности у слободно време, а посебно о доприносу културне партиципације личном благостању и доживљају среће представљају релативно нову линију истраживања. Иако има доста налаза о позитивној вези између личног благостања и културне партиципације, резултати нису у потпуности конзистентни, што се бар делимично може објаснити различитим теоријским схватањима ових сложених појмова (културна партиципација, лично благостање и срећа), као и њиховим различитим операционализацијама, примењеним истраживачким техникама и узорцима. Ово истраживање спроведено је на репрезентативном узорку грађана Србије старијих од 15 година (N=1521, 46% мушкараца, просечан узраст 41.5). Теренско прикупљање података реализовано је у октобру и новембру 2019. године. Као потенцијални предиктори субјективног доживљаја среће укључени су: 1. социо-демографске варијабле (пол, старост, степен образовања, радни статус, финансијски статус), 2. субјективна процена здравственог стања, и 3. листа активности сачињена на основу претходних истраживања

у домену слободног времена и културне партиципације (која је одређена тако да обухвата културну продукцију, приватну и јавну културну потрошњу, а испитаници су оцењивали у којој мери им је омиљена свака од наведених активности). Анализом главних компоненти издвојено је шест латентних димензија активности у слободно време: 1) културна партиципација у ужем смислу, 2) филмови и забава, 3) народњаци и породица, 4) активности на отвореном, 5) спорт и 6) е-књиге и е-новине. На нивоу целог узорка субјективни доживљај среће је био висок, просечна оцена 5.03, на 7-степенј Ликертовој скали. Резултати линеарне регресије издвојили су најбоље предикторе субјективног доживљаја среће. Срећнији су људи који позитивније оцењују своје здравствено стање, имају виши финансијски статус, али и они који су више образовани. Позитивнијем доживљају среће такође позитивно доприносе три обрасца омиљених активности у слободно време: народњаци и породица, активности на отвореном и културна партиципација. Резултати су дискутовани у светлу комплексности испитиваних феномена, а посебно су истакнуте могућности за наредна истраживања, као и практичне импликације за доносиоце одлука о у области културне политике.

Кључне речи: *културна партиципација, потрошња, срећа, благостање, слободно време*