

The Attitudes of Students towards Opera and Ballet: Attendance, Motivations, Barriers and Expectations

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Abstract

The paper aims to explore attitudes of university students towards opera and ballet. The survey was conducted in Slovakia amongst 900 students from different fields of study. Four main findings are of interest: (1) The most important motives of opera and ballet-goers were consistently identified as a desire to experience a “live” performance, to see a particular piece, interest in the genre in general and to go out with friends or family. (2) Main barriers perceived by non-attendees were a fear of boredom, lacking knowledge about opera and ballet and lacking interest in these genres in the people from their surroundings. (3) Concerning the expectations related to opera and ballet performances students put at the first places emotions, atmosphere of the venue or event, broadening own’s scope in culture and relaxation. (4) The field of study had not a significant influence on attitudes and the attendance of students.

Key words

Opera, ballet, attendance, attitudes, students

Introduction

The educational level is generally considered to be one of the most important factors positively influencing attendance at arts (Colbert, 1994; Kotler and Scheff, 1997; Hill and O’Sullivan,

1997). University students are therefore regarded as one of those consumer segments who are most likely to become regular arts participants. The students' participation in the arts has been often analysed in the framework of young audience surveys. However, Kolb (1997) stresses that it may be inappropriate to speak broadly of youth as a market. Since educational status of the student, just as educational level of the adult, remains the largest determining variable in predicting attendance. The educational level is without doubt the most decisive factor affecting consumers behaviour in the field of opera and ballet in Slovakia. As showed a recent audience survey (2004) conducted by Slovak National Theatre amongst opera and ballet-goers in Bratislava, the 54 % of participants were university graduates (with respect to only 14,5 % of university graduates in the Slovak population), whereas other frequently examined variables (income, age and occupation) were insignificant. Understanding factors which influence consumers behaviour is essential for developing an appropriate marketing strategy. This study was designed to reveal attitudes of university students towards opera and ballet, analysing their interest, attendance, motivations, barriers and expectations. It must be noted that in contrast with other studies that analyse consumers behaviour in performing arts (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Cuadrado and Mollà, 2000), the term "expectation" was used instead of "goal", since we were interested in responses not only from participating students but also from non-attending ones. The word "expectation" better expressed a conditional aspect of the question used in the survey. In the first section of the study we will describe research objectives, methodology of the survey, starting points, hypotheses and a demographic profile of the examined sample. The second section offers main findings of the research providing also a complementary analyses of basic influencing factors as gender, age and study field. Finally, in the third section we will present the results of the survey through evaluation of hypotheses, followed by a discussion and main conclusions.

Research Objective and Questions

The aim of this study is to explore attitudes of university students towards opera and ballet. The main points of interests are: (1) Which attitudes towards opera and ballet prevail among students? (2) What are their attendance rates at opera and ballet performances? (3) What motivates opera and ballet-goers to attend the performances, and on the other hand which are the most important barriers for non-attendees? (4) What are their expectations related to the attendance at opera and ballet? (5) Are there any differences in attitudes among students in dependence on the field of their studies?

Methodology

The survey was carried out in Bratislava, capital of Slovak republic, among university students aged mostly from 18 to 26 years during the spring term of 2004. The sample consisted of 900 individuals divided into five subgroups according to the field of study: four subgroups of 200 students with majors in economics, humanities, life sciences and polytechnics and one subgroup of 100 students in arts. The arts students were analysed only as a comparison group with the aim to distinguish between the attitudes of young people professionally involved in arts and those for whom the arts are only a part of their leisure. Since the group of arts students were not included into the statistical evaluation with other subgroups, the final sample comprised 800 respondents. The study was conducted by the Slovak National Theatre Bratislava in the cooperation with the University of Economics in Bratislava. Forty students in marketing from the university participated in the preparation and implementation of the survey. They were involved in developing hypotheses, designing questionnaire and also in collecting

data. There were two main purposes for getting involved students in the study: to estimate realistically the behaviour of the examined segment and to make interviewing process more informal in order to facilitate the expressing of respondents' opinions, especially not favourable ones. The contribution of these students was invaluable and many of the suggestions applied in the survey came directly from them. The survey was carried out by using a standardized questionnaire. Before having generated its final version the questionnaire was tested on a small sample. Respondents were personally interviewed with the emphasis on maintaining „student to student“ informal relation. The questionnaire was divided into four parts: (1) attitudes towards opera and ballet (2) attendance and intentions to attend at opera and ballet performances in the future, (3) motivations, barriers and expectations, (4) demographic variables. Both open-response and closed-response questions were used. All survey questions which had a list of reasons to choose from, also had a place for additional responses. The list of reasons given in the questionnaire (motivations, barriers and expectations) had been gathered from the students and reflected their language and ideas. Selected questions from the survey instrument are included in Appendix A.

Starting Points and Hypotheses

There is a general assumption that young people are mostly not interested in opera and ballet. However, the audience survey (2004) conducted by Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava revealed that the attendance of young people, especially those with higher education, had been underestimated. This finding drove us to explore more deeply the attendance behaviour and attitudes of students in the field of opera and ballet. Five hypotheses about the behaviour and attitudes of university students towards opera and ballet were developed. We assumed that at least half of the sample have already participated in an opera or a ballet performance, 20 % of students do not attend because of little knowledge about these genres, 40 % of non-attendees are afraid to be bored during the evening, 60 % of respondents are influenced mainly by the attendance behaviour of the people in their surroundings, 20 % of students are not interested and do not attend neither opera nor ballet.

Demographic Profile

A demographic profile of respondents is consistent with the demographic structure of students at Slovak universities. In the academic year 2003/04 there were 101 429 individuals pursuing their studies at the universities in Slovakia, 51 359 (50,64 %) of them were women. In the survey females comprised 50 % of the sample. Regarding the age, students between 18 and 21 years represented 50,25 % of the respondents and those between 22 and 26 comprised 45,25 % of the sample. There were 0,50 % of students under 18 and 4,00 % over 26. The average age of students in arts was slightly higher, since they used to start their university studies later because of longer secondary school preparation. However, arts students were not included in the sample and served only as a comparison group. The majority of universities in Slovakia offer a five years study programme in undergraduate studies, only a few of them offer six years studies. A distribution of respondents according to their grade at the universities was as follows: 16,75 % in the first year of studies, 22,38 in the second year, 21,62 in the third, 27,25 in the fourth, 11,00 in the fifth and 1,00 %. A number of respondents in the subgroups did not intend to represent a real ratio of students in different fields of study corresponding to the situation in Slovakia but to obtain a relevant number of responses for each study field. Since the representation of genders differs in dependence on the field of study we took this fact into

account in the structure of the subgroups. Women prevailed in humanities (60 %) and arts (58 %), they were slightly more represented in economics (52 %) and life sciences (54 %) and considerably less represented in polytechnics (33,5 %).

Research Findings

1. Attitudes towards Opera and Ballet

Attitudes of university students towards opera and ballet (Table 1) were examined by using four options which combined attendance and interest approach. The interest was employed as a differential factor. We tried to distinguish between those who are interested and do participate or do not participate (due to lacking opportunities) and those who are not interested and do not attend or do attend because of several reasons (e. g. to accompany a partner, friend, family; if he or she gets tickets as a gift, etc.). The research showed that 27,12 % (opera) and 33 % (ballet) of respondents belong to the group that is not interested neither attends these genres. 21,13 % of them chose this response for both opera and ballet, which is consistent with our hypothesis. Further, 16,25 % (opera) and 11,87 % (ballet) of students are interested and do attend opera and ballet performances. The most numerous category found by the survey was that of a latent interest. More than one third of the sample – 34,75 % (opera) and 35,75 (ballet) – claimed that they are interested but have not visited opera or ballet yet. Finally, 21,87 % (opera) and 19,37 % (ballet) of respondents are willing to attend under certain circumstances even if they are not interested in these genres.

Table 1:
Attitudes of University Students towards Opera and Ballet

Attitudes	OPERA						BALLET					
			Gender (%)		Age (%)				Gender (%)		Age (%)	
	(n)	(%)	Male	Fem.	≤21	22+	(n)	(%)	Male	Fem.	≤21	22+
Not interested and do not attend	217	27,13	36,00	18,25	28,57	25,63	264	33,00	48,25	17,75	34,98	30,96
Not interested but sometimes attend*	175	21,87	25,25	18,50	22,17	21,57	155	19,37	22,00	16,75	18,47	20,30
Interested but have not attended yet	278	34,75	29,25	40,25	37,68	31,73	286	35,75	24,75	46,75	38,42	32,99
Interested and do attend	130	16,25	9,50	23,00	11,58	21,07	95	11,88	5,00	18,75	8,13	15,75
T o t a l	800	100	100	100	100	100	800	100	100	100	100	100

* e. g. to accompany a partner, friend, family; if he or she gets tickets as a gift, etc.

The results of the analysis suggest that 16,25 % (opera) and 11,87 % (ballet) of the sample represent current audience for opera of ballet and in 56,62 % (opera) and 55,12 % (ballet) of students the attendance might be succesfully stimulated by using appropriate marketing strategy. Regarding the influence of gender and age on attitudes, the survey confirmed some well known facts. Females significantly prevailed in the “interest and do attend group” – 23,00 % (opera) and 18,75 % (ballet) against 9,50 % (opera) and 5,00 % (ballet) males. Consequently, males were more numerous in the “no interest, no attendance group” – 36,00 % (opera) and 48,25 % (ballet) in comparison to females – 18,25 % (opera) and 17,75 % (ballet). Women predominated in the category of latent interest too. On the other hand, the attendance of men was more likely to be influenced by other people than the participation of women. Differencies in age were significant only in the “interested and do attend group” where the older students were about two times more represented.

Table 2:
Attitudes of University Students towards Opera and Ballet
according to the Field of Study*

Attitudes	OPERA (%)					BALLET (%)				
	ECON	HUM	LIFE	TECH	ARTS	ECON	HUM	LIFE	TECH	ARTS
Not interested and do not attend	26,5	26,5	28,5	27,0	11,0	34,0	30,0	35,5	32,5	14,0
Not interested but sometimes attend**	21,5	14,5	23,0	28,5	17,0	16,0	14,0	19,5	28,0	14,0
Inerested but have not attended yet	36,5	36,0	33,0	33,5	36,0	40,0	38,5	32,0	32,5	40,0
Interested and do attend	15,5	23,0	15,5	11,0	36,0	10,0	17,5	13,0	7,0	32,0
T o t a l	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Students in economics (n=200), humanities (n=200), life sciencies (n=200), polytechnics (n=200) and arts (n=100).

** e. g. to accompany a partner, friend, family; if he or she gets tickets as a gift, etc.

No significant differencies among subgroups from different fields of study (Table 2) were identified in both “non-attendees” categories for both opera and ballet. Responses differed significantly in the “no interest, but sometimes attend group”, where students in polytechnics prevailed over the others and students in humanities were the least represented. On the other hand, the findings are reverse in the “interest and do attend category”. Nevertheless, this is very likely due to a different percentage of males and females in those subgroups. As shown in the previous table men in general tended to have a similar ratio with respect to women as the students in politechnics with respect to the rest of the sample. The same conclusion might be done for the students in humanities, who in contrast were numerous in the “female” category – “interest and do attend group”. As expected, students in arts were considerably less represented in the “no interest, no attendance group” and predominated in the “interest and do attend category”.

2. Attendance at Opera and Ballet Performances

The results of the analysis (Table 3) show that 62,25 % of respondents have already participated in an opera performance, with 17,38 % of students who attended in the past twelve months. The attendance rates were significantly lower for ballet: 47,39% of the sample have already visited a ballet performance, and 11,39 % of attendees did so in the past year. Consistently with well known differences in attendance at arts events between men and women, female students prevailed in both genres – 68,24 % (opera) and 55,5 % (ballet) against males – 55,75 % (opera) and 39,25 % (ballet). As expected, participation rates increased with age for both opera and ballet, however the differences were not significant. Regarding the intentions to attend in the future, 67 % of respondents, with more women represented, claimed that they would like to visit an opera performance. Similarly, 60 % of students, with even bigger predominance of females, planned to attend a ballet.

Table 3:
Attendance of University Students at Opera and Ballet Performances

	OPERA						BALLET					
			Gender (%)		Age (%)				Gender (%)		Age (%)	
Attended	(n)	(%)	Male	Fem.	≤21	22+	(n)	(%)	Male	Fem.	≤21	22+
Never	302	37,75	44,25	31,76	40,64	34,77	421	52,63	60,75	44,50	54,93	50,25
Yes, but not this year	359	44,88	42,50	46,90	43,35	46,45	288	36,00	32,75	39,25	33,74	38,32
In the past twelve months	84	10,50	7,75	13,15	10,59	10,41	58	7,24	3,25	11,25	7,64	6,85
Last month	27	3,37	2,25	4,47	2,71	4,06	13	1,63	1,75	1,50	1,48	1,78
This month	20	2,50	2,00	2,98	1,97	3,05	13	1,63	0,50	2,75	1,48	1,78
This week	8	1,00	1,25	0,74	0,74	1,26	7	0,87	1,00	0,75	0,73	1,02
T o t a l	800	100	100	100	100	100	800	100	100	100	100	100
Attended (together)	498	62,25	55,75	68,24	59,36	65,23	379	47,37	39,25	55,50	45,06	49,75
Wish to attend in future												
Yes	536	67,00	61,00	73,00	67,24	66,75	480	60,00	43,75	76,25	59,11	60,91
No	264	33,00	39,00	27,00	32,76	33,25	320	40,00	56,25	23,75	40,89	39,09
T o t a l	800	100	100	100	100	100	800	100	100	100	100	100

Table 4:
Attendance of University Students at Opera and Ballet Performances
according to the Field of Study*

	OPERA (%)					BALLET (%)				
Attended	ECON	HUM	LIFE	TECH	ARTS	ECON	HUM	LIFE	TECH	ARTS
Never	39,00	32,50	39,50	40,00	14,00	60,00	52,00	52,00	46,50	19,00
Yes, but not this year	44,50	51,50	38,50	45,00	41,00	35,00	36,00	30,00	43,00	49,00
In the past twelve months	9,00	10,50	14,50	8,00	22,00	4,00	7,00	10,50	7,50	19,00
Last month	4,50	3,00	4,50	1,50	13,00	0,50	2,50	2,50	1,00	8,00
This month	3,00	2,00	1,50	3,50	5,00	0,00	2,50	3,00	1,00	4,00
This week	0,00	0,50	1,50	2,00	5,00	0,50	0,00	2,00	1,00	1,00
T o t a l	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Attended (together)	61,00	67,50	60,50	60,00	86,00	40,00	48,00	48,00	53,50	81,00
Wish to attend in future										
Yes	67,50	69,00	67,50	64,00	87,00	57,00	67,50	60,50	55,00	85,00
No	32,50	31,00	32,50	36,00	13,00	43,00	32,50	39,50	45,00	15,00
T o t a l	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Students in economics (n=200), humanities (n=200), life sciences (n=200), polytechnics (n=200) and arts (n=100).

Table 4 presents the influence of different fields of study on the participation in opera and ballet. Insignificant differences among subgroups were found in the attendance at opera: 61 % of students in economics, 67,5 % in humanities, 60,5 % in life sciences and 60 % in polytechnics have already visited an opera performance. However, two notable anomalies were found in the attendance at ballet: students in polytechnics (53,5%) prevailed in participation over other subgroups and students in economics (40 %) reached the lowest attendance rate in the sample. These results are inconsistent with most other findings. As expected, the attendance of arts students was much higher than of the sample and did not differ so much between opera (86 %) and ballet (81 %). With respect to the intentions to attend these genres in future, differences among subgroups were insignificant for the opera. Nevertheless, they were considerable in the case of ballet, where students in humanities reached the highest (67,50 %) and students in polytechnics the lowest (55 %) number of positive responses. Again, arts students were significantly more interested in attending opera (87 %) and ballet (85 %) performances in the future.

3. Motivations and Barriers

Table 5 lists motives and barriers of the surveyed students with respect to the attendance at opera and ballet. We focused on discovering what drives current opera and ballet-goers among students to participate and on the other hand what discourages non-attendees to do so. Respondents were asked to select up to three reasons from the list. They might add their own reasons too.

Table 5:
Motives and Barriers to Attendance at Opera and Ballet Perceived by University Students

	OPERA						BALLET					
			Gender (%)		Age (%)				Gender (%)		Age (%)	
	(n)	(%)	Male	Fem.	≤21	22+	(n)	(%)	Male	Fem.	≤21	22+
Motivations												
Interest in the genre in general	138	15,51	13,08	16,87	13,73	17,22	123	15,89	12,83	17,15	13,95	17,83
To see a particular piece	216	24,27	25,23	23,73	24,49	24,06	173	22,35	23,89	21,73	22,22	22,48
To experience “live” performace	269	30,22	30,84	29,88	30,89	29,58	246	31,78	30,09	32,48	32,30	31,27
To see particular artists	73	8,21	9,35	7,56	6,41	9,93	41	5,30	6,64	4,74	5,43	5,17
To go out with friends or family	132	14,83	13,40	15,64	17,16	12,58	118	15,25	15,93	14,96	17,83	12,66
Interest in these genres in the people from the surroundings	36	4,04	4,05	4,04	3,89	4,19	45	5,81	7,08	5,29	5,43	6,20
Other reason	26	2,92	4,05	2,28	3,43	2,44	28	3,62	3,54	3,65	2,84	4,39
T o t a l	890	100	100	100	100	100	774	100	100	100	100	100
Barriers												
Lack of knowledge	150	20,16	22,08	17,18	21,41	18,84	177	22,55	23,24	21,15	21,55	23,66
Fier of boredom	224	30,11	30,91	28,87	29,50	30,75	257	32,74	36,00	26,15	32,45	33,06
Bad experience in the past	51	6,85	5,30	9,28	5,22	8,59	44	5,61	5,33	6,15	6,05	5,11
Lacking interest in these genres in people from the surroundings	138	18,55	17,66	19,93	21,41	15,51	154	19,62	17,71	23,46	21,79	17,20
Formality of the event	99	13,31	14,13	12,03	12,01	14,68	80	10,19	9,52	11,54	10,17	10,22
Prices of tickets	52	6,99	5,30	9,62	6,79	7,20	46	5,86	4,38	8,85	5,57	6,18
Other reason	30	4,03	4,62	3,09	3,66	4,43	27	3,43	3,82	2,70	2,42	4,57
T o t a l	744	100	100	100	100	100	785	100	100	100	100	100

The overwhelming motivation for attendance was a desire to experience a “live” performance, mentioned by 30,22 % (opera) and 31,78 % (ballet) of respondents. Other common reason given by opera and ballet-goers was to see a particular piece – 24,27 % (opera) and 22,35 % (ballet). Almost the same number of students have chosen a general interest in the genre – 15,51 % (opera)/15,89 (ballet) and to go out with friends or family 14,83 % (opera)/15,25 % (ballet) for the third and the fourth position. Regarding barriers, the results of the survey supported the hypothesis that a fear of boredom is the most important reason for non-attending – 30,11 % (opera) and 32,74 % (ballet). This result is consistent with findings of the study by Kolb (1997) implemented in this field. In accordance with the next hypothesis, a lacking knowledge about the genres was identified as the second most common barrier perceived by non-attendees – 20,16 % (opera) and 22,55 % (ballet). Finally, a lacking interest in these genres in the people from respondents’ surroundings was mentioned at the third place – 18,55 %

(opera) and 19,62 % (ballet). The order of given motives and barriers was consistent for opera and ballet. Males and females did not differ in ranking the first two motivating factors. However, a social context (to go out with friends) was a stronger motivation for men than for women. Concerning barriers, responses of men and women were consistent only in selecting the fear of boredom as the most important reason for non-attending. The lacking interest in the genres in the people from students' surroundings was more discouraging for females than for males. Interestingly, younger students gave their motives similarly as men and their barriers similarly as women.

Table 6:
Motives and Barriers to Attendance at Opera and Ballet Perceived by University Students according to the Field of Study*

Motivations	OPERA (%)					BALLET (%)				
	ECON	HUM	LIFE	TECH	ARTS	ECON	HUM	LIFE	TECH	ARTS
Interest in the genre in general	13,58	17,53	14,49	16,40	21,88	13,82	17,26	17,16	15,43	26,03
To see a particular piece	25,51	25,90	25,13	19,58	30,61	22,58	23,01	20,71	22,84	25,34
To experience "live" performance	30,04	29,08	29,47	32,80	25,00	34,10	33,19	28,40	30,25	28,08
To see particular artists	7,82	7,97	7,73	9,53	10,00	3,23	5,75	6,51	6,17	9,59
To go out with friends or family	16,87	11,95	15,94	14,82	5,63	17,52	11,06	17,16	16,05	6,16
Interest in these genres in the people from the surroundings	4,12	4,78	3,38	3,70	4,38	5,99	7,52	4,14	4,94	3,43
Other reason	2,06	2,79	3,86	3,17	2,50	2,76	2,21	5,92	4,32	1,37
T o t a l	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Barriers										
Lack of knowledge	18,59	22,44	18,82	21,18	14,29	23,44	21,64	23,53	21,56	20,83
Fier of boredom	32,66	30,77	30,11	27,09	21,43	33,33	34,50	32,35	31,19	25,00
Bad experience in the past	4,52	10,90	6,45	6,41	4,76	3,13	4,68	3,93	10,09	8,33
Lacking interest in these genres in people from the surroundings	19,60	17,95	16,67	19,70	26,19	21,35	21,64	17,65	18,35	20,83
Formality of the event	12,56	12,18	12,37	15,76	14,29	8,85	10,53	10,29	11,01	8,33
Prices of tickets	8,54	3,85	8,60	6,41	7,14	7,29	4,68	6,37	5,05	6,25
Other reason	3,53	1,91	6,98	3,45	11,90	2,61	2,33	5,88	2,75	10,42
T o t a l	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Students in economics (n=200), humanities (n=200), life sciences (n=200), polytechnics (n=200) and arts (n=100).

As shown in Table 6, no differences in selecting the two first motives (to experience a "live" performance, to see a particular piece) appeared among subgroups. Students responses differed again only in the third and the fourth position. The social context of attendance at opera was more important for students in economics and life sciences. In contrast, students in humanities and polytechnics put a general interest in the genre at the third place. In the case of ballet, the importance of social context prevailed over the general interest. Interestingly, only

slight differences in motivations between the sample and the comparison group of students in arts were found. The only significant differential factor consistently identified for both opera and ballet was a lower importance of the social context: 14,83 % (sample) against 5,63 % (comparison group) for the opera and 15,25 % (sample) against 6,16 % (comparison group) for the ballet. Another difference in motivations was found in the general interest in the genre but only in the case of ballet: 15,51 % (sample) against 26,03 % (comparison group). Concerning barriers discouraging students to attend, responses were consistent and independent on the field of the study. Surprisingly, students in arts considered the lacking interest in the people from one's surroundings (26,19 %) as the most important barrier to the participation in opera. Their responses did not differ from those of the sample in the case of ballet.

4. Expectations related to the Attendance at Opera and Ballet

Students were asked to rate in order of importance seven expectations related to attendance at opera or ballet (Table 7) using a five-point-scale of preferences, where 1 meant very important and 5 not important at all. The participants of the survey were free to add another decisive factor according to their own expectations. However, only fifteen respondents (1,88 %) did so. Therefore we did not involve this option into the final evaluation of responses. The students' expectations were ranked (Table 8) as follows: emotional experience (1,72), atmosphere of the venue or event (1,83), broadening own's scope in culture (2,01), relaxation (2,15), entertainment (2,27), educational development (2,49) and new incentives, inspiration... (2,68).

Table 7:
Expectations of University Students related to Opera and Ballet

Expectations	mean	OPERA AND BALLET								
		Gender (m)		Age (m)		Field of study (m)*				
		Male	Fem.	≤21	22+	ECON	HUM	LIFE	TECH	ARTS
Entertainment	2,27	2,29	2,26	2,31	2,23	2,38	2,22	2,29	2,20	2,72
Relaxation	2,15	2,11	2,19	2,15	2,15	2,29	2,26	2,11	1,95	2,22
Emotional experience	1,72	1,93	1,54	1,79	1,65	1,59	1,67	1,91	1,79	1,48
New incentives, inspiration...	2,68	2,82	2,55	2,78	2,58	2,88	2,59	2,51	2,79	1,91
Educational development	2,49	2,61	2,38	2,55	2,43	2,59	2,38	2,35	2,61	1,99
Broadening the scope in culture	2,01	2,19	1,85	2,06	1,96	1,95	1,83	2,01	2,26	1,75
Atmosphere (of venue, event...)	1,83	1,91	1,75	1,84	1,81	1,74	1,76	2,02	1,79	1,97

* Students in economics (n=200), humanities (n=200), life sciences (n=200), polytechnics (n=200) and arts (n=100).

Table 8:
Ranking the Expectations of University Students related to Opera and Ballet

Expectations	order	OPERA AND BALLET								
		Gender		Age		Field of study*				
		Male	Fem.	≤21	22+	ECO N	HUM	LIFE	TEC H	ART S
Entertainment	V.	V.	V.	V.	V.	V.	IV.	V.	IV.	VII.
Relaxation	IV.	III.	IV.	IV.	IV.	IV.	V.	IV.	III.	VI.
Emotional experience	I.	II.	I.	I.	I.	I.	I.	I.	I.-II.	I.
New incentives, inspiration...	VII.	VII.	VII.	VII.	VII.	VII.	VII.	VII.	VII.	III.
Educational development	VI.	VI.	VI.	VI.	VI.	VI.	VI.	VI.	VI.	V.
Broadening the scope in culture	III.	IV.	III.	III.	III.	III.	III.	II.	V.	II.
Atmosphere (of venue, event...)	II.	I.	II.	II.	II.	II.	II.	III.	I.-II.	IV.

* Students in economics (n=200), humanities (n=200), life sciences (n=200), polytechnics (n=200) and arts (n=100).

The order of importance of the expectations given by males and females differed in almost each position. They agreed only with the last three options. However, the final ranking of the sample was consistent with that of women. No significant differences in dependance on the age of respondents were found by the survey. In contrast, the field of study has affected the ranking of students. Their views fully coincided only in the last two places. The results of students in economics were the nearest to those of the sample. The ranking of the students in arts coincided with the sample only in the first position (emotional experience). An entertainment has had the lowest importance for them and new incentives and inspiration were naturally much more important for them than for the sample.

Evaluation of Hypotheses and Discussion

Despite the fact that the attendance of young people at opera and ballet is considered to be rather low we assumed that at least half of the respondents have already participated in an opera or a ballet performance. This hypothesis was fully confirmed in the case of opera (62,25 %). The attendance rates were lower at the ballet, nevertheless they reached 47,37 % of respondents. According to our second hypothesis, 20 % of students do not attend because of little knowledge about the opera and ballet. The results of the survey met our expectations, comprising 20,16 % (opera) and 22,55 % (ballet) of respondents. Although a fear of boredom was identified as the most important barrier perceived by non-attendees for both opera and ballet, the estimated percentage of respondents was overvalued. We expected 40 % of students to mention this factor among the barriers discouraging them to attend. The survey confirmed this only in 30,11 % (opera) and 32,74 % (ballet) of the sample. However, the biggest difference between estimated values and the results obtained in the survey was found in the fourth hypothesis. We assumed that participation of 60 % of students is influenced by the attendance behaviour of the people in their surroundings. Results of the survey suggested that this percentage was considerably lower and reached only 22,59 % (opera) and 24,79 % (ballet) of the respondents. The last hypothesis, which assumed that 20 % of respondents are not interested and do not attend neither opera nor ballet was confirmed by the survey. We identified 21,13 % of students corresponding to this criterion.

Table 9:
Evaluation of the Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Estimated values (%)	Results of the survey (%)	
		OPERA	BALLET
(1) At least half of the respondents have already participated in an opera or a ballet performance	50	62,25	47,37
(2) 20 % of students do not attend because of little knowledge about these genres	20	20,16	22,55
(3) 40 % of non-attendees are affraid to be bored during the evening	40	30,11	32,74
(4) 60 % of students are influenced mainly by the attendance behaviour of the people in their surroundings	60	22,59	24,79
(5) 20 % of respondents are not interested and do not attend neither opera nor ballet	20	21,13	

Five other findings about students attitudes are of interest: (1) A latent interest was the prevailing attitude towards both opera and ballet, however the predominance was not significant. (2) The most important motives of opera and ballet-goers were consistently identified as a desire to experience a “live” performance, to see a particular piece, interest in the genre in general and to go out with friends or family. (3) Main barriers perceived by non-attendees were a fear of boredom, lacking knowledge about opera and ballet and lacking interest in these genres in the people from their surroundings. (4) Regarding the expectations related to opera and ballet performances students put at the first places emotions, atmosphere of the venue or event, broadening own’s scope in culture and relaxation. (5) In general there were no significant differencies among students in dependance on the field of their studies. Even though a divergence appeared, it was more likely caused by other factors than the study field, a gender in most cases.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to determine attitudes of university students towards opera and ballet. Five hypotheses about the behaviour of this consumer segment were developed. Although the study was prepared in the close cooperation with forty students in marketing – meeting criterions of the examined sample themselves – only three hyphoteses were confirmed by the survey. This fact shows the importance of marketing research in discovering true factors influencing behaviour of existing or potential audiences. Results of the survey did not reveal significant differences in attitudes among students in dependance on the field of their studies. In general the students were more familiar with opera than with ballet. The findings of the research highlight the need for changes in marketing strategy focused on students, stressing primarily the atmosphere of “live” performance together with an emotional experience. Further findings imply the necessity to intensify educational activities provided by theatres for pupils of primary and secondary schools, to enhance the profile of opera and ballet as entertaining events and to attract students by promoting the social context of the attendance.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Selected questions from the questionnaire used in the survey

1. When did you attend an opera (ballet) performance for the last time?

☐ never ☐ I have already attended opera (ballet), but not this year ☐ in the past twelve months ☐ last month ☐ this month ☐ this week

2. Do you wish to attend an opera or a ballet performance in the future?

OPERA ☐ yes ☐ no
BALLET ☐ yes ☐ no

3. What is your attitude towards opera and ballet (mark one option)	OPERA	BALLET
a) I am not interested and do not attend		
b) I am not interested but sometimes I attend a performance (e. g. to accompany a partner, friend or a family, if I get tickets as a gift, etc.)		
c) I am interested but I have not had an opportunity to attend yet		
d) I am interested and do attend		

4. For the respondents who chose the option a) or b) in the question n. 3.

What discourages you to attend opera or ballet performances? (maximum 3 responses)

	OPERA	BALLET
a) I have little knowledge about this genre		
b) I am afraid to be bored		
c) I have a bad experience in the past		
d) There is nobody in my surroundings interested in this genre		
e) I consider the event to be too formal		
f) Prices of tickets		
g) Other reason - state.....		

5. For the respondents who chose the option c) or d) in the question n. 3.

What motivates you to attend opera or ballet performances? (maximum 3 responses)

	OPERA	BALLET
a) Interest in this genre in general		
b) Desire to see a particular piece		
c) To feel an atmosphere of a "live" performance		
d) To see particular artists		
e) To go out with friends or a family		
f) People from my surroundings are interested in this genre		
g) Other reason - state.....		

**6. If you decided to attend an opera or a ballet performance what would you expect?
(Mark importance of each category, 1 means very important and 5 not importante at all)**

	1	2	3	4	5
Entertainment					
Relaxation					
Emotional experience					
New incentives, inspiration...					
Educational development					
Broadening my scope in culture					
Atmosphere (of the venue, event...)					
Other state.....	-				