



Film festival participant profile

Survey report

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1. Information on the project

“Film festival participant profile” project is a joint project conducted by Pomeranian Film Foundation in Gdynia, the main organizer of the Polish Film Festival, and the Faculty of Human Geography and Planning at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. The project is co-financed by the Polish Film Institute. The survey allowed to examine the impact of a film festival on local development, to determine an event (festival) participant/tourist profile, his/her cultural preferences, his/her approach to new media, and new ways of participation in cultural events.

The project complements and summarizes several years of research on the impact of the Polish Film Festival on local market as well as on determining the profile of a festival tourist in 2018 and 2019. In pandemic years 2020-2021, the research was abandoned due to the anticipated unrepresentativeness of a study group (the pandemic heavily affected the structure of festival audience). In the future, the authors of the report are going to publish a book that will summarize three years of research on the festival audience and its impact on the city and region.

The project has been based on a survey method that is used to examine large populations that cannot be observed directly. The survey was conducted between 12 and 17 September 2022, during 47th Polish Film Festival in Gdynia. During that time, a group of students-interviewers from the Faculty of Human Geography and Planning at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and Film Art Organization Department at the Lodz Film School, supervised by the project coordinators, conducted the survey on a sample of 1204 Polish Film Festival participants.

2. Basic information on the 47th Polish Film Festival in Gdynia

47th Polish Film Festival in Gdynia was held between 12 and 17 September 2022. Among its Organizers, there were the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Polish Film Institute, Polish Filmmakers Association, Self-government of the Pomerania Province, and the City of Gdynia. The Co-organizers were: Telewizja Polska SA, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, and the National Centre for Culture.

Within the 47th Polish Film Festival in Gdynia, 134 films were presented during 389 screenings. Around 58 000 viewers attended film screenings. The screenings and meetings with filmmakers were held in five locations – the Musical Theatre in Gdynia, Gdynia Film Centre, Helios Gdynia cinema in the Riviera Shopping Centre, Mercure Gdynia Hotel, and the Consulate of Culture. The Main Competition consisted of 20 films, there were also 30 films in the Short Film Competition and 7 films in the Microbudget Film Competition. The programme was completed by 10 film sections and accompanying events: Gdynia Industry (13 events), exhibitions (9), promotions of books (9), and other events (5).

3. Who is a festival participant? Social and demographic characteristics

The conducted survey has shown that festival participants are mainly young people (under 35 years old) who constituted 61 percent of all responders. The largest age group were people aged 18 to 25 years old (30 percent). The majority of respondents were women (63 percent). Among the festival participants, there were mainly well-educated people. Just as in previous editions of the festival, the persons with higher education prevailed; they constituted 61,8 percent of all participants. Most of the participants were employed individuals, although there was also a substantial participation of learners (pupils and students). For the third time, also the level of wealth measured by a declared total net income was examined. The most surprising was the fact that in 2022, much more people participating in the event declared considerably higher income than 3 or 4 years ago – 25,4 percent of respondents claimed they earn more than PLN 6000 (net wage). In 2019, that group constituted a little over 15 percent of all festival participants. The vast majority of participants consisted of employed and rather well-to-do people on the one hand, and on the other hand – young and not yet economically active pupils and students.

4. Activities of the participants during the festival

The main reason to take part in the festival is the will to watch interesting films – such a declaration was made by 50,7 percent of the surveyed respondents. In the second place, people indicate the atmosphere of the festival (36,3 percent) and the festival being a good way to spend their free time (35,3 percent). This proves that cultural and recreational motives prevail. 27 percent of respondents indicated professional reasons – these were the industry members or filmmakers for whom the participation in the festival is a part of their job. Once again, it turns out that advertising and promotion are of marginal importance when it comes to attracting viewers. Festival participants are always very active during the event itself – 37,6

percent attended 10 or more screenings, and almost one third of respondents (31 percent) watched 5 to 9 films. On average, a festival participant watched 7,3 films. Accompanying events always attract much less attention – on average, a festivalgoer takes part in 3,2 accompanying events. Half of the respondents spent five or more days at the festival. On average – a festivalgoer spent 3,8 days at the event, which gives pretty much the same result as in previous years.

Over one third of respondents (35,2 percent) attended Polish Film Festival for the first time in 2022. It was the largest group of respondents. Experienced festival participants who attended at least 5 festival editions constituted around one fourth of all respondents (26,2 percent). Just like in previous years, on the one hand, the festival hosts its permanent participants, but on the other hand – it is also able to attract new audience. Once again, we highly appreciate the potential of not only retaining, but also development of the festival audience: 85,8% survey participants declared their will to attend the next edition of the festival.

Active festival participation of the Gdynia audience can be proved by the fact that 42 percent of the Polish Film Festival participants also took part in other film festivals in Poland within the past 3 years.

5. The impact of the festival on the city

Ever since we started our research, we have been interested in the multidimensional impact that a cultural event has on the place it is held in. Visitors usually are of the main economic importance. In the case of the 47th Polish Film Festival, 39,2 percent of participants came from Gdynia, and the rest were visitors. Most of them came from Gdańsk(12,3 percent) and Warsaw (15,4 percent).11,2 percent of participants came from other big Polish cities as Kraków, Poznań, Wrocław, and Katowice. Viewers from the Tricity (Gdynia, Gdańsk, Rumia, Sopot) constituted56,1 percent of participants.

Most of the visitors were accommodated in hotels or in private apartments at their own expense (62,7 percent). 35,2 percent stayed for free with their friends or relatives (a significant increase compared to previous years). More than a half of respondents used a local accommodation base, providing the possibility for local entrepreneurs to earn money.

The direct measure of the impact the festival has on the city are its participants' expenses. We asked visitors to estimate their expenses. On average, a festival participant spent PLN 2077,13. It is considerably more than it was in 2018 – back then, the amount was

PLN 877,59. It is estimated that total expenses of festival visitors' from outside Gdynia amount to PLN 6,954,829.76 (as compared to ca. 6.08 million in 2018). Meeting basic needs constituted the main expense of festival participants – apart from the expenses related directly to the festival itself, like festival tickets or passes. Another most indicated expenses were food and transportation expenses. The festival programme satisfied a vast majority of cultural and entertainment needs of respondents.

30,7 percent of recipients indicated alcohol as the most often purchased product. Relatively important category of purchased products were also books and gadgets related to the festival. 20,3 percent of respondents declare that during the event, they bought clothes, leather accessories, and footwear. The main means of transport the festival viewers used to arrive to Gdynia were trains and cars – those two options were chosen by 81,8 percent of all surveyed respondents. In their free time in between film screenings, festival tourists enjoyed the attractions offered by the Tricity. Vast majority of respondents indicated the following tourist attractions:

- Gdynia – the city beach, Kamienna Góra district, Emigration Museum, Gdynia City Museum, cliffs, and Kościuszko Square;
- Gdańsk – Old Town, Museum of the Second World War, and European Solidarity Centre;
- Sopot – the Sopot Pier.

6. Participants' assessment of the festival

For the third time, festival participants were asked to evaluate the Polish Film Festival, and for the third time this assessment proved extremely positive. Equally positive evaluation concerns the festival's programme – both films and accompanying events. The quality of films was assessed as good or very good by 77,1 percent of respondents. The evaluation of the accessibility of festival venues has improved and now is positively rated by 80 percent of respondents. Also works on improving the reservation system paid off – the number of positive opinions on it increased up to 64 percent. Assessments of the quality of films and accompanying events from 2019 and 2020 differ from the assessments from the year 2018, when the evaluation was the most positive. At the same time, both the assessment of the quality of films and the number of declarations of returning to the Polish Film Festival are

higher in 2022 than in 2019. More people want to return to Gdynia in 2023 and are happy with the quality of films in 2022.

7. Cinema or streaming? Film choices of the Polish Film Festival participants

Past four years were the period of dramatic changes in the organization of the film industry on both a global and a regional scale. Contrary to popular opinions, it was not the pandemic that caused that – it was only the factor that accelerated this process. The success of streaming platforms is caused mainly by the popularisation of the SVoD subscription model. In 2019, issues concerning streaming platforms and participants' attitude to VoD were for the first time included in the survey on the Polish Film Festival participant profile.

Results of the survey from 2022 indicate both an increased interest in VoD services and sharing time between going to the cinema and watching VoD platforms. 76 percent of respondents declare using VoD services to watch films on regular basis, and 68,9 percent regularly go the cinema. Television is becoming less and less popular due to the young age of the participants. For VoD services, they usually use a TV set or a computer. Festival participants share their time between films and film series on VoD series: they declare that 48 percent of their time spent watching VoD they devote to watching films, and 42 percent – to watching film series. The largest group of respondents spend 4 to 7 hours a week watching films on VoD platforms, and 18,6 percent of them – over 15 hours a week. Only 3,9 percent of respondents do not use VoD services at all.

8. What type of cultural consumer is a film festival participant?

Recipients of cultural content constitute a group of consumers that, according to Toffler (1965), can be called cultural consumers. To characterize a festival audience we will use the definition proposed by Peterson (1992) that divides main categories of recipients due to consumed content. Peterson divides cultural consumers into “omnivores” and “univores”. In this way, he proposes the abolition of the division of consumers into elites and masses. “Omnivores” do not specialize in consuming cultural content, they participate in various kinds of cultural activities. “Univores” are much more specialized and consume less diverse cultural content. The conducted research reveal that festival participants are very active cultural customers. Other fields of culture are also relevant to them. Most of respondents visited a theatre, a museum, an art gallery, attended a concert, an exhibition or other festival within the past year. The Polish Film Festival participant is a cultural “omnivore” that eagerly consumes diverse cultural content.