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Cultural Tourists Among Students from Toruń—Preliminary Profile

Abstract: The objective of this paper is to outline a sketch profile of a young Polish cultural tourist based on an empirical quantitative study, which involved a group of students of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (UMK). A total of 1,139 surveys were obtained from three different departments. The profile exhibits preferences, motivations, traits, and behaviours of a cultural tourist. Furthermore, an attempt has been made to compare the attained profile of a student from Toruń with the profile of a student from Poznań already presented by Buczkowska in 2014. The comparison of these two profiles seeks to establish similarities and differences in attitudes, preferences, and behaviours of young adults (tourists) studying in different cities. The study may later be extended to other social environments.

The research indicated a considerable similarity in behaviours and preferences of both surveyed groups, which could lead to a conclusion that Polish students as a social group exhibit traits characteristic of cultural tourists. It may also mean that learning about culture(s), as well as experiencing it, is of great importance in their travels. For that matter, this comparative study signals the need for further analysis of tourists with the use of the same survey instrument.

Keywords: tourism, cultural tourism, tourist attitudes and behaviours, tourist profile

1. Introduction – general overview of cultural tourism and its participants, the aim of study

As a trend on the contemporary market, cultural tourism has been gaining importance over the past two decades. According to a researcher in this field, G. Richards (2018), “cultural tourism has recently been re-affirmed by the UNWTO as a major element of international tourism consumption, accounting for over 39% of tourism arrivals.” This trend may be related to numerous factors, including globalisation and increase in certain populations’ wealth (mainly in Europe, Asia and North America). Greater wealth means that more people can afford travelling, therefore the number of tourists grows as well. The factors in question involve mobility, which has greatly improved owing to low-cost airlines business model that led to low-

ering air travel costs in general. Furthermore, such occurrence resulted in a rapid surge in the so-called *city breaks*, which are travels mostly of cultural nature. The destinations are predominantly cities with airports and good number of monuments, for instance Lisbon, Kraków and Marrakesh. Development of the Internet favours promotion of – among others – ethnic (exotic) tourism, and facilitates travelling in terms of organisation. For ethnic cultural tourism to improve, certain regions in Africa, Asia and South America should be more open for potential visitors. One way in which such attitude may be manifested is gradual abolishment of visas, and providing more opportunities to apply for one via the internet (e-Visa).

It emerges that cultural travels – not only those to exotic destinations – are of considerable importance for an individual's personal development. They serve as a tool for discovering various aspects of other people's lives, as well as products of both their high and everyday culture. Such a clash of cultures allows the participating individuals confront the aspects of otherness and observe a different life environment. It shapes tourist's personality, teaches them respect and understanding for other points of view. Moreover, experiencing other cultures etches into one's mind a sense of tolerance towards differences of any kind, be they cultural, religious, or traditional. Such knowledge allows individuals to distance themselves from daily problems, and assume different perspectives to properly assess and confront the issues (Kruczek, 2011). Additionally, it lets them broaden their knowledge and gain experience with regard to both travelling and cultural studies.

A cultural tourist is by definition a strongly motivated person who is culturally prepared to set out on frequent journeys, and has every intention of exploring and interacting with the culture of different places he or she visits in both active and multisensory manner, thus pursuing personal development and adopting a new lifestyle in the process (Buczkowska, 2014). This description was drawn up on the basis of comprehensive empirical studies and literature research. The needs, motivations and behaviours of a cultural tourist are quite diverse, hence the necessity for researchers and tour operators to conduct profile analyses time and again. On the same note, Polish cultural tourists are a group of concern to a large extent, since they have yet to be studied more thoroughly. The only comprehensive study in this matter was carried out by Buczkowska (2014) in Poznań in 2010, and Niemczyk (2012) in Kraków within a similar time-frame. Fortunately, there are increasingly more studies that focus on selected groups of individuals that take up specific forms of cultural tourism. For instance, Stasiak (2009) conducted research on Polish film tourists, Bebenow (2015) studied railway tourists, Podgórski et al. (2016) researched pilgrimage tourists, Charzyński and Podgórski (2017) looked into the case of eno- and birotourists, and Rogowski et al. (2018) performed study on birotourists.

Cultural tourists are people of various age. As Richards and van der Ark (2013) claim: "cultural tourists may develop a cultural 'travel career,' as younger visitors tend to consume more contemporary art, creativity and modern architecture, whereas older visitors are more prevalent at more traditional monuments and museums."

The authors of this text put the main focus on the former group of cultural tourists, i.e. young people. The objective of this paper is to outline a sketch profile of a young Polish cultural tourist based on empirical quantitative study, which involved a group of students from Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. The profile includes preferences, motivations, traits, and behaviours of a cultural tourist. Looking further ahead, in order to make this profile representative of all academic communities of Toruń, it is essential to extend the study to other Nicolaus Copernicus University faculties, as well as other universities in the city. Collected data were confronted with the profile presented by Buczkowska in 2014, which pertains to students from Poznań. The profile was developed based on research conducted at 24 universities with a sample group of 2,500 respondents. To sum up, a typical cultural tourist from Poznań is a female (data indicate prevalence of women) student of humanities, arts, or tourism and recreation, who exhibits "permanent" cultural tourism traits. So far she has visited a few countries, comes from a town of a population of more than ten thousand people, and the expense of her education is covered by her parents and with the money she makes herself. She is highly interested in the culture of places she visits. She is inclined to opt for active travels paired with sightseeing or leisure, which she carefully plans beforehand (unless she is an artist, in which case she often leaves her decisions to chance) and usually personally organizes. She is especially fond of travelling around Poland with her close ones. While preparing for her journeys, she usually uses the internet, talks with other tourists and reaches for guidebooks. During travel she tends to stay in small hotels and guest houses (if she is an artist, she is more likely to choose hostels and other people's houses), and eats local dishes at local venues. As for souvenirs, she buys gifts and admission tickets, and brings them home

along with photos, handicrafts, and leaflets. Her interest is piqued by monuments and people. She is also curious about the lifestyle of the encountered local people, their traditions, and cuisine. Additionally, if she is a student of art or tourism, she is keen on participating in student exchange programmes (Buczowska, 2014).

2. Research Methods

There is a number of methods and techniques used to study cultural tourists. They fall within the scope of either quantitative (especially survey research methods) or qualitative research (interviews, observation). Buczowska (2014) prepared her own questionnaire in 2010 which has been tried and tested among academic communities of Poznań. That being the case, it was used for the purposes of this study in a slightly modified and abridged version.

The survey was conducted among Polish students of three selected faculties of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń: Faculty of Earth Sciences, Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection, and Faculty of Education in the academic year 2016/2017. These three faculties were chosen deliberately for the reason of logistics (i.a. the students were easily accessible). Then again, the sampling of students was random. The research involved students of the following fields¹:

- Faculty of Earth Sciences: Geography, Urban Studies, Tourism and Recreation, Territorial Planning, Environmental Geoinformation; during the study period, the number of students amounted to 572, and 392 of them took part in the survey, which stands for 68.5% of all students of said Faculty;
- Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection: Biotechnology, Biology, Environmental protection, Forensic Biology; during the study period, the number of students amounted to 510, and 278 of them participated in the survey, which comprises 54.5% of all students of said Faculty;
- Faculty of Education Sciences: Education, Special Education, Social Work, Media Edu-

The purpose of the analysis performed in this paper is to examine similarities and differences in attitudes, preferences, and behaviours of young adults studying various majors in different cities. The results can be potentially used in research extended to cover to other social environments.

cation; during the study period, the number of students amounted to 1,348, a 469 of them took part in the survey, which stands for 34.8% of all students of said Faculty.

No separate analysis was performed to assess the results against gender.

A total of 1,139 questionnaires were obtained from the students, which translates into a half of the students of the aforementioned faculties.

Survey questions were ordered in a top-down manner. The first part pertained to general travel preferences (types and frequency of travelling, organisers and companions during the journey, destinations). Further questions revolved around means of travel, preparations, food, expenses, and souvenirs (the addressed issues are essential to cultural tourism). Finally, the last part involved respondents' interests in the field of cultural studies specifically: the degree of interest in the culture of places visited, cultural aspects of said places, and the awareness (or the lack of such) of being a cultural tourist.

Questions in the survey featured answers indicating desirable and undesirable behaviours and preferences of cultural tourists. The profile of young Polish cultural tourists studying in Toruń was based on how frequently certain answers were picked (as had been the case earlier in Poznań). The nine paramount questions found in one of Buczowska's (2014) surveys are listed below along with an appropriate explanatory comment. The most typical and desirable answers addressing behaviours and preferences are written in italics.

¹ Information regarding the number of students of particular faculties was collected from their respective deanships.

Question: What is your main purpose of travelling?

- *Active sightseeing and learning about visited places;*
- *Sightseeing always combined with leisure;*
- *Leisure activities sometimes combined with sightseeing;*
- *Active leisure activities (e.g. sports);*
- *Passive leisure activities (e.g. beach vacation);*

Question: How do you choose your travel destinations?

- *There are a few places I want to visit in the coming years, so I'm implementing my plan step by step;*
- *I choose new places with care;*
- *I visit recommended places only [gaining experience and learning about new cultures was taken into account];*
- *I choose them arbitrarily.*

Question: Where do you get your information from when preparing to travel?

- *I read about the chosen destination on the Internet;*
- *I read a guidebook;*
- *I study maps;*
- *I read articles in travel magazines;*
- *I read articles in daily newspapers or glossy magazines;*
- *I talk to people who have already visited said place;*
- *I don't look up anything at all;*
- *Other: e.g. I watch travel programmes on TV.*

Question: Where do you tend to spend the night in your travels?

- *In large hotel complexes;*
- *In small hotels, guest houses, or rural guest houses;*
- *In hostels or youth hostels;*
- *At my friend's or family's house, or by virtue of couch-surfing;*
- *Under tents [international and local camping were taken into consideration];*
- *Other: e.g. at historical sites.*

Question: Where and what do you eat most frequently when travelling?

- *Meals bought at fast-food restaurants of the world's known brands;*
- *Regional dishes served at local venues;*
- *Regional dishes served in fancy restaurants;*
- *Regional dishes served at the place of accommodation (hotel, guest house);*
- *Polish (domestic voyages) or European (outbound trips) dishes in general, served at local venues;*
- *Polish (domestic voyages) or European (outbound trips) dishes in general, served at the place of accommodation (hotel, guest house);*
- *I cook my own meals [the opportunity to cook local dishes was taken into consideration];*
- *Other: meals served by a host family.*

Question: What do you spend your money on during the journey (excluding accommodation, food, and travel expenses)?

- *Admission tickets to tourist facilities;*
- *Admission tickets to cultural events (theatrical plays, exhibitions);*
- *Parties in clubs, pubs, and discotheques;*
- *Souvenirs for myself related to the visited place;*
- *Gifts for my family and friends;*
- *Shopping (clothes, shoes, cosmetics, etc.);*
- *Other things (provide examples): ...*

Question: What souvenirs do you bring home?

- *Admission tickets from visited facilities;*
- *Photos;*
- *Leaflets, flyers, and maps collected at places visited;*
- *Books, catalogues, and albums bought at places visited;*
- *Mass-produced local objects and goods;*
- *Local handicrafts;*
- *Postcards;*
- *Shells, stones, and other gifts of nature collected on my own;*
- *Other: local food products (olive oil, alcohol, sweets, etc.);*
- *I don't bring any souvenirs.*

Question: How important is the culture of places visited to you?

- *Considerably;*
- *Moderately;*
- *Marginally;*
- *Unimportant.*

Question: Which aspects of culture interest you in the place visited?

- *Monuments;*
- *Fiestas, festivals, and other cultural events;*
- *History and historical sites;*
- *Cuisine and beverages;*
- *Museums, (classic and modern) art galleries;*
- *Music, dance;*
- *Religion and religious sites;*
- *Theatres, cinemas;*
- *People—their lifestyle, traditions, and customs;*
- *Modern architecture;*
- *Language;*
- *Other.*

Question: Do you consider yourself a cultural tourist? [respondents were not provided with the definition of a cultural tourist in order to address their intuitive understanding of this term. Another aspect taken into account was Richard's (2007c, p. 28) findings based on research in Haarlem – a small Danish town – where none of surveyed students considered themselves cultural tourists despite the fact that the activities they claimed to have performed were typical of this group]:

- *Yes, always;*
- *Yes, sometimes;*
- *No, never;*
- *I don't know, I'm not familiar with the term.*

3. Analysis and comparison of research results

The survey involved 682 women (59.0% of all respondents) and 457 men (41%). Incidentally, women were predominant at all faculties.

An overwhelming majority of 754 students (i.e. 66.2% of respondents) were undergraduates, whereas 385 (33.8%) attended postgraduate studies. A half of those surveyed live in rural areas

(47.9%), 209 of them (18.3%) come from towns with population of 10,000 people, 216 (18.6%) reside in cities of 100,000 people, whereas 166 of the respondents are from cities with population ranging between 10 and 100 thousand people.

The demographic data presented above are given only for information, as the nature

of the research in Toruń, which involved random sampling of students from merely three deliberately chosen faculties, does not allow for comparison of results with those from Poznań, where respondents were chosen based on strict statistical criteria from all students of this city.

For the purpose of measuring their tourism activity, the surveyed were asked a question regarding the number of countries they had visited (Fig. 1). Slightly more than half of them (50.4%) claimed to have visited 1–3 countries, one quarter (25.2%) had been to 4–8 countries. The third most numerous response (15.9%) was 9–13 countries. As for the rest of students who took part in the study, 18 of them (which stands for 3.5% of all survey participants) admitted to never having been abroad, and only 59 respondents (5.2%) had visited more than 13 countries.

Tourism activity of students from Poznań was higher: 42.1% of them visited 4–8 countries, and 33.1% claimed to have been to 1–3 countries (Buczkowska, 2014).

Respondents from Toruń travel mostly to do sightseeing and explore new places (as 37.1% of them declared). A very similar percentage noted among the surveyed (35.9%) chose sightseeing always combined with leisure. Three quarters of those answering consider sightseeing essential in their travel. Overall, 21.6% prefer “leisure activities sometimes combined with sightseeing”. 3.8% of respondents pointed to “active leisure” as their main goal (e.g. sports). Only 1.6% claimed to travel mainly for “passive leisure”. The percentage of answers to this question is displayed in Fig. 2 and broken down by Nicolaus Copernicus University faculties. It tran-

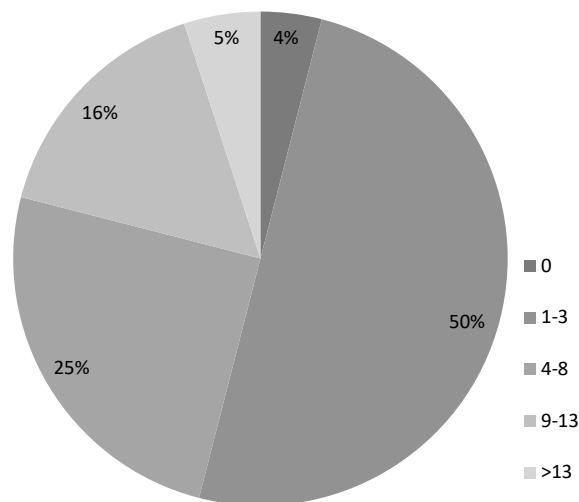


Figure 1. Number of countries visited by respondents from Toruń (Source: Authors' own study)

spires that sightseeing always combined with leisure prevails in two of the three faculties.

As far as Buczkowska's (2014) research is concerned, “active sightseeing and learning about visited places” was chosen by 22.9% of the respondents, and “sightseeing always combined with leisure” stood for 32.3% of the answers. Such results indicate that sightseeing is a priority for more than half of students from Poznań.

The surveyed most frequently travel (Fig. 3) with friends (48.3%). 43.5% of the respondents choose the company of their family. Slightly fewer of them go on a trip with their partner. However, there are substantial differences among the faculties in this matter. Faculty of Education students travel with their partners almost two-fold less often than the students from the other faculties, yet the respondents from the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection are two-fold less keen on travelling

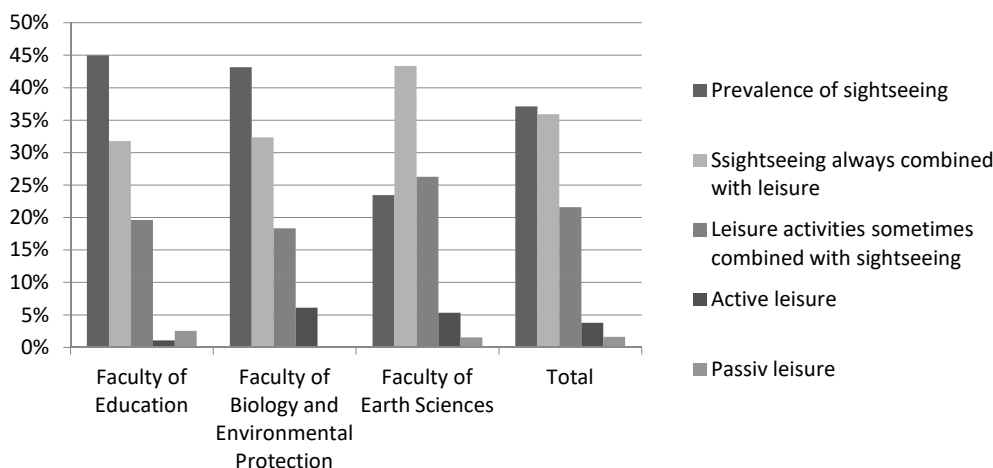


Figure 2. Travelling preferences of respondents from Toruń (Source: Authors' own study)

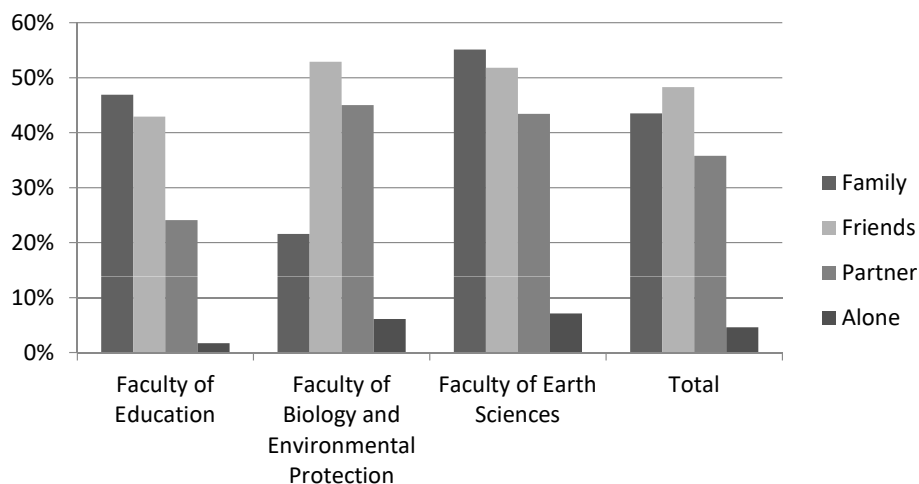


Figure 3. Travelling companions of respondents from Toruń (Source: Authors’ own study)

with their family. The Faculty of Education students differed from the others by choosing this answer four times less frequently.

The results achieved in this study correspond with those from Poznań Academia, the students of which also prefer travelling with close friends (51.2%), family (43.3%), or their life partners (42.7%) (Buczowska, 2014).

Poland is the most popular destination for 66.7% of the respondents (Fig. 4). Almost one third of the surveyed (30.5%) are more likely to travel to Europe, and only 3.1% visit non-European countries. Comparison of the results across the selected faculties indicates that the students of the Faculty of Education prefer inbound trips, and only 20% of them travel abroad. Students at the Faculty of Earth Sciences, on the other hand, leave their country twice as often (41%). Such difference in prefer-

ences may arise from the specificity of the fields they study within their respective faculties. In the case of Poznań (Buczowska, 2014), travelling around Poland was also the most popular answer, while European countries ranked second. Nevertheless, the study results from Poznań and Toruń should not be juxtaposed, since in the case of the former students were allowed to choose up to two answers, whereas students in Toruń were asked to select only one.

When preparing for a journey, 67% of the surveyed rely on information available online (Fig. 5). The second most prevalent answer (30%) regarded consulting people who have already been to the chosen destination. Surprisingly, students of Education and related courses are the ones using maps most often (28%). Students of Geography, Tourism and related courses did not indicate this source as

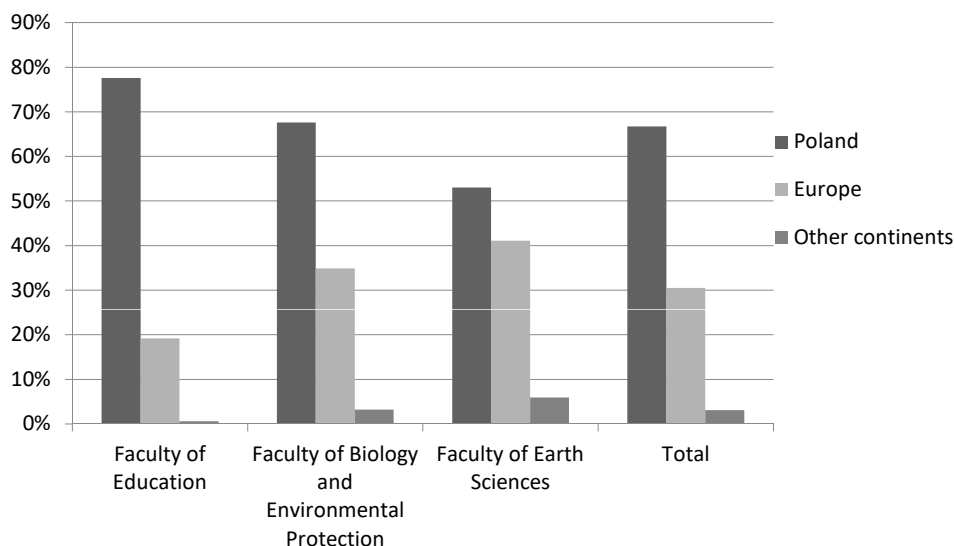


Figure 4. The most popular destinations among students from Toruń (Source: Authors’ own study)

frequently (18%). Instead, they prefer guidebooks (23.5%), while the students from the Faculty of Education chose this medium three-fold less often (8.5%).

As for Poznań, a great majority of respondents (73.4%) favoured the Internet, indicating it as the main source of information before travel (Buczkowska, 2014).

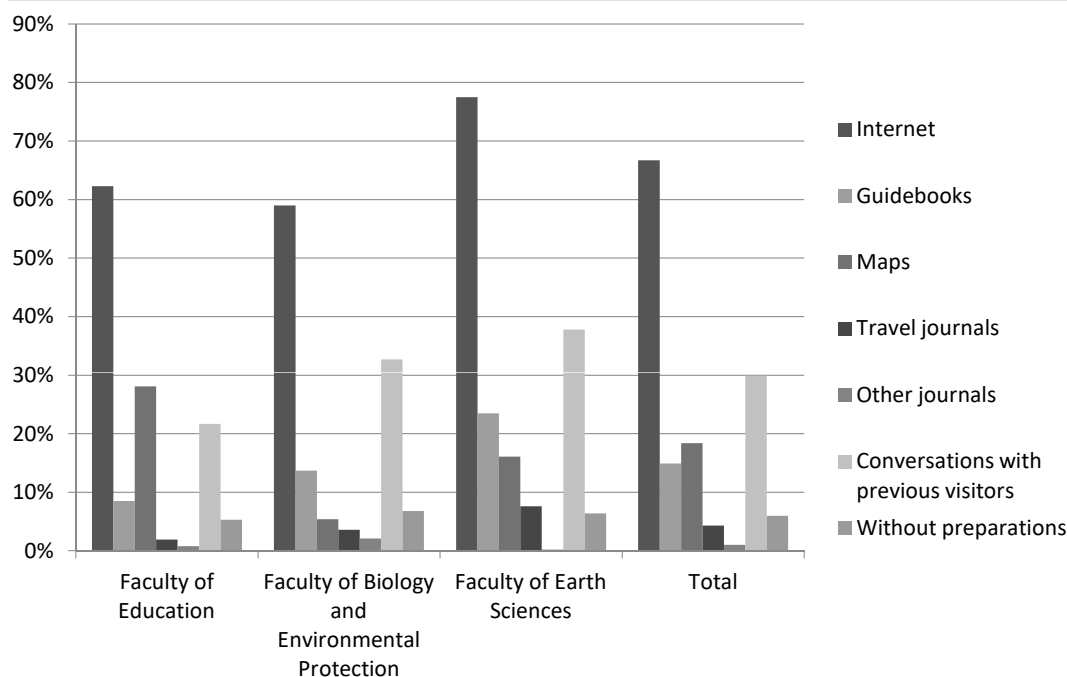


Figure 5. Sources of information before travel—students from Toruń (Source: Authors' own study)

Another question in the survey referred to food preferences during the journey. The purpose was to determine whether the students are interested in local cuisine, which is rightfully regarded as an element of culture. As many as 60% of the surveyed stated that they gladly try regional dishes served at local venues. On the other hand, 30% of the respondents opt to prepare their meals on their own when travelling. Fast-food proved to be a fairly popular option and was selected by 19.4% of the respondents. As far as students from Poznań are concerned, more than half of them (56.6%) chose regional dishes from local venues as well. Moreover, when compared to Toruń, almost as many students from Poznań cook their own meals (29%), although fast-food seems to be more popular among them: 26.4% of all answers (Buczkowska, 2014).

One of the subsequent questions concerned main extra expenses borne by the respondents (Fig. 6). The most frequent answer to this question was “admission fees” (58%), gifts for family and friends ranked second (43%), and 30% of the respondents admitted to spending their money on souvenirs for themselves. A small

proportion of the surveyed (11%) allocate their money to cultural events, such as theatrical plays, exhibitions and concerts.

Incidentally, the study in Poznań (Buczkowska, 2014) provided similar results – 64.5% of the respondents buy admission tickets, and 46% purchase gifts for their loved ones and friends. Moreover, 42.6% of those answering spend their money on parties, making it the third most popular answer. This stands in contrast with the results obtained in Toruń, as only 17% of the respondents included parties in their additional expenses.

Another aspect appearing in the survey involved souvenirs (Fig. 7). Photographs ranked first among the surveyed (70%), while admission tickets from visited places were the second most popular answer (36%). Almost one third of the respondents (30%) bring self-collected gifts of nature (e.g. shells, stones). The least frequently picked answers involved books and catalogues (3.5%), and no souvenirs at all (2.2%).

As for Poznań (Buczkowska, 2014), the most prevalent keepsake among the students was photographs (90%). Other than that, they also bring home shells, stones, and other gifts

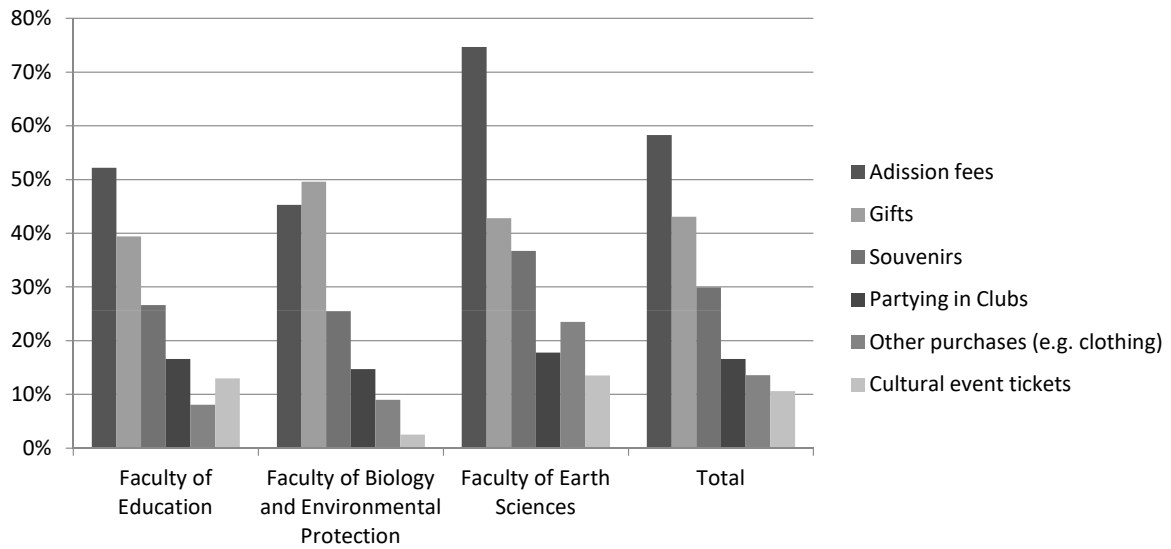


Figure 6. Travel expenses of respondents from Toruń (Source: Authors’ own study)

of nature collected by themselves (35.2%), as well as admission tickets from visited places (29.4%).

Almost half of those surveyed declared a moderate level of interest in the culture of places they visit. However, 40% of them indicated that culture is of great importance to them (Fig. 8). Low and nil level of interest was

voiced by respectively 10% and 1% of respondents. The answers provided by students from their respective faculties are visibly different from one another. The students of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection seem to be the most curious in terms of other cultures, while Faculty of Education students exhibit the least interest in this matter.

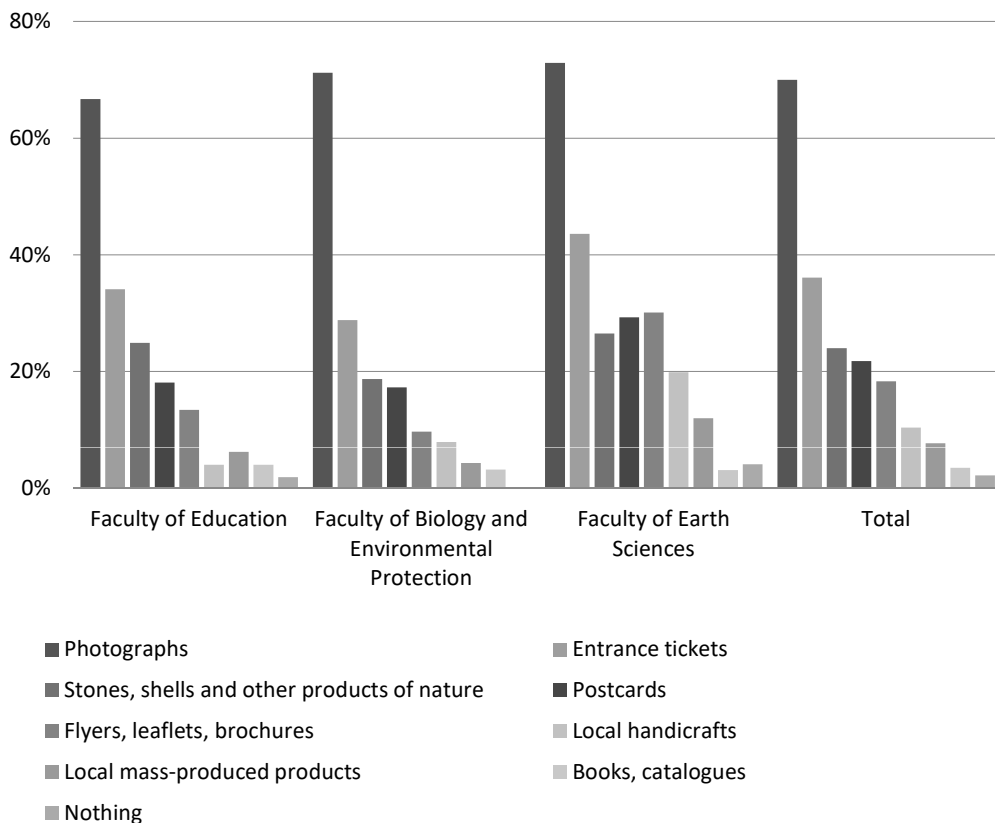


Figure 7. Travel souvenirs for respondents from Toruń (Source: Authors’ own study)

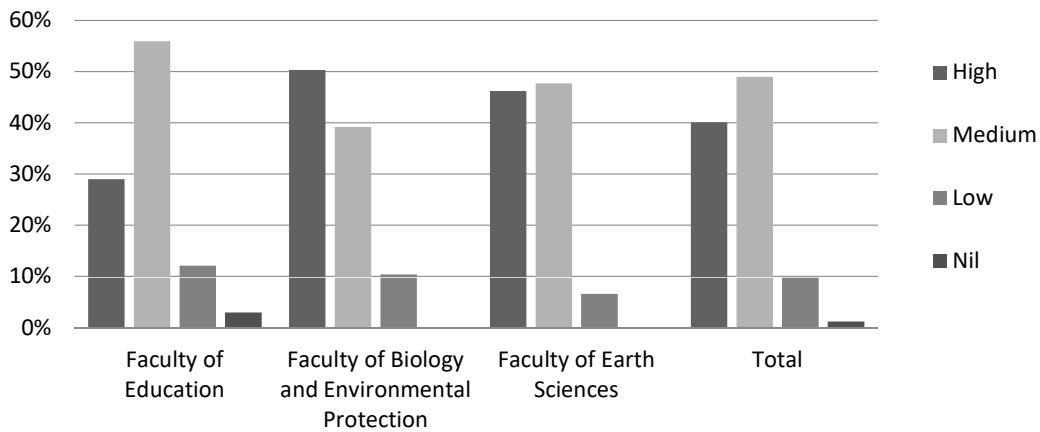


Figure 8. The degree of interest in the culture of places visited by respondents from Toruń (Source: Authors' own study)

In Poznań 50% of those answering found culture moderately interesting, and 39% were interested in it to a larger extent (Buczkowska, 2014).

Ipsos Raport (Global@dvisor) of 2011, entitled *Global Citizens in 24 Countries Choose Their Primary Pleasure Trip/Vacation Type*, (2011) reveals that more than half of those surveyed (57%) from various countries show interest in learning about other cultures during their holidays or journeys. However, regardless of their enthusiasm, 35% prefer “leisure and

sightseeing in part”, 17% are keen on immersing themselves in culture, and only 5% favour “cosmopolitan experiences”. According to Richards (2007), young people demonstrate considerable interest in cultural tourism, as nearly 40% of cultural tourists are in their twenties. Barbier (2005) carried out research regarding cultural tourism among French tourists. Fewer than half of them were keen on sightseeing and learning about local culture in their travels. Among them one could find not only “culture enthusiasts,”

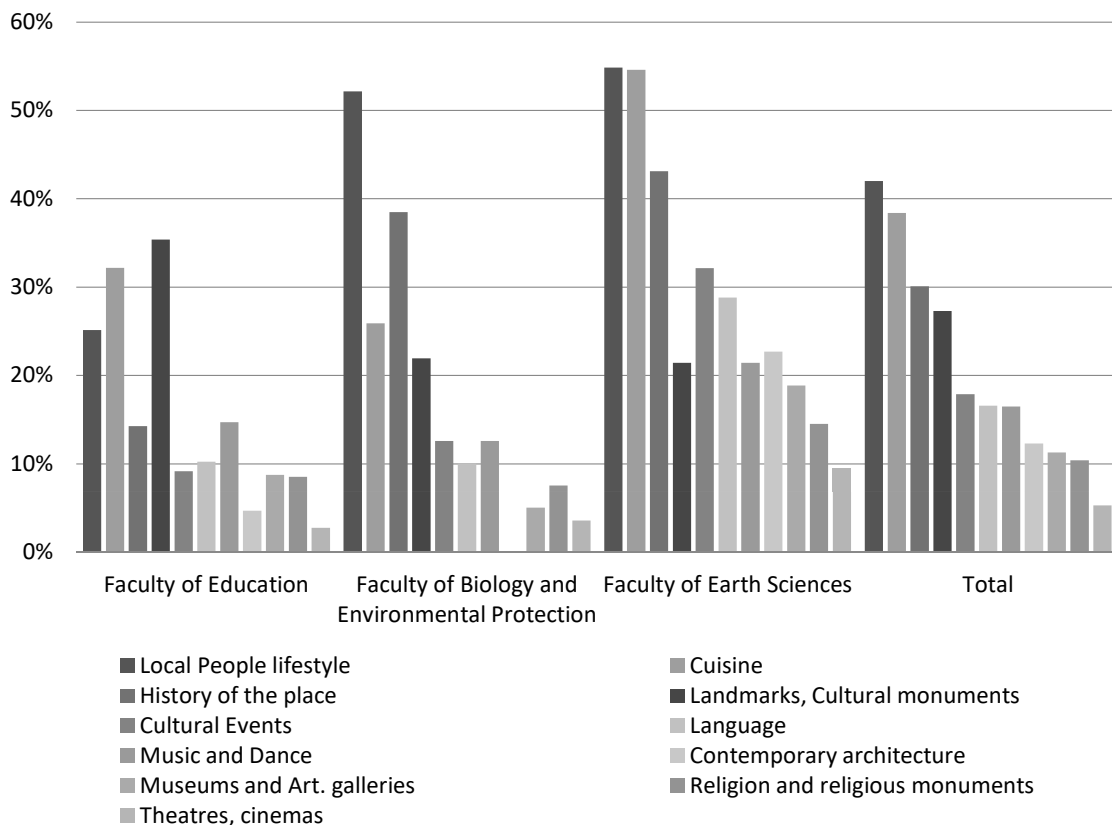


Figure 9. Most interesting aspects of culture from the perspective of respondents (Source: Authors' own study)

who are considered cultural tourists in the full sense (although they amount to approx. 5–7% of all tourists), but also regular tourists, who combine sightseeing with leisure (15–17.5% do it regularly, 25–30% – occasionally), and who constitute 42.5–45% of all tourists. More than half of respondents from France showed no interest in learning about local cultures at all.

Respondents in our research were also asked which aspects of culture they were interested in (Fig. 9). 42% of those answering admitted that lifestyle, traditions, and customs of locals are in their field of interest. Slightly fewer of them (38%) perceive local cuisine as an essential aspect of culture. One third of respondents (30%) are interested in the history of visited places. Monuments are interesting for 27% of the surveyed students. What is more, when comparing the answers of students from the three faculties, it is visible that the level of interest of Faculty of Earth Sciences students

was substantially higher in most distinguished categories (apart from cultural monuments).

As far as students from Poznań are concerned, they mostly picked monuments (69%) as their answer. Then, subsequently, traditions (59%), cuisine (48%), and history (40%) (Buczowska, 2014).

Finally, the last question in the survey concerned the definition of cultural tourist and whether the respondents consider themselves one or not (Fig. 10). A vast majority of respondents (52%) answered “Yes, sometimes,” which is very similar to what the students from Poznań (Buczowska, 2014) thought themselves – 56% made the same choice. As for Toruń, again, 18.4% of the surveyed always view themselves as cultural tourist.

The results obtained in Poznań were almost identical: 18.6%. Roughly one sixth of the surveyed students from Toruń (17.7%) do not consider themselves cultural tourists at all.

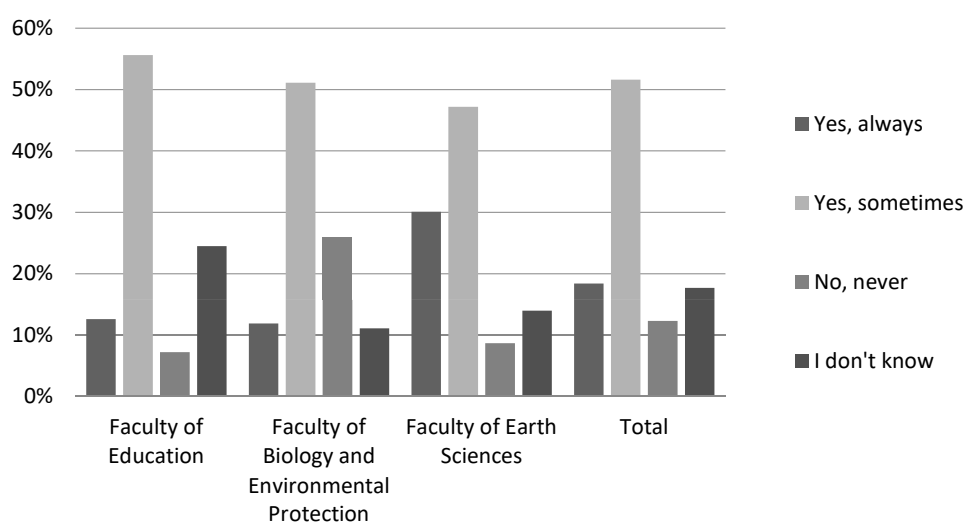


Figure 10. Do you think you are a cultural tourist? (Source: Authors' own study)

4. Conclusions

A young cultural tourist from Toruń – as the research has indicated – is a person who chooses Poland over Europe as their destination, and visits non-European countries on a rare occasion. He/she has visited only a few countries so far, and concentrates predominantly on sightseeing, which is sometimes combined with leisure. The tourist is typically accompanied by family and friends. When preparing to travel, he/she seeks information

on the internet or consults people who have already visited the destination. The food he/she eats away from home comprises regional dishes served at local venues. Additional costs during the trip are usually related to buying admission tickets to tourist facilities, gifts for family or friends, as well as souvenirs. Mementos mainly involve photographs, admission tickets, and gifts of nature, i.e. shells, stones. A young tourist appears to be interested mostly in people he

or she encounters, their lifestyle, language, and customs. He/she is also fond of local cuisine, and visits both monuments and historical sites.

The people in question sometimes consider themselves cultural tourists, although they often admit that they are only moderately interested in culture itself. That does not mean, however, that there are no tourists among who would show a considerable interest in culture, and who always regard themselves as cultural tourists. Quite the contrary, one fifth of them manifest both traits.

Research carried out in the academic community of Toruń and Poznań produced similar results, which indicates that being a cultural tourist is not assigned to a place. Instead, it

depends on the person, his or her age, education, field of study, interests, mental attitude, etc. One can thus claim – as mentioned in the case of studies performed in Poznań (Buczkowska, 2014) – that Polish students as a social group exhibit traits typical of cultural tourists, and attribute much importance to both learning about and experiencing other culture(s) when traveling.

The results of this comparative study proved to be relevant and provide valuable statistical data pertaining to cultural tourism in Poland, hence there is a need to continue research with the use of the same tried and tested survey instrument.

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