



REPORT AND SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF SURVEY “HOW WELL I KNOW MY CULTURE”

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ABSTRACT

This report from the survey “How well I know my culture?” is organized in the framework of Lifelong Learning Grundtvig Partnership project FOCAL. The aim of the survey was to gather opinions about the local culture, traditions, beliefs and other topics related to cultural development and knowledge about it. One of the main aims of the survey was to compare the knowledge about traditions and cultural heritage of young people and elderly people, who are considered to be “tradition keepers”. The results of the survey are the first step to raise the awareness about the fact that traditions, fundamental values, customs of a nation are its milestones for further development and future prosperity.

1. Methodology

The survey is developed through a questionnaire containing 24 questions, regarding various parts of the country’s culture and traditions – historical background, religion, beliefs, customs, folklore, and architecture. The questionnaire was made online in order for it to be easily accessible on the one hand for the interviewee (to fill in themselves) and for the interviewers on the other to work with representatives of the target group. Since the target group (and part of the sample) is elderly people it was easier to work together with them in order to receive the questions, than to let them fill in the questionnaire by themselves. The survey was held for 6 weeks.

The sampling strategy of the survey can be described as stratified, convenience, snowball sampling.

A stratified sampling involves dividing the population into homogenous groups, each group containing subjects with similar characteristics.

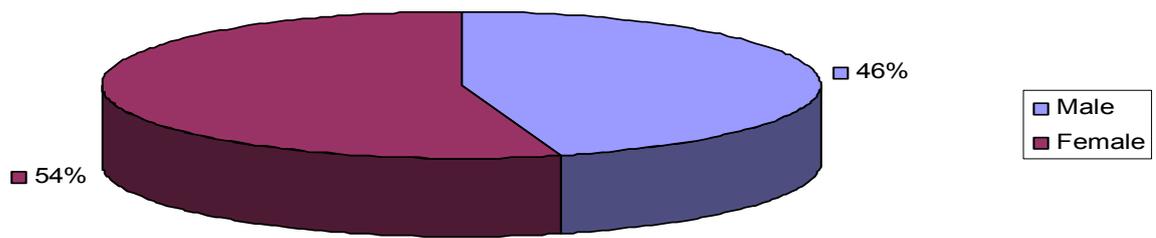
2. Participants

57 People took part in the survey (26 men and 31 women). Of them 12 are in the age 18-25; 20 are in the age 26-35; 10 are in the age 36-55 and 15 are over 55 years old. Of the 57 people, who took part in the survey 26 are with secondary education and 31 have university degree or higher (See graphs below).



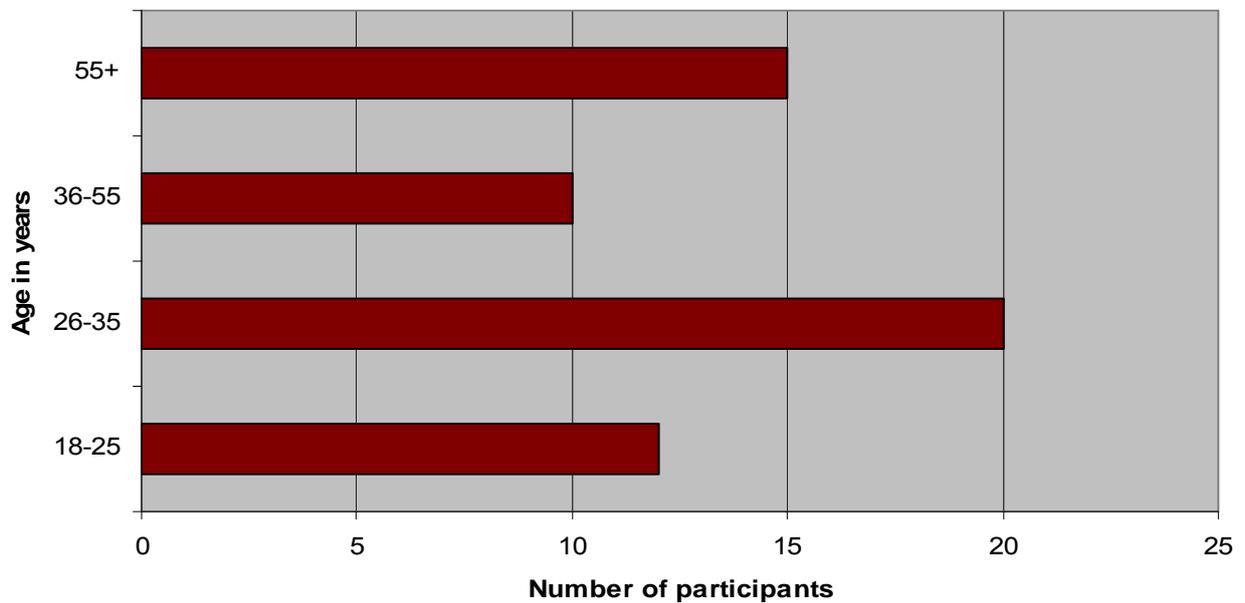
Gender of participants

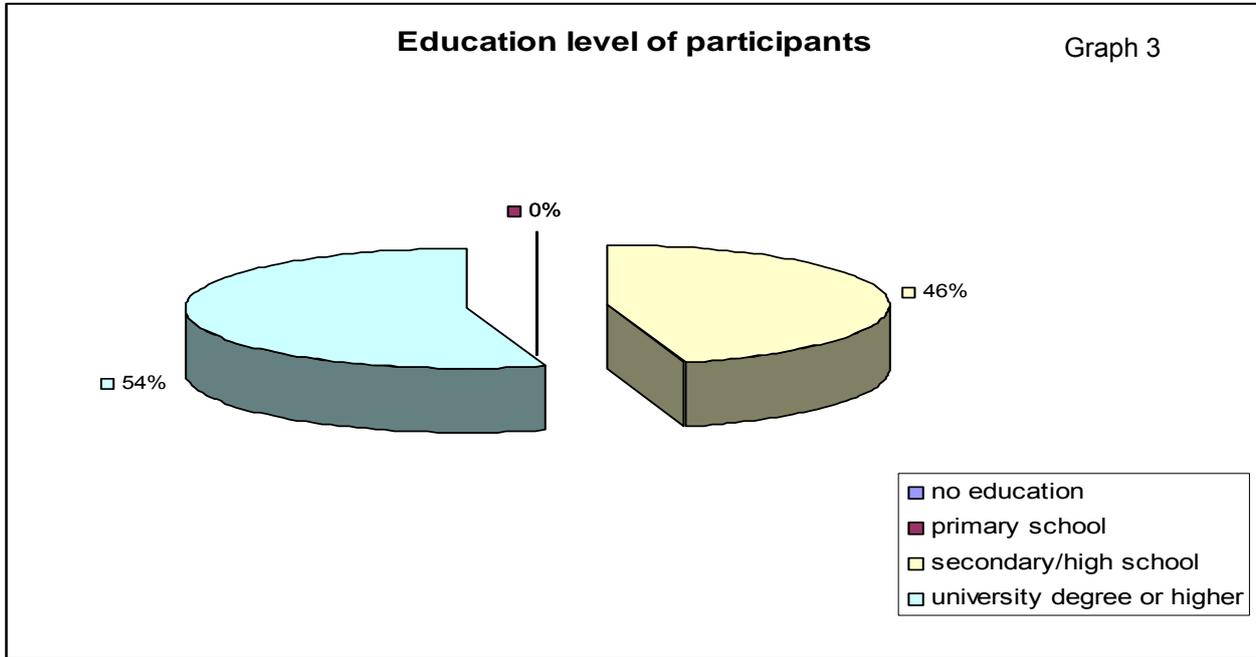
Graph 1



Age range of participants

Graph 2





3. Key findings about main facts, related to the country's and nation's history

With regard to the questions related to the country's and nation's history we can say that the majority of people answered correctly to the answers, showing they know main facts about the forming of the Bulgarian state (96%), about the symbol used to characterize the Bulgarian nation and what it means (68%), about the main inventions and discoveries, made from Bulgarians, which changed world's history (like the Cyrillic alphabet (88%), like the first prototype of the first computer (86%), like the 6th tone of the heart (19%)). From the last question of what Bulgaria is famous for around the world (concerning inventions and discoveries, made by Bulgarians) the results show that people know very well of certain noted facts (these are also facts, constantly reminded by media), but know less of facts, which are as important, but not that popular around the media, like the discovery of the sixth cardiac tone, which was even announced as the Bulgarian discovery of the 20th century.

Considering the age of respondents and cross section analysis of the dependences of their knowledge and age we can say elderly people know more of the history of the country than young people. For example 83% of the people over 55 years have answered correctly to the question, which the symbol, characterizing our nation is, while in the age group of 18-35 the percentage is 68.

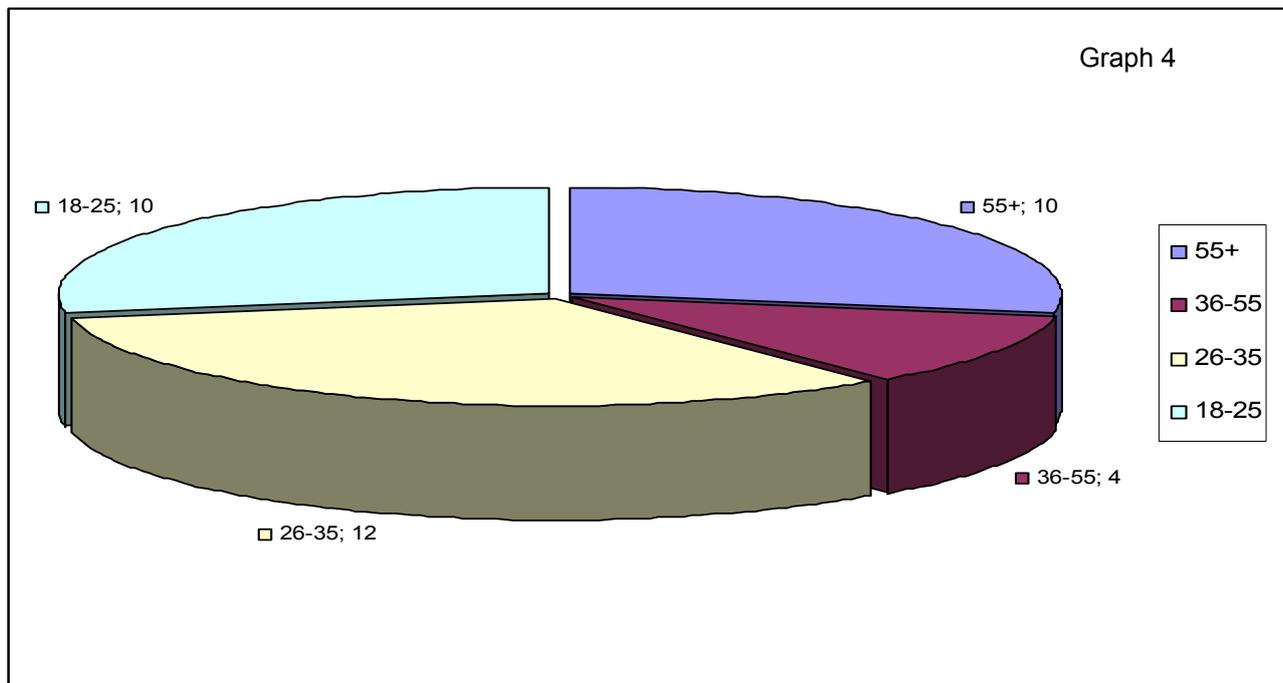
Another important question in this section of the questionnaire is the question about the Bulgarian monuments, part of the UNESCO world's cultural heritage. Actually only 6 people of 57 (or 11%) answered correctly to this question and more of them are in the age range of 26-35. One possible reason for this could be that some of the monuments, shown in the list of answers are included in the UNESCO's cultural heritage list only recently and the people, who are aware of that, are not that much. Elderly people also more often give answers including more monuments, than are really present in the official list. A reason for this is that older people consider more of the country's monuments are unique and worthy of including in the world's cultural heritage list.



4. Key findings about knowledge of beliefs, customs (9-12)

That part of the questionnaire consists of questions, related to very famous traditional beliefs and customs with regard to weather forecast, evil spirits, superstitions and traditional sayings.

31% of the respondents have answered correctly to the question related to pointing the day of the year, from which the weather for the rest of the year could be determined. As to if older people or younger people have given more correct answers we can say there is a difference in the correctness of answers between age groups: 67% of the age group of 55+, 40% of the age group 36-55, 60% of the age group of the age group 26-35 and 83% of the age group between 18-25 have given correct answers to this question (See graph 4).



In this case the greatest percentage of correct answers is given by youngsters and elderly people. A possible reason why mid-agers would know less about such beliefs is that there was a period of transition in Bulgarian economy and social life (from communism to market economy) when knowledge about traditions and respect towards traditions was somehow decreased: new values and customs were put in the daily life of people. Actually 63 % of people between 26 and 55 years old answered they do not believe in such sayings. But these processes are getting reversed and people are more willing to get to their roots and know more about and respect their history and unique traditions.

It is the same situation with the answers regarding traditional Bulgarian customs – 58% of all respondents gave a correct answer. And these are mostly elderly people, over 55 years old and young people between 18 and 25 years old.





5. Key findings about traditional folklore (clothing, music and dances, arts, crafts)

Section 5 of the report relates to traditional folklore. There are various definitions of folklore, focused usually on the fact that the artistic expression are made anonymously and in non-written form. In our survey we have accepted a broader definition of folklore and have decided to include in this section knowledge, related to various kind of arts – crafts, paintings, music, clothing, no matter if it is created anonymously or not. This part of the survey starts with questions related to traditional footwear and clothing of men and women in ancient times. We wanted to see if people know the traditional names of specific types of footwear and pieces of clothing, as well as the materials they are made of. 86% of all respondents gave the correct answer as to what is the name of the traditional footwear, used from Bulgarians in the past and 93% of them pointed out correctly they are made of leather. The results are not that straightforward when it comes to traditional clothing of Bulgarians. People know the basic elements and quite a high percent of respondents have answered correctly (between 88% and 95% in the different age groups have checked that part of the correct answers – it was a question with more than 2 correct answers). But when it comes to not that popular elements of traditional clothing, like upper part of women's clothing called "saya" (in Bulgarian сая) or lower part of men's clothing used over the trousers, called "kalci" (in Bulgarian калци) the percentage of correct answers drops significantly – only 25% of the respondents answer correctly about that part of the women's clothing and 38% of all respondents answered correctly about that part of men's clothing. As in the previous section the people, who have given correct answers about those specific types of clothing (showing knowledge about the old names) are again mostly people over 55 years of age.

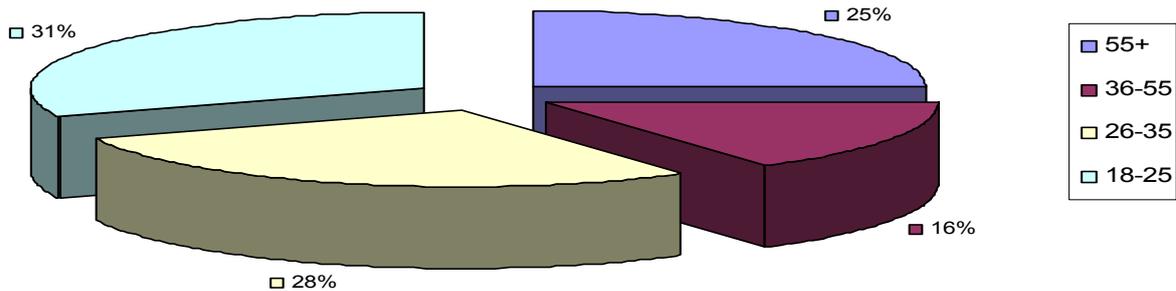
When it comes to traditional folk songs, instruments and folklore music areas, all respondents - no matter of their age or educational level - show quite good knowledge. For example, one question regarding knowledge of traditional folk songs required people to check the names of the songs, which really exist, while the amongst the answers were included songs which names were mixed up or mistaken. The respondents were quite good in recognizing the real songs – out of ten songs they had to recognize 4 as the correct songs. These songs were checked from 81% to 96% of the people). 98% of the respondents correctly answered that one of the most typical Bulgarian musical instruments – bagpipe (in Bulgarian – гайда; gayda) is most commonly used in Rhodopi mountain area.

With regard to the question related to Bulgarian art respondents are divided in their answers (43% gave false answers and 57% gave correct answers) – it was required from them to point out the name of the Bulgarian artist, who is the founder of Bulgarian secular painting. However (as seen from the percentages above) almost half of the people gave wrong answers. The chart below gives the distribution of people, given correct answers of the question, related to Bulgarian art, by their age range.





Graph 5



6. Key findings about traditional food, drinks

The findings about the knowledge of people, related to traditional food and drinks show that people recognize as traditional Bulgarian food and drinks number of food and drinks, typical for other Balkan countries. This, not surprisingly, comes from the common past a number of countries on the Balkan region had. There is no difference in the knowledge of respondents with regard to traditional food and drinks from the point of view of their age – years after years the common beliefs are passed from one generation to another. For example 98% of respondents checked “lyutenitsa” (a national relish, the ingredients of which include tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, onion, garlic, black pepper, vegetable oil, sugar and salt) as traditional Bulgarian food, which is a correct answer. 84% of respondents answered “banitsa” is a traditional dish, which is also a correct answer. But quite a high percent of people (54%) also recognize musaka as traditional Bulgarian food, while it is made in all countries in the region of the Balkan Peninsula and even some other countries like Armenia or Arab countries.

It is the same situation with alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks – most of the drinks recognized as typical Bulgarian drinks like rakia and mastika are considered typical also from other countries like Greece, Turkey and Macedonia.

7. Conclusions

The survey “How well I know my culture” shows that in general people know quite a lot about traditional Bulgarian customs, beliefs, rituals and holidays. There are areas, like traditional beliefs and customs where elderly people know more about the old sayings and have given higher percentages of correct answers. While, at the same time, there are other areas, referring to such topics as the aging of cultural heritage monuments and their inclusion in the world cultural heritage, where correct answers were given mostly by young people. The results also show that the knowledge about cultural traditions is not strictly related to educational level. Sometimes more people with university degrees or higher educational level give correct answers, but sometimes it is the people, with secondary education degrees. The relation we have found in the survey is that it is the type of knowledge, which predetermines to greater extent the higher or lower percentage of correct answers. When the questions were about popular facts and beliefs, holidays -



traditionally celebrated in most parts of the country, people easily gave the right answer. While when it came to important facts, information of which, however, was not that commonly spread in media, people showed less knowledge.



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