



## **Increasing the Level of Education of the Younger Generation through Theatre**

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### **Abstract**

Theatre is an integrative art form, with the capacity to support human development and the process of building skills for personal fulfilment and growth. The provision of theatrical education has been demonstrated to facilitate social integration and active participation in society. Furthermore, it has been shown to promote the formation of a concept of life based on humanistic and scientific values, national and universal culture, and the stimulation of intercultural dialogue, respect for dignity, tolerance, and fundamental human rights and freedoms. Theatre has been demonstrated to engender sensitivity to human issues, moral and civic values, and the promotion of sustainability and respect for the natural, social, and cultural environment.

In the contemporary educational landscape, the integration of theatre in education has emerged as a compelling strategy to cultivate a well-rounded, dynamic learning environment. Theatre, with its rich tapestry of creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking, offers unique opportunities to enhance traditional educational methodologies. The integration of theatrical practices into the curriculum has been demonstrated to enhance the learning experience and address the holistic development of students, preparing them for the complexities of modern life.

The initiative to educate young people through theatre is a welcome one. It is aimed both at universities and faculties that offer programmes in theatre and the performing arts in Romania, as well as theatres that may have educational programmes dedicated to teenagers. The recent



introduction of theatre education in high schools, in conjunction with music and visual education, will facilitate the employment of graduates from relevant faculties in pre-university education. Furthermore, the enhancement in the level of education of adolescents will be evident through their engagement with theatre.

The present paper sets out the hypothesis that an increase in the level of education of the younger generation is to be achieved through the medium of theatre.

## **1. Introduction**

Theatre is an integrative art form, with the capacity to support human development and the process of building skills for personal fulfilment and growth. The provision of theatrical education has been demonstrated to facilitate social integration and active participation in society. Furthermore, it has been shown to promote the formation of a concept of life based on humanistic and scientific values, national and universal culture, and the stimulation of intercultural dialogue, respect for dignity, tolerance, and fundamental human rights and freedoms. Theatre has been demonstrated to engender sensitivity to human issues, moral and civic values, and the promotion of sustainability and respect for the natural, social, and cultural environment.

## **2. Literature Review**

In the contemporary educational landscape, the integration of theatre in education has emerged as a compelling strategy to cultivate a well-rounded, dynamic learning environment. Theatre, with its rich tapestry of creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking, offers unique opportunities to enhance traditional educational methodologies. The integration of theatrical practices into the curriculum has been demonstrated to enhance the learning experience and address the holistic development of students, preparing them for the complexities of modern life.

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well as theatres that may have educational programmes dedicated to teenagers. The recent introduction of theatre education in high schools, in conjunction with music and visual education, will facilitate the employment of graduates from relevant faculties in pre-university education. Furthermore, the enhancement in the level of education of adolescents will be evident through their engagement with theatre.

Theatre for young people is a form of theatre that is defined by and for its audience, since the use of the preposition, which indicates the attribution of the artistic object – the young audience (or for children and adolescents, for young people) – is absent in the definition of other forms of theatre. On the one hand, there is the theatre for young audiences, which reveals a very attentive concern for the spectator, for the way in which the artistic message is conveyed, but also for its pedagogical stakes. The name itself is indicative of the target audience, which is clearly defined, important and appropriately perceived. Furthermore, the mission of this type of theatre is unique and special. Conversely, this name has been argued to contribute to a devaluation of the meaning and value of the artistic act. For young audiences, it is often translated as "lower quality" or even "a minor genre of theatre". This may be attributed to the historical context in which theatre for young people was predominantly regarded as an educational instrument, with artistically significant performances emerging subsequently. The fundamental premise of the article is that young people require a theatrical education that is distinct from that provided to adults, particularly in the context of youth theatre. The argument is that the artistic act should be different for young people. These objectives can be achieved through a variety of cultural activities, communication strategies, and promotional initiatives.

The role of cultural activities in society has been extensively discussed in terms of their economic impact, with little consideration given to their impact on social life. A considerable number of studies have sought to ascertain the impact of diverse leisure activities on educational capital.



### 3. Methodology

The present article is an examination of the concept of cultural marketing, which may be defined as the process and art of offering the artistic product to the target audience by combining it with tools such as price, placement, promotion and staffing of organisations in order to achieve management objectives. In contrast to the conventional marketing paradigm within the contemporary market economy, artistic products do not merely respond to expressed consumer demands; rather, they identify the appropriate audience for an existing product or service, thereby establishing a framework of expectations. Concurrently, the objective of cultural marketing is to establish a mutually beneficial relationship between the organisation and the consumers.

The cultural institution is the entity that facilitates the act of creation, in addition to providing the resources necessary to create a unique experience for the audience. The theatrical performance, as a work of art contingent on its audience, is a social and participatory event. In this sense, the reality of the artists and that of the audience become one.

The objective of this paper is to identify strategies through which theatrical institutions could educate the younger generation, an activity that is only reluctantly practised in cultural organisations. The present study proposes an encounter between organisational thinking and consumer behaviour, with a view to providing performing arts institutions with practical guidance specific to cultural marketing.

### 4. Main Results

The literature review has outlined a number of theoretical perspectives that aim to identify the social impact attributed to participation in cultural activities. These perspectives analyse aspects related to active citizenship, civic engagement, social integration and democratic participation.<sup>1</sup> To illustrate this point, the following example is provided: For instance, the European Parliament's resolution of 11 December 2018 on the New European Agenda for Culture

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<sup>1</sup> M. Sharon Jeannotte, *The Social Effects of Culture. A Literature Review* (Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa, 2017).



highlights the pivotal function of culture and the cultural and creative industries in accomplishing the objectives of cohesion and social inclusion policies. This assertion underscores the distinctive contribution of cultural life in fortifying a democratic society.<sup>2</sup>

The 2022 Cultural Consumption Barometer report indicates that the situation in Romania has shown signs of improvement compared to 2021, though it remains below the levels recorded in 2019. Carmen Croitoru, who occupies the position of Director General of the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training in Bucharest, is the subject of this text.<sup>3</sup>

The findings of the 2022 consumption trends report, representing the initial post-pandemic study, indicate a gradual return of Romanians to theatres and cinemas. Concurrently, they persist in their online activities, seeking both information and entertainment.<sup>4</sup> For the first time, the Barometer establishes a correlation between cultural consumption and democratic citizenship, demonstrating that Romanians who are frequently exposed to cultural practices tend to be more involved in community life. With regard to attendance at theatre performances, data indicates a 9% decrease compared to 2019, when the proportion of Romanians who stated they attended the theatre at least once a year was 29%. It is noteworthy that in 2021, a year characterised by social restrictions, the proportion was a mere 7%, thereby indicating that the new barometer is indicative of a gradual return to pre-pandemic behaviours.

Furthermore, cinema attendance has decreased from 35% of respondents in 2019 to 26%, although this figure has increased by 12% compared to 2021. Furthermore, the proportion of individuals who visit museums, galleries or art exhibitions at least once a year has decreased by 8 per cent since 2019, from 38 per cent to 30 per cent. However, it is projected that this figure will increase by 6 per cent from 2021. The survey also demonstrates how young people are engaging with culture. It is an established fact that, even prior to the advent of the pandemic, the

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<sup>2</sup> EU Commission, European Parliament Resolution of 11 December 2018 on the New European Agenda for Culture, 2018.

<sup>3</sup><https://www.radioromaniacultural.ro/emisiuni/timpul-prezent/timpul-prezent-barometrul-de-consum-cultural-2022-carmen-croitoru-situatia-e-ceva-mai-buna-decit-in-2021-dar-ceva-mai-proasta-ca-in-2019-id40493.html>, accessed on September 23.

<sup>4</sup><https://culturaladuba.ro/84-dintre-romani-nu-au-incredere-in-oameni-de-alta-nationalitate-arata-barometrul-cultural-2022/>, accessed on September 25.



younger generation exhibited a keen interest in the possibilities offered by the Internet, particularly for those with limited material means. Furthermore, they demonstrated a higher level of comfort in analysing specific cultural aspects on the Internet when compared to the 50+ generation. It is indeed the case that this generation, which has been termed 'the generation that grew up with television', has been exposed to a plethora of information since childhood, with no concomitant effort to interpret or decipher the messages. Consequently, their relationship with the Internet has been characterised by a similar process of passive reception, whereby images are presented alongside pre-determined messages. The absence of cultural infrastructure, such as performing arts venues or cultural centres, has been demonstrated to have a detrimental effect on cultural consumption, with consumers turning to the internet as a means of escapism. The Barometer study has revealed that the most significant cultural barrier pertains to education, in the sense that while individuals may perceive, observe and listen, they often fail to comprehend the underlying nuances.<sup>5</sup>

This predicament is also faced by producers of cultural content, who must reconsider their modes of expression and the gradual education of their audience. However, the present discussion pertains not to the domain of artistic education, encompassing disciplines such as dance, painting and music, which are typically pursued in school classes. Those who demonstrate aptitude are then selected to attend vocational schools. The focus is on facilitating enhanced accessibility and comprehension of cultural artefacts from the moment of their genesis. This is a concern that is on the public agenda not only in Romania, but in all European countries, where the level of understanding of cultural products is falling quite dramatically.

An examination of the period during the pandemic reveals an increase<sup>6</sup> in the consumption of entertainment and everyday products, while consumption of products that question man's place in society or raise certain issues has decreased. In the aftermath of the pandemic, the cinema industry has also not yet regained the level of performance that it exhibited in 2019. The

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.radioromaniacultural.ro/emisiuni/timpul-prezent/timpul-prezent-barometrul-de-consumcultural-2022-carmen-croitoru-situatia-e-ceva-mai-buna-decit-in-2021-dar-ceva-mai-proasta-ca-in-2019-id40493.html>, accessed on September.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.culturadata.ro/tendinte-ale-consumului-cultural-in-pandemie-editia-i/>, accessed on September.



phenomenon has evolved, albeit in a restrained manner, and has not yet attained a proportion of 35% of cinema consumption. One potential explanation for these results is the impact of the pandemic on the emotional state of the population and the use of leisure activities as a form of stress relief or relaxation in crisis situations, as demonstrated by the studies cited at the beginning of this article. Another potential explanation for this phenomenon is the paradigm shift in cultural management, which, in the desire to attract new audiences, has moved towards a more leisure and entertainment-oriented offer, with a greater focus on entertainment and enjoyment and a reduced emphasis on functional and symbolic benefits.

The 2022 and 2023<sup>7</sup> cultural consumption barometers demonstrate a gradual recovery following the pandemic. In 2022, cultural participation remained low; however, in 2023, there was an increase in visits to museums, exhibitions and historical monuments. It is anticipated that a gradual recovery will be observed by the year 2025.

In 2022, we observe that:

- A decline in the number of individuals attending theatrical and cinematic establishments has been observed in comparison with the year 2019;
- Visits to museums and exhibitions are to be encouraged. ~30%;
- The number of visits to historical monuments and sites was found to be 59%;
- A notable escalation has been observed in the consumption of digital cultural content, manifesting predominantly through streaming and online platforms.

In 2023:

- Visits to historical monuments are an integral component of the educational experience. 67%;
- Visits to museums and exhibitions are to be encouraged. 45%;
- Cinema attendance: 34%;
- The following data pertains to theatre attendance: ~25%;
- Attendance at classical music events and performances ~24%;

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.culturadata.ro/wp-content/uploads/The\\_Cultural\\_Consumption\\_Barometer\\_2022\\_full.pdf](https://www.culturadata.ro/wp-content/uploads/The_Cultural_Consumption_Barometer_2022_full.pdf).



- The perpetual augmentation of digital platforms is a phenomenon that merits consideration.

## 5. Conclusions

Recent studies have indicated that young people are returning to cultural consumption at a faster rate than older generations. One conclusion of this analysis would be that between 2022 and 2023, there will be a noticeable recovery in public cultural consumption, particularly at museums and historical monuments. Attendance at both theatres and cinemas has increased, although it remains below pre-pandemic levels. By 2025, cultural consumption will be characterised by a combination of traditional and digital experiences.

Trends until 2025:

- A rise has been observed in public cultural consumption, encompassing activities such as attending theatre and cinema performances and visiting museums;
- The persistence of urban-rural differences is a matter of note;
- A rise has been observed in both digital and hybrid consumption, encompassing both online and offline activities;
- Cultural education is elevated to a position of priority;

The necessity for a cultural policy in this area is therefore imperative. Commencing with a definition of specific objectives, the ways in which these objectives can be achieved, and the impact that achieving them would have on young theatre audiences and others, two perspectives have been outlined by the present authors:

1. Externally, national theatres could have programmes dedicated to young people.
2. Internally, a series of activities could be developed to support the education of young people.

It is recommended that the cultural consumption of the young generation be increased and diversified by offering a real and original landmark, both historically and culturally, at the local level (and subsequently extended to the national level).



Prospective avenues for future research include:

- The objective of this project is to create a series of performances that will bring to young audiences, in chronological order, the great dramatic creations of the world. These performances will be staged in the cultural, economic and social context of the time in which they were created. The project will begin with ancient theatre. In essence, the objective is to undertake a historical reconstruction of the plays in the repertoire, meticulously detailing aspects such as costumes, sets and texts.
- In order to function within an environment that fosters creativity and innovation, it is essential to enhance young people's access to and involvement in cultural activities.

Pathways:

- It is vital to facilitate access to an environment that will stimulate the creativity and innovation of young people.
- The implementation of a youth loyalty programme, encompassing monthly subscriptions and matinee programmes, is recommended.

In consideration of the research's limitations, it is important to acknowledge that the analysis was primarily informed by data from the Cultural Consumption Barometers for 2022 and 2023. This methodological approach limits the temporal scope of the study and should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. The absence of comprehensive data for 2024 impedes the ability to draw definitive conclusions regarding the evolution of cultural participation until 2025. Furthermore, the research did not address in depth the socio-demographic and regional dimensions of cultural consumption, such as urban-rural differences, level of education, or income, factors that can significantly influence the degree of participation.

In light of these findings, a number of future research directions are beginning to emerge. Firstly, it would be beneficial to conduct longitudinal studies to track the evolution of cultural consumption habits in the post-pandemic period. Secondly, comparative analyses between urban and rural areas are required in order to identify the structural barriers affecting access to culture. It is further recommended that the impact of digitisation and hybrid forms of participation on young audiences be investigated in greater depth. In addition, the effectiveness of cultural



education and loyalty programmes in increasing long-term cultural participation should be evaluated.

The expansion of these directions will enable future research to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the transformations in the field of cultural consumption. This, in turn, will contribute to the formulation of evidence-based cultural policies that are tailored to the needs of contemporary audiences.

- The promotion of the concept of "theatre education" for young people is recommended.

The conclusion drawn is that it would be opportune to implement a project with the aim of bringing the world's great dramatic creations, staged in the cultural, economic and social context of the era in which they were created, in chronological order, starting with ancient theatre, to young audiences and only to young audiences. The project will entail a historical reconstruction of the plays in the repertoire, with meticulous attention to detail afforded to costumes, scenery and text. The initiative will commence at the local level, with the objective of extending the project to a national level.

From an alternative standpoint, the issue at hand could be the education of young people through theatre. The enhancement of the educational attainment of the younger generation through theatre involves the integration of theatrical practices and principles into educational curricula with a view to improving learning outcomes and personal development. The following methods may be employed to achieve this:

1. The Enhancement of Engagement and Motivation

The integration of theatre into educational settings is widely acknowledged to be a highly beneficial strategy, with one of its primary advantages lying in its capacity to transform passive learning models into active, engaging processes. Conventional educational practices frequently entail a substantial reliance on rote memorisation and lecture-based instruction, a pedagogical approach that has been observed to result in student disengagement. Conversely, theatre demands active participation through various means, including acting, directing, and stagecraft. This experiential approach has been shown to engender a more interactive and enjoyable learning



environment, thereby fostering a deeper connection with the material. The engagement of both the mind and body is a fundamental aspect of theatre, which has been demonstrated to facilitate more effective information retention and the development of a passion for learning among students.

## 2. The Development of Soft Skills

Theatre education has been shown to excel in the nurturing of essential soft skills that are often overlooked in traditional curricula. Communication is of pivotal importance in the field of theatre; students are taught to articulate their thoughts with clarity, to listen actively, and to interpret non-verbal cues. These skills are considered to be of inestimable value in any professional context. Furthermore, the nature of theatre is such that it requires teamwork and collaboration. It is imperative that students collaborate to ensure a successful performance, and in doing so, they will learn to negotiate, compromise, and support each other. The aforementioned collaborative experiences have been shown to foster the development of interpersonal skills and to instil in students a comprehension of the value of collective effort.

Creativity and critical thinking are also considered to be fundamental components of theatre education. Theatre fosters innovative thinking and problem-solving skills, whether in the development of characters, the interpretation of scripts, or the resolution of technical challenges. The students are taught to approach problems from multiple perspectives and to think outside the box, skills that are crucial in today's rapidly changing world.

## 3. Cultural Awareness and Empathy

Theatre provides a distinctive perspective through which students can explore diverse cultural phenomena, historical periods, and social issues. By adopting the perspectives of characters from a variety of backgrounds and historical periods, students cultivate a more expansive comprehension of the world and its intricacies. It is evident that exposure to different cultures has the capacity to engender cultural awareness and sensitivity, which are essential qualities in an increasingly globalised society.

Furthermore, theatre fosters empathy. In order to portray a character in a convincing manner, it is essential for students to delve into their motivations, emotions, and experiences. The process of



comprehending and personifying diverse viewpoints has been demonstrated to facilitate the development of heightened empathy and compassion in students, thereby enhancing their social and emotional intelligence.

#### 4. The Impact of Theatre on Academic Performance

The integration of theatre into education has been demonstrated to result in enhanced academic performance. Engagement with dramatic texts and scripts has been demonstrated to enhance literacy skills, including reading comprehension, vocabulary, and interpretative abilities. The process of writing and performing plays has been shown to have a positive effect on the development of creative writing skills and to encourage a deeper understanding of narrative structures and literary devices.

Furthermore, theatre fosters interdisciplinary learning opportunities, thus contributing to a holistic educational experience. A notable illustration of this phenomenon is the utilisation of historical plays in the pedagogy of history, a strategy that has been demonstrated to enhance the relatability and memorability of historical events and figures. Science concepts can be explored through creative dramatisations, which have been shown to facilitate the comprehension of complex ideas through visual and experiential learning (Smith, 2019). This interdisciplinary approach not only reinforces academic content but also highlights the interconnectedness of different fields of knowledge.

#### 5. Personal Growth and Confidence

It is evident that personal growth and self-confidence are significant by-products of theatre education. Theatre functions as a secure environment in which students can articulate their thoughts, investigate their sense of self, and undertake artistic endeavours that involve a certain element of risk. The performance of an act before an audience has been demonstrated to have a beneficial effect on students, fostering the development of confidence and the alleviation of public speaking anxiety. The attainment of success in a performance, frequently accomplished through diligent effort and perseverance, engenders a sense of accomplishment and self-worth.

Furthermore, the discipline and time management skills that students acquire through rehearsals and performances are conducive to the development of important life skills. They learn to



balance multiple responsibilities, work under pressure, and meet deadlines — skills that are transferable to any future career path.

## 6. Real-World Applications and Career Readiness

The skills developed through theatre education have broad real-world applications (Smith, 2019). In the professional context, communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking are considered to be of significant value. In the contemporary business world, employers in diverse sectors are actively seeking individuals who possess the ability to think creatively, function effectively within teams, and communicate with clarity and purpose. The integration of theatre into educational curriculums has been demonstrated to equip students with the skills necessary to thrive in both academic and professional contexts.

## Conclusion

The integration of theatre into educational settings has been demonstrated to have a substantial positive impact on the learning experience of younger generations. The programme has been developed to promote a holistic approach to student development, combining cognitive, emotional and social growth to prepare students for both academic success and personal fulfilment.

The enhancement of the education of young audiences through theatre has been demonstrated to be a tool for achieving social and economic goals, and has a dynamic and cross-sectoral value. The response to the needs of the younger generation is not at the expense of other generations, who are still able to satisfy their own needs.<sup>8</sup>

The establishment of development-research-education-innovation poles, inclusive of entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative sectors, represents a significant challenge and a crucial component of the educational process for the young generation through theatre. Consequently, the financial burden of development centres will be a catalyst for the attraction of new theatre productions and the enhancement of investment activity. The return on investment will generate cash flow.

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<sup>8</sup> Mucică, Delia, prof.univ.dr. - Cultural policies and strategies (course), 2017.



The process of human development is not, however, often identified correctly as being distinct from increasing material well-being or a high standard of living. However, it should be noted that there are a number of other equally important dimensions to this issue. Firstly, it is evident that the skills of the young people involved will be improved by the training period. Secondly, it is reasonable to hypothesise that the young people will acquire new skills as a result of the training. Thirdly, it is predicted that, depending on the number of hours allocated to each participant, this will ultimately lead to better results and greater public satisfaction.

Human development is defined by the expansion of individuals' options for a prolonged and salubrious life, encompassing the pursuit of education, that is to say, the acquisition of a level of knowledge that meets their evolving needs, and access to resources that ensure a satisfactory standard of living. In addition to the aforementioned choices, there are others that relate to political freedoms and the exercise of other fundamental rights and freedoms.

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