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## **Concept of Cultural Practices in the Context of Social and Cultural Activities Management**

**Introduction.** In the modern scientific discourse, there is a growing scientific interest in the conceptualisation of cultural practices, and the importance of researching the phenomenon of established (traditional) and innovative cultural practices in various spheres of public life is emphasised. This article aims to study cultural practices as cultural phenomena of people's socio-cultural existence and key factors in managing socio-cultural activities. *Purpose and methods.* The purpose of the article is to provide the general scientific methods of formal logic (deduction, induction, analogy, synthesis), the method of analysing the opinions of scientists from different countries on several aspects of the problem under discussion, as well as the socio-cultural method to define cultural practices as a socio-cultural phenomenon.

*Results.* It is noted that the concept of 'cultural practices' is a theoretical reflection of the foundation of the socio-cultural existence of humankind. The author's definition of 'cultural practices' is proposed as an integral system of interactions and communications between individual and collective social actors, a specific field of cultural events that reproduce and produce social (cultural) reality in the private and public spheres. The article analyses some features of cultural practices of Ukrainian citizens based on the data of sociological studies conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in 1992-2024 and a comprehensive sociological study on the topic: 'Cultural Practices of the Ukrainian Population in the Context of War', conducted with the financial support of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation in 2023.

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The scientific novelty of the article lies in its identification of the specific features of cultural practices in the dimension of cultural and leisure practices and cultural consumption practices in the context of the management of socio-cultural activities. The authors emphasise the need for further development of conceptual and methodological approaches to studying cultural practices in the dimension of cultural and leisure practices and cultural consumption practices in traditional and innovative (immersive) forms in the context of management of socio-cultural activities.

**Keywords:** culture, cultural practices, individualisation, virtualisation, management of socio-cultural activities.

## 1. Introduction

In the context of the socio-cultural transformation of modern society, cultural practices related to spiritual culture, mentality, and national identity are becoming more important. Based on cultural practices in the dimension of leisure and cultural consumption, individuals self-identify, form a personal lifestyle, and express themselves in private and public spaces of public life. The need to study modern trends in managing socio-cultural activities related to implementing cultural practices and innovative forms of socio-cultural activities is becoming more relevant.

In the modern scientific discourse, there is a growing scientific interest in the conceptualisation of cultural practices, and the importance of researching the phenomenon of established (traditional) and innovative cultural practices in various spheres of public life is emphasised.

**State study of the problem.** In recent decades, domestic scholars have been conducting quite effective research on the socio-cultural transformations of Ukrainian society, including cultural practices. Among the scientific works that contain conceptual proposals and empirical data on understanding the dynamics of cultural change, socio-cultural phenomena, and cultural practices are such works as ‘Culture Variability: Sociological Projections’, (Kostenko, 2015), ‘Participation in Culture: People, Communities, States’ (Kostenko, 2018), ‘Cultural Practices in Modern Society: Theoretical Approaches and Empirical Measurements’ (Skokova, 2018), etc.

Among Ukrainian scholars, the issues of cultural practices are covered in the works of O. Kopiiivska (2019), L. Chuprii et al. (2023), L. Skokova (2018), V. Sudakova (2021), and others.

The study of cultural practices in the Cultural Studies paradigm is the subject of O. Kopiiivska’s work ‘Cultural Practices in the Discourse of Cultural

Studies' (Kopiiievska, 2019). The scholar notes that at the present stage, theoretical research of domestic cultural practices and further implementation of the results in cultural management should be a priority for scholars.

A Cultural Thought suggests using the concept of cultural omnivorousness and the concept of a cultural omnivorous individual when studying cultural practices. According to the scientist, the concept of 'cultural omnivorousness' reflects the process of destruction of the traditional classical disposition – high culture and low culture, hybridising culture and may mean 'rejection of snobbery, exclusivity of tastes in favour of their 'inclusiveness', inclusion, and therefore democracy, cultural openness, tolerance' (Skokova, 2018).

Based on an analysis of the results of national and cross-cultural projects of recent decades, L. Skokova (2018) emphasises that the use of the concept of omnivorousness in studies of the dynamics of cultural practices and tastes in the space of cultural consumption, creates an interesting comparative context that allows us to understand better the dynamics of cultural practices and its relationship to the system of social stratification (p. 96).

The study of the specifics of cultural practices as phenomena of the cultural space of modern society, the identification of their role in the processes of modernisation of everyday practices is devoted to the work of V. Sudakova 'Cultural Practices and Problems of Their Modernisation in the Cultural Space of Contemporary Societies' (Sudakova, 2020). The scientist notes that in the real cultural space, cultural practices change by historical, economic, and socio-cultural changes and, at the same time, retain their basic essential properties, that is, they have a transcultural nature and semantic predictive projections (Sudakova, 2020, p. 168).

Studies of cultural practices are widely represented in the scientific works of foreign researchers. For example, Ch. Beresniova examines the concept of a 'cultural curriculum' in the context of formal community history education. She concludes that teachers now feel responsible for the challenges of ancient cultural practices (Beresniova, 2019). Sujeong Kim's research on interpreting transnational cultural practices in the social discourse of Japan, Hong Kong and China is of interest (Kim, 2009). G. Buchenrieder et al. (2017) analyses the influence of cultural practices on the participatory governance process in local administrative structures, particularly Thai communities; considers cultural dimensions (collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance) through the 'cultural understanding' model in the context of community development meetings. The study is based on qualitative observation and structured inter-

views. The results show that dominant cultural practices can limit transparency and openness of discussions, contributing to a paternalistic style of governance. However, there is a gradual shift towards a more open and engaged public participation model (Buchenrieder et al., 2017).

S. Scherger's work examines the impact of age on cultural practices, pointing out that social sciences usually focus on class, gender, and ethnicity. In contrast, age is often considered a secondary factor. Using the Taking Part survey data in England, the authors analyse how age differences affect cultural consumption. It was found that cultural activity is influenced by factors such as health, life cycle and socio-economic status of different generations (Scherger, 2009).

Cultural practices are also analysed to shape the 'normal' way of life in the community and set standards of behaviour for its members, such as the impact of these practices on teenage motherhood in one of the regions of Ghana. The study found that certain traditions and beliefs promote early motherhood among adolescent girls. Using an exploratory approach, four key factors in cultural practices of early motherhood were identified: fear of curse through abortion, co-sleeping patterns, the role of funeral rituals, and cohabitation practices. The article emphasises the need to develop programmes and policies considering adolescents' cultural characteristics and needs. To effectively prevent early motherhood, the authors suggest paying attention to the influence of family, personal factors, community, institutions, and national and international factors (Tampah-Naah et al., 2024).

An outstanding representative of the contemporary trend in study into cultural practices is F. Coulangeon, whose work *Sociology of Cultural Practices: Discoveries* is based on data from the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies on the frequency with which people attend certain cultural events in France (Coulangeon, 2005). The researcher found a tendency to increase spending on cultural leisure in France and Europe as a whole and believes that profound social changes are taking place in people's lifestyles and the general model of self-identification of the European population.

Another researchers of cultural practices, T. Chan and J. Goldthorpe, notes that despite high incomes, financial capabilities and free time, people do not engage in cultural consumption practices, having monotonous leisure and the same type of entertainment (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007).

According to P. Bourdieu, cultural practices, cultural consumption on the scale of 'high/inhabitant/low' by institutional legitimation, play a significant

role in the reproduction of cultural reproduction, social and cultural stratification of modern society (Bourdieu, 1993).

The purpose of the article is to study the concept of cultural practices as cultural phenomena of people's socio-cultural existence and key factors in the management of socio-cultural activities.

## **2. Purpose and methods**

The purpose of the article is to study the concept of cultural practices as cultural phenomena of people's socio-cultural existence and key factors in the management of socio-cultural activities.

The realisation of this purpose involves solving the following tasks:

- to investigate cultural practices as a cultural phenomenon on the methodological basis of the socio-cultural approach;
- to clarify the features of cultural practices in the dimension of cultural and leisure practices and practices of cultural consumption;
- to investigate the impact of virtualisation and individualisation on the development of cultural practices in modern society.

**Methodology and methods.** Throughout this study, the authors applied theoretical methods such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, and the generalisation of scholarly perspectives from various countries on different aspects of the problem in question. The aim and objectives of this article have necessitated the use of a socio-cultural method. It facilitates an understanding of the distinctive features of cultural practices as a cultural phenomenon and an innovative form of management of socio-cultural activities.

The research methodology is based on scientific principles of systematisation and generalisation, which have enabled an investigation of cultural practices within the methodological framework of cultural theory. It is noted that the concept of 'cultural practices' is a theoretical reflection of the foundation of the socio-cultural existence of humankind. The author's definition of the concept of 'cultural practices' within the methodological framework of cultural theory is proposed as an integral system of interactions and communications between individual and collective social actors, a specific field of cultural events that reproduce and produce social (cultural) reality in the private and public spheres.

The author's analyses the main types of cultural practices and the factors that provide/do not provide opportunities for participation in the cultural life of the population of Ukraine based on the data of monitoring studies conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine

‘Ukrainian Society’ in 1994-2024 (Vorona & Shulha, 2021). The database accumulated as a result of this monitoring allows us to track the content of cultural and leisure practices of Ukrainian citizens for three decades, as well as shifts in the structure of these cultural practices that occur as a result of global and regional social changes.

The article analyses some features of cultural practices of the Ukrainian population in the context of war based on the data of a comprehensive sociological study, the topic: ‘Cultural Practices of the Ukrainian Population in the Context of War’, conducted with the financial support of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation in 2023 (Holovakha & Makeiev, 2023).

### **3. Results and discussion**

‘Cultural practice’ or ‘cultural practices’ have recently been widely used in scientific discourse. In the theory and practice of management of socio-cultural activities, the study of cultural practices is a key area of research. This is because the concept of cultural practices, as a theoretical reflection of the socio-cultural existence of people, is defined as an important category of cultural management, cultural studies, sociology, and other sciences.

Despite scientific research on various aspects of cultural practices, this concept remains insufficiently defined and needs to be clarified. Ukrainian researcher V. Sudakova (2020) offers an understanding of cultural practice as information-filled interaction, i.e. a space of changing, mobile and at the same time reproducible ‘rules’ of relations, sustainable interaction based on a historically established behavioural code in the conditions of social (collective) life (p. 168).

O. Kopiiievskia defines the concept of ‘cultural practice’ as the subjective and practical activity of a person/people related to the creation, distribution or consumption of cultural products (Kopiiievskia, 2019).

In her work ‘Cultural Practices in Modern Society: Theoretical Approaches and Empirical Dimensions’, L. Skokova focuses on the fact that there is an endless list of different types of cultural practices. The researcher notes that cultural practices can be considered holding meetings, performances, charity, the practices of invitation, hospitality, greetings and farewells, the etiquette of friendship, indifference, conflict, enmity, and even swearing and fighting... (Skokova, 2018).

We believe that the concept of ‘cultural practices’ is a theoretical reflection of the foundation of the socio-cultural existence of humanity. We can propose the following definition of ‘cultural practices’ as an integral system of interactions and communications between individual and collective social actors,

a specific field of real cultural events that reproduce and produce social (cultural) reality in the private and public spheres.

We agree with V. Sudakova (2020), who notes that the importance of personalised cultural practices and their impact on developing social, cultural, and artistic creativity is growing. Therefore, cultural practices are interactions that are always reproduced as a resource for the prospective transformation of cultural space, as a resource for modernising public life (p. 168).

In managing socio-cultural activities, we will consider cultural practices in the dimensions of cultural and leisure practices and cultural consumption practices. We believe that cultural and leisure practices and practices of cultural consumption have a single, common recreational function: they reproduce those algorithms of actions that switch, transfer, and distract human consciousness from the working, switched-on, tense mode to a calm, balanced rhythm. By changing the focus of attention, a person undergoes a psychological reboot, immersing themselves in another world, another reality, and distancing themselves from their problems and affairs. Sometimes, such a reboot allows a person to find the right way to solve their problems and helps them to resolve them quickly. Moreover, the final impact on a person is the difference between cultural and leisure practices and cultural consumption practices.

According to scholars (K. Nastoichna, L. Chupriy, etc.), cultural practices in the dimension of cultural consumption are leisure practices of a special type, because they are focused on the self-improvement of the spiritual nature of a person, on his or her self-development, self-awareness, and reflection (Chuprii et al., 2023). Thus, it is worth discussing the role and importance of art and its educational mission in human cultural development. However, people choose how to spend their free time, through entertainment or art.

In today's post-information society, a fundamentally different socio-cultural environment is being formed, leading to innovative cultural and leisure practices and cultural consumption practices. The cultural and leisure sphere's main emphases include activism, creativity, attention to emotions, freedom of expression, etc.

Virtualisation and individualisation have influenced the formation of new cultural practices in which consumers today seek primarily personal experience, unforgettable impressions and emotions. Virtual reality, which allows deep immersion of a subject in an artistic/historical topic, contributes to gaining new practical experience through immersion, changing human behaviour or thinking based on rethinking, and experiencing unique and unforgettable emotions.



According to O. Boyko, traditional cultural and leisure practices are no longer popular and widespread (art and folk crafts). In contrast, others are transformed in terms of content (reading, theatre, etc.) (Boiko, 2011). Moreover, most importantly, completely new cultural practices and types of recreation that did not exist before in leisure (online games, graffiti, shopping, etc.) are emerging. According to O. Boyko, this can be explained by a change in the value of the leisure space itself, the goals of activities implemented in the leisure sphere, and, thirdly, the means used, i.e. leisure practices, and the emergence of new lifestyles. A wide range of new leisure practices aimed at meeting various needs is evidence of the growing importance of leisure space for an individual and the increasing influence of individualisation (Boiko, 2011).

Speaking about innovative forms of cultural and leisure practices in the twenty-first century, one cannot help but consider the growing overall impact of virtualisation and individualisation trends. The dominance of the individualisation trend is associated with the emergence and spread of the popularisation of all kinds of hybrid extreme leisure activities (Boiko, 2011). These trends also initiate specific processes that transform traditional cultural and leisure practices and cultural consumption practices. We are talking about McDonald's, gaming, commercialisation, gamification, and consumerisation, which, in turn, are already shaping the phenomena of omnivorousness, excessive choice in cultural and leisure practices, cultural consumption, etc.

One more leading trend in cultural and leisure practices is worth pointing out: consumerisation. It can be traced when cultural and leisure practices are openly consumerist. Consumerisation also contributes to a change in the traditional understanding of leisure. It is used to actualise artfully imposed needs realised in the consumption field. The expansion and commercialisation of leisure space manifest themselves in various forms, primarily through the expansion of leisure services and the recreation and entertainment industry. The hybridisation of leisure forms caused by commercialisation manifests in various spectacular leisure practices, theatricalisation, and the combination of previously incompatible services and goods.

Contemporary cultural practices aim at interactivity, inclusiveness, and acquiring new sensory experiences. Therefore, they can be seen as steps towards forming a qualitatively new level of citizens' participation in cultural life – a culture of participation. The topic of participatory culture is currently being actively discussed at European conferences. It is emphasised that participatory culture is the free, practical, and conscious participation of people in cultural



and social processes and the opportunity to be 'consumers' and contribute to creating cultural events. Therefore, the development of active involvement of the Ukrainian population in cultural practices and the formation of a participatory culture is important and promising, including in the context of managing socio-cultural activities.

To find out the main types of cultural practices and the factors that provide/do not provide opportunities for participation in the cultural life of the population of Ukraine, we can refer to the results of monitoring studies conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine 'Ukrainian Society' in 1994-2024 (Vorona & Shulha, 2021). These data relate to aspects of cultural practices such as cultural and leisure preferences, preferences of the population regarding genres of literature, music, art, media products, etc., obstacles to the desired forms of leisure / participation in culture, etc. According to these surveys, there is an increase in the ratio of private and public cultural and leisure practices in favour of the dominance of private/home-based practices, which is, in fact, a common trend in modern societies. The domestication and mediatisation of leisure is complemented by the popularity of individualised cultural practices within the framework of networked digital culture, a characteristic of socio-cultural processes in recent decades. According to research, about 22% of the population of Ukraine participates in public cultural consumption practices that require the availability of appropriate infrastructure, such as attending theatres, concerts, museums, art exhibitions, libraries, etc.

It should be noted that the population is quite active in using the possibilities of the Internet to engage with culture, reading fiction books in their electronic libraries (over 11%), listening to music they like, watching feature films (over 32%), etc. Mediatised private/household leisure is taking up an increasing share of people's free time and engagement, while new media and the Internet are blurring the boundaries between private and public spaces.

According to various sociological studies, since 2014, and especially since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, there have been significant shifts in cultural practices in public and private spaces. Among the scientific works that contain the results of a study of cultural practices during the war, we should first mention the work by Chuprii L., Nas-toiasha K., Marutian R. 'Cultural Practices of the Population of Ukraine during the War' (Chuprii et al., 2023).

According to the results of a comprehensive sociological study of the cultural practices of the population of Ukraine during the war, which was imple-

mented with the financial support of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation in 2023, during the period of hostilities there was a significant decline in such forms of cultural and leisure practices as visiting cinemas, theatres, concerts, and especially excursions to their own and other cities. Instead, there has been an increase in the popularity of such forms of leisure as watching films at home, social media pages, and listening to music; overall activity in the public sector has also increased, and personal creativity is developing. According to the survey, reading was ranked first among cultural leisure practices (however, this applies not so much to books as to news feeds and social media pages). People who previously avoided immersing themselves in the information flow now say they have been in it constantly since the beginning of the war. According to psychologists, this hyper-attention of Ukrainians to the news is an attempt by the psyche to control the situation, which in times of war requires more effort and provokes anxiety. The popularity of other cultural leisure practices is even lower, which is influenced by wartime conditions.

According to the survey results, a total of 93% of respondents stated that they had either completely stopped or significantly reduced their consumption of Russian-language content, switching to Ukrainian instead (Chuprii et al., 2023, p. 94). The primary trend in cultural practices during the war has been the transition to Ukrainian content in cultural and leisure practices, as well as in cultural consumption among the population of Ukraine.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The study of cultural practices in contemporary society is of particular importance, as they serve as the foundation for individuals' self-identification, expressions of their lifestyle, and the creation of both traditional and innovative forms of sociocultural activity in private and public spaces of social life. The concept of 'cultural practices' is a theoretical reflection of the foundation of the socio-cultural existence of humankind. The author's definition of 'cultural practices' is proposed as an integral system of interactions and communications between individual and collective social actors, a specific field of cultural events that reproduce and produce social (cultural) reality in the private and public spheres.

Contemporary cultural management should consider the specifics of new cultural practices, their significance for different social groups, and the economic, political and social contexts in which these practices exist. The challenges managers face in the socio-cultural activities include insufficient funding for implementing socio-cultural projects for cultural and leisure activities, a lack of

effective communication between stakeholders, and insufficient public awareness of the opportunities offered by cultural practices. To overcome these challenges, it is necessary to introduce innovative solutions based on the best international practices, particularly in developing participation and communication strategies in the cultural sector. Moreover, the question now concerns cultural practices and the population's access to culture through cultural consumption and participation in cultural creation.

In the context of sociocultural changes driven by the increasing influence of virtualisation and individualisation trends, cultural practices related to leisure and cultural consumption, both in traditional and innovative (immersive) forms, gain special significance. Virtual platforms and digital technologies open new opportunities for engaging various population segments in cultural practices. Managers of sociocultural activities should focus on addressing these and other issues related to transforming traditional approaches to organising cultural events and audience engagement.

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