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# IN THE AREA OF INTERESTS OF CONTEMPORARY YOUTH – FILMS AND TV SERIES

## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary society exists within a technological landscape that increasingly asserts control over the organization of individual time and attention. Online algorithms, designed to deliver content tailored to specific users, contribute to the creation of personalized information bubbles.[1] A similar mechanism operates within streaming platforms, where viewing histories inform algorithmic recommendations for future content. This raises a pertinent question: in an environment dominated by algorithmic influence, is there still space for autonomous decision-making? Can individuals truly exercise independent choice regarding the content they consume or engage with? A 2015 study conducted by Kamil Ludwisiak, Michał Polguja, Agata Majos, and Wojciech Drygas suggests that the Internet and television play a central role in shaping the lives of young people.[2] Given that media now constitute a primary sphere of interest among contemporary youth, it is essential to examine this domain more closely. We are living in an era that Zygmunt Bauman described as *liquid modernity*,[3] characterized by constant change, uncertainty, and fluid social structures. One contemporary manifestation of this condition is the widespread use of streaming platforms, which

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[1] Eli Pariser, *The filter bubble. What the Internet is hiding from you* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011).

[2] Kamil Ludwisiak, Michał Polguj, Agata Majos, and Wojciech Drygas, "Wpływ mediów na zachowania zdrowotne młodych osób dorosłych," *Medycyna Ogólna i Nauki o Zdrowiu* 22, no. 2 (2016): 147.

[3] Zygmunt Bauman, *Płynna nowoczesność* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2006).

enjoy considerable popularity both in Poland and globally. One of the researchers in this area is Amanda D. Lotz, who points to the *hegemonic* position of linear television.[4] This article aims to explore young people's knowledge and opinions regarding film, with particular attention to the elements of pacing and rhythm, as well as their preferences concerning the length of films and television series. The research conducted offers substantial insights into the aforementioned areas. Notably, a clear trend emerges indicating the predominance of television series over feature films, as reflected in respondents' greater willingness to allocate time to serialized content. Another significant finding pertains to preferences for dynamic visual sequences; while the majority of participants favored fast-paced editing and rapid scene transitions, slightly more than one-quarter expressed a preference for slower editing and extended shots. In addition to these observations, the article presents an analysis of pacing across specific film genres. This study also seeks to examine the relationship between the contemporary technological landscape and the cinematic choices of young audiences. The discussion concludes by highlighting the challenges posed by modern viewer preferences and offering recommendations for future research and analysis.

## 1.  RESEARCH METHODS AND TOOLS

In addition to an analysis of relevant scholarly literature, this study presents the results of original research examining the knowledge of contemporary youth in selected areas of film, as well as their preferences and evaluations concerning pace and rhythm. The research was quantitative in nature, and participants were selected using a random sampling method. Data were collected through an online survey administered between February and March 2025. The survey was completed by 140 respondents. The decision to focus on a specific age range was informed by the observation that contemporary youth represent a demographic particularly inclined to engage with new technological solutions, including streaming platforms. According to the 2023 report by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS),[5] nearly three-fifths of Internet users (57%, representing 44% of the total adult population) watch television, films, series, or other video content online. The proportion of Poles consuming such media via the Internet has reached a record high. Internet-based viewership is particularly

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[4]  Amanda D. Lotz, *Netflix and Streaming Video: The Business of Subscriberfunded Video on Demand* (Cambridge – Medford: Polity Press, 2022).

[5]  Michał Feliksiak, "Korzystanie z internetu w 2023 roku." Komunikat z badań Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, accessed April 25, 2025, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2023/K_072_23.PDF.

prevalent among individuals aged 18 to 24 (84%) and 25 to 34 (73%). The selection of the age group for this study was informed, among other factors, by the classification proposed by Krystyna Grzesiak and Beata Zinkiewicz, who define "youthful age" as ranging from 17/18 to 24 years.[6] It is worth noting that there is an emerging tendency among researchers to extend the upper boundary of this developmental stage, with some proposing an increase to age 30 or even beyond. At the time of the study, participants were between 18 and 26 years old, and all were enrolled as students. The respondents completed an online questionnaire consisting of ten questions. Participation in the study was entirely anonymous. The questions included were as follows:

- Based on your knowledge and experience, what is the typical duration of a feature-length film?
- Based on your knowledge and experience, what is the typical duration of a short film?
- When attending a cinema screening or choosing a film to watch at home, does the length of the film influence your decision?
- Which of the following statements best reflects your preferences?
  - I prefer full-length films.
  - I prefer short films.
  - The length of the film does not matter to me.
- Which would you prefer?
  - A 110-minute movie.
  - Two episodes of a series, totaling 110 minutes.
- How much time do you spend watching films each week?
- How much time do you spend watching television series each week?
- Which statement best reflects your preferences?
  - I prefer fast, dynamic editing.
  - I prefer slow, long shots.
  - I cannot decide.
- Do you believe the pacing of a film should align with its genre?
- How do you envision the pacing of scenes for specific film genres?

The responses collected during the survey were processed, tabulated, and categorized. The analysis of these results is presented in the following sections of this publication.

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[6] Krystyna Grzesiak, and Beata Zinkiewicz, "Kim zostanie moje dziecko?" Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej, accessed April 25, 2025, http://www.wybieramzawod.pl/public/poradniki/Poradnik_5_WEB.pdf.

## 2.  VIEWER TIME AND IMAGE TIME – CLASH WITH MODERNITY

The issue of content perception has become a significant concern in contemporary society. The overwhelming abundance of information and the nearly infinite range of leisure activities can complicate decision-making and may lead individuals to succumb to external influences. Sławomir Śpiewak, in his discussion of cognitive overload, highlights that one of the key reasons for yielding to social influence is the limitation of human attention. A person can process only approximately 15 bits of information per second, while the stimuli to which we are exposed contain an information load that far exceeds this capacity, amounting to around $10^{11}$ bits per second.[7] An important factor that influences the interpretation of film messages by the viewer is the structuring of modern individuals' time. This includes both time allocated to paid work and periods of leisure. Throughout the day, the average person has a portion of free time, typically distinct from work and other obligatory activities. Effectively managing this time away from professional duties presents a challenge for the film industry. Contemporary productions are designed to capture the viewer's attention and encourage them to allocate their limited leisure time to the content. Amidst the vast array of stimuli presented by modern society, only a fraction of information has the potential to be noticed, received, and processed. The information an individual engages with is largely determined by attention, a mechanism that helps mitigate information overload. This structure governs the selection of incoming data, allows for the maintenance of control over ongoing activities, and allocates the energy required to engage with them.[8] The principle of priority frequently plays a significant role in content perception, suggesting that information presented at the beginning is more readily remembered by the individual.[9]

As Wiesław Godzic observes, the viewer has become increasingly dependent on visual stimuli in the contemporary era. Screens have become the predominant medium of communication. Rapid advancements in recording technologies have expanded the possibilities for viewing, influencing the development of numerous visual innovations, the creation of new conventions, the transformation of genres,

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[7]  Sławomir Śpiewak, "Poznawcze uwarunkowania wpływu społecznego," in *Społeczne ścieżki poznania*, ed. Małgorzata Kossowska, Magdalena Śmieja, and Sławomir Śpiewak (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, 2005), 148.

[8]  Edward Nęcka, Jarosław Orzechowski, Błażej Szymura, and Szymon Wichary, *Psychologia poznawcza* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2006), 65.

[9]  Mario Pandelaere, Kobe Millet, and Bram Van den Bergh, "Madonna or Don McLean? The effect of order of exposure on relative liking," *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 20, no. 4 (2010): 449.

and, most notably, the emergence of new attitudes toward media consumption.[10] Our era provides the conditions for a new development of language, and the perception of space, time, and film perspective cannot be detached from their deeper historical and cultural foundations.[11] However, as Karolina Mróz points out, this process also operates in the opposite direction: changes in the modern world are often driven, and at times even shaped, by a new way of perceiving reality – viewed through the prism of the screen.[12] In the era of iPads, Facebook, blogs, interactive games, and the impending advent of hybrid television, the way in which we consume audiovisual content is undergoing a significant transformation. Contemporary perceptions of the world are, to a large extent, if not entirely, mediated. We increasingly experience the world as a function of events unfolding on the television screen.[13] Marshall McLuhan wrote about media as extensions of the senses, stating: "All media, from the phonetic alphabet to the computer, are extensions of man's senses, bringing about profound and lasting changes in both himself and his environment."[14] This raises the question: what changes are brought about by today's technology, particularly with regard to audiovisual materials and their near-instantaneous availability and consumption on mobile devices? Zbyszko Melosik has discussed the schizophrenic nature of consumer culture, characterized by an accelerating "newness-obsolescence" cycle. In this context, the consumer becomes trapped in a perpetual spiral, continuously seeking new experiences to maintain the illusion of being "up to date." As a result, the modern individual exists in a constant state of "consumer anxiety," which becomes a normal and unceasing condition.[15] The issue of the pursuit of novelty is also addressed by Fredric Jameson, who contends that our entire social system is gradually losing its capacity to preserve the past, existing instead in an eternal present and continuous state of change.[16] When considering the context of digitalization, it is relevant to reference Arkadiusz Lewicki's observation regarding the merging of distinct realms: the stage with the audience, the television

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[10] Wiesław Godzic, "Rozumieć telewizję, zrozumieć widza," in *W świecie mediów*, ed. Ewelina Nurczyńska-Fidelska (Kraków: Rabid, 2001), 39.

[11] Zbigniew Czeczot-Gawrak, *Współczesna francuska teoria filmu* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1982), 137.

[12] Karolina Mróz, "Zmiany percepcji w wyniku oddziaływania nowych mediów i nowych modeli odbioru dzieła filmowego," *Images. The International Journal of European Film, Performing Arts and Audiovisual Communication* 13, no. 22 (2013): 242.

[13] Wiesław Godzic, "Cyfrowy film i analogowy widz," *Kino* 12 (1998): 42.

[14] Marshall McLuhan, *Wybór tekstów* (Poznań: Zysk i S-ka, 2001), 333.

[15] Zbyszko Melosik, *Kryzys męskości w kulturze współczesnej* (Poznań: Wolumin, 2002), 181.

[16] Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernizm i społeczeństwo konsumpcyjne," in *Postmodernizm. Antologia przekładów*, ed. Ryszard Nycz (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Baran i Suszczyński, 1997), 213.

studio with the street, and computer-generated virtual reality with everyday life.[17] Thus, the fundamental question that must be addressed in the process of planning and creating a film today is how to capture and sustain the viewer's attention. The issue of genres in the context of time should also be considered – specifically, whether the genre preferences of viewers evolve in response to changing realities. Furthermore, in the era of fluid postmodernity, one might ask whether film (and each of its genres) has experienced a form of acceleration, understood as an increase in various aspects, such as the duration of the film itself, as well as the length and pace of individual scenes. Bolesław Lewicki, in his discussion of film genres, emphasized that film, through the implementation of specific literary forms, serves distinct social functions – that is, it tells stories, evokes emotions, persuades, and educates. He thus argued that it is valid for film scholars to confirm the literary genre classification as a useful framework.[18] In *Marek Hendrykowski's Dictionary of Film Terms*, the concept of "film genre" is defined as "a set of rules that determine the construction of a film work [...] an intersubjectively existing system of conventions for shaping film material, which define the character of a given film and establish its formula within the process of social communication between the sender and the recipient."[19] Genre can thus be defined as a conglomeration of rules – a set of conventions that enables the recipient to identify and interpret the work, while also ensuring a certain degree of coherence within the work itself. In this sense, genres function as a specific grammar of expression, a set of directives (for the creator) that governs the mode of communication and the socially established manner of behavior.[20] As Tomasz Goban-Klas argues, popular genre forms serve as mediators between the work and its audience. Genre aids in planning the selection of messages and serves as a means of organizing the relationship between the two elements of mass communication: the message and the recipient.[21] Mirosław Przylipiak discussed the popularization of genres, noting that genre labels often appear on film posters or in rental stores, where films are categorized on shelves labeled "horror," "action," "melodrama," "comedy," and so on. Consumers, in turn, often request films from genres they particularly enjoy. Thus, defining the genre facilitates communication between those

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[17] Arkadiusz Lewicki, *Sztuczne światy. Postmodernizm w filmie fabularnym* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo UWr, 2007), 174.

[18] Bolesław W. Lewicki, *Wprowadzenie do wiedzy o filmie* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1964), 176.

[19] Marek Hendrykowski, *Słownik terminów filmowych* (Poznań: Ars Nova, 1998), 107.

[20] Michał Głowiński, "Gatunek literacki i problemy poetyki historycznej," in *Problemy teorii literatury*, ed. Henryk Markiewicz (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1987), 126.

[21] Tomasz Goban-Klas, *Media i komunikowanie masowe. Teorie i analizy prasy, radia, telewizji i Internetu* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2004), 198.

who distribute films and those who consume them. It provides key information that allows potential viewers to decide whether or not to engage with a particular film. Importantly, the recipient recognizes the genre through individual knowledge, which is grounded in everyday experience.[22] Today, a similar dynamic can be observed on streaming platforms, where films and series are categorized, in part, by genre. Genre, in this context, acts as a specific structure that ensures the recipient receives the expected product.

## 3.  PACE AND RHYTHM IN YOUTH PERCEPTION – RESULTS OF SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS

The first question in the survey, designed for the purposes of this study, asked: "How long do full-length films usually last, in your opinion?" The question was open-ended, allowing respondents to provide any value. The majority of responses (122 out of 140) indicated a duration ranging from 60 to 120 minutes. In response to a similar question regarding the duration of a short film, the majority (87 out of 140) suggested a time range of 15 to 30 minutes. However, this question elicited a greater degree of fragmentation in the responses – some participants indicated durations as short as 5 minutes, 10 minutes, or even up to 50 minutes, while others simply referred to "less than one hour." It can therefore be concluded that while young people are relatively accurate in estimating the length of a full-length film, they are less confident when it comes to estimating the duration of a short film. This discrepancy may be attributed to the lower degree of popularization and exposure to short films. Both on television, in cinemas, and on streaming platforms, full-length productions dominate. As such, specialized knowledge is not required; rather, the experience of a viewer is sufficient to accurately estimate the duration of full-length films.

Another interesting issue examined in the study was the influence of film duration on the choice of production. In this context, participants responded to three questions. The first question asked: "When going to the cinema or choosing a film to watch at home, does the length of the film matter to you?" The largest group of respondents (82 out of 140) indicated that the length of the film was not a determining factor in their decision. Just over one-third of the respondents (51 out of 140) expressed the opposite opinion. Additionally, seven participants noted that their choice was contingent upon other variables, such as the cast or available free time at the moment.

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[22] Mirosław Przylipiak, *Kino stylu zerowego: z zagadnień estetyki filmu fabularnego* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, 1995), 163.

The second question in this section was: "Which statement best reflects your preferences: (a) I prefer full-length films, (b) I prefer short films, or (c) The length of the film does not matter to me?" In response to this question, one answer again emerged as clearly dominant – namely, the preference for full-length films, which was chosen by 84 out of 140 respondents. The second-largest group (44 out of 140) indicated that the length of the film was not a significant factor in their choice. Only twelve participants expressed a preference for short films. The percentage distribution of responses is illustrated in the graph below.
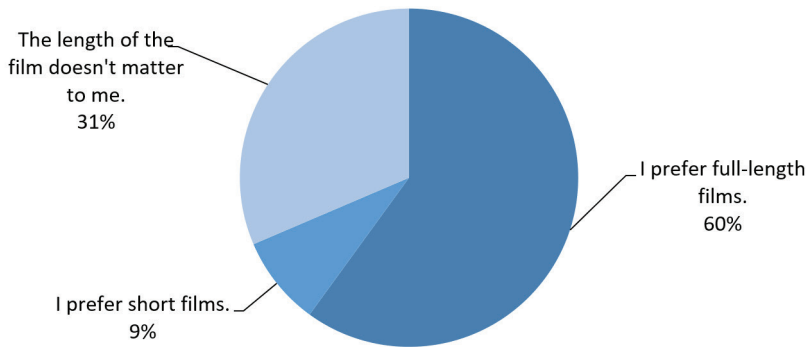


Chart 1. Preferences regarding film length. Source: own research.

An interesting issue from the perspective of the researcher is the amount of time young people spend watching films and series. Given the growing interest in series, respondents were asked two separate questions: the first regarding the amount of time spent watching films per week, and the second about the time spent watching series. In both cases, the responses were highly diverse. For films, the majority of respondents (43 out of 140) indicated a time range of two to four hours per week. However, the differences between the number of responses across the various time intervals were relatively small. The second largest group (42 out of 140) reported spending one to two hours per week watching films, while the third largest group (36 out of 140) admitted to spending less than one hour per week. Additionally, 15 respondents (out of 140) indicated four to six hours, and a small group of six respondents indicated more than six hours.

When it came to the question about the amount of time spent watching series each week, the responses were similarly varied. However, one time range clearly dominated: 46 out of 140 respondents reported watching series for two to four

hours per week, which was the same time range indicated for films. The second most frequent response was from the 29 respondents who stated they watched series for less than one hour a week. The remaining responses were relatively evenly distributed, with 23 respondents (out of 140) indicating four to six hours, 21 respondents indicating one to two hours, and another 21 respondents indicating more than six hours. The differences in responses for both films and series are depicted in the graph below.
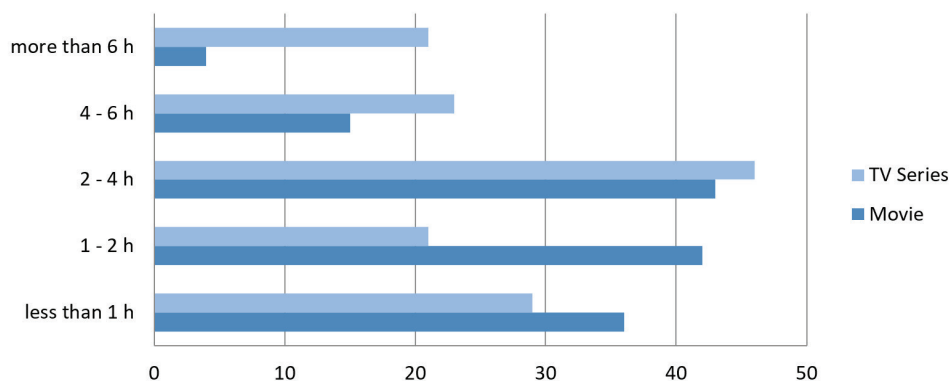


Chart 2. Time spent watching films and series. Source: own research.

In the case of young people, alternative time divisions for viewing habits can be identified. Based on the collected responses, it can be assumed that most individuals tend to watch one or two films per week. In contrast, the time allocated for watching series is more varied, with a noticeable trend of periodic viewing sessions, such as from four to six hours, or even more than six hours per week. Given that interruptions in series are usually shorter than those in films (and sometimes even allowed), it can be observed that young people typically watch two or three, and sometimes more than six, episodes of a series each week.

To provide a more detailed understanding of viewing preferences, an additional question was included in the survey. It asked: "What would you rather choose?" Respondents were presented with the option to select between a 110-minute film or two episodes of a series with a total runtime of 110 minutes. The largest group of respondents (80 out of 140) preferred two episodes of a series, while the remaining 60 respondents chose the film. This indicates an emerging preference for series over films among the study participants.

The third group of questions focused on the perception of pace and rhythm in film. Respondents were first asked to indicate their preferences regarding film

editing. In response to this question, two answers received the same number of votes (54 out of 140): one indicated a preference for fast, dynamic editing, and the other expressed difficulty in choosing a preferred editing style. The smallest group (32 out of 140) preferred slow editing with long shots.

Remaining in the domain of pace and rhythm, participants were then asked whether they believed that the pace of a film should align with its genre. The vast majority (116 out of 140) responded affirmatively. To gain deeper insight into how participants perceive pace and rhythm within various genres, they were asked to assign the pace of scenes to different film genres. Respondents were provided with a three-point scale (fast, moderate, slow) and the following genres: drama, horror, comedy, crime, science fiction, thriller, western, romance, documentary, historical film, nature film, and psychological film. The results are presented in the graph below.
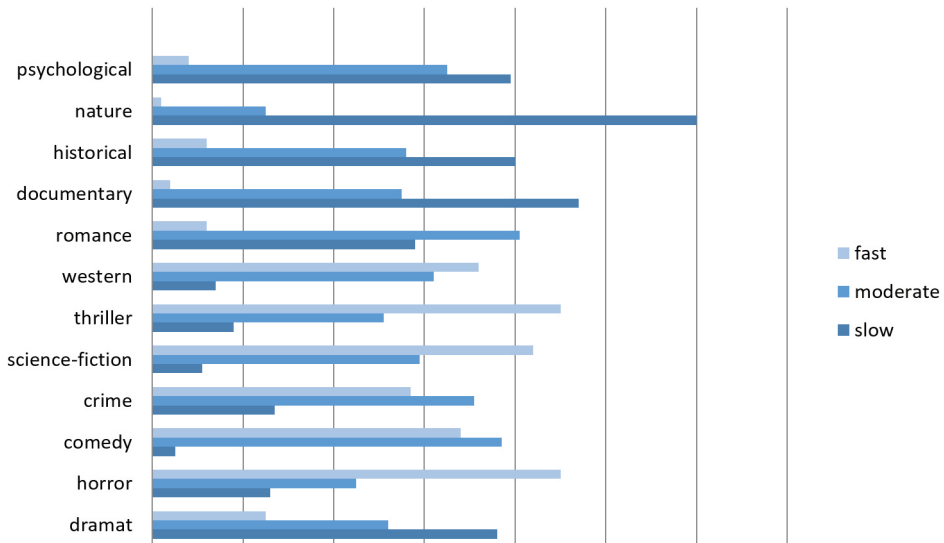


Chart 3. Scene tempo for individual film genres. Source: own research.

The responses provided by the participants reveal certain trends related to expectations concerning the pace of scenes within specific film genres. The most significant consensus is observed in the case of nature films, where the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated a preference for a slow pace. This same preference for slow pacing is also evident in genres such as psychological films, historical films, documentaries, and dramas. In contrast, a moderate pace was most frequently associated with the genres of comedy, crime, and romance.

Meanwhile, a fast pace was seen as characteristic of genres like westerns, thrillers, science fiction, and horror. The responses also highlight the pacing that is least expected for each genre. In the case of psychological films, a fast pace was the least favored, similar to the responses for nature films, historical films, documentaries, and romances. On the other hand, slow pacing was least expected in genres such as comedy, science fiction, westerns, thrillers, horror, and crime.


CONCLUSIONS


Summarizing the results of the conducted research, several key tendencies stand out. In terms of knowledge about film length (projection time), the majority of participants accurately assessed the duration of full-length films. However, a smaller group experienced difficulties in determining the length of short films correctly. When applying Mirosław Przylipiak's earlier idea, which suggests that viewers recognize a film genre based on individual knowledge and common experience, this approach can also be applied to recognizing film length. Full-length films are much more commonly presented to audiences – both on television and in cinemas. In contrast, short films are typically found in art cinema, which struggles to compete with mainstream, full-length productions. It is possible that short films may gain more popularity in the future as technological advancements push viewers to shorten their attention spans and increase their consumption of content. However, the fact that most respondents expressed a preference for full-length films suggests that such acceleration in viewing habits may not occur rapidly – or at all.

In terms of the time young people devote to watching films, the most common response was a time range of two to four hours per week. This was the case for both films and series, though young people were generally more inclined to spend more time watching series. Notably, when presented with the same unit of time (110 minutes), respondents were more likely to choose two episodes of a series over a single film. This observation leads to the interesting conclusion that viewers may prefer "fragments" of a story rather than complete, self-contained works. The inclination to spend more time on series – often consisting of multiple episodes – may be a factor contributing to their increasing dominance over films. If this preference is indeed the case, it would be valuable to explore how this trend correlates with the demands of modern technological culture. Perhaps, as Zbyszko Melosik suggests, this could be a form of searching for "new experiences," which allows young viewers to remain "up to date."

Regarding the pace of films, there is a clear preference for dynamic editing and fast-paced sequences. The majority of participants indicated a preference for fast scenes and editing, while fewer than a quarter of respondents favored longer, slower shots. This preference aligns with the current societal trend of living at a fast pace, constantly engaging with rapid information processing. The question then arises: to what extent does modernity influence the structure of individual film genres? When asked whether the pace of a film should align with its genre, the vast majority of respondents agreed. This response suggests that most participants view film tempo as a crucial element of audiovisual works and expect certain genres to adhere to specific pacing conventions.

This trend was also evident in responses to a question regarding the expected tempo for various film genres. There was significant consistency in participants' responses, with clear preferences for specific paces for different genres. These findings reveal certain challenges that contemporary viewers pose to cinematography. While the preference for dynamic and fast-paced scenes aligns with modern cultural trends, the tension between short, episodic formats of series and long, full-length films is noteworthy. The research indicates a shift towards series, yet full-length films still hold a preference among young viewers. This discrepancy highlights areas that warrant further investigation. Particularly intriguing and pertinent is the question of the future relationship between new technologies and cinema, especially regarding the preferences of younger audiences. Further research in this area could provide valuable insights into how technological advancements and changing viewing habits will continue to shape the landscape of film and television consumption. It is important to acknowledge that the study is subject to certain limitations arising from the homogeneity of the sample, which consisted exclusively of students who completed the survey independently in an online format. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of the research.

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IN THE AREA OF INTERESTS OF CONTEMPORARY YOUTH – FILMS AND TV SERIES

S u m m a r y

The aim of this article is to investigate the attitudes of contemporary youth toward films and television series as a domain of personal interest. Particular emphasis is placed on the assessment of film and series duration, as well as opinions regarding the pacing and stylistic characteristics of various genres and scenes. The article presents an analysis of responses collected from individuals aged 18 to 26, drawing upon their personal knowledge, experiences, and beliefs. In addition to a review of existing literature and publicly available reports, original research was conducted in the form of a survey. Key analytical concepts were defined, and the survey findings are presented and discussed. The analysis reveals a prevailing trend favoring television series over feature films, and portrays the modern young viewer as one who is especially receptive to fast-paced and dynamic content. Furthermore, the article examines the role of pacing within specific film genres. This study represents an attempt to explore the relationship between the contemporary technological environment and the evolving preferences of young audiences in the context of film consumption.

**Keywords:** film; TV series; youth; modern technologies

PRZESTRZEŃ ZAINTERESOWAŃ WSPÓŁCZESNEJ MŁODZIEŻY – FILMY I SERIALE

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest zbadanie postaw współczesnej młodzieży wobec filmów i seriali telewizyjnych jako obszaru ich zainteresowań. Szczególny nacisk położono na ocenę czasu trwania filmów i seriali, a także opinii dotyczących tempa i stylistyki różnych gatunków oraz scen. Oprócz przeglądu istniejącej literatury i publicznie dostępnych raportów, przeprowadzono badania w formie ankiety. Artykuł przedstawia wyniki badań przeprowadzonych na grupie wiekowej 18–26 lat. Ponadto artykuł analizuje rolę tempa w poszczególnych gatunkach filmowych. Zdefiniowano kluczowe koncepcje, a wyniki ankiety przedstawiono i omówiono. Analiza ujawnia dominujący trend faworyzowania seriali telewizyjnych nad filmami i ukazuje współczesnego młodego widza jako osobę szczególnie podatną na szybkie i dynamiczne treści. Niniejsze badanie stanowi próbę zbadania relacji między współczesnym otoczeniem technologicznym a ewoluującymi preferencjami młodej widowni w kontekście konsumpcji filmów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** film; serial; młodzież; nowe technologie