
CHRISTMAS AWARENESS OF CZECH CHILDREN

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Abstract

The goal of our article is to introduce the most relevant traditions and customs of Christmas in the Czech Republic and their development. Since the said Christmas traditions and customs form a part of the cultural heritage of the Czech Republic, they should not be neglected in the present time. The article introduces the Christmas traditions and customs maintained in the advent period, especially those of Christmas Eve, describing the main ways of conducting and the history of the Christmas traditions. We are also concerned with the maintenance of the Christmas customs by children and their parents, and it is just what the questionnaire research conducted in primary school first stage children on the topic of maintenance of Christmas traditions and customs is about. As a result, the frequencies of maintenance of the individual customs are established. These findings can then be followed by further support provided to the restoration of any less known or less maintained but still interesting customs and traditions. This support can take place during teaching lessons in the form of making one's own products, such as Christmas decorations or Nativity scenes.

Keywords: Christmas, traditions, customs, Christmas Eve, Nativity scene

1. Introduction

Christmas has always been a feast highly favoured not only by small children but also by adults since immemorial times. The pre-Christmas period lasts four weeks and is called Advent. It used to be a period of fasting, in which people were required to abstain from dancing and celebrating, drinking and overeating, and interesting customs were pursued, of which some have been preserved until today. In the present commercialized times, for many people, Christmas is only a period of great shopping and cleaning, but many worship and celebrate the traditional Czech Christmas that starts just with the Advent and ends by singing the carol of the feast of Epiphany.

2. Czech Christmas from a historical point of view

From the Advent period until the Epiphany carols, people have always followed certain folk customs and traditions. Some of them have been preserved

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until today, and some of them became extinct in the course of time. In this article, the authors will familiarize the readers with the old Czech folk customs and traditions.

2.1. Advent calendar in Czech folk traditions

The beginnings of observation of this period in the Czech lands date back to the reign of Charles the Great [1]. The Advent season consolidated gradually within a period of four weeks starting on the Sunday that is nearest to 30th November. The first Advent Sunday is the fourth one before 25th December. However, a situation can occur in which Christmas Eve falls in the last, fourth Advent Sunday [2].

Long ago, after finishing the farming works, after the fetes celebrating the harvests and after the last Saint Catherine feast, a period of winter rest and fasting started. No dancing parties or wedding ceremonies were held, and the season of spinning, feather stripping and other home works associated with the narration of various stories began. For children, the Advent meant the period of counting down days until Christmas Eve with Father Christmas bringing them presents.

First Advent Sunday comes around Saint Andrew's Day (30 November). The first called in the apostolic service by Jesus, Saint Andrew was previously a disciple of Saint John the Baptist. For his preaching activities, he was tortured in Patras in 70 A.D. by being tied to a cross, after which he died in three days. He became the patron saint of brides. The Advent period of four weeks begins on Saint Andrew's Day. This day used to be associated with a magical power for fortune telling, which fact was used especially by girls to learn whether they would get married soon. At midnight before Saint Andrew's Day, girls used to knock at the henhouse; if the cock was first to respond, the girl was expected to marry within one year, and if a hen was heard, she would remain single. At midnight, it was also possible to catch sight of her intended on water surface in a well or in a pail, in a mirror or even in a chimney [3]. Similar customs were often pursued by young men.

Second Advent Sunday comes around Saint Barbara's Day (4 December). Saint Barbara came from a rich grocer's family in Nicomedia (in the territory of today's Turkey). Her father, hating Christians, locked his daughter in a high tower to protect her from their faith. In spite of that, Barbara had herself christened, for which she was persecuted and finally sentenced to death by being beheaded with sword. Her symbols are a three-windowed tower, coat, sword, torch, peacock, and torturing tools. She is the patron saint of miners and all 'fire makers'. Since the 19th century, girls have been putting cherry twigs into jars with water and setting them in warm places to bloom. According to the number of blossoms and to the twig turning direction, they then estimated the time until their wedding and the side from which their groom was going to come. On the eve of this feast, women and girls called Barbaras (Barborcky) were going around the village, wearing white bed sheets or dresses with veils and having baskets

with fruits and sweets in one hand for good children and rods in the other to threaten the naughty ones [2, p. 92].

Saint Barbara's Day is followed by the Feast of Saint Nicholas (6 December), which is one of the most typical feasts of the pre-Christmas period preserved until today. It is associated with the custom of going around people's homes and giving presents to children on the eve of the feast. Formerly, Saint Nicholas used to be accompanied not only by a devil and an angel as today, but also by a Jew, hussar, knacker, dragoon, Turk, gypsy, lord, lady, farmer, farmer's wife, page, father, mother, an old woman with a broom, the Reaper, and other figures representing trades, such as a butcher, gamekeeper, tinker, and many others.

Saint Nicholas from Myra in Asia Minor is worshipped as a protector of children, pupils, sailors, travellers, traders, farmers, and girls intending to marry. He is also considered to be the patron saint of happy marriage. The legend about the murdered children brought by the saint back to life has met with good response in the folk belief in the form of an idea that Saint Nicholas protects children in illness and brings them luck, being their patron saint and friend [2, p. 130; 3, p. 42].

In Bohemia, exists the idea that Saint Nicholas is generous giving away not only wealth but also happiness. The Golden Legend by Jacobus de Voragine tells a story of Saint Nicholas' learning about a certain nobleman who has got into such difficulties that he had to sell his three daughters to a brothel. Saint Nicholas decided to save the family and threw three golden nuggets in three consecutive nights through the window of the father's home. The father then could buy out his three daughters and provide for them. This is also why Saint Nicholas is often depicted with three golden nuggets as an attribute.

The Advent period is associated with Advent wreaths. The first Advent wreath is said to be produced in 1838 by a theologian who headed an orphanage in Hamburg. The wreath was carved in wood and had a candle put on it. The theologian hung the wreath on the wall and put a little box under it for passers-by to throw in contributions for the children living in the orphanage. Later, the advent wreath became a custom in humble folk. Wreaths were carved in wood and, later, people started to decorate them with colours. After a certain period of time, wreaths were also weaved of branches of conifer trees and decorated with four candles being lit gradually always on the Advent Sunday. Sometimes, the wreath was also decorated with a fifth candle placed in the centre of the wreath [4].

2.2. *Christmas Eve*

The fasting period of Advent ends with the rising of the first star on Christmas Eve. Only then, families sit down to take a festive dinner, as soon as the housewife had announced that everything was ready. The dinner had several courses, consisting of the traditional Czech cuisine meals. The quantity of the

meals must have been so high to satiate everyone and some had to remain as a guarantee of abundance in the next year.

2.2.1. *Christmas Eve Dinner*

Fish, and especially carp, has been served in Bohemia as the main dish of the Christmas Eve dinner as late as since the 19th century. Formerly, several dishes were served for the dinner, the basic ones being lentil or pea soup, mushroom barley, and buns called 'pukance' with poppy-seed and honey. An even number of feasters must have been seated around the table as any odd number meant misfortune, and this is why local poors or wayfarers were invited to the table.

At first, everyone said grace to thank for all the good things brought in by the previous year and to ask God to bless the forthcoming one. The guests were served by the housewife, who was the only one allowed to go away from the table, while all others had to keep their seats during the dinner. When a part of the dishes remained after the dinner, it was considered to be a good sign and a promise of abundance. People used it to feed their animals, put it to the roots of trees, and a small part was even thrown into wells.

Today, hardly anybody can imagine a Christmas Eve dinner without the carp or other kind of fish. The fish became the symbol of Christianity, being based on the Greek word *ichthys* meaning fish. It is also formed of the initial letters of Greek words *Iésús Christos Theú (h)Yios Sótér*, in English Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.

Jesus was called the beloved Son by a voice from Heaven during his christening by Saint John the Baptist in the river of Jordan. The origin of the symbol of fish can probably also be seen in the Gospel accounts of the miraculous multiplication of loaves and fishes [3, p. 64].

2.2.2. *Mistletoe*

Mistletoe grows semi-parasitically in the crowns of some tree species. Its fruits ripening in December are white berries resembling pearls. It was just thanks to these characteristics (and the healing effects) of mistletoe that the plant was considered miraculous. People believed that mistletoe would protect them against fire, would prevent witches and evil ghosts from entering, and that it would bring luck similarly as the four-leaved clover or the horseshoe. For mistletoe to bring the proper effects, one has to receive it from someone first and, of course, give it to someone in return.

Mistletoe is also connected with a legend according to which it was a tree once. Its wood is said to be used to create the cross on which Jesus Christ died. The tree then shrunk with shame and transformed itself into a plant that fills everyone who passes under it with happiness [3, p. 72].

2.2.3. Plait

The plait had been the main Christmas period decoration before Christmas tree appeared. It was woven of wicker and decorated with various products of nature. It symbolized the effect of the Sun on earthly life.

2.2.4. Christmas tree

Some sources say that the first Christmas trees appeared in our country as early as at the beginning of the 14th century, while according to other ones it was in the 19th century. We have probably adopted this tradition from our German neighbours, but not even they are its founders. Trees are said to be decorated at Christmas for the first time in Italy. Obviously, this custom does not belong to the oldest Christmas ones. According to the documentary sources, this Christmas symbol appeared for the first time in 1605 in Strasbourg. Other sources state the first mention of a lit tree decorated with sweets and paper flowers to be found in 1570 in the chronicle of the City of Bremen. In our country, the Christmas tree is said to appear for the first time in 1812 in the family of Liebich, Director of the Theatre of the Estates, but then as an undecorated green supplement to decoration only. It was not sooner than after another twenty years that Christmas tree showed off in all its glory in the household of Josef Helfer, professor at the Faculty of Law. It is said that the Professor's beautiful wife brought this novelty from her native town of Bratislava, to which the custom got from South Germany across Austria. At first, people used to hang a decorated tree above the Christmas Eve table. It was only in the second half of the last century that the custom of decorating a tree spread in our country to replace the Nativity Scenes from our homes [3, p. 73].

The symbolism of the Christmas tree remains rather unclear. It is stated that the tree actually describes three spheres of the world, with its roots being under the ground, the trunk being the part of and support to human life, and finally the crown extending to the Heaven. The tree is thus presumed to symbolize the whole world.

2.3. Christmas folk customs

Our ancestors believed in the mystique of Christmas Eve, being at the same time curious to know what awaited them. Perhaps almost all Christmas customs were associated with future telling or influencing.

2.3.1. Apple cutting

Apple cutting remains among the customs most frequently held in Czech households. After the Christmas Eve dinner, each family member takes a beautifully polished apple and cuts it crosswise to obtain two halves. Fortune is then told according to the apple core shape. If it has the form of a cross, an

illness or even death can be expected to come in the next year. A star-shaped apple core brings luck and property. It has to be noted that nature is merciful here because most apples are endowed with stars [1, p. 32; 2, p. 124].

2.3.2. *Floating nutshells*

A walnut is broken to obtain two halves. The contents of the shell are removed to form a kind of a vessel into which a small quantity of wax is dropped and a small candle is put down to be held in the wax. The nutshells are then floated on water in a washbasin or in a bowl. If the shells of all family members come nearer to each other, it is considered to be a good sign [2, p. 125; 3, p. 29].

2.3.3. *Pouring lead*

Molten lead pouring belongs to the very old folk customs, in which a molten metal – lead – is poured into cold water. The resulting solidified abstract shape indicates one's future. Everybody searches for a particular form in it to one's own imagination [2, p. 125; 3, p. 30].

2.3.4. *Polazník*

An old rumour says that 'polazník' was the first guest person who entered in a house on Christmas Eve or the first one met outdoors. Then, it depended on who the person was, because a young man was the sign of sons and little bulls in the new year, a young woman brought daughters and heifers, a fat person symbolized the birth of strong cattle and a skinny person of thin cattle, a child or a girl brought luck, and a single boy merriment. If a pregnant woman entered the house, she was not the bearer of a new life but, on the contrary, someone who was barren momentarily and thus meant illness. Meeting an old man was also considered to be a sign of bad luck, while a man carrying fodder was a good sign [2, p. 125; 3, p. 30].

2.3.5. *Kissing under the mistletoe*

If a girl stands under a mistletoe bunch on Christmas Eve, any boy can come and kiss her. The mistletoe must not be decorated in gold, of course, but should be in its natural green form.

2.3.6. *Straw bedding*

Straw bedding in rooms and churches reminded the birth of Jesus Christ in a barn. Later, a heap of loose straw was replaced by a straw binder put under the table. The basis of this customs was to secure rich harvests and the wish of abundance and fertility. The same custom was also symbolized by a plate with

cereals put on the table, with money being put under or onto it [1, p. 65; 2, p. 126].

2.3.7. Open house

Our ancestors let their houses open on Christmas Eve, allowing all passers-by to enter and be served. But in the course of time, people became more careful. The beautiful open-house idea disappeared gradually because profiteers started to come (as they always do), often robbing the owners of their last possessions [1, p. 66; 2, p. 127].

2.3.8. Nativity scenes and cribs

The tradition of producing Christmas nativity scenes and cribs is very old. In 354, the crib was brought from Bethlehem to Rome and consecrated by Pope Liberius in the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. Since then, cribs have been constructed in all Italian churches and palaces and the so-called nativity games were played there.

In Bohemia, at the beginning of the 18th century, Nativity scenes started being produced as the original expression of art in rural people, at first in the poor regions of mountains and foothills – Giant Mountains, Ore Mountains, Bohemian Forest, and in Moravia in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands, Jeseníky Mountains, and in Wallachia. Figures carved in wood were bought by traders from the folk masters and brought to fairs, for instance to the famous Saint Nicholas Fair in Prague, and sold there.

The art of carving Nativity scenes in wood was passed down within families from fathers to sons and from one family to another. Figures were carved in well-seasoned linden wood by means of the simplest tools. The carver produced the rough shape of a figure from a block of wood with a saw and a chisel and then finished it with a sharp short-bladed knife. The figures were simple but valuable as they expressed the view of life of the humble folk [3, p. 80].

When building the Nativity scenes, the folk artists maintained the fixed composition of the figures. The crib with the Infant Jesus and the Holy Family were always put in the middle, with the figures of various donors being placed on the right and with the shepherds bringing lambs as gifts being located on the left. The nativity scenes included trees, a cow heating a child with her breath, and many others. Later on, Nativity scenes were produced of clay and baked in ceramic ovens. Since then, the Nativity scenes have been an impressive symbol of Christmas [1, 110; 2, p. 44; 3, p. 81].

2.4. The Three Wise Men

Nothing lasts forever in this world, and also the Christmas feasts come to an end one day. Christmas trees meet their doom just on the Three Kings Day

when this inherent symbol of our Christmas ends its earthly life mostly as a waste at the garbage collection points. The Three Wise Men, also called the Three Magi from the East, are said to come to bow to the newly born Infant Jesus. Their number, however, is not specified in the New Testament and the oldest Christian sources speak about two to twelve men. They are said to be led to Bethlehem by a star they followed on their way. In the course of time, the number of the wise men settled to three. The number 3 used to be (and still is) considered to be a magic number, symbolizing the completeness of the beginning, of the middle, and of the end.

The names of the Three Kings being Gaspar, Melchior and Balthasar probably come from the 12th century when the letters C + M + B started being written with blessed chalk on door lintels. But the letters need not be connected with the names of the Kings at all, as they may mean the phrase *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which means “May Christ bless this house” [3, p. 85].

3. Folk customs and traditions of today

At present, there still are many families where the Czech Christmas customs and traditions of Czech are held at Christmas time.

3.1. Maintaining folk customs in the Czech Republic in the 21st century

For a majority of people in the Czech Republic, Christmas still is the time bringing certain expectations. Although it is true that some Christmas customs have fallen into oblivion for various reasons, most of the ancient folk customs have been maintained to the present day: girls still pick cherry twigs on Saint Barbara’s Day, putting them into water to blossom and then guessing in what time they will marry, and little children still look forward to Saint Nicholas Day to be presented with sweets as they did tens of years ago. The Advent period has a certain charm for everyone: people decorate their dwellings with Advent wreaths, mistletoe bunches and Christmas trees. They still entertain themselves with pouring lead, floating walnut shells, and cutting apples. But of course, some of the folk customs have disappeared gradually: hardly anyone knows ‘*polazník*’ any more or what the plait was, and no one really lets the house open on Christmas Eve or puts straw under the table [2, p. 220].

The Three Kings carol still holds its tradition in our country. On Three Kings’ Day (6th January), one can meet carollers in all Czech towns. It is just on this day that various foundations organize collections for those in need. Carollers dressed as the Three Kings go round with sealed moneyboxes and collect contributions.

The Nativity scenes have preserved their diverse forms over the years. Today, they are mostly displayed at Christmas in churches, but can also be found in many households and museums.



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 1. (a) Nativity Scene made of bread, constructed by the students of the Technical College of Commerce, Services and Entrepreneurship in České Budějovice; (b) Lada's Czech Nativity Scene (paper, plywood), 1st issue in 1919; (c) Movable Nativity Scene from the middle 1950s (home-made) (Place: Christmas exhibition 'The Beauty of Nativity Scenes', Museum of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, 2016).

A change occurred in the form of displaying Nativity scenes/cribs in churches in the 16th century. During the reign of Emperor Joseph II, prohibition to display large Nativity scenes in churches and in public places was issued. This, however, did not discourage people, and they started building cribs and Nativity scenes in their homes, using materials they had available. Thus, the tradition of building cribs lasts, only the materials change over the time [4, p. 75].

There are many materials available that can be used to set cribs or Nativity scenes. The figures were often carved in wood or made of clay. A Nativity scene can even be made of bread (Figure 1a), which is an easily available and workable material.

Nativity scenes are still produced of different kinds of dough (salt doughs, gingerbread doughs). In producing Nativity scenes, paper (pasteboard or painted paper) was used in the past and also prevails today. It is affordable and also suitable for smaller pre-printed scenes to be pieced and glued together. Some figures may even be reinforced with plywood (Figure 1b).

One can also meet Nativity scenes produced from textile threads, such as the crocheting or felting techniques. Nativity scenes need not to be static only; some even have mechanical functions, being moved by means of simple or more complicated mechanical components. Some of the figures move around on rails or on the spot. Nativity scenes can also be lighted, creating dioramas and using combinations of various materials (Figure 1c). Their origin is also dated back to the 19th century.

3.2. Folk customs in the awareness of Czech children

Many folk customs are maintained predominantly on Christmas Eve. Such customs have been maintained for centuries [5]. Lately, however, the customs have been suffering from a slight decline as people change gradually to celebrating Christmas in a more material fashion. In our research, we concentrated on the knowledge and maintenance of the folk customs in contemporary families, or by the upcoming generation. Primary school first stage pupils were chosen as respondents. The main objective of the research was to find out which customs are maintained in today's families which have children, because it can be assumed that they will then maintain the customs later also in their future families. A twelve-point questionnaire was elaborated as a research tool. As the questions of the applied questionnaire were closed-ended, the respondents only answered yes or no to them. 138 respondents were selected for the research from several schools in Pilsen Region. Therefore, the selection of the respondents was not completely random, which is why the results obtained can be considered valid for Pilsen Region only. We presume that in other regions, such as South Moravia, the results would differ considering the higher number of believers living in the region. But this will be the subject of another research.

In our article, we quote the questions in a simplified form in order to keep the presented results clearly arranged. However, the researcher completed the questions with a description of the respective custom for the children to know which custom the question is about.

3.2.1. Questions put in the questionnaire

- Q 01) Do you observe the whole-day fasting custom on Christmas Eve to see a golden pig?
- Q 02) Do you pour lead to tell the future?
- Q 03) Do you cut apples after finishing your Christmas Eve dinner?
- Q 04) Do you float walnut shells?
- Q 05) Do you put some carp scales under Christmas Eve dinner plates to bring all your family enough money next year?
- Q 06) Do single girls in your family throw a shoe?
- Q 07) Do you decorate a tree on Christmas Eve?
- Q 08) Do you produce your own decorations for the Christmas tree?
- Q 09) Do you go to attend the midnight mass on Christmas Eve?
- Q 10) Do you sing or listen to carols with your family members?
- Q 11) Do you have a carp for Christmas Eve dinner?
- Q 12) Do you hang mistletoe above your door?

Since younger children mostly do not decorate the Christmas tree with their parents because it should be part of the surprise prepared for them on Christmas Eve, the researcher re-formulated Question No. 7 for them as follows: When does a decorated Christmas tree appear for the first time at Christmas in your home? The researcher also answered questions put by the children, explained the questions above and helped in answering them. The results of the research were processed in a well-arranged chart (Figure 2).

As follows from the results, maintaining especially the better known, traditional and simpler customs is quite obvious. Thus, most families do not miss decorating a tree on Christmas Eve, singing Christmas carols, and hanging mistletoe. Throwing shoes proved to be among the least frequently maintained customs, probably due to the lower number of single girls in families or to the fact that children do not consider the tradition to be relevant. Pouring lead was found to be the least frequently maintained Christmas custom of all, the possible reason being the rather complicated performance of this old custom. Given the lower number of believers in Pilsen Region and the time of midnight mass celebration (Q09), the attendance at the mass is less frequent. Also, the traditional Czech Christmas Eve menu – fried carp with potato salad – is often replaced by other meals. On the other hand, the tradition of listening to Christmas carols or even the knowledge thereof still lasts.

Similar results were also achieved by Slovak researchers J. Depešová [6] and M. Kožuchová [7]. Their independent researches proved that some Slovak folk customs already are not known by children at all and that some of them still survive.

Other statistic centres of public opinion, that are often requested by commercial subjects, deal with Christmas and keeping the tradition. The reason is completely clear. Stores must focus more on customers because they have the biggest profit in the month before Christmas.

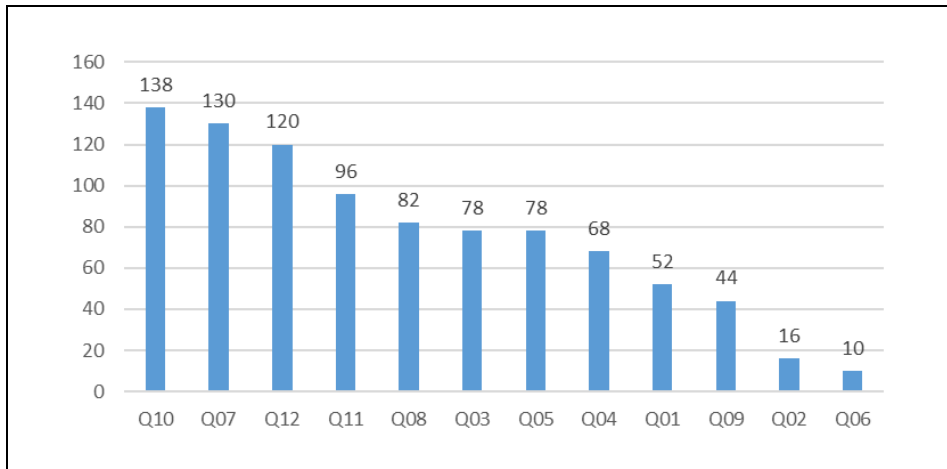


Figure 2. The frequency of positive responses (Questions 1-12).

For example, ‘Centre for a public opinion research Sociological institute AV CZ’ dealt with it and it states in the press release from 2003 that from the total of 1048 respondents over 15 years of age, 66 % feel the importance of keeping traditions definitely [J. Červenka, *Keeping traditions in our households: press release*, Sociological institution AV CZ: Centre for a public opinion research, Prague, 2003, https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a342/f9/100254s_or30813.pdf]. An interesting question was for which events are cooked traditional dishes. The most were for Christmas (96%), and Easter (67%) then there were other traditions and holidays.

Other Christmas tradition is, for example, the visit of a church. In this season, churches are visited also by those who are not believers. The survey from STEM company carried out from December 3 to December 11 shows that churches are visited during these days by more than 36% of citizens [*Church visit belongs to Christmas habits for more than one third of population*, Stem.cz: Institute of empirical researches, 2015, <https://www.stem.cz/navsteva-kostela-patri-mezi-vanocni-zvyky-vice-nez-tretiny-populace-2/>]. The result is quite high related to the percentage of Christians in the Czech Republic. The sample for this survey was chosen by the method of quota sampling. The total was 1014 respondents. The result is not comparable to ours because it focuses on the whole population. The difference of traditions between adults and children can be seen here.

One of our surveys also deals with Christmas but it partly focuses mainly on presents and overall experience [I. Zelenohorská, *Ovšem. Christmas (survey results)*, 2011, <https://ovsem-vanocce.vyplnto.cz>]. Question no. 7 is asking ‘Which Christmas habits and traditions do you keep? (you can mark more

options)'. The biggest representation were habits and traditions: Christmas decoration of the house, playing Christmas carols, visiting relatives, eating carp fish and potato salad on Christmas Eve. These results correspond to our survey. The total sample of respondents was 146, the biggest part (in total of 70% respondents) was formed by age range of 18–25 years.

As we mentioned companies, e.g. Pilsner Urquell a.s. had one of survey done in 2016 by the agency 'ppm factum' also about Christmas [Pilsner Urquell, *Christmas in the Czech Republic? People feel more and more stress and rush but keeping traditions is still important*, 2016, <https://www.prazdroj.cz/vanocecesku-lide-stale-vice-citi-stres-shon-dodrzovani-tradic-ne-porad-dulezite>]. The sample was formed by 1000 respondents from an on-line survey of the target group of 18–65 years of age. Important for us is the finding that "88 % of Czechs keep habits and traditions in the way they know them from childhood". So, the fact is that what children experience during childhood they repeat in adulthood, so we need to focus on the tradition restoration in primary schools.

Ppm factum focused on Christmas also in previous years. In 2011 they also carried out survey focused on 'Christmas habits and traditions' [Ppm factum, *Christmas habits and traditions*, 2011, <http://www.factum.cz/aktuality/aktualita/vanocni-zvyky-a-tradice-5>]. From the findings, the most important for us are the most favourite traditions "slicing apples (50%), letting boats with candle float (15%) and pouring lead (7%)", that correspond to our findings in questions 3, 4 and 2 with similar results for questions 3 and 2.

4. Conclusion

Many Christmas traditions have their charm and hidden surprise, and it is for this reason that they should not fall into oblivion [8]. The Czech Christmas customs and traditions also strengthen the national identity in children, encouraging their interest in the history of the nation. Therefore, the requirement to revive the national customs and traditions is in the limelight of education interests, especially with respect to the perspective of globalization and interconnection of economies and information systems [6, p. 140]. Here, not only the family but also the school is irreplaceable in the revival and development of the traditions and customs. It is more than desirable to implement these national elements into the teaching plans and curricula at the individual stages and types of schools [7, p. 110; 8, p. 28]. Another reason is that the national customs and traditions not only develop children in aspects such as feelings, intellect, aesthetic, ethics, and psychomotor skills, but maintaining the customs and traditions also forms a certain national identity and awareness in children [9]. Otherwise, Christmas would only become a feast of decorated trees and presents.

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