

Museum visitors: two types of motivation

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This research was conducted by **Juan Gabriel Brida, Chiara Dalle Nogare and Raffaele Scuderi** at the **Free University of Bolzano-Bozen, University of Brescia and University of Enna “Kore”, Italy**

Summary

Of all the drivers of museum attendance, “motivation” has rarely been systematically assessed. The aim of this study was to understand its role. So far experts have focused mainly on other factors like education, vicinity to museum location, wealth, time constraints, whose effects are also confirmed to be significant in this study. The research identified two principal characteristics of motivation: recreational and intellectual.

The research surveyed visitors to Vittoriale

Vittoriale is a popular museum on the shores of Lake Garda in Italy. During summer 2012, the researchers carried out a survey of visitors asking about the reasons for visiting this destination. They subsequently divided the answers into six main categories: curiosity; specific or professional interest; learning something new; spend free time/relax; visit cultural attractions; accompany friends/relatives. They regarded motivations to visit Vittoriale as broadly representative of motivations to visit any museum. Using statistical analysis, the researchers conclude that motivation plays a driving role in understanding museum visiting, provided that other socio-economic factors are taken into account.

The research identified two principal characteristics of motivation

These mark distinct attitudes towards cultural consumption. The first is a recreational attitude, which envisions museums as a form of light entertainment, the second is more intellectual and sustained by genuine search for knowledge. In the case of recreational motivation, the attendance is occasional, limited to holidays, but constant over years: typically it is aimed at making best use of the large amount of leisure time during holidays when they lack other entertainments or to comply with “must-do” lists suggested by tourist guides and other travelers. A recreational attitude is associated with a low frequency of museum attendance more generally. This evidence can open new perspectives on museum policy, such as opening hours and additional services to ensure a satisfying experience for these occasional visitors.

This summary is by **Barbara Bravi, King’s Knowledge Exchange Associate**

Keywords

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