

Rainy days at the museum

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This research was conducted by **Harold E. Cuffe** at **Victoria University Wellington, New Zealand**

Summary

This study analysed the effect of rain on museum attendance. Morning rain increases visitor numbers in the mornings to a significant degree, while afternoon rain has less of an impact on visitors. By using data collected throughout the day (rather than simply day data), this research provides a more accurate picture of how visitor numbers vary as a result of weather conditions.

Weather is a major factor in how people choose indoor and outdoor activities

Attendance data was collected for the Te Papa Museum in New Zealand (chosen for its similarity with many other prestigious museums in the world) where rain occurs one in four days in a year, offering ample opportunity for the data to be generalised beyond just this museum. The weather forecast has less of an impact than one would believe, as this research found that most decisions are made in the moment, and so driven by current or imminent weather conditions. During the weekend and holiday period, when visitors are already willing to spend time on cultural activities, all-day rainfall positively impacts museum attendance.

Precipitation impacts how much people spend

Rain increases the ticket sales for temporary, pay-to-visit exhibitions throughout the day, driving up revenue by 8-13 per cent, with mornings remaining the most profitable time of day. The cost of paying for an exhibition also encourages longer stays and this influences foreign visitors in particular. In response to weather conditions, institutions should staff the museum

accordingly and distribute tasks among its employees to respond to the number of attendees. Museums could buy time-specific targeted adverts, for instance timed for the mornings when attendance is at its highest on rainy days.

This summary is by **Adina Stroia, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

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