

[Why festival attendance cannot predict regular museum attendance: Examining the attitude-behavior relationship](#)

Biljana Jokić

Center for Study in Cultural Development, Republic of Serbia

Iris Žeželj

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Psychology

Abstract

This study addresses the fact that during the one-night festival Museum Night, tens of thousands of visitors find themselves in museums, which stands in sharp contrast to the lack of museum visitors during the rest of the year. Taking into account conceptual differences between festivals and regular museum programs, we examined the obstacles that prevent festival visitors from becoming regular museum visitors. Using a two-stage stratified sample ($N=1480$) of visitors during Museum Night in Serbia in 2012, we identified 39% of those who have never visited a museum during the previous twelve months. This allowed for a comparison between this group of visitors and regular museum visitors based on their socio-demographic characteristics and their cultural habits. In addition, we assessed their attitudes towards museums, their subjective norms about visiting museums, and the perceived barriers for more frequent visits (perceived control factors). The choice of constructs was guided by Ajzen and Fishbein's theory of planned behavior (1985; 2011). We analyzed if they could predict a) intentions to visit museums in the future and b) visits to museums in the previous year. The attitude towards museums was proven to be a good predictor of both intentions and past behavior, while subjective norms and perceived control were better indicators of past behavior. Results demonstrated that museums were perceived as predominantly educational institutions, with their main image-related drawbacks being lack of dynamics and excitement. In spite of that fact, a significant number of festival visitors did express their intentions to visit museums more often in the future. We discussed how these intentions could be addressed in public communications in order to translate them into behavior. We also suggested how both descriptive and prescriptive norms could be employed to widen potential museum audiences and which strategies could improve the image of museums as more proactive and appealing.

[Link](#)