CultureCase

The factors that determine attendance at museums and historic sites across Europe

This research was conducted by **Martin Falk** and **Tally Katz-Gerro** at the **Austrian Institute of Economic Research** and the **University of Haifa, Israel**

Summary

This paper looked at data on 350,000 people in 24 EU countries. The researchers found that household income, education, employment status and nationality made a difference to whether (and how often) people attended museums, galleries and historic sites. Both education and income have consistently strong effects for all the countries in the study. The consistencies are striking given the different educational, economic and cultural policies across the EU.

The study used comparable data from across Europe

The research is based on a dataset from 2006 that gathers together comparable data on income, work status, education, health, and demographic details, as well as lifestyle questions including one about attendance at museums and historic sites. The surveys gathered data on adults over 16 years old in all 24 members of the EU in 2006.

Cultural policies have some impact but cannot overcome inequality in human capital

The difference between attendance levels in general across the different countries can be partly attributed to cultural policy factors. The highest attendance levels are in countries which tend to opt for free admission and

lowest where admission fees are the norm. But there were unequal levels of attendance across social groups in all countries. Education was the most important of all the factors to increase the likelihood of visiting museums and historic sites, meaning that “human capital is more important than economic capital” in this regard.

Keywords

attendance **museum** **survey** **gallery** **european union**

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Author email	**tkatz@soc.haifa.ac.il**

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