

Art Museum Visitor Segments: Evidence From Italy on Omnivores and Highbrow Univores

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Introduction

Since the 1970s, cutbacks in public funding and increasing competition from many leisure pursuits have forced museums around the world to become more market-oriented. This has led to a need to understand audience expectations of the museum experience (Goulding 2000; Kotler et al. 2008). Research suggests that visitors look for a variety of experiences (e.g., amusement, excitement, learning) in a museum and that different visitor types look for different experiences (Kotler et al. 2008). As Kotler et al. (2008) point out, “[T]he first thing a museum should do is to understand the characteristics of its current consumers and the segments they represent” (p. 117). By defining, profiling and differentiating the marketing mix for different segments, museums can optimize their offer to meet the needs of their various visitors (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre 2007). However, much of the research on museum audiences has been criticized for failing to integrate the results into a coherent framework and to use them to advance an overall understanding of the nature of museum visits (Goulding 2000).

Given our interest in the art museum domain in particular, this study is intended to ascertain who visits art museums, and why. While visiting an art museum is a cultural activity involving a private, intimate and personal experience of works of art, it is also a leisure activity often shared with friends and family (Debenedetti 2003). As pointed out in the literature (Goulding 2000; Prentice et al. 1997), despite their use in profiling visitors, sociodemographics tell us little

about the nature of museum visitors’ anticipated experiences and their reasons for visiting (Prentice et al. 1997). We investigate why people visit museums and what experiences they seek, by considering their tastes, preferences and engagement in a wide range of leisure activities. Although leisure activities have been studied in various other areas (Havitz et al. 2013; Jackson 2004), in the case of art museums they have been neglected with the exception of an early study by Hood (1983). Hood demonstrates that art museum audiences differ based on their desired leisure experiences. Although marketing and market segmentation have grown in importance for museums, few studies have specifically addressed art museums, understanding their visitors and the segments they represent based on the various experiences they look for in museums as well as their preferences with regard to various leisure and cultural activities.

According to Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984) theory of cultural reproduction in sociology, by consuming more complex, prestigious and refined forms of leisure such as visiting art museums, individuals with a high income and/or a high level of education can be differentiated from those lower down in the social hierarchy. In line with this theory, researchers have investigated the social basis of different rates of engagement in the arts. Peterson (2005a, 2005b) labels as *omnivores* those with high social status who appreciate a wide variety of cultural offerings, including both high and popular culture, while those who display a taste for only one or a limited number of cultural forms he labels as *univores*.

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Considering the research previously carried out and the above-described theories, the present study makes a number of contributions. First, it fills a gap in the literature by attempting to segment art museum visitors according to why they visit museums, in particular what experiences they look for in museums. We use Falk and Dierking's (1992, 2000) interactive experience model to understand museum visitor experiences as a framework for exploring possible visitor segments in art museums. We use this model to investigate various experiences sought by current visitors to art museums that include personal, social and physical components. More specifically, we explore whether personal, social and physical experiences sought by visitors to art museums play a role in the identification of segments.

Second, we explore the role of behavioural as well as motivational variables in a holistic way in the segmentation of art museum visitors. Drawing on Hood's (1983) findings, Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural consumption and Peterson's (2005a, 2005b) omnivore/univore thesis, we investigate the role of visitors' leisure preferences and participation in both high and popular cultural activities.

Third, by investigating these factors, we hope to contribute to the customer experience literature by incorporating theories of cultural consumption in the field of art museums. This research is also important for art museum practitioners, because strategic segmentation is the basis for effective communication campaigns, product formulation and augmentation targeted to specific groups of current and potential audiences.



Museum Experience

Traditional marketing approaches that focus on tangible product attributes and quality are not adequate today, since consumers are looking for unique, memorable, extraordinary experiences (Hosany and Witham 2009). According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), with the "progression of economic value" today's successful businesses provide consumers with unforgettable experiences. Pine and Gilmore identify four dimensions of experience: entertainment, education, escape and aesthetics. In their framework, entertainment is one of the oldest forms of experience. Theatre companies, for example, aim to delight and entertain their audiences. An educational experience, on the other hand, actively engages consumers personally, stimulating their mind and appealing to their desire to learn. As highly immersive experiences, escapist experiences completely absorb individuals in the activity. Finally, with the aesthetic dimension, consumers interpret the physical environment around them. According to Bitner (1992), ambient conditions is one dimension of the physical environment; others include layout, design and decoration.

As pointed out by Prentice et al. (1997), studies specific to museums have identified general dimensions of experiences sought. It has been found that visitors seek various experiences when visiting a museum; they wish to satisfy their curiosity, to escape from routine, and to be with family and friends. Fitchett (1997) states that "different visitors have different reasons and motives for visiting museums" (p. 233) and that these are complex and diverse. Others (e.g., Falk and Dierking 1992; Jansen-Verbeke and van Rekom 1996; McLean 1994; Scott 2000) find that learning is the principal motive for visiting a museum.

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ABSTRACT

This study segments the various types of art museum visitor using two-step cluster analysis. It goes beyond a simple demographic categorization of visitors and investigates why people visit museums, in particular what experiences they seek in museums based on their preferences and participation in various leisure activities. The sample was selected from among visitors to two art museums in Genoa, Italy. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 400 visitors. The resulting 394 useable questionnaires yielded two clusters – Cultural Omnivores and Art Museum Univores – providing evidence for the omnivore/highbrow univore thesis described in the literature. The data suggest that the experiences visitors look for in museums, their preferences regarding various leisure activities, and their attendance at both highbrow and popular cultural events provide an effective means of segmenting art museum visitors. The theoretical contributions and managerial implications are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Market segmentation, art museum visitors, two-step cluster analysis, omnivores/univores, Italy

Falk and Dierking (1992, 2000) propose an interactive experience model consisting of three components – personal, social and physical – to understand the experiences of visitors to galleries and museums. A visitor's experience occurs within the physical environment of the gallery or museum (physical context). The visitor perceives the world through his or her own personal context, within the physical context. Sharing that experience with various other people who have their own personal contexts creates the social context of the gallery or museum. Visitor experience is the result of interaction among personal, social and environmental contexts. Using this advanced model, Falk (2009) goes beyond a simple demographic categorization of museum visitors and explores their individual experiences.



Segments of the Art Museum Audience

In an early study (carried out in Toledo, Ohio) of the reasons behind frequent attendance and nonattendance at an art museum, Hood (1983) investigated why some people visit museums whereas others do not and what the two groups most value in their leisure experiences. Hood reports that, before making their selection, individuals consider several alternatives, including museums, based on the experiences they seek and value. She identifies six attributes of a desirable leisure experience: (1) being with people or socially interacting, (2) doing something worthwhile, (3) feeling comfortable and at ease in the surroundings, (4) experiencing new challenges, (5) having an opportunity to learn, and (6) participating actively. Hood tested the importance of these six attributes for museum participants and nonparticipants. She found that art museum visitors fall into two groups: *frequent participants*

and *nonparticipants/occasional participants*: “Each group seeks different values and experiences through leisure activities, including museum going” (p. 52). Frequent participants – those who visit at least three times a year – are in the minority. They value having an opportunity to learn and enjoy the challenge of new experiences and doing something worthwhile with their leisure time. They find what they want in museums. Nonparticipants represent the opposite pole: they value being with friends and family, engaging actively and feeling at ease in their surroundings. Occasional participants – those who visit once or twice a year – closely resemble nonparticipants, as they also value socializing during their leisure time; this group tends to seek active participation, social interaction, entertaining experiences and comfortable settings. Hood's study is recognized as ground-breaking because it does not merely analyze demographics but links visitation, non-visitation and frequency patterns with leisure values and choices, personality, and socialization factors (Kotler et al. 2008).

Brida et al. (2013) and Falk (2009) also segment visitors with respect to factors that motivate them to visit. On the other hand, Guillon (2011) segments performing arts audiences based on loyalty behaviours and finds that some individuals are more likely to be loyal than others, consistent with their propensity to subscribe to other types of cultural outing.



Art Museums and Cultural Consumption

Research has found that typical art museum visitors belong to the upper educational, occupational and income groups and that they participate in other forms of arts and leisure activity more than nonvisitors. Additionally,

RÉSUMÉ

L'objectif de cette étude est de segmenter les différents types de visiteurs de musées d'art à l'aide d'une analyse par regroupement en deux étapes. L'étude va au-delà d'une simple catégorisation démographique des visiteurs en explorant les raisons pour lesquelles les gens visitent les musées, notamment en identifiant les expériences que cherchent à vivre les visiteurs au musée en fonction de leurs préférences et leur participation à de différentes activités de loisir. L'échantillon de l'étude a été constitué à partir des visiteurs de deux musées d'art à Gênes en Italie. Les chercheurs ont mené des entrevues en personne auprès de 400 visiteurs et ont analysé 394 questionnaires utilisables, ce qui a permis d'établir deux regroupements : les « omnivores culturels » et les « univores de musées d'art », confirmant la thèse concernant les omnivores et les univores de la haute culture. Les données indiquent que les différentes expériences que cherchent à vivre les visiteurs dans les musées, leurs préférences pour différentes activités de loisir, de même que leur participation à des activités de culture populaire et savante constituent un moyen efficace de segmenter les visiteurs de musées. Les auteurs présentent également la contribution de leur recherche sur le plan théorique et ses implications en matière de gestion.

MOTS CLÉS

Segmentation du marché, visiteurs de musées d'art, analyse par regroupement en deux étapes, omnivores, univores, Italie

female visitors outnumber male visitors (DiMaggio 1996; Hendon 1990). Of these socio-demographic characteristics, the best net predictor of art museum attendance around the world is educational attainment (DiMaggio 1996).

Such common sociodemographic differences regarding art museum visitors are consistent with Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural reproduction. "According to Bourdieu, familiarity with and appreciation of high culture art forms, including the kinds of art found in museums, represents a form of cultural capital" (DiMaggio 1996, 162). "The notion of cultural capital is of special importance to Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory. Cultural capital refers to good taste, appropriate manners, cognitive sophistication and knowledge of, and receptivity to, legitimate cultural products (such as art, classical music, theatre, and literature)" (van Eijck 1997, 197). Developing the most comprehensive theory of the interrelationship between culture and social hierarchies, Bourdieu (1984) claims that "individuals on high income and/or education differentiate themselves from those lower on the social hierarchy by consuming more complex, prestigious, refined forms of leisure" (Widdop and Cutts 2013, 108). In the United States, Peterson (1992) used Bourdieu's theory to investigate the relationship between social distinction and high culture musical taste, and found that education has a considerable statistical effect on participation in and attitudes towards not only high culture but also popular culture.

More recent empirical research on the social stratification of cultural consumption suggests that "although individuals in advantaged social positions are more likely than others to consume high-brow culture, they do not have a general aversion against other cultural forms. Indeed, consumers of high-brow culture are just as likely to consume middle-brow or popular culture, leading Peterson and Simkus (1992) to describe them as cultural omnivores" (Chan 2013, 2).

Examining the relationship between so-called legitimate culture or highbrow culture and high social status, Peterson and Simkus (1992) and van Eijck (1997) found that while most members of the upper social strata regularly consume popular culture, members of the lower social strata tend to be restricted to popular forms of culture. Peterson (1992) labels these higher status groups as *omnivores* with an openness to a wide variety of cultural forms, both high and popular. Thus "social status is gained not only by consuming prestigious forms of art, but also by showing off one's cultural knowledge in a wide variety of genres" (Sintas and Alvarez 2002, 356). However, this does not mean that omnivores like everything indiscriminately (Chan 2013). Those in low status groups are *univores*, since they display a taste for one or a limited number of popular aesthetic traditions (Widdop and Cutts 2013). Thus, in order to differentiate the univore from the omnivore in empirical research, it is convenient to count the number of recreational choices one makes (Peterson 2005a, 2005b). Indeed, as pointed out by DiMaggio and Mukhtar (2004), high culture attendance is the best available proxy for cultural capital.

While Bourdieu argues, in his study of leisure (Bourdieu 1984), that in 1960s France there was a division between high and low cultural consumption practices, Peterson and Kern (1996) contend that there is increasing omnivorousness in cultural participation. According to this post-modern view of cultural change, the content of cultural capital evolves over time (DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004). Sintas and Alvarez (2002), investigating the stratification of cultural consumption and the relationship between social class and lifestyle in Spain, find support for the thesis of Peterson and Kern (1996). They segment consumers according to their behaviour when engaging in a set of cultural activities comprising museums, art galleries, historic monuments, book

RESUMEN

Con este estudio se propone investigar los varios tipos de visitantes de museo, y segmentarlos en función de un análisis de conglomerados en dos pasos. Más que una simple categorización demográfica de los visitantes, en el presente artículo se estudian las razones que tienen las personas para visitar los museos, en particular las experiencias que los visitantes esperan de estos, teniendo en cuenta sus preferencias por varios tipos de actividad de ocio, y su participación en ellos. El muestreo para el estudio se seleccionó entre los visitantes de dos museos en Génova, Italia. Los investigadores llevaron a cabo entrevistas personales con 400 visitantes y analizaron 394 cuestionarios utilizables que destacan dos conglomerados: "Omnívoros culturales" y "Unívoros de museo de arte". Estos resultados corroboran la teoría de los omnívoros y unívoros culturales. Los datos sugieren que las varias experiencias que los visitantes buscan en los museos, sus preferencias por las diferentes actividades de ocio, y su asistencia a actividades tanto intelectuales como de cultura popular, pueden servir como un medio eficaz para segmentar a los visitantes de museos de arte. Se discuten las implicaciones teóricas y de gestión.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Segmentación de mercado; visitantes de museo de arte; análisis de conglomerados en dos pasos; omnívoros, unívoros, Italia

fairs, craft fairs, trade fairs, lectures and music/theatre festivals. The four classes are as follows: *no cultural activity*, *popular*, *highbrow* and *omnivore*. Although both highbrows and omnivores participate in highbrow cultural activities (including visiting museums and galleries), omnivores also consume popular culture. Hence, as pointed out by Lizardo and Skiles (2008), the capacity to display omnivorous taste seems to be the dominant form of cultural capital in today's societies. The popular class has a very poor chance of going to museums or galleries/exhibitions or attending lectures, while the omnivorous class has the greatest chance. Popular and highbrow classes, on the other hand, can be considered univore since their pattern of cultural consumption is concentrated on only one of the two underlying cultural dimensions in the study. The highbrow group has a high probability of consuming high culture (Sintas and Alvarez 2002).

Further research in the area led Peterson (2005a, 2005b) to refine his omnivore/univore dichotomy. Like Sintas and Alvarez (2002), Peterson (2005a, 2005b) found that a small minority in the upper social strata reject popular culture. They are labelled *highbrow univores*, or snobs, as opposed to highbrow omnivores. They appear to have a nearly exclusive taste for the fine arts and are unlikely to engage in non-elite leisure activities such as attending sports events, taking part in sports, camping or hiking, or making home repairs. In this vein, the snob is recognized as a kind of univore. Peterson claims that, in this age of general wealth, geographic mixing and multimedia, it is inappropriate to measure univores in terms of wealth and education. Today, many people choose to limit their consumption based on a fixed set of principles. As a result, Peterson suggests, univorousness is no longer restricted to the poor.

In a qualitative study of the social and political attitudes of cultural omnivores in Britain, Chan (2013) found that omnivores are more tolerant, extroverted, cosmopolitan, and open to new experiences. This finding challenges the view that omnivorousness is a new form of distinction or the symbolic expression of class domination. "There are individuals who have a relatively open, tolerant and cosmopolitan outlook or disposition. Such disposition, which might be cultivated by education, would then find expression in different domains of social life, with cultural omnivorousness being an example in the cultural domain" (Chan 2013, 31). This finding suggests a more nuanced relationship between cultural consumption and social stratification.

Methodology

Sampling and Data Collection

Since the purpose of the study was to explore different types of art museum visitor based on motivational and behavioural variables, face-to-face interviews were carried out with current museum visitors to investigate various experiences they look for in museums and their cultural consumption in two art museums in Genoa, Italy – Palazzo Rosso and Museo di Sant'Agostino – to ensure representativeness of the sample. Italy makes an interesting case study because of its rich cultural heritage and its role in the development of museums.

Genoa is noted for its ancient history and its many examples of medieval, Renaissance, Baroque and Gothic architecture, including the famous Ducale Palace, San Lorenzo Cathedral, Church of San Matteo and Palazzo San Giorgio (*Britannica Online Encyclopedia* 2016). In addition to these attractions, Genoa is home to over 20 galleries and museums. As part of the Musei di Strada Nuova complex, Palazzo Rosso, which houses one of Genoa's two largest picture galleries, exhibits paintings collected over more than two centuries by the Brignole-Sale family. The artists represented in the gallery include Dürer, Veronese, Guercino, Strozzi, Grechetto and van Dyck. The Palazzo also boasts an extraordinary setting, Via Garibaldi, which, with its magnificent Renaissance and Baroque buildings, has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Museo di Sant'Agostino, on the other hand, is located in a 13th-century Augustinian complex in the heart of the old city. It houses sculptures, frescoes and paintings from the 10th to the 18th century, with masterpieces by Giovanni Pisano and Pierre Puget. Like Genoa's other outstanding sites, these two museums attract visitors from around the world (Genovamusei 2016).

A total of 400 interviews were held with those visitors who agreed to participate. The interviews were conducted by one of the authors and a graduate student trained and monitored by that author. They were held in a range of places, at various times of day and during different periods (in July and August 2014) at the two museums to ensure representativeness of the sample. Of the questionnaires collected, 394 were useable. The sample was considered representative, as its demographic profile was similar to the profiles of visitors surveyed for other studies conducted in Genoa.¹ Tables 1 and 2 give summary statistics for the sample. Overall, the sample aligns with those for other large-scale studies of museum

visitors (e.g., European Commission 2013; Market Opinion and Research International 2001). The sample size was deemed sufficiently large to represent all relevant population groups.

As seen in Table 1, in line with the literature on art museum visitors and the findings of large-scale research (European Group on Museum Statistics 2007; Heritage Lottery Fund 2012) on museums in general, Genoa's art museums are visited mostly by women, people between the ages of 31 and 60, and those of high socioeconomic status. In line with the Market Opinion and Research International (2005) findings, these museums have a substantial number of repeat visitors: 44.9% of respondents said they would visit the particular art museum again in the next 12 months. In addition, 86% of respondents stated that they preferred to visit art museums. This supports the results of DiMaggio and Mukhtar (2004), who found that there is greater elite and general interest in art museums.

Museum visitors in Genoa, similar to those elsewhere, expressed a desire for several different kinds of experience from a museum visit. The most common reason for visiting museums was to learn (72.3%), which is consistent with the findings of Falk and Dierking (1992), Jansen-Verbeke and van Rekom (1996), and McLean (1994). As shown in Table 2, the second most common reason was the building, atmosphere or view (52.8%). Goulding (2000) cites the importance of a museum's physical environment for the visitor experience. The physical context seems to be particularly important to art museum visitors. Regarding cultural consumption, the most popular attraction was cinema (79.2%), followed by historic sites (70.3%), theatre/opera/ballet (61.7%) and photography/sculpture/painting exhibitions (58.6%), while jazz was the least popular (14.7%). These findings are in line with those of other research (e.g., European Commission 2013; Gayo-Cal 2006; Market Opinion and Research International 2001; Sintas and Alvarez 2002) on museum visiting and the consumption of cultural products.

Survey Variables

Based on previous research on museums, the research instrument included questions about reasons for visiting, frequency of visiting, intention to visit again, sociodemographic characteristics and lifestyle habits to reveal leisure preferences and behaviour patterns concerning cultural consumption.

As there is no widely adopted scale for research on art museum visitors and their experiences, a customized list was developed with selected input

TABLE 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE		
Characteristics	Frequency	%
Gender		
Female	229	58.1
Male	149	37.8
Missing	16	4.1
Education level		
Primary	9	2.3
High school	76	19.3
Undergraduate	165	41.9
Master's	101	25.6
Doctorate	35	8.9
Missing	8	2.1
Age		
≤ 20	24	6.1
21–30	64	16.2
31–40	66	16.8
41–50	90	22.8
51–60	93	23.6
≥ 61	54	13.7
Missing	3	0.8
Socioeconomic status		
Never worked, long-term unemployed ^a	67	17.0
Semi-routine and routine occupations	7	1.8
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	10	2.5
Small employers and self-employed workers	18	4.6
Intermediate occupations	67	17.0
Managerial and professional occupations	188	47.7
Missing	37	9.4
Place of residence		
Italy	165	41.9
France	131	33.2
Elsewhere in Europe	73	18.5
Other	25	6.3
Resident of Genoa		
Yes	52	13.2
No	342	86.8
Frequency of attendance		
None	15	3.8
Once or twice	70	17.8
Three or four times	123	31.2
Five times or more	186	47.2
Intention to revisit the museum		
Yes	177	44.9
No	215	54.6
Missing	2	0.5
Museum preference		
Art	338	86.0
Archaeology	155	39.4
Science	106	27.0
Missing	1	0.2

^a Students and retirees are included.

from the European Commission (2013), Hood (1983), Jansen-Verbeke and van Rekom (1996), Market Opinion and Research International (2004), and Pine and Gilmore (1999) based on the personal, social and physical components used by Falk and Dierking (1992) to investigate visitors' experiences in galleries and museums. The questionnaire included a list of 14 reasons for visiting museums. It also included a list of 11 cultural activities, both highbrow and popular, and 16 leisure activities attended in the last 12 months, to determine their preferences, based on the work of Chan and Goldthorpe (2005, 2007), DiMaggio (1996), Hood (1983), Peterson (2005a, 2005b), and Sintas and Alvarez (2002). The questionnaire also included two items on rate of participation. The first measured frequency of attendance on a four-point scale (*none, once or twice, three or four times, five times or more*), as in the European Commission (2013) study. The second concerned intention to revisit.

Demographic questions concerned age, gender, education level, occupation and country of residence. Respondents' occupational details were used to determine their socioeconomic status, as in the studies by Arts Council England (2002) and Chan and Goldthorpe (2005, 2007). Country of residence was determined by asking respondents to state the city and country in which they lived. These and other questions were nominally scaled; as noted by Marcussen (2014), rating scales and categorical (nominal) scales are commonly used in various disciplines, including psychology and psychometrics. All dichotomy variables (e.g., male/female; yes/no) were coded to assume values of zero or one.

Data Analysis

Two-step cluster analysis

Cluster analysis was deemed appropriate for the purposes of classifying museum visitors into mutually exclusive groups on the basis of selected socio-demographic, motivational and behavioural variables. There are a number of different ways to conduct cluster analysis, including hierarchical methods, partitioning methods (k-means) and two-step clustering. Largely a combination of the first two methods, two-step clustering has been suggested as appropriate for clustering groups with mixed attributes. It was developed by Chiu et al. (2001) to handle categorical and continuous variables simultaneously (Mooi and Sarstedt 2011).

Categorical and continuous variables

The choice of variables for cluster analysis must be underpinned by theoretical and conceptual considerations, because there is no mechanism

TABLE 2

SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE		
Characteristics	Frequency	%
Reasons for visiting		
To have a good (quality) time	189	48.0
To learn	285	72.3
Self-improvement	105	26.6
To have fun	53	13.5
To see special exhibitions	171	43.4
Because of wonder	138	35.0
To see new/different things	181	45.9
To be with friends	17	4.3
To educate my children/grandchildren	61	15.5
Because of the building, atmosphere or view	208	52.8
Because of the restaurant/café	6	1.5
Because I love museums	144	36.5
Because of a recommendation	56	14.2
Because of my occupation	52	13.2
Other	5	1.3
Highbrow and popular cultural activities in last 12 months		
Cinema	312	79.2
Theatre/opera/ballet	243	61.7
Library	185	47.0
Historic sites	277	70.3
Photography/sculpture/painting exhibition	231	58.6
Classical music concert	115	29.2
Festival	115	29.2
Sports event	103	26.1
Jazz concert	58	14.7
Other live music performances	143	36.3
Dance shows	91	23.1
Other	22	5.6
Leisure preferences		
Being with friends	280	71.1
Learning something new	216	54.8
Being on the computer or watching TV	100	25.4
Reading books/magazines/newspapers	258	65.5
Dance or music concert	109	27.7
Shopping/shopping malls	101	25.6
Playing sports	130	33.0
Walking	200	50.8
Travelling/visiting new places	308	78.2
Participating in social welfare	40	10.2
Cinema	172	43.7
Theatre/opera/ballet	159	40.4
Pursuing hobbies	136	34.5
Visiting parks/having picnics	111	28.2
Other	16	4.1

for differentiating between relevant and irrelevant variables (Cornish 2007). Accordingly, 10 categorical and three continuous variables were chosen based on Chan and Goldthorpe (2005, 2007), DiMaggio and Mukhtar (2004), European Commission (2013), Hood (1983), Market Opinion and Research International (2004) and Peterson (2005a, 2005b); these factors appear to have a strong association with museum attendance and cultural capital.

The categorical variables were frequency of attendance, value placed on spending leisure time with friends and eight experiences sought in a museum. The eight highest-frequency experiences of the 14 listed were chosen for our final analysis, namely quality time, learning, development, special exhibitions, wonder, seeing new/different things, building/atmosphere/view and love of museums. The remaining six – having fun, being with friends, bringing the children, restaurant, recommendation and occupation – were discarded due to low frequency. The *none* and *once or twice* categories of frequency of attendance were combined because of their low frequency.

The continuous variables were the number of different leisure choices confronting the respondent and the number of different highbrow and popular cultural events attended in the last 12 months. Peterson and Kern (1996) investigated the number of highbrow and popular music genres liked by respondents in order to distinguish between omnivore and univore taste. We included theatre, opera and ballet; libraries and historic sites; photography, sculpture and painting exhibitions; and classical music concerts as highbrow activities, since these are closely associated with Bourdieu's (1984) definition of high or "legitimate" culture. The remaining activities – attending sports events, festivals, jazz and live music concerts, and dance performances – were classified as popular culture. Cinema was excluded from our analysis as it appears to be a frequent leisure activity for people in different social classes with different income levels, as reported by Gayo-Cal (2006).



Findings and Discussion

Two-step clustering was conducted by letting the algorithm decide on the number of clusters according to the BIC (Bayesian information criterion). The auto-clustering algorithm indicated that a two-cluster solution was the best model, as it minimized the BIC value and the change between adjacent numbers of clusters. Regarding the quality of the cluster solution, the

silhouette measure of cluster cohesion and separation indicated a fair solution as suggested by Mooi and Sarstedt (2011). The resulting clusters (1 and 2) contained 204 and 188 cases, or 52% and 48%. An overview of the cluster structure and the overall variable importance for the clustering solution indicated that the number of leisure choices was the most important variable for the clusters, followed by the building, atmosphere or view, number of highbrow cultural activities, seeing new/different things, wonder, spending leisure time with friends, number of popular cultural activities, special exhibitions, frequency of attendance and learning. These findings support the results of the Arts Council England (2011) and Hood (1983) studies, which also identify two groups of current art museum visitors. Our chi-square and t-test results show statistically significant differences between the two clusters, at $p < 0.000$. The summary statistics of our cluster analysis for art museum visitors are presented in Table 3.

Cluster Profiles

Our chi-square and t-test results indicate that among the eight experiences visitors look for in museums, five – building/atmosphere/view, seeing new/different things, wonder, special exhibitions and learning – caused differences between the two clusters. Cluster 1, Cultural Omnivores, had more leisure choices (7.71 on average), in line with the findings of Chan and Goldthorpe (2005, 2007) and Peterson (2005a, 2005b). In this segment the majority were motivated to visit by the building/atmosphere/view, seeing new/different things, wonder and special exhibitions. This segment also includes those who are motivated mainly by learning (81.9%), a higher percentage than those in Cluster 2. Most of the Cultural Omnivores (90.2%) prefer to be with friends in their leisure time. The frequency of museum visits for this segment was five times or more (> 50% of visitors) than for Cluster 2.

Cluster 2, Art Museum Univores, had fewer leisure preferences (4.28 on average) than Cultural Omnivores. The majority of people in this segment are not motivated to visit museums by the building, atmosphere or view, seeing new/different things, wonder or special exhibitions. However, this group also consists of individuals with a strong desire for learning. Half the members in this segment prefer to be with friends in their leisure time. In this segment, frequency of museum visits was also mostly five times or more (36.2%), but still lower than that observed for Cultural Omnivores.

Validation of Cluster Solution

Validating is essential in cluster analysis because this method is somewhat subjective regarding selection of an optimal cluster solution (Hair et al. 2010). Therefore, as suggested by Hair et al. (2010) and Mooi and Sarstedt (2011), the solution's stability and validity were assessed. Although in the two-step cluster analysis the number of clusters was automatically determined on the basis of the BIC, the procedure was repeated using AIC (Akaike information criterion). The results obtained were not different from those obtained using BIC.

The solution was cross-validated by creating two subsamples (randomly splitting the sample into two groups) and comparing the solutions for consistency with respect to the number of clusters and the cluster profiles (Hair et al. 2010; Viswanathan et al. 2007). For this method, stability was assessed using the number of cases assigned to the same cluster across cluster solutions.

In line with Hair et al. (2010), in this study a very stable solution was obtained, with 9.6% of the observations assigned to a different group.

Furthermore, to validate the clustering solution, we assessed its criterion (predictive) validity. To do so, we performed a discriminant analysis with selected variables not used to form clusters but expected to vary across clusters. Gender, age, education level, socioeconomic status, and highbrow and popular cultural activities attended in the last 12 months were selected to assess external validity, because these variables have strong theoretical support in the literature, as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). In addition to these variables, country and city of residence and intention to revisit in the next 12 months were used in the discriminant analysis. Table 4 summarizes the results of the discriminant analysis. The results indicate that the predictive model is statistically significant. They therefore enhance confidence in the reliability and validity of the clusters.

TABLE 3

CLUSTER PROFILES				
Variable	Cluster 1 Cultural Omnivores <i>n</i> = 204 (52%)	Cluster 2 Art Museum Univores <i>n</i> = 188 (48%)	Test statistic	Significance
Average number of leisure preferences	7.71	4.28	<i>t</i> = 14.323	0.000
Building, atmosphere or view	yes 77.0% no 23.0%	no 72.9% yes 27.1%	$\chi^2 = 97.550$	0.000
Average number of highbrow cultural activities	3.31	1.98	<i>t</i> = 10.481	0.000
Seeing new/different things	yes 68.1% no 31.9	no 77.7% yes 22.3%	$\chi^2 = 82.563$	0.000
Wonder	yes 55.4% no 44.6%	no 86.7% yes 13.3%	$\chi^2 = 75.999$	0.000
Prefer to spend leisure time with friends	yes 90.2% no 9.8%	yes 51.1% no 48.9%	$\chi^2 = 42.585$	0.000
Average number of popular cultural activities	1.72	0.86	<i>t</i> = 7.835	0.000
Special exhibitions	yes 57.6% no 42.4%	no 77.2% yes 22.8%	$\chi^2 = 45.740$	0.000
Frequency of attendance	< 3 times 8.8% 3 or 4 times 33.3% ≥ 5 times 57.8%	< 3 times 35.1% 3 or 4 times 28.7% ≥ 5 times 36.2%	$\chi^2 = 41.893$	0.000
Learning	yes 81.9% no 18.1%	yes 62.8% no 37.2%	$\chi^2 = 17.979$	0.000

Note: Boldface type indicates differences between the clusters.

TABLE 4

SUMMARY OF DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS RESULTS							
	Eigenvalue	% of variance explained	Canonical correlation	Wilks's lambda	Chi square	Significance	% of overall correct classification
Discriminant function 1	.556	100.0	.598	.643	142.637	.000	78.7%

To further differentiate the profiles of the two clusters, each cluster was cross-tabulated with the same external variables used in the discriminant analysis. As shown in Table 5, the chi-square results indicate statistically significant differences between the two clusters at $p < 0.05$ with respect to these external variables (with the exception of socioeconomic status, whether residing in Genoa and attending sports events). However, with respect to socioeconomic status, there are no statistically significant differences between Cultural Omnivores and Art Museum Univores when this variable is divided into two groups, one comprising working-class persons, those who have never worked and long-term unemployed persons, the other comprising those employed in various occupations and of higher status. This finding suggests that both Cultural Omnivores (76.8%) and Art Museum Univores (75.9%) are from the upper social strata. Therefore, as expected, they do not differ based on attendance at sports events, an important indicator for lowbrow or popular culture. In addition, they both indicate low attendance at classical music concerts. DiMaggio and Mukthar (2004) found a decline in classical music attendance due to possible cultural changes in line with postmodern theories on this subject.

Overall, Cultural Omnivores are young (mostly aged 21–30), highly educated individuals involved in various types of leisure activity. They may not be specifically interested in art museums, as most (60.6%) say that they will not revisit the museum in the next 12 months, but their frequency of museum visiting is higher than that of the Art Museum Univores. These results are consistent with those of Sintas and Alvarez (2002), who found that Spanish omnivores were young and educated and attended fine arts more often than highbrow univores. Members of this group also seem to need incentives to visit museums, including special exhibitions and building attributes, although they visit museums often and are interested in a wide range of leisure activities. They also value spending their leisure time with friends. Therefore, Cultural Omnivores appear to resemble Hood's (1983) *occasional participants*. Cultural Omnivores place a high value on special exhibitions, socializing and leisure. With sufficient encouragement and incentives, they become active museumgoers. However, since learning is also an important motivation for this group, they are frequent visitors, unlike Hood's (1983) *occasional participants*.

Cultural Omnivores consist primarily of visitors from outside Italy (68.1%). Hence they might be expected to state that they would not revisit the museum in the next 12 months. As Stylianou-Lambert (2011) notes, previous studies (e.g.,

McIntyre 2007; Prentice 2001) have found that people have an increased desire to visit cultural attractions, including art museums, when abroad. There is also evidence that those who visit museums while abroad are predisposed to do so at home; according to Kim et al. (2007), "individuals' experiences in everyday life carry over into [the] tourism arena, which results in a similar pattern of everyday practice and tourism cultural practice" (p. 1370). Consequently, this cluster is formed by variables that define visitors who engage in various types of cultural activity, both highbrow and popular, including historic sites, art exhibitions (photography, sculpture, painting), festivals, cinema, libraries, theatre, opera, ballet, concerts and dance performance.

On the other hand, Art Museum Univores are educated and older (mostly aged 41–60) individuals who visit museums without requiring extensive encouragement such as special exhibitions or building attributes. Members of this group value learning and visit museums often. We argue that Art Museum Univores are similar to Hood's (1983) *frequent participants*. Their values can be expected to be similar to those of museum managers. As stated by Hood (1983), "These loyalists go to museums wherever they are and whatever is showing. . . . Since their experience with museums has developed over time, they identify with museum values and understand the 'museum code' of exhibitions and objects" (p. 54).

Of the Art Museum Univores, a large proportion are Italian (52.7%) and most are employed in occupations held by the upper social strata. This cluster is composed of those who participate little in various cultural activities but who have a particular interest in art museums, with more than half saying they will visit the museum again in the next 12 months. Although these visitors might be expected to revisit because most live in Italy (approximately one third in Genoa), they are less interested in other highbrow or popular cultural activities than Cultural Omnivores or Peterson's (2005a, 2005b) highbrow univores. They are like Pulido-Fernandez and Sanchez-Rivero's (2010) "museum culturophiles," who place a high value on museums but do not engage in other cultural activities.



Conclusions

Although data exist on the number of visitors and visits to museums in many countries, to increase and diversify visitorship to art museums we must first determine their common characteristics. Our cluster analysis of data

TABLE 5

CLUSTER DIFFERENCES				
Variable	Cluster 1 Cultural Omnivores n = 204 (52%)	Cluster 2 Art Museum Univores n = 188 (48%)	Test statistic	Significance
Gender	female 66.5% male 33.5%	female 54.2% male 45.8%	$\chi^2 = 5.952$	0.015
Age	≤ 20: 6.5% 21–30: 22.9% 31–40: 17.9% 41–50: 20.9% 51–60: 21.4% ≥ 61: 10.4%	≤ 20: 5.9% 21–30: 9.6% 31–40: 16.0% 41–50: 25.5% 51–60: 25.5% ≥ 61: 17.6%	$\chi^2 = 15.887$	0.007
Education	< undergraduate 17.4% university 37.3% postgraduate 45.3%	< undergraduate 26.8% university 48.6% postgraduate 24.6%	$\chi^2 = 18.284$	0.000
Socioeconomic status	higher occupations 76.8% working class and unemployed 23.2%	higher occupations 75.9% working class and unemployed 24.1%	$\chi^2 = .037$	0.846
Resident of Italy	yes 31.9% no 68.1%	yes 52.7% no 47.3%	$\chi^2 = 17.390$	0.000
Resident of Genoa	yes 11.3% no 88.7%	yes 14.9% no 85.1%	$\chi^2 = 1.132$	0.287
Revisit intention	yes 39.4% no 60.6%	yes 51.3% no 48.7%	$\chi^2 = 5.593$	0.018
Highbrow and popular cultural activities attended in last 12 months				
Cinema	yes 89.2% no 10.8%	yes 69.1% no 30.9%	$\chi^2 = 24.254$	0.000
Theatre/opera/ballet	yes 75.0% no 25.0%	yes 47.9% no 52.1%	$\chi^2 = 30.557$	0.000
Historic site	yes 87.3% no 12.7%	yes 52.7% no 47.3%	$\chi^2 = 56.485$	0.000
Library	yes 59.3% no 40.7%	yes 34.0% no 66.0%	$\chi^2 = 25.072$	0.000
Photography/sculpture/painting exhibition	yes 71.6% no 28.4%	yes 45.2% no 54.8%	$\chi^2 = 28.080$	0.000
Classical music concert	yes 38.2% no 61.8%	yes 19.7% no 80.3%	$\chi^2 = 16.248$	0.000
Festival	yes 41.2% no 58.8%	yes 16.5% no 83.5%	$\chi^2 = 28.763$	0.000
Sports event	yes 27.5% no 72.5%	yes 25.0% no 75.0%	$\chi^2 = 0.303$	0.582
Jazz concert	yes 19.6% no 80.4%	yes 9.6% no 90.4%	$\chi^2 = 7.813$	0.005
Live music concert	yes 47.5% no 52.5%	yes 24.5% no 75.5%	$\chi^2 = 22.493$	0.000
Dance performance	yes 36.4% no 63.7%	yes 9.0% no 91.0%	$\chi^2 = 40.703$	0.000

collected in two selected art museums in Genoa reveals that art museum visitors can be classified into two segments in terms of their leisure choices and the experiences they look for in a museum. Overall, the results of this study deepen our understanding of the findings reported in the literature, specifically that current art “museum goers,” as they are conventionally called within the museum community, are not made up of one type of clientele. Indeed, as found by Hood (1983) and Peterson (2005a, 2005b), Cultural Omnivores and Art Museum Univores are two distinct groups, differing significantly in their patterns of cultural participation.

Similar to the findings of Hood (1983), the heterogeneity between the two groups arises from the experiences they look for in a museum. For Cultural Omnivores, the building, atmosphere and view, new/different things and special exhibitions are important, but these characteristics do not seem to motivate Art Museum Univores. Still, the two groups share an important characteristic: they visit museums to learn. As found by Scott (2000), education and learning seem to be the core and timeless attributes of museums for all visiting publics.

Thus, we find support for Peterson’s (2005a, 2005b) omnivore/highbrow univore thesis for art museums. However, our results also support those of Chan (2013), who found omnivores to be highly educated, tolerant, extroverted and cosmopolitan individuals open to new experiences. Chan’s findings challenge the view that omnivorousness is a new form of distinction or a symbolic expression of class domination. Therefore, we argue that, rather than social factors, motivational factors – in particular the type of experience visitors look for in a museum – might better explain the differences between omnivores and highbrow univores. This finding is one of the important theoretical contributions of our study. As noted by Peterson (2005b), univores display a taste for one narrow range of activities or objects and do not sample widely; they may have a particular taste for art museums as they seem to be frequent and loyal visitors to this kind of museum. Thus, future research might investigate the differences between the cultural omnivores and highbrow univores in art museums by incorporating the experiential qualities of their consumption. In this regard, both utilitarian and hedonic functions of consumption should be investigated. While utilitarian aspects of consumption are considered a means of preserving or maintaining the status quo in consumption experiences, hedonic aspects are viewed as a way to enhance the experience (Hosany and Witham 2009).

Our study makes another important theoretical contribution. Art museum visitors can be classified into two segments based on their behaviour when consuming a set of cultural activities, their leisure preferences and the experiences they look for in a museum. Therefore, questions like “Are art-museum visitors different from other people?” (Di Maggio 1996, 161) are inappropriate, as there is no one type of art museum visitor. Instead of investigating clusters of products based on census data, which has been the usual method employed in sociological research on cultural consumption, we explored visitor behaviour and motivations in an art museum setting. This allowed us to distinguish between omnivores and highbrow univores. Our findings suggest that omnivorousness is related to not only volume (Peterson 2005a, 2005b) but also composition, as pointed out by Warde et al. (2007). However, we do not support Warde et al.’s conclusion that “an omnivorous orientation is socially profitable but culturally rather undistinguished” (p. 20). As these and other authors (e.g., Atkinson 2011) investigated mainly cultural omnivores, they were not able to distinguish among them; one can distinguish among omnivores only by defining or profiling them relative to others, such as highbrow univores, as per Sintas and Alvarez (2002). Our findings suggest that omnivores are culturally distinct from highbrow univores based on the museum experiences they seek, their leisure preferences, and their engagement in both highbrow and popular culture. In this regard, art museums are an appropriate setting for observing omnivorousness, as they attract both omnivores and highbrow univores. Overall, while we find support for the hypothesis that omnivores belong to the highly educated and younger age groups (Sintas and Alvarez 2002), they may also be distinguished in terms of the experiences they seek.

Managerial Implications

Overall, our findings suggest that a holistic approach to understanding art museum visitors is in order. Segmenting visitors based on their motivational variables, leisure preferences and patterns of engagement in various cultural activities may be a useful tool for art museums to use in devising their promotional and business strategies. Our results have several marketing implications. Cultural Omnivores seem to fill their leisure time with a variety of activities. They may be attracted to museums that present special exhibitions and programs, change their offerings periodically, and offer a variety of new activities and aesthetic experiences based on the building

itself or its architecture, atmosphere or views. As Flynn (2002) notes, museums have begun to consider their structures as a means to attract larger, more diverse publics. Indeed, some museums, such as the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in Spain, have hired famous architects, or “starchitects,” to design their structures with the aim of increasing visitation and revenues. When a new or renovated museum opens today, visitors are attracted not only by the collection but by the building itself. A renowned 17th-century street, Genoa’s Strada Nuova, and the museums that line it attract foreign visitors for the unique architecture. Our findings confirm the importance of the museum building in attracting Cultural Omnivores. By using communication and information technologies, particularly Web sites, podcasts and social media, to promote a variety of experiences, art museums could increase visits by this group, who are mostly in their twenties and thirties.

Since this segment consists mainly of individuals who are not interested in visiting the same art museum twice, a museum’s primary objective for this group should be to attract first-time visitors. However, any incentive that might draw Cultural Omnivores back to an art museum should be explored. As Kotler et al. (2008) suggest, contests may be one avenue. Contests that foster learning and offer something new each time a person visits could give this group a reason to return and help build long-term relationships. Marketing efforts to develop youth-oriented nightlife packages – multiple-event admission that integrates cinema, theatre, opera, ballet, historic sites, and photography, sculpture, and painting exhibitions – could also provide incentives. Partnerships between art museums and organizations presenting these cultural forms ought to be considered. Museums should also provide ample seating, to promote social exchange, as members of this segment seem to value socializing in their leisure time. As Cultural Omnivores are attracted to the building and the view, art museums could offer socializing and learning in beautiful surroundings to encourage first-time visiting and turn this segment into repeat consumers. The trend towards edutainment, an approach combining education and entertainment (Balloffet et al. 2014), may be particularly suitable for Cultural Omnivores.

Although competition in the leisure and cultural marketplace is strong and growing, there appears to be a segment of visitors who value art museums in particular. This segment is made up of older individuals, who may have an abundance of leisure time. Unlike the other segments, they do not seem to have an interest in other cultural

attractions. They are loyal patrons of art museums, possibly sharing the same values as museum managers. Therefore, they do not require encouragement to become repeat visitors of a particular art museum. Accordingly, the museum/amusement park dichotomy discussed within today’s museum community (e.g., Balloffet et al. 2014) may not apply to this group. Such active visitors are likely to be lifetime consumers committed to a museum over an extended period. Art museums can derive long-term benefits from this segment at low cost, as they likely represent visitors, members and donors with consistent values. Although art museums must look for ways to attract new audiences, they do have loyal visitors who appreciate them as they are. By better understanding this segment, museums could develop strategies to increase loyalty. Although many attractions in general have low levels of repeat visitors, Genoa’s art museums seem to be successful in attracting and retaining this group.

Limitations and Further Research

It is important to consider the limitations of our study. First, we used a cross-sectional method of collecting data from current visitors who agreed to participate at two selected art museums in Genoa, Italy. Longitudinal data from a larger sample would have provided more validity. A sample that included other cultures would have made the investigation more global. Another limitation is the research scope and the number of factors investigated. Among hundreds of variables and factors that can influence art museum visitation, three important ones (family life cycle, museum experience, and visitor satisfaction and meanings derived from the visit) were not included in the study. On the basis of cost and length of the survey instrument, selected items with a nominal scale were used. This could be considered another limitation.

Future research could investigate why some people visit art museums and become repeat active visitors while others do not. More in-depth qualitative research needs to be undertaken, by incorporating leisure and cultural activities and motivational characteristics of individuals. Such research could yield additional insights into how the public derives value and benefits from an art museum experience. This information is critical in order to identify the nature of the art museum experience for various segments and to enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

Notes

1. According to Tina Russo from Genoa’s Directorate of Culture and Tourism, Marketing and Promotions Office, in a personal interview conducted on 22 January 2015.

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