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Characteristics of aquarium Dubrovnik and Boka visits

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Abstract

This paper analyzes visitor characteristics at Aquarium Dubrovnik (Croatia) and Aquarium Boka (Montenegro) based on surveys conducted in October 2022. A total of 2,998 questionnaires were collected from visitors at both locations, focusing on socio-demographics, biodiversity knowledge, and engagement. The study found notable differences between the two aquaria. Aquarium Boka attracted mainly school groups and had higher visitor numbers, while Aquarium Dubrovnik had more individual visitors. The age distribution varied, with younger visitors at Boka and older ones at Dubrovnik. Educational levels also differed, with Dubrovnik visitors generally more educated. Knowledge of biodiversity was greater among Aquarium Boka visitors, with younger demographics showing better understanding. Awareness of endangered Adriatic species was inconsistent, with more accurate knowledge among younger visitors and gaps in understanding regarding some species. Perceptions of political responsibility for biodiversity protection varied, with Dubrovnik visitors expressing less confidence in governmental and EU roles compared to Boka visitors. Most respondents at both aquaria were first-time visitors, indicating potential for growth through promotions like season tickets. Engagement in environmental organizations was low, though environmental awareness was high among visitors. Interest in outdoor activities was notable, with a preference for water sports and diving, while interest in angling and sailing was lower. The findings suggest a need for improved educational programs, better information on endangered species, and promotional strategies to boost repeat visits. The low interest in participating in future research highlights the need for incentives to enhance data collection in subsequent studies.

Keywords: visitor characteristics, aquarium comparisons, biodiversity awareness, socio-demographic analysis, environmental engagement

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