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Predictors of Attendance at the Performing Arts

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The present study differs from earlier efforts by its consideration of (1) future attendance intentions of potential artsgoers, (2) life-style, attitudinal, and experiential predictor variables, and (3) multiple market segments, and by its use of multivariate methods. With such differences, socioeconomic variables that were best predictors of arts attendance in prior work become nonsignificant. Implications for arts management are discussed.

PAST FINDINGS

A large and growing number of arts audience studies were conducted in the United States within the last ten years, many of which are unpublished. In general, these studies have concluded the obvious: attendance at the performing arts is strongly positively associated with income, educational and occupational attainment, and white racial status. A recent review of 270 studies of audiences for museums and performing arts also found, not surprisingly, that heavy attenders at one live performing art (except theater) tended to be heavy attenders at other live performing arts (DiMaggio, Useem, and Brown 1978). In addition to confirming findings that were already well-known to arts managers, these past studies exhibited other deficiencies that the study reported here sought to remedy.

1. Much of the past research on arts audiences has tended either to profile current audiences or to contrast attenders and nonattenders. It has not sought meaningful subsegments within either group. The study reported here divides the population into subsegments based on their leisure-time use patterns, and then observes their likelihood of future attendance. In addition to developing these leisure life-style groupings, this study also develops a richer array of data on respondents' general life-style tendencies. To

meaningfully examine the role of arts attendance in life-style patterns, the study considers a broader group of people than present arts attenders, but excludes those most likely to be "hardcore nonattenders" of the performing arts.

2. As DiMaggio, Useem, and Brown (1978) have noted: "Another issue about which little is known and much curiosity exists is the process of socialization into arts attendance: How early does it begin, how important is the family, and how important is the school?" (p. 73). The present study adds to the standard set of socioeconomic variables two new sets of questions asking about (a) the extent to which respondents were interested in classical music or live theater when they were growing up, and (b) the extent to which their parents were also interested in the same performing arts. In addition to these new questions, the study also asked whether receptivity to the performing arts is higher or lower as one moves through the family life cycle.
3. Past studies have had relatively little success in linking attendance or nonattendance to individual perceptions of the performing arts. Thus, the present study has included a substantial battery of questions about consumer attitudes, i.e., their expectations when attending theater and symphony, and the importance of those expectations to them.
4. Finally, past research has failed to employ sophisticated analytic techniques to look at the interactions among variables. Instead, the tendency has been to observe (and make recommendations from) relationships between arts attendance and standard socioeconomic variables, examined one at a time (DiMaggio, Useem, and Brown 1978). Although such studies could benefit from greater use of the relatively simple technique of cross-tabulation analysis,

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the present study suggests that a much higher payoff is possible from the use of more sophisticated techniques, namely, factor analysis and multiple regression.

Thus, in summary, the present study attempts to introduce more advanced analytic techniques as well as several new audience measures in an attempt to learn whether these innovations will yield better predictions of future attendance at theater and symphony performances than have been possible in the past. It is, however, recognized that the associational approach described here is not without its faults. A complementary approach based on presenting respondents with possible new offerings is described elsewhere [Andreasen and Belk (forthcoming)].

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in four southern cities—Atlanta, Georgia; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Columbia, South Carolina; and Memphis, Tennessee. The four cities were chosen from among a list of several dozen southern cities with both a symphony and regular theater presentations. Southern cities were chosen by the study sponsor because of lower attendance in this region (National Center for the Arts, Inc. 1975).

Data were gathered by means of telephone interviews with respondents 14 years of age or older, systematically selected from households with telephones. At the outset, it was decided that a major focus would be on marginal attenders—those who do not now go frequently to the theater or symphony, but who might be enticed to do so. For this reason, those judged to have virtually zero probability of attending the theater or symphony were screened out. At the same time, heavy attenders were intentionally undersampled because our main concern was not with audiences already heavily involved in the arts. Therefore, we interviewed only one-half of those who had attended three or more theater performances or three or more symphony performances in the previous year.

Screening questions defined potential users as:

1. Those who did one of the following in the last 12 months:
 - Went to a live popular or rock concert
 - Listened at least ten times to classical music on radio, television, records, or tapes
 - Visited an art gallery or museum
 - Went to a live classical music performance other than a symphony concert
 - Saw a ballet either live or on television
 - Saw one or two plays
 - Went to a symphony orchestra concert once or twice.

2. And/or those who met one of the following qualifications:

- Play a musical instrument
- Have worked for or in a theater, music, or dance production
- Attended three or more live plays sometime in their lives, but not in the past year
- Attended three or more symphony orchestra concerts sometime in their lives, but not in the past year.

A total of 3,956 residential telephone numbers were selected for screening, using telephone directories and supplementary random digit dialing. Of these, 44 percent were not screened because the numbers were no longer in service or the residents were not at home after five callbacks, or refused to participate. Of those screened, 15 percent were heavy attenders; by sample design, one-half of them were dropped from the main sample.¹ Only 14 percent of those reached were dropped because their probability of attending was deemed to be zero, according to the criteria discussed above. After screening, a total of 1,733 households were designated for complete interviews. A systematic selection table was used to determine the household member to be interviewed. Of the remaining respondents, an additional 14 percent were unavailable or refused to participate in the main interview, yielding a final sample of 1,491.

Comparisons of respondent characteristics with census data suggest that the sample population is younger, better educated, has higher incomes, and is substantially more often female than the general population of the four areas. These differences are consistent with those found in other studies using telephone interviewing and our procedure for screening out those with zero probability of attending arts events.

Predictor Variables

Respondents in the study were asked extensive questions about their attitudes and behavior toward theater and symphony, aspects of their leisure and general life-styles, and their socioeconomic characteristics. The questions were developed from other research studies, from introspection, and from several focus-group interviews with heavy and light arts attenders.

Life-style measures offer profiles of consumer purchases that are greater in depth and clarity than those provided by simpler demographic information about the consumer (Wells 1975). In addition, there is some evidence that "cultural activities" are important to the

¹ Of the heavy attenders, 77 percent were heavy attenders of theater only, five percent were heavy attenders of symphony only, and 15 percent were heavy attenders of both.

leisure component of certain life-styles (Hawes, Talarczyk, and Blackwell 1975; Holbrook and Lehmann 1980). In the present study, consumer life-style was measured at two different levels. The first level was the individual's use of leisure time, the second level was the individual's more general activities, interests, and opinions reflecting the general life-styles in which the leisure activities are imbedded.

Leisure Life-Style Characteristics

The first type of life-style analyzed was based on responses to a set of 50 questions about leisure-time activities, interests, and opinions. These data were then used to group respondents into leisure-specific life-style categories. Unlike the analysis of the general life-style characteristics to be discussed below, a *Q* factor analysis was performed on the answers to the 50 leisure life-style questions to place respondents into unique groups, each with similar leisure-time use patterns (Stephenson 1953). The objective of this analysis was to find types of life-styles, i.e., types of people rather than types of life-style characteristics or traits.

A *Q* factor analysis program (Johnson 1970) was employed for this task. Several groupings were tested for stability between two randomly chosen halves of the respondents. A solution was selected that partitioned the population into six unique clusters. Group means for major variables are reported elsewhere [Andreasen and Belk (forthcoming)]. The results suggest the following characterization of the six groups:

- *The Passive Homebody* (n=295). This group prefers family- and home-oriented activities. They are heavy watchers of television, have essentially negative attitudes toward cultural organizations and activities, and tend to avoid nearly any activity outside the home, such as bowling, eating out, or seeing a movie. These people recognize that their days are routine and filled with unused leisure time.
- *The Active Sports Enthusiast* (n=285). This group is the antithesis of the previous group. They take part in active sports, such as tennis and bowling, and engage in other outgoing activities, such as movies, parties, and spectator sports. They strongly disagree that they are homebodies or like to spend a quiet evening at home. On the other hand, they are like the homebodies, but more extreme, in their negative attitudes toward theater, symphony, and other cultural activities.
- *The Inner-Directed Self-Sufficient* (n=216). Members of this group are best characterized by their participation in a number of industrious home-oriented activities, such as gardening, reading, and craft projects. They are family-oriented and prone to undertake outdoor activities, such as hiking and picnics. They are inactive and uninformed when it comes to cultural activities, although they are not negative toward these activities as are the Passive Homebody and Active Sports Enthusiast groups. They are not overburdened with leisure time as is the Passive Homebody. In-

stead, it appears that their leisure interests keep them busy, either alone or with their family.

- *The Culture Patron* (n=295). This group would be expected to be the best market for theater and symphony, because they are involved with these activities. This is a reflection of their favorable attitude toward the arts. They lack the orientation toward home and family of the Passive Homebody and the Inner-Directed Self-Sufficient and the sports orientation of the Active Sports Enthusiast. They rely very little on television for entertainment or relaxation.
- *The Active Homebody* (n=190). Members of this group resemble the Passive Homebody group in their home- and family-orientation, but replace that group's nonactive TV-watching with such activities as golf, working on the car, and gardening. They have a generally negative attitude toward the arts, and do little reading, partying, or radio-listening. In other words, they are not very socially active or media-oriented, but fill their time with what might be called productive "tinkering" activities.
- *The Socially Active* (n=210). This last group is also active, but in a more social vein. They give and attend parties, eat out often, and participate in clubs and other meetings. They are aware of theater and symphony offerings, and have friends who are interested in these activities. Nevertheless, their own patronage is infrequent. They are busy and cannot abide leisurely pursuits such as golf, reading, or spending a quiet evening at home.

In the present context, then, the Culture Patron and Socially Active groups have leisure life-styles conducive to attending the performing arts. On the other hand, the Passive Homebody, Active Homebody, and Active Sports Enthusiast groups are negatively predisposed toward attendance. Finally, the Inner-Directed Self-Sufficient group is generally uninformed, and possibly neutral, about the arts.

General Life-Style Characteristics

The *R* type factor analysis of general life-style items sought meaningful composites of 43 activity, interest, and opinion questions through principal axes factor analyses with iterative estimation of communalities and varimax rotations. On the basis of eigenvalue plots and interpretations of various solutions using two through 15 factors, it was decided to retain six factors that together account for 33 percent of the variance in the original questions. Factor loadings and interpretations for these six rotated factors are reported elsewhere [Andreasen and Belk (forthcoming)]. To examine the stability of these factors all solutions using five through eight factors were derived separately for randomly selected halves of the data, and then examined for comparability. Five- and six-factor solutions were the most stable, and allowed derivation of nearly identical factors in both halves of the data.

These two solutions were also tested separately with the data from each of the four cities in which samples were obtained. Again both solutions proved to be stable. The six-factor solution was selected on the basis of its superior interpretability.

The final step in the *R* factor analysis was to develop a set of factor scores for each individual. These factor scores, developed by least-squares regression estimates, served as the representation of the amount of each general life-style dimension possessed by each individual. The six dimensions may be characterized as follows:

- *Traditionalism*. This characteristic is associated with church-going, old-fashioned tastes, a feeling that things are moving too fast, and a wish for the good old days. It is also related to preferences for a traditional child- and family-centered home where the man is in charge and the woman is home-oriented. Finally, it includes a preference for security and an unwillingness to take chances.
- *Hedonism/Optimism*. This characteristic involves wanting to look attractive and perhaps a little different, wanting to travel around the world or live for a time abroad, and living to eat. It is associated with the positive view that one's greatest achievements lie ahead.
- *Defeatism*. This characteristic is marked by a depressed outlook due to a belief that things have not turned out so well. One's present life is thought undesirable; if given the chance, one would do things differently. It is also associated with wishing for the good old days, thinking things are changing too fast, spending for today, and dreading the future.
- *Self-Confidence/Opinion Leadership*. Two characteristics seem to best describe this dimension—a feeling of self-confidence and liking to be considered a leader.
- *Urbanism*. This factor involves a preference for big cities and support for progressive issues, such as Women's Liberation.
- *Outdoorsiness*. This dimension involves a predilection for outdoor activities, such as picnics and hiking.

Attitudes Toward Theater and Symphony

The life-style approach to explaining arts behavior examines how various arts behaviors fit into more general life patterns. Attitude measurements focus, instead, on predicting behavior by understanding the nature and value of the various outcomes that an individual expects from engaging in a behavior, e.g., attending the theater or symphony. Behaviors that yield positive outcomes on important dimensions will be adopted; those that do not yield positive outcomes or that yield positive outcomes only on unimportant dimensions will not be adopted (Ryan and Bonfield 1975).

In the present investigation, subsamples of con-

sumers were asked about their attitudes toward attending the two performing arts under study. Because of the length of the overall questionnaire, attitudes about theater attendance were asked of one-third of the sample only, and attitudes about symphony attendance were asked of another third. Focus groups and pretests helped to define salient attributes of arts attendance. Each participating respondent was asked (a) how likely it would be (on a 4-point scale) that they would obtain each of 17 different outcomes (e.g., get exactly the seats you wanted, find friends there, or understand what was going on) and (b) how important it was (on a 4-point scale) to achieve these outcomes. In addition, as Fishbein recommends in his extended attitude model (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975), respondents were asked about their perceptions of what significant others expected of the respondent's arts-going behavior. The resulting model was therefore of the following form:

$$BI_{jk} = \sum_{i=1}^n I_{ik}B_{ijk} + NB_{jk},$$

where,

BI = likelihood of respondent k attending performing art j ,

I_{ik} = the importance weight given to consequence i by respondent k ,

B_{ijk} = the respondent k 's belief about the extent to which attending performing art j will result in consequence i , and

NB_{jk} = normative belief; the extent to which respondent k perceives that significant others believe he or she should attend performing art j .

Other Questions

In addition to these life-style and attitude items, respondents were asked about childhood socialization into the arts. Specifically, they were asked:

1. How interested were you in live theater (classical music) when you were growing up?
2. How interested were *your parents* in live theater (classical music) when you were growing up?

Further, any background in theater, music, or dance was ascertained as well as any ability to play a musical instrument.

RESULTS

The key questions that stimulated the present analysis were:

1. Which individual variables best predict likely future attendance at symphony and theater? We also wished to assess whether our findings paralleled those reported by others.

- Which *set* of variables best predicts future attendance at symphony and theater? This analysis considers all the variables together, taking account of interdependencies among these predictors.
- What contribution does the addition of life-style, attitude, and socialization variables make to predictive ability compared to the traditional age, income, and education measures?

Simple Correlations

As the interest of the study was in predicting future attendance at theater and symphony, the dependent variable in the analysis was the individual's responses to the question: How likely (on a 4-point scale) are you to attend theater/symphony "in the next year or two?" Although responses to this question were significantly related to prior attendance at such events (Table 1), these relationships were far from perfect.

TABLE 1

SIMPLE CORRELATIONS OF SELECTED RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS AND LIKELIHOOD OF ATTENDING SYMPHONY AND THEATER

Variable	Correlation with likelihood of attending	
	Symphony	Theater
Interest in classical music when growing up	.35	.23
Culture Patron ^a	.34	.32
Attendance at symphony in last 12 months	.34	.20
Attitude toward symphony	.33	.19
Attitude toward theater	.29	.38
Parents' interest in classical music	.28	.19
Attendance at theater in last 12 months	.25	.32
Interest in theater when growing up	.24	.28
Parents' interest in live theater	.23	.20
Hedonism/Optimism ^b	.20	.20
Urbanism	.19	.21
Number of cars owned	.18	.02
Listened to 10+ classic records last year	.17	.14
Active Sports Enthusiast ^a	-.16	-.13
Education of respondent	.16	.19
Education of father	.14	.11
Plays musical instrument	.14	.12
Ever worked for theater/music/dance production	.14	.18
Lives in Columbia	-.13	-.15
Ever attended three plays (but none last year)	-.13	-.19
Traditionalism ^b	-.12	-.15
Education of mother	.12	.12
Passive Homebody ^a	-.12	-.15
Self-Confidence/Opinion Leadership ^b	-.11	-.20
Single adult life-cycle stage	.11	.13
Socially Active ^a	.10	.08
Active Homebody ^a	-.09	-.09
Years in area	-.09	-.12
Defeatism ^b	.08	.11
Lives in Atlanta	.08	.08
Inner-Directed, Self-Sufficient ^b	-.08	-.04

TABLE 1 (Continued)

SIMPLE CORRELATIONS OF SELECTED RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS AND LIKELIHOOD OF ATTENDING SYMPHONY AND THEATER

Variable	Correlation with likelihood of attending	
	Symphony	Theater
Age of respondent	-.07	-.12
Empty-nest life-cycle stage	-.07	-.07
Young-married with no children life-cycle stage	.06	.09
Homemaker	-.06	-.06
Number of children over 14	-.06	-.07
Young-children life-cycle stage	-.05	-.03
Income over \$25,000	.05	.08
Employed full-time	.04	.06
Employed part-time	.04	.08
Retired	-.04	-.11
Lives in Memphis	.04	.06
Income \$7,000 - \$9,999	.03	.01
Income \$10,000 - \$11,999	-.03	-.05
Income \$15,000 - \$19,999	.03	.05
Income \$20,000 - \$25,000	.03	.02
Not employed	-.03	-.03
Amount of leisure time available	-.02	.02
Older-children life-cycle stage	-.02	.00
Income under \$7,000	-.02	-.05
White	-.02	.01
Outdoorsiness ^b	.02	.05
Female	-.01	-.02
Widowed life-cycle stage	-.01	-.06
Spouse employed	.00	.07
Teenage life-cycle stage	.00	-.04
Income \$12,000 - \$14,999	.00	.03
Temporarily unemployed	.00	.01

^aLeisure life-style group.

^bGeneral life-style dimension.

However, in view of the emphasis on marginal attenders in the sample (those who attended two or fewer performances in the past year), the likely attendance variables became the most relevant focus for the study.

Univariate correlations of 56 independent variables with the likelihood of attending theater and symphony are reported in Table 1. Note that several key variables, such as family life cycle and income, are treated as sets of dummy variables to detect possible curvilinearities. In these cases, point biserial correlation coefficients are reported. Correlation coefficients greater than ± 0.045 can be considered statistically significant at the 0.05 level, given the sample size. Here, one observes findings agreeing with earlier studies:

- Sex is not significantly related to attendance likelihood.
- Education of respondent is positively correlated with attendance likelihood (as is education of each parent).

Elaborating on earlier findings, the present sample indicates that:

- Age is negatively correlated with attendance. The family life-cycle measures suggest that this may be

because of high attendance among (a) single adults and (b) young adults with no children, and low attendance among older adults with no children ("empty nest" stage).

4. Only membership in the highest income category (over \$25,000) is positively related to attendance.
5. Race is not significantly related to likely attendance. This marks the only significant exception to prior research, and may suggest that the screening procedures eliminated more potential respondents who were black than those who were white.

In addition to these variables, attendance was also found to be positively related to years living in the area, living in Atlanta, and number of cars owned (symphony only), and negatively related to number of children over 14 years (the life-cycle factor again), being a homemaker, and living in Columbia, South Carolina.

However, what is striking in Table 1 is not that we have confirmed or elaborated the traditional predictor variables, but that variables unique to this study generally have much higher correlation coefficients. All of the variables with simple correlations equal to or above 0.20 for either theater or symphony were measures of (a) leisure life-style group membership, (b) general life-style dimensions, (c) past attendance, (d) attitudes, or (e) childhood socialization influences; all newly introduced to arts studies in this project.

Multiple Regression

A problem with total prediction from these correlations is that many of the variables are related. For example, as income increases so does the number of cars in the family ($r = 0.46$) and the likelihood that the spouse is employed ($r = 0.36$). The importance of several variables must then be assessed in explaining the likelihood of attendance while taking account of their interrelationships. The technique chosen was stepwise regression using "step-up" procedures in which predictors were selected one at a time, starting with the single best predictor and adding that one variable at each "step" that increases predictive accuracy the most. This continued until the best remaining predictor that could be added produced no significant improvement in overall predictive accuracy.

Theater. Of the 58 variables examined in the stepwise regression, six were found to add to the prediction of theater attendance at the 0.05 level of significance. The six predictors were jointly able to account for 28 percent of the variability in the reported likelihoods of theater attendance using an adjusted R^2 measure. Although this R^2 leaves most of the variability in these likelihoods "unexplained" (and potentially related to factors not examined in the study), it is double the "predictive" ability of the best single variable.

Table 2 shows by quite a substantial margin that the best predictor of the likelihood of future attendance is attitude toward going to the theater. Not surprisingly, the more one thinks the outcomes of attendance will be favorable, the more these outcomes are important, and the more significant others are seen as favoring attendance, the more likely one will be to plan future attendance.

Three variables of approximately equal importance are the next best predictors. All three are measures of positive past experiences with the arts. One variable is the respondent's interest in live theater when growing up. Being favorably socialized to the theater as a child seems to have a strong and lasting effect on future attendance independent of whether one presently has favorable prospects for attendance. Also in this predictor group is theater attendance during the past year; past behavior is a good predictor of likely future behavior. A third variable in this set is membership in the Culture Patron leisure life-style group. Here we see that past attendance, not only at the theater, but at several other of the arts, as well as having other interests and opinions reflecting an arts-centered leisure life-style, make significant contributions to likelihood of theater attendance. This finding also lends support to our contention that performing arts attendance can profitably be seen from its perspective within particular life-styles. It also supports the contention of DiMaggio, Useem, and Brown that "aficionados of one art form also attend others" (1978, p. 73).

Following the three "experiences" variables, at a slightly reduced level of importance, are two general

TABLE 2
STANDARDIZED BETA WEIGHTS FOR VARIABLES
PREDICTING LIKELIHOOD OF ATTENDING
SYMPHONY AND THEATER^a

Variable	Standardized beta weight	
	Symphony	Theater
Attitude toward attending theater	NS	.31
Attitude toward attending symphony	.21	NS
Culture Patron ^b	.25	.15
Socially Active ^b	.12	NS
Interest in live theater when growing up	NS	.15
Interest in classical music when growing up	.20	NS
Theater attendance during past year	NS	.14
Symphony attendance during past year	.20	NS
Traditionalism ^c	NS	-.13
Self-Confidence/Opinion Leadership ^c	NS	-.12
Number of cases	(232)	(222)
Adjusted R^2	.289	.279

^aSignificant at the 0.05 level.

^bLeisure life-style group.

^cGeneral life-style dimension.

NOTE: NS = not significant.

life-style dimensions, Traditionalism and Self-Confidence/Opinion Leadership. Both dimensions are negatively related to future attendance.

Symphony. Five variables explain about 29 percent of the variance in likely attendance at symphony concerts (Table 2). Most striking is the fact that, although this is an entirely different sample of respondents, the first four variables—those with the most weight in this equation—are the variables that are the most important in the theater analysis. Again, attitudes are significant. Also, the three experience dimensions—past attendance, interest in the art form when growing up, and membership in the Culture Patron life-style group—are included in this set of most important predictors.

The single new variable in this equation is membership in the Socially Active leisure life-style group. This group also was predisposed toward the arts, which may lend credence to the suspicion that symphony attendance for some patrons serves social needs beyond any cultural needs it may fulfill.

Nonuseful Potential Predictors. The fact that a particular set of variables entered the equations in the preceding two regression analyses does not mean that other variables do not have substantial simple correlations with likely attendance. Table 1 attests to this. What the equations do is capture the best linear combinations of predictors. In this light, it is informative to consider which variables did *not* enter the equations.

First, all the socioeconomic variables used in other studies—education, sex, income, occupation, and so forth—are not significant predictors of likely attendance when the attitude and general and specific life-style factors that we have included here are entered into the analysis. This finding suggests that socioeconomic variables are significant only when the richer set of variables added here are not included.

The second factor that does not show up is variation across cities. Columbia was generally less responsive to the performing arts at the time of our study; however, even this apparent difference does not produce a significant effect on likely attendance when other variables are considered. This finding gives us some confidence that the results reported here are generalizable across cities of different sizes and different cultural opportunities—at least in the South.

IMPLICATIONS

If we can overlook the limitations of drawing directional causal inferences from correlational data, and the likely imperfection of intentions data as a surrogate for behavioral data, this study suggests a segmentation strategy that has rather clear implications for building arts audiences. It suggests that one should take the factors now leading to likely attendance and use them to

identify target audiences. There may also be some opportunity to motivate attendance in present nonattenders. In the present analysis, three factors show through in both analyses.

Attitudes

Expectation of positive outcome clearly affects whether one will attend theater or symphony. Although static and cross-sectional, the data suggest that future attendance may be increased and arts audiences broadened by one of three approaches.

Improving Expectations. Nonattenders are significantly less positive than attenders on twelve expected outcomes of going to the theater; there are nine such dimensions for symphony. Further, seven dimensions show high average importance scores for nonattenders for both theater and symphony. At the intersection of these two groups, where expectations are significantly low although the importance weight for nonattenders is high, four dimensions for theater and five for symphony merit attention. Improved attendance for both theater and symphony, thus, may result if nonattenders become more positive in their perceptions of the following:

- The likelihood that they would like the particular program
- The likelihood that they would understand what is going on
- The likelihood that those with whom they attended would have a good time
- The likelihood that the evening would prove stimulating.

In addition, theater attendance might be enhanced if nonattenders felt that the performers were better, and symphony attendance might be increased if nonattenders would come to believe that they were not going to waste their time.

Increasing Importance. Increasing importance weights is generally a much more difficult task than changing perceptions, and often takes many years. The analysis here suggests that the problem in the arts is even more difficult, because in only two cases nonattenders reported lower importance than attenders, as well as high expectations. Both of these cases are for theater: one is understanding what was going on; the other is feeling that those with whom they were attending were having a good time. The fact that these are both dimensions where expectations are also significantly lower for nonattenders suggests that these dimensions may be susceptible to short-range as well as long-range promotional strategies.

Increasing the Impact of Significant Others. Attenders are substantially more likely than nonattenders to agree that significant others expect them to attend theater and symphony. This factor may be used to induce more attendance through promotions aimed at stimulating personal influence, possibly by encouraging present attenders to bring nonattenders to performances.

Leisure Life-Style Groups

Most arts marketers feel that Culture Patrons are excellent prospects for attendance at arts events. However, several studies suggest that theater audiences are isolated from other cultural event audiences, and that the "core" cultural audience is composed of heavy attenders, with marginal attenders failing to show such cross-patronage (Baumol, and Bowen 1964; Ford Foundation 1974; National Research Center of the Arts 1975). This study contradicts both conclusions. Even though the sample was largely composed of marginal attenders, membership in the Cultural Patrons life-style group was the best predictor for symphony and the second best predictor for theater attendance intentions. The use of mailing lists, programs, and posters for one performing art to encourage attendance at another should be commonplace in the arts. However, reluctance to share mailing lists seems surprisingly high among administrators in this field.

Even more intriguing is the indication that likely attendance at symphony concerts is high among the Socially Active group. This finding would suggest that promotions emphasizing the social dimensions of symphony attendance may bear considerable fruit among this group. Analysis of correlates with membership in the Socially Active group suggests that if symphony marketers wish to promote to Socially Active respondents, they should aim their messages toward older, retired people who are active in giving and going to dinners and parties, possibly portraying a visit to the symphony with other mature, socially active people as a natural complement to their active, social life-style. The fact that this group has more leisure time and fewer family responsibilities leads to the speculation that they may be good workers as well as attenders for the symphony, if working on a fund drive or a related activity can be seen as part of an active social life-style.

Interest in the Arts as a Child

It is still true, as Ryans and Weinberg (1978) point out, that we know little about how people learn to attend arts events over time, but it seems clear from this study that early exposure is a major determinant of arts attendance. It appears reasonable to suggest, therefore, that if they have not already done so, both theater and symphony organizations should develop

active youth programs, young people's concerts or plays, in-school programs, youth discounts, and the like. Bradley Morison, a marketing consultant to many arts organizations, recently stated his belief that the development of an active children's theater program at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis was largely responsible for a drop of five years in the average age of attenders at the Guthrie between 1963 and 1973.² This infusion of youthful attendees is, Morison argues, a source of continuing vitality to such established organizations. Teachers of music and theater to young people (in as well as out of school) should be viewed as key gatekeepers, and courted and aided accordingly.

It should be commonplace to develop mailing lists of participants in school or youth programs, if this early exposure is to be turned into active adult patronage of symphony and theater. It may also be useful to consider longer-term series discount programs (perhaps billed as "learners' discounts") to encourage young people to continue their patronage through adulthood.

CONCLUSION

The present data strongly suggest that life-style, attitudes, and developmental experiences are both more conceptually useful variables with which to understand consumer behavior regarding the performing arts, and more empirically predictive than socioeconomic variables. This suggests that prior studies and conclusions may be shortsighted, and that to increase attendance, at least for theater and symphony in the South, concentration on children and limited life-style segments of the adult population may be most fruitful. Criteria for measuring the success of such efforts should focus on attitudes and attendance by these same segments. The specific implications discussed illustrate some of the ways in which these strategies might be pursued.

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² Comments at a Conference on Planning for the Arts, University of Illinois, January 16, 1978.

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