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Abstract	<p>This study explores motivations of visitors to the Imperial War Museum (North and South), United Kingdom, with a view to understanding why people visit museums associated with conflicts. Though museums are part of the education and leisure industry, the distinction between education and leisure is often blurred. There are a number of reasons why people visit museums. Motives of museum visitors can be grouped into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. This study analysed the extent to which museum visitors are motivated by extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Semi-structured interviews with visitors were conducted w at the Imperial Museum of War (North and South), United Kingdom. The findings do establish that extrinsic motivations are more dominant than the intrinsic ones for visiting the Imperial War Museum. The importance of extrinsic factors in motivating museum visitors would suggest that providing an opportunity for a good day out has more appeal to the visitors than the collections in the museum for the average visitors. The experiencing of museum in its totality is more important than the individual collections or the theme of the museum to the mainstream visitor. This work has made a contribution to understanding visitor motivations, which are multi-facetted, complex and not necessarily fully understood by the visitors themselves.</p>
Keywords (separated by ‘-’)	Museum - Motivations - Imperial War Museum - Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations

Motivations and Experiences of Museum Visitors: The Case of the Imperial War Museum, United Kingdom

Raymond Powell and Jithendran Kokkranikal

Abstract This study explores motivations of visitors to the Imperial War Museum (North and South), United Kingdom, with a view to understanding why people visit museums associated with conflicts. Though museums are part of the education and leisure industry, the distinction between education and leisure is often blurred. There are a number of reasons why people visit museums. Motives of museum visitors can be grouped into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. This study analysed the extent to which museum visitors are motivated by extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Semi-structured interviews with visitors were conducted w at the Imperial Museum of War (North and South), United Kingdom. The findings do establish that extrinsic motivations are more dominant than the intrinsic ones for visiting the Imperial War Museum. The importance of extrinsic factors in motivating museum visitors would suggest that providing an opportunity for a good day out has more appeal to the visitors than the collections in the museum for the average visitors. The experiencing of museum in its totality is more important than the individual collections or the theme of the museum to the mainstream visitor. This work has made a contribution to understanding visitor motivations, which are multi-faceted, complex and not necessarily fully understood by the visitors themselves.

Keywords Museum • Motivations • Imperial War Museum • Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations

1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate motivations of visitors to the Imperial War Museum (North and South), United Kingdom, with a view to understanding why people visit museums associated with conflicts. Museums are part of the education and leisure industry, and at times the distinction between education and leisure can seem somewhat blurred when considering the motivations of those who

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30 visit. Often visitors to heritage sites (and by extension museums) are not always
31 clear as to their exact motivations themselves (Davies & Prentice, 1995). The
32 distinction between leisure and education may be so fine as to merit no distinction
33 at all. That is to say, museums are so configured to deliver education and leisure at
34 the same time that the distinction becomes meaningless when considering the
35 function of a museum. What is noticeable about educational leisure settings is
36 that most, if not all, have some key features in common:

- 37 • The setting provides real and direct experience of objects, places and people
38 (Falk, Dierking, & Holland, 1995; Hooper-Greenhill, 1995);
- 39 • Learning is voluntary, but information should be easily accessible (Falk et al.,
40 1995);
- 41 • The visitor is the arbiter of what is learnt, and that is stimulated by the individual
42 needs and interest of the learner/visitor (Hooper-Greenhill, 1995);
- 43 • Learning is often a social occurrence (Falk et al., 1995);
- 44 • Visitors appear in diverse ways: alone; in mixed groups; with a range of
45 expertise and prior knowledge and experiences (Anderson, 1995).

46 Museums therefore need to meet the needs and expectations of a very wide
47 ranging potential client group, although it should be remembered that different
48 museums cater for different interests. The Imperial War Museum is no different in
49 this regard, and it offers a unique collection which serves to draw visitors into the
50 contemplation of how war impacts on lives (IWM website). This is a deliberate
51 attempt to provide a broad appeal to the broadest possible audience whilst also
52 acting as guardian, curator and preserver of an important national archive of war
53 and conflict related artefacts which might otherwise be neglected or overlooked. If
54 not for museums where would such artefacts be stored?

55 There have been a number of studies conducted which seek to explore how
56 tourists, in particular, spend their leisure time (Cameron & Gatewood, 2003;
57 Davies, 2005; Hayes & Slater, 2002; Orr, 2004; Slater, 2007). Learning, in some
58 shape or form, was deemed to be the most significant motivator in encouraging
59 visitors to museums in the majority of visitor surveys (Black, 2005). Garrod and
60 Fyall (2000) recommend that if any heritage attraction is to be successful it must be
61 visitor friendly and intellectually accessible, as well as managing the difficult
62 balance between the needs of the visitor and the conservation imperative.

63 Understanding quite what those needs may be, and also understanding the
64 motivations of visitors to heritage sites and museums is as a major theme in heritage
65 research. This means that motivations are being explored, rather than just being
66 assumed, and this also recognises that the audience for cultural consumption is
67 larger than was once presumed (Richards, 2007). Museums and other heritage sites
68 are visited by a wide range of people for a wide range of reasons (Prentice et al.,
69 1998; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). For example, Shackley (1999) argues that sacred
70 spaces such as churches and cathedrals are visited because, as well as their sacred
71 function, they also have aesthetic and architectural merit, but importantly also
72 provide a great day out. The same site, therefore, can mean different things to
73 different people, and therefore the motivation to visit must rest with the individual.

AU1

AU2

The attraction can provide certain stimuli, but whatever they offered would not necessarily appeal to everyone. This is, in essence, identifying a target market, a familiar enough context in the commercial world, but one which presents a range of challenges beyond the purely commercial when your reason for being is so intimately tied-up with wider societal concerns and issues of social exclusion. The collection itself may provide a motivation for visitors to attend, and a key motivation often reported in the literature is that of education in one form or another (Moussouri, 2002; Slater, 2006; Thyne, 2001).

The motivation to visit a museum can be considered as being intrinsic or extrinsic. Those visitors primarily motivated by intrinsic factors are focussed on the perceived usefulness of the visit and the context of the visit linked to largely personal factors such as personal meaning and interpretation, timeliness, opportunities for interaction and the degree of intellectual challenge (Screven, 1976; as cited in Goulding, 2000). These motivations are internal and individual, and it is likely that whilst there may be a high correlation in certain visitor segments, they are largely individual motivations and thus different people will seek different environments and, in the case of museums, different collections to view.

Extrinsic motivations on the other hand are external to the visitor and include such factors as feedback or rewards such as visible achievement, perhaps through rewards or tokens, and a sense of achievement (Goulding, 2000). Common extrinsic motivations are escapism, social interaction with family and friends, learning in one form or another and seeking some relaxation in a perceived worthwhile educational environment (Prentice, Davies, & Beeho, 1997; Slater, 2007). This suggests that visitor motivations have to be interpreted carefully with due regard to the subtlety of such broad phrases as “escapism” and “learning” (Slater, 2007). Enjoyment also plays its part as a good day out and quality time being spent well in a worthy environment. Altruism also features in that a visit to museum could part of a conscious effort to support museums, which were deemed to have worth and were a desirable feature in towns (Goulding, 2000).

Imperial War Museum (IWM) is one of the leading repositories of conflict-related artefacts, which seek to provide for the study and understanding of the history of modern war and ‘wartime experiences’. With a collection of five museums—IWM London; IWM North in Trafford, Greater Manchester; IWM Duxford near Cambridge; the Churchill War Rooms in Whitehall, London; and the historic ship HMS Belfast, moored on the River Thames—IWM is a community of museums that serve the public by providing opportunities to contemplate the impacts of conflicts on individual, communities and the nation itself in a range of locations and settings. The IWM facilities offers permanent displays, the archives, special exhibitions, f events, education programmes, corporate hospitality and souvenirs shops.

114 2 Research Methods

115 The purpose of this study is to investigate motivations of visitors to the Imperial
116 War Museum (North and South), United Kingdom. To this end, a case study
117 research, which is appropriate for exploring a phenomenon that requires context
118 and an overall view of the relationships, was carried out (Yin, 2009). The research
119 was undertaken in four main phases as follows:

- 120 1. An extensive literature review was carried out on visitor motivations in
121 museums
- 122 2. Semi-structured interviews with visitors were conducted w at the Imperial
123 Museum of War (North and South).
- 124 3. The data generated were analysed using qualitative techniques of data reduction,
125 data organisation and interpretation (Sarantakos, 2002). The results of data
126 analysis are embedded in the sections that follow below.

127 A convenience sample of 42 museum visitors were interviewed, of which
128 20 were conducted at the IWM (North) and 22 at the IWM (South). The semi-
129 structured interviews were used as they allow for questioning which follows the
130 flow of the conversation and offers the researcher the opportunity to probe
131 responses in a way that can clarify meaning and establish significance to the data
132 obtained (Denscombe, 2007).

133 3 Findings

134 A number of reasons were given by the interviewees for visiting the Imperial War
135 Museum, ranging from 'just passing' to 'interest in military history'. Table 1 pro-
136 vides a numerical representation of the reasons for visiting as stated by the
137 interviewees. The total percentage calculated exceeds 100 % because interviewee's
138 gave multiple reasons for visiting the museum. Almost all the respondents (33 out
139 of 42) gave four or more reasons for visiting the museum with nine respondents
140 giving two reasons. This reiterates the fact that museum visitors are attracted by a
141 combination of motivations, which is well-borne out by a number of studies (e.g.,
142 Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonell, 2006; Falk & Dierking, 1992;
143 Moussouri, 2002; Prentice et al., 1997; Ryan, 1997; Slater, 2007; Thyne, 2001).

144 Analysis of the findings indicates motivations to visit the museum are indeed
145 multi-faceted and represent a broad diversity of motivations. Motivations, as has
146 been previously mentioned, can be intrinsic or extrinsic, and museum visitors tend
147 to be driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Goulding, 2000; Slater,
148 2007). The responses from the interviewees about the reasons for visiting the
149 Imperial War Museum were grouped into extrinsic and intrinsic categories (Please
150 see Table 2). Authors acknowledge the subjective judgements inherent in making
151 such classifications. The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic values are not

Table 1 Reasons for visiting

Reasons given for visiting	Number	Percentage
Drawn by a particular exhibition	11	26
Visited before	6	14
Family history	9	21
Interest in military history	23	55
Education/learning	9	21
Social reasons	9	21
Just passing	1	2
Recommended by friends/family/other	7	17
Free admission	5	12
Interest in history	15	36
Day out/something to do	16	38
I like museums	6	14
Quality of exhibits	3	7
Interactivity	4	9
Curiosity	3	7
Visiting the shop	2	5
Atmosphere/see it for myself	4	9
Convenience/location/ease of access	14	33
Nostalgia	2	5
Commemoration	3	7
Sightseeing	3	7

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Table 2 Categories showing sub-division of intrinsic/extrinsic motivations

Extrinsic motivations	Responses	Intrinsic motivations	Responses
Drawn by a particular exhibition	11	Family history	9
Visited before	6	Curiosity	3
Social reasons	9	Education/learning	9
Just passing	1	Interest in history	15
Recommended by friends/family/ other	7	I like museums	6
Free admission	5	Atmosphere/see it for myself	4
Day out/something to do	16	Nostalgia	2
Quality of exhibits	3	Commemoration	3
Interactivity	4	Interest in military history	23
Visiting the shop	2		
Convenience/location/ease of access	14		
Sightseeing	3		
Total	81	Total	74

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152 always clear-cut (Harold, 2005), extrinsic reward may well play a major part in
153 intrinsic motivation (Reiss, 2005). Therefore it is necessary for the researchers to
154 make a subjective judgement on the nature of motivations as stated by the respon-
155 dents, for example, whether an interest in military history or the desire to relate to
156 family history is an intrinsic or extrinsic motivator. Therefore it is appropriate to
157 consider what intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for visiting the Imperial War
158 Museum.

159 The authors considered intrinsic motivations to be those which had their origins
160 within the respondent. That is to say that such motivations as they reported may be
161 considered as being generated by internal desires such as the need for self-
162 fulfilment or learning for example. Extrinsic desires are those factors which are
163 external to the respondent and can be delivered through such things as a comfort-
164 able environment and pleasant surroundings. These are just examples; the full
165 ranges of desires are numerous and often personal, which makes understanding
166 how they influence museum visitors something of a challenge.

167 McIntyre (2009) relates that visitors to museums and galleries were seeking
168 internalised self-learning, which were themselves dependent on time and space
169 considerations such as the layout and accessibility of the gallery space. A suitable
170 balance of different types was considered to be an essential part of meeting the
171 needs of visitors; space to interact with the exhibits and space to relax and reflect on
172 the experience were an integral part of meeting visitors' needs. This serves to
173 demonstrate the interrelationship of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: one cannot
174 be met without the consideration of the other.

175 An interest in history was identified as being a prime motivation for respondents
176 in this study, but it is necessary to consider how that general "interest" can be
177 considered enough of a motivation to generate an actual visit. Habermas notes that
178 "the *only* knowledge that can truly orient action is knowledge that frees itself from
179 mere human interests and is based on Ideas—in other words knowledge that has
180 taken a theoretical attitude" (Habermas, 2005; in Gutting, 2005, p 310). Informa-
181 tion seeking itself, therefore, needs to act in conjunction with other factors in order
182 for it to be considered a *motivation* which will act upon an interested and potential
183 visitor to a museum to turn them into an *actual* visitor. Of direct relevance to the
184 way in which museums make their artefacts accessible to such visitors is
185 Habermas's further observation that interest is not value free, and carries with it
186 an ontological view of the world which is not neutral. This would explain why an
187 interest in history was often seen as being different to an interest in military history
188 in this study. Visitors to any museum need to have their interest met with accessible
189 artefacts and interpretation in comfortable and well laid out galleries (McIntyre,
190 2009). These latter points can be viewed as being extrinsic factors which enable the
191 intrinsic interest in history to be acted upon, thus combining to form a motivation to
192 visit the museum.

193 It is a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors which must combine in order
194 to meet the needs and desires of visitors and potential visitors, and as we have seen,
195 museums are moving towards a much more visitor focussed experience when
196 presenting their collections, away from what many have seen as their traditional

custodial and preservation role and into a broad based, visitor led era which seeks to put the visitor at the heart of the museum experience. In other words, “customers” are a principal factor in the success of any museum (Harrison & Shaw, 2004; McLean, 1994). In particular, museum design is being carefully considered to maximise the extrinsic factors which are an essential part of the mix designed to attract visitors (McIntyre, 2009). This is especially true of the Imperial War Museum (North) with its purpose-built, thoughtful and challenging design by the architect Daniel Libeskind which is a key part of the regeneration of Salford’s docks as well as being an important museum in its own right (Blundell Jones, 2003).

“Motives are reasons people hold for initiating and performing voluntary behaviour. They indicate the meaning of human behaviour, and they may reveal a person’s values” (Reiss, 2004, p 179). Thus it is that *motives* and *motivations* are two subtly different things. For the purposes of this study it is a useful shot-cut to consider motives as being a *reason* for doing something, but it should be remembered that it is entirely possible to behave in a particular way, visiting a museum for example, and not necessarily be aware of precisely what that reason or motive is (Reiss, 2004). The authors are aware that reported “motives” for visiting the Imperial War Museum cannot be taken as absolute truth. It is necessary to see the patterns which emerge from the collected data in order to make a reasonable and informed assessment as to its meaning. The actual number of potential motivations is unlimited in any practical sense. It is only the individual involved who is able to decide what they consider to be a motive to visit. Therefore these categories depend on the careful interpretation of reported motives and imaginative analysis of the words of respondents in order to categorise and code them. The authors are aware of the subjective nature of this process. There is a complex interweaving of motivations, and it is rare for there to be only one of significance playing a part in the decision to visit: rather, it is the combination of motivations which translate into an actual visit.

Table 2 shows that respondents reported more individual extrinsic motivations to visit the museum than intrinsic ones, although in terms of the number of times each type of motivation was cited it is still reasonably close. This may be as a result of the relatively small data set. Nevertheless, it can be seen that visitors have more extrinsic motivations as regards reasons to visit, but that intrinsic motivations tend to have a slightly bigger pull factor when considered individually. That is to say there are more extrinsic factors such as the desire for a day out, the quality of the exhibits or social reasons which are likely to have a major influence in motivating a visit to the museum, but the intrinsic motivations such as a liking of history, and more specifically military history, are strong motivators also. The implication being that for some people the collection is of less importance than going out for the day.

4 Discussion

Following themes emerge from the analysis of the findings:

- 238 • Motivations are divided between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Extrinsic factors
239 are more numerous, but intrinsic factors exert a bigger motivation.
- 240 • Exhibitions were reported as being a significant motivating factor.
- 241 • Taken together, social reasons (meeting friends, day out) proved to be significant
242 motivators. It seems likely that respondents who reported social factors *and*
243 strong intrinsic factors would be the most likely to visit the museum.
- 244 • Interactivity was recorded as a motivator. This suggests that visitors are keen to
245 do more than simply view artefacts. The opportunity to engage with the collec-
246 tion was a key factor, and one which is in line with the modern view of a museum
247 (Black, 2005; Merriman, 1991).
- 248 • Education and learning, whilst being cited as a key motivator in a minority of
249 cases, did not feature prominently in the body of reported motivations. Never-
250 theless, it did feature as a significant motivator in a large minority of respon-
251 dents, but never as a feature on its own. However, an interest in history was a
252 significant factor in a number of responses, and this could be broadly interpreted
253 as having an educational or learning component inherent in it.
- 254 • The location of the museums is an important factor in motivating visits. Con-
255 venience and ease of access featured a number of times.
- 256 • The collection itself was of interest to visitors, but this was not the *prime*
257 motivator for a significant number of respondents. This is in line with the idea
258 that socialisation plays a significant part in choosing to visit a museum, so it is
259 not always necessary for every member of the party to have a specific interest in
260 the collection.

261 In general the data supports the idea that motivation is general, multi-faceted
262 and relatively few and interrelated (Ryan, 1997). This study identified a number of
263 motivations, but none of them stand out as being of particular significance when
264 taken singly. It is necessary to understand the inter-relationship of a number of
265 complimentary factors in order to fully understand how they combine in order to
266 generate a visit. For example, it is likely that someone with a keen interest in
267 military history will still consider other factors such as convenience and the desire
268 for a day out when considering their visit.

269 Data collected indicates that an interest in history in general and military history
270 in particular is a key motivating factor for visitors to the Imperial war Museum.
271 Taken together these two categories were indicated as being important in generat-
272 ing visits in very nearly a quarter of all reported motivations. Quite what “interest”
273 means is worthy of further study, but this is in line with findings reported elsewhere.
274 Increasing numbers of people are visiting historical sites and museums, but the
275 reasons for this are not well understood (Cameron & Gatewood, 2003). The
276 phenomena of “numen seeking”, which is the idea that tourists are motivated by
277 more than information or pleasure seeking when visiting historical sites is reported
278 by Cameron and Gatewood (2003). They indicate that visitors to such sites are often
279 in search of a deeper experience or a personal connection, and this is reflected in
280 this study through the reported desire for interactivity and being able to get close to
281 the artefacts. The Imperial War Museum is well aware of the personal connection

expressed by visitors as a reason to visit, and successfully positions itself as a museum which seeks to relate the history of conflict in a way which shows how “war shapes lives” (IWM website). Family history was identified as a key motivator by a small number of respondents. Often visitors to heritage sites are influenced by aspects of their own culture or collected history, which also has an impact on their behaviour at such sites (Poria, Reichel, & Biran, 2005). It is to be expected, therefore, that those with cultural and family links to the themes of the museum are likely to be more motivated to visit the museum in the first place.

Historical sites and museums are increasingly popular choices, related to numen seeking (Cameron & Gatewood, 2003) but literature indicates that visitors are often poorly educated about historical sites, and frequently have little historical knowledge (Alderson & Low, 1996; Jakle, 1985). Whilst a desire for education is often reported as being a prime motivator for museum visits (Falk & Dierking, 1992; Hood, 1983; Jansen-Verbeke & Van Redom, 1996; Moussouri, 2002; Prentice et al., 1997; Thyne, 2001) such motivation is poorly understood by museum professionals, and often based on subjective judgements (Cameron & Gatewood, 2003). This study would concur that whilst the desire for education and information is one of the reported motivations its capacity to generate actual visits to museums appears to be overstated, and learning is a broadly defined concept which means that often visitors and museum professionals have difficulty in fully understanding its draw. There is the underlying assumption that a visit to a museum is worthwhile in itself (Black, 2005; Hooper-Greenhill, 1994a, 1994b; Merriman, 1991) although the authors did not find any data which supported that assertion. However, it is reasonable to assume from the literature that a visit to a museum still carries some idea of cultural worth. A very small number of respondents in this study did identify that part of their reasons for visiting was that it was “important to do something” with their time. Nostalgia was also reported as being a factor in two cases.

The growing attraction of “dark tourism” (Lennon & Foley, 2006) is one area the authors expected to be more represented in reported motivations, although on reflection it is likely that respondents would be unwilling to ascribe such motivations to themselves, or possibly they may be unaware of them as motivators (Lennon & Foley, 2006). A number of respondents indicated that a key motivation for them was the draw of specific exhibitions, which in IWM (South) included a major exhibition on the Holocaust. However, the only mention of this particular exhibition was by one respondent who indicated that, in fact, they had specifically avoided it. Such exhibitions nevertheless play a key role in the museum’s aim of providing education and information. Special exhibitions per se were reported as being a key motivator by many respondents in this study. However, an understanding of motivations related to the more horrific aspects of war and conflict related materials remain stubbornly unilluminated by this research.

It could be argued that attendees at festivals, galleries and exhibitions would have motivations similar to museum visitors when considering which factors actually generate a visit. This estimation is borne out by Uysal, Gahan, and Martin (1993), Mohr, Backman, Gahan, and Backman (1993), and Slater (2007) who stressed the importance of socialization and family togetherness, escape from

327 routine and the experience of new things as being key motivators for going to
328 festivals, galleries and exhibitions, all of which can be applied to museum visits.
329 This study identified the importance of family time in a number of cases, and social
330 reasons were often reported as being a key motivator, when taken together with the
331 desire for a day out. Therefore the authors would agree that socialization (social
332 reasons/ day out/ something to do), understood in broad terms, does provide
333 significant motivation when considering museum visitors.

334 Falk and Dierking (1992) and Moussouri (2002) also identify socialization and
335 educational reasons as being important motivators, along with the desire to be
336 entertained. There was also a reverential aspect to museum visiting which other
337 studies have not explicitly identified. This was reflected in this work when “com-
338 memoration” was able to be categorized as a reported motivation. The idea of
339 socialization being a key motivator was reinforced, and this work would once again
340 concur with their findings. Moussouri (2002) also included a number of extrinsic
341 factors such as life-cycle and place to explain motivations. This work clearly
342 identified the issue of practical issues as being a significant motivator, with a
343 number of reported motivations reflecting the convenience of the location or the
344 galleries themselves as being important in their decision to visit. These ideas also
345 support the authors’ observations on the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic
346 factors when considering motivations.

347 Prentice et al. (1997) identified, in particular, the importance of a day out and,
348 again, socialization, as being especially significant in providing motivation to visit a
349 museum. Interestingly “curiosity” is also mentioned in this context, and this was
350 one of the key words identified by the researcher in this study. The authors would
351 agree with their findings and considers this work to be in line with their findings,
352 although the detail provided in their study was not the intention of this work.

353 When considering cultural tourists Richards (2007) recognises that one of the
354 motives for visiting museums is that people who visit *always* visit museums. That is
355 to say that there is a particular type of cultural tourist who is likely to visit museums,
356 seemingly with little regard to any other factors. This is in line with the findings of
357 the MLA (2005) which identified a core group of museum advocates who, it seems
358 likely, make up the majority of visits (but not necessarily visitors). “Been before”
359 was reported as a motivation in this work, and no further elucidation was considered
360 necessary by the respondents, adding weight to the assumption that having been
361 before provides sufficient motivation for those respondents to visit again. Richards
362 (2007) also points out that not all visitors to a museum are necessarily there because
363 they are interested in the collection, or even like museums, but because they are
364 accompanying someone who did have other motivations to visit. The influence of
365 friends is also a factor in generating a visit. Several respondents identified that
366 recommendations from friends and family provided motivation to visit. The authors
367 recognise that museum visitors and cultural tourists are not necessarily mutually
368 inclusive groups, but the findings indicate there is a likely overlap between the two
369 as regards their motivations to visit cultural attractions, and would agree that the
370 data is supportive of Richards’s observations.

5 Conclusion

371

“The problem for the museum profession is not so much how to enhance the 372
experience of the public, but how to ascertain what that experience is” (McLean, 373
1993 p18). This work has sought to find out the motivation of visitors to the 374
Imperial War Museum. The preliminary assumption guiding this study was that 375
people visit museums for a variety of different reasons, which is confirmed by the 376
findings of this study. Significantly it turned out that there was not one single, 377
over-riding motivation which could explain why people visit museums. Visitors are 378
motivated to visit by a combination of factors, which vary from person-to-person, 379
time-to-time and most probably place-to-place. Some of those factors are intrinsic, 380
and some are extrinsic. They combine in a multitude of ways and provide sufficient 381
motivation to generate a visit in those who are receptive to the idea of visiting a 382
museum, which not everyone is, although the sample selected for this particular 383
research were all, of course, museum visitors. 384

This study analysed the extent to which museum visitors are motivated by 385
extrinsic and intrinsic factors. The findings do establish that extrinsic motivations 386
are more dominant than the intrinsic ones for visiting the Imperial War Museum. 387
The importance of extrinsic factors in motivating museum visitors would suggest 388
that providing an opportunity for a good day out has more appeal to the visitors than 389
the collections in the museum for the average visitors. The experiencing of museum 390
in its totality is more important than the individual collections or the theme of the 391
museum to the mainstream visitor. 392

Museums, in turn, are examining their role and function and are moving towards 393
a much more visitor centred approach. One of the things which make that particular 394
task difficult is the fact, as pointed out by McLean (1993) above, the museum 395
profession is not entirely clear as to what the museum experience is, nor fully 396
conversant with why people visit in the first place. 397

This work has made a contribution to understanding something about visitor 398
motivations: they are multi-facetted, complex and not necessarily fully understood 399
by the visitors themselves. A number of studies which investigated visitor motiva- 400
tions in a variety of contexts were compared to the data collected and showed that 401
the data was consistent with previous studies in a number of areas. What this study 402
showed in particular is that motivation depends on that balance between intrinsic 403
and extrinsic factors. 404

If a museum is able to deliver a well organised, interactive and well interpreted 405
exhibition it will appeal strongly to potential visitors who are likely to be in social 406
classes ABC1 in the main (MORI, 2004), and will have an interest in history and the 407
desire for a good day out. Audience development is likely to be a key area for 408
museums in the future as they find their audience is increasingly likely to be seeking 409
entertainment (a good day out) and be drawn from a wider social spectrum as the 410
benefits of inclusion policies and the change of emphasis in museums has effect. 411

412 **References**

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