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How Visitors Relate to The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums: The Other Roles of Traditional and Modern Museums

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

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Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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Abstract

How Visitors Relate to The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums: the Other Roles of Traditional and Modern Museums

by

Ahmed Abdel Fattah

The roles of traditional and modern museums have been scrutinised theoretically in museum studies, critical theory, cultural studies and other academic disciplines, but there is a lack of empirical insights into their actual functioning from the visitor’s perspective. The claims to simplify and reduce the functions of traditional and modern museums to either educational experiences and preservations or fun learning experiences, attests to the fallacy in the field. In order to offer an empirical interrogation of the other roles of traditional and modern museums, we need to answer the questions of why people go to traditional and modern museums, and what experiences they take from the museums. Buried within the construct we call the museum visitor’s motive and experience lie answers to fundamental questions about the other roles of traditional and modern museums and the differences and similarities between each type of museum.

By drawing on the results of qualitative research that examined the visitor’s motive and overall experience at two different museums, this thesis found that the nexus between the physical and personal contexts and the physical and social contexts reveals different roles of the museum to different visitor types. It is found that although The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums exist at different levels or scales, there are more similarities than differences between the functions of the two institutions from the perspective of visitors.

The roles of each type of museum are much wider than educating the public, displaying original artefacts in locked glass cabinets, vying with shopping malls, and providing infotainment and leisure for families on a Sunday afternoon. Both museums are important
sites for: learning; social interactions; remembering historical and personal events; connecting visitors with the familiar and reinforcing their pre-existing knowledge; and settings for aesthetic, recreational and restful experiences. In this regard, there is no apparent conflict between The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums in relation to different visitors.

Behind the obvious similarities between the two museums lies glaring differences between international and domestic participants at each site. Accordingly, this research splits the visitors at each site into two groups: domestic and international.

Keywords: Te Papa; Egyptian Museum; traditional; modern; visitor experiences; motivations; international visitors; domestic visitors.
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I hope you all discover the diverse/similar roles of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums from the perspectives of the participants and also the distinctions/similarities between domestic and international visitors’ experiences and motives at both sites.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

We live today in a profoundly museological world – a world that in no small measure is a product and effect of some two centuries of museological mediations. Museums are one of the central sites at which our modernity has been generated, (en)gendered, and sustained over that time. They are so natural, ubiquitous, and indispensable to us today that it takes considerable effort to think ourselves back to a world without them, and to think through the shadows cast by the massive and dazzling familiarity of this truly uncanny social technology. Our world is unthinkable without this extraordinary invention (Preszlosi, 1996, p. 97).

My connection to the Egyptian Museum stemmed from two factors: a) my visit to the museum with my parents (social experiences); and b) my experience in elementary, secondary and tertiary levels of education (personal experiences).

The Egyptian Museum always reminds me of my childhood days when I would accompany my parents and their neighbours to the museum during our mid-year school holidays. My parents preferred socializing with their neighbours in the café or the garden to visiting the exhibitions; for my parents and their neighbours the museum was properly a site for socialization that could not be satisfied by stationary ancient relics. While the adults socialised, we children would play games in the garden such as backgammon, soccer, cards, dominos and chess.

These visits bring back faint but fond memories of the museum building, but we rarely entered the indoor exhibition area as normally it was associated with ‘boredom’ ‘dead animals and bodies’, and ‘no fun’ zone. I remember as a youngster being familiar with a phrase, which I may have invented, ‘that Egyptian Museum feeling,’ it was an Arabic expression which refers to a type of claustrophobia and exhaustion which settled upon me as soon as I entered the indoor exhibition area and noticed those straightened avenues and alleyways inside the museum. Once I moved into a world of continuous, connected space – visual space – exhaustion quickly set in, because there were no shops or restaurants and no means to view

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1 Please note: sources in electronic form do not require page number citation under Lincoln University guidelines; however, I have included page numbers for documents that were printed in pdf-format.
central Cairo with its British coconut buildings and the big mosque located next to the museum.

During my schooling, the neglect of Pharaonic Egypt in the state schools led me as a teenager to a total loss of orientation and a lack of connection with the ancient past of Egypt. Through my twelve years of elementary and secondary school training, ancient Egypt history lessons were usually taught once a week for a very short period of time as the last subject in the school day, when students were exhausted and had difficulty concentrating - an indication of the subject’s overall lack of importance within the curriculum. The junior and senior high school history and geography textbooks focused primarily on the Islamic heritage and history of Egypt, The Egyptian Revolution of 1952, Arab nationalism, the occupied Palestinian territories, and the October War of 1973. Most of the students in my school, myself included, considered the history of ancient Egypt lessons to be the least important of their classes and remembered very little of the actual content. Even sports and music classes were given more importance and had higher final grades than ancient Egyptian history.

A prominent educational journalist, who had conducted a detailed content analysis of the education standards attained by French and Egyptian schoolchildren, found that at each level the standard was lower in Egypt and that “the French child knows more about the history of ancient Egypt than the Egyptian child” (as cited in Hyde, 1978, p. 48). Thus, as a teenager, my lack of knowledge of my ancient heritage means that the Pharaonic relics displayed in the museum were alien to me, and I felt that the exhibition area was a foreign environment full of international tourists.

It was not until I started my bachelor’s degree in history at the University of Alexandria in Egypt that I developed a strong interest in ancient Egypt. Studying ancient history at the university definitely shaped my love of the Pharaonic relics and I became increasingly motivated to visit the indoor exhibition area of the Egyptian Museum. My favourite vacation as a university student was a two-week trip to Cairo during which I saw many objects at the museum and made strong connections to the ancient relics I had already read about and studied for four years. By the time I finished my bachelor degree, I knew I wanted to secure a position at the Egyptian Museum, which I achieved, working at the Education Department for a few years.

By the same token, my past and current experiences of Te Papa were directly contingent on two primary factors: a) my personal experience with a particular exhibition, and b) my social
and past experiences. When I first moved to New Zealand in 2005, I was not interested in visiting museums and heritage sites. In fact, I was desperate to ‘get out there’ and experience the beautiful, lush, hilly country. I had seen internet photos of New Zealand’s stunning national parks and I had been told stories about rural areas and other out-of-the-way places that are worth a visit. It was not until late 2006 that I decided to visit Te Papa for the first time when I came across a 20-second television commercial promoting the exhibition Egypt: Beyond the Tomb. Hence, my first visit to Te Papa was not to see the Maori, Pacific, and European exhibitions and all the ramifications related to them. During my first visit, my pre-existing knowledge about ancient Egypt held responsibility for the quality of the museum experience; I entered the museum with a sense of curiosity, excitement and familiarity with something I had a fair amount of knowledge about.

On this visit, after I finished exploring the Egyptian exhibition, I decided to search the rest of the museum. Since I knew relatively little about New Zealand history, art and heritage, I took a cursory glance at different exhibitions, but found myself attracted to three sections, namely, Te Papa Café on the ground floor, the Bush City, and the hands-on Discovery Centre for children on the fourth floor. The primary motive that attracted me to these areas was that I felt they made a perfect place for parents and children to socialise and spend quality time together. Consequently, I made subsequent visits to Wellington and brought my family to the museum and we took advantage of the three sections.

The café has a wonderful area for children and my young daughter usually enjoys playing with the magnetic board and big lego bricks trying to build an enclosure for other children to sit in. We often meet wonderful people at the café and my child has learned many lessons about sharing and playing ‘nicely’ with other children. Outside, in the Bush City, there is an array of things we do such as seeing a few wetas\(^2\), caving and digging up a ‘dinosaur fossil’, feeding the ducks and walking across the swing bridge. Before we leave the museum, we usually head to the Discovery Centre where my child races ahead to her favourite spot ‘Story Place’ to enjoy storytelling, drama, puzzles, songs, games, and art activities.

During these family visits there were three interesting questions that cropped up in my mind as I compared my experiences of Te Papa with those of the Egyptian Museum: ‘What are the

\(^2\) The weta is one of the largest and heaviest insects in the world. It is sometimes called the dinosaur of the insect world. The weta is only found in New Zealand and is so old and it has outlived the dinosaurs.
differences and similarities between The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums?’ ‘What does each site offer to other visitors?’ ‘Why do other people choose to visit these museums?’ and what experiences do international and domestic visitors take from the museums? Although I worked as a part-time museum education officer for two years (1995-1997) at the Egyptian Museum, these questions never crossed my mind until I visited Te Papa in 2006. These questions arose due to the large differences I perceived in the experiences offered at Te Papa, arguably a ‘modern museum’, when compared to the very ‘traditional’ Egyptian Museum.

This personal feeling about Te Papa captured my intellectual curiosity and led me to think that there is more subtlety to the issue of interactivity and hands-on experiences. An important avenue to explore the different roles of the museum would come from knowing more about why different visitors choose to visit the museum and what types of experiences they seek and enjoy. In this regard, the role of the museum can be analysed from the users’ perspectives. Traditional and modern museums are not only about viewing authentic objects, learning, education, interactivity and hands-on experiences; they are also about ‘something else’.

Hence when it came to selecting a topic of study for my PhD, exploring the role of modern and traditional museums vis-à-vis visitors’ motives and experiences was the obvious choice. Years later, this thesis represents what I discovered. The ideas presented in the following chapters linger on in you, the reader, and in the process of reading become subject to further examinations and dissections. This study is, in fact, unfinishable and to a certain extent a purely subjective phenomenon for both writer and reader.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to introducing the research topic. It explains the study context and describes the research problem. It then reviews the key objectives and summarises the theoretical and methodological approaches used. The chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis structure.

1.1 Research Context: What is a Traditional and Modern Museum?

The context for the current study can be explained in terms of the roles of traditional and modern museums from the visitor’s perspective (the role of each type of museum is discussed in more detail in chapter Two Evolution of Museums).

What is a traditional museum? This question has been asked by a surprisingly wide range of people including members of the museum profession itself, museum theorists, heritage
academics and art historians (Bennett, 1995; Weil, 2002, 2004; Witcomb, 2003; Zolberg, 1994). Traditionally, the role of the museum was a space in which material treasures of the past is collected and displayed. The traditional museum has played an important role in preserving objects and materials of cultural, religious and historical significance, and exhibiting them to the public for the purpose of education (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000).

Traditional museums were also elitist institutions as they encouraged the educated public to visit them. They presented themselves as elitist temples of art, history and culture (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Roberts, 1997).

Compared to the function of the traditional museum, the modern museum is different and serves more than just preserving, storing and displaying artefacts. The modern museum embraces creativity elements and ideas such as commercialisation, communication and technology (Black, 2005; Noordegraff, 2004)). Modern museums are also multipurpose in offering tangible and intangible products and services to their visitors. They have embraced engaging and interactive approach. They have developed blockbuster shows and exhibits for the masses, and have invested vigorous efforts into merchandising, as the typical museum shop shows (Noordegraff, 2004). Perhaps more important, modern museums have adopted an infotainment or edutainment mission to reach out to young audiences and families with young children and diversify the population of museum-goers (Black, 2005; Kolter & Kolter, 1998).

The understanding of what constitutes a traditional museum has been described largely in functional terms. The purposes of traditional museums have been perceived as tangible and concrete, equivalent to the essence of the “material evidence” which in the past has been the focal point of museums (Montaner & Oliveras, 1986; Weil, 1995, p. 47). In traditional museums, with the Egyptian Museum being a good example, artefacts were revered for their originality; provenance, for example, was a key characteristic of a legitimate museum artefact. Indeed, notions of originality, value and integrity have been at the heart of the traditional museum brand and are a fundamental measure of museum distinctiveness. Original artefacts are often precious – too precious indeed to even be procured by museums or stored and exhibited for any length of time (Bennett, 1995).

Traditional museums have long been associated also with visitor’s learning experience. Traditional museums have positioned themselves in the market at the “serious education” rather than the “fun entertainment” end of the continuum and “departures from this tradition is disparaged” (Bown, 1995; Packer, 2004, p. 58). Indeed, notions of scholarship and
seriousness have been also at the heart of the traditional museum brand and are a fundamental measure of its distinctiveness (Chhabra, 2007; Goulding, 2000; Harrison, 2005).

Yet, modern museums, with Te Papa being a prominent example, are very different from museums of the past; the learning/educational experience and the role of the artefacts are increasingly blurred in the modern museum. Modern trends in museology have broadened the range of subject matter and introduced many interactive exhibits, which give the visitor the opportunity to make choices and engage in activities that will ensure the experience varies from person to person. Notions of leisure, infotainment, interactivity and hands-on experiences have been the components which lie at the root of all definitions of the modern museum (Black, 2005; Chan, 2009; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Kolter & Kolter, 1998).

However the nature of learning/educational experiences and visual and sensory experiences is not sufficient to explain all the differences in functions of traditional and modern museums. In seeking to demonstrate the other roles of traditional and modern museums, one needs to look beyond their undeniable educational value and interactive and fun learning experience, to a range of other visitors’ motives and experiences. If we know why people visit traditional and modern museums and what experiences they take away from the museums, we will learn something about the role of each type of museum to different groups of visitors. The research problem in which the current study is based derives primarily from this argument, and is described in the following section.

1.2 Traditional and Modern Museums: the Research Problem and Research Objectives

Buried within the construct scholars call the museum visitor’s motive and experience lie answers to fundamental questions about the role of traditional and modern museums and the differences and similarities between each type of museum. These are all tremendously important issues, and these alone would be justification for trying to better understand the traditional and modern museum presentations and offerings vis-à-vis visitors’ motivations and experiences.

It is not possible to examine the roles of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums in the absence of understanding domestic and international visitors’ motives and different experiences across both types of site. Accordingly, the study is structured around the distinctions and similarities between domestic and international visitors’ motives and experiences at both museums.
At present, there is a lack of qualitative visitor insights into the functioning of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums. Investigating visitors’ expectations, needs, wants and interests in Egyptian and New Zealand museums is usually secondary to the research agenda, if mentioned at all (Hassan, 2005; Hawass, 2005a; Linda, 2005; Mansour, 2005; McIntosh, 2004; Page & Hall, 2003; Pearce, Tan, & Schott, 2004b; Ryan, 2006; Ryan & Pike, 2003; Sibley, 2007; Wilson et al., 2006; Zeppel, 1997). At the time of beginning this thesis no in-depth research into the motivations and experiences of visitors at Te Papa had been conducted, although three brief studies had been published by Armstrong (2002), McIntosh, Smith, & Ingram (2000) and McIntosh, Hinch, and Ingram (2002).

Following the commencement of this study, a qualitative research project investigating the visit experience of six adult visitors at the Museum of Wellington City and Seas was published (Sibley, 2007). In her study of visitors’ perceptions of the Signs of a Nation exhibition at Te Papa and their spatial use of the exhibit, Kerry Armstrong (2002) emphasised the need for a deeper exploration of visitors’ personal agendas and experiences at Te Papa in terms of motivations, perceptions, attitudes, thoughts, satisfaction and learning. Armstrong (2002, p. iii) reiterated that her “thesis is not an exhaustive study but does provide valuable starting points for deeper investigation in the areas investigated to better understand the visitor museum relationship”. Equally, Sibley (2007) emphasised the need for a larger study at Te Papa that would allow for comparisons of a representative range of visitors of different types.

In relation to Egyptian Museum research, after this project commenced, a brief study of visitors’ interpretations of the King Tutankhamen exhibition at the Egyptian Art Museum in Cairo was published by French anthropologist Emmanuel Grimaud (2008). There had been no previous studies exploring visitors’ personal agendas and their reactions to the exhibits in any Egyptian museums. Dr. Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), admits that although many scientific studies, restoration and renovation of the existing museums have been carried out, “[w]e still lack academic studies that examine tourists’ experiences to our museums and heritage sites” (Shahine, 2004, p. 22).

Thus in order to investigate and compare the broader roles of this traditional and modern museum, based on the motivations and the nature of experience for different types of visitors, there is still much research to be done. Specifically, there is very little understanding of the visitor’s goals, interests, expectations and experiences at the two different museums: one a long established traditional museum and the other one of the world's most modern museums.
Demographic characteristics of the visitors and participation patterns have been the backbone of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums’ audience surveys but they do not explain the visit experience of different visitors and the role of traditional and modern museums in relation to the visitor. Questions about why visitors come to traditional and modern museums and what types of experiences traditional and modern museums offer to visitors are sorely neglected issues.

The aims and objectives for the current study were developed from the research problem outlined above.

1.2.1 Research objectives

In order to explore and compare the different roles of the traditional and modern museum presentations and offerings, by comparing the Egyptian Museum of Cairo and Te Papa Museum of Wellington, this research set out to:

- explore the key motivational factors behind the visit to The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums; and
- identify the types of experiences that emerged as central forces in the visitor experience across both sites.

Since similarities/differences existed between visitors’ motives and experiences at each site, the study divided up research participants into two groups: domestic and international.

A mix of qualitative research methods, including interviews, observational approach, document analysis, reflective and academic journals, and the concept of historical participant, was employed to answer the study’s research objectives. This combination of qualitative research methods enables the research objectives to be addressed with both depth and breadth and allows each method to compensate for the limitations of the other. This mix of qualitative methods is discussed in greater detail in chapter Five.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

In exploring the traditional and modern museum presentations and offerings vis-à-vis visitors’ motivations and experiences, this study examines a number of different theoretical perspectives, drawing from a range of museum studies and practices that are relevant to this
research. In particular, the study examines the notion of the museum as an experiential product (Noordegraaf, 2004; Pine & Gilmore, 1999), the concepts of the interactive experience model (Falk, 1993a; Falk & Dierking, 1992, 2000), and mindfulness/mindlessness theory (Moscardo, 1992, 1999).

Noordegraaf (2004) argues that museums do not function in isolation but instead are solidly embedded in contemporary commercial culture and society. In this way, she places the evolution of the script of museum presentation in the wider visual culture of the twentieth century and compares it to the script of commercial presentation particularly that of shops, department stores and shopping malls (Noordegraaf, 2004). Noordegraaf (2004) employs Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) concept of The Experience Economy to provide a significant analysis on the development of the script of museum commercial presentations.

The experiential model developed by Pine and Gilmore (1999) emphasises that experiences are not about teaching or entertaining customers, they are about engaging them. In relation to museums and recreational settings, Pine and Gilmore (1999, p. 171) argue that when museums are successful, they go one step beyond the presentation of information and teaching and provide what they call “transformations”. Transformations refer to the engagement of visitors in a personal, memorable way. In other words, transformations occur from highly engaging and personalised museum experiences.

A second focus of analysis is Falk and Dierking’s (1993a; 1992, 2000) conceptualisation of the museum experience as involving an interaction between personal, social and physical contexts of the visitor; these three contexts need to be examined together in order to fully understand the museum experience. A third focus for analysis in this research is Moscardo’s (1992, 1999) application of mindfulness/mindlessness principles which offer insights to further our understanding of the nature of the visitors’ experiences in museums. Mindfulness refers to a state of mind which is actively processing presented data (for example, brochures, signs, labels, pamphlets, maps) within a setting, whereas mindlessness is considered a type of detachment from information in one’s setting (Moscardo, 1992, 1999).

1.4 Explanation of Terms used in the Thesis

A glossary of terms and names sourced from personal knowledge, International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) and Ngata English – Maori Dictionary (Ngata, 1995) is provided at the end of the chapters before the appendices. The glossary was developed as a
tool to assist readers unfamiliar with Maori and Arabic terms. The glossary included the following: the names of some Egyptian and New Zealand exhibitions, artists, Egyptologists, ancient Egyptian gods, kings, and queens and geographical names of cities and towns in Egypt and New Zealand.

Throughout this thesis the writer has used the term Western in the most general sense to refer only to Egyptian Museum’s visitors who come from Israel, Europe, North America and Australasia. The writer also refers to the Egyptian Museum and Te Papa throughout this study and not The Egyptian Museum of Cairo and The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa to facilitate the readability of the thesis. Lastly, the writer has also used the term agenda which refers to a set of desires, needs, and motivations for what the museum visit will hold (Dierking, 1989; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Leinhardt & Knutson, 2004).

1.5 Outline of the Thesis Structure and Content

This introductory chapter has outlined the rationale and background for the research objectives. The thesis is organised into the eleven remaining chapters. Chapter Two discusses the evolution and changing nature of museums in the late twentieth century. Chapter Three reviews the structure and history of case study sites by providing background information on both museums since this information offers an important context when presenting the findings. Chapter Four consists of a comprehensive literature review which brings or combines together a range of disciplines including museum studies, leisure studies, tourism, psychology, and education. Chapter Five introduces and discusses the multiple qualitative methods used in this study to explore the motivations and the experiences of research participants. The qualitative methods included a case study approach, documentation reviews and archival records, interviews, observations and historical participant approach.

Chapter Six provides the demographic/characteristics of the participants at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums. The visitor profile in this chapter presents data and insights into respondents’ demographics; though it did not reveal why visitors attended the museums and what experiences they took from the museum. Accordingly, chapters Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, and Eleven detail the main research findings and discussing them in the light of the relevant literature. In doing so, these chapters give insights into the motivations and experiences of international and domestic participants in order to reveal the museum’s role. In the concluding
chapter Twelve, I summarise the key findings of this study and refer to the fulfilment of this study’s aims, the contributions of the findings and the future areas of research.

Lastly, an alphabetical glossary and twelve appendices are provided.

Abbreviations

During data analysis, excerpts from interview transcripts were identified with a two letter abbreviation and a code number that refers back to the exact and complete interview transcript. The two letter abbreviation makes it easy for the researcher to differentiate between museum staff and international and domestic visitors at each site. For example, (IS) stands for Egyptian Museum staff, (IT) for international visitors at the Egyptian Museum, (IE) for domestic visitors at the Egyptian Museum, (NS) for museum staff at Te Papa, (WL) for international visitors at Te Papa museum and (IN) for domestic visitors at Te Papa.

Additionally, the letter (O) refers to observational data and the letter (F) stands for field notes. I decided not to insert the two letter abbreviations and code numbers of museum staff and visitors into the text of the thesis because they can be confusing to the reader. Still, I indicated international participants’ nationalities in the text of the thesis.
Chapter 2
Evolution of Museums

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a broad overview of the origins and evolution of museums. It discusses the changing role and identity of the public museum, which is achieved mainly through an historical narrative. This narrative tracks changes in the meaning of the museum from its earliest European beginnings, drawing upon multiple academic traditions spanning cultural, museums and heritage studies, politics and marketing.

2.1.1 What is a museum, and what should it be? From the traditional to the modern model

*The forbidding monumentality of the traditional museum has no place in the life of a modern Pacific nation (Te Papa Project Development Team, 1985, p. 11-12).*

What is a museum, and what should it be? This question has been raised repeatedly internationally, by different people ranging from politicians, museum professionals, those linked to the cultural objects held by museums, and most recently, members of business communities and members of the broader community. It is not, however, a question with any fixed answer (Sturgess, 2009). Private museums date back at least to classical times, however these pre-modern precursors bear little resemblance to the public museum we know today (Murray, 1904; Sturgess, 2009).

Historically, the Greeks and Romans were responsible for the early development of museums. The term “museum” derives from the Greek word “mouseion”, meaning a space of contemplation or a shrine. The Romans used the term to describe a place of philosophical debates and discussion (Woodhead & Stansfield, 1994, pp. 3-5). As a result the word “mouseion”, originally “a temple or holy place”, came to mean “a place of research and learning” (Macrone, 1992, p. 70). These Greek and Roman museums were commonly established simply to display the memento collections of travellers to distance destinations (Alexander, 2007).
The period of European imperialist growth from 1870 to 1914 was accompanied by a similar trend of collecting and accumulating artefacts, which are at the focal point of such world eminent museums as the British Museum and Musee de l’homme. Basically from these times museums were the storehouses of cultural artefacts that represented other cultures in the world and from the collections acquired through invasions they represented the influence that a particular nationality had over another (Macrone, 1992). The 1992 Oxford Dictionary supports the storehouse idea in its definition of museum as a “building used for storing and exhibiting objects of historical, scientific, or cultural interest” (The Pocket Oxford Dictionary, 1992).

Early European museums were disorganized and mainly disposed to create surprise rather than provide learning or instruction. In existence prior to the classification systems, at times they even made up and exhibited legendary creatures such as mermen and the “basilisk”, a mythical dragon (Murray, 1904, p. 204).

On the other hand, the traditional modern understanding of what comprises a public museum has always been explained in “functional” or practical terms (Harrison, 2005, p. 38; Sturgess, 2009). Since their establishment, modern museums have been viewed primarily as places of material display, but concurrently as sites of research (Vergo, 1989). At their centre is an essential veneration for the museum collection, which is accumulated empirically by experts on behalf of the public and future generations. Consequently, the core “material evidence” is not merely exhibited but also collected, conserved, protected, studied, and interpreted (Weil, 1995, p. 46). In the process, the museum develops into a well-regarded cultural authority, a storehouse of authentic knowledge, or indeed, a “truth purveyor” (Harrison, 2005, p. 38-39; Sturgess, 2009).

Accordingly, museums have long represented a creator-driven philosophy (Dicks, 2003b; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Museum professionals have usually perceived their cultural objects, collections of art, and scientific specimens as distinctive relics of cultural value; a policy which validated and conditioned all methods to their presentations and offerings. This specific identity, borne of a relatively recent history, originated in the Enlightenment philosophy of late eighteenth-century Europe – or as Bella Dicks has labelled it, the “age of exhibition” (as cited in Sturgess, 2009, p. 4).

As indicated by Dicks (2003a) it is no accident that museums thrived at a period in history when monarchical power was melting away to make way for the democratic nation state.
While during the Renaissance private collections were exhibited only to wealthy and aristocratic elite, the political atmosphere of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries required a bourgeois and working-class population to feel incorporated “in the nation’s culture so they could see it as part of their own inheritance” (as cited in Sturgess, 2009, p. 4). For a public reconceived as a national citizenry rather than a subject people, the resulting legacy has been the release of this philosophy into the public domain through visiting museums. Thus in addition to museums, this era also witnessed the initiation of other, associated, institutions of cultural displays: panoramas, dioramas, national and international expositions, arcades, and department stores (Aalst & Boogaarts, 2002; Bennett, 1995; MacDonald, 1996; Sturgess, 2009; Weil, 2004).

This historical reading is also shared by Eileen Hooper-Greenhill (2000), who maintains that the French Revolution produced the environment for growth of a new knowledge, a new logic and rationality, out of which came a new functionality for a new establishment. Nevertheless in trying to reach recently liberated citizens, museums were not merely “benign or apolitical”: even the role of collecting objects has an ideological or political aspect (Sturgess, 2009, p. 5). During the second half of the nineteenth century – the time in which many of today’s major metropolitan museums were first established – an additional justification was ascribed to the museum: that of public education. Museums of natural history, science, archaeology particularly took up a responsibility to produce and disseminate knowledge via the development and exhibition of their collections (Bennett, 1995; Black, 2005).

While supposedly espousing democratic notions, it has been broadly accepted within museum studies that notions of public education, learning and personal improvement were attached to the exercise of state control. Several critics have come to view the traditional museum as another establishment of modern government: a place permeated by bourgeois ideals, formed increasingly to disseminate civic reform (Bennett, 1995; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). In this manner it would function not through direct control, but rather by securing public support for liberal values and objectives.

Tony Bennett adopts this theory most comprehensively in his powerful book The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics (1995). For Bennett (1995), the history of museums is one of political rationality; or the belief that museums grew as educational institutions, parallel to other disciplinary organisations such as prisons, the police force, and the asylum (Sturgess, 2009). Thus the goal of the nineteenth century museums was to instil a sense of morality and
good behaviour in the minds and hearts of citizens, as much as it was to inform and reflect their lived experience. French post-structuralist Foucault (1975/1977) supported this approach, mingling his interest in styles of institutional discipline with his later works on governmentality. This particular formulation also contains a strong sense of cultural hegemony, in that museums are viewed as always reinforcing dominant social forms (of class, gender, race, familiar ideas, and other relations of power) (Sturgess, 2009).

Some museum theorists have critiqued such a strong Foucauldian stance. For example, Andrea Witcomb (2003) in particular claims it overlooks both the popular pleasure acquired through museum experiences and an economic history of the museum (Sturgess, 2009). However the majority of critics do acknowledge the effect of the civic role upon the early twentieth century museum, and the majority also acknowledge that nineteenth-century rationales were fundamentally at odds, or at least as Vergo has labelled it, “uneasy bedfellows” (as cited in Sturgess, 2009, p. 6).

Early public museums seldom lived up to the ideal espoused of attracting an egalitarian sample of the population. By the early 1900s, the middle-classes had come to consider personal improvement through culture-biological sciences, the fine and decorative arts, and technological developments as a sort of duty, while the working-classes were more likely to embrace the growing forms of social and pastime experiences found at the amusement parks and various fairs (Dicks, 2003a; Duncan, 1994). By providing some public information, classifications and labelling, museums successfully created a setting where “culture on display for the public also demonstrated its stratification” (Dicks, 2003a, p. 6).

2.1.2 The Changing nature of museums in the late twentieth century

It was not until the end of the twentieth century that a further change in the definition of the museum came about; a change that mirrored the emergence of a new body of academic writings concerning the museum and museological studies. Since the early 1980s, this body of literature has dedicated a great deal of discussion and debate to the concept of an essential break from old museum practices and ways of thinking (Sturgess, 2009; Witcomb, 2003). Avant-garde and postmodernist thinking also became increasingly dominant for museum studies during this period, especially in England and other parts of Europe. Therefore the first important compilation of this time, The Museum Time Machine (Lumley, 1988), was an endeavour to investigate bias in the various interpretations which museum exhibitions place upon history and social markers such as class, gender and race.
This publication was closely followed by the landmark anthology The New Museology (Vergo, 1989), which announced a call by critics and museum practitioners for “change, relevance, curatorial reorientation and redistribution of power” within the museum community (Stam, 2006, pp. 54-55; Sturgess, 2009). The very title was a blatant proposition that the conventional museum method, made apparently inevitable by scientific and rationalist discourse, was not the only way of producing displays of culture (Sturgess, 2009). According to Harrison (2005) and Sturgess (2009), new heritage practitioners and museum professionals tried to emphasize the objectives and political dimensions of museums against the traditionally narrow focus on simple method and practice. In this way they sought to position the museum within “place-based community”, substituting the ‘object’ for the social ‘subject’; a concept best demonstrated by the ecomuseum movement which was instigated in France and Sweden toward the end of the 1970s (Harrison, 2005; Sturgess, 2009, pp. 7-8).

The 1980s also witnessed the effects of post-industrial capitalism, as the Western world and the Middle East wrestled to adjust to a new economic reality. It was a decade of recession coupled with entrepreneurial urban strategies and privatisation in local economic development. Accordingly, many museums worldwide which traditionally relied heavily on public funding found themselves under severe financial restrictions as neoliberal policy agendas thrived (Bayat, 2000; Le Heron & Pawson, 1996; Nasser, 2006).

### 2.1.3 Museums in Egypt

The arrival of neoliberal policy agendas in the Middle East during the 1980s unleashed important socioeconomic changes. The free market economy has made consumer commodities available and enriched society’s upper strata, while increasing income disparity. Many Middle Eastern states (including Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) have retreated from the traditional social responsibilities and public funding that characterized their early populist development. Most social provisions have been undermined and poor people must rely on themselves for survival. For example, the Egyptian government, after some delays, began to implement the recommendations of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to adjust the economy with rigorous public sector reform and privatization. Subsidies on basic food stuffs such as rice, sugar and cooking oil have been removed, and subsidies on items such as fuel, electricity and transport have been reduced (Bayat, 2000).
Yet major museums in Egypt or tourist-oriented museums (such as the Egyptian Museum, the Coptic museum, the Luxor museum, the Solar Boat museum, the Aswan museum and the Greco-Roman museum of Alexandria) have been immune from the neoliberal policy agendas and have continued to enjoy steady government funding. It is also important to stress the fact that these major museums earn substantial revenue from international visitors (over 72 percent of it at the Egyptian Museum alone) (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007). Hence, because of their foreign earning potential and continuing government funding these museums do not have to learn to better market themselves.

Also, unlike local museums where staff have to be generalists and carry out a variety of roles, tourist-oriented museums hire both full time and part time professional staff with narrowly restricted expertise (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002). In 2008, the full-time professional staff was increased to fulfil the Egyptian Museum's expanded functions. For example, the Egyptian Museum coordinated with the Ministry for Social Cooperation in creating a museum education programme for children in orphanages and special needs institutions as well as for blind and hearing-impaired visitors. These programmes have been staffed by a group of highly qualified professionals drawn from education, tourism and heritage sectors who have extensive input into the programmes (from the Egyptian Museum, personal communication, June 2008).

Local museums or non-tourist museums in Egypt have been affected to varying degrees, depending on the willingness of national, provincial and municipal governments to maintain their funding (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002). Since the late 1980s, the Egyptian government has been struggling to maintain local museums and many local museums struggle to survive in the face of scarce state resources (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 1998/1999). One additional problem facing these museums has been rapid growth in the museum sector. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the number and variety of local museums in Egypt increased dramatically, with a sharp rise in the number of rural museums devoted to modern Egyptian art (for example, the Gezira Art Museum and Alexandria’s Museum of Modern Art); a steady increase in modern history museums (for example, the Military Museum in Alamein, Gamal Abdel Nasser Museum, and Sadat Museum); and a proliferation of new science museums in every region of the country (for example, Alexandria Aquarium, Egyptian Geological Museum, and Qasr Al-Eini Medical Museum) (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002).
A second problem is that almost all of local museums are currently free of charge (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007); consequently, they have given up tangible revenue that may sustain operational costs. Ironically, the government believes that, unlike major tourist museums, local museums should be held in the same regard as public libraries. The Ministry of Culture believes the placement of the admissions desk/ticket counter and the ineffectiveness of limited free admission policies prevents local museums from reaching a broader, less-experienced local visitor. Thus, the Ministry of Culture has stated that “local museums, if they become oriented towards making profits, local visitors will not feel motivated to come [and] local museums will not be essential elements within the community and an important educational resource for all individuals wishing to learn” (Saleh, Sourouzian, Al-Misri, & Al-Misriyah, 1987; The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007). Despite the challenging aspects of charging people an entry fee for a local museum, it is reasonable to conclude that admission fees are, to some extent, vital to local museums’ sustainability.

A third problem is limited private financial support and a lack of incentives for private donations to museums. Generating income and privatising local museums are major issues that the Egyptian government and the museum community have been discussing in the last eight years. The government will no longer support and administer them, and it is argued that privatisation programme will provide local museums with more effective administration and will bring total independence from government politics (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007). However, Egyptian industries and private institutions are not accustomed to donating money to museums or any Egyptian government projects, and individuals are equally hesitant to donate money to museums for fear it will be lost in bureaucracy. Thus practical problems are enormous: objects in many storage areas are deteriorating because temperature and humidity are not controlled and staffing is inadequate (Baligh, 2005; The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002). Local museums also lack trained personnel. Many of those on museum staffs are scholars and graduate students from different fields (for example, geography, architecture, history, archaeology, and literature), but very few know museum work, and they are learning on the job (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 1998/1999).
2.1.4 **Museums in the Western world and the New Zealand experience**

Similar to museums in Egypt, museums in the Western world - heavily dependent on public funding - found themselves under severe financial constraints as neoliberal policy agendas proliferated. In the USA and England, for example, museums had business and market-determined methods imposed upon them by legislation which demanded new responsibility for the use of federal or government funds (Harrison, 2005). In New Zealand, the fourth Labour government of 1984-90 applied an economic policy agenda which had similar impacts on the public sector. Commonly known as the “New Zealand experiment” (Kelsey, 1997, p. 71) this era of structural re-adjustment generated a radically deregulated, market-driven economy. Its creators commercialised state-owned enterprises, changed tax structures, and drastically decreased social spending levels as an effort to increase levels of economic growth (Le Heron & Pawson, 1996).

The effect of this ideological separation of economy from Keynesian welfarism was to compel civic cultural organisations in New Zealand into the private realm in quest of alternative sources of financial support. Such commercialisation entailed the embracing of business management paradigm and models, which in turn produced new interest in marketing and promotional discourse, and the modern-day political doctrines of place promotion and tourism (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Museums (within local government jurisdiction) were certainly not alone in losing funding. Arts producers, media, literary providers, and sporting institutions in general were expected to function commercially as well as contribute to the larger economy; in this regard, both the privatisation of media and the consolidation of the New Zealand film industry provide relevant parallels (Waller, 1996).

Consequently these pressures contributed considerably to a worldwide diversification of the conventional museum product. No longer restricted only to historical and ethnographic objects, the end of the twentieth century witnessed still another propagation of new types of cultural display: “the 1980s heritage boom” (Dicks, 2003b, p. 32) of living history sites.

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3 The ideas of British economist John Maynard Keynes shaped the foundation of New Zealand economy policy between 1935 and 1974. This was the time of great welfare state, in which prosperity and high level of living was coupled with a high regulated, interventionist economy (Le Heron & Pawson, 1996).
proliferated alongside a rapidly increasing theme park industry, in which the Disney Corporation exemplified a form of free enterprise and business management (Harrison, 2005).

At the same time, leisure-entertainment centres such as IMAX theatres and the modern shopping mall swelled during this time, as did hybrid, experiential discovery centres blending the traditional museum with technology and interactive experiences (Dicks, 2003a; MacDonald & Alsford, 1995). Paris’s renowned modern art centre the Centre Pompidou (founded in 1977) was one of the first sites internationally to do this; whereas closer to home, Sydney’s Powerhouse Museum (founded in 1988) brought together a historic collection of post-industrial technologies with new display models. The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa, opened in 1998) is the leading New Zealand prototype, and may perhaps be a more important one than the Powerhouse given its iconic status nationally.

What has unified these new forms is thus a movement towards market-orientation and commodification. The legacy of this period has been an international revitalisation of the sector, at the same time the museum collection itself has moved at least in part towards a focus on client relationships and means of communication. The most salient sign of this is the way in which educators, marketers and public programmes staff have divested substantial power from the traditional museum curator (Harrison, 1997; Witcomb, 2003). This is also noticeable in museum presentations that seek to unite recreation and education, in recognition that the medium of display must also be the message (Black, 2005; MacDonald & Alsford, 1995; MacDonald, 1996). Hence a museum may still be a place of instruction and scholarship, but these are less likely to be it’s only, or even its main, justification for existence. Instead of collecting, interpreting, and exhibiting, museums are now more likely to use words and phrases like entertainment, social experiences, leisure, access, social responsibility, and community involvement (Witcomb, 2003).

Up until now, modern museological thinking on the shift towards a commercial model has ranged from the unwavering critics (for example, Appleton, 2001; Dutton, 1998; Watkins, 2004).

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4 Commodification is an aspect of modernity, and the possible valuing of the images of commodities above the commodities themselves. It has been claimed (and disputed) that the rise of a global culture is based on the ubiquity of particular commodities, from soft drinks to software, and clusters of commodified culture—entertainment, media, museums, and heritage tourism, and other tourist attractions—have made their mark on contemporary urban life (Aalst & Boogaarts, 2002; McTavish, 1998).
1994) to those who support its democratising potential (for example, Black, 2005; Kolter & Kolter, 1998; MacDonald & Alsford, 1995; McTavish, 1998; Prentice, 2001; Tobelem, 1997). But in spite of different individual preferences and thinking, the consensus appears to be much more united: critics may differ with the impacts of private subsidy models but for the most part are acquiescent to their realistic inevitabilities, undoubtedly lending support to the view that a complete paradigm change has already taken place in the museum sector (Montaner & Oliveras, 1986).

Accordingly, museums’ management have began to respond to these changes by thinking and acting more as businesses which meant that museums now had to learn to market themselves more effectively. Reduced funding has created a dilemma, as museums still require enough funds and marketing expertise to attract a steady and increasingly diverse audience and have to seek extra funding through sponsorship and other revenue gathering exercises like retail opportunities and entry fees and friends of museum societies. Visitors are also demanding a quality experience which often entails museums embracing modern technology similar to other tourist attractions while offering both an educational and entertaining experience (Hudson, 1998; Kolter & Kolter, 1998).

2.2 Summary

This chapter has provided a broad background to the changing nature of the public museum, which is accomplished primarily through an historical account. This account tracks changes in the role of the museum from its earliest European development to today, drawing upon multiple academic works ranging from museum to cultural, politics and marketing studies.

It has been argued that social political and economic changes have altered museums’ roles. In the context of global economic restructuring in the Western world, governments have looked more carefully at their budgets and public spending, meaning that museums are no longer funded as heavily by governments as they used to be. This new situation has pushed many museums to act as professional businesses and to better market themselves and offer a quality experience. In Egypt, major tourist museums have not been affected by the neoliberal policy. They continued to enjoy government funding and foreign spending which prevented them from acting more as businesses. Still, local museums in Egypt have been affected to varying degrees, depending on the willingness of government to keep its funding.
The next chapter will provide a broad overview of the case study sites since this overview provides an important context for understanding the findings.
Chapter 3
An Overview of the Case Study Sites

3.1 Introduction

Several scholars have argued that an historical overview and the familiarisation with the structure of a museum is required in order to understand how the physical context affects the motivational, affective, perceptual, and learning experiences of unguided visitors in the informal museum environment (Bitgood, 2002; Bitgood & Loomis, 1993; Bitner, 1992; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Goulding, 2000; Noordegraaf, 2004; Packer, 2004, 2008). In view of that, this chapter will present background information on The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums since this information provides an important context for interpreting the findings, and in particular, visitors’ experiences in relation to the museum presentations and offerings. This background information is also crucial for understanding how The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums fit within the context of modern consumption sites which are characterised by a new spatial form that is a synthesis of leisure/entertainment and educational/learning experience (Black, 2005; Delaney, 1992; Packer, 2004).

3.1.1 Background and context of the Egyptian Museum

Before examining the economic and socio-cultural aspects of the Egyptian Museum, it is important to make a short detour to briefly examine how six major historical events in Egypt were closely related to eighteenth and early twentieth century international tourists’ interests in the Pharaonic objects. The discussion of the six episodes provides some insights into the economic and socio-cultural context of the Egyptian Museum.

The first, and perhaps most significant, episode to have a lasting impact on tourists’ interest in Pharaonic objects was Napoleon’s ill-fated invasion of Egypt between 1798 and 1801, considered by many historians as a revolutionary incident which sparked an enduring Western fascination with the monumental legacy of Pharaonic civilization (Brier, 1999; Burleigh, 2008; Cole, 2007). More detail about Pharaonic artefacts became known in the wake of Bonaparte’s invasion of Egypt. The French expedition was concerned, among other things, with discovering and investigating ancient monuments. As a result, the famous French linguist and historian Jean-François Champollion deciphered the Egyptian hieroglyphic
writing on the *Rosetta Stone* which became his greatest accomplishment and helped him to understand the grammar and compose a lexicon of the ancient Egyptian writing (Brier, 1999; Reid, 1992).

After Napoleon's invasion force withdrew, the British and Egyptian governments established the sea and overland route from London through Egypt to India in 1830. Soon Egypt became the favourite destination of elite European travellers, artists, adventurers, sculptors, poets, and photographers (Conner, 1983; Jeffreys, 2003). Subsequently, the opening of the Suez Canal (1869), the British occupation of Egypt (1882), Thomas Cook’s travelling business in Egypt, and the discovery of the tomb of *King Tutankhamen* in Luxor (1922) have left a permanent imprint on the travel business and tourism publicity in Egypt (Hassan, 2003; Hazbun, 2007; Humbert, 2003).

The inauguration of the Suez Canal in 1869 by the French Empress Eugenie brought a host of visitors and publicity to Egypt. An ever-increasing number of European tourists journeyed to Egypt for sightseeing and adventure (Haddad, 2005; Saad El-Din, 2004). For example, Thomas Cook brought his first group of tourists to Egypt to watch the opening ceremony of the Suez Canal, which he described as the “greatest engineering feat of the present century” in his *Excursionist and Tourist Traveller* magazine (Hassan, 1999). In addition, the celebration of the completion of the Suez Canal provided the government with an opportunity to build several new hotels in Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said to accommodate international travellers (Hazbun, 2007; Saad El-Din, 2004).

After the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and the virtual inclusion of Egypt within the British Empire, European fairs and news journals of the period provided rich descriptions and images of the Pharaonic monuments of Egypt, its oases, the deserts, the river Nile, the fellaheen of the Nile (peasant farmers) and Bedouin tribes all of which boosted the interest of the European masses in visiting the country (Haddad, 2005; Khatib, 2003; Reid, 2002). Prior to the close of the nineteenth century, Egypt recognised tourism as an important industry with the official opening of Thomas Cook Company which began arranging excursions down the Nile River and promoting a quality package of activities and experiences of historical treasures and the winter sunshine.

Thomas Cook, a true businessman, had an extraordinary forethought and he meticulously developed his travelling industry in Egypt basing it on the needs of his customers. To make his tours more alluring and exciting, Cook’s tourists’ handbook for Egypt and his brochures
showed various images of the Nile-cruisers, the pyramids, the Sphinx, the ancient relics and different Egyptian customs. It is quite obvious that the development of the Egyptian tourism industry owed much to Thomas Cook. His company employed the largest labour force in Egypt and offered the country a distinctive reputation in the realm of the tourism industry (Hazbun, 2007; Reid, 2002; Travelers in the Middle East Archive, 1897).

The discovery of the tomb of *King Tutankhamen* in Luxor in 1922 by Howard Carter also seized Europe’s attention and imagination. The marvels of golden masks, jewels and statues found in Tutankhamen’s tomb thrilled the world. Numerous foreign newspapers allotted substantial space of their pages to report the discovery and thus a flood of well-heeled European tourists poured into the country. In the meantime, Egypt soared to the forefront of tourist destinations around the world, attracting a steady flow of international royals and dignitaries such as Queen Elizabeth of Belgium, who brought with her Crown Prince Leopold and an entourage of diplomats (Humbert, 2003; Rizk, 2000).

To sum up, the six major events mentioned above have sparked Western visitors’ interest in ancient Egyptian relics which still burns as strongly today as ever. In the context of this research, the ancient Egyptian objects continue to fascinate the Western tourists, and are deemed the museum’s most significant asset overriding all the Greco-Roman collections. The following chapter (chapter Seven International Participants Motives and Experiences at the Egyptian Museum), then, will explore the international visitors’ motivations and their engagements with the objects, particularly how they experienced various statues and artefacts in the museum.

### 3.1.2 Historical background: the Egyptian Museum

The idea of building an Egyptian Museum goes back to 1828 when the Governor of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha (1805–1848), passed several laws to halt the removal of Pharaonic artefacts from the country by foreign diplomats, traders, aristocrats, scholars and art collectors, all of them competing to plunder Egypt’s antiquities and to smuggle them into Europe (El-Saddik, 2005; Hawass & Garrett, 2002; Lutz, 2007). It was during this time also that Muhammad Ali asked the famous French scholar Jean-Francois Champollion (1790-1832), who was called the founding father of Egyptology, to write an accurate account of Egypt’s Pharaonic artefacts with the intention of preserving and cataloguing them.
Champollion then produced his famous two volumes Monuments de l’Égypte et de la Nubie just before his premature death in 1832. Soon afterwards, in 1835, Muhammad Ali established Egypt’s first antiquities museum in Al-Azbakiya Gardens, located in central Cairo. This museum (formerly known as the Al-Azbakiya Museum) was, however, unfit to house any more of the archaeological findings that were continually being excavated, and its objects were transferred to another building in the Salah El-Din Citadel situated in Cairo's Eastern skyline with its raised rocky platform on the edge of Cairo (El-Saddik, 2005; Hawass & Garrett, 2002; Kamil, 2005a, 2005b; Lutz, 2007; Maxwell, Fitzpatrick, Jenkins, & Sattin, 2006; Reid, 1992).

By 1855, the French archaeologist Auguste Mariette, who was fascinated by ancient Egypt, had already started preparations for the construction of a new museum in Bulaq district, on the North-Eastern bank of the Nile in Cairo. The Bulaq Museum was opened in 1863 and Mariette enriched it with different types of Pharaonic collections. Unexpectedly, in 1878 the Bulaq Museum was damaged and many of the objects were destroyed as a result of a flood of the Nile River. The artefacts were relocated again to another museum in the Giza district close to the Pyramids, where they remained until they were transferred for the last time to the current museum in downtown Cairo in 1902.

The current museum was built by The Ministry of Public Works in 1902 with the intention of keeping a record of antiquities and housing the growing number of archaeological finds. The museum operates under a centralised administration known as The Supreme Council of Antiquities with oversight from the Ministry of Culture. The first collection in the museum had been assembled by the famous French archaeologist, Gaston Maspero, whose various archaeological findings improved techniques of field excavation (El-Saddik, 2005; Hawass & Garrett, 2002; Maxwell et al., 2006; Reid, 2002).

The current Egyptian Museum is one of the world's most famous museums. It is also one of the most significant attractions for international tourists visiting Cairo (El-Daly, 2003; Hawass, 2005a; Lutz, 2007; Maxwell et al., 2006; Nasser, 2006; Reid, 2002; West, 1995; Wynn, 2007). It is located in the busiest commercial district and retail areas in downtown Cairo (called Tahrir Square) along with numerous bazaars, shopping malls, department stores,

It is often called SCA. The council is the branch of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture which is responsible for the conservation, protection and regulation of all antiquities and archaeological excavations in Egypt.
rental car companies, hotels, motels, cafeterias, restaurants, coffee shops, cinemas and theatres. The mission of the museum is to preserve, document, conserve, research and exhibit collections, as well as to educate and inspire visitors (Babbie, 2004; El-Saddik, 2005; Tiradritti, 1999; West, 1995).

The museum does not only strive to preserve Egypt's cultural heritage, however, but also encourages tourism by focussing on the internationally renowned Pharaonic antiquities especially those deciphered and excavated by European scholars and archaeologists (Reid, 2002; West, 1995). For many of the international tourists visiting the museum, the focal point of the collection is deemed to be the tomb artefacts of the Pharaoh Tutankhamen and The Royal Mummy Room which includes 27 royal mummies from Pharaonic periods (Hawass & Vannini, 2008; Lutz, 2007; Shahine, 2003; Shahine, 2004; The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, 2004).

3.1.3 Economic and socio-cultural aspects of the Egyptian Museum

Egypt’s top-visited cultural museums include the five major ancient Egyptian antiquities museums: Egyptian, Solar Boat, Nubia, Luxor, and Graeco-Roman Museums, which hosted a combined average of about 2.5 million people per fiscal year from 2002 to 2005 and attracted a predominantly international audience (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002-2005). The Egyptian Museum attracts around 1.7 million visitors per year, twice the average admission to all other major antiquities museums in Egypt combined. The Solar Boat Museum comes in at a distant second averaging around 206,980 visitors per year. (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007). By comparison with museums emphasising Pharaonic and classical antiquity, the Coptic and Islamic Museums of Cairo operate on a modest scale with pre-renovation averages of around 43,600 and 21,600 visitors per fiscal year (2002-2005), respectively (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002-2005).

Despite new trends in the Egyptian tourist economy, with beach, diving, adventure and health tourism on the rise since 2004, admissions to the three major antiquities museums increased by over 55 percent from 2004 to 2007 (The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, 2004; The Egyptian Tourism Authority, 2002/2007). The Egyptian Museum continues to rank first in terms of earned income amongst museums (UK£ 38,833,746 per annum) (The Egyptian

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6 More than 12.8 million tourists visited Egypt in 2007, providing revenues of nearly $13.5 billion. The sector employs about 12 percent of Egypt's workforce (The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, 2007).
Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002-2005, 2007). It is important to note that this earned income includes rent travelling exhibitions, blockbuster exhibitions, and the museum’s collaboration with tour operators in Egypt and overseas.\(^7\) The Egyptian Museum and other ancient archaeological sites are high on the list of motivators for travel to Cairo. Activities in the capital reported by foreign tourists in 2007 included visiting the pyramids and Sphinx (73 percent), visiting the Egyptian Museum (66 percent), touring Khan el-Khalili Bazaar (41 percent), visiting Jewish sites (21 percent), and attending opera and live theatre performances (9 percent) (The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, 2007).

As stated above, the Pharaonic objects of Egypt have for more than a century fascinated international visitors. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, to learn that only 16 percent of total admissions to the Egyptian Museum in 2006 and 2007 were local Egyptians, who earned the museum less than two percent of its annual income from ticket sales. Students and researchers represent a high percentage of Egyptian visitors to the museum and are typically admitted free of charge; of the Luxor museum’s total admissions in 2007, 23 percent were complimentary (22.8 percent students and researchers, 0.2 percent VIP) (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2006a, 2007). One should note that the overwhelming majority of Egypt’s antiquities museums’ income is earned by foreign spending, over 72 percent of it at the Egyptian Museum alone (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007). This underscores the role of international tourism in sustaining these museums and programmes that would otherwise be prohibitive for tourists and domestic audience, and highlights the responsibility of the SCA to maintain and develop those programmes.

Both practically and theoretically, the division between international tourist and domestic tourist/local in Egypt has a problematic effect on museum practice in general. In actual fact, there are two separate types of museums in Egypt — tourist and non-tourist — and the museum’s public profile and character in large part determine a museum’s operation and the type of visitors (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 1998/1999). The tourist museums, such as the Egyptian Museum, charge for general entry and have a two-tiered entrance fees (a higher charge for international visitors than for domestic visitors).

\(^7\) For example, after a sell-out season in the USA and Europe, the acclaimed travelling exhibition Tutankhamen: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs opened at Melbourne Museum, Australia on 8 April 2011. The exhibition attracted around 500,000 visitors (Bennett, 2011).
The past one hundred years have seen the development of eleven times the number of museums housing archaeological material than were found in the fifty years between 1855 and 1905; at the time of this research in 2008 there were approximately 98 museums active in Egypt and at least 17 more in development (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007). The twentieth century also witnessed a significant increase in local museums incorporating modern and religious subjects and themes. Relatively, few museums in Egypt are devoted exclusively to Pharaonic antiquity, and for the most part, these are highly commercial museums attached to popular tourist and archaeological sites (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 1998/1999).

The non-tourist museums, what could be considered the local museums, serve a predominantly Egyptian audience. The majority of these local museums are concentrated in and around rural and frontier regions, in particular in the provinces of Upper Egypt. They often rely on professional curator-guides, and are in many cases too remote or obscure for international tourists to access (Hassan, 2005; The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007; The Egyptian Tourism Authority, 2002/2007). By comparison with tourist museums emphasising Pharaonic and classical antiquity, non-tourist museums mainly represent Coptic and Islamic history and modern Egyptian history during and following the era of Mohammed Ali (1805-present) (Baligh, 2005; Reid, 2002). The rise of these museums has resulted in increased local access to Arab art and Coptic and Islamic heritage (Reid, 2002; The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007; The Egyptian Tourism Authority, 2002/2007).

Tourist-oriented museums are generally well represented in tourist literature, located in popular tourist areas along the Nile Valley, North Coast, and Red Sea, and attended by foreign visitors, VIPs and private tour groups, whose visits are scarcely controlled or influenced by a museum’s administration (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 1998/1999; The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, 2007; The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002). With some very noteworthy exceptions, non-tourist museums with actual local impact tend to have the most limited financial resources. Unlike the Egyptian Museum, for example, curators of the local museums raise funds for the upkeep of collections and publications of research (Hassan, 2005; Hawass, 2005a; Reid, 2002; The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007).

In this, there is an important contrast between non-tourist museums, which have limited resources but are free from the constraints of tourism and eager to have local impact, and tourist museums, which are constrained by tourism but having sufficient financial resources.
and significant impacts on tourism (Hassan, 2005; Reid, 2002). Also, while tourist-museums deliver a cultural experience that appeals to tourists, local museums provides museum experience that appeal to residents.

The result is that tourist museums, such as the Egyptian Museum, separate Pharaonic history from Coptic, Islamic and modern Egyptian history (Baligh, 2005; Reid, 2002; The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002). Hence the Egyptian Museum continues the Western presentation methods which established Pharaonic Egypt as the indigene of all Egyptian history (Reid, 1992). In other words, presentations of Pharaonic artefacts in the museum is removed from the country’s Coptic, Islamic and modern Egyptian history and appropriated for a Western grand narrative which for the international visitors begins in Pharaonic Egypt and culminates in Greco-Roman times. In his seminal study on the relationship of Pharaonic identity and Egyptian nationality, Donald Reid (2002) noted that,

> Even in its striking new premises, the Museum of Arab Art never rivaled the Egyptian Museum as a cultural landmark in Western eyes. The Egyptian Museum’s building of 1902 cost over four times as much as the building of the combined Museum of Arab Art and Khedivial Library. Today the Egyptian Museum remains a landmark in Cairo’s central square-despite being overshadowed by the Nile Hilton, Arab League, Mugamma (a government office complex), and commercial high-rises-while the Museum of Arab Art lies off the beaten tourist track ... In 1913 the Egyptian Museum drew 29,879 visitors, six times as many as the 5,166 who visited the Museum of Arab Art (p. 239).

Tourist-oriented museums also draw attention to the development of a destination product when reference is made to the country’s capital, Cairo. The city is associated, almost exclusively in many tourism brochures and travel guidebooks, with the Egyptian Museum and the Pharaonic relics around the city (The Egyptian Tourism Authority, 2002/2007). The museum has a major influence on tourism promotion strategies for the city, for example, Egypt Travel Holidays states that “this 6000 year old capital offers history and legend from the mysterious Pyramids and Sphinx to the treasures of the Tutankhamen at the Egyptian Museum,” while The guide to the Egyptian Museum mentions that “Cairo is a main city since the time of the Pharaohs . . . [and] No visit to Cairo is complete without seeing the Great Pyramids and the Egyptian Museum of Cairo” (Bongioanni & Sole Croce, 2001; Egypt Travel Holidays, 2010). In these examples, the Egyptian museums and Pharaonic images are the exclusive reference to the city. Thus museums play an important role in the development of the destination product and in helping to build its cultural appeal (Verbekeb & Rekom, 1996),
especially in situations where museums may be significant in determining the image of the city (Plaza, 2000).

It would be natural to suppose that the Egyptian Museum with its impressive status, artefacts, hieroglyphics and gold might serve to attract and inspire a domestic audience, but this has not necessarily been the case since the opening of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Local museums which present Coptic, Islamic and modern Egyptian history have been more successful in attracting domestic visitors. In the fiscal year 2006-2007, 83 percent of visitors to the Museum of Islamic Ceramics, for example, were domestic audience and the museum received around 2,000 paid visitors per day from April to September 2007 (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2006b).

One important reason for the historically low level of domestic visitations at the Egyptian Museum is that since the early 1900s Coptic, Islamic and modern Egyptian histories have been more powerful forces than the Pharaonic heritage in shaping the modern Egyptian identity and in the building of the modern Egyptian nation. Domestic visitors use these elements as distinctive markers of the nation. Modern day Coptic and Islamic Egypt does not see a deep, historical connection to its Pharaonic past. History for the modern day Egyptian is either Coptic or Islamic history (El-Daly, 2007; Reid, 1992, 2002).

Since the 1920s, nationalists and traditionalist groups within the educated elite formulated and inculcated a modern national culture that drew on the heritage of Islamic civilisation, on the legacy of Coptic heritage and Arabic culture and language. The result was that Arabic language and art, Egypt’s Coptic history, Islamic-Arab history and the Arab heroes and myths became reservoirs from which could be constructed modern values, mythology, literature, museums, heritage sites, theatres, art, and poetry and school textbooks. These elements also were depicted as alternatives to the Westernised Egyptian culture, which derived its contents and symbols from Pharaonic, Hellenistic or Greco-Roman civilisations. More specifically, from the socio-cultural standpoint, there has been an eternal dialogue between Egypt’s Islamic, Coptic and modern history and the majority of Egyptian citizens at the expense of the Pharaonised Egyptian heritage (Hassan, 2003; Reid, 1992, 2002).

The contemporary museums in Egypt then, are represented with two sets of signifiers occupying two different presentations: first the ancient history and second the medieval and modern history; the former is specific to international tourists and the latter is exhibited to primarily a domestic audience.
3.1.4 Overview of the administrative aspects of the Egyptian Museum

Today, museums in Egypt operate under a centralized administration with oversight from various public ministries and institutions. At least 80 percent of all museums in Egypt are centralized, and non-governmental, private, or shared museum administration is operating in only sixteen museums. The Ministry of Culture governs the bulk of the museums in Egypt, and that authority is divided between two sectors in the ministry, the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) and the Sector of Fine Arts (SFA). Each of these groups manages two museum sets: the SCA ‘antiquities’ and ‘historical’, the SFA ‘national-historical’ and ‘arts’. The full range of museums in Egypt is more usefully categorised by subject-type using the five basic distinctions of archaeology (from prehistoric to Coptic and Islamic), Coptic and Islamic history, art, ethnography, and natural history (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002).

Curatorial work at the Egyptian Museum consists of two functions referred to as the committee role and public relations. The committee role encompasses main projects of collections management, conservation, study, and display, as well as routine duties such as artefact movement, label revision, photography, gallery arrangement, lighting, and furniture repair. Committees normally consist of three or more curators in addition to the technicians, carpenters, object handlers, security personnel, and specialists required by a particular project. The committee procedure determines the arrangement of daily activity and oversees the movement of objects and information within the museum. It is usually a lengthy and formal routine that occupies much of a curator’s time, though some curators also collaborate on contract projects such as temporary and travelling exhibitions or film production (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002).

The second main part of the curatorial job, ‘public relations’, entails leading tours for VIP and student groups and assisting foreign researchers archaeologists. The office of public relations and its staff are responsible for coordinating and receiving special museum guests, who may be assigned a curator-guide for their visit. In this context, the public does not include tourists, whose experience is managed by private guides or guidebooks. The public relations office does not handle external and media relations, which are the responsibility of the SCA, museum director, and senior curatorial staff (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002).
Within the majority of museums in Egypt, staff curatorial appointments are classified by material type, and for dynastic collections, by time period. Curatorial composition at the Egyptian Museum, for example, is based on seven museum sections which are 1.) Gold, jewellery, and Tutankhamen, 2.) Old Kingdom, 3.) Middle Kingdom, 4.) New Kingdom, 5.) Late Period and Greco-Roman, 6.) Papyri and coins, and 7.) Coffins, scarabs, and papyri (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 1998/1999; The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002).

At the Egyptian Museum one head curator and four or more assistant curators are assigned to each division, and the seventh section has usually two head curators. In total, there are 8 head curators and 31 assistant curators, and of these 39, 30 are permanent and 9 are temporary. Senior positions are permanent, and temporary contracts are provisional appointments renewed on an annual basis. Along with the curatorial staff there are 15 conservators (10 permanent and 5 temporary), 5 carpenters (3 permanent and 2 temporary), 17 object handlers (2 permanent and 15 temporary), 14 admissions staff (13 permanent and 1 temporary), 2 photographers, 4 public relations staff, over 90 security officers, and an undetermined number of technicians. The office of the director houses the General Director, five deputy directors, eight administrators, and three assistants. The restaurant, bookshop, post office, gift shop, bank, kiosks and custodial services at the museum are private contracts for which the museum administration is not responsible (from the Egyptian Museum, personal communication, July 2008).

Museum curators typically possess baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate training from Faculty of Arts, Department of Archaeology. Professional tour guides on the other hand have a Bachelor's degree in Egyptology and guiding and are certified through foreign language training and are regulated by the Ministry of Tourism (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002).

During peak tourist season, the Egyptian Museum may receive over 10,500 visitors per day (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007). During this peak season, an independent tour guide can earn as much as ten times the monthly salary of a senior museum curator in just one week. The lack of instructional standards or guidelines for tour guides and the limited public impact of curators create a reciprocal tension that may adversely affect the museum experience for tourist groups (from the Egyptian Museum, personal communication, May 2008).
3.1.5 The physical features and arrangement of the Egyptian Museum

The current museum was designed by the French architect Marcel Dourgnon in 1900. He intentionally constructed the building in a Neo-Classical Roman style, its facades showing splendid arcs and harmonious pillars and cornices (Bongioanni & Sole Croce, 2001). The museum retains these traditional architectural features and character today. The total area of the museum building is about 15,000 square meters (El-Saddik, 2005).

The inside of the museum is richly adorned with inscriptions, statues, embellishment and ancient images aimed to reveal the magnificence and strength of the edifice and its significance to history, culture and civilization. There are two main floors of the museum; the ground floor and the first floor (Figure 3.1). The ground floor is covered by a semi round dome containing apertures around its parameter to allow natural light to enter, which supplements the artificial light. This dome is sustained by four long columns which extend to the highest part of the building, therefore creating a vertical link between the ground and the first floor. The basement or the storage room lies below the ground floor, and contains numerous artefacts from different archaeological periods and eras.

![Figure 3.1 Interior of the Egyptian Museum: natural light supplements the artificial light. Photograph: Ahmed Abdel Fattah.](image)
Outside the museum’s main entrance is a small garden\(^8\) in the middle of the museum and a small library on the far left (Figure 3.2). On the far right there is a small café/restaurant, post office and various stands selling models, souvenirs, gifts, academic books, food and drinks. In front of the main entrance door lies a fountain, in and around which are clumps of grass, flowers, lotus plants and papyrus (Figure 3.3). Also, in front of the main entrance door stands a sarcophagus and groups of sphinx-headed statues made of stone. There is also the statue and tomb of the founder of the Egyptian Museum August Mariette (1821-1881) bearing his name and dates of birth and death. The garden is a pleasant spot to lunch, perhaps after visiting the museum.

\(^8\) The garden is formerly known as the sculpture garden. Museum staff and some domestic participants called it “The Pharaoh’s backyard”.

*Figure 3.2 The Egyptian Museum garden. Photograph: Ahmed Abdel Fattah.*
Figure 3.3 Facade of the Egyptian Museum: an exhibit of the Sphinx. Photograph: Ahmed Abdel Fattah.

All parts of the museum, including the museum garden, restaurant/cafeteria and gift shops have a role in introducing visitors to ancient Egyptian artefacts. The adornment in all these places reflect the Pharaonic historical theme, and the range food and beverage items in the restaurant/cafeteria includes some historical specialities, or at least carry Pharaonic names for contemporary day dishes, such as Ramses the Great sandwiches; the Akhenaton salad with golden cheddar; King Tutankhamen’s barley flat bread, the Queen Nefertari traditional bean dish and authentic ancient Egyptian beer.

Since its opening in 1902, the basic architecture and aesthetic of the Egyptian Museum display has not been altered or changed which makes the building in itself a museum piece (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 1998/1999). Once inside, the reception hall is quite dim and very little information is provided regarding the objects. An information desk is located at the right of the entrance which is supposed to serve as a map of rooms and levels, but proved to be confusing, resulting in chance exploration rather than a planned route. Throughout the museum there is little in the way of signage. The room lighting often throws a glare on the object or label that makes it difficult to see. The museum offers a variety of exhibits ranging from early ancient Egyptian history to the Greco-Roman Period.

Very traditional display techniques are used in the museum; objects are placed in cases, with a small amount of information given for each of them. The visitor experience at the museum is
physically passive; there are no opportunities for interactivity and hands-on experiences as most of the artefacts are stored behind glass or roped off from the public touch.

Currently, the museum houses more than twenty seven thousand antique pieces including mummies, Sarcophagi and the remarkable treasures from Tutankhamen’s tomb. The objects in the museum are basically arranged in the chronological order of ancient Egyptian history. Thus, the antiquities are divided into five main periods: Early Dynastic or Prehistoric Dynasty Period (10,000-3200 B.C); Old Kingdom Period (2700-2150 B.C); The Middle Kingdom or Intermediate Period (2140-1785 B.C); the New Kingdom Period (1550-1070 B.C); and the Late Period and Greco-Roman Period (712-332 BC and 332 BC-395 AD). Small objects are displayed in glass cabinets labelled with brief descriptions of its origin, period and the material used in its manufacture. Not exhibited in glass cabinets are large and significant objects which are labelled with long explanations (Figure 3.1). The artefacts have either handwritten or typewritten labels. Some of the artefacts have labels written in English only, and others have labels written in Arabic and French, however very few artefacts have labels written in all three languages. Labels on a few items date from the 1900s and a few small items have no labels at all. Guidebooks are available at the museum, though they limit their coverage to the popular artefacts.

The majority of the museum’s collections are on the ground floor which consists of fifty five small exhibition rooms and contains the heavy objects such as large statues, stone sarcophagi, wall reliefs, large pedestals and stone slabs. The exhibitions on the ground floor start from the Early Dynastic or Prehistoric Dynasty Period (10,000-3200 B.C) and end with the Greco-Roman Period (712-332 BC and 332 BC-395 AD). The organisation of the collections on the ground floor runs from west to east or left to right. The first floor consists of fifty-six exhibition rooms and contains smaller and lighter artefacts such as objects of daily life, mummy portraits, vases, manuscripts and small statues of deities and royal mummies. It is exhibited thematically, or by tomb group. A key part of the first floor is dedicated to exhibiting King Tutankhamen’s Collection (1350 B.C) and royal and animal mummies, which occupy a large part of the space. The first floor also displays some small objects relating to ancient Egyptian music, dancing, cooking, agriculture, amusement, and crafts. The pride of the first floor is the gold mask, colossal statue, the throne and the painted chest of King Tutankhamen in rooms four, nine, twenty-five and forty respectively.
Finally, by observing patterns in the arrangement and composition of the displays, the museum’s presentations do not merge Pharaonic history and Coptic and Islamic cultures into an overlapping Egyptian identity that extends the indigenous characterisation to incorporate a full span of Egyptian history. The display methods establish Pharaonic Egypt as the source of all Egyptian history. The influence of Pharaonic Egypt appears in every display from the military to the culture and arts. Common presentations of Pharaonic Egypt focus on kingship, divinity, mummification, Egyptian papyrus writing, military, and agriculture themes, and in few cases include Greco-Roman themes. This kind of categorisation transposes the recent past to create an Egyptian identity that draws its legitimacy from the remote past. So, the museum narrative forms physically discriminates Pharaonic and Greco-Roman from local Coptic and Islamic cultures and history. The result is that domestic and international visitors encounter a museum presentation that is highly attached to Pharaonic antiquity.

The next sections describe the historical, economic, and social aspects of Te Papa.

3.1.6 Historical background: Te Papa

The NZ$317 million Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa is commonly known by its Maori name, Te Papa Tongarewa, or Te Papa (Jolly, 2001). It was officially opened on February 14, 1998 on a new site on the Wellington waterfront, on Cable Street. The museum offers free entry to a range of permanent exhibitions, though charges apply to few short-term exhibitions and activities (for example, tour guides, Day in Pompeii temporary exhibition, and interactive rides). There is also a donation box prominently displayed in the foyer for visitors who wish to make a contribution to the operation of the museum and the preservation of its collections.

Te Papa was not an entirely new institution, as New Zealand had a national museum since the early years of European settlement. Formerly known as the Colonial Museum in Wellington in 1865, it became the Dominion Museum in 1907, before officially named the National Museum in 1972 (Gore, 2002). An historical overview is required in order to understand the origins of Te Papa and identify the types of exhibitions being presented for visitors.

Interest in New Zealand’s natural history and art was evident from the early years of European settlement, and as a result New Zealand had established The Colonial Museum in Wellington in December 1865 (Gore, 2002). The museum collections largely consisted of different natural history specimens that demonstrated the relationship between Maori culture
and natural history, a practice that New Zealand museums continued for many years (Gore, 2002; Young, Ansell, & Hurst, 1984).

When New Zealand achieved nationhood in 1907 and became a Dominion\(^9\), the government changed the name of The Colonial Museum to the Dominion Museum (Message, 2006). The new name mirrored the government’s desire to make the museum representative of the nation. Thus, the new museum had a distinctive national focus, including an emphasis on the social character of nationhood rather than natural history and Maori material culture. Also, the development of the national art collection at the Dominion Museum commenced in about 1908 and gained impetus in 1936 with the creation of a National Art Gallery, housed with the museum in a new building (Gore, 2002).

Since the late 1960s, it had been clear that a lack of space, inadequate facilities and staff shortages required more government spending. In addition, there had been a fairly constant public criticism from some journalists and government officials that the museum did not focus enough on its mission and character as a national museum, but rather had become largely the Wellington Provincial Museum (Message, 2006). The appeal for more generous government funding, and demands for more focus on national, rather than provincial history gathered momentum in the 1970s with the passing of the National Art Gallery, Museum and War Memorial Act 1972. The Act changed the name of the museum from Dominion to National and bestowed official acknowledgment of the national character and focus of the institution. The Act outlined the role of the museum, which included purchasing, preserving and acting as a national institution that displays objects mainly concerning New Zealand and the Pacific history and culture and their relationship to plants and animals (Gore, 2002).

In the 1980s, the success of the *Te Maori* art exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and social and economic changes marked a new era in the evolution of the National Museum and had a significant impact on its development. In 1984, the *Te Maori* exhibition toured New York, St Louis, Chicago and San Francisco. It was a great success and showed that Maori culture and art could appeal to international visitors (Smith, 2006a). More importantly, the exhibition had an immediate effect on the National Museum practice and

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\(^9\) On 26 September 1907 the United Kingdom granted New Zealand (along with Newfoundland, which later became a part of Canada) Dominion status within the British Empire. New Zealand became known as the Dominion of New Zealand. Westminster granted New Zealand independent dominion status in 1907 and full independence took effect in 1947.
Maori art and culture was placed at the forefront of the planning process of different exhibitions and art galleries. There were also extensive consultations between the museum and Maori elders with regard to the care and interpretations of their cultural resources. Tribal elders and *Pakeha* professionals recognised the need for change in the way the National Museum cared for and interpreted Maori artefacts. These developments had led the National Museum to embody the national narrative framework of biculturalism (Butts, 2002; Smith, 2006a; Williams, 2001).

The impact of the *Te Maori* exhibition on the National Museum happened at a time when social and economic changes had greatly affected New Zealand museums in general. The restructuring of central government resulted in less government funds to support museums; this created pressure to attract funding from other sources, as was happening throughout the world (see section 2.1.2 The Changing nature of museums in the late twentieth century).

At the same time, an increasingly diverse society and increased disposable income resulted in the need for a greater number and broader range of leisure facilities. This need was catered to via the proliferation of a wide array of leisure experiences offered through new leisure facilities (Armstrong, 2002; Le Heron & Pawson, 1996). Thus the need became obvious for a museum more representative of New Zealand’s culturally diverse society and with a wider audience appeal.

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992 mirrored this shift of perception, and the focus of the exhibitions and their appeal to different visitors was given a dynamic new momentum (Parliamentary Counsel Office, 1992). The Act decisively highlighted the need for a more broadly accessible and customer focused institution than the existing museum. It also recognised the importance of Maori, European, and other major traditions and cultural heritages, and that the institution provides the means for every such culture to contribute effectively to Te Papa (Williams, 2001).

Te Papa was to be quite different from the Colonial, Dominion and National museums, in that it was to be egalitarian, inclusive and intended to honour “the cultural interests and aspirations of all the people of New Zealand” (Gore, 2002; New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2000). Particularly, it aimed to amalgamate natural history with the representation of the human heritage of New Zealand. Margaret Austin, the Minister of Internal Affairs at the time, stressed the fact that Te Papa would be a local museum, but would recognise the
significance of locally-held artefacts and collections of national importance and would form a partnership with other regional museums in New Zealand (Gore, 2002).

### 3.1.7 Economic and socio-cultural aspects of Te Papa

The government believed that the introduction of a new national museum which incorporated modern museological trends would appeal to a more diverse society and attract domestic and international visitors (Kaino, 2005). In an attempt to challenge the image of dusty artefacts in glass cabinets that the term museum traditionally evoked, from the outset Te Papa integrated interactive elements and hypermedia within many of its exhibitions thereby fulfilling the requirements of a modern museum (Gore, 2002; Macintyre & Clark, 2004). But the greater use of new techniques at Te Papa, such as multi-media and other interactive technologies, drew mixed views and considerable criticism, much of it reflecting a concern over neglect of education, scholarship and contemplation in favour of entertainment; a criticism raised about modern museums worldwide in both the popular and academic press (Dalrymple, 1999; Keith, 2008; MacLennan, 1994).

Today, Te Papa represents the largest national museum project in the country’s cultural sector and one of the world’s most modern national museums (Kaino, 2005; Smith, 2006a). With support from both local and central government, Te Papa promotes a national identity that also encourages tourism which in the regional context has helped shaped Wellington city as the cultural capital of the country, and the museum has been pivotal to the city’s transformation into an attractive leisure destination (Kaino, 2005; Tramposch, 1998). Situated between the hills and a magnificent harbour, the majority of Wellington’s population live within about 4 kilometres of the sea. With a well educated population, the city easily lends itself to the flourishing cultural environment inspired by the high level of communication and interaction. This advanced communication is an essential adjunct to Wellington’s cyber communication techniques; Wellington boasts that it is the most “fully wired city” in the world (Chamberlain, 2000; Kaino, 2005, p. 37).

This flourishing cyber communication has provided the necessary infrastructure for the Oscar-winning film trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, to be filmed in New Zealand. The film with its digital media and supplies has made a significant contribution to the New Zealand economy. Te Papa was an ideal venue to exhibit memorabilia from the film as well as an economic recipient from the venue (Fickling, 2003). The museum exhibition *The Lord of the Rings Motion Picture Trilogy: The Exhibition* was viewed by almost 250,000 visitors over two and a
half months and generated almost two million dollars in revenue (Te Papa, 2002/2003). As well as exhibiting the high technology utilised in the film, the exhibition showcased Te Papa’s innovation internationally, and also endorsed the wide applications of technology in Te Papa’s design structure (Fickling, 2003; Kaino, 2005).

One example of Te Papa’s role is to offer a forum for New Zealand to present, explore and preserve its cultural heritage. Consequently, Te Papa is recognised by the government as playing a major role in New Zealand’s cultural life and this is supported through increased government spending. Other funding is endorsed through one of its five commercial principles one of which is the museum is to be commercially positive by presenting a variety of exhibitions and merchandise to contribute to the financial viability of the museum (Tramposch, 1998; Williams, 2001, 2006).

The museum has succeeded in an ambitious project of meeting commercial, as well as recreational and educational, objectives, many of which have exceeded performance targets. For example, in fiscal terms, the government spends $13.92 per visitor, compared to $30.80 for the National Museum of Australia and $39.12 for the Museum of Victoria in Melbourne. Te Papa’s commercial business contributed 31 percent to its gross generating revenue (Te Papa, 2004/2005).

Te Papa plays an instrumental role in promoting economic progress via tourism and a cultural role as a desirable end in itself (Griffin, Chris, & Rodney, 2000). In this context, Te Papa should not be viewed only as a means to economic ends but should be also conceptualised as a means to educational and cultural ends. This is reflected in its learning programme, which comprises thirteen core school curriculum courses offered across social studies, science, English, mathematics, arts, technology, and health and physical education, as well as online and video conferencing projects. Te Papa also works with universities, has close links with Victoria University of Wellington and arranges occasional joint exhibitions with Auckland University of Technology (Department of Internal Affairs, 2000/2001; Te Papa, 2004/2005, 2008a).

Arguably, Te Papa also has shaped a strong identity for New Zealanders. The museum is designed to function as key element in the ongoing project of cultural identity (Smith, 2006a; Williams, 2006). In addition to offering models of multi and bicultural practices, Te Papa’s representational approaches are concerned with processes of reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous people, so that the museum developed around a tripartite
 thematic structure of Tangata Whenua (Maori: The original inhabitants of the land), Tangata Tiriti (Pakeha and other non-Maori New Zealanders there by virtue of the Treaty of Waitangi) and Papatuanuku (the natural environment, home to all New Zealanders). This aims to link the past, present and future, and to give greater authority to the bicultural legislation underpinning the institution by centralising the Treaty of Waitangi (Tramposch, 1998; Williams, 2001).

Te Papa has appropriated Maori language, tradition, and culture to not just represent, but to also actively sponsor and promote New Zealand’s political and cultural agendas. The museum was closely associated from the outset with the development of the country’s particularly articulated social policy agendas which generally centres on national unity and identity (Gore, 2002; Smith, 2006a; Williams, 2005, 2006). Also, although Te Papa is structured to embody the national narrative framework of biculturalism; it also depends methodologically upon multicultural strong inferences to define its status as a new, multicultural relevant museum to different communities (New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2000; Te Papa Project Development Team, 1985). This can be seen clearly in the museum’s presentations of the other distinct and parallel cultures and communities such as Pacific Island and other minority groups. As such, Te Papa can be conceptualised as presenting two elements: either the singularity of national identity (biculturalism mainstream displays) or promoting contingent, changing, overlapping, hybrid versions of identities (Gore, 2002; Linda, 2005).

Finally, the criticism of Te Papa’s focus on entertainment stemmed from the museum’s goal to be customer oriented, entertaining, commercially feasible and, most importantly, a nontraditional museum (Gore, 2002; Macintyre & Clark, 2004; Smith, 2006a). Since its foundation, the museum outlined its policy as embracing “competitive, commercially responsive customer focused organisation that occupies a leading role in the national and global recreation and leisure market place” (Macintyre & Clark, 2004, p. 208). It is a strategy that enables the museum to be competitive in the marketplace and meet its high running costs in order to ensure its longevity. Reflecting the growing need for museums to be competitive in the market place, it is a strategy that has continued to cause controversy, even though it was most prominent at the museum’s opening, particularly over its exhibition of Pakeha and Maori art and the inclusion of virtual-reality rides (Gore, 2002; Williams, 2001, 2005).

Further fuelling the criticism was the decision to drop the title museum altogether from the institution’s name in order to give it a completely new brand identity. In a desire to challenge
the image of dusty artefacts in glass cases that the term museum traditionally implied, the
museum announced in 1997 that its new brand title would simply be ‘Te Papa’, meaning ‘Our
Place’, while its visual identity would be a stylised thumbprint. The new name provoked
much criticism and commentary mostly over the apparent move towards becoming a fully-
fledged commercial business very different from a traditional museum (Dutton, 1998; Gore,
2002; Smith, 2006a; Williams, 2006). Mary Varnham for the Evening Post, emphasised the
museum’s objective associate itself with “the latest American business craze and become a
themed leisure brand”, while the same paper’s editorial described the thumbprint symbol as “a
clunker” (Varnham, 1992, p. 6).

3.1.8 Overview of the administrative aspects of Te Papa

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) and its board were established
under the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992. Te Papa is an independent
Crown entity under the Crown Entities Act 2004. Te Papa is governed by a board whose
members are appointed by the responsible Minister, the Minister for Arts, Culture and
Heritage. The museum has a bicultural leadership structure consisting of the chief executive
and the kaihautu (leader). The board maintains policies, procedures and guidelines that govern
the way the museum undertakes its activities, including in relation to exhibition development
and delivery; corporate governance; corporate decision-making; management, and
conservation. The chief executive is responsible for the conduct of the museum's operation
and the kaihautu leads the ongoing development of Te Papa's Maori exhibitions and the
management and interpretations of tikanga (Maori culture, custom, ethic and practices) (New
Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2000; Te Papa, 1998/1999). The directorate of Te
Papa comprises nine major departments or groups as follows:

- Corporate Services – includes the functions of finance/administration, risk strategy,
  building services and information technology and development.

- Marketing and Communications – Includes the functions of visitor and market
  research, communications, and marketing (including tourism marketing).

- Exhibition development and Delivery – it is responsible for exhibition development,
  events and delivery of narrative within the exhibitions.
• Commercial – operates Te Papa’s commercial business including hospitality (Te Papa Café, Espresso, ICON catering functions venue), retail (Te Papa Store and Te Papa’s Treasure Store), picture library, Te Papa press, and visitor services and attractions.

• Funds Development – manages and develops partnership and sponsorship arrangements.

• Experience – includes the functions areas of concept and product development (including concept development, and interpretation and media), product and service delivery (including project management, design, touring exhibitions, customer services and guided tours), and the Learning Centre (including Te Papa Education, Discovery Centres and Te Papa Library and Information Centre).

• National Services Te Paerangi – works in partnership with museums, iwi, and related culture and heritage organisations to build capacity, and enhance the sustainability of the services they provide in their local communities.

• Curatorial, Collection Management, Research, and Technical Services – conducts research, educates about its collections and co-operates with and assists other New Zealand museums and organisations.

• People and Strategy – human resources, strategic policy and planning and bicultural development (including bicultural policy) (New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2000).

In general, Te Papa’s management style could be split into two major zones, where the front zone worked by highly trained and skilled museum staff, is for the benefit of public image while the back zone, for administration, collection and research.

Te Papa has united the function of host and security guard, and in so doing has widened a role that not only looks after the collections on the floor but also helps visitors during their visit. To stress the importance of the visitor, hosts are stationed at the main entrance of the building with the aim of greeting every visitor entering the museum. Hosts receive extensive training and are selected from long lists of applicants who already have extensive experience interacting with the public. The museum believes so firmly in the “front of house” that almost every member of the staff works in the exhibitions for one week a year. This means that curators, administrators, secretaries, and registrars are all assigned to work on the frontline
among the public. This scheme was initiated mainly as an attempt to save money, but it has proved to be a good way to reduce the barriers within what had been a very departmentalised institution (from Te Papa, personal communication, November 2009).

3.1.9 The physical features and arrangement of Te Papa

In order to provide some context for the subsequent discussion, it is useful to provide a brief descriptive view of Te Papa’s exhibitions and the design of its commercial activities. As stated earlier, Te Papa was designed around a modern museological approach, in the sense that it intended to draw and invite visitors that normally do not attend museums. This is most clearly demonstrated by the utilization of interactive technology throughout the museum. At the same time, the museum design derived from the concept of biculturalism that in many ways pervades New Zealand’s society and culture (Gore, 2002).

The museum is architecturally designed as two distinct areas—one Pakeha, one Maori. The Maori exhibitions overlook the harbour to the sea and the Pakeha exhibitions face the city streets (William, 2006). As architect Pete Bossley described Te Papa was based on “a bicultural gesture” embracing two concepts, one Maori and one European (as cited in Varnham, 1992, p. 6). The Maori part was “more traditional in style and faced over the water” The European part “echoed the grid patterns of streets” (Varnham, p. 6). The notion behind this design is that the Maori section of the museum conveys the natural and spiritual world of the indigenous people while the Pakeha part expresses the Western town buildings and capitalist exploitation (Williams, 2006).

The museum building holds six levels of exhibitions and offers around 36,000 square metres of indoor and outdoor exhibition space (Figure 3.4). The floors of the museum building are inlaid with paua shells (Bossley, 1998b). On the ground floor level there is the public foyer, café, gift shop, toilets, elevators and a coat room which has hangers, keyed lockers, strollers and wheelchairs available for loan. Once past the automatic entrance doors, the visitor encounters the coat check room, the toilets and elevators on the right and around to the left is the gift shop and the Seasons Cafe which has a play area for children and a parents’ room. The Seasons Café has a direct access to the Bush City area, an outside native plant garden, where visitors can gain a snap shot of New Zealand bush. Access to all exhibition levels from the ground floor is gained either by stairs or lifts.
Figure 3.4 Te Papa The Physical Features Source (Figure 2.3 Bossley, 1998b, pp. 28-29).

The museum exhibitions start on Level Two of the building which include the information desk, Te Papa Kid’s Store and the Our Space exhibition. The Our Space exhibition is an important signifier that distinguishes Te Papa from the traditional museum model (Figure 3.5). It blends interactive technology with entertainment. Showing clear signs of Te Papa’s themed leisure brand and its customer oriented style, the visitor can walk over the satellite map of New Zealand and try the virtual experiences of some typical Kiwi outdoor activities such as bungy jumping. There are two main reality rides called Future Rush and Blastback. In Future Rush while watching a screen and listening to the sound effects, the ride takes the visitor forward in time to see Wellington in 2055. In Blastback the ride takes the visitor backwards to view pre-historic New Zealand and witness the formation of the land.

The rest of this level highlights the country’s natural environment and includes four main exhibitions: Awesome Forces, Mountains to Sea, the Colossal Squid and Bush City. Awesome Forces examines the natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, landslips and earthquakes that shaped and transformed New Zealand. There is a wide range of interactive experiences, reflecting the utilisation of technology and multi-media throughout the exhibition, such as
large-screen projections, seismic station and a room allowing the visitor to experience a simulated earthquake. Mountains to Sea, which depends on less interactive technologies, highlights New Zealand’s varied range of habitats, animals and plants. The exhibition offers the visitor six main types of natural environment: New Zealand’s alpine, bush, freshwater, coastal, open ocean, and deep-sea. The Colossal Squid, a less dynamic small exhibition, examines the anatomy of the colossal squid and its habitat in the deep ocean of Antarctica.
The Bush City is adjacent to these natural environment exhibitions and linked to them by a bridge. The visitor can walk through different native plants and trees while experiencing New Zealand landscape (Figure 3.6). Level three contains only one exhibition, Blood, Earth, Fire, dedicated to New Zealand’s native plants and animals such as adzebill, the laughing owl and the stout-legged moa. There is also a wide range of interpretive techniques and experiences, illustrative of the utilization of technology and multi-media throughout the museum, such as listening to how the dawn chorus of a thousand years ago may have sounded and using the Survivor computer interactive game to pick out species to take from your planet for survival in a new place.
Figure 3.6 The Bush City at Te Papa Photograph: Ahmed Abdel Fattah.

Level Four contains the Espresso Café and the majority of the museum’s exhibits. *Mana Whenua*, the main exhibition dealing with the Maori, takes up a relatively large space on Level Four. The exhibition explores Maori language, songs, artworks and culture. It uses oral histories and displays different Maori taonga (treasures). Linked to the *Mana Whenua* is the *Marae* (meeting place) which is painted in rainbow colours and carries carved ancestral images. The *Marae* symbolises the concept of bicultural identity, and is based on the idea that all people have right to enter the *Marae* and feel at home. Along the lines of New Zealand’s Pacific heritage stands *Mana Pasifika* exhibition which examines the influence of Pacific island communities, particularly those of Fiji and Polynesia, within New Zealand's history and identity.

The rest of this level is dedicated to the Pakeha history exhibitions. ‘*Signs of a Nation*’ is a large exhibition standing in the centre of the level and highlighted by a giant replica of the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand's founding document. The treaty is explored through a number of media, from the simple display of the treaty in Maori and English language to the extensive use of oral histories, presenting the different views of ordinary New Zealanders to the Treaty. The *Passports* exhibition reveals the stories, hardships and triumphs experienced by many different immigrants in their quest to start a new life in New Zealand. The long term exhibit *Scots in New Zealand* focuses on stories of the Scottish migrants to this country, while the final permanent exhibit, *Golden Days*, which is a nostalgic multi-media experience that attempts to celebrate the past by appealing to visitors’ emotions through images of recognisable and familiar events in history.
According to museum staff, the *Golden Days* is one of the most visited exhibitions by New Zealand visitors and reinforces Te Papa’s use of technology and multimedia. The exhibit is an object theatre and fast-paced moving image showing images of recognisable and familiar moments in history. Visitors enter a junk shop theatre and sit upon stools and worn sofas, to find themselves surrounded by familiar old items such as stuffed children toys, a New Zealand flag, a grandfather clock, and old television sets. The window of the shop acts as the screen for the film, which starts as the shopkeeper pulls the window shutter down at the end of the day. The film celebrates, aided by the involvement of moving objects in the theatre, New Zealand’s pioneering spirit from the sowing of the land, the development of international exports and energy resources, to historical moments such as women gaining the vote, Vietnam protests and Sir Edmund Hillary conquering Everest.

Other areas of Level Four include four discovery centres each with a different theme, such as Nature Space and PlaNet Pasifika. The Discovery Centres are specially designed for children aged seven to twelve. Nature Space is a fun, interactive place for children and adults to learn about science and natural history. PlaNet Pasifika is also an interactive area featuring objects and stories from the Pacific such as Pacific costumes, Samoan canoes and stories about ocean voyaging in the Pacific.

Finally, the remaining levels of the museum (Fifth and Sixth Levels) contain extensive exhibitions of New Zealand’s rich and diverse artistic heritage and precious metals such as huia-beak gold brooch, silver cradle and golden tableware items. The Fifth Level feels like a separate national art gallery. It includes *Toi Te Papa Art of the Nation* which is a large exhibition celebrating New Zealand’s rich and diverse artistic heritage. This long-term exhibition showcases more than three hundred impressive artworks from Te Papa’s collections.

On Level Six visitors discover more short term indoor exhibitions on art and visual culture. Visitors also discover a unique outdoor *Sculpture Terrace* exhibition. The terrace is home to contemporary sculpture by contemporary New Zealand and international artists and provides the visitor with spectacular views of Wellington’s city and harbour.

### 3.2 Summary

Te Papa differs from the Egyptian Museum in one important respect. While all exhibits at the Egyptian Museum are presented in the traditional manner, interactivity, hypermedia,
immersion, novel communication and entertainment have shaped Te Papa’s presentations and offerings. The Egyptian Museum is what might be considered a traditional museum – exhibiting authentic artefacts. For the most part the museum relies on text panels and display cases to convey the message to visitors.

The Egyptian Museum has long been associated with the original ancient artefacts it exhibits. Procuring, preserving and exhibiting original artefacts and statues have been at the heart of the museum curatorship. Yet, Te Papa is very different from the Egyptian Museum; it tends to cater for visitors who seek interactivity and hands-on experiences in this consumption scenario. Te Papa responds to shifts in visitor preferences, the role that artefacts play in the process of consumption is, it would seem, increasingly blurred. In a period of waning public funding for museums and the global financial crisis, museums, such as Te Papa, have been pressured to think more innovatively as to how they attract and retain visitors. As is the case for most other market offerings, sameness and predictability are no longer strong enough propositions to meet customer expectations.

The following chapter will set up the theoretical framework of this study regarding the visitor’s expectations and experiences in relation to the museum presentations and offerings.
Chapter 4
A Review of the Literature

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to establish the context of this study with respect to the roles of traditional and modern museums in relation to visitors’ motives and experiences. The functions of traditional and modern museums cannot be adequately described by analysing only the content of the museums, the design of exhibitions, or by examining the museum mission statements (Falk and Dierking, 2000). It is also through visitors’ motives and experiences that other functions of traditional and modern museums emerge. If we know the answers to the questions of why different visitors go to modern and traditional museums and what types of experiences they prefer and find most satisfying, we will gain insights into the different functions of each type of museum.

The literature of museum theory and practice reveals certain common characteristics of motives and experiences for different categories of visitors that could be conducive to positive or negative museum experiences in general and, as such, these characteristics have relevance to this research. Researching visitors’ motives and experiences vis-à-vis museums’ traditional and modern presentations and offerings involves weaving together literature emerging from the study of museum visitors (analysing visitors’ characteristics, motives and experiences), programme and facility development (provision of effective visitor programmes), exhibit design and evaluation (producing adequate visitor displays), visitor behaviour models, the nature of informal learning environment and customer satisfaction.

This thesis will focus on the motivational factors and the personal, social and physical contexts of the museum experience. These issues are examined from a number of different theoretical perspectives, drawing from a range of disciplines including museum studies, leisure studies, tourism, psychology, and education.

4.1.1 The significance of the experience: Pine and Gilmore and Julia Noordegraaff

This chapter begins with an overview of the theoretical contributions of Pine and Gilmore (1999) and Noordegraaff (2004). At a crucial stage of this research project’s formulation, the
arguments of these academics resulted in a revaluation of the role of today’s museum. My interpretive investigation of their works did not produce narrow definitions or meanings of ‘today’s museum’ such as its equation with education, learning, or infotainment, the achievement of cognitive and edutainment goals as postulated by several scholars (Falk & Dierking, 2000, 2002; Leonie & Johnston, 2007; Packer, 2004, 2008). In this way, the perspective that shaped this research was that the roles of ‘today’s museum’ are not just about education, presentation of original artefacts and fun learning experiences. Museums can also offer recreational/leisure experiences, sociable experience, entertainment experience, personal and memorable experiences and aesthetic experiences.

Pine and Gilmore (1999), in their book The experience economy: Work is theatre and every business is a stage, argue that experiences are a new economic offering, as separate from services as services are from goods. To back up their argument, they refer to many instances of businesses escalating their profitability by moving beyond the aspect of services to the staging of experiences, Disney being a significant model. In this way they argue:

*Experiences are a fourth economic offering. Experiences have always been around, but consumers, businesses and economists lumped them into the service sector with such uneventful activities as dry cleaning, auto repair. When a person buys a service, he [sic] purchases a set of intangible activities carried out on his behalf. But when he buys an experience, he pays to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that a company stages as in a theatrical play to engage him in a personal way (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 2).*

Although Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) experience economy receives more attention in the retailing, hospitality, and marketing sectors, their exploration of visitors’ desires and the ways these might be satisfied are valuable for museum settings. However, within the museum literature, there is very limited reference to the experience economy (Noordegraaf, 2004).

Pine and Gilmore (1999) have attempted to depict a memorable experience with the use of the four different realms of experience and its dimensions ranging on a continuum from passive and active participation on one axis, and immersion and absorption on the other axis (Figure 4.1). Pine and Gilmore (1999) describe the four realms of experience that result from this matrix as 1) the educational; 2) the escapist; 3) the esthetic; and 4) the entertainment.
In the educational realm, customers absorb the activities that are taking place around them. They become active participants in the setting as the focus shifts from providing information to utilising information. Their minds should be actively engaged as part of their experience. In the escapist realm, customers are wholly immersed in the experience as an actively involved participant and they shape the experience by participating in it. An individual who takes part in the escapist experience wants to act; the customer is not simply watching others perform something, instead he or she is the actor; the one who affects the performance. The escapist realm can educate and inform just as well as the educational realm or entertain just as well as the entertainment realm, but it includes greater consumer immersion. Examples of escapist experiences in museums may include science-fiction settings which may contain spaceship piloting skills, or firsthand experience of the nostalgia of New Zealand's military service men and women, through the diverse selection of artefacts, letters, newspapers, and twenty eight ex aircraft as well at Wigram Air Force Museum.

In the esthetic realm, individuals are immersed in distinctive and often impressive environments or events in a passive way. “Esthetic experiences include standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon, visiting art gallery or museum, and sitting at the Café Florian Old World Venice. Sitting in the grandstand at the Kentucky Derby would also qualify” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 35). Esthetic experiences also highlight the attractiveness of the perceived objects or environments as well as the. The aesthetic realm requires less active involvement.
than the escapist realm. Lastly, in the entertainment realm of experience individual customers are passive participants and the experiences amount to absorption at best. Similar to the other three realms, potential customers in the entertainment realm can sense and feel (for example, viewing an object, reading a label, or watching a performance). Experiences have always been the centre of entertainment, “from plays, plays and concerts to movies and TV shows” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 2).

It is important to note that remarkable experiences are not mutually exclusive; the borders are indistinct and could combine aspects of all of the four realms. In other words, the richest experiences encompass aspects of the four realms. Pine and Gilmore (1999) note that:

> When all four realms abide within a single setting, then and only then does plain space become a distinctive place for staging an experience. Occurring over a period of time, staged experiences require a sense of place to entice guests to spend more time engaged in the offering (p. 42).

Regarding museums and other educational leisure settings, Pine and Gilmore (1999) maintain that it is not just the presentation of information and exhibitions that is important to visitors, it is the experiences that surround these presentations. Likewise, offering one of the four experiences is not just about entertaining visitors, it is about involving them in a personal, memorable way. Hence, the memorable experience should move beyond both the educational and the entertainment realms. This position is supported by a number of heritage and museum researchers. For example, Falk and Dierking (2000), McIntosh (1998) and McIntosh and Prentice (1999) acknowledge the relevance of the experience construct in the context of museums, heritage and tourist attractions and call for a strong focus on the experience itself as it is the central consumption product. However, Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) thesis has been criticised also from within the fields of business, leisure and museum and heritage studies.

A first criticism of Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) realms of experiences are the apparent contradictions in the formulation. For example, according to the model, an experience is only educational if the participant is actively participating. This is an unconvincing position; learning by passive observation is educational. Museum studies, for example, show that learning occurs through observing and imitating others. Beyond simple curiosity, museum visitors observe other visitors to gain information or knowledge (Ellenbogen, 2002; Falk & Dierking, 2000, 2002). Similarly, zoo and aquarium studies show that visitors enjoyed their experiential learning experience from observing animal behaviour (Falk & Dierking, 1992).
Secondly, Pine and Gilmore (1999) have chosen a narrow definition of ‘economy’, namely commercialisation of experiences or market value. Their model is closely linked to expectations of economic returns. It is, therefore, purely commercial activities which are of primary interest in Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) experience economy (Boswijk, Thijs, & Peelen 2005). This creates a dilemma since in many areas experience is characterised by the provision of (semi) public goods with substantial community and government funding. This is true for many museums, heritage sites, theatres, and libraries. These cultural institutions are characterised by being non-profit institutions that do not have profit maximisation as their goal but, typically, the maximisation of output in some sense or another, either qualitative or quantitative (Boswijk et al., 2005).

Related to this previous point is the criticism that an experience setting can mean different things and be interpreted in different ways by different consumers. Pine and Gilmore (1999) define experience as something designed, in which the participant plays a role shaped and controlled by the entity that designs it. For Pine and Gilmore (1999), it means a virtual and/or physical environment in which the entertainment realm is significant, but where educational, escapist, aesthetic and design aspects also play a role. In this way, their perspective is one in which the experience of the environment is staged and directed as fully as possible with little scope apparent for individual interpretation.

A number of researchers have criticised Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) premise that experiences are economic opportunities, requiring design, staging and scripting. For example, Holbrook (2001) and Pralahad & Ramaswamy (2004) viewed the emphasis on staging performances as product centred and superficial. These scholars call for an experience environment that lets consumers create their own experiences in a search for a personal growth. In this way, Pralahad and Ramaswamy (2004, pp. 56, 89) describe Pine and Gilmore’s experiences as “production centres” which views the consumer “as human prop in a carefully staged performance”, rather than an experience environment that enables access, dialogue, and transparency – in fact “a process of co-creation” – in which both parties are more or less in a balance at the helm.

These views are also shared by Bernstein (2006), a postmodern critic of art museums, who argues that Pine and Gilmore’s model of experiences represents a veiled form of manipulation of the visitor’s experience. Controlling and pre-defining the outcome of experience is the
objective of marketing; it is not the open-ended enrichment and pleasure that art museums, at their best, can provide (Bernstein, 2006).

Yet, a few museum scholars endorse Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) experience economy concept. Julia Noordegraff (2004), in her study Strategies of display: museum presentation in the nineteenth-and twentieth-century, applied Pine and Gilmore’s experience paradigm to her analysis of museum displays and the evolving nature of the museum quality standards. In this work she provides a significant analysis of the development of the script of commercial presentations in museums and investigates the museum/visitor interaction: an additional take on the nature of the visitor’s experience. Her study illustrates that the application of Pine and Gilmore’s theory of the experience economy provided a useful framework for identifying the differences and similarities between department stores and the late twentieth century museum presentations.

Noordegraff (2004) compares the museum offerings to the script of commercial presentation particularly that of shops, theme parks, department stores and shopping malls. Central to her study (and argument) is that developments in museum presentation in the 1980s and 1990s did not always stem from the museum but often originated in other leisure settings, such as department stores and shopping centres. Noordegraff (2004) uses Pine and Gilmore’s term “Mass-Customisation” to describe the offering of diverse museum presentations and cultural and commercial activities that need to be modified according to the visitors’ choices and values. She argues that contemporary museums are applying varied interactive and commercial methods to extend visitors’ visits, like a diverse exhibition programme, a range of interactive technologies to acquire information on objects and a selection of cultural activities, cuisines and commodities.

Noordegraff (2004) identified some differences between department stores and the late twentieth century museum presentations, stating:

*The difference is that . . . the former [department stores] present mainly mass-produced objects whereas the latter primarily present objects that are unique, original and authentic. . . . this distinction was put into perspective in the last decades of the twentieth century. The museum-as-experience no longer distinguishes itself with its main assets, the objects, but with all the things that surround them: decors, shops, merchandise, food, digitally provided information, audio-guides, etc. . . . by the end of the twentieth century it had become increasingly difficult to determine where the museum ended and the store began . . . the museum is cannibalising its principal assets (pp. 242-243).*
Noordegraff (2004) and other museum theorists (Falk, 1988; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Kent, 2009) show also that other elements of the museum environment and presentations play significant roles in shaping the visitor’s experience. For example, the quality and smell of food and coffee, gift shops, parking, traffic, distance to the museum, the weather on the day of the visit, the colour of the water fountain, parking lot painting, the benches painting in the museum’s garden and museum guards’ uniforms all will have an influence.

As the function of museums has changed over recent years from focusing on objects to a focus on the visitors’ experiences of other museum presentations and offerings, a deeper, more holistic explanation of visitors’ motives and experiences is important.

4.1.2 Motives and experiences of museum visitors: why people go to museums and how they experience them

Again the unique facet of this thesis is an attempt to explore the other roles of traditional and modern museums by focusing on visitors’ motives and experiences The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums. Accordingly, understanding a visitor’s museum experience means understanding first what the visitor brings to the site in terms of their personal agenda (Falk & Dierking, 2002, 2004). This includes information about previous visits, reasons and motivations for visiting which affect what a visitor expects from the experience. But before I continue my discussion of the literature review about motives and experiences of museum visitors, it is helpful to briefly define the terms ‘experience’ and ‘motivation’. While doing so, I will also draw attention to the relationship between the terms ‘motives’ and ‘reasons’.

What is an experience? There is no one simple definition of the term ‘experience’. Experience can be defined as the visitor’s engagement in making sense of things; discovering new and different things; and being mentally stimulated (McIntosh et al., 1999; Moscardo, 1999; Packer, 2008). Pine and Gilmore (1999), who have been recognised as the initiators of the modern business-oriented experience economy theory offer no precise definition. The closest they come to describing experiences is that an experience happens when a business deliberately utilises “services as the stage, and goods as props,” to involve individuals in a way that generates a memorable event (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 98). “Commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences memorable” (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p. 98). Thus they (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) highlight the supplier’s side which tells us little about what the customer buys, why he or she buys it and what an experience is to him or her.
The notion offered here is that an experience is something that occurs to the customer – or the visitor. The term ‘experience’ refers to exposure to events that affect, or are capable of affecting, behaviour. Such events are called stimuli. An experience is triggered by external stimuli which are interpreted by the visitor (Beeho & Prentice, 1997; Moscardo, 1992). In the interpretation process, he applies his previous experiences and his social and physical needs (Beeho & Prentice, 1997; Moscardo, 1992; Packer, 2004, 2008). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, one may define the experience as a product of a combination of external stimuli and the experiencing individual’s past experiences and how he/she has categorised, construed and interpreted them.

Experience is intangible, mental phenomenon. It encompasses some of the most important aspects of life - love and longing, inspiration and joy, excitement and pleasure (Moscardo, 1992). Experience may be provoked by physical means such as hands on interactive exhibitions, artefacts, souvenirs, buildings and their architecture (Black, 2005; Chia, 2007). Here experience can be described as a mental journey which leaves something immaterial or intangible – a memory or a sensation. Such experiences can be entertaining, restorative, social, personal or educational experiences (Langer, 1990; Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

Experiences are also closely associated with motives (Langer, 1990; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Researchers have acknowledged that experiences cannot be adequately understood without references to motives. A considerable body of literature supports the significance of motives at all stages of the experience (Blud, 1990; Chan, 2009; Diamond, 1986; Dierking, 1989; Falk & Dierking, 1992, 2000; Kavanagh, 1994; McManus, 1989; Moscardo, 1992, 1999; Moussouri, 2003; Packer, 2008). For example, where museum visitors direct their attention, and how intently, may be influenced by motivational factors such as the novelty or interest value of the artefacts, the emotional arousal generated by the museum materials, and the personal goals held by the visitors (Moscardo, 1992, 1999). Motives thus provide the mental energy which is often necessary for museum experiences.

Motives are desires or the diversity of needs and wants that are fulfilled through experiences and actions. They cause people to act in a particular way or to seek out a particular experience in a variety of different settings (Moscardo, 1992). In other words, the bundles of motives make up the experiences and actions. For example, museum visitors’ motives to learn relax or socialise and bond with friends and family lead them to behave in a particular way and create the kinds of experiences they desire (McManus, 1989; Moussouri, 2003). This example is
useful for the showing the diversity of motives that are fulfilled through the educational, social and recreational experiences that visitors create in the museum. In short, one may see clearly that motives reflect human actions and experiences.

Finally, it is important to note that in museum studies the terms ‘motives’ and ‘reasons’ are used interchangeably. There is an important connection between motives and reasons. Motive refers to the ‘reason’ or the ‘why’ a person behaved in a particular way (Stam, Mos, Thorngate, & Kaplan, 1993). Motive is the reason for engaging in a particular behaviour, especially human behaviour as studied in psychology (Langer, 1990, 1993; Moscardo, 1992; Stam et al., 1993). In psychology, motives and reasoning come from intentions, which underlie and influence almost everything people choose (Stam et al., 1993). For example, a motive, in museum studies, is the cause that moves people to visit certain kinds of museums and heritage sites (Hood, 1981; Moscardo, 1992, 1999). Although it seems that reasons and motives have roughly the same meaning, there are a few subtle differences. There is a general tendency to think of motives as being deeper than reasons (Stam et al., 1993). Motive reveals deeper explanations of the person’s actions and also uncovers an inner drive, impulse or intention that causes a person to do something or act in a certain way. It refers to inner or hidden desires that are the real reasons for people’s actions. Motive precedes reason in terms of action (Stam et al., 1993). For example, in this study motives provide insights into visitors’ real reasons for attending the museums.

At this stage, after I defined the terms ‘experience’ and ‘motivation’ and also highlighted the relationship between the terms ‘motives’ and ‘reasons’, I need to return to the discussion of the literature review about motives and experiences of museum visitors.

The last decades of the twentieth century were an era of fast and profound change in leisure experiences. In contrast with life and work in the twentieth century, where the borders between work and leisure time were strictly drawn, in the so-called “Knowledge Age” of the early twentieth first century, work, consumption, learning, and leisure time are all closely intertwined (Falk, 2009, p. 45). These changes have major implications for museum and heritage researchers who have been exploring visitors’ motives and experiences. In order to gain some understanding why individuals decide to visit museums and heritage sites, many researchers have regarded museum visits mainly as a leisure experience.

The majority of museum scholars have maintained that people make leisure decisions to visit museum for one of many personal motives, which have more to do with socio-cultural
background, personal values and interests than demographics alone (Chan, 2009; Dierking, 1989; Falk, 2009; Foley & McPherson, 2000; Hood, 1981, 1992). For example, Hood (1992, p. 19) states that while museum audience surveys have focused on demographic and participation patterns, these “do not explain why people do or do not attend museums”. She argues that it is the psychographic profiles of visitors – “people’s values, opinions, attitudes, interests, concept of self, social interaction behaviour, expectations, satisfaction, goals, activities, group membership and consumption behaviour” – that offer answers to questions of this kind.

The following section discusses different motives for visiting the museum.

4.1.2.1 Motives

Falk (1993b) attempted to understand the recreational and pastime use of museums by African Americans. Falk (1993b) found three main criteria by which all his participants explain leisure time use of museums: 1) being with people or social interaction; 2) feeling comfortable and at ease in one’s surroundings; and 3) learning. Nearly all his participants in his sample valued social interaction.

In a study based on open-ended interviews with hundreds of visitors to different museums in Britain, Moussouri (1997) found that all the different motives cited for visiting museums could be classified into one of six different general categories, with these categories mirroring the roles a museum is considered to play in the social/cultural life of people. She labelled the six types of motivations and they were in order of priority: 1) Education; 2) Entertainment; 3) Social event; 4) Life-cycle; 5) Place; 6) Practical issues. The first type and most commonly reported motivation for museum-going was Education, which referred to motives connected to the knowledge, aesthetic or cultural content of the museum. The majority of participants in Moussouri’s (1997) study reported that they go to museums in order to learn or find out more about the exhibitions. This desire to learn was occasionally related to specific exhibitions or objects, but more often related to just exhibits in general. A few participants also articulated a desire for an emotional/aesthetic experience, which was also categorised under the Education type. Entertainment, the second most frequently reported motivation, represented a set of related recreation and pastime motives for visiting a museum. The bulk of the visitors whose motives fitted this category stated that they visit museums in their spare time in order to have fun and enjoy themselves, and/or to view new and interesting exhibitions in relaxing and aesthetically pleasant surroundings.
Visiting a museum as a type of social event was another general motive cited. For these respondents, museum-going was broadly regarded as a “day out” for the whole family, a special social occasion, and an opportunity for family members or friends to enjoy one another’s company. A related but independent type of motivation was what Moussouri (1997) identified as Life-cycle, whereby some visitors’ motive for museum-going was to mark significant events or happening at specific periods in the visitor’s life, generally connected to childhood. The attendance of museums during childhood or the absence of childhood museum-going pattern influences visitors’ present museum-going behaviour (Moussouri, 1997). Place was the group of motives reported by participants when they classified museums as leisure/cultural/recreational sites representative of a local or region. The majority of individuals attend museums for this reason, including visitors on day trips or holidays or those hosting out-of-town guests. The final set of motives for museum visiting, Practical reasons, related to issues such as closeness to the site, weather and crowd conditions, time availability, and the entry fee (Moussouri, 1997, 2003).

In follow-up research, Falk, Moussouri and Coulson (1998) found that people not only generally expressed a range of these motivations, but that the nature of these motivations directly linked to their subsequent experiences and learning. For instance, visitors who had a main educative motivation for going to the museum learned more things than did those participants who had entertainment as the main visit motivation, though both groups experienced learning (Falk, Moussouri, & Coulson, 1998). This conclusion is supported by the observations of Dierking (1989, 2005) and Packer (2004) that motivation and learning within the museum setting are not only related, but that in order to appreciate visitors’ motivations and learning, one needs to consider both of these paradigms in their broadest sense. Packer (2004) showed in her doctoral dissertation that almost without exception, visitors shared both a motive to learn and to have fun – nevertheless for some learning was more significant than fun and for others fun more important than learning. Based upon that relationship, different types of learning and different uses of time at the museum resulted.

In contrast to the above researchers, others have concluded that education and leisure must be considered totally independent dimensions. Beer (1994), Graf (1994) and Weil (2004) reported that some visitors’ motives for visiting museums included frivolous experiences that were not part of the museum’s learning agenda. This type of visitor came to museums to “play or move around” and does not have the intention to learn about the exhibitions or read information (Graf, 1994, p. 79).
Other researchers have suggested other motives for museum visitors. In the late 1990s, Zahava Doering, Andrew Pekarik, and their colleagues at the Smithsonian Institution became very interested in exploring what motivated individuals to attend the different Smithsonian museums and its affiliates across the United States. (Doering, 1999; Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Pekarik, Doering, & Karns, 1999) Based on their findings, they presented a list of different experiences that they thought encapsulated the aspects that museum visitors commonly found satisfying about their museum visits. They grouped visitor experiences into four separate types: 1) object experiences (concentrating on something outside the visitor, for example, seeing the real objects or seeing exceptional or valuable things); 2) cognitive experiences (focusing on interpretive or intellectual aspects of the experience); 3) introspective experiences (visitors concentrate on personal feelings and experiences, such as imagining, reflecting, reminiscing, and connecting); and 4) social experiences (focusing on interactions with family members, friends, other visitors, or museum staff). Their results revealed that different kinds of museums, and different objects or exhibitions within museums, seemed to generate these types of experiences to varying extents.

The researchers suggest that visitors enter with a motive to experience either one or a mixture of these four types of experiences (Doering, 1999; Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Pekarik et al., 1999); visitors do not enter museums as “blank slates”, but carry with them their personal interests, knowledge, beliefs, and past museum visits (Doering & Pekarik, 1996, p. 22). The researchers refer to these as the visitor’s “entrance narratives” (Doering, 1999; Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Pekarik et al., 1999). If one starts with the thought that learning, generally defined, is a major result of museum experiences, then it follows that different learning results are likely to be directly contribute to different entrance narratives. Entry narratives will guide learning and behaviour because visitors’ perceptions of satisfaction will be directly linked to experiences that resonate with their entering narrative (Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Pekarik et al., 1999). This concept is in line with the results of Falk et al. (1998).

Tourism researchers also have become very interested in understanding museum visitors’ different motivations and experiences. In order to rate the outcomes museum visitors expect to gain from their visit, Packer and Ballantyne (2002) interviewed 300 visitors; 100 each at an Australian museum, art gallery, and aquarium. A factor analysis of the resulting responses revealed five kinds of visit motivation: 1) Learning and discovery; 2) Passive enjoyment; 3) Restoration; 4) Social interaction; and 5) Personal self-fulfilment. Packer and Ballantyne (2002) described Learning and Discovery as the desire to experience something new or
different, expand knowledge, be better informed, and use the mind. As found by Moussouri (1997) this was the most common category.

Closely echoing Missouri’s (1997) data also, the second most common category was ‘Passive enjoyment’ identified as the desire to enjoy oneself, to be pleasantly occupied, and to feel happy and satisfied. ‘Restoration’ was described as the desire to relax mentally and physically, to have a change from routine and recover from stress and tension (Packer & Ballantyne, 2002). Indeed, in a later study conducted by Packer (2008), ‘Restoration’ was a major motive for a significant proportion of participants. Packer (2008) found evidence that main restoration factors (calm and peaceful positive setting, being away, and being physically and mentally removed from one’s everyday environment) were found in educational leisure settings such as museums. Packer (2008) highlighted the fact that restoration motives have been given little attention in the literature.

Social interaction was defined as the desire to spend quality time with friends or family, or interact with strangers and build new relationships (Packer, 2008; Packer & Ballantyne, 2002). Finally, Packer and Ballantyne (2002) identified a type of motivation they named ‘Personal self-fulfilment’. In this category the individual desires to make things more meaningful, challenge his or her abilities, feel a sense of accomplishment by seeing rare or significant objects, and develop his/her spirituality. All these motives discussed above are quite instructive in terms of the way visitors view their museum experience.

4.1.2.2 Review of visitors’ experiences: The personal, social and physical contexts

A good starting point for such a review is Falk and Dierking’s (1992) The Museum Experience which draws on a number of studies undertaken in the US, in order to develop an understanding of the way the visitor uses museums. Falk and Dierking (1992) conceptualised the museum visit in what they termed “The Interactive Model”, where the museum visit involves three contexts: the personal context, socio-cultural context, and the physical context (Figure 4.2):

The museum experience occurs within the physical context, a collection of structures and things we call the museum. Within the museum is the visitor, who perceives the world through his [sic] own personal context. Sharing this experience are various other people, each of their own personal contexts, which together creates a social context …. At any given moment, any one of the three contexts could assume major importance in influencing the visitor. The visitor’s experience can be thought of a
continually shifting interaction among personal, social and physical contexts (Falk & Dierking, 1992, p. 4).

Figure 4.2 The Interactive Experience Model (Falk & Dierking, 1992, p. 2).

The principal findings of this study provide framework for understanding the findings. Falk and Dierking (1992, 2004) explain a number of principles which focus on museum visitor experiences vis-à-vis museum presentations and offerings. They view the museum exhibitions and objects as the main media through which museums communicate with their visitors, so they refer to ways in which exhibitions can be designed to “reinforce both the experiences the visitor has inside the museum and those outside, before and after the visit” (Falk & Dierking, 1992, p. 151). It is worth looking at each of the principle in detail.

The first principle is that each visitor learns in a different way, interpreting information in terms of their previous knowledge, experience and beliefs. Related to this is the further recognition that visitors have different learning styles, with their previous experiences affecting the way in which they learn at the museum. The museums need therefore to have an understanding not only of what the museum wants the visitors to take away from the visit, but also what the visitor already knows. This involves building “structures that enable visitors to traverse the path from current knowledge and experience to hoped-for knowledge and experience” (Falk & Dierking, 1992, p. 137). Along with other scholars such as Radley
Falk and Dierking (1992) talk about connections between the museum experience and the visitor’s life outside the museum. If visitors can relate to the museum presentations in some way, they are more likely to remember and use the information given by the museum.

A second principle outlined by Falk and Dierking (1992) is that all visitors personalise the museum’s message so that it confirms their own experience and understanding. They confirm Radley’s (1991) suggestion that the context of the objects needs to be highlighted. They also argue that museum visitors tend to compare an exhibition with something they have seen before. Thus, as McManus (1991) warns, museums should be aware of defining the exhibitions and objects using their own agendas and understanding.

A third principle is that every visitor arrives with an agenda and a set of expectations of the museum which will strongly influence their learning and behaviour. Falk and Dierking (1992) argue that to a large extent, people go to museums because they want to have fun, a term more often associated with amusement parks and shopping malls. The entertainment that people want from museums is related more to viewing unique and unusual exhibitions or objects, of being intellectually challenged and visually stimulated (Falk & Dierking, 2002, 2004; Noordegraaf, 2004). As Falk and Dierking stress (1992, p. 142) “[m]aking museums entertaining does not mean trivializing exhibits, but it does suggest designing exhibition spaces that encourages a variety of emotional responses”. In order to facilitate learning, then, exhibitions need to be designed to incorporate the visitor’s perception of the exhibits rather than the exhibition designer’s ideas. This point is made also by MacDonald (1992):

> Visitors bring to any exhibition particular preconception – particular tendencies towards certain imaginings. Clearly the more exhibition makers can manage to detect of these predisposition, the better they will be able to work with them . . . exhibitions can at least shake preconception which visitors may hold (p. 407).

In their studies Falk and Dierking (1992, 2004) found that most visitors come to museums as part of a social group; and that therefore, what visitors view, do, and remember is mediated by that group. Related to this is the finding that the visitor’s social experience in the museum includes museum staff and other visitors, both within and beyond the visitor’s own travelling party. Blud (1990) and McManus (1989) also conclude that the nature of the museum visit is not simply a case of visitor interaction with the exhibitions, but the chance for social interaction in a learning environment. In living history displays, for example, staff play an integral role in the display, helping visitors to understand and appreciate the scale of an object.
and its relation to the world. Interactions with other individuals in the museum also produce either positive or negative social experience (Moscardo, 1999; Packer, 2008). For example, the helpfulness, attention and friendliness of museum staff can generate a positive experience (Moscardo, 1999; Noordegraaf, 2004).

Blud (1990) and McManus (1989) also conclude that the nature of the museum visit is not simply a case of visitor interaction with the exhibitions, but the chance for social interaction in a learning environment. Companions, family groups and children in school groups make use of museums as a socially mediated learning environment (Diamond, 1986; Dierking, 1989). Other visitors see the museum as sites to meet and hang-out with friends and family. Falk (2009) calls this type of visitors “Facilitating Socializers” who:

*may or may not be particularly knowledgeable about the content area of the museum. They will regularly meet at the museum for lunch or a quiet stroll through the galleries, happily chatting away, occasionally glancing at exhibits or labels. Although they are likely to become members (for economic and perhaps status reasons), their primary objective is to gain access to what the museum affords socially rather than what it offers intellectually (p. 193).*

The importance of these interactions was noticed as early as 1928 by Robinson (1928), who noted, “[t]he social influences at work when several people go through a museum together must be exceedingly important in determining reactivity toward the objects encountered” (1928, p. 17). For example, companions, family groups and children in school groups make use of museums as a socially mediated learning environment (Diamond, 1986; Dierking, 1989). This has been emphasised by many scholars and practitioners (Blud, 1990; Diamond, 1986; Dierking, 1989; Falk & Dierking, 1992, 2000; Kavanagh, 1994; McManus, 1989; Moscardo, 1992, 1999; Moussouri, 2003; Packer, 2008).

Visitors are further influenced by the physical aspects of the museum, including the architecture, smell, sound, ambience as well as the location of the exhibitions and the museum’s orientation (Falk & Dierking, 1992, 2000). The importance of this broader physical context was apparent in Kent’s (2009) investigation of the experience of the gift shop in the museum, which found that the shop was an essential part of the museum experience. For many visitors, the shop was both a recreational site and a place which supported informal learning through the availability of educational commodities (Kent, 2009).

Similarly, in her examination of the various commercial facilities at the Louvre Museum, Lianne McTavish (1998) argued that the consumer area occupied a very significant location
which blurred the boundaries between visitor’s experience of the artefacts and commercial facilities. In assessing the museum experience, Falk and Dierking (1992) also found that the average visitor considers the quality of the food service and gift shops to be as important, if not more important, as the quality of objects or exhibition design.

Bitner’s (1992) notion of “servicescape” is relevant also in understanding aspects of the physical museum context that affect visitors’ experiences. Her “servicescape” comprises environmental factors such as lighting, noise, temperature, spatial layout, signs and symbols. Bitner (1992) maintains that these ambient settings affect visitors’ learning experience and their psychological and emotional responses to the environment. Falk and Dierking (1992) have brought together a wealth of research and have lent it a coherence which offers a number of useful insights. They have drawn on materials which investigated the museum visitors and their reactions to the museum as a whole and to the exhibitions in particular.

4.1.2.3 Mindfulness and Mindlessness

Moscardo (1988, 1992, 1999) is another museum theorist who has attempted to define the visitors’ experience in the museum. She has approached this issue from a psychological perspective and proposed a cognitive model of visitor responses in interpretive settings based on the concept of mindfulness and mindlessness, first developed by Langer (Langer, 1990; Langer & Newman, 1979). Langer (1990) cited research which demonstrated that many ostensibly “intelligent” activities such as reading and writing can be done quite automatically, that is, without thinking. Moscardo (1988, p. 9) used the common expression “when the light’s on but nobody’s home” to characterise this state of mindlessness, and applied this concept to museums and educational settings, arguing that many visitors are mindless or mentally passive in their response to interpretive materials and displays. They act out behavioural routines with little questioning or processing of new information (Moscardo, 1992).

Mindful visitors, by contrast, pay attention to their environment, react to new information, create new ways of seeing the world, and new routines or scripts for behaviour. The extent to which visitors are mindful is a function of both communication factors (features of the interpretation offered, for example, novelty, variety, visitor control and involvement) and visitor factors (things that visitors bring with, then for example, knowledge, interests, motives and social group). Mindful visitors enjoy their visit more, express greater satisfaction, learn more and are more interested in exploring a topic or place (Moscardo, 1992; Moscardo &
Pearce, 1986). Moscardo (1992) argued that museums can encourage mindful states in their visitors by having more dynamic and interactive exhibitions and information that encourages questioning and participation. The theory has proved effective as:

\[
\text{It has been tested and used in a range of business, educational, medical, and other social applications and the consequences of encouraging mindfulness include more learning, high satisfaction and great understanding (Moscardo, 1996, p. 104).}
\]

Packer (2004) argues that a related concept to Moscardo’s mindlessness is Trienen’s (1993, pp. 89, 93) “active dozing” which is the expression he employs to describe a purposeless, unplanned or unstructured activity. Trienen (1993) found striking similarities in behaviour between museum visitors and mass media audience. He (Trienen, 1993) points out that museum-going resembles mass-media consumption. In the context of museums and mass media, he (Trienen, 1993, p. 90) describes “active dozing” as “cultural window shopping” which suggests that visitors act as if museums were mass-media: they linger in front of specific objects or exhibitions with which they already know before the museum visit. As soon as museum visitors satisfy their curiosity and gain the knowledge about particular objects, then their mental stimulation fades away and must be frequently substituted in order to sustain their interest (Treinen, 1993). Most museum visitors, Treinen (1993) argues, make limited contact with the exhibits, glance or skim, and they are motivated more by the desire for entertainment and curiosity than by an interest in collecting information about the exhibits or the desire to learn. Hence the behaviour of many museum visitors may closely resemble that of the audience who like to continuously change television channels, rather than watching any particular program (Treinen, 1993). This fleeting engagement does not stimulate mindful learning which requires attention, sufficient time and effort (Moscardo, 1992; Packer, 2004; Treinen, 1993).

4.1.2.4 Learning in Museums

Other researchers who have attempted to describe the visitor’s experiences of the museum presentations and offerings have approached it from an educational perspective. In thinking about learning in the museum, the literature has made numerous references to learning, but it is the different ways in which visitors learn that has been the subject of much discussion in the literature.

Falk and Dierking (2000, 2002), Packer (2004, 2008), and Uzzell and Ballantyne (1998) have provided a comprehensive overview of research and theory in the area of museum learning.
experiences. They argue (Falk & Dierking, 2000, 2002; Moscardo, 1992; Moscardo & Pearce, 1986; Packer, 2004; Uzzell & Ballantyne, 1998) that visiting a museum or an interpretive site is a social experience for most people and observe that social interaction can facilitate learning by opening up different perspectives, providing a model for learning, offering opportunities to explore and share information and opinions, and stimulating and supporting learning through obligation to the group. Well-informed group members during the visit encourage the learning of less informed members by offering “scaffolding,” or help in the process of learning. Scaffolding can appear in the form of questions, cues, or other learning supports (Diamond, 1986; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Moussouri, 2003). “Parents ask children questions; children ask parents questions;” they focus on particularly appealing artefacts and rarely peruse labels (Diamond, 1986; Dierking, 1989; Falk & Dierking, 1992, pp. 110-111; Moussouri, 2003). Blud (1990), Packer (2004, 2008), and Uzzell (1989) also maintain that coordination and resolution of cognitive conflicts between individuals drives learning, and therefore presentations and interpretations that are designed to stimulate social interaction will be more useful than that depending on individual cognition only.

While museum learning continues to concentrate mainly on first-hand experience of authentic original artefacts, these real artefacts are no longer crammed into corners and through dark narrow hallways full of dusty glass display cases but are now used to convey abstract concepts, tell a story, stimulate curiosity and imagination, provoke thought and facilitate and support social learning (Doering, 1999; Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Hooper-Greenhill, 1995, 1999; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; MacDonald, 1996; Kolter & Kolter, 1998; Noordegraaf, 2004; Packer, 2004, 2008). Hence, museums are now able to engage their visitors in “meaning making rather than meaning taking” (Packer, 2008, p. 21).

Silverman (1995, p. 164) highlights the following strategies museum visitors employ to create their subjective meanings: “reminiscence, wonder, and references to people, possessions and mass media content”. She (Silverman, 1995) mentions that the museum visitor engages in active, creative, intellectual and emotional processes that include remembering, imagining or revering objects, taking artefacts as symbols, and using objects to tell stories to others. When museum visitors are regarded as “meaning makers” the museum’s educational role shifts from providing authoritative interpretation to facilitating the varied interpretive activities of visitors and encouraging negotiation and dialogue among those different views (Silverman, 1995).
Also, unlike their precursors, present-day museums have become aware of the importance of inviting visitors to become actively involved with exhibits. This combined with opportunities for contemplation, reflection, interactive experience, social interaction and cooperative experiences which indicate that today’s museum has the ability to provide a unique learning setting (Hein, 1998; Hood, 1992; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Packer, 2004, 2008). Yet the extent to which visitors are inspired to exploit this ideal constructivist learning environment is still the subject of extensive discussion and debate by educators and theorists both in and outside the museum world (Hein, 1998; Hood, 1992; Moussouri, 2003; Packer, 2004; Tilden, 2008; Tili, 2008; Treinen, 1993).

4.1.2.5 Leisure and learning context

With regard to the aspect of interactive experience, Lumley’s (1988) extensive review of museums’ presentations argued that many museums offer a more interactive way of learning with videos, games as well as other hands-on exhibits which offer the visitor more variety in learning but also more choice. This in turn has meant that many visitors can learn more informally and at their own leisure while concurrently they can interchange their position of learning from being passive receptors to active learners.

Several scholars have stressed the fact that the relationship between learning and leisure in museums is complex. For example, Moscardo (1988, 1992) and Packer (2004, pp. 27, 184) argue that it would seem that visitors to educational leisure sites such as museums often search for enjoyable but “purposeless mental stimulation”, whereas “mindful learning is effort demanding and purposeful”. Further, arguments that people in our fast-paced, high-tech society are being overwhelmed by information, knowledge and technologies suggest that some people may retreat and “seek relief from information overload in leisure experiences that are information free” (Falk & Sheppard, 2006; Packer, 2004, p.132). Still there is evidence that people have a powerful and natural drive to learn, that learning can be pleasurable, rewarding and provide the mental stimulation needed for intellectual growth and emotional well-being, that inherently stimulated learning may take place relatively unconsciously, without effort and without much conscious control and can lead to implicit knowledge (Dierking, 2005; Falk & Sheppard, 2006; Moscardo, 1992; Packer, 2004).

According to Packer (2004, 2008), one facet of the relationship between learning and leisure that is particularly challenging is the fluidity of the boundary between entertainment and education. From the perspective of studies of informal learning and interpretation,
entertainment is a fundamental part of the museum learning experience (Black, 2005; Dierking, 2005; MacDonald & Alsford, 1991; Moscardo, 1992; Packer, 2004, 2008). Also, the forms of entertainment may incline visitors to adopt a mindless attitude and devote little mental effort towards learning. Equally, the utilisation of entertainment as a way to catch the visitors’ attention and interest them in the exhibitions may actually divert visitors from the learning experiences they were designed to facilitate (Moscardo, 1992, 1999; Packer, 2004). Still the possible positive and negative effects of the deployment of entertainment in museums to popularise a learning experience has not been extensively debated and discussed (Black, 2005; Packer, 2004).

The term ‘entertainment’ refers to the notions of public event or show and distractions or leisure activities for visitors (Falk & Dierking, 2002; Packer, 2004). The term is also employed to refer to those components of a museum experience that are considered by visitors to be pleasurable or amusing (Black, 2005; Goulding, 1999). Scholars such as Falk et al. (1998), Packer and Ballantyne (2002), Packer (2004, 2008) have attempted to clarify the generally held understanding of this term in their studies that the terms learning, discovery, entertainment and leisure are all ideologically loaded terms that carry a great deal of baggage. To the scholarly person, learning denotes value, quality, significance, skill, or knowledge, whereas entertainment and leisure imply mindlessness and playfulness (Beer, 1994; Blud, 1990; Dierking, 2005; Falk et al., 1998; Hedge, 1995; Packer, 2004).

In the field of modern museology, considerable debates have taken place concerning the conflict between entertainment and learning (MacDonald & Alsford, 1995; McManus, 1989; Packer). Some museums have been criticised for becoming theme parks and leisure/entertainment centres (Dalrymple, 1999; Dutton, 1998). Museums which emphasise fun and entertainment experience are denounced as Disney-style amusement parks, “vulgar sideshows”, while those which focus on learning and educational experiences are denounced as “elitist enclaves” (Dalrymple, 1999; Griffiths, 2002, p. xxiv; Packer, 2004,).

Falk and Sheppard (2006) propose that this conflict between learning and entertainment is an outcome of the perceived dividing line between work and leisure time in Western societies. Entertainment is perceived to be associated with amusement and fun and learning with work and education, and the two aspects are deemed irreconcilable. Work, in other words, cannot be regarded as pleasurable, and leisure cannot be regarded as serious (Falk & Sheppard, 2006; Packer, 2004; Roberts, 1997).
The growth of shopping malls, theme parks, and heritage centres has forced museums to compete and become more market-oriented (MacDonald & Alsford, 1995). Thus, while museums try to maintain their image as places of memory and learning, they also compete for their audiences with leisure and entertainment facilities (Black, 2005; Kolter & Kolter, 1998). Dalrymple (1999) refers to these as “amusement arcade”. These leisure and entertainment competitors to museums have often been criticised for concentrating exclusively on profitability, while museums try to focus purely on scholarship and preservation (Moore, 2000a). Hence, museums endeavour to maintain their not-for-profit status (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). MacDonald (1995) and Packer (2004, 2008) suggest that while museum staff often perceive the museum as a place for scholarship and rich learning experiences, their visitors view the museum more as a site of entertainment and leisure. In educational leisure settings, amusement may be viewed as a useful and legitimate end in itself, with no additional benefits other than simple and pure enjoyment; or it may be perceived as a means to an end, an effort to attract visitors to the setting in a way that is easy and suitable to them (Packer, 2004, 2008; Roberts, 1997). Likewise, learning may be viewed as a valuable and legitimate end in itself; or it may be considered as a means to an end, an attempt to enhance the entertainment experience. This “complementary relationship” between learning and amusement has been raised and discussed by several scholars using terms such as “edutainment” and “infotainment” (Falk & Dierking, 1992; Black, 2005; Lepper & Chabay, 1985; Lucas, 1991; Packer, 2004, p. 59).

The established divisions between work time and leisure time, learning and entertainment are becoming less clear. Learning is achieved through experience gained by a person outside formalised learning settings or arrangements. Leisure experiences are regarded as useful, satisfying or rewarding experiences and essential for the development of both the individual and society. Involvement in worthwhile leisure activities is known to have a positive effect in people’s lives (Falk & Dierking, 2000; Hedge, 1995; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999). In the context of museum learning, Packer (2008) quotes Csikszentmihalyi and Kleiber (1991) as suggesting that “productive work” is not usually unpleasant, nor is “unproductive leisure” always pleasant. In general, people tend to assume that enjoyable experiences come only from passive activities, such as strolling on the beach, watching television, listening to music or being entertained. Work is seen as tedious, stressful or boring, to be avoided if possible. Yet, few people are aware that the most intensely enjoyable experiences often derive from the least
expected sources – “from a job well done, from a stimulating conversation” (Cikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1993, p. 93).

Learning in museums can be seen as enjoyable, fulfilling, stimulating and pleasurable (Falk, Dierking, & Holland, 1995; Packer, 2004, 2008). Falk (1992) proposes that “fun” is a term frequently used by museum professionals to describe the visitor’s involvement and interest in the exhibitions and the effortless, multi-sensory, and enjoyable learning experience. Black (2005), Falk and Dierking (2000, p. 73) and Packer (2004) also maintain that most museum visitors see “no apparent conflict between fun and learning”. Fun can be a powerful aide to learning (Dierking, 1989). Most museum visitors do not distinguish between the value of entertainment and learning and both are effective motivations in learning (Black, 2005; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Packer 2004). Learning can also be a complex, demanding and competitive activity, thus engaging the person’s mental capacities, offering opportunities for growth, and providing satisfaction through goal achievement (Hooper-Greenhill & Moussouri, 2002; Packer, 2004; Schauble et al., 2002).

Just as learning can be entertaining, so entertainment can be educative (Packer, 2004). Notions about learning in informal settings maintain that first, museum visitors must view an object or an exhibition for learning to take place, and second “[entertainment’s] very nature – playful, enjoyable, and fun – evoked in people the optimum conditions for learning – openness, loss of self, and what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi called ‘flow’” (Roberts, 1997, p. 40). The introduction of “entertainment”, “fun” or “play” in a museum provides an environment for visitors to explore, learn more, interact with, and visually verbalize what they see, feel, and understand about the exhibitions (Anderson, 1995; Black, 2005; Moscardo, 1992, 1999). Hence, informal learning settings such as museums and heritage sites are suitable for infotainment or edutainment experiences, but it is vital to keep a balance of the two within an exhibition and across a whole museum (Packer, 2004, 2008).

Packer (2004) then poses several interesting questions as well as challenges for museum professionals. What is the desired result of a learning leisure experience in museums? Is it learning or is it amusement? Which should be considered the end and which should be considered the means to the end? What is the real product being offered or marketed to visitors? Pine and Gilmore (1999) and Prentice (1993), referring to the visitor’s experience at museums, heritage sites, and amusement parks, suggest that the actual product is ‘experience’. A visitor attending a theme park, heritage site, or a museum seeks or “buys an experience”
(Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 2; Prentice, 1993). This experience may incorporate both being informed and being entertained (Packer, 2004, 2008).

### 4.2 Summary

If we know what visitors bring to the museum in terms of their motives and what kind of experiences they take away from the museum, we will know something about the different roles of traditional and modern museums. In this context, previous research was examined in relation to visitors’ motives and experiences. As the twentieth century progressed, museums employed a growing variety of means to make the museum and its content attractive to a general audience.

The visitors’ experiences may move beyond the artefacts and exhibitions to the experiences that surround these presentations. The twentieth century museum started to think of visitors as “consumers” or “shoppers” with needs, expectations and wants that museums were responsible to meet (Noordegraaf, 2004; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). But, as museums are becoming more visitor-oriented and facilitating different experiences, a deeper understanding of visitor’s experience is vital. Falk and Dierking (1992) approached this effort from a visitor’s perspective and have conceptualised the museum visit as involving an interaction among three contexts: the personal context, the social context, and the physical context.

Other scholars attempted to understand the visitor’s experiences of the museum presentations and offerings from a psychological perspective. The mindfulness and mindlessness model was applied by Moscardo (1988, 1991, 1992, 1996) to understand visitors’ motives and experiences in museums. Visitors’ experiences gained are derived from and related to their mindfulness state as well as non-mindfulness state. Also, scholars, who have explored learning in museums, debated the conflict between education/learning and entertainment. It has been argued that in considering museum visitor’s motives and experiences, the complimentary relationship between entertainment and education should be explored. Just as entertainment can be educative, education can be entertaining. Museum settings are well suited to such a complimentary relationship. In the following chapter, I will establish the theoretical and methodological frameworks of this thesis.
Chapter 5

Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the rationale for choosing a qualitative format and the philosophical underpinnings that support the approach. It elaborates on the reasons for employing a mix of qualitative methods combining review of documents and archival records, visitor interviews, observations and the concept of historical participant. The rationale for the selection of the case study sites at the Egyptian and Te Papa museums is also outlined. Then each qualitative method used in this study is explained individually. The latter half of this chapter explains the process for analysing the data and briefly describes ethical considerations.

5.1.1 Basis for the use of qualitative inquiry for the design of the research study

In many ways the basis for the use of qualitative inquiry for the design of the research study is based on the belief that a qualitative approach to the research aim set out in Chapter One is one that will best provide insight (Patton, 2002). To reiterate here, the overall aim of this research is to explore the other roles of traditional and modern museums through visitors’ motives and experiences. I identified a lack of qualitative visitor insights into the functioning of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums. Quantitative research (through statistical sampling) has been the backbone of The Egyptian and Te Papa museums’ audience surveys but they do not describe the visit experience of different visitors and the role of traditional and modern museums in relation to the visitor (see chapter One Introduction). In my view, demographic characteristics of the visitors and participation patterns simplify and reduce the issue of the visitor experience to attendance figures and financial statements, and thus they are useful only for marketing and very specific educational purposes as Black (2005), Chan (2009) and Goulding (2000) aptly point out. This explains why I feel that this study is more closely related to qualitative perspectives examining the role of traditional and modern museums from the visitor’s perspective.

Patton (2002, p. 39) endorses a “paradigm of choices” that seeks “methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality”. The real
difference between qualitative and quantitative paradigms is not so much the method, but the researcher's aim (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 1996). The decision of which method to apply may reflect the interests of those carrying out or benefitting from the study and the purposes for which the results will be applied. The choice of which type of research method to use is also based on the researcher's own experience and preference, the population being researched, the proposed audience for findings, time, money, and other resources available (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

Black (2005) and Kolter and Kolter (1998) offer a good historical summary of the development of museum visitor studies as a new element of the visitor-focused museum and indicates that it gained increased importance only at the beginning of the 1990s. Cameron (1971) and Chan (2009) rightly explains that museum research data is mainly of a quantitative nature and is used primarily for marketing purposes to reflect the glowing attendance statistics that are published in annual reports. Along the same lines, Vergo (1989, p. 3) agrees with this scholarly critique and maintains that in general a museum’s success or failure is measured simply in financial terms and high attendance levels.

Museum and heritage studies weave a complex web and some issues are difficult to understand in a quantitative statistical way (Chan, 2009; Chia, 2007; Goulding, 2000; McIntosh, 1998; Moscardo, 1999). There are limitations in a numerical presentation of the complexity of visitor behaviour often examined in museum and heritage studies (Chan, 2009; Chia, 2007). While quantitative methods allow results and overall patterns to be generalised, qualitative methods produce a deeper understanding of the visitors’ experiences and complex behaviour “rather than quantifying, generalizing or predicting it” (Chan, 2009, p. 179; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In other words, a major strength of the qualitative research approach in this study is that it is capable of capturing and understanding visitors’ descriptions and meanings of their visits. In the same vein, Chacko and Nebel (1990) emphasised that a qualitative approach is a more suitable method for different researches especially when the subject of the research is concerned with experiences, motivations and behavioural issues.

Increasingly, other museum and tourism researchers are realising the advantages of qualitative techniques as a valuable tool for understanding diverse aspects of visitor experiences and for exploring intangible elements of visitor behaviour (Armstrong, 2002; Falk, 2008, 2009; Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001; Moussouri, 2003). Quantitative methods have been criticised as having weaknesses when investigating the tourist experience, for instance providing statistical
evidence without sufficient rich explanation of the various results on such experiences (McIntosh, 1998; Walle, 1997). Quantitative techniques have the disadvantage of not being able to explore the “intersubjective nature” of visitors’ experiences (Eyles, 1985, p. 54); they are inflexible for exploring the feelings and experiences of individuals, while qualitative approaches provide deep insights when studying complex human behaviours (Walle, 1997). Silverman (2007, p. 84) also maintains that the qualitative approach is a vital technique when the researcher attempts to address the “whats” and “hows” of participants’ interactions.

Polkinghorne’s (2005) Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research text confirms that typically qualitative research focuses on describing experiences and behaviours. While qualitative case studies differ in the types of experiences they explore, their main interest is about the “experience itself” (Goulding, 2000; Polkinghorne, p. 139). In a museum context, for example, qualitative methods place emphasis on visitors’ own accounts of their exhibition experiences and the ensuing meanings they have made from them. In general, by using qualitative methods, the role of the researcher and the intention, behaviours, activities and purposes of those being researched become of major significance (Blaxter et al., 1996).

In this study, a qualitative approach also allows the researcher to use different methods such as interviews and observations which explore further possibilities in the research setting. With in-depth and semi-structured interviews, for example, the researcher can employ certain specific questions, but be free to probe beyond these if he/she sees fit. Also with observations, the researcher can observe museum visitors’ behaviours and can observe the sequence of actions that precede and follow an incident or behaviour (Heaton, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Observation of behaviour can lead to deeper understandings than interviews alone, because it provides knowledge of the context in which events take place, and may enable the researcher to view things that participants themselves are not aware of, or that they are unwilling to discuss (Moore, 2000b). Therefore researchers frequently prefer to record the behaviours undertaken by visitors in educational leisure settings such as museums, science centres and heritage sites (Moscardo, 1999; Veal, 2006).

One point that I would like to stress here is the fact that the scholarly arguments above of the advantages of qualitative methods serve well as an explanation of why the researcher chooses to employ qualitative approaches. Yet these arguments do not intend to devalue or marginalise all quantitative methods, which suit certain contexts and studies such as visitor surveys, annual reporting, public accountability and marketing campaigns. Also, my
arguments above do not imply that quantitative research cannot be combined with qualitative methods. The point is, perhaps, that there is no right or wrong, no one approach that is the ‘best’. The issue is more that the choice of method should suit the research objectives and questions, the purpose of the study, as well as the conceptual framework within which the researcher operates (Silverman, 2005). Hence, if the goal is an understanding of the visitor’s motives and experience in relation to museum presentations and offerings, then qualitative insights are of fundamental significance.

In view of the discussion above, this study is anchored within qualitative research methods since they provided complex data about the individual visitor experience (Blaxter et al., 1996; McIntosh, 1998). This approach has included techniques such as face to face interviews, observations, case studies, documentation reviews and field notes (Heaton, 2004). The use of this approach enables the researcher to acquire insights into visitors’ motives and their experiences: using their own expressions and words with plenty of rich information that can be employed to demonstrate issues about the research outcomes (Goulding, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

5.1.2 A Mix of Qualitative Methods

The two main case studies are examined with an integrated qualitative methods approach using interviews (face to face), observation, the concept of historical participant, document analysis, and academic literature review which were employed at various stages of the research. Since each individual method has its own methodological weaknesses and strengths, the combination of qualitative methods was considered important. Gilmore and Carson (1996) summed up by arguing that an “integrative qualitative research methodology” is useful since different qualitative methods can be deployed strategically to allow the research progress through distinctive phases over a given time period.

The research design developed here was further inspired by three case studies at different museums which were based primarily on a mix of qualitative methods. The first one examined the visitor experience vis-à-vis the museum setting at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in England (Goulding, 2000). The other case studies explored visitors’ different motives and experiences at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester (Moussouri, 2003) and three local museums in Taiwan (Chia, 2007). All researchers involved in these projects immersed themselves in the museum environment and used an integrated methods
approach to allow the research to evolve and develop through distinctive stages over a given time period.

The next section discusses the case study approach, the individual methods, and the pilot study in more detail.

5.1.2.1 Choice of the case study sites

A case study approach was adopted in this study to provide detailed insights into visitors’ motivations and experiences vis-à-vis the museum presentations and offerings. Case studies are relevant to the research project when the researcher is interested in “how,” “what” and “why” questions (Ellinger, Watkins, & Marsick, 2005, p. 4). A case study method enables the researcher to understand a complex event, experience or practice and can provide an in-depth account of what is already known through previous research.

Case studies draw attention to comprehensive contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships (Yin, 2003). The case study method has been recommended by museum researchers and heritage and leisure tourism scholars to facilitate the systematic exploration of a particular setting “in its real life context” (Decrop, 1999, p. 361; Goulding, 2002; Kelman, 1995; Ryan, 1995).

Choosing a limited number of sites is not only cost-effective within the boundaries of the research project but provides limits to the research context by concentrating on a particular site, population, phenomenon or characteristics (Decrop, 1999). Yin (2003, p. 10) and Decrop (1999) suggest that suitable settings should be “convenient” and “accessible” with a high probability of the experience and event being examined occurring. Besides, for a study to be viable, the settings chosen have to be attended by enough visitors to make sure the study succeeds (Decrop, 1999). Yet, as Yin (2003) notes, one of the disadvantages of the case study approach is that findings are specific and may not be relevant or applicable to other settings.

My research objectives were approached using the case study method within two selected sites; the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, Egypt and Te Papa in Wellington, New Zealand. My case study approach has provided an in-depth investigation of interaction between the expectations and experiences of international and domestic visitors and museums’ presentations and offerings. The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums were purposefully selected for this study, and a number of factors had to be considered for site selection. These two museums are in some ways very similar to each other, but in other ways they are very
different settings. These similarities and differences provided the rationale that made the two sites appropriate for selection. The Egyptian Museum in Cairo and Te Papa in Wellington each hold a prominent position as national museums and tourist attractions. Both museums are showcase extravaganzas of Egyptian and New Zealand’s history, their culture and their people. They also put Wellington and Cairo on many visitors’ itineraries (Kaino, 2005; The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2006a, 2007).

Te Papa is one of the largest national museums in the world, and the most important project in New Zealand’s cultural sector for decades (Donald, 2007; Jolly, 2001; Kaino, 2005; Te Papa, 2002/2003, 2006). It has been established during this new era of commercialism and financial accountability, and therefore can be considered a modern museum. The museum is also a more recent tourist destination, and therefore has been selected as a museum at an earlier stage of tourist destination development. The opening of Te Papa in 1998 “has given tourism in the city a major boost. Te Papa attracted 1.31 million visits in the year ended June 2002. Of these 41% were from international visitors” (Kaino, 2005; Pearce et al., 2004b, p. 399). In comparison to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, tourists’ visits to Te Papa is still in its infancy stage, however, the museum has been hugely popular among domestic tourists (Donald, 2007; Kaino, 2005; Page & Hall, 2003; Pearce, Tan, & Schott, 2004a; Pearce et al., 2004b; Te Papa, 2006).

In the case of the Egyptian Museum, the museum put Cairo, a bustling city of 17 million, on many international tourists’ itineraries (El-Daly, 2003; Fodor, 1983; Hassan, 2005; Hawass, 2005a; Maxwell et al., 2006; Nasser, 2006). The bulk of the international tourists in Egypt consider the Pyramids of Giza and museum their primary destinations before visiting other major sights in the country. It is easier to absorb and link those sights tourists eventually visit (such as the Temple of Abu Simbel and the Valley of the Kings) after a visit to the museum (Fodor, 1983; Kamil, 2006; Maxwell et al., 2006; Slymovicks, 1989; West, 1995). Despite these facts, no comprehensive study has been undertaken to discover aspects of international visitors’ experiences in either institution.

To date, the Egyptian Museum has lacked both the sheer extent of communication technology and the interactivity of multimedia systems. The Egyptian Museum can be identified as a series of cabinets of curiosities and repositories of knowledge and objects (El-Aref, 2002, 2003; El-Saddik, 2005; Hawass, 2005a, 2006; Weil, 1995). In general, the museum does not match the modern museums in terms of using technology, and using gadgets to dispense
knowledge. It is very traditional, with writing under each artefact to display its history. But the museum has substance, and it can seem endless; the tourist can spend many hours in it viewing all the objects on display. Yet, similar to European museums, the Egyptian Museum makes provision for commercial facilities and outdoor areas.

In the case of Te Papa, the marketing strategies and entertainment programmes are evident inside the museum. The process of commercialisation and entertainment programmes in Te Papa reflects a larger trend in the development of some national museums’ presentations and offerings. Because of the variety of interactive exhibitions at Te Papa, it was considered that there would be a wide range of visitors’ experiences.

Since 1999, there has been evidence of a long-term audience development plan in both museums. Document analysis of advertising and promotional media, such as television programmes, radio reports, newspapers, magazines, Internet and travel guidebooks provide evidence of museum visitor development activities in both institutions. There has been an upsurge of new services and facilities at the Egyptian Museum: new spaces to exhibit the important collections properly and renovation of the basement of the museum, which resembled a labyrinth of passageways where visitors looked at the items. The other significant changes were the renovation of the restaurant and garden area and the enlargement of the underground store to accommodate loads of archaeological items (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2002-2005).

In the case of Te Papa, there has been evidence of different museum visitor development activities. In 2001, Te Papa witnessed a new phase in its continuous audience development. For example, four new exhibitions, drawn from the national collection, opened the NZ$4.7 million project, allowing Te Papa to show more contemporary and historical art (Te Papa, 2008b). Several exhibitions have been refurbished also; for example, in 2008, Te Papa renovated the Oceania room, which has views of the harbour and Waitangi Park (Te Papa, 2009/2010).

Besides the general reasons given above, there are other secondary justifications for selecting both museums as suitable case studies in this proposed research. Both museums are known to the researcher (see Chapter One Introduction) and this project has provided an opportunity to spend more time in a place (The Egyptian Museum in Cairo) with which I have a close affinity. Therefore, the researcher’s prior knowledge of the exhibitions at both sites ensured there was a stronger chance of richer information being presented. A command of the Arabic
and English language, and a background in Ancient Egyptian History and Hieroglyphic, as well as long-term residence in New Zealand represent distinctly personal justifications for choosing The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums as suitable case study sites. Previous work experience and contacts also delivered a sound background for this study. From 1995-1997, I worked as a part-time museum education officer at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and consequently had conducted guided museum tours for domestic and international tourists and schools, and delivered educational programmes, lectures and workshops. In 2003, I worked as a part-time administrator and researcher in the Educational, Cultural and Scientific Department at the League of Arab States in Cairo, and became interested in Arab tourists’ experiences. I was partly involved in a large project collecting and analysing data on the Arab Gulf tourists’ preferences for heritage sites and museums in Cairo and Alexandria.

This personal involvement, particularly at the Egyptian Museum, raises some pertinent issues for consideration. Qualitative data are heavily influenced by the social context within which the research design and analysis and data collection take place (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). Qualitative research is an interpretive and subjective exercise, and the researcher is intimately involved in the process (Decrop, 1999; Patton, 2002). The interview schedules and observations were designed by the researcher, with a particular aim in mind and with a certain cultural and social background and context. The analysis and conclusions therefore represent a personal construction and interpretation of what was said or observed. Rubin & Rubin (2005) caution that one of the main sources of bias in qualitative fieldwork is a propensity to select field data to suit an ideal notion or (preconception) of the phenomenon, and Dey (1993) provides a similar warning:

Because the data are voluminous, we have to be selective – and we can select out the data that does not suit. Because the data are complex, we have to rely more on imagination, insight and intuition – and we can quickly leap to the wrong conclusions (p. 222).

It was important to recognise the influence that my former role as an employee and as an Egyptian citizen could play on my role as a researcher, and to attempt to minimise any bias. I did this by constantly scrutinising my research methods and by clearly documenting my thought processes as the analysis proceeded. I was not driven to prove something because this might have put me in danger of letting my personal bias and prejudice intrude, unconsciously or consciously skewing my research to achieve this end (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002).
Although I had an idea of the learning/educational role of the Egyptian Museum in relation to visitors I had encountered during my employment in the museum, I was also aware that this topic had never been researched before in an Egyptian context and that much of the information I would be uncovering would be new and relatively unique in academic circles. For this reason, I do not feel that I had any real preconceptions about what I would find – indeed, I was somewhat surprised by several of the themes which rose to prominence during the analysis. Overall, I feel that I was sufficiently aware of my position as a researcher to be able to minimise any potential sources of bias that could have influenced the study findings.

5.1.2.2 Documentation reviews and archival records

The utilisation of documents and archival records is a popular method in museum and tourism research (Decrop, 1999; Dierking, 2005; Moscardo, 1992). Moreover, in our contemporary society, documentation is part of "the fabric of everyday social life" (Atkinson & Coffey, 2004, p. 56). In order to review documentation and archival records, permissions were obtained from each museum. I sought assistance from the Senior Research Analyst at Te Papa and I was granted permission to use data from the museum’s Visitor and Market Research Unit. Similarly, I was granted permission to use information from the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, The Egyptian Ministry of Culture and the two major Egyptian daily newspapers, Al-Ahram and Al-Gomhuria. Extensive copies of documents and records were obtained, and field notes were recorded for those official documents not permitted to be copied. Documents of relevance to the analysis of exhibitions, visitor profile and preferences were reviewed and these included: management and marketing documentation, project plans, visitor surveys, visitor feedback/guestbook, internal reports and various newspaper articles.

Due to the fact that I was neither present in Cairo nor in Wellington continuously, I sought out several independent news reports and magazines. Also, since the late-1990s, the World Wide Web has become an effective and valuable tool for social research (Babbie, 2009, p. 513). Accordingly, in this project the Internet acted as another source of data. News reports and editorials contained within the museums’ web sites kept me up to date with events and important issues. Overall, by reviewing various documents and records I was able to validate and cross check some findings.
5.1.2.3 Interviews

Qualitative interviewing is referred to as a conversation between the researcher and the research participant, with the specific aim of obtaining information pertinent to the research questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this conversation, the researcher focuses on the participant’s perception of self, life, and experience, as expressed in his or her own words. Through this process the researcher gains access to, and subsequently understands, the private interpretations that individuals hold. It is assumed that this perception is knowable and can be made explicit (Patton, 2002).

Conversely, unstructured or semi-structured interviews represent a more open approach than the interrogative process used in structured interviews. The goal of semi-structured interviews is to seek information about the participant’s world by understanding his or her perspective, in a language that is natural to him or her, rather than focusing on the researcher’s perspective as the valid view. It allows the participant to introduce ideas and place emphasis on topics he or she sees as important (Babbie, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

This study employed face to face semi-structured interviews because they are very effective in eliciting narrative (Patton, 2002); they let the research process be adapted to the interviewees; probe for answers; clarify statements; and explore new ideas and views (Babbie, 2004; Polkinghorne, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Van Aalst (1994, p. 24) also noted that one of the main advantages of face-to-face interviews, especially if the research is somewhat complex, is that the interviewer can “gently question the underlying meaning” of complex and sensitive issues. In short, individual interviews allow greater insights into the individual experience.

I conducted face to face interviews with museum staff and domestic and international visitors at both museum sites (see Appendices B, E, G, I, and L for more information on the content of the interview questions). Since Te Papa has different departments such as marketing, visitor services, management and education, it was necessary to draft three sets of interview questions for staff: one for management staff, one for service staff, and a third one for marketing staff (see Appendices, E, F, and G). Permission to interview staff at each site had to be obtained prior to the commencement of the field work phase of the research. A detailed copy of the research proposal was emailed to management to facilitate approval being granted at each museum. The researcher then approached management at each site by telephone and emails to finalise the fieldwork periods.
The Visitor and Marketing research manager at Te Papa and the Director of Exhibition and Collections Services at the Egyptian Museum provided the researcher with a list of museum staff in different departments to be contacted for interviews. Museum staff were approached by emails followed by either phone calls or other electronic mails to arrange interview appointments. A total of 31 interviews were conducted with museum staff. Of the 31 interviews there were 17 interviews at Te Papa and 14 interviews at the Egyptian Museum. The staff interviewed worked in a cross-section of professional roles and organisational divisions – curatorship and exhibit design, education, human resources, marketing, tour guides and floor staff. Some of the museum floor staff and tour guides (7 staff in total) at both sites who were aware of my presence and research project approached me and volunteered to participate in the research. Generally, the interviews with museum staff at each site lasted approximately 40 minutes.

**Participants’ interviews**

With interviews, time and other resources are usually limited for all research, and the researcher does not know, prior to speaking with research participants, how many interviews would be useful (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). Some museum scholars have conducted over one hundred interviews (Falk, 1993b; Hood, 1981; Moscardo, 1992), although most studies are based on approximately thirty to sixty interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). These authors suggest that this range is a reasonable number, and the researcher is legitimately sacrificing breadth for depth. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that the more interviews, observations, and documents obtained by a researcher, the more variation will be found from multiple sources of evidence, resulting in a greater data density.

The visitor interviews were conducted over all the daytime hours during which the museums were open. Interviews at the Egyptian Museum were carried out during the months of May, June and July 2008. Interviews at Te Papa took place during the months of September, October and November 2008, and the months of November 2009 and January 2010. The in-depth analysis of all interviews including key factor coding was completed using a qualitative data analysis computer programme called NVivo (see section 5.1.3 Coding of data and data analysis).

Museum visitors were approached by the researcher (“as a friendly stranger”) (Du Toit & Dye, 2008, p. 77) on site on a random next-visitor-to-pass basis as they exited the museums “to avoid sensitizing them to the study during their museum experience” (Du Toit & Dye,
2008). A total of 172 visitors were interviewed on the completion of their visit to the museum. Of the 172 interviews there were 70 visitors at the Egyptian Museum (50 international respondents and 20 Egyptian respondents) and 102 visitors at Te Papa (52 New Zealand respondents and 50 international respondents). Approximately 90 percent of visitors who were approached at the Egyptian Museum agreed to participate in the interview and almost 70 percent of visitors who were approached at Te Papa agreed to an interview.

The majority of the interviews at both museums (156 interviews) were conducted one-to-one with single visitors, although 16 interviews were conducted with couples, family groups and friends/relatives according to the participants’ preferences. I conducted approximately six interviews per day at the Egyptian Museum and between three and four interviews a day at Te Papa. Only visitors aged 18 years or over were interviewed. The researcher also excluded visitors who were not fluent in either English or Arabic, as these were the two languages in which the interviewer was fluent.

I approached all visitors that I could, but was unable to interview visitors who exited the museum while I was interviewing others. All of the interviews were conducted at the museum, except for three which were carried out at three different hotels in Cairo where the international visitors were staying. The majority of the participants at both museums were interviewed in the café area or restaurant of each museum. A few participants were interviewed in Te Papa’s ground floor foyer and the Egyptian Museum’s garden; each provided various quiet and private seating areas away from the background noise from other visitors’ conversations and traffic.

Those who were willing to participate were offered a small incentive, such as a cold drink or a cup of tea or coffee, to encourage and thank them for their time. This was offered before they agreed to take part in research. Such incentives have been a common device to encourage participation in quantitative and qualitative research projects (Patton, 2002; Veal, 2006). An interview took anywhere from 40 to 50 minutes depending on the interest and stamina of the participants though most took around 50 minutes. Of the 203 interviews with visitors and museum staff at both sites, 34 interviews were conducted in Arabic and 169 interviews were conducted in English. All interviews were tape-recorded, with respondents’ consent, and transcribed individually into a word processing programme. Recording allowed greater attention to be given to what the research participants were saying. However, this method has
a drawback; 50 minutes of interview can take between two to four hours to transcribe (see section 5.1.3 Coding of data and data analysis).

At the end of the interview I briefly summarised what had been covered with the participants and usually at this stage the participant would add some new information or comments (Patton, 2002). Subsequently I would scribble down a few notes about any interesting remarks made to me after the interview had been completed (Patton, 2002) or even non-verbal communication like facial cues, eye contact and general body gestures that stood out (Corbetta, 2003; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The digital tape containers were labelled to simplify filing and retrieving. I made a copy of the original recording of the interview before attempting the transcription. I had two copies of the original recording in case any accidents occurred during the transcription that may have accidentally damaged or erased it.

In my approach to the interviewing process, I used the laddering technique to discover underlying values in given statements (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). I was aware that participants may not spontaneously speak about the “whole picture” (Gillham, 2000, p. 65). A laddering technique involves using a series of directed probes and prompts to uncover the full range of the individual’s motives, experiences, needs, wants, and personal goals (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). This method helps the researcher to elicit important motives and experiences by ordering them into a hierarchy linked to concrete thoughts. Accordingly, the laddering method assists us to understand ‘what’ is important to the respondents (Gillham, 2000).

In this research, respondents’ motives and experiences were mapped hierarchically through probes to find core motives and experiences (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). For example, the laddering technique revealed that the Egyptian visitors’ most prevalent motives and experiences were to socialise and spend quality time with friends and family in the museum’s garden and restaurant. In short, the laddering technique unearths the layers of visitors’ motives and experiences.

All interviews included prompts to encourage the respondents to expand on any points. The semi-structured interviews enabled me to establish my “own style of conversation” (Corbetta, 2003, p. 270). Indeed, the design of the qualitative semi-structured interview procedures had been driven by and embedded in the theoretical framework established in chapter Four. In other words, the preliminary literature review informed the researcher prior to interviewing visitors and museum staff. During the interview process I maintained extensive field notes to keep me focused and reduce the likelihood of data loss in case of tape recorder malfunction.
(Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Patton, 2002; Tolich & Davidson, 1999). I also used some Arabic and English abbreviations and informal shorthand to facilitate taking notes during the interviews (Patton, 2002; Tolich & Davidson, 1999). Taking notes during the interview process helped me to check out and clarify some of the answers and statements said earlier (Patton, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). All interview notes were incorporated with the interview transcripts (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

**A summary of the approach to the interview process**

All interviews began with an explanation of the purpose of the research and the presentation of the consent form. Research participants (visitors and staff) were assured of the confidentiality of the information they provided and of their right to withdraw comments or even refuse to give information at any stage before or during the interview. The interview guide was offered to each participant to view, but only a few of them looked at the list before the interview began; the rest were relaxed and willing to talk in a natural conversational manner. The interviews began with the interviewer becoming acquainted with the respondents at both sites by talking about food, hobbies, travel experiences, and past educational experiences in a friendly and candid manner. This kind of exchange proved helpful in “breaking the ice” and laying the groundwork for the interviews (Grbich, 1999, p. 98) After establishing rapport, participants were offered a cold drink or a cup of tea or coffee and then were interviewed.10

Most of the interviews with museum staff and visitors became a semi-structured interview-type conversational situation between an active listener and an active participant. Sometimes respondents did not have ready responses and it took them a while to remember what they saw, read or visited and form an answer. Accordingly, a priority was made of the use of specific basic skills such as: remaining silent and inquisitive and appearing interested in what the participant had to say; giving the interviewee a considerable amount of latitude to expand upon certain subjects or exhibitions in an unhindered manner and as naturally as possible; reflecting some of the answers back to the interviewees; asking them to elaborate on or clarify

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10 Many interviewees, particularly at the Egyptian Museum, agreed to participate in the research without any incentives.
particular statement or response; and introducing new topics (Corbetta, 2003; Grbic, 1999; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Patton, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

More importantly, a priority was made when interviewing museum staff and international and domestic visitors at the Egyptian Museum. During my interviews at the Egyptian Museum I drew on the concept of self-reflexivity; a willingness to be conscious of my own perspectives and origins. As the literature highlights, involvement, trust and ambiguities are important matters in fieldwork (Heaton, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and as an Egyptian researcher I maintained a certain “scientific detachment” (Babbie, 2004, p. 279). No matter how much knowledge I had about the site, I maintained my role as a researcher and relied only on the perspectives and voices of the participants (Corbetta, 2003; Patton, 2002). I was constantly aware and attentive to my own culture, history, social, political and religious origins as well as my similarities and differences to those I talked to during the fieldwork. Hence, during every interview I aimed to remove myself from my own cultural and social context and endeavoured to open myself to the visitor’s world and his/her own narrative of experience (Gillham, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Lastly, it is well recognised that interviews have some disadvantages, including possibly distorted responses owing to participants’ political or cultural bias and the physical and emotional condition at the time of interview (Patton, 2002). In past visitor studies, researchers have also noted that interview questions are answered superficially due to the interviewees’ inability to articulate their thoughts or feelings (Decrop, 1999; Patton, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Hence first-hand observations and field notes can limit the problem of superficiality and provide a check on what is described in interviews (Decrop, 1999; Patton, 2002). For example, I ensured that I took extensive field notes shortly after the interviews. The taking of these field notes heightens the objectivity of the interviews. I also recorded my own impressions and feelings of every interview which acted as a further check on political or cultural bias (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Wynn, 2007).

5.1.2.4 Observations

Initially, my decision to use observational method stemmed from consideration of various remarks and valuable observational work undertaken by Armstrong (2002), Goulding (2000), Lincoln and Guba (1985), McIntosh, Hinch and Ingram (2002) and Moscardo (1999). These writers emphasise that the hallmark of observation is its unobtrusive nature which minimises any interference in the behaviour of those observed, neither manipulating nor stimulating
them. These researchers identified also four types of situations where an observation is appropriate: the use of informal leisure settings; deviant behaviour; complementary research; and spatial use of sites.

Therefore, my interviews were supplemented with unobtrusive observation work since this approach can extend the researcher’s perspective in field research (Babbie, 2009). The advantage of observations is that they approach reality in its natural setting and examine incidents and actions as they progress (Decrop, 1999; Goulding, 2000; Polkinghorne, 2005). The unobtrusive method was first used in fieldwork at the beginning of the twentieth century by social anthropologists to study urban environments (Lee Miller & Brewer, 2003). This technique is often carried out to describe visitor behaviour while keeping a level of researcher anonymity in the field where it is important that the researcher’s own presence will not change the natural behaviour of those being observed (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). Hence the researcher captures people's behaviour exactly as it occurs.

Observations at the Egyptian Museum were carried out during the months of May, June and July 2008. Observations at Te Papa were conducted during the months of September, October and November 2008 and the months of November 2009 and January 2010. In general, observations at both museums were carried out in two phases. The initial observation schedule was conducted during the interview phase of the research and focused on the sites themselves; to familiarise myself with the exhibitions, activities and events and to experience them from the visitor’s perspective. During this stage, key themes and ideas were noted for each site.

In the second stage, I conducted more observations shortly after the completion of the interview phase. The data from the interviews were used to design and inform subsequent observations. For instance, during this phase, observations were undertaken at five very distinct exhibitions, The Royal Mummy Room and King Tutankhamen Room at the Egyptian Museum and the Our Space, Awesome Forces and Rita Angus exhibitions at Te Papa. The Egyptian exhibitions were chosen due to the fact that the interviews revealed that they were very popular among international participants and international visitors in general.

The three exhibitions at Te Papa were selected for two reasons. First, the Our Space exhibition was experienced by the majority of the international respondents who expressed negative reactions to the exhibit. Second, the Awesome Forces and Rita Angus exhibitions were very popular places for the majority of domestic visitors completing the interview.
Moreover, unlike *Our Space* and other exhibitions, which provide visitors with high level of interactivity, the *Rita Angus* exhibit was a fairly traditional art exhibition, relying on the visitor to walk from piece to piece and passively observe and contemplate. The exhibition also is associated with the more orthodox form of preserving, interpreting and displaying local artworks.

Since the on-site behaviours of visitors to both museums were recorded across a wide range of areas and exhibitions, it is difficult to detail all cases in this study. Therefore, I focused more on visitors’ behaviours at these five popular exhibitions and these are discussed in the findings chapters. Such information from the observations was helpful in clarifying the data generated from the interview questions by providing a context for the visitors’ responses. For consistency of data, my record-gathering of observations were carried out during the same times of the selected days. The initial observation at both sites was conducted on one weekday (Wednesday) and a weekend day (Saturday) from 10:30 am to 4.00 pm. The second phase of observation at the five exhibitions ran on Monday to Saturday from 10.30 am to 4.00 pm. and Sundays 11:00 am to 3:30 pm. Observations were conducted on weekdays and weekends to encounter high use and low use periods (Moscardo, 1992). In total, I conducted twenty seven hours of observations at the Egyptian Museum and thirty three hours of observations at Te Papa.

One of the methods I used during this observation was the visitor tracking method, whereby I followed a visitor through the exhibition or area being researched and noted his/her behaviour (Goulding, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lofland & Lofland, 1995). The purpose of tracking the visitors through the exhibition or area was to develop an understanding and gain greater insight into visitor behaviours and movements (Moscardo, 1996). At other times I stayed in one place to observe how all visitors interacted with a particular exhibition or attraction. I sketched my own map to draw visitors’ routes and record their movements. Additionally, I used digital photography occasionally as another source of data to capture some of the settings and this visual method helped me sometimes in recalling different surroundings later during the in-depth analysis (Patton, 2002; Polkinghorne, 2005). Concerning ethical issues associated with research using photographs, I blurred photographs to keep people anonymous (Pink, 2007).

The researcher found that recording observations of visitors’ behaviours was relatively straightforward; observations could be written into a notebook without the researcher
appearing conspicuous. For example, many visitors to the exhibitions took brochures and booklets with them where they often read them and sometimes (particularly at the *Rita Angus* and *King Tutankhamen* exhibitions) wrote in journals. The researcher’s notebook and note taking was not unusual in these circumstances. Behaviours were recorded by hand in a notebook attached to a clipboard, and a digital wristwatch was used to time the observation period (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002) (Analysis of observations is discussed in Section 5.1.3 Coding of data and data analysis). I noted the following:

- General appearance, age, gender, the number of visitors in the group and possible nationality.

- Environmental features such as crowding levels, a sense of orientation, and the nature of the exhibition (for example, interactive or tradition presentations).

- The nature and content of social interaction and conversation.

- Engagement with exhibitions (time spent, apparent concentration, and involvement).

I aimed to capture as much as possible of what occurred (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). Abbreviations were used for each type of visitor, objects, exhibitions and behaviours. I tried to heighten the objectivity of the observation through taking extensive notes and training. For example, I conducted a series of pilot observations and ensured that verbal information was noted as close to verbatim as possible which included “things heard and overheard, conversation among people, conversation with people” (Lofland & Lofland, 1995, p. 93). I also recorded my own experience and understanding of the museum and its exhibits – since they might have been shared by other visitors which served as a further check on bias. It is well recognised that the insider’s impressions and insights retrieved through observation are significant, and deliver valid results (Goulding, 2002; Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

With respect to recording observations, it was important for the researcher to differentiate between visitors who ‘take a glimpse’ at an object or artwork as opposed to those who ‘look’ or ‘read’ the label and noting such action correctly (Goulding, 2000; Patton, 2002). Hence any visitor who stood in front of an object or artwork for less than five seconds was noted as ‘glimpsing’ as opposed to ‘looking’ or ‘reading’ a label. Also, observational words such as laughing, touching, showing, or interacting were accompanied with detailed descriptions to avoid falling into the bad practice of mainly recording terms rather than thick descriptions (Patton, 2002). I was interested in any type of interacting such as friendly, sociable, talkative,
angry, or argumentative. Lastly, when analysing the observational data I intended to move from a set of particular observation to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all the given behaviours and interactions (Babbie, 2004).

In conducting observations, there are problems of reliability such as the degree of “chance occurrences” or unexpected events versus real behaviour (Goulding, 2000, p. 265). In this respect, I used the “multiple observations” technique, whereby I looked for negative incidents as well as positive cases to lend a degree of validity, and the repetitions of observations across different situations to establish reliability (Goulding, 2002, p. 64). Accordingly, I considered alternatives and searched for other possible explanations. For example, while waiting in long queues to enter the King Tutankhamen exhibition created positive verbal interactions between tourists of the same nationality, the long wait also generated frustration and boredom (negative case) among visitors.

Finally, sample size for observations was determined when information and theoretical insights reached saturation, which constitutes observing the same behaviours reported without anything new being added (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). It is well acknowledged that observational method records the external behaviours of the subjects but cannot capture the participant’s voice to confirm the findings (Goulding, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lofland & Lofland, 1995). I could not view what was happening inside visitors’ minds. In order to overcome this issue, I used interview data to go beyond the external visitor’s behaviour and explore the visitors’ actual experiences and thoughts of the physical environment (Goulding, 2002; Patton, 2002).

5.1.2.5 Historical participant

I utilised the concept of historical participant used by Joanna Fountain (2002) in her study of the touristic place images of Akaroa. The historical participant approach allows the researcher to discuss past and present personal events in the context of the present research, and sometimes allows one to reflect and provide possible explanations to research issues (Fountain, 2002). This brings me to some remarks on my position as a researcher. I came to the Egyptian Museum with available knowledge about the site; however, I was sometimes surprised by the abyss between my knowledge and memories of former visits and what my research unearthed. Growing up in Cairo, and visiting the museum at many different stages of my life the building holds for me personally layers of experience. Also, visiting the museum
at different stages of my life has meant that I had been learning about the museum informally for most of my life.

Thus, I became an “informed reader” (Denzin, 2001, p.67) within the context of this research. I believe this provides me with a particular understanding about the Egyptian Museum, its staff and the Egyptian visitors’ motives and experiences and the phenomenon under scrutiny. While this might be considered as an inherent bias, I regard it as a meaningful advantage with regards to empirical understandings (Denzin, 2001). And concurring with Patton (2002, p.108), I am swayed that personal insights and reflections of the researchers produce a “creative synthesis” in the research project and contributes to the theoretical framework in that it brings an element of reflexivity.

The historical participant approach is an interesting and novel method for experiential studies. It can strengthen our commitment to conduct good research based on building some type of relation between the researcher’s previous museum experiences and the participants’ experiences (Fountain, 2002). In my view, I do not believe that using this approach is to self-indulge but to reflect on how one is inserted in the study and how similar historical and cultural processes might locate the researcher with the research participants (for example, Egyptian participants). Many commonalities - such as my nationality, culture, religion, and my past motives and experiences at the Egyptian Museum – enables me to interpret the deep motives and experiences of Egyptian participants. Historical participant approach does, however, entail abandoning the search for objectivity in favour of critical provisional analysis based on plurality of visitors’ motives and experiences (Fountain, 2002). As a result, the researcher’s past personal events can be embedded within broader processes and better explanations garnered of visitors’ motives and experiences.

The following section describes the management and analyses of the qualitative findings. Finally, the limitations of the research and ethical considerations are discussed in some detail.

5.1.3 Coding of data and data analysis

The interview questions, observational data, field notes and existing documents were individually numbered and stored in ring binders. Findings for the two sites were analysed with the QSR NVivo software package for Social Sciences (Version 8.0 Lincoln University License).
Following my pilot study at Canterbury Museum, I decided that it would be necessary to use a software package for the full study. This decision was initially made on the basis of volume of data, and the possible option was explored by attending NVivo training sessions at Lincoln University before the final decision was made to use NVivo software. NVivo was chosen over manual coding and analysis primarily because coding with NVivo was easier and quicker than manual methods. For example, it was easier and quicker to code text on screen than it would be to manually cut and paste different pieces of text relevant to a single code onto pieces of paper and then store these in a file. Typing memos within the NVivo software rather than manually (by, possibly, writing in a notebook) and linking different pieces of information together through electronic memos can be helpful when building up themes across the data.

The searching facilities in NVivo added rigour to the analysis process by allowing me to carry out quick and accurate searches of a particular phenomenon or theme (the researcher may be reluctant to carry out these searches manually, especially if the qualitative data are voluminous), and added to the validity of the results by ensuring that all instances of a particular phenomenon are found. In other words, the searching tools in NVivo allowed me to interrogate important data at a particular level. This, in turn, improved the rigour of the analysis process by validating (or not) some of my own impressions and interpretations of the data.

All interviews, field notes, observational data and documents were analysed and categorisation were made with the support of the software which was developed to assist in the analysis of qualitative research data. The software package ‘QSR NVivo helps with the collection of data, content analysis and results of a project and contains various “nodes” and “documents” (Richard, 1999). Large chunks of text are imported in the form of documents saved in rich text format. Once imported, the researcher can create, code, edit, and explore compound documents, meaning that one inter-links documents and nodes to provide cross-referencing networks. The “Node System” is used for categorising individual pieces of data (coding) and identifying key themes; and it can be organised into trees of the nodes or hierarchies that go together, or simply used to provide easy access to various elements of the research project (Richard, 1999, p. 134).

By providing a detailed example from my data analysis, I will shed light on how the different themes knit together to form a whole. It was first necessary to analyse individual or major themes in the data. Using the software to perform this was effective. The tools in NVivo
assisted me in terms of “who mentioned what regarding motivations and experiences” within a theme. Then, in order to relate the theme to other ideas it was necessary to consider the electronic memos typed during the analysis process. The NVivo was effective at this stage for mapping out diagrammatically how the themes related to each other. At this point, the researcher viewed the whole picture and the inter-relationships of the codes on the screen. When considering the electronic memos and coded data together in order to pull out themes across the data, I simply typed a short summary on each node.

These summaries included details such as “why did domestic participants come to Te Papa”? Or “what experiences did international visitors take from the Egyptian Museum? This information was placed alongside relevant electronic memos and using this data, notes were made of possible themes within the nodes. For example, when considering the motivations of international participants at The Egyptian Museum the relevant text from all interviews was coded as "motivations" and a coding report was typed of this node. The themes of “learning more about the objects” and “the desire to link the artefacts with their pre-existing experiences” was identified from this node coding report and thus major main ideas were formulated for a discussion in the research of the museum as a place to connect with the familiar and evoking previous knowledge.

In summary, utilising NVivo programme helped me greatly in organising, analysing and connecting the 589 documents that represented the interviews, observations, field notes and existing documents made during this research. Once the documents were imported into the programme, I read and re-read them and began to make trees of the nodes that matched up, such as the different issues covered in interview questions or observational data (like expectations and experiences, main weakness/strength of museum experiences, negative and positive behaviours). As I read more of these documents, I refined some nodes and created new ones and gradually started to develop an understanding of different interests, needs, motivations, experiences and presentations at each site; a picture of the thesis as a whole begun to emerge. At this point I achieved unity by making connections across the full body of data and with relevant literature; a process that is mirrored in the structure of the thesis.

My data analysis can be thought of as the work of an ethnographer who embarks on an attempt to analyse and describe the findings via documentation, observation, interview and field notes and inevitably interpret the visitors’ motivations and experiences vis-à-vis the museum presentations and offerings. Certainly, this can only be my construction of the
motives and subjective experiences of the international and domestic participants at both sites. The researcher actively constructs the research object not just in the methods of documentation, observation, interview and field notes but in the analysis as well (Grbich, 1999; Jensen, 1991).

The initial part of the analysis was the existing documents and archival records that were already available and used to support the current research (Decrop, 1999). I analysed the documentation reviews and archival records as the basis of comparisons between visitor experiences at the sites. The visitor profile data from Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, the Egyptian Ministry of Culture, the Te Papa Visitor and Market Research Unit and New Zealand Ministry of Tourism provided demographic background and numbers of domestic and international visitors and the main reasons why they visited. This data allowed comparison of overall museum visitor statistics with the findings of the current case studies to explore any patterns and differences between the two groups. Although documentation and archival records are useful data, they may be inaccurate or not detailed enough to help the researcher in addressing the thesis objectives, and so “we cannot treat records – however official – as firm evidence of what they report” (Atkinson & Coffey, 2004, p. 58; Patton, 2002).

The analysis of the lengthy responses is indeed a time-consuming and laborious task in comparison to quantitative data, which is often easier to analyse as it allows easy statistical analysis. I analysed the interviews using procedures similar to those suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Patton (2002) and Tolich and Davidson (1999). The immense amount of responses to the interview questions was managed in the analysis by copying and pasting from the full transcription into a separate word file document for each question. Then, I drew out recurring descriptions, reasons, themes and ideas, grouping them into categories. This was time consuming but grouping answers within categories provided an indication of the recurrence of similar responses. The commonly similar responses and general themes were then coded using NVivo programme.

The transcribed interview data provided valuable quotations to illustrate visitors’ motives and experiences. Visitors’ motives and their experiences identified from the data were grounded in visitors’ own descriptions, thus enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. I included the interviewee’s speech patterns and grammar and did not change spellings or phrasing to make the interview more grammatically correct. By keeping these unique speech
patterns, particularly the speech of Egyptian respondents and Te Papa’s international visitors, an authentic picture of the interviewees’ reactions and perspectives could be painted. I also exercised my own discretion about insignificant expressions that fell into normal speech patterns, such as "uh," "ah" or "um" since removing all of them might have posed the risk of losing the respondent’s speech pattern and including them all might have made for ‘clunky’ reading.

To assure accuracy of the full and complete translation of Arabic interview responses and some of the Arabic documents and archival records, I followed Behling & Law’s (2000) technique of “Translation/Back-Translation” where the researcher meets with bilingual specialists and they examine the language of the transcripts and documents until they reach an agreement. Behling & Law (2000) maintain that such procedure scores high on informativeness or source language transparency. The technique will also point to instances of shoddy or biased interpretation (Behling & Law, 2000). The interview transcripts in Arabic were transcribed as soon as possible and then were reviewed by another qualified specialist (postdoctoral researcher) from the English Department, Faculty of Arts at Cairo University.

By comparing and cross checking (triangulating) my international sample in Te Papa with the international visitor profile findings from the museum and the New Zealand Ministry of Tourism, I found that my sample did not fairly represent all international visitors to Te Papa (see section 6.1.1.1 Nationality). Rubin and Rubin’s (2005, p. 16) study emphasised that if any gaps are noticed between the interview data and other data sources, “the researcher may go back to conduct more interviews”. Accordingly, I returned to Te Papa to carry out more interviews during the months of November 2009 and January 2010 and this ensured a fairer representation of international visitors.

The other area of analysis concerned on-site observations. I constantly used my portable computer as a fieldwork tool which facilitated the saving and organisation of field notes. Material generated from observations was recorded in notebooks and then typed into Word documents that were printed out and stored in folders. A running list of extensive observational data was then created to generate the category themes.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that category coding can be applied to social incidents observed and non-verbal behaviours such as frustrations, boredom, hesitations or emotions. Hence, I applied codes to label, separate and organise the observational data into two main headings, such as negative behaviours and positive behaviours according to such factors as
body language, frustration, boredom, a sense of orientation, contemplation and engagement, remarks made and social interaction (Goulding, 2000). In total 77 observational sheets (41 sheets for the Egyptian Museum and 36 sheets for Te Papa) were completed. The final in-depth analysis then was done whereby recurring behaviour patterns and the use of spaces and exhibitions became the basis for the final interpretation.

Observational data was also triangulated with interview responses and field notes which allowed me to move beyond a single view of the museum experience. Triangulation is a significant technique in the interpretation process as data from different methods and different stages of the research and from the different respondents in the study can be systematically compared (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). This can lessen the risk of the data being the result of a single technique of collection and therefore enhance interpretation. In the present study, the triangulation of the data was useful to offer additional explanations for visitors’ responses and behaviour patterns when data from one method regarding a research objective did not provide enough detail (Bechhofer & Paterson, 2000). One example is the presentation of King Tutankhamen exhibition where I noted in my observation that the curators organised the exhibition as a display of art and showcasing jewellery designs, not of history and archaeology. Similarly, analysis of interview data found that international respondents’ visit to the exhibition became an aesthetic experience: the international visitor visited the exhibition for the visual aesthetic (that stood against the educational and historical) value of the experience. I found that such matching further enhanced my understanding of a particular phenomenon. In this case I learnt that the design of the exhibition is directly related to the international visitors’ artistic and aesthetic background about King Tutankhamen legacy (personal context).

Another good example is domestic and international visitors’ comments on the Rita Angus exhibition at Te Papa. While domestic visitors enjoyed walking through the exhibition and contemplating the works of art, many international visitors saw the Rita Angus and Toi Te Papa: Art of New Zealand exhibitions as boring and not providing a stimulant for family interaction. On the other hand, my observational data identified three major types of visitors at the exhibition: a) hopping visitors who were interested in the artworks and were observed moving from one room or section to another, but usually stopped to examine a specific work of art for a lengthy period of time; b) steady visitors who were also interested in artworks and moved through the exhibit more systematically and followed the exact sequence of exhibit elements intended by the curators; and c) the sightseers who were not interested in the
artworks, engaged in more conversation and less label reading, moved from one space to another in what appeared to be a totally haphazard manner and left the exhibition after a short time. By cross-checking the data sources, I found that international visitors fitted the sightseer pattern, while domestic visitors fitted either the hopping or steady pattern.

A third example of triangulation is domestic participants’ experience of Te Papa as a place for social learning experiences. The responses to the interview questions suggested that a number of parents aimed at influencing their children’s learning experience and regarded themselves as guides of their children’s educational experience. They viewed the museum as a social learning site where their children will be the beneficiary. This guiding behaviour above matched some of the observations made inside the Our Space and the Awesome Forces exhibitions. Family groups were observed to exchange information, read the labels and the instructions provided on-screen to their children, and they attempted to direct their children’s observations. Of interest were the methods and the tools parents used to convey information to their children. These included asking questions and providing reinforcement; and providing explanations often by using exhibit leaflets and images on the screens. In the examples above, the method of cross-checking data from multiple sources provided a more informed impression of the visitor experience and went beyond the knowledge made possible by one approach and thus contributed to promoting quality in the research.

5.1.4 Peer review and pilot study

Before fieldwork began, changes to the questionnaire were made as a result of a pilot study which was conducted at Canterbury Museum in Christchurch. This pilot study assisted with determining the visitor’s comprehension of the interview questions, the time taken to complete the interview and to evaluate my skill in observation.

The pilot study also provided facts, approaches and hints the researcher may not have anticipated before conducting the major research. Such ideas and signs increase the chances of reaching clearer findings in the main project (Haralambos & Holborn, 1995). My pilot study was a miniature version of my major project. It was a preliminary investigation to determine the feasibility of my research. My main goal was to ensure that the interview questions were easily understood as well as getting an idea of how long interviews would take to complete. I also undertook unobtrusive on site observations before the main study. This was useful practice, firstly to get familiar with the observational techniques; familiar with the
whole site; familiar with the most popular exhibitions noted by the participants; and ensured consistency in understanding and interpretation of different behaviours.

The pilot study was conducted during the month of January 2008 at Canterbury Museum in Christchurch. The researcher followed the same policies of Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee, and its approval was obtained prior to the research activities. Museum professionals were approached by emails and phone calls followed by a visit for interviews. Visitors were approached in person on site on a random next-visitor-to-pass basis as they exit the museum.

Following the pilot study, the observation method and interview procedure and its question wording were revised to remove any anomalies in the observation protocol and the set of interview questions that may have inhibited the interpretation or analysis of findings. No major problems were identified with the procedure by which interviews and observations were conducted, but a few changes were made to the observation method and the set of interview questions in the light of the analysis of pilot study responses and techniques. Thus my prior knowledge of interviewing and observations at Canterbury Museum ensured there was a stronger chance of richer data being reported in the main study. After the completion of the pilot study, the main study was conducted approximately four months later with different groups of visitors to the two sites. Before I end this chapter, I need to qualify this research with regards to certain limitations which will be highlighted in the next section.

5.1.5 Limitations of the research

This research was conducted in two specific locations with a very small sample size limited to Arabic speaking visitors at the Egyptian Museum. Accordingly it has a number of limitations, which related, in some way, to the nature of the qualitative approach itself. A basic limitation of this research involves the generalisability of the results, especially given the small sample size of the domestic visitors at the Egyptian Museum. The limitations of qualitative research are well documented in that a research of this nature cannot produce the same results, in terms of representativeness or generalisability, as quantitative research (Lee Miller & Brewer, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It has long been recognised that there are issues with generalisability in qualitative study owing to its unstructured nature and the complexity of replicating the process and instrumentation of findings (Grbich, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Replicating a qualitative study is typically unfeasible and often difficult because the common assumption is that the real world is complex and changes overtime. Patton (2002, p. 563), for instance,
reminds us that we should be very careful about “extrapolating (much less generalizing) the findings to other situations, other time periods, and other people” since qualitative results are case dependent and highly context.

In short, this study does not intend to provide representative claims relating to all modern and traditional museums in the world. It is simply not possible to generalise the results of this explorative study with that of other traditional and modern museums with a global importance, different locations, and different landmark roles in the touristic marketing. However, I regard this as a limitation of the scope and not of the nature of this thesis. It is ultimately up to the general reader and museum theorists and practitioners to decide if and to what extent the two exemplary cases are useful for understanding the roles of other traditional and modern museums.

While every effort was made to interview a wide range of visitors, this was potentially limited by a number of factors. First, selection of participants was limited to adult visitors (18 years and over) who were competent speakers of English and Arabic. Hence the sample is not fully representative of all visitors at both sites which included children and teenagers less than 18 years of age. Secondly, since a few interviews were conducted with couples, family groups and friends/relatives factors like group pressure or social desirability might have influenced responses given by participants (Bechhofer & Paterson, 2000). Thirdly, although it was intended to approach all visitors (over 18 years and who were competent speakers of English and Arabic), practical considerations made this impossible at the museums. For example, visitors who exited the museum while I was negotiating with other participants over the selection of the interview location were missed and such interruption could be considered random.

Lastly, time constraints and social and cultural barriers hindered the participation of other types of visitors. For instance, the few Arab Gulf families who were visiting the Egyptian Museum during my fieldwork declined to be interviewed since they had limited time and did not see all the exhibitions. Also, three female Arab Gulf tourists (two from Saudi Arabia and one from Kuwait) were approached for interviews but they declined since they were not escorted by girlfriends or male family members. Here the researcher’s gender impeded the exploration of the motives and experiences of these visitors. Also, the time constraints of tour itineraries limited the opportunity for tour group members to participate in the interview and reflect on their experiences. Either tourists had inadequate time at the museums and were not
typically free to view all the exhibitions in a self-directed fashion, or when asked to participate tour group members politely declined because they were about to leave the museum. As one Egyptian tour guide noted “I would have liked you to interview some of the tourists in my group, but the interview questions seem too long and time consuming and we are about to get on the bus tour”.

Another drawback of this study is the lack of Egyptian visitors. Egyptian visitors who attended the exhibitions were very difficult to find for interviews. They have been notably underrepresented of all visitors (see chapter 6 Visitor Profile). During my fieldwork school groups had formed a significant proportion of domestic visitors at the Egyptian Museum and they were excluded since selection of participants was limited to adult visitors over 18 years of age.

One final disadvantage in this study was that I did not possess an insider’s knowledge of the Maori worldview including culture and beliefs, lifestyle, legends, Maori terminology and place names. Hence an unforeseeable limitation in this study was that a few Maori phrases and place names used by two Te Papa’s local visitors and four museum staff during the interviews were not known by the researcher. However, awareness of this limitation allowed the researcher to be more aware of this situation and therefore if any misunderstanding occurred the researcher immediately asked the participant for clarification and then wrote the phrases down in a notebook (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). For instance, when I expressed difficulties in comprehending the Maori terms koha and aroha, the participants then explained that koha meant gift and aroha meant sympathy or affection. The use of Maori terminology and place names during the interviews suggested that there was perhaps an assumption from a few visitors and museum staff that the researcher would have had prior knowledge of te reo (the Maori language) or would have understood from being in the museum, or in the country what these phrases meant. But researchers sometimes face challenges in the field when there is a gap between local or domestic language (Maori) versus everyday language (English) (Kolb, 2008).

In spite of the above noted limitations, it is felt that these were outweighed by the strengths of the present research. By utilising a qualitative approach, this study provides a sufficiently rich, in depth-understanding of visitors’ personal agendas at two renowned sites and as a result achieved deeper insights into the visitor museum relationship and confirmed the relevance of the issues in the literature. Also, the use of triangulation allowed the researcher to
generate and cross validate data findings through the methods used in the field research: a combination of interviews, documents, observations, historical participant and field notes.

5.2 Summary

The methodology for this research emerged from an examination of literature surrounding research into qualitative and quantitative methods in social science. It was decided that quantitative methods were unsuitable for this research since they provide numerical descriptions rather than detailed narrative and generally provide less elaborate accounts and intangible aspects of visitor experiences and behaviour. Case studies are also relevant when carrying out research of a particular phenomenon within museums or other research settings. The two main case studies have been examined with an integrated methods approach using interviews, observations, field notes, historical participant and documentation reviews and archival records.

When researching visitors to particular settings or heritage attractions a mix of qualitative methods can ensure a richness of data, since each individual method has its own methodological weaknesses and strengths. A mixed method approach was utilised so that the researcher could:

- make an early comparison between the two sites using the documentation reviews and archival records;
- gain an understanding of visitors’ experiences and motivations at the case study sites through interviews with visitors and museum staff;
- experience the museum from the visitor’s perspective and observe visitors’ reactions to the exhibits and their spatial behaviour using non-obtrusive observational method;
- correlate and triangulate the results from different stages of the research, different methodological techniques and from the perspectives of the respondents (as recorded and interpreted by the researcher) and the researcher; and
- allow the researcher sometimes to reflect on past and present personal events in the context of the present research and provide possible explanations to research issues through the concept of historical participant.
The initial part of the multi-method research process was through reviewing the various documents and archival records. The methodology then outlined the advantages and disadvantages of face to face interviews and described the interviewing process. The methodology also explained the role of historical participant and the observational technique. The pilot study of the interviews and observational technique provided the researcher with an opportunity to establish any problems that might have occurred during the main fieldwork.

Analysis and coding of data have been described and their usefulness explained as a way to make sense of interviewees’ responses and provide more insight into answering the research objectives through the process of triangulation. I paid special attention to the reliability, integrity, accuracy and validity of this research and how I sought to enhance these by opting for a multi-method approach and using triangulation.

The next chapter will provide an overview of the demographics/characteristics of the participants at the case study sites and will provide a picture of the types of visitors visiting The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums.
Chapter 6
Visitor Profile

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a visitor profile based on the combined responses of the first interview questions for participants conducted at the case study sites. The visitor profile provides data on the demographic characteristics of study participants.

6.1.1 Demographics

6.1.1.1 Nationality

The nationality of respondents at each site provides an important context for understanding the findings.

International visitors dominated the profile at the Egyptian Museum. The majority of participants came from Western markets such as United Kingdom, France and Germany (Figure 6.1). This data demonstrates that the Egyptian Museum is an attraction that has strong international demand. The three largest groups (United Kingdom, France and Germany) in this research closely correlate with findings from the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities and the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism. For instance, an Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities report acknowledged that within the traditional profile of tourist visitors to the Egyptian and Luxor museums the top five visitor origins were United Kingdom, Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland (The Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, 2006a). United Kingdom, France and Germany are amongst the eight largest tourist markets to Egypt. The dominance of British, German and French respondents might be partially explained by the post 9/11 vigorous five year marketing campaign of the “Red Sea Rivera” (Hurghada), Aswan, Lake Nasser and the Egyptian, Luxor and Nubia museums in these particular markets (The Egyptian Tourism Authority, 2002/2007).
With regard to domestic visitors, the majority of them (16 out of 20) came from Cairo and Giza governorates. Visitor survey data of the Egyptian Museum collected by the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities for the period of January to December 2007 reflects the dominance of international visitors and the clear under-representation of Egyptian visitors (Figure 6.2).\(^{11}\) Again this shows the strong international visitor’s demand and his/her strong interest in the museum’s presentations and offerings. There seems to be a significant relation between the strong international demand and the participants’ previous knowledge. In fact, almost all international participants arrived at the museum with some degree of familiarity with various exhibitions and statues. This is crucial for this study as the interactions between the participants’ previous knowledge or images (personal context) and the exhibitions (physical context) will later reveal the role of the Egyptian Museum from the perspective of the participant.

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\(^{11}\) The survey included small and large organized tour groups and Egyptian and international school groups.
On the other hand, the profiles for international and domestic visitors at Te Papa are somewhat different from other existing data. In the current research, domestic visitors comprised 51 percent and international comprised 49 percent of the sample. In 2006/2007, a sample survey of visitors to Te Papa shows that 54 percent were domestic visitors and 46 percent were overseas visitors (Te Papa, 2006/2007). A more recent sample survey conducted in July 2008 to June 2009 shows that 40 percent of visitors were from overseas (Visitor and Market Research Unit, 2008/2009). The different data sources demonstrate that Te Papa is an attraction that has national and international demand. The high overseas visitation rate has been generally attributed to Te Papa’s ongoing work with international tour operators and the international touring exhibitions\(^\text{12}\) which are considered a major strategy for boosting the profile of Te Papa among the world’s leading museums and art galleries (Kaino, 2005; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Annual Report, 2006/2007; Te Papa, 2004/2005).

The origins of Te Papa’s international visitors in this research show that the two largest groups closely correlate with findings from Te Papa’s most recent visitation patterns for the full year 2008/2009 (Figure 6.3). In figure 6.3, one may also notice the over representation of

\(^{12}\) The Lord of the Rings Motion Picture Trilogy: The Exhibition is noteworthy as a good example of this strategy. It attracted over one million visitors over its first five international venues including Te Papa.
South American research participants as compared to visitors from Te Papa’s data (see also previous Section 5.1.3 Coding of data and data analysis). The majority of South American participants were working and holidaying in Wellington and very few were tourists who came to Wellington to visit the major attractions including Te Papa for a few days. More importantly, the majority of them also visited the museum with friends and families to spend quality time and explore or talk about the exhibitions. This is important for understanding the role of the museum as a social educational place and recreational setting (this topic will be discussed in more detail in later sections).

The relatively high percentage of South American participants might have been due to the fact that visitor numbers from South America\textsuperscript{13} have increased steadily over the last eight years since visa waiver agreements and working holiday schemes have been signed between New Zealand and several Latin American states between 2001-2008 (New Zealand Government Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2010). Moreover, cultural exchanges have been a vibrant part of New Zealand relationship with Latin America. For example, in 2006 CEO of Te Papa visited Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Peru) and Te Papa hosted a major Latin American exhibition in 2007 as part of its strategy for raising the profile of Te Papa internationally (Beehive.govt.nz, 2007; New Zealand Government Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2008).

With regard to domestic visitors at Te Papa, the majority of respondents (63%) were from outside the Wellington region (Figure 6.4). This is a higher proportion than previous museum surveys which have shown that around 41 percent of all domestic visitors came from outside the Wellington region (Te Papa, 2005/2006, 2006/2007). Only three of the 52 domestic respondents mentioned they were born outside New Zealand: two were born in United Kingdom and one in Australia.

\textsuperscript{13} Brazil accounts for more than half of all South American visitors to New Zealand.
Figure 6.3 International research respondents and visitors from different markets from the Te Papa’s data (Visitor and Market Research Unit, 2008/2009).

Figure 6.4 Origins of domestic visitors at Te Papa (n=52).

6.1.1.2 Visitor characteristics

The gender ratio differed at each site with males dominating the visits at the Egyptian Museum (Figure 6.5). This is perhaps related to cultural norms as domestic Egyptian males would often speak for females, and some females would feel uncomfortable speaking to a
male researcher14 (see also Section 5.1.5 Limitations of the research). Generally, international and domestic participants at the Egyptian Museum tended to be older than those at Te Papa. For example, there were more international visitors at the Egyptian Museum in the 35-55 year group and the 55+ group than those at Te Papa (Figure 6.6).

Figure 6.5 Gender ratio and Age group at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums.

Figure 6.6 Age Groups at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums.

14 Unfortunately, I did not further investigate possible influences of gender as this would have involved extensive analysis in itself.
One possible explanation for the younger age mix amongst international visitors at Te Papa might be the nature of the modern museum. Modern museums, which offer visitors a range of interactive and hands on exhibitions, appeal to visitors who might be young or bored by the generally non-interactive displays in traditional museums (Black, 2005; Kolter & Kolter, 1998). Dierking and Falk (1998) pointed out that museum visitors, especially those young visitors, have frequently responded enthusiastically to interactive exhibits in modern museums, even coming to expect them as an integral part of the museum experience. As Black (2005) Caulton, (1998), and Packer (2004) argued, interactivity in modern museums can activate an otherwise static exhibition with sound and moving images; provide a variety of view points; engage young visitors in multi-layered activities; and encourage and support interaction among them in an exhibition. Also, modern museums appeal to young visitors since the combination of interactivity, designed natural environments, social and entertainment events, and services such as restaurants and gift shops offers them entertainment, social or restorative experiences as well as fun learning experience (Black, 2005; Hood, 1981; Packer, 2004, 2008). This is important for understanding the role of the museum as a place which offers social, restorative, and recreational and pastime experiences.

Another possible explanation for the younger international visitors at Te Papa is that unlike Egypt, New Zealand has been a major market in its own right for independent young travellers or backpackers who had been classified into two major demographic segments: first time young travellers, away from home on a study break between secondary and tertiary study; and older more experienced backpackers between the ages of 25 and 35 (Newlands, 2004; Richards & Wilson, 2004; Vance, 2004). In short, one may argue that an explanation for the younger age mix amongst international visitors at Te Papa might be the nature of the modern museum.

6.1.1.3 Occupation and education

Respondents at both sites were asked to state their usual occupation. The question yielded a variety of occupations. Seventeen domestic visitors at the Egyptian Museum fell into the categories of clerical, labourer, trade workers and sales and service occupations and three visitors occupied managerial and educational positions. Educational, health and managerial professionals were extremely highly represented amongst international respondents at the Egyptian Museum with almost 70 percent of them stating various managerial or professional careers. One possible explanation for the dominance of professional and managerial
occupations of international visitors at the Egyptian Museum is that Cairo and Luxor cities respectively tend to attract more high-yield cultural visitors who tend to stay longer and spend more (The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, 2007). For instance, a detailed report prepared by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture exploring the economic impact of cultural visitors\textsuperscript{15} in Cairo governorate shows that the city attracted 3.5 million international cultural visitors in the year 2004/2005 spending an average of US$175 per day with an average visit duration of 9-12 days (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007). The same report found that international cultural visitors’ expenditure on package tours (which often included organised cultural activities such as museums, galleries, cathedrals, synagogues, churches and mosques) featured more highly than expenditure on entertainment (such as theatres, festivals, dining, dance and operas).

Research on visitors to heritage sites and museums have generally found that heritage/cultural tourists are inclined to have a higher income, stay longer while on vacation, are older and spend more money (Kaufman & Scantlebury, 2010; Silberberg, 1995; Timothy, 1997). It has also been widely reported in museum visitor studies that the majority of museum visitors are well educated, employed in professional occupations and of higher than average socioeconomic level, with these findings applying equally to visitors of art museums, science museums, history museums and cultural heritage sites (Falk & Dierking, 1992; Ritchie, Carr, & Cooper, 2003; Schiele, Amyot, & Benoit, 1994).

The majority of Te Papa’s domestic visitors fell into the classifications of sales and services, trades, students and few fell into the categories of health and educational professionals. A much lower proportion of international respondents at Te Papa reported managerial than respondents at the Egyptian Museum; almost 40 percent of international visitors at Te Papa were working in professional or managerial occupations such as human resource manager, head nurse, teacher, computer consultant, financial adviser, insurance agent, laboratory

\textsuperscript{15} The report defines the cultural visitor as a visitor who attends one or more cultural attractions in Cairo including: (1) theatres, festivals, dining, dance and operas, (2) museums, galleries, cathedrals, synagogues, churches and mosques, (3) Pharaonic/Coptic/Islamic history/heritage buildings, sites or monuments, and (3) Islamic/Coptic/Jewish community or cultural displays. This definition also reflects data collected through the International Visitor Survey and National Visitor Survey conducted by the Ministry of Tourism (The Egyptian Ministry of Culture, 2006/2007).
technician, library specialist, property manager, civil engineer, building inspector and hotel front desk supervisor.

6.1.1.4 Visitation characteristics

In terms of travel party, the majority of respondents at each site visited with a partner, friends, and family members (children and relatives such as grandparents and cousins) while few respondents visited either site alone (Figure 6.7). The percentages shown below are important for understanding the data, and in particular, when presenting the reasons that bring visitors to the museum and the social context of the visit. These percentages also reflect what has long been recognised in the literature: the majority of people visit museums as part of a social group and a large part of their visit is invested in social interactions (Gunther, 1999; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Moussouri, 1997, 2003; Packer, 2004).

![Graph showing visitation characteristics](image)

**Figure 6.7 Group Type at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums.**

One notices that almost half of the respondents at the Egyptian Museum were visiting with a partner, whereas at Te Papa half of the participants were visiting with a family group. This difference between the samples suggests different experience and social context. Adults with their families are typically preoccupied with their children; adults in other groups, however, are typically preoccupied with the nature and content of the museum (Diamond, 1986; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Moussouri, 1997, 2003).
This phenomenon was obvious in both sites. During the museum visit, a number of adult domestic visitors at Te Papa took on the role of teachers/educators (Diamond, 1986; Moussouri, 2003). They interacted with their children by showing them what to look at and teaching them the subject matter of the exhibition. The main focus in such groups was social learning experiences and this type of experience reflects the museum’s role (see section 10.1.2.1 As a place for social learning experiences). On the other hand, the social interaction was not part of the international participants’ agenda at the Egyptian Museum. Almost all international respondents paid attention to the familiar ancient artefacts and other aspects of the museum environment. Seeing objects and statues which were familiar fulfilled the personal needs of many international visitors and this type of experience mirrors the museum’s role (see sections 7.1.1 Motives for visiting the museum & 7.1.2 International visitors’ experiences of the museum).

With regard to the length of stay, calculated to the nearest half hour, the majority of international respondents (82 percent) at the Egyptian Museum stayed for 2.5 to 3.0 hours, whereas 75 percent of domestic respondents stayed for up to one hour (Figure 6.8). Around 85 percent of international respondents at the Egyptian Museum indicated that they did not have time to see everything that they wanted to and this had been caused by two major factors, being the vast collection of Egyptian antiquities; and having to depart early to leave time for visiting other heritage site/sites. Most international visitors (78 percent) at Te Papa spent up to 1 hour at the museum, whereas 86.5 percent of domestic visitors stayed for 1.5 to 2.0 hours (Figure 6.9).

![Figure 6.8 Length of visit at the Egyptian Museum (Total n=70).](image-url)
One notices that international participants at the Egyptian Museum and Te Papa’s domestic participants spent more time in the sites than the Egyptian Museum’s domestic participants and Te Papa’s international respondents. These differences may be related to the fact that international participants at the Egyptian Museum and Te Papa’s domestic participants are more familiar with the museum content than the other visitors. This familiarity with the objects may have prompted them to spend more time at the sites and made a relaxed and positive visit more likely (Bitgood & Cleghom, 1994; Henry, 2000).

Research has shown that visitors who are not knowledgeable about the museum content spend less time focusing on the exhibitions because they are unfamiliar with the subject. They also do not find the museum experience personally meaningful and they describe it as dull, lifeless and boring (Hood, 1983; Hood, 1992; Leinhardt & Knutson, 2004). Again, this shows that some visitors see the museum as a site for connectivity and seeing the familiar (this topic will be discussed in more details in later sections).

With regard to previous visits, not surprisingly, all domestic visitors (100 percent) to the Egyptian Museum were on repeat visits, whereas only five international respondents were repeat visitors. By comparison, only 42 percent of all domestic visitors to Te Papa were repeat visitors and only one international visitor was making his second visit to the museum. In terms of the domestic visitors to Te Papa, these findings concur with an exit survey conducted with 3200 domestic visitors to Te Papa in 2005 which revealed that one third of them were on
a repeat visit to the museum and 76 percent intended to revisit the museum within the next year (Visitor and Market Research Unit, 2005-2006). A more recent visitor survey also showed that 40 percent of visitors to Te Papa were international and 17 percent of these were repeat visitors (Visitor and Market Research Unit, 2006-2007). It has been generally accepted that Te Papa’s attractive short term exhibitions and the significant changes to its events programmes have stimulated and encouraged high level of repeat visitation by domestic visitors (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Annual Report, 2006/2007; Te Papa, 2000/2001, 2009/2010).

6.2 Summary

This chapter touches upon a number of aspects that are important for forthcoming finding chapters. First, international visitors dominated the profile at the Egyptian Museum and the bulk of them came from Western and English speaking markets. They reflected the Egyptian Museum’s main visitor origins, which are United Kingdom, France and Germany. There appears to be a significant relationship between the strong international demand and the participants’ previous knowledge. Almost all international participants arrived at the museum with some pre-existing knowledge about various exhibitions and statues. This is important as the interactions between the participants’ personal context and the physical context of the museum reveal the role of the Egyptian Museum from the perspective of the participant.

Second, most respondents attended both sites with a partner, friends or family members, and few respondents at each museum were visiting alone. This is significant for understanding the findings, and in particular, when revealing the other roles of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums as sites for social experiences. Lastly, international participants at the Egyptian Museum and Te Papa’s domestic participants spent more time at the sites than the Egyptian Museum’s domestic participants and Te Papa’s international respondents. The strong interest in the exhibitions, the previous knowledge, and the familiarity with the museum content may have prompted international participants at The Egyptian Museum and Te Papa’s domestic participants to stay longer. Again, visitors’ previous knowledge and familiarity with the museum content are important elements for understanding the museum’s role.

In general, the visitor profile provided data and insights into respondents’ demographics; though it did not explain why visitors attended both sites and the experiences they took from the museums. Hence, the following chapters present findings and discussion on visitors’
motivations and experiences in order to explore the different roles of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums. Since the subsequent findings illuminate the differences/similarities between domestic and international visitors’ motives and experiences at each museum, participants at each site were divided into two groups: domestic and international.
Chapter 7
International Participants’ Motives and Experiences at the
Egyptian Museum

7.1 Introduction

How is it that in this stage of atomic fission, space shuttle and other wonders, each year many more thousands people from all over the world visit Egypt to see its ancient temples, tombs and cities? Why have vast crowds waited patiently for so many hours at the British Museum, the Louvre and elsewhere to see the treasures of King Tutankhamen? Other ancient cultures cast their spells; but Ancient Egypt exerts a special hold in the public imagination (Smith, 1983, p. 5).

7.1.1 Motives for visiting the museum

7.1.1.1 The need to learn more about the artefacts and desire to link the objects with the visitors’ previous experiences

The quotation that opens this chapter illustrates the special relationship between the international visitor and the ancient Egyptian relics. This special relationship was reflected in the international participants’ motives and experiences at The Egyptian Museum in Cairo. In order to understand the role of the museum in relation to the international visitor, this chapter gives insights into the motivations and experiences of visitors at the museum. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section explores visitors’ motivations for visiting the site. The second section examines the different ways in which visitors experienced the museum’s presentations and offerings.

In outlining their motives for visiting the Egyptian museum all international visitors expressed two main motivations. These motivations were coded as “learning more about the artefacts” and “the desire to link the artefacts with their previous experiences”. Numerous responses suggested these motivations, framed as: “I love to learn more about …” “I wanted to expand my knowledge about …” “Since I’m familiar with the Mummy Returns movie, I wanted to know more about them or see the actual ones up close and personal” and “I want to see and learn something about the statues I’ve seen on TV”.

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This interaction between the visitor’s motives (that is, the need to learn more about the collections and desire to link the objects with the visitor’s previous experiences) and the physical aspects of the museum reveal the function of the Egyptian museum as an experiential consumption space for learning more about the artefacts and connecting visitors with what is already familiar to them.

In interviewing international visitors to the Egyptian museum it became apparent that it is the rootedness of the museum’s objects in Western culture that made them so distinctive to all international visitors. In general, the decision to visit the Egyptian museum depended on its perceived place in the visitor’s mind and the fulfilment of the personal agendas of each visitor. For the majority of international interviewees, the Egyptian museum was a major part of a checklist of ‘must see’ attractions in Egypt. It was one of the attractions which marked the achievement of the international participants. So entwined was the international visitors’ image of the Egyptian museum with its Pharaonic objects that it appeared self-evident to them that the museum was Egypt’s biggest attraction after the pyramids and Sphinx:

All participants reported arriving at the Egyptian Museum with great reverence for the Egyptian relics, the splendour of ancient Egyptian architecture and sculpture, and the exciting veil of mystery surrounding archaeological findings. They expressed a love of learning more about the ancient artefacts that drew them to the museum. For these participants, the Egyptian museum was appealing because of a pre-existing love and respect for the Pharaonic history. This love is captured in the following quotations:

After we arrived in Cairo, one of the first things we decided to do was to visit the pyramids and the museum on three separate days before our trip to Hurghada and Sharm El Sheikh (USA).

I love to learn more about ancient Egypt, so I just thought it was going to be wonderful experience. It doesn’t matter much what I attend, if it’s ancient Egyptian history, I’m there (UK).

I love Pharaonic objects. I want to expand my knowledge about different statues. It’s fascinating to learn about objects I see a lot in the media (Israel).

In addition to their desire to learn more about ancient Egypt, participants attended the museum to supplement their knowledge of a particular objects or particular time period. For example, one interviewee reported: “I want to supplement the knowledge I have gained from reading about ancient Egyptian gods like Isis and Anubis” (Germany), while another
participant noted: “I was eager to know more about the young King Tutankhamen. So I was trying to fill a void there so that was what motivated me to visit the museum” (Netherlands).

Beyond a general learning motive, the motivation to view the objects was also greatly influenced by the larger world beyond the museum buildings. Participants’ personal motives were related to the entire world of media, heritage, history, literature, education and religion which, in turn, added an element of enjoyment to their visit. For instance, most of the responses from participants related their admiration for the museum and its artefacts to books, religion, films, television documentaries, science, architecture of Egyptian inspiration and a mixture of works of art of the widest spectrum of quality, as the following quotations attest:

_We love the Mummy movies and were so excited to see the royal mummies (Germany)._  

_Since I was a kid, the museum and the pyramids had been at the very top of my list of places ... I was really interested in King Tut exhibit. I’ve read a lot about Howard Carter and his discovery of the tomb (USA)._  

Another visitor confirmed:

_That’s why I wanted to come here, because I am fascinated with Ancient Egypt. I can’t imagine a better place to come ... I’ve read about it, I’ve learned about it. I’ve taken exams on it in school (UK)._  

Here it is important to note that participants’ motive to learn was not from a position of existing ignorance (Leonie & Johnston, 2007). It is not that visitors knew nothing about ancient Egypt; rather their exposure to ancient Egypt already had made them eager to learn more about the artefacts. Museums are places where people can either store new information or retrieve old information, expand their knowledge on artefacts, and reconstruct past experiences (Falk & Dierking, 2000; Spock, 2006). On a personal note, this argument is confirmed by some of my personal reminiscences in New Zealand. For example, shortly after I had finished my fieldwork at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, I went on a field trip to Back Country Molesworth16. We called expectedly at the 1863 Acheron Cob homestead Molesworth and were greeted by a New Zealand family as if we were long lost friends. At one point during the course of our tour of the homestead, I looked behind me and noticed a

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16 It is a sightseeing tour in the largest farm in the country that represents some of the most spectacular and remote countryside in New Zealand. Besides, it is New Zealand’s largest and most iconic cattle station. It is located about 125 km southwest of Blenheim.
pyramidal arrangement of framed photographs, some books about ancient Egypt, a miniature replica of a mummy, three crystal Egyptian pyramids and replicas of King Tutankhamen and Nefertiti bust (O 12.12.2008). Then, immediately, I took down a few notes and drew some pictures of the souvenirs. I was inquisitive and asked the head of the household about those mementos and books. She told me that she and her deceased husband had purchased these souvenirs during their trip to Egypt. In her description of her trip to Egypt, she stated that visiting the Egyptian museum:

fe**lt** like walking through a massive warehouse of antiquities. Its objects were awesome. I grew up in England and was taught about ancient Egypt. I remember learning about King Tut and the mummies. So visiting the museum in Cairo gave me a chance to see these relics up close and learn more about them.

Generally, visitors’ learning in museums can be conceptualised as involving the interaction between prior knowledge and experience; subsequent, reinforcing experiences; culture and background and the physical context of the museum (Dierking, 1989, 2005).

The following section explores international visitors’ experiences of the museum’s objects.

### 7.1.2 International visitors’ experiences of the museum

The following sections underscore the fact that the physical context of the Egyptian Museum was bound up with the personal and social contexts of the participants. The interactions between the personal and physical contexts and between the physical and social contexts of the museum reveal the role of the museum in relation to international participants. Hence the museum is revealed as:

- a place to enjoy the layout of the museum and the physical presence of the objects;
- a place for seeing the familiar and remembering historical events;
- a place of aesthetic experience: the experience of the **Gold Room** (King Tutankhamen); and
- a place for social interaction.
7.1.2.1 As a place to enjoy the ambience of the museum and the physical presence of the objects

The setting characteristics of the Egyptian museum were remarkably significant to the international respondents. Many participants offered positive comments about the museum environment and its ambience:

Yeah, it’s not modern and flashy but I really like it. When you walk in the museum, it’s like going back in time. You feel like you are on your own to explore the home of the mummies. It’s totally an awesome experience (USA).

It’s a magical place. It has that musty old smell that makes you feel like you can almost taste the ancient history. It’s not like the usual modern museum that is toddler buggy friendly . . . They [Egyptian curators] don’t hide all the objects behind glass cabinets, many objects out in the open so that you can get up close and experience a piece of history (UK).

The ceilings are very high so you feel like you’re really in a big ancient place. It’s like the feeling you have when you enter a traditional Catholic church that you may have thought is gone (Germany).

Equally, a museum staff member confirmed that:

If there is something for the tourist to gain from the experience of our museum it lies in its monuments and traditional structure.

In all the interviews, the physical presence and close proximity of the artefacts was also an integral part of the participants’ experiences. Participants reported that the presence of the objects made the difference for them; they acted as evidence of the past. As one participant noted:

Anybody can read about them in books, I mean, anybody, I can, and I’ve read about this stuff for years in books, every time ... I am not even a history teacher. I mean, you read about them in books and see them on TV, and people talk about them and things. It’s just totally different experience. You know, looking at them in photographed books and catalogues didn’t provide me with a much better view than seeing them in person – in dark, dusty cluttered shelves. This makes it physical and personal (UK).

According to several respondents, the close proximity and solid presence of the artefacts animates them:

The close proximity of the objects bring the objects and their history more to life . . . When I saw the statue Akenaton I felt like I’m seeing the real Pharaoh in front of me (Netherlands).
Oh wonderful, I mean, it was yeah... it was just odd to be that close to something like that .... The pleasure of reading over the years, it just brings it alive at the moment when I am viewing the item. And here they are, and the feeling that – here I am looking at all this a thousand years later. I’m looking in the face of a real Pharaoh (USA).

International visitors liked the building because they saw it as an ancient place that allowed visitors to experience the real Pharaohs. However, the following two sections reveal that the physical context does not exist in isolation but is intertwined with the personal context. To put it succinctly, the layout and content and pre-existing knowledge are differently pronounced in the museum experience, but make sense only in their reciprocal relationship (Falk, 1988; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Moscardo, 1992). This joint relationship reflects the museum’s role.

7.1.2.2 A site for seeing the familiar and remembering historical events through their personal context

As has been discussed above, the majority of the responses from international participants indicated that the visitor’s pre-existing knowledge or familiarity with the Pharaonic objects (personal context) affected the quality of the museum visit. In this way, viewing objects and statues which were familiar fulfilled the personal needs of many participants. Many of the objects in the museum were already familiar to these visitors, and that familiarity made an enjoyable and positive affective experience more likely; the following responses being typical:

It’s just wonderful experience to see these royal mummies. Already I’m familiar with them because of my love of the films, they seem less foreign, I guess, because I know, I think ‘oh I have seen them before’ (Germany).

it [the museum] made a certain impression on me, I’ve heard so much about it at school history lessons and would never imagine that one day I would happen near its doors . . . (USA).

It’s a great museum experience. I enjoyed seeing all those things I’ve seen in history books. Looking at the objects in the museum provided me with a much better view than seeing them in photographed books and catalogues (UK).

I am a big fan of art history and I really enjoyed the art of Thebes on the second floor. My all-time favourite book is Art in The Days of the Pharaohs (USA).
Analysis of interview data also found that familiar artefacts, such as the Greco-Roman collections, *King Tutankhamen*, the replica of the *Rosetta Stone* and Egyptian obelisks invoked visitors to remember historical events:

*The thing I like most is the gold mask of King Tut. I’ve read several books about it. From what I’ve read, I know that Howard Carter had a real problem with it [Death Mask]. The Egyptian government challenged him at the time, he finally gave up and had to turn it to the museum . . . it was all about nationalism and dignity but he [Carter] was a good man. The problem was the Egyptians saw him [Carter] as part of the British establishment rather than an independent scholar [both laughing] (UK).*

*We came here today to see the mummy of Ramses [II] and visit the Roman section. Last year we saw the Obelisk of Ramses [II] in Rome. There are many Egyptian obelisks in Italy, especially in Rome. I remember reading that the Roman emperors used to bring them to Rome as a symbol of their power. Some emperors like Augustus used the obelisks for their own mansions (Italy).*

*I was somewhat surprised it [the replica of the Rosetta Stone] was much larger and thicker than I thought but it was my best object because it reminded me of what I read in history books about Champollion and Napoleon. It is part of our history (France).*

The responses above show that most visitors to the museum did not come as “blank slates”; their museum experience was “framed within, and constrained by, prior knowledge, interests and beliefs” (Falk & Dierking, 2004, p. 141). They entered the museum not only with motivations and expectations for a visit but also with an ability to apply previously acquired historical knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and interests to their experience of the museum artefacts. All of these factors merged to influence how visitors interacted with particular museum presentations and offerings.

**The personal experiences of the Jewish and British Afro-Caribbean/African-American participants**

A few respondents had different kinds of experiences with the artefacts. The Jewish, British Afro-Caribbean and African-American participants (around 20% of international respondents) demonstrated the belief that some objects, such as the mummy of *Ramses II*, the bust of *Amenhotep* and the statues of *Hashepsut*, belonged to their heritage and identity or were part of their civilization. For example, a museum staff member clearly elucidated that:

*Their [Jewish tourists] encounter with the objects is like a son who found his long lost father. They all have a special relation with the same statutes. They truly believe that they are the inheritors of these statues. But if the*
monuments belong to Islam, the Middle East or even modern Misr17 [Egypt] they become guests not inheritors.

Similarly, the researcher found that a number of Karaite Jewish tourists from the Netherlands, United States and Denmark were in search of their roots among the first examples of recorded history in the museum (see glossary for more information about Karaite Jewish visitors). The majority of the Jewish tourists in this research regarded themselves as the descendants of the Egyptian Karaites. When talking about visit motivation, they often spoke of their connection to the Egyptian Karaite Jewish background. The Jewish tourists reminisced about specific objects (for example, the mummy of Ramses II and his three statues) and expressed disappointment at not finding any reference in the text labels to the survival of the Jews, or of Moses and his life story, or of their experience of slavery as a group under the Pharaoh Ramses II:

*I was a bit disappointed because there was no mention of Moses or the story of the Exodus... I personally believe that the Jews contributed to some extent to this civilisation (USA).*

*I think it would be wonderful if there was some kind of exhibition that actually pertained to the Jews of ancient Egypt (Netherlands).*

It was very common for Karaite Jewish tourists to look for personal meaning during their visit; for them, a visit to the museum was akin to the visit of Muslim pilgrims in Europe to Mecca which can be very personal, spiritual and rewarding experience. A Karaite Jewish visitor, who left Egypt in 1955 when she was 17 years old and eventually settled in Denmark, said:

*I would like to see some labels exploring the Passover because it does have a personal meaning and memory for me and it reminded me of the biblical Exodus and when we ourselves had to run and leave everything behind in Cairo (Netherlands).*

In this way, this participant had used the exhibitions as an aide-memoir. Through the deployment of reminiscence and memory, this participant formed personal links to the past, thus reinforcing her cultural identity. Some tourism academics have described this desire to look back on the past as “diaspora tourism” or “roots tourism” (Coles & Timothy, 2004, p. 19; Timothy & Teye, 2004, p. 111). Several other scholars have identified these visitors who

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17 The term Misr originated from the Arabic word Misr which means Egypt. Egyptian visitors are also called by the museum staff Missryin (see glossary for more information about these terms).
are interested in seeing particular monuments or places of the past as “pilgrims” and “heritage tourists” (Basu, 2004, p. 27).

Other Western respondents reacted to the ancient objects quite differently. Similar to the Karaite Jewish visitors, another group of visitors, British Afro-Caribbean and African-American visitors, saw various ancient artefacts as part of their heritage, and were stimulated by, and proud of, different ancient statues with which they believed they had a right to associate themselves. They read different statues as African rather than as universal, Middle Eastern or European (that is light-skinned Arabs or white Europeans). When asked if any of the exhibitions they visited added to their understanding of a particular subject/theme, the answers were strikingly similar:

*The pieces that stand out the most to me are the black bust of Amenhotep [the son of Nefertari] and the two black statues of Menkaure [The Pharaoh who built the third pyramid on the Giza Plateau]. Obviously they appear African, I couldn’t doubt their African identity [laughing] but Hollywood directors show them white (USA).*

*I found I could identify myself or some feelings for the statues without having to read label ... When I took a close look at the facial features of Hatshepsut statues [Fifth pharaoh of the eighteenth dynasty of ancient Egypt], I realised they were African. It’s been proven many times that ancient Egyptians are pure Africans. If you go upstairs and look again and again you’ll find the flat nose and thick lips, they aren’t monopoly of the white race or the Arabs... (UK).*

For this group, the ancient objects and statues played a significant role in signifying the grand larceny of African civilisation by the white race. The inference was that various objects and statues in the museum were an indissoluble part of the African history. Their museum-going experience did not involve a superficial look at the objects but a sensitive personal engagement, as measured by their responses.

The British Afro-Caribbean and African-American visitors’ attitude and views in this study were somehow akin to the “Afrocentric movement” (African American archaeologists, scholars and thinkers) which fervently challenges dominant representations of ancient Egypt and retrieves it for black history rather than as the symbol of Western or universal history (Najovits, 2003). They believe that ancient Egyptian civilisation should be rearranged as part of the African context. This may be due also to the fact that many African-Americans trace their ancestry to African origins and, because Pharaonic Egypt is part of Africa, they see it as part of their heritage (Najovits, 2003; Okafor, 1991; Spring, 2006).
According to a museum guide interviewed, the African-American visitor market is a niche market for the museum because the African-American tourist these days is more interested in exploring his/her “identity and historical heritage”; the very product that the museum offers. Equally, a senior management staff at the museum noted that African-American visitors can identify the distinct African features of different Egyptian figures:

Most of them [the African-American visitors] are religious people like heads of churches and priests and they come through different American travel agencies in Chicago, New Jersey, New York .... The one group I work with has about 33 priests, they have special feelings for the museum. They search for their roots and are particularly interested in some statues.

Given these comments by museum staff about African American visitors, the researcher expected that some exhibitions may explore controversial themes concerning the African character of ancient Egypt; this interpretation was not found. On the contrary, some Egyptian historians, archaeologists and museologists have considered a debate over the issue of black history and skin colour of the ancient Egyptians as extraneous and xenophobic themes, and the Egyptian museum has avoided discussing the subjects in displays (Lawrence, 2009; Scham, 2003; Wynn, 2007). For example, when several African-American activists in Philadelphia rejected the portrayal of King Tutankhamen with lighter skin, Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Cairo, explicitly told reporters that “Tutankhamen was not black, and the portrayal of ancient Egyptian civilization as black has no element of truth to it” (ABC News, 2009). On the other hand, one African-American female respondent eloquently voiced the opinion of British Afro-Caribbean and African-American visitors; when asked “In general, what would have improved your experience at the museum today?,” she suggested:

Probably something worthy! I don’t know. I would have liked information on ancient Egyptians who were Africans and what they did. The museum should try and put forward an honest description of the black African presence in ancient Egypt. It would be nice if visitors coming here could see a little of the true Africa (UK).

[Interviewer: So you’d actually like to see the museum dealing with these reality and myth type issues like the black experience of ancient Egypt and ancient Egyptians’ colour?].

Well, perhaps not addressing the myth and reality, but perhaps showing the Nubians who lived in ancient Egypt, rather than letting the myth run, ask questions.
Based upon the findings above, one may argue that for these visitors the museum became a commemorative and memorial site honouring African civilisation and Jewish history. These types of visitors who entered the museum were probably motivated by a desire to see familiar objects and strengthen their self-identity through association with specific subject matter of the museum. They reminisced about statues and objects they were familiar with; they attempted to make sense of them in light of their own pre-existing historical and religious knowledge. These visitors did not see the museum as world heritage but personal heritage. Heritage and self-identity were key influences on their meaning-making. This is a finding which has been reported in other studies as well. For instance, the Karaite diasporic tourists at the Egyptian Museum, in search of particular objects visited the Mummy of Ramses II and his three statues to “re-root their identities and find nourishment” (Basu, 2004, p. 28) as they were “haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back” (Rushdie, 1992, p. 10).

The previous sections have presented insights into international visitors’ motivations and experiences of the Egyptian museum. These respondents were influenced in a profound way by their pre-existing knowledge of ancient Egypt. Each visitor arrived at the museum armed with different pre-visit images of the ancient artefacts, formed from novels, films, documentaries, educational experiences and the general media, and their motivations for visiting the museum are shaped, to a great extent, by these images. Once at the museum, the visitors’ experiences of the objects on display acted as a conduit for reinforcing, enhancing or enriching what they already knew. In this way, these visitors’ encounters with the Egyptian relics were strongly influenced by two major factors described by many museum theorists and practitioners: the personal context (visitor’s prior knowledge, identity, experience and interest), and the physical context (exhibitions, objects, programmes and interpretive material they encounter) (Chia, 2007; Dierking, 1989; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Moscardo, 1992, 1999; Smith, 1983).

To illustrate and reinforce the points made above, the following sections will examine international visitors’ experiences at the most popular areas in the museum: the Royal Mummy section and the Gold Room of King Tutankhamen. In doing so, the discussion will once more highlight the reciprocal relationship between visitors’ identities, their pre-visit images and their previous knowledge and the museum's physical holdings and its offerings of the ancient Egyptian relics.
The Experience of the Royal Mummies

As outlined above, a recurring theme of interest and focus for the vast majority of the Western tourists was a desire to see and learn more about the mummies and the different methods of mummification (Figure 7.1 & Figure 7.2). For almost all the Western visitors, The Royal Mummy Room was the ultimate icon, the following quotation being typical:

\[\text{the mummy room was my favourite \ldots the thing I wanted to learn more about here was the types of mummification (France).}\]

Equally, a museum curator confirmed that:

\[\text{The Royal Mummy Room is the main destination for many of the European and American tourists \ldots they like to gain knowledge about the methods of mummification. They keep asking about mummification.}\]

This fascination with mummification came up time and time again in interviews, in many different forms and cut across gender, age, education and nationality.

\[\text{Figure 7.1 Mummy of Ramses II in Cairo Museum, one of the greatest pharaohs of ancient Egypt Photograph Ahmed Abdel Fattah.}\]
A good deal of the information in The Royal Mummy Room relates to the ancient Egyptians’ daily life and their different methods of mummmification. This information has been drawn from examination of their elaborate and complex burial practices, their royal and private sepulchres and their cadavers. Funerary relics are highlighted in various glass display cases (O 12.06.2008; F 28.05.2008). In some sections, burial objects are exhibited to help exemplify ancient Egyptian beliefs about death and the afterlife, as their firm belief in the rebirth after death became the driving force behind their funeral practices. For ancient Egyptians, death was simply a temporary interruption, rather than complete cessation of life, and that eternal life could be ensured by means such as preservation of the physical body through mummmification and piety to the gods. In other exhibitions, such as the one representing the wooden coffins of the Middle Kingdom Period, the tomb artefacts on display also emphasise the narrative of death, belief and afterlife (O 31.05.2008; F 10.06.2008).

Similarly, for some respondents, their experiences with the mummies in the museum evoked thoughts of death and the concept of after life:

"I'm intrigued by their belief in the afterlife... (Israel)."

"they [mummies] made you think of death and what we wanted done with our dead bodies (France)."

"they [ancient Egyptians] really believed that mummmification was the only way to have an afterlife (Germany)."
the pharaohs saw these mummies as proof of an eternal afterlife (USA).

But the majority of Western visitors’ experiences of the mummies reflected the mummy’s long history in Western literature, films, science fiction and the scientific investigations:

The mummy is something I read about constantly and felt that I was familiar with during my visit of the museum (USA).

It was a very interesting experience to see the original mummies, especially I just watched on Discovery Channel how forensic scientists tried to recreate the face of the mummy. They believed to be Queen Nefertiti. I was so amazed (UK).

It was a surreal experience and reminded me a lot of my favourite movies and books (UK).

A few other respondents related their experiences of the royal mummies at the Egyptian museum to previous experiences at other museums:

My interest in the mummies was stimulated by seeing them on display in the British Museum as a child. The museum presented all the mummies with great reverence. I remember, they were wrapped and placed in rectangular coffins made out of a dark brown wood and the coffins were inscribed with religious texts. For me, it was a quite moving experience being up close to the mummies trying to touch their coffins. It gave me a sense of connection with the past to look at their faces. Just like Catholics can with popes in St Peter’s (UK).

It was a fantastic experience seeing the mummies of many great Egyptian rulers. The Mummy Room reminds me of my first encounter with the mummies 15 years ago. I saw my first mummy in its open coffin during my visit to the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. It was an interesting experience. We went through all the scientific stuff. We saw scientific reconstructions of the heads of the mummies (USA).

Observations also revealed that many visitors spent very little time at the small mummy cases closest to the entrance door, preferring to move through to the section in the back of the room that housed the most famous mummies of Ramses II, Hatshepsut, and Ahmose-Nefertari. This interest was associated with visitors’ pre-existing knowledge and familiarity with these mummies, which gave them greater historical significance and interest in the minds of the participants.

The mutual relationship between the physical and personal context is further interrogated in the next section.
7.1.2.3 As a place of esthetic experience: the experience of the Gold Room (King Tutankhamen)

After the Royal Mummy Room, King Tutankhamen treasures were the second most important exhibition for the majority of international tourists. Three respondents voiced the views of a significant majority of international visitors:

*My first stop was the mummies area; next stop was King Tut’s treasures ... (USA).*

*We planned to see the mummies before making our way into the King Tut’s Room (Germany).*

*Unfortunately, we had only one hour to spend so we decided to highlight only a few important objects. The first thing we wanted to visit was the royal mummies then the Gold Room ... (Israel).*

The King Tutankhamen area is formally known as The Gold Room. The Gold Room is a collection of the treasures from the Tomb of King Tutankhamen, a lesser Egyptian Pharaoh who ascended to power in the fourteenth century B.C. The treasures in Tutankhamen’s tomb, discovered by the British archaeologist Howard Carter in 1922, are still considered to be one of the most significant discoveries in the history of archaeology (Grimaud, 2008). Most of the items from the tomb – the splendidly decorated coffins, the highly structured furniture, the magnificent death mask of pure gold – have been the property of the Egyptian museum since their discovery (F 15.06.2008).

One should indicate here the publicity about these objects. This can be clearly noticed in DVDs, catalogues and various illustrated guidebooks sold in the museum lobby for English, French, Italian and German tourists. For example, the historical and archaeological information about the young king’s reign in these materials was categorically presented, but it served as the background for a full adoration of the quality and astonishing value of his tomb’s contents: “The gold shines brightest”; “the jewellery and woodwork”; “... in lavish detail and magnificent colour, here are objects from Tutankhamen”; “... superbly crafted artefacts”; “Intricate jewellery glitters with precious gems...”; “vivid insight into the skill, artistry, and astonishing sophistication...”; “... stylized statues” (Hawass, 2005b, pp. 5-7,13; Quilici, 2005; Smith, 2006b). It is the rootedness of these hegemonic glosses in Western popular culture that makes King Tutankhamen’s treasures so distinctive.

Analysis of interview data found that for some respondents, their reactions to the collections in the exhibit were related to other international exhibitions and family occasions. This also
emphasises that memories during the museum visit are situated within physical, personal and social contexts. Many memories during the visit are linked to friends or family members and the place and time spent with them (Chia, 2007; Falk & Dierking, 2000):

*About seven years ago my parents took me to one of King Tut’s exhibitions. It was a great family outing. Everyone enjoyed it from my Granddad to my younger sister. I can still remember the crowds, I remember getting so caught up in the display that I got separated from my parents. We brought home a copy of the catalogue, which I read again and again. My previous experience of King Tut was almost entirely based on the photos from the catalogue, so it is a real treat to see a wider variety of his collections (UK).*

*We already saw it [Death Mask] in King Tut exhibit in Philadelphia last year. We went with my dad, it was great he loved it. His favourite item was the gold coffin. He was disappointed that there were no books or postcards of his favourite object in the exhibit. But it was really a good day out. I remember I got into an interesting debate with my father about the mysterious death of King Tut (USA).*

For the majority of participants, their reactions to the collections in the exhibit were related to their familiarity with certain aspects of *King Tutankhamen*. Many came to the museum armed with previous knowledge about the art and craftsmanship of *King Tutankhamen’s* treasures gleaned from various sources. The words of two interviewees voiced the attitudes of many respondents:

*Over the years I’ve followed the documentaries on King Tut that explained and showed his skill and craftsmanship. Most of all I remember his famous mask. It was amazingly carved. I love the simplicity of the design, very geometric, with it’s cobra on the forehead and the falcon on the shoulders (USA).*

*I learned a lot about King Tut and the treasures of Egypt in school. The thing I remember most about him was the stool and the mask. They’re crafty and colourful. I remember reading that he used glass and stones to create the mask (Sweden).*

Equally, the presentation of the objects in The Gold Room reinforced participants’ association of Egypt’s famed King Tutankhamen with the idea of art and craftsmanship. The room was structured around Howard Carter’s archaeological findings and excavation discoveries, but the tourist found an experience of art jewellery, not historical and archaeological knowle
Similarly, Howard Carter’s vivid excitement and enthusiasm, reproduced repeatedly in the media, museums, literature and academic books, became the aesthetic form through which Western visitors were invited to view The Gold Room. For instance, the visual depictions of the tomb’s treasures in The Gold Room, as recounted by Carter in his diaries, was repeated in different text labels with the kind of artistic flavour usually reserved for art galleries (F 20.06.2008; F 21.06.2008). The items were arranged in the order they were discovered by Carter and his working team (O 20.06.2008; F 20.06.2008). In several short labels accompanied the items, the tomb objects presented clearly through Carter’s aesthetic descriptions in his diaries:

- A wall label text typed up on a manual typewriter in English and Arabic used few quotations from Carter’s personal account: . . . “Lord Carnarvon asked him what ‘do you see’ he [Carter] said ‘I see wonderful things, lots and lots of wonderful things’.

- A hand-written label in English, Arabic and French attached to The Tutankhamen Collection: Jewellery and Ornamentation described the room of the young king quoting few quotations from Carter’s diaries: “… and the room was filled with what he [Carter] describes as ‘gold gold gold, everywhere the glint of gold’.

- A label typed up on a manual typewriter in English, French and Arabic explained: “When Howard Carter entered the tomb he found a dazzling array of vessels, remarkable wall paintings, the Canopic chest, gilded figures …”.

- A hand-written label in English, Arabic and French attached to King Tutankhamen’s Gold Throne described the throne: “It was, as Howard Carter described, an exquisitely crafted work of art”.

- A worn-out label typed up on a manual typewriter in English and Arabic attached to Tutankhamen’s jewellery: “Gold Falcon Collar, Gold Cloisonné Earrings, Gold Buckle depicted the jewelleries: They are treasures of object of arts whose artistic beauty left him [Carter] astonished”.

Hence, one may argue that the museum reproduced King Tutankhamen’s objects as a great art experience and made them available to the international tourists through the aesthetic
descriptions of the English archaeologist. In The Gold Room, art experience was presented as acting in the service of Western tourists who, according to a staff member, “…bring income that goes towards the restoration and preservation of the objects as well as expanding the museum building”. Another staff member confirmed that:

*The Gold Room and the Royal Mummy are very important areas for many tourists. They capture their minds and imagination… we pick out the objects that look great and real and appeal to the delicate taste of the regular visitors.*

Along the same lines, analysis of interview data found that the respondents’ reactions to The Gold Room were founded on a series of apparent art-related phrases. King Tutankhamen’s treasures enthralled the tourist’s mind and dazzled his/her aesthetic senses:

*But what really got me about this death mask was the style. It’s like a piece of art. I just stood there and looked and looked and looked (USA).*

*The jewellery and furniture were really cool, they still retain much of their original colour. They were probably made from combinations of the most valuable materials his kingdom of Egypt had to offer (USA).*

*I was more interested in the high quality and elegance of his treasures. His artists excelled in jewellery-making and design. His jewellery is vibrant. I spent a lot of time up there, but it went by real fast (Denmark).*

As the previous sections have illustrated, participants’ experiences within the museum was influenced by the interplay between the physical context and personal context. In the last section, I interrogate the social context which shows that the social context of museum visit does not exist in isolation but is also intertwined with the physical context.

**7.1.2.4 As a place for social learning experience**

The participant’s experience of the actual objects—the physical context—is mediated by this expanded notion of social context. Visitors’ responses indicated that some participants enjoyed learning about particular objects through their engagement in conversations with museum guides:

*When we entered the section, she took us around to explore the Statue of the young Akhenaton. Her explanations was enriching in learning more about his life and thoughts. She kept telling us different things and I think talking to her was a great learning experience (Germany).*

*I think learning too comes from the staff here, like the guides. They speak good English. You can talk to any of them and start up a conversation and you learn something new (USA).*
Other visitors reported that the guide encouraged them to interact with the objects and use their imagination:

*He was great ... He wants you to interact with the artefacts. He will come to particular objects and highlight key things and say ‘I’d like to point this out’ but at the same time, he’s letting you use your imagination and tell stories about what he liked best – It’s not like listening to a boring lecture. It’s like imagining living in ancient Egypt. It’s kind of cool (USA).*

*She encourages you to use your feelings and imagination. She would say ‘imagine being transported back to the age of the pharaoh’ or ‘imagine yourself being the pyramid builder of ancient Egypt’. To learn about ancient Egyptians with little imagination makes the visit enjoyable. You get a feeling for the ancient Egyptians and you understand what their culture is (UK).*

Consistent with visitor observation findings, several visitor groups initiated informal conversations with museum staff about various artefacts. These conversations were often repeated to other members in the group who had not heard the discussion. Besides, quite frequently visitors clustered whenever a museum staff started to offer information about objects. When museum staff conducted the regular scheduled talks in the *Mummy* and *King Tutankhamen* rooms guides tended to give short but precise historical, archaeological and scientific descriptions of what was on display. Visitors were then allowed to ask questions about the objects and many of them engaged the staff members with questions.

This kind of informal conversations with museum staff matched the comments voiced by a few museum staff:

*They [international visitors] walk about to anybody works in the room and start up a conversation and I just chat away. They keep asking questions about the mummy and the ways of mummifications. And I just get excited and become like a storyteller who teaches a foreigner something about the mummy. I usually want to set a spark in their eye.*

Observations and field notes also show that occasionally museum staff did not have sufficient content background to effectively answer visitors’ questions about particular objects. At other times, the museum staff enabled visitors to link new information with their pre-existing knowledge about some artefacts:

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18 The scheduled talks presented in English, French, Italian, German, Spanish and Japanese.
I didn’t know that he [King Tutankhamen] married his half sister. I thought he had never married. This is new information to me, and very interesting.

Here a conversation with museum staff allowed visitors to incorporate new information with their own personal knowledge and perspectives.

Also, in the interviews, most participants did not report having engaged in interaction with friends, family members or other visitors, however observations made it clear that this interaction was an important part of the museum visit. For example, there were particular areas that attracted groups of visitors and seemed to provoke a few short conversations and interactions. For example, visitors stopped and commented near King Tutankhamen’s gold portrait mask, the chariots, his sandals and his two coffins, and did the same near the identified mummy cases of Ramses V, Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut.

The objects in these areas stimulated several conversations involving recollections, associations and connections to prior knowledge among members of the visiting group. Visitors also reported new information to others in their group. Comments overheard in response to different objects were:

- *I remember seeing the colour photos of his [King Tutankhamen] mask. Here it’s somewhat different.*
- *This is one of many sandals they found in his tomb. They are actually made of wood and covered with gold.*
- *Hey Larry come here and take a look that’s the mummy of Queen Hatshepsut. She is the first female ruler in history.*

Adults/parents also tried to stay with their children as they visited the galleries. It was not infrequent that a child of a party would wander away and become interested in King Tutankhamen’s gold portrait mask or his two coffins but would be reminded by the parents/adolescents that the group should keep together. Children called out the names of specific famous objects they noticed and recognised, for example, “Look at his [King Tutankhamen] golden crown Mom”, “Did you see this mummy?” The smaller and lesser known artefacts were not pointed out, such as King Tutankhamen’s gloves and golden rings.

Despite a considerable period of time being spent at the famous exhibits in these sections, there was not frequent parent/adolescent-child interaction about the objects. Parents/adolescents, for the most part, did not explain or talk about the popular displayed artefacts by reading or
summarising written materials to their children, nor did they try to direct their children’s observation. This last point suggests a complete departure from several museum visitor studies. Frequently, observing adults/parents influencing their children’s museum/educational experiences is a common phenomenon in several visitor studies (Anderson & Piscitelli, 2002; Diamond, 1986; Dierking, 1989; Falk & Dierking, 2000; Moussouri, 2003). At The Gold Room and The Royal Mummy Room, on the other hand, adults/parents did not take on the role of facilitator or learning leader. There are a number of possible explanations for this observation.

First, the physical context of the museum may influence the visitors’ interactions and experiences. The Egyptian museum is a traditional museum – exhibiting indexically authentic artefacts. The museum’s exhibitions are displayed in a way that does not allow personal interactions with the item. The visitor experience at the museum is physically passive; there are few opportunities for interactivity and hands-on experiences as most of the artefacts are stored behind glass or roped off from the public touch. The lack of such opportunities might have hindered social interactions between parents and their young children. Second, the proclivity of adults/parents and children to view/see the objects was quite resilient and they became engrossed in the objects. In other words, both parents and children seemed to find more pleasure in viewing the displayed objects and reading labels than verbal interactions.

A final explanation for the lack of interaction between adults and children in these exhibits is that museum staff tended to assume the role of facilitator or learning leader. For instance, observations showed that whenever a museum staff member started to offer information about objects, children were not shy or reluctant about asking them questions about different artefacts:

*How old was he [King Tutankhamen] when he died?*

*Did King Tut have any children?*

*Was the tomb really cursed?*

*Did the museum wrap those [mummies] in bandages?*

Thus, while the physical context of the museum stimulated interaction and communication between some visitors, it also may have hindered parent/adult-child interactions.
7.2 Summary

This chapter sought to provide an understanding of international visitors’ motives and experiences of their favourite exhibitions and objects in order to reveal the role of the Egyptian Museum. The international audience saw the museum as a symbolically significant destination for learning more about ancient Egypt and the desire to connect the different artefacts with their pre-existing knowledge. Throughout the chapter, the physical aspects of the museum influenced the overall experience of the visitor. The physical context was embedded in the personal and social contexts. In other words, the participant’s experience of the actual objects—the physical context—is mediated by these expanded notions of the social and personal contexts. For example, the physical presence of the mummies and King Tutankhamen’s objects evoked visitors’ personal context.

The nexus between the physical and personal contexts and the physical and social contexts reveals different roles of the museum in relation to international participants. This can be broadly recognised and conceptualised as: a place to enjoy the ambience of the museum and the physical presence of the objects; a site for seeing the familiar and remembering historical events through their personal context; a place of aesthetic experience; and a place for social learning experiences.

The following chapter explores domestic visitors’ motives and experiences which revealed different roles of the museum that stood apart from the roles of the Egyptian museum in relation to international participants.
Chapter 8
Domestic Participants’ Motives and Experiences at the Egyptian Museum

8.1 Introduction

This chapter explores domestic participants’ motivations and experiences at the Egyptian Museum. Domestic participants chose to visit the museum during their leisure time expecting to have a particular type of experience. In order to understand the role of the museum in relation to the domestic visitor, this chapter gives insights into the motivations and experiences of visitors at the museum. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section explores visitors’ motivations for visiting the site. The second section examines the different ways in which visitors experienced the museum’s presentations and offerings.

8.1.1 Motives for visiting the museum

Embedded in the interaction between the visitor and the physical context of the museum was a spoken contract of motivations. What motives associated with the physical context of the museum resulted in a decision to visit the site? This question forms the essence of this section.

It is important to stress here that unlike international participants, many of the motives for visiting the museum were related to the museum’s garden and café-restaurant setting, rather than the exhibits and museum buildings. Direct observations of the Egyptian visitors showed a clear persistence in going to the café-restaurant or the museum garden, and seldom entering the main building. Observations showed that school groups constituted a significant proportion of domestic visitors who entered the main building and viewed the objects. Once inside the main building, school children often passed through crowds of international visitors or around them without the need to avoid, intervene and interact with them.

It is important to highlight here that visitors’ underutilisation of the exhibit area is quite simply beyond the scope of this study and would be probably most profitably addressed in a separate study. This topic requires a deep investigation of the influence of the Islamic religion in Egyptian society and the power of Nasirist Pan-Arabism which has been dominating the
Middle Eastern environment. Still, domestic visitors’ underutilisation of the exhibits will be briefly discussed later in this chapter.

From the interviews completed, three main motivations were identified as determining the domestic visitor’s agenda for the museum visit, with the decision to visit the museum based on the fulfilment of personal agendas and expectations of each visitor. The majority of domestic visitors articulated one, or a combination of the following three motivations for their visit:

- Social motives: a desire to interact with a group and its members;
- Relaxation and external/practical motives (such as proximity to the museum);
- Bringing back personal memories.

These three motives all reveal the interdependence between the physical context and the visitor’s motive. This relationship between the domestic visitor and the physical aspects of the museum reveals the function and role of the museum for this group of visitors.

### 8.1.1.1 Social motives

Many domestic visitors interviewed revealed that they had decided to visit the museum because they viewed it as a site where social interaction could take place. In this way, the museum became a place where they could go to socialize and unwind outside of work and home, whether in the gardens or in the museum’s café-restaurant:

*I wouldn’t say we come to learn history and view the objects. I come may be once every month to have the children play around in front of the coffee shop and we have a long break from them to get something to drink and chat.*

*We usually decide to meet in the museum’s café and stay for an hour just before we go and see a new film in the cinema.*

*I usually visit the museum on Fridays because that’s my day off. If we have nothing to do after the Friday prayer I take the boys and have lunch in the garden. I also like to come because the visit is good for my children to interact with other people. What you’ve got here [in the garden] is a whole range of people, like there’s us, there’s lots of other children, there’s lots of couples, families, older people, younger people, that’s really nice in itself.*
I visit the museum about 2 - 4 times a week. I meet my friends here [café-restaurant] in the evening for a couple of hours to socialise and smoke shisha.

The practical aspects of the café-restaurant factored into some visitors’ motivations for visiting the museum. Spending time with relatives and practical external incentives such as proximity to the café-restaurant, the air conditioning, the restaurant atmosphere, menu, prices and quality of food all contributed to some visitors’ decision making process. According to Falk & Dierking, (2000, p. 57) “[d]istance, ease of getting there, and appeal of the architecture are all consideration people employ when deciding how and where to spend their free time”. A few visitors frequented the café/restaurant to listen to the Western techno beats and enjoy the authentic Egyptian cuisine and fruit juice rather than the other sawdust-floored places that serve traditional Egyptian tea and coffee across the street from the Egyptian Museum. As one visitor and his wife aptly stated:

Some of my relatives came from Al-Fayyum to visit me today so my wife and I decided to invite them to have lunch at the restaurant. I prefer to come to this restaurant because it is near our flat and it has an efficient central air conditioning. We really need it in a day like that. [His wife interjected and commented on the quality of the food, saying that] The food is delicious they offer good plates of labna and olives. I also like their pickled turnips, foul mudammes and tamaaya dishes. It is a great place to enjoy the afternoon with our guests.

Another visitor confirms that he occasionally comes to the museum in order to eat at the restaurant and enjoy the atmosphere:

We don’t come to the museum frequently. Just once in a while. We tend to come and eat at the restaurant and enjoy listening to the music.

The “servicescape” motives facilitated the social transactions. Servicescape is a term used to describe “the environment in which the service is assembled and in which the seller and customer interact, combined with tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communication of the service” (Booms & Bitner, 1982, p. 36). Along these lines, the location of the café/restaurant, its neatly arranged menus, the uniformed doorman, the aroma of fresh brewed coffee, the trimly dressed waitresses with their hushed tones, the central air-conditioning, the polished hardwood floors, the arabsque windows and the music became the servicescape for organized social meetings. The servicescape communicated a distinct message of splendour and high quality and invoked definite feelings such as enjoyment and serenity.
8.1.1.2 Relaxation motives

Some domestic visitors frequented the museum because of its close proximity to their workplace and to seek solitude and refuge from the traffic and the double pressures of work and family life:

My work is close to the museum so I usually come to sit in the garden and relax and sort of shut my eyes and forget about my job.

I work as a secretary for an insurance company. During my break at 2 o’clock I take 20 minutes out of my day to have something to eat in the garden and get away from the hassles of work. It’s a good way to enjoy the scenery away from the pollution and crazy traffic of Tahrir Square.

I decided to come to the museum today because I want to get away from the stresses of life in general to somewhere where I can just unwind and look and enjoy. Because I am coming from urban environment the garden gives me a chance to be aware of the natural surrounding and the scenery.

The significance of the garden and café/restaurant was underscored by some museum staff:

A lot of them [domestic visitors], especially young ones, hang around in the lobby for a while waiting for someone to arrive then go to the restaurant to have something to drink or eat. They don’t even bother looking at our new exhibitions on the ground floor.

The garden is an important site for local visitors. They see it as a great place to stroll and relax and enjoy a break from the hectic downtown Cairo. International visitors don’t usually spend long time in the garden.

8.1.1.3 Bringing back personal memories

For a few domestic visitors, a visit to the museum was an invitation to evoke a memory of a particular past event. They wanted to experience the event in their mind:

I visited the museum today because I like it. Usually when I come to Cairo I try to visit the museum. I have good memories. The museum is a reminder of my youth, of Nasser’s revolution. I always like to see the dome of the museum and the three flags. They make the Tahrir Square looks a little bit pleasant. They really remind me of what it was like then in the 50s and 60s this period of dignity and freedom from humiliation.

I don’t come to stand back and look at the monuments. The museum visit for me is a good way to think about the good times of my childhood. I think about my parents and my friends that I used to go to the museum with.

Visiting this museum and seeing some statues like going to the doctor, something I ought to do from time to time and it’s cheap. It brings back so
many good memories for me as I used to go often with my husband before he recently died from lung cancer.

The preceding discussion examined the reasons the domestic participants gave for visiting the Egyptian Museum. For the most part, their experience of the museum was motivated by social and relaxation motives. A few visitors also visited the museum to recreate their own memories of events. In light of the previous discussion, the following section explores the kind of experiences domestic visitors had at the Egyptian Museum.

8.1.2 Domestic visitors’ experiences of the museum

The majority of domestic visitors articulated three types of experiences during their visit of the museum:

- as a place for social and pastime experiences;
- as a refuge and therapeutic facility; and
- as a place for remembering personal events.

These experiences clearly follow out of the motivations mentioned in the previous section, and the vast majority are associated with the garden and café/restaurant setting of the museum, rather than the museum exhibits themselves. Although most of the visitors’ experiences (sixteen out of twenty interviewees) were a mixture of the list above, the social nature of the experience was important for almost all of them. They articulated the importance of the social experience much more often than any other type of experience. The majority of the domestic visitors commonly reported “enjoying a relaxed family outing” and “having a good time together”. In the following discussion it is clear how the interactions between the physical and social contexts and the personal and physical contexts of the museum reveal the role of the museum in relation to domestic participants.

8.1.2.1 The social and pastime experiences

Much of the social interaction in museums is a way for visitors to connect and find meaning (Hood, 1992). Not all of the social interaction is content-focused. Some of it involves spending more time together and bonding between individuals (Dierking, 1989; Falk, 2009). Unlike international participants, the social experiences reported by domestic interviewees generally were limited to their own family members and companions, and did not extend to
interactions with museum staff. Domestic visitors’ social experiences discussed below were reinforced by different museum staff:

Local visitors don't enter the museum with a view to seeing particular exhibits. They come for the social experience. A lot of them, especially young ones, hang around in the lobby for a while waiting for someone to arrive then go to the restaurant to spend quality time and have something to drink or eat.

Whether they [domestic visitors] enter the gallery areas or not, they see the garden as a social place. Some of them who live near the Tahrir Square come with friends or families on Fridays. They often spend an hour or two in the garden and the restaurant and then leave to do the noon prayer at a nearby mosque.

Several other museum staff explained that different types of museum experiences go with different types of visitors:

I see the Egyptian Museum as a unique one because it can satisfy the goals of different visitors such as tourists and locals. Tourists who like to learn about our ancient history they go inside and spend long hours learning and some go to the library and read a variety of rare historical sources. Egyptians who come in groups and want to socialise they go to the restaurant or enjoy their time in the garden and buy cold drinks from the kiosks ... Some Egyptian visitors from Upper Egypt who never visited the museum get surprised when they encounter our catering outlets. They think of the museum as an old dusty place. But they find a different picture. We have catering outlets in all areas surrounding the main building including the restaurant, kiosks, post office,[and] the two gift shops. We will install a cash machine next to the post office next year. Gone are the days of the dusty old Egyptian museum.

We cater for different visitor types. One of the presumptions people tend to make is that all visitors to the museum require the same experience, but this is not the case ... Local visitors are few and usually they are not interested in the exhibitions, but we still offer them something. They come in groups and enjoy their time in the garden and some of them go to the restaurant for breakfast or dinner. Most of them like the beautifully landscaped garden with its exotic flowers and shrubs. In 2005, the director redeveloped the garden. She added seating and food service vending cart.

I turn now to the social experiences voiced by the domestic visitors. For most of the visitors, just being in the presence of friends or family members in the museum’s garden or café /restaurant seemed to be a satisfying experience (Figure 8.1, Figure 8.2 & Figure 8.3).

Visitors who attended the museum said that they were coming to be with children, friends, out of town guests or for a family outing.
An example is a conversation overheard between an Egyptian mother and her two children in the museum’s garden. The mother was rushing her children to leave the museum. The children were shrieking that they did not want to leave, but the mother asserted stridently, “I brought both of you here to play soccer for only two hours away from our crowded neighbourhood, if we don’t leave now you will be stuck at home next week”. The comment “I brought both of you here to play soccer ...” became emblematic of the importance of the museum not only as a “social setting” (Falk & Dierking, 1992, p. 143) but also as “a fun place for kids to run around” and “great places to meet and hang-out with friends” and “escape from routine” (Falk, 2009, pp. 192-193, 204). In addition, the fleeting remark “... for only two hours away from our crowded neighbourhood” served as a meta-comment on how the museum trip was organised according to space and time frames rather than cognitive frames or object experiences.

The museum’s café/restaurant and the garden greatly contributed to and supported the social interaction among domestic visitors:

*As soon as we got here, the first thing my son wanted to do was to run into the garden and play with his cousins. The garden gives the kids a space to play and have fun and for adults to have a nice social time to talk and relax.*

*I am able to walk around and chat with my friend in the garden. We also use the restaurant not only to sit and eat but it is a nice place for socialisation and seeing old friends who work and live in central Cairo. We share a few delicious falafel dishes with them and have plenty of good humour and an appetite for lively political discussion about what’s going on in Egypt.*

Another visitor, who was waiting for his fiancé, noted that the café/restaurant “is a good spot because it provides good food and seating areas and it is a quiet setting to talk away from the crowds”. Here the café/restaurant offered the degree of quietness that aided the progress of social exchange.
Figure 8.1 Domestic visitors at the café/restaurant. Photograph courtesy of research participants.

Figure 8.2 Domestic visitors socialising in the garden. Photograph: courtesy of research participants.
Figure 8.3 Domestic visitors spending a relaxing Friday afternoon in the garden. Photograph: courtesy of research participants.

It may be suggested that in addition to the “good food and seating areas,” the domestic visitor searched for social/emotional/personal experiences at the café/restaurant which encompassed methods of stimulating interest and engagement such as quietness, lighting, and relaxing; that is, they are buying an experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

Based upon extensive observations of the behaviour of domestic visitors in the garden, the high proportion of couples and family groups was noteworthy. In general, the garden was a social area where human bonding behaviour, such as friendly and intimate physical contact, and frequent verbal interaction between Egyptian visitors who came to the museum together was highly evident. Some drinking and eating in the garden of soft drinks, Egyptian desserts and potato chips brought from the nearby kiosk was observed. The following description which resulted from field notes gives an example of how domestic visitors interact in the garden:

> Opposite me sat a family of three; a father, a mother and their daughter, who looked roughly 8 years old. The father was sprawling lazily on the grass listening to his wife who talked uninterrupted for almost 5 minutes about her new job. Then the father leaned forward and absent-mindedly stroked the brunette hair of his daughter, who was sitting between them drinking and eating her potato chips.

In addition, unobtrusive observations of social interaction among Egyptian family members in the garden can be summarised as follows:

- Family groups in the garden were generally comprised of a father, mother and children.

- Fathers appeared to act the role of guides/tutors trying to find an empty garden bench under a tree. Then the family marked out their territory by laying heavy blankets down on the grass. They put their food and drinks down on the blankets (Figure 8.3).
• Garden benches served as seating and picnic tables for the majority of the families observed.

• Food and drinks (few food items, water containers and thermoses of hot tea) were brought out, and women gathered in clusters, some talking, others laughing, some just laying idly watching international tourists walk by with amused look on their faces.

• Mothers and elderly adults (grandmothers) were more likely than fathers to give directives (both disciplinary and instructive) and reprimanded their children.

• Mothers and fathers conversed with each other and laughed together while watching their children play.

• Children dragged their parents (fathers, usually) to buy them food and drink from two vendors selling coffee/tea/sweets/sandwiches.

• Male children were most likely to talk in broken English to the tourists passing through the garden to get to the main building.

• Some children ran and ran and ran, creating the full range of noises that fill schoolyards during a mid-day break. They were immediately reprimanded by museum security staff.

• Children who touched or climbed atop the statues were harshly reprimanded by two security officers who were seated nearby acting as a warning presence.

• Some mothers talked to their elderly adults (grandmothers) as fathers were reading the newspapers.

• During noontime families were observed sipping tea or lemonade, eating lunch as their children play around them.

• Mothers tended to make the decision to leave the garden and the museum.

Further prolonged observations also showed that Egyptian families and couples occupied the garden for extended periods of time (between 1.5-2 hours). In contrast, the garden area had many international tourists quickly passing through to get to the main building, and also had a lot of them stopping for very short periods of time. One may suggest that tourists stopped by the garden for very short periods of time either because they were in a hurry to visit other
heritage sites or they tried to avoid the sun/heat. Another possible explanation is that the tourists were more interested in the artefacts than the museum garden. The majority of international tourists who spent a longer time in the garden were occupied taking photos in front of or near to the sphinx-headed statues, the sarcophagus and the statue and tomb of August Mariette all set amidst the museum garden.

Through observations, it was revealed that international visitors seemed to need physical evidence of having been in the presence of the iconic objects not in the space of the garden (Figure 8.4 & Figure 8.5). For example, most of the international visitors observed tended to follow the following pattern: (1) headed towards the garden, (2) took a quick look at the statues, (3) leaned forward to read the inscriptions, (4) again looked intently up at the statues, (4) took their digital cameras out of their bags (5) took photographs standing next to, near or in front of the famous statues which were free-standing. Unlike the domestic participants, the garden visit for international participants was not about socialisation and pastime experiences. In short, the garden elicited a response time that depended on looking, reading, snapping photos rather than socializing.
Figure 8.4 International visitors next to Egyptian statue. Photograph: courtesy of research participants.
It should be noted that the strong propensity for visiting the outdoor garden can be briefly explained, at least in part, within the framework of Islamic religion and Egyptian history and literature. The idea of a “Western park” as a protected area in its natural state is virtually absent in Egypt (EL-messiri, 2004). Many Egyptians are familiar with the notion of the garden which has two elements: the modern concept of garden and Islamic garden perception. The modern concept refers to the design of the garden for the decoration of the city structure using statues, fountains, small temples and tree-lined enclosures (EL-messiri, 2004). The Islamic garden mentioned in the Koran is described through the Arabic term Al-Jannah (the Garden). The Koran employs many different terms to refer to Al-Jannah or the Garden, all of which call to mind the experiences that people undergo when they enter it. These include “rivers flow,” “shade,” “bliss,” “rejoicing,” “eternity” and “everlasting life” (Koran 47:12, 13:35, 5:11-19).

The garden image has also been used by the Egyptian cinema and literature. For example, the gardens in The Arabian Nights tales conjure up images of a lotus-scented garden and “warm, sultry nights, mysterious women and sultans, glimpses of forbidden sights and exotic, spicy smells” (Kirton, 2007, pp. 226-227; Styles, 2010). Moreover, since ancient times, Egyptians have favoured the green familiarity of the Nile Valley to the heat stricken deserts and have
perceived gardens as protected retreats from the deserts and wild nature/life (Budge, 1977, 1998; David, 1998; Wilkinson, 2006). When asked “Is the visit to the museum the main activity for the day or part of other attractions?” one shopkeeper, who was visiting with his family, noted:

*I take my children there at least once a week to watch the fountains and play on the grass in front. It [museum] is always seems to be filled with different tourists. We prefer to stay here [in the garden] than going to the Giza pyramids. On this side of town there is no shade trees, no vendors. All what you do there is looking at the pyramids, walking under the burning sun, go horse riding in the desert. There is not much else to do.*

He conceived the museum’s garden as a place to socialise and escape the harshness of the desert plateaus on the west bank of the Nile River.

For the majority of domestic visitors, just being in the company of others in a positive environment outside the main building seemed to be a satisfying experience, serving to emphasise the inescapable interplay of the physical and social contexts in understanding the role of the museum.

**8.1.2.2 The museum as a refuge and therapeutic facility**

Some domestic participants referred to the significance of the museum as a place to get away from everyday life. For them, the museum was a place of refuge or escape, almost like taking a holiday from their work and everyday life. The interviewees in this category viewed the museum as a site of quiet retreat and meditation locked away from the outside world:

*It’s sort of closed off from the rest of the central city. I would find sitting out here useful. I feel totally refreshed for my return to work. It takes away your depression. Sometimes you can walk in and feel so down and out, and when you leave you feel really good about everything.*

*The experience is something that is different from other parts of life and other places. It’s almost a little bit of escapism [from work] in some ways and I always come back feeling fresh and focused.*

The visitors referred to the museum as a place to escape from everyday life, a physical refuge from material tasks, where one that could find refreshment and restoration. They may resemble Cohen’s (1979, p. 86) divisionary mode, in which a person “escape[s] from the boredom and meaningless of routine, everyday existence, into the forgetfulness of a vacation, which may heal the body and sooth the spirit”. In addition to being a place of escape, the museum also had “therapeutic potential” (Marstine, 2005, p. 9). It became a “place of
sanctuary removed from the outside world” (Marstine, 2005, p. 9). A site which removed from the traffic jams, heavy air pollution, and noise of Tahrir Square.

More than just a site of retreat or sanctuary, however, the museum offered a new environment in which domestic visitors could observe tourists and, in the mean time, immerse themselves in foreign places and cultures. In other words, the museum drew domestic visitors into the tourist’s world. When asked “What did you like most about your trip to the museum today?” a frequent visitor, who works near the museum, said:

*It takes your focus away from worrying about jobs and the three children and their mother and all the rest of that junk that you think about daily. The museum has a nice atmosphere, just have my cup of tea with a cigarette and look at the tourists coming from each direction and think about their different world and their way of life and their dress. I’ve noticed French tourists they are proud of themselves. They make known their presence in chatting loudly and when they walk they put their heads up and make large moves. I don’t feel so different from them. They just shift your mind away from stresses to another planet where you can just look and imagine and enjoy.*

Another visitor explained that:

*Sometimes I don’t bring them [the children] with me to the museum. I work full time at my house, look after my elderly father, look after the children, and sometimes I just leave them all and visit the museum on my own. I come to sit in the garden for an hour or two admiring the scenery and watching tourists around me. I’m into discovering their cultures by watching them. I really admire the Japanese tourists. I like their bowing etiquette. They are very respectful and their men and women don’t kiss in public. But Italians and French tourists kiss in the garden in front of everyone like in the movies.*

The brief immersion at the museum, then, induced the visitor to step outside the confines of his/her culture, his/her country, and his/her own experience. In addition, the outside experiences fostered a keen sense of observation and greater consciousness of other cultures and behaviours. The space outside the exhibit halls appeared to become a place where domestic visitors can come across representative samples of foreign cultures. In the words of Falk and Dierking (1992, p. 92) “museums are places where people can see and learn about things outside of their everyday lives”. But one needs to make an important and interesting distinction between domestic participants’ consciousness of other cultures and the previous quotation. Domestic participants’ seeing and learning about other cultures is not what Falk
and Dierking (1992) were talking about; they were talking about ‘objects’ not about looking at cultures of other visitors.

Those respondents who considered the museum as a retreat and restful environment appeared to engage in an internal discourse between themselves and the environment outside the exhibit halls with the aid of tourists or other stimuli. For example, one interviewee recognises that he is not using the museum as it is supposed to be used:

*The museum for me is not what it is meant to be. It isn’t about objects and history. When I walk around outside I leave time behind me. I feel like I’m talking to myself. I overhear different languages and look at people of different races and I search deep inside myself and find out something about myself about my character. That’s why I’d like to be alone, not to be disturbed, to be silent, to walk by myself. It’s different from the four wall prison experience inside.*

Paralleling this comment, another interviewee noted:

*Look, the space outside inspires me. It is human, not like the deformity of the building blocks of downtown. It offers me the opportunity to sit down in the shade and think about personal things.*

The use of the verbs “to be alone” and “to think about personal things” is accurate shorthand for these visitors’ desire for a contemplative experience rather than object experience. Self-contemplation and exploration seemed to play a role in their museum experience and for them, visiting alone was another way to have a positive experience and steer clear of the stress zone brought on by workloads and family’s needs. In brief, escapism, mental restoration, self-discovery and the museum’s proximity to the visitor’s workplace were the driving forces for visiting the museum. Participants’ responses once again attest to the agency of the spatial forms. The interactions between the physical environment of the museum and the visitor feed directly into the interpretation of the museum’s role.

The next section will explore the memories and personal events of domestic visitors in their museum visits. Regular domestic visitors, through the deployment of memory and reminiscence, formed personal links to the physical context of the museum.

### 8.1.2.3 Personal events stimulated by the museum

We can observe once again the interplay of personal and physical contexts, which provides more insights into the role of the museum in relation to domestic visitors. Again, this type of experience follows out of the motivations mentioned earlier. Some domestic visitors had
memories prompted by the museum’s environment and its objects. Their memories centred on an event, feelings or life episode. They were interested in the museum’s environment and surrounding buildings and they provided new insights into the relationship between past and present events.

The experience of some domestic visitors in the museum was imbued with childhood memories and meaningful intergenerational relationships. A few visitors appeared to view playing in the museum’s garden and hiding behind the colossal statues of the Pharaohs standing outside the main building as significant marker events, taking place at particular phases of their lives, usually related to childhood memories and positive parent relations:

*I always have a walk round the garden especially if I’ve got my son with me, he’ll always say, are you going to take me to the museum’s garden like grandpa used to take you. I feel really good when we come here something my son enjoyed … I usually bring him to the museum once a week. My parents used to bring me to the garden to ride the bike and play hide and seek with other children. [Laughing] When I look back I remember I liked to hide behind this long statue.

There is just something about this garden that takes me back to my childhood fieldtrip days and eating falafel sandwiches out on the huge lawn while playing cards and waiting for the bus to pick us up in front of the gate. Definitely nostalgic for any child who grew up close to central Cairo. And now being able to spend an afternoon with relatives and family chit chatting and sitting in front of the statues makes for awesome new memories. I love it.*

For another interviewee, the museum evoked a memory of particular family events and some general childhood memories:

*Personally, the visit is quite different for me. It’s not like visiting the Zoo with the children and it’s not just about spending quality time with my family. I mean, for me visiting the museum reminds me also of my childhood days. My father used to take me to the museum in the morning and teach me how to ride the bicycle in this garden and behind the main building. I was probably about six or seven years old. I remember he was impatient with me and usually had this little obsession about me never learning how to ride a bicycle and he told me one day if I pedalled it, he would run out and buy me one. I did pedal it a little so he did buy me one.*

Other domestic participants employed their life stories as a main resource in prompting emotional engagement with the museum. They were able to identify with personal memories that were constructed in relation to museum visiting. Their recollections reinforced events and personal experiences outside and inside the museum premises. For one respondent, the
museum became a stage in which he recalled an important historical event which he himself experienced firsthand:

When news of the 52 Revolution reached me I was with my brother in the vicinity of the museum then I overheard a guy on the street said that the revolution broke out an hour ago and we both run from the museum to Abdeen Palace to witness some demonstrations and I remember we cheered and shouted long live Nasser, long live justice.

His museum visit was a revolutionary trip down memory lane. It was an invitation to recreate some aspects of a historical event or period in his mind. The vicinity of the museum to the “Abdeen Palace,” incited an emotional reaction that let the visitor feel as if he had experienced a realistic version of the recent past not the distant or ancient Egyptian history. The visitor employed signs or events outside the exhibit halls as a key resource in engaging with the museum. Unlike international visitors, the domestic visitor was able to identify with external signs or events that were part of his recent local history.

Before I continue with the findings, I want to recount here an incident from my fieldwork which pulls us once again back to the interaction between the personal and physical contexts. At some point in my fieldwork, this interviewee’s recall of the 1952 revolution was driven home to me during a stroll around the museum’s post office which is located at the far end of the museum from the entrance. On a cement wall that bounded the post office grounds, I discovered a chalk sketch, remarkable for its artistry and their symbolic content that raised provocative questions about the domestic visitor’s personal context and the museum presentations. The sketch was extremely well crafted and bitingly clever, the artwork of a hand that should be professional if indeed it is not. Our unknown visitor(s)/artist(s) carefully had chosen a site that is not populated with visitors. The sketch was signed by the unknown visitor(s)/artist(s) and consisted of the following: “For memory, Shakir family and friends, Qena”. The sketch depicted Gamal Abdel Nasser in classic ancient Egyptian profile pose driving a chariot. Above are two colloquial Egyptian phrases, “We all need to build a strong economic nation-state through active participation of Egyptians,” and “Look what the Pharaohs accomplished”. At Nasser’s right side, their backs to the viewer as they look across the Nile River towards the Pyramids and the Sphinx stood his comrades sketched as pyramid builders. At Nasser’s left side, appeared some peasants in Pharaonic Egyptian clothing working around their primary jobs of farming and grinning at the revolutionary leader.
This artwork might be interpreted as the unknown visitor(s)/artist(s) utilising Pharaonic motifs to represent Egypt’s reawakening and the new promises of economic and political stability. Most intriguing is that unlike almost all the Egyptian Museum’s participants, this unknown mindful visitor(s)/artist(s) had linked their personal context (their pre-existing knowledge about Nasser and Egypt’s recent past since the 1952 Revolution) to the museum’s presentations (the far-distant past or ancient Pharaonic Egypt). One wonders if our muralist(s) had actually entered the exhibition environment and to what extent they drew on the museum presentations and offerings.

Visiting the museum not only brought back reminiscences of the recent past and personal memories but also motivated visitors to compare the social conditions and their personal economic situations of the past with their contemporary situations, unveiling a strong propensity to believe that their conditions were better off in the past than today. When asked “How has this visit been different/similar to visiting other attractions?,” one visitor replied:

Certainly it is different. For a museum like this one, it isn’t like going to the cinema or seeing a film. I can’t find personal relationship between me and the cinema and films. It wouldn’t mean so much if I chose to go to other places. But the museum and its surrounding area, yes well, they tell a lot of stories, true stories not tales. They [museum and its surrounding area] remind me of the past. Back in the old days these buildings around the museum were better than buildings in Europe in Rome, France, London. The museum was called the Louvre along the Nile. The streets were cleaner than El-Chanzilize Street of Paris. People were really nicer and there was a sense of community. The economy was better. I used to have 20 Piasters and I was able to pay for the tram, tickets to the museum, going to the national theatre, getting an ice cream from Groupie and still had money. Now what did globalisation bring? Nothing but misery and poverty. Look at the museum it is kissed by fumes and pollution and embraced by ugly modern buildings and street food vendors who are simply poor people.

Another visitor adopted a positive attitude to the past economic situations. Again, his words reflect the interplay of the personal and physical setting of the museum:

Prices are quite expensive especially compared with other museums in Cairo and Aswan ... When I used to visit with my parents, the meals at the

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19 This is the actual Arabic word used by the quoted speaker. English street name of this word is Chanzilize Street. It is the most famous street in France and a fashion hub with many international renowned clothing stores.

20 Piaster is a fractional monetary unit in Egypt. Twenty Piaster coin is the second lowest denomination coin of the Egyptian Pound. Twenty Piasters is equivalent to the New Zealand twenty cent coin.
restaurant were so much cheaper than now and the restaurant had a better quality food and beverages. My parents never bought any food from outside the museum because prices were pretty much the same as outside. Like a filling Shawarma plate used to cost you 35 Piasters, It was much cheaper back then, and the salaries were better.

A number of museum theorists have maintained that visitors, while limited to the artefacts chosen and exhibited by the museum, are able to connect exhibitions and particular objects with their own memories and produce their own recollections and meanings during their visits (Chia, 2007; Hermann & Plude, 1995; Hooper-Greenhill & Moussouri, 2002; Silverman, 1995). Nevertheless, unlike international visitors, the domestic visitors in this study made sense of, read and created complex levels of meanings outside the exhibit halls. Their recollections were not embodied in various ancient artefacts and statues. Instead, the knowledge of the food prices at the museum in the past, the regional nationalist movements, buildings and streets were part of the raw materials of their visit.

It is important to note another way in which personal events from the past were evoked to stimulate interest in visiting the exhibit halls. For another domestic visitor, visiting the museum and seeing particular objects brought to mind her past relationship and time spent with her beloved one. Her memories were found to be stimulated by certain objects in the museum building. The visit also emphasised the therapeutic role of the museum which was suitable for this visitor who had lost her husband:

> It [visiting the museum] was a way to bring us [she and her husband] together. It provided a place for us to talk about history and some politics that otherwise we didn’t talk about at home. We used to have a wonderful time ....When I go there I don’t necessarily look at everything. I tend to go and see the statues of Nefertari and Amenhotep. My husband particularly admired the statue of Thoutmosis the Third.

In this particular case, the interviewee could not help sobbing when I asked her “What did you like most about your trip to the museum today?” as she recalled her memories with her husband in the museum: “I can remember him like walking through my memory box …”. Her reply demonstrates how emotively a personal memory can stand out among ancient objects, establish itself, and insist that attention be paid to her husband. Falk and Dierking (1990) have highlighted the fact that museum recollections are highly idiosyncratic and usually centre on a distinct event or detail:

> Museum visitors do not catalogue visual memories of objects and labels in academic, conceptual schemes but assimilate events and observations in
mental categories of personal significance and character, determined by events in their lives before and after the museum visit (p. 123).

In summary, the interaction of the physical and personal contexts had a great influence on the visitors’ museum experience. Both contexts held responsibility for the quality of the museum experience and reflects the role of the museum as a place for remembering historical and personal events.

Before I conclude this chapter, I need to return to the issue of visitors’ underutilisation of the exhibition area as I indicated earlier. I will briefly discuss this issue in the following section.

8.2 Domestic visitors and the museum exhibitions

When they enter the museum they do not leave their cultures and identities in the coatroom. Nor do they respond passively to museum displays. They interpret museum exhibits through their prior experiences, culturally learned beliefs, values and perceptual skills as well as membership in multiple communities (Karp & Lavine, 1993, p. 79).

As the previous quotation revealed, museum audiences differ in terms of their interests, knowledge and attitudes. Domestic and international visitors often had different perceptions, interests, knowledge and attitudes towards the museum. The international admiration of the museum’s antiquities had only very weak echoes among domestic visitors. The exhibition environment was low on the list of things for Egyptian participants to attend at the museum. Several museum staff noted that Egyptian visitors constituted a very small portion of the museum population. For instance, one museum staff stated that “Egyptian visitors have traditionally been almost invisible inside the museum”.

The question one may ask is: what was the cause of this attitude where those domestic visitors did not look forward to interact with the objects and statues inside the building? Little information was gleaned from a few interviewees. One visitor eloquently revealed a good reason for the lack of interaction between the visitor’s personal context and the exhibition environment. According to this participant, the fairly weak connection to the exhibition area stemmed partly from past educational experiences and lack of previous knowledge. Especially for domestic visitors who attended state schools, ancient Egyptian history was not an integral part of the curriculum. Unless they educated themselves afterwards, they have no desire to visit the exhibitions:
Improving the experience should come from the Ministry of Education [me laughing]. I know it sounds strange, but I will tell you how. I remember when I attended Embaba Preparatory School ancient Egypt wasn’t important subject at all. History classes concentrated more on Islamic history, foreign occupation, Egyptian nationalists. The first time I set my foot in the museum, I was about 20 years old. My idea is if you are really interested in ancient Egypt, you need to do it yourself and build link with this part of our history, so when you look at the objects you know something about it and it grabs your attention. It’s like you don’t want to go to the cinema and watch a film unless you are interested in the actors or at least you know something about them.

Before I proceed, I want the reader to step back and return to my personal experiences mentioned earlier in the thesis introduction chapter regarding the neglect of Pharaonic Egypt in the state schools which led me as a teenager to a total loss of orientation and a lack of connection with the ancient past of Egypt (chapter One Introduction). Some of my personal reminiscences bear resemblance to the visitor’s experience in the free public schools. My personal experiences and the visitor’s comment above shows that an interaction between the personal context and the exhibition area (physical context) produces museum experiences that may include connection and building links with the familiar. This type of experience differs qualitatively from the recreation or social and pastime experiences mentioned earlier in this section. Again, this aids the development of my argument throughout this study by highlighting that museums are not only places for preservations, learning or education, the achievement of purely cognitive goals, but also sites for connection and building links with the familiar.

Another participant lends support to the significance of previous knowledge:

*I have been inside [the exhibition area] may be twice or three times only. If I go inside, I feel bored because I don’t have a lot of knowledge about many of the items. I have sound knowledge about Islam, modern Egypt like Nasser and Sadat ... I just come to the museum to take a break and relax before going back to work.*

I want to reiterate once again that domestic visitors’ underutilisation of exhibition environment is beyond the scope of this study. However one can only make a speculation about the lack of interaction between the domestic visitor and the exhibition environment.

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21 The school is located in the district of North Giza. The school includes underprivileged students and it is in two shifts. Classroom density often reaches fifty students.
This lack of interaction may be related to visitors’ lack of connection with the ancient past or participants’ lack of knowledge of their own ancient heritage which means that the Pharaonic relics displayed in the museum become alien to them, and the end result is a foreign exhibition environment full of foreign tourists. Yet domestic participants were able to find other ‘spaces’ in the physical context of the Egyptian museum to enjoy their visit. Their interactions with these ‘spaces’ revealed different roles of the museum.

8.3 Summary

For the purpose of exploring the role of the museum in relation to domestic visitors, I interrogated domestic visitors’ motives and experiences which illuminated the interdependence between the personal and physical contexts and between the physical and social contexts. These interactions reflect the role of the museum:

- as a place for social and pastime experiences;
- as a place for remembering personal events; and
- as a place for refuge and therapeutic facility.

Again, the different roles above contradict the conventional view of the traditional museum as a place for only educational experiences and preservations of valuable collections. Apart from the roles of the Egyptian museum in relation to domestic participants, this chapter also showed that domestic visitors’ motives and experiences stood apart from international visitors’ motives and experiences. For example, unlike international participants, the social and pastime experiences were important for almost all of the domestic participants.
Chapter 9
International Participants’ Motives and Experiences at Te Papa

9.1 Introduction

This chapter explores international participants’ motivations and experiences at Te Papa. In order to understand the role of the museum in relation to the international visitor, this chapter gives insights into the motivations and experiences of visitors at the museum. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section explores international visitors’ motivations for visiting the site. The second section examines the different ways in which visitors experienced the museum’s presentations and offerings.

9.1.1 Motives for visiting the museum

International visitors described their motivation for visiting Te Papa in a number of different ways and often gave more than one reason for their visit. Different types of international visitors had different motives. For example, visitors who attended the museum with children and young adults sought entertaining and/or educational experiences, while visitors who came to the museum with adult friends/relatives and spouses sought social experiences and to learn about different exhibitions. All the motives listed below reveal the inseparable relationship between the physical context and the visitor’s motive (for example, the desire to learn about the collections; the desire to spend quality time with friends and families and explore or talk about the exhibitions; the desire to have fun by interacting with the hands-on exhibitions; or the desire to see a particular exhibition for self-satisfaction). These different interactions between the visitor’s motives and the physical aspects of the museum reveal the different roles of the museum.

Overall, six main motivations were identified as determining the international visitor’s agenda for the museum visit (Figure 9.1):

- a desire to learn and gain knowledge;
- social motives: a desire to interact with a group and its members;
• a desire for having fun while learning (seeking infotainment/edutainment experiences);

• a desire for pure amusement (entertainment);

• external/practical factors such as weather conditions, time availability before they visited, proximity to the museum, crowd conditions and free admission; and

• self-satisfaction and prestige/status motive.

**Figure 9.1 Six motives for museum visit.**

9.1.1.1 **A desire to learn and gain knowledge**

In describing their reasons for visiting Te Papa, many participants referred to seeking experiences or information that was different or new and which consequently triggered learning and evoked a feeling of exploration and discovery. This is in line with Falk and Sheppard’s (2006, pp. 88-89) argument that “learning, broadly defined, is a major motivation for visiting the museum, a major aspect of what people do in the museum, a major contributor to visitors satisfaction and a major outcome to the museum experience”.

International visitors at Te Papa had exhibit-specific expectations and focused on the learning/educational aspect of the exhibitions and many of them stated that learning about nature and culture as important motives for their visits:
I’m here to learn and try to understand a bit more about the different birds, because I’ve not seen a lot. I saw my first kiwi and I’ve been here over a week. It’s very fascinating learning about the different birds that are endangered that was probably my main motivation to visit Te Papa (USA).

I enjoy history in general and this visit gives me the opportunity to learn some New Zealand history and see what the museum has to offer … I wanted to learn about them [Maori and Polynesian cultures], find out of their thoughts and ideas. This is important for me as an international visitor (UK).

We came here because we wanted to see the Maori exhibitions. I was particularly interested in their myths and legends. It’s my curiosity to try to learn about other cultures in other parts of the world, and for me it’s very stimulating (Australia).

9.1.1.2 Social motives: a desire to interact with a group and its members

Since only one international visitor interviewed came to the museum alone, the social motive was important for almost all the international visitors. Visiting Te Papa was perceived as a positive way for friends and families to spend quality time together. Many participants expressed their wish to share the visit with family members and friends. More importantly, for many the social motive was not separated from the learning motive. The social aspect of the visit was interwoven with their leaning motive. Many interviewees reported having discussed, or at least shared, information with their companions:

One of the reasons I came to this museum is that we want to enjoy it together, and learn something while we’re here. I am a bit more auditory, I need to hear and discuss things with someone … I kind of get fried sometimes walking through the museums. I look at the displays and keep reading and reading and I don’t remember what was that about. So I always like to have someone accompany me because it’s interesting to share and compare your ideas, to learn from different points of view (USA).

I decided that today my daughters needed a bit more history and culture on a rainy Sunday afternoon. So I decided to take them to the museum. I had a chance to talk with them about things we usually don’t discuss because we’re too busy running around (USA).

It’s a great place to visit with friends. I wouldn’t want to go alone because I like to have a conversation about the stuff that I see. You talk to someone if you see interesting objects. They can raise interesting points and you can share yours. They point out things that, not even that you miss some when you are just walking by yourself, but you wouldn’t even consider them (UK).
In short, Te Papa was seen as a tourism/leisure product that generated a spark of sociability and, at the same time, created an informal learning experience.

### 9.1.1.3 A desire for having fun while learning: seeking infotainment/edutainment experiences

Some participants expected Te Papa to be a place for a fun learning experience or “edutainment”/“infotainment” experience (Lepper & Chabay, 1985; Lucas, 1991). They articulated a combination of entertainment and “knowledge/learning/education” as motivating factors for a visit:

*Once my wife mentioned Te Papa I said good it would be fun for the kids and they might gain some knowledge about New Zealand history and culture. If it wasn’t for these programmes [entertainment programmes at the Four Discovery Centres], we might have skipped visiting Te Papa (Australia).*

*It [Te Papa] was a perfect place for us. An informational type of museum won’t attract us. Like the ones in Europe, they are too serious, don’t touch this, kids not allowed, but in Te Papa you can find a good combination of education and entertainment . . . (UK).*

*To us, it’s quite nice to visit Te Papa because it offers fun education programmes for young and old ... I have four children so it [the museum] would have to be fun and interactive to interest them (Australia).*

Equally, Falk and Dierking’s (2000) research found that visitors tended to use learning/education and amusement interchangeably. According to Falk and Dierking (2000, p. 73), visitors did not conceptualise learning/education and amusement as mutually exclusive but as compatible terms of a single multifaceted leisure experience and were searching for “a learning orientated entertainment experience”.

### 9.1.1.4 A desire for pure amusement (entertainment)

There was a small minority of visitors who sought a purely entertaining experience which was devoid of learning engagement, articulated as “entertainment,” “excitement,” “enjoyment” or “fun”. Their motive was receiving a pleasurable diversion, as commonly occurred when playing fun computer games, trying virtual-reality bungy jumping, or watching Maori and Polynesian dance performances in the museum’s foyer:

*Well I’ve come to be entertained and relax really, I’m on holiday, and I’ve just finished my two years at college last month so I don’t want to be educated much more (USA).*
We wanted to try the bungy jump and have some fun. We didn’t really come here to read and learn about the objects. Learning in museums can be quite boring. I used to go around museums in Paris when I was young in school and I found it quite tedious to see all the skeletons and read information from computer screens (France).

I’m not a museum person who likes history and art. The visit wasn’t really a learning experience for me. I’m just much more interested in things that are active or entertaining like the bungy jumping and the rides or the multicultural dance. To me, going around and just reading and looking at objects is not really active enough, it’s kind of boring (UK).

The responses above attest to the interaction between the visitor and aspects of the physical context, in this case, hands-on interactive exhibits.

9.1.1.5 External/practical factors

There was some strong evidence that the personal agendas of a small minority of international visitors were influenced by other motives. Practical considerations such as weather conditions, proximity to the museum, time availability before they visited, crowd conditions and free admission were also taken into account during the planning of visit. In previous museum studies, most of these practical matters have been considered as secondary motivations for visiting museums (Falk & Dierking, 1992; Merriman, 1989; Moussouri, 2003).

The international participants at Te Papa tended to be very practical. The external conditions of the visiting day (to shelter from the rain, traffic), the feasibility of visiting the museum (the physical location of Te Papa and the available free time), the service of the museum (free admission, the parking service and café/restaurant) all were also taken into consideration. While some participants saw these external factors as secondary motives, others considered them as primary motives:

I thought it made more sense to spend this rainy morning in the museum (UK).

We came here primarily to learn about New Zealand heritage and history but also we wanted to stay in town and visit the museum because the weather was supposed to be not so great (Brazil).

Well, the reason why I’m here is because the museum is very close to my hostel and you don’t have to pay museum admission to eat at the restaurant (Uruguay).
We had a few hours with nothing to do so we decided to come and check it [museum] out (France).

Again, these responses attest to the interplay of the physical context and the visitor’s desire to come to the museum (for example, sheltering from the rain, proximity of the museum).

### 9.1.1.6 Personal self-fulfilment and prestige/status motive

A number of studies (Falk & Dierking, 1992; Glynn, Bhattacharya, & Rao, 1999; Heath, 2007; Weil, 2004) cited social status, self-satisfaction, curiosity and an opportunity for reverence among a number of broad categories of motivations for visiting museums. Likewise, one international participant had come to Te Papa to check out a story he read about the colossal squid and to be able to tell others that he saw it. He also considered that this was a worthwhile use of his time, and he felt better about himself for having seeing it:

> I came because I’ve been reading about the colossal squid that was caught by a New Zealand fisherman in Antarctica. It’s the only colossal squid on display in the world. I wanted to say I saw it—like people say they saw King Tut in Egypt. But I also like to take advantage of things that may only happen once in a lifetime. It makes me feel unique (UK).

Since only one respondent gave these sorts of responses, then one may argue that personal self fulfilment and prestige motives were not important motives identified amongst international visitors in this study.

The preceding discussion examined the reasons the participants gave for visiting Te Papa. These motives shed light on the interaction between the visitors’ different motives and the physical environment of the museum. This interaction serves to reveal the role of Te Papa. Further, the choice to visit a museum entails matching personal agendas with the anticipated physical context and the associated activities of a museum (Moscardo, 1992, 1999; Moussouri, 2003). Accordingly, the following section explores international visitors’ experiences of Te Papa which illuminate the interdependence between the personal and physical contexts and between the physical and social contexts.

### 9.1.2 International visitors’ experiences of Te Papa

The majority of international participants articulated four types of experiences during their visit of the museum. The majority of these experiences clearly follow out of the motivations mentioned in the previous section:
• as a place for social educational/learning experiences;

• as a place to spend time with friends and enjoy the layout, functions, and scenic qualities of the café/restaurant;

• as a place for interactivity and hands-on experiences; and

• as a place to connect with the familiar and evoking previous knowledge.

9.1.2.1 Social learning experiences

Since the social motive of the visit was intertwined with the visitors’ leaning motive, international participants who described their social interactions at Te Papa reported having both social and educational experiences. They reported that they had discussed exhibits, or at least pointed things out to each other. In most cases they felt that this had helped their learning experience and/or added to their enjoyment of the exhibition. Also, sharing and discussing information was a necessary condition for the experience of learning in the museum as it is understood by the majority of the participants:

*It was the best experience I've ever had talking and learning about New Zealand history. We were together all the time. We talked a bit, showing each other what we'd found. If I found something then we would read about it and learn new things. I enjoyed discussing things I didn’t know. Like my husband told me that the Marae, I can’t even pronounce that properly ‘Marae’, that it actually is used when a high ranking Maori chief dies and his body is usually displayed in an open casket and covered with special feather coats as a sign of respect. And I just thought that was really a unique way to pay tribute to the deceased person (USA).*

*It's [visiting the museum] was a good way to get some kind of mental exercise and share the things we learnt today. I think that’s part of the reason you come here. You are learning about the collections and sharing experiences, and not the shallow experiences one does in normal day to day life (Australia).*

*It’s good to come as a group because we explored and learnt things together. We looked and shared experiences. It’s nice to have company. I would be lonely and lost by myself (UK).*

The responses above matched observations conducted inside the Our Space exhibition, which revealed the interactions between visitors and the exhibitions. For example, visitors were observed reading aloud and exchanging information about exhibitions. What is of interest are the techniques that visitors employed to share information about the exhibition. These included what is described here as “telling” and “cooperating” (Diamond, 1986). Telling
involved explaining to member/members of the group how to use the interactive exhibits, asking member/members of the group questions about the exhibit and highlighting interesting information on the screens. Cooperation refers to members of a group collaborating in the exploration of the interactive exhibits by conversing with each other, volunteering information about the images on the screens and stretching, animating, painting and moving the images around. The following descriptions offer an example of how the use of “telling,” and “cooperating” created social interactions between visitors and the exhibit:

Visitor (1) approaches the free standing exhibition “the Wall,” reads the instruction and manipulates the exhibit. Soon afterwards, her two friends approach and stand in a semi circle around her. One of them said “You’ve got a mixture of stuff here”. Visitor (1) guides the group across the big screen telling them about “the storm that swept down the North Island” i.e. Wahine disaster (The Space Exhibition).

A group of visitors (4 adult persons) approaches the Map exhibit. They walk around, point at the various bits of the country and asking what they were, where various places they had visited were, etc. (The Our Space Exhibition).

The social experiences reported by other participants were not limited to their own companions and family members, but extended to interactions with museum staff. For some respondents, just interacting with museum staff created social experience where learning about the exhibitions was the result:

I should say that she [The museum guide] is informative, personable, and animated guide. She shares her thoughts and opinions with you and let you use your mind and senses to respond to and interpret the objects. Like she made us look for clues in the paintings upstairs and made learning about the Maori artwork interesting. A museum tour is not just about listening to the guide non stop for an hour. It’s also about letting you use your vision and mind and be able to find your own interpretations of the objects and exhibitions rather than simply accepting someone else's interpretation ...

We also learnt a lot from our conversations about the Maori and Pacific people. I can say I now understand some of the depth of the Maori and Pacific Island customs and beliefs (UK).

We took the walking tour that meets at 11:00 [am]. The guide was sociable and he made the tour a fun learning experience with knowledgeable commentary throughout the tour. He told us all about the New Zealand art and history and showed us cool paintings. It was an easy, pleasant walk where we learned many things about Maori and Polynesian history. There is no way we could have learned as much on our own and certainly would not have known the historical information that he passed on. (USA).
Another participant recounts her interaction with the museum staff and again allows us to witness the creation of the social learning experience at Te Papa:

\[
\text{We joined the 60 minute tour of the museum with a guide of Maori culture. He was warm and friendly, has a great sense of humour and taught us lots about the Maori exhibitions. He told us stories that have been told for generations and shared his own. He was very detailed in his explanation of the tribe customs and the Maori cultural dances and Maori carvings. It felt like we were just having a good time with a buddy from New York City. So we all felt comfortable asking questions and learning new stuff and also sharing with him our stories we had learned from famous Native American myths and legends like Rainbow Crow and the King of Sharks (USA).}
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Visitors interacted with museum staff and shared information with each other (social context) about the exhibitions (physical context). We can observe once again the interplay of the physical context and the international visitors’ social experiences. The social context of the museum was connected to the physical context. The interaction of the social and physical contexts generated social educational experiences. This kind of interplay did not produce a narrow definition of the role of the museum such as its equation with learning or education, the achievement of purely cognitive goals; the museum can also be a site that offers visitors a rich social experience where learning of the exhibitions may be an outcome.

9.1.2.2 \textbf{As a place to spend time with friends and enjoy the layout, functions, and scenic qualities of the café/restaurant}

Once again, in this section one can notice the interaction between the visitors and the physical context. For some respondents, just coming to the café/restaurant-the physical context- and being in the presence of friends seemed to be a satisfying experience:

\[
\text{We have visited the museum before but this time we did not come to view the exhibitions or learning about New Zealand history. We were mainly interested in going to the restaurant for lunch with our backpacking friends. We spent nice time with them. The food was great. We ate together and talked about what happened in our day and this or that ... (France).}
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\[
\text{I don’t usually come for the exhibitions. We already viewed the exhibitions once before when we arrived in Wellington last week. Since our rental apartment is near the museum, me and my friend regularly have morning coffee and breakfast at the café upstairs [Espresso Te Papa Café on level Four]. We enjoy each other’s company chatting and reading the free newspapers provided. We talk about our day, our plans. What we will visit and see that day (Brazil).}
\]
Many times when I want to meet my friends I will call or text them and say ‘let’s meet at Te Papa at the café upstairs’ because it’s easy parking and it’s handy and nice environment and it’s not noisy like a lot of the cafés on Cuba street. So, Te Papa is a great place that I use to meet up with friends and enjoyed a relaxed breakfast or dinner (Australia).

Here, the interplay of the social context and the physical context produced other roles of Te Papa. For some international participants, visiting Te Papa was a chance to spend leisure time with their companions in the café/restaurant. In this regard the museum became a site for socialisation and pastime experiences.

The interaction between the visitor and the museum’s physical context cannot be erased and continue to exist. Many participants had started their museum visit with a trip to the Te Papa café/restaurant on the ground floor: “After eating [at the restaurant] we decided to actually take a look at the exhibits” (USA); “We wanted to try the restaurant first before seeing the exhibitions” (UK).

The layout and functions most valued by the international participants related to ambience, location, structure, comfort and quality of food:

*The great feature of the restaurant [on the ground floor] is that it’s child friendly. There is a play area in one section where the kids can easily entertain themselves (Australia).*

*The layout of the café is good and well spaced. You have a lot of space to move around and choose what it is that you want to eat (UK).*

*As soon as I got here, I ran into the café and got a double latte ... the food [at the Seasons Café] is excellent, and while a bit pricy, you're getting some pretty high-end food as well (USA).*

The different responses above also indicated that the interaction relationship between the international participants and the servicescape that is the layout and functions of the café-physical context- was another significant aspect directly related to the overall museum experience (Bitner, 1992). Equally, in rating the museum experience, Falk and Dierking (1992) found that the average visitor considered the attractive setting of the restaurant, the prices, the quality of the food service and the gift shop to be as significant, if not more important, as the quality of the exhibitions. They also found that “even a conversation about dinner or what to wear to a social event the next day frequently takes precedence over conversation about exhibits” (Falk & Dierking, 1992, p. 48). Fiona Mclean (1994, p. 235) also
maintains that the museum experience may include many things: “a particular item in the collection; the café or even social acceptance”.

Still the interaction between the visitor and the physical context of the museum shows that the museum can be a place to enjoy the scenic and visual landscape qualities. Participants’ experience of the café/restaurant included Pine and Gilmore's (1999) esthetic experience, which entails the passive immersion of individuals in a natural environment, unique physical design or event without altering or affecting the nature of these surroundings. The Seasons Café on the ground floor was an apt example.

The café/restaurant turned eating at Te Papa into an experience of visual landscape qualities. Participants enjoyed eating while, at the same time, passively immersed themselves in New Zealand’s diverse natural environment through the Bush City living outdoor exhibition of rain forest and other native plants:

The most memorable part of the museum was the restaurant. The food was great and I really enjoyed the atmosphere. It’s more like a relaxing place where you can unwind and view the natural surroundings (USA).

It’s such a nice restaurant with lovely scenery. It takes your mind off all types of things. I guess because the bushes and trees around the restaurant take your attention. You’re focusing on them, so you’re not really thinking about anything else (Brazil).

It offers a great variety of kid’s food. Another thing I like about this restaurant is the view. We gave the kids some running around time while eating our lunch and enjoying the relaxation of the scenery (UK).

In summary, dining at the Seasons Café became an experience rather than the simple act of eating; it became memorable, and the scenery viewed became a reminder of that experience. This suggests that international visitors like particular physical aspects of the modern museum experience. Still, the continued interactions between the visitor and the physical context of the museum showed that many international participants did not like other physical aspects of the modern museum experiences (for example, interactive exhibitions). This issue is further interrogated in the next section.

9.1.2.3 Interactivity and hands-on experiences

The interplay between the visitor and other physical aspects of Te Papa evoked different reactions between domestic and international participants at Te Papa. Te Papa’s interactive exhibitions reinforced the significance of the physical context as an integral part of the
museum experience, from the domestic visitors’ perspective (see also the following Section 10.1.2.3 As a place to enjoy the layout of Te Papa, the interactive technology, the aesthetic atmosphere, and the scenic qualities of the museum restaurant). Te Papa’s domestic participants mentioned the positive impact of the interactivity which mainly included the multiple sense experiences in exhibits. On the other hand, the reaction of the majority of international respondents was based on the view that the excessive use of interactive technology led to noise and bustles among visitors, detracted from the museum learning experience and turned the exhibition into a an entertainment medium. Overall, this was the most prevalent views among international participants with regard to the infotainment or edutainment experience provided by the museum.

There is no doubt that interactive technology is central to the presentations of Te Papa, as they are at many modern museums (Williams, 2001, 2006). In this regard, it is not surprising that many of the international participants described their experiences with the various infotainment presentations. But did this mean international participants viewed the museum as a site of infotainment experience? To answer this question, I reveal participants’ different interactions with the interactive presentations and museum staff’s views on the infotainment experience.

Perhaps surprisingly, given the trend towards this type of presentation in modern museums, only a small minority of international responses (5 interviewees) expressed positive reactions to the interactive media. These positive responses tended to be framed in terms of the “infotainment” or “edutainment” experience the exhibits offered:

*I like the presentation of the collections. For example, Our Space section. It was a great exhibition. It provides a fun way to experience and learn new things using all your senses, not just your mind and vision. When you use the interactive features of the exhibition, I think that you exercise and stimulate all your senses. It’s really good. Some of the other exhibitions were designed using interesting mobile devices and sounds which I found really useful. The Discovery Centres are really interactive. And I thought that was pretty good the way it was organised. You can find all sorts of different ways that helps children to learn. They made great use of latest technology and we could get a hands-on experience. The kids can measure the ecological footprints and can lift big rocks. It was a great place for the kids to explore the natural environment in New Zealand. I can see this as a great thing for my kids as it is definitely not boring (USA).*

*The two exhibitions [Our Space and Discovery Centres] are good places for children and adults. All of the activities are designed with children and adults in mind, so you get to learn with your child in a fun environment*
and away from the typical distractions of the homework, the housework, phones, and televisions and computers (Romania).

I really liked the idea of the maps and interactive elements of the exhibition. They helped us engage together and locate the major regions of New Zealand ... If it [the exhibit] wasn’t interactive, I’d just kind of walk in and go ‘Oh yeah I’m not here to learn and overload myself with information’ and walk out. I don’t like museums that bombard you with information that never really adds up. You will get bored and want to leave. But if you make it fun, visitors tend to learn a lot more about particular exhibitions ... The more fun and entertaining it [the exhibit] is, the easier you will learn and the exhibit will stick in your mind (Australia).

The small number of positive responses from international visitors is perhaps all the more surprising, given that these participants had acknowledged that their motives for visiting Te Papa was for social, edutainment and fun experiences, which this type of technology is designed to encourage (Gore, 2002). Even more surprising is the fact that the vast majority of international participants (over 90 percent) expressed negative reactions to the interactive presentations placed throughout the museum. The primary complaint seems to be that the overuse of interactive technology distracted and interfered with their appreciation of the museum and its content:

There was too much play and too little communication of information. They [the children] gained very little from the interactive nature of the exhibit [Our Space] ... The virtual games and rides are quite distracting for the kids. So if that’s less prominent when they visit the museum, you probably stand more chance of learning something in there and enjoying that experience. They should come up with more original displays (France).

Perhaps it’s too interactive for those who want to gain a better understanding of New Zealand history. I somehow didn’t get properly engaged in the interactive part of the exhibit, so we went to the Marae and the Scottish exhibition to have a real museum experience (UK).

It [Our Space exhibit] was a bit noisy. Lots of interactive stuff there. It's kind of like an entertainment thing. Everything is made to entertain visitors without educating them. It doesn't make you use your brain power. If you want an amusement park you go to one, if you want a museum you go to one, I don't want museums trying to be amusement parks. As a child I loved a trip to the museum, they [museums] had a few nice interactive activities but that was only part of the enjoyment, the static exhibitions kept me glued as well ... I think I can often learn a lot more from reading-I certainly do-as opposed to touching, or looking at a computer screen (Australia).
There was so much noise and stuff happening around. Looks like something a five year old would love. I’m not sure I learned a great deal from it. I was expecting something a little more educational. It really should be full of objects, not buttons to press (USA).

The majority of international visitors did not express a view on their negative reactions to the infotainment experience at Te Papa. However, little information was gleaned from a few interviewees (2 participants). There might be two possibilities behind participants’ negative reactions to the interactive presentations. Participants to Te Papa were overwhelmed by the large amount of multimedia interactive exhibits. They might have expected a national museum to be a more serious repository of artefacts. For example, one participant explained that:

*You know I guess I had expectations a national museum was going just be a site that has rare historical objects in glass display cases and very few interactive exhibits. But then when I got there I was actually a little bit disappointed. I didn’t feel I gained valuable insight into the history of the country. The exhibits are more fun and less history, you know. I did not sense the seriousness of the national museum. The place is crammed with multimedia experiences, gift shops and cafes and special exhibitions for kids. I felt like it’s a great kid’s museum. I think Kiwis have a rich history. They have unique Maori and Pacific heritage, significant natural history and with a better design and layout that history can be reflected in their national museum. I mean the curators need to think a lot more about learning and a lot less about entertainment and technology (USA).*

The second argument is that participants did not understand the meanings or historical information behind certain interactive things because they did not have the cultural baggage or knowledge (see also the next Section 9.1.2.4). One visitor eloquently revealed a good reason for the negative reactions to the interactive exhibits. According to this participant, the fairly weak connection to the exhibition area stemmed from the lack of previous knowledge:

*I didn’t enjoy the interactive stuff. I touched the screen on the large wall and watched some images from the news archives and it was such a boring experience because I am not knowledgeable about New Zealand history. May be if I had read more about New Zealand, I would have spent more time watching the video clips and enjoyed these kinds of exhibits (France).*

The majority of international visitors’ reactions to the interactive technology are also clearly reflected in the reactions of local and overseas commentators to the museum. They described the museum as “a really cool virtual game room” and “a great hi-tech arcade” (Becton, 1998), “Disneyland” (MacLennan, 1994), “300 million theme park” (Dutton, 1998), “a fast-food outlet” (Keith, 2008) and “an amusement arcade” (Dalrymple, 1999). One also found a
possible congruence between international visitors’ reactions to the interactive technology and Theodore Dalrymple’s22 description of Te Papa. During his several visits to Te Papa, Dalrymple (1999) observed different visitors viewing objects with no sign of “intellectual rebellion.” He concluded his observation of Te Papa with the forcible reminder that:

_The hurly-burly of a museum? The very idea is the antithesis of learning, let alone of scholarship. One leaves Te Papa knowing no more than when one entered it. If one has the mentality of a child of limited intelligence and curiosity, one might have been amused or kept out of trouble for a while, but nothing more._

Here, it is important to note that the interactions between the visitors and the interactive exhibits—the physical context—reveals that for some type of museum visitors (for example, the majority of international participants), Te Papa was not perceived as a site that offered “infotainment” or “edutainment” experience. Thus, the bulk of international participants defied the infotainment model held by Te Papa’s staff. In regard to learning via interactive technology, a number of museum staff members commented that one way Te Papa has attempted to respond to the needs of domestic and international visitors is by combining interactive technology in various exhibition spaces. They elucidated that Te Papa bridges entertainment and learning/educational experience via interactive technology:

_We want to make this exhibit [Our Space] interactive and very fun and interesting to people. We want them [visitors] to have a fun way of learning. We knew that interactive multimedia was one way to do that. Interactive multimedia in Te Papa, especially interactive storytelling and gaming, has the ability to communicate effectively and assisting both the education and entertainment of visitors._

_The interactive exhibits provide both education and entertainment. They make learning fun and memorable. We are constantly updating and adding new technologies so the visitor can discover something new or different. The role of the museum is no longer just to display significant and beautiful artefacts. The old-fashioned mode of communication by showing exhibits in display cases alongside with labels is no longer appealing to visitors because such kind of static displays can hardly offer them enjoyment or a sense of participation. Nowadays the museum must also create fun, rich and engaging experiences. And I think Te Papa has done a great job of that. It promotes closer interaction between visitors and objects by using interactive experiences throughout the museum. The hands-on exhibits are not only educational, but entertaining and_

22 He is a renowned British author, columnist and former psychiatric doctor whose critical article agitated former Prime Minister Helen Clark (Williams, 2001).
enlightening. They engage visitors in active and prolonged learning experiences and suit all ages. They also make the exhibitions come alive and bring out the best of history.

Te Papa has all types of interactive exhibitions that serve to keep a fun learning environment and this can encourage visitors to learn something and keep them interested over a period of time. For example, the Awesome forces experiences and the Discovery Centres and Our Space exhibition entertain visitors but they also inform them. So yeah, you need to have different methods of presenting the history of New Zealand to your visitors otherwise they can get bored and don’t learn. Interactive technology is an important entry point for visitors into any subject matter. For us, interactive technology is a key element to engage the visitors’ interests in the exhibitions and in the meantime to entertain them ... What visitors are doing while they interact with the exhibitions is as important as the content. It is not enough that they are busy having fun interacting with image stuff or touching stuff, but the fun really come as a result of a new understanding, a new skill, a new way of seeing something or a confirmation of what they always knew, the satisfaction of knowing or of figuring out.

Still, international participants enjoyed other physical aspects of the modern museum experiences (for example, Maori exhibitions). This issue is further interrogated in the next section. I examine the interactions between the physical context and the personal context which reflects another role of the modern museum: as a site to connect visitors with the familiar.

9.1.2.4 Connecting with the familiar and evoking pervious knowledge

The interactions between the physical and personal context were evidenced from the participants’ responses. It has been suggested that interpretation of exhibitions, images or sites depends on what visitors bring to them and that changes according to the personal knowledge and individual experiences of those visitors (Doering, 1999; Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Hermann & Plude, 1995). Every visitor leaves the museum with an individually unique experience and interpretation because every visitor is engaged in constructing a narrative about what he or she views (Treinen, 1993; Uzzell, 1989). In view of that, a few international participants compared their “entrance narratives” (Doering & Pekarik, 1996) with what was presented at Te Papa.

These participants reported feeling a sense of identification or connection with particular exhibitions, and in particular, the Signs of a Nation, Mana Whenua, the Marae and Passport exhibitions. The primary themes presented in the exhibitions (The Maori arts, language and culture and listening to the voices of ordinary New Zealanders giving their opinions and
interpretations of the *Waitangi Treaty*, ranging from Pakeha views to Maori perspectives) helped them to consolidate their personal knowledge and responses and forge a deeper understanding of the Maori history and culture. For them there was an acknowledgment that experiencing New Zealand’s colonial history and Maori culture provided an opportunity also for personal enrichment and self-reflection about the history of their country. The explanatory information-based form of the exhibitions and the visual images through sound took their mind to the Maori world. More significantly, the interactions between the physical and personal contexts incited participants to think and ponder on new ideas never before considered:

*I think coming from South America where we also have native people I am just interested in the differences between South Americans and New Zealanders and how native populations are treated. I sort of equated the Maori here to the native people in South America. The treaty [Signs of a Nation: Treaty of Waitangi] and Maori collections made me think about the indigenous people in Brazil and Mexico fighting for their rights—just like the native tribes of New Zealand fighting for their land. So for me that are the connections and similarities between New Zealand and South America. I believe we have not treated our indigenous people in South America at all well nor have we restored their culture nor do we brag about it as well as Kiwis have done in that museum. There are some efforts being made in Brazil right now. And they do a fine job there, but I do think what kiwis have done in their museum is wonderful (Brazil).*

*I think if I were to pick the most unforgettable part of the visit, it probably would have been the Marae and that section where they had that real beautiful Maori carvings. I found the Maori wood carving really interesting and they triggered my interest because I saw a few carvings out of whale bone and teeth that looked a lot more like those in Vanuatu and also the Maori moko tattoos looks a lot like the Ni Vanuatu traditional tattooing (Vanuatu).*

*I thought that the passports exhibition was really interesting probably because that’s sort of related to me. I can notice the connection because my great grandparents moved around between England and New Zealand and all over the North and South Islands from Wellington to Picton so that was an interesting exhibition to explore. And the kind of things that I wanted to see were things that were related to my great grandparents ... that exhibition I found appealing. The appeal to me is about remembering my grandparents and reflecting on who I am (UK).*

*I really enjoyed the Maori culture exhibits and artefacts because I can compare them to Australian Aboriginal culture .... They [Maori] probably have similar feelings of displacement like the Aboriginal people in Australia. But there are some differences. The Maori have a treaty to fall back on. Aborigines on the other hand are more fortunate [than Maori]*
because they can have a physical separation from white Australians. Maori have interbred and there’s hardly a place in New Zealand where Pakeha and Maori do not live side by side (Australia).

Moreover, visitors paid attention to particular objects that interested them. A visitor’s interest in the *Signs of a Nation: Treaty of Waitangi* exhibit was determined by his or her previous knowledge and personal experiences:

> I have been involved with different Aboriginal communities in North-Western Australia for over seven years so I am interested in knowing more about Maori history and artefacts trying to find out the similarities and differences between the two communities … The treaty was probably my favourite part of the entire museum. I read it twice and I really enjoyed it. It is well written … Visiting the Maori exhibits and reading the treaty brought back to me the current situation of Aboriginal people in Australia. In Australia Aboriginal populations aren’t treated very well, in my opinion. I believe that the treaty gave Maori better treatment and greater respect than the Aborigines in Australia (Australia).

Another visitor’s interest in the *Marae* was also determined by his cultural background and feelings. The physical context of the *Marae* at Te Papa resonated with his personal experience and produced specific feelings in him. No two visitors perceived the same *Marae* in exactly the same way, as one respondent stated:

> When I entered the Maraee I had the most peaceful feeling … I looked at most of the Maori wall carvings in the house and they brought back enjoyable memories for me. It reminds me of our traditional house in my country. It just made me feel like I was in the traditional meeting house in Vanuatu with my grandparents when they were still alive. Each week we would gather inside the house talking about our community and at the end of the meeting I would get involved in some dance and song performance. We call our meeting house Nakamal. It means a place of peace where community matters are discussed (Vanuatu).

Visitors’ voices encapsulate the significance of the interplay between the physical and personal contexts and provide further insights into the functioning of the museum as a site to connect visitors with the familiar. Two museum staff’s explanations eloquently lend further empirical weight to the connection between the physical and personal contexts and the other roles of the museum and these detailed explanations deserve to be quoted in their entirely:

> When I meet those visitors [international visitors], they are just here on holidays and a lot of them are not interested in learning and reading information because they are not familiar with the collections. But I believe that one of the main functions of museums, other than to preserve objects and learning, is to stimulate visitors, not to educate them and fill
their minds with historical information, that’s too much for them and will make the visit boring, but trying to find something that is going to be familiar to them. Something they can relate to. There has to be some kind of connection, some kind of link between the visitor and the exhibit. For example, I will talk to American visitors about the Treaty of Waitangi and try to link it to the treaties the Americans signed with the Native Americans then they become very interested and ask questions. I remember one American visitor came to me and said [laughing] he never knew white settlers in New Zealand treat the natives better than their counterparts in America.

People have different views about the role and function of museums. Some people argue that the aim of any museum should be to teach visitors something that they did not previously know. In my opinion, I think the museum is also a space that enables people to make the personal links and create new meaning. In my experience as a museum guide I often get international visitors who are looking for personal connections or try to create some links. For example, the Canadian tourists want to learn about the Treaty of Waitangi or about Maori culture, then they ask ‘so that glass treaty over there, what are the pros and cons of this treaty, why are the Maori people of New Zealand still upset about it? They are better off than most Aboriginal peoples in Canada’. They also come up with their own explanations, they would say that New Zealand is so much better than Canada and U.S. in resolving indigenous issues. So although they know very little about New Zealand history and although they are just here for a short period of time, they really want to absorb what’s here and then connect it to their own cultural baggage. And I just found it very interesting to know how the museum was able to help them make this type of connection.

Still, unlike domestic participants, without being able to establish personal links with the exhibitions, many international participants were robbed of the opportunity to link with the familiar and the result is a dissonance between the visitor and the physical context of the exhibitions. Some of the participants also showed a tendency of desiring more information. Here the museum fails to fulfil its role as a site of connection:

I found the Golden Days exhibition hard to understand due to the lack of information. You need to read up before hand. The images just seemed irrelevant to me. I am not from New Zealand, so I couldn’t appreciate many of the images from the film. May be a Kiwi would appreciate them more than I did. And I think that was because the exhibition was not quite general to suit many different visitors. I think it is organised to suit Kiwi visitors. The exhibition lacked in information and this limits the experience of people from different countries. So may be more information in this area would have appealed to different visitors and creates some kind of connection (USA).
When I walk up into the museum, I don’t see an environment of endless learning possibilities. I think the museum is a place where I can connect and relate to stuff I already knew about from history books and personal experiences. So it’s confusing and boring when a visitor enters the museum and he doesn’t have previous knowledge or information on the objects. I mean I come from UK for example, I knew nothing about Maori and Pacific people. I felt like there’s no connection, the history is so new to me. I don’t know depending on where you come from. Like for me, I felt quite connected to the scottish exhibition. I am half Scottish and the exhibition made me feel in touch and it also made me feel like I should know more about Scotland. It allowed me to look and take in the information (UK).

I think in order to enjoy the Maori exhibitions you need to know something about their history and because I haven’t read anything about their religion and customs before I came here it was hard for me to relate to them. For example, I couldn’t understand how a treaty [The Treaty of Waitangi] would help the Maori keep their land. It’s a document that is difficult to decode. The language is somewhat vague (Chile).

Another participant confirmed the conflict between the visitor and the physical contexts. This conflict reflects once again the significance of the interconnectedness between the two contexts:

... and we didn't really know what to expect as we entered this section [Golden Days]. I will admit that I don't know much about New Zealand history and heritage, so I felt that the scenes on the screen were not well described and short. May be the curators have done a reasonably good job of explaining what each scene is. I can notice that for New Zealand visitors who were setting next to us laughing and whispering to each other. They can connect to the film because they are familiar with their history. For them it is not a new history that they are trying to piece it together. But for us as foreign tourists coming from different backgrounds it was not interesting and we had difficulty understanding the different scenes in the film. If the museum tries to explain to uninformed visitors an important part of New Zealand history, things need to be described more in this section and the film should go on longer. I’d like to see more information that actually tells you about all these different scenes in the film (France).

Without the personal context, the French interviewee is left to interact with the physical context (Golden Days exhibition) without pre-understandings of New Zealand history and heritage. She presumes that it was easier for New Zealand visitors to relate to the exhibit because they were familiar with their history. But for the “uninformed visitors”, the lack of personal context makes it virtually impossible to create relevant connections.

This section reflects once again the significance of the interconnectedness between the personal and physical contexts which I have explored throughout this thesis with the intention
to find other roles of the museum. It showed that much of what some participants chose to seek out and attend to while in the museum was driven by what they found most familiar.

9.2 Summary

This chapter explored international visitors’ motives and experiences at Te Papa and has highlighted visitors’ positive and negative reactions to the museum presentations and offerings. There were four main features that impacted on the participants’ experiences including: first, preference for shared learning experiences of exhibitions (social and physical contexts); second, visitors’ understanding and enjoyment of exhibitions through their own background knowledge and experience (personal context and physical context); third, the infotainment/edutainment experience; and finally, the social and pastime experience and enjoyment of the layout, functions and scenic qualities of the café/restaurant (visitor’s interaction with a particular aspects of the physical environment of the museum). Again, these features reflect the role of Te Papa:

- as a place for social educational experiences;
- as a place for interactivity and hands-on experiences;
- as a place to connect with the familiar; and
- as a place to spend time with friends and enjoy the layout, functions and scenic qualities of the café/restaurant.

Yet, the role of Te Papa as a place for interactivity and hands-on experiences did not make the majority of international participants enjoy the “infotainment” or “edutainment” experiences offered by the museum. Unlike domestic respondents’ experiences of interactive exhibitions which will be explored in the next chapter, the reaction of the majority of international respondents was based on the view that the excessive use of interactive technology led to noise and bustle among visitors, detracted from the museum learning experience and turned the exhibition into an entertainment medium instead of an infotainment experience. Overall, this was the most prevalent view among international participants with regard to the infotainment or edutainment experience provided by the museum.

The following chapter explores domestic visitors’ motives and experiences at Te Papa which revealed different roles of the museum. By highlighting the roles of Te Papa from the
domestic visitor’s perspective, the subsequent chapter also points to a number of similarities and differences between domestic and international visitors’ motives and experiences.
Chapter 10
Domestic Participants’ Motives and Experiences at Te Papa

10.1 Introduction

This chapter explores domestic participants’ motivations and experiences at Te Papa. Domestic participants chose to visit the museum during their leisure time expecting to have a particular type of experience. In order to understand the role of the museum in relation to the domestic visitor, this chapter gives insights into the motivations and experiences of visitors at the museum. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section explores visitors’ motivations for visiting the site. The second section examines the different ways in which visitors experienced the museum’s presentations and offerings.

10.1.1 Motives for visiting the museum

The museum is a physical setting that visitors, usually freely, choose to visit. Usually, visitors who decide to go to museum are predominately motivated by the physical context of the museum which includes the artefacts, design, layout, atmosphere and services (Moscardo, 1999). In this section, I will explore why domestic visitors decided to experience the physical context of the museum.

Three main motivations were identified as determining the domestic visitor’s agenda for the visit to Te Papa. The choice to visit the museum was based on the fulfilment of personal agendas and expectations of each visitor. The majority of domestic visitors articulated one, or a combination, of the following three motivations for their visit:

- curiosity and learning;
- social motives;
- secondary motivations: relaxation, break from routine and aesthetic experience.

These different interactions between the visitors’ motives and the physical aspects of the museum reveal the role of the museum in relation to domestic visitors.
Falk and Dierking (2000, p. 116) made it clear that the primary motivation of the curiosity-driven museum visitor is the “the expectation of novelty, the prediction that curiosity will be piqued and satisfied”. A later study, by Falk (2008), found that curiosity-driven visitors expected to see special exhibitions that would capture their attention and stimulate their learning. They came to museums for a specific purpose - to see a show, special exhibition, or particular work of art.

Similar to international participants at Te Papa, domestic visitors’ general responses reflected their educational motives for visiting Te Papa. For example, numerous responses suggested: “We came to find out ...” “I wanted to discover ...” “I never knew that before,” “I’m interested in learning about ...” “I want to learn about ...” “I’d like to know ...” “I want them [children] to learn ...” and “I enjoy the opportunity to examine ...” that the museum was regarded as a consumption space for educational experiences.

Several domestic visitors arrived with curiosity about particular exhibitions for one reason or another, based on something they had seen, heard or read about:

I visited Te Papa hoping to see the Colossal Squid that is being preserved there. Video footage of the squid alongside the vessel was broadcast widely on television news. This raised my interest in the squid, and what was going to happen to it.

It is also common for Te Papa to advertise on televisions and radio stations, and in the entertainment sections of newspapers in order to bring in a wider variety of visitors. Hence, several visitors described the details of a news story or media event about Te Papa’s exhibitions and art galleries. In short, they came to check out a story they read or simply to learn more about what they saw on television: “I came because I read that there was a major show of Rita Angus work coming up at Te Papa”.

Still many other domestic visitors came to use the museum for direct educational purposes. They perceived Te Papa as having substantial educational significance and benefits related to different themes such as scientific/aesthetic/cultural concerns and plant and animal conservation and extinction, as the following quotations attest:

I wanted to examine the giant moa.

We decided to explore the topic [learning about the native trees and plants] in greater detail.
I like native plants, I like to learn what all the good ones are.

By the same token, without exception all museum staff interviewed reflected the views voiced by domestic visitors. For instance, when asked “In your opinion, what do you see the main role of the museum? What other roles does it have? And “Are there any similarities/differences between the needs and interests of tourists and domestic visitors?” their answers were noticeably similar to the domestic visitors’ educational motives:

To them [domestic visitors] it’s a lot more than just a site to visit and spend an afternoon with friends and family, it’s an educational place.

They [domestic visitors] come here and they learn things that they didn’t learn in books. They intend to learn something about culture, about our natural environment, about artists that they might not have known before.

They [domestic visitors] are looking for quite different museum experiences. I think a lot of them seek out a learning experience. They want to know more. They feel, ‘There’s something I want to see, to study, to experience’.

Several adult visitors reported making regular trips to Te Papa with their young children. Some as young as four years old were taken to the museum as frequently as two or three times a month and many adult visitors stated that teaching their children and interacting with them were important motives for their visits. This lends support to Falk & Dierking (2000, p. 72) discussion that the majority of people visit museums “to learn more about something – occasionally something in particular” and that “education represents a category of reasons related to the aesthetic, informational, or cultural content of the museum”. The responses below reveal the fact that the motive for the visit was mainly centred on facilitating the experience of the children in their accompanying social group (Falk, 2008):

It’s important for them [children] to learn about the environment. They should learn now. That’s what the museum is for, isn’t? A teaching tool? I also want them to learn something, that they will see some things that will help them in school and generally in life.

I try to find exhibitions that fit my child individual learning styles. He likes the Bush City area. I always tell him the names of the plants and we learn about them together ...

We came to the museum because I want my kids to see the native bush exhibition. It helps them to see things the way they once were. All they know are city buildings and the traffic and stuff.
Even adult visitors unaccompanied by children often expressed an interest in acquiring new insight or gaining additional knowledge or information about different exhibitions such as exhibitions about New Zealand's plants and extinct birds. Here, the visitor’s motive led him to choose particular exhibit/topic that would satisfy his interest:

*I thought here’s a good place to learn about the giant moa. I enjoy the opportunity to examine it. I love exhibits like this one. It gives me the chance to see out of the ordinary things.*

Other domestic participants – like international participants who wanted to learn about particular exhibitions such as Maori and Polynesian cultures - came to the museum seeking to learn about particular cultural and scientific concerns. These visitors appeared to be more specific in their reasons for visiting the museum. In other words, they were motivated by a desire to satisfy a particular content-related purpose. They have a clear knowledge of what their interests are and they visit only the exhibitions related to their particular interest:

*I came purely because I wanted to learn a few things and really have learnt quite a few things about the dinosaurs. They’re [dinosaurs] a great source for the study of fossils and geological change.*

*I’m interested in learning about the different types of flax plants that Maori women have used for generations.*

*We wanted to spend several hours in the Blood Earth Exhibition learning about the changing landscape of New Zealand.*

These visitors’ desires for satisfying a special content-related objective fit Moscardo's (1996) mindfulness model that describes mindful museum visitors as those with high learning motive and who are interested in specific topics.

Education as a motive for visiting Te Papa confirmed some previous observations made by Falk and Dierking (2000, 2002) and Frankel (2001). Frankel (2001, p. 164) described the American present day museums as organisations “involved in providing free-choice education experiences”. Thus, one may argue that Te Papa is more likely to be associated with informal, voluntary experiences where visitors engage in free-choice learning, for example deciding what to pay heed to or to choosing what to look at in the museum and indeed what to learn.

**10.1.1.2 Social motives**

Some domestic respondents mentioned that coming to Te Papa was a family habit. They viewed visiting the physical context of the museum as a positive way for families to spend quality time together. Interviewees in the study found that visiting the site was “a tradition,”
“a treat” or “a special occasion” for them and their children. There was also a consensus among adult visitors that their children “love the museum” and that a visit to Te Papa was a family-oriented social activity. More significantly, like international participants at Te Papa, there was strong evidence among many domestic respondents that a positive synergy existed between social and learning/educational aspects:

Visiting the museum is a habit with us. We come to Wellington every year. We try to spend at least half a day at Te Papa walking through the exhibits, taking photos and learning new things about art and European immigrants.

My parents like to do things with the family, so we were spending the week with them so we sort of decided this week to visit Te Papa. My two boys also are out of school and my husband is travelling so we thought it would be a good time to go and share fun and learning.

In addition to visiting museums as a social activity, Falk and Dierking (1992) argue that some visitors:

[A]ssociate museum visits with their childhoods because their parents took them to museums when they were children. As they became adolescents and young adults, they focus more on athletic or club event. But when they became parents, they returned to the museums for the benefit of their children (p. 21).

In her study of visitors’ differing motivations for visiting Toledo Art Museum in the United States, Marilyn Hood (1981) found that childhood experiences in museums became part of the enjoyment of museum visits later in life. She (1981) also found that this class of visitors took on the role of teachers during the museum visit.

Along these lines, it was common to find a few domestic visitors in Te Papa had developed a social habit of museum visitation at a young age and now as parents they made monthly or annual museum visits with their own children, supporting Falk and Dierking’s (2000, p. 74) assertion that “people who have gone to museums in the past are most likely to go in the future”. These respondents were socialised into museum use and were quite accustomed to its ritual process. Again, museum visiting tended to be a social activity, combining elements of enjoying the company of family and learning:

I remember visiting Otago museum when I was a child, taken there by my father once a month and now I am taking my children to Te Papa [and] we never tire of looking at the exhibitions. We have our favourites and we always learn so much while going through the exhibitions.
My children love the museum. We visit Te Papa so often. It's a habit I picked up from my parents. I remember them taking me around museums and heritage sites and they had to drag me away at the end of our visit. Now I go to museums with my wife and children. I don’t expect my children to take in the entire museum, but they do go with me to museums and we try to find exhibitions that are interesting for them. For example, Te Papa usually brings in interesting art exhibitions and when we’re looking at paintings I try to engage the kids and give them the benefits of art and learning about famous New Zealand artists. One trick I use is to go to the museum gift shop and buy some postcards of the artworks then ask the kids to match them up once inside. Mostly, though, I’m careful to respect their limits and take a break or leave when they get bored.

In summary, the range of responses used in this category strongly indicates that museum visiting provides an opportunity for social activity but also for learning experience. Participants perceived the physical aspects of the museum as a positive way for them to spend quality time together and learn something about the exhibitions.

10.1.1.3 Secondary motivations: relaxation, break from routine and aesthetic experiences

Some domestic participants sought to attain a sense of relaxation and calmness in the museum. They reported that the need to escape from stress, mental effort and the increased pace of life and work was their main motive for the visit. Research by Falk (2009), Hood (1993), and Packer (2008) also indicates that some visitors may be increasingly seeking leisure in museums that is enjoyable, fun and relaxing as an antidote to increased work pressure and the increased pace of modern society:

Because it [visiting Te Papa] is a complete getaway. It [the visit] gives me a chance to take a break from my daily life and clear my head of stress.

I came today because I needed time alone, away from work to get my head back on. Twenty minutes out here is better than a one-hour lunch break at work. When you're in the clinic it's easy to get caught up in that whole sick vibe. When you come out here it's life. You feel relieved from all the medical aspects.

Visitors’ responses provide further evidence for the interaction between the physical context and personal agendas which in turn sheds more light on the role of Te Papa.

There was also feeling articulated by a small minority of domestic visitors that Te Papa offered a personally sensational experience that went beyond simple enjoyment. The main motive of this type of visitors was to enhance their understanding and appreciation of New Zealand’s diverse and rich artistic heritage. They were interested in acquiring greater insight.
into New Zealand’s art and they tended to focus on style and technique. They enjoyed the aesthetic qualities provided and were taken by individual works of art in the Art of the Nation exhibition:

I wanted to check out a few artworks by Toss Woollaston. He was one of the most important New Zealand painters of the twentieth century I've always been attracted to his [Toss Woollaston] artworks. He is my favourite artist [and] when I look at his paintings, I can read into his work – his grey rivers and mountains reveal the drama of the West Coast ... .

I came to see some artworks by Goldie and Archibald Nicoll. They show great feel for capturing emotions ... their portraits make me feel like I can reach out and touch the person. They capture life.

One may describe this type of visitor as “inspiration/sensation seekers,” to borrow from Davies and Prentice (1995, p. 493) who searched for “sensual and emotional excitement”:

I always enjoy seeing McCahon paintings. Every time I visit I discover different aspects of his art -- different symbols. His work is a bit soul-searching and visually stimulating for me because his paintings are composed with an array of beautiful colours.

A museum staff member confirmed that the museum set up different exhibitions so “visitors can have personally rewarding encounters with visual objects”. Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1991, p. 12) point out that “the aesthetic experience provides visceral, holistic and greatly rewarding sensations that are absent from purely cognitive activities”:

I come to Te Papa because I love the stimulation I get each time I visit the Art of the Nation exhibition. It has such unique art. If you take a look at the paintings there, you will see that a lot of them are abstract and many people have trouble understanding and appreciating this type of art. But I like it because it tells a story and makes me think deeply and wonder.

The preceding discussion examined the reasons the domestic participants gave for visiting Te Papa. For the most part, their experience of the museum was motivated by curiosity and learning motives, social motives and relaxation. A few visitors also visited the museum seeking aesthetic experiences. In light of the previous discussion, the following section explores the kind of experiences domestic participants had at Te Papa.
10.1.2 Domestic visitors’ experiences of the museum

The interactions between the personal and physical contexts and between the physical and social contexts of the museum reveal the role of Te Papa in relation to domestic participants. Hence the museum is:

- a place for social learning experiences;
- a place for seeing the familiar and remembering historical and personal events; and
- A place to enjoy the different aspects of the museum environment.

These experiences clearly follow out of the motivations mentioned in the previous section.

10.1.2.1 As a place for social learning experiences

Similar to international participants at Te Papa, being able to discuss and share information was an important dimension to the experience for many domestic participants. Social interaction offered several visitors the opportunity to learn in the museum, and by, inference, enjoying different exhibitions. Participants in company enjoyed the opportunity to share and discuss ideas, and were able to support and enhance each other’s learning, a phenomenon that has been widely studied by museum scholars (Falk & Dierking, 2000; Frankel, 2001; Gunther, 1999; Moscardo, 1991, 1992; Moussouri, 1997). Many examples of this social learning were expressed:

I really enjoyed learning and talking about a lot of different exhibitions with Mark, my husband. When we go to the museum it’s something that we want to know. So we share information and learn about what is in there, history, different objects, and it’s a learning process. We are very curious people; we like to know why things are like they are.

My husband and I go to museums on a fairly regular basis. I love museums in general and he tolerates them. I’m a history person and he is interested in art and social history. Today, we just sort of wandered through and looked at things ourselves. We were quite interested in the Golden Days exhibition. We sat down and watched the film. And when we went for lunch we talked a lot about the exhibition and I learned a few more things ... The extraordinary thing about visiting Te Papa isn’t the huge variety of interactive exhibits and the objects shown in a huge variety of venues. It’s the social experience. It invites us to talk about objects and art with museum staff, security guards, friends, people old and young. People crowded around artworks, pointing things out, exclaiming about their preferences, sharing their discoveries. Not all the art was good, but it all spurred conversation.
It’s kind of our hobby to bushwalk and stuff, and we drive a little bit more knowledge. We like to exchange information and learn about native trees and shrubs. Taking a short bush walk through the native bush is always a lot more fun when you are with someone else to share the experience with and to talk over what you’re seeing.

Visiting Te Papa was also commonly viewed as an opportunity for parents and young children to interact, read together, learn together, play and develop skills:

*My son is only four years old and these are the two parts [Our Space exhibition and Discovery Centres] of the museum he really enjoys. We come at least once a month. It’s a worthwhile family outing. We usually have a great time in the Discovery Centres trying to spot the Big Baby and explore the New Zealand environment in the Story Place section. It’s really a great place for kids and families to play and learn together.*

It’s [visiting Te Papa] an interesting experience to him [her son]. He likes seeing different exhibitions ... We discussed concepts that are more closely linked to specific disciplines like history and science. I asked questions to encourage him to think and describe what was happening at the exhibits. I would come back again because over all, Te Papa is still a good learning experience and my kid had a lot of good memories the last seven times I’ve visited.

A number of parents aimed at influencing their children’s learning experience and saw themselves as guides of their children’s educational experience. They saw the museum as a social educational place where their children will be the beneficiary:

*When we come to the museum we try to teach her stuff. She’s at the stage where I’m just trying to get her to learn the colours and numbers and ABC’s and that kind of stuff. I wanted her to interact with the pictures and pick a few things, not many things because she’s so young, just focus on a couple of things that we could talk about later.*

*I would probably be the one to guide them to make a picture [at the Discovery Centres] whereas, you know, maybe somebody would say let them interpret their own or let them just scatter them and make their own picture, whereas I’m like “Does this look like a circle or does that look like a rectangle? Yeah, I like to guide them and explain things.*

*We want to teach them a lot and relate a lot of the things that we see and do ... We like to come to the museum and use a lot of interactive things and they learn. You don’t think that they learn but they do. If they see certain objects or if they see something on the screen, we say ‘Can you describe it to us?’ And they say ‘Yes’ and they try to express their thoughts using their imaginations.*

This guiding behaviour above matched some of the observations made inside the *Our Space* and the *Awesome Forces* exhibitions. Family groups were observed to exchange information,
Parents and their two sons approach the free standing exhibit Wall. The two sons are several steps ahead of their parents. The father stops and reads the instruction aloud while each son holds a laser pointer. The father leans over one of his sons, puts his hand over the son’s hand, and moves his son’s hand and the pointer up and down to select an image. The father [the guide] tells his son, Watch the stick! Watch the stick!” while the pointer is moved up and down. Then the father and the mother stand back and watch the son moving the pointer by himself to select an image. The parents ask their son to name the image on the screen and the boy says “Sea and big shark”. The mother says “good boy” (Our Space exhibition).

A mother approaches a video screen that is describing New Zealand natural forces. She points and directs her daughter’s attention to the images on the screen. The mother points and says ‘Know what this is?’ The daughter looks carefully and then replies, ‘That’s a dinosaur’. The mother smiles and concurs with her daughter and explained that, ‘There used to be dinosaurs here. I know! And in Europe and in Africa’ (The Awesome Forces exhibition).

Father asking the child: Where do extinct animals go?

Child: They don’t go anywhere dad. They just die.

Father: How do they die?

Child: Humans kill them for food and to make clothes (The Awesome Forces exhibition).

This teaching behaviour is consistent with previous studies regarding the behaviour of family groups in museums (Diamond, 1986; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Gunther, 2001). Oftentimes, observing parents trying to structure their children’s visit is a common phenomenon in museums. Falk & Dierking, (1992, p. 111) found that “often the parents direct the visit asking questions of children and selecting the exhibits to be viewed”.

We can observe once again the interplay of the physical context (the exhibitions) and domestic visitors’ social educational experiences. Again, this kind of relationship did not produce a narrow definition of the role of the museum such as its equation with learning or
education, the achievement of purely cognitive goals. The museum can also be a site that offers visitors a rich social experience where learning of the exhibitions may be an outcome.

The impact of the physical context is further discussed in the next section.

**10.1.2.2 A place for seeing the familiar and remembering historical and personal events**

Museum visitors interact with exhibitions and objects in different ways, interpreting information from their own previous experiences, knowledge and beliefs (Leonie & Johnston, 2007; Noussia, 1998). Many domestic participants (akin to few international participants in chapter 9) used their personal context to make the connection between themselves and different exhibitions. For some respondents, being attracted by familiar exhibitions and being able to see what they had previously read in books or heard about was an important aspect of their museum experience:

*I don’t think there’s any exhibition that I didn’t have something that I recognised, it’s not about viewing new exhibitions, it’s about viewing exhibitions that I can recognise and relate to.*

*I usually head for specific exhibitions that I am familiar with and then zip through the other stuff that’s not holding my interest ... I think seeing objects that I may have read in books or studied in school is what I usually look for in the museum. It was good to actually see the artefacts in real life and go oh yeah I remember that particular thing, I’ve read about it before.*

*What was really interesting for me was the Art of the Nation exhibition. It gave me the chance to build upon my previous experience with different forms of art and add a new dimension of feelings and thoughts.*

Reminiscence also seemed to be quite important among many participants. Different exhibitions prompted their old memories. They provided opportunities for recollections and stimulated remembering. Seeing particular exhibitions gave them the chance to relive past experiences. This seemed to be particularly the case with the *Golden Days exhibition*:

*I enjoyed the memorabilia inside the Golden Days exhibition. It’s nice that some of the original things, furniture and stuff, are here. The bits and pieces remind me of my grandfather’s house. They bring childhood memories back. I remember his clock and cuckoo clock. Both clocks mean a lot to me. It’s like walk down memory lane.*

*The multimedia material in the exhibition [Golden Days] made me think about the older days. It took me back there, as a child. I mean I can remember the Royal visit by the Queen in 1953 and the Wahine sinking. I lived through that.*
What is meaningful in these particular examples is that a special exhibition let participants carry their memories back to those memorable childhood days. The exhibition presents an opportunity to generate an emotional response that may result in mindful visitors who enjoy knowledge and show greater interest in exploring more about a theme or place (Moscardo, 1999). Chia (2007) and Falk and Dierking (2009; 1992) laid great stress on the fact that frequently museum staff have taken no notice of the fact that one of the important roles of the museum is to allow visitors to connect with the exhibitions and create their own experiences.

The ability of items to stir memories was also present in the art work:

I stayed a long time there and looked at particular artworks. I’ve seen some of them in Dunedin Public Art Gallery but Te Papa exhibition really stirred me up. Many of the places she [Rita Angus] painted are very familiar, which helps. I remember going to the Coffee Pot and Wellington National Art gallery as a teenager in the 60s. I also remember well the Wellington art scene in the 60s and spent many hours restlessly roaming the National Art Gallery as a teenager.

Familiar exhibits also tend to invoke visitors to recreate historical events and compare them with the present:

I like the separate Marae area. It reminds me with the meetings we used to have twenty years ago. The meetings back then were so easy and we got things done. It saddens me to know that not many families turn up to the meetings nowadays. They are busy playing sports, or work commitments but mostly just can't be bothered. They should make concerted efforts to play their part in keeping the Marae alive for future generations.

For those who had not experienced historical events firsthand, visiting Te Papa was more about imagining the past:

It [The Earthquake House] was interesting. I can imagine all the stories my parents told me. They can remember when that bad Napier earthquake hit. I didn’t experience the earthquake firsthand but when I experienced Te Papa’s earthquake house rattling and shaking I visualised my parents’ house rocking and the ground opening up wide cracks. That was like I was there . . .

I always find the material on the Maori exhibitions fascinating. I look through the exhibitions and try to imagine what life was like for Maori before the coming of the Europeans, and compare the welfare of Maori people then with the way in which they live now, the suggestion that as a people they would have been better off had they been left to themselves is still debatable.
These data suggest that objects and exhibitions in museums resemble something that visitors have been familiar with or used before, and through recollections and reconstruction of events, the objects and exhibitions very often invite and stimulate visitors’ memories. Thus the museum is not only a place for pure learning and contemplation but a site for memory and reminiscence.

Equally, several museum staff lend empirical weight to the assertion that the museum is a site of connection and seeing the familiar and remembering historical and personal events:

*Some of them [domestic visitors] would connect with something specific ... the power of the museum experience comes from connecting to a particular person from history which gives local visitors a personal connection to a historic event.*

*Most importantly, being animated as they [domestic visitors] remember vividly an experience or a story that is related to an object or artwork.*

*In these exhibits [Passports, Golden Days and the Scots in New Zealand] there is something that really touches them [domestic visitors] or moves them. The exhibits make them feel at home because they remember the stories of their grandparents and great-grandparents.*

Moreover, two museum curators mentioned that particular exhibitions such as *Golden Days, Art of the Nation, The Marae, and Passports* were very popular among domestic patrons especially “the older generation who already know something about the events and incidents”. They noted that these exhibitions simply “add to” or “enrich” what they already knew. Thus, it could be suggested that overall Te Papa produced a feeling of connection, “a sense of belonging” (Lonetree & Cobb-Greetham, 2008, p. xxix) and a reassuring “sense of place” (Hall, 2005, p. 43) where domestic visitors felt a particular attachment to an exhibit with their pre-existing local knowledge and prior experiences. This confirms Lonetree & Cobb-Greetham’s (2008) argument that museums are not only places for learning; they are sites to create connection and facilitate a deeper level of attachment with the exhibitions.

In addition, the above discussion may suggest that the museum has been made through what one may call a collection of components, that is the set of messages, symbols, historical and cultural practices and sometimes myths, where the museum is shaped and identified by common signs, a sharing of a common natural history, heritage, art and way of life. This set of components increase the likelihood of reinforcing or reflecting the visitor’s personal context. This reinforcement occurred through the communication of shared information, such
as experiences and memories, shaped by the socio-cultural milieu of the domestic visitor and the museum itself.

10.1.2.3 As a place to enjoy the layout of Te Papa, the interactive technology, the aesthetic atmosphere, and the scenic qualities of the museum restaurant

Domestic respondents’ experience of Te Papa was closely linked to the setting characteristics or the physical context. Embedded in the interaction between the visitor and the physical context of the museum was a set of major experiences such as infotainment, aesthetic, and relaxation. Many of the respondents praised Te Papa for its structure and the way in which its exhibitions was arranged and displayed, the modern interactive technology, the aesthetic atmosphere and mood its exhibitions induced and the calm and serenity of the café/restaurant.

The museum environment and its ambience were important elements of domestic participants’ experiences. Several participants offered positive comments about the structure and arrangement of Te Papa, and specially identified elements such as spatial layout, space and lighting:

_I like the layout of the museum very much. I like the number of exhibitions per area. It’s not too concentrated and that makes it very relaxing to walk through. I can walk around and feel like I’m seeing everything. They don’t overload you … I especially like the fourth floor when you walk up there it’s just so open and it just feels really nice, like the actual space. It’s so open, it doesn’t feel like there is a floor per se, you know what I mean, like it’s just kind of gradations of information …_

_I thoroughly enjoyed my experience at Te Papa. It’s such an amazing beautiful building. It’s a spacious museum which makes it look less crowded. You can wander at your own space without disturbing other visitors. I liked how it’s set up in different sections, but you don’t feel like you are in a confined space. It seemed to feel like you are in a big open space … You just kind of walk in and you walk right into an exhibition and then you walk upstairs and you have your exhibitions and everything kind of branches off and kind of goes smoothly from one area into another. And I enjoyed that … it was nice and when you walk in it’s so simple. There is just a globe there, the fountain at ground level through the main entrance. It’s very simple, like it’s not too overbearing. It doesn’t intimidate you with anything at first … The curators also have done a great job at displaying a variety from their collections without overwhelming you, and they have some wonderful artefacts on display._

The building itself was unlike anything some of the participants encountered in their daily lives. One participant reported that “it is a really nice building … very impressive … I’d come
from a central Auckland suburb which was little houses on gardens … it all seemed terribly city to me”. Another participant stated that:

*I prefer to go to Te Papa because it’s not like the rush you see in the shopping malls or anything, like too much energy in a contained space. But in Te Papa it is quite big building that yes, there is so much information, but there is also space to get away from that information if you need a break, or if you just need to find out where you want to go next.*

Interestingly, a few of the participants also, unprompted, compared Te Papa’s structure to other museums they visited in their adult travels. These commentaries were useful for the further light they shed on participants’ impressions of their visits to Te Papa and their interactions with the museum physical context. These interactions also continue to shed some light on the museum’s other roles as a place to enjoy the layout and atmosphere of the building. Two participants commented that:

*It’s [Te Papa] not the typical British museum experience. Te Papa has a different atmosphere and I can’t think of any other museums that are particularly similar. When you go inside Te Papa, you don’t just see objects, but what you’re seeing the technology, the building, the environment, which you don’t see at other museums. You just don’t come in here to learn and view artefacts but you come to enjoy the atmosphere and experience the architecture.*

*I’m a museum-goer and I’ve been to quite a few in Europe but my experience at Te Papa is quite different from my experience in Europe. Te Papa is more modern and has impressive exterior and very modern interior. It’s certainly not a stuffy and silent tomb of learning with scowling security guards and boring tour guides. … I find often at times with museums in Europe there is so much information cramped into a tiny physical space that I actually start to feel like dizzy and just ‘ah, I want to get out of here!’ Almost like a crowded mall or something. And there is so much to read and I feel that I am forced to learn. In Te Papa it’s not all about learning and reading and the many hands on and interactive displays. For me personally, I like to experience the environment. For example, I enjoyed the feeling at the Sculpture Terrace exhibition on the top floor of Te Papa. It was a peaceful setting to relax, like it was out of the way and it wasn’t really hectic and busy. If you are just standing in the middle of the terrace it seems really calm and you enjoy the stunning views of the harbour.*

In fact, unlike international participants at Te Papa, the multi-media presentations did not draw any negative comments from domestic participants. The reason behind this is unclear, but it may be due to the fact that the majority of domestic respondents were repeat visitors and
had experienced the content of the exhibitions before. Another possibility is that participants could relate to the interactive exhibit since they have the cultural baggage or knowledge.

When participants were asked what made the experience attractive or enjoyable, they elaborated on the interactive experience. The large number of positive responses from domestic visitors is perhaps all the more surprising, given that these participants had not acknowledged that their motives for visiting Te Papa was for edutainment or infotainment experiences, which this type of technology is designed to encourage (Gore, 2002). Still, the general impression conveyed in their remarks about the interactive exhibits shows that the infotainment experience reinforced the importance of the physical context as an integral part of the museum experience, from the visitors’ perspective. Participants mentioned the impact of the interactivity which mainly included two important aspects; the multiple sense experiences in exhibits and the complementary relationship between entertainment and learning:

*When you enter the building there’s interactive displays that catch your eye - you sort of drawn around the exhibitions and it makes it interesting. There are things that you can hear, touch and feel. It’s very good ... what I found most enjoyable though was that you learn and have a good fun at the same time. I had good fun with the Our Space rides and it was a good informative introduction to New Zealand’s territory. The rides are not all about fun, they open you up also to learning a little bit more.*

*I like Te Papa because it’s quite a visual place. As you walk around you encounter interactive exhibits with some new twists. I guess that’s what attracts me to the museum ... We just walked around a bit, the new interactive exhibit was there, just press the button and away you go-and we spent an hour and half there, which we didn’t plan on doing ... this museum is really aiming for the new age of visitors like us who are more interested in like touching and learning and actually being involved, which is good. For example, when I walk into an exhibit, like the ‘Blood, Earth and Fire’, and the red lava spewing and you can hear the sounds of things erupting, it just really (paused) makes me more aware of what they are trying to get me to understand. It just really adds to the experience. It’s one thing to read about something in books but to be given the chance to try to comprehend what it really sounded like, felt like, smelled like for me as a person, I don’t know if everyone would feel the same way, (paused) but once you are trying to experience it firsthand, and even though it’s a simulation, it may open up a new way of thinking about the lava rocks.*

*You know this will not be a boring visit when the first thing you see is the interactive technology. It’s always exciting when we start the visit with the interactive bits. We like touching and handling objects and we actually experienced different things that make learning fun. Definitely, with all the interactive stuff, my child was able to press the button and learn about it,*
instead of being in a classroom and learning about it. Like if you come here on a school visit instead of being in a classroom and learning about things, you can come and actually see and interact with what you are learning about.

Another participant appreciated the way the interactive exhibits had been placed to create a visual impression and provide an edutainment experience:

*The numerous interactive and hands on exhibits scattered around the museum add a distinct flavour in the environment. You have the wall of postcards, the high rides and the earthquake house. You can envision that sort of stuff, it’s fascinating. You stand inside a house and feel what it is like to experience a small earthquake. Then you go to another section and you touch the objects and watch how the Maori people lived a hundred years ago and how hard it was to do the daily cleaning and cooking. Yeah, I like that set up, it doesn’t make the visit boring. It provides a fun way for me to learn and broaden my understanding of the social history of Maori.*

Besides the interactive exhibitions, the physical context created an aesthetic atmosphere and this was most notable in the art exhibitions. Nearly all of the respondents who attended *Rita Angus* and the *Toi Te Papa Art of the Nation* exhibitions saw the exhibits as an open, spacious and comfortable area in which to enjoy the aesthetic qualities offered. They enjoyed the encounter with works of art and appreciated the way in which the paintings were set up and presented and the way the exhibitions stimulated reflection and personal introspection:

*[Toi Te Papa Art of the Nation exhibition]* I really was surprised by these paintings. I had no idea that things were set up that way and I loved it. It gives me a better sense of the feeling of the art than having things set out by themselves. And it felt good just to see modern artists working in a traditional theme and that sometimes change my experience of art.

*[Toi Te Papa Art of the Nation exhibition]* Mixing European art works with Maori paintings sets a great mood. It’s so stimulating to be in this quiet space with these great things as your background. I like to experience art while I am visiting Te Papa. I usually perceive my experience as aesthetic experience. There is always something to appreciate if you just take the time to look deeply at these paintings. I enjoy the elegance and grace in the Maori paintings especially the colours in terms of display and visual effect ...

*[Rita Angus exhibition]* I think that when I come in the gallery, it poses all kinds of thought-provoking questions. I adore her art, always have. It was amazing to walk through the gallery seeing her pictures in each stage of her life, feels hard to describe it right now though. Except to say she painted with an honest and idealist take that inspired me to start seeing the world around me a bit differently.
It is important here to note that domestic visitors’ comments on the exhibit’s organisation and the personal introspection, aesthetic ambience and mood it induced were further strengthened by visitor observations. Observational data identified three major types of visitors at the *Rita Angus* exhibition. The first type was the hopping visitors who were interested in the artworks and were observed moving from one room or section to another, but usually stopped to examine specific works of art for a lengthy period of time. They had a long concentration span and engaged in more viewing than any other visitor grouping.

It is the hopping visitors that constituted the majority of the exhibition visitors. The second type was the steady visitors who were also interested in the artworks and moved through the exhibit more systematically and followed the exact sequence of exhibit elements intended by the curators. Accordingly, they tracked the unfolding narrative of *Rita Angus*. What was most noticeable about this type of visitor was that there was an overwhelming tendency for them to engage in some form of prolonged viewing of art works at almost every stop in their tour.

The last type of visitors was the *sightseers* who were observed moving from one space to another in what appeared to be a totally haphazard manner. Usually, they stayed in the exhibition for a very short period of time and proceeded through the exhibit at rapid pace without much attention given to works of art. They mainly engaged in conversation with their companions and less label reading. By cross-checking the data sources, one found that in general domestic participants squarely fitted either the hopping or steady pattern.

Finally, some domestic respondents referred to the significance of the museum’s café/restaurant as a place to get away from the pressure of life and work. They explained how the scenic qualities of the café/restaurant had a relaxing effect:

> Well, I would have to say it’s primary just because it’s [the Ground Floor Restaurant] such a beautiful place and I find that going there helps me unwind. It’s not that my job is so terribly more stressful than anyone else’s, but life today, you know, is quite stressful. So I find going to the café quite relaxing. I sit there and watch the sunlight outside falling in little spots through the leaves of the trees and just soaking in the silence.

> My current job is quite stressful so I come to the café to be refreshed. I take my delicious cup of coffee outdoors and enjoy the surrounding natural environment. Just sitting there for twenty or thirty minutes makes me feel less stressed, and more calm.

These visitors referred to the value of the museum café/restaurant in terms of having attained a sense of relaxation, peace and tranquillity, thus providing strong evidence for the
importance of the physical environment to the quality of the visitor experience. Museum research also reveals that for some visitors the museum café/restaurant, gift shop and recreational experience is important or more important than the exhibitions and educational experiences (Falk & Dierking, 1992; Packer, 2008).

10.2 Summary

The previous sections highlighted domestic visitors’ different reactions to Te Papa’s presentations and offerings. The dynamic aspects of the physical context such as, the structure of the museum; its exhibitions; and its café/restaurant, influenced the overall experience of the visitor. The physical context was embedded in the personal and social contexts.

The nexus between the physical and personal contexts and the physical and social contexts reveals different roles of the museum in relation to domestic participants. This can be broadly recognised and conceptualised as: a place for social educational experiences; a place for seeing the familiar and remembering historical and personal events; a place to enjoy the layout, functions and scenic qualities of the café/restaurant; a place for interactivity and hands-on experiences; and a place of aesthetic experience. Aside from exploring the roles of Te Papa from the domestic visitor’s perspective, the chapter also referred to a number of similarities and differences between domestic and international visitors’ motives and experiences at Te Papa.

The next chapter will merge the previous discussion of the relationship between the physical and personal contexts and the physical and social contexts with the greater theoretical framework. In doing so, I will draw out the key threads that reveal the role of traditional and modern museums from the visitors’ viewpoint. Apart from highlighting the similarities between the roles of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums from the visitors’ perspective, I will also underscore the differences/similarities between domestic and international visitors’ motives and experiences at each site.
Chapter 11
Discussion of Findings with Framework

11.1 Introduction

The heart of the museum is its visitors (Kelman, 1995). Logically then, this thesis examined visitors’ motives and experiences at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museum in order to explore the different roles of the traditional and modern museums. As noted earlier in the thesis, the nexus between the physical and personal contexts and the physical and social contexts revealed different roles of the museum in relation to different visitors. It is the physical context that provides many of the personal and social experiences (Moscardo, 1999). Without physical points of reference the museum visitor experience would be impossible (Dierking, 2005). Visitor’s physical experience attests to the view that visitors’ personal and social experiences occur in an environment, namely the physical context of the site; not merely in it but because of it, through interaction with it (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999). This interaction provided answers about the role of the museum and simultaneously revealed the similarities and differences between different types of museum visitors.

In this chapter, I will highlight the main motives and experiences that stood out as being particularly important across both museums. I will also identify the key similarities and differences between domestic and international visitors’ motives and experiences at each museum. These motives and experiences will be referred to constantly during the discussion of the interplay between the personal and physical contexts and between the social and physical contexts. Generally, the interaction between these contexts in this chapter points to a number of important conclusions: the uncertainty about how to define modern and traditional museum; there are more similarities than differences between the roles of the traditional and modern museums; the roles of modern and traditional museums accrue from their relationships to the visitors; and that the glaring difference between international and domestic visitors was clearly related to their prior knowledge (personal context) of the museum presentations and offerings. This personal context or personal connectivity can be bound by an emphasis on the phenomenon of nostalgia. Thus this chapter will also draw attention to the nostalgic, personal aspects of the museum experience. These conclusions are informed directly by the background theoretical work of chapter Four.
11.2 Motives and Experiences

The other roles of traditional and modern museums carried through visitors’ motives and experiences and remained at the heart of this thesis. What draws people to a museum is often referred to in visitor studies literature as the “grab” (Schauble et al., 2002, p. 427) or “attracting power” (Falk, 2007, p. 4), something about the site that attracts visitors to want to attend to it. What is the grab of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums? Is it wanting to learn something, for example, about New Zealand heritage or ancient Egyptian history? Is it a place to spend quality time with friends and relatives? Is it a site to escape from the daily routine?

International and domestic participants articulated a mixture of attractive attributes for visiting both sites:

- seeing the familiar and remembering historical and personal events;
- curiosity and learning motives;
- social motives: a desire to interact with a group and its members;
- recreation and pastime experiences;
- relaxation and escape from routine;
- a desire for amusement;
- external/practical motives such as weather conditions, time availability before they visited, proximity to the museum, crowd conditions and free admission;
- seeking aesthetic experiences; and
- self-satisfaction and prestige/status motive.

Five of these motives stood out as being particularly decisive across both museums: (1) seeing the familiar and remembering historical and personal events; (2) curiosity and learning motives; (3) social motives; (4) recreation and pastime experiences; and (5) relaxation and escape from routine. These main motives drove the museum visitor's experiences. For instance, visitors’ connection with the familiar and reinforcement of their prior knowledge; visitors’ remembrance of historical and personal events; social learning experiences; and the aesthetic, social, restorative, recreational and pastime experiences surfaced as focal factors in the visitor experience at both museums.
These experiences above show that The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums have a number of similar characteristics pertaining to visitors’ motives and experiences:

- a setting for learning more about the exhibitions and seeing the familiar and remembering or evoking historical and personal events;
- a site for aesthetic experience;
- a site for visitors to rest, relax and escape from the pressures of work and everyday life;
- a site for social learning experiences; and
- a site for recreational experiences and socialisation with family and friends.

The following sections of the discussion chapter will continue to support my argument that the common experiential themes which arose from both sites reveal more similarities than differences between the roles of the two institutions. While doing so, I will also draw attention to the main differences/similarities between domestic and international visitors’ motives and experiences at each museum, but first, the similarities between the two sites invite us to redefine the roles of traditional and modern museums.

### 11.3 An invitation for Redefinition: Understanding the Role of Traditional and Modern Museums Today through Visitors’ Motives and Experiences

Just as this study has explored the role of the museum in relation to visitors’ motives and experiences, it is imperative to redefine how we think about the role of traditional and modern museums. There is evidence to contradict the simple assumption that there are many and clear differences between the roles of modern and traditional museums. The value of redefining the function of traditional and modern museums through visitors’ motives and experiences is that it precludes treating each type of museum as a separate category, somewhat isolated from each other. The examination of visitors’ motives and experiences in relation to traditional and modern museums reveals several similarities that would have remained underexposed.

Before I proceed with the discussion of the dichotomy revolving around the functions of traditional and modern museums, it is important to briefly remind the reader of the changing role and nature of traditional museums. Museums as social and cultural institutions have
changed considerably since their establishment during the European Enlightenment. Historically, the museum was a site of higher value and universal truth, a sacred temple representing the newly born ideals of the enlightened person (MacDonald & Alsford, 1995). The goal of the traditional museum was to provide moral and content based education to the middle and upper social classes – from a trustworthy institution to uninformed individuals (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). The focus was on the institution’s intellectual roles such as research, learning and collections, which hinged on the financial support of wealthy individuals and families (MacDonald & Alsford, 1995).

In the present day, most museums are public institutions (Noordegraaf, 2004). They have been affected by dramatic changes in societies, which have meant new accountabilities and responsibilities. In other words, the traditional role of the museum has been changed in order to adapt to the needs of contemporary society, from that of an institution mainly concerned with collection of artefacts and education to one which focuses upon visitors as creators and users of artefacts in their collection (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; MacDonald & Alsford, 1995).

In developed countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States and United Kingdom, their traditional model of museums have been transformed significantly since the early 1960s by embracing forms of commercialisation and digital media and technology (Noordegraaf, 2004). The museum visitor is perceived more and more as a consumer, consuming ideas, activities, commodities, images, and experiences, rather than a visitor who seeks education and learning (Black, 2005; Noordegraaf, 2004).

In developing countries, such as Egypt, the traditional models of museums have also been transformed (though to a lesser extent) by embracing some limited forms of commercialisation. For example, The Egyptian Museum combines its traditional approaches to the display and presentation and its educational value and distinctive ancient objects with the types of commercial services and recreational facilities (for example, the gift shop, restaurant, kiosks, the garden and the post office) found in other modern museums such as Te Papa. Here, the visitor seems to be being perceived as either a consumer or a seeker after knowledge and original objects.

In addition, traditional museums, as the archetypal example of a learning site, have a number of distinguishing characteristics that are true to varying degree of other modern museums:
learning is inspired by the motivations and interests of the visitor (Packer, 2004, 2008);

visitors come alone, in small or family groups of mixed ages, sexes, and subject expertise with very diverse learning styles and pre-existing knowledge (Packer, 2004, 2008);

the setting provide direct experience with real artefacts, people or places (Goulding, 2000; Packer, 2004, 2008);

visitors use outdoor museum space for rest and recreation (Falk & Dierking, 1992; Goulding, 2000);

learning is voluntary (Falk & Dierking, 2000); and

learning is often socially mediated (Falk & Dierking, 2000; Goulding, 2000; Packer, 2004, 2008).

This brings us back to redefine the role of modern and traditional museums today from the visitors’ perspectives. The most pertinent current dichotomy surrounding the role of the museum is in fact a heated debate between those who claim that museums need to change by incorporating infotainment/edutainment experiences and those who defend traditional museum presentations and offerings (Black, 2005; Witcomb, 2003). Driving this is uncertainty about how to define the role of modern and traditional museums: does the main role of the traditional museum revolve around showing the original objects and offering only educational and learning experiences? Does the major role of the modern museum revolve around offering only infotainment, leisure and social learning experiences? The findings suggest that the roles of traditional and modern museums are far more complex than such a black-or-white position will allow. This is because the roles of museums accrue from their different relationships to different types of visitors (Falk, 1988, 2008; Spock, 2006). The role of the museum is more about how the visitor chooses to use the physical context of the museum, based on their personal and social contexts (Kavanagh, 2000; Moscardo, 1999).

Predominantly, traditional museums, such as the Egyptian Museum, are perceived as having substantial learning or educational significance and benefits associated with museum visits. Learning/educational experience and the focus on collections are seen as an important reason for the existence of such museums, and are major components of the experience offered to
visitors (Bennett, 1995; MacDonald, 1996; Moore, 2000a). Conversely, modern museums, such as Te Papa, are regarded as an experiential consumption site for cultural/heritage educational and learning experiences and leisure and engaging activities. They are very different from traditional museums; they tend to cater for visitors who seek leisure, social and infotainment experiences in this consumption scenario. (Black, 2005; Chan, 2009; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Kolter & Kolter, 1998). Yet the findings suggest that even in the absence of infotainment experience in the Egyptian Museum, traditional and modern museums still offer similar experience in relation to different types of visitors – mainly social learning experiences, a sense of connection and reinforcement of past knowledge, memory, socialisation with family and friends, aesthetic, recreational and pastime experiences.

Some museum theorists and staff see the museum as a site that tends to emphasise one kind of experience over the others or enforces a particular kind of experience (for example, either leisure and interactive learning experience or object and didactic experience) (Baligh, 2005; Dalrymple, 1999; Duncan, 1994; Goulding, 2000; Hawass, 2005a, 2006). Although these theorists maintain that the design of the museum presentations and offerings structures the museum visit (mentally because the information given or left out, physically because of the layout of the exhibitions and building), the findings do not support the implicit view of visitors as passive victims who are subjected to specific experiences. The results of this research suggest that visitors are “active agents” who by their physical presence, previous knowledge, motives and behaviour have an active role in redefining the role of traditional and modern museums (Leonie & Johnston, 2007, p. 67).

Traditionally the purpose of the Egyptian Museum has lain in its original Pharaonic artefacts; its role to collect, preserve and educate visitors (Baligh, 2005; El-Daly, 2007; El-Saddik, 2005). However, the interplay between the personal and physical contexts and between the social and physical contexts seems to uncover the broadening and extension of the function of the Egyptian Museum through understanding visitors’ motives and experiences. International and domestic visitors did not expect simply object and learning experiences. They had also come to expect a deeper and broader range of experiences from the museum (Kolter & Kolter, 1998). They wanted to connect with something they already knew and experienced, use the exhibitions as aides-memoire, satisfy social aims, and enjoy aesthetic and carefree relaxing recreational experiences. In other words, the Egyptian Museum’s role is further defined by connectivity, recreational, nostalgic, sociable and aesthetic experiences.
For instance, for international participants the Egyptian Museum became not only a space for learning more about the artefacts, but a place of aesthetic experience and showcasing ancient jewellery of King Tutankhamen and a historical site for remembering historical events. In the meantime, for domestic respondents the Egyptian Museum space became a place for social, restorative, recreational and pastime experiences, and a site for remembering personal and historical events related to modern Egyptian history. Commonly, traditional museum management emphasises non-commercial and non-recreational aspects of museums such as referring to intrinsic educational, scientific, historical, artistic and authentic values (Black, 2005; Lumley, 1988; MacDonald, 1996). Yet, similar to Te Papa, it has been found that the traditional museum as an experience may include either its original artefacts or all the things that surround them: café/restaurant, shops, decors, or natural environment (Bitner, 1992; Falk & Dierking, 1992). The domestic participants’ experiences of the Egyptian Museum’s restaurant, various kiosks, and the garden suggest an experiential consumption at odds with the notion of the museum as monument and cabinet of curiosities (Bennett, 1995; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Lumley, 1988). The restaurant, kiosks and the garden were welcome alternatives to the object and learning experiences inside the exhibition hall.

The traditional museum, which began with an object experience and educational impulse, can also be perceived as a vehicle for leisure and social experiences (Black, 2005; Caulton, 1998). It can be argued that the traditional museum can combine its educational value and distinctive original objects with the types of services and recreational facilities that different visitor segments expect (Falk & Dierking, 1992). Thomas Krens (as cited in Smith, 2009, p. 86) defined the public museum as “a theme park with four attractions: good architecture, a good permanent collection, prime and secondary temporary exhibitions and amenities such as shops and restaurants”.

Here, one may argue that the notion of selling experiences to customers (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) can be seen to operate in the two museums. The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums charge visitors for different museum experiences, whether educational, restorative, entertainment, social, infotainment or esthetic. The Egyptian museum charges for general entry and have a two-tiered entrance fee (a higher charge for international visitors than for domestic visitors). Several domestic participants at the Egyptian Museum, for example, paid entrance fees to buy social and relaxing experiences in the garden space and café/restaurant rather than goods or commodities. The Egyptian Museum’s international visitors bought educational and memorable experiences. Equally, while Te Papa offers free entry to all of the
permanent exhibitions, it charges visitors for tours, interactive rides and some short-term exhibitions. Domestic participants at Te Papa, for example, bought infotainment experiences (by using the interactive rides) and relaxing experiences (by utilising the café/restaurant on the ground floor).

Still the notion of selling experiences continues to operate on several other levels within traditional and modern museum spaces. For example, similar to Te Papa, the Egyptian Museum offers commercial activities designed to function as a space for the leisurely experiences. Both institutions reflect a customer driven approach. For example, similar to Te Papa, in the Egyptian Museum, visitors find different functions - gift shops, post office, restaurants, and stalls and kiosks - situated outside the exhibition hall in separate, clearly demarcated spaces. Revenue generation through its gift shops, café/restaurant, post office and stalls gave rise to new roles and different expectations of traditional museums.

Commercial facilities can be seen to be a function of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums management and the museum café/restaurant has been elevated to be an important element of the museum experience and an expected part of the visit by particular types of visitors (for example, domestic visitors at the Egyptian Museum and international visitors at Te Papa) (Falk & Dierking, 1992; Kolter & Kolter, 1998). Thus, the traditional and modern museum spaces and associated experiences were put to good revenue-gathering use. So in this regard, the Egyptian Museum is comparable with many modern museums: there is at the very least an imperative to turn a profit.

This supports the argument that traditional museums are in a state of flux, and flowing in a global community that is changing rapidly (Alexander, 2007; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Lumley, 1988). It is often claimed that traditional museums are overcoming their storehouse image and their conservative, elitist status by combining elements of both traditional and modern museology (Delaney, 1992; Impey & MacGregor, 1985; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Commercial services are being employed to extend the museum experience beyond objects and exhibitions while returning some revenues to the museum (McTavish, 1998).

The findings continue to bridge the supposed chasm between traditional and modern museums. Interest in learning, original objects, and interactive experiences are not sufficient to explore the roles of traditional museums. Egyptian domestic visitors and some of Te Papa’s international participants did not view the learning, seeing the original ancient objects and infotainment experience as important factors influencing their decision to visit the museum.
Research findings imply that the Egyptian Museum’s focus on educational experience and revered objects has been joined also by restorative, memorable, social, and recreational and pastime experiences. For example, domestic visitors used the museum’s garden to recall personal and historical events, socialise, stroll, relax, escape from routine and immerse themselves in novel settings. Some of Te Papa’s international participants saw the museum as an opportunity to socialise with friends at the café/restaurant. This can help break down the public and academic perceptions of the traditional museum as an institution of public education, elitist and family unfriendly space (Bennett, 1995; Bicknell & Farmelo, 1993; Bourdieu, Darbel, & Schnapper, 1990). In this regard, the The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums are similar in that they become accountable to the visitor. Both institutions no longer seek to only emphasise object accountability and impose educational/learning experience or interactive experiences that they deem most appropriate (Dierking, 2005; Doering, 1999).

Hence, one may argue that the Egyptian Museum did not stray from the modern museum’s hybrid script of commercial presentation (Noordegraaf, 2004). It has developed from being cabinets of curiosities and repositories of knowledge to having multifaceted, outward looking role as hosts who attract different types of visitors inside to learn and reinforce their previous knowledge, remember, socialise, wonder, stroll, relax and encounter. Indeed, the changing role of traditional museums has strong support in the literature arguing that a traditional museum may still be a benevolent site of instruction and scholarship, but this is less likely to be its only, or even primary, raison d’être (Dierking, 2005; Doering, 1999; Weil, 1995; Witcomb, 2003). The question thus is: why did a traditional museum, such as the Egyptian Museum, break the traditional mould and offer some commercial activities? What explains this traditional museum anomaly? Two possibilities are that it really was not an anomaly, but rather a reaction to a changing world (Weil, 2004) or a careful calculation of presentations and offerings that can satisfy particular type of visitors (for example, domestic visitors) who are not interested in object and didactic experiences (Noordegraaf, 2004).

First, according to Moscardo (1999), every museum should be clear about why it exists and whom it is trying to appeal to. In other words, the museum should specify what specific needs (wants) it is uniquely positioned to satisfy for each segment of the visitors it hopes to attract (Moscardo, 1999). It has been generally believed by museum staff that the Egyptian Museum exists to serve and satisfy international tourists by focusing on the traditional presentations of the Pharaonic objects. While this may be true, the findings imply that the Egyptian Museum’s
role is a delicate balancing act – responding to the tourist’s needs, while simultaneously providing domestic visitors with commercial facilities and outdoor areas for restorative, social, recreational and pastime experiences. This was also explicitly articulated by Egyptian museum staff (see section 8.1.2.1 The social and pastime experiences). The museum designed an array of traditional presentations and commercial offerings that identified and responded to the needs of different visitor segments (for example, international and domestic visitors). It is true that the Egyptian Museum stands out in the crowd as an old traditional site, but by offering commercial activities the museum persuades frequent domestic visitors – many of whom felt strongly that the exhibitions are not for them – to come. Thus giving domestic visitors’ interests, attracting them required selling the museum as a place of socialisation, recreation, quiet and tranquillity right in the middle of the busy city. This is not to deny a belief in the continuing importance of ancient artefacts, their preservation and research, and the learning/educational experiences related to them.

Along the same line, it seems that the museum’s traditional displays and commercial offerings have been designed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to sustain the interest of visitors who exhibit non-mindfulness and mindfulness (Moscardo, 1992, 1996, 1999). On the one hand, the museum provided recreation, restorative and social and pastime experiences through its garden, restaurant and kiosks (mindlessness). On the other hand, the museum offered learning, object, or aesthetic experiences through its library, world-famous Pharaonic artefacts and statues (mindfulness). Thus the traditional museum, akin to the modern museum, lends itself to transcending traditional roles of only object and didactic experiences toward different visitors needs and experiences (Doering, 1999; Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Moscardo, 1999). For too long, traditional museums have thought and behaved as if they were isolated jewels, with their inherent value based on their educational mission, privilege, longevity, history, or prestige. Today most museums exist in order to serve and attract all types of visitors (Black, 2005; Foley & McPherson, 2000). Today’s museum has no option but to think seriously about who their visitors are and why they visit, as well as who does not visit and why not (Falk, 2009). Falk (2009) argued that:

> Visitors are at the heart of the twenty-first century museums’ existence. Understanding something about museum visitors is not a nicety; it is a necessity! Asking who visits the museum, why and to what end are no longer mere academic questions. These are questions of great importance (p. 20).
Second, the combination in the traditional museum of objects, designed environments, and some services such as restaurants and gift shops may have been copied or inspired by modern museums and commercial industry (Noordegraaf, 2004). The claim that traditional museums are to preserve objects, display them and encourage only the educated people to visit them has become too narrow and unacceptable in a constantly changing world where there is sustained clamour for more openness, pragmatism and consideration of visitors’ needs and wants that are not always being fulfilled (Doering, 1999; Kavanagh, 2000; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Spock, 2006). Underlying this argument is the fact that the traditional museum is not an isolated island onto itself, but it has to respond, to a certain extent, to a continuous changing environment.

For instance, the ongoing democratisation of museums is mirrored in the ideological shift in museums from serving as cabinets of curiosity in the seventeenth century to emphasising education in the nineteenth century to public empowerment in the twentieth century. Then, in the twenty-first century there have been different challenges facing traditional and modern museums alike. Funding cuts has been identified as the most important challenge and have resulted in more limited resources requiring museums to operate on a more commercial basis and to stay relevant and be responsive to international tourists and domestic visitors. (Dicks, 2003a; Hudson, 1998; MacDonald & Alsford, 1995) (see also chapter 2 Evolution of Museums).

Across the world museums are also finding themselves competing in the marketplace with other leisure, learning and educational providers. Thus conventional museums of all kinds – history, art, ethnographic and science – have been steadily becoming part of the service economy in increasingly global economy and multicultural society (Kolter & Kolter, 1998; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). The impact of other service providers and how this has encouraged heritage sites to offer experiential products or services is broadly recognised as major issues, making long established museums and heritage sites much more dynamic and experiential consumption places than they seemed to be fifty or hundred years ago (Foley & McPherson, 2000; Noordegraaf, 2004).

The late twentieth-century public museum has been belatedly adjusting to the management and commercial codes initiated by other commercial enterprises of contemporary society like department stores, shopping malls, and theme parks (Noordegraaf, 2004). Similar to the department store, the public museum has begun to acknowledge the heterogeneous
preferences of different visitor segments by accommodating a range of regimenting modes of address and utilising some commercial services to offer visitors an attractive experience (Noordegraaf, 2004). One may equally argue that museum professionals and their visitors do not function in isolation. The same people who design and visit traditional museums are also frequent theme parks, contemporary museums, world’s fairs, go to the cinema, watch television, use computers and move through streets and alleys lined up with shops, cafés and restaurants. The confrontation of these different media constitutes certain aspects that determine how we perceive and interpret the world. Some of these aspects may penetrate the traditional museum and construct particular presentations and offerings to serve or satisfy certain types of visitors such as frequent visitors.

In summary, it is hard to pin the Egyptian Museum down as either traditional or modern. The roles of traditional and modern museums stems from their different relationships to different types of visitors and how the visitors choose to use the physical context of the museum. Clearly the common experiential themes that arose from both sites bridge the gap between traditional and modern museums by extending their functions to include comparable sets of experiences: learning more about objects, social educational experiences, aesthetic experiences, reinforcement of previous knowledge and seeing the familiar, memory and socialisation, recreational and pastime experiences.

These different experiences are achieved quite differently by different sets of consumers, dependent on the personal and social contexts they bring with them, and the physical context the museum provides. All of these experiences can still be catered for without modifying or debasing the core presentations (for example, the interactive/infotainment experiences or traditional displays and learning experiences), and by maintaining the various secondary presentations and offerings which include such things as restaurants, kiosks, café, gift shops and outdoor recreation and social spaces.

My discussion in the following sections about the interdependence between the personal and physical contexts and between the social and physical contexts will continue to aid my argument that the common experiential themes which arose from both sites reveal more similarities than differences between the roles of the two institutions. As we will notice in the subsequent discussion, the interplay between these contexts bridges the difference between traditional and modern museums. Still I will highlight the slight difference between the roles of the two museums.
11.4 The Interplay of the Personal and Physical Contexts and the Role of Traditional and Modern Museums

Behind visitors’ motives and experiences lies a very simple idea: that traditional and modern museums are not simply inert containers of ancient artefacts, antiques sculptures, and modern interactive and technological exhibits. They are not only spaces where learning, preservations, fun and infotainment experiences occur, but an active force, that pervades the visitor’s experience and shapes its depth. Making the connection between the visitor’s personal context and the museums’ presentations and offerings explicit allows us to see some other significant roles of the museum that have so far escaped us.

In this context, the role of the museum cannot be adequately described by analysing the content of the museum, museum mission statements and reports, analysing visitor demographics, or the social arrangements in which visitors enter the museum, or even by talking to museum staff. To get the complete picture of the role of the museum requires exploring visitors’ motives and experiences (Falk, 2009). In other words, it is impossible to understand the role of the museum by only viewing it from within the box of the museum. Accordingly, this study explored the motives and experiences of visitors at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums.

The study found that the role of the museum is situated within that unique interdependence between the personal and physical contexts and between the physical and social contexts. This unique interdependence is evidenced from visitors’ motives and experiences at each site. In the present discussion, I will first focus on the interaction between the personal and physical contexts.

This research recognises the valued dimensions of the participants which were shaped by the visitors themselves through their personal thoughts, feelings, memories, imaginations and their socio-cultural identity or background that they brought with them to the sites. The findings indicate that the participant’s personal context (including personal interests, values, previous knowledge, experiences and motivations) was the single greatest influence on their museum experience (Falk, 2009).

The interactions between the personal context (for example, previous knowledge) and the physical context (for example, exhibitions or objects) showed both museums as sites for learning more about the objects or exhibitions and seeing the familiar and remembering
historical and personal events. In learning, participants wanted to expand their knowledge about an object or exhibition they were already familiar with. Important to learning experiences is previous knowledge: expanding their understanding about particular exhibitions that were personally relevant and with which participants could easily connect. Hence learning in museums draws on the interaction between the physical context and the individual’s prior knowledge, personal experiences, preferences and memories (Chia, 2007; Falk & Dierking, 1992, 2000).

Previous knowledge provided “hooks”, “entry points” (Hein, 1998, pp. 35, 152) or “entrance narratives” (Doering, 1999, p. 3) that enabled participants to relate to the exhibitions being presented in the sites. For example, a number of Te Papa’s domestic participants used the museum to make connection between themselves and New Zealand history and heritage. Te Papa’s presentations offered them a history and heritage with which they continually interacted, one which fused personal context with certain aspects of the museums’ physical context, namely, the objects and artefacts contained within.

By the same token, some international participants at Te Papa interacted with exhibitions through their personal contexts. They brought with them their prior knowledge, identity, capacity for independent thought and even emotion. They recollected past knowledge whilst encountering Maori exhibitions. Different interpretations and a sense of identity were revealed in associations of Maori history with local indigenous groups in Australia, Brazil, USA, and Vanuatu. Again, the way they viewed the exhibitions illustrated the interrelation of the personal and physical contexts.

Similarly, the dynamic interplay of the personal context and physical context was also evidenced among international and domestic participants in the Egyptian Museum. Many of the Egyptian Museum’s international participants came to the site motivated by a strong desire to learn more about the ancient artefacts and desire to link the objects with their previous experiences. They looked forward to viewing particular objects that were personally relevant and with which they could easily connect. The various ways in which they related to the content of the museum were influenced by their own media, heritage, history, literature, school and religion. Their experiences of the actual exhibition (the physical context) were mediated by this expanded notion of personal context.

Images of various objects and stories about different kings and queens at the Egyptian Museum were familiar to international participants and they easily identified various statues.
Accordingly, for all international visitors interviewed for this research, the physical context of the Egyptian Museum setting evoked certain themes: monumental edifices; authentic royal mummies; King Tutankhamen’s treasures and art; Howard Carter’s historical discovery; African and Jewish heritage, King Ramses II and Moses; the story of François Champollion and the Rosetta Stone; religion; slavery; creativity; supremacy; death. Again, these themes were drawn from their socio-cultural background such as Western literature, schools, films, television documentaries and the content of other exhibitions in Europe and North America that are generally available in the West and readily digestible by interested and motivated museum audiences.

Equally, some Egyptian Museum’s domestic visitors had memories prompted by the museum’s environment and its objects. Visitors are often guided implicitly to recognise or search for personal links with the content and physical setting of the museum (Bitgood & Cleghom, 1994; Dierking, 2005; Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Falk & Dierking, 1992, 2000; Goulding, 2000; Hooper-Greenhill & Moussouri, 2002; Moscardo, 1991, 1992, 1999).

Domestic participants’ memories at the Egyptian museum centred on an event, feelings or life episode. Also, if we step back and return to the example of our domestic wall muralist at the Egyptian museum (see section 8.1.2.3 Personal events stimulated by the museum) - and if we presume that he or she is other than a quirky historian who visited the exhibition environment - we might find that the role of the Egyptian museum can come from a good match between the personal and physical contexts (Hooper-Greenhill & Moussouri, 2002). The artist’s invocation of Gamal Abdel Nasser vis-à-vis the Pharaonic motifs reflects a synergy of the personal and physical contexts. When the two contexts come together, a role of the museum can be seen as a setting for remembering or evoking historical and personal events that differs qualitatively from the function of the museums as a place for recreation or social and pastime experience.

As participants moved through museum spaces, they selectively looked at and examined things and tried to personalise and make sense of what they saw. The important aspect of their activity at both sites is that it is selective and affected by the physical context (Goulding, 2000; Moscardo, 1999). Evidence from the data reveals that the physicality of the artefacts helped bringing history to life and bearing witness to personal events and favourite childhood memories (for example, “It brings back so many good memories. Seeing some [Pharaonic] statues like going to the doctor”; “The multimedia material in the exhibition [Te Papa: Golden
Days] made me think about the older days”). One may argue that the relationship between the visitors and the objects/exhibits is founded as much on their prior knowledge of the museums’ presentations, as on the physicality of the material remains that connects them with history and personal memories.

In short, the interplay of the personal and physical contexts allowed respondents to remember personal memories and reconstruct historical and personal events. As Kavanagh (2000) argues, within the public space of the museum, memories and reconstruction of past events are triggered through the exhibits and visitors’ personal knowledge of the objects they are viewing. Prior knowledge and the content and physical setting of the museum spark memories.

Several museum and heritage scholars have confirmed the role of physical context in general in the creation of memories and in relation to awareness of place. Research has indicated that most visitors have memories prompted by the museum’s environment and building (Chia, 2007; Falk, 1988). Accordingly, the museum once again can be a venue for “remembering, retelling, and re-experiencing significant moments and people in their lives” (Roberts, 1997, p. 138). This aspect is clearly evidenced from the responses as reported in the interview findings at both institutions. For example, visitors at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums stated that particular exhibitions and the museum’s environment and building brought childhood memories back and let them reconstruct different historical and personal events.

It is important to remind the reader that the interplay between the visitor and the physical context includes not only the objects and exhibitions, but also the architecture, “feel” and “smell” of the building (Falk & Dierking, 1992, pp. 3-4). The interplay between the participants and their immediate surroundings was also evidenced at both sites. Participants became actively involved in their immediate surroundings. They created their own museum experience. The findings showed that there were some of the linkages between the atmosphere and structure of both sites and visitor’s experience.

For example, the Egyptian Museum’s international participants noted that the site had “musty old smell” and was felt to be like “a traditional Catholic church”. In the meantime, Te Papa’s domestic participants noted that the site was “spacious” “fancy” and a “very relaxing place to walk through”. This extends the analysis of the interaction between the visitor and the physical context of conventional and modern museums; the spatial layout, the arrangement of the exhibitions and even the taste and smell of traditional and modern buildings is an integral
and for some, a significant part of the holistic visitor experience (Black, 2005; Falk & Dierking, 1992).

It is reasonable to suggest here that the interplay between the visitor and the physical context helped inducing the state of “mindfulness”. The findings reinforce Langer’s (1993) and Moscardo’s (1992, 1996) theory of “mindfulness” since the interaction between the two contexts had put visitors in an active state to; evoke memories; learn more about the artefacts; enjoy the exhibitions; and actively involved in their immediate surroundings. Participants described the exhibitions and the museums’ atmosphere as “interesting,” “memorable,” “familiar,” “personal,” “enjoyable” “appealing”, “fancy” and “traditional”.

The interaction between the two contexts not only helped participants at both sites activate their prior knowledge and memories but also construct their own aesthetic experiences from the exhibitions. For example, the physical context created an aesthetic atmosphere and this was most notable among international participants’ experiences of the King Tutankhamen exhibition and domestic participants’ experiences of Rita Angus and Toi Te Papa Art of the Nation exhibitions. Here the museum can be seen as a site for aesthetic experience.

Still, the interplay of the visitors’ personal agendas and physical context continue to reveal other roles of the traditional and modern museums. For some domestic respondents at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums, visiting the sites was also an enjoyable break from the daily life and work-related stress, and they saw the museum’s facilities and scenery as excellent venues to accomplish that. Falk (2009, p. 230) identifies this type of visitor as “Rechargers”. These are visitors who visit the museum in order to rejuvenate, or generally just bask in the wonder of the place. They see museums as sites that afford them an opportunity to avoid, if only briefly, the noisiness, clutter and ugliness of the outside world. This shows the multifaceted functions of traditional and modern museums as sites where visitors can relax and escape from pressures of work and everyday life.

In short, this discussion of the interaction between the personal and physical contexts pulls us once again back to the role of traditional and modern museums. We need to move outside the confines of the traditional and modern museums. To understand the role of the museum, we moved to that abstract realm where the personal and physical contexts came together over the course of a museum visit – museum visitor experience – that is constructed in the mind of the visitor and expressed in the form of visitors’ motives and experiences. In view of that, one found that the physical context of the sites and its interplay with visitors’ motives and
experiences has resulted in a range of findings that suggest more similarities than differences between the functions of the two institutions. Both museums are important sites:

- For learning more about the exhibitions and seeing the familiar and remembering or evoking historical and personal events: participants wanted to learn more about the exhibitions and reinforce what they had already known. Respondents were interested in objects/exhibitions that reminded them of historical and personal incidents including childhood memories. Their interests in seeing familiar exhibitions/objects hold responsibility for the quality of the museum experience.

- For aesthetic experience: international visitors attended the King Tutankhamen Room at the Egyptian Museum for the visual aesthetic value of the experience. They found renowned objects which showed ancient Egypt as a place of artistic richness as well as material wealth. Equally, domestic visitors at Te Papa enjoyed the aesthetic atmosphere of Rita Angus and Toi Te Papa Art of the Nation exhibitions.

- For visitors to rest, relax and escape from the pressures of work and everyday life: for some visitors, particularly domestic participants at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums, visiting the sites was an enjoyable break from the daily life and stresses, and they saw the museum’s facilities or scenery as excellent venues to accomplish this goal.

11.5 The Interplay of the Social and Physical Contexts and the Role of Traditional and Modern Museums

The interaction between the physical and social contexts is extremely important in shaping the museum experience. Museum visit is very often a social experience (Mclean, 1994; McManus, 1989; Merriman, 1989). Likewise, evidence from this study strongly suggests that many participants viewed their museum visitation as social in nature (Falk et al., 1998; Goulding, 2000; Hooper-Greenhill & Moussouri, 2002; Moussouri, 2003). A large proportion of participants came to both sites in pairs or in small groups, and for these participants; interaction with their companions and family members was an important aspect of their museum experience. The presence of a partner, friend, family group or even a museum staff member was seen as a significant contributor to the social learning experience at the museum. The motivations to interact socially, and enjoy themselves were so intricately intertwined, that they basically formed one agenda.
The social context of the museum visit did not exist in isolation but was also strongly intertwined with the physical context. The interplay of the social and physical contexts created social learning experiences. Much of the social behaviour that goes on in museums is focused on discussing and sharing information (social context) about the content of the museum (the physical context). Most museum visitors learn as much from their social group as they do from the exhibitions and programmes (Hooper-Greenhill & Moussouri, 2002). This socio-cultural mediation, either direct or indirect, plays a critical role in personalising the museum experience for visitors and facilitating their efforts to learn (Moscardo, 1992). Since the physical context of the museum is a socio-cultural one, all visitors, even those choosing to visit alone, find themselves quickly immersed in the socio-cultural milieu of other visitors and museum staff (Dierking, 2005).

For example, The Egyptian Museum’s international participants enjoyed learning about objects (the physical context) through their interactions with museum staff (social context). This attests to Falk’s (2009) view that the physical and social contexts can be seen to operate when visitors are thrilled when they encounter a knowledgeable museum staff member with whom they can share, interact and ask questions about the content of the exhibitions.

Te Papa’s domestic and international participants also felt that sharing and discussing the exhibitions with a partner, friend, family group or museum staff helped their learning experiences. Again, this type of interaction between the social and physical did not produce a narrow definition of the role of the museum such as its equation with learning or education; the achievement of purely cognitive goals. The museum can also be a site that offers visitors a rich social educational experience where learning of the exhibitions may be an outcome.

Visitor observation findings also reveal the interconnectedness of the social and physical contexts at both sites. Observations showed that activities in particular exhibitions at Te Papa involved showing, discussing, pointing or pulling someone across to an object. These activities are often described in the museum literature as teaching behaviour (Diamond, 1986), and are regarded as a fundamental aspect of the spontaneous social interactions with the content of the museum (McManus, 1989; Moussouri, 1997, 2003). Equally, observations at the Egyptian Museum showed that international participants clustered whenever a museum staff started to offer information and initiated informal conversations about different artefacts. This highlights once again the profoundly interplay of the social and physical contexts which shows museums as places for social experience where learning about the exhibitions occurs.
The interplay of the social and physical contexts continues to reveal similar roles of traditional and modern museums. As Falk and Dierking (1992) argue, not all of the social interaction in museums is content-focused. For example, according to Falk and Dierking (1992), some of it involves spending time in the museum restaurant, bonding between individuals or, for example, within families, behaviour management such as checking to see if the children are hungry or need to use the toilets. Besides, for some visitors, museums have become safe venues for “sociability, dating, networking and meeting friends” (Kolter & Kolter, 1998, p. 43).

Similarly, for many domestic participants at the Egyptian Museum and some international participants at Te Papa, visiting the sites was a chance to socialise and spend leisure time with their companions in the garden and café/restaurant. This type of visitor considered the museums as experiential sites that offered social and pastime experiences. They match Falk’s (2009, p. 192) “Facilitating Socializers”. They sought a purely social experience which was devoid of cognitive engagement (for example, it was a site to have fun and joy with others, take out of town guests, or bring the children to play in the museum’s garden). In other words, their interaction with the physical context of the museum was “to gain access to what the museum affords socially rather than what it offers intellectually” (Falk, 2009, p. 193).

Here also, a parallel exists between this type of participant and McIntosh, et al.’s (2000) typology of family fun lovers who visit a key attraction in the destination to spend a nice day out and to have fun with family or friends. What is also crucial to note here is that this type of museum visitor may match Moscardo’s (1991, 1992, 1999) non-mindful visitors who tend to have little interest in the content, but whose motivations are more linked to entertainment or socialisation and therefore have little understanding or appreciation of the exhibitions. In this regard, once again one may argue that the traditional museum pushed beyond the traditional roles of educating, preserving, and displaying original artefacts by engaging a segment of museum visitors in recreation and pastime experiences - experiences not usually associated with traditional museums.

In short, the physical context of the sites and its interplay with visitors’ social experiences has resulted in a range of findings that suggest more similarities than differences between the functions of the two institutions. Both museums are important sites:

- For social learning experiences: as discussed earlier, social interaction is a way for visitors to discuss and share the information about the content of the museum. Visiting
both sites was a social educational experience for a number of participants at both museums. The museum was a place where a visitor can be stimulated by the thoughts of others such as a partner, friends, family members or museum staff.

- For socialisation, recreational and pastime experiences: as discussed earlier, not all of the social interaction is exhibit-focused. For some respondents (for example, the majority of the Egyptian Museum’s domestic respondents and some of Te Papa’s international respondents), visiting the sites was a chance to bond between visitors and spend leisure time with their companions in the café/restaurant and the garden.

It is also important to bear in mind that these similarities show that the museum audience is not one but a plurality – a mass of separate audiences each seeking its own experiences and outcomes from what is basically the same product. In the next section, I will continue my argument by showing similar realms of experiences at each site through the merging of visitors’ experiences and motives and Pine and Gilmore's (1999) four realms of experience.

### 11.6 Similar Realms of Experience at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums

The interplay of visitors’ personal, social and physical contexts indicated that Pine and Gilmore's (1999) four realms of experience (educational, esthetic, escapist and entertainment) were present in the two sites. Although Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) four realms are not staged deliberately by the museums, they are possible to encounter. For example, learning more about the ancient Egyptian artefacts and the social educational experience at Te Papa were important aspects of the educational realm of the experience. Esthetic experience was as well an important aspect of the experience in both museums (for example, *King Tutankhamen Room* and *Rita Angus* and *Toi Te Papa Art of the Nation* exhibitions). In the esthetic realm, participants highlighted the attractiveness of the perceived exhibitions as well as the experience itself.

Escapist experiences were also present in the experience of the two museums. Visitors found escapist experiences in Te Papa, but not in the way of virtual bungy jumping or whale riding. It is important to keep in mind that the escapist experience can be found in the two sites in the form of the Egyptian Museum’s garden and Te Papa’s restaurant. They were places of peace and quietness in the hectic everyday life; spaces where participants sought relaxation and diversion. The escapist experiences at both museums reflect the fact that museum staff design
exhibitions, develop label copy, and carefully arrange objects in hope that visitors will attend to them, but that does not always happen (Foley & McPherson, 2000; Kent, 2009; MacDonald & Alsford, 1995). Not all museum experiences are educative or edutainment, as many scholars have pointed out (MacDonald & Alsford, 1995; McTavish, 1998; Moore, 2000a; Packer, 2008).

The entertainment realm, which involves sensing or absorption of sensory stimuli, was present in the experience of the two sites. It is essential to reiterate that entertainment experience occurs when individuals passively absorb the experiences through their senses, as generally happens when touching or handling an object, listening to music, viewing a performance, or reading for pleasure (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). The entertainment experience was found in Te Papa in the form of domestic visitors’ experiences of hands-on and interactive exhibits. In particular, domestic visitors referred to aspects of the multi-sensory nature of the experience such as feeling, touching and handling. The multi-sensory nature of the experience offered them some form of entertainment but the aim of interactive experience was to inform.

The entertainment realm was found in the Egyptian Museum when international participants viewed the iconic artefacts and listened to the museum guides who encouraged them to interact with the objects and use their imagination. The entertainment experience was also evidenced in the Egyptian Museum in the form of domestic visitors’ experiences of the restaurant. For example, domestic visitors came to smoke shisha, enjoy the authentic Egyptian cuisine and fruit juice while listening to the music.

Again, the presence of the four realms at each site demonstrates that The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums offer similar experiences to different types of visitors. The roles of two museums stems from their different relationships to different types of visitors and how the visitors choose to use the physical context of the museum.

The obvious similarities of experiences between The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums hide one difference between the roles of the two sites. The difference is the inclusion of the multi-media presentations at Te Papa and the absence of this element at the Egyptian Museum. Te Papa’s interactive multimedia technology fulfils two distinct roles: interactive technology in the museum creates edutainment and infotainment experience or the notion of having fun while learning (Armstrong, 2002; Gore, 2002; Kaino, 2005). The next section discusses this difference between the roles of both sites.
11.7 The Difference between the Roles of the two Museums

The one difference between the roles of the two museums can be explained through the interplay of the visitor’s previous knowledge-personal context- and the physical context of the museum. Visitors make use of museums for their own purposes, and from varying perspectives. Visitors tend to attend the museums that they think their exhibitions are personally relevant and with which they can easily connect (Lonetree & Cobb-Greetham, 2008). The public’s visit decisions are influenced by perceptions and images of the institution, but these perceptions are either typically general in nature or are only slightly based upon a detailed reckoning of what is on exhibit (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000).

International visitors’ reactions to the Egyptian Museum’s presentations showed that the absence of interactive experiences at the museum did not negatively detract from their overall visitor and learning experience. This might be related to the status and symbolism of the two museums (physical context) and visitor’s prior knowledge (personal context): What do The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums represent? Te Papa is best known for its biculturalism and infotainment experience with the latest interactive technology (Kaino, 2005; Tramposch, 1998; Williams, 2006). International visitors to Te Papa visit the museum with the expectation to learn something new, while having an entertaining experience (Armstrong, 2002).

Museums exist at different levels or scales, namely world, traditional, modern, national, local and personal sites (Timothy, 1997). The Egyptian Museum falls into the category of world and traditional heritage site. The museum constructs a symbol of a traditional institution. The travelogue preserves the notion of traditionalism in the Egyptian Museum. It is often perceived in the travel literature as “traditional”, “old”, “conventional”, “conservative” or “locked in time” and these influence international visitors’ experiences (Gauldie, 2008; Hawass, 2005b). According to museum staff, the Egyptian Museum draws large masses of international tourists who are already familiar with the objects. They flock to the site to have object and learning experiences rather than infotainment or social experiences. For example, when international participants entered the museum they were not concerned with interactivity but rather searched for the more familiar displays, particularly the mummies and those belonging to King Tutankhamen. The museum holds universal appeal among international tourists with its prominent and original artefacts. This lends weight to Falk and Dierking’s (2000) argument that embedded in the relationship between the personal context
and the physical context is an unspoken contract of expectations and images. Generally, expectations associated with museums result in a decision to visit or not to visit.

Te Papa belongs to the category of national, modern, local and personal sites (Timothy, 1997). The museum conjures up the image of a modern national museum and induces strong feelings of national pride and personal connectivity among domestic visitors (Gore, 2002; Kaino, 2005). Thus while the Egyptian Museum cannot claim to offer an interactive experience, what it does offer is a world-renowned collection within a traditional institution.

Within this context, international participants of the Egyptian Museum planned to partake in the rite of being at a traditional site. They wanted to be in the same place as the ancient artefacts and as such were tourists to that unique museum. They participated in the “secularised ritual” of visiting the traditional site with its iconic relics which has been an essential part of tourism since Thomas Cook began his tours in Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century (Benjamin, 2002, p. 105; Hazbun, 2007; Saad El-Din, 2004). The range of iconic artefacts was the interface of international visitors’ fascination with the museum. Seeing the iconic ancient objects and connecting with previous knowledge became the focus for the activities that interested many international participants at the Egyptian Museum.

Before this physical experience begins, the international participant was already well aware of the artefacts’ fame and its location within an internationally renowned traditional museum, a link between object and location by which each increases the status of the other. The visitor was aware that he/she was in two spaces simultaneously; the space of the ancient artefacts and the space of the traditional museum. They expected that the Egyptian Museum adopted a passive approach that included traditional displays (captioned, interpretive exhibits of objects, illustrated catalogues, guided tours, lectures, and classes) to tell the lives and stories of ancient Egyptians. Still, a prestigious, iconic and universal collection within a traditional space is still the most powerful image in the visitor’s mind, and this normally ensures that attention is drawn to what the museum holds, rather than what is missing (for example, interactive technology) (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

Hence, international participants’ reactions to the presentations and offerings showed that the absence of interactive and hands-on experience at the Egyptian Museum did not negatively detract from the overall visitor experience. International visitors knew that their experience in this traditional museum was to passively consume the ancient Egyptian objects. Again, this is related to the visitor’s pre-existing knowledge of the physical context of the museum and the
symbolism or status of the Egyptian Museum in their mind. Unlike Te Papa, the Egyptian Museum is allowed to do things the traditional way because for the international visitors it symbolises a traditional museum. Thus one may argue that the call (for example, Black, 2005; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; MacDonald & Alsford, 1995; Marstine, 2005; Tobelem, 1997) to provide infotainment or edutainment experiences at traditional museums would serve to erase from the visitor’s mind the traditionality of the display which creates an intriguing element of the museum experience.

On the other hand, domestic participants’ reactions to Te Papa’s presentations substantiate its role as a modern, lively interactive museum. The domestic participant was already well aware of Te Papa’s strength, that it has turned history, culture and education into an interactive experience. The domestic visitor knew that he/she was in two spaces simultaneously; the space of the artefacts and the space of a modern interactive museum. They expected that Te Papa adopts an informative and interactive experience to tell the history, lives and stories of New Zealand and its people.

Also, the performative and integrated multi-media displays of the exhibitions (for example, Golden Days exhibit, the physical context) provoked inseparable emotional responses and triggered memories (personal context) leading to a form of interactivity beyond “pushing the button or hiring a headset”(Witcomb, 2007, p. 3). This shows that the call (for example, Dalrymple, 1999; Dutton, 1998) to erase the hands-on interactive experiences would serve to erase from the domestic visitor’s mind the role of Te Papa as an infotainment site and a setting for seeing the familiar and remembering historical and personal events.

While there exists one difference between the roles of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums, it is important to keep in mind their multifaceted similarities that emanate from visitors’ motives and experiences at both sites. The similarities between the two museums also points to a number of similarities and differences between domestic and international visitors’ motives and experiences at each site, which will be discussed in the last two sections of this chapter.

11.8 Major Differences between Visitors’ Motives and Experiences at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums

The findings of this study provided insights not only into the functioning of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums from the visitors’ views, but also into the main differences that existed
between international and domestic visitors at each museum. In the following two sections, I will identify the key similarities and differences in the motivations and experiences of visitors at each site. I will also reconsider some theoretical arguments as they support my findings. In doing so, the personal context for the visit stood out. In particular, the interaction of the personal context with the physical context played a major role in determining the key differences between domestic and international visitors at each museum.

11.8.1 The personal context: international and domestic participants at the Egyptian Museum

International and domestic respondents arrived at the site with a myriad of motives for visiting. They also responded to the museums’ presentations and offerings in different ways according to their previous experiences, knowledge, culture and interests. All international respondents came to the site motivated by a strong desire to experience and learn more about specific artefacts and statues they were already familiar with. This reveals the significance of the inter-connectedness of personal context for learning in museums and supports Falk (2007) and Rennie’s (1996) argument that learning is a more likely outcome of a museum visit when the exhibitions stimulate knowledge or experience with which the visitor is already familiar. George Hein (1998, p. 156) went further to argue that this association with the familiar is inherent in the museum learning experience and that “it is not only difficult but almost impossible to learn something without making an association with familiar categories”. Accordingly, if the international visitor does not have prior knowledge about ancient Egypt, or if we remove the personal context, we may not only find learning but aspiration, desire, and intention or, in a word, the will to visit the Egyptian museum. The international visitors’ desires for building upon their previous knowledge may also be linked to Falk and Dierking’s (1992, 1997, 2000) “cognitive” experiences. Cognitive experiences occur when museum visitors enrich their understanding of specific object/topic, gain further information or knowledge or reflect on the meaning of what they are viewing.

Further, according to Moscardo’s (1992, 1996) mindfulness/mindlessness perspective, one may argue that international participants were mindful as well as mindless museum visitors. For example, one could describe them as mindful and mentally active participants because they paid attention to the environment and the information presented in the setting and showed interest in the experience. Similarly, one could characterise their museum experience as mindless since they were not necessarily challenging their existing knowledge and
understanding, rather they were reinforcing it (Langer, 1993; Moscardo, 1992, 1996). Thus it is not as simple as saying that visitors are either mindful or mindless. One should not consider mindfulness/mindlessness theory in only one light.

Unlike international participants, the majority of domestic participants were not interested in the museum’s ancient relics. The royal mummies, the statues of Nefertari and Rameses II, the Rosetta Stone and the aesthetic encounter with the tomb of King Tutankhamen did not appeal to them. This lack of connection to the artefacts stemmed partly from past educational experiences and lack of previous knowledge (see chapter 8 Domestic Participants’ Motives and Experiences at the Egyptian Museum). On an interesting note, when the first Egyptian mummy film (Al-Mumiya; The Mummy; released in English as The Night of Counting Years)23, which revolves around the looting and theft of valuable Pharaonic artefacts, was officially released in Egyptian cinemas in 1975, it never achieved popularity with the general public (Abd al-Rahman, 1996b; Colla, 2002; Gordon, 2002). The significance of the film had been constructed by critical appraisal rather than popular or commercial reception (Colla, 2000a; Gordon, 2002). The same unpopular public reaction to the content of the film in 1975 was to some extent comparable to the domestic participants’ reaction to the exhibition environment in the present study.

The research findings showed that generally domestic participants tended to use the museum differently, had different motives and experiences. They considered the Egyptian Museum as an experiential site that offered recreation and social and pastime experiences and, to a lesser extent, as a place for recalling personal and historical events. Unlike international participants, the majority of domestic respondents related their museum visits to the social experience and stated that the museum was the place to hang out with family and friends.

For many domestic participants at the Egyptian museum, the outdoor garden and the café/restaurant played an important part of the social and pastime experiences. Observations showed that while international visitation included short stops at the garden for photo taking, local visitation included long visits that involved family outing. Generally, the outdoor garden

23 Egyptian director Shadi Abd al-Salam’s film Al-Mumiya filmed under Gamal Abdel Nasser, screened under Anwar Sadat and occasionally televised under Hosni Mubarak. The film was championed by Egyptian and Western critic as a paragon in Egyptian cinema and history due both to its subject matter and artistry. Yet it never achieved popularity with the general public (Abd al-Rahman, 1996a; Colla, 2000b; Gordon, 2002).
and the café/restaurant offered domestic visitors a special social experience with a friend or relative and a chance to enjoy themselves together. Falk and Dierking (2000) maintained that:

*People select physical contexts to visit and live within. The decision to visit a museum rather than a shopping mall, let alone the choice of which museum or mall, is determined in part by an appraisal of the physical context (p. 57).*

It is important to note here that this type of domestic museum visitor may match Moscardo’s (1991, 1992, 1999) non-mindful visitors who tend to have little interest in the content, but whose motivations are more linked to socialisation or entertainment and therefore have little understanding or appreciation of the museum. On the other hand, one could argue that domestic participants also displayed signs of mindfulness since they paid heed to their environment (for example, the garden, museum’s restaurant, museum premises and particular objects) (see sections 8.1.2.2 The museum as a refuge and therapeutic facility & 8.1.2.3 Personal events stimulated by the museum). The extent to which domestic visitors were mindful was a function of both communication factors (features of the museum presentations and offerings, for example, garden and restaurant) and visitor factors (things that domestic visitors bring with, for example, interests, social motives and social group) (Moscardo, 1992, 1996; Moussouri, 1997, 2003). Here, we can observe again that it is not as simple as saying international visitors are mindful while domestic visitors are mindless, and vice versa.

Before I conclude this section, there was one last thing to note regarding the differences between domestic and international participants. Some domestic participants explained that they visited the Egyptian museum mainly as a form of relaxation. They described how aspects of the visit had a restorative or relaxing effect. They referred to the value of mental restoration in terms of their renewal ability to deal positively with workloads, family’s needs, and life. This was also found to be true by Kaplan (1995), Hein (1998), Packer (2004, p. 49; 2008) and Falk and Dierking (2000, p. 106) who found that some visitors go to the museum “seeking its solitude” and “restorative experience”. On the other hand, international participants did not report any restorative experiences, thus providing further evidence that gaining more knowledge about exhibition offerings or encountering familiar objects represented their sole or even primary objective.

In summary, behind the contradiction between the motives and experiences of international and domestic participants at the Egyptian Museum stood in fact the significance of the personal context which was made up of international participants’ pre-visit knowledge of
Pharaonic artefacts. The differences between the two groups were not coincidental. In other words, what caused the difference was prior knowledge. Unlike domestic visitors, international respondents visited the site to connect with the familiar objects and support what they already knew.

The last section will highlight the main differences and similarities that existed between international and domestic visitors at Te Papa.

11.8.2 The personal context: international and domestic participants at Te Papa

Research findings showed that some similarities between international and domestic participants existed at Te Papa. For example, social motives and social experiences featured prominently in interviews with both groups. Equally, for many international and domestic respondents the social motives and social experiences were inextricably linked with learning. The two groups of participants reported having engaged in learning and discussing or sharing information with the people with whom they were attending. This lends support to museum literature that overwhelmingly emphasises that museum visiting tends to be a social occasion, combining free-choice learning or looking at something interesting while enjoying the company of friends and family (Blud, 1990; Chan, 2009; Dierking, 1989; Falk et al., 1998; Merriman, 1989; Moussouri, 2003).

Also of note, when explored in more depth, it was clear that Te Papa’s international and domestic participants correlated positively with particular features of the museum’s physical environment, namely, Te Papa’s café/restaurants on the ground and fourth floor. Both groups exhibited positive experiential themes related to the qualities of the café/restaurants such as the attractive setting of the place and the quality of the food service. This finding gave rise to Falk and Dierking’s (1992) argument that extraneous elements in relation to the museum as an experience (for example, quality and smell of food and coffee, gift shops, parking space, the water fountain colour, the toilets, and museum staff uniforms) can play a significant role in shaping the visitor’s experience. The finding also compliments Noordegraaff’s (2004, p. 242) assertion that the museum as an experience no longer includes its main assets, the exhibitions or objects, but “all the things that surround them: decors, shops, merchandise, food, digitally provided information, audio – guides, etc.”.

Although there were some similarities between international and domestic respondents, there was one major difference between the two groups of participants. Te Papa’s exhibitions
attracted favourable responses from all domestic participants and evoked a sense of belonging or connection to New Zealand art, culture and heritage. Domestic participants drew upon the exhibitions around them with their own past experiences and previous knowledge. Accordingly, they described the exhibitions as “interesting”, “memorable”, “familiar”, “personal”, “enjoyable”, and “appealing”.

Similarly, a small core of international respondents was able to relate to specific exhibitions through their socio-cultural and personal contexts. They brought with them their prior knowledge, identity, capacity for independent thought and even emotion. They recollected past knowledge whilst encountering Maori and European exhibitions. Different interactions were revealed in associations of Maori history with local indigenous groups in Australia, Brazil, and Vanuatu. It is reasonable to hint that Te Papa’s domestic visitors and those few international visitors from Australia, Vanuatu, and Latin America would not connect with the different Maori exhibitions in the same way. This seems to strengthen Falk and Dierking (1992, 2000), Goulding (2000), and Hooper-Greenhill’s (2000) argument that visitors usually reshape the museum’s experience according to their socio-cultural and personal contexts.

Although a commanding majority of domestic participants and a few international visitors construed different exhibitions by employing their personal context, the majority of international respondents lacked the cultural and historical background to connect with the exhibits on their own. Accordingly, they described different exhibitions as “confusing”, “vague”, and “boring”. Some of the respondents also expressed an interest in wanting more information. They briefly explained that while “New Zealanders” found significant connections to the exhibitions, “uninformed visitors” found it difficult to link with the exhibitions. This is reflected in Robin Parkinson’s (1998, p. 62) argument that “Te Papa tells the New Zealand Story; it is aimed at the widest New Zealand audience and it is a uniquely New Zealand product”.

Finally, I need to draw considerable attention to the nostalgic, personal aspects of the museum experience.

11.8.3 The nostalgic personal aspects of the museum experience

While nostalgia was not a reaction experienced by all participants, it was a pervasive component of the personal experience for a number of participants. Visitors at both sites, particularly domestic visitors, were motivated by the novel elements of recreated history, the
visit tended to be largely nostalgic personal experience (see chapters Seven, Eight & Ten).
This group of visitors used the museum as a platform for nostalgia. It was a nostalgia based
on an interest in history, admiration for a particular artefacts and architecture, and aesthetic
identification. There were similarities among visitors in the source of the reaction, and its
personal significance.

The discovery of familiar or personal objects and settings became the prime focus of the
experience among these visitors and served to reveal the visitor’s nostalgic personal aspects
and his or her historical interpretation of the objects and museum building. Here it is crucial to
note that nostalgic reflections must first draw from the individual’s own personal context (for
example, previous knowledge or personal history) rather than only from external sources such
as books, films, buildings, objects, or stories (Beeho & Prentice, 1997). In other words, the
personal context is the single greatest influence on the person’s nostalgic feelings. A person
cannot experience nostalgia for a period or event through which he or she has not been
exposed to, read about, lived or experienced before.

Searching for meaning by retreating into the past typified the behaviours of participants who
exhibited nostalgic personal aspects. This, however, was largely based on an informed
understanding of a particular history and artefacts, and a strong sense of identification with
them (Beeho & Prentice, 1997). The impact of nostalgia was two fold. On the one hand, it
added a layer of meaning through the personalisation of museological content. On the other
hand, it assisted participants to make connections and engage them in dialogue and
discussion.

The nostalgic personal aspects, as encompassing an inner dialogue between past and present,
become obvious when we consider the following success to create a sense of personal
meaning and establish relevant personal connectivity and conjunctions in exhibition settings.
A search for nostalgic personal aspects was made mostly among familiar artefacts and
buildings, where nostalgic construction was explicit and its meaning palpably manipulated.
Here, for example, visitors’ comments on their experiences of the Golden Days exhibit, The
Egyptian Museum building and the statues of Nefertari and Amenhotep, shows that nostalgic
personal aspects of the museum experience may relate to the best times of our lives and serves
in some way as a mechanism for coping with the present when times are hard (Beeho &
Prentice, 1997). Again the role of the museum is filtered through the interaction between the
physical and personal contexts:
I enjoyed the memorabilia inside the Golden Days exhibition. It’s nice that some of the original things, furniture and stuff, are here. The bits and pieces remind me of my grandfather’s house. They bring childhood memories back. I remember his clock and cuckoo clock. Both clocks mean a lot to me. It’s like walk down memory lane.

They [museum and its surrounding area] remind me of the past. Back in the old days these buildings around the museum were better than buildings in Europe in Rome, France, London. The museum was called the Louvre along the Nile. The streets were cleaner than El-Chanzile Street of Paris. People were really nicer and there was a sense of community. The economy was better. I used to have 20 Piasters and I was able to pay for the tram, tickets to the museum, going to the national theatre, getting an ice cream from Groupie and still had money. Now what did globalisation bring? Nothing but misery and poverty. Look at the museum it is kissed by fumes and pollution and embraced by ugly modern buildings and street food vendors who are simply poor people.

It [visiting the museum] was a way to bring us [she and her husband] together. It provided a place for us to talk about history and some politics that otherwise we didn’t talk about at home. We used to have a wonderful time .... When I go there I don’t necessarily look at everything. I tend to go and see the statues of Nefertari and Amenhotep. My husband particularly admired the statue of Thoutmosis the Third.

Within the scope of this study, the nostalgic personal aspects also manifest itself through a search for solitude and escape through imaginative daydreaming about a more romantic period or the acceptance that the past was better then. It may also manifest through an emotional sense of loss and contemporary emptiness (Chia, 2007). Once again one can notice the roles that museums and other heritage sites play in the creation of nostalgic personal aspects. This supports the views that social establishments such as museums follow a process of stimulating nostalgic personal aspects through selectively preserving and showing the public scientific, aesthetic and historical cultural objects (Beeho & Prentice, 1997; Chia, 2007; McIntosh et al., 1999).

This may suggest that the personal context of the museum visit may be used to understand the function of the museum and the behavioural reactions to the museum presentations and offerings. A greater understanding of the personal context may prove a valuable tool for use in segmenting the visitors for such institutions and attractions that are based on selling the past (Chan, 2009; Chia, 2007; McIntosh, 1998; Moscardo, 1999). The personal context of the visit may tell museum professionals, particularly museum marketers, a great deal about visitors’ consumption and informs the marketing strategies (Chan, 2009). Consequently,
museum professionals can use the personal context as a source of motivation for museum consumption and attention.

11.9 Summary

The previous discussion attempted to reinterpret the roles of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums in the light of the interactions between the physical and personal contexts and between the physical and social contexts. The interconnectedness between the contexts resulted in a set of visitors’ experiences across both sites, suggesting that The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums have much in common. For example, the social educational experiences; visitors’ desire to learn more about the objects; visitors’ desire to connect with the familiar and reinforce their pre-existing knowledge; visitors’ remembrance of historical and personal events; and the aesthetic, recreational and pastime experiences emerged as central forces in the visitor experience across both museums. These experiences reflect a remarkable shift in thinking, from seeing traditional and modern museums as sites of either educational or infotainment experiences to understanding them as institutions that offer a wider range of similar experiences.

The set of visitors’ experiences mentioned above pointed to a glaring difference that existed between international and domestic visitors at each museum. While a perfect match existed between the cultural and historical background (personal context) of international visitors at the Egyptian Museum and the museum’s exhibitions, the majority of Egyptian Museum’s domestic respondents lacked the historical baggage to connect with the objects. The same is true for visitors to Te Papa but the other way around. While Te Papa’s domestic participants were armed with some prior knowledge of the exhibitions, the majority of international respondents lacked the degree of familiarity with the collections.

Hence, for international visitors at the Egyptian Museum and Te Papa’s domestic visitors, the two museums set a spark and planted the seeds of connectivity, familiarity, and interest which again mirrored another role of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums as sites to view familiar objects and link visitors with what they already know. On the other hand, for the majority of Te Papa’s international participants and the Egyptian museum’s domestic respondents, the two museums failed to provide connectivity spaces: they did not generate familiarity with the collections and provoke an interest in the themes of the exhibitions.
This study evolved from the researcher’s personal interest in the roles of traditional and modern museums. The roles of traditional and modern museums cannot be accurately described by only examining the objects and exhibitions, the design of the museum or by analysing the museum mission statements. It is also through visitors’ motives and experiences that the other roles of traditional and modern museums may surface. The role of the museum is filtered through the interaction between the physical and social contexts and between the physical and personal contexts. Viewing the role of traditional and modern museums in terms of the interaction of visitor-physical contexts helps us to recognise that the role of modern and traditional museum can go beyond learning and infotainment experiences.

As with any system, our understanding depends upon the lens through which we look at that system. Currently there are two main lenses that represent the roles of traditional and modern museums: the first one emphasises that modern museums have provided educational leisure experiences or fun learning experiences, while the second lens shows that traditional museums have positioned themselves in the market as places for object and rich learning experiences (American Association of Museums, 1984; Black, 2005; Bourdieu et al., 1990; Chia, 2007; Kolter & Kolter, 1998).

Both of these lenses reveal some of what is important about the roles of traditional and modern museums. Each lens provides a partial view of reality. Each yields some insights into why people visit these types of museums, what they do there, and what experiences they take away from the sites. However, viewing the role of the traditional and modern museum through just one of these lenses, no matter which one is chosen, provides only a partial picture. In my view, the claims to simplify and reduce the roles of traditional and modern museums to either educational experiences and preservations or fun learning experiences, attests to the fallacy in the field (Black, 2005; Moscardo, 1996). As Falk (2008, 2009) and Moscardo (1992, 1999) aptly point out, such studies are useful only for marketing and very specific educational and leisure purposes. This explains once again why I feel that this study is more closely related to visitors’ motives and experiences in examining the roles of the museum.
Thus, this thesis set out to explore visitors’ motivations and experiences at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums to find answers to the question: What are the other roles of traditional and modern museums in relation to visitors’ motives and experiences? The nature of this question required this study to be embedded in the academic fields of museum and visitor studies, leisure studies, tourism, psychology, and education. The literature has been interwoven in this thesis which guarantees the seamless link between the theory and practice embodied in the inquiry and is appropriate for exploring visitors’ motives and experiences.

I identified a lack of qualitative visitor insights into the functioning of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums. I proceeded by establishing theoretical and methodological frameworks to explore visitors’ motives and experiences across both institutions in order to uncover other functions of traditional and modern museums that goes simply beyond preservation, learning and interactive or edutainment experience, an issue that has been ignored in the body of academic literature on museums.

In this context, I undertook a qualitative study (beyond broad, quantitative analyses) of domestic and international visitation to both sites so as to address the following issues:

- explore the key motivational factors behind the visit to The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums.
- identify the types of experiences that emerged as central forces in the visitor experience across both museums.

In this concluding chapter, the research findings in relation to these two objectives are summarised, the contributions of the findings to understanding the functions of modern and traditional museums in relation to visitors’ motives and experiences are highlighted, and the scope for future research is outlined.

**12.1 Summary of Findings in relation to Research Objectives**

I selected a qualitative approach as the appropriate research design for this study. The research design was grounded in the context of the museum visit and consisted of the following combination of qualitative tools: a case study approach, documentation reviews and archival records, semi-structured interviews, unobtrusive observation and historical participant approach. I drew upon several published qualitative research studies and museum leisure, and cultural heritage studies to develop a research design and methodology suitable
for small scale case studies. For this project, then, the selection of an appropriate methodology was based on the particular purpose of the inquiry. The purpose of this study required a methodology suitable for the study of visitors’ motives and the significance of their museum experience as perceived by them.

From the literature review it became apparent that the entire museum experience involves an interaction between three main contexts: the personal, social and physical contexts. This study then fleshed out the linkage between the physical and personal contexts and between the physical and social contexts. In the course of doing this, we inevitably encounter more similarities than differences between the roles of the traditional and modern museum, by comparing The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums. Adhering to visitor’s motives and experiences, both sites have a number of similar characteristics:

- a setting for learning more about the exhibitions and seeing the familiar and remembering or evoking historical and personal events;
- a site for aesthetic experience;
- a site for visitors to rest, relax and escape from the pressures of work and everyday life;
- a site for social educational experiences; and
- a site for social recreational experiences.

In the meantime, the similar experiences at both institutions highlighted three important aspects. First, although infotainment and learning experiences were present at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums respectively, these experiences were equally offset by a much wider range of visitors’ experiences. Here, an experience goes beyond mere learning and infotainment experiences because it engages and connects with visitors (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Some visitors also dealt with the physical context of the museum in ways that appeared independent of the objects and interactive exhibitions of the museum. Second, the Egyptian Museum sat closer to the new than it did to the old, which to the lay observer may not seem entirely obvious at first glance. Findings showed the infiltration of commercial and recreational aspects at the Egyptian Museum. Admittedly, these developments were less extreme than might be found at Te Papa; however they did depict modern museology.
Lastly, the similar experiences at both museums enabled comparisons to be made of visitors’ motivations and experiences at each site within the objectives of the study. The interplay between the personal and physical contexts and between the social and physical contexts pointed to a main difference between international and domestic participants at each site. This difference was clearly related to their prior knowledge (personal context) of the museum presentations and offerings.

12.2 Contributions

In this study, visitor’s motives and experiences of the museums emerged as important because they could provide a window into the other roles of the traditional and modern museum, by comparing The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums. The exploration of the visitor-museum relationship in this study simultaneously captures important and key realities of the two museums as well as significant realities of the visitor.

Traditional museums have long been associated with learning experiences and the artefacts they exhibit. The educational value and procuring, preserving and exhibiting artefacts have been at the heart of the traditional museum curatorship (Dicks, 2003a; Hudson, 1998). On the other hand, modern museums are very different from those of the past; the learning/educational experience and the role of the artefacts are increasingly blurred in the modern museum. Notions of leisure, interactivity and hands-on experiences have been at the heart of the modern museum brand and are a fundamental measure of museum distinctiveness (Black, 2005; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; Kolb, 2008; Kolter & Kolter, 1998). The similar roles of The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums sabotage the reductionist trap of binary oppositions and melting the iron grid of either educational experiences or fun learning experiences.

The results from this study allowed the appraisal of the interactions between the physical and the personal context and between the physical and social contexts. In doing so, the study has found no apparent conflict between the roles of the traditional and modern museum from the visitors’ perspectives, by comparing The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums. In other words, although The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums represent two very different kinds of institutions, the weight of evidence in the present study indicates that they do offer many similar experiences to diverse audiences. Both museums are very much informal educational institutions providing much more than just objects, learning or infotainment experiences. In particular:
The study drew attention to the significance of the interplay between the personal and physical contexts. In the personal context, the Egyptian and Te Papa Museums became venues for: learning more about the exhibitions and seeing the familiar and remembering or evoking historical and personal events; for aesthetic experience; and for visitors to rest, relax and escape from the pressures of work and everyday life.

The personal context was also a crucial element in our understanding of the conspicuous difference between domestic and international respondents at each museum. The distinction between the two groups of visitors confirmed debate in the literature that visitors’ prior knowledge of the exhibitions do impact upon the museum experience (Doering & Pekarik, 1996; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Falk et al., 1998; Hein, 1998; Henry, 2000).

The study drew attention to the significance of the interplay between the physical and social contexts. In the social context, the study revealed that the two museums became venues for: social educational experience and spending quality time with friends and family utilising the outdoor environment and commercial services.

The Egyptian Museum could help to redefine the role of the traditional museum. The study indicates that the motives and experiences of leisure time audiences may change the function of the twenty first traditional museum. Its role in the visitors’ experiences may extend beyond its undeniable educational/learning value and object experiences, to a range of other experiences. Its hybrid presentations - traditional text panels and guided tours coupled with the few commercial facilities and outdoor environment - could serve different types of visitors (for example, international and domestic visitors).

These insights can enable museum practitioners to better understand their visitors and the similar roles traditional and modern museums may play in visitors’ experiences as well as rethinking the mission and goals of both types of institutions. In spite of the pessimistic views on the disappearance of traditional displays at the modern museums in favour of infotainment experiences and the criticism of the traditional museum as a temple of knowledge and a cabinet of curiosities, today’s traditional and modern museums could fulfil a number of similar experiences. These experiences may range from learning, showing ancient objects and infotainment experiences, to a sense of
connection and reinforcement of past knowledge, memory, social, aesthetic, restorative, recreational and pastime experiences.

12.3 Possible Future Research

Areas for future research came out of the limitations in the existing research and the insights/gaps identified in my analysis. This qualitative study is a rich source of data and it provides a number of directions for small scale in-depth and larger scale survey and observation research. There are a number of trends that warrant further research. As signalled earlier, this explorative study does not aim to provide representative claims relating to all modern and traditional museums in the world, especially given the small sample size of the domestic visitors at the Egyptian Museum. The current research was located at specific museums, and so may need further case studies in different regions of the world. This may serve to develop more generalised findings about the roles of traditional and modern museums from visitors’ viewpoints. Furthermore, future research on visitors’ museum experiences at other museums located in different cities can verify the significance of the personal context in revealing differences and similarities of museum experiences between domestic and international visitors.

Also, as indicated earlier, language, social and cultural barriers hindered the exploration of the motivations and experiences of a substantial portion of visitors at both sites particularly Asian visitors and Arab Gulf visitors. Thus future research may be designated to explore the expectations and experiences of a large sample of Arab and Asian visitors, particularly Chinese visitors at Te Papa and Japanese visitors at the Egyptian Museum. It would also be very interesting to explore the expectations and experiences produced by Asian, Arab and Western visitors to further investigate the influence of the personal, physical and socio-cultural contexts on the whole museum experience. The inclusion of different types of visitors could determine if and how visitors’ motives and experiences are expressed in other forms of museum experience.

Another area for future research is to explore the expectations and experiences of school groups and tour group members at each site. The study can give insight into what these types of groups do throughout the entire course of their museum visit and to explore their experience in their own terms, including their interactions with tour guides and their responses to traditional displays, commercial activities and interactive exhibitions.
Further refinement of the methodology would include tape recordings of children talk during the visit and video images at selected points. Both refinements would supplement what an observer can capture and provide another source of triangulation. The tape recorder and video camera would also allow for a more rigorous comparison of the behaviour of school groups in different types of exhibitions. It would also be very interesting to compare the experiences produced by these organised groups (for example, school groups and tourist groups) and unorganised groups (for example, individuals and family groups) to further explore the different types of experiences at each site.

During data analysis gaps/insights were identified with regard to domestic visitors’ underutilisation of the exhibition environment at the Egyptian Museum. The majority of the domestic respondents did not enter the exhibition hall. Instead, the museum’s outdoor environment was a large part of the domestic visitor experience. Hence research with in-depth interviews with a large sample of domestic visitors is needed to tackle the following issues: Why the exhibition environment had a serious handicap in attracting those domestic visitors? In other words, what was the cause of this attitude where those domestic visitors did not look forward to an object or cognitive experiences? And how can the museum draw local visitors who only use the museum’s restaurant and garden to attend the exhibition hall?

Furthermore, there is clearly scope for further qualitative research that focuses on Egyptian visitors’ motives and experiences at other museums in Egypt. The study can give insight into what Egyptian visitors seek and do during their museum visit, including their reactions to the museum presentations and offerings. For example, do Egyptian visitors seek object experiences? Do they seek social experiences? Do they seek learning experiences? Or do they seek variety in the offerings? These issues could be explored to verify the finding of this study.

Finally, the findings of this study may support the application of a number of existing constructs in exploring the roles of other sites that is art galleries and other informal science education sites such as zoos, national parks, aquariums, science centres and botanical gardens). For example, Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) notion of the experience economy is particularly relevant to various educational leisure settings. “Here the consumer - or ‘guest’ to use a Disneyism – values a memorable experience over goods and services . . . when he buys an experience, he pays to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that a company
stages” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 45). According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), an experience goes beyond mere entertainment because of the way it engages and connects with customers.

Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) concept, together with Falk and Dierking’s (1992, 1997) interactive experience model, can be applied to extend our understanding of the different roles of other sites. For example, do art galleries only function as places for aesthetic experiences? Do zoos only function as sites for entertaining and educational places for children and adults? These issues could be profitable to explore through future research.
### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abdeen Palace</td>
<td>The palace was built in 1863. It was a royal residence until the end of the monarchy in 1952 and is still used by the president for official events. The palace is located within 10 minutes walking distance from the Egyptian Museum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aborigines</td>
<td>Australian Aborigines are the original inhabitants of the Australian continent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akaroa</td>
<td>It is a small French town and very popular tourist destination on the Banks Peninsula, about 85km from Christchurch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akhenaton</td>
<td>He is known also as Amenhotep IV. He is particularly famous for his promotion of the first universal religion in the world, the monotheistic worship of Aton, the sun god.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Azbakiya Gardens</td>
<td>Built in 1870 under the direction of the French landscape gardener M. Barillet and located not far from the centre of Cairo and the Egyptian Museum. The Gardens are known to be the lungs of the Cairo city and to offer beautiful views of exotic plants, trees and flowers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ahram (Egyptian newspaper)</td>
<td>The word Al - Aram literally means the pyramids. It is a daily newspaper published in Cairo, long regarded as Egypt's most authoritative and influential newspaper and one of the most important papers in the Arab world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>It was founded by Alexander the Great in April 331 BC It is located on Egypt's Mediterranean Coast. The city houses various Greco - Roman and Pharaonic monuments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Fayyum:</td>
<td>It is a city in Middle Egypt and is located about 130 km southwest of Cairo. Its Oasis is famous for fruit and vegetables and its chicken. The oasis offers both Egyptian and foreign visitors a relaxing break from city life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Gomhuria (Egyptian newspaper):</td>
<td>The word Al-Gomhuria literally means The Republic. It is an influential state-owned Egyptian Arabic language daily newspaper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Jannah:</td>
<td>It is the Arabic word for Paradise. It can also mean the Garden of Eden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenhotep IV:</td>
<td>He is better known as Akhenaton. He is particularly famous for his promotion of the first universal religion in the world, the monotheistic worship of Aton, the sun god.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anubis:</td>
<td>In Ancient Egypt mythology, Anubis is the god associated with resurrection, which guides the dead to the place where they will be judged, has the head of a dog. King Tutankhamen’s chamber flanked by god Anubis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Gulf visitors/tourists:</td>
<td>They are visitors or tourists from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabesque:</td>
<td>A popular decoration in Muslim architecture. Arabesque usually found decorating the walls and window screens of mosques and Muslim homes and buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archibald Nicoll</td>
<td>Archibald Frank Nicoll (1886–1953) was a New Zealand artist and art teacher. Nicoll had advanced his skills as a painter, made painting excursions to Holland, Belgium and France and developed a keen interest in etching. He continued to send out works annually for exhibition in New Zealand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aroha: It is a Maori term means love and compassion. While this is the major meaning of the term, Aroha refers to other meanings in Maori including poor, pity, sympathy, condolences and mercy.

Aswan: Aswan is located in the south of Egypt, about 680 km south of Cairo, just below the Aswan High Dam and Lake Nasser. It has distinctive African atmosphere and used to mark the southern boundary of the Ancient Egypt, and was then known as Syene.

Augustus: The first emperor of Rome, Augustus, also commonly known as Octavian, the adopted son of Julius Caesar. He was the first emperor to raise obelisks in the city of Rome, bringing two from Egypt.

Auguste Mariette: (February 11, 1821 – January 19, 1881) was a French scholar, archaeologist and Egyptologist, the founder of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

British Afro-Caribbean It is a term that refers to residents of the United Kingdom who are of West Indian background, and whose ancestors were indigenous to Africa.

Bulaq district: It is the north Western district of Cairo, Egypt. Situated on the Nile River, Bulaq was a major port suburb before the city of Cairo expanded to engulf it.

Bust of Amenhotep The largest statue in the Cairo Museum shows Amenhotep III and his family. He ruled during a peaceful time and was known as the pharaoh who beautified Egypt by building various monuments.
Chanzilize Street

It is the most famous street in France and a fashion hub with many international renowned clothing stores.

Cuba Street

It is one of the most prominent streets in Wellington, New Zealand. is the home to an eclectic collection of cafes, op-shops, boutique, small fashion stores, art galleries, and music shops.

Exodus:

The Exodus is the story of the departure of the Israelites from ancient Egypt described in the Hebrew Bible.

Fellaheen:

Fellaheen is the plural for the word “Fellah,” which is the Arabic word for farmer, peasant, or agricultural worker, or any rural inhabitant who makes his or her living from the land--as opposed to the nomadic wanderer.

Foul – Mudammes:

It is a Middle Eastern dish of cooked and mashed fava beans served with chopped parsley, olive oil, onion, and garlic and lemon juice.

Gamal Abdel Nasser:

He is seen as one of the most important political figures in both modern Arab world and Third World politics in the 20th century. He led the bloodless coup, known as the 1952 Revolution, which toppled the monarchy of King Farouk and heralded a new period of modernization and socialist reform in Egypt together with a profound advancement of pan-Arab nationalism.

Gaston Maspero:

Gaston Maspero (June 23, 1846 - June 30, 1916) was a French Egyptologist who served as director of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, where he established the French School of Oriental Archaeology.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giza district</th>
<th>It is located on the west bank of the Nile River, some 20 km southwest of central Cairo. The three main Pyramids of Giza are the focal point of the Giza district.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giza governorate:</td>
<td>It is located on the west bank of the Nile River, some 20 km southwest of central Cairo. The three main Pyramids of Giza are the focal point of the Giza district. It is one of the governorates of Egypt. It is in the centre of the country, situated on the west bank of the Nile River opposite Cairo. Its capital is the city of Giza which includes the Giza Plateau: the site of some of the most impressive ancient monuments in the world, including the Great Sphinx, the Great Pyramid of Giza, and a number of other large pyramids and temples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giza Plateau</td>
<td>The Giza Plateau is a plateau that is located in the immediate vicinity of South-Western suburbs of modern Cairo (in Giza) where the three great pyramids are located</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldie</td>
<td>Goldie Charles Frederick Goldie (1870–1947) was a well-known New Zealand artist, famous for his portrayal of Māori dignitaries. went to Paris to study at the famous Académie Julian. This was a conservative institution, resistant to Impressionism and the avant-garde, and Goldie received a strong grounding in traditional, formal drawing and painting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groupie</td>
<td>It was a restaurant and bar. It was frequented by elite society, intellectuals, political figures and British and French clientele.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hatshepsut: She was a female Pharaoh in Egypt, famous for portraying herself as a man. She was one of the greatest builders in ancient Egypt: she erected temples, obelisks and commissioned statues and works of art.

Hurghada: Hurghada is located in eastern Egypt on the Western coast of the Red Sea. It is a world renowned dive resort.

Isis: The Egyptian goddess Isis was worshipped throughout Egypt, even from very early dates. Ancient Egyptians referred to her as Isis the goddess of magic. In Ancient Egyptian myths, Isis had a brother called Osiris, who became her husband, and she then was said to have conceived Horus.

Karaite Jews: They believe that they adhere to the plain text of the Torah as prescribed by God. They originated in the eighth century in Persia and spread all over the Middle East particularly in Egypt, Israel, Iraq and Spain. The turmoil of the Revolution in 1952, the chaos of the Suez crisis and the defeat in 1967 damaged Egypt’s reputation as a safe haven of tolerance. Many of them forced or induced to flee to Europe and North America. For further explanations on these topics see for example, Mourad El-Kodsi’s (1987) Karaite Jews of Egypt 1882-1986.

Kiwi: It is the national bird of New Zealand. The people of New Zealand are colloquially called Kiwis.
Koha: It is a Maori term and a custom which is translated as contribution, offering, gift or donation, especially of cash. The giving of koha stems from the Maori tradition of bringing gifts or taonga when visiting tangata whenua or other people or tribes. In more modern times the giving of money has replaced, in some instances, the giving of gifts, taonga and kai (food).

Koran or Qur'an: The sacred text of Islam, considered by Muslims to contain the revelations of God to Prophet Muhammad.

Lord Carnarvon: His name is George Edward Stanhope known as Lord Carnarvon. He was the British financial partner in the discovery of the tomb of King Tutankhamen. He died suddenly after opening the tomb of Tutankhamen, leading to the story of a mummy's curse.

Luxor: Luxor is located 700 km south of Cairo at the Nile River, built in the ancient city of Thebes. Luxor has been a major tourist destination ever since Nile steamers began calling in the nineteenth century to view the remains of ancient Egypt.

Colin McCahon Colin McCahon is an outstanding figure in New Zealand visual art of the twentieth century. He was a great painter and a profound thinker. He was also a teacher, curator, and critic whose contribution to art in New Zealand is immense.

Mana Whenua: The term Mana Whenua has various layers of meaning. It describes the significant relationships that Maori have with Whenua (the land) and of the value placed upon the land within the culture.
Maori: They are the native people of New Zealand. They arrived from East Polynesia in several waves at some time before the year 1300.

Mecca: Also spelled Makah. Mecca is the centre of the Islamic world and the birthplace of both the Prophet Muhammad and the religion he founded.

Menkaure: He was a pharaoh of the Fourth dynasty of Egypt (c. 2620 BC–2480 BC) who ordered the construction of the third and smallest of the Pyramids of Giza.

Misr: The term Misr originated from the Arabic word Misr which means Egypt. The name of Egypt (Misr) was mentioned in the Koran more than fourteen times, with its meaning in Arabic “the region” or “the country.”

Missryin: Plural word for “Missry” which is the Arabic word for Egyptian. This term originated from the Arabic word Misr which means Egypt. The name of Egypt (Misr) was mentioned in the Koran more than fourteen times, with its meaning in Arabic “the region” or “the country.”

Monuments de l’Egypte et de la Nubie: Numerous inscriptions were recorded by French Egyptologist Jean Francois Champollion in Egypt and Lower Nubia in an 1828-1829 expedition with the Italian scholar Ippolito Rossolini and the artist Nestor L'Hote. These were first published in Monuments de l'Egypte et de la Nubia, Description of Monuments in Egypt and Nubian vols. 1 and 2 (1832).
Moses: He was born between 1300 and 1150 B.C. in Egypt. Moses, the most famous of all personalities in the Bible, was chosen to be the leader of the Jewish people, to lead them out of the slavery in Egypt and to give them the Torah.

Muhammad Ali Pasha He came to Egypt as a Turkish army officer in 1800, he rose to rule Egypt, and his descendents continued to do so until the last king of Egypt, King Farouk, abdicated his rule in 1952 by royal decree No. 65-1952. Muhammad Ali Pasha is considered by many to be the founder of modern Egypt. He was the first Egyptian ruler to determine to stop the trade in Egyptian antiquities.

Nakamal Nakamal in terms of village life in Vanuatu is a place of meeting and is generally a 'mens' only area where all matters of significance are discussed, men of importance met by the village, presentations and a substantial number of ceremonies held.

Nasirist Pan-Arabism It is a political movement aimed at unifying the Arab nation. The movement began in Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser. The movement rejected Islamic sentiments in favour of a unified Arab nation bound by ties of Arab culture and history.

Nefertari: (C. 1290–1255 BC) She was the chief Queen and favourite wife of Ramses the Great. Her image is a famous one in Egyptology because her tomb contains some of the finest artwork known in all of Egypt, still in an excellent state of preservation.
Ni - Vanuatu: They are the original inhabitants of the Vanuatu islands. They are known as native Melanesian people who constitute almost 95% of the population, with the remainder of the population made up of Europeans, Asians and other Pacific islanders Vanuatu.

Nubia: Nubia is a region that lies partly in southern Egypt and partly in northern Sudan. Although Nubia is no longer an independent region, many of the inhabitants who live there still consider themselves to be Nubians, and some can trace their heritage back over centuries of African history.

Nubian Museum: It is located in the city of Aswan, on the eastern bank of the Nile, 899 kilometres south of Cairo. The museum was opened in 1997. It houses the major finds of the UNESCO salvage campaign which was carried out to save the Nubian monuments at the time of the building of the High Dam of Egypt, still in an excellent condition.

Osiris: Osiris is commonly known in ancient Egyptian mythology as the god of the Nile, the creator of all things living, the god of the Afterlife and the underworld. He was the brother and husband of Isis, with Horus being considered begotten son.

Pakeha: Pakeha is a Maori term that is generally used to describe New Zealanders of predominantly European descent.

Pasha: The term Pasha itself is an honorary/elite official title used to be granted to generals, governors and different segments of the Egyptian society’s elite. It is similar to the British title “Lord,” “Prince” or “Earl.” The term was abolished after Nasser's 1952 Revolution.
| **Passover:** | Passover is a Jewish holy day or festival. It commemorates the physical freedom of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. |
| **Qena:** | It is a city in Upper Egypt, and the capital of the Qena Governorate. It is situated on the east bank of the Nile. The city has a considerable Coptic and Islamic heritage. |
| **Ramses II:** | Ramses II reigned from 1279 BCE to 1213 BCE. He is also known as Ramses the Great for his contributions to Egypt, including his war campaigns to the Mediterranean and into Nubia, as well as his construction projects, such as cities, temples and tombs. Several scholars identify the pharaoh of the enslavement with Ramses II, but they differ as to whether the Exodus occurred during his reign or only in the days of his son Merneptah. |
| **Rita Angus:** | (March 12, 1908 – January 25, 1970) She was one of the most famous and talented New Zealand artists. Her feminism and pacifism are most clearly expressed in her different paintings. |
| **Rosetta Stone:** | The stone was found by Napoleon's troops in Egypt during his campaigns there. It is very famous for it provided the key to solve the ancient Egyptian language. The historian and linguist Jean François Champollion translated the *Rosetta Stone*. The original Stone is now housed in the British Museum. |
| **Salah El-Din Citadel:** | The citadel was constructed by Salah El Din, the governor of Egypt, in 1183 AD overlooking the whole city of Cairo to be his defensive point against the attacks of the Crusaders. |
Shisha: It is an Egyptian tobacco pipe with a long bendable tube attached to a small water container where the smoke is cooled by passing through the water.

Suez Canal: It is one of the world's most important waterways. It connects the Red Sea with the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Opened in November 1869, it allows water transportation between Europe and Asia without navigating around Africa.

Tahrir Square: English translation "Liberation Square." It is the bustling noisy centre of Cairo where tourists find the Egyptian Museum, as well as an amazing variety of shops, bazaars, travel agencies, eating places, banks and cinemas. The square also is the nucleus of modern Cairo. It is representative of the more modern, commercial centre of Cairo; it houses various significant old and modern buildings in addition to it being a public transport hub, all of which have turned the square into one of the most vital and busiest districts in the city.

Tamaaya: It is deep frying chickpeas with tahini and salad and is often served with tahini and salad.

Te Maori exhibition: It was the first international exhibition of taonga Maori (treasured Maori objects) from New Zealand museum collections. It has been the most successful Maori art that toured the USA in 1985-1986. This exhibition changed the way that museums and art galleries interpreted and managed treasured Maori artefacts.

Te Papa Tongarewa: It is broadly translatable as "the place of treasures of this land".
Te reo: The Maori language. Literally means language.

The Bulaq Museum: From 1858 to 1891 the Egyptian Museum was known as the Bulaq Museum; from 1891 to 1900, the Giza Museum; and since 1900, the Egyptian Museum of Cairo.

The Marae: Te papa’s Marae is a very special place where the visitor can experience Maori art and culture. The term Marae is collectively known as the sacred place where people formally come together on a specific occasion for a specific function. It has its own tikanga (customs), although this may vary from iwi to iwi (tribe to tribe).

The Pharaoh Tutankhamen: Tutankhamen, or better known as King Tut, is an 18th dynasty Pharaoh who inherited the throne at a very young age. His reign was short-lived. He remains one of Egypt’s grandest icons. He is the world’s best known pharaoh, partly because his tomb is among the best preserved, and his image and associated artefacts the most-exhibited.

Thoutmosis the Third III: He was the sixth Pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. He is known as the Napoleon of Egypt. He possessed all the qualities of a great ruler. He was a brilliant general who never lost a battle and he also excelled as an administrator and statesman.

Thomas Cook: (1808 –1892) He was an English gentleman, who heralded the era of travel business in Egypt and opened the country as the prospective sight for spending winter holidays. He is more or less developed the tourism industry in Egypt with his first escorted tour in 1869.
Toi Te Papa: Art of the Nation: It is a major exhibition celebrating New Zealand’s rich and diverse artistic heritage. This long-term exhibition exhibits hundreds of impressive artworks from Te Papa Papa’s major collections.

Toss Woollaston: Toss Sir Mountford Tosswill "Toss" Woollaston (1910–1998) was one of the most important New Zealand painters of the twentieth century. He studied art at the Canterbury School of Art in Christchurch. He became interested in modernism after moving to Dunedin to study.

Treaty of Waitangi: Signed in 1840 between the British Crown and Maori, whereby all rights and powers of sovereignty were ceded to the queen of England, all territorial rights being secured to the chiefs and their tribes. The treaty is seen as New Zealand's founding document.

Wahine sinking or Wahine disaster: The sinking of the ship Wahine in Wellington harbour, New Zealand on the 10th April 1968.

Wellington: Wellington is the capital of New Zealand and a major cultural, commercial, cosmopolitan centre. In population it is New Zealand's second largest city.

Zahi Hawass: He is an Egyptian archaeologist, an Egyptologist and the head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities. He is considered the most famous and world renowned contemporary Egyptologist.
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Appendices

Appendix A

Information Form for Questionnaires of Visitor Participants at The Egyptian and Te Papa Museums

Lincoln University

Environment, Society and Design Department

Dear visitor participant,

As part of my PhD study, I am researching visitors’ experiences in museums. You are invited to participate as a subject in this research which is entitled: “How Visitors Relate to Museum Presentations and Offerings: Insights from the Egyptian Museum of Cairo and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.” As such, I am very interested in your views. If you are under the age of 18, you will be excluded from the project on the basis of the research question relating to age. I understand that this is a very special time for you and would be grateful if I could interview you. I would like to record and transcribe the interview which will last between 25 to 30 minutes, depending on your response.

No covert research will occur and any information collected will be used solely for the purpose of completion of my doctoral thesis. The results of the research may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of the data gathered in this research: the identity of the participants will not be made public. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question. You could not withdraw from the research because it would be anonymous and by participating you are giving consent. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher, his supervisors and the bilingual specialists will be the only persons with access to the data. The bilingual experts will examine the language of the transcript to assure accuracy of translation. I will keep the data in a secure storage until destruction.

The project is being carried out by Ahmed Abdel–Fattah who can be contacted by either phone: 64 3 325 2811 (Extension 8105) or email: abdelfaa@lincoln.ac.nz. Alternatively, you can contact my main supervisor Dr. David Fisher, phone 64 3 325 2811 (Extension 8149).
The project has been reviewed and approved by The Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee (HEC). Before the tape recorded interview takes place, you may ask for sufficient time to think through whether you wish to take part in the project and raise questions.
Appendix B
Interview Question Topics for Visitor Participant at Te Papa Museum

Visiting the museums

1. What is your country of residence?
2. Who have you come with?
3. Why did you visit the museum today?
4. Have you been to the museum before?
5. How long did you stay in the museum?
6. Did you read anything about this museum before you visited? What did you read?
7. When was the decision made to visit the museum?
8. Is the visit to the museum the main activity for the day or part of other attractions?

Expectations and the experience of exhibitions and interactive media

1. Was there anything in particular you were looking forward to seeing at the museum?
2. What exhibitions did you visit at the museum?
3. What else did you visit?
4. Do you think any of the exhibitions you visited today added to your understanding of a particular subject/theme? Which exhibitions? In what ways?
5. Did the people you came to the museum with affect your visit? In what ways?
6. Did other visitors at the museums affect your visit? In what ways?
7. Did you use any of the computer programmes and audio visuals in the museum? If yes, what did you like most/least about them?
8. Did you use the interactive exhibitions in the museum? If yes, what did you think of them?
9. Did you discover any new information by using the interactive exhibitions? Could you please tell me what?

Facilities and Services

1. Did you use the information desk? Yes____ No____

If yes, what did you think of the service?
1. Very poor.
2. Poor.
3. Fair.
4. Good.
5. Very good.

2. Did you go to any of the museum’s cafés/restaurants? Yes____ No____
If yes, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the service and menu?
   1. Very satisfied.
   2. Satisfied.
   3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
   4. Dissatisfied.
   5. Very dissatisfied.

3. Did you go to the gift shop (s)? Yes____ No____
If yes, what did you think of the quality of the souvenirs and clothing?
   1. Very poor
   2. Poor
   3. Fair.
   4. Good.
   5. Very good.

4. How did you feel about the prices in the gift shop (s)?
   1. Very expensive.
   2. Expensive.
   3. Average
   4. Inexpensive
   5. Very Inexpensive

5. Did you use the parking spaces? Yes____ No____
If yes, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the parking?
   1. Very satisfied
   2. Satisfied
   3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
4. Dissatisfied.
5. Very dissatisfied.

6. Did you use the toilet facilities? Yes____ No____
If yes, what did you think of the quality of the toilet facilities?
   1. Very poor.
   2. Poor.
   3. Fair.
   4. Good.
   5. Very good.

7. Did you come into contact with museum staff? Yes____ No____
If yes, where?

7. What is your opinion of the staff you came in contact with?
   1. Very unfriendly.
   2. Quite unfriendly.
   3. Indifferent.
   4. Quite friendly.
   5. Very friendly.

Main weaknesses/strengths of the museum experience:
1. How did you feel about the price of the ticket/admission to the museum?
2. How has this visit been different/similar to visiting other attractions?
3. What did you like most about your trip to the museum today?
4. What did you least like about your trip to the museum today?
   Why do you say that?
5. In general, what would have improved your experience at the museum today?

6. Is there anything else you would like to tell me, which relates to your interest in and experience of the museum?

Characteristics of visitors:
1. What is your occupation?

2. What is the highest qualification(s) have you completed? (Grade school, High school, College/University graduate school).

Appendix C
Interview Question Topics for International Visitor Participant at the Egyptian Museum

Visiting the museums
1. What is your country of residence?
2. Who have you come with?
3. Why did you visit the museum today?
4. Have you been to the museum before?
5. How long did you stay in the museum?
6. Did you read or heard anything about this museum before you visited? What did you read or hear?
7. When was the decision made to visit the museum?
8. Is the visit to the museum the main activity for the day or part of other attractions?

Expectations and the experience of exhibitions and interactive media
1. Was there anything in particular you were looking forward to seeing at the museum?
2. What exhibitions did you visit at the museum?
3. What else did you visit?
4. Do you think any of the exhibitions you visited today added to your understanding of a particular subject/theme? Which exhibitions? In what ways?
5. Did the people you came to the museum with affect your visit? In what ways?
6. Did other visitors at the museums affect your visit? In what ways?

Facilities and Services
1. Did you use the information desk? Yes____ No____
   If yes, what did you think of the service?
2. Did you go to any of the museum’s cafés/restaurants? Yes____ No____
   If yes, how would you describe your experience?
3. Did you go to the gift shop (s)? Yes____ No____
If yes, what did you think of the quality of the souvenirs and clothing?

4. How did you feel about the prices in the gift shop(s)?
   1. Very expensive.
   2. Expensive.
   3. Average.
   4. Inexpensive.
   5. Very Inexpensive.

5. Did you use the parking spaces? Yes____ No____
If yes, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the parking?
   1. Very satisfied.
   2. Satisfied
   3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
   4. Dissatisfied.
   5. Very dissatisfied.

6. Did you use the toilet facilities? Yes____ No____
If yes, what did you think of the quality of the toilet facilities?

7. Did you come into contact with museum staff? Yes____ No____
If yes, where?

8. What is your opinion or experience of the staff/tour guides you came in contact with?

Main weaknesses/strengths of the museum experience:

1. How did you feel about the price of the ticket/admission to the museum?
2. How has this visit been different/similar to visiting other attractions?
3. What did you like most about your trip to the museum today? Why do you say that?
4. What did you least like about your trip to the museum today? Why do you say that?
5. In general, what would have improved your experience at the museum today?

Characteristics of visitors:

1. What is your occupation?
2. What is the highest qualification(s) have you completed? (Grade school, High school, College/University graduate school).
Appendix D
Information Form for Interviews of Museum Staff at Te Papa Museum

Lincoln University
Environment, Society and Design Division

Contact Letter Museum Staff

Dear [insert name]

My name is Ahmed Abdel-Fattah and I am a Ph.D. student at Lincoln University. I am currently working on a project entitled: “How Visitors Relate to Museum Presentations and Offerings: Insights from the Egyptian Museum of Cairo and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.” The aim of this project is to gain an understanding of the museum visitors' experiences, motivations, and expectations vis-à-vis museum presentations and offerings. As such, I am very interested in your views as someone who is involved in the museum sector/industry and I would like to invite you to participate in this research. I would like to discuss the following general topics in an interview of 25 to 40 minutes:

- The characteristics of the visitors who visit your museum.
- The content of your exhibitions.
- The services and facilities in and around the museum.
- The activities and events in the museum.

No covert research will occur and any information collected will be used solely for the purpose of completion of my doctoral thesis. All findings will be handled confidentially. The interviewee will be identified by the institution but his/her personal identity will not be revealed, as only a general job description will be made public (for example, management team, service staff, security staff, guide etc). You can refuse to answer any questions or terminate the interview at any time. You could not withdraw from the research because it would be anonymous and by participating you are giving consent. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher, his supervisors and the bilingual specialists will be the only
persons with access to the data. The bilingual experts will examine the language of the transcript to assure accuracy of translation. I will keep the data in a secure storage until destruction.

I would be happy to provide the museum with a copy of the doctorate thesis once it has been completed. I can be contacted at 64 3 325 2811 (Extension 8105). I will be pleased to discuss any concerns you have about participation in the project. Alternatively, you can contact my main supervisor Dr. David Fisher, phone 64 3 325 2811 (Extension 8149) or by mail at Social Science, Parks, Recreation and Tourism Group, Environment, Society and Design Division, Lincoln University, P.O. Box 84, Canterbury, New Zealand. The project has been reviewed and approved by The Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee (HEC).

Yours Sincerely

Ahmed Abdel-Fattah

Ph.D. Student.
Appendix E
Interview Question Topics for Service Staff at Te Papa Museum

History of staff

1. Are you a full time or part time employee?
2. How long have you been working in the museum? Did you work in other museums before this one?
3. How would you describe your job?
4. What part of your job do you enjoy most?
5. Do you speak more than one language?
6. What other languages do you speak?

Visitors

1. In what ways do you interact with visitors?
2. What language do you usually use when you interact with visitors?
3. What do you personally enjoy most from your interaction with visitors?
4. What is your opinion of the visitors you come in contact with?
5. What kinds of questions/queries do they ask?
6. Do they make any comments or requests that you often hear? If yes, what kinds of comments or requests?
7. What kind of nationalities do you find it hard to communicate with? Why?
8. What kind of nationalities do you find it easy to communicate with? Why?
9. Do you change your style of communication towards different kinds of visitors?
   If so, why?
10. How do you handle a frustrated/disturbed visitor?
11. In your past experience, have you had any special experience you would like to share?
   If yes, what is it?
Appendix F
Interview Question Topics for Management Staff at Te Papa Museum

History of staff
1. Are you a full time or part time employee?
2. How long have you been working in the museum? Did you work in other museums before this one?
3. How would you describe your job?
4. What part of your job do you enjoy most?
5. Have you had any formal qualifications in museum curatorship?

About the museum
1. In your opinion, what do you see as the main role of the museum?
2. What other roles does it have?
3. Does the museum provide any training opportunities (for example, workshops or conferences) to museum personnel?
4. What sort of training do you get at this museum?
5. How have the exhibits in the museum changed in the last 10 years?
6. How would you best describe the dominant theme of the exhibits?
7. What factors go into deciding what to show in the exhibits?
8. How do the interactive media add value to the museum visit?
9. Do you regard the interactive media as an educational tool or an entertainment tool? Why?

Visitors
1. From your dealings with visitors, where do the visitors come from?
2. How do they get to the museum?
3. How long does the average visitor stay?
4. What parts of the museum do visitors usually visit?
5. What themes/subjects of the exhibitions attract visitors most? Why?
6. In your view, what types of museum activities are most popular among visitors? With which visitors? Why?
7. In your opinion, what types of commercial facilities are most popular among visitors? With which visitors? Why?

8. Are there any similarities/differences between the needs and interests of visitors and local visitors? In what ways?

9. Do visitors of different nationalities have different interests or tastes? If yes, what do they want see?

10. How does the museum fulfil their special interests and needs?

11. In your opinion, would this museum be more or less likely than non-traditional sites (such as shopping centres, fair trades, festivals) to attract visitors? Why?

12. In your view, what are the key factors or characteristics of the museum experience that attract visitors most?
Appendix G
Interview Question Topics for Marketing Staff at Te Papa Museum

History of staff
1. Are you a full time or part time employee?
2. How long have you been working in the museum? Did you work in other museums before this one?
3. How would you describe your job?
4. What part of your job do you enjoy most?

Marketing:
1. What do you see as the main role of the museum marketing department? What other roles does it have?
2. How has the museum marketing changed in the last 10 years?
3. In your view, where do the web and new media technologies fit into the museum marketing today?
4. What do you consider to be the most important market segment?
   Why?
5. In your opinion, are there specific marketing images that appeal to visitors most? If yes, what are they?
6. In what ways do they appeal to visitors?
7. Do visitors of different nationalities have specific images about the museum?
8. Who are these visitors?
9. What kinds of images do they have about the museum?
10. Do the interactive media play an important role in the museum marketing? If so, in what ways?
11. Does your museum work with tour operators? If so, how do you work with them?
Appendix H
Arabic Version of Information Form for Questionnaires of Domestic Participants at the Egyptian Museum
تخزين في ممكان أمن وخاص في جامعة لينكولن لفترة محددة ثم يتم التخلص منها بواسطة الجامعة بعد الحصول على درجة الدكتوراه.

هذا البحث يقوم بتنفيذ الباحث الشهير جورج عبد الفتاح والذي يمكنه الاتصال به في نيوزيلندا رقم الهاتف 22224811 (داخلي 810) أو يمكنه الاتصال بالموظف العامد الدكتور ديفيد فيشر على الهاتف بنيوزيلندا رقم 22228811 (داخلي 8149) أو يمكنهم إرسال بريد جوي على العنوان التالي:

Social Science, Park, Recreation and Tourism Group, Environment, Society and Design, Division, Lincoln University, PO Box 84, Canterbury, New Zealand, 7647.

هذا المشروع تم مراجعته وفحصته والموافقة النهائية عليه من مجلس جامعة لينكولن للدراسات الإنسانية والأخلاقية.
Appendix I
Arabic Version of Interview Question Topics for Domestic Participants at the Egyptian Museum

 موضوعات حوار الأسئلة مع السائقين (الناحية)

زيارة المتحف:
ما هو موقع إقامتكم الدائم؟
من الذين قدمت معهم؟
إذا قررت أن تزور المتحف اليوم؟
هل زرت هذا المتحف من قبل؟
كمية استمتعت فترة زيارتك للمتحف؟
هل قرأت أي شيء عن هذا المتحف قبل زيارتك اليوم؟
ما الذي قرأت؟
متى اتخذت القرار لزيارة المتحف؟
هل زيارة المتحف اليوم هي النشاط الأساسي لك؟ أم جزء من نشاطات سياحية وترفيهية أخرى؟
توقعاتك ورأيك في المتحف والآثار المعروضة:
هل هناك أي شيء خاص في ذهنك سبب أن تراه اليوم في المتحف؟
ما الأقسام أو المناطق أو الفنون التي أودت بزيارتها في المتحف؟
هل هناك أشياء أخرى قمت بزيارتها اليوم؟
هل الأثر في المتحف قد أضافت شيئاً جديد لمعرفتك وما هي تلك الآثار؟
كمية أضافت تلك الآثار شيء جديد لك؟
هل الأشخاص الذين قمت معهم إلى المتحف حك منهم تأثير على زيارتك اليوم؟ كيف؟ اكتب عن رأيك حولها؟
الخدمات والنشاطات بالمتحف:

هل تعاملت مع مكتب المعلومات عند دخولك المتحف؟

نعم / لا

- إذا حكانت الإجابة (بنعم) ما رأيك في الخدمة:
  1. رديئة جدا
  2. رديئة
  3. الخدمة متوسطة
  4. الخدمة جيدة
  5. الخدمة جيدة جدا

هل ذهبت إلى متحف القلعة؟

نعم / لا

- إذا حكانت الإجابة (بنعم) كيف تقيم الخدمة:
  1. هل أنت راضٍ جدا
  2. هل أنت راض
  3. ليست راضياً ولست غير راضياً
  4. غير راضي
  5. غير راضي على الإطلاق

هل ذهبت إلى مكتبة الهدايا والصوتي بالمتحف؟

نعم / لا

- إذا حكانت الإجابة (بنعم) ما رأيك في جودة السلع المقدمة هناك:
  1. رديئة جدا
  2. رديئة
  3. السلع متوسطة الجودة
  4. السلع جيدة
  5. السلع جيدة جدا

-2-
ما رأيك في الأسعار بمحكية: الهدايا والحليب بالتحف؟

1. باهظة الثمن جدا
2. باهظة الثمن
3. متوسطة الثمن
4. غير باهظة الثمن
5. رخيصة جدا

هل استخدمت المرحاض أو الحمام بالتحف؟

نعم / لا

- إذا حكانت الإجابة: (نعم) ما رأيك في جودة الحمامات؟

المرحاض:
1. رديئة جدا
2. رديئة
3. متوسطة الجودة
4. جيدة
5. جيدة جدا

هل استخدمت ساحات انتظار السيارات حول المتحف؟

نعم / لا

- إذا حكانت الإجابة: (نعم) ما هو انطباعك العام عن ساحات انتظار السيارات?

انتظار السيارات:
1. راضٍ جدا
2. راضٍ
3. ليست راضياً ولست غيري راضياً
4. غيري راضى
5. غيري راضى على الإطلاق
هل حسب أي ضعف سلبيّة؟ اتصال بينك وبين موظفي المتحف
نعم / لا
إذا كانت الإجابة (نعم) ما هو إتطاعك عن موظفي المتحف:
1) غير متعاونين جدا
2) غير متعاونين
3) متعاونين إلى حد ما
4) متعاونين
5) متعاونين جدا

الأعمال السلبيّة / الإيجابية لزيارتك اليوم:
ما هو إتطاعك عن تذكيره دخول المتحف؟
كيف أن هذه الزيارة للمتحف تختلف / تتشابه مع زيارات
نطاق السياحية أخرى؟
ما هو أشكش ما تجده في هذه الزيارة اليوم في المتحف؟
ما الذين الذي لا تجده على الإطلاق في هذه الزيارة اليوم في
المتحف؟
بشكل عام ما الذي يمكن عمله لتحسن زيارةك اليوم
للمتحف؟

بيانات عن السائحين:
ما هو عملك؟
ما هي أعلاى الدراسات العلمية التي حصلت عليها أو أكملتها؟
إبتدائي - إعدادي - ثانوي - معهد متوسط - معهد عالي -
بحكالوريوس - دراسات عليا
ما هو عمرك
(71 - 75) (76 - 80) (81 - 85) (86 - 90)
Appendix J

Arabic Version of Information Form for Interviews of Museum Staff at the Egyptian Museum

صيغة المعلومات والموافقة على إجراء
مناقشة شخصية مع موظف المتحف المصري
جامعة لينكولن / قسم البيئة والمجتمع والتصميمات
خطاب ترحيب موجه إلى السادة موظفي المتحف المصري:

عزيزي السيد / موظف المتحف المصري

اسمي: أحمد عبد الفتاح وأنا باحث نيوزيلندي مصري أعد رسالة الدكتوراة في جامعة لينكولن نيوزيلندا، أتمنى أن تكون على جمع المادة العلمية موضوع رسالة الدكتوراة بعنوان (انطباع السائحين) لما تقدمه المتحف من عروض ونشاطات - نظرية عميقة من داخل المتحف النيوزيلندي والمتحف المصري بالقاهرة. الهدف من الرسالة هو المقارنة وفهم دوافع وتوتخمات ومتطلبات السائحين وما يقدمه المتحف من خدمات وعروض وتسهيلات.

لهذا فإني أريد معرفة وجهة نظرك كموظف في المتحف المصري وأن أدعوك أن تشارك في هذا البحث العلمي الأكاديمي. الحوار سوف يحتوي مسجلا أنا أريد مناقشة الموضوعات التالية علميا بأن إجراء الحوار سوف يأخذ ما بين 15-20 دقيقة:

1. أنواع السائقي الذين يزورون المتحف.
2. محتوى الأثار التي يعرضها المتحف.
3. الخدمات والتسهيلات والعرض الذي يقدمها المتحف للزائر العام.
4. النشاطات التي يقدما المتحف للزائر مثل العروض الخاصة.

كل المعلومات التي يتم جمعها سوف تستخدم لغرض علمي أكاديمي بحث وهو مشروع الدكتوراه. حكمل نتائج البحث سوف تعامل معاملة سريّة تامة بمعنى أن موظفي المتحف المشاركون في البحث لن ولم تذكر أسمائهم ولا موقعهم الوظيفي في رسالة الدكتوراه على
الطلاق، سوف يشير إليهم بمثابة عامة وهم السادة موظفي المتحف المصري. أن ذلك الحق يدفع أن ترفض أن تشرك في هذا المشروع العلمي، أو أن ذلك الحق أن ترفض أن تصبح من أي سائل موجه إليك، وللحصول على السريان القافية والترجمة الدقيقة والصحيحة. إن الذي سوف يقوم بالإطلاع على النسخة الأصلية للمقابلة، هم الأشخاص التاليين فقط: 

بباحث نفسه، اثنين من المرشحين على رسالة الدكتوراه، وليست لغوي يجيد اللغتين العربية والألمانية. الخبير اللغوي سوف يحمل محتوى المقابلة للتأكد من درجة الترجمة. محقق المعلومات سوف يسجن في محكمة أمن وخاص في جامعة لينكولن لفحص معينة، ثم يتم التخلص منها بواسطة الجامعة بعد الحصول على درجة الدكتوراه.

إذا سوف أقوم بتقديم نسخة من رسالة الدكتوراه إلى المتحف المصري فور إتمامها، وإذا كان لديك أي استفسار تتعلق بالإتصال بالأبحاث نفسك على الهاتف نيو زيلاند رقم 447232511 (داخل 510-581) أو يمكنك الإتصال بالمرشد العام دكتور ديفيد فيشر على الهاتف نيو زيلاند رقم 447232511 (داخل 510-581) أو يمكنك إرسال بريد جوي على العنوان التالي:

Social Science, Park, Recreation and Tourism Group, Environment, Society and Design, Division, Lincoln University, PO Box 84, Canterbury, New Zealand, 7647.

المشروع تم مراجعته وفحصه والموافقة عليه من مجلس جامعة لينكولن للدراسات الإنسانية والأخلاقية.

مع خالص الشكر

أحمد عبد الفتاح
باحث دكتوراه
Appendix K
Arabic Version of Interview Question Topics for Service Staff at the Egyptian Museum

موضوعات حوارات الأسئلة
مع السادة موظفي المتحف من الأسئلة والاستعلامات
وأمن المتحف الداخلي

تاريخ السيد موظف المتحف:
1. هل هذا هو عملك الأساسي اليومي أم هذا عمل إضافي لك؟
2. كيف بدأ عملك في المتحف؟ هل عملت في متحف آخر قبل هذا?
3. كيف تصف عملك في المتحف?
4. ما هو الشيء الخاص الذي تتطلع به في عملك في المتحف؟
5. هل تتحدث أسكروتن لغة؟
6. ما هي اللغات الأخرى التي تتحدث بها؟

السائحين
7. كيف تتعامل أو تتعامل مع السائحين؟
8. ما هي اللغة التي تستخدمها دائماً عند الاحتيال أو التعامل مع السائحين؟
9. في رأيك الشخصي ما أكثر شيء تجربته تشمل تعامله مع السائحين؟
10. ما هو أجمل في السائحين الذين تتعامل معهم؟
11. ما هو نوع الأسئلة التي يوجهها لك السائحين؟
12. هل للسائحين طلبات خاصة أو تعليقات خاصة عن المتحف؟
13. ما هي الم.elements التي يصعب التعامل معها؟ وإذاً:
14. ما هي الممارسات التي يسبب التخلف عنها؟ ولماذا؟
هل تغير من طريقة تتعاملك مع السائقين حسب نوع السائق؟
وصيتك بحكوم هذا التغيير؟
14. هل تتعامل مع سائق غاضب / أو غير راضي أو غير سعيد في المتحف؟
15. من تزورك في العمل بالتحف هل هناك حادث خاص حدث لك تريد أن تتحدث عنه في هذا الحوار؟ إذا الإجابة نعم ما هو هذا الحادث؟
Appendix L

Arabic Version of Interview Question Topics for Management Staff at the Egyptian Museum

موضوعات حوار الأساتذة
مع السادة موظفي إدارة المتحف

تاريخ السيد موظف المتحف:
1. هل هذا هو عملك الأساسي اليوم أم هذا عمل إضافي لك؟
2. حكم مدة خدمتك في المتحف؟ هل عملت في متاحف أخرى قبل هذا المتحف؟
3. كيف تصف عملك في المتحف؟
4. ما هو الشئ الخاص الذي تستمتع به في عملك في المتحف؟
5. هل لديك أي درجات جامعية علمية في التحافت والآثار؟

عن المتحف:
6. في رأيك الشخصي ما هو الدور الأساسي لرئيسي للمتحف وما هي الدور الآخر الذي يقوم بها المتحف؟
7. هل يقدم المتحف أي فرس تدريبية للعاملين به مثل دورات تدريبية أو دورات إرشادية؟
8. ما هو نوع التدريب الذي تلقاه في هذا المتحف؟
9. كيف تتغير المهام والخدمات والأنشطة التي يقوم بها المتحف للزوارين خلال العشر سنوات الماضية؟
10. ما هو الموضوع أو المنصورة الرئيسية التي يقدمها المتحف لزواره؟
11. ما هي الموال أو الأفكار التي تؤخذ في الاعتبار عند عرض الأثار والآثار لزوارها؟
12. هل أن استخدام التكنولوجيا من الممكن أن تضيف قيمة إلى الآثار المعرضة في المتحف؟
هل تعتبر استخدام التكنولوجيا في المتحف أداة تعليمية أم أداة ترفية؟

الأنهار/المرايا
- من احتكاك وتعاملك مع السائحين من أيين يجيء معظم السائحين؟
- كيف يعبرون أو يتنقلون إلى المتحف؟
- في الموسط العام، كيف تستغرق مدة زيارة السائح للمتحف؟
- ما من الأجزاء/الأقسام/المتاجر التي يقوم السائحين بزيارتها في الاعتادة؟
- ما هي أمور الآثار التي تجذب السائح في المتحف؟ و إذا ما هي؟
- في رأيك الشخصي ما هي أمور الأنثويتها أو المعارض التي تجذب السائح في داخل المتحف؟ و أي السائحين تجذبهم هذا الأنثويتها والمعروض؟ و إذا ما؟
- في رأيك الشخصي ما هي أنواع الخدمات التجارية مثل الطعام ومحكة (النماذج والجذور) التي يمتلكها على السائحين بصورة دائمة؟ أي أنواع أو أصناف من السائحين يترددون عليها؟ و إذا ما؟
- هل يوجد تشابه/اختلاف بين احتياجات ورغبات السائحين للأجانب والزوار المحليين (الصينيين)؟ و إذا ما؟
- كيف يحكم هذا التشابه أو الاختلاف؟
- هل الرائنين من جنسيات مختلفة لهم أذواق ورغبات مختلفة؟ إذا حكمت الإجابة: نعم ما هو الآثار التي يركزون أو يرغبون أن يرواها؟
- كيف يخدم المتحف أذواق ورغبات الزوار وخاصة الزوار الذين لهم رغبات محددة؟
- في رأيك الشخصي هل تعتقد أن هناك تشابه حكيم أم قليل بين هذا المتحف وبين الأماكن السياحية الأخرى غير التقليدية؟
الجاذبة للسائحين مثل الحفلات الفنانية والمعارض الفنية والمراكز التجارية التي يوجد بها محلات تجارية ومطاعم وأماكن ترفيه للأطفال؟ وما أوجه التشابه أو الاختلاف؟

في رأيك الشخصي ما هي العوامل/ العناصر الرئيسية التي لها تأثير على زيارة السائح بال المتحف؟