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Visitor Motivation based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the Cultural Museums (Case Study: Isfahan Constitutional House)

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Abstract

The visitors visit the museums with different motivations. Since, motivation is prerequisite for decision-making and choice of destination, the motivation and needs of different visitors should be investigated effectively and efficiently. In addition, move towards the visitor motivation and needs can follow visitor satisfaction and increasing the number of visitors. Current research aims to identify the motivation of Isfahan Constitutional Museum visitors and compare it with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Descriptive statistics and a qualitative method with the help of MAXQDA software were used to examine the research question, and the data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. The convenience sampling was used to collect data. The data reached the saturation point in interview number 40. The results illustrated that self-actualization needs are the first motivation for visiting the museum, which is divided into eleven open codes as visiting historical places and increasing historical information, learning, and interest, familiarity with the constitutional history and its events, interest in learning about the country's history, increasing historical information, taking photos, enjoying the architecture of the museum building and learning about it, academic research about the most influential people in the constitutional revolution, touching, feeling, smelling, and sensing history of Iran, familiarity with celebrities and characters of the museum, acquaintance with the biography of Haj Aqa Nourollah. Social needs were another motivation for visiting the museum. In addition, the need for safety and security was the last but not the least need that attracted the visitors to the museum.

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Introduction

The past is the light of the future and learning the history of the nations can be a strategy for better future management. Among the museums, historical museums and museums of revolution strive to popularize and interpret world history events. Today, historical and political events and revolutionary movements are known to be an attraction and have become a pull factor for visits to revolutionary locations and museums (Boudreau, 2018). Revolutions in Egypt, India, Japan, Russia, China, France, America, and Iran constitute good examples. Moreover, visiting related museums such as the Museum of the American Revolution, USA; (Boudreau, 2018) the National Museum of the Islamic Revolution, Iran; the French Revolution Museum, France (Boylan, 1992); the Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution, China; the Lao National Museum, Laos; the Museum of Political History of Russia, Russia; the Constitution House of Tabriz, Iran; and the Isfahan Constitutional House, Iran confirms the idea that revolutionary movements can constitute tourism attractions. Revolution museums are a place for history buffs to share compelling stories about the diverse people and complex events related to the concepts of liberty, equality, and self-government. Revolution museums offer an inclusive picture of the revolutions that are often overlooked by other institutions. In addition, the exhibitions which are held in this type of museums also dives into the challenges of creating a new nation and the enduring impact of revolutions on those around the world. These museums display an expansive collection of art and artifacts from the nation's revolutionary period and they also present a range of objects gathered from and pertaining to the revolutionary war, including pictures, weapons used in battles and personal diaries written in camp, etc. Museums of this type are also a center for documentation on the revolutionary period.

Museums, as educational institutions try to respond to the needs of the society /audiences (Carnegie, 2010), and historical museums, are no exception. Nowadays, the museum seeks to address the audiences' needs, and the museum's mission is to educate, collect, preserve, research, and transfer historical, cultural, artistic, social, political, and religious awareness to present audiences and future generations (Park et al., 2022; Foster et al., 2020). The museum creates an opportunity to link the past and the present. Studying the audience's motivations for visiting the museums can play an axial role in the introduction of the museums and effective management of them (Vareiro et al., 2021). Previous studies illustrated that there is a relation between motivation factors and visitors' satisfaction and loyalty (Omo-Obas & Anning-Dorson, 2023). It is obvious that, investigating the audience's motivations will impact all the activities related to the museum and can help better to understand the audience's expectations of the museum. One of the most critical concerns in museum management is knowing the reason behind the audience's behavior or motivation (Luo & Ye, 2020, Choi et al., 2020).

Isfahan Constitutional House, Isfahan, Iran, has been selected as the case study in this research. The current research aims to achieve the following two goals:

- 1- Identifying the motivation of the audience to visit the Isfahan Constitutional House
- 2- Comparing the motivation to visit the constitutional museum with the hierarchy of human needs based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Figure 1)

It is noteworthy that Carducci (2020) indicated that existing needs are able to motivate people in such a way that they engage in the behavior designed to fulfill them, for example going to a museum. Moreover, he argued that Maslow's hierarchy of needs strives to account for the motivation and service prioritization in museums. Kinkel (2016) demonstrated that Maslow's hierarchy can be used to analyze different museum services. According to Kinkel (2016; Logan & Everall, 2019), it can be concluded that Maslow's hierarchy of needs is an appropriate framework to consider the motivation of the visitors to visit the Isfahan Constitutional House.

According to Maslow's belief, human needs have a hierarchy such that the most intense need influences the individual's motivation such that instead of the previous needs, another level of need will become essential and drive behavior. In the same way, needs rise to the end of the hierarchy of needs, and after being satisfied, they subside and it is the turn of another (Lester, 2013). This hierarchy of needs to be satisfied includes physical (physiological) needs, safety and security needs, social needs, respect and appreciation needs, self-actualization needs, and talent development. These theories give managers an insight into the needs of the museum audience/visitors and help him to know what motivates the museum audience to visit the museum.

It is worth mentioning that studies which have reviewed the literature demonstrate that no significant scientific research has been conducted to identify the motivation of museum visitors in the country and so the present research can help to develop and extend the literature in this field. Furthermore, previous researchers have compared the motivations for visiting revolution museums with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Therefore, the current research can fill these gaps. In addition, the results of this research can provide a useful guideline for making a policy of museum management. However, this research is a case study and limitations of case study research include: difficulty generalizing findings from one case study to other settings.

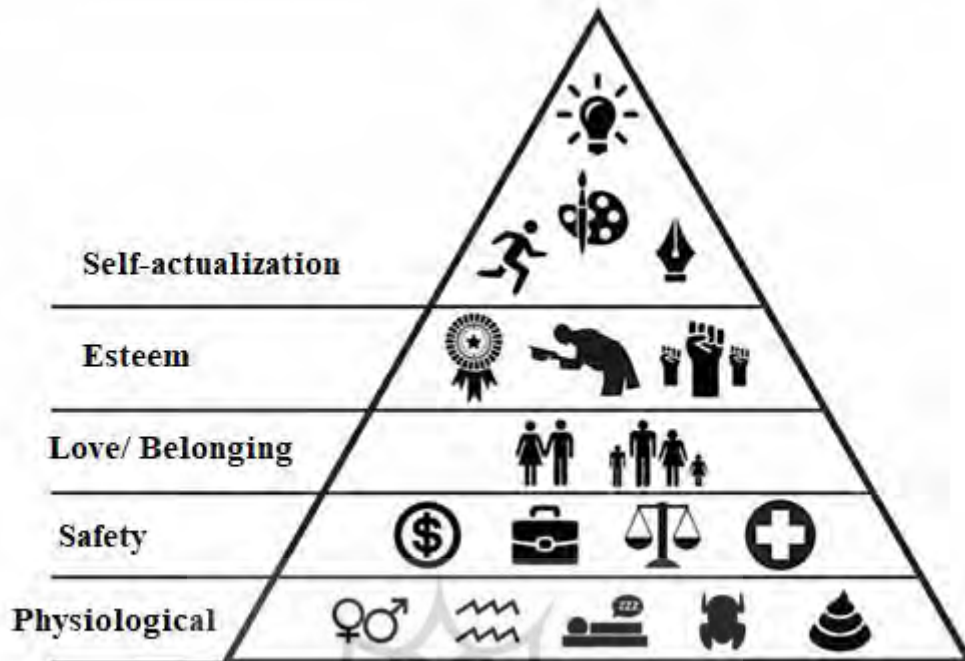


Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs chart
(<https://honarehzendegi.com/fa/Maslow-Needs-Pyramid>)

Literature Review

This study is an initial attempt to investigate the motivation of visitors to visit the Isfahan Constitutional House in Iran. The researchers used a systematic review method to carry out a solid literature review in this regard. The article is focused on the topic of visitor motivation to highlight motivational factors in museums.

Education in museums is known as informal learning (Paris, 1997; Dudzinska-Przesmitzki & Grenier, 2008) and public pedagogy (Hansson & Öhman, 2022). Garner et al., (2016) noted that museums strive to promote transformative experiences and development of identity for audiences. Moreover, museums create collaborative learning opportunities (Leinhardt et al., 2003). It is noteworthy that learning is one of the motivations that attract audiences to museums (Packer & Ballantyne, 2002).

Hooper-Greenhill (1994) pointed out the many changes that have occurred in museums and galleries around the world and emphasized that museums have become active learning environments. Packer and Ballantyne (2002) compared the motivational factors and visitor experience in museums, art galleries, and aquariums. The results indicate that learning and understanding are more highlighted in museums, while learning, discovery, and enjoyment are motivations in aquariums and galleries.

Sullivan (2003) considers museums as informal learning environments and the source of modern education. This research emphasizes the fact that museums provide significant physical and social opportunities for visitors in the museum experience process. Apostolakis and Jaffry (2005) stated that museum managers and trustees need to pay attention to the new needs and demands of visitors today more than ever. In addition, in order to preserve cultural heritage attractions, tourism planners and museum curators should pay particular attention to the display, education, consumer preferences, and the quality of visitors' personal experience.

Axelsen (2006) demonstrated that holding museum events increase the motivation to visit, including learning and enjoyment. In addition, du Toit and Dye (2008) stated that visitors' interaction with artworks has an influential role in their learning. Slater (2007) studied the motivations for visiting the museum and the results of the research indicate that audiences want to spend quality time with friends and family. Gao (2013) investigated the characteristics of visitors to find out what motivations are effective in their visit. The data was collected through a questionnaire were designed based on 17 motivation items. As a result, out of 17 factors proposed as motivations for visiting, only four were recognized as the most influential factors – motivations such as curiosity, seeing new exhibitions, participating in museum events, and enjoyment.

Muka and Cinaj (2015) studied the motivation, perception, and expectations of visitors to Bunk'Art heritage sites, and the results indicated that visitors' motivation is to learn about the history. (2015) group the motives for visiting the museum into four main categories: social, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. Vathoqi and Rajabi Moghadam (2018) divide effective motivational factors for visiting the war museum into four categories: advertising, interest in gaining knowledge and recognition, internal factors, and amenities and facilities. Cotter et al. (2022) studied visiting a museum based on Falk's identity-oriented approach. Various motivations related to identity were suggested, and qualitative and quantitative interviews were conducted based on the content analysis of visitors' interviews in a scientific center before and after the visit. The results show that the audience goes to the museum for entertainment with their spouse, learning, and curiosity.

Li (2024) argued that museums should shift their responsibilities and functions towards audience-centered approaches. Chen et al. (2023) emphasized on informal science learning through augmented reality in museum as visitor motivation.

The audience/visitors' motivation is to learn about the history. The results of previous research studies demonstrate that no significant scientific research was conducted to identify the motivation of museum visitors in Iran and none of the research studied the relationship between Maslow's hierarchy of needs and visitor motivation in museums. The novelty

of this paper is to fill this gap. Therefore, the present research can help to develop the literature in this field.

Table 1. The audience's motivation to visit museums based on literature reviews

Motivation to visit the museum	Researcher
Learning, understanding, and Education	Hooper-Greenhill (1994), Packer and Ballantyne (2002), Sullivan (2002), Axelsen (2006), Slater (2007), du Toit and Dye (2008), Muka and Cinaj (2015), Cotter et al. (2022), Choi et al (2020), Gao (2013)
Enjoying	Axelsen (2006), Gao (2013)
Curiosity	Gao (2013), Cotter et al. (2022)
Visiting new exhibitions	Gao (2013)
Participation in museum events	Gao (2013), Arai and Pedlar (2003)
Entertainment	Choi et al (2020)
Being with family	Cotter et al. (2022)

Case Study (House of Haj Aqa Nourollah Najafi (Isfahan Constitutional House))

The Persian Constitutional Revolution took place between 1905 and 1911. The revolution led to the establishment of a parliament in Iran during the Qajar dynasty (1789 -1925) (Haeri, 2000).

Haj Aqa Nourollah Najafi was a political leader in the Constitutional Revolution of Iran in Isfahan city (Amini, 2006). He was the son of Ayatollah Sheik Mohammad Baqer Najafi. Haj Aqa Nourollah was born in 1859 and after finishing his education in Islamic science, he became a mujtahid. His house in Isfahan was a place to hold association meetings regarding constitutional revolution. At present this historic house turned into the Isfahan Constitutional museum (Figure 2) which displays the historical documents, and photographs from the Persian Constitutional Revolution.

The house was built during the Qajar dynasty and probably during Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar) 1853- 1907) and is located near Naqsh-e Jahan Square, which is a UNESCO world cultural heritage site (Diba, 1999).

The residential buildings of the Qajar period, included the central room, porch, the column in front of the entrance, and smaller rooms around the central room (Heydarian et al., 2013).



Figure 2. Isfahan Constitutional House

(<https://www.iranhotelonline.com/blog/post-1014/>)

Methodology

The goals of this study are to identify the audience's motivation to visit Isfahan's Constitutional House and compare the motivation to visit with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. To examine the research questions, the qualitative method (Case study) has been used with the help of MAXQDA software. The data collection tool is a semi-structured interview form.

The content validity ratio (CVR) index (Formula No. 1) was used to evaluate the validity of the interview form. The validity form was given to eight experts in history, tourism, culture, art, and museums. The validity of the questions was calculated as eee on average, indicating the interview form's high validity.

$$CVR = (N_e - N/2) / (N/2),$$

The N_e is the number of panelists indicating "essential", and N is the total number. Lawshe Table (Wilson et al., 2012) determines the numeric value of the content validity ratio.

The statistical population of the research included visitors to Isfahan Constitutional Museum and interviews being carried out with visitors at the end of their visit. The interview form includes open-ended questions and close ended (Likert scale questions) questions, which descriptive statistics were used to analyze the Likert scale questions.

The data collection technique was convenience sampling, and the interviews (face to face) continued until achieving the saturation point (interview no. 40). The saturation point is where the open codes became repetitive, and no open code was added to the previous codes. Open and axial coding was used to analyze the open-ended questions..In the next step, after extracting open codes, axial coding was used to identify larger themes relevant to the research question.

In the next step, a simple percent agreement (Grieve et al., 2024) was used by two coders to determine reliability. In each of the interviews, the codes that were similar in the opinion of two people were recorded as agreements. The codes that were similar were recorded as disagreements. It is worth mentioning that the coders reached agreement on an average of 90%. Hence, it can be said that the coding was highly reliable.

Results

At first, the demographic characteristics of the Isfahan Constitutional Museum's visitors were examined. In the second phase, the closed questions in the interview form were analyzed through descriptive statistics. In the last step, the semi-structured interview data were analyzed using the grounded theory method (open and axial coding).

• *Demographics of the Isfahan Constitutional Museum's audiences*

Demographics include characteristics of age, gender, education, and occupation. Studying demographics in heritage is very important because it can be a significant indicator of behavior. As illustrated in table 2, the majority of the museum's audience is women with 80%, which indicates that women are very interested in visiting this museum. In terms of education, 92.5% of the visitors have a bachelor's degree or higher, which indicates that Isfahan Constitutional Museum's visitors are educated. Therefore, authorities of the museum should pay particular attention to the educational activities.

In terms of age, most of the people (45%) who visited the museum were between 25-35 years old. Therefore, most of those interested in this museum are young. It is noteworthy that the museum has visitors of other age groups and it can be said that the Isfahan Constitutional Museum was successful to attract audiences in all age groups.

About 70% of the museum's visitors are visitors from Isfahan. Since the museum has an emphasis on the constitutional history of Isfahan province, the citizens are more visit this museum and they are interested in getting more information about their place of residence. Hence, the museum planners and curatorship should attempt to more collaborate with the city tours, tour guides of Isfahan, and schools.

In addition, based on the number of times the museum has been visited, 50% of visitors visited the museum once time and 40% twice, which reveals visitor satisfaction with the museum and loyalty of visitors.

In terms of occupation, 47.5% of museum visitors are students. It can be said that the museum planners and curatorship should organize more mutual meetings and events with universities and schools.

Table 2. Demographics of the Isfahan Constitutional Museum's audiences

Characteristics	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	32	80%
	Female	8	20%
Age	15-25	11	27.5%
	25-35	18	45%
	35-45	10	25%
	45-55	1	2.5%
Education	Under diploma	1	2.5%
	Diploma	2	5%
	Bachelor's degree	17	42.5%
	Master's degree	16	40%
	Ph.D.	4	10%
Occupation	Freelance job	9	22.5%
	Student	19	47.5%
	Employee	6	15%
	Unemployed	2	5%
	University faculty	2	5%
	Doctor	2	5%
Number of visits to the museum	Once	20	50%
	Twice	16	40%
	More than four times	4	10%
Place of residence	Visitor from Isfahan	28	70%
	Domestic Tourists	12	30%
Total		40	100%

• *Descriptive Statistics*

Forty museum visitors were randomly interviewed face-to-face and asked to answer five-choice questions about their motivation to visit the museum. Then, the researcher compares the position of that answer to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

According to table 3, 77.5 percent (high and very high) of the audiences with the motivation to learn (increase their knowledge about the history and constitutional events) visit the Isfahan Constitutional Museum. This motivation is consistent with the self-actualization need in Maslow's pyramid.

The third level of Maslow's pyramid is social needs (love/ belonging). The results of this research indicate that 10% (high and very high) of the Constitutional House Museum's audiences are motivated by several hours of entertainment with the family, and 12.5% (high and very high) are motivated by several hours of being with friends in visiting the museum.

Based on the data analysis with descriptive statistics, 35% of the museum audiences (high and very high) stated that visiting the Isfahan Constitutional Museum gives them self-confidence. This is consistent with the need for respect and value placed on the fourth floor of Maslow's pyramid (Esteem).

As illustrated in Table 3, 30% of the audience visited the Isfahan Constitutional Museum because Museum guides and curatorship respect the audiences (high and very high). This is consistent with the need for respect and value placed on the fourth floor of Maslow's pyramid (Esteem).

The motivation for safety is on the second level of Maslow's pyramid. Table 3 demonstrated that 72.5% (high and very high) of visitors visit the museum with the motivation of achieving a sense of security and peace, which is related to the need for safety and security (second level) in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Getting knowledge about past events and history (being familiar with the celebrities and characters of the Constitutional Museum of Isfahan) is also part of the motivation for learning and on the fifth level of Maslow's pyramid, which is the need for self-actualization. As illustrated in Table 3, 75% of visitors who visit the museum with high and very high motivation have this goal.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage of the audience's motivations to visit the Constitutional Museum (N=40)

Audience's motivation	Likert Scale (Frequency)					Total
	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	
To have entertainment with my family for several hours	19 47.5%	9 22.5%	8 20%	2 5%	2 5%	40 100%
To be with friends for several hours	12 30%	10 25%	13 32.5%	2 5%	3 7.5%	40 100%
Self-confidence	6 15%	4 10%	16 40%	9 22.5%	5 12.5%	40 100%
Respecting the audiences	9 22.5%	10 25%	9 22.5%	6 15%	6 15%	40 100%
A sense of security and peace	1 2.5%	2 5%	8 20%	12 30%	17 42.5%	40 100%
Learning	2 5%	3 7.5%	4 10%	5 12.5%	26 65%	40 100%
Being familiar with the celebrities and characters of the Constitutional Museum of Isfahan	0 0	4 10%	6 15%	6 15%	24 60%	40 100%

The results of the analysis with descriptive statistics indicate that the audiences visited the museum to meet the needs of self-actualization, safety and security, respect and value (Esteem), and social needs, respectively (Figure 3).

Therefore, Isfahan Constitutional Museum House has played a significant role in meeting the needs of self-actualization (education and learning) and providing safety and security needs. Figure 3 indicated the descriptive statistics of the motivation of Isfahan Constitutional Museum's audiences based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

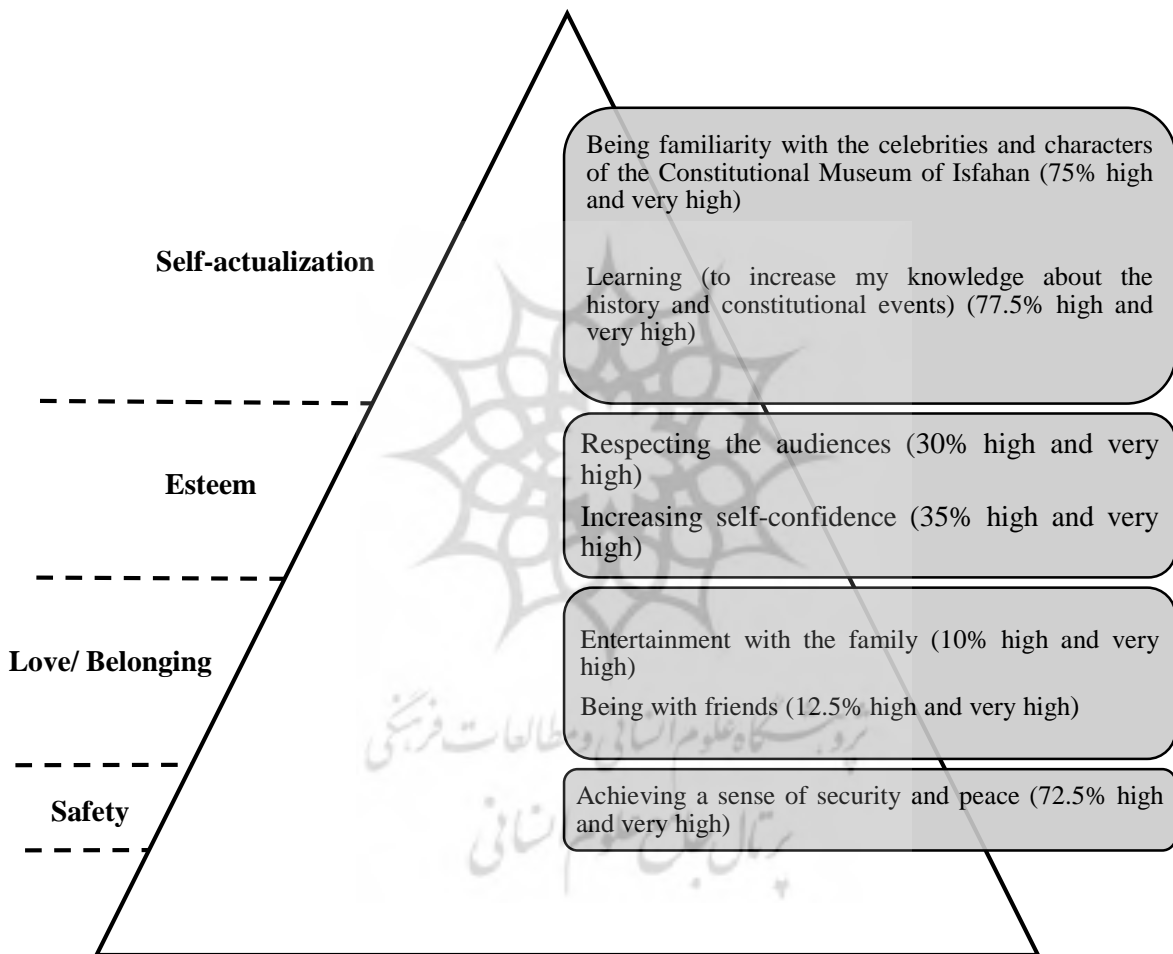


Figure 3. Visitor motivation of Isfahan Constitutional Museum based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (obtained from Percentage frequency)

Qualitative analysis (thematic analysis)

The second question of the interview form (what was your motivation for visiting the Isfahan Constitutional Museum?) was analyzed using the qualitative method. In the first stage, after conducting each interview, the researcher studied the resulting data and extracted conceptual codes from it. Then, the data obtained from the interview forms were analyzed using open and axial coding techniques. Finally, after extracting open codes, they were placed in the categories of main codes according to the semantic relationship using the MAXQDA software (Table 4 and Figure 4).

It is noteworthy that the results of analyzing data through MAXQDA software also indicate that self-actualization is one the most important motivations for a visit and the majority of activities mentioned by visitors emphasize learning, education, and increasing knowledge and awareness. The results illustrate that self-actualization needs are the first motivation for visiting the museum, which is divided into eleven open codes: visiting historical places and increasing historical information; learning and interest; familiarity with constitutional history and its events; interest in learning about the country's history; increasing historical information; taking photos; enjoying the architecture of the museum building and learning about it; academic research about the most influential people in the constitutional revolution; touching, feeling, smelling and sensing the history of Iran; familiarity with celebrities and characters of the museum; and acquaintance with the biography of Haj Aqa Nouroollah. All the open codes in the self-actualization needs emphasize education and learning, except taking photos which is an artistic activity. It is worth mentioning that art also is self-actualization.

Moreover, social needs were another motivation for visiting the museum. In addition, the need for safety and security was the last but not an unimportant need that attracted the visitors to the museum.

Table 4. Open and axial coding of visit motivation obtained from the interview forms according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Main themes (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs)	Sub-themes
Self-actualization	Visiting historical places and increasing historical information
	Learning and interest
	Familiarity with constitutional history and its events
	Interest in learning about the country's history
	Increasing historical information
	Taking photos
	Enjoying the architecture of the museum building and learning about it
	Academic research about the most influential people in the constitutional revolution
	Touching, feeling, smelling, and sensing the history of Iran
	Familiarity with celebrities and characters of the Constitutional Museum of Isfahan
Social needs (Love /Belonging)	Acquaintance with the biography of Haj Aqa Nourollah
	Being with friends
Safety and security needs	Entertainment with family members
	Finding peace in the historical environment
	Feeling well and relaxed due to culture and history

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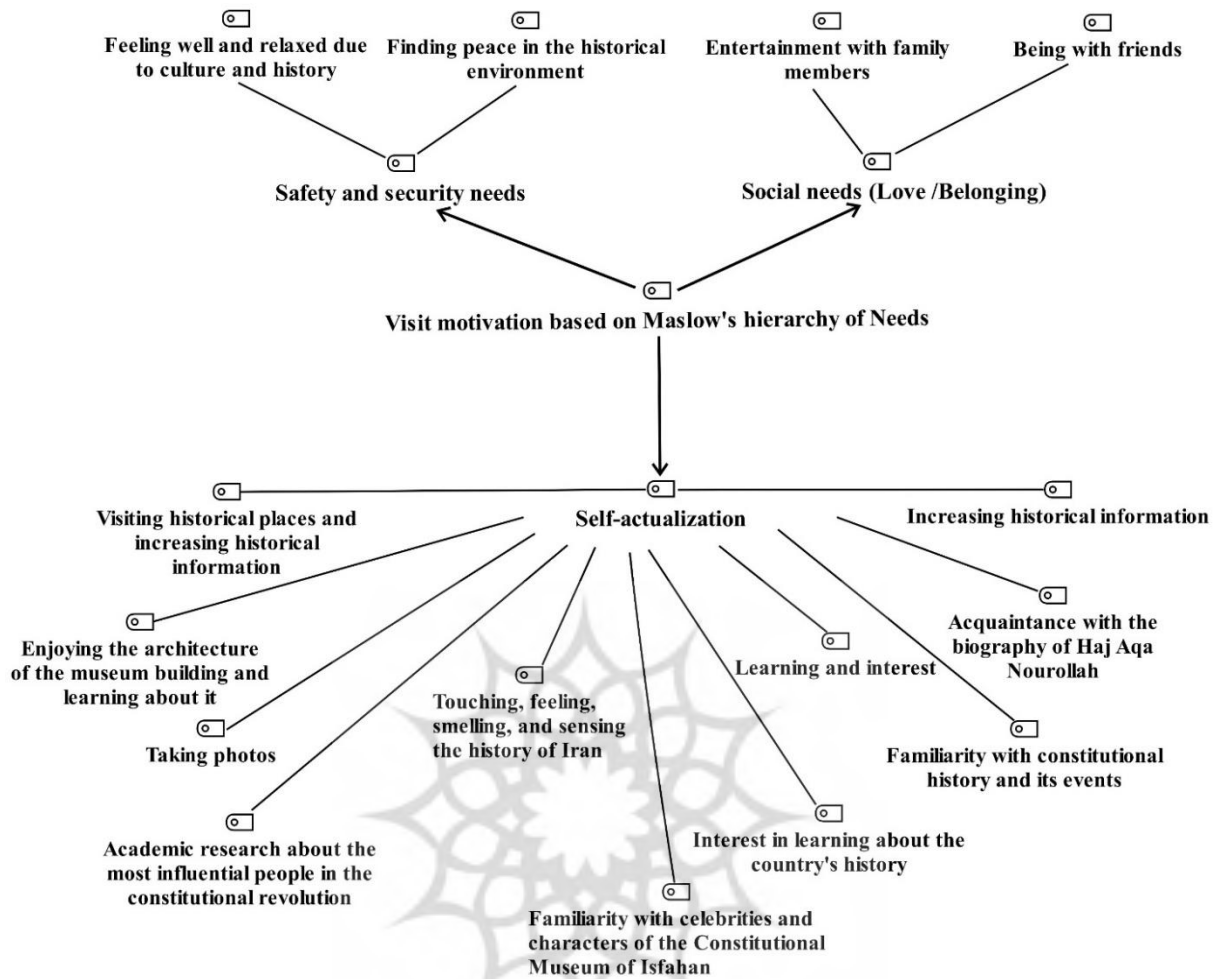


Figure 4. Motives for visiting the Isfahan Constitutional Museum designed by MAXQDA software (obtained from interview forms)

Discussion and Conclusion

The role of museums has undergone a fundamental change today; people no longer look at museums as they used to. The museum cannot be limited to one definition and goes beyond objects exhibition. Museums pay special attention to the audience's needs, and the audience is the leading museums' target. One of the key components that help museums to be aware of the audience's needs is to identify the audience's motivation. Ambrose and Paine (2006) noted that a study of visitor motivation in museums can help to understand the museum market.

The purpose of this research was to identify the motivation of the audience to visit the Isfahan Constitutional House and compare the visit motivation with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

The results of the qualitative analysis of the interview forms demonstrated that self-actualization needs are the first. According to the qualitative analysis, the motivations for self-actualization are divided into eleven open codes, which are as follows: visiting historical places and increasing historical information, learning, and interest, familiarity with the constitutional history and its events, interest in learning about the country's history, increasing historical information, taking photos, enjoying the architecture of the museum building and learning about it, academic research about the most influential people in the constitutional revolution, touching, feeling, smelling, and sensing history of Iran, familiarity with celebrities and characters of the Constitutional Museum of Isfahan, Acquaintance with the biography of Haj Aqa Nourollah. It is noteworthy that the majority of self-actualization motivations emphasize learning and getting knowledge. In addition, some researchers (Packer & Ballantyne, 2002; Axelsen, 2006; Hooper-Greenhill, 1994; Sullivan, 2002; du Toit & Dye, 2008; Muka & Cinaj, 2015; Cotter et al., 2022; Slater, 2007) stated that learning is one of the most important motivations for visiting a museum, and the current research confirms their findings.

Moreover, teaching history to children is an activity that the museum should include in its plan. Isfahan Constitutional House should dedicate a space for children for entertainment and education programs. The museum should try to hold historical events and historical storytelling sessions.

Social needs were one of the other motivations for visiting the museum, which includes the two open codes of being with friends and entertainment with family members. Cotter et al. (2022) and Choi et al. (2020) also consider entertainment and filling free time as one of the motivations for visiting museums.

The need for safety and security was the third need that attracted the visitors to the museum, and two open codes (finding peace in the historical environment and feeling well and relaxed due to culture and history) were identified for this need. None of the existing studies has considered museums as a place for relaxation, and this finding of the present study is new and significant.

Since that learning has been one of the most important motivations for visiting the museum, and also the visitors want to be familiar with constitutional history and its events in Isfahan, the museums' authorities should provide facilities to play a historical movie related to constitutional history. And one of the museum's rooms should be turned into a space for showing the movies, and it is better to play the film for 15 minutes and then let visitors enjoy and experience the museum environment.

It is also suggested to provide a small exhibition of traditional clothes from the constitutional period for visitors to visit and purchase. This idea can increase the sense of place and can have a financial benefit for the museum.

Safety and security needs are identified as one more visit motivation and this main theme is classified into two subthemes finding peace in the historical environment and feeling well and relaxed

due to culture and history. Regarding this, creating a coffee shop in the museum environment for serving the traditional drinks, foods, and sweets of the Qajar period can create a new experience for visitors. Furthermore, the coffee shop can satisfy social needs such as being with friends and family in the museum environment.

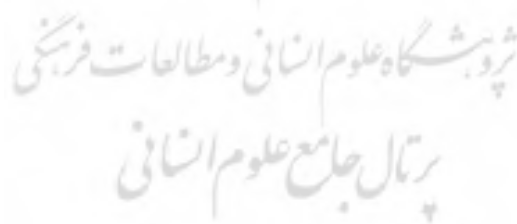
As mentioned before this research is a case study and limitations of case study research include: difficulty generalizing findings from one case study to other settings. In addition, risk of bias, as the researcher's personal opinions and preferences may influence the research.

The clearest result of the investigation is that Isfahan Constitutional House could satisfy the esteem needs because of the appropriate behavior of museum guides and authorities and this allows us to conclude that the museum was successful in this regard.

Lastly, the following subject suggested for future research in the museum

- Investigating the tendency of visitors to the Isfahan Constitutional Museum
- The study of the level of visitor satisfaction in the Isfahan Constitutional Museum
- The impact of space and architecture on the Isfahan Constitutional Museum audience
- Making and managing a brand for the Isfahan Constitutional Museum

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