

Chapter 13

Exploring the Shadows: Understanding the Phenomenon of Dark Tourism

Mohd Azhar

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3222-5565>

Woxsen University, India

Saragadam Nikhil

Woxsen University, India

Gottipati Vishwas Chowdary

Woxsen University, India

Ch. S. S. Sai Gopal

Woxsen University, India

ABSTRACT

Dark tourism involves travel to places that relate to death, disaster or pain that has occurred in history. These places include war museums and trenches and famous cemeteries, genocide complexes and disasters. Focusing on dark tourism as an acknowledgement of death and suffering as a travelling idea, it should be noted that even though the field of researching tourism outcomes is quite well-developed, quite a few methodologies and approaches are still untapped and do not receive enough attention. There is no extensive research by scholars in terms of the motivations and tourism experiences of dark tourists. Another one is the so-called 'conflict of interest' concerning the commercialization of terror sites, since that process poses an exacting challenge between profiting and saving. This chapter aims at filling these gaps by focusing on the psychological and emotional experiences associated with dark tourism together with the ethical concerns that define it.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-8417-6.ch013

1. INTRODUCTION

Traveling to places where significant tragedies or catastrophic events have taken place, known as dark tourism. Thanatourism or dark tourism describes the travel to the places associated with death, disaster or a historic dark event (Foley & Lennon, 1996; Salajczyk, 2024). People are drawn to these sites to learn about suffering, pay respects to victims and satisfy their curiosity about the events that have shaped them. Dark tourism offers an educational experience that sheds light on the condition and the impact of past events. Unlike tourism it centres on commemorating and understanding history's dark moments (Stone, 2006).

The concept of dark tourism has historical roots that spans back to medieval times. In ancient Rome, public spectacles such as gladiatorial combat and executions were held at venues like the Colosseum and public places. These events were designed to entertain people while also showcasing the power and control of the authorities (Foley & Lennon, 1996; Salajczyk, A. M. 2024.). In medieval times in Europe, public executions served punitive and educational purposes. These practices were not only forms of punishment but also public spectacles intended to scare criminals and entertain the public (Rojek, 1993; Bowal & Ghosh, 2023).

The contemporary form of dark tourism only started developing, fully-fledged at least, in the later part of the 20th century and more especially in the early years of the 21st century. Technological development in transport systems and communication made easier to access sites of historical tragedies. Another sign of progress that needs to be noted is that the creation of the memorials and museums, for instance the Holocaust Museum in Washington D. C and 9/11 Memorial to list a few in New York, is a sign of progress as these sites teach the visitors what had happened in the past while remembering the lives lost (Tarlow, 2005; Kotsioulas & Lioukas,2021).

Understanding dark tourism is crucial for several reasons. It offers insight into the psychological and cultural motivations that drive people to visit sites associated with death and disaster. This understanding can inform the design and management of these sites, ensuring they fulfil their educational and commemorative purposes effectively. Additionally, studying dark tourism can highlight the ethical challenges involved, such as the risk of commercialization overshadowing the historical significance of the sites. Understanding these things helps balance profitability with respect for history and victims (Behrendt, 2012). Understanding dark tourism also contributes to historical consciousness. By engaging with sites of tragedy, visitors and communities can develop a deeper understanding for historical events and the will, determination & resilience of those affected. This process helps preserve the memory of past events and fosters a more informed and empathetic understanding of history (Sharpley & Stone, 2009).

This chapter offer the information on how societies relate to their histories and memorialization of tragedy. Due to dark tourism, a reader gets an opportunity to assess how families and communities around the world remember and come to terms with their past misfortunes. Such knowledge can be useful for the management of such sites and contribute to their efficient protection, as well as the enhancement of the execution of their educative and memorial roles (Behrendt, 2012). Furthermore, attention should be paid to the reasons for such behavior, and the careful analysis of the factors of dark tourism provides the understanding of reasons for people to pay a special interest to sites that have something to do with disasters. This also includes discovering the extent to which curiosity, education needs and paying homage are usable in predicting the behaviour of the visitors. Such understanding can be used to enhance the aesthetics, and revisit experiences of the dark tourism places with an objective of enhancing the educational effectiveness with regard to ethical concerns (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). The purpose of this

14 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/exploring-the-shadows/371534

Related Content

"Exclusivity Dared": Impact of Digital Marketing on Luxury Fashion Brands

Aster Mekonnen and Liz Larner (2018). *Digital Marketing Strategies for Fashion and Luxury Brands* (pp. 165-177).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/exclusivity-dared/191077

Ethics in Behavioural Targeting: Mapping Consumers Perceptions

Sonam Chauhan and Shubhangini Rathore (2014). *International Journal of Online Marketing* (pp. 45-61).

www.irma-international.org/article/ethics-in-behavioural-targeting/113957

A Fuzzy Segmentation Approach to Guide Marketing Decisions

Mònica Casabayó and Núria Agell (2012). *E-Marketing: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 368-388).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/fuzzy-segmentation-approach-guide-marketing/66608

The Role of Cultural Intelligence in the Relationship Between Platform Trust and Loyalty: The Perspective From OTA Platforms

Meng Tao, Faizan Alam, Muhammad Zahid Nawaz and Jashim Khan (2021). *International Journal of Online Marketing* (pp. 17-31).

www.irma-international.org/article/the-role-of-cultural-intelligence-in-the-relationship-between-platform-trust-and-loyalty/274875

How Customer Knowledge Management Is Becoming a Dominant Industry Trait

A. F. Wazir Ahmad and Mohammad Muzahid Akbar (2015). *Marketing and Consumer Behavior: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 599-623).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/how-customer-knowledge-management-is-becoming-a-dominant-industry-trait/122970