MARKETING PERSPECTIVES OF THE DARK TOURISM TREND IN THE GLOBAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Ruxandra BEJINARU
"Ştefan cel Mare" University of Suceava, Romania
ruxandrab@usm.ro

Abstract
This study employs exploratory research to investigate the underexplored topic of dark tourism, focusing on marketing strategies. Our study covers diverse perspectives on 'dark tourism,' examining its academic evolution and industry development, with secondary objectives including analyzing motivation models, exploring the impact, describing destinations, and discussing marketing strategies. Throughout the introduction section we present briefly the concept and argue the curiosity of the topic. In the third section we analyze motivation models and argue a series of dark tourists' drivers. Throughout the fourth section of the paper, we emphasize the impact of dark tourism throughout potential effects both positive and negative for the involved parties. In section number five, we describe a selection of "dark tourism" destinations and reveal both their points of attraction for tourists and the stories behind. Section six, discusses options for marketing the dark destinations, and the critical aspects which make the difference in such strategies. The article concludes by emphasizing the importance of responsible marketing in dark tourism, catering to the specific needs of visitors, and contributing to a broader understanding of the evolving dynamics of the global tourism market. The exploration of dark tourism is crucial to ensure ethical and sustainable marketing strategies.

Key words: *cultural events, educational experience, dark tourism, historical tragedy, marketing strategy, tourist behavior.*

JEL Classification: M31, L83, Z32.

I. INTRODUCING THE TOPIC

The burgeoning phenomenon of "dark tourism" represents a distinctive crossroads where human tragedy and the tourism industry converge. This paper embarks on a comprehensive exploration of how the hospitality sector engages with and markets this evolving trend, delving into both the opportunities and challenges that define this unique segment within the broader tourism market. In a world where curiosity often leads us to explore the unknown, "dark tourism" emerges as a fascinating, yet disturbing, universe that beckons for further understanding. This paper is structured to offer a multifaceted perspective on the concept and evolution of "dark tourism" within the context of the hospitality industry. Beginning with a concise introduction that underscores the novelty and intrigue surrounding this topic, we then progress to a thorough examination of its definition and its evolution within academic discourse and industry development. The subsequent sections delve into the various types of "dark tourism" and their significance, presenting a series of selected destinations that hold both a magnetic allure for tourists and compelling narratives of their own. Moreover, this paper introduces lesser-known perspectives of dark tourism, expanding the horizons of exploration in the field. Finally, we aim to shed light on the marketing perspectives of the "dark tourism" trend and its unique place within the world hospitality industry.

The topic of marketing perspectives of the dark tourism trend in the world hospitality industry holds significant relevance in today's dynamic tourism landscape. Several factors contribute to the growing interest in this subject, both from tourists and in terms of increasing media attention on dark tourism destinations.

First and foremost, tourists' interest in dark tourism destinations has been on the rise (Kunwar & Karki, 2019; Light, 2017). This surge can be attributed to a complex interplay of motivations, as mentioned earlier, including curiosity, educational experiences, emotional connections, and the desire to break away from routine travel. Tourists are increasingly seeking unique and immersive experiences that go beyond the traditional sun-and-sand vacations (Lewis, Schrier & Xu, 2021). Dark tourism offers a way to engage with the past, learn from it, and gain a deeper understanding of the human experience, including its darker aspects. As a result, there is a growing demand for hospitality services in and around these destinations (Sarkar, Chakraborty & Valeri, 2022).

Moreover, dark tourism destinations have been receiving more significant media coverage and exposure in recent years. Documentaries, films, news reports, and social media have played a pivotal role in bringing these destinations into the public eye. This heightened visibility has piqued the curiosity of travelers and has also sparked discussions about the ethical and cultural dimensions of dark tourism. As such, these destinations are becoming more integrated

into the global tourism landscape, necessitating a strategic marketing approach within the hospitality industry and integrating actions of several stakeholders: tourists, business owners, local authorities, educational entities, and more (Lupan & Bejinaru, 2019; Shekhar & Valeri, 2022).

In this context, it is vital for the hospitality industry to understand the specific needs and sensitivities of dark tourism visitors. Crafting effective marketing strategies for these destinations requires a deep understanding of the motivations that drive tourists to such sites, as well as the ethical considerations involved. Marketing perspectives should consider the delicate balance between promoting these destinations responsibly while respecting the significance of the events they represent (Zheng et al., 2018).

Ultimately, the marketing of dark tourism destinations is a subject that demands careful analysis and consideration due to its unique and often sensitive nature (Raine, 2013). By exploring this topic, we can gain insights into how the hospitality industry can responsibly cater to the needs of dark tourism visitors, capitalize on the growing interest in these destinations, and contribute to a broader understanding of the evolving dynamics of the global tourism market. This exploration is crucial to ensure that dark tourism destinations are marketed ethically and sustainably while offering tourists meaningful and enlightening experiences.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Throughout its general scope, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the hospitality industry engages with and promotes the dark tourism trend, addressing both the opportunities and challenges in this unique segment of the tourism market.

For this paper we approached the exploratory study, as a basic phase, in order to investigate the topic of dark tourism (focusing on the marketing strategies) as the prior knowledge and understanding seems limited (Swedberg, 2020). The scope of this exploratory study is to identify the opportunities, problems and future paths for development in the field. In this sense our study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the hospitality industry engages with and promotes the dark tourism trend. Our purpose is to cover various perspectives on the concept of "dark tourism" and examine its evolution in academic writings, and discusses its development in the industry. The paper also analyzes as secondary objectives: motivation models, emphasizes the impact of dark tourism, describes specific destinations, and discusses marketing strategies. Therefore, the paper seeks to explore and

describe the various aspects of dark tourism, offering insights into its development, impact, and marketing strategies. Aligned with the research scope and methodology we present the sections development.

In the Introduction section, we briefly introduce the concept and highlight the intriguing nature of the topic. By expanding on the definition, we offer evidence of how the concept has evolved in academic literature and delve into its development within the industry. We also discuss the various types of dark tourism and their significance. Within this section, we argue the methodology. Moving on to the third section, we analyze motivation models and present a series of factors that drive dark tourists.

The fourth section of the paper places emphasis on the impact of dark tourism, exploring potential effects that can be both positive and negative for the parties involved. In section five, we provide descriptions of selected "dark tourism" destinations, shedding light on what attracts tourists to these places and the stories that accompany them. Section six delves into marketing options for dark destinations, discussing the critical aspects that can make a difference in such strategies.

The article concludes by underlining the importance of responsible marketing in dark tourism, catering to the specific needs of visitors, and contributing to a broader understanding of the evolving dynamics of the global tourism market. The exploration of dark tourism is vital to ensure ethical and sustainable marketing practices. This approach aims to provide tourists with meaningful and enlightening experiences while preserving the historical and cultural significance of these destinations.

III. MOTIVATIONS STANDING FOR DARK TOURISM

Tourists may have various motivations for visiting dark tourism destinations, ranging from the emotional to the rational and educational or cultural dimensions, such as:

Curiosity: Many tourists are drawn to the idea of seeing unusual places or learning more about historical or cultural events that occurred there. For example, they may visit former battlefields, concentration camps, or disaster sites out of curiosity to understand the context and history associated with these places (Edwards, 2020; Kunwar & Karki, 2019).

Educational Experience: Dark tourism destinations offer opportunities for tourists to learn about history, culture, and humanitarian events that unfolded at these locations. They serve as living classrooms that provide a deeper understanding of significant events and their impact (Farmaki, 2013; Jang, Sakamoto & Funck, 2022).

Emotional Connection: Visiting dark tourism

destinations can be a profoundly emotional experience. It allows tourists to connect with the historical events or the people involved, fostering empathy and a deeper appreciation of the human experience (Sigala & Steriopoulos, 2022).

Diversity: Dark tourism destinations often differ from more common tourist spots. Tourists may be attracted to this diversity and the chance to explore locations and stories that are less mainstream (Biran & Hyde, 2013).

Escape from Routine: For some, visiting dark tourism destinations offers an opportunity to break free from the monotony of daily life. It provides a chance to experience something new and different, even if it involves somber or unsettling subject matter (Niemelä, 2010). It's important to note that while these motivations are common, each tourist may have their unique reasons for visiting dark tourism destinations. These reasons can be influenced by personal interests, preferences, and values.

Dark tourism, which involves visiting places or events associated with pain, suffering, or death, includes destinations such as cemeteries, concentration camps, crime scenes, and sites of accidents or natural disasters (Farmaki, 2013; Kunwar & Karki, 2019; Niemelä, 2010). It can also encompass places that have witnessed significant historical or cultural events with a negative impact on people (Stone & Sharpley, 2013). Some may view dark tourism with skepticism, as it might be perceived as the exploitation of others' suffering for personal pleasure or entertainment (Chen & Xu, 2021). However, for some tourists, visiting these locations serves as a means to gain a deeper understanding of history and the impact of events on people. It offers an opportunity for reflection on the importance of empathy and compassion.

Similarly, steaming from unique motivations and preferences, have emerged, apart from dark tourism, several other distinct forms of tourism:

-*Adventure Tourism* (Janowski et al., 2021).
-*Medical Tourism* (Çapar & Aslan, 2020).
-*Volunteer Tourism* (Khan et al., 2023).
-*Cultural Tourism* (Richards, 2018).
-*Religious Tourism* (Jongmeewasin, 2016).
-*Culinary Tourism* (Guzel & Apaydin, 2016).
-*Ecotourism* (Carvache-Franco, et al., 2021).

These various forms of tourism cater to a wide range of interests and motivations, reflecting the diversity of human experiences and the desire to explore the world in different ways. When formulating marketing strategies for these scopes, it's essential to strike a sensitive equilibrium, promoting these destinations responsibly while maintaining due reverence for the historical, natural, religious and cultural significance of the events they commemorate. Strategic marketing approach is essential for this type of business (Hapenciuc et al., 2019).

IV. DEFINING THE IMPACT OF DARK TOURISM

According to academic research practices, we will first specify the origin and beginning of this concept and trend in tourism. The phrase "dark tourism" was first used in 1996 by John Lenon and Malcolm Foley as professors at Glasgow Caledonian University in the Department of Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Management. The significance they gave to the concept was that of 'tourist activities in destinations that have been in the past scenes of major tragedies and locations with a large number of deaths'. Expressed in a plastic way, we can say that this phenomenon, of dark tourism, is the intersection between tragedy and tourism (Schneider et. al, 2021).

Certain authors considered that destinations can be viewed as a complex touristic product portrayed by various kinds of attractions, items and services that are joined in different ways as indicated by the needs of every vacationer and a definitive objective of having an experience as exceptional as could be expected (Constantinescu and Nistorescu, 2013, p. 58). The travel industry research includes distinguishing those components that decide the appeal of a locale and is the vital element in knowing those perspectives that urge individuals to travel (Garbea, 2014, p. 84).

The current known as "Dark Tourism" (Foley & Lennon, 1996; Lennon & Foley, 2000) has emerged as a result of unfortunate or even tragic events. From this point of view, the exploitation for financial income of these sad moments in the life of some people, as well as in the history of some peoples, may seem unethical and inhuman (Heuermann & Chhabra, 2014). However, this is not entirely the case. The desire, the curiosity, the interest of some tourists for such destinations, can be based on several aspects. For example, experimental learning of historical events, or commemoration of the deceased, or truthful documentation of places and events that occurred (Zerva, 2023).

Dark tourism is a universe as intriguing and mysterious as it is intense, controversial but spectacular. Loaded with suffering, tragedy and unresolved cases over time, this type of tourism attracts the human eye because it inspires feelings of empathy, sadness and regret for those who have gone through hell. Such locations illustrate places marked forever by death, catastrophe, or landmark events such as the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster or the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz.

Thus, this article focuses on more detailed documentation on the new phenomenon in tourism, namely "dark tourism". Examined both historically and in relation to "death," this study includes definitions, destinations, and analyzes for a broader perspective on the subject. The phenomenon is not as debated as its real potential but is rather an emerging

research topic therefore our study includes some opinions of people passionate about the field.

A basic definition of the concept of dark (or morbid) tourism, also called *Thanatourism* (from Thanatos - the representative figure in Greek mythology that personifies 'death') states that this type of tourism involves historical destinations associated with tragedy, suffering and death. The main attraction of dark places is the historical value that it undertakes, more than the association with death and suffering (Stone, 2006).

The idea that dark or morbid tourism, often referred to as *Thanatourism*, is primarily about historical value rather than a fascination with death and suffering is well-founded and supported by several compelling arguments. Dark tourism often centers on sites that hold significant historical value. Visitors are drawn to these locations because they seek to gain a deeper understanding of past events, cultures, and societies (Light, 2017). Many dark tourism sites are associated with pivotal moments in history, such as battlefields, concentration camps, or monuments to commemorate tragic events. Tourists are motivated by a genuine interest in learning about and commemorating these historical events.

Dark tourism often serves as a way to preserve the memory of past tragedies and suffering. By visiting these sites, tourists pay homage to the individuals who endured hardship and tragedy (Shekhar & Valeri, 2022). These visits can contribute to the perpetuation of collective memory, ensuring that future generations remember and learn from history. This type of tourism can encourage reflection on the cultural and societal factors that led to historical tragedies. It provides an opportunity to contemplate the root causes of conflicts, atrocities, and suffering, which can be an essential step towards preventing their recurrence.

Visitors to dark tourism sites often seek to understand the broader historical and cultural context in which these events occurred. This knowledge can shed light on the complex and multifaceted factors that contribute to human history. Some researchers suggest that dark tourism provides a means for individuals to confront their own mortality and fears in a safe and controlled environment (Roberts & Stone, 2014). It can be a way to gain a more profound insight into the human experience, including its darker aspects.

Dark tourism has gained recognition and interest in the academic community. Scholars and researchers have explored the psychological, sociological, and anthropological aspects of dark tourism, supporting the notion that it is more than a morbid fascination with death (Chen & Xu, 2021; Edwards, 2020; Kunwar & Karki, 2019; Heuermann & Chhabra, 2014; Roberts & Stone, 2014; Shekhar & Valeri, 2022).

While the association with death and suffering cannot be entirely discounted in dark tourism, the historical and educational aspects often take precedence. Visitors are driven by a desire to engage with the past, learn from it, and acknowledge the significance of these historical sites. These motivations demonstrate that dark tourism has a broader and more profound impact beyond mere morbid curiosity, making it a valuable and multifaceted form of tourism.

V. DESTINATIONS OF DARK TOURISM

A destination of dark tourism is a site imbued with historical or cultural significance due to past tragedies, death, or suffering, attracting visitors seeking to explore and understand the darker aspects of human history (Zerva, 2023). For example, Holocaust tourism is the connection between dark tourism and heritage tourism. People attracted by these places are interested into understanding the pain of the "other" or just for educational purpose. Dark tourism teaches an important and memorable lesson to both the new generations and the current society (Lewis et al., 2021). However, visiting these sites requires the respectful behavior, emotional empathy and rational awareness of the visitors. It is essential for individuals engaging in dark tourism to approach these sites with a sense of solemnity, acknowledging the gravity of the historical events or tragedies associated with them. Respectful behavior involves understanding and adhering to any rules or guidelines set forth by authorities, preserving the integrity of the site, and refraining from any disrespectful actions like taking pictures, laughing or social media live streaming (Martini & Buda, 2020).

Emotional empathy is crucial in recognizing the profound impact these sites may have on individuals, including survivors, families of victims, and local communities. Visitors should approach with sensitivity, being mindful of the emotional weight carried by the place and its significance to those directly affected. This empathy fosters a deeper connection with the historical narrative and helps cultivate a sense of shared humanity (Martini & Buda, 2018).

Rational awareness plays a pivotal role in comprehending the historical context, allowing visitors to grasp the complexities surrounding the events that unfolded. Being well-informed about the background of the site enhances the overall experience, fostering a more profound and nuanced understanding of the cultural and historical implications (Iliev, 2021).

Thus, the educational value of dark tourism is maximized when visitors exhibit respectful behavior, emotional empathy, and rational awareness, ensuring a

meaningful and responsible exploration of these impactful historical sites.

Among the emblematic destinations of dark tourism by popularity degree, according to Kulcsár and Simon (2015) we mention in arbitrary order:
-From Scotland, the historical battlefield "Culloden"
-From Anglesey, the former prison called "Beaumaris"
-From the London Dungeon, the destinations "Wales" and "Jack the Ripper"
-From Japan, The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and
-From Ukraine "Chernobyl".

The field of literature presents many other places based on human atrocities and genocide like Auschwitz concentration camp (Poland), Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall (China), the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (Cambodia), Jeju riot (South Korea) and Spirit Lake Internment Camp (near La Ferme), all of them revolving around the concept of dark tourism (Fonseca et al., 2015).

Above Hinduism, temples and spirituality, the tropic island called Bali is also known for the way that tourism is converting the death rituals and funerals into a form of tourism business. They even sell tickets to adapt the news of someone's deathbed into a touristic adventure (Astawa et al., 2020). Leading a successful business in this field is relying on the basic management principles but connected to the new context and resources (Baesu & Bejinaru, 2020).

The Holocaust Memorial Museum from Washington D.C. offers the visitors the opportunity to experience a glimpse of a Holocaust victim's life through a special identity card which matches, by name and photo, the gender and age of a tourist with those of a victim. By entering a personal ID on the monitors, the Holocaust pseudo-victims feel and experience the counterpart of their real-life (Stone, 2011).

Famous during his period of life, famous even after death, Pablo Escobar, has provided touristic places that are Escobar-themed. A private museum belonging to Roberto Escobar brings a high number of visitors per year in Medellin Cartel, the main reason being the focus on his brother Pablo. Also, we include here the house where Escobar was murdered, the prison "La Catedral" where Pablo was held and Hacienda Napoles, a famous building which you can find near Puerto Triunfo, between Bogota and Medellin. With a significant dark potential, these destinations attract tourists from all over the world in Colombia (Van Broeck, 2018).

Having a wide variety of tragedies, human-made events and old rituals, a lot of actual sites have the potential to become main destinations for dark tourism. Through human-made events we exemplify the Ukraine-Russia conflict and through old rituals we mean immoral, degenerate and sinful actions

(Ironside, 2018).

In Table 1 we have collected a series of sites from all over the world where specific events ended with tragic repercussions and that can be considered (in the present and future days) potential destinations with dark tourism identity.

Table 1. Worldwide sites with dark identity

Place	Event	Victims	Period
Fiji Islands	Cannibalism	Unknown	1834-1907
Milwaukee	Jeffrey Dahmer	17 persons	1978 - 1991
Hillsborough	Stampede	96 persons	1989
Mekka, Jamarat	the collapse of a crane	107 persons	2015
Mati, Greece	Island Fire	104 persons	2018
Seul	Stampede	151 persons	2022
Ukraine and its regions	War (still on)	15.000 persons (Nov. 2023 data)	24 Feb. 2022-Until present

Source: authors' compilation from Google search

Niche literature authors mention a number of reasons for people to choose dark tourism as a form of leisure. First of all, for educational experience because while representing a place of curiosity, dark tourism defines a place of culture, historical interest and desire to know and understand past events. Secondly, for self-discovery purposes, search of identity and adventure, dark tourism is a destination of interest also for memory, status/prestige and religious, guilt feelings or heritage reasons (Bratianu & Bejinaru, 2019; Magano et al., 2022; Sun & Lv, 2021).

More dark tourism sites which are worth mentioning are: war or conflict zones, such as Iraq or Afghanistan; execution sites, such as in Paris or London; famous cemeteries, such as Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris; detention and prison locations, such as Alcatraz in the USA; areas affected by natural disasters, such as disaster zones in Japan or Nepal; extermination sites, such as concentration camps in Europe; ruins and historical sites, such as Pompeii or Machu Picchu; or ghost towns, such as the city of Pripyat in Ukraine (Farkic, 2020; Fonseca et al., 2015; Ngo et al., 2022; Min et al., 2021; Paz, 2005; Young & Light, 2016).

Different papers emphasize different types of dark tourism destinations according to the research scope. Popularity of this trend explains the increasing numbers of "dark tourists". The preference for dark destinations is dynamic according to different criteria (Shekhar & Valeri, 2022; Zhang, 2022). We present a list of randomly selected dark tourism destinations in the world, includes: Chernobyl, Ukraine; Fukushima, Japan; Auschwitz Concentration Camps, Poland; Sedlec Ossuary, Czechia; Oradour-sur-Glane, France;

Aokigahara Suicide Forest, Japan; Volcano Creeks in Pompeii, Italy; Killing Fields, Cambodia; Robben Island, South Africa; Wuhan, China; National 9/11 Memorial & Museum, 'Ground Zero' (9/11 site), New York; Alcatraz, San Francisco, USA; Berlin – sites of the Wall, Checkpoint Charlie museum, etc., Germany (Carrabine, 2017; Fonseca et al., 2015; Olejniczak, 2019; Salazar, 2022; Strange & Kempa, 2003).

VI. MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR DARK TOURISM

Within the studies exploring the marketing aspects of dark tourism, a significant challenge has been identified—namely, *the promotion of dark tourism*. Recent research underscores the increasing importance of electronic media and social platforms as valuable resources for promoting dark tourism, as highlighted in studies by Wight (2020), Šuligoj (2019), and Price & Kerr (2017). Furthermore, a noteworthy aspect explored in some studies is the role played by cinema and web series in the promotion of dark tourism, exemplified in the work of Zerva (2021). This thematic exploration aligns with Light's (2017) findings, who observed the emergence of this issue in their review study. While past reviews have consistently pointed out the absence of an empirical model for marketing dark tourism without ethical concerns, Michelson and Miller (2019) have notably conceptualized such a model.

In contrast, other studies place emphasis on the marketing investigation methods employed in dark tourism research (Hwang et al., 2023; Shekhar & Valeri, 2022). Predominantly, these studies lean towards the conventional use of interviews and questionnaires to gather and model tourist motivations in order to get insights (González-Tennant, 2013; Kerr et al., 2022). Despite this, there is an observable trend towards an increased utilization of visualization techniques in dark tourism research, like digital storytelling, contributing to more authentic and nuanced research findings (González-Tennant, 2013; Wyatt et al, 2022). Although there are review studies summarizing prevalent themes in dark tourism, such as bibliometric studies reviewing top journals (Kumar et al., 2020), there seems to be limited methodological advancement evident in current dark tourism research.

The promotion strategies for dark tourism must be well thought out and designed because, otherwise, this type of tourism might have a negative impact on the local community and may be deemed inappropriate or disrespectful towards the victims of historical or natural events that occurred at these destinations. Transparent communication is essential as complete and accurate information about the tourist destination, including any sensitive or controversial aspects, must be provided. It is crucial to consider respecting the opinions and feelings of the local

community and to avoid any activities that could be deemed disrespectful or offensive. In this context, marketing strategies should promote social responsibility and contribute to local development or heritage conservation (Bratianu & Bejinaru, 2019; Kunwar & Karki, 2019; Edwards, 2020).

The marketing of these destinations has a delicate mission regarding tourist education. Through marketing communication, it is essential to inform tourists about how they should behave at the tourist destination and how they can contribute to a positive experience for all those involved. The impact that marketing approaches may have on tourist experience, perception and satisfaction is extremely sensitive to investigate and should be carefully addressed (Michelson & Miller, 2019; Zerva, 2023). Research reveals that marketing of dark sites is mainly developed online, throughout thematic sites, blogs, vlogs, or social media channels (Bolan & Simone-Charteris, 2018; Valeri, 2020; Wyatt et al, 2022).

The strategies for promoting dark tourism can vary depending on the actual destination, and the services offered can be diversified accordingly. For transparent information and compliance with ethical principles in approaching dark destinations, it is useful to create tourist guides or tourist packages that highlight and describe the key information about these interesting destinations (Pike& Page, 2014; Yoshida et al., 2016).

The range of tourist services could also include the organization of guided visits or thematic tours to provide more detailed information about the places visited. In this field, the services can also be extended to collaboration with other organizations or institutions to develop educational or research programs that support dark tourism (Seccardini & Desmoulins, 2023) and to ensure a safe and pleasant tourist experience for visitors (Chen & Xu, 2021; Dar, 2016; Handayani & Korstanje, 2020; Siddique, 2019).

VII. CONCLUSIONS

In recent decades, the concept of dark tourism has evolved, becoming more accessible and popular among tourists. However, this type of tourism remains a delicate subject and it is important that all its aspects are approached with responsibility and respect.

Dark tourism, reached the scientific community interest quite recently and began to be sporadically studied in the last two decades. The concept refers to visiting places or event site related to death, suffering or violence. Other distinct forms of tourism such as dark tourism are: red tourism, war tourism, disaster tourism, forensic tourism and funeral tourism. Well-known destinations for dark tourism are: cemeteries, history museums, fortresses, castles, concentration

camps, war zones, graves and monuments.

We conclude that, promoting dark tourism is challenging because these destinations are associated with painful or tragic events in history. Some methods of promotion may include providing educational information about the place or event visited, as well as providing quality tourist guidance and services.

The evolution of the concept of dark tourism has included greater recognition and acceptance of this type of tourism, as well as greater attention to ethical issues and responsibility in relation to them. We have argued that it is important that this type of tourism is approached in a respectful and responsible way to avoid exploiting or trivializing tragic events in history.

A critical issue approached in this research domain is "motive". The motivations of tourists to practice this type of tourism can vary, from curiosity and the desire to understand history and culture, to the desire to live extreme or even morbid experiences.

Throughout this paper we tried to underscore the complexity and sensitivity of promoting dark tourism destinations. The challenges in marketing dark tourism are evident, and recent research emphasizes the evolving role of electronic media and social platforms in promotional efforts. Cinema and web series are also recognized as influential tools for attracting attention to dark tourism, as explored in studies by Wight (2020), Šuligoj (2019), Price & Kerr (2017), and Zerva (2021). These findings align with Light's (2017) observations on the emerging significance of electronic media in dark tourism promotion.

Notably, Michelson and Miller (2019) have conceptualized an empirical model for marketing dark tourism without ethical concerns, showing how taboos can be operated by human agency. However, there remains a divergence in the emphasis of studies, with some focusing on marketing investigation methods, predominantly through interviews and questionnaires, while others highlight the increasing use of visualization techniques, such as digital storytelling, for more nuanced insights. Online platforms play a pivotal role in marketing dark sites, with thematic sites, blogs, vlogs, and social media channels being primary channels for promotional efforts.

The importance of well-designed promotion strategies is emphasized to prevent negative impacts on local communities and ensure the responsible treatment of sensitive historical or natural events. Transparent communication is deemed essential, including the provision of complete and accurate information about destinations, respecting local opinions, and avoiding potentially offensive activities. Marketing strategies are urged to prioritize social responsibility and contribute to local development and heritage conservation.

The educational mission of marketing in dark tourism is highlighted, focusing on informing tourists about appropriate behavior and their role in fostering a positive experience for all involved. The delicate balance in marketing approaches and their potential impact on tourist experience, perception, and satisfaction is acknowledged and requires careful consideration. Creating tourist guides or packages is suggested for transparent information and adherence to ethical principles, facilitating a responsible approach to dark destinations and enhancing the depth of visitor engagement.

In summary, the evolving landscape of dark tourism promotion necessitates a thoughtful and ethical approach that balances marketing objectives with sensitivity to the historical and cultural contexts of these destinations.

REFERENCES

Astawa, I. P., Sukawati, T. G. R., & Sugiartha, I. N. G. (2020). The Light-Up of Dark Bali Tourism: A Qualitative Study. In Tourism. IntechOpen.

Baesu, C., & Bejinaru, R. (2020). Knowledge management strategies for leadership in the digital business environment. In Proceedings of the International Conference on Business Excellence (Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 646-656).

Biran, A., & Hyde, K. F. (2013). New perspectives on dark tourism. International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research, 7(3), 191-198.

Bolan, P., & Simone-Charteris, M. (2018). 'Shining a digital light on the dark': Harnessing online media to improve the dark tourism experience. The Palgrave handbook of dark tourism studies, 727-746.

Bratianu, C., & Bejinaru, R. (2019). Intellectual capital of the cultural heritage ecosystems: a knowledge dynamics approach. Knowledge Management, Arts, and Humanities: Interdisciplinary Approaches and the Benefits of Collaboration, 215-238.

Çapar, H., & Aslan, Ö. (2020). Factors affecting destination choice in medical tourism. International journal of travel medicine and global health, 8(2), 80-88.

Carrabine, E. (2017). Iconic power, dark tourism, and the spectacle of suffering. In The Palgrave handbook of prison tourism (pp. 13-36). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Carvache-Franco, M., Carvache-Franco, W., Víquez-Paniagua, A. G., Carvache-Franco, O., & Pérez-Orozco, A. (2021). The role of motivations in the segmentation of ecotourism destinations: A study from Costa Rica. Sustainability, 13(17), 9818.

Chen, S., & Xu, H. (2021). The moral gaze in commercialized dark tourism. Current Issues in Tourism, 24(15), 2167-2186.

Constantinescu, A., Nistorescu, T. (2013). The online communication mix for tourism destinations study case on Romanian tourism destinations, Management&Marketing, 11, 58-70.

Dar, A. A. (2016). Future of the past: developing Jammu and Kashmir as a dark tourism destination. International Journal in Management & Social Science, 4(1), 249-256.

Edwards, E. D. (2020). Morbid curiosity, popular media, and thanatourism. Australian Journal of Parapsychology, 20(2), 113-138.

Farkic, J. (2020). Consuming dystopic places: What answers are we looking for?. Tourism Management Perspectives, 33, 100633.

Farmaki, A. (2013). Dark tourism revisited: A supply/demand conceptualisation. International Journal of Culture, tourism and hospitality Research, 7(3), 281-292.

Foley, M., Lennon, J. (1996). JFK and Dark Tourism: Heart of Darkness. Journal of International Heritage Studies, 2 (4), 198- 211.

Fonseca, A. P., Seabra, C., & Silva, C. (2015). Dark tourism: Concepts, typologies and sites. Journal of Tourism Research & Hospitality.

Garbea, R.V. (2014). Tourist attractiveness of the urban environment in Moldova, Management&Marketing, 12, 84-90.

González-Tennant, E. (2013). New heritage and dark tourism: A mixed methods approach to social justice in Rosewood, Florida. Heritage & society, 6(1), 62-88.

Guzel, B., & Apaydin, M. (2016). Gastronomy tourism: Motivations and destinations. Global issues and trends in tourism, 394.

Handayani, B., & Korstanje, M. E. (2020). Virtual dark tourism: The role of sound branding and augmented reality for death sites. In Destination Management and Marketing: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice (pp. 183-203). IGI Global.

Hapenciuc, C. V., Stanciu, P., & Bejinaru, R. (2019). Businesses Neuromarketing Strategies in the Knowledge Economy. Strategica, 434, 444.

Heuermann, K., & Chhabra, D. (2014). The darker side of dark tourism: An authenticity perspective. Tourism analysis, 19(2), 213-225.

Hwang, Y., Park, E., Lee, C. K., Son, H. J., & Olya, H. (2023). Applying mixed methods to explore lighter and darker shades in hybrid dark tourism experiences. Tourism Review, 78(3), 747-760.

Iliev, D. (2021). Consumption, motivation and experience in dark tourism: A conceptual and critical analysis. Tourism Geographies, 23(5-6), 963-984.

Ironside, R. (2018). The allure of dark tourism: legend tripping and ghost seeking in dark places. Temple University Press.

Jang, K., Sakamoto, K., & Funck, C. (2022). Dark tourism as educational tourism: The case of 'hope tourism'in Fukushima, Japan. In Dark Tourism Studies (pp. 104-115). Routledge.

Janowski, I., Gardiner, S., & Kwek, A. (2021). Dimensions of adventure tourism. Tourism Management Perspectives, 37, 100776.

Jongmeewasin, S. (2016). Religious tourism, pilgrimage and cultural tourism. In 6th National and International Graduate Study Conference: Creative Multi-Disciplinary Studies for Sustainable Development & the 1st National and International Conference on Creative Multi-Disciplinary Studies for Sustainable Development (NCMSD & ICMSD 2016) (pp. 394-95).

Kerr, M. M., Price, R. H., & Rajanikanth, G. (2022). Research methods for studying young tourist experiences. In Children, young people and dark tourism (pp. 245-261). Routledge.

Khan, S. A., Khan, V., & Asif Khan, D. M. (2023). Behavioural intention of tourists towards volunteer tourism: A developing country perspective. Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing (JTHSM), 9(1), 37-47.Kulcsár, E. & Simon, R.Z., (2015). The magic of dark tourism, Management and Marketing Journal, vol. XIII (1), 124-136. http://www.mnmk.ro/documents/2015_X1/10-4-1-15.pdf

Kunwar, R. R., & Karki, N. (2019). Dark tourism: Understanding the concept and recognizing the values. Journal of APF Command and Staff College, 2(1), 42-59.

Kumar, Satish, Sureka, R., & Vashishtha, A. (2020). The Journal of Heritage Tourism: A bibliometric overview since its inception. Journal of Heritage Tourism, 15(4), 365-380. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2020.1754423

Lennon J., Foley M. (2000). Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death & Disaster[M]. London: Continuum.

Lewis, H., Schrier, T., & Xu, S. (2021). Dark tourism: Motivations and visit intentions of tourists. International Hospitality Review, 36(1), 107-123. https://doi.org/10.1108/IHR-01-2021-0004

Light, D. (2017). Progress in dark tourism and thanatourism research: An uneasy relationship with heritage tourism. Tourism management, 61, 275-301.

Lupan, M., & Bejinaru, R. (2019). Perspectives of university governance for the development of entrepreneurship. The USV Annals of Economics and Public Administration, 19(1 (29)), 74-81.

Magano, J., Fraiz-Brea, J. A., & Leite, Â. (2022). Dark tourists: profile, practices, motivations and wellbeing. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19(19), 12100.

Martini, A., & Buda, D. M. (2020). Dark tourism and affect: Framing places of death and disaster. Current Issues in Tourism, 23(6), 679-692.

Martini, A., & Buda, D. M. (2018). Analysing affects and emotions in tourist e-mail interviews: A case in post-disaster Tohoku, Japan. Current Issues in Tourism,1–12.

Michelson, G., & Miller, R. (2019). Taboos, morality and marketing: Towards a conceptual model and illustration. Journal of Consumer Marketing, 36(3), 393-400. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCM-03-2018-2621

Min, J., Yang, K., & Thapa-Magar, A. (2021). Dark tourism segmentation by tourists' motivations for visiting earthquake sites in Nepal: implications for dark tourism. Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 26(8), 866-878.

Ngo, P. M., Bui, H. T., & Dimache, A. (2022). 9 Dark Tourism in the Former Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). In Vietnam Tourism: Policies and Practices (pp. 136-150). GB: CABI.

Niemelä, T. (2010). Motivation factors in dark tourism: Case: House of terror.

Olejniczak, M. (2019). Dark Tourism–the Dark Side of Berlin. Studia Periegetica, 27, 139-151.

Paz, E. B. (2005). Learning from the experiences of past cultures, lost and abandoned urban centres. Assumpt Univ J Technol, 8(3), 135-145.

Pike, S., & Page, S. J. (2014). Destination Marketing Organizations and destination marketing: A narrative analysis of the literature. Tourism management, 41, 202-227.

Price, R.H., & Kerr, M.M. (2017). Child's play at war memorials: Insights from a social media debate. Journal of Heritage Tourism, 13(2), 167-180. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2016.1277732

Richards, G. (2018). Cultural tourism: A review of recent research and trends. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 36, 12-21.

Raine, R. (2013). A dark tourist spectrum. International Journal of Culture, tourism and hospitality Research, 7(3), 242-256.

Roberts, C., & Stone, P. R. (2014). Dark tourism and dark heritage: Emergent themes, issues and consequences. Displaced heritage: Responses to disaster, trauma and loss, 9-18.

Salazar, G. M. (2022). Macabre tourism in Japan Case study Aokigahara Forest and Nagoro Village. Journal of Global Tourism Research, 7(2), 151-156.

Sarkar, A., Chakraborty, P., & Valeri, M. (2022). People's perception on dark tourism: a quantitative exploration. Current Issues in Tourism, 25(13), 2042-2047, https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.1889483

Schneider (Ispas), A., Anghel-Vlad, S., Negruț, L., Goje, G. & Para, I. (2021). Tourists' motivations for visiting dark tourism sites. Case of Romania, The Annals of the University of Oradea. Economic Sciences TOM XXX, 140-150.

Seccardini, G., & Desmoulins, L. (2023). Flawed public diplomacy: when Croatia Instagram Riviera narrative destination branding ignores dark tourism amateurs. Journal of Communication Management, 27(2), 277-292.

Shekhar, S., & Valeri, M. (2022). Evolving Themes in Dark Tourism Research: A Review Study. Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal, 70(4), 624-641.

Siddique, M. H. (2019). Dark Tourism: An ethical dilemma (Master's thesis, University of Stavanger, Norway).

Sigala, M., & Steriopoulos, E. (2022). Does emotional engagement matter in dark tourism? Implications drawn from a reflective approach. In Dark Tourism Studies (pp. 54-74). Routledge.

Stone, P. R., & Sharpley, R. (2013). Deviance, dark tourism and 'dark leisure. Contemporary perspectives in leisure: Meanings, motives and lifelong learning: Meanings, motives and lifelong learning, 54-64.

Stone, P. R. (2011). Dark tourism experiences: Mediating between life and death. Tourist experience: Contemporary perspectives, 21-27.

Stone, P. R. (2006). A Dark Tourism Spectrum: towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions, Tourism, 54(2), 145-160.

Stone, P. R., Sharpley, R. (2008). CONSUMING DARK TOURISM: A Thanatological Perspective, Annals of Tourism Research, 35(2), 574–595.

Strange, C., & Kempa, M. (2003). Shades of dark tourism: Alcatraz and Robben Island. Annals of tourism research, 30(2), 386-405.

Šuligoj, M. (2019). Dark events of the Istrian countryside: An electronic media perspective. Academica Turistica, 12(2), 121-132. https://academica.turistica.si/index.php/AT-TIJ/article/view/182

Sun, J., & Lv, X. (2021). Feeling dark, seeing dark: Mind–body in dark tourism. Annals of Tourism Research, 86, 103087.

Swedberg, R. (2020). Exploratory research. The production of knowledge: Enhancing progress in social science, 17-41.

Valeri, M. (2020). Blockchain technology: Adoption perspectives in tourism. Entrepreneurship and organizational change: Managing innovation and creative capabilities, 27-35.

Van Broeck, A. M. (2018). 'Pablo Escobar Tourism'—Unwanted Tourism: Attitudes of Tourism Stakeholders in Medellín, Colombia. The Palgrave handbook of dark tourism studies, 291-318.

Verma, S., & Jain, R. (2013). Exploiting tragedy for tourism. Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 3(8), 9-13.

Wight, C.A. (2020). Visitor perceptions of European Holocaust Heritage: A social media analysis. Tourism Management, 81, 104142. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TOURMAN.2020.104142

Wyatt, B., Leask, A., & Barron, P. (2022). Designing dark tourism experiences: An exploration of edutainment interpretation at lighter dark visitor attractions. In Dark Tourism Studies (pp. 75-91). Routledge.

Young, C., & Light, D. (2016). Interrogating spaces of and for the dead as 'alternative space': cemeteries, corpses and sites of Dark Tourism. International Review of Social Research, 6(2), 61-72.

Yoshida, K., Bui, H. T., & Lee, T. J. (2016). Does tourism illuminate the darkness of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?. Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 5(4), 333-340.

Zhang, Y. (2022). Experiencing human identity at dark tourism sites of natural disasters. Tourism Management, 89, 104451.

Zerva, K. (2023). How to be a dark tourist: Analysis of the tourist behavior through a documentary series. Cuadernos de Turismo, (51), 10123.

Zheng, C., Zhang, J., Qian, L., Jurowski, C., Zhang, H., & Yan, B. (2018). The inner struggle of visiting 'dark tourism'sites: examining the relationship between perceived constraints and motivations. Current Issues in Tourism, 21(15), 1710-1727. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2016.1220512