# **Visitor Motivation on Dark Tourism**

#### In War Museum, Pulau Pinang

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#### ABSTRACT

Dark tourism started to gain academic attention in the early 90s, and recently it interested the media and the general public. Dark tourism is also known as black tourism, thanatourism that is associated with death or tragedy. Dark tourism has become the subject of debate because of its critiques and assessment of social impacts. Therefore, the study aimed to investigate visitors' motivation for dark tourism in War Museum, Penang. 377 respondents were participating in this study conducted through social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and others. This study focused on dark tourism in War Museum Penang. The result showed the visitor's motivation to enjoy dark tourism in War Museum Penang positively.

Keywords: Dark Tourism, Motivation, Experience, Uniqueness

#### INTRODUCTION

Dark tourism is defined as tourism involving black history associated with death or tragedy. Dark tourist attractions are indeed considered heritage and cultural sites. It is something that occurred and left a cultural imprint. According to Dann (1998), dark sites have significant cultural and historical symbolic importance. It is well known that culture plays an important role in instilling a sense of value in unfortunate events such as dark tourism products (Birna, Hyde, & Raine, 2013; Korstanje & Ivanov, 2012). The development of dark culture sites is viewed as an attraction capable of providing visitors with a value-added interaction (Alom et al., 2019). This can be evidenced by Stone (2006), who reported that tour operators have started bringing tourists to various dark tourist spots, and it has become an attraction and exhibition related to genocide and tragedy, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau or the Killing Fields of Cambodia. Dark Tourism is distinguished because it is based on true events. There are a variety of dark tourism attractions, such as Holocaust sites, battlefields, prisons, slavery sites, mausoleums, detention sites, memorials, and other places with a disputed history, as well as unforgettable sites (Casbeard & Booth, 2012; Doss, 2008; Patwary & Rashid, 2016).

Aside from that, according to Korstanje and Ivanov (2012), the travel industry is a form of fusion of the past, present, and coming years, which could be a biased discourse in which the price of culture and architecture is highlighted to visitors? As previously stated, sites associated with war and atrocities have long been considered part of broader historical and cultural heritage tourism (Stone, 2012). According to a few tourism scholars, dark tourism not only serves as a guardian of history in terms of heritage but also provides a moral guardian in a supposedly volatile modern society.

The effective dissemination of information about site heritage and historical values allows travellers to comprehend past tragedies (Braithwaite & Lee, 2006). As a result of the past tragedies related to war, cruelty, death, murder, and all the pain, this tourism is considered

dark tourism. Today's tourists living in comfortable surroundings are less interested in dark tourism. However, some tourists are interested in uncovering the history and travelling to conduct research, so dark tourism is an option.

Malaysia has many interesting Dark Tourism attractions that influence visitors to visit that place. Visitor arrivals are due to the environment and unique experience which is on Dark Tourism. The Dark Tourism attraction is the War Museum Penang. This study aimed to investigate the visitor's motivation on Dark Tourism in War Museum Penang. There were two objectives of this research:

- 1. To examine the relationship between dark experiences and tourist motivation in Penang War Museum.
- 2. To investigate the relationship between engaging entertainment and tourist motivation in Penang War Museum.

To identify the relationship between the unique learning experience and tourist motivation in Penang War Museum.

## Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is focused on tourist perceptions of dark tourism in the war museum, Penang. Through this study, researchers can find out the views of tourists on this place and whether it attracts their interest or not. Furthermore, this study has the potential to increase knowledge and provide a better understanding of the past story of dark tourism, particularly at the War Museum in Penang. Simultaneously, it can support the dark tourism industry to become more well-known and ensure the country's history and cultures are not forgotten and neglected. In addition, this research can increase awareness among Malaysians of the importance of knowing the history of the country so that it can be used as motivation or moral to ensure the history will not be repeated in the future.

Subsequently, this study will aid in the tourism industry's holding. Fibre research can serve as a model for the next generation. It allows them to investigate and comprehend dark tourism, particularly in the War Museum in Penang. In the long run, it can preserve and ensure that the country's history will always be remembered. The increased exposure to dark tourism will increase the number of tourists visiting this area. It can provide an attraction for others to explore this place as well. This will also benefit the country's economy if more tourists to this location becomes greater. Although the research process provides a different perspective than simply sharing a journal or academic article concept, one is exposed to the real-world environment and location. However, this study can be used as a reference and promotion tool to help the dark tourism industry become popular as other types of tourism

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Dark tourism

Dark tourism contributes significantly to the income and image of some areas. Museums, graves, slums, concentration camps, war situations, assassinations, and other tragic locations are all considered dark tourism destinations. With that in mind, it's time to show off some of the world's most popular Dark Tourism destinations.

Korstanje and Ivanov (2012) found that tourism is a way of combining the past, present, and future into a biased discourse that enhances the value of history and heritage to be portrayed to visitors. Such a Penang war museum related to conflict and atrocities has long been

recognized as part of the larger historical and heritage tourism framework. Some tourism scholars believe that dark tourism serves not only as a guardian of history in terms of heritage but also as a moral guardian in today's culture; Penang war museum seems to have a flourishing moral life and has become part of tourism itineraries around the world. Tourists can better appreciate the tragedies that happened in the past thanks to the dissemination of information about the history of the site and the heritage value of the Penang war museum. Death and disaster events can be changed, according to Stone (2010), giving visitors a sense of comfort, security, and optimism. The Penang War Museum, for example, was once the most terrible war stronghold and torture site in Malaysian history. Still, it now serves as a monument that operates as a mirror of the human soul and is regarded as the most effective way to learn about the event.

#### **Tourism motivation**

Educational and dark tourism have a close relationship and are intertwined, particularly in the case of the most obnoxious tourists. For most people, the most important reason to visit dark tourists is to seek knowledge or education. While dark tourism isn't everyone's favorite's hobby, and it's certainly not as much fun, many people value the education it generates. Visitors to dark tourist attractions come from a wide range of socioeconomic classes. Motivation encompasses learning goals, a passion for learning more about the past and more like that. Others are motivated by the desire to put in another way.

Dark tourism is part of a significant new scope of death (which "consists of areas of disaster and difficult heritage") in contemporary secular societies (Stone, 2020, p. 3). It provides visitors with unique cognitive and affective experiences (Henderson, 2000). Stone (2012) believes that a dark experience is a teachable moment and reflection from life when confronted with death, which comes suddenly and inevitably. Dark tourism is thus educationally significant because what tourists see and feel during their visit influences their cognition.

Visitors drawn to dark tourism destinations may be curious about the reality behind the media depictions, or they may have a personal connection to the site or people linked with it. In any case, the infatuation with dark tourist destinations has resulted in many ethical quandaries (Patwary, 2022). People frequently form emotional attachments to celebrities. As a result, tours of the Penang war museum.

#### **Dark Experience**

Dark tourism involves travel to places historically associated with death and tragedy. According to (Raine, 2013), the burial grounds or graveyards concluded the mourners had a personal spiritual connection in dark tourism with different sites. The specific grave site usually had the meditations for death. Death rates are often performed as a ritual not necessarily to mark the passing of the deceased but rather to heal the wound of families, communities, societies, or nations by the deceased's passing (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2009; Patwary et al., 2020).

Traveling to and experiencing places associated with death is not a new phenomenon. Disaster tourism or Dark tourism, though it is considered as not legal and ethical in terms of business prospects, is attracting the attention of both tourists and academic practitioners, as well as the Tourist, who operates for various reasons (Yuill, Stephanie Marie (2003). Dark tourism, also known as 'Thanatourism' especially in the academic arena, is the tourism activities mainly in the heritage or historical sites with controversies and other attractions and

exhibitions of death, disaster, memorial sites, or seemingly macabre that were shadowed in the past.

It is a concept that started in the mid-1990s/2000s, transforming war or disaster zones into tourism or travel destinations (Lyn Robinson, Jim K, Jarvie, 2008). Such sites and attractions are gaining the popularity and attention of several visitors, more than half a million per year in recent decades. For Examples, Auschwitz Museum in Oswiecim, Poland; Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima. Japan; Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Peace Park Jeju Island, South Korea.

# **Engaging Entertainment**

Emotional connections by the location of travelling by visiting the dark tourism destination of tourists to see the reality behind media or image. Everyday life has been systematized for the tour of Elvis' home, Graceland and the reenactment of James Dean's funeral offers visitors different experiences (Foley & Lennon, 1996).

Dark Tourism Spectrum (2006) Stone states that dark tourism supply cannot be analyzed completely unless the tourist behaviour and demand for dark tourism are recognized. Supply in dark tourism is given in a wide and distinct series; nevertheless, a structured foundation of supplying attractions is necessary to assist in identifying and researching visitors' motivation and experiences.

Not all dark tourism attractions have the same level of 'darkness'. (Strange & Kempa 2003) first introduced a differentiation between 'lighter' and 'darker' tourism sites. They compared Alcatraz and Robben Island, both being former prisons that have been converted into tourist attractions, and even though both places have different histories, they share certain attributes. Nevertheless, Alcatraz is already being presented commercially and entertainingly, whereas Robben Island still holds on to its seriousness and maintains a higher level of political influence in its interpretation. Robben Island thus still focuses more on promoting education, honourable and remembrance. As a result, Robben Island is being perceived as a shade darker than Alcatraz (Stone, 2005).

# **Unique Learning Experience**

Dark tourism has also had unique tourism trends in recent years and has always been curious about places that might have a historical connection with tragic events. But the reasons tourists want to visit such dark tourism sites is not a bad thing and gaining a unique learning experience. Studied found that their primary motivations werexploring, making discoveries, and educating at burial sites and graveyards (Raine, 2013).

Ashworth (2004) introduced four arguments that place dark tourism in a familiar context. The first argument deals with people's curiosity, which is one of the major drivers of human beings. It is triggered by a sensation of uncertainty in the brain, and the human seeks to satisfy this feeling. People, and thus tourists, are fascinated by the unusual, unknown and unique, which leads to the conclusion that at least part of the curiosity for dark tourism attractions comes from the same motivations that lead people to acknowledge and remember the exceptional. The exceptional unusual arouses and satisfies curiosity which is not uncommon for the tourist, but due to restrictions in daily life, the sensation does not get experienced often.

Curiosity shows at events such as car accidents or scenes of natural disasters, where some might consider it inappropriate to stop and stare. On a more socially acceptable level, even circus shows and (extreme) sports with many viewers may thrive in popularity due to the perceived possibility of a tragic event happening.

While, Patwary et al. (2022) the motivations of tourists investigated the dark heritage destination in Cyrus that found the concept of death was incorporated to enhance tourists' experience, the educational and memorial purposes become places of commemoration, admiration and learning from the dark tourism site.

In the age of postmodernity, the experience of consumers plays an increasingly important role in economic and social life. In social science literature on the tourist experience, most researchers focus on the experience in contrast to the daily experience. The tourist experience is thus understood as the pure, net, or peak experience, usually derived from the attractions, rather than mixed, gross, or supporting experiences such as eating, sleeping, etc. Those experiences that are regarded as the extension of the daily experience to the tourist journey, such as the experience of accommodation and transport, are mostly ignored or taken for granted (Quan & Wang, 2004). There are two general approaches to studying the tourist experience, namely, the social science approach and the marketing/management approach (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). This refers to the attractions' experience that constitute tourism's major motivations. The latter treats the tourist experience as supporting consumer experience, which refers to the experiences of gratifying basic consumer needs on the journey, such as eating, sleeping, and transport, which do not constitute the major motivation for tourism. In contrast, the former regards the tourist experience as a peak experience in sharp contrast to the daily experience.

# **Research Hypothesis**

The literature review revealed e independent and dependent variables as motivation for dark tourism in Penang War Museum. Hence, this research will examine any relationship among these variables. The hypothesis of the study is outlined as follows:

- H<sub>1</sub> There is a significant correlation between dark experiences among visitor motivation in War Museum, Penang.
- **H**<sub>2</sub> There is no significant correlation between dark experiences and visitor motivation in War Museum, Penang.

# **Research Framework**

The Figure 1 below shows the research framework use for this study

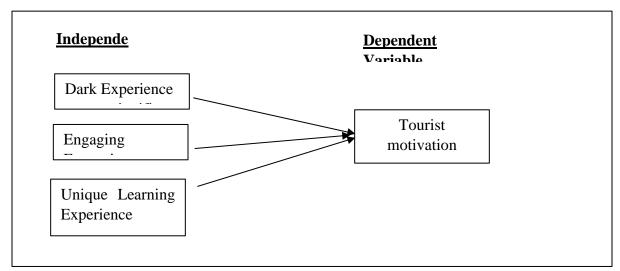


Figure 1: Research Framework

# METHODOLOGY

## **Research Design**

This study used the quantitative method, distributing questionnaires to 377 respondents who visited the Penang War Museum. This research focuses on visitors who have experience visiting Penang War Museum. This is because individuals who have visited Penang War Museum have different motivations that make them visit or have experienced in Penang War Museum. Therefore, it is easy to find random respondents because Penang War Museum is an attractive destination that makes tourists want to visit this place.

Moreover, questionnaires were distributed to the population to collect the data which are visitors' motivation on the dark experience in Penang War Museum. This questionnaire used the format of multiple choices and 5-point Likert scales of agreement. The researcher divided the questionnaire into 5 sections which are Section A, B, C, and D. For Section A, the questionnaire requested general information about the demographics of respondents, such as gender, age, race and employment status. For Sections B, C, D and E, the questions elaborated more on the dependent and independent variables, which were (i) Dark experience, (ii) Engaging entertainment, (iii) Unique learning and (iv) Visitors' motivation that were was examined in the survey.

## **Data Collection**

The data collection was conducted using questionnaires. This research chose to distribute the questionnaires using the Google form application. The questionnaire was conducted online to collect information on dark experiences, engaging entertainment and unique learning experiences of visitors' motivation at Penang War Museum. Links to Google forms have been distributed on social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp to cover the total number of targeted respondents. Researchers will use questionnaires because it is one of the most cost-effective ways to collect quantitative data. Self-designed questionnaires where the researcher does not need to conduct a face-to-face interview. This is a cost-effective method because hiring someone to make an appointment is not necessary. The questionnaire also gathered a large amount of information from a large number of people in a relatively short time. Apart from that, the questionnaire allows invisibility, which can comfort those who respond.

# Sampling

The sampling method used in this study was the probability sampling method. The researcher wanted to relate the random sampling method, for example, looking at the data frequency

statistics for the same questionnaire. This indicates that many respondents are motivated by the Penang war museum based on methods such as simple random sampling.

$$s = \frac{x^2 N p (1 - P)}{e^2 (N - 1) + x^2 p (1 - p)}$$

n= sample size

N= population size

e = the degree of accuracy expressed as proportion (0.05)

x = chi-square of degree of freedom 1 and confidence 95% (3.841)

p = proportion of population (if unknown, 0.5)

Table 1: The Number of Households in Three States of Malaysia

Place Name	Number of visitors to the War Museum in the	
	previous year (people)	
Penang War Museum	20 000 people	

Source: www.CEICDATA.COM, Department of statistics, Database Malaysia.

# Data Analysis

Four types of data analysis were used in this study: frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, reliability test and Pearson correlation analysis. The data obtained was analysed by using SPSS version 26.

## FINDINGS

## **Result of Frequency Analysis**

Table 4: Frequency Analysis

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender			
Female	222	58.9	
Male	149	39.5	
Age			
18-25	235	62.3	
26 - 33	95	25.2	
34 - 41	31	8.2	
42 - 49	7	1.9	
50-above	9	2.4	
Race			
Bumiputera Sabah	2	0.5	
Chinese	15	4.0	
India	9	2.4	
Kadazandusun	1	0.3	
Malay	349	92.6	
Siam	1	0.3	
Employment Status			
Governemnt sector	40	10.6	
Housewife	14	3.7	

Kaki lena	1	0.3
Private sector	83	22.0
Self employed	54	14.3
Student	185	49.1

Table above clearly shows that female respondents were 58.9% (n=222) more than male respondents 39.5% (n=149). Among these five age groups, the highest numbers of respondents were from 18 to 25 years old with 62.3% (n=235). Followed ,25.2% (n=95) of respondents from the age group of 26 - 33 years old. For the age group of 34 - 41 years old indicates as much as 8.2% (n=31) respondents, while 2.4% (n=9) respondents from the age group of 50 years old and above. The lowest number of respondents were from 42 - 49 years old, with 1.9% (n=7) respondents. Among these six race groups, the highest number of respondents were from Malay respondents, with 92.6% (n=349). Following with 4% (n=15) respondents are Chinese, 2.4% (n=9) are Indian respondents, 0.5% (n=2) are Bumiputera Sabah. The lowest respondents were Siam, and Kadazandusun respondents have the same number that is 0.3% (n=1) respondents for each. Other than that, among these six types of employment status, the highest numbers of respondent from private sector, 14.3% (n=54) respondents were self-employed, 10.6% (n=40) respondent from government sector, 3.7% (n=14) were housewife. The lowest number of respondents was 'kaki lena' with 0.3% (n=1).

# **Result Of Descriptive Analysis**

Variables	Item	Mean score	Standard Deviation
The dark experience	1. Dark experiences that occurred in Penang War Museum have attract visitors to visit Penang War Museum	4.51	737
	2. I traveled here to satisfy my curiosity about abnormal and strange occurrences	4.37	872
	3. The attractions at the War Museum gave me an incredible experience	4.54	718
	4. I can feel the dark experience, contemplating death, war, and destruction at the Penang War Museum	4.44	833
	5. The dark experience at the War Museum intrigued me to learn about a tragedy as w ell as see how the location had reacted to the tragedy	4.53	736
	6. I visited the Penang War Museum because fascinated with dark experiences and paranormal activities	4.46	798
Engaging entertainment	1. I enjoying dark tourism exhibitions	4.53	765
	2. I am interested to see historical sites and the way it has impacted our lives	4.58	715

 Table 5: Descriptive Analysis

	3. I love taking pictures of historical places and the War Museum is an interesting entertainment place for me to keep a collection of historical images	4.53	729
	4. I get viewing death and war events through re-creation fiction when visiting Penang War Museum	4.52	740
	5. Varieties of entertainment offered encourage visitors visited Penang War Museum	4.55	735
	6. I travelled to the Penang War Museum to see the change or improvement of the dark tourism location	4.47	802
The unique learning	1. I enjoyed learning about what happened and being able to take lessons based on the historical of the Penang War Museum	4.60	657
	2. I visited the Penang War Museum to see the originality of the historic place	4.57	689
	3. I travelled to the Penang War Museum because I wanted to try something new	4.51	786
	4. I choose to visit a dark tourist spot because to experience a place many people have not been to or wish to visit	4.51	748
	5. Visiting here is a great way to learn about important historical events	4.60	661
	6. I travelled here because I wanted to try something 'out of the ordinary'	4.51	751
Visitors motivation	1. In the future, I would consider returning to Penang War Museum	4.51	737
	2. I would recommend to people who are close to me to visit Penang War Museum	4.55	746
	3. Penang War Museum helped increase my interest and experience of dark tourism	4.51	769
	4. Service and quality offered at the Penang War Museum increase the motivation of tourists to visit this place	4.51	740
	5. Engaging entertainment and unique learning obtained at the Penang War Museum became the motivation for me to visit this place	4.56	705

# **Result Of Reliability Analysis** Table 6: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Item	Cronbach's Coefficient	Alpha
Dark experience	6	0.940	
Engaging entertainment	6	0.940	
Unique learning	6	0.956	
Visitor motivation	5	0.955	

## **Result of Pearson Correlation Analysis**

The Table 5 below shows the Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 7: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis	P-Value	Result (Supported/Not Supported)
$H_1$ : There is a significant correlation between dark experiences among the visitor motivation in War Museum, Penang	0.844	H <sub>1</sub> is supported/
$H_2$ : There is a significant correlation between the available engaging entertainment and visitor motivation in War Museum, Penang.	0.902	H <sub>2</sub> is supported
H <sub>3</sub> : There is a significant correlation between the unique learning experiences and visitors' motivation in War Museum, Penang.	0.899	H <sub>3</sub> is supported

The first hypothesis predicted a positive and significant relationship between dark experiences and tourist's visitation. According to Pearson Correlation analysis (see Table 4.5), the result showed that dark experience strongly correlates with the visitor motivation in Penang War Museum. Based on the result, a strong positive correlation relationship between independent variable 1 (dark experience) and dependent variable (visitors motivation) at r = 0.844, p < 0.01 are shown. Dark experience affects tourists visiting the Penang War Museum. Although the War Museum has a dark and somewhat horrible history, the dark experience can show that tourists are attracted to go there because of interest and curiosity about the events that happened there and can be used as a reflection. Subsequently, the attractions available at the Penang War Museum have also provided an incredible experience for the tourists. This means that the dark experience at the War Museum has had a positive impact on visiting tourists.

The second hypothesis predicted a positive and significant relationship between engaging in entertainment and tourist visitation to Penang War Museum. According to Pearson Correlation analysis (see Table 4.5), the result showed that engaging entertainment strongly correlates to tourist visitation. Based on the result, a strongly positive correlation between independent variable 2 (engaging entertainment) and dependent variable (tourist's visitation) at 0.902, p < 0.01, is shown. Most tourists who come to the Penang War Museum are because they are interested in seeing historical sites. Those who love collecting pictures of historical places also come here and make it an engaging entertainment while travelling. In addition, visiting tourists also consisted of those keen to see changes or improvements to dark tourist

locations. As described in chapters 1 and 2, dark tourism is a historical place where there have been wars, horrific deaths and even destruction. Therefore, the condition of the place needs improvement to provide comfort to tourists who visit, and it is appropriate when tourists want to see improvements from the history that has passed many years.

The third hypothesis predicted a positive and significant relationship between unique learning and tourists visiting Penang War Museum. According to Pearson Correlation analysis (see Table 4.5), the result showed that unique learning is strongly correlated to tourist visitation. Based on the result, a strongly positive correlation between independent variable 3 (unique learning) and dependent variable (tourist's visitation) at 0.899, p < 0.01 are shown. This shows that tourists have fun learning about what is going on at the Penang War Museum. Travelling to this historic place also attracts tourists to the War Museum. Some tourists want to experience places that many people have not been to or want to visit. As discussed in chapter 1, dark tourism is not the tourism that is the main choice of tourists. Still, most of them travel to dark tourism are those who really - interested in historical places and someone who wants a different situation from others.

To sum up, all three research objectives have been achieved, and research questions have also been answered in this study.

#### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The discussion aims to resolve the questions and address the hypotheses as stated in the first chapter of this study. In general, this study has examined visitors' motivation towards the dark experience at the Penang War Museum. Based on the study's findings, it focused on tourists' perceptions of dark tourism in the war museum, Penang. Through this study, researchers can find out the views of tourists to this place and whether it attracts their interest or not. Furthermore, this study has the potential to add knowledge, providing a better understanding of the past story of dark tourism, particularly at the War Museum in Penang. Simultaneously, it can support the dark tourism industry to become more famous as the history and culture of the country is not forgotten and ignored. In addition, this research can increase awareness among Malaysians about the importance of knowing the history of the country so that it can be used as motivation or moral to ensure that the history is not repeated in the future. In this research, we examine the motivations that make dark tourism an attraction and the benefits that can be gained from dark tourism as well as assess the impact of dark tourism on all tourists. This research also assesses the extent of tourist motivation about the attraction of this Penang war museum in this dark tourism.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has motivated visitors on dark tourism in the war museum, Pulau Pinang. Three independent variables, namely dark experiences, engaging experiences, and unique learning, have been chosen to examine their relationships with the dependent variable, which is the visitor's motivation for dark tourism in the war museum, Pulau Pinang. a total of 377 respondents from the age of 18 years old and above were selected from all states in Malaysia to examine visitor's motivation on dark tourism in the war museum, Pulau Pinang. Overall, based on Pearson's correlation analysis, the dark experience scored a value of 0.878, followed by engaging entertainment with 0.836, and unique learning with 0.844.

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