

Motivations and intentions for engaging in Dark Tourism

Bachelor Thesis for Obtaining the Degree

Bachelor of Business Administration in

Tourism and Hospitality Management

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1 Abstract

The niche tourism, dark tourism, which involves destinations that are associated with destruction, disaster, and death, has gained popularity over the last few years. However, little research about people's motivations and intentions to engage in dark tourism has been done. As a result, this thesis focuses on finding possible driving forces and motivations to engage in dark tourism. It especially concentrates on one of the most prominent dark tourism destinations, the nuclear disaster zone in Chernobyl.

The exploratory research design was used to answer the research questions about the primary motivations to visit dark tourism sites as well as identify experienced emotions during the visits. In addition to that, both primary and secondary data were used to investigate this topic.

Firstly, academic literature was analyzed thematically. The findings show that general motivations to visit a dark tourism site are very difficult to detect, as they can vary immensely from person to person. Secondly, for the primary data, the qualitative approach was chosen. The data was collected through an online survey, which gathered information about the visit to the zone from twenty-five participants. The results show that there are four primary motivations to visit the nuclear disaster zone in Chernobyl. These motivations are photographic opportunities, interest in technology, educational reasons, and sheer curiosity. However, as the literature review already indicated, it is very difficult to determine general motivations for traveling to a dark tourism site. In addition to that, the primary experienced emotion on-site, excitement, was determined. Even though a few primary motivations could be categorized, motivation is very dependent on the individual. All findings and their implications are presented and discussed at the end of the thesis.