

Visiting death and life: Tourists' motivation for engaging in dark tourism

Bachelor Thesis for Obtaining the Degree

Bachelor of Business Administration in

Tourism and Hospitality Management

Submitted to Marion Garaus

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1 Abstract

Dark tourism has become the dominant term for any tourism site associated with death, disaster, suffering, or violence (Boateng et al. 2018). In recent years, the media attention and the interest in visiting sites where adverse historical events occurred emerged immensely. However, research about the tourists' overall experience at dark sites is rare.

As a result, this bachelor thesis investigates tourists' motivation for taking part in dark tourism using the example of the *Mauthausen memorial site* in Austria. The researcher used an exploratory research design to examine the main reasons for the visit and the emotions experienced on-site.

On the one hand, data was gathered from academic literature and analyzed thematically. The findings show that the motivation partly affects the dark tourist's experience and that individual emotional reactions affect the tourist experience itself. Moreover, researchers found that the interaction between the tourist and the attraction plays a significant role in the experience.

On the other hand, primary data necessary to reach this paper's aim is contributed by sixteen in-depth interviews. The implications of the findings are provided and critically discussed at the end of the paper.