

Dark Tourism in Lebanon: A Bright Opportunity to be Pursued

Socrat Ghadban^{1*}, Hanna El Maalouf², Manar Abou Zaki³

¹Department of Economics, Faculty of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Lebanese University, Lebanon, ²Department of Tourism, Faculty of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Lebanese University, Lebanon, ³Department of Education, Modern University of Business & Science (MUBS), Lebanon.

*Email: manar.abouzaki@gmail.com

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Abstract

Tourism in Lebanon has always been a key contributor to the national economy. It is one of the main sectors Lebanon depends on besides banking. In this research, dark tourism was approached as an important type of tourism that has a significant potential role in Lebanon. Unfortunately, this is not reflected in the Ministry of Tourism list of tourist's attractions. The interviews done in this research showed that the Lebanese government gives no attention to such sites, and even dark places' owners do not give their sites the needed attention in term of tourism development strategies. 100 questionnaires were collected in three different locations. Results showed that the youth generation in Lebanon is interested visiting dark-related destinations. The motivations and willingness to pay were studied for four different sites. Sources of information had a very important effect on visiting dark-related sites. As for payment, a randomized complete block design test revealed that visitors' willingness to pay depends on the visited site. Finally, an important aspect in this research treated the ethical dilemma in promoting dark-related sites which have an impact on the way dark tourism should be promoted.

Keywords

Dark tourism, Death, Attractions, Lebanon, Tourist behavior.

Introduction

Tourism is a very important economic development tool and a major sector in many economies especially that it has an exceptional ability of generating income and employment opportunities. According to the USDA (National Agricultural Library, Rural Information Center), the tourism sector provides income and diversification. This primordial role is encouraging governments to promote tourism in its different types. Dark tourism is one of those types, this term that was first introduced by Foley and Lenon in 1996 (as cited in Minic, 2012), has become nowadays, a thriving phenomenon within the industry. Many countries are trying hard to promote it. For example, the Galleries of Justice in Nottingham is created from buildings originally used as prisons and courts (Minic, 2012).

In Lebanon, tourism has always been an essential pillar in the balance of the economy. The location and climate of Lebanon, its unique landscape and cultural heritage, are all important resources that distinguish this country from its neighborhood (IDAL, 2014). Tourism is considered one of the fastest growing sectors in Lebanon, with an average of 13% annual growth recorded between 2005 and 2009. This sector whose contribution to Lebanon's gross domestic product reached 21.7% in 2010 percent dropped dramatically to 9% in 2013 due to the situation in the region (The Daily Star, 2013).

Tourist needs and behaviors change over time. According to Mihailovic and Moric (2011), the last decade of the 20th century had brought significant changes in tourism, especially in the behavior of tourists as consumers. Thus, in their study "The Role of Marketing Philosophy in Tourism Development" they insisted on the important role of marketing research to build a strong database regarding tourism consumers' personal life-stage, socio-economic, and behavioral characteristics to create a wealth of

marketing opportunities and an immediate and practical impact on planning and organization of rural tourism offer.

Many studies focused on the factors that affect tourist behavior. Abdallat and El-Emam reached a result in the study, they made in King Saud University that consumer behavior has a considerable effect on tourism (Abdallat and El-Emam, 2014). So, did another study made by Scott Cohen about how tourists make their decisions based on their behavior and needs which depend on values, motivations, self-concept and personality, expectations, attitudes, perceptions, satisfaction, and trust and loyalty (Cohen, 2014). Moreover, they have mentioned external influences such as technology, generation Y characteristics, and ethical consumption.

Research Objectives and Research Question

Dark tourism is a type of niche tourism. As a concept, it refers to attracting tourists to sites associated with death (Korstanje, 2012). However, it is not the only term describing visits of tourists to death-related sites. Black spot tourism (Rojek, 1993), thanatourism (Seaton, 1996) (as cited in Biran, 2011), and morbid tourism (Blom, 2000) (as cited in Biran, 2011) are some of the precedent terms designating the recently called "dark tourism" (Biran et al., 2011). Another researcher named such sites the "sites of suffering" (Borthwick, 2013).

The main of this research is to study the possibility of developing the dark tourism product in Lebanon.

Thus, the main research question is: Can Lebanon attracts the dark tourism market?

In order to answer this question, it is substantial to answer the following sub-questions:

- Are there dark tourism resources in Lebanon?
- What do tourists prefer to visit among the potential dark tourism sites available in Lebanon?
- What is their attitude toward dark tourism development in Lebanon?
- Is dark tourism really considered by Lebanese tourism stakeholders among the different tourism types?

Although, Lebanon is full of resources that can constitute a basis of dark tourism, the literature review about dark tourism in Lebanon faced the barrier of the total absence of references and previous studies. This scarcity of previous studies was a key motivator in this research.

Literature Review

History

The dark tourism as a concept had existed well before the term. According to Stone and Sharpley (2008), the term “dark tourism” was first introduced by Foley and Lennon in 1996. While the concept started since ancient times when numerous spectators used to fill antique arenas to watch gladiator battles, as well as squares of mass executions in the middle ages (Bittner, 2011).

Definition

The different existing definitions of dark tourism concept reflected different dimensions. O’Rorke (1988) described this concept as “holidays in hell.” Foley and Lennon (1996) defined it as a practice which encompasses the presentation (by the destination) and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites (Causevic and Lynch, 2007). Stone (2011) (as cited in Korstanje, 2011) focused on the goal in his definition of dark tourism; he considered this tourism type as a pedagogical instrument to encourage health issues in visitors through its potential contribution in changing bad habits (Korstanje, 2011).

Terminology

“Dark tourism” is not the only term indicating what goes under death and tragedy destinations visited by tourists. In the first part of their book, “The Darker Side of Travel,” Sharpley and Stone (2009) stated many alternative terms with their sources such as Black Spot tourism (Rojek, 1993), milking the macabre (Dann, 1994), thanatourism (Seaton, 1996), morbid tourism (Blom, 2000), and fright tourism (Bristow and Newman, 2004) (as cited in Sharpley & Stone 2009).

Dark tourism typology and the spectrum of darkness

Dunkley (2005) identified seven subtypes of dark tourism that is also called thanatourism as mentioned previously (Figure 1).

From a different perspective, many researchers classified dark tourism from the darkest to the lightest. Philip Stone, in his book “A Dark Tourism Spectrum,” adopted Mile’s (2002) (as cited Stone, 2006) suggestion that there is a difference between dark and darker sites (Stone, 2006). In Mile’s opinion, there is a crucial difference between sites associated with death and suffering and sites that are of death and suffering (Stone, 2006) (Figure 2).

Dark tourism products

Stone (2006) identified the following seven different dark tourism products based on the characteristics of the site:

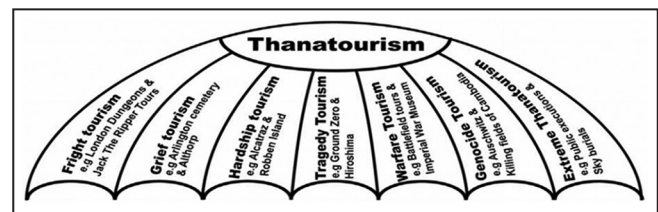


Figure 1: Thanatourism typology (Dunkley, 2005)

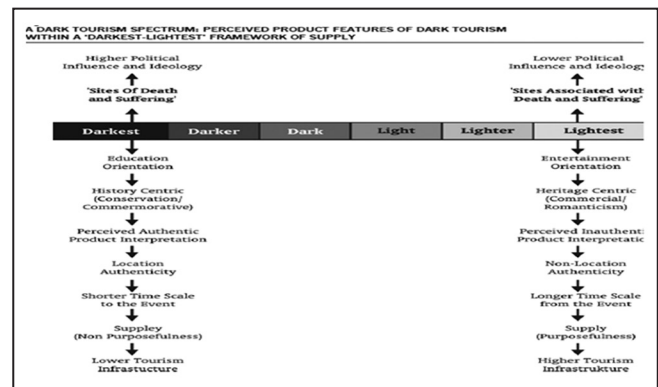


Figure 2: Dark tourism spectrum (Stone, 2006)

- The “Dark Fun Factories” described as “visitor sites, attractions and tours which predominately have an entertainment focus and commercial ethic, and which present real or fictional death and macabre event”
- The dark exhibitions encompassing those exhibitions and sites which essentially blend the product design to reflect education and potential learning opportunities that goes into seven phases
- The “Dark Dungeons” are a mix of entertainment and education. They are all sites and attractions which present bygone panel and justice codes to the present day consumer, and revolve around (former) prisons and courthouses
- The “Dark Resting Places” he said such suppliers focuses on the cemetery or grave markers as potential products for dark tourism
- “Dark Shrines” are a category described as the sites which essentially “trade” on the act of remembrance and respect for the recently deceased
- “Dark Conflict Sites” are the commodified remains of war and battlefields. These tourism products focus on both educational and commemorative goals
- “Dark Camps of Genocide” represent those sites and places where genocides, atrocities and catastrophes took place. This category occupies the darkest edges of the “dark tourism spectrum” (Stone, 2006).

In another book of Stone and Sharpley (2009), dark tourism was subdivided into the following six categories: Perilous places, houses of horror, fields of fatality, tours of torment, and themed Thanatos. This new classification was not really different from the previous one.

Sources of knowledge and influence Media

The key role played by the media in the commercialization of dark tourism sites is becoming obvious. While Yuill (2003) considered media as a mediator rather than a direct motivator,

Heisel et al. had a different point of view; they studied the push and pull impacts of the media in dark tourism. They clarified the push factor through the example of John F. Kennedy assassination incident that was intensively covered by the media. This created a push effect and motivated people to visit the site where the incident took place. As for the pull factor, they chose "The sixth floor" Museum in Dallas, Texas, one of the spots related to JF Kennedy memorial sites, that displayed a wide collection of related photos, newspapers articles, and documentaries. This attraction played a role in pulling tourists to the place, especially the new generation (Heisel et al., 2013). Those two-direction-impacts of the media created motivation among tourists to visit such places.

Preconceived ideas

Sharpley and Stone's (2009) stated the sources of information that affect the tourist behavior. Besides media, preconceived ideas were mentioned as main sources. The information provided by these sources motivates the tourist to visit a site with some prior expectations. The visit itself leads him to build his perception that will be compared to the expectations in the evaluation phase. This evaluation has its consequences that will affect the tourist's future behavior and his decisions to repeat the visit or not.

Other sources

According to a survey done by Yuill (2003) in a study about dark tourism, friends and family were the main reliable source of information for some tourists to know about the existence of the sites. The newspapers constituted the second source, then, tour guides, road signs, the site itself, radio programs, travel brochures, documentaries, non-fiction books, TV, movies, and magazines (Yuill, 2003).

Dark tourism attractiveness

Yuill (2003) suggested that tourists are attracted to such sites for different reasons which constitute the push factors. The majority of the answers in her survey with (71% of 186 respondents) stated that the educational reasons are behind their interest in dark tourism. The second reason was remembrance, and then came curiosity, artifacts or exhibitions, hope, nostalgia, and other reasons like the influence of some writers who wrote about dark tourism sites. Moreover, only 13.4% admitted that the guilt feeling was behind their visit to those sites (Yuill, 2003). In the same context, according to Dunkley (2005), these reasons are: Morbid curiosity, pilgrimage, remembrance and empathy, contemplation, special interest, risk seeking, validation, authenticity, self-discovery, ironic sites, and convenience (Dunkley, 2005). Finally, another study was done by Bittner (2011) who believed that culture is the main reason behind tourists' visits to dark tourism sites.

Dark tourism ethics and morals

Many researchers considered that the organizers of any type of dark tourism are exploiting history to their own interests and benefits. Stone and Sharpley (2009) have the most important contribution in the analysis of this dilemma. In this context, they quoted Carroll (1865) (as cited in Stone & Sharpley, 2009) who says: "Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it" in an attempt to defend dark tourism and consequently, answer the

questions related to the moral ambiguity of dark tourism.

Moreover, they said: "Despite an increasing ethical commentary on dark tourism, either from media reporting of specific sites or experiences or within broader academic discourse, the analysis of morality and dark tourism has to date been rather descriptive and one-dimensional. Although dark tourism has largely been accused, especially by media, of trivializing death and exploiting tragedy for mercantile advantage or for political gain, dark touristic experiences have often been dismissed as unethical and voyeuristic."

Dark tourism and entertainment

At first glance, the term "dark" when associated with "tourism" may reflect a negative image in the reader's mind. However, in fact, it is not what many researchers saw in this type of niche tourism. Stone (2012) considers that through dark tourism, the dead, like many historical monuments, mediate their presence by entertaining contemporary tourists.

What can be concluded from Stone's point of view is that creative site management can exhibit death in an entertaining way. One of the good examples is the kingdom of dead in Venice that attracts a huge number of tourists enables its visitor to play the game of death and funerals (Al-Nahar Newspaper, 2015).

The Institute for Dark Tourism Research (iDTR)

It seems that dark tourism is being a very important study where institutions are founded only for the purpose of studying such subject. The iDTR was established as an area of scholarly activity that has important social, cultural, economic, and political implications based on the University of Central Lancashire in England (University of Central Lancashire, 2014). The reason for such studies done by iDTR, in their own words, is that "the study of dark tourism is both justifiable and important for a number of reasons. In general, dark tourism sites, attractions and exhibitions are not only numerous but also vary enormously. Consequently, all such sites, attractions and exhibitions require effective and appropriate development, management, interpretation and promotion" (University of Central Lancashire, 2014). The mission of the iDTR, as stated on their website, is to advance knowledge about the act of visitation to tourist sites of death, disaster or the seemingly macabre. "It brings together researchers who seek to deliver internationally recognized research that contributes to the ethical and social scientific understanding of dark tourism and heritage, as well as to the appropriate development, management, interpretation and promotion of dark tourism sites, attractions and exhibitions" (University of Central Lancashire, 2014).

Dark tourism in Lebanon

In Lebanon, dark tourism is still an obscure concept. Thus, as mentioned previously, the studies about this topic are almost absent. Moreover, the website of the Lebanese Ministry of Tourism's does not mention any term related to dark tourism.

Methodology

This research uses a mixed method approach. The survey has been developed for quantitative data including some qualitative questions regarding gender and age. In addition, a set of

semi-structured interviews were made with Lebanese Ministry of Tourism and four dark tourism sites' officials as a qualitative data supporting the literature data.

Mixed method approach

Using a mixed method in research is considered a flexible approach, where the objectives of the research set the design of the whole research. *"Mixed-methods research is a flexible approach, where the research design is determined by what we want to find out rather than by any predetermined epistemological position. In mixed-methods research, qualitative or quantitative components can predominate, or both can have equal status"* (Introduction to Quantitative, 2010). The purpose of using a mixed method approach is the triangulation that enriches and confirms picture collected of a situation. This method helped the research having a broader picture regarding dark tourism in Lebanon.

Cross-sectional data

The survey of this research was made in a specific time of the year with 100 respondents in three different locations. Cross-sectional approach helped in gathering information regarding the tourists' preference of four dark tourism sites, the source of their knowledge and many other aspects. This kind of study is used to help answer the research questions of interest. *"It is called cross-sectional because the information about X and Y that is gathered represents what is going on at only one point in time"* (Olsen and George, 2004).

The categorical data analysis

In another intention in this research to analyze data between respondents in the four sites to see if there is a relationship between the sources of knowledge tourists sated and the specific site they visited, the categorical probabilities of two-way contingency table was used. It was also used to study the relationship between being interested in such dark tourism-related sites and the consideration of promoting them as an ethical or unethical act. With categorical data analysis- one-way table a Chi-square test is made for a k proportions. It tests the equality of proportions for one variable with several levels. With the chi-square test the researcher can compare the observed count to expected count assuming that the null hypothesis is true (Mcclave et al., 2014). As for the two-way contingency table it shows if there is a relationship exists between two qualitative variables (Mcclave et al., 2014).

The ANOVA randomized block design F-test

In order to compare the means of payment of respondents in these four sites to see if they differ or not the researcher used the ANOVA randomized block design F-test. *"The Randomized Block Design is research design's equivalent to stratified random sampling. Like stratified sampling, randomized block designs are constructed to reduce noise or variance in the data"* (Trochim, 2006).

Sample

A random sampling technique was used in this study (non-probability sampling technique) surveying 100 respondents during different hours of the day in the Rafiq Al-Hariri Airport, Lancaster Plaza Hotel and Nakhal Agency. A sampling is considered a random sampling technique when *"subjects in*

the population are sampled by a random process, using either a random number generator or a random number table, so that each person remaining in the population has the same probability of being selected for the sample" (Frerichs, 2008). Data was analyzed using SPSS and Excel to understand the relationship between the variables.

Results

Interviews

Sites' officials interview

In the interviews made with four officials in the four dark tourism sites: Mleeta battlefield, Khiam detention center, Rafiq Hariri and Martyr's Cemetery, answers reflected every site's official point of view. All interviewees stated that the sites' visitors are Lebanese and foreigners of all religions. Same case was in Prime Minister Rafiq's Al-Hariri Cemetery that receives visitors of different nationalities. As for Martyr's Cemetery, the official said that it is not easily accessible and visitors are mainly relatives and friends of those martyrs.

In another question about what motivates visitors to visit such sites, in Rafiq's Al-Hariri cemetery, it was to pray and pay their respect to the deceased martyrs who were victims of terrorist bombings. In Mleeta and Khiam detention officials answered that visitors seek adventure and have the curiosity to know how the Lebanese resistance Hizbullah liberated the South of Lebanon. The official of Mleeta stated that the site targets all Lebanese which he considers to be a historical site representing a vital part of Lebanese resistance history. He sees that such site changes the pre-judgment people have about the Lebanese Resistance that is because Mleeta is already related to Hizbullah.

In Khiam detention, when the center guide, a former prisoner in this camp, was asked why this site is usually visited by tourists, he claimed that everyone must visit this site to witness the harshness and oppressiveness of Israel. This former prisoner tried to explain the agony prisoners used to feel with the methods of torture practiced by the enemy against prisoners who were held in tragic conditions. In his opinion, this detention remains a memorial for people from all generations to remember the brutal enemy.

In Mleeta the interview took another level. The interviewee that was responsible for this site showed professionalism in the field of tourism. He knew how the game is played; his answers were clear and helpful. He had the intelligence in answering the question asked about the party supporting this site in which there was no ability to have a definite answer regarding this. This was not the same case in Rafiq's Al-Hariri and Martyr's cemetery for Officials were not interested in answering the questions; however, they showed boredom and anxiety through their short and limited answers.

Ministry of Tourism interview

In the interview conducted by the Ministry of Tourism, there was no evidence of hospitality or help. The aim of the interview was to understand the role of the ministry in developing the Lebanese tourism sector and spreading awareness regarding dark tourism. It has reflected the weakness of the public sector in Lebanon, confirming the fact that it depends mostly on the private sector.

Table 1: Age range of respondents

Descriptive statistics					
Age of Respondents	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	96	19	45	26.08	4.857
Valid N (list wise)	96				

The Ministry of Tourism considered Mleeta as a museum limiting it to an educational or historical site, while the owners not only consider it as a kind of battlefield tourism that is displaying the Jihad perspective of the place, but also as a remarkable attraction to attract both local and international tourists, and regarding Khiam Detention Center, Ministry said it was originally a French building that was occupied by Lebanese army and then converted to a prison by the Israeli forces. It was simply removed from the list of the Ministry of Tourism without following the appropriate procedures and checking on the site. Another example of the Ministry's weakness in this sector is that the guide of Khiam detention center claimed that they have a license from the Ministry of Tourism, while in fact the latter contradicted this claim.

Demographic information

The gender's count of the 100 participants that were surveyed was slightly similar with 55% for males and 45% for females with an average age of 26. The majority of those respondents who most of them are university graduates (72%) (Table 2) turned out to be familiar with the four sites. Rafiq Al-Hariri Cemetery showed to be the most popular site with 81% of respondents is familiar with Rafiq's Al-Hariri Cemetery and Martyrs showed that they had the most repetitive visits from the respondents with 3 times each, while the other two were visited only once. Most of the respondents that did not visit sites are tending to have a visit in the future. This fact shows the high potential of dark tourism sites and how important is the development of dark tourism in Lebanon.

When respondents were asked about the pulling factor that was attracting them to these sites, results of their answers showed that the higher pulling factor was the education or information besides the religious purpose. As for pushing factors, in Martyr's Cemetery and Khiam detainee the highest pushing factor was the spiritual purpose. While in Martyr's and Hariri's cemetery respondents were pushed by both, curiosity to death and dying. Heritage was the pushing factor for respondents in both Khiam and Mleeta.

Respondents reported a feeling of sadness in visiting the four sites. In Khiam and Mleeta, respondents showed besides sadness, the feeling of superiority with 15% in Khiam and 19% in Mleeta. 13% of the respondents in Mleeta also had sentiment of insecurity. Mleeta and Khiam sites were considered as touristic sites by respondents with 69% and 66%, respectively, while the remaining two were not considered. So, when respondents were asked for their willingness to pay in every site, respondents' average payment in Rafiq Al-Hariri site was 3490 L.L., in Mleeta 6470 L.L., in Khiam 5610, and in Martyrs Cemetery 3210 L.L., 59% of respondents showed that they would like to visit a similar dark-related cemetery like Wadih Al-Safi.

Table 2: Educational level of respondents

Educational Level of respondents	Frequency	Percent	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Valid				
Primary	2	2.0	2.1	2.1
Secondary	8	8.0	8.2	10.3
Post-graduate	15	15.0	15.5	25.8
University	72	72.0	74.2	100.0
Total	97	97.0	100.0	
Missing				
System	3	3.0		
Total	100	100.0		

Surveys analysis

Testing category probabilities: Two-way contingency table

Using the testing categorical probabilities of two-way contingency table, results showed (Table 3) an evidence of a relationship between the sources of knowledge tourists sated and the specific site they visited with a Chi-square of 27.35 and a critical value of 21.026. So, the null hypothesis was rejected with . In Rafiq's Al-Hariri Cemetery site and Khiam Detainee, the higher chosen source of knowledge was the TV and radio with 48% and 38%, respectively. Whereas, it was the friends and family in Mleeta Battlefield and Martyrs Cemetery with 38% and 45%, respectively.

After analyzing the relationship between the sources of information tourists stated and the specific site they visited, the researcher headed to another two-way contingency table to study the relationship between being interested in such dark tourism-related sites and the consideration of promoting such sites as an ethical or unethical act. Results showed the acceptance of H_1 and rejection of H_0 since with Chi-square equal 14.27 and critical value equal 3.841. This showed a piece of evidence of the relationship between being interested in such sites and the feeling that it is unethical to promote them. In this case, it can be said that if a respondent said: "I'm interested in such sites." He will have a tendency to say: "I must not feel it's unethical to promote them" and *viz.* This logical fact was obvious because 45% of the respondents that said they are not interested in visiting such sites, they have said it is unethical to promote them, and only 20% gave a yes for both. This shows dominance of the relationship between both questions' answers by 65%.

The relation between age range and interest in dark-related sites

Studying these previous relations raised a new question: What ages are mostly interested in such sites? In this survey case, the suggestion was Wadih's Al-Safi cemetery. Results showed that

Table 3: The testing categorical probabilities of two-way contingency table (the relationship between sources of knowledge and sites chosen)

Source of Knowledge	Raffic Harriri cemetery	Mleeta Museum	Khiam Detainee site	Rawdat Al-Shaheedayn
Friends/family	23	27	19	34
Internet	15	18	20	12
Travel	1	3	5	2
TV/radio	47	21	31	25
Newspaper/magazine	12	3	6	2
Chi-square	27.30			
Df	12			
χ^2_α	21.026			

the most interested age ranged between 20 and 30 years, which meant that youth category in Lebanon encourages the existence of such death related sites (Table 4). Besides, the sources of influence have been studied. In Rafiq's Al-Hariri Cemetery site, most visitors were influenced by television with 29%, while in the remaining three sites, Mleeta Battlefield, Khiam Detainee, and Martyrs Cemetery, the most effective influence was family and friends with 29%, 32% and 32%, respectively.

The preference in visiting different sites

In the 13th question of the survey, respondents were asked to rank their preference for visiting different sites using a ranking scale from 1 (most preferable) to 5 (least preferable). Preferences were as following: Politics, religious, entertainment, history, and culture. Using the ranking method, results showed that the most preferable reason for visiting different sites was the history with a score equal 3.17 (Table 5).

“Ranking questions calculate the ranking average for each answer choice so you can determine which answer choice was most preferred overall. The answer choice with the largest ranking average is the most preferred choice” (Survey Monkey, 2014).

The ANOVA randomized block design F-test

Respondents in this research survey were asked if they have the willingness to pay a visit to these four sites and how much they will pay in Lebanese Lira. To compare the means of payment in these four sites, a random block design F-test was made with a null hypothesis of equal means in the four sites among 100 respondents and an alternative hypothesis suggesting different means. Results came as shown in Table 6.

With a significance level of 0.05, V1 equal 3, and V2 equal 297, test statistics equal 2.635 and F distribution equal 8.5 null hypotheses was rejected. F is greater than F critical. In this case, it was $8.5 > 2.635$. As a conclusion, sufficient evidence existed to conclude that the amount that people are willing pay to pay differ from one site to another.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research was made in the purpose of providing new insights on the possibility that the existence of dark tourism destinations in Lebanon would leverage the Lebanese tourism sector. Results from the interviews conducted with the responsible of the four dark tourism sites, and the Ministry of Tourism showed that neither any of them had enough awareness of how important

Table 4: People in age variable that would like to visit Wadih's Al-Safi cemetery

Age	Count	Yes	%
<20	3	1	33
20-25	43	21	49
26-30	39	29	74
31-35	6	4	67
36-40	3	3	100
>40	2	0	0
N/A	4	1	25
	100		

Table 5: Ranking preference of respondents

What do respondents prefer	1	2	3	4	5	Ranking average
Politics	15	6	7	21	30	1.92
Religious	14	18	11	22	18	2.37
Entertainment	33	6	21	6	19	2.83
History	24	28	17	16	2	3.17
Culture	14	29	25	10	9	2.9

dark tourism is for tourism sector. In addition, the interviews revealed the absence of effective and efficient strategies that allow managing such sites.

The survey results showed a relationship between the sources of information mentioned by tourists and the specific site they visited. The sources ranged between friends and family, Internet, travel guide, TV and radio, and newspaper or magazine. This fact proves that the promotion of all dark tourism sites cannot rely on one standardized means of communication. For example, TV and radio were the most selected sources of information about Rafiq Al-Hariri Cemetery and Khiam Detainee site, while in Mleeta Battlefield and Martyrs Cemetery, family and friends were the most effective means. Our study showed that not all dark tourism sites are equally promoted by media.

Moreover, this research treated the relationship between the interest of visitors in dark tourism and the ethical dimension of

Table 6: Randomized block design test

ANOVA						
Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P value	F criteria
Respondents	1.23E+10	99	1.24E+08	4.159939	1.39E-21	1.297417
Sites	7.65E+08	3	2.55E+08	8.550948	1.83E-05	2.635004
Error	8.85E+09	297	29802155			
Total	2.19E+10	399				

its promotion. It showed that those who are not interested in dark tourism are more likely to consider its promotion as unethical.

As a conclusion, despite the demonstrated exceptional attractiveness and growth potential of dark tourism in Lebanon, this niche tourism type is not seriously considered by the Ministry of Tourism or by sites owners. Thus, Lebanon, whose economy depends largely on services and mainly on tourism, should not underestimate or neglect this bright opportunity of dark tourism development. To that end, both public and private sectors have vital roles to play.

The government recommended actions start by the recognition of this type of tourism and its primordial role in strengthening the Lebanese national identity. An inventory of all potential dark tourism sites all over Lebanon must be developed. Municipalities should encourage the involvement of local community in dark tourism by promoting its positive impacts.

As for the private sector, Lebanese tour operators should include dark tourism sites in their offered packages especially those targeting Lebanese visitors. They can also contribute to local community development by recruiting local guides living in rural areas.

Finally, dark tourism can constitute a cornerstone for rural tourism development in Lebanon. Thus, further research in this field is essential in order to explore all its aspects.

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