

The Face of Dark Tourism in the Philippines: A Market Study

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Abstract

The paper takes a look into the marketability and economic viability of dark tourism in the Philippines with the view of developing a marketing plan for promoting it to younger audiences. The study aims to offer empirical evidence on which tourism policy and marketing decisions can be predicated to gain more visibility into this niche market. This study makes use of purely qualitative strategy in data collection by virtue of contact qualitative guide questionnaires honed in to gauge awareness, interest, and perceptions of dark tourism among millennials. Qualitative data were also collected through key informant interviews with representatives of the Tourism Promotions Board, which is the marketing arm of the Department of Tourism, as well as ten (10) tourists and a local tour operator, to assess current tourism policy, marketing strategies, and the economic implications of dark tourism. The study looked at the 'supply' of dark tourism practices in the region by evaluating available sites in terms of their attractiveness, the marketing and infrastructure needed to support them, and identified gaps. This study served as a case study of the current reality of dark tourism in the Philippines, placing emphasis on the possibilities for further development and economic return of the activities. It contributed to forming strategies for the development of dark tourism, particularly targeting the youth sector, and thereby enhanced the economic potential of the industry, serving as the final output of the research plan.

Keywords: Dark Tourism, Market Plan, Millennial ;

1. Nature and Scope of the Problem Instigated

Dark tourism has established itself as one of the major niches in the modern tourism industry. Even though engaging in encounters with death, either physical or imaginary has been around forever ago, there is an increasing scholarly and marketing interest in this activity as an emerging focus within tourism studies. This subject discipline was restated and formally recognized in 1996 by Lennon and Foley who traced its origins to the above year. This was based on their more complicated work entitled 'Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster' dating the year 2000. Dr. Peter Hohenhaus, a self-identified "dark tourist", has been to 900 dark tourism sites in 116 countries, one of which was the Philippines. The country is appealing to dark tourists as it has many sites connected with WWII, and he references this in his book, *Atlas of Dark Destinations*. In this conflict, the Philippines came under Japanese invasion and occupation in April 1942 even when it was under U.S. rule. Tourist attractions also include historical places downtown like Corregidor that were used in American defense efforts, as well as memorial places such as POW camps and the Bataan Death March, which is most notoriously considered one of Japan's war crimes. Recently, a study by Fabros et al. 2023 showed that the experts from the Department of Tourism were in consensus that dark tourism is not negative by nature. However, the department has laid emphasis on nine principal tourism products, dark tourism being left out in advertising. The experts accepted the notion of dark tourism as a niche tourism

market with great potential for growth. While most concurred that it relates to visiting a place of death and desolation, others pointed out in its favour that it is beneficial to the tourism industry. As ideas go, it may be unusual, impolite or controversial for some, but one expert cited the benefits, including the ability to engage young target groups – the millennials for example, and being beneficial for the industry's welfare. There is a growing understanding of dark tourism as a valid and active segment of the contemporary tourism industry but there is still limited understanding of the other aspects including its relevance, market and public opinion. Also, the focus on dark tourism seldom figures in the strategies of most within the tourism industry. This begs the question: if dark tourism has a commercial potential, why do tourism market players ignore it? It is said that dark tourism has the potential to attract younger audiences, but there is a gap between the perception and practice. The objectives of the study include defining how presumptions about popular dark tourism generate policy and implementation in that field and to consider tourism as a potential field of economic growth.

1.1 Research Problem and Objectives

This study aims to develop a market plan for dark tourism sites in the Philippines. It seeks to explore and address the following questions:

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

1.1. Age:

1.2. Gender:

1.3. Educational Attainment

2. Awareness of Dark Tourism

2.1. How would you personally define dark tourism, and what do you think motivates people to visit places associated with tragedy or suffering?

2.2. Can you describe a dark tourism site that you feel holds particular historical or cultural significance, and explain why it is meaningful for society or for you personally?

2.3. What emotional or educational impact do you believe dark tourism experiences have on visitors, and how might these visits shape their understanding of historical events?

3. Perception of Dark Tourism

3.1. How do you perceive the historical significance of Intramuros, especially in relation to its role during World War II? Do you think this site serves as more of a historical landmark, a dark tourism destination, or something else?

3.2. What emotional responses or reflections come to mind when you consider visiting Fort Santiago, knowing its history as a prison camp?

3.3. How does this knowledge shape your interest or perspective on visiting the site?

3.4. How do you interpret the significance of Corregidor Island, especially in terms of its role in the Philippines' defense during World War II? Do you believe it qualifies as a dark tourism site, and if

so, why?

3.5. What personal or cultural value do you think Capas National Shrine holds, especially in commemorating the Bataan Death March? How do you feel about visiting a place with such a tragic history?

3.6. In your opinion, should sites with significant historical tragedies, like Corregidor Island or Fort Santiago, be marketed primarily as dark tourism destinations, or should they be framed more as educational or historical landmarks? What factors influence your view?

4. Dark Tourism Marketing

4.1. When it comes to promoting dark tourism, what kind of words or phrases do you think would be most effective in grabbing people's attention? Can you give examples of any that would compel you to click or engage with a post?

4.2. How do you feel about using intense or evocative language (such as "haunting," "tragic," or "fear") in promoting dark tourism sites? How do these words influence your interest or willingness to engage with content?

4.3. What emotions do you believe are important to convey in images and language when marketing dark tourism sites? How might these emotions influence a potential visitor's decision to learn more or visit?

5. Likelihood of Visiting Other Dark Tourism Sites in the Philippines

5.1. What draws you to visit or consider visiting dark tourism sites in the Philippines, and are there particular elements (like accessibility, tours or historical significance) that would make these sites more appealing to you?

5.2. Do you think connecting dark tourism sites with well-known figures or historical personas would increase your interest in visiting? Why or why not?

6. Visitor Experience at Dark Tourism Destinations

6.1. What specific aspects of a dark tourism site's atmosphere or ambiance (like weather, lighting, or mood) have the greatest impact on your experience, and how do they influence your connection to the site?

6.2. In what ways do the behavior and respectfulness of other visitors affect your experience at dark tourism destinations? Can you describe a situation where visitor behavior significantly enhanced or

detracted from your visit?

1.2. Research Framework

The first stage of the research focused on gathering information on dark tourism in general. This involved literature review of the subject, a review of available industry trends, and the identification of the drivers of tourist behavior. The research considered the demographics of the potential tourists, how aware they were of dark tourism, and how social media influenced their attitudes. It also considered external drivers including historical authenticity, safety, and ethics, which all added to the attraction of dark tourism attractions. The process stage utilized qualitative data collection techniques, including a survey questionnaire with open-ended questions that allowed for more in-depth analysis and in-depth interviews. The survey allowed the participants to express their views on dark tourism and, in the process, examine their awareness, perceptions, and motivations without being constrained by pre-formulated response options. Interview questionnaires were also used to carry out in-depth discussions with selected participants, which provided more in-depth information on the personal views and motivations of the participants on dark tourism. Such qualitative techniques provided rich and in-depth information on how people perceived and participated in dark tourism. Thematic analysis was used in the interpretation of the data collected, extracting repeated themes and patterns that shed light on the factors driving interest and decision-making on dark tourism. The result of this research was an executed marketing plan that was designed to promote dark tourism effectively in a way that maintained ethical and responsible tourism practice. The plan entailed extensive segmentation of the target market, based on awareness, perception, and travelling inclination of potential tourists. The plan also outlined marketing strategies that employed social media, historical narrative, and ethical storytelling to effectively engage audiences. In addition, the marketing plan recommended promotion campaigns to increase awareness and alleviate dark tourism concerns. These campaigns involved partnerships with tourist boards, historical societies, and travel agencies to enhance authenticity and educational value of dark tourism sites. The plan also incorporated sustainability and ethical considerations to ensure that dark tourism sites were promoted in a way that maintained historical value and cultural sensitivity. Through the application of a purely qualitative approach, the research provided an extensive and interpretive analysis of opinion towards dark tourism. The findings were an effective tool for tourism operators, policymakers, and other interested parties that wanted to develop their strategy for the marketing and growth of dark tourism, thereby providing an informed and ethically sound marketing plan.

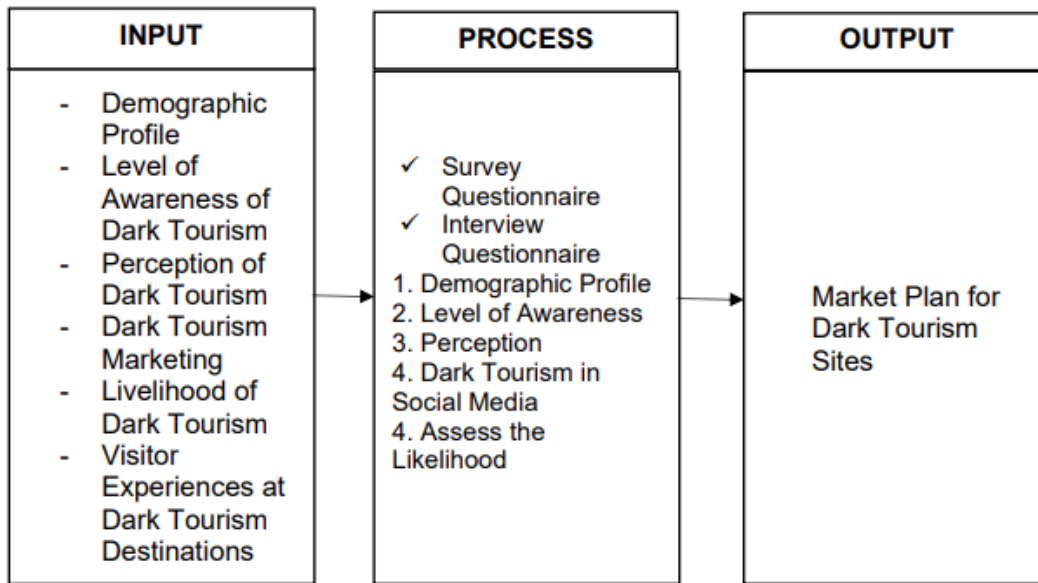


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

1.3. Research Significance

This paper aims to provide better perception about dark tourism in the Philippines, not only for its historical, cultural, and economic characteristics, but also in unraveling knowledge about this niche market. The analysis would help researchers to dig into relevant knowledge regarding this niche market and focus attention on its potentials of engaging younger demographics-including millennials. Investigating the motivations and preferences that this audience may favor enables the study to help marketers create campaigns attuned to their interests, thus ultimately increasing participation. Therefore, the findings of the research are of paramount importance for policy making, especially by the Department of Tourism. The work brings to the forefront the significance of dark tourism in national tourism strategies towards facilitating policy support for the development of sustainable and ethical practices within the sector. The research project points to opportunities for tour operators and local communities to grow in the dark tourism market, elaborating on new revenue sources from which employment and economic benefits will emanate. More importantly, it supports the engagement of the relations of the cooperation among tour operators and local communities; support any initiatives, as in their narratives, emphasize local histories to enrich the tourist experience. For the academic field, it contributes to the corpus of literature on dark tourism. This paper will then be a landmark reference for other researchers as its insights contribute in particular with understanding the dynamics of this evolving field in better ways for scholars and practitioners.

1.4. Scope and Delimitations

This study focuses on dark tourism, more popularly known as dark tourism, with a specific context in the Philippines. The objective is to analyze the current landscape of sites in dark tourism, particularly those related to the World War II era, namely Corregidor, the Martial Law Memorial, Bantayog ng mga Bayani, Intramuros, and sites associated with the Bataan Death March, such as the Capas National Shrine in Tarlac. Research will be conducted from the perspectives of both experts in tourism and tourist visiting dark tourism sites and its market potential to attract young audiences. In addition, the stance of the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines towards the dark tourism phenomenon: visibility and economic impact will be taken into account. For the study to be successful, the intention of the researcher will be to employ a Descriptive Research Design. Post Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks, the researcher will provide a survey that directly targets both tourism experts and tourists who had visited dark tourism sites. The interview transcript obtained from the tourism experts will be dealt with thematically and content data analysis by developing key themes such as potential economic, audience engagement, and marketing challenges. Additionally, promotional materials prepared by the Department of Tourism will be assessed in terms of the presence of dark tourism or mainstream tourism products.

1.5. Review of Pertinent Literature

Dark tourism has attracted a great deal of interest in recent times, with scholars and the public in general having become increasingly cognizant of its invaluable contribution in the area of heritage tourism and the construction of cultural memory (Foley & Lennon, 1996). The interest in visiting places linked with death, tragedy, and suffering is greatly fueled by mortality perceptions within a society, which have direct implications for the manner in which individuals engage with these sites (Stone, 2012). Dark tourism perceptions can be quite extensive in diversity across cultures, with the various religious beliefs, norms, and historical records playing a major role in the perceptions of death-related tourism and its implications (Tanaś, 2014). While some view this form of tourism as an opportunity for reflection and education, others assume that it is nothing but the commodification of human suffering. In the Philippines, despite the presence of numerous potential sites that could be included in the definition of dark tourism, little research has been conducted to evaluate their potential for marketability and their respective contributions to the overall development of tourism. It is therefore of utmost significance to be aware of how tourists perceive and engage with dark tourism sites, as it can further ensure respectful engagement with these sites while further promoting and preserving cultural heritage. The place of social media in the context of dark tourism has become more relevant and impactful, significantly influencing the mindset of tourists, enriching their experiences, and defining their travel intentions to such locations (Stone, 2013; Martini & Buda, 2018). Social media platforms are being used to create maximum exposure for dark tourism destinations by efficiently sharing stories, publishing historical context, and giving personal accounts of past visitors, which in turn defines the manner in which prospective visitors interact with such engaging and somber locations (Chemli et al., 2020). Marketing practices in the tourism marketing industry have now started incorporating social media, virtual reality tools, and advanced digital branding methods to optimize audience interaction and appeal to a wide range of audiences that may be interested in dark tourism (Geng et al., 2023). The notion of sustainable branding is also becoming an increasingly significant issue in the industry as increasing ethical issues related to dark tourism forces marketers to balance commercial success with cultural sensitivity towards communities related to such locations (Hartmann, 2018). Moreover, labor trends in the tourism industry are also pointing towards the pressing need for specialized training programs that can help professionals acquire the skills needed to manage, interpret, and present dark tourism locations professionally and ethically (Epsellita & Maravilla, 2020). As dark tourism continues to transform and evolve over the years, it is imperative that future studies examine various ways in which market trends, increasing digital innovations, and associated ethical issues define its overall growth and sustenance in the tourism industry.

2. Research Design

The research used a qualitative research methodology that centered on dark tourism and thus provided an overall perspective of this niche type of tourism. It delivered the key information in relation to demographics, economics, and opinions from relevant parties. These formed the foundations for suggested policies and marketing strategies that were thought to enhance and maintain more dark tourism in the country, specifically in the Philippines.

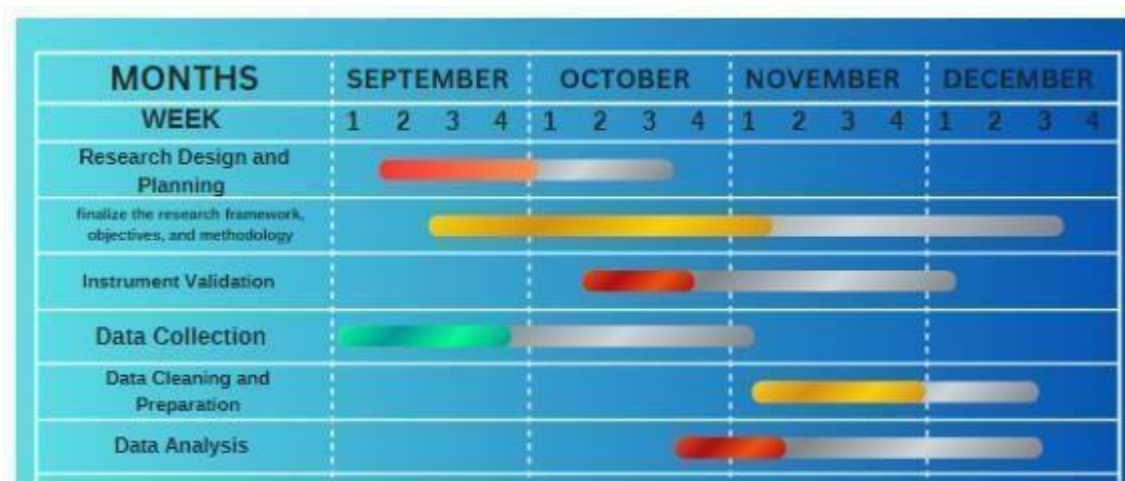
2.1. Population and Sampling

In this qualitative study of dark tourism, the population consisted of tourists, experts, and younger audiences, while the sampling method included a mix of probability (for tourists) and non-probability (for experts) techniques. The sampling strategy ensured that a diverse range of perspectives was captured to provide a comprehensive view of dark tourism in the Philippines.

2.2. Treatment of Data

The treatment of data in the study on dark tourism involved a qualitative analysis technique. Qualitative data was explored through thematic and content analysis. By applying these methods, the study generated insights into tourists' behaviors, motivations, and perceptions, helping to inform strategies to promote dark tourism as a viable niche market.

Figure 2. Gantt Chart



3. Results and Discussion

The study delved into the awareness and understanding among participants regarding dark tourism and whether they had any knowledge about the concept and its sites. The study also probed characteristics or attributes leading to the classification of specific locations as dark tourism destinations. Words, phrases, and messaging styles that may possibly attract attention and popularize dark tourism on the different social media sites were also researched. It also ascertained the respondents' intention to visit other dark tourism attractions within the country and segmented the visitor according to needs and preferences. Lastly, the study explored factors beyond the attractions themselves that intervene in the experience formed by participants at dark tourism sites.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Code	Age	Gender	Educational Attainment
Respondent 1	24 years old	Male	Undergrad
Respondent 2	44 years old	Prefer not to say	College
Respondent 3	30 years old	Male	Undergrad
Respondent 4	20 years old	Male	Undergrad
Respondent 5	27 years old	Male	Undergrad
Respondent 6	20 years old	Male	Undergrad
Respondent 7	22 years old	Male	Undergrad
Respondent 8	22 years old	Female	Undergrad
Respondent 9	20 years old	Female	Undergrad
Respondent 10	20 years old	Female	Undergrad
Respondent 11	20 years old	Female	Undergrad
Respondent 12	22 years old	Female	Undergrad
Respondent 13	22 years old	Female	Undergrad

Table 2. Respondents Awareness on Dark Tourism

Respondent 1	Dark tourism relates to historical tragedies, particularly within areas such as Intramuros, the walled city of Manila. Stories that make people come to the dark tourism destination are what appeal people towards it. visitors come mainly due to an interest to understand a message of tragic events in history, and therefore an emotional attachment and understanding of the event is created.
Respondent 2	Dark tourism is about attractions that have sad stories about history.
Respondent 3	Dark tourism and heritage tourism looks the same.
Respondent 4	Dark tourism is visiting places where tragic events happened. People might go to learn about history, reflect on suffering, or feel a connection to the past.

Cont. of Table 2. Respondents Awareness on Dark Tourism

Respondent 5	Dark tourism can be defined as visiting places that evoke reflection on human suffering and historical tragedies. Motivations for such visits often include a desire for education, personal introspection, and a connection to history. Tourists may seek to understand the past better or pay respects to those who suffered.
Respondent 6	Dark tourism basically is an endeavor involving exploration in a place with a history that involves tragedy or death. Personally, I think people or tourists are motivated to choose to visit such places for it is not only aesthetically imposing with its horror effect, but it has that culture or background that makes it more fascinating to be at.
Respondent 7	Para po saakin yung witchcraft yung mga kulam, stories like for example sa siquijor.
Respondent 8	Dark tourism is similar to historical tourism, the story of death etc. nacocover na rin po sya sa historical tourism.
Respondent 9	Pagbaba ng kita sa tourism? Similar to the pandemic po bumaba yung contribution ng tourism sa bansa or totally nawala dahil sa pandemic kaya para sakin yun po yung dark tourism.
Respondent 10	Yung mga aswang, multo po?
Respondent 11	Similar po sa sinabi nila na death and tragedy pati witchcraft.
Respondent 12	Dark tourism po ay death and tragedy para sakin.
Respondent 13	It's about visiting places with a story about death po.

Table 3. Dark Tourism in Society

Respondent 1	One of the most significant dark tourism sites in the Philippines is Corregidor Island, located at the entrance of Manila Bay. Known as "The Rock," this island was a strategic military fortress during World War II and witnessed some of the most intense battles between Filipino-American forces and the Japanese army. And for the society tinuturuan nito ang mga susunod na henerasyon regarding sa mga nakakatakot na digmaan.
Respondent 2	Correct, I have the same idea of a site with the same personal opinion about society po.
Respondent 3	During my visit in Armenia the country itself serves as a dark tourism site due to its tragic history of genocide, it is meaningful in the society because they are earning from it.

Cont. of Table 3. Dark Tourism in Society

Respondent 4	Intramuros, during the Japanese occupation, is a significant dark tourism site. It shows the destruction and suffering of the city during World War II. It's important to remember this period so we can learn from the past and prevent similar tragedies.
Respondent 5	One notable dark tourism site is Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, which serves as a memorial to the Holocaust. Its significance lies in its role as a stark reminder of the consequences of hatred and intolerance, making it essential for society to remember these events to prevent their recurrence.
Respondent 6	One that I could name is the Dungeons of Fort Santiago. A meaningful place in the Philippine history, and society-wise, it molded our culture to what it is now and to what we become as Filipinos. It has that contribution to the things that happened to which we call our "history."
Respondent 7	Here in Los Banos, famous yung baker hall kasi ginawa syang kulungan ng mga pilipino at amerikano noong WW2 sa society parang wala naman syang impact as a dark tourism site kasi it is not being published as a dark tourism site, more of a historical site sya.
Respondent 8	Siquijor po, kasi sabi nila yung mga kinukulam meron area sa siquijor na nakakapag pagaling sa mga galaw ng tao.
Respondent 9	I have the same po nung tour namin nung senior high sa intramuros po marami talaga ang tourist even international.
Respondent 10	The fall of Bataan po, the infamous Death March. I saw this documentary po na everytime na hinohonor nila yung event of fall in Bataan yung mga veterans or even their relatives are visiting Bataan and that's yearly ha.
Respondent 11	Based from the definition of dark tourism, aswang festival? kasi di lang naman po sites talaga ang dinadayo ng mga tourists pwede din ang events and festivals.
Respondent 12	I agree with respondent 11 po.
Respondent 13	Ako rin po same.

Table 4. Dark Tourism and Historical Events

Respondent 1	On an emotional level, these experiences evoke empathy, sorrow, and reflection by immersing visitors in the realities of human suffering, loss, and resilience. Standing in spaces where tragedies occurred such as battlefields, memorials, or sites of natural disasters can foster a deeper emotional connection to the past, making historical events feel more tangible and personal.,
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Cont. of Table 4. Dark Tourism and Historical Events

Respondent 2	For some, these experiences can be cathartic, offering a chance to grieve or honor the memory of those who suffered.
Respondent 3	Visiting dark tourism sites triggers my emotions to do a lot of research about a specific area which results to more learnings.
Respondent 4	Dark tourism can make people feel sad, but it also helps them learn about history. It can make people think about the past and how it affects us today.
Respondent 5	Dark tourism experiences can profoundly impact visitors by fostering empathy and awareness of historical injustices. These visits often lead to a deeper understanding of complex historical narratives and encourage discussions about social issues related to those events
Respondent 6	Emotional wise, to what I have expected, it impose sympathy to the lives that was lost during the tragedy but I'm amazed by its beauty and background. Educational wise, I have learned the significance of the place, where it all began, its contribution to what we call "history" today and the sufferings to be able to experience our freedom. All of this considered, these places can shape one's understanding of historical events by means of proper experience and being able to go there, the place, it has created a more profound understanding and a robust context to what really happened.
Respondent 7	I agree with them po, dark tourism sites are really interesting to visit which results to having more learnings po.
Respondent 8	Yes po same din with respondent 3.
Respondent 9	If you will be visiting a dark tourism site with a tour guide that knows the tragedy behind it definitely parang mafefeel mo yung nangyari noon.
Respondent 10	Opo, kapag magaling yung tour guide nakakadala po yung ganun.
Respondent 11	Agree po ako.
Respondent 12	Same din po.
Respondent 13	Same po ma'am.

Table 5. Intramuros as a Dark Tourism Site

Respondent 1	From my understanding dark tourism sites are already classified as historical sites due it's content similar contents the only difference is that the dark tourism focuses more on emotions.
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Cont. of Table 5. Intramuros as a Dark Tourism Site

Respondent 2	Intramuros is already considered as a historical site that is sellable as a dark tourism site with the right focus from a tour guide.
Respondent 3	Respondent 1 is correct, I agree with her.
Respondent 4	Intramuros during World War VII shows both the destruction of war and resilience. It's a historical landmark, but also a dark tourism site because of the suffering during the battle.
Respondent 5	Intramuros holds immense historical significance as it was the center of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines and played a crucial role during World War II. It serves as both a historical landmark and a dark tourism destination due to its association with wartime suffering.
Respondent 6	I personally perceive Intramuros as a place of evidence and history to what happened throughout the time of the world war II. It serves as commemoration that can help engrave the past to the minds of the younger generations. For me, it serves both historical landmark and as part of the dark tourism for it promotes history of the past, but parts of it showcases tragedy.
Respondent 7	Para po sa akin it is a historical site.
Respondent 8	Sa akin naman po ay dark tourism site ang intramuros kasi yung story behind it is tragic.
Respondent 9	Dark Tourism site.
Respondent 10	Dark Tourism site.
Respondent 11	Dark Tourism site.
Respondent 12	Dark Tourism site.
Respondent 13	Dark Tourism site.

Table 6. Fort Santiago as a Prison Camp

Respondent 1	Visiting Fort Santiago, knowing it was once a prison camp, brings out a flood of emotions. It's humbling and, at the same time, made me think about how far we've come and what we've learned from that part of our history.
Respondent 2	It stirs up a sense of admiration for the resilience of those who endured such hardships. You start to realize that places like this aren't just relics of the past they're reminders of the strength and sacrifices of the people who came before us. For some, this makes the site even more intriguing. It's not just about visiting a historical landmark; it's about connecting with the stories that make it significant.
Respondent 3	Knowing the history definitely changes the way you look at Fort Santiago. It's not just a tourist spot anymore; it's a place to reflect, to pay your respects, and to understand a little more about the struggles that shaped our nation. And maybe that's what makes it so meaningful—it's not just about history, but about the human stories behind it. Would this kind of connection make a visit to Fort Santiago more meaningful for you too?

Cont. of Table 6. Fort Santiago as a Prison Camp

Respondent 4	Sadness, respect, and a sense of history come to mind. Knowing its past makes me want to visit to learn and remember.
Respondent 5	Reflecting on Fort Santiago's history as a prison camp evokes feelings of sorrow and respect for those who endured suffering there. This knowledge enhances my interest in visiting the site, as it represents resilience amidst adversity.
Respondent 6	Curiosity comes to mind when I hear Fort Santiago having a history as a prison camp. Binding with that curiosity, it catches my interest to explore the site and to be able to experience first hand what actual place that is and the offers it may give.
Respondent 7	I am curious about Fort Santiago's stories about their prisoners, for sure each prisoner had a different experience of torture.
Respondent 8	Exactly, torture from the Japanese soldiers are the worse thing daw po, according to my grandfather who was 7 years old during WWII.
Respondent 9	My knowledge about the history of Fort Santiago made me feel like there was no freedom before and we owe our freedom to the people who died during the war.
Respondent 10	From this interview, I am now looking at Intramuros as a sad place and hurtful place po knowing that many people died there. When we had our tour, they emphasized the purpose of the walled city and how soldiers operate there without focusing on the negative side.
Respondent 11	Mejo mabigat po yung feeling ko ngayon about intramuros.
Respondent 12	I am now looking at the brighter side of having more dark tourism sites to visit in the Philippines.
Respondent 13	My family and I goes to Intramuros to dine in at Barbara's but as tourist to walk around po we do not hire tour guides. I would never go on a tour in a prison camp.

Table 7. Corregidor Island as a Dark Tourism Site

Respondent 1	The Malinta Tunnel is a key defensive stronghold and hospital, the bombed-out barracks, and artillery remnants—stand as solemn reminders of the intense suffering, bravery, and historical significance of the time. Yes, Corregidor qualifies as a dark tourism site due to its association with death, tragedy, and the remnants of war.
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Cont. of Table 7. Corregidor Island as a Dark Tourism Site

Respondent 2	Corregidor Island used to have officers' quarters, barracks, hospitals, quarters for non-commissioned officers, and schools. The hospital, reputed to be haunted, is a favorite site for ghost-hunting tours which qualifies as a dark tourism site.
Respondent 3	At night, Corregidor is enveloped in an eerie silence. Caretakers on the island often caution visitors to exercise utmost care when venturing out in the dark. After all, countless soldiers perished on this historic battleground during the final major world war.
Respondent 4	Corregidor Island was a key defense point for the Philippines during World War II. It saw a lot of fighting and sacrifice. Yes, it's a dark tourism site because it reminds us of the war's suffering and the bravery of those who fought.
Respondent 5	Corregidor Island is crucial for understanding the Philippines' defense during World War II. It qualifies as a dark tourism site due to its history of battles and sacrifices made by soldiers, serving as a reminder of the cost of war.
Respondent 6	Based what I can gather, Corregidor Island is a battle cry but a symbol of hope during the World War II. It is the last outpost of organized resistance after the fall of Bataan, which serves the last "hope" for sovereignty. And I think it qualifies as a dark tourism site for it has the history of the battle that led to hundreds of deaths, which can be considered as a tragedy filled history.
Respondent 7	Corregidor qualified as a dark tourism site because all wounded soldiers were confined in their hospital and probably died there.
Respondent 8	Similar po sa Intramuros, Corregidor had a huge impact in our history po and yes it is a dark tourism site.
Respondent 9	During my visit at Corregidor Island, I remember the guided tour in the tunnel, it gave me chills. Yes for me it is a dark tourism site.
Respondent 10	What gave me chills during my tour was the sound of lizards, and my most memorable part of the tour was the buffet lunch by the lighthouse.
Respondent 11	The Lorch Dock is a simple place to look at but have a lot of story because this is where Douglas McArthur's famous statement "I shall return" before going to Australia. Yes it is a dark tourism site because when McArthur left, the filipino people suffered from the japanese.
Respondent 12	Yes it is a dark tourism site similar to Intramuros.
Respondent 13	Yes it is.

Table 8. Capas National Shrine as a Dark Tourism Site

Respondent 1	The Capas National Shrine speaks to me personally and culturally; one of several locations in my country where we commemorate the valor and sacrifices of the Filipino and American soldiers who endured the Bataan Death March during World War II. It is more than a historical site; it is a place that exemplifies the resilience of humanity and a reminder of the price of freedom. As I visit a site with this sad history, it inspires a swirl of emotions—sadness for the lost lives, respect for the bravery and gratitude for the sacrifices. It's humbling to walk the grounds where so much suffering took place, and it makes you think about the struggles that have influenced our country's history. Weighing in the experience of the visit, but also the connection made with the past and greater appreciation of the freedoms we share in the present. It's a space for reflection, understanding, and remembrance, and it's a gutting, impactful experience for anyone who steps inside.
Respondent 2	Capas Shrine is outside the dark tourism spectrum from my end. The place itself doesn't hold a tragic story.
Respondent 3	The site is a typhus for commemoration on Araw ng Kagitingan (Valour Day), an Annual observance on 9 April—the anniversary of the surrender of US and Philippine force to the Imperial Japan in 1942. Also there is a memorial to the Czechs and some Slovaks who died fight with Filipinos and US Soldiers. On 7 December 1991, President Corazon Aquino declared the area where the Bataan Death March culminated as Capas National Shrine. The shrine covers 54 hectares of parkland, of which 35 hectares have been planted with rows of trees, each in remembrance of a single dead person. For me visiting Capas National Shrine is not part of the dark tourism compared to Intramuros.
Respondent 4	Capas Shrine remembers the Bataan Death March. Visiting is sad, but important for learning about war and peace.
Respondent 5	The Capas National Shrine commemorates the Bataan Death March victims, holding significant cultural value by honoring their memory. Visiting such sites allows for reflection on tragic histories that shaped national identity.
Respondent 6	I think it holds the resiliency of the Filipinos in hard and tough times. In this site, it honors the men and women who stood firm and fought during the World War II. The Capas National Shrine holds these brave people, therefore, it is the home of resiliency and nationalism. And if I were to visit such place, I would feel extremely proud to what their sacrifices has made our nation our own, though their lives were risked the process, it is not wasted but dignified our country more.
Respondent 7	I agree with Respondent 3 because Capas Shrine is just for commemoration of the people who died from WWII.
Respondent 8	Yes po there's nothing tragic really happened in Capas Shrine.

Cont. of Table 8. Capas National Shrine as a Dark Tourism Site

Respondent 9	When I was there all i can see are tombs with photos of the people who died during WWII.
Respondent 10	Yes I agree.
Respondent 11	For me if they will include this in an travel itinerary that would be considered to be done in a rolling tour kasi there's nothing special for me.
Respondent 12	same din po.
Respondent 13	same din.

Table 9. Historical Landmark versus Dark Tourism Site

Respondent 1	Sites like Corregidor Island and Fort Santiago straddle the intersection of history, education and tourism. Whether they should be advertised as dark tourism hot spots, or instead for their educational/historical relevance, lies on a few key factors. On one hand, promoting these sites as dark tourism sites highlights their emotional potency. By bringing attention to the tragedies that took place there, visitors can have a truly human and transformative experience, prompting reflection and empathy for the lives and strength of those who lived through these times. This framing is often attractive to people who are looking for a deeper sense of history and historical trauma.
Respondent 2	same
Respondent 3	same
Respondent 4	Sites with significant historical tragedies should be framed as educational or historical landmarks. This respects the events and helps people understand history better.
Respondent 5	I believe that dark tourism sites should be framed primarily as educational landmarks rather than just dark tourism destinations. This approach emphasizes learning from history while respecting those who suffered.
Respondent 6	I think labelling it as dark tourism for me is just necessary. Apart from the fact that it has a tragic history upon them, it promotes the real happenings. So, having it labelled to what it actually is helps visitors to be more aware of the background and past of the place, making the experience more robust and wholesome. And that decision is influenced by authenticity, since history shall be disseminated properly, with the actual label, people may experience and understand the past more accurately.

Cont. of Table 9. Historical Landmark versus Dark Tourism Site

Respondent 7	I agree with Respondent 6
Respondent 8	same
Respondent 9	same
Respondent 10	same
Respondent 11	same
Respondent 12	same
Respondent 13	There's a thin line between historical landmarks and dark tourism sites, for me both of them can be both educational and tragic as well because knowing the history the Philippines have been through a lot.

Table 10. Promoting Dark Tourism

Respondent 1	"Unveiling Hidden Histories"
Respondent 2	"Secrets Beneath the Ruins"
Respondent 3	"Echoes of Resilience"
Respondent 4	Effective marketing phrases could include "Explore the Unseen" or "Step into History." These phrases grab attention and make people curious.
Respondent 5	Words like "reflect," "remember," and "honor" could effectively engage potential visitors by emphasizing the educational aspect of dark tourism.
Respondent 6	I think personally, the things with vulgar words or just transparent wordings will grab my attention for it doesn't filter or beautify anything, just the raws of it. For example, a post says outright "death," "died," or anything that should be censored but were posted raw.
Respondent 7	"Witness History Firsthand,"
Respondent 8	"Learn the Stories They Tried to Bury," because not all stories are being publicized.
Respondent 9	"Inside the Haunted Tunnels of History," this is good for corridor.
Respondent 10	"Where Time Stands Still" can draw intrigue without being overly sensational.
Respondent 11	Nothing that I can think of at this time.
Respondent 12	Nothing that I can think of at this time.
Respondent 13	Nothing that I can think of at this time.

Table 11. Using of Intense Language in Promoting

Respondent 1	It is effective.
Respondent 2	It is effective.
Respondent 3	It is effective.
Respondent 4	Evocative language ("haunting," "tragic") can be effective, but "fear" might be off-putting. It should evoke reflection, not just fear.
Respondent 5	Intense language such as "haunting" or "tragic" can draw attention but should be used thoughtfully to ensure sensitivity towards the subject matter.
Respondent 6	These evocative language catches my attention more, it fires up my curiosity to the point of considered exploration. Little hesitation will come to me whenever these type of post or content pop up, for these are more eye catching and worth filling the curiosity for.
Respondent 7	It is effective.
Respondent 8	It is effective.
Respondent 9	It is effective.
Respondent 10	It is effective.
Respondent 11	It is effective.
Respondent 12	It is effective.
Respondent 13	It is effective.

Table 12. Emotions when Marketing

Respondent 1	—
Respondent 2	—
Respondent 3	—
Respondent 4	Respectful sadness, reflection, and a sense of learning are important emotions to convey. These emotions make people want to learn more and visit.
Respondent 5	Emotions such as empathy, respect, and reflection are vital in marketing dark tourism sites, influencing potential visitors' decisions by highlighting the importance of understanding history.
Respondent 6	I think to promote dark tourism sites, marketing should aim for tragic feels, or just more on the spooky side an image or the use of language should be assembled for it can create more factor in visitor attraction. With those in use, curiosity can be more felt by the visitor making them eager to experience the site and learn its background.

Cont. of Table 12. Emotions when Marketing

Respondent 7	—
Respondent 8	—
Respondent 9	—
Respondent 10	—
Respondent 11	—
Respondent 12	—
Respondent 13	—

Table 13. Elements on Dark Tourism Sites

Respondent 1	For me a good booking system and friendly staff.
Respondent 2	For me a good tour guide.
Respondent 3	The walking tour in Intramuros is just one example of having a good tour package, aside from reducing the carbon footprint of motorized vehicles walking is also good for the health.
Respondent 4	I'm interested in Philippine history, especially its difficult past. Good access, informative tours, and strong historical significance make sites more appealing.
Respondent 5	My interest in visiting dark tourism sites in the Philippines is driven by their historical significance and accessibility. Elements like guided tours enhance the experience by providing context and insights into the events that occurred.
Respondent 6	The feels of it actually draws me to these kind of sites, for its aesthetic and just the atmosphere is different compared to a regular preserved site. It is more in depth and has a more diverse background. With these sites as well, apart from its beauty and feels, it also has historical significance. Specially those in the Philippines, tragic may be its process, but the outcome is inspiring and nationalistic worthy of recognition.
Respondent 7	If there's a good food.
Respondent 8	Not all of the dark tourism sites in Philippines are accessible, in considering visiting dark tourism sites accessibility should be the first thing that comes in your mind.
Respondent 9	—
Respondent 10	All of the dark tourism sites should have restaurants nearby for hungry tourists.
Respondent 11	A good restroom.

Cont. of Table 13. Elements on Dark Tourism Sites

Respondent 12	Having additional attractions like playground for kids?
Respondent 13	For me affordable entrance fees.

Table 14. Representation of Dark Tourism Sites

Respondent 1	—
Respondent 2	—
Respondent 3	—
Respondent 4	I'm interested in Philippine history, especially its difficult past. Good access, informative tours, and strong historical significance make sites more appealing.
Respondent 5	My interest in visiting dark tourism sites in the Philippines is driven by their historical significance and accessibility. Elements like guided tours enhance the experience by providing context and insights into the events that occurred.
Respondent 6	The feels of it actually draws me to these kind of sites, for its aesthetic and just the atmosphere is different compared to a regular preserved site. It is more in depth and has a more diverse background. With these sites as well, apart from its beauty and feels, it also has historical significance. Specially those in the Philippines, tragic may be its process, but the outcome is inspiring and nationalistic worthy of recognition.
Respondent 7	—
Respondent 8	—
Respondent 9	—
Respondent 10	—
Respondent 11	—
Respondent 12	—
Respondent 13	—

Table 15. Visitor Experience at Dark Tourism Destinations

Respondent 1	—
Respondent 2	—
Respondent 3	—

Cont. of Table 15. Visitor Experience at Dark Tourism Destinations

Respondent 4	Visitor Experience at Dark Tourism Destinations: Quiet, respectful atmospheres are best. Dim lighting can enhance the mood. Bad weather can be distracting..
Respondent 5	The atmosphere at dark tourism sites—such as somber lighting or weather—greatly influences my emotional connection to the site, enhancing the overall experience.
Respondent 6	Specifically, “historical spooky” mood impacted me the greatest, as silly it may look, it is the feels in a sense where it seems taking me back to the past and experiencing it first hand. It connected me somehow to the history making a more complex understanding of the background.
Respondent 7	—
Respondent 8	—
Respondent 9	—
Respondent 10	—
Respondent 11	—
Respondent 12	—
Respondent 13	—

Table 16. Tourist Behavior at Dark Tourism Sites

Respondent 1	—
Respondent 2	—
Respondent 3	—
Respondent 4	Respectful visitors enhance the experience. Loud or disrespectful ones detract.
Respondent 5	The behavior of other visitors can significantly affect my experience; respectful behavior enhances collective reflection, while disruptive actions can detract from the solemnity of the visit.
Respondent 6	Behaviors of those co-visitor can either spoil your visit or help you to be more understanding of the site. For instance, realistically, these sites can be scary at times, and if someone makes fun of the atmosphere and shouts suddenly, you may felt scared or somehow detached to tour itself.
Respondent 7	—

Cont. of Table 16. Tourist Behavior at Dark Tourism Sites

Respondent 8	—
Respondent 9	—
Respondent 10	—
Respondent 11	—
Respondent 12	—
Respondent 13	—

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