

Aspects of attractiveness of dark tourism to tourists (as an example of Lithuanian dark tourism objects)

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Abstract

Dark Tourism - a new direction for niche tourism which is widely explored by many scientists from the world who understand the concept, classification, attractiveness of tourism, the causes and perspectives of tourism. Today, we can fearlessly say that dark tourism is not just about visiting places related to war and death, but also visiting slums, catastrophe places, taking part in trips during night time - like hiking, diving, wade through the swamps, watching stars or fishing. It is also a trip to places that are beginning to disappear as a result of climate change, the development of active farming, the felling of forests and other areas. There are also dark entertainments that are dedicated to the mention of deceased artists or other people in organizing concerts and exhibitions. There are a lot of popular dark tourism objects in Lithuania that attract tens of thousands of tourists.

Keywords: dark tourism, attractiveness of dark tourism, Lithuania

1 Introduction

The theme of dark tourism came to the world of science at the end of 20th century, as a form of niche tourism was included in the tourism classification. Based research by many scientists can distinguish the following types of dark tourism: grave tourism, Holocaust tourism, (other) genocide tourism, prison and persecution site tourism, communism tourism, cult-of-personality tourism, Cold War & Iron Curtain tourism, nuclear tourism, disaster area tourism, icky medical and suicide death tourism, poverty tourism, dying tourism objects, tourism at night, mystical tourism, illegal tourism, dark entertainment tourism. There are many dark tourism directions listed, but you can safely say that their number will only increase as tourist activity increases and the interest of scientists in deeper analysis of the phenomenon of dark tourism is getting wider.

The quantitative survey was conducted by interviewing visitors of the 9th Fort Museum (Kaunas), the KGB Museum (Vilnius), the Cold War Museum (Plateliai), the „Grūtas Park“ (Druskininkai) and the Ethnocosmology Museum (Molėtai). The study included 398 respondents from Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Germany, Israel, the United States, Ukraine and Belarus, aged 18 to 72, both men and women who pointed out the following aspects of attractiveness: deepening historical knowledge on the basis of professional guides and authentic exhibits, emotional experience and engagement by being proud of their country's patriotism, strength, ability to survive in hellish conditions, participation in original travel directions, familiarizing with original exhibits, nostalgia and filling family historical white spots.

2 Overview

This work discusses the advantages:

- The classification of dark tourism based on the experience of tourists, and what emotions they experience when visiting dark tourism objects
- How the concept of dark tourism objects differs in different age groups
- How are the objects of dark tourism valued by tourists who lived in Soviet times
- What kind of benefits tourists receive when visiting dark tourism objects

3 Decision

Depreciation of the subject of dark tourism from a scientific point of view and empirical research allows us to understand why this type of tourism is becoming more popular and what kind of benefits tourists receive. This is important in preparing excursion texts - descriptions for tourists, publishing promotional publications. Dramatic booklets, catalogs and maps of dark tourism promoted by professionals in the field of advertising can add even more to the attendance of such places with all the following consequences: larger tourist flows, higher income, new places and high level education.

4 Conclusion

The study showed that Dark Tourism is also an educational tourism that provides historical, environmental, social knowledge with responsibility for our own actions and decisions. For many respondents, dark tourism causes emotions such as sadness, pain, loss, emptiness, but also positive emotions, especially if the objects that being visited are related to antiquity and entertainment.

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