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Dark Tourism in Ukraine.

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Abstract

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While the term "dark tourism" is getting more popular with every year, it still remains an underdeveloped part of the tourism industry that lacks investments in order to reveal its hidden potential. Therefore, a thorough analysis and an efficient development plan for dark destinations is an essential step towards increasing the number of tourists interested in dark tourism.

This thesis is a qualitative research, made using secondary data, blogs, forums and other Internet materials about Chernobyl and dark tourism, and is aimed at analyzing the dark tourism site – The Chernobyl Exclusion Zone with theories and concepts from previous researches in order to provide development suggestions based on the gathered data. The type of the dark tourist destination is determined by analyzing the site according to Stone's dark tourism spectrum, and 'spectrum of supply'. The purpose of the research was to outline the definition of dark tourism and to analyze Exclusion zone of Chernobyl as a dark tourism destination. The site is located in the north of Ukraine, 70 miles (110km) north of Ukraine's capital Kiev and is known as the worst nuclear catastrophe in the world.

The research findings reveal that the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone is an attractive dark tourist destination, which can potentially become more successful in due time, depending on the usage of marketing strategies and the level of governmental support provided in the development of the site. Categorization of the dark tourism site allows to see the "real" value of the destination, as well as to determine the most suitable target market, which will help to maximize profits and minimize losses.

The thesis aims to be a guiding book for tourism businesses who might be interested in investing in Chernobyl tourism industry as well as to give suggestions on how to develop the infrastructure of the area to make it a more attractive product for the customers. It is a good contribution to the development of Chernobyl as the dark tourism destination.

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1 Introduction

Visits to places of death, misery, and suffering is known as dark tourism (Foley and Lennon 1996, 198-211). Dark tourism has increased significantly over the last decade with a growing number of dark travelers (Lennon and Foley, 2000; Martini and Buda, 2018). Nowadays, many tourists, attracted with dark tourism destinations are coming for the thrills and even more come to pay their respects to the history. National 9/11 Memorial & Museum, 'Ground Zero' in New York, USA gets approximately 4-5 million visitors annually, and over 2 million visited Auschwitz, site of the best-known concentration camp near Krakow, Poland. Despite gaining the academical attention since early 90's, dark tourism still is not very popular, and only recently started being noticed by the media and public.

One of these destinations is the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine, where in April 1986 one of the worst nuclear disasters have taken place, taking away many lives and dealing an enormous amount of damage to the environment. The authorities deemed the place is safe to visit in 2011 and since then, Chernobyl town, also known as the "Exclusion Zone" became one of the most entertaining dark tourism sites to visit in Ukraine.

The purpose of this research is to identify the weaknesses of dark tourism in Chernobyl and giving the development suggestions to improve the experience in the area. Analyzing the site as a tourism destination and the products offered will give an opportunity to develop the services available in the area. By analyzing Chernobyl as the dark tourist destination, it will be possible to determine the current target market as well as find suitable development strategies to improve the quality of products and services provided on site.

The research has been carried out with the qualitative research methods mostly using the secondary data collected on the internet and forums about the destination together with some statistics from different databases. A qualitative interview with one of the tour guides, who provides services in the Exclusion zone have been conducted and the data was analyzed to fit with the purpose of the research.

2 Purpose of the study

In the following chapter the research questions will be described together with the personal motivations of the author on writing this thesis.

2.1 Personal motivations and learning goals

As for my personal motivation and the reason I picked dark tourism as a topic, I was born in Ukraine. Even though I spent 18 years in Ukraine before moving to Finland I never thought I would end up studying in the Tourism field and finding it interesting as I was going to be an IT professional. Dark tourism was not the topic included in the studies I had in my school; however, I decided to learn more about it as a part of my self-studies and to broaden my knowledge of the Tourism industry overall.

After researching it for a certain amount of time I was surprised by the diversification the Tourism industry has to offer its customers and I was stunned by the products and services provided in dark tourist destinations. Getting interested in the concepts of death and suffering, which are the main motivational factors in dark tourism I thought of Chernobyl as a dark tourist destination, which has an enormous potential that have not been used before. That is why I decided to make this research, in order to help boost Chernobyl's popularity by analyzing the destination using different concepts and theories and to make a contribution in the Tourism industry of Ukraine.

2.2 Research questions

There are multiple questions this research attempts to answer, regarding the dark tourist destination Chernobyl. All of them are focused on the existing services the site has to offer, the way in which the products are presented and possible improvement suggestions for the future development of the destination.

1. *What are the weaknesses of Chernobyl as the dark tourism destination?*

Based on author's observations and analysis of the currently existing products and services, as well as information retrieved from different travel agencies on the

target market, the assessment of the potential of the site will be made, revealing the push and pull factors influencing the image of Chernobyl Exclusion Zone as a dark tourism site.

2. *How to improve the services and products provided at the destination and what possible new products might attract the attention of potential tourists?*

With the help of theories and concepts presented in this thesis, a fair assessment of the products and the destination overall will be made. Analysis of the current target market and the level of “darkness” of the site according to the dark tourism spectrum (Stone, 2006) will give an opportunity to look at the site from a different point of view, as well as allowing to target new customer groups with new products.

2.3 Research process

In the first chapters, the primary and secondary data was collected, using different sources, and the needed theories and concepts picked out in order to give a reader a basic understanding of the topic of the research and present the most important terms and concepts, which will be used further in the thesis. The next chapters give an overview of the chosen dark tourist destination including its history, background information and the analysis of currently existing services in the area, as well as analysis of the site and attractions available on it with the help of the dark tourism spectrum by Stone (Figure 1). The results of the analysis will be described in the conclusion chapters together with the products development suggestions using the strategies from the Ansoff matrix (Figure 4), which will be beneficial for the improvement of the site’s image.

3 Research methods and data collection

Primary and secondary data are the most common sources of marketing information. Primary data is data that did not exist before and is being acquired for the first time. Field research is defined as research that involves the collection and analysis of original data. (Finn, Elliot-White & Walton 2000, 40-41.) There are two types of field research: qualitative research and quantitative research, where the first one is based on non-numerical data collection and processing, and the latter is founded on the concept that people's behavior and attitudes about things may be stated statistically (in numbers).

Qualitative indicators are based on knowledge, interpretation, and interpretation of empirical facts, rather than statistical assessments or measurements which are used in quantitative research. The purpose of the qualitative research method is to obtain as complete and detailed information as possible on the subject of the research (DJS Research Ltd, 2013). Using interviews, focus group work, case studies, and literature reviews, this approach is used to explore people's opinions and ideas. This is mostly in a form of a survey used to gather information about people's ideas and experiences. Following methods are commonly used in qualitative research:

- Interview: this method includes using open-ended questions for interviewing respondents orally.
- Focus group: data collection from a discussion of a certain topic with a group of people.
- Topic research: a detailed study of an event, organization, person, or group.
- Literature review: review of existing materials, previously conducted research and publications on related topics.

(Addo & Eboh, 2014, pp. 137–154)

Quantitative data, on the other hand, is often expressed in numbers and graphs to validate hypotheses, theories, and assumptions (DJS Research Ltd, 2013). The data collected on the topic is precise and there are several ways to acquire such information:

- Surveys: consists of a series of multiple-choice questions or ratings that can be completed face to face, by phone or via the Internet.
- Experiments: this method requires data to be collected in a controlled environment, where it is possible to observe and adjust variables to determine the correlation between cause and effect.
- Observations: observing people in their natural surroundings where variables cannot be controlled.

(Addo & Eboh, 2014, pp. 137–154)

After quantitative data collection, author can evaluate the combined data through statistical analysis to reveal patterns or similarities in the data. Graphs and tables can be used to display the results.

However, a research can be conducted using a combination of information collected with both methods.

This research was conducted based mostly on secondary data analysis, including theses and previous research on related topics. A small interview was held with a tour guide from one of the tour agencies (via phone), which provides tours in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone in order to find out the motivations of tourists taking the tours around Chernobyl. Also, there were some questions regarding the satisfaction level of customers and development possibilities in offered services on site. Even though the data from the interview was not perfect, as it was not collected by me in person and was gathered for different purposes by tour agencies, it was a necessary piece of information required to finalize the analysis of the dark tourist destination and its target market. The number of respondents is unknown as this information was not recorded by the agencies and therefore it is difficult to estimate how accurate it will be when applied in the research to the whole destination.

4 Dark tourism

Dark tourism is defined as the act of tourists traveling to sites of death, tragedy, and suffering (Foley and Lennon, 1996, pp. 198-211.). Many other terms and names were given to this phenomenon, such as thanatourism (Seaton, 1996), disaster tourism (Rojek, 1993), black spot tourism (Rojek, 1993), morbid tourism (Blom, 2000, pp. 29-36.), and even Phoenix - Tourism (Rojek, 1993). (Powell et al., 2018). One common thing between all these terms is that they all represent any kind of travel that has any connections with death and tragedies.

Dark tourism destinations include, for example, battlefields, war monuments, and Holocaust-related sites such as concentration camps, cemeteries, and disaster sites (Sharpley 2009a, 17). Former prisons on public display, such as Alcatraz and Robben Island, are another type of dark tourist destination (Sharpley 2009a, 20). Homicide sites, death sites, and former residences of deceased celebrities can all be tourist attractions (Lennon & Foley 2010, 4). Chernobyl as the place of massive catastrophe, which lead to deaths and terror is therefore suitable to be called a dark tourism destination.

Being practiced for hundreds of years, dark tourism has a lengthy history. For example, pilgrimage is one of the most ancient forms of dark tourism. People traveled to shrines or monuments associated with their religion, as well as between nations to view public executions. People used to go to these executions for entertainment and that was "natural" in the past. 205206 (Robinson et al., 2011).

However, dark tourism has grown in popularity and variety during the previous century. Smith (1998, pp. 202-227.), for example, proposes that locations or destinations linked with conflicts becoming 'the world's largest single category of tourism attractions' (also see Henderson 2000). However, despite their diversity, war-related attractions constitute a subset of the entirety of tourist places connected with suffering and death (Dann, 1998).

Despite the fact that Foley and Lennon (1996, pp. 198-211.) invented the term "dark tourism", their study is not the first to concentrate on the relationship between tourist attractions and interest in death and horror.

According to Rojek (1993: 136), "black spots" are "commercial developments of cemeteries and areas where celebrities or large numbers of people have suffered sudden and violent deaths." Interestingly, Rojek begins his research by referring to the hordes of tourists who visited disaster sites such as the Zeebrugge coastline in 1987 (the Herald of Free

Enterprise capsized) and Lockerbie, Scotland (the Pan Am 103 crash site) in 1988. After which he goes on to discuss other Black spots related to deaths of celebrities like the James Dean car crash in 1955 and JFK's assassination, which He refers to as postmodern spectacles and recurring reconstructions that rely on modern audiovisual media to maintain their appeal. Other attractions, such as city and national cemeteries, are classified as "nostalgic", and only later did he differentiate disaster sites as "analytically separated from black spots as sensational sites" (Rojek, 1993: 63).

Blom (2000, pp. 29-36.) made the same comparison, by defining "morbid tourism" as the tourism that, on the one hand, focuses on unexpected death and quickly attracts large numbers of people ", and on the other hand an "attraction-focused artificial morbidity-related tourism". As a result, the concept of dark tourism and its production is instantly complicated by a multitude of elements, including:

1. The spontaneity and immediacy of dark-feeling tourism to current places of death and misery, as opposed to deliberate excursions to structured and organized attractions or museums depicting recent and / or distant historical catastrophes.
2. The difference between intentionally created sites, attractions or exhibits that interpret or reproduce events or activities related to death and macabre and the so-called "accidental" or non-purposeful sites. Those include cemeteries, monuments, or disaster sites that have "accidentally" become tourist attractions due to their association with volatile and tragic events.
3. To what extent "interest" (to learn more about the death of the celebrities, to to dice with death in dangerous places (Pelton, 2003)) in death and suffering is the main reason for visiting dreary attractions and how the supply fulfills this obvious "demand".
4. The purpose for creating and supplying of these experiences (political, educational, entertainment or economical gain)

(Stone, 2006)

4.1 Dark tourism spectrum

Since dark travel products are too different in nature, purpose, and design, it has become clear that the universal term “dark” cannot cover all aspects of dark tourism. Therefore, an analysis was carried out considering the different shades of dark tourism depending on the characteristics of the place, its perception, and purposes (Stone, 2006). One of these researches was started by Strange and Kempa (2003), who evaluated two prisons and the effect of external political bodies on their values and purposes. Specifically, the old American Alcatraz jail, where the most dangerous criminals in the United States were formerly housed, as well as Robben Island in South Africa, which was originally a correctional center for apartheid-era political prisoners (including Nelson Mandela). In the end, they argue that even though the two former correctional facilities share similar design elements, the political and cultural agendas surrounding the two locations have a great impact on “memory managers” responsible for understanding and interpretation of the destination's dark past (Stone, 2006). As the result of their evaluation Robben Island is a “shade more serious” in its interpretation of penal (in)justice than the Alcatraz prison, due to the latter being more “overshadowed by commercial and entertainment values” (Stone, 2006) and thus making the Robben Island a higher value product of “remembrance, commemoration and education”.

This research was followed by many comments, stating the question of how inappropriate, if not unethical it is to use the cultural heritage sector as the means of describing human death and suffering (Hewison 1987; MacCannell 1992; Urry 1995; Walsh 1992), leading to doubts about the boundaries between authentic and inauthentic history being raised. Auschwitz or Chernobyl could be taken as an example of the “real” destinations, while such a place as Galleries of Justice in UK, the heritage industry which can be inauthentic and seemingly falsify or misrepresent the past dark deeds. However, using dark sites for entertainment purposes and mass consumption does not exclude the presentation of counter-hegemonic stories, stories of injustice or horrible acts committed recently or in the distant past.

Seaton (1999) notes that the creation of dark tourism products and history is not only determined by factors like media, marketing, and consumer preferences but it can also be changed depending on the cultural and political situation. Thus, according to Rojek and Urry (1997) the varying degree of “darkness” can alter depending on the event

that took place in a certain location (war or terror act) or the form in which it is presented to the customers (movies, books, or memoirs).

After this notion of darkness degree from Seaton, Miles (2002) concluded that a 'darker-lighter tourism paradigm' does exist (Figure 1), and he shows the difference between "dark" and "darker" tourism in the example we mentioned above (Auschwitz-Birkenau camp and Gallery of justice in UK). According to Miles, Auschwitz is a darker tourism destination based on "temporal dimension and spatial affinity" and also due to it being a site which *is of death and suffering*, unlike the Gallery of Justice, that is only *associated with death*.

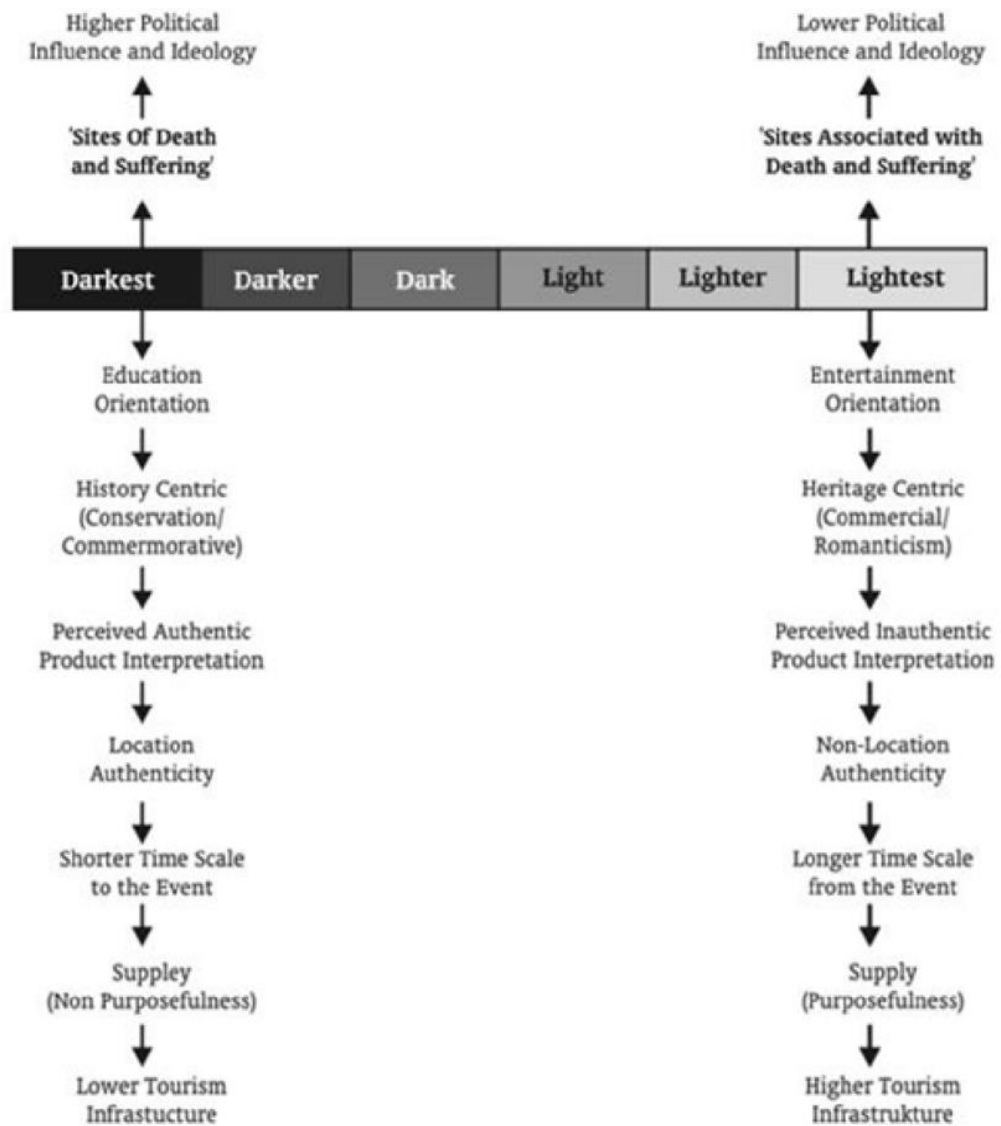


Figure 1. Dark tourism spectrum (Stone, 2006)

The main point is that the Gallery of Justice is only merely associated with death and suffering while Auschwitz-Birkenau camp is the exact location of tragedies and death and therefore has a key locational authenticity in its product design. The environment and the location of the site is a very important aspect that has a huge impact on empathy between visitors and the victims of the tragedy (in the past). Furthermore, Miles believes that the “time component” of the dark tourism site has a potential to increase the visitors’ empathy and change the ways a certain dark tourism product is created, presented, and finally consumed. Supporting the idea of “chronological distance” of Lennon and Foley (2000), Miles says that events (tragedies, deaths, and catastrophes) that occurred closer to the present can be categorized as “darker” tourism sites. As there might be survivors or witnesses whose stories and comments will be more convincing and entertaining to listen to, comparing to the events that took place in the distant past, it will create a greater sense of visitors’ empathy, making the destination more attractive to its customers. Sharpley (2005) however considers the degree of darkness to also depend on the level of interest in death on the part of the tourists as well as the tourist’s site’s development to meet those demands. On the other hand, these “darker” products or services which were especially developed to take advantage of the customers’ curiosity and fascination will have a limited tourism infrastructure and target market, thus making them less popular and more challenging to find.

4.2 Seven dark suppliers

Another way to categorize the dark tourism sites and products is called “Seven dark supplier” by Stone (2006). Therefore, this chapter will give a closer look at these 7 categories, when it comes to dark tourism sites. Those include: “Dark Fun Factories”, “Dark Exhibitions”, “Dark Dungeons”, “Dark Resting Places”, “Dark Shrines”, “Dark Conflict Sites” and “Dark Camps of Genocide”, which will be presented from ‘lightest’ to ‘darkest’ according to the dark tourism spectrum above.

1. *Dark Fun Factories* is a group to which belong the sites and tours, where the main purpose is entertainment. Those sites are usually artificially created ones with high level of infrastructure and can even be family-friendly products.

This group lies in the 'lightest' side of dark tourism spectrum as it represents both real and fictional tragedies and death events, thus making its perception more inauthentic comparing to other groups of dark tourism suppliers presented in this chapter. Stone shows us 2 examples of such site: the London Dungeon in UK and the 'Dracula Park' in Romania, both of which are entertainment-based destinations with main products focused on fictional or real deaths and macabre.

2. *Dark Exhibitions* come second after the Dark Fun Factories as its main purpose is rather educational than entertainment. Therefore, it is considered a more serious product, with less tourism infrastructure involved, however it is still somewhat focused on creating profit. Dark exhibitions offer products which are related to deaths and macabre with a commemorative and educational message. As an example of this group of destinations any museum can be taken, which presents dark tourism themed products (Stone, 2006).
3. "*Dark Dungeons* refer to those sites and attractions which present bygone penal and justice codes to the present-day consumer and revolve around (former) prisons and courthouses." (Stone, 2006). They possess both educational and entertainment purposes and are put in the middle of the dark tourism spectrum, meaning that they can have a mixture of light and dark elements in their presentations. They are usually greatly commercialized, possess a certain degree of tourism infrastructure, and are located in places, previously unsuitable for dark tourism. As an example, we can take 2 prisons that were used in a research by Strange and Kempa (2003) – the old American prison Alcatraz and Robben Island jail in South Africa, which was originally a correctional center for apartheid-era political prisoners.
4. *Dark Resting Places* mostly focuses on cemetery and grave sites as main products of dark tourism (Seaton, 2002). The destination is used to "charm" visitors with death in a different way, comparing to darker tourism sites, and therefore Dark Resting Places sit in the middle of the dark tourism spectrum as they also consist of light and dark elements. Their key products' characteristics are concentrated on 'history-centric, conservational, and commemorative ethic' (Stone, 2006). A few examples of this category of dark tourism are the cemetery at Père-Lachaise in Paris (over 2 million visitors per year) and Weaste Cemetery in Salford UK (Stone, 2006). Salford City Council stated:

'Weaste Cemetery is primarily a place to respect and commemorate the loved ones we have lost. People also visit cemeteries for exercise and relaxation, and to study nature and local history. It is our aim to offer a fitting environment for the bereaved and also to enhance the life of the community.'

(Salford City Council 2004)

5. *Dark Shrines* is the type of sites which are constructed close to the place of tragedy and death, not a long time after the event occurred, thus they are placed in the darker side of the dark tourism spectrum. They function as an expression of remembrance and respect for the recently deceased having no touristic purpose, therefore possessing little to no tourism infrastructure. However, these types of events usually gain media attention for a short period of time, thus increasing the political awareness and influence towards a certain Dark Shrine location (Stone, 2006). Stone also gives a perfect example of this type of events - the dark shrine, which was built after the murder of Princess of Wales, Diana, near the gates of Kensington Palace.

6. *Dark Conflict Sites* are usually battlefields and places of warfare, which are history-centric and used in educational commemorative purposes. Due to the availability of many battlefields and sites associated with warfare, and their rising popularity Smith (1998, pp. 202-227.) considers them as a potential dark tourism product for a wide target market. Originally not created for touristic purposes, these destinations have been commercialized, turning them into dark tourism sites with a developed tourism infrastructure. Due to being the place of actual wars, death, and suffering, it is put on the darker side of the dark tourism spectrum, however there are many aspects that can change that, for instance tourists' intention and fascination in death or the nature of the product provided in the area itself. Example of these places include Long Tan (Vietnam), Crete (Greece), Western Front (France/ Belgium) or Germany which has many sites from the Nazi regime.

7. *Dark Camps of Genocide* is the darkest form of dark tourism according to the dark tourism spectrum, being a place that symbolizes genocide, catastrophe, and disasters. Due to the nature of the events that took place in those sites there are not many destinations available for tourists, however there are a few Dark Camps of Genocide which are created to provide the ultimate emotional experience whereby visitors 'sightsee in the mansions of the dead' (Keil 2005, pp. 479-494), even though their main purposes are education and commemoration. Unlike the Dark Exhibitions, these sites are located right at the place of all the human suffering, telling the horrible stories of the past, which reveal the true history of one of the darkest places in the human history. There is no better example of this category of dark tourism sites as Holocaust, which is the most popular kind of dark tourism and is often used in mass media (Stone, 2006)

5 Motivations in dark tourism

Nowadays tourism has become a passive and active recreation methods, and while the desire to travel is mostly attempts of people to get away from their everyday life, it is more complicated to determine the motivations of tourists who visit dark tourist destinations. Coming into close contact with places related to death can have many reasons, which is why Dunkley (2005) offered the basis for future research on motivations in dark tourism (framework for understanding of motivation in dark tourism) (Barbara D., 2014):

- Curiosity and the desire to see the places like graveyards and cemeteries.
- Desire to visit places that are difficult and dangerous to reach.
- Confirmation of the “dark event” that took place in a certain destination.
- Finding self and educational purposes.
- Visiting the sites which have a huge historical influence and commemorative purposes.
- Religion related reasons
- Curiosity in the sites of recent “dark events”

(Dunkley, 2005)

However, Dunkley (2005) notes that these classifications are too narrow and are only suitable to describe motivation of tourists of certain destinations, therefore they will not be appropriate for interpretation of the intentions of visiting dark tourism sites overall.

Willis (2014) mentions that her experience from visiting different dark tourism destinations was varying, depending on each site. However, it was not sadness that affected her after the visits, but it was a mixture of emotions that stunned her, so that she did not know how to react at all. She also stated that these trips can be mentally heavy and as she was alone almost the whole trip, she wanted to share those experiences and emotions with somebody.

While some people are genuinely interested in death, suffering and history others might enjoy the risk and thrill of the trip or want to use the trip for self-discovery and development.

5.1.1 Motivation, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

“Motivation (in tourism) – those factors which make tourists want to purchase a particular product or service.” (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 413). According to Woodworth, “Motivation is the state of the individual which disposes him to certain behavior for seeking goal.”

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory on motivation in psychology which consists of a five-layer model of human desires, sometimes shown as a hierarchy level within the pyramid (Figure 2). It was developed for clinical psychology but is now used in many other disciplines because of its simplicity. The hierarchical paradigm begins with basic human needs like food, cloths, sleep, and warmth, and climbs up to love and belonging needs and finally self-actualization. Maslow believes that before satisfying the needs in higher parts of the pyramid, needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied first.

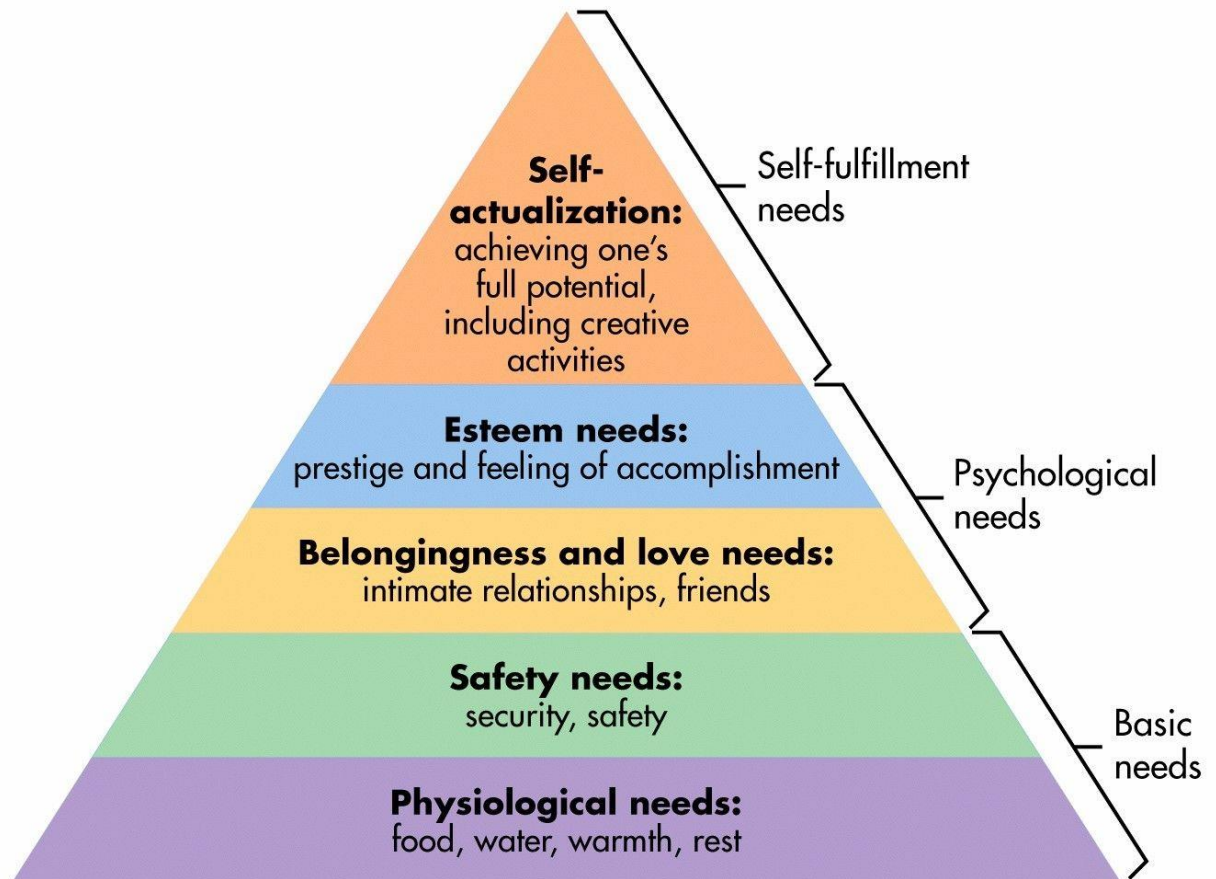


Figure 2 : Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943)

The first four levels are called D-needs (deficiency needs) and the top-level is called B-needs (being needs or growth needs). The longer the needs are ignored, the stronger is the desire to satisfy them. For instance, the longer a person does not eat, the hungrier they become.

Even though Maslow first suggested that lower-level needs must be satisfied, before moving up the pyramid, he mentioned that the statement might lead to a misunderstanding "that a need must be satisfied 100 percent before the next need emerges" (Maslow, 1987).

As soon as your basic needs are partially satisfied, your body may naturally move up the hierarchy of needs and change your desires making the next level your primary need. The desire will continue to grow, and it might increase even higher once you start achieving some progress in the bottom levels. Despite the fact that everybody is capable of moving up their desires in the hierarchy of needs, there are often obstacles and bad life experiences which may be in your way of satisfying the lower levels of needs, making it impossible to move up the ladder.

The Hierarchy of Needs is simple as it only has 5 levels, starting with basic human needs to survive:

1. *Physiological needs* are considered the most important for every person, as the body will not be able to operate normally without satisfying at least a part of listed needs.
2. *Safety needs* come second, as it gives the person the feeling of stability. Mental, financial, social and health stability, which means that there is no risk in any of these categories brings predictability and control in peoples' lives.
3. *Love and belongingness needs* – the third level of human needs, which meaning is easy to understand from the name itself. It is the feelings of belongingness to a person or to a group of people, being emotionally attached, and connected to them. Those feeling include friendship, trust, love, etc.
4. *Esteem needs* – the needs to feel that you are respected by others and that you are worth something (skills, dignity, and achievements).
5. *Self-actualization needs* – the top level of the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is the desire for self-development, new experiences, and personal growth, which will lead to forming the *kind of person* people want to be.

(Maslow, 1987)

6 Risks, safety, and security in tourism

The 5 main risks connected with tourism are as follows: “terrorism” (Richter, 2003), “war and political instability” (Sonmez, Apostolopoulos, & Tarlow, 1999), “health” (Richter, 2003), “crime” (Dimanche & Lepetic, 1999), and “cultural and language difficulties” (Basala & Klenosky, 2001, pp. 172–182). “These risks are of growing importance in the global tourism environment and present threats not only to tourists but also host societies and the tourist’s home nations” (Richter, 2003).

The types of risks that are associated with tourism are:

- Crimes: the possibility to become the victim in any crimes, for example rape, murder, robbery etc.
- Cultural: the inability to adjust to foreign culture and traditions, way of life, problems in communication with locals, cultural misunderstandings.
- Financial: wasting money on attractions and experiences which do not meet the expectations.
- Health: the possibility to become sick during the trip.
- Equipment: transportation and accommodation problems during the trip.
- Performance: the possibility of not earning holiday advantages due to a poor performance of the travel product or service.
- Physical: the possibility of getting physically injured, involves risk and injury that is harmful to one's health (accidents).
- Political: possibility of being involved in the political turmoil of the country being visited.
- Psychological: “possibility that travel experience will not reflect traveler’s personality or self-image, damage self-image, reflect poorly on personality”
- Satisfaction: the possibility of not getting satisfied by the travel experience

(Sonmez & Graefe (1998); Basala & Klenosky (2001); Dimanche & Lepetic (1999))

The main purpose of tourism is to satisfy tourists' travel desires and holiday expectations, and in order to achieve these goals, tourist facility operators need to ensure the safety of their visitors.

"The tourism industry is safety and security dependent" (Tarlow & Santana, 2002). Risk management in destinations and tourists' risk perception have a huge impact on tourists' travel motivations. "Lack of safety is a strong predictor of tourists avoiding some tourist destinations" (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998a, pp. 171–177). "Perceptions of travel risk, anxiety, and perceptions of safety are important determinants of international travel" (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005).

Tourism is all about providing a high-quality service to the visitors and according to UNWTO, safety and security are key factors in achieving that goal. The product "should not pose a threat to the life, health and other interests, and integrity of the consumer" (UNWTO, 2003). Health, cleanliness, and reliable and accurate information are equally important aspects of tourism experience.

6.1 Risk perception in tourism

As the tourism industry is rapidly growing, people started paying more attention to travel risks and travel safety as they are key factors that are impacting the consumer purchase behavior. Risk in tourism lies in the facts that tourists perceive the unfortunate consequences of their travel activities (Fischer 1991; Chen 2009). While choosing where to travel, tourists have to consider the safety issues of their travel destinations, however, security cannot be evaluated in numbers (Suddle, 2009), thus it is necessary to link risk and security (Lepp and Gibson, 2003).

As there are more risks appearing with new tourists' attractions and new way of travelling, peoples' awareness in these risks has also increased. (Beck, 1999, p. 184). Tourists' perception of tourism risk is based on the uncertainty of the outcome and their assessment of the process of tourism activity. All tourists have a specific level of tolerance for their impression of danger, and when risks exceed that level, the visitor tries to mitigate the risk (Dirk, 2003, pp. 41–57).

The concept of "tourism risk perception" caught the attention of the scholars in 1990's, after their wide concerns of tourist risk. (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998a, pp. 171–177). Currently, the concept "tourist risk perception" can be divided into three views (Figure 3)

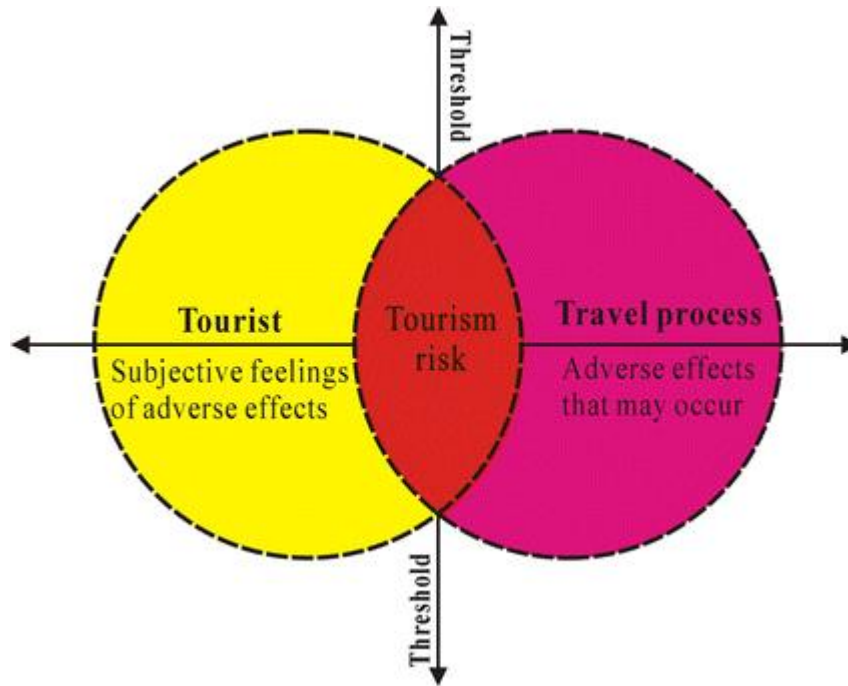


Figure 3 Three views of tourism risk perception concept (Cui, F., Liu, Y., Chang, Y, 2016, pp. 643–658)

- “Tourism risk perception is tourists’ subjective feelings of the negative consequences or negative impact that may occur during travel”;
 - “Tourism risk perception is tourists’ objective evaluation of the negative consequences or negative impact that may occur during travel”;
 - “Tourism risk perception is tourists’ cognitive of exceeding the threshold portion of the negative consequences or negative impact that may occur during travel.”
- (Cui, F., Liu, Y., Chang, Y, 2016, pp. 643–658)

6.1.1 Tourism risk perception factors

Subjective factors

Two dimensions of tourism risk perception include subjective and objective factors, both of which have a huge impact of risk perception of tourists considering visiting a certain destination. The level of risk perception is highly dependent on such factors as physical conditions of a tourist, his knowledge level, memory, perception, and attention, etc. (Cui, F., Liu, Y., Chang, Y., 2016, pp. 643–658). For example, an extreme adventure tourist, who has a lot of experience, skills and knowledge might find a trip easy or not challenging enough, not risky enough, therefore making the product less attractive in his point of view.

However, for an average traveler with average physical characteristics and experience it will be extremely hard and satisfying to overcome his fears and enjoy the trip to the fullest. (Cui, F., Liu, Y., Chang, Y., 2016)

Now, there are two categories of subjective factors that impact tourism risk perception:

- Demographic variables (age, gender, social status, education level, income and social experience)
- Individual cognitive abilities (personality, emotions, values, temperament, etc)

According to Ahmad (2015, pp. 123–133) here are main factors affecting tourism risk perception:

1. Women are a little more sensitive to travel risks than men.
2. Cultural and psychological similarities, and the spatial proximity of geographic locations, affect a visitor's sense of loss.
3. People's awareness of risk increases as they are more educated, have more regular contact with the media, and have a higher social status.
4. The more trust tourists have in sources and institutions, the more they are aware of the risks, the stronger is their risk perception.
5. Urban residents are more aware of the risks than rural residents.
6. People's fears, worries, and other emotions about the dangers of travel can affect a person's risk perception.

(Cui, F., Liu, Y., Chang, Y., 2016, pp. 643–658)

Objective factors

The objective factors that influence tourism risk perception mostly are the negative effects, consequences, and accidents that may happen during the trip, and can be summed up as multiple dimensions of tourism risks. There are five-, six-, and seven- dimension tourism risk:

1. five-dimension risk: psychological risk, financial risk, performance risk, health risk and social risk.

2. six-dimension risk: performance risk, physical risk, financial risk, psychological risk, social risk and time risk.
3. seven-dimension risk: physical risk, economic risk, equipment risk, social risk, psychological risk, time risk and opportunity loss.

(Cui, F., Liu, Y., Chang, Y., 2016, pp. 643–658)

The quality of the environment in the tourist destination, food, accommodation, transportation, and attraction facilities are all objective factors influencing tourism risk perception.

7 Product development

According to Lominé, L. & Edmunds, J. (2007), product development is “the process of bringing a new project to the market”. This “process” is not only important for tourism industry, but also for any other businesses. Developing new products and improving existing ones is the key to success in any company and is an essential step to increase sales and expand the customer base as well as helping the company to grow and targeting new customer groups. In the marketing word, there is always a risk, which comes together with launching a new product and in order to avoid it, it is important to choose the best approach to product development for the company and its market. (Holloway 2004, 151-152.)

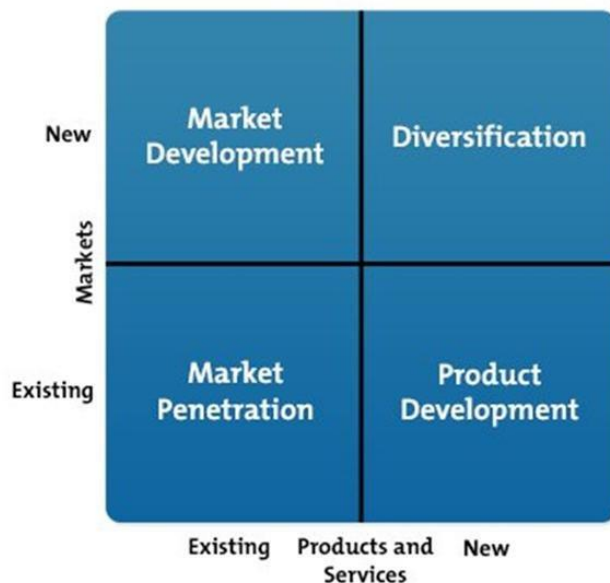


Figure 4. The Ansoff matrix. Image from the web. (Uploaded by Tamal Datta Chaudhuri, 2020)

According to Ansoff matrix (Figure 4) there are 4 strategies for product development:

1. Market penetration

The safest option out of all four strategies, which does not require a company to create anything new, as the main goal remains same – increasing the sales

revenue of the certain existing product to a current customer base of the company. The easiest ways of implementing this strategy are:

- Develop a marketing strategy, which will lead to an increase of popularity of company's products, encourage their usage and increase the sales volume.
- Use simple loyalty programs, so that customers will easily understand what and how they are earning.
- Use special promotions and discounts

(Ansoff H.I., 1957)

2. Product development

This approach, however, might be more risky, as a company will present a *new* product to its existing market. As the same client base will be used, it is possible to develop related products or services, change the presentation of a product or create alternatives to an existing product. "In a service industry, shorten your time to market, or improve customer service or quality" (Ansoff H.I., 1957)

3. Market development

With the market development strategy, a company will have to aim at a different customer group as your target, by improving the existing product (adding new features, different presentation of products, new benefits, etc). Companies can also try to attract customers from different locations (cities, countries) or new customer groups "with different age, gender or demographic profiles from your usual customers" (Ansoff H.I., 1957). The marketing mix can also be useful to shift the product to meet the needs of a certain customer group (product, price, location and promotion) (Ansoff H.I., 1957).

4. Diversification

And the last strategy, diversification, the riskiest approach company can choose as it will have to present a completely new products to a new market, that they have no experience dealing with. Being the hardest strategy to implement it requires research of the market, preparation, and professional expertise, however it

is extremely unpredictable what the consequences will be for different companies.
(Ansoff H.I., 1957)

8 Chernobyl

In the following chapters 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 basic information about Chernobyl will be given, including background and development history of the site. Together with that in the chapters 8.3 and 8.4 author's analysis of Chernobyl as a dark tourist destination will be given, as well as product development suggestions, based on the results of the analysis.

8.1 History and background

The name "Chernobyl" is associated with the worst and largest nuclear disaster that ever took place in this world. Its notoriety was brought to the world in 1986 after the explosion of one of the reactors on the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which was built to meet the increasing demand for energy of once existing USSR. Being located 120km from Kiev – the capital of Ukraine, and being close to the borders with other countries, the explosion of the 4th power unit led to the exposure of over 200 thousand square kilometers to radioactive contamination. The Chernobyl tragedy had a particularly severe impact on the territory of Belarus, the closest country to the power plant. Radioactive pollution has also reached Scandinavian countries including Norway, Finland, and Sweden as well as some European countries up close to Italy. According to the scientists, the most damage was taken by the nearby countries like Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia. (World Nuclear Association, 2021)

On 27th of April around 50 thousand people, residents of the Pripyat town, currently known as the "ghost town" were evacuated, followed by the evacuation of the whole population of 10 km area around the nuclear power plant in the next month, taking the number of evacuated people to over 150 thousand. The residents were promised to be allowed to come back in a few days, however they never got a chance to do so once the scale of the disaster was determined by the Soviet Government. Nowadays, the uninhabited houses and buildings with all the personal belongings left by residents became one of the most attractive places to visit in Chernobyl. (Nuclear Energy Agency)

Around 600 thousand human lives of people living in the polluted areas got the negative effects from the disaster in different forms of diseases like cancer, leukemia and other heart and chronic diseases (International Atomic Energy Agency, 2006). The actual number of those killed in the disaster has yet to be determined. Approximately 4 thousand

individuals were predicted to die from radioactive exposure in 2005, according to United Nations (Gray R., BBC, 2019). Greenpeace estimates that the overall number of deaths and injuries might range between 90,000 and 350,000.

8.2 Chernobyl as a dark tourism destination

Chernobyl is a relatively new dark tourism destination, compared to others, and it only started gaining popularity as a nuclear disaster site after the Fukushima and Nagasaki disaster. Despite being a dark tourist destination, there are multiple reasons for people to be interested in the site. Fascination is death and sufferings appear to be not the only motivational factor for the visitors as there is another reason - the history of USSR. Being one of the cities of once existing USSR with untouched infrastructure in 21st century brings many visitors to the area. "Pripyat is the largest post-war ruin in existence and presents a unique opportunity to reflect on urban ruin and its representations" (Dobraszczyk, 2010, pp. 370-389.).

After the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant the area around it was evacuated and the access to the site was restricted. Only the scientists and some workers with special permissions had the right to enter the zone. The nearest town to Chernobyl – Pripyat has now become a tourist attraction after the evacuation of its residents, who left all their personal belongings, believing they will be coming back to their normal lives very soon.

In November 2011 the Ukrainian authorities declared Chernobyl as a safe destination for tourists to visit, however they required all the tours in the site to be controlled by professional tour guides as well as the authorities do not take any responsibility for the negative health effects that might happen to travelers after the visit. They also presented a set of rules for all the visitors of the site including safety measures and instructions regarding safety, security, protective clothing, and possible dangerous places in destinations with high level of radiation.

After the opening of the site in 2011 the place started gaining more popularity and increasing the number of visitors with every year. In the period from 2017 to 2019 the number of people who visited the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone increased from 46136 to 124423 according to SRD (Statista Research Department (Apr. 26, 2021)), almost doubling the number with each year. Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus epidemic and new travel restrictions, the tourism industry suffered a lot of damage and particularly Chernobyl's

number of visitors dropped to 36450 people by the end of 2020 which is quite impressive under all the circumstances. (SRD, 2021, Apr 26)

Unfortunately, the number of illegal entries to the site have also increased as there are many people who want to explore the flora and fauna and other restricted areas freely, despite the health risks. (Polyzogopoulou A., 2020) Even though the Maslow's hierarchy of needs is not proved to be connected with dark tourism it can be used to explain tourists' motivations overall. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the desire to visit a restricted place might belong to the 4th and 5th levels of the pyramid, the highest levels of needs, which are related to self-actualization and esteem. The risk and the feeling of achievement from visiting the restricted areas, which are not available to other people might be the reason of those illegal entries as people want to feel superior towards others (Coltman, 1989). The difficulty to travel to the site and accessibility issues of the destination might be another reason why people want to visit the place, which gives them the feeling of accomplishment for having the courage to travel to places with high level of radiation and health risks, where no one else would have gone.

Another motivational factor for tourists to visit Chernobyl and the most common reason for travelling overall is the need to escape the daily routine and experience something new and emotionally stunning. As the human desires are changing and the new trends appear, the service industry was shifted to meet the needs of modern customers and now they are all similar, so instead of a usual trip to the beach or resorts, nowadays, people prefer new, authentic experiences and unique travel locations to reach the upper levels of Maslow's pyramid of needs. As self-actualization and esteem needs are satisfied through the feelings of accomplishment, achievements and self-development, Chernobyl is a suitable destination for those people who want to learn history or visit the destinations for other educational purposes (radiation, flora and fauna, nuclear energy, etc.), in other words to expand their knowledge, which is one of the highest forms of self-actualization. The boost in visits of the site in 2019 was mainly created due to the combination of a few events, which had a huge impact on the popularity of Chernobyl as a tourist attraction. One of those reasons is the involvement of media and the release of the HBO miniseries called "Chernobyl" in May 2019, that increased the viewers' interest in the nuclear power plant and the "ghost city" Pripyat. Another reason is the official opening of the site to public as a tourist attraction in summer 2019.

In July 2019 the president of Ukraine, Vladimir Zelensky announces his intentions to make Chernobyl an open site for tourism, after the new sarcophagus's construction was finished, reducing radiation emissions, and enabling the site to take in more tourists every

year. Another reason for that announcement in my opinion was the realization of the potential of Chernobyl as the tourist attraction, as the site had a very successful year (2019) taking in over 124000 visitors and bringing the economy of Ukraine over 100 million dollars via tourism industry. According to the President, making Chernobyl an official dark tourism destination is one way to change its image as the site of the world's worst nuclear disaster. He hoped that by doing so it will be possible to save and develop the city's tourism infrastructure and keep environmental conditions in good state as the area has been uninhabited for 35 years.

“We want to prove to everyone that Chernobyl is safe. It is the evidence that the Ukrainians have defeated the problem and are in control of the situation. The area is changing. And our main task is for it to have a new meaning and to turn it from an exclusion zone into a revival zone...”, - said Bogdan Borukhovskiy - Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine. (Kommersant 2019)

Since that announcement a lot of work has been done in order to turn Chernobyl into an attractive tourism destination:

- The construction of the tourist center for foreign tourists in Chernobyl was planned together with a new development strategy of the site for the next 3 years.
- The accessibility issues and filming restrictions on site are to be removed.
- The logo and a special website (chornobyl.today) were created for the destination making it a new brand and increasing its awareness
- The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy plans to apply for the inclusion of the Chernobyl exclusion zone in the UNESCO World Heritage list (December 2020).
- The State Agency for the Management of the Exclusion Zone in Ukraine approved 21 tourism routes, including 13 land routes, five water routes, and three air routes. Travel agencies are now trying to create a bicycle route as well.
- The content of the presentations and tours was upgraded, the tours became more flexible, taking into consideration customers' preferences

- An increased number of tour operators: there were 33 tour operators as of 2020, while in 2018 only 10 existed. (Panyushkina, 2020)

8.3 Chernobyl's placement on the dark tourism spectrum scale, seven dark suppliers

“As dark tourism products are multifaceted, complex in design and purpose, and diverse in nature, it is perhaps clear that the universal term ‘dark’ as applied to tourism is too broad and does not readily expose the multilayers of dark tourism supply. Therefore, it is perhaps prudent to argue for an analysis that accounts for multiple shades of dark tourism, with respect to identifiable product traits, characteristics and perceptions”

(Stone, 2006)

Dark tourism destinations vary in design, purpose, and locations, making it impossible to categorize the site with one word “dark”. Therefore Stone (2006) and Miles (2002) proposed that it is beneficial to sort out different destinations according to the “darker-lighter tourism paradigm” (Miles, 2002) or a “dark tourism spectrum” created by Stone (2006). Depending on the location of the site and the tragic event that took place there or the disaster that it is representing it is possible to determine, where does the destinations stand on the lightest-darkest scale.

Chernobyl as a dark tourist destination, unlike, for example the US Holocaust Museum, which is only associated with death and created to represent the event, is a site of death and macabre, and therefore can be put closer towards the “darkest” side of the dark tourism spectrum. The “spatial affinity” of the tours provided in Chernobyl help to create a special link between the visitors and the site itself. Even though the number of deaths from the disaster is not big, it is known worldwide for the amount of environmental damage and contamination that it caused to the countries of Europe and Scandinavia, as well as health issues, that came together with the radiation. As the conclusion, Chernobyl can be considered a “darker” tourist destination comparing to other dark tourism sites.

The time interval between the disaster and the present might play a huge role in the way the products is perceived and consumed by customers (Miles, 2002).

“There is no one better to explain these feelings to the tourists and say more than just some facts about Chernobyl than the one who was born here, saw everything with his

own eyes, suffered, was forced to move and forget his home forever.”- said one of the tour guides to Ganna Yankovska & Kevin Hannam in their interview. As the Chernobyl disaster is not an event from a “distant past” and only happened 35 years ago, there are victims and witnesses, who are perfectly suitable to recreate the catastrophe in the minds of the tourists visiting the area (Miles, 2002), thus making the products at the destination “darker”.

The level of fascination in death and suffering of tourists is also a key to determining the “darkness” of the product, as well as the purpose of the destination and the products provided on the site. The Chernobyl Exclusion zone is a unique place with authentic experiences, which are provided in a large area connected to the disaster and its results for educational, commemorative, and conservational purposes. Moreover, the lack of tourism infrastructure in Chernobyl and the “ghost town” Pripyat is a unique trait of the product, which “evokes a greater sense of empathy” (Miles, 2002) and thus helps describe the destination as “darker” (Sharpley, 2005).

Summarizing everything said so far, it is acceptable to place Chernobyl close to the darkest side of the dark tourism spectrum as the destination has all the necessary traits to be considered “darkest”. However, it can be easily shifted towards the lighter side in the future depending on the developments plans the government has for the site, as well as the tourism infrastructure that is to be added to the destination.

“Dark Camps of Genocide represents those sites and places which have genocide, atrocity and catastrophe as the main thanatological theme, and thus occupy the darkest edges of the ‘dark tourism spectrum’ “(Stone, 2006)

Chernobyl as the site of a catastrophe belongs to the seventh and the darkest group of seven dark suppliers – Dark Camps of Genocide. Even though its scale is not as big, comparing to the Holocaust, which is the representative of this group, the disaster has a different nature, related to human suffering, “poisoning” (diseases), and environmental consequences of contamination and high amounts of nuclear radiation. Nowadays there is an opportunity to visit the control room of the Chernobyl Reactor 4, which provides an “ultimate emotional experience” (Stone, 2006) to the customers and reveals the true history of the place together with the mistakes, which led to the disastrous event that took place at the site.

8.4 Motivations and risks analysis

Motivations of tourists engaging in dark tourism is very unpredictable, as they vary from one person to another. However, it is essential to understand those reasons in order to develop the site in the right direction and be able to attract a certain customer group, which will be the most beneficial to the destination. Age, level of education, gender and any other characteristic of a customer may determine his/her reasons to visit a certain destination. (Jarl I., 2021)

According to the interview, given by tour guides to Ganna Yankovska and Kevin Hannam (2014), customers' age varied from 18 and older, up to 60, dividing the tourists in 2 groups: aged from 18-28 and older. Motivations of the younger group were more entertainment-centered, while the older customer group was seeking self-development and learning, which means they came to Chernobyl for educational and commemorative purposes.

The influence of media led to the increase of Chernobyl's popularity among teenagers (18 and older), as there are a lot of entertainment contents related to the destination, starting with the mini-series "Chernobyl" from HBO and ending with horror/action video games, that include some sites of Chernobyl like destroyed buildings, the nuclear power plant and Reactor 4, etc. (Yankovska G. & Hannam K., 2014, pp. 929-939). Also, curiosity and fascination of death, which are the main motivations of dark tourists, played a huge role in the numbers of arrivals in Chernobyl.

On the other hand, the older group of customers (28 and older) was more interested in deaths and suffering that took place on site. Showing more curiosity towards the disaster and desire to learn about the history of the destination, they wanted to visit not only the "ghost town", but also some nearby villages to interact with locals. The victims and survivors of the accident, who illegally came back in 1 year after the disaster were the ones to make the experience more authentic and unique to the customers by recreating the events of the past with their stories. They also wanted to learn more about the circumstances which lead to death of people from radiation, which is the darkest part of the experience. Most people from this target group came to Chernobyl for educational purposes and self-actualization, which is the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

This analysis is important, as it allows to determine the motivations of certain customer groups, thus making it possible to create a more efficient development plan for the destination. Understanding of the motivations of visitors can help increase the target market of

the destination as well as improve the quality of products created for certain customer groups based on their personal reasons to visit Chernobyl.

Visiting Chernobyl, according to the Ukrainian Government is safe in certain areas, and therefore it is strictly forbidden to go there without a guide. In order to enter the Exclusion Zone of Chernobyl tourists have to get a day ticket, provided by a number of tour operators that provide services in the destination, as well as to have safety and monitoring equipment, protective clothing, etc. It is the radiation which is the biggest risk of travelling to Chernobyl and most probably it is one of the main reasons why some people are still avoiding the place. The lack of knowledge of radiation, its health impact, and real risks of travelling to Chernobyl are the factors that are changing Chernobyl's image to the worse side, making it less desirable than it deserves to be.

On the research of Isabel Jarl, who gathered data with the survey (among visitors of Chernobyl), 76% of respondents were male and 24% were female. 40% of them have received a high school degree (or other equal education level) and 32% received a bachelor's degree or equal, while the rest have got less than high school degree or PhD and higher.

Based on the risks that come with visiting Chernobyl it is understandable that there are more men travelling to Chernobyl, as women are usually more sensitive towards these risks. Not only the gender, but also the level of education of visitors, their personal emotions and fears have a huge impact on the number of arrivals in Chernobyl. As seen above, all the visitors have a certain level of education, which helps them fairly assess the risks and decide whether or not they want to visit such a destination like Chernobyl.

Among the objective factors that affect tourists risk perception there is also equipment risk present in Chernobyl. The buildings, which have been uninhabited during the last 35 years are getting too old and can fall apart any time, thus it is dangerous to visit them. Those buildings and facilities in the "ghost town" Pripyat, are the main attractions, which act as a perfect place for photographing as well as history representation of the site.

The risks analysis helps determine the risks, together with how they are perceived by tourists, who are considering visiting the destination. Tourist risk perception has a huge influence on decision making process and therefore is very important in order to create a more positive image of the destination that will look more attractive to the tourists, looking for a dark tourism destination to visit.

8.5 Product development opportunities

According to the results of the analysis carried out above, development suggestions were formed and will be presented in this chapter. Different product development strategies from the Ansoff matrix will be made use of in order to increase diversification of dark tourism products and services provided in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, therefore leading to an increase in popularity of the destination and improving its image in the eyes of other travelers.

The 1st strategy – Market penetration is a good option, as it does not require any new products to be developed and is more concentrated on the marketing of the destination. Close cooperation with the media can bring many new tourists to the area, as well as influence tourists' risk perceptions. By pointing out the risks and safety measures, that were taken to prevent these accidents, risk awareness in tourists can be increased allowing them to see “real risks” and get rid of “misbeliefs” around the danger of Chernobyl. The more educated people are the higher is their risk perception (Ahmad, 2015, 123–133). The destination already has its website and logo, which are helping to increase its brand awareness, however, there is room for improvements.

Nowadays, Chernobyl is not only the place for scientists, who seek knowledge, but also for photographers and bloggers, who want to share the experiences through their pictures, articles, and stories. With their help it is possible to increase the influence on different social media platforms, that are very popular among teenagers and even create a new trend in tourism.

The 2nd strategy is called Product development, which involves creation of a new product to the same target market. It is perfectly suitable for Chernobyl, as the site has multiple points of interest, depending on customers' desires.

For example, special tours can be organized for teenagers, whose motivations were influenced by movies and video games. Their tours will consist of visiting sites, closely related to those movies and games, and it will not have to be related to death and suffering, because their target is entertainment.

Dividing customers according to their age or motivations also means that there will be people, who are more interested in certain aspects of the catastrophe, or those who came here with educational and commemorative purposes.

A separate travel route can be created for photographers, whose aim is to capture amazing sceneries of the untouched infrastructure from the 20th century of the once existing USSR. Their route can consist of best sites for photography like Pripyat with its untouched buildings and other facilities, Pripyat amusement park with the Ferris wheel, or the Duga Radar System that is now considered a protected cultural monument.

And with the help of the last 2 strategies, market development and diversification, development of a new product, that can target both existing customer groups and new one is possible. By using Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies, that are becoming more popular nowadays, there is an opportunity to develop a completely new product or improve the presentation of existing products to a new level. As an example, a game with VR technologies can be created, that will help solve one of the biggest problems of the tourism/service industry overall – intangibility of the services. Moreover, the games can be designed for different purposes and for different target groups, for instance:

- For teenagers, who are seeking entertainment it can be in a form of a fantasy game, which takes place In Chernobyl.
- For those, seeking knowledge and self-improvement, it is possible to create a simulation of the disaster for educational purposes. Recreating the disaster will help customers learn history and also give them an unforgettable experience of the past events, that took place in the destination.
- For those tourists who are still considering Chernobyl a dangerous site to visit, or for those with disabilities the game will be a suitable solution as it is a completely safe product that can be consumed even at home.
- For scientists and other people who are interested in radiation there is an opportunity to safely visit the power plant and the control room of the Reactor 4 with no time limit, unlike the real site, where the radiation level is still too high to be in there for longer than 5 minutes.
- AR is also useful when it comes to enhanced learning, as it can provide additional information on different objects and buildings, as well as historical facts and figures related to the destination. It also helps to make the guides' job easier and enables experiences for bigger groups of people as tour guides will have more control over the group.

Another great idea would be to improve the medical facilities and institutions in order to ensure the safety of traveling in Chernobyl. It is a big step towards getting rid of the fears of potential visitors who are afraid of the radiation.

As the desires and needs of the tourists are changing it is important to learn and understand true motivations of the tourists. Creating a number of products and experiences that are more flexible allows the guides to provide an ultimate experience to the customers and satisfy their needs, which will lead to a higher customer satisfaction level. "In a service industry, shorten your time to market, or improve customer service or quality" (Ansoff H.I., 1957).

9 Conclusion

In conclusion, dark tourism can be considered one of the leading industries in tourism, which is gaining popularity with each year. With human desires changing and new trends emerging, dark tourism provides new and unique experiences to the customers and has a lot of potential for development. There have been many researches carried out on the topic of dark tourism and even though the ethical side of the industry is being questioned, dark tourism proves to be more than a commercialized entertainment field that only concentrates on economical benefits.

Through this research the author was able to determine the state of Chernobyl's dark tourism industry, by analyzing the destination using the dark tourism spectrum and seven dark suppliers' scales (Stone, 2006). The Chernobyl Exclusion Zone can be placed on the darkest side of the spectrum, belonging to the darkest group of seven dark suppliers – Dark Camps of Genocide, having more local authenticity and being more education and commemoration centered than any other groups. As the result of the research it can be said that, depending on the type of each destination, its purpose can vary, and the site can have a huge political and educational influences on future generations.

Studying the motivations of tourists visiting the destination also proved to be an important part of creating a development plan, as it allows to create more suitable products that will completely satisfy the needs of tourists, who travel to Chernobyl for different purposes. Identifying those needs is the key to success in the service industry in particularly and in tourism industry overall.

As the result of the analysis, the development ideas were formed based on the data, gathered from multiple researches on related topics. The Chernobyl Exclusion Zone proved to have potential for growth, as it only became a public destination in 2019 and have not been developed thoroughly. Based on the motivations of the tourists, new product ideas have been suggested to fit certain customer groups with similar motivation factors. The analysis of the target market allowed to categorize visitors by their needs and to develop the products, that are more suitable to satisfy those shifting tourist desires.

The problems of risk perception in Chernobyl tourism have also been pointed out and suggestions on how to increase the risk awareness in tourists have been given.

Overall, the author achieved his goals of analysis of the dark tourism site and have been able to fairly assess the current state of the tourism industry in the destination according to theories and concepts from previous generations.

This research is a perfect example of how to use the dark tourism spectrum and seven dark suppliers scale to analyze a dark tourism destination, determine the right customer target and the main purposes of each destination, depending on the level of its “darkness”.

Dark tourism has the potential to become an industry that will provide the most authentic and emotionally stunning experiences that will satisfy the growing tourists’ needs.

9.1 Research limitations

Conducting an interview with the travel guide via phone applied many limitations on the research, as the information was not collected by me in person and surveys were created by tour operators for different purposes. Another limitation comes in a face of reliability of the information, as the number of respondents was not recorded, and it is impossible to determine their exact number, therefore credibility of the collected data can be questioned.

Visiting the site was also impossible due to the pandemic and the researches used were not very recent, which means that the information might be not up to date, however the web resources was made use of, making the research more credible.

As this thesis is mostly based on secondary data, the lack of research on topics related to health risks in dark tourism such as Chernobyl, as it is a unique destination which deserves to be called the World’s heritage. Not many places are in such condition of high levels of radiation and therefore it is important to evaluate the safety of visiting the destination.

9.2 Future research possibilities

In the future it is possible to conduct more researches on the topic of risk perception in case of Chernobyl as there are many delusions about the health of visiting the destination. Also, the availability of the medical facilities on site should have an impact on

the risk awareness and risk perception of the tourists so this issue should also be studied thoroughly for the development of the image of the site.

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