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## Motivational Factors of Sabahan Youth for Visiting Dark Tourism Sites

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to understand the Sabahan youths' understanding, knowledge, and motivation for visiting dark tourism sites. The theory of push-pull framework is a popular theory for explaining why youth choose to visit one destination over another, the type of experience, and the type of activity. The overall purpose of this study is to utilise the push-pull theory in combination with four dark tourism variables (unique learning experience, casual interest, engaging experience, and dark experience) to better understand the motivation factors of Sabahan youth for visiting dark tourism sites in Sabah, Malaysia. A total of 384 respondents were collected from the distribution of questionnaires, and the data is analysed by SPSS software to ensure the questionnaire's suitability and reliability by using Cronbach's Alpha. Most Sabahan youths have visited the common places such as Agnes Keith House, Kundasang War Memorial, Petagas War Memorial, Sandakan Memorial Park, and Monsopiad Cultural Village. The theory of push-pull factors was utilised to address the following research objectives: (i) to identify the Sabahan youths' understanding and knowledge of dark tourism; and (ii) to determine the Sabahan youths' motivation factors for visiting dark tourism sites. The dark tourism variables utilised for this study were adapted and supported by previous dark tourism research by (Allman, 2017).

**Keywords:** Dark Tourism, Sabahan Youth, Theory of Push and Pull, Knowledge and Understanding, Motivational Factors

### Introduction

Dark tourism is a phenomenon where people get captivated and engrossed with locations or places associated with death, disaster, and tragedy. Each dark tourism site upholds an event from past time. These locations and places are attractions of various tragedies, where death and pain have occurred on site. Dark tourism has grown significantly in the last decade, with an increasing number of dark tourists (Lennon and Foley, 2000; Martini and Buda, 2018). According to Dann and Seaton (2001), dark tourism refers to travel to places linked with death, disaster, acts of violence and crimes against humanity. Dark tourism has become a vital travel motivation topic (Rittichainuwat, 2007). In essence, there is a relationship between the

motivational factors of Sabahan youth for visiting dark tourism sites that drive the Sabahan youth to visit dark tourism sites in Sabah.

Motivation is considered one of the significant variables to explain youth motivation to visit tourism destinations. Understanding and motivating factors that lead to travel decisions are vital for tourism and hospitality operators (Chan & Baum, 2007). Motivation has been identified as an essential factor in tourist behaviour when selecting tourist destinations. With that said, motivation is the fundamental reason for particular travelling behaviour and plays a vital role in selecting dark tourism destinations. Determining motivation is the first phase in developing destination planning since it explains why people travel and the type of experience, destination, or preferable activity.

Youth travel has been recognized as one of the most significant segments of global tourism and is also seen as having considerable potential for future growth (World Tourism Organisation, 2018). As more youth begin to travel more frequently and over longer distances, youth travel has become an increasingly important part of the global tourism industry and leaves significant economic contribution to the places they visit to develop personal skills, social ties, and cultural links in their pursuit of engaging experiences (World Tourism Organisation, 2018). Besides that, there has been a significant relationship between youth, their motivation factors for travelling, and their selected tourism destination in the modern era. Youth has been increasingly considered an important area of research for several reasons (Staffieri & Cavagnaro, 2018).

Arowosafe et al (2021) stated that motivation that enhances tourists' behaviour to visit destinations could be investigated using the push and pull factor approach. With that said, this study will utilise the theory of push and pull factors to focus on why Sabahan youths' are motivated to visit dark tourism destinations, specifically in Sabah, Malaysia. As such, this research was conducted to understand both the understanding and knowledge and motivation of the Sabahan youths' for visiting dark tourism sites. The theory of push factors (unique learning experience and casual interest) and theory of pull factors (engaging experience and dark experience) were utilised to address the following research objectives: (i) to identify the Sabahan youths' understanding and knowledge of dark tourism; and (ii) to determine the Sabahan youths' motivation factors for visiting dark tourism sites. The dark tourism variables utilised for this study were adapted and supported by previous dark tourism research by (Allman, 2017).

## **Literature Review**

### **Concept of Dark Tourism**

Dark tourism is different from relaxing, enjoying fun, and having a wonderful time, and it is complete with sadness and pain. In general, black tourism entails visiting places associated with death or calamity in some form. Dark tourism, on the other hand, takes many different shapes. The link between death and disaster can be undeniable, as in the mausoleums of famous communist leaders where their actual dead remains are on public display. It can be quite indirect, as no actual deaths occurred at the sites of volcanic damage. Thana tourism Seaton (1996), morbid tourism Blom (2000), black spots Rojek (1993), and atrocity tourism Ashworth & Hartmann (2005) are just a few of the terms used to describe dark tourism.

According to Sharpley (2005), as cited in Foley and Lennon (1996), the media and its influence have contributed to the origin and growth of the dark tourism phenomena.

Memorial tourism is a part of dark tourism. It involves trips to sites associated with human suffering and widespread calamities, such as concentration camps, battlefields, major historical battles sites, and large-scale natural disasters. Education and empathy for the victims are the key motivations for memorial tourism. The historical facts and a deeper understanding of truths are related to the growth of memorial tourism. Seaton (1996) mentioned visiting graveyards, cenotaphs, crypts, war memorials, and internment places. According to Sharpley (2005), the purpose of visiting the memorial tourism site was primarily for educational and memorial purposes. However, the concept of death was incorporated to enhance the tourists' experience.

According to Seaton (1996), dark travel activities can be divided into five categories: To begin, travel to see public death reenactments. Consider public executions. Second, after a death has occurred, travel to the individual or collective death site. Battlefields, death camps, places where celebrities died, and the sites of well-publicized murders are just a few examples. Travelling to memorials or interment sites is the third option. Graveyards, cenotaphs, crypts, and war memorials are only a few examples of memorials or internment sites. After that, go to unrelated locations to see proof or symbolic depictions of death. For example, museums house weapons of mass destruction and displays that recreate specific events or actions. Finally, travel for death simulations or reenactments. For example, participate in performances or festivals with a religious theme. According to Miwil (2021), dark tourism destinations are associated with war sites, prisons, slavery sites, graveyards, memorial parks, and significant historical events are examples of a dark and dreary past.

### **Dark Tourism Sites in Malaysia**

Museums, graves, cathedrals, war artifacts, prisons, and monuments are among the dark tourism destinations in Malaysia. According to Zahari et al (2016), as cited in Abbasi & Mohamed (2013), Malaysian dark tourism products have been pushed as one of the country's possible revenue sources. The government provided more than RM5 million in the 10th Malaysia Plan for preserving and renovating dark tourism sites in Malaysia, according to Zahari et al (2016), as cited in (Bhuiyan et al., 2013). Although Malaysia has many dark tourism attractions, they are not well-known worldwide (Zahari et al., as cited in Braithwaite & Lee, 2006).

Tan & Lim (2018), as cited in Zahari et al (2016) stated that dark tourism products are recognized as a niche market in Malaysia. Several well-known dark tourism locations in Malaysia have attracted a large number of visitors. Pudu Prison in Kuala Lumpur is a well-known example of a dark tourism destination in Malaysia. Pudu Prison, also known as Pudu Jail, was constructed on a former Chinese cemetery site. Pudu Jail was utilised as a prison for over a century before being converted into a museum with caning and hanging tools on display. Next, the Penang War Museum is one of Malaysia's gloomy tourism highlights. The eerie and violent history of the Penang War Museum is well-known. The Penang War Museum, which the British Army constructed before World War II, was located on the southeastern extremity of Penang Island, is Southeast Asia's most important war museum. According to National Geographic, the Penang War Museum is one of Asia's most haunted

locations. Besides, Kellie's Castle is also a dark tourism destination in Malaysia. Kellie's Castle is an abandoned and unfinished historic structure in the centre of a rubber farm near Batu Gajah. Kellie's Castle is known as Malaysia's most popular dark tourism destination.

As a result, Tan & Lim (2018), as referenced in Braithwaite and Lee (2006); Suhasini and Chai, (2010); Masanti (2016) claimed that researchers have begun to pay attention to dark tourism in Malaysia in recent years. Figure 1 shows the potential dark tourism product in Malaysia.

Potential dark tourism product in Malaysia	Location
Penang War Museum	Penang, West Malaysia
Jerajak Island	Penang, West Malaysia
Pulau Bidong	Terengganu, West Malaysia
Batu Lintang	Kuching, Sarawak, East Malaysia
Labuan	Federal Territory of Malaysia
The Second World War Sandakan – Ranau Death March	Sandakan to District of Ranau area, Sabah, East Malaysia
Pulau Berhala	Sandakan, Sabah, East Malaysia
Brothel No. 8	Sandakan, Sabah, East Malaysia
Jesselton (Kota Kinabalu)	Sabah, East Malaysia
Ranau	Sabah, East Malaysia
Mantanani Island	Kota Belud, Sabah, East Malaysia

Source: Adopted from Masanti (2016)

Figure 1: Potential dark tourism in Malaysia  
Adapted from: Lim (2018)

### Dark Tourism Sites in Sabah

Sabah is a state in East Malaysia located on the island of Borneo. Tourism is Sabah's third-largest industry and one of the most important revenue generators. Sabah has many well-known tourist attractions that have helped the state draw millions of local and international visitors, including dark tourism. Although Sabah has many dark tourism attractions, they are not well-known worldwide or even locals. Hence, Sabah's numerous spots might be turned into dark tourism destinations, as each location has its own unique story to tell. Sabah has many potential places with spooky stories that can be formulated into dark tourism sites which are most commonly visited Dark Tourism sites, namely, Agnes Keith House, Kundasang War Memorial, Petagas War Memorial and Sandakan Memorial Park. Tourism, death, incarceration, and suffering can produce the relationship of curiosity. These dark histories can become the main reason for visitation (Lennon and Foley, 2000). Not only that, Lennon and Foley (2000) also stated that dark sites could urge people to realise the scale of death, pain, and suffering in an increasingly virtual and post-authentic world, depending on a variety of aspects such as context, politics, philosophy or operational ethos. These feelings and emotions, which can contribute entirely to the 'visitor experience,' may arise at actual sites or areas where dark events are memorialised, in some cases for commemorative or educational objectives and others for blatant commercial exploitation.

Sabah's history, rich folklore, and cultural heritage have attracted thousands of visitors from all over the world, especially visiting sites associated with death and disaster. According to Hashim (2021), Tourism, Culture, and Environment Minister Datuk Jafry Arifin highlighted that Sabah has a potential Dark Tourism site that can develop into new tourism products and attract a new experience for domestic and international visitors. Developing dark tourism sites in Sabah not only concentrated as a place to do site visits but also has value since it fosters a greater appreciation for historical heritage, serves as a source of knowledge and opens up chances for a researcher to research past events and their connections to the present and future. Additionally, many people are unaware that Dark Tourism extends far beyond the paranormal realm, including war and memorial sites, prisons or locations linked

with death and tragedy; common places that are associated with the dark elements are namely Agnes Keith House, Kundasang War Memorial, Petagas War Memorial, and Monsopiad Cultural Village.

Besides Sabah currently has several common most visited Dark Tourism sites: Agnes Keith House, Kundasang War Memorial, Petagas War Memorial, and Sandakan Memorial Park. There are three sites at Crocker Range Park identified as potential dark attractions. The first potential dark tourism site is at Ulu Senagang Substation, where a private British aircraft crashed in the hillside Tinutan and caused seven onboard deaths at the scene. When the Crocker Range Park team visited the site in 2017, the plane wreckage and pieces of wood thought to have been used to transport the bodies were still there. Next, the second potential dark tourism site located at Pinamansok waterfall has a stone with human facial features and a mortar-shaped stone with a 20-cm deep hole filled with water. According to ancient belief, Crocker Range Park research and education coordinator mentioned that if the water at Pinamansok waterfall is disturbed, it will cause floods or disasters. The third site at Crocker Range Park is the salt trail from Inobong substation in Penampang to Malungangan substation in Tambunan, which has been used since World War II. According to Miwil (2021), during the past, local communities from Penampang and Tambunan used to escape into the forest during the war, and the trail later used to be a trade route between people in the interior and the coast.

Furthermore, according to Hashim (2022), Sabah Park has unveiled 40 new proposed dark tourism products and activities in its parks and substations throughout the state, including wreck diving in Sipadan to the summit of Sabah's tallest mountain. According to Datuk Joniston Bangkuai, State Assistant Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Environment, the development of Dark Tourism in Sabah is an excellent opportunity to accelerate the recovery of the state tourism sector following the outbreak of Covid-19. Empowering Dark Tourism in Sabah can serve as a new tourism product, revitalising the tourism industry, increasing domestic tourism, and elevating Sabah as a top destination for domestic and international visitors. Hashim (2022) stated that few locations could develop as dark tourism attractions, namely Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, Kinabalu Park, Pulau Tiga, Tun Mustapha Tawau Hills Sipadan island, and Tun Sakaran Park. The majority of the listed dark tourism destinations are associated with a dreary and dark past that holds significant historical value.

### **Theory of Push and Pull Factors**

The push-pull theoretical framework is a popular theory for explaining why people choose to visit one destination over another, the type of experience, and the type of activity (Said & Maryono, 2018). Ravenstein of England coined the pull and pushed the theory of migration in the nineteenth century. People migrate due to factors that push them out of their current country and factors that pull them into another. The push and pull model is a useful framework for identifying and measuring the various forces and influences that push a person to travel and pull or attract that person to a specific destination (Chan & Baum, 2007). In summation, push factors are used to explain why people want to go to a destination, whereas pull factors are used to explain why people choose to go to a destination.

Travel patterns can be differentiated by push and pull factors that influence travel decisions and destination selection Chan & Baum (2007) cited in (Uysal & Hagan, 1993). Motivation has

a strong influence and is connected with prominent forces known as push and pull. With that said, these two forces which is push and pull describe individuals are pushed by motivation variables to make travel decisions, and how they are drawn or attracted by destination attributes Chan & Baum (2007) cited in Sirakaya & Woodside (2005) In this study, the researcher used the theory of push and pull factors.

### **The “Push” Motivation Factors**

The term push factors refers to a person's needs, wants, and desires, which are intangible and intrinsic needs. In other words, push factors are internal motives or forces that cause people to seek activity such as the need for escape, rest and relaxation, status, health and fitness, adventure, and social connection are intrinsic motivators. Typically, push factors are crucial in eliciting a desire to travel. According to Yoon & Uysal (2005), the social-psychological demands that motivate a person to travel are known as push forces. Furthermore, Crompton, (1979); Hsu & Lam (2003) stated that push motivations explain why people want to travel. These factors are divided into two groups of motivating factors that explain tourist behaviour (Goossens, 2000).

### **The “Pull” Motivation Factors**

The term pull factors refer to those that encourage or attract people to the destination. Pull factors comprises variables that motivate or excite a person to travel to a specific location (Buhalis, 2003; Flucker & Turner, 2000). Basically, the variables under the pull motivations influence one's decision on selecting a specific destination (Crompton, 1979; Hsu & Lam, 2003). In other words, destination-generated pressures and tourists' knowledge of a destination are pull factors (All Answers Ltd, 2015 as cited in Gnoth, 1997). Pull factors emerge from a destination's beauty, such as beaches, recreation facilities, and cultural attractions (All Answers Ltd, 2015, cited in Uysal and Jurovski, 1994). Pull factors are often more critical in determining destination choice (All Answers Ltd, 2015 as cited in Crompton, 1979).

### **Variables in Dark Tourism**

In other studies, several variables motivate visitors to visit dark tourism. According to Kang et al (2012), people might want to visit dark tourism due to several motivations: education, social reasons, and curiosity. This statement supported by Best (2007); Biran et al (2011); Isaac & Cakmak (2014); Kang et al (2012); Sharpley (2012); Thurnell-Read (2009); Winter (2011); Yan et al (2016) that mentioned some people visit dark tourism sites for personal reasons, such as for education, understanding and learning about the history that has occurred in that one particular site. Besides, tourists visit places with dark history or suffering proposed by three principal reasons. The first was curiosity and interest to know about the site's history, the second was the empathy feeling towards the people who suffered in the history, and the third was the thrill associated with horror that mixed the two broader between violence and entertainment.

Meanwhile, Isaac and Cakmak (2014) stated that tourist motivations to visit a former Second World War transit camp Westerbork are motivated by various reasons: self-understanding, curiosity, conscience, and a 'must-see' this place and exclusiveness. Last but not least, Ivanova & Light (2018) mentioned that motives to visit sites that immortalised death or tragic history included schadenfreude, known as a childlike curiosity to learn and know more about death,

contemplation of mortality and nostalgia. The researcher will study dark tourism sites in Sabah and the

motivations that motivate visitors to visit these places through this research. The researcher will also use two variables to determine the visitor's motivation to visit dark tourism sites. These variables are Push factors and Pull factors. Table 1 shows the summarization of used factors by other research.

Table 1

*Summarised of used factors by other researchers*

Variables			Study		Authors and Year
Education, social reasons	curiosity and		Consumption, motivation experience in dark tourism: conceptual and critical analysis	and a	Iliev (2020)
Self-understanding, curiosity, conscience, a 'must-see' this place and exclusiveness			Understanding visitor's motivation at sites of death and disaster: the case of former transit camp Westerbork, the Netherlands		Isaac and Cakmak (2014)
Curiosity, empathy and associated with horror		thrill	Have we illuminated the dark? Shifting perspectives on 'dark tourism'		Ashworth and Hartmann (2005)
Schadenfreude; a childlike curiosity to learn and know more about death, contemplation of mortality and nostalgia 'It's not like we like death			It's not like we like death or anything': exploring the motivations and experiences of visitors to a lighter dark tourism attraction		Ivanova & Light (2018)

### Unique Learning Experience

Any conversation, course, programme, or other learning experience, whether in a traditional academic or nontraditional setting, is referred to as a learning experience. Visiting burial sites and graveyards to seek information, explore the history, and make discoveries on-site often for educational purposes, emotionally detached, and only visit for unique learning experiences (Allman, 2017).

### Casual Interest

Casual refers to someone or anything relaxed or appearing to be careless about what is going on. In contrast, interest is the sensation of someone whose curiosity, attention and concern have been drawn to something in particular. Allman (2017) stated that casual interests are individuals who want to visit dark tourism destinations for entertainment value but also want to have a relaxing time while visiting the dark tourism site.



### Engaging Experience

Engaging experience is a type of experience people have when they visit a place or use a product actively and frequently. Dark tourists are frequently motivated by a desire for a new experience or an adventure to gain knowledge and comprehend something previously unknown to them (Sharpley & Stone, 2009).

### Dark Experience

Individuals who visit dark tourism sites seeking dark experiences are morbidly curious, or thrill-seekers go to cemeteries to confront and experience death. Individuals who had a solid connection to the dead they were visiting could classify them as seeking a dark experience (Allman, 2017).

### Study Framework

This study attempts to identify the push and pull factors in domestic travel motivation to visit dark tourism sites in Sabah, Malaysia. Figure 2 shows the research model that describes the components of the variables in this study.

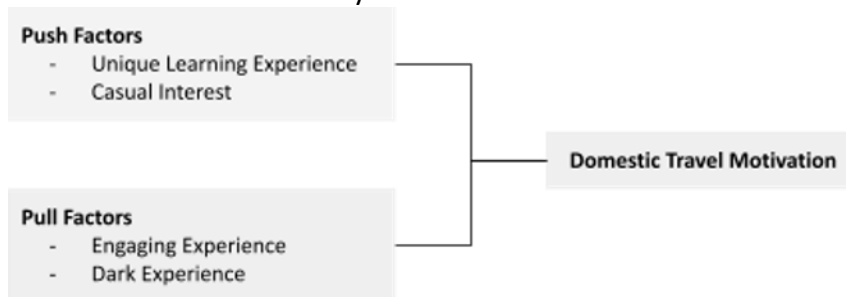


Figure 2: Research Model  
Adapted from: Allman (2017)

### Methodology

This research utilises the quantitative research method for the data collection. Due to the fact that this research is focusing on the dark tourism sites, particularly in Sabah, the target respondents are the youths ranging from the age 20 to 40 years old who originate from Sabah. According to the Department of Statistics (2019), the population of Sabah within the age range of 20 to 40 years old is 912, 000 people. Hence, according to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling method, the most suitable sample size for this particular research will be 384 respondents. Apart from that, this study utilises the non-probability sampling approach and uses a snowball sampling method to collect the data. Technically, a non-probability sampling approach is utilised due to the cost-effectiveness with the possibility to collect primary data as well, as the data collection can be done in a short period of time. Additionally, snowball sampling was used with the intention to reach potential respondents that are hard to reach from all over Sabah.

The questionnaire used in this study was adopted from Allman (2017) with minor alterations. In order to make sure that the questionnaire is valid and reliable, a pilot test was conducted prior to the commencement of the actual survey. All questionnaire items are based on the motivation factors, namely, engaging experience, dark experience, unique learning experience, and casual interest. Subsequently, these items are measured using the 5-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-mixed).

Besides that, a pilot study was conducted in the middle of November, and 31 samples were collected. Then, the data is analysed by SPSS software to ensure the questionnaire's suitability and reliability. Consequently, the result of Cronbach's Alpha proves that all items are considered reliable as the range is between 0.823 and 0.938. Furthermore, a self-administered questionnaire was designed and tabulated in Google Forms. Following this, the hyperlink to the questionnaire was distributed to targeted respondents through the medium of social media (i.e., WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, and Instagram). Thenceforth, the respondents can share the link to the online survey with any of their acquaintances.

Eventually, 384 valid responses were collected. Then, all data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software in order to identify the reliability of the items along with the minimum value, maximum value, mean, frequency, and ranks of the variables.

#### *Respondents' Demographic Profile*

As stated below, Table 2 shows the respondents' demographic profile (N=384). The results showed that most of the respondents were female (53.9%), and 62.5% of the respondents were aged between 20 to 25 years old. In terms of the education level, the majority of them are STPM and Diploma holders (33.9%), and most of them were also students (47.4%). Additionally, most respondents have a monthly income below RM 1 000 (52.9%).

Table 2

#### *Demographic Frequency Analysis (N=384)*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Gender	Male	177	46.1
	Female	207	53.9
Age group	20-25 years old	240	62.5
	26-30 years old	46	12.0
	31-35 years old	61	15.9
	36-40 years old	37	9.6
Education level	SPM	35	9.1
	STPM / Diploma	130	33.9
	Bachelor's Degree	192	50
	Master's Degree	25	6.5
	PhD	2	0.5
Occupation	Student	182	47.4
	Employed	177	46.1
	Unemployed	25	6.5
Monthly income	Less than RM 1, 000	203	52.9
	RM 1, 000 - RM 1, 999	73	19.0
	RM 2, 000 - RM 2, 999	74	19.3
	RM 3, 000 - RM 3, 999	26	6.8
	RM 4, 000 - RM 4, 999	3	0.8
	RM 5, 000 and above	5	1.3

On the other hand, Table 3 shows the respondent's understanding and knowledge of dark tourism. As a result, most of the respondents know what dark tourism is (64.6%), and half of the respondents are aware that there are similar dark tourism sites apart from the Sandakan War Memorial (54.2%). However, most of them have not visited other dark tourism sites besides the Sandakan War Memorial (55.2%). Moreover, the results show that many of the respondents find out about dark tourism from social media (59.4%), followed by family members and friends (29.9%), along with print advertising (10.7%).

Table 3

*Respondents' Understanding and Knowledge on Dark Tourism (N=384)*

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent (%)
Do you know what dark tourism is?	Yes	248	64.6
	No	136	35.4
Do you know that there are similar dark tourism sites other than Sandakan War Memorial?	Yes	208	54.2
	No	176	45.8
Have you visited other dark tourism sites other than Sandakan War Memorial?	Yes	172	44.8
	No	212	55.2
How did you find out about dark tourism sites in Sabah?	Social media	228	59.4
	Print advertising	41	10.7
	Family members and friends	115	29.9

### Descriptive Analysis

The values of minimum and maximum responses, mean, and standard deviation for all of the items used for this particular research are shown in Table 4. Furthermore, the reliability of the questions has been tested using Cronbach's Alpha test through the SPSS. The results of Cronbach's Alpha that have been processed through the SPSS are shown in Table 4, where the range of every element used for this study is between 0.823 and 0.938. As stated by Saunders et. al (2009), Cronbach's Alpha test results that exceed 0.7 show that the questions are acceptable and pass the reliability tests. Therefore, we can conclude that all items in the questionnaire have passed the reliability test and are considered reliable.

Table 4

*Variables' Descriptive Analysis (N=384)*

<b>Variables' Items</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>
<b>Engaging Experience (EE)</b>				
I would like to travel	2	5	4.54	2
I would like to have a hobby	1	5	4.43	5
I would like to change pace and get away from routine	2	5	4.34	7
I would like to meet people with similar interests	2	5	4.40	6
I would like to be emotionally refreshed	1	5	4.52	3
I would like to be physically refreshed	2	5	4.55	1
I would like to have some entertainment	2	5	4.48	4
I would like to see the improvement/changes of the dark tourism location	1	5	4.29	8
I would like to visit dark tourism sites that has been featured on television shows	1	5	4.24	9
Cronbach's Alpha Value	0.823			
<b>Dark Experience (DE)</b>				
I would like to reconnect with individual(s) that were somehow associated to the dark tourism location	1	5	3.92	3
I would like to satisfy personal curiosity about how the victims died	1	5	4.02	1
I would like to witness the act of death and dying	1	5	3.70	6
I would like to satisfy my fascination of abnormal and bizarre events	1	5	3.76	5
I would like to experience paranormal activity	1	5	3.28	8
I would like to experience paranormal activity as seen on main-stream media	1	5	3.23	9
I would like to seek out stories related to the dark tourism location	1	5	3.95	2
I would like to see the wreckage/debris of the dark tourism location	1	5	3.88	4
I would like to visit well-recognized location that are known to be home to paranormal activity	1	5	3.69	7
I would like to visit a well-known place for paranormal activity	1	5	3.69	7
Cronbach's Alpha Value	0.938			
<b>Unique Learning Experience (ULE)</b>				
I would like to try something new	1	5	4.36	4

I would like to try something “out of the ordinary”	1	5	4.28	6
I would like to experience place(s) that many people have not been to or wish to visit	1	5	4.03	8
I would like to increase knowledge	1	5	4.52	1
I would like to experience a part of my own heritage	1	5	4.31	5
I would like to visit historical/cultural sites	1	5	4.40	2
I would like to visit dark tourism sites that has the originality of facilities	1	5	4.24	7
I would like to visit place(s) than is well-known for historical heritage	2	5	4.39	3
Cronbach’s Alpha Value	<b>0.877</b>			

### ***Casual Interest (CI)***

I would like to visit dark tourism place(s) to have an enjoyable time with family/friends	1	5	3.91	5
I would like to visit dark tourism place(s) to enjoy natural scenery	1	5	4.08	1
I would like to visit dark tourism place(s) to experience a good service quality	1	5	4.03	2
I would like to visit dark tourism place(s) to seek for personal safety	1	5	3.68	6
I would like to visit dark tourism place(s) to enjoy the value of tours	1	5	3.95	4
I would like to visit dark tourism place(s) because of the special tour promotions	1	5	3.96	3
Cronbach’s Alpha Value	0.920			

### **Findings**

Based on the result in Table 4, the engaging experience was one of the motivational factors for the Sabahan youth to visit dark tourism sites in Sabah. The result supports the claim by Ashworth and Isaac (2015), visiting a dark destination can evoke a mixture of emotions, and dark tourism can be viewed in several ways. Ashworth and Isaac added that there are two categories of primary emotions: positive (anticipation, joy, acceptance, and surprise) and negative (anger, sadness, disgust, and fear). In this study, youth agreed that travelling could help them change pace, get away from routine, and be emotionally and physically refreshed. In addition, the media introduces us to new places and groups that we would not have known about otherwise, raising curiosity about visiting such places. This explanation is aligned with the statement from Sharpley and Wright (2018), once a tragedy has been published, it attracts anybody, for whatever reason, want to travel to see it.

According to Stone (2013), dark tourism is often considered taboo. Therefore, it is foreseen that the motivation of getting dark experiences from the tour is not very preferred by the target respondents as much as the other variables. Although the results for dark experience were not as high as other variables, there are still several respondents motivated by the dark experience. This statement is also supported by Ashworth and Isaac (2015), as they stated that some researchers note that humans have always been captivated by the bizarre,

indicative death. Consequently, the statement on wanting to satisfy personal curiosity about how the victims died showed the highest mean value among all the questions for the motivation of dark experience. As shown in the result obtained from Table 4, the overall respondents are within the range of mixed feelings. They agree that having dark experiences from dark tourism sites would motivate them to visit those particular sites more.

A unique learning experience was also motivating Sabahan youth to visit dark tourism sites in Sabah. This construct was based on learning about the region's history of visiting or experiencing something new and unusual. The statement on increasing knowledge and visiting historical or cultural sites showed the highest mean value among other questions under unique learning experience. Thus, the results support the claim by Desmond (1999); as cited in Kunwar and Karki (2019) that tourism is crucial in the improvement of education since an event, history, or the life and death of a person can be internalised and imprinted inside the visitor's self. Understanding the dark sites drew much academic interest due to some tourists interested in an educational experience. To gain a learning experience, some tourists are also motivated to visit dark tourism sites because they want to have cultural experiences. This statement was in line with Stone (2013) when he claimed that the heritage sites frequently used as instances of dark tourism are places where tourists can participate in various experiences, such as cultural experiences, heritage experiences, and education.

Ivanova and Light (2018) mentioned that curiosity and an interest in the unusual are the first motivation, followed by empathy and yearning to identify the victims of cruelty. The last motivation is the thrill corresponding with horror. Besides that, Zhang et al (2016) also stated that four interpersonal constraints were identified by researchers concerning dark tourism sites, including culture, emotion, escape, and incuriousness, which supports the statement that visitors are motivated by casual interest motivation for visiting dark tourism sites. Accordingly, the result of this study indicates that the Sabahan youths are motivated by a casual interest to visit dark tourism sites in Sabah. This statement is also supported by Stone and Sharpley (2008) meaningfulness, which eventually leads them to conclude that dark tourism may have more to do with life and living than death and dying.

## **Conclusion**

This study has explored and identified the motivational factors of Sabahan youth for visiting dark tourism destinations. It provides an insight into the understanding and knowledge of what motivates Sabahan youth for visiting dark tourism destinations in Sabah, Malaysia. It is clear that the dark tourism destination attractions (pull factors) and the fulfilment of needs, wants, and escape (push factors) serve as the motivational factors of Sabahan youth for visiting dark tourism destinations in Sabah, Malaysia. The destination attributes or pull factors explain how Sabahan youth are attracted, motivated and excited to visit the dark tourism destination. Whilst, push factors to explain the internal motives and desire of Sabahan youth to visit dark tourism destinations such as escape, relaxation, adventure, and social connection.

Sabah is an appropriate state to kick off Malaysia's dark tourism trend, as some of the dark sites have been recognized by existing dark tourism sites that portray different kinds of untold stories. Local authorities in Sabah are encouraged to realise the full potential of dark tourism in Sabah. Venturing into the dark tourism market will assist in sustaining other forms of

tourism from being overused by any future development. Although Sabah has many potential dark tourism sites, they have yet to be recognized by the Sabahan youth and are capable of attracting domestic and international visitors. It is due to a lack of government recognition and support for this new tourism opportunity. And due to that, both the government and any tourism organisations should promote and raise awareness through outreach campaigns for dark tourism attractions. All in all, this will help to boost enthusiasm and receive strong support from locals, especially from the Sabahan youth.

In research from Tan and Lim (2018), as cited in Mashanti (2016), culture needs to be a priority to establish dark tourism in Malaysia. It is no doubt that Sabah could enter into the dark tourism market and make it a tourism revenue product if it is marketed appropriately and does not disregard any cultural sensitivity of the local community; thus, this also should apply in Sabah because it is important for being aware that cultural differences exist and people should be respectful and accept the differences regardless of gender, race, religion, culture, language, ethnicity, and nationality.

Furthermore, Sabah is rich in cultural history and home to 32 indigenous groups, including more than 30 ethnic races. Offering and developing dark tourism in Sabah will enhance its attractiveness and competitiveness in economic and social aspects. Apart from the economic point of view, dark tourism can evolve in the emotional wellness of the locals and foreigners. It can also give new experiences to domestic and international visitors and generate income to help the local community. The stakeholders play a vital role in planning and developing tourism projects for successful tourism development. To be specific, stakeholders involved in tourism destinations consist of local residents, business associations, tourism developers, competitors, local companies, media, and government. Government and state tourism agencies play a crucial role in promoting Sabah as a dark tourism destination through social media platforms and journal articles published online. In essence, this will boost the state's tourism growth by creating a new niche market for the tourism industry in Sabah.

In summation, because each location has its own unique story to tell, Sabah's numerous locations could be turned into dark tourism destinations. Sabah has a wide range of potential locations with its own historical stories that can be turned into dark tourism destinations. Ejecting dark tourism as one of Sabah's tourism attractions may boost wide-scale tourism industry revenues, preserve and conserve historic sites, and contribute to preserving cultural heritage by using culture as a tool to promote harmony, a sense of unity and understanding among communities.

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