

# Experiences of visitors to Gallipoli, a nostalgia-themed dark tourism destination: an insight from TripAdvisor

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to examine and understand the experiences of travelers to Gallipoli, by analyzing their online comments and reviews.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The data were garnered from the well-known online user blog TripAdvisor. Data, concerning visiting the Gallipoli Peninsula, were retrieved from ( $n = 330$ ) travelers' reviews and comments, and were examined using content analysis to elicit and identify their experiences.

**Findings** – Overall, the travelers' reviews and comments mostly conveyed emotional and nostalgic experiences. Further, the travelers' nostalgic experiences of Gallipoli emerged as historical nostalgia deriving from the personal attachment of travelers to the site.

**Research limitations/implications** – The data have shown that the experiences of travelers to Gallipoli can mostly be identified as emotional, which are generally consistent with the current literature. This paper utilized traveler reviews and comments on TripAdvisor, left by tourists who had previously visited Gallipoli, and this represents the limitation of the present study. Thus, to better understand the experiences of travelers visiting Gallipoli, with regard to their psychological aspect, future research should be conducted with travelers either through face-to-face interviews or via a survey.

**Originality/value** – Despite its significance for dark tourists, limited research has been carried out that deals with the experiences of travelers visiting the Gallipoli battlefield. As such, this is the first research project designed to highlight the experience of dark tourism, under the concept of nostalgic tourism, by providing valuable data and a deeper understanding of the field.

**Keywords** User-generated content, Dark tourism, Dark tourism experience, Nostalgic experience, Nostalgic tourism

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

The commercial tours of battlefield sites pertaining to the First World War increased in popularity at the beginning of the 1990s (Dunkley *et al.*, 2007). The Gallipoli Peninsula, a well-known battlefield tourism destination, is considered one of the most compelling examples of war-related attractions encompassed within the concept of dark tourism. The site is visited every year by thousands of tourists from both domestic and international locales, in particular by Australians and New Zealanders (Slade, 2003). Therefore, the war-related area situated in the Gallipoli Peninsula is seen as one of the most popular battlefield tourism attractions, both at domestic and international levels (Birdir *et al.*, 2015). In particular, the site is seen by Australians, New Zealanders and Turkish people as the real birthplace of their respective modern countries after the First World War. Fundamentally, the site is considered to be a "sacred" and significant place, especially by Australians and New Zealanders, and this can be explained by its playing a role in the building of the modern histories of Australia, New Zealand and Turkey after the First World War (Hyde and Harman, 2011; Prideaux, 2007). Here, then, arises the postulation that travelers visiting Gallipoli have a sense of place attachment with the site and feel Gallipoli to be part of

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their own heritage, even though, for Australians and New Zealanders, the site is physically located far away (Eastgate, 2010).

Visitors' motivations for traveling to Gallipoli are associated with spiritual, family pilgrimage, nationhood, commemorative and remembrance concerns (Basarin *et al.*, 2010; Biran and Hyde, 2013; Cheal and Griffin, 2013; Eastgate, 2010; Hyde and Harman, 2011; Kokkranikal *et al.*, 2015; Ryan, 2007; Ozer *et al.*, 2012), which reinforce the national identities of Australians and New Zealanders (Hall *et al.*, 2010; Slade, 2003), while offering visitors commemorative experiences (Lagos *et al.*, 2015), including joy, sadness, love and anger (Hede and Hall, 2006). Except for a few studies (Birdir *et al.*, 2015; Hede and Hall, 2006, 2012; Lagos *et al.*, 2016), the literature has neglected the battlefield tourism experiences of travelers visiting the Gallipoli Peninsula. Given the present research's theoretical grounding in nostalgia, there is a link between social identity and cultural tourism emanating from dark tourism (Brown and Humphreys, 2002; Russell, 2008).

Just as warfare tourism sites offer travelers a sense of national identity (Dunkley *et al.*, 2011), dark tourists are also more engaged in nostalgic tourism. This paper is the first one designed to explore the issue of the dark tourism experience, within the context of nostalgic tourism. In doing so, the aim of this study is to examine and identify the experiences of travelers visiting the Gallipoli Peninsula. By adopting a qualitative research method, the study utilizes user-generated content. Thus, in striving to fill a gap in the extant literature, this project has been designed with the aim of finding answers to the following research questions:

RQ1. What kind of experiences does the Gallipoli site offer to travelers?

RQ2. How can post-visit experiences of travelers to Gallipoli be identified in their online narratives left by tourists who had previously visited Gallipoli?

RQ3. Does the Gallipoli site provide travelers with more historical or personal nostalgic experiences, or a combination of both?

The paper begins with a review of the relevant literature on dark tourism. Section 2 explains the research method used, and a brief review of the historical significance of the site is presented. The findings section sets out the ideas and opinions of the travelers, and the conclusion discusses the implications of the findings. Suggestions are given for future research.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 *The concept of dark tourism*

The idea of dark tourism became a popular research topic in the twenty-first century, having garnered considerable attention after Foley and Lennon (1996a) coined the term for a form of cultural tourism in the modern era (Korstanje, 2011; Powell and Iankova, 2016; Powell and Kennell, 2016). The concept has been further developed by Seaton (1996), who gave the term "thanatourism" to places that are associated with death and disasters. The concept of dark tourism is described as "travel to sites associated with death, disaster, acts of violence, tragedy, scenes of death and crimes against humanity" (Preece and Price, 2005, p. 192). The phenomenon of dark tourism, although mainly associated with the last century, has in fact a long history, since people have long traveled to sites associated with death and disaster (Buda and McIntosh, 2013; Stone and Sharpley, 2008).

In simple terms, this form of tourism allows for visitors to experience places where tragic events or deaths have occurred in the past (Hartmann, 2014; Knudsen, 2011). The emergence of the phenomenon of dark tourism is credited to two main causes. One is cited by Rojek (1993), who views the transformation of leisure and tourism into dark tourism as a movement from modernism to postmodernism (Casbeard and Booth, 2012); the other cause is rooted in the tourist's changing outlook, which is socially constructed to seek out certain types of places (Urry and Larsen, 2011). Thus, over the last two decades, dark tourism has emerged as a new form of niche tourism (Tarlow, 2005), which is credited to the pre-eminence of postmodernity (Muzaini *et al.*, 2007). While the concept of the dark tourism experience has been identified and examined in various ways by scholars, it remains under researched, despite the fact that

concentrating on dark tourism experiences instead of motivations promises rich and meaningful insights into understanding this newly emergent phenomenon (Light, 2017).

There are several different forms of dark tourism, classified according to the nature of the attraction. Thus, for analytical purposes, we may distinguish between dark tourism associated with prisons (Strange and Kempa, 2003), battlefields (Cooper, 2006; Miles, 2014; Ryan, 2007; Seaton, 1999; Smith, 1998; William, 2014; Yirik *et al.*, 2016), disaster zones (Goatcher and Brunnsden, 2011; Stone, 2013), concentration camps (Ashworth, 2002; Cohen, 2011; Keil, 2005; Kidron, 2013; Liyanage *et al.*, 2015; Thurnell-Read, 2009), places where celebrities died (Blom, 2000; Foley and Lennon, 1996b; Stone, 2005), slavery (Dann and Seaton, 2001; Mowatt and Chancellor, 2011) and sites where terrorist events have occurred (Knudsen, 2011; Potts, 2012).

Given the emergence and evolution of the phenomenon, the media – both traditional and social – plays a crucial role in its promotion (Foley and Lennon, 1996a, b; Sharpley, 2005). Within the context of postmodern perspectives, dark tourism sites are presented by destination managers using imagery and media, which can transform touristic landscapes into apparently authentic products (Stone, 2009; Wight, 2006).

Dark tourism sites give rise to both supply and demand issues (Raine, 2013). The motivational factors driving such visits originate from various sources (Liyanage *et al.*, 2015), such as curiosity and learning more about history or war, or, more generally, a desire for education (Bigley *et al.*, 2010; Henderson, 2000; Podoshen, 2013; Winter, 2011). The sites themselves offer educational and emotional experiences stemming from engagement with a place which has historical and cultural significance (Biran *et al.*, 2011; Henderson, 2000; Kang *et al.*, 2012).

The dark tourism sites that are associated with death or disasters are considered to be a form of cultural tourism which is linked to cultural geography, relying as it does on the interpretation of place by visitors (Koleth, 2014; Young, 1999). Thus, landscapes associated with war, atrocity and horror have been transformed into heritage sites (Hartmann, 2014). On the other hand, the visitor experiences of battlefield tourism vary compared to those of mass tourism, in respect of motivation, emotional attachment and personal experience (Yeneroğlu-Kutbay and Aykaç, 2016).

## ***2.2 Nostalgic experience and dark tourism***

While Seaton (1996) claims that interest in dark tourism is based on general interest rather than on reasons specific to individuals, it remains the case that cognitive and emotional experiences are gained by dark visitors, whether through participation in collective ceremonies or personal remembrance (Light, 2017). The concept of experience has been classified into ten different types – physical, restorative, sensory, introspective, cognitive, transformative, emotional, spiritual, hedonic and relational – each of which has several dimensions (Packer and Ballantyne, 2016).

From the perspective of Sharpley's (2005) dark tourism typology, the experience is classified according to a spectrum ranging from accidental to purposeful supply and from palest to darkest demand, which together define the degree to which dark touristic attractions meet visitor expectations. Further, Sharpley includes specific attractions, such as war cemeteries, memorials, battlefields, and other war-related museums or attractions within the ambit of the dark tourism experience. Here, it should be kept in mind that the media plays a central role regarding both push and pull motivational factors, which can also affect the intensity of dark tourists' experiences (Yuill, 2003).

The conceptual background of the present study is heavily based on nostalgic experiences that have been identified and divided into three forms of nostalgia (Sierra and McQuitty, 2007). While the first refers to the stance of "things were better in the past," the second is a questioning, rather than an emotionalizing. In the third and last one, the individual actually investigates his or her nostalgic experience (Havlena and Holak, 1991, p. 325). Nostalgia is defined as "an emotional state in which an individual yearns for an idealized or sanitized version of an earlier time period" (Stern, 1992, p. 11), or, more concretely, it "refers to a longing for the past, a yearning for yesterday" (Holbrook, 1993, p. 245). The concept of nostalgia has two basic forms, personal and historical (Kim, 2005; Muehling *et al.*, 2004). Personal nostalgia refers to a period in which a person can directly remember past events or addresses an idealization

process of the past, while historical nostalgia identifies responses or events pertaining to the past that have never been personally experienced (Marchegiani and Phau, 2010; Muehling and Pascal, 2012; Pascal *et al.*, 2002).

Personal nostalgic tourists tend to revisit their own past cultural environment in order to evoke past personal experiences, whilst historical nostalgic tourists show a tendency to visit an idealized cultural environment, one which they can indirectly experience through both tangible and intangible means, such as movies, books and stories (Russell, 2008). The First World War memorial landscapes hold symbolic meaning, in terms of political and esthetic ideas of nationalism or imperialism, through monuments and memorials dating back to the past (Bowman and Pezzullo, 2010). From this point of view, nostalgia can play a crucial role in the construction process of identity, as well as being a tool for maintaining a common sense of socio-historic persistence (Brown and Humphreys, 2002).

### **2.3 Historical background and importance of the site**

The Gallipoli Peninsula, situated in the Dardanelles in Turkey, is a broad landscape comprising 33,000 hectares, which is associated with significant battles during the First World War (1914-1918) (Yeneroğlu-Kutbay and Aykaç, 2016). The operation was realized by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) and Turkish forces in 1915 (Hall, 2002). The campaign commenced after the landing of ANZAC forces at a beach on April 25, 1915 and ended on December 20, 1915, after almost 500,000 of casualties were lost on both sides (Basarin *et al.*, 2010; Hall *et al.*, 2010; Slade, 2003). Although the campaign ended with a Turkish victory and the defeat of allied ANZAC forces, the war as a whole led to the birth of all three modern nations, Australia, New Zealand and Turkey (Catalca and Yurtseven, 2003; Prideaux, 2007; Ziino, 2006).

Thus, Gallipoli is not only considered to be a sacred landscape for Australians and New Zealanders, which they visit every year to attend commemoration events, but it also has a similar meaning for Turkish people (Hyde and Harman, 2011; Prideaux, 2007). Travelers visiting the site often attend the guided tours organized by travel agents located in the region. For Australians and New Zealanders, the tour often starts from the camp area at North Beach, and continues on to Lone Pine Cemetery and Chunuk Bair after the Dawn Service finish, while other visitors prefer to visit the Turkish 57th Infantry Regiment Cemetery situated at Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair (Cheal and Griffin, 2013). Overall, the site encompasses several monuments, war memorials, museums, trenches, inscriptions, plaques, writings and statues that are all frequented by visiting tourists.

## **3. Methodology**

Through the rapid development of the internet, many online blogs have emerged as social media platforms on which consumers can exchange ideas and opinions about their experiences (Amaral *et al.*, 2014; Leung *et al.*, 2013; Schmallegger and Carson, 2008). Alongside this, the Web 2.0 approach has developed, from which travelers can benefit by using TripAdvisor, which is regarded as one of the largest information source platforms (O'Connor, 2010; Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). Thus, social media has gained particular recognition in terms of sharing different types of user-generated content, including news, photos and videos on platforms, such as Facebook, Flickr, Google+, Twitter, YouTube and Wikipedia (Khang *et al.*, 2014). The present study adopted a qualitative research method utilizing user-generated content by analyzing travelers' comments and reviews through one of the most popular websites, TripAdvisor (Jeackle and Carter, 2011).

Data were drawn from its well-known online user blog on November 27, 2016 and July 13, 2017, comprising comments left by Gallipoli travelers who had visited the site between 2011 and 2017. The data for the analysis were drawn from a website related to the Gallipoli travelers' experiences by entering the words "Reviews and Comments of Gallipoli Travellers" into Google. Data were analyzed through an inductive content analysis technique, and in order to ensure the reliability of the data two independent human coders were involved in the data analysis process, while Krippendorff's  $\alpha$  (Hayes and Krippendorff, 2007) was also utilized. Themes which emerged, and the words mostly used by travelers, were checked by the two coders and intercoder reliability

was found to be 0.77, meaning that a high level of agreement was reached by the two coders. Once the researcher had extracted the most-used themes and keywords identifying travelers' experiences, the two additional coders checked and verified them.

#### 4. Findings

The process of data analysis revealed that the travelers' countries of origin were the UK, Canada, Turkey, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, Greece, USA, Georgia and Dubai. Data were retrieved from 330 travelers' reviews and comments, regarding visiting Anzac Cove, Gallipoli National Park and the Hellas Memorial in Turkey. In a subsequent step, after the coding process was realized, two main themes (emotional and nostalgic experience) and seven main categories (i.e. "moving," "sad," "amazing," "memorable," "humbling," "proud" and "touching") were extracted, all falling under the theme of emotional nostalgia. The theme of nostalgic experience also included historical nostalgia. Further, the vast majority of travelers found their experience to be informative, as the Gallipoli site provides useful knowledge about war history. Moreover, it can be seen from travelers' reviews and comments that they obtained a deeper understanding about the history of the area through monuments, plaques, writing, memorials, cemeteries, statues and museums, which led to a strengthening of their identity. This process can be attributed to an aspect of nostalgia, which is motivated by a fascination to understand ancestral identity (Russell, 2008). The travelers' ideas and opinions related to historical nostalgia are outlined below:

You may have seen documentaries, or read books about the history, but it's nothing like the sombre feeling of actually being here (Traveller 2).

[...] If you go when it is quieter, you get the spiritual feeling from the place, you can walk among the graves and take the time to read the headstones, and be at peace [...] (Traveller 5).

If you are ever in this part of the world and you are from Australia or New Zealand, then you need to spend a half day at this site. You can feel the history of the place and it will affect you even if you do not know all of the history surrounding this location (Traveller 11).

[...] Easy to get to but the best way to fully experience and understand the history is take a tour or even better get a personal tour guide [...] (Traveller 41).

It can also be claimed from an analysis of travelers' experiences that many considered the site to be an historical marking place, which helped create the national identity of Australians, New Zealanders and Turkish people. While some travelers prefer to visit the site directly, as the first priority of travel, through package tours, others come as backpackers, after experiencing day tours in Istanbul. Another key issue is that tour guides play a crucial role in providing necessary information to the tourists during their visit (Table I).

**Table I** Emerging themes most frequently used by travelers

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Anzac	267
Gallipoli	237
Memorial	201
War	141
Respect	65
Monument	41
Remember	39
Trench	36
Battlefield	24
Must see	24
Dawn service	14
Lest we forget	15
Pilgrimage	11
Heroism	7

While the vast majority of travelers came to visit the site as organized groups attending daily guided tours, the remainder can be categorized as those who preferred to visit the site independently, a group commonly known as backpackers. Overall, the travelers' experiences were listed as being "moving," "sad," "amazing," "humbling," "proud," "memorable" and "touching," reflecting the emotional nature of their experiences (Table II). Some of the travelers' opinions and ideas about their experience are expressed in the following:

In the ANZAC Cove is one of the most moving memorials in the area [...] (Traveller 16).

[...] The area was filled with visitors who had emotional and familial connections to this spot [...] (Traveller 23).

Two visits to Anzac Cove. Both times were so memorable. A beautiful piece of history which will never be forgotten. Very emotional [...] (Traveller 43).

[...] They made you feel very proud that we have such wonderful young people in our country [...] We are very proud to have been part of the commemoration [...] (Traveller 60).

For all Aussies, Kiwis and Turks this is a very special place and was a humbling experience walking around Anzac Cove being the place that the troops landed (Traveller 65).

I was moved at this sight, I felt so upset that I started to cry when I thought of the lives that were lost here during the war. As an Australian I felt humbled and am very proud to have visited this site (Traveller 133).

The whole peninsula is amazing and beautifully kept. Be prepared to feel emotional at the monuments to the fallen [...] (Traveller 177).

This is a must if you're Australian or from New Zealand. Extremely sad and devastating, but it's something you must visit [...] (Traveller 188).

[...] It was interesting and touching seeing the Australian and Turkish trenches which were surprisingly so close to each other, and the memorials, plus the stunning views of the coastline [...] (Traveller 225).

Four of my relatives, three of whom were brothers, were killed here in that terrible war, so I found my two-day visit to the sites and their graves/memorials extremely emotional and moving (Traveller 257).

After data analysis was completed, the term "Anzac" emerged as the theme most frequently used, followed by the themes "Gallipoli" and "Memorial" (see Table I). Moreover, during their on-site experience visitors claimed that they felt a connection to the site, in particular, Australians and New Zealanders, while the vast majority of the rest expressed no direct or indirect family connection to the site. The online reviews and comments of the Gallipoli travelers also indicated that there were first-time travelers visiting the site, along with repeat visitors who had previously experienced the battlefields. The majority of travelers cited "moving" as their emotive experience, although their comments also reflected enjoyment from their visits to Gallipoli.

One of the most substantive and compelling motivations for travelers is a form of pilgrimage relating to place attachment and a sense of nationalism or patriotism, since the Gallipoli Peninsula National Park Area represents the birth of national identity for Australians, New Zealanders and Turkish people alike. Although we find this sentiment expressed primarily by travelers from those states, the desire to have this kind of experience is also found among a few visitors from the UK and the United Arab Emirates, even though they have no historical connection to the site. This situation reminds us that Gallipoli does not merely have significance for Australians, New Zealanders and

**Table II** Frequency of word usage identifying the emotional experiences of travelers

<i>Keywords</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Moving	105
Sad	38
Amazing	36
Humbling	12
Proud	11
Memorable	10
Touching	8

Turkish people, but, being a site which is significant for the First World War, it is embedded in a web of global consequences and effects which implicate other international travelers as well:

This is one of the pilgrimages you must make in a lifetime. Research well and plan your trip to maximise the best of this once-in-a-lifetime journey (Traveller 14).

Like most Australians and New Zealanders, while in Turkey I felt the need to make the pilgrimage to ANZAC cove - in my case in early February [...] (Traveller 84).

Like a lot of Aussies I have wanted to do the pilgrimage to Gallipoli all my life, but I found myself rushed and unable to just take my time and let the experience and emotions overwhelm me [...] (Traveller 132).

Like many Aussies, I did the pilgrimage to Anzac Cove. Such a moving and very humbling experience. Makes me so proud to be Australian and very grateful for what our brave and young soldiers endured. A very beautiful and serene setting [...] (Traveller 329).

In light of the statements cited above, as expressed by travelers visiting Gallipoli, one can claim that the trip could be regarded as a modern pilgrimage, based on the notion of battlefield tourism, and consistent with prior studies (Hede and Hall, 2012; Hyde and Harman, 2011). And, as we have just noted, we can also conclude that due to its historical significance in the First World War, the Gallipoli Peninsula National Park Area is considered a locus of pilgrimage not only by Australians, New Zealanders and Turkish people, but also by international travelers who have no connection to the site. Yet the interest of Australians and New Zealanders in the site displays specific characteristics, while other international travelers reflect more general purposes in visiting the area, and thus the experiences they gain are varied.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

Academic literature has failed to take note of the significance of the experiences of travelers visiting the Gallipoli Peninsula National Park Area. Responding to this gap in research, the present study has attempted to advance the understanding of the experiences of Gallipoli travelers, by utilizing reviews and comments left on TripAdvisor. In light of the travelers' comments, it has been seen that the Gallipoli Peninsula attracts not only Australians, New Zealanders and Turkish visitors, but also many travelers from other countries. However, as the site is considered to be the national birthplace of Australia and New Zealand, the visits of such nationals to the area is regarded as a sacred journey, much like the pilgrimages to Jerusalem or Lourdes (Hyde and Harman, 2011; McKenna and Ward, 2007; Slade, 2003). In considering the experiences of Australians and New Zealanders, attending commemorative events and remembering those who died during the Great War were highest on the list, and this finding is generally consistent with the extant literature. The present research has revealed that the experiences of Gallipoli travelers were emotional, and that they hold a sense of nostalgia for the history of their nations. This is amply supported by the key categories elicited from the content analysis, namely "moving," "sad," "amazing," "memorable," "humbling," "proud" and "touching." Based on these research findings, we can conclude that travelers' experiences mostly reflect feelings of historical nostalgia, rather than personal nostalgia, since their desire was to visit a sacred cultural environment not directly experienced by themselves, where they were able to obtain a deeper understanding of the history of the area through indirect means (i.e. monuments, plaques, writing, memorials, cemeteries, statues and museums), leading to a strengthening of their identity (Russell, 2008).

Moreover, visitor experiences fall within, and mostly comply with, the emotional, spiritual and cognitive facets of the ten-faceted model of the visitor experience developed by Packer and Ballantyne (2016) within the context of dark tourism. In other words, the results of this study have underscored the fact that the dark tourism experiences of visitors reflect the site's ability to engender emotional, spiritual and cognitive experiences. The data also support the supposition that Gallipoli is a destination selected by travelers because it offers a commemorative experience associated with the prominent word "Anzac," an experience reflecting one of the main motivational factors of travelers in visiting the site (Basarin *et al.*, 2010; Cheal and Griffin, 2013; Hall *et al.*, 2010; Hyde and Harman, 2011; Lagos *et al.*, 2015; Slade, 2003). Furthermore, it can also be understood from the reviews and comments that the site offers an experience that derives from a personal connection to the area, in terms of the emotions created by a sense of patriotism or nationalism. Further, the results show that the battlefield of Gallipoli provides visitors with both positive and negative experiences, consistent with the findings

of prior research (Birdir *et al.*, 2015; Hede and Hall, 2006, 2012; Lagos *et al.*, 2015). One of the most important findings of the present research is that Australians' and New Zealanders' interest in the site are specific, while other international travelers have a more general purpose in visiting the area. This difference has led to Gallipoli travelers reporting differing experiences after their visit to the site. More interestingly, it can be claimed that the Gallipoli site offers not only emotional experiences, but also historical nostalgic ones, while post-visit comments reflect multidimensional characteristics, as seen in emergent categories (Lupu *et al.*, 2017).

The data have also revealed that Gallipoli is visited by backpackers who travel to the site by charter flight from Istanbul to Çanakkale, or by taking buses from Istanbul airport to the area, a journey that takes almost four hours. One of the most substantive implications of the present study is that travelers prefer to experience the site through the tours which are organized daily by domestic tour operators. Moreover, the Gallipoli battlefield offers Turkish, Australian and New Zealander visitors a spiritual experience, alongside the educational and emotional ones, evoking a sense of heroism within an historical and patriotic context. This is due to the fact that the First World War created a feeling of national identity for these three countries, through which their citizens today express themselves in our modern era. The site is widely regarded as a sacred landscape which can evoke nationalistic pride, particularly for Australians and New Zealanders, and, thus, it can be claimed that the overriding motivation of these visitors to Gallipoli is one of pilgrimage, rather than for thanatouristic purposes (Cheal and Griffin, 2013). Another key finding is that some travelers opined that the Gallipoli Peninsula National Park Area was very well preserved and cared for, with only a few people not comparing the Gallipoli battlefield to other similar international sites. The results of the study have demonstrated that nostalgia can be one of the main motivational factors behind dark tourism.

The present research was based on travelers' comments on TripAdvisor, rather than utilizing face-to-face interviews and conducting traveler surveys at the site, and this comprises its principal limitation. In order to obtain a deeper insight into the experience of dark tourism, future studies will need to focus on examining such experiences by taking a holistic perspective, and by conducting mixed methods research.

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