

Benefits of visiting a 'dark tourism' site: The case of the Jeju April 3rd Peace Park, Korea

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ABSTRACT

This research examines visitor experiences at a contemporary dark tourism site: the April 3rd Peace Park on Jeju Island, South Korea, a site commemorating and memorializing one of the most destructive episodes in modern Korean history. The study employed quantitative and qualitative research methods, with 46 semi-structured interviews forming the basis of a questionnaire, and 407 valid questionnaires obtained for data analysis. The implications of the findings are firstly that 'obligation' remains a key motivation for a visit, with a number of subsequent visitor benefits also identified. Secondly, that a benefit-based approach provides an effective framework for comprehending visitor experiences in dark tourism contexts. And thirdly, that a 'hot interpretation' of visitor experiences in dark tourism contexts remains particularly valid for comprehending visitor experiences, and in turn, for effectively designing and managing dark tourism sites within Asia and more generally.

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1. Introduction

Sites associated with natural or man-made disasters or atrocities have become not only places of remembrance, but also tourism attractions in themselves. The number of visitors to such sites around the world is significant: in 2007 for example, the Holocaust site of Auschwitz-Birkenau (2009) in Poland received around 1.2 million visitors, while the Ground Zero site in New York has attracted 3.5 million visitors, and is now one of the city's top ten tourism attractions (Blair, 2002).

This phenomenon is well recognized, and investigated under a range of terms including dark tourism (Foley & Lennon, 1996, p. 198), thanatourism (Seaton, 1996), black spot tourism (Rojek, 1993), atrocity heritage tourism (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996), and morbid tourism (Blom, 2000). Among these, dark tourism is the most widely applied in academic literature (Sharpley, 2009), and defined as 'the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre' (Stone, 2006, p. 146), or alternately, as 'visitations to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred ... that continues to impact our lives' (Tarlow,

2005, p. 48). In this way, such places encompass sites as varied as those of murder and mass death, battlefields, cemeteries, mausoleums, churchyards, and the former homes of deceased celebrities.

As a tourism phenomenon of contemporary relevance in particular, researchers have devoted greater attention to the study of this phenomenon since the 1990s (Dann & Seaton, 2001; Foley & Lennon, 1997; Lennon & Foley, 2000; Seaton, 1996; Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Strange & Kempa, 2003; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Many such studies highlight that dark tourism can in fact provide a significant tourism experience, whilst raising at the same time new anxieties and ethical dilemmas (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005; Sharpley & Stone, 2009b; Wilson, 2008). For instance, what is the morality or otherwise of commodifying death, disaster, and atrocity (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Seaton, 2009), and to what extent is it acceptable to 'market' a tragic event? Moreover, who should control destination images, and to what extent can tourist expectations created by the media be realistically met? Or further still, how can managers of dark tourism sites effectively communicate the 'message' of their site?

To deal with and address such issues this research focuses on the perspective of 'benefit' when it comes to both dark tourism experience providers, and the consumers of dark tourism sites themselves (i.e. tourists or visitors), developing in turn a case study of visitor experiences at the Jeju April 3rd Peace Park in South Korea. This site is located on the largest of Korea's islands, and commemorates and memorializes one of the most destructive episodes in modern Korean history. The island has a population

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today of over 600,000, and is a well known domestic tourist destination attracting nearly 6 million visitors each year. The site of the park itself occupies a mountainous area of the island, and lies around 30–40 min by car from Jeju International Airport. While public transport is available, it is also infrequent and involves a trip time of about one and a half hours to reach the site. Accordingly, the majorities of visitors normally drive their own vehicles or rent a car, or alternately take a taxi to the site.

In spite of its geographical remoteness, around 270,000 people visited the park in the first 12 months of its opening on March 28, 2008 (Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, 2009). In short the park was established to commemorate an uprising of Jeju islanders against the Korean Government, which began on April 3, 1948 during the troubled period immediately prior to the Korean War (1950–1953), and resulted in over 30,000 victims either dead or missing, or more than 10% of the population of the island at that time. It is generally considered the most representative tragic event of contemporary Korean history preceding the Korean War (Jeju April 3rd Committee, 2008). As such, the site is also symbolic of the political and ideological conflict Korea experienced following the end of the War in the Pacific in 1945. While remaining a prohibited subject for more than five decades due to government regulation, the first changes in official attitude occurred with a shift from right to left wing government in South Korea in 1998. Jeju Island was registered as a ‘World Peace Island’ by the same left wing Korean Government in 2005, and since then every endeavor has been made to create an image of this place as one of peace. The April 3rd Peace Park in turn plays an important role in presenting the dark side of the island’s contemporary history to visitors (Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, 2009).

This study aims to examine visitor experiences to the park to comprehend them more generally, and the benefits visiting brings to tourists and the local community, by applying a benefit-based approach equally valuable to management in gauging whether a site is meeting its objectives.

2. Dark tourism experiences

Dark tourism offers both an educational and emotional tourism experience, conveying important messages related to gaining knowledge of past events (Henderson, 2000; Lennon & Foley, 2000), while serving an emotional or potentially therapeutic function as well (Braithwaite & Lee, 2006). Such attractions and sites evoke negative emotions including fear, horror, sadness, depression, empathy, sympathy, and feelings of vengeance (Krakover, 2005; Miles, 2002). Yet dark tourism sites, such as those of the Holocaust differ from the fictional ‘horror’ experiences presented by theme parks, given that the former relate to real events almost wholly devoid of positive associations (Marcuse, 2005). In contrast, dark tourism sites such as ‘dark fun factories’ (e.g. the Black Death or Jack the Ripper establishments in the United Kingdom, or the Dracula Park in Romania) focus on entertainment with a combination of real and fictional death and the macabre in general. The sense of shock, horror, or fear in such attractions differs substantively from those evoked by Holocaust locations (Stone, 2009b).

The emotional and educational aspects of dark tourism experiences are likely to be affected by a range of factors, including the types of interpretation available, site authenticity, and media coverage. To begin with, interpretation plays an important role in dark tourism experiences, and is the primary means of communicating information about a site to its visitors (Ballantyne, 2003; Moscardo & Ballantyne, 2008; Sharpley & Stone, 2009a; Wight & Lennon, 2007). Selective interpretation has in particular been applied in sites associated with war or political conflicts, and can be defined as ‘the process of creating multiple constructions of the

past whereby history is never an objective recall of the past’ (Wight & Lennon, 2007, p. 527). More specifically still, a ‘hot interpretation’ approach focuses on the emotional or affective dimension of human experience, with a subjective or emotional interpretation of the past notably advocated by Uzzell (1989). This approach can offer tourists a significant dark tourism experience, while also facilitating community healing by providing deep understandings and insights into a tragic event (Ballantyne & Uzzell, 1993; Uzzell & Ballantyne, 1998).

The authenticity of a site or the meaning associated with a place is also regarded as an essential element given it engenders visitors’ empathy or sympathy (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Miles, 2002). At the same time, the media also plays a major role in generating initial interest. Indeed Blom (2000) argues that the media creates perceptions by describing the tragic events or phenomena associated with a site, thus subsequently affecting a visitor’s experiences. Key examples include the treatment of the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963, or more recently, the destruction of the World Trade Centre as well as the Haiti earthquake, all of which captured significant attention worldwide and continue to be of interest to many (Foley & Lennon, 1996; Lennon & Foley, 2000; Stone, 2009a; Walter, 2009).

Not surprisingly, scholars have applied a range of approaches to examining and understanding dark tourism experiences. One initial approach aimed to identify the key characteristics of sites (Strange & Kempa, 2003) given such characteristics affects dark tourism experiences. Four distinct ‘types’ of sites have been revealed through such investigation: battle sites and death camps (Braithwaite & Lee, 2006; Henderson, 2000; Seaton, 1999); the death sites of celebrities (Blom, 2000; Foley & Lennon, 1996); sites of extraordinary disaster (such as the 9/11 World Trade Centre site in New York, the New Orleans Hurricane Katrina in 2005, or the recent tsunami in South-East Asia); and lastly, prisons or other sites of notorious incarceration such as Alcatraz in the United States or Robben Island in South Africa. In short, each type of dark tourism attraction or site can be seen to possess distinctive characteristics, leading academic investigators to focus their research on one or another particular type in turn. In addition, recent research has also aimed at more specific ‘themes’, such as battlefield tourism (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009; Ryan, 2007), prison tourism (Strange & Kempa, 2003; Wilson, 2008), atrocity heritage tourism (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005), slavery tourism (Dann & Seaton, 2001), and genocide tourism (Beech, 2009). Commensurately, other scholars have attempted to understand dark tourism as a type of cultural or heritage tourism, given dark tourism sites are often of considerable significance both culturally and historically (Ashworth, 1993; Dann & Seaton, 2001; Lowenthal, 1998; Seaton, 1999).

2.1. Benefit-based approach

In this study, a benefit-based approach has been used to understand the experiences of dark tourists to the Jeju April 3rd Peace Park. The benefit-based approach derives from recreational leisure literature as utilized by Driver, Brown, Stankey, and Gregoire (1987), Manning (1999), and others. Essentially it comprises a hierarchical model of four levels linked in sequence: the demand for a particular leisure ‘activity’ (Level 1); the particular recreational ‘setting’ (environmental, social and managerial settings) (Level 2); the ‘experience’ gained from undertaking these ‘activities’ in that setting (Level 3); and the ultimate ‘benefit’ (Level 4) which flows from the experience (Manning, 1999). Early tourism literature had a concern with operationalizing findings based on visitor ratings. While such operationalization remains in use, some researchers (Iso-Ahola, 1982) further conceptualized the tangible attributes of destinations as merely conduits with the potential to facilitate

desired psychological outcomes (Samdahl, 1991; Tian, Crompton, & Witt, 1996).

This conceptual shift from operationalization toward experiential and psychological benefits is consistent with the evolution of definitions across the spectrum of leisure subfields (Samdahl, 1991), with experiential benefit derived from experiences applied generally in cultural and heritage tourism studies (Beeho & Prentice, 1997; McIntosh & Prentice, 1999; Prentice, Witt, & Hamer, 1998). In these studies, however, the four levels of the benefit-based approach is slightly different: motivation or reasons for visit (level 1); settings (level 2); cognitive and affective experiences (level 3); and benefits gained (level 4) (Beeho & Prentice, 1995).

A benefit-based approach has been applied to research focusing on: benefit-based management at recreation sites (Driver, Tinsley, & Manfredi, 1991; Lee & Driver, 1999); the influence of site setting on an individual's desired benefits (Shin, Jaakson, & Kim, 2001); segmentation of tourists based on benefits sought (Frochot, 2005; Tian et al., 1996); and promotion or product development in heritage tourism (Beeho & Prentice, 1997; McIntosh, 1999). In sum, a benefit-based approach is effective in evaluating overall visitor experiences at an attraction, and identifying tourists' ultimate goal in consuming the tourism product. In turn it is particularly apt in this context to conceptualize tourism experiences given the particular characteristics of dark tourism. Indeed the sensitive nature of dark tourism, and the broad scope of dark tourism attractions, means scholars have few theoretical approaches to fully comprehend such tourism experiences, resulting in the theoretically limited and fragile nature of much dark tourism literature to date (Sharpley, 2009).

2.2. The April 3rd Peace Park

The term *the April 3rd incident* is official terminology for the events memorialized at the April 3rd Peace Park. In the government report of *Jeju 4·3 sageon jinsangjosabogoseo (The truth investigation report of the Jeju April 3rd incident)*, this term refers to the incident which immediately preceded the main conflict and massacres involving the Jeju South Labor Party and the government of South Korea (Jeju April 3rd Committee, 2008) (Fig. 1).

The April 3rd incident is generally considered one of the darkest events in modern Korean history, with Jeju residents today still suffering from trauma associated with the period (Jeju April 3rd Committee, 2008; Merrill, 1989). Despite the significance of the incident in Korean contemporary history however, the actual sites associated with the events have been destroyed due to government

policies, as well as subsequent economic and tourism development on the island. In turn, the April 3rd Peace Park was constructed to provide a single site to commemorate and memorialize the events, with the park located near the mountains where many local villages were destroyed and local populations massacred. The site plays an important role for the victims of the events and their relatives, an educative resource for Koreans in general, as well as a means of reconciliation within the Jeju community itself (Jeju April 3rd Committee, 2008).

The events of the tragedy are described in chronological order in the Peace Memorial Hall, beginning in 1945 and continuing to beyond the year 2000. The Memorial Hall consists of seven smaller displays, the contents as follows:

- The 1st display consists of around 30 m of tunnel and an unscrubbed tombstone. The tunnel serves to connect the present to the past. The unscrubbed tombstone in turn provides visitors with an opportunity to consider their own definition of the Jeju incident, given the incident remains a point of ongoing political and ideological conflict as well as controversy in Korea. For instance, some describe the Jeju incident as a 'riot by communists', others as an 'uprising by Jeju citizens' (Park, 2008), and others still the 'Cheju-do rebellion' (i.e. Jeju Island rebellion) (Merrill, 1989).
- The 2nd display depicts the circumstances of Jeju Island prior to the April 3rd incident. It presents settings related to World War II and the period of liberation following Japanese rule.
- The 3rd display displays the various reasons why Jeju Islanders became involved in the April 3rd uprising. It includes Koreans' strong will against the division of Korea into a north and south, and the beginning of the conflict between Jeju Islanders and the government.
- The 4th display describes various massacres in the mountainous areas of Jeju Island, and includes films of survivor testimonies.
- The 5th display presents the aftermath of the incident; around 84 villages in the mountainous areas vanished, and the government subsequently practiced a policy of involvement (guilt by association) until 1981 to control the survivors and/or families of relatives of victims. It also details the campaign for truth-finding in relation to the April 3rd incident from 1960 to the present.
- The 6th display contains the memoranda of visitors on completing their visit. Many leave written notes about their feelings in relation to the April 3rd incident.
- The special exhibition display presents the 1992 findings and the Darangshi cave where the remains of eleven innocent villagers suffocated to death by police or military personnel were excavated. The cave exhibition shows villagers' everyday living conditions, while providing insights into the horror and atrocity of the April 3rd incident.

When it comes to interpretation, the site interpretation is well developed and provides visitors with an opportunity to engage with the April 3rd incident. In general, according to Moscardo and Ballantyne (2008), the setting remains the foundation for effective interpretation, with key factors including good physical orientation; information to assist in planning a visit; sufficient programs to ensure visitor comfort and safety; and strategies to manage and alleviate crowding and congestion. Considering these factors, the site at Jeju Island can be recognized as appropriate, offering excellent experiences for visitors. Since the site was constructed in 2008 it has been well maintained in terms of facilities for visitor comfort and convenience. Along with the theater presenting a range of films which help visitors grasp and comprehend the April 3rd incident, the aforementioned reproduction of the Darangshi

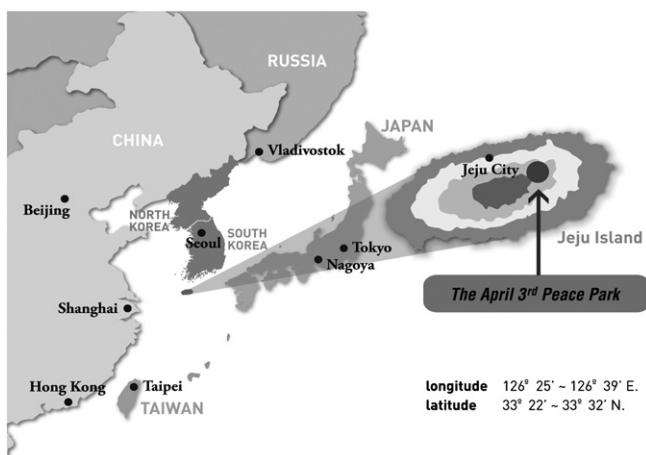


Fig. 1. The location of the Jeju Island and the April 3rd Peace Park. Source: Jeju Special Self-governing Province (2009).

cave and other prison settings, along with several artworks, further capture visitors' attention, enabling them to emotionally engage with the April 3rd incident.

3. Research methods

Implementing the benefit-based approach employed a combined qualitative/quantitative approach. The study was founded on a post-positivist research paradigm, the latter characterized as a modified version of positivism which can include qualitative research methods (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The qualitative component of this research sought to gain information with which to develop a quantitative data collection instrument (Veal, 2005).

Qualitative data was collected between September and October 2008 at the research site. Initially, 46 semi-structured interviews, each around 20 min in length, were conducted with visitors at the end of their visit to the site's Peace Memorial Hall. This employed a purposive sampling method to examine the differences in visitor experiences and benefits. It interviews from three different groups: visitors who had some connection to the April 3rd incident ($N = 13$); Jeju Islanders with no connection to the incident ($N = 20$); and non-Jeju islanders with no connection to the incident ($N = 13$). A series of questions focusing on visitors' reasons for visiting the site, their on-site activities and experiences, and the benefits gained from their visit, were all put to respondents. The data collected from the interviews was subsequently collated, analyzed, and utilized in the construction of the questionnaire (see Appendix), the key quantitative instrument employed in this research.

In addition, prior to implementing the questionnaire survey several pre-tests were conducted to specify relevant dimensions of visitor reasons for visit, their experiences, and the benefits derived from the initial exploratory study (Churchill, 1979). As one example of the relevance of this method, one 62 year old male, a local respondent, provided his reasons for visit to the park as 'I have to come to the site as a Jeju islander. I have to know what the exhibitions of the Peace Memorial Hall'. This was interpreted as suggesting obligation and curiosity about the Peace Memorial Hall, and incorporated in the question about reason for visit in the questionnaire. A pilot survey was then used to assess the reliability and validity of benefits gained, reasons for visit, and visitor experiences.

Finally, the on-site, self-administered survey was conducted within the lounge area/lobby of the Peace Memorial Hall, between June and July, 2009. The target participants were over 18 years of age on completion of their visit. A total of 450 questionnaires was distributed to achieve a target sample size of around 400; in sum a total of 407 completed questionnaires was collected, with a response rate of 90%. This was similar to previous studies which all use around 400 questionnaires to examine heritage experiences via a benefit-based approach (e.g. McIntosh, 1997; Prentice et al., 1998). The collected data was then analyzed, using in particular correlations and factor analysis as found in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 17 software. The exploratory factor analysis enabled reduction in the 12 items concerning reasons for visit to three dimensions; 13 items of 'thought about' (cognitive experiences) to three dimensions; 13 items of 'felt' (affective experiences) to three dimensions; and 17 items of benefits gained to four dimensions. These dimensions were then utilized to examine the interrelationships between reasons for visit, experiences, and benefits gained by Pearson's correlations.

4. Results

Applying a benefit-based approach to visitor experiences enables the identification of four different levels (for example, reasons for visit, settings, experiences, and benefits), along with their

interrelationships as shown in Fig. 2. Here settings (level 2) was a fixed factor, hence the research examined the relationship between visitor reasons for visit to a site (level 1) and their on-site experiences (level 3), as well as benefits gained from their experiences (level 4).

The results shown in Table 1 indicate that two key dimensions in terms of visitor reasons for visit – namely *learning and obligation*, and *social reasons and curiosity* – were significantly related to the six dimensions of experiences. However, the other dimension of reason for visit – *educational program* – was unrelated to any visitor learning or emotional experience dimensions ($P > .05$).

Firstly therefore, *learning and obligation* was significantly associated with six dimensions of learning and emotional experiences: *the April 3rd incident* ($r(405) = .359, p < .01$); *related issues* ($r(405) = .450, p < .01$); *personal concern* ($r(405) = .367, p < .01$); emotion evoked by *the April 3rd incident* ($r(405) = .368, p < .01$); emotion evoked by *environment at the park* ($r(405) = .098, p < .05$); and emotion evoked by *the circumstances of Korea* ($r(405) = .292, p < .01$). The *learning and obligation* (RV1) has significant relationships with all six dimensions examined and all of them are positive relationships. Of these six significant relationships, the relationship between *learning and obligation* and the dimension of *related issues* (CR) (.450) is the strongest, and the relationship between *learning and obligation* and emotion evoked by *environment at the park* (EE) (.098) is the weakest. Secondly, *social reasons and curiosity* (RV2) were significantly associated with five dimensions of experiences: *related issues* ($r(405) = .153, p < .01$); *personal concern* ($r(405) = .195, p < .01$); emotion evoked by *the April 3rd incident* ($r(405) = .208, p < .01$); emotion evoked by *environment at the park* ($r(405) = .212, p < .01$); and emotion evoked by *the circumstances of Korea* ($r(405) = .164, p < .01$). However, *social reasons/curiosity* was not significantly related to the dimension of *the April 3rd incident* (CA) ($r(405) = .084, p > .05$).

The relationship between the six dimensions of visitor experiences and the four dimensions of benefits gained was examined using Pearson's correlation. The results revealed in Table 2 indicate that visitor experiences were significantly related to the visitor benefits gained ($p < .05$).

The *personal concern* (CP) was significantly associated with three dimensions of benefits gained: namely *family bonding* ($r(405) = .107, p < .05$); *meaningfulness* ($r(405) = .117, p < .05$); and *comfort from*

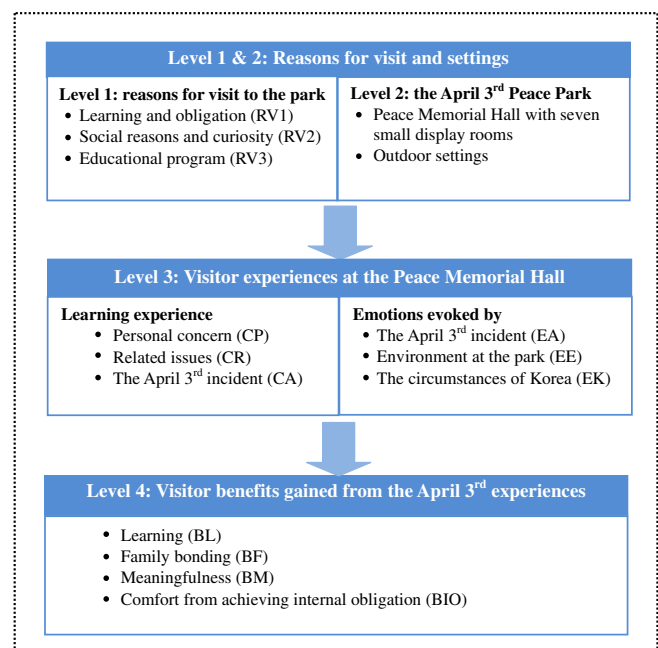


Fig. 2. Four levels of the benefit-based approach.

Table 1
Correlation test between reasons for visit and experiences.

Level 1		Level 3: Experiences					
		Cognitive			Affective		
		CA	CR	CP	EA	EE	EK
RV1	Pearson correlation	.359**	.450**	.367**	.368**	.098*	.292**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.048	.000
	N	407	407	407	407	407	407
RV2	Pearson correlation	.084	.153**	.195**	.208**	.212**	.164**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.091	.002	.000	.000	.000	.001
	N	407	407	407	407	407	407
RV3	Pearson correlation	.084	-.034	.048	.071	.027	-.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.091	.497	.329	.150	.589	.700
	N	407	407	407	407	407	407

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

achieving internal obligation ($r(405) = .411, p < .01$). However, this was not significantly related to learning benefit ($r(405) = .059, p < .05$). The dimension of *related issues* (CR) was significantly related to four benefits: *learning* ($r(405) = .213, p < .01$); *family bonding* ($r(405) = .107, p < .05$); *meaningfulness* ($r(405) = .285, p < .01$); and *comfort from achieving internal obligation* ($r(405) = .285, p < .01$). The *April 3rd incident* (CA) was also significantly associated with four benefits. A correlation of coefficient was $r(405) = .279, p < .01$ for *learning*, $r(405) = .140, p < .01$ for *family bonding*, $r(405) = .280, p < .01$ for *meaningfulness*, and $r(405) = .264, p < .01$ for *comfort from achieving internal obligation*.

These results indicate that visitor affective experiences were significantly associated with the benefits gained. The strength of relationship between the three dimension of affective experiences and four dimension of benefits gained were stronger than those between the three dimensions of cognitive experiences, and four dimensions of benefits gained. Emotion evoked by the *April 3rd incident* (EA) was significantly associated with the benefit of *learning* ($r(405) = .299, p < .01$), *family bonding* ($r(405) = .299, p < .01$), *meaningfulness* ($r(405) = .391, p < .01$), and *comfort from achieving internal obligation* ($r(405) = .395, p < .01$). Emotion evoked by *environment at the park* (EE) was also significantly related to the benefit of *learning* ($r(405) = .244, p < .01$), *family bonding* ($r(405) = .541, p < .01$), *meaningfulness* ($r(405) = .385, p < .01$), and *comfort from achieving internal obligation* ($r(405) = .341, p < .01$). Finally, emotions evoked by the *circumstances of Korea* (EK) were significantly associated with the benefit of *learning* ($r(405) = .326, p < .01$), *family*

Table 2
Correlation test between visitor experiences and benefits gained.

		BL	BF	BM	BIO
CP	Pearson correlation	.059	.107*	.117*	.411**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.236	.031	.018	.000
	N	407	407	407	407
CR	Pearson correlation	.213**	.107*	.285**	.285**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.032	.000	.000
	N	407	407	407	407
CA	Pearson correlation	.279**	.140**	.280**	.264**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.005	.000	.000
	N	407	407	407	407
EA	Pearson correlation	.299**	.274**	.391**	.395**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	407	407	407	407
EE	Pearson correlation	.244**	.541**	.385**	.341**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	407	407	407	407
EK	Pearson correlation	.326**	.329**	.345**	.292**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	407	407	407	407

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

bonding ($r(405) = .329, p < .01$), *meaningfulness* ($r(405) = .345, p < .01$), and *comfort from achieving internal obligation* ($r(405) = .292, p < .01$).

5. Discussion

A benefit-based approach was found to be effective in the overall evaluation of visitors' April 3rd experiences, enabling comprehension of visitors' reasons for visiting the site as well as their on-site experiences. The reasons for visiting the park constituted three key dimensions: personal learning and obligation; social reasons and curiosity; and general educational program. Some of these reasons had aspects in common, or were closely related to the reasons for visiting cultural heritage tourism attractions in general. However, obligation has not been found to be a reason for visiting cultural heritage tourism attractions in general, or other types of tourism attractions for that matter, serving to confirm that dark tourism experiences may differ when compared with other forms of tourism. This type of obligation is recognized as internal obligation deriving from personal desire, as opposed to external forces (Heath & Schneewind, 1996). It seems a previous tragic event can engender moral obligations in later generations, compelling them to become familiar with the event and commemorate its victims (Thurnell-Read, 2009).

These reasons for visiting the site were found to further affect visitor on-site experiences in many cases (see Table 1). To begin with, *learning and obligation* (RV1), the main reason for visiting the park, was found to have a greater effect on cognitive experiences than affective experiences, comprehensible in that visitors whose purpose is learning are likely to have their cognitive experiences at the site met. In particular, these visitors tended to think more about issues related to the April 3rd incident, such as ideological conflict or Korean contemporary history in general, than focusing solely on innocent victims or survivors of the April 3rd incident and recollection of personal memories of the incident. These visitors were likely to feel sympathy for or empathy with innocent victims or survivors of the incident, albeit also sorrow for the division of North and South Korea for instance while wandering through the exhibition display areas. However, they were not highly sensitive to environment (the physical and social settings of the Peace Memorial Hall), with a relatively weak relationship with this dimension revealed.

The *social reasons* (e.g. bringing their friends or relatives, a meaningful day out) and *curiosity* (RV2) were identified as the second key reasons for visiting, and were further found to affect visitor on-site experiences as with cultural heritage experiences more generally (McIntosh, 1997; Prentice et al., 1998). Visitors with these reasons were not likely to have a strong interest in learning about the incident or other issues, given it had no significant relationship with the dimension of the April 3rd incident, and a relatively weak positive relationship with the dimension of related issues (e.g. ideological conflict or Korean contemporary history). However, these visitors were found to be sensitive to the atmosphere of the site. As an example, they were more likely to be depressed by the exhibition contents, themes, and quiet atmosphere caused by the small number of visitors to the site, compared with visitors with learning and obligation.

In this study, a type of compulsory field trip program offered by schools or organizations (RV3) as a common reason for visiting many dark tourism attractions (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009) was found to have no effect on visitor on-site experiences, as distinct from the effects of the other two dimensions (learning and obligation, and social reasons and curiosity). This confirms that a compulsory field trip program may not stimulate a visitor's interest in the incident, and thus cannot necessarily generate effective visitor learning and emotional experiences.

In relation to visitor benefits gained from on-site experiences, visitors were likely to obtain four different types of benefits: learning, family bonding, meaningfulness, and comfort from achieving internal obligation. Learning was a crucial benefit gained from the April 3rd site, which along with many dark tourism attractions was established for the purposes of education and remembrance of past tragic events (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009; Lennon & Foley, 2000; Walter, 2009). It is also considered a common and prominent benefit of other tourism attractions within cultural heritage and ecotourism.

In contrast to the benefit of *learning* (BL), other benefits identified reveal the distinctive characteristics of dark tourism experiences. For example, family bonding in general leisure and recreation is considered an outcome of participation in activities with family members, which comprises dimensions of family satisfaction, family interaction, and family stability (Orthner & Mancini, 1991). However, *family bonding* (BF) in this context involved, in terms of general leisure travelers, the psychological benefits derived from strong feelings of good fortune that none of their family had been victims of the incident; or alternately, strong feelings and a deep understanding of visitors' grandparents and ancestor's lives if they had been.

The benefit of *meaningfulness* (BM) is to some extent similar to the feeling of enjoyment or pleasure derived from escaping daily life via leisure or recreation (Driver et al., 1991). However, visitors to the April 3rd Peace Park were reluctant to use the term enjoyment or pleasure to describe either their reason for visit, or the benefits derived from their experiences. Instead, they used the term 'meaningful' to describe their experiences, thus differentiating them from an enjoyable or pleasurable day out. In this respect, the benefit of meaningfulness in this study was indeed similar to the benefits of 'sharing time with family or friends or a good day out', as identified in studies of cultural heritage park visitation (Prentice et al., 1998).

The benefit of *comfort from achieving internal obligation* (BIO) confirms one of the most distinctive characteristics of dark tourism experiences, namely a therapeutic effect or sense of psychological healing experienced by visitors. Previous literature has referred to such a therapeutic effect of dark tourism for those suffering from survivor syndrome and/or survivor guilt (Garwood, 1996; Hartmann, 2005). While this study included respondents who were either victims or relatives of victims or survivors, the scope of the study did not allow for in-depth investigation of this. Given many respondents did not indeed claim to be victims or to have a personal relationship with victims/survivors, this task remains the objective of a more focused and directed investigation of dark tourism, dealing more exclusively with the visits of either victims/survivors or their relatives to sites of dark tourism.

In terms of the effect of on-site experiences on benefits gained, the findings from Table 2 indicate that visitor emotional experiences were more likely to facilitate insight into the incident. Several scholars have argued for the importance of emotional experiences in the consumption of dark tourism, and have encouraged the adoption of a hot interpretation approach (Ballantyne & Uzzell, 1993; Uzzell & Ballantyne, 1998), and the importance of authenticity in dark tourism settings (Miles, 2002; Shackley, 2001; Sharpley & Stone, 2009a). However, such contributions have until now provided little evidence to support this claim. In addressing this omission, the findings of this research underline the importance of a hot interpretation approach to enhancing visitors' emotional experiences and the benefits gained.

Visitors' cognitive experiences were also found to have an effect on four of the benefits gained, and in particular, to constitute a strong influence on the benefits of comfort from achieving internal obligation and meaningfulness, particularly compared with family bonding. Of the three dimensions of cognitive experiences, the dimension of personal concern (e.g. recollection of

memories of the incident, and comparison between the exhibition content and prior knowledge of the incident) did not have a significant relationship with the benefit of learning; however it did have a strong relationship with comfort in achieving internal obligation. Visitors who experienced personal concern at the site were assumed to be knowledgeable about the incident prior to visiting the site. In such cases, visitors were unlikely to gain learning benefits, however they did acquire other benefits, and in particular the benefit of comfort from achieving internal obligation.

6. Conclusion and implications

This research can be considered a preliminary investigation into dark tourism experiences, providing a number of important implications for future research in the field. To begin with, a benefit-based approach is an effective tool for use in facilitating understanding of visitor psychological experiences in tourism and leisure settings, and in particular, in dark tourism settings which do not offer hedonic experiences. The approach enables an examination of visitor experiences at the April 3rd Peace Park, including reasons for visit, on-site experiences and benefits gained. It further identified 'obligation' as a core motivation for travel to the Peace Park, whereas obligation is not normally considered a motivation for leisure travel, even though social obligation is sometimes cited as a reason for 'visiting friends and relatives' (Larsen, Urry, & Axhausen, 2007). In a dark tourism context however, internal obligations including personal duty and/or a sense of obligation appear one of the main reasons for traveling to dark tourism sites, with a further effect on both on-site experiences as well as benefits gained. To date the notion of internal obligation has not been fully examined when it comes to dark tourism experiences, and is thus a key recommendation for future research.

Second, the findings of this research indicate that educational programs offered by schools or educational establishments will not necessarily have a positive effect when it comes to on-site experiences. In other words, the field trip may be ineffective when it comes to experiential learning. In such cases the Peace Park management, along with schools or educational establishments, can work together to identify effective ways to enhance students' and/or visitors' experiential learning and emotional experiences. Moreover, the field trip may indeed at times engender interest in a tragic event, hence the effects of compulsory field trips on experiential learning experiences at dark tourism attractions and post-experiences remains a potentially important area for future research.

In turn, this study provides that a benefit-based approach is not considered an effective means for segmenting visitors according to benefits sought, given the primary benefit sought by most visitors was identified as learning, though the level or detail of learning varied. Hence it would be better to apply other approaches for the segmentation of visitors to dark tourism sites which have similar characteristics, such as the April 3rd Peace Park.

Lastly, the findings of this study serve as a foundation for creating effective site design, and for providing adequate tourism services to tourists and visitors by identifying their needs and wants. In particular, this research strongly confirms the usefulness of a hot interpretation approach in terms of dark tourism attractions and sites (Moscardo & Ballantyne, 2008; Uzzell & Ballantyne, 1998) in order to enhance dark tourism experiences.

In conclusion, this study and its findings have relevance to the management and development of dark tourism attractions and products, providing evidence that dark tourism experiences can be beneficial for destinations as well as tourists and visitors. The findings of this study may aid management in turn to create more effective sites and tourism services by better understanding the benefits gained by visitors to a site. However, since this

research examined a dark tourism site in South Korea, it inevitably encompasses strong viewpoints evoking specific ideological and political conflicts, nationalism, and a host of other contentious issues. These inevitably relate to the current division of North and South Korea as a product, in part, of ideological conflict. In turn, some findings of this study may differ significantly from investigations where this may not be the case, hence the findings revealed here must be considered in a context specific to contemporary South Korea.

Appendix

The mean scores and standard deviations for the appropriate items on the questionnaire (Table A, Table B, Table C, & Table D).

Table A provides *reasons for visit to the site*, and gives descriptive information as well as the three extracted factors. The four items with the highest means measuring reasons for visit were R1 ($M = 4.29$), R2 ($M = 3.69$), R7 ($M = 3.66$), and R9 ($M = 3.37$). The two items in terms of reasons for visit with the lowest means were R8 ($M = 1.63$) and R5 ($M = 2.13$). The highest mean indicates important reasons for visit for the majority of visitors, while the lowest mean indicates important reasons for visit for the minority group.

Table A
Descriptive statistics for reasons for visit to the site (level 1).

Item	Description	Mean	SD	N
R1	To learn something about the Jeju April 3rd incident.	4.29	.970	407
R2	Interested in Korean contemporary history.	3.69	1.118	407
R3	Interested in ideological conflict in general.	2.96	1.279	407
R4	To participated in an educational program provided by community group, school or organization.	2.35	1.603	407
R5	Brought by friends and relatives.	2.13	1.517	407
R6	Brought friends and relatives.	2.19	1.531	407
R7	Felt obligation to understand the Jeju April 3rd incident as a Jeju resident/Korean.	3.66	1.312	407
R8	Personal or family involvement in the Jeju April 3rd incident.	1.63	1.237	407
R9	To commemorate victims of the Jeju April 3rd incident.	3.37	1.299	407
R10	Wanted to teach my children the Jeju April 3rd incident.	2.44	1.598	407
R11	To fulfill the curiosity of the Jeju April 3rd Peace Memorial Park.	3.07	1.332	407
R12	To have meaningful day out with family or friends.	3.13	1.432	407

Cognitive experiences were measured using 'thought about deeply' (TAD) items and Table B presents the descriptive information and the three factors extracted for cognitive experiences. The five items of TAD with the highest means were: TA1 ($M = 4.61$), TA2 ($M = 4.52$), TA3 ($M = 4.31$), TA7 ($M = 4.22$), and TA5 ($M = 3.97$). The two items of TAD with the lowest means were: TA10 ($M = 2.61$) and TA12 ($M = 2.84$).

Table B
Descriptive statistics of visitor cognitive experiences (TAD).

Item	Description	Mean	SD	N
TA1	Innocent victims of the Jeju April 3rd incident.	4.61	.707	407
TA2	Those who suffer mental and physical injuries caused by the Jeju incident.	4.52	.755	407
TA3	Jeju islanders' hard life during the Jeju April 3rd incident.	4.31	.831	407
TA4	Comparisons between life then and now.	3.47	1.213	407
TA5	Korean contemporary history interrupted by foreign countries.	3.97	1.118	407
TA6	The issue of the ideological conflict.	3.73	1.128	407

Table B (continued)

Item	Description	Mean	SD	N
TA7	The issue of human rights.	4.22	.981	407
TA8	The importance of education.	3.93	1.15	407
TA9	The guilt-by-association system.	3.41	1.258	407
TA10	My memories of the Jeju April 3rd incident.	2.61	1.501	407
TA11	Comparison between the exhibition contents and what I have known the Jeju April 3rd incident.	3.10	1.482	407
TA12	The impact of the Jeju incident on me personally.	2.84	1.471	407
TA13	The hard lives of my ancestors.	3.67	1.256	407

The results of *affective experience* provide descriptive information for affective experiences and the three extracted factors. The five items of affective experience with the highest means were: E7 ($M = 4.44$), E1 ($M = 4.39$), E3 ($M = 4.23$), E2 ($M = 4.20$), and E8 ($M = 4.19$). The two items with the lowest means were: E13 ($M = 3.05$) and E12 ($M = 3.46$) (see Table C).

Table C
Descriptive information of visitor affective experience.

Item	Description	Mean	SD	N
E1	A sense of fear from the cruel nature of human which caused the tragic event like the Jeju April 3rd incident.	4.39	.850	407
E2	A sense of fear from the scene of slaughtering displayed in the display rooms.	4.20	.913	407
E3	Sorrow for the circumstance in which people had to fight each other.	4.23	.975	407
E4	Sorrow for Korea's current status as a divided nation.	3.95	1.096	407
E5	Sorrow over Korea's being a weak nation.	3.96	1.167	407
E6	Surprised at the miserable life of Jeju residents during the incident.	4.11	.969	407
E7	Sympathy for innocent people who were killed, injured or orphaned by the Jeju April 3rd incident.	4.44	.788	407
E8	Sympathy for people who had to live in caves or mountains to avoid arrest by the rightist or the leftist.	4.19	.905	407
E9	Empathy with the painful lives of survivors who were injured mentally or physically from the incident.	4.16	.908	407
E10	Appreciative of today's quality of life.	3.60	1.269	407
E11	Appreciative of the peaceful state of the nation.	3.38	1.261	407
E12	Depressed from the exhibition contents and theme.	3.46	1.204	407
E13	Depressed from the small number of visitors while wandering display rooms.	3.05	1.372	407

Table D provides the *benefits gained*, and gives descriptive information and the four extracted factors for benefits gained. The five items of benefits gained with the highest means were: BG1 ($M = 4.31$), BG3 ($M = 4.29$), BG2 ($M = 4.26$), BG15 ($M = 4.18$), and BG16 ($M = 4.13$). The two items for benefits gained with the lowest means were: BG10 ($M = 2.27$) and BG11 ($M = 2.57$).

Table D
Descriptive information of visitor's benefits gained.

Item	Description	Mean	SD	N
BG1	Realized how horrible the Jeju April 3rd incident was.	4.31	1.007	407
BG2	Learnt that a large number of innocent people were killed during the incident.	4.26	1.056	407
BG3	Had a deep understanding how the incident had erupted.	4.29	.952	407
BG4	Changed my viewpoint regarding the Jeju April 3rd incident.	3.32	1.349	407
BG5	Learnt about Korean contemporary history.	3.64	1.125	407
BG6	Understood the issues of ideological conflict and human rights.	3.65	1.103	407
BG7	Carried out the obligation to visit the site as a Jeju islander/Korean.	3.84	1.177	407
BG8	Carried out the obligation to commemorate victims as a Jeju islander/Korean.	3.84	1.165	407

(continued on next page)

Table D (continued)

Item	Description	Mean	SD	N
BG9	Comfort from sharing the pain and sadness of the Jeju incident with others.	3.64	1.153	407
BG10	Relieved from my memory of the Jeju April 3rd incident.	2.27	1.131	407
BG11	Felt grateful that no victims are in my family.	2.57	1.455	407
BG12	Understood the importance of family.	3.25	1.389	407
BG13	Had an insight into the miserable life my ancestor used to have.	3.67	1.209	407
BG14	Felt grateful that you are living now and not then.	3.62	1.307	407
BG15	Realized the importance of peace in Jeju island.	4.18	1.029	407
BG16	Had a meaningful day out.	4.13	1.058	407
BG17	Had a good time with family, relatives or friends.	3.74	1.300	407

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