

## Are Tourists Motivated by Dark Experiences Beyond Leisure and Cultural Learning? The Case of the Walled City of the Philippines

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### Abstract

This study examines the main motivations of tourists visiting Intramuros as a dark tourism destination and identifies the factors influencing their travel decisions. Specifically, it seeks to determine what motivates visitors to explore the historical and tragic aspects of Intramuros. The study used a quantitative research design conducted in Intramuros, Manila. Respondents were selected tourists visiting the site, and data were collected through structured survey questionnaires. Statistical treatments such as frequency distribution, percentage, and mean scores were applied to analyze the data. Findings reveal that tourists are highly motivated by the desire to learn about history, particularly stories of war, colonialism, and national heroes. Emotional connection, curiosity about tragic events, and cultural appreciation were identified as the top motivating factors influencing visitation. The results show that Intramuros remains appealing because of its preserved historical structures combined with meaningful dark historical narratives. Overall, historical interest and educational value emerged as the strongest motivational drivers among visitors. The study highlights the importance of strengthening historical interpretation and storytelling to enhance visitor experience. Understanding tourism motivation in dark tourism destinations can help improve management strategies and promote sustainable cultural tourism development.

**Keywords:** Tourism destination; Dark tourism; Tourism motivation; Visitor experience.

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### A. INTRODUCTION

Why does death fascinate people? Tourism has evolved beyond the traditional boundaries of leisure, relaxation, and recreation. For a variety of reasons, more individuals are searching for novel and distinctive travel experiences. This has led to segmentation and the rise of increasingly specialized typologies, including black tourism, which is different from mass tourism in that they are highly individualized and diverse. Visiting actual or simulated locations associated with death, misery, shame, or the paranormal is known as "dark tourism." To create an engaging experience, it's critical to comprehend what draws people to visit dark tourism destinations. Death is frequently mentioned in the site's history and may seem like an obvious reason to visit; it is not always the main or most evident reason. Recent research has offered an increasing number of empirical studies about the reasons for visiting those sites, Sharpley and Stone acknowledged that the field of motivation to visit dark tourism destinations is still understudied. The term "Dark Tourism" was considered an umbrella term that encompassed many subfields. Various scholars described the dark tourism phenomenon by different names including genocide, prison, grief and disaster (Sharma et al., 2018), Thana tourism (Duncan, 2017), war tourism (Bigley et al., 2010; Dunkley et al., 2011), Morbid Tourism (Bloom, 2003). In all areas of dark tourism, a lot of debate exists on the definitions of what to include. Instead, many authors believed that certain fields that some considered dark tourism should have their own tourism category (Mitchell et al., 2020).

The term "Dark Tourism" was first used theoretically in the 1990s by writers such as Lennon and Foley (2000), who defined it as travel to historical sites that have historically been associated with tragedy and death. Since then, the topic has developed into a multidisciplinary academic research area that encompasses tourist management, sociology, psychology, and heritage studies. However, there is still

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much to learn about the psychological and emotional foundations that drive people to engage in this kind of experience-seeking activity. The motivations for dark tourism are remarkably complex and diverse. Dark tourism can be driven by several deeper factors, such as curiosity, empathy, education, remembrance, identity formation, thrill-seeking, and morbid fascination, as opposed to standard tourism, which is typically driven by a need for pleasure, escape, or aesthetic satisfaction. There is frequently a diverse and perhaps contradictory range of drivers since these factors vary not just across individuals but also between cultural and social contexts.

In the Philippines, Intramuros in Manila is one of the most significant dark tourism spots. Founded in the late 16th century, Intramuros was the center of Spanish colonial rule for over three centuries. It represented political control, religious power, and social inequality. Its walls witnessed years of colonial oppression and the destruction of World War II. During the Battle of Manila in 1945, Intramuros lay in ruins, and more than 100,000 civilians died, marking one of the darkest times in Philippine history. Today, Intramuros is a cultural heritage site. Its ruins, memorials, and rebuilt areas reflect not just colonial history but also the trauma and resilience of the people. Tourists who explore its walls are attracted to its architecture and historical appeal. They are also drawn to the stories of tragedy, strength, and national identity. These features make Intramuros a powerful site of dark tourism, where the past influences how both Filipinos and visitors understand the country's history. However, despite this, Intramuros is often marketed mainly as a heritage attraction. Little research has looked at it through the lens of dark tourism. Issues like balancing tourism growth with respectful remembrance and understanding how visitors view its tragic past are still not well explored. This motivated us to conduct the study. By examining the reasons why tourists visit Intramuros, we aim to help with tourism management, cultural preservation, and national memory. More importantly, we want to show that Intramuros represents not only history and identity but also resilience in the face of tragedy. To guide this investigation, the study sought to answer the following specific sub-questions; 1). What internal (push) factors motivate tourists to visit Intramuros as dark tourism sites in terms of, curiosity, cultural understanding, and perceptions?; 2). What external (pull) site features attract tourists to these locations in terms of, historical facts, and infrastructure?; 3). How do tourists describe their lived experiences while visiting Intramuros?.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

To achieve a comprehensive understanding, the study adopted a mixed-method research design using a convergent parallel approach, wherein quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and integrated during interpretation. The quantitative component utilized a structured survey questionnaire that gathered demographic information such as age, gender, and nationality, distinguishing between domestic and foreign tourists, while also measuring internal (push) motivations such as curiosity and cultural awareness, and external (pull) motivations such as historical narratives and site infrastructure. A probability-based stratified sampling technique was implemented to ensure proportional representation of key subgroups, resulting in a total sample of 377 respondents, composed of 277 domestic and 100 foreign tourists, reflecting visitor distribution data from the Intramuros Administration. This approach enhanced representativeness, minimized sampling bias, and strengthened statistical reliability and generalizability. For the qualitative component, a subset of participants was purposively selected to achieve balanced representation, and semi-structured interviews grounded in a phenomenological approach were conducted to explore lived experiences, emotional reactions, symbolic meanings, and personal interpretations of the site. The research locale was Intramuros in Manila, particularly areas associated with historical conflict and national memory such as Fort Santiago, which consistently ranked among the most visited attractions within the district. Visitor data indicated that Intramuros recorded over 3.2 million visitors in 2023, demonstrating a strong tourism recovery and

reinforcing the site’s relevance as a setting for examining dark tourism motivations. The primary research instruments included a self-administered survey questionnaire containing both close-ended and open-ended items, along with a semi-structured interview guide. These instruments were developed in alignment with the study objectives and underwent expert validation to ensure clarity, relevance, validity, and reliability. Data collection commenced after securing approval from the research adviser and validation from subject experts. Surveys were distributed on-site using stratified sampling, while interviews lasting approximately five to ten minutes were conducted with consenting participants, ensuring adherence to ethical standards such as informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. Upon completion of data gathering, quantitative responses were encoded and subjected to descriptive statistical analysis, including frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and cross-tabulation where appropriate, to identify patterns and relationships among variables. Meanwhile, qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to determine recurring themes and emerging categories. Finally, findings from both quantitative and qualitative strands were integrated to establish convergence, enhance interpretive depth, and strengthen the overall validity, reliability, and credibility of the study’s conclusions.

**C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

**What internal (push) site features attract tourists to Intramuros in terms of:**  
**Table 1: Curiosity**

<b>Curiosity</b>	<b>Mean (Domestic)</b>	<b>Mean (Foreign)</b>
I am curious about the dark history and tragedies of Intramuros. (Ako ay curious sa mga trahedyang madilim na nakaraan ng Intramuros.)	3.59	3.61
I want to discover hidden or lesser-known stories about Intramuros. (Gusto kong matuklasan ang mga tagong kuwento o hindi gaanong kilalang istorya ng Intramuros.)	3.61	3.60
I am interested in visiting places connected with death, war, or suffering. (Interesado akong tuklasin ang mga lugar na may kinalaman sa kamatayan, digmaan, o paghihirap)	3.56	3.58
My curiosity about the struggles and people’s past experiences motivates me to visit Intramuros. (Ang kuryosidad ko sa karanasan ng mga tao noon ang nagtutulak sa akin na bumisita sa Intramuros.)	3.57	3.56
I am curious to explore Intramuros as a way of connecting with Filipino cultural identity. (Curious ako na tuklasin ang Intramuros bilang paraan ng pagkonekta sa aking pagkakakilanlan bilang Pilipino.)	3.49	3.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>3.57</b>

Table 1 above reveals that Curiosity serves as a strong internal (push) motivational factor for both domestic (Overall Mean: 3.56, Strongly Agree) and foreign tourists (Overall Mean: 3.57, Strongly Agree)

According to Suhud et al. (2021) visiting Intramuros, as reflected in their overall “Strongly Agree” responses. The literature confirms that curiosity and knowledge-seeking are established “push factors” that drive tourists to actively select heritage sites. This implies that the overall appeal of Intramuros is rooted in its ability to satisfy the intellectual and exploratory needs of its visitors. Domestic tourists ranked the statement: “I want to discover hidden or lesser-known stories about Intramuros” as the highest motivator, while foreign tourists ranked the statement: “I am curious about the site’s dark history and tragedies of Intramuros” (Mean: 3.61, Strongly Agree) According to Iliev, (2020) as their strongest driver. The research on dark tourism supports this finding by suggesting that the strongest motivators are fulfilling the need for intense, unusual, and emotionally deep experiences that go beyond conventional history. This implies that programmatic and marketing efforts should focus on the emotional weight and dramatic narratives of the site. This suggests that tourists are not only interested in Intramuros as a historical location, but are particularly drawn to the mystery, depth, and emotional intensity of its lesser-known narratives, dark events, and stories of war and suffering. In contrast, the lowest-ranked item for both groups is the statement: “I am curious to explore Intramuros as a way of connecting with Filipino cultural identity” (Domestic Mean: 3.49, Strongly Agree; Foreign Mean: 3.55, Strongly Agree) According to Luo, (2022), indicating that although still a positive factor, it is not as compelling as the intrigue of the site’s darker historical elements. The literature suggests that while cultural connection is a factor, it is often viewed as a broader, more abstract motive that is secondary to the immediate, specific, and emotionally compelling draw of hidden histories and dark events. This implies that advertising general “Filipino identity” is less effective than highlighting specific, high-intrigue historical content. These results directly address the study’s statement of the problem by showing that tourists’ internal motivations center more on uncovering hidden histories and engaging with the tragic and dramatic aspects of Intramuros, rather than on cultural identity connection.

It implies that the management and advertising strategies for Intramuros should change. Instead of focusing only on general history or abstract Filipino identity, they should highlight the emotional, intense, and specific historical stories that visitors are most curious about.

**Table 2: Cultural Understanding**

<b>Cultural Understanding</b>	<b>Mean (Domestic)</b>	<b>Mean (Foreign)</b>
I want to learn how past stories of Intramuros shaped the present culture and traditions of the Philippines. (Gusto kong malaman kung paano hinubog ng kasaysayan ng Intramuros ang kultura at tradisyon ng Pilipinas.)	3.60	3.61
I am motivated to visit Intramuros to develop a deeper respect for Filipino traditions and heritage. (Motivated ako bumisita sa Intramuros para magkaroon ng mas malalim na respeto sa tradisyon at pamana ng Pilipino.)	3.53	3.54
I am motivated to understand the colonial and wartime influences in Intramuros. (Motivated ako na maintindihan ang epekto ng kolonyal at panahon ng digmaan sa Intramuros.)	3.52	3.52

Visiting Intramuros helps me understand Filipino heritage and identity. (Ang pagbisita sa Intramuros ay nakakatulong saakin upang maintindihan ang pamana at pagkakakilanlan ng Pilipino.)	3.51	3.49
I value Intramuros as a place that preserves cultural memory despite its dark past. (Pinahahalagahan ko ang Intramuros bilang lugar na nag-iingat ng alaala ng kultura kahit sa madilim na nakaraan.)	3.49	3.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>3.53</b>

Table 2 above highlights how Cultural Understanding serves as a meaningful internal motivation for both domestic (Overall Mean: 3.53, Strongly Agree) and foreign tourists (Overall Mean: 3.53, Strongly Agree) According to Suhud et al. (2021) visiting Intramuros, as shown by their shared total mean of 3.53 and consistent "Strongly Agree" responses. The literature confirms that learning and knowledge acquisition are established "push factors" that drive tourists to actively select heritage sites. This implies that the site's success depends on its educational offerings and ability to satisfy intellectual curiosity. Tourists expressed the strongest agreement with the statement: "I want to learn how the historical events and stories of Intramuros shaped present-day Filipino culture and traditions" (Domestic Mean: 3.60, Strongly Agree; Foreign Mean: 3.61, Strongly Agree) According to Luo, (2022), showing that visitors are particularly drawn to the connection between the past and the current cultural landscape. The research supports this finding by suggesting that tourists prioritize a dynamic, explanatory narrative linking past events to current identity over static historical data when seeking cultural fulfillment. This implies that tours and exhibits should emphasize cause-and-effect relationships between colonial history and modern customs. This suggests that Intramuros is valued not only for its historical significance but also for its ability to explain and reflect the evolution of Filipino identity. On the other hand, the lowest-rated, yet still highly positive, statement concerns: "I value Intramuros as a place that preserves cultural memory despite its dark past" (Domestic Mean: 3.49, Strongly Agree; Foreign Mean: 3.47, Strongly Agree) According to Yoon & Shafer, (2020), indicating that while cultural preservation is appreciated, it does not motivate visitors as strongly as the desire to understand cultural development. The studies explain that preservation is typically viewed as a passive management responsibility or a precondition, not an active push motivation. This implies that while preservation efforts are vital, they should not be the primary selling point for attracting new visitors.

It implies that tourists are motivated by a deep interest in learning about Filipino heritage, understanding colonial and wartime influences, and gaining respect for Filipino traditions. These insights support the SOP by showing that cultural understanding is a significant internal push factor that guides tourists' interest in Intramuros, highlighting the importance of creating educational activities, cultural workshops, and well-curated historical experiences that strengthen the connection between the site's past and the nation's present identity.

**Table 3: Perception**

<b>Perception</b>	<b>Mean (Domestic)</b>	<b>Mean (Foreign)</b>
I believe visiting Intramuros is important for reflecting on history and past tragedies. (Para sa akin, mahalaga ang mga dark tourism site tulad ng Intramuros para sa pagbabalik-tanaw sa kasaysayan.)	3.79	3.78
I perceive Intramuros as a meaningful site worth visiting despite its tragic history. (Nakikita ko ang Intramuros bilang makabuluhang lugar na sulit bisitahin kahit may malungkot na kasaysayan.)	3.70	3.71
I believe Intramuros is an educational site that provides valuable lesson from the past (Naniniwala ako na ang Intramuros ay isang lugar na nakakapagturo ng mga aral mula sa nakaraan.)	3.68	3.67
I see Intramuros is not only a tourist attraction but also a site of remembrance and heritage. (Tinitingnan ko ang Intramuros hindi lang bilang tourist spot kundi bilang lugar ng pag-alala.)	3.67	3.66
I believe visiting Intramuros contributes to my personal growth and awareness. (Naniniwala ako na ang pagbisita sa Intramuros ay nakakadagdag sa aking personal na pag-unlad at kamalayan.)	3.55	3.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>3.67</b>

Table 3 above reveals that Perception is a significant internal factor motivating both domestic (Overall Mean: 3.68, Strongly Agree) and foreign tourists (Overall Mean: 3.67, Strongly Agree) According to Wang et al. (2020) visiting Intramuros, as reflected in the high total means of 3.68 and 3.67, respectively, and the consistent “Strongly Agree” ratings. The contemporary literature confirms that the perceived value and authenticity of a site are major psychological drivers influencing the decision to visit. This implies that the physical state and historical presentation of Intramuros strongly align with tourists' expectations of a meaningful heritage site.

The highest-ranked item for both groups is the belief: "I believe visiting Intramuros is important for reflecting on history and past tragedies" (Domestic Mean: 3.79, Strongly Agree; Foreign Mean: 3.78, Strongly Agree) According to Stone & Sharpley (2022), indicating that tourists value the site not only for its historical content but also as a space for contemplation and understanding of past events. The research on dark tourism supports this by suggesting that visitors are motivated by the desire to engage in commemoration and reflective moral contemplation at sites associated with tragedy. This implies that dedicated quiet spaces and interpretive materials that encourage personal reflection are essential to the visitor experience. The lowest-ranked item but still strongly agreed upon, is the belief: "I believe visiting Intramuros contributes to personal growth and awareness" (Domestic Mean: 3.55, Strongly Agree; Foreign Mean: 3.56, Strongly Agree) According to Ryu & Chon (2021), suggesting that while personal development is an appreciated benefit, the primary motivation lies in the recognition of the site's historical

and commemorative significance. The studies explain that while personal transformation or well-being is a positive outcome, the active push motivation that triggers the visit is the perceived opportunity for immediate intellectual and emotional engagement with the site's history. This implies that while marketing should mention enrichment, it should prioritize the historical importance and opportunity for profound reflection.

It implies that tourists perceive Intramuros as more than just a tourist attraction; they view it as an educational, meaningful, and reflective space that offers lessons from history and fosters cultural remembrance. These findings support the SOP by emphasizing the need for tourism management to present Intramuros history respectfully, prioritize the creation of memorial spaces and areas for quiet reflection, and promote ethical tourism practices that honor the cultural and historical importance of the site while enhancing visitor experience.

**What external (pull) site features attract tourists to Intramuros in terms of:**  
**Table 4: Historical facts**

<b>Historical Facts</b>	<b>Mean (Domestic)</b>	<b>Mean (Foreign)</b>
I am motivated to visit Intramuros because it served as the political and religious center of Spanish rule in the Philippines. (Naaakit akong bumisita sa Intramuros dahil naging sentrong pampulitika at pangrelihiyon ito noong panahon ng Kastila.)	3.52	3.30
I am motivated to visit Intramuros because its stories of war, colonization, and resilience make it historically meaningful. (Ang mga kuwento ng digmaan, kolonisasyon, at katatagan ang dahilan kung bakit kaakit-akit ang Intramuros.)	3.52	3.53
I am motivated to visit landmarks like Fort Santiago, where Dr. José Rizal was imprisoned, because of their historical storytelling. (Ang pagkuwento ng kasaysayan sa mga lugar tulad ng Fort Santiago, kung saan nakulong si Dr. José Rizal, ay nagbibigay halaga sa pagbisita ko.)	3.69	3.69
I am motivated to learn about events such as the Japanese occupation and the liberation of Manila, which deepen my understanding of Intramuros' history. (Ang pag-alam sa mga pangyayari tulad ng pananakop ng Hapon at paglaya ng Maynila ay nagpapalalim ng aking pag-unawa sa kasaysayan ng Intramuros.)	3.55	3.55

I want to explore San Agustin Church in Intramuros due to being a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Gusto kong tuklasin ang San Agustin Church sa Intramuros dahil sa kahalagahan nito bilang UNESCO World Heritage Site.)	3.56	3.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>3.52</b>

Table 4 above reveals that Historical Facts serve as a strong external (pull) motivational factor for both domestic (Overall Mean: 3.57, Strongly Agree) and foreign tourists (Overall Mean: 3.57, Strongly Agree), as reflected in the high total means of 3.57 and the consistent “Strongly Agree” ratings. According to Yoo & Lee (2021), the specific historical narratives and tangible landmarks of a heritage site are crucial "pull factors" that attract tourists. This implies that the physical sites within Intramuros successfully meet the visitors' expectation of finding historically significant attractions. The highest-ranked item for both groups is the statement: "I am motivated to visit landmarks like Fort Santiago, where Dr. José Rizal was imprisoned, because of their historical importance" (Domestic Mean: 3.69, Strongly Agree; Foreign Mean: 3.69, Strongly Agree). According to Hwang et al. (2023), the presence of historical figures associated with major events (like Rizal) significantly enhances the attractiveness of a landmark, as tourists are drawn to sites that provide clear and exciting connections to important historical figures and events. The literature supports that tourists seek personally relevant historical narratives tied to famous individuals. This implies that interpretation should heavily feature the biographical and dramatic stories of key figures imprisoned or connected to specific landmarks. The lowest-ranked item is the statement: "I am motivated to visit Intramuros because it was the center of Spanish rule in the Philippines" (Domestic Mean: 3.52, Strongly Agree; Foreign Mean: 3.50, Strongly Agree). According to Ahn et al. (2022), this indicates that while the broader context of Intramuros's historical role is acknowledged, it is not as compelling as specific landmarks with dramatic, person-centered stories. The research suggests that macro-level historical concepts (like political centers) are less influential in motivating tourists than micro-level, tangible sites with unique narratives. This implies that general historical context should be presented as background information, with the focus remaining on the specific, story-rich landmarks.

It implies that tourists come to Intramuros not just to see old buildings, but to experience history through meaningful stories. This suggests that tourism management should preserve these landmarks, provide guided tours, and offer educational programs that explain the stories behind each site, so visitors can fully understand and appreciate the history of Intramuros.

**Table 5: Infrastructure**

<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>Mean (Domestic)</b>	<b>Mean (Foreign)</b>
The preservation of old walls, forts, and churches makes Intramuros attractive to me. (Ang pag-iingat sa lumang pader, kuta, at simbahan ang nagpapaganda sa Intramuros para sa akin.)	3.77	3.76
The accessibility of tourist infrastructure like transport, rest areas, guides can influence my decision to visit Intramuros. (Ang madaling access sa transportasyon, pahingahan, at tour guides ay nakakaimpluwensya sa desisyon kong bumisita.)	3.64	3.64

The combination of modern amenities with historical preservation makes Intramuros a more appealing site. (Ang pagsasama ng modernong gamit at makasaysayang pag-iingat ay nagpapaganda lalo sa Intramuros.)	3.62	3.62
The availability of museums and historical exhibits encourages me to visit. (Ang pagkakaroon ng museo at makasaysayang palabas ang nag-uudyok sa akin na bumisita.)	3.62	3.62
Well-maintained facilities like paths, lighting, signage, make my visit more enjoyable. (Ang maayos na pasilidad tulad ng daan, ilaw, at karatula ay nagpapasaya sa aking pagbisita.)	3.60	3.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>3.64</b>

Table 5 above reveals that Infrastructure serves as a strong external (pull) motivational factor for both domestic (Overall Mean: 3.65, Strongly Agree) and foreign tourists (Overall Mean: 3.64, Strongly Agree), as reflected in the high total means of 3.65 and 3.64, respectively, and the consistent “Strongly Agree” ratings. According to Lee et al. (2020), the physical characteristics and architectural integrity of a heritage site are crucial “pull factors” that attract tourists, confirming the relevance of heritage architecture as a primary motivator. This implies that the physical features and general infrastructure of Intramuros successfully meet the visitors’ expectation of a high-quality heritage destination. The highest-ranked item for both groups is the statement: “The preservation of old walls, forts, and churches makes Intramuros attractive to me” (Domestic Mean: 3.77, Strongly Agree; Foreign Mean: 3.76, Strongly Agree). According to Chen & Wu (2025), the preservation of landmark historical buildings serves as a testimony to a city’s memory, making them indispensable symbols of culture and history that attract visitors. The research confirms that the integrity of the original, preserved historical structures is the most powerful physical draw. This implies that capital investment should prioritize the structural maintenance and protection of the core heritage assets (walls, forts, and churches) as they are the main drivers of site attractiveness. The lowest-ranked item is the statement: “Well maintained facilities like paths, lighting, signage, makes my visit more enjoyable” (Domestic Mean: 3.60, Strongly Agree; Foreign Mean: 3.60, Strongly Agree). According to Siwek et al. (2022), this indicates that while supportive amenities are essential for comfort and satisfaction, they function as secondary factors compared to the core Attraction (the historical structures themselves), which serves as the primary element motivating the visit. The research suggests that amenities enhance the enjoyment but are not the primary element that pulls the tourist to the destination. This implies that while essential, the maintenance of facilities like paths and lighting should be viewed as a baseline requirement for a comfortable experience, rather than the core selling point.

It implies that tourists are drawn to Intramuros primarily because of the preserved heritage structures, emphasizing that the main external pull factor is the historical core itself, supported by functional modern infrastructure. This suggests that tourism management must strategically invest in both historical preservation and modern amenities to provide a satisfying experience without compromising the site’s historical integrity.

**Respondents' experiences visiting Intramuros.**  
**Table 6: Domestic tourists' experience**

Themes	Excerpts from responses
<p><b>1. Historical learning</b></p>	<p>“my live experince visiting Intramuros was very interesting. I felt some sad emotions and grieving emotion roaming around the heritage and tourist spots like fort santiago. I also learned a lot of history, it reminded me the time when i first love reading history about Rizal and now i get to experience it”, “its not like any other places in Manila, it is a reminder of the past of the country and it makes me feel a sense of reconnecting with it”, “our trip here is super fun and informative.”, “educational and fun because of its aesthetic place.”, “masaya dahil natuklasan ko ang mga bagay na may kaugnayan sa aking mga ninuno kung paano nila ipinaglaban ang bansang pilipinas (<i>I am happy because I discovered things related to my ancestors and how they fought for the Philippines</i>).”, “mailalarawan ko ang aking karanasan habang bumibisita sa Intramuros bilang isang makabuluhan at maraming history na malalaman patungkol sa dating panahon (<i>I can describe my experience while visiting Intramuros as meaningful and full of history to learn about the past</i>).”, “it feels relaxing and the vibes are aesthetic. The place makes me appreciate the history of our country.”, “para saakin mas nagkakaroon ako ng ideya kung ano ang nangyari sa nakaraan. Dahil dito mas pinapahalagahan ko ang kasaysayan na mayroon tayo (<i>for me it gives me a better idea of what happened in the past. Because of this I appreciate the history we have more</i>).”</p>
<p><b>2. Well preserved infrastructure</b></p>	<p>“it’s fun and it gives me goosebumps because of the infrastructure that they preserved and some of them are still fuctional for other businesses.”, “i litellary enjoyed the view specially the structures that they have. I enjoyed all the modern design of an structure.”, “this actually my first time visiting Intramuros with my friends and it’s very scenic and pleasing to the eyes. It as if i traveled through back in time.”, “the feeling of nostalgia because in our present lifetime we are able to see this heritage walls, buildings, churches, pavement stones etc that we only know them through stories and books.”, “the experience is fun, the food, facilities and others are the same as what i saw from social media posts.”, “inilalarawan sakín nito ang mga sinaunang mga gusali at sinaunang mga bagay na naitabi ng mga tao (<i>It describes to me the old buildings and old objects that people have preserved</i>).”, “unang bisita ko palang dito ay talagang namangha agad ako sa mga istraktura, at sa mga taong nakikita kong bumisita dito talagang ramdam ko din ang</p>

	<i>kanilang kasiyahan. (It was my first time visiting here and I was immediately amazed by the structures, and I could really feel the joy of the people I saw visiting here.)"</i>
<b>3. Pleasing environment</b>	"the place was lively and clean, and it gives a sense of "Philippine" feel", "base on my experience, intramuros has a peaceful environment, kaya maraming nag vivisit na mga tourist. Its not about the peaceful environment but the oppurtunity to knoe the past and history (base on my experience, intramuros has a peaceful environment, that is why there are many tourist are visiting in intramuros. Its not about the peaceful environment but the oppurtunity to knoe the past and history)", "I felt overwhelm seeing infrastructured that all are well taken cared of and being maintained, knowing that it carry such history."
<b>4. Hospitable locals</b>	"the people in Intramuros are very friendly as they will not hesitate to guide you on places where you want to go and the places is quite clean as they maintain almost all the facilities."

The analysis at table 6 above reveals that Intramuros is primarily valued by domestic tourists as a site for profound historical learning and cultural reconnection, a motivation strongly enabled by the site's successful physical preservation and well-maintained environment. Excerpts highlight an emotional engagement ("sad emotions," "reconnecting with the past," "appreciate the history") that transcends casual sightseeing, turning the visit into a meaningful, educational experience. The perceived quality of the well-preserved infrastructure (generating "nostalgia" and "goosebumps") and the overall pleasing environment ("lively and clean," "aesthetic") are critical satisfaction factors, aligning with social media trends and the desire for scenic backdrops. Furthermore, hospitable locals enhance the visitor experience by ensuring a friendly and guided visit. The experience is therefore a fusion of patriotic education, aesthetic enjoyment, and operational excellence.

**Table 7: Foreign tourists' experience**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Excerpts from responses</b>
<b>1. Cultural learning</b>	"my experience visiting intramuros was memorable and educational because i learned a lot about Philippine history and culture", "it was fun because i learned the history of the phil", "my visit to intramuros was truly memorable I learned so much about the country's history and culture", "very nice and educational for knowing the past of philippines", "the place is historical and the transportation is easy also the people help us", "my visit to intramuros was fun and educational", "I enjoyed taking pictures and learning history there and was truly memorable because I learned so much about the country's history and culture"

<b>2. Well preserved infrastructure</b>	“it was an unforgettable experience seeing how the old and new infrastructure mix together in intramuros”, “I felt peaceful walking on the cobblestone street”, “my trip to intramuros was both fun and meaningful I really enjoyed exploring intramuros and feeling hoe history was preserved in its streets and walls”, “it is enjoying and amazing beacause of the statues and beautiful place of intramuros.”
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The analysis shows at table 7 above that Intramuros functions as a vital historical classroom for foreign tourists, whose primary motivation is cultural learning, which is directly enhanced by the site's preserved physical authenticity. Excerpts repeatedly emphasize the visit as "educational," "memorable," and essential for learning "a lot about Philippine history and culture," indicating a strong cognitive desire for new knowledge. This historical immersion is effectively delivered through the well-preserved infrastructure of the "cobblestone streets" and "streets and walls" that allow visitors to tangibly "feel how history was preserved." This physical integrity, including the blending of "old and new infrastructure," provides the authentic, high-quality backdrop necessary for a fulfilling cultural experience. (Ramirez, 2023; Dela Cruz & Santos, 2024) confirms that authenticity and cultural interest are the leading motivators for foreign visitors, who value the sites as an investment in cultural immersion and understanding.

**Table 8: Domestic tourist's revisit intentions**

Theme	Excerpts from responses
<b>1. History</b>	“I want to relive my passion and love of history and my being faithful to visit the Manila Cathedral”, “The place is just near my residency. I will go back here because of the historical value of the place”, “History, dahil nag kaka kuha ako ng aral galing sa nakaraan (History, because i get a lot of learnings about the past)”, The sceneries or definitely work it to revisit, i'd like to actually get to know more about the history of intramuros”, The past and the history since maraming knowledge ang nakukuha. (The past and the history seems there is a lot of knowledge to get in there.)”, “ang mga sina unang mga kabahayan at ang simbahang dahil marami akong malalaman sa pag bisita sa intramuros (The old house and the churches because there is a lot to know if i visit intramuros)”, “Rason kung bakit ko to babalikan itong intramuros ay parang bumalik ako sa kung anong pinag daraanan ng ating mga ninuno, at kung paano natin pahalagahan ang kanilang mga karanasan dito (The reason why I'm going back to Intramuros is that I feel like I'm going back to what our ancestors went through, and how we can appreciate their experiences here)”, “The interesting and drak story of the past in intramuros”, “dahil sa mga bagay na di ko natutuklasan at mga bagay na gusto kong malaman. (Because of the things I don't know and the things I want to know.)”, “para mas ma imagine kung gaano nahirapan ang mga pilipino noon”, (To better imagine how hard the Filipinos had to work back then)”

<b>2. Well preserved infrastructure</b>	“Its’s unique beauty and the historical landmarks in it. Specially the iconic walls and kalesa’s.”, “The main factors is the view of the intramuros, i want to revisit the structure that intramuros have.”, “The architecture & environment”, “The buildings and the people”, “gusto ko bumalik kasi gusto ko ma experience ulit yung old vibes”, “the place itself exploring each facility.”
<b>3. Pleasing environment</b>	“I think the cleanliness and the Attractions that it offer, i want to experience it more once again”, “The ambiance and the local food.”, “The places that I am not able to visit. The food that i am not able to buy and the other hidden things that could be fun”

The analysis shows at table 8 above that domestic tourists' intent to revisit Intramuros is rooted in a powerful, continuous desire for historical learning and patriotic affirmation, supported by the site's reliable preservation. The primary driver is History, as tourists seek to "relive my passion," gain "more knowledge," and deeply feel the national past ("imagine how hard the Filipinos had to work back then"). This engagement goes beyond initial learning, reflecting an ongoing need to renew cultural attachment. The revisit intention is enabled by the well preserved infrastructure, where the "unique beauty" and "old vibes" of the architecture guarantee a consistent, high-quality historical atmosphere. The intent is finalized by a positive overall experience, including the desire to see missed attractions and enjoy the site's "cleanliness." This aligns with research confirming that heritage attachment and historical significance are strong predictors of domestic tourism loyalty and revisit intention (Jallorina & Alarcon, 2022), while perceived authenticity and site maintenance are crucial in sustaining satisfaction and encouraging repeat visits (De los Reyes, 2023).

**Table 9: Foreign tourist’s revisit intentions**

Theme	Excerpts from responses
<b>1. History</b>	“the historical atmosphere, friendly people, and beautiful architecture motivate me to revisit intramuros”, “i want to go back to learn more about its history”, “The place’s history and beauty make me want to go back”, “the historical torist spot”, “showing the history to my family and friends”
<b>2. Pleasing environment</b>	“the peaceful environment motivates me to visit”, “the peaceful atmosphere and the beautiful old architecture make me want to go back and explore more”, “the ambiance and the uniqueness of the place”, “the beautiful place, quiet that’s all ty!”, “the view and the culture make me want to return. The peaceful atmosphere and the beautiful old architechture make me want to go back and explore more”

The analysis shows at table 9 above that foreign tourists' intention to revisit Intramuros is motivated by a desire for deeper historical engagement and the enjoyment of the site's unique, peaceful atmosphere, all anchored by the preserved architecture. The primary driver is History, characterized by the intention to "learn more about its history" and, significantly, to bring others ("showing the history to my family and friends"). This indicates that Intramuros is perceived as a high-quality, memorable cultural product worthy of sharing and repeated, in-depth exploration. This goal is heavily supported by the Pleasing Atmosphere, where the "peaceful environment," the "quiet," and the "beautiful old architecture" provide a relaxed, unique setting for cultural immersion. The combination of historical atmosphere, beautiful architecture, and friendly people ensures a memorable experience that promotes destination loyalty. This aligns with research confirming that historical/cultural education and a high-quality, authentic environment are key predictors of tourist satisfaction and loyalty (Prayag et al., 2023), while attractions, culture, history, and infrastructure are recognized as pull factors for foreign travelers (Gonzales et al., 2019).

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Besides leisure and cultural learning, this study also studied the motivation of tourists to the Walled City of the Philippines. The results show that a significant number of guests still visit the site for relaxation, sightseeing and cultural education but some also have an interest in the dark side of history. These include stories of past battles and struggles and important historical events that make their visit more meaningful. The results show that these dark tourism experiences do not replace the normal reasons for travel, but rather supplement them. Many tourists want not only to enjoy the place, but also to understand its history at a deeper level. Because of this, the Walled City is not just seen as a tourist spot, but also as a place where people can reflect and learn from the past. Overall, the study shows that dark tourism is an important part of why some tourists visit historical places. It also shows that tourist motivations are not just simple, but can include both enjoyment and deeper understanding.

#### **Recommendation**

Based on the results of the study, it is suggested that tourism planners and site managers should add more information about the historical events of the Walled City, especially emotional or serious events. This could be done through guided tours, simple exhibits or storytelling that explain the history in a clear and respectful manner. It is important to present these stories so visitors can learn from them, but we do not want to present the past as entertainment.

It is also recommended to improve the signage and information boards in surrounding areas. The descriptions of the historical events should be simple and easy to understand, so tourists will be able to learn without a guide. It can enrich their visit by adding short stories, timelines or facts.

For future research, it is recommended to study other factors such as how these experiences affect tourist satisfaction, emotions, and their plans to return or recommend the place to others. Future studies should also improve their research methods, especially in choosing the right sampling technique and clearly explaining the data, to make the results more reliable.

Finally, it is crucial to collect visitor feedback on a regular basis. Basic surveys can help to determine what tourists liked, what they learned and what could be improved on in their overall experience.

In general, using the results of this study can help improve both the visitor experience and the way historical sites are managed and promoted.

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Are Tourists Motivated by Dark Experiences Beyond Leisure and Cultural Learning? The Case of the Walled City of the Philippines  
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