Tourists' perceptions of crime-safety whilst participating in a Jack the Ripper walking tour: Whitechapel, East London

Richard George

Tourists' perceptions of crime-safety whilst participating in a Jack the Ripper walking tour: Whitechapel, East London

Richard George[1]

Abstract

Over the last half century, the unidentified serial killer Jack the Ripper has influenced the creation of numerous films, television programmes, and true crime documentaries. Such media attention has sustained an interest in Jack the Ripper and in recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of tour operators offering personalised walking tours around the area where these infamous murders took place: in Whitechapel in the East End of London. Whitechapel, a vibrant, multicultural district is synonymous with criminal activity and belongs to the borough of Tower Hamlets, one of the top 10 most dangerous boroughs in London with the sixth highest rate of crime overall in London (towerhamlets.gov.uk 2023). The purpose of this study is to explore tourists' perceptions of crime-safety whilst participating in a Jack the Ripper guided walking tour, as a new field of enquiry in the literature. Further, the paper analyses whether several respondents' personal variables such as gender, age, nationality, and tour group size have any impact on their perceptions of crime-safety whilst on the Jack the Ripper guided walking tour. Questionnaires were distributed using QR-codes for respondents to access via a tour booking office and a total of 212 online questionnaires were received for analysis and discussion. Findings reveal that the majority of study respondents felt safe whilst on a Jack the Ripper walking tour. By maintaining high safety standards and addressing the specific concerns of those who feel unsafe, Jack the Ripper walking tour companies can ensure a positive and secure experience for all visitors.

Keywords: Jack the Ripper; dark tourism, crime-safety, perceptions, walking tour

---

[1] ICON College of Technology and Management, UK. richard-george@iconcollege.ac.uk

1. Introduction

Whitechapel, a vibrant, multicultural district in the East End of London is synonymous with criminal activity. In the 1890s, Jack the Ripper, one of the most infamous serial killers, conducted his killings in its cobblestone alleys. Consequently, the East End of London during the 1880s and 1890s was a scene of brutal murders, symbolising London's criminal underworld. In this Victorian era, impoverished Whitechapel contained slum housing (known as 'rookeries') with high overcrowding and poor conditions where prostitution, pollution and poverty and high crime rates were rife (Beames, 1850). As a result, Whitechapel had a notorious reputation for high crime rates. Indeed, during these times a Scotland Yard official referred to Whitechapel as one of London's "prime criminal show places" (Evans & Skinner, 2000). London's East End has a long historical association with poverty, deprivation, and crime (Hobbs, 1995). In the 1960s, the infamous Kray twins, Ronald and Reginald, held the reins of the criminal underworld in the East End (Morton, 2021).

Whitechapel and Aldgate East are in the London borough of Tower Hamlets. Today, Tower Hamlets is among the top 10 most dangerous boroughs in London with the sixth highest rate of crime overall in London (total notifiable offences) and the second highest rate of anti-social behaviour calls in London (https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/Research-briefings/BP2018_10_Community_safety_and_Cohesion.pdf). The overall crime rate in Tower Hamlets in 2022 was 100 crimes per 1 000 people (crimerate.co.uk/london/tower-hamlets). This compares poorly to London's overall crime rate (6% higher than the London rate of 95 per 1 000 residents). For England, Wales, and Northern Ireland as a whole, Tower Hamlets is the 27th most dangerous local (https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/Research-briefings/BP2018_10_Community_safety_and_Cohesion.pdf).

The identity of Jack the Ripper has inspired more than 130 years of speculation and the creation of numerous films, television programmes, true crime documentaries, literary works including novels, non-fiction works, short stories, poems, and comic books, as well as songs, plays, and operas. The enduring media coverage has contributed to the continued public fascination with Jack the Ripper. The preoccupation around Jack the Ripper and his crimes has manifested in a vast array of books, documentaries, blogs, podcasts, and films (for example, including *Man in The Attic* (1953), *Ripper Street* (2012-2016), and *The Ripper*

(2020), all projecting 'dark activities' into the public and academic sphere. Due to the plethora of television dramas and documentaries on real-life crime, there has been increased interest in 'dark tourism' activities. Speculation around who Jack the Ripper was, has propelled these unsolved murders into popular culture. Indeed, the tourist experience of visiting places of death or encountering the morbid has brought 'dark tourism' into academic and public imaginations (Sharpley & Stone, 2009).

Every night of the year scores of curious tourists, many on guided tours, flock to Whitechapel to see the locations associated with the grim and gripping story of Jack the Ripper (Hoffin, 2023: 37). Several tour companies have been operating in East London since the 1990s. A 'Jack the Ripper' Museum, which opened in 2015, is located on Cable Street in Aldgate East. The Museum houses countless exhibits including a recreation of the police station in Leman Street where detectives attempted to identify the murderer, and houses the whistle used by police constable Edward Watkins to summon help when he discovered the body of one of the victims and includes the truncheon and notebook case he was carrying. A typical Jack the Ripper tour entails a walk of approximately two miles around the streets of Whitechapel and Spitalfields in Tower Hamlets. The tour usually takes place in the evening (adding to the effect) and begins at a designated location (e.g., the booking office) and ends at one of the places of interest either in Aldgate East or a return to the starting point in Whitechapel. The tour takes tourists through the streets and alleyways stopping off at the Jack the Ripper murder sites as well as numerous places of interest associated with Jack the Ripper (such as the boarding houses in which the victims once lived and the public houses where they patronised). The tour attracts high numbers of visitors and runs twice a day, seven days-a-week to meet the high demand of visitors interested in the Jack the Ripper story.

This paper explores the niche relationship between walking tours and perceptions of crime-safety using the Jack the Ripper (with 'Ripper Vision'TM) guided walking tour in the centre of Whitechapel, London, as a case study as a new field of enquiry. Further, the paper analyses whether the variables of gender, age, nationality, and tour group size has any impact on tourists' perceptions of safety whilst on the tour. Before the study results are presented and discussed, the literature on dark tourism and tourist perceptions of crime-safety and perceived risk is reviewed.

2. Literature review

Dark tourism

Dark tourism is the act of tourists travelling to sites of death, tragedy, and suffering (Foley & Lennon, 1996). It involves visits to and tours of sites of death, atrocity, violence, and disaster (Dalton, 2014). Dark tourism sites and attractions are growing in popularity across the world (Sharpley & Stone, 2009: 7). The term 'dark tourism', although recent in academic terms, has attracted growing scholarly research attention around the concept. Developed from the term *Thanatourism*, "a more specific concept… about long-standing practices of travel motivated by a specific desire for an encounter with death" (Light, 2017). The phenomenon is a complex interweaving of motivations and desires alongside individual and collective factors within various political, economic, and social landscapes. Despite the increasing popularity, there is still limited understanding of dark tourism as a multi-faceted phenomenon (Biran & Hyde, 2011).

Due to the wide application of the definition of dark tourism, there is debate in the literature of what constitutes a dark tourism site, attraction or activity (Fonesca, Seabra & Silva, 2016). Although the label 'dark tourism' was initiated by Foley and Lennon in 1996, many alternative terms have also appeared in the literature associated with death-related touristic activities. Initial definitions of the concept included an aspect of the macabre, an aspect associated with paranormal, ghosts and ghouls which managers of dark tourism sites had mixed responses towards (Poade, 2017). Consequently, the lack of a unified definition and theoretical grounding underpinning the concept presents the researcher with ontological and methodological challenges. For clarification a broader definition of the concept has been selected for the study to encapsulate a range of sites, attractions and activities that are associated with dark tourism. The definition that this paper utilises is: "Dark tourism is an association in one form or another between a tourism site, attraction or experience" (Sharpley & Stone, 2009: 10).

Dark tourism cannot be considered as a phenomenon of the modern era. Travel to sites and attractions associated with death and suffering has existed in many different forms throughout history for example, the gladiatorial games, pilgrimages, and mediaeval public executions (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). Other early examples of dark tourism may be found in the guided morgue tours of the Victorian period, the Chamber of Horrors exhibition of Madame Tussauds (originally opened in Baker Street, London in 1935), or in 'correction houses' of

the nineteenth century where galleries were built to accommodate fee-paying visitors who witnessed flogging as a recreational activity (Stone, 2006). However, the interest in destinations associated with death and suffering is rapidly increasing. In recent years, due to the power of (social) media and the proliferation of satellite television channels, dark tourism has gained more attention again, of potential tourists, the media and academic researchers. Specifically, this past decade marks a significant growth of dark tourism with an increasing number of tourists (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Martini & Buda, 2020). Over 1.67 million tourists visited the Auschwitz Memorial in 2023 (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2024), and over 3 million tourists visit the Ground Zero 9/11 Memorial in the city of New York annually (Lewis et al., 2022). However, what constitutes a dark tourism site or attraction? Arguably, there are a plethora of different sites and attractions around the world which could be classified as purveyors of dark tourism. In early research, Miles (2002) proposed a distinction between actual sites of atrocity (such as Auschwitz-Birkenau) and sites associated with dark tourism (such as the UK Holocaust Museum - Beth Shalom). Miles (2002) further subdivided dark tourism sites and attractions into dark, darker, and darkest. Similarly, Sharpley (2005) classified dark tourism into black, grey, or pale, and Stone (2006) into lightest and darkest. In later work Poade (2017), suggested that sites could be categorised according to their artefacts/objects for public display purposes and the nature or agency of the content – 'sensitive material' as a defining factor for a dark tourism activity. A critical point relates to why some sites are selected for touristic consumption whilst others are not. In the case of a Jack the Ripper guided walk, the content is certainly evocative, controversial and uncomfortable; thereby 'sensitive' by definition.

Early research in this area included conceptualising the concept with an interest in attempts to categorise and classify both sites and tourists with debate around the concept of a 'dark tourist'. The limited empirical dark tourism studies were mostly case studies with historical battlefields and concentration camps being the hot spots (Le & Pearce, 2011; Lennon & Foley, 1999; Miles, 2002). Later work has explored the supply side and a large body of work has been building on ethical concerns and the potential 'commodification of the dead', where "an increasing number of people are keen to promote or profit from 'dark' events as tourist attractions" (Stone 2010: 50). Another area of scholarly enquiry has explored the motivations and experience of dark tourists (Poria et al., 2004). The literature on dark tourist motivations is multi-dimensional with an array of motives and visit intentions and evolving. In Light's comprehensive (2017) review, he suggested that most studies concluded that people visiting

dark tourism sites do not appear to be dark tourists which highlight the complexity and array of factors involved with motivations. Similarly, more recent work on intentions and motivations disputes an early primary motive reported that death is the motivation for engaging in dark tourism experiences. A recent review of the literature by Lliev (2021) suggests that many visitors are now motivated by a desire and an interest in cultural heritage, learning, education, and understanding about the site itself.

A glaring omission in the literature is the lack of enquiry into the risks threatening travellers engaged specifically in dark tourism activities. The role of tourism safety and security perspective has gained attention and importance due to the rise in the frequency of terror attacks and natural disasters that have taken place in the last couple of decades (Seabra et al., 2020; Seabra & Korstanje, 2023). Indeed, the topic of tourism safety and security theory is extensive and has integrated research fields: risk management; consumer behaviour; travel decision-making; risk perceptions; destination image and marketing communications. When exploring risk and perceived risk in tourism endeavours, risk is viewed as a controversial topic with many paradoxes and disputes (Yang & Nair, 2014). Perceived risk is more researched than actual risk due to the difficulties of reporting and measurement. Despite disasters whether natural or man-made, tourists are willing to take risks – as far as they are aware of them – and visit dangerous places. These types of tourists could fall into various categories according to Wang et al. (2024), 'schadenfreude' tourists, who glean a secret pleasure from seeing others' misfortune, and 'thanatopsis' tourists, who are interested in contemplating the meaning of the loss of life. Risk can be seen as a positive element – such as 'no risk – no fun' as highlighted by Korstanje (2009). However, these studies are applied in the context of more 'traditional' tourism activities rather than dark tourism activities. Thus, our paper seeks to explore this unique relationship.

Although dark tourism has been studied from different approaches (e.g., type of the place, motivations, type of the experience) so far (Light, 2017), limited research has been conducted from a safety, security, and criminological perspective. Limited research has been conducted in urban regeneration studies using walking tours to illustrate how urban landscapes are developed and perceived (Farkic et al., 2015; Opfermann, 2020). As Dalton (2014) suggested, such dark tourism sites are milieus of past crimes, and therefore should be of great interest to criminology and criminal justice scholars. Research has examined the relationship between tourism and crime in terms of crimes against tourists and tourists as criminals. Specifically, Brunt et al. (2000) explored destinations deemed 'risky' and Dalton (2014: 1)

explored how dark tourism locales convey meaning about crime and punishment in today's society. "Some crimes…are so historically, culturally and socially important that they warrant deliberate commemoration and memorisation…" (2015: 1). Travel risks are regarded as the negative consequences that may arise during travel (Cetinsoz & Ege, 2013; Hasan et al., 2017). Risk associated with travel destination has many facets that are usually evaluated by several dimensions, such as functional/performance risk, financial risk, social risk, psychological risk, physical risk, and time risk (Fuchs & Reichel, 2011; Pizam & Mansfeld, 2006; Sõnmez & Graefe, 1998a).

What is poorly understood is whether different types of visitors experience different levels of risk and safety when consuming dark tourism, particularly when experiencing guided walking tours. Sites and attractions attract a specific 'profile' of tourists and further, what role does 'sensitive material' play in this dynamic? Guided tours are a key feature of the tourism experience and many guided tours (mostly walking tours) have been branded with the 'dark' component to identify features of controversy, emotiveness – a key descriptor of 'dark' (Roberts, 2018) alongside an 'after dark' tourist endeavour. For example, in the Whitechapel area alone there are several providers of Jack the Ripper tours. Other notable guided tours associated with dark tourism activities include different destinations such as Stratford upon Avon's 'Dark Chronicles History Walking Tour', Bodmin Jail's 'Go Darker Heritage Tour' in Cornwall, and the Bloody Tour of York in Yorkshire. Some research has explored the relationship between guided tours and the sense of place (Van Es & Reijnders, 2018) and a plethora of research exists on guided tours as a tourism product including tour modality such as guided walks (Koerts, 2017; Wang & Kao, 2017) and virtual tours which were prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic (Chiao et al., 2018; Xie et al., 2021).

The Jack the Ripper tour takes place in a perceived-to-be dangerous area of East London, coupled with the narrative on grisly and gruesome murders that took place. The tour utilises a specific technological feature namely 'Ripper Vision' which is trademarked and markets this as its unique selling point on its promotional material. During the tour the guide uses a hand-held projector screen which is used to project imagery of the murders such as autopsy photographs and original crime scene photographs taken at the time of the murders and as their website states the aim is to 'bringing the gruesome story of Jack the Ripper to life in a way never seen before' (Ripper-vision.com). The images are projected onto walls of buildings, in alleyways which are small and in high crime areas. It is argued therefore that this tour product features components of authenticity in the form of original photographs

projected at actual murder sites. The narrative offered on the Jack the Ripper tour is aimed away from sensationalist reporting on the perpetrator of these crimes but focused on the victims to recount them as women who had lives and relationships. The representation of the victims is carefully represented to allow visitors to feel empathy, a concept highlighted in the heritage literature (Knudsen, 2011; Miles, 2002). The notion of evoking emotion through interpretation or 'hot interpretation' has been discussed in the heritage literature (Uzzell & Ballantyne, 1998) to highlight the affective element of representation and interpretation of material. It is acknowledged, however, that this is a complicated relationship dependent on a wide range of variables.

'Criminological Theory

Criminological Theory, the 'study of why individuals commit crimes and why they behave in certain situations' (Criminology, 2018) is something that is widely covered when looking at Jack the Ripper. This is because of the need to understand why someone like this would have acted the way that they acted and to help develop ways of rehabilitating that person or being able to prevent the acts from happening again. With help from various theories there are many ways that information that regards Jack the Ripper and the victims could be displayed to members of the public. Criminological Theories are expansive covering several areas and are always increasing but there are some such as Rational Choice theory (Cornish & Clarke, 1986): *Individuals choose to commit a crime based on rational choice weighing pro's against cons*, Classical Theory (Bernard et al., 2019): Criminals only commit the crime when advantageous, Conflict Theory (Inciardi, 1980): Crime arises when there are conflicts within society among the social classes, are all theories that could have potential for being applied. Due to the unknown nature of Jack the Ripper's identity it is difficult to adhere to any of these theories, or the many others, without the profile to support their reasons, however, there are a few which can be applied with facts known at the time. These could also be a reason for the benefits of having a museum that can help to highlight and show insight from various angles. This is not to say that it is also not a negative thing to have a museum as it also allows access for others who have similar criminal intent.

The *Hot Spots theory* and *the Routine Activity theory* are two well-known theories frequently referenced in the study of crime victimisation in tourist locations (Crotts, 1996). The Hot Spots theory focuses on the correlation between predatory crimes and specific types of geographical areas or places (Schiebler et al., 1996). It suggests that tourist destinations with

a higher concentration of tourist facilities and visitor attractions, such as transportation hubs, nightclubs, pubs, strip clubs, and drinking establishments, can be identified as hotspots where crimes against tourists are more likely to occur (Roncek & Maier, 1991; Ryan & Kinder, 1996). Within these hotspots, tourists often engage in risk-taking behaviour, lowering their guard and increasing their vulnerability to criminal victimisation (Barker et al., 2003; Crotts, 2003). The Routine Activity theory views criminal acts in the course of their everyday, routine activities such as work and leisure; criminals need to satisfy themselves by taking something of value from victims (Cohen & Felson, 1979). According to this theory, three elements must align for a predatory crime to take place: a suitable victim or target, a motivated offender, and a relative absence of police and private security forces (or "guardianship"). If any of these elements is missing, the occurrence of the criminal act is deterred (Crotts, 1996).

From this analytical perspective, the "crime triangle" is based on the presence of a suitable target (less vigilant tourists who may not comply with safety norms and frequent locations where they are unaware of potential dangers), a motivated offender, and ineffective security measures to prevent criminal acts. These theories support the hypothesis that an increase in the number of tourists in a particular location can make them more susceptible to crime when security measures are reduced or ineffective. Overall, these theories provide valuable insights into how and where local communities may expose tourists to the risk of criminal victimisation (Crotts, 1996).

Tourists' perceptions of crime-safety

If a tourist feels unsafe or threatened at a holiday destination, it can significantly impact their perception of the location, leading to negative consequences for the destination's tourism industry (George, 2003). This can manifest in various ways:

I. Reputation for high crime rate: When a destination develops a reputation for having a high crime rate, potential tourists may opt not to visit the area altogether. The perception of being unsafe can discourage visitors from considering the destination as a viable option for their travels.

II. Limited participation in activities: Tourists who feel unsafe during their stay are less likely to engage in activities outside their accommodation. This cautious approach

restricts their exploration of the destination, resulting in reduced economic benefits for local businesses and visitor attractions.

III. Diminished return visits and recommendations: Tourists who have experienced threats or felt unsafe are unlikely to revisit the destination in the future. Additionally, they are less likely to recommend the location to others. Negative word-of-mouth can significantly impact the destination's reputation and deter potential visitors (George, 2003).

Research into the relationship between tourism and criminal acts affecting tourists' safety, or perceptions of safety, started receiving attention in the early 1990s (Demos, 1992; Milman & Bach, 1999; Pinhey & Iverson, 1994; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a). As with risk perceptions, when safety concerns are introduced into travel decisions, they are likely to become the overriding factors, altering the context of conventional decision-making models and causing travellers to amend travel plans. Perceptions of safety and security play a significant role in a tourist's decision-making process (Ferreira & Harmse, 2000; Mawby 2000; Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009; Seabra et al., 2013). In addition, research has shown that tourists will not spend money in places where they do not feel safe (Pizam & Mansfeld, 1996).

A prevalent finding in the existing tourism-crime literature underscores the importance of safety and security for the success of a tourist destination. Sönmez and Graefe asserted that "when faced with two similar options, tourists are likely to choose the one that ensures safety and is free from threats" (1998a). Pearce (1988) further emphasised that personal security concerns significantly influence individuals' decision-making process when selecting travel destinations. However, several authors have argued that residents and tourists face similar risks of falling victim to crime. Prideaux (1996: 73) suggested that under normal circumstances, tourists should anticipate having a comparable probability of experiencing criminal incidents as the local residents of the visited area. Walmsley et al. (1983) supported this perspective by contending that concerns about crime can be irrational, considering that statistically, visitors face an equal or even higher risk of being involved in fatal car accidents or suffering household injuries at home. Thus, the critical factor in this context becomes the fear of the unknown and the perception of risk.

In a study conducted by Demos (1992), the focus was on understanding the perceptions of tourists visiting Washington, D.C., USA while on holiday. The research aimed to assess the impact of the city's high crime rates on its tourism industry. Demos interviewed various

visitors, including holidaymakers, businesspeople, and individuals visiting friends or relatives, during the early 1990s. The findings revealed that visitors' perceptions were influenced by factors such as their previous visits to the city and demographic characteristics like gender, marital status, and education level. Demos reported that prior to arriving in the city, approximately one-third of the respondents expressed significant concerns about their personal safety. Moreover, 39% of the participants stated that they did not feel safe in Washington, D.C. after dark. However, despite these apprehensions, only around one-third of the respondents identified safety as the primary factor that would dissuade them from returning to the city. Most participants believed that crime rates would not discourage them from revisiting Washington, D.C. (Demos, 1992).

In a comparable investigation, Pinhey and Iverson (1994) conducted a study examining safety concerns related to typical holiday activities among visitors in Guam in the Western Pacific. The researchers specifically focused on the perceptions of Japanese visitors. The study revealed that Japanese tourists expressed greater concerns about safety when engaging in activities that kept them in their hotels. Additionally, Pinhey and Iverson (1994: 92) found that younger and more affluent Japanese tourists felt less secure when participating in various leisure pursuits compared to other respondents. This finding aligns with Demos' (1992) research, which suggests that visitors with higher educational backgrounds are more likely to express concerns about safety than those with lower educational levels. However, it is worth noting that Pinhey and Iverson's (1994) exploratory study solely examined a selection of activities and did not encompass other aspects of the tourist experience, such as food, accommodation, transportation, and visiting tourist attractions.

In a study conducted by Brunt et al. (2000), British tourists were surveyed to explore their perceptions and encounters with crime during their holidays. Notably, their research differed from most other surveys as it relied on their own findings from a victim survey rather than official police statistics. The survey questions focused on the respondents' previous holiday experiences. Despite this unique approach, the findings of their study align with existing literature on tourist victimisation, including studies by Chesney-Lind and Lind (1986), de Alburquerque and McElroy (1999), and Schiebler et al. (1996). These studies also assert that tourists are more vulnerable to victimisation compared to residents.

Mawby (2000) subsequently reviewed the findings of Brunt et al. (2000) in the context of a risk–fear paradox. Mawby observed that criminologists have expressed concern about the

disparity between the fear of crime and the actual risk it poses. On one hand, media reports often amplify the perception of crime danger in tourist destinations, while on the other hand, tourists' fears may be justified due to evidence indicating high crime rates in tourist areas and the vulnerability of tourists to criminal incidents. Mawby (2000) suggested that informing tourists about the risks associated with visiting tourist areas could help alleviate their fear of crime while on holiday. This, as Mawby pointed out, creates a paradox: "The fear of crime may hinder the growth of tourism, yet only through educating tourists about risks can crime in tourist-oriented areas be reduced in the long term" (2000: 119).

A tourist's sense of safety about a tourist destination is highly subjective dependent on intrinsic factors such as personality traits, demographic variables (age, education, and gender), culture and nationality, knowledge/previous experience, safety knowledge, and traveller type/role. Perceptions vary between different subgroups of tourists (Adam & Adongo, 2016; Floyd et al., 2004; Seabre et al., 2013; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998a). An individual tourist's characteristics (Lepp & Gibson, 2003) such as cultural differences/nationality (Kozak, 2002; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2006; Zou, 2022), extent of previous travel experience (Mazursky, 1989; Sönmez, & Graefe, 1998b; Zou & Mawby, 2021), age (Brunt & Shepherd, 2004), and gender (Amir et al., 2015; Carr, 2001; Qiao, 2018; Reisinger & Crotts, 2009) have been found to influence perceptions of a destination as safe or risky. Age and gender have been found to influence perceptions of safety because people of different ages and gender are more vulnerable to crime. For example, researchers argued that gender was a significant factor affecting female respondents' perceptions of safety and security in choosing a tourist destination (Amir et al., 2015; Carr, 2001; Floyd et al., 2004; Gibson & Jordan, 1998; Greenberg & Ruback, 1992; Kozak et al., 2007; Lepp & Gibson, 2003). In addition, a study by Amir et al. (2015) in Kuala Lumpur found that women travellers were more fearful of crime because of perceived vulnerability compounded by sexual risk; especially walking around the city at night-time. Study respondents' other main concerns were pick-pocketing and snatch theft cases.

Nationality should be observed in the context of familiarity with the destination (Karl & Schmude, 2017) since there are differences between domestic and foreign tourists, and foreign tourists, especially those coming from geographically more distant countries, perceive a higher level of risk than domestic tourists. In addition, foreign tourists often generalise risks to the entire country or region, while domestic tourists are more capable of making a realistic assessment because they are better informed (Yang et al., 2015). However, there are also the

opposite examples, as in a study conducted by George (2010) in Cape Town, where he found that domestic tourists perceive crime risk as higher than overseas visitors, as they are better informed about the local situation and therefore have a higher awareness of the possibility of criminal incidents.

One of the most cited characteristics of the victim in the literature is the nationality of the victim and it is found that foreign tourists are more victimised than residents. Chesney-Lind and Lind (1986) for instance suggested that in Hawaii, tourists were more often crime victims than residents. Similarly, Michalko (2004) found that in Hungary foreign tourists (especially those from Western Europe) were disproportionately more victimised than residents. However, numerous studies have found that residents and tourists stand an equal chance of becoming a victim of crime. Harper (2001) for instance proposed that the crime experience of residents was greater than that of tourists, although he concluded that as crime experience increases for residents, it also tends to increase for holidaymakers. Prideaux (1996) noted that in the normal course of an event, tourists may expect to have at least the same probability of becoming victims of crime as residents of the destination area. A study by Walmsley et al. (1983) supports this finding, stating that "crime can be an irrational concern and that statistically visitors have an equal or greater chance of being involved in a deadly car accident or suffering a household injury at home" (1983: 143)

Yang et al. (2015) argue that gender does not work alone in determining travel risk perception; other factors such as age, nationality, and previous travel experience affect risk perception. Similarly, Lepp and Gibson (2008) also found that perception of crime-risk can vary by gender, previous travel experience and tourist role. Travel experience – both generally and with regards to a specific tourist destination – have also shown to be key factors affecting perception of safety (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998b; Zou & Mawby, 2021). Travellers who have previously visited a destination are usually less risk-averse than first-time visitors (Fuchs & Reichel, 2011; Kozak et al., 2006; Lepp & Gibson, 2003).

Consequently, studies on the safety and security of tourists partaking in specific tourists' endeavours (guided tours) are distinctly lacking. This study attempts to conceptualise the linkage between tourism safety and dark tourism. The study applies a quantitative approach to explore the attitude of tourists towards visiting death-related destinations and their risk perceptions in travel decision-making. As such, this study was conducted to understand both the motivations and visit intentions of tourists to dark tourism destinations and activities. The

objectives of this paper are to find out whether visitors on a Jack the Ripper Tour in Whitechapel, east London felt unsafe and whether specific personal factors of the respondents, such as demographic characteristics, related to their perceptions of crime and safety in London. No research on travel group size. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge no research to date has examined tourists' perceptions of crime-safety in the context of dark tourism.

3. Methodology

This study measured tourists' perceptions of crime-safety whilst on a Jack the Ripper guided walking tour in London. Additional questions in the survey asked whether respondents who had a positive or satisfactory experience were more likely to recommend a tour to others.

An online questionnaire using Google Forms was devised to collect data on the socio-demographic background and motivations from tourists participating in a Jack the Ripper tour. A survey, involving a sample of 212 tourists was undertaken from November 2022 to July 2023. The primary objective of this study was to determine whether tourists participating in a Jack the Ripper tour felt safe.

3.1 Study site

The study area was the locales of Aldgate East, Spitalfields, and Aldgate in the East End of London in the borough of Tower Hamlets. The area is infamous because it was here in the late 1880s, that the serial killer, Jack the Ripper, stalked the back alleys and murdered five women (Rubenhold, 2020). The area is also synonymous with high profile murderers such as the Kray twins in the 1960s (Morton, 2021).

This study measured tourists' perceptions of crime-safety whilst participating in a Jack the Ripper walking tour around the vicinity of Aldgate East, Aldgate, and Spitalfields.

3.2 Survey instrument

A structured self-completion questionnaire consisting of 13 questions was used to collect data from tourists who participated in a Jack the Ripper walking tour. Survey data were collected from tourists over a nine-month period using an online self-administered questionnaire.

Questions in the first part of the survey asked about respondents' visit: whether they had previously been on a Jack the Ripper tour, and which other dark tourism sites/attractions in London had they previously visited. In the second part, respondents were asked about their perceptions of crime-safety, whether they had ever been a victim of crime whilst on holiday in London, their satisfaction levels of the Jack the Ripper tour, the size of their travel group, their likelihood of recommending a Jack the Ripper tour to others, and how they first heard about the Jack the Ripper tour. The third and last part of the questionnaire consisted of general questions concerning tourists' characteristics (namely: origin, age, and gender).

Respondents provided answers to a five-point Likert-type scale to rate three items: perceptions of safety whilst participating in a Jack the Ripper walking tour, how satisfied they were with the overall experience of the tour, and whether they would recommend a Jack the Ripper tour to others. For instance, Respondents' perceptions of safety were measured on a 1–5 scale where 1=very safe and 5=very unsafe. If they answered "Unsafe" or "Very unsafe", they were then asked to choose one of the following main reasons: "Lack of policing presence", "General grime, litter, and pollution", "Lack of lighting", and "Other". Respondents were also asked whether they had ever encountered crime whilst on holiday in London, and if so, to briefly explain the nature of the crime.

Independent measures used in the analysis included respondent's gender, age, size of tour group, and where they came from (country and city/town). Cross-tabulation was used to investigate the relationship of these characteristics to respondents' perceptions of safety whilst participating in a Jack the Ripper tour.

The questionnaire was modelled on studies by George (2003; 2010) and Mawby et al. (2000) on tourists' perceptions of safety and security. These studies recommended that additional research needs to be conducted to examine tourists' perceptions of crime-risk in different tourism environments (i.e. visitor attractions, destinations, and activities). This study, therefore, has focussed on tourists' perceptions of crime-safety in the context of a themed walking tour in an urban area.

3.3 Data collection

The target population in this study consisted of international and domestic tourists who participated in a Jack the Ripper walking tour between September 2023 to May 2024. Respondents scanned a Quick Response (QR)-code to directly access the survey from their

smartphones via their device's camera. By scanning the QR-code, respondents were directed electronically to the questionnaire in Google Forms. The survey QR-code was displayed in A-4 format laminated posters mounted at the Jack the Ripper tour booking office located in Aldgate East, London. Potential respondents were directed to the QR-code via a 'gatekeeper' at the booking office. The code was also printed out in a postcard format which was attached to the ticket for the tour and distributed to tourists taking part in the tour.

A total of 212 questionnaires surveys were fully completed and deemed suitable for data analysis.

3.4 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were compiled to summarise responses and make inferences about the survey data. To ensure that the constructs of perceptions on safety and the likelihood of recommending the tour were internally consistent, item reliability tests were conducted. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore associations between respondents' demographics and personal characteristics and perceptions of crime-safety. The main objective was to investigate tourists' perceptions of crime and safety and likelihood of recommending a Jack the Ripper tour given differences in personal characteristics, namely nationality, age, and gender.

Cross-tabulation was employed to examine the relationships between these characteristics and respondents' perceptions of the Jack the Ripper tour. Additionally, inferential statistical tests, including independent-samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and regression analyses, were conducted. Both parametric and non-parametric tests were used to further explore these relationships and to provide a more robust understanding of how demographic factors influence perceptions of crime-safety and the likelihood of recommending the tour.

4. Discussion of results

4.1 Demographic characteristics of the sample

Of the 212 respondents, 55% of respondents (N = 116) were female, and 45% (N = 96) were male, 2.4%. Forty-seven per cent of respondents (N = 99) were aged 36 to 50, 22% of respondents (N = 46) were aged 25 to 35 years, 18% of respondents (39) were aged 51 to 60, and 7%% (N = 14) were aged 18 to 24 years. The 36-50 age group is the most prevalent age

group, representing nearly half (47%) of the respondents. This suggests that the tour primarily appeals to middle-aged adults. The 25-35 age group is also well-represented with almost a quarter (22%), indicating a strong interest from young adults.

Just over half of the Jack the Ripper walking tour respondents (54%/114) were from overseas, and the remainder (46%/98) were domestic UK tourists. Several nationalities comprised the international market including the USA, Canada, Romania, Croatia, Sweden, Poland, Ireland, Australia, Israel, South Africa, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Norway, France and Portugal.

4.2 Previous Jack the Ripper walking tour experience

Regarding previous experience of a Jack the Ripper walking tour, a significant majority of respondents (87.3%/185) indicated that this was their first Jack the Ripper tour. This suggests that the tour is attracting a large number of new visitors. Only 12.7% of respondents (N = 27) have been on a Jack the Ripper tour before, indicating that repeat customers are a smaller portion of the total participants.

4.3 Size of walking tour group

Just over half (51%/92) of respondents stated that the size of the tour group participating in the Jack the Ripper walking tour was approximately 10 to 20. Nineteen per cent (N = 35) stated they were in a tour group of between 5 and 10, 17% (N = 30) 20 to 30, and 7% of respondents were in a tour group of less than 5 tourists.

4.4 Other dark tourism attractions previously visited

The questionnaire asked respondents which other dark tourism sites in London they had previously visited. Almost 40% (N = 99) of respondents had previously visited the Tower of London (located in Tower Hill, east London), reflecting its status as a major historical and dark tourist attraction in London (see Table 1). The second most popular dark tourism site visited by respondents is the London Dungeon, South Bank visited by 15% (N = 37) of respondents, indicating strong interest in attractions that combine history with entertainment. Over a quarter of respondents (27.27%/69) have not visited any of the listed dark tourism sites. This suggests that there is a wide variety of attractions in London, not fully captured in

the questionnaire. Moderately visited dark tourism sites – indicating a specific interest in historical landmarks – included Highgate Cemetery with 10% (N= 26) of respondents, and the Monument to the Great Fire of London (4%/N = 9) of respondents.

Table 1. Previously visited London dark tourism sites

Dark tourism site	Frequency	%
Barts Pathology Museum	1	.4
Cross Bones Graveyard, Southwark	4	1.58
Highgate Cemetery	26	10.28%
Jack the Ripper Museum	1	.4
Jeremy Bentham & the Auto-Icon	2	.79
London Dungeon, South Bank	37	14.62
None of the above	69	27.27
Other	1	.4
St. Martin-in-the-Fields Crypt Cafe	3	1.19
The Blind Beggar pub.	1	.4
The Monument to the Great Fire of London	9	3.56
The Tower of London	99	39.13
Total	253	100.0

4.5 Jack the Ripper walking tourists' perceptions of safety

With regards to perceptions of physical safety, almost half of respondents (49%/104) felt very safe and 34% (N = 73) felt safe whilst on the Jack the Ripper walking tour. Only 11% of respondents (N = 24) stated that they felt unsafe whilst visiting on the tour (see Table 2). The fact that no respondents felt "very unsafe" and only 11% felt "unsafe" suggests that most participants perceive the environment as safe. A mere 5 per cent (N = 11) stated they were indifferent regarding how safe they felt whilst on the Jack the Ripper walking tour. These findings correspond to those other research studies such as a study by George and Booyens (2014) which surveyed 316 tourists on a township tour in Cape Town, South Africa. Their study found that 73% of respondents felt safe whilst on a township tour. In a similar study

with similar results George (2003) 71% of visitors felt safe and 13.5% felt unsafe whilst visiting the city of Cape Town in South Africa.

Table 2. Respondents' perceptions of safety whilst on a Jack the Ripper tour

Degree of safety	Frequency	%
Very unsafe	0	.0
Unsafe	11	5.19
Neither safe/unsafe	24	11.32
Safe	73	34.43
Very safe	104	49.06
Total	**212**	100.0

This study's data shows a strong perception of safety among the majority of respondents, with a small but significant minority expressing concerns. By maintaining high safety standards and addressing the specific concerns of those who feel unsafe, the tour can ensure a positive and secure experience for all visitors.

A substantial majority of respondents (83.5%) feel either safe or very safe, indicating a general perception of safety among the participants. A smaller portion of respondents (16.51%) feel unsafe, which includes those who are unsure (neither safe nor unsafe). This indicates some concerns about safety among a minority of participants.

4.6 Experience of crime whilst on holiday in London

When asked "Have you ever been a victim of crime whilst on holiday in London?", only 5.2% (N=10) of respondents have been victims of crime while on holiday in London. This finding is consistent with other tourism-crime victimisation studies, such as Mawby et al.'s (2021) analysis of tourists' safety concerns when visiting Istanbul, which found that only 7% (N = 15) had been a victim of crime. These respondents stated that they had been victim to a number of types of crimes such as attempted pickpocketing, physical abuse, mobile phone theft (2 respondents), robbery, stolen debit card while at an ATM, and bicycle theft.

The vast majority of Jack the Ripper walking tour respondents (95.2%/180) have not been victims of crime whilst on holiday in London. This indicates that most visitors do not experience crime during their stay, which is a positive sign for the city's overall safety perception.

4.7 Satisfaction, likelihood of recommending a Jack the Ripper walking tour

A vast majority of respondents (98%/N = 208) stated that they were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the Jack the Ripper walking tour experience. This finding corresponds with the research of George and Booyens' (2014) study which found that 84.4% of respondents were satisfied with their township tour.

In addition, 81% (N = 171) of respondents stated that they were "very likely" or "likely" to recommend a Jack the Ripper walking tour sometime in the future. This finding is not consistent with other studies where the likelihood of repeat visitation is much higher. For instance, Mawby et al.'s (2021) study found that 98% of visitors would return to Istanbul. That said, the lower rate of repeat visitation for this study is expected considering that a Jack the Ripper tour is a tourist attraction experience and not an international city.

4.8 Gender versus safety perceptions

An independent samples t-test comparing safety perception scores between male and female participants confirmed no significant difference ($t(210) = -1.712$, $p = 0.741$), with Levene's Test validating the assumption of equal variances ($F(210) = 0.110$, $p = 0.741$). The mean scores for males (M = 4.17, SD = 0.86) and females (M = 4.37, SD = 0.85) were close, and the effect size (Cohen's d = -0.237) indicated only a small practical difference. While previous studies have shown that preferences for risk in tourism can vary by gender (Carr, 2001; George, 2003, 2010; Kinnaird & Hall, 2000; Kozak et al., 2007; Reisinger & Crotts, 2009), other research has not found a significant relationship between gender and safety perceptions (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Mataković & Mataković, 2019). Our findings align with the latter group of studies, suggesting that gender does not significantly influence safety perceptions in the context of the Jack the Ripper tour. These results suggest that the influence of gender on safety perceptions may depend on the specific context and location of the study.

4.9 Age versus safety perceptions

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of age on safety perception among participants of the Jack the Ripper tour, with participants divided into five age groups: less than 24, 25-35, 36-50, 51-60, and 61+. The initial level of confidence was set at 0.05, but to ensure greater accuracy, it was adjusted to 0.01. Despite this more stringent confidence level, the results remained consistent, and all subsequent tests were conducted at the 0.01 level.

To verify the assumption of homogeneity of variances, Levene's Test was applied. The test results indicated that the assumption was met, based on the mean ($F(4, 207)$ = [value], p = 0.181), the median ($F(4, 207)$ = [value], p = 0.125), and the trimmed mean ($F(4, 207)$ = [value], p = 0.099).

The ANOVA results indicated no statistically significant difference in safety perception across the different age groups at the 1% significance level, with $F (4, 207)$ = 2.238, p = 0.066. However, the effect size measures (Eta Squared = 0.042, Epsilon Squared = 0.023, Omega Squared = 0.023) suggest a small effect, indicating a potential trend in the data.

Further analysis using Tukey's HSD test revealed the mean safety perception scores for each age group: less than 24 (M = 4.48), 25-35 (M = 4.17), 36-50 (M = 4.16), 51-60 (M = 4.50), and 61+ (M = 4.83). Although the differences were not statistically significant, a noticeable trend emerged, with older age groups (51-60 and 61+) generally perceiving safety more positively.

These findings indicate that although the ANOVA did not reveal significant differences in safety perception across age groups at the 1% significance level, there is an observable trend where older participants tend to perceive safety more favourably. While this trend was not statistically significant in this sample, it suggests a potential area for further research. A larger sample size could provide more insight into the influence of age on safety perception. This observation aligns with George's (2010) findings, which showed that age influences tourists' perceptions of crime and safety whilst visiting a national park. Specifically, George (2010) found that as respondents' age increased, their concern for personal safety also increased, particularly for those under 55 years. Interestingly, for individuals over 55, this concern for personal safety tended to decrease.

4.10 Nationality: Comparing domestic versus international visitors with regards to safety perceptions

One of the most frequently cited characteristics in the literature regarding victimisation is the nationality of the victim, with research consistently showing that tourists are more likely to be victimised than residents. For instance, Chesney-Lind and Lind (1986) found that in Hawaii, tourists were more frequently crime victims than residents. Similarly, Michalko (2004) reported that in Hungary, foreign tourists, particularly those from Western Europe, were disproportionately more victimised compared to local residents. However, Reisinger and Mavondo (2005) found that both foreign and local tourists share similar risk concerns, with no significant differences between these two groups.

When comparing the perception of safety between international and domestic tourists, a noticeable difference in mean scores was found. International visitors had a mean safety perception score of 4.15, while domestic visitors reported a higher mean score of 4.43. This finding aligns with other studies that suggest local tourists tend to perceive safety more positively. The statistical analysis reinforces this observation, as the two-sided p-value for the comparison, with "equal variances not assumed," was 0.016. This value is below the standard significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that the difference in safety perception between international and domestic tourists is statistically significant, with less than a 1.6% chance that this difference occurred by random variation.

From a practical standpoint, this significant difference in safety perception suggests that tour operators and safety planners should consider implementing additional measures or support specifically aimed at international tourists, who may feel less secure. However, it is important to note that despite this difference in safety perception, there was no significant difference in overall tour satisfaction across the groups. This suggests that other factors influencing satisfaction remain consistent, regardless of the tourists's nationality or prior victimisation experience.

4.11 Size of tour group versus safety perceptions

In this analysis, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the relationship between group size and safety perception among participants. The F-statistic, which measures the ratio of variance between group means to variance within groups, was calculated to determine

whether there are significant differences in safety perceptions across different group sizes. However, the F-statistic was not significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that there were no statistically significant differences between the group means. The p-value was slightly above the 0.05 threshold, suggesting a potential trend toward significance, but not enough to reject the null hypothesis outright.

To further explore the potential differences between specific group sizes, Tukey's post hoc test was conducted. This test helps to identify which specific group means differ while controlling for Type I error across multiple comparisons. The results showed a p-value of 0.095, indicating that the differences between the means of the groups were not statistically significant, as the p-value exceeded the 0.05 threshold. Although the p-value was close to significance, it did not meet the standard threshold, suggesting that any observed differences might be due to random variation rather than actual differences in safety perception across group sizes. The ANOVA results suggest that there are no statistically significant differences in safety perception across the different group sizes, as the p-value (0.057) was slightly above the 0.05 significance level. This finding is further supported by the Tukey test, which confirmed the absence of significant differences between specific group pairs, with a p-value of 0.095. Although the p-values were close to the 0.05 threshold, they did not fall below it, indicating that these results should be interpreted with caution. There may be practical or contextual factors worth exploring further, especially considering the potential trend suggested by the data.

To ensure the robustness of the findings, Welch's ANOVA was performed to account for unequal variances between groups. Welch's ANOVA returned a p-value of 0.068, which is also above the 0.05 threshold, confirming that there is no statistically significant difference in safety perceptions between the group sizes at the 5% significance level.

Additionally, to control for multiple comparisons, the Bonferroni correction was applied, and effect sizes and confidence intervals were reported to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the results. The post-hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni correction revealed no significant differences between any pairs of groups: Small vs. Medium (p = 0.376), Medium vs. Large (p = 0.066), Small vs. Large (p = 1.000).

These findings suggest that there is no strong evidence of differences in safety perception across different group sizes. While the p-values were close to significance, they did not cross

the standard threshold, indicating that the observed differences are likely due to random variation. The analysis highlights the importance of considering practical implications and context-specific factors that might warrant further investigation, particularly with a larger sample size or more balanced group frequencies.

It is important to note that this investigation touches upon a relatively novel area of research—the impact of group size on tour safety perceptions. To date, limited studies have explored this relationship, particularly in the context of tourism. As safety perceptions appear to hold significant importance when purchasing, further inquiry into this topic could yield valuable insights, especially in high-risk environments. For instance, the dynamics of group size on perceived safety could be particularly relevant in locations known for elevated risks, such as slums or favelas, or cities with high crime rates like Mexico City and Cape Town, and São Paulo (Schutte et al., 2021). Understanding how group size influences safety perceptions in these settings could inform the development of targeted strategies to enhance tourists' sense of security, potentially leading to more effective safety protocols and improved experiences for travellers.

Given the potential implications of this research, future studies should consider exploring this relationship with larger sample sizes and more balanced group frequencies. Additionally, it may be worthwhile to investigate the impact of contextual factors, such as the specific nature of the location or the type of tour, to provide a more nuanced understanding of how group size affects safety perceptions. Such investigations could contribute significantly to both academic literature and practical applications in the field of tourism and safety management.

4.12 Safety perceptions versus likelihood to recommend a Jack the Ripper walking tour

The data reveals a moderate to strong and statistically significant positive correlation between safety perception and the likelihood of recommending the tour, as indicated by Kendall's tau (0.457) and Spearman's rho (0.509), both with p-values of 0.001. This suggests that improving safety perceptions can significantly boost recommendations, which are essential for attracting new visitors and enhancing the tour's reputation.

4.13 Satisfaction versus likelihood to recommend a Jack the Ripper walking tour

A strong positive correlation exists between satisfaction with the tour and the likelihood of recommending it. Kendall's tau (0.529) and Spearman's rho (0.561), both with p-values of 0.001, indicate that as satisfaction with the tour increases, so does the likelihood of recommending it. This finding is consistent with previous research by Donaldson and Ferreira (2009), George (2010), George and Swart (2012), and George and Booyens (2014), all of which found that satisfied visitors were more likely to recommend their destination to others. These results highlight the importance of both safety and satisfaction in driving positive word-of-mouth, which is crucial for the continued success of the Jack the Ripper tour.

4.12 Victim and non-victim of crime groups against safety perceptions

In the study comparing satisfaction with the tour and perception of safety between victims of crime (N = 11) and non-victims (N = 201), the Mann-Whitney U test was used to account for the unequal group sizes and non-normal distribution of data. The victims of crime were coded as 1 and non-victims as 2.

The results indicated no significant difference in satisfaction with the tour (U = 214, p = 0.736) between the groups. The median satisfaction for both victims and non-victims was 5, indicating similar levels of satisfaction across both groups.

However, there was a significant difference in the perception of safety (U = 736, p = 0.046) between the groups. The median perception of safety for victims was 4, compared to 5 for non-victims. This finding suggests that individuals who have been victims of crime perceive their safety to be lower compared to those who have not been victims of crime.

These results highlight that while overall satisfaction with the tour remains unaffected by victim status, the perception of safety is significantly lower among victims of crime."

Conclusions and recommendations

Jack the Ripper tours are the most iconic examples of true crime walking tours where tourists visit the sites where the Ripper murders took place in the late 1880s. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in interest in contemporary consumer culture to partake in such dark tourism activities. This study focused on examining tourists' perceptions of crime-safety

whilst on a Jack the Ripper walking tour in the Whitechapel district of East London. Previous studies have not addressed crime-safety perceptions of a walking tour per se and whether factors such as the size of travel group, and tourists' age, gender, and nationality influence their perceptions of crime-safety.

According to this study's findings, the vast majority of tourists felt safe whilst on a Jack the Ripper walking tour and are likely to recommend a tour to others. Findings also suggest that tourists' age, gender, and travel size group did not influence their perceptions of crime-safety whilst participating in a tour. With regards to nationality – when comparing the perceptions of crime-safety between international and domestic tourists – domestic tourists perceived crime-safety more positively. This finding aligns with other studies that found local tourists tend to feel safer than international tourists (see: Yang et al., 2015). This stands to reason as domestic tourists are in their home country and are more familiar with the destination's culture, language, and customs. As Harper (2001) notes, tourists' unfamiliarity with the area makes it easier for the perpetrator to escape and more difficult for victims to identify their attacker.

This study's data indicates that most respondents have not been victims of crime while on holiday in London, which is a positive sign for the city's overall safety. However, for the small percentage who have experienced crime, targeted reassurance and communication efforts are essential. By implementing strategies to support these visitors and promote safety, guided walking tour operators can help enhance the overall perception of crime-safety and ensure a positive experience for all visitors.

The data findings also suggest that participants in the Jack the Ripper walking experience are not 'dark tourists' characterised by numerous encounters with a dark tourism product as the respondents reported they were unlikely to visit another site associated with dark tourism in the area associated with dark tourism. However, a significant number of respondents had previously visited the Tower of London which although has a dark history, in essence is more of an iconic London attraction rather than a dark attraction.

The majority of the study respondents indicated that they felt safe; despite the fact that the tour takes place at night time in a high-crime area and they visit actual murder sites while listening to gruesome, sensationalist accounts of serial murders and view a selection of the victims' autopsy photographs. This is where, as Seltzer (2007) points out, truth and fiction overlap in the name of 'infotainment', and along with an element of desensitisation due to the

prevalence of the Ripper story as well as other true crime accounts in popular culture, may well contribute to respondents' positive perceptions of crime-safety.

The findings of this study are of value to Jack the Ripper tour operators. They ought to be aware that the majority of visitors felt safe during their Jack the Ripper walking tour. This development is beneficial for their efforts to entice potential local and international tourists and stimulate more demand. However, if a walking tour visitor were to become a victim of a crime, ensuing negative media coverage could have a detrimental impact on tourism demand. In such an event, it would be necessary for guided walking tour operators, tourism and government authorities, the tourism industry, and the media to collaborate and coordinate their efforts to inform tourists that tours are not dangerous, and to foster positive perceptions of such areas. This does not mean that appropriate safety measures should be disregarded or that tour operators and tourists should be complacent about safety. While the walking tour operator itself may have limited control over broader crime rates, providing a sense of security and support can help mitigate tourists' negative perceptions of crime-safety.

Regarding future tourism-crime research in this area, further work could be carried out to explore local residents' perceptions of crime-safety (particularly in light of the graphic nature of the tour guides' storytelling at murder sites which may be overheard by some local residents). Another study could examine local residents' perceptions of the impact of the Jack the Ripper tours; from both economic and socio-cultural perspectives. The study could also be replicated at other dark tourism sites in London and internationally in order to gain insight into the effects of perceived crime risk on visitation.

References

Adam, I. and Adongo, C. (2016) Do Backpackers Suffer Crime? Empirical Investigation of Crimes Perpetrated against Backpackers in Ghana, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 27, pp. 60-67.

Amir, A., Ismail, I. and See, T. (2015) Sustainable Tourist Environment: Perception of International Women Travellers on Safety and Security in Kuala Lumpur, *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences* 168, pp. 123-133.

Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. (2024) '1 million 670 thousand people visited the Memorial in 2023'. Available at: https://www.auschwitz.org/en/museum/news/1-million-670-thousand-people-visited-the-memorial-in-2023,1663.html (accessed 09/08/2024).

Barker, M., Page, S. and Meyer, D. (2003) Urban Visitor Perceptions of Safety During a Special Event, *Journal of Travel Research* 41(4), pp. 355-361. doi:10.1177/0047287503041004004

Beames, T. (1850) *The Rookeries of London: Past, Present, and Prospective* (London: Thomas Bosworth).

Bernard, T., Snipes, J., Gerould, T. and Vold, G. (2019) *Vold's Theoretical Criminology* (New York: Oxford University Press).

Biran, A. and Hyde, K. (2013) New Perspectives on Dark Tourism. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 7(3), pp. 191-198.

Brunt, P. and Shepherd, D. (2004) The Influence of Crime on Tourist Decision-Making: Some Empirical Evidence, *Tourism* 52(4), pp. 317-328.

Brunt, P., Mawby, R. and Hambly, Z. (2000) Tourist Victimisation And The Fear Of Crime On Holiday, *Tourism Management,* 21(4), pp. 417-424. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00084-9 [Crossref], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]

Carr, N. (2001) An Exploratory Study of Gendered Differences in Young Tourists' Perceptions of Danger within London, *Tourism Management* 22(5), pp. 565-570.

Chesney-Lind, M. and Lind, I. (1986) Visitors as Victims: Crimes Against Tourists in Hawaii, *Annals of Tourism Research* 13*,* pp. 167-191.

Cetinsoz, B. and Ege, Z. (2013) Impacts of Perceived Risks on Tourists' Revisit Intentions, *Anatolia—An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research* 24(2), pp. 173-187.

Chiao, H., Chen, Y. and Huang, W. (2018) Examining the Usability of an Online Virtual Tour-Guiding Platform for Cultural Tourism Education, *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education* 23, pp. 29-38.

Cohen, E. and Felson, M. (1979) Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach, *American Sociological Review* 44(4), pp. 588-608.

Cornish, D. and Clarke, R. (1986) *The Reasoning Criminal Rational Choice Perspectives on Offending* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers).

Criminology. (2018) 'Understanding criminology theories: Criminology', *Criminology* [online]. Available at: https://www.criminology.com/understanding-criminology-theories/ (accessed 11/07/2024).

Cronbach, L. (1951) Coefficient Alpha and the Internal Structure of Tests, *Psychometrika* 16*,* pp. 297-334. [Crossref], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar].

Crotts, J. (1996) Theoretical Perspectives on Tourist Criminal Victimisation, *The Journal of Tourism Studies* 7(1), pp. 2-9.

Crotts, J. (2003) Theoretical Perspectives on Tourist Criminal Victimization, *Journal of Tourism Studies* 14(1), pp. 92-98. doi:19961809302 [Google Scholar].

Dalton, D. (2014) *Dark Tourism and Crime* (London: Routledge).

de Albuquerque, K. and McElroy, J. (1999) Tourism and Crime in the Caribbean, *Annals of Tourism Research* 26(4), pp. 968-984.

Demos, E. (1992) Concern for Safety: A Potential Problem in the Tourist Industry, *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* 1(1), pp. 81-88.

Donaldson, R. and Ferreira, S. (2009) (Re-)creating Urban Destination Image: Opinions of Foreign Visitors to South Africa on Safety and Security, *Urban Forum* 20, pp. 1-18.

Evans, S. and Skinner, K. (2000) *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook* (London: Robinson).

Farkic, J., Peric, D., Lesjak, M. and Petelin, M. (2015) Urban Walking: Perspectives of Locals and Tourists, *Geographica Pannonica* 19(4), pp. 212-222.

Ferreira, S., & Harmse, A. (2000) Crime and Tourism in South Africa: International Tourists' Perceptions and Risk, *South African Geographical Journal* 82(2), pp. 80-85.

Floyd, M., Gibson, H., Pennington-Gray, L. and Thapa, B. (2004) The Effect of Risk Perceptions on Intentions to Travel in The Aftermath of September 11, 2001, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 15(2-3), pp. 19–38. doi:10.1300/J073v15n02_02 [Taylor & Francis Online], [Google Scholar].

Foley, M. and Lennon, J. (1996) JFK and Dark Tourism: A fascination with Assassination, *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2(4), pp. 198-211.

Fonesca, A., Seabra, C. and Silva, C. (2016) Dark Tourism: Concepts, Typologies and Sites, *Journal of Tourism Research & Hospitality* 2(2). doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.4172/2324-8807.S2-002 [Taylor & Francis Online], [Google Scholar].

Fuchs, G. and Reichel, A. (2011) An Exploratory Inquiry into Destination Risk Perceptions and Risk Reduction Strategies of First Time Vs. Repeat Visitors to a Highly Volatile Destination, *Tourism Management* 32(2), pp. 266-276.

George, R. (2003) Tourist's Perceptions of Safety and Security While Visiting Cape Town, *Tourism Management* 24(5), pp. 575-585.

George, R. (2010) Visitor Perceptions of Crime-Safety and Attitudes Towards Risk: The Case of Table Mountain National Park, Cape Town, *Tourism Management* 31(6), pp. 806-815.

George, R. (2012) International Tourists' Perceptions of Crime-Risk and their Future Travel Intentions during The 2010 FIFA World Cup In South Africa, *Crime Prevention and Community Safety Journal: An International Journal* 15(2), pp. 79-103.

George, R. and Booyens, I. (2014) Township Tourism Demand: Tourists' Perceptions of Safety and Security, *Urban Forum* 25, pp. 449-467.

George, R. and Mawby, R. (2015) Security at the 2012 London Olympics: Spectators' Perceptions of London as a Safe City, *Security Journal* 28, pp. 93-104.

George, R. and Swart, K. (2012) International Tourists' Perceptions of Crime-Risk and their Future Travel Intentions during the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, *Journal of Sport Tourism* 17(3), pp. 201-223.

Gibson, H. and Jordan, F. (1998) Shirley Valentine lives! The Experiences of Solo Women Travelers, Paper presented at the fifth Congress of the World Leisure and Recreation Association, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Greenberg, M. and Ruback, R. (1992) *After the Crime: Victim Decision-making* (New York: Plenum).

Harper, D. (2001) Comparing Tourist' Crime Victimisation: Research Notes, *Annals of Tourism Research* 28(4), pp. 1053-1056.

Hasan, K.I., Ismail, A. and Islam, F. (2017) Tourist Risk Perceptions and Revisit Intention: A Critical Review of the Literature, *Cogent Business & Management* 4(1). DOI: 10.1080/23311975.2017.1412874

Hobbs, D. (1995) *Bad Business: Professional Crime in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Hoffin, K. (2023) Jack the Ripper Tour: Whitechapel, London, UK, in A. Lynes, C. Kelly and J. Treadwell (Eds.) *50 Dark Tourism Destinations*, pp. 35-40 (Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press).

Inciardi, J. (1980) *Radical Criminology* (London: SAGE Publications).

Kinnaird, V. and Hall, D. (2000) Theorizing Gender in Tourism Research, *Tourism Recreation Research* 25(1), pp. 71-84.

Knudsen, B. (2011) Thanatourism: Witnessing Difficult Pasts, *Tourist Studies* 11(1), pp. 55–72.

Koerts, D. (2017) 'Amsterdam: Interpreting the city in "free" walking tours', in *Conference Proceedings 5th International Research Forum on Guided Tours*, pp. 112-123.

Korstanje, M. (2009) Re-visiting Risk Perception Theory in the Context of Travel, *e-Review of Tourism Research* 7(4), pp. 68-81.

Kozak, M. (2002) Comparative Analysis of Tourist Motivations by Nationality and Destinations, *Tourism Management* 23(3), pp. 221-232.

Kozak, M., Crotts, J. and Law, R. (2007) The Impact of the Perception of Risk on International Travellers, *International Journal of Tourism Research* 9(4), pp. 233-242.

Law, R. (2006) The Perceived Impact of Risks on Travel Decisions, *International Journal of Tourism Research* 8, pp. 289-300.

Le, D. and Pearce, D. (2011) Segmenting Visitors to Battlefield Sites: International Visitors to the Former Demilitarized Zone in Vietnam, *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* 28(4), pp. 451-463.

Lennon, J. and Foley, M. (2000) *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (London: Continuum).

Lepp, A. and Gibson, H. (2003) Tourist Roles, Perceived Risk and International Tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research* 30(3), pp. 606-624. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(03)00024-0

Lepp, A. and Gibson, H. (2008) Sensation Seeking and Tourism: Tourist Role, Perception of Risk and Destination Choice, *Tourism Management* 29(4), pp. 740-750. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2007.08.002

Lewis, H., Schrier, T. and Xu, S. (2022) Dark Tourism: Motivations and Visit Intentions of Tourists, *International Hospitality Review* 36(*1*), pp. 107-123.

Light, D. (2017) Progress in Dark Tourism and Thanatourism Research: An Uneasy Relationship with Heritage Tourism, *Tourism Management* 61, pp. 275-301.

Lliev, D. (2021) Consumption, motivation and experience in dark tourism: a conceptual and critical analysis. *Tourism Geographies, 23*(5-6), 963-984.

Mansfeld, Y. (1996) Wars, tourism and the "Middle East" factor, in A. Pizam & Y. Mansfeld (Eds.) *Tourism, Crime and International Security Issues,* pp. 265-278 (New York: Wiley).

Mansfeld, Y. and Pizam, A. (Eds.). (2000) *Tourism, security and safety: From theory to practice,* in A. Pizam & Y. Mansfeld (Eds.) *Tourism, Crime and International Security Issues,* pp. 265-278 (New York: Wiley).

Martini, A. and Buda, D. (2020) Dark Tourism and Affect: Framing Places of Death And Disaster, *Current Issues in Tourism* 23(6), pp. 679-692. doi: 10.1080/13683500.2018.1518972.

Mawby, R. I. (2000) Tourists' Perceptions of Security: The Risk–Fear Paradox, *Tourism Economics* 6(2), pp. 109-121.

Mawby, R. I. (2014) Responding to Tourist Victims of Crime: Lessons the UK can Learn, *Crime Prevention and Community Safety* 16(4), pp. 294-300.

Mawby, R. I. (2017) Crime and Tourism: What the Available Statistics do or do not tell us, *International Journal of Tourism Policy* 7(2), pp. 81-92.

Mawby, R. I., Ozascilar, M. and Ziyalar, N. (2021) Risk, Safety and Security Among Visitors to Istanbul, *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 21(1), pp. 61-72.

Mazursky, D. (1989) Past Experience and Future Tourism Decisions, *Annals of Tourism Research* 16(3), pp. 333-344.

Michalko, G. (2004) Tourism Eclipsed by Crime, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 15(2–3), pp.159-172.

Miles, W. (2002) Auschwitz: Museum Interpretation and Darker Tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research* 29(4), pp. 1175-1178.

Milman, A. and Bach, S. (1999) The Impact of Security Devices On Tourists' Perceived Safety: The Central Florida Example, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research* 23(4), pp. 371-386. doi:10.1177/109634809902300403 [Crossref], [Google Scholar].

Morton, J. (2021) *East End Gangland* (London: Sphere).

Opfermann, L. (2021) Walking in Jozi: Guided Tours, Insecurity and Urban Regeneration in Inner City Johannesburg, *Global Policy* 12, pp. 41-52.

Pearce, P. (1988) The Ulysses Factor: Evaluating Tourists in Visitor's Settings, *Annals of Tourism Research* 15(1), pp. 1-28.

Pinhey, T. and Iverson, T. (1994) Safety Concerns of Japanese Visitors to Guam, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 3(2), pp. 87-94.

Pizam, A. (1982). Tourism and Crime: Is There a Relationship? *Journal of Travel Research* 20(3), 7–10.

Pizam, A. and Mansfeld, Y. (Eds.) (1996) *Tourism, Crime and International Security Issues. Chichester: Wiley & Sons*. [Google Scholar]

Poade, D. (2017) *The Business of Dark Tourism: The Management of Dark Tourism Visitor Sites and Attractions with Special Reference to Innovation*. Phd thesis. University of Exeter.

Poria, Y., Butler, R. and Airey, D. (2004) The Meaning of Heritage Sites for Tourists: The Case of Massada *Tourism Analysis* 9(1/2), pp. 15-22.

Prideaux, B. (1996) The tourism crime cycle: A beach destination case study, in A. Pizam & Y. Mansfeld (Eds.) *Tourism, Crime and International Security Issues,* pp. 59-76 (New York: Wiley).

Qiao, X. (2018) Empirical Study on the Influencing Factors of Female Tourists' Safety Perceptions: A Case Study of Tianjin Female Tourists, *Journal of Business. Management* 12, pp. 139-14.

Reisinger, Y. and Crotts, J. (2009) The Influence of Gender on Travel Risk Perceptions, Safety, and Travel Intentions, *Tourism Analysis* 14, pp. 793-807.

Reisinger, Y. and Mavondo, F. (2005) Travel Anxiety and Intentions to Travel Internationally: Implications of Travel Risk Perception, *Journal of Travel Research* 43(3), pp. 212-225.

Reisinger, Y. and Mavondo, F. (2006) Cultural Differences in Travel Risk Perception, *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* 20(1), pp. 13-31.

Rittichainuwat, B. and Chakraborty, G. (2009) Perceived Travel Risk Regarding Terrorism and Disease: The Case of Thailand, *Tourism Management* 30(3), pp. 410-418.

Roberts, C. (2018) Educating the (Dark) masses: Dark tourism and sensemaking, in: P. Stone, R. Hartmann, T. Seaton, R. Sharpley and L. White (Eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan). https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-47566-4_25

Roncek, D. and Maier, P. (1991) Bars, Blocks, and Crimes Revisited: Linking the Theory of Routine Activities to the Empiricism of "Hot Spots", *Criminology* 29, pp. 725-753. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1991.tb01086.x

Ryan, C. and Kinder, R. (1996) The deviant tourist and the criminogenic place: The case of the tourist and the New Zealand prostitute, in in A. Pizam & Y. Mansfeld (Eds.) *Tourism, Crime and International Security Issues,* pp. 23-36 (New York: Wiley).

Schiebler, S., Crotts, J. and Hollinger, R. (1996) Florida tourists' vulnerability to crime, in Mansfeld, Y., & Pizam, A. (Eds.) *Tourism, Crime and International Security Issues,* pp. 39-50 (New York: Wiley).

Schutte, F., Breetzke, G. and Edelstein, I. (2021) The Relationship Between Temperature and Crime on the Cape Flats of South Africa. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences* 16(1), pp. 127-145.

Seabra, C., Dolnicar, S., Abrantes, J. and Kastenholz, E. (2013) Heterogeneity in Risk and Safety Perceptions of International Tourists, *Tourism Management* 36, pp. 502-510.

Seabra, C. and Korstanje, K. (Eds.) (2023) *Safety and Tourism: Tourism Security-Safety and Post-Conflict Destinations* (Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited).

Seabra, C., Reis, P. and Abrantes, J. (2020) The Influence of Terrorism in Tourism Arrivals: A Longitudinal Approach in a Mediterranean Country, *Annals of Tourism Research* 80(January). doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2019.102811.

Seltzer, M. (2007) *True Crime: Observations on Violence and Modernity* (Abingdon: Routledge).

Sharpley, R. (2005) Travels to the edge of darkness: Towards a typology of dark tourism, in: C. Ryan, S. Page and M. Aitken. (Eds.) *Taking Tourism to The Limits: Issues, Concepts and Managerial Perspectives,* pp. 217-228 (Oxford: Elsevier).

Sharpley, R. and Stone, P. (2009) *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism* (Bristol: Blue Ridge Summit: Channel View Publications). https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845411169.

Sönmez, S. and Graefe, A. (1998a) Influence of Terrorism Risk on Foreign Tourism Decisions, *Annals of Tourism Research* 25(*1*), pp. 112-144.

Sönmez, S. and Graefe, A. (1998b) Determining Future Travel Behavior from Past Travel Experience and Perceptions of Risk and Safety, *Journal of Travel Research* 37(2), pp. 171-177.

Stone, P. (2006) A Dark Tourism Spectrum: Towards a Typology of Death and Macabre Related Tourist Sites, Attractions and Exhibitions, *Tourism* 52, pp. 145-160.

Stone, P. (2010) *Death, Dying, and Dark Tourism in Contemporary Society: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Central Lancashire).

Uzzell, D. and Ballantyne, R. (1998) Heritage that hurts: Interpretation in a postmodern world, in D. Uzzell and R. Ballantyne (Eds.) *Contemporary Issues in Heritage and Environmental Interpretation*, pp. 152-171 (London: The Stationery Office).

Van Es, N. and Reijnders, S. (2018) Making Sense of Capital Crime Cities: Getting Underneath the Urban Facade on Crime-Detective Fiction Tours, *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 21(4), pp. 502-520.

Walmsley, D., Boskovic, R. and Pigram J. (1983) Tourism and Crime: An Australian Perspective, *Journal of Leisure Research* 13(2), pp. 136-155.

Wang, C. and Kao, Y. (2017) Re-assembling the Memorial Landscape: The Politics of Walking Tours in Taipei, *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23(10), pp. 1002-1016.

Wang, J., Guo, J., Lu, G., Zhang, S., Feng, L. and Morrison, A. (2024) Beyond Thanatopsis: The Sublime Experience of Visitors at Natural Disaster Sites, *Current Issues in Tourism*, pp. 1-15.

Xie, L., Guan, X., Liu, B. and Huan, T. (2021) The Antecedents and Consequences of the Co-Creation Experience in Virtual Tourist Communities: From the Perspective of Social Capital in Virtual Space, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 48, pp. 492-499.

Yang, E. and Nair, V. (2014) Tourism at Risk: A Review of Risk and Perceived Risk In Tourism, *Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism* 3, pp. 1-21.

Yang, E., Sharif, S. and Khoo-Lattimore, C. (2015) Tourists' Risk Perceptions of Risky Destinations: The Case of Sabah's Eastern Coast, *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 15(3), pp. 206-221.

Zou, Y. (2022) Cultural Differences in International Tourists' Perceived Safety in China, *Journal of China Tourism Research*, pp. 126. DOI: 10.1080/19388160.2022.2114969.

Zou, Y. and Mawby, R. (2021) Perceptions of Safety Among Visitors to China: Feeling Safe in an Unfamiliar Environment, *Safer Communities* 20(1), pp. 16-30.