

## The Role of Integrated Marketing Communications on Dark Heritage Sites: the perspective of travel agencies

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### Abstract

This study was for exploring the role of integrated marketing communications (IMC) on dark heritage sites. For this purpose, a total number of 347 usable questionnaires were collected from employees working in Egyptian travel agencies, as they are the marketers of dark heritage sites. The survey indicated that communication means for message delivery could be divided into three types (variables): “public relation (PR),” “advertisement (ADV),” and “direct sale and promotion (DS&P).” ANOVA, Mann-Whitney, and Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted to find out the relationship between the study variables (the three IMC factors and demographic characteristics of travel agencies' marketers). The findings are expected to assist dark heritage marketers and managers, to identify the effective marketing tools for target markets. Therefore, these sites would be promoted within the tourism-marketing plan.

**Keywords:** Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), Dark Heritage Sites, Marketing, Egypt.

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### Introduction

The interest in the study of dark sites increased at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and is reflecting the extent to which society is interested in historical events related to death and disasters (an interest that needs to be understood and interpreted in research). It also explains the extent to which society is affected by the importance of such events for nations, civilizations and the path of their history. Dark tourism sites give the chance to retain and keep the “dark” memory of humankind and make it accessible, for the domestic and international tourist, and to all people (Powell, Kennell, 2016). Lennon and Foley (2000) defined dark tourism sites as the attraction of death and disaster. They conceived dark tourism as a part of cultural tourism and an amazing part of heritage tourism (Bowman & Pezzullo, 2010). However, their definition of dark tourism was considered limited compared to that which is often known since it is clearly recognized as a phenomenon of the twentieth century. It is an interpretation of dark tourism as postmodernism (Light, 2017).

Additionally, some researchers are not persuaded that dark tourism or thanatourism are sufficiently a distinguished part of heritage tourism to justify their adoption as expository frameworks. Ashworth and Isaac (2015) were indifferent with dark tourism. Evolving their earlier work on dissonant heritage, advocated the terms ‘atrocities tourism’ or ‘atrocities heritage’ (Ashworth, 1996, 2004; Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005a). Logan and Reeves (2009) suggested the term ‘difficult heritage’ and in no chapter of their volume, they referred to dark tourism, in spite of focusing on the types of site that have been broadly studied by dark tourism researchers. In fact, some scholars have studied to redefine dark tourism as special types of heritage. In brief, despite the growing interest in dark tourism over the past two decades, some researchers are unconvinced and at times dismissive of the concept (Roberts & Stone, 2014). Furthermore, researchers have focused on classification of dark tourism or thanatourism according to sites (Dann, 1998; Dunkley et al., 2007; Sharpley, 2005; Stone, 2006), whilst others classified according to visiting motives for such sites (Dann, 1998; Raine, 2013; Seaton, 1996; Sharpley, 2005). The most significant typology is the supply of dark sites (Stone, 2006). Dark sites are divided into sites of death and suffering (termed the ‘darkest’ form of dark tourism), and sites associated with death and suffering (the ‘lightest’ form). Dark sites include other goals of the visit such as education/entertainment; history/heritage; authentic/inauthentic sites; shorter/longer time scale since the event; and higher/lower political/ideological significance. This classification has raised considerable controversy within heritage tourism (mainly the authentic/inauthentic and education/entertainment terms) but was significant in descriptive the distinguished form of dark tourism supply. Marketers focus on studies that use multiple sources of information to shed light on the dark heritage sites (Dunkley, 2007; Johnston, 2013; Podoshen, 2013). Therefore, a clear marketing strategy should be available for dark sites. Valuable strategic tool dark heritage site administrator should use in marketing a brand image is throughout Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). This communication strategic tool combines a marketing mix to send effective messages to target audiences (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998; Sirgy, 1998; Vargas, 2005). Practically the integrated marketing communication consists of many tools, such as, advertisement, direct Sale & promotion, public relations and word-of-mouth, to attain its communication goals successfully (Pike, 2004). IMC may potentially create the greatest effect on consumers’ behavior (Madhavaram et.al, 2005).

The purpose of this paper is to give examples of dark heritage sites in Egypt and how these sites should be marketed. However, dark sites could be an attraction of dark tourism and heritage tourism with respect to the strong relationship between dark and heritage sites. As a result, this study seeks how marketers can promote their sites? This study is concentrated on travel agencies employees as the marketers. So the research focuses on answering two questions: (1) what are dark sites, heritage sites and the strong relationship between them? (2) How should marketers promote these sites by IMC?

### **Dark tourism and heritage tourism**

The vast majority of case studies used in dark tourism research emphasize the intimate relationship of the concept with heritage, confirmed by increasing the use of the dark tourism concept in heritage studies (Hyde and Harman, 2011). Undoubtedly, dark tourism is utilized as a comprehensive term under which several heritage sites related to death, struggle, and disaster have been placed. While IMC has been effectively implemented by many fields, it is still a new method to heritage management (Wang et al., 2009). Nearly all heritage sites have been classified from the dark tourism side, as well as interest in the motivation of the visit, site interpretation and categorization of sites (Biran et al., 2011; Cohen, 2011; Kang et al., 2012; Stone and Sharpley, 2008). Marketing sites in an effective and integrated way to the tourist are more often than not for the purpose of profitability (Bird et al., 2018). On the other hand, fewer efforts have been made to the motives and conditions of supply of dark heritage sites and consequently the responsibility of the provider in involving heritage-related aspects such as memories and identities. Lanfant (1995) stated that nation should be interested in developing and promoting heritage resources, as these are vital in the structure of a national identity and destination image. As the need for authentic tourist experiences has intensified in the recent decade and with a growing realisation that suppliers manipulate site attributes to increase perceived authenticity to visitors (Tomaz and Vesna, 2010), attention needs to be modified towards the enhanced aspects defining dark heritage sites to recognize how they are predictable to the community. As Farmaki (2013) summed up that, dark tourism sites are frequently imagined as heritage attractions. Nearly all heritage managers concentrate their efforts on exploration, conservation, and education. As the rivalry has increased, however, marketing a site as an unparalleled “product” and effectively communicating with the potential customers becomes very important (Pike, 2004). Sharpley and Stone (2009)

declared that dark tourism sites sustain the ability to note down the historical events of people or to give the political explanation of past life. The raising awareness focused on the role of collective remembrance and its influence in the heritage of societies that has been well- written down by cultural studies in the initial period. Benton (2010) confirmed that collective reminiscence differentiates what is vital in a society's identity, interpreting perceptions into historical memories which consecutively are described as cultural heritage within the tourism industry. Predictably, studies support the idea that tangible and intangible heritage illustrates people's characteristics and that heritage systems are based mainly on memories and values rather than fact and reality (Henderson, 2007). Even so, where memories are related to struggle or events of aggressiveness and death, it is likely that narrative argument will occur, as diversity of perception of community members. For this reason, illumination of dark heritage can be uncertain and discarded. Included messages and moral symbols, heritage difference forms the growth and marketing of heritage tourism (Ashworth, 2008). Reasonably, heritage associated to argument, political struggle and genocide has been called "difficult heritage" (Logan and Reeves, 2009). Recently, dark tourism as a creative type of tourism related to the consumption of "tourism that hurts" in its field of study (Convery et al., 2014). Therefore, "conflict heritage" (McDowell, 2008), "atrocious heritage" (Ashworth, 2002) or "dissonant heritage" (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996) is often categorized under the umbrella of dark tourism. Consequently, researchers are seeking to revise and expand this classification (Heuermann & Chhabra, 2014; Raine, 2013). Otherwise, Yoshida et al. (2016) recommended that a field based on an education/entertainment binary represent an unsuitable model for dark tourism in Asian contexts. It is explicit from the above that dark tourism is a Western concept that is often applied but has some criticism. As for non-Western societies, they assume alternative forms between the living and the dead. In conjunction with the growth of typologies has been a concern to categorize sub-forms of dark tourism. These types contain "penal/prison tourism" (Strange & Kempa, 2003, p. 388); "fright tourism" (Bristow & Newman, 2005); "genocide tourism" (Beech, 2009; Dunkley et al., 2007, p. 9); "grief tourism" (Dunkley et al., 2007, p. 8); "disaster tourism" (Robbie, 2008); "favela tourism" (Robb, 2009, p. 52); "pagan tourism" (Laws, 2013); "suicide tourism" (Miller & Gonzalez, 2013, p. 293); "atomic tourism" (Freeman, 2014); "conflict heritage tourism" (Mansfeld & Korman, 2015); and "dystopian dark tourism" (Podoshen et al., 2015). As well, use "poverty tourism" as a form of niche tourism (Rolfes, 2010;

Carrigan, 2014), and “gothic tourism” (McEvoy, 2016). Ryan and Kohli (2006) confirmed that tourist experience consists of place, time, and political factors in dark heritage sites. In fact, as Farmaki (2013) suggested that, the tourist experience is shaped within the socio-cultural environment in which the site is found. However, Site identity is formed or affected to some extent by heritage planners, mainly when there are political goals. Dark heritage sites depend on historical events naturally, mostly affected by political forces. For that reason, the tourist experience at dark sites is directed from heritage societies, deeply inclined by political goals and media analysis (Convery et al., 2014) and regularly intended for political propaganda throughout a process of remembrance and memorialization of loss and struggle. No doubt, that heritage is commonly helped to attain social goals and divide history into “past” and “present” to inform the present generation (Poria and Ashworth, 2009). Therefore, the marketing and promotion of dark heritage sites provide Web 2.0 – as a tool of integrated marketing communication– the increasing import as a site of data formation and exchange in tourism (Tribe & Liburd, 2016). In addition, there is rising to utilize a range of websites that include travel blogs. Besides, written sources such as travel writing, guidebooks, and comment of visitors that can be used as an indicator for visitor experiences (Dunkley, 2007; Johnston, 2013; Podoshen, 2013).

#### **The Integrated marketing communication for dark places/destinations**

The marketing and promotion of sites related to death, atrocity and disaster remain an ignored topic (Farmaki, 2013; Johnston, et al., 2016) and beside the imperfect literature on these topics are assorted and disjointed. The promotion or marketing of dark sites are at times handled incidentally (or through discussions involving the supply side of dark tourism). Further, Marketing studies provide little attention to dark tourism. This gap is deep, since sites of atrocity and disaster are similar to any other tourist sites in packaging, promoting, pricing, and positioning” (Brown et al., 2012). The Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is the most influential technic among experts and researchers looking for significant effects from the use of strategic communication tools in a campaign (Chang and Thorson, 2004; Naik and Raman, 2003). Furthermore, the public sector cooperates with the private sector in promoting the places of dark tourism in the same way as other tourist attractions and destinations. Therefore, earlier studies show cooperation when using several promotional tools (e.g. advertising, personal selling, public relation, and direct marketing) or in media like TV, radio, print and Web (Confer and McGlathery, 1991; Naik and

Raman, 2003; Stammerjohan et al., 2005). Interaction effect explanation is based on theories including difference theory, repetition-variation theory and the principle of selective attention (Stammerjohan et al., 2005). It also appears that interpretations, variations, and functionality of IMC are associated with and relied on different factors such as organizational variables, cultural aspects and the specialized background of employees (Beard, 1997; Eagle and Kitchen, 2000; Ots and Nyilasy, 2015). The unwillingness to discuss the marketing in dark tourism and atrocity tourism may reproduce an argument about the promotion of dark sites. Consequently, the marketing of dark places may be considered as unsuitable, inconvenient, or unfair (Brown et al., 2012). It is clear that researchers have diminished the importance of this topic. Some studies that have handled the marketing of dark sites or attractions typically address them as a case study research but with minor exceptions (Brown et al., 2012; MacCarthy, 2016). (IMC) is able to create sound effects on visitors' expectation. IMC that integrates sources, communication, tools, and media evidently could increase awareness and develop the image of dark heritage sites. Heritage administrators are recommended to employ appropriate IMC strategy to increase influential value for destination brands. Heritage administrators could employ the outcomes to construct a creative marketing plan, depended on visitors' choices, and the power of communication tools to enhance marketing competence and decrease marketing cost. Finally, involving the concept of integrated marketing communication (IMC) to create marketing plans becomes predictable. Simultaneously administrators could intend integrated messages to deliver to target customers for a valuable destination image. Not only can heritage administrators develop destination's awareness but also image to maximize the market share, they also can disseminate the theory of sustaining dark heritage assets for our next generation. (Wang et al., 2009). Unluckily, the application of concepts, theories, and models of dark tourism marketing is still few. Therefore, sites can manage their relations with atrocity or struggle to improve place products to attract tourists. Relations with death or violence heritage can improve a place into somewhere surprising, which can be utilized to encourage other tourists (Ashworth, 2004; Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005a). Some case studies research have focused on the responsibility of dark sites in making place product, attracting further tourists, and conducive to economic development (Eskew, 2001; Essah, 2001; Isaac, 2014; Isaac & Ashworth, 2011; Rofe, 2013; Warner, 1999; White, 2013). In other cases, the core focus is on the rebranding of sites following battle or struggle (Volcic et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2014), or the

lack of enthusiasm to adopt dark tourism in making place products (Simone-Charteris et al., 2013). On the other hand, the use of death places as branding is undistinguished to dark tourism as there is a necessary literature related to heritage for such purposes. Other marketing research has concentrated on definite items as well as the challenges of promoting sensitive sites (Austin, 2002) and the use of images in illustrating a site as dark (Smith & Croy, 2005). An emerging research topic is the marketing messages offered to tourists of their visit on websites, both visitors (Heuermann & Chhabra, 2014; Krisjanous, 2016) and those of travel agencies and tour operators (Johnston et al., 2016; Powell & Iankova, 2016; Smith & Croy, 2005). While the impact of the websites on the decision to visit dark sites, so far has not received the required attention. Studies have shown death takes a symbolic and sacred form in the national heritage as well as influenced by the tourist experience with educational or cultural motives (Poria et al., 2004). For example, Poria et al. (2006) classified three types of tourists:

The devotees of history, those who want to learn, and those who maintain no personal attachment to the site and perceive the visit as leisure. Therefore, the explanation comprises a most important element of the tourist experience (Moscardo and Ballantyne, 2008). Biran et al. (2011) stated that dark tourism understanding focus on the strength of the awareness of the site, familiarity with the event and the importance of the site as a place to attract. If tourists realize the place as their own heritage, they will show their emotions towards the place. Positively, an increasing type of heritage tourism is a tour of sites related to person's heritage (Poria et al., 2009). Additionally, Prentice and Anderson (2007) suggested that strengthening of national personality represent a vital aspect of visiting dark heritage sites. As a result, the perceived value of the dark heritage site is further affected by the level of awareness of the place and location (Yuill, 2003). Obviously, the gathering of people, place, and time in dark tourism growth is essential in the discovery of dark heritage sites within social Heritage. Corresponding to this perception, IMC theory should be more inductive than prescriptive, letting theory develop by understanding IMC through the experience of practitioners in their practices. Firms should learn and employ integrated tools and improve the performance of the practice. We need modeling the underlying structures guiding practitioners in IMC behaviors (Ots and Nyilasy, 2015).

#### **Dark heritage sites in Egypt**

In Cairo, there is Fortress of Babylon, Military Salah al-Din Castle Museum as wars, forts tourism or genocide tourism. The massacre of the

Mamluks at the door of the castle and Bab El Azab Route as Massacres and atrocities tourism. The tomb of the President Gamal Abdel Nasser, the tomb of the President Mohamed Anwar Sadat, the tomb of the leader Saad Zaghloul as tombs/graves tourism or grief tourism. Taha Hussein Museum, Ahmed Shawky Museum, Mahmoud Khalil Museum in Giza as conflict heritage tourism. Denshway museum in Menoufia as wars and forts tourism. Re-simulation of Ria and Sekeena legend as horror and ghost tourism or fright tourism in Alexandria. In Sharqeya Bahr El Baqar Massacre museum as Massacres and Atrocities tourism. The 6th of October martyrs' tombs in Suez as Cemeteries tourism. Mount El Banat at Saint Catherine as horror and ghost tourism. Memorial of World War II Military Museum of El Alamein as Memorials tourism. Mountain of the dead in Siwa as cemeteries tourism. The Valley of the Golden Mummies Cemeteries at El-Bhariya Oasis, as tombs tourism (Attia, et al., 2015). Re-simulation of the Pharos curses Legend in Luxor as horror and ghost tourism fright tourism. Philea Island Wars and Forts Tourism dystopian dark tourism in Aswan. The tombs of the Nobles, Cape City ruins, Aga-Khan Shrine, the anonymous Soldier tomb as cemeteries tourism, graves tourism or grief tourism (Keyser, 2001).

### **Methodology**

This study aimed at identifying of dark heritage sites in Egypt, and the role of ICM to promote these sites in Egypt.

### **Respondents**

The target populations of this study represent the employees in travel agencies category "A" in Egypt. This category of travel companies was chosen as it is supposed to be more knowledgeable and to have a basic understanding and relation with the topics of research in order to obtain significant data. The sample was randomly chosen. The survey was administered to 370 employees. The mail survey and interviews were the main forms of data collection. Data collection was carried out during the period from Jan 2018 to March 2018. There were 347 responses received, indicating an estimated response rate of 93 percent.

### **Research Instrument**

The data collecting methods of the study were questionnaire forms, to verify the gathered data. A survey questionnaire was developed to measure the role of integrated marketing communications on dark heritage sites. The instrument was developed from dark tourism and IMC literature. The survey using a scale of revised items from Wang et al., (2009), they recommended 21 items testing the role of various marketing channels. These items were developed to reflect the major classifications

of mass media. These categories include (1) Direct Sale and Promotion (DS&P) (2) Public Relations (PR); (3) Advertisement (ADV). Each question invited the respondents to rate a particular communication medium on the marketing process of the dark heritage sites. Measurement of the 21 items was applied a 5-point scale ranging from extremely disagree (1) to extremely agree (5). The higher score on the five-point Likert scale means the higher of dark sites marketing. A pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire validity. Reliability analysis on item-scale was conducted. In the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha of the study measures was above 0.70. The questionnaire comprises of two sections. Section 1 represents the respondents' profile. Section 2 consists of 21 inquiries to categorize IMC tools of dark heritage sites.

### **Data analysis**

Data were analyzed employing SPSS version 16-software package. Suitable tools were used to examine the variables and find the reliability. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of the data, the mean and standard deviation have been calculated to classify the sets and determine how homogenous or discrepant (inconsistent) the sample is, regarding all research variables. The descriptive statistics and ANOVA, Mann-Whitney, and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to analyze the demographic data.

## **Results**

### **Respondent Profile**

Respondents' demographic data were analyzed by descriptive statistics using the SPSS 16. Table (1) showed the demographic profile of respondents. Female respondents' represent (29.7%) and male counterparts represent (70.3%). Most respondents were relatively young. About three-fourths (76.1%) of the respondents were under the age of 41, about (13%) of the sample falling into the age category of 24-30 and 11% were from 41 to 50. In terms of work experience, (52.7%) of the respondents were 6-10 years of work experience. Nearly half of the respondents (40.6%) falling into the range from 11 years to 15 years. While (6.6%) of the respondents have experienced more than sixteen years. With regard to the respondents level of education, about (19.6%) of the sample had, high education. The vast majority of the sample (80.4%) received the postgraduate education.

**Table (1): The Profile of the Respondents**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Freq. (N= )</i>	<i>%</i>
<b><i>Gender</i></b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Female	103	29.7
<input type="checkbox"/> Male	244	70.3
<b><i>Age</i></b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> 24- 30	45	13.0
<input type="checkbox"/> 31- 40	264	76.1
<input type="checkbox"/> 41 - 50	38	11.0
<b><i>Work experience</i></b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 years	183	52.7
<input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 years	141	40.6
<input type="checkbox"/> 16 years and above	23	6.6
<b><i>Education</i></b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> High school	68	19.6
<input type="checkbox"/> Post graduated	279	80.4

According to the mean and standard deviation table (2) showed that the mean value for the study variables was ranged from 2.069 to 4.161 and the standard deviation from 0.756 to 1.319. Moreover, the highest mean value (4.161) for Advertisement (ADV) than Direct Sale & Promotion (DS&P) (3.858) and Public Relations (PR) (3.662).

**Table (2) Mean and Standard Deviation for the study variables**

	<b>Sentences</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
	<b>Direct Sale &amp; Promotion (DS&amp;P)</b>	<b>3.858</b>	<b>.7214</b>	<b>.705</b>
1	Carnivals influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	2.299	1.062	
2	Travel exhibitions influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.513	.837	
3	Travel agency ads influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.141	1.221	
4	Festivals influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.247	1.070	
5	Radio travel newsnews influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	2.910	.963	
6	Travel information news influences the marketing of dark heritage sites.	2.521	1.319	
7	Travel info brochures influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.164	1.195	
8	Radio programnews influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	2.858	1.085	
9	Recommendation F/R news influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.642	1.137	
	<b>Public Relations (PR)</b>	<b>3.662</b>	<b>.6485</b>	<b>.710</b>
10	Printed media columns news influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	2.951	1.207	
11	Printed media travel news influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.982	.7714	
12	TV travel news influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	2.397	1.004	
13	TV travel programs influence the marketing of dark heritage sites	2.069	.9191	
14	Internet travel information influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.873	1.073	
15	Travel news Web influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.714	.986	
16	Social media influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.685	1.097	
	<b>Advertisement (ADV)</b>	<b>4.161</b>	<b>.7955</b>	<b>.70</b>
17	Outdoor boards influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	2.953	1.217	
18	Internet advertising influence the marketing of dark heritage sites	3.322	1.160	
19	TV commercials influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.187	1.161	
20	Broadcast commercials influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.276	1.203	
21	News/magazine ads influence the marketing of dark heritage sites.	3.034	1.255	

One-way ANOVA results showed a significant difference between employee's participation in the marketing of dark sites in relation to their age, (DS&P  $F= 46.461$ , ADV  $F= 36.85$   $p$  value= 0.000, .000). There were significant differences in Participants' responds in relation to Age except in PR.

**Table (3) the Differences in Participants' responds in Relation to Age**

Age		N	mean	SD	F	P
Direct Sale & Promotion (DS&P)	24- 30	45	1.5111	.50553	46.461	.000
	31- 40	264	2.2614	1.02991		
	41 -	38	3.5000	.68773		
Public Relations (PR)	24- 30	45	4.0000	1.22474	21.888	.430
	31- 40	264	2.7917	1.18216		
	41 -	38	2.8158	.60873		
Advertisement (ADV)	24- 30	45	2.0000	1.22474	36.85	.000
	31- 40	264	2.7311	.93497		
	41- 50	38	3.7895	.62202		

The results of table (4) indicated that the employees' work experience had a significant effect on direct Sale & promotion (DS&P) and advertisement (ADV) , the employees whose work experience between six to ten years have participated more in direct Sale & promotion and advertisement ( $F= 66.41, 127,03$ ,  $P$  value= 0.006, 0.001).

**Table (4) the Differences in Participants' responds in Relation to work experience**

Work experience		N	mean	SD	F	P
Direct Sale & Promotion (DS&P)	6-10	183	1.8798	.77515	66.408	.006
	11-15	141	2.5674	1.11037		
	16 years and	23	4.0000	.00000		
Public Relations (PR)	6-10	183	2.8579	1.10520	1.180	.308
	11-15	141	3.0638	1.41023		
	16 years	23	3.0000	.00000		
Advertisement (ADV)	6-10	183	2.1257	.68784	127.036	.001
	11-15	141	3.3617	.96567		
	16	23	4.0000	.00000		

Using Mann-Whitney test, it is obvious from the table (5) that the gender had a significant effect on direct Sale & promotion (DS&P) and advertisement, the results indicated that male employees confirmed that

Direct Sale & Promotion and Advertisement are Influential more than female's point of view(p value=0.008, .000 )

**Table (5) the Differences in Participants' responds in Relation to gender**

Gender		N	Mean rank	Sig.(2 tailed)
Direct Sale & Promotion (DS&P)	male	244	182.92	.008
	female	103	152.87	
Public Relations (PR)	male	244	171.34	.423
	female	103	180.30	
Advertisement (ADV)	male	244	204.73	.000
	female	103	101.21	

According to table (6), Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that high school and post-graduate employees had participated in this survey but postgraduate employees' participated largely. From the table, there is a positive relationship between Direct Sale & Promotion (DS&P) and the educational levels sig. =.002 Chi-Square = 9.54. Public Relations (PR) had a positive relationship with sig. =.000 and Chi-Square =55.11. In addition, Advertisement (ADV) had a significant relation with sig. = .000 and Chi-Square = 35.64.

**Table (6) the Differences in Participants' responds in Relation to education**

Education		N	Mean rank	Asym p. Sig.	Chi-Square	df
Direct Sale & Promotion (DS&P)	High school	68	206	.002	9.540	1
	Post-graduated	279	166			
Public Relations (PR)	High school	68	251	.000	55.112	1
	Post-graduated	279	155			
Advertisement (ADV)	High school	68	112	.000	35.643	1
	Post-graduated	279	189			

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of integrated marketing communication (IMC) channels on marketing dark heritage sites. Results indicated that integrated marketing communication (IMC) used as a tool for message delivery. IMC is described as a process that adopts and implements strategic and tactical marketing communication decision-making (Reid et al., 2005; Schultz and

Schultz, 1998). According to Wang et al (2009) who classified 21 items testing the role of a variety of marketing channels, these items were divided into three types as “direct sale & promotion (DS&P),” “public relation (PR),” and “advertisement (ADV).” Direct Sale & Promotion (DS&P) contained carnivals/activities, travel exhibition, travel agency ads, festivals, the “public relation” communication featured Print media , Print media travel news , TV travel news , TV travel programs , Internet travel information , Social media ,Travel news Web. The third type, “advertisement,” contained advertising delivered through varied media to people, such as the Internet, outdoor boards, TV, broadcast, and print media. The value means of Advertisement (ADV) played a vital role to help people make up their mind through Internet and broadcast commercials. Direct sale and promotion (DS&P) confirmed through recommendation F/R news and travel exhibition. Public Relations appeared to have less influence than did the other two communication types through printed media travel news and Internet travel information. Furthermore, the results of demographic revealed that male employees aged between 31- 40 years old who is 6-10 years old and 11-15 years of experience have largely participated in the study. No differences in the values were found between the Public Relations (PR) and gender. Findings suggested that participation of respondents between 31 and 40 years of age differed from the rest of the sample on all three factors. Another significant result of the current study was that a positive relationship was found between employee's participation in direct Sale & promotion (DS&P) and advertisement (ADV) in relation to their age. The same result (of gender and work experience) with the positive relationship was found between employee's participation in direct Sale & promotion (DS&P) and advertisement (ADV). For the level of education, results indicated that Direct Sale & Promotion (DS&P), Public Relations, and Advertisement (ADV) had a significant relation with respect to the educational levels. Therefore, Methods used to measure the effectiveness of PR and advertising give the information to the administrators for decisions making and for assessing these decisions. Controlling the competence of advertising and PR should be depended mainly on measuring of cost effects. Furthermore, these communicative effects in synchronism with other elements of marketing mix can be measured the impact on sales because the final aim is clearly the economic impact of business activities (Kretter, Kádeková, 2011). Moreover, the results of this study suggested that direct sale & promotion (DS&P) are effective from the employees' points' view who are middle-aged and who have work experience. However, there are various dark heritage sites in Egypt

but marketers have not a specific marketing strategy for these sites. Heritage Product performance is less than the potential of the Egyptian destination. Therefore, The Egyptian ministry of tourism confirmed that dark heritage sites should have major enhancement required to develop the product. These sites need innovative plans and pilot projects (Egyptian national competitiveness council, 2013).

The IMC plan presents the structure for improving, implementing, organizing, and monitoring the firm's IMC program. Therefore, managers must decide on the specific aspects of the promotional mix and the role of each aspect, organize the integration between them, so as to evaluate and assess the achieved results (Blech and Blech, 2018).

### **Implication and further research**

This study merely investigates the role of integrated marketing communication (IMC) channels on marketing dark heritage sites in travel agencies. Despite the increase in the dark heritage sites in Egypt, they are suffering from negligence and need an innovative marketing plan. It leaves a scope for future researchers to examine the effects of IMC on the tourists of dark heritage sites, and the impact of IMC on decision making. In addition to this, future researchers should shed light on the role of conflict heritage in dark tourism.

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#### الملخص العربي

قامت هذه الدراسة على إستكشاف دور الاتصالات التسويقية المتكاملة (IMC) على مواقع التراث المظلم. فبالرغم من أن هناك العديد من المواقع التراثية المظلمة في مصر ، لكن المسوقين ليس لديهم استراتيجية تسويقية محددة لهذه المواقع. ولهذا الغرض تم جمع 347 استمارة استبيان قابلة للاستخدام من الموظفين العاملين في وكالات السفر المصرية لأنهم المسوقون لمواقع التراث المظلم. أشار المسح إلى أن وسائل الاتصال لتسليم الرسالة يمكن تقسيمها إلى ثلاثة أنواع (متغيرات): "العلاقات العامة، الإعلان، البيع المباشر والترويج . أجريت اختبارات ANOVA و Mann-Whitney و Kruskal-Wallis لمعرفة العلاقة بين متغيرات الدراسة (عوامل الاتصالات التسويقية المتكاملة الثلاثة والخصائص الديموغرافية لمسوقي وكالات السفر). ومن المتوقع أن تساعد هذه النتائج المسوقين ومديري التراث المظلم، لتحديد أدوات التسويق الفعالة للأسواق المستهدفة. والترويج لهذه المواقع ضمن خطة التسويق السياحي.