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Paranormal Tourism: Market Study of a Novel and Interactive Approach to Space Activation and Monetization

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Abstract

We review the premise, popularity, and profitability of *paranormal tourism*, which involves visits to any setting or locale for the explicit purpose of encountering apparent supernatural phenomena for leisure, investigation, services, products, or conventions. This niche sector can offer an inherently engaging conceptual framework for seasonal or year-round space activation and monetization by businesses situated in specific settings or cities. On a broader level, the niche also illustrates how tourism–hospitality brands and operations can navigate and even capitalize on three paradigm shifts that have disrupted contemporary markets, that is, the mobilities, performative, and creative turns. This assertion is underscored with a case analysis of a historic site that successfully leveraged paranormal themes as part of its space reactivation and rebranding. Finally, our market study suggests that the success factors of paranormal tourism might indicate a fourth paradigm shift across the wider tourism–hospitality industry, whereby the *experience economy* is transforming to an *enchantment economy*.

Keywords

brand personality; enchantment; legend-tripping; paranormal tourism; systems theory; space activation; tourism

Introduction

Space activation, reactivation, and monetization are hot-button industry topics (e.g., Collina et al., 2017; deRoos, 2011; Tamini, 2018)—especially in the context of certain forces that have disrupted retail, tourism, and hospitality markets. Specifically, Russo and Richards (2016) noted three important paradigm shifts or "turns" that have evolved the concept of consumerism in these businesses, that is, the *mobilities*, *performative*, and *creative* turns (pp. 3–5). A later section deals with these in greater detail, but such trends are substantiated by considerable evidence, and collectively suggest that the most successful service–hospitality concepts intentionally capitalize on "systems theory," i.e., environment–person bidirectional or enactive influences (Goldhagen, 2017; Jelić et al., 2016; Rentfrow, 2013). Stated simply, the prevailing view is that contemporary tourism and hospitality should approach the issue of space activation as an *interactionist* proposition.

These ideas are strikingly exemplified in the niche sector of "paranormal tourism." Here, we emphasize that while Halloween is a popular commercial holiday in many markets (National Retail Federation, 2018), eager capitalists literally "scare up" profits globally and year-round by feeding the public's enduring infatuation with the supernatural. This topic may once have been considered fringe or underground, but it has become a socially acceptable part of mainstream consciousness. Verifiable metrics are scarce in this highly competitive arena, but the available data imply a strong business case for paranormal tourism as a novel opportunity in space activation and monetization, as well as a theme for seasonal positioning or larger scale branding initiatives.

The qualifier "alleged" is implied whenever this article uses terms such as "paranormal, supernatural, ghosts, or hauntings," as such phenomena have not been scientifically confirmed or explained (Houran et al., 2017). Similarly, our report neither aims to legitimize or debunk the existence of paranormal activity nor aims to analyze these purported events themselves. Rather, we present a market study of this tourism sector from three interconnected viewpoints: (a) We examine its premise and popularity, (b) we explore data

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on its reported revenues, and (c) we review social–psychological factors that support this sector's compatibility and success within the three market turns. Finally, we conclude by discussing the potential implications of our information and interpretations for the wider service–hospitality industry.

Paranormal Tourism as a Widespread Cultural Phenomenon

The Paranormal in Popular Culture

"Ghosts and haunted houses" are pervasive cultural narratives (Bader, 2017; Blanco & Peeren, 2013; Booker, 2009; Edwards, 2005; Goldstein et al., 2007; Lecouteux, 2012) that can act as highly engaging memes (Drinkwater et al., 2019; S. A. Hill et al., 2018, 2019). Some cognitive and evolutionary psychologists have even argued that human beings are neurologically "hard-wired" for anomalous, mystical, or numinous experiences (J. Evans et al., 2019; McClenon, 2004, 2012; Persinger, 1983; Winkelman, 2004).

Large-scale, representative polling on paranormal topics is sporadic at best. The Gallup polls of 1990, 2001, and 2005 showed that a substantial proportion of respondents believed in spectral phenomena (Dagnall et al., 2015). The 2005 Gallup poll specifically found that 37% of those surveyed believed that houses could be haunted and 32% thought that spirits of the dead could return to certain places or situations (Moore, 2015). More recent surveys using convenience samples have normally reported figures and trends that compare favorably with these past Gallup metrics (e.g., Dagnall et al., 2016; Haraldsson, 2011; Lipka, 2015; Live Science, 2011; McClenon, 2012).

Belief in various paranormal phenomena varies by topic, but research shows that such beliefs have generally tended to rise. For example, the Pew Research Center (2009) documented positive changes in specific paranormal beliefs from 1990 to 1996 and 1996 to 2009. This same survey indicated that a large portion of Americans believe in other paranormal phenomena such as reincarnation, astrology, and spiritual energy. Altogether, the survey found that 65% of adults reported holding at least one paranormal belief. A later poll and extensive study by Live Science (2011) indicated that 71% of respondents had an alleged paranormal experience.

The latest surveys that focus on the particular question of ghosts and haunts show a stark increase in belief. The Chapman University (2018) Survey of American Fears documented from 2016 to 2018 an 11.1% rise in respondents who "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement: "Places can be haunted by spirits." The percentage for 2018 (the last time the survey was conducted) was an astounding 57.7%. Likewise, a YouGov (2019) poll reported that 45% of Americans polled felt that ghosts "definitely" or "probably" exist. Therefore, it seems that within the past 15 years approximately one third to one half of Americans have taken this subject seriously. These trends imply a steadiness, if not increase, in the public's paranormal belief—which is likely influenced by the popular media (for overviews, see Drinkwater et al., 2019; S. A. Hill et al., 2018, 2019).

The Paranormal as a Leisure Activity

The belief statistics above translate to big business opportunities with paranormal tourism (Locker, 2014; Paulas, 2013; ThunderTix, 2017). TravelChannel.com defines this as "the niche within the travel industry where tourists attend paranormal-themed conventions and festivals, investigate famously haunted locations, and join ghost tours or haunted pub crawls through cities" (Sagers, n.d.). Others have referred to it as visiting places that embody belief systems beyond normal views (Pharino et al., 2018). We believe the definition is broader and best described as "visits to any setting or locale for the explicit purpose of potentially encountering paranormal phenomena, whether for leisure, investigation, services, products, or conventions" (cf. Haynes, 2016, p. 3).

By way of explanation, "paranormal" is often used as a catchphrase for a wide range of anomalous or "Fortean" phenomena, including mystical or religious experiences, spirits and demons, extraterrestrial life forms and folklore-type beings, witchcraft, psychic abilities, and any supernatural or New Age agencies or forces. Academic researchers tend to define the paranormal phenomena more precisely in terms of three criteria (Irwin, 2009; Tobacyk, 2004): (a) phenomena cannot be explained by current science, (b) phenomena can be explained only by major revisions in basic limiting laws of science, and (c) phenomena are incompatible with normative perceptions and expectations about reality.

Turning to business concepts and issues, Novelli (2005) discussed how the term "niche tourism" largely borrows from the phrase "niche marketing" that denotes how a specific product or service can be tailored to meet the needs of a particular audience or market segment. The tourism industry as a whole is robust throughout the United States and internationally (Osborne & Markowitz, 2018). For instance, the World Travel and Tourism Council reported that in 2015, tourism directly contributed US$458 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP) of the United States or 2.6% of total GDP. Tourism contributed another US$1,402.6 billion to GDP in indirect contributions, or 8% of total GDP. The tourism industry also directly provides 5,302,000 jobs or 3.6% of total jobs in the United States. Furthermore, tourism, in total, supports 13,652,500 jobs or 9.3% of total employment in the United States, both directly and indirectly (Turner, 2015).

Niche tourism is far reaching and includes many subsectors (Ali-Knight, 2011), including the more well-known agritourism, cultural and heritage tourism, ecotourism, religious tourism, music tourism, and wine tourism, as well as arcane sectors such as paranormal or dark tourism. Niche tourism is important, in that, it provides a viable economic base for many communities that otherwise lack any, or serves as an ancillary to, tourism activity in large tourist destinations such as gateway cities. Paranormal tourism is relatively new in its modern incarnation as a niche sector, but it has existed in many guises throughout different cultures and historical eras, most obviously as pilgrimages to "sacred spaces" (Badone & Roseman, 2004; Brunn, 2015; Reader & Walter, 1993; Timothy & Olsen, 2006; Westwood, 1997). There is a corresponding and growing literature on "hierotopy," which views the creation of sacred spaces as a special form of human creativity (Lidov, 2006).

Today, haunted buildings or locations in Western culture are often promoted favorably as enticing tourist destinations (Hanks, 2015), with consumer demand stimulated by the media, formal and informal marketing, word of mouth (WOM), historical folklore, urban legends, and a plethora of websites (e.g., http://travelparanormal.com) and articles listing haunted sites, hotels, attractions, and tours that cater to paranormal enthusiasts. Accordingly, many communities and cities throughout the world have learned to exploit their "dark" or supernatural reputations as another source of entertainment available in the vast consumerist marketplace (Bader, 2017; Stockholm University et al., 2019). Unfortunately, to our knowledge, there are neither publicly available nor firm statistics on the number of consumers or product offerings in this sector. These questions deserve in-depth study and analysis. However, we address below the issues of business impact relative to visitor spend and psychology within paranormal tourism.

Consumer Motivations in Paranormal Tourism

This sector is filled with novel concepts and nuances that have evolved over time. Like other forms of niche tourism, however, it seemingly reflects what consumers value or desire. This includes a sense of *authenticity* and even *transformation* (see, for example, Aulet & Vidal, 2018; Belhassen et al., 2008; Bremer, 2006; Fu et al., 2018; Gil de Arriba, 2006; Huang & Pearce, 2019; Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b; Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Shackley, 2002). Paranormal tours are conducted by foot, carriage, bus, trolley, Segway, or even a hearse. Structured tours or activities are typically conducted after dark by guides who follow a script to tell the macabre history of ghostly legends or shocking deaths associated with specific locations or generally around town. Each tour attempts to differentiate itself from the others with a special theme or theatrical style. Some tours focus on cemeteries, true crime, or certain historical structures. Haunted pub crawls are ubiquitous. Some tours also allow group investigations fitted with scientific detection equipment.

To make sense of these various approaches, Stone (2006) proposed a typology of "dark tourism" products based on a "dark-light scale" defined by their *authenticity* versus *commerciality*. This scheme has proven utility on a general level (e.g., Powell & Iankova, 2016), so it might also apply to paranormal tourism more specifically. Furthermore, Stone's scale agrees in fundamental ways with Huang and Pearce (2019), who found that visitors' perceptions of religious destinations were strengthened by site features such as an impressive atmosphere, attractive environment, personal beliefs, and loyal behaviors, but weakened by commercial activities, modern buildings, environmental pollution, and secular behaviors.

Other systems categorize sites or products simply by their dominant theme and visitor motivations, that is, *war/battlefield tourism*, *disaster tourism*, *prison tourism*, *cemetery tourism*, *ghost tourism*, and *holocaust tourism* (Fonseca et al., 2016). On the other hand, some authors take a broader approach to argue that paranormal or dark tourism is merely one form of heritage tourism (e.g., Light, 2017). Despite these various classification schemes, it is important to understand that every haunted location or paranormal tour has its own "terroir" as Smith (2015) might say, that is, mood and trappings, landmarks, historical drama, or cultural flavor highlighted in the presentations.

One of the most significant drivers of visitation to a haunted location is undoubtedly notoriety arising from its appearance on television or other media (A. Hill, 2011; Holloway, 2010). "Most Haunted" now forms part of the English tourism experience (Davies, 2007), and the "Most Haunted effect" (Hanks, 2015) refers to the increase in visitor interest that occurred after the airing of the show *Most Haunted* (2002–2018) filmed at a specific site. As the haunted reputation grows over time, ghost-hunting teams visit these locations in what becomes a self-reinforcing process, or maybe more accurately a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Any haunted location or setting can apparently achieve celebrity or cult status from media exposure, but our personal experimentation and experience show that consumer resources like TripAdvisor or Viator often highlight hospitality businesses among their top recommendations for ghostly excursions. Some of these establishments enjoy established and widespread fame as paranormal haunts, such as the beautiful Queen Mary ship (San Diego, California) or the historic Stanley Hotel (Estes Park, Colorado)—which is the reported inspiration for Stephen King's (1977) celebrated horror story, *The Shining*. Nonetheless, places with quieter or local reputations for spectral activity can also promote causal visits by customers or host more formalized group tours or "ghost-stakeouts" as novel approaches to space activation and monetization.

Along these lines, S. A. Hill et al. (2018) discussed how entire economies have developed around *legend tripping*, or deliberate excursions to spooky locations in the hopes of experiencing the paranormal (see also Bird, 2002; Holloway, 2010). Folklorists might denote such pursuits as examples of "ostension," that is, acting out or showing a legend narrative in real life (e.g., Manning, 2018). These activities, along with organized forms of paranormal tourism, speak to Maddern and Adey's (2008) notion of spectro-geographies, whereby "ghosts 'are a ubiquitous aspect of the phenomenology of place,' 'ineffable and quasi-mystical' dimensions which emerge in encounters with the material, the mediated, the sensual and the affectual" (Edensor, 2008, p. 331). Indeed, ghost narratives are effective media through which many types of stories can be told, and emotions expressed (Dyne, 2010; Edwards, 2001). It is not surprising, therefore, that consumer prospects for structured and unstructured paranormal tourism and its tangential activities or products are extensive.

The Paranormal in Business Perspective

To pinpoint the "hot spots" and illustrate the geographic distribution of this sector, we studied travel and tourism websites from the first two pages of a Google search (conducted July 1, 2019) using the clear and direct phrases: "Most *haunted* [*cities*, *hotels*, *restaurants*, *places*] in US." We did not repeat the searches using synonyms for "haunted," because this term is arguably the most appropriate to cover the typical keywords used for those interested in paranormal tourism. Our goal is to present a broad, inclusive idea of "haunted places." Therefore, these searches were not intended to define "haunted" as used by the respective business owners or marketers. Rather, the word is used ubiquitously in marketing to signify a general paranormal aspect (e.g., ghostly experiences) that the public understands. Locations certainly have specific or distinguishing characteristics (e.g., dark alleys, cemeteries, mansions, historic backgrounds), but these still fall under the more comprehensive cultural notion of being "haunted" and thus were not considered in our analysis.

Table 1 lists our search results, which represent a relatively small number of specialized lists of haunted sites from which to draw. Although these reference pages may have been subject to the influence of Google's algorithm, the lists we consulted for our own rankings derived from top tourism websites. Thus, the information we present does not directly follow from Google rankings and corresponding biases in their algorithm. We concluded that this was a reasonable and fair way to rank the results for the time period. The locations mentioned the most frequently on those sites were tallied and ranked according to citation. For ties in the number of mentions, the location with the higher mention in various lists was ranked above the others. We offer these sets of rankings as estimated "popularity indices" from which to infer trends in this niche sector.

For the purposes of this study, it was also necessary to create a taxonomy of city types to distinguish the various markets and economic landscapes in which paranormal destinations are broadly situated. The tourism–hospitality industry currently lacks standardized definitions; thus, we formulated categories via definitions used in other industries or fields, such as commerce and government. Due to aggressive marketing strategies, some of these terms are used liberally and lose their clarity amid constantly changing, short-term marketing initiatives. However, our taxonomy aims to establish a clear and precise system to classify cities.

Table 2 suggests that paranormal tourism is largely, albeit not exclusively, a product of anchor and commercial cities. Precisely, this sector chiefly benefits from cities with a high volume of annual visitors and associated spending. This characterization agrees with the assertion that success in this niche is directly linked to consumer perceptions of neighborhood (or area) vibrancy and safety, which are concomitant with centers of high activity (Paulas, 2013).

In terms of specific hospitality businesses, hotels may or may not use their haunted legends to attract bookings. Some court paranormal investigation teams while attempting to maintain the appearance of being an elegant place of lodging. Other hoteliers regard this type of notoriety or activity as disreputable. In fact, it is sobering that many businesses, which need new or diversified revenue streams, perceive connections with ghosts, hauntings, or "dark" history (negative or unpleasant) as branding blights versus sales and marketing opportunities. This paradox is illustrated by one Chicago hotel where the bartenders love paranormal tour groups for the increased business and tips, but the owner believes that the "haunting" of the hotel will drive guests away.

For the top 10 list in Table 3, promotion of resident ghosts is a must with tourists encouraged to share their personal stories in reviews. Ghost-hunting TV shows have likewise been a huge boon to hotels, because they receive a boost in bookings after hosting a TV crew. Table 3 reveals that the most popular haunted hotels solely represent "historic" (i.e., old) properties. The majority of these properties reside in or are proximate to a downtown area, regardless of the type of city. This likely stems from the fact that older hotels would have been built closer to the main city for practical reasons upon initial opening, and thus predating suburban development. It is also clear that the majority of these hotels are either upscale or luxury hotels—monetizing the paranormal intrigue with limited emphasis—whereas the minority of lower chain-scale haunted hotels are more reliant on attracting demand through their ghostly legends.

Table 4 indicates a similar relationship between restaurants and hotels with respect to the historic nature of

Table 1.
Google Search Results Used to Create "Top 10" Lists of Paranormal Tourism Sites.

Augustine, Cindy. 2013. 9 Haunted Restaurants and Bars Around the U.S. Zagat. October 28, 2013, https://www.zagat.com/b/9-haunted-restaurants-around-the-u.s.

Auvil, Jennifer Plum. Top 10 Most Haunted Places. Travel Channel. https://www.travelchannel.com/interests/haunted/articles/top-10-most-haunted-places

Booth, Jessica. 2018. 16 Haunted Restaurants That Will Gives You Nightmare Forever. So Yummy. July 6, 2018 https://soyummy.com/haunted-restaurants-united-states/

Cavallo, Alexandra. 2017. Scare Easy? Don't Make a Reservation at These Haunted Restaurants. Upserve. October 23, 2017. https://upserve.com/restaurant-insider/scare-easy-dont-make-reservation-one-haunted-restaurants/

Chicago Tribune. 2019. The Most Haunted Cities in the US. https://www.chicagotribune.com/sns-most-haunted-cities-in-the-us-20190314-photogallery.html

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Food and Wine. 2016. America's Haunted Restaurants and Hotels. June 16, 2016. https://www.foodandwine.com/slideshows/americas-haunted-restaurants-and-hotels

Ghosts and Gravestones. Most Haunted Places in America. https://www.ghostsandgravestones.com/most-haunted-places-in-america.

Hammel, Katie. 2017. America's Most Haunted Places. Travel and Leisure. March 6, 2017.
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Morton, Caitlin. 2018. The 26 Most Haunted Places in the U.S. Conde Nast Traveler. October 11, 2018. https://www.cntraveler.com/gallery/the-most-haunted-places-in-america

Panda, Preetish. 2018. Spooky Data Visualization Reveals Most Haunted Cities in the US. The Next Web. October 30, 2018. https://thenextweb.com/contributors/2018/10/30/spooky-data-visualization-reveals-most-haunted-cities-in-the-us/

Rent.com. 2018. Top 10 Haunted Cities in America. https://www.rent.com/blog/top-10-haunted-cities-in-america/

Schmalbruch, Sarah, and Talia Lakritz. 2018. The History Behind 40 of the Most Haunted Places in America. Insider. October 28, 2018. https://www.insider.com/most-haunted-places-america-2017-10

Travel Channel. Top Haunted Cities in America. https://www.travelchannel.com/interests/haunted/photos/top-haunted-cities-in-america

Travel Channel. Top 10 Haunted Hotels in America https://www.travelchannel.com/interests/haunted/photos/top-10-haunted-hotels-in-america

the properties and proximity to a downtown area. However, restaurants seem to be less involved in offering paranormal activities, tours, or events than other industry attractions. Although they may be willing to market their ghostly fame, restaurants do not want to detract from their main focus and source of revenue, namely the dining experience of their guests. And also, there are practicalities likely at play. Restaurant patrons often stay too short a time to experience anything that could be interpreted as paranormal. The haunted reputation, therefore, often derives from personnel who note strange events outside business hours. Their stories can add to the ambience of the place, as any spill or breeze can be attributed to otherworldly causes. But most places will aim to capitalize on haunted reputations, even if it is exaggerated. For instance, haunted "pub crawls" are a staple in many large cities, which amusingly hint that "spirits beget spirits."

Table 5 suggests that most paranormal attractions exist as former places of residences, as exemplified by the multiple mansions, an asylum, a prison, and a hospital. Historic places of residence provide an abundance of stories and legends that are easily marketed. And importantly from a space activation and monetization perspective, historic locations receive new "life after death" when ghostly experiences are connected to them. These attractions tend to utilize paranormal tourism as a primary or secondary revenue strategy; thus, they are usually more overt in their social media marketing, website promotion, or paranormal offerings.

In many examples, such as homesteads, and abandoned hospitals, schools, and prisons, paranormal tourism has allowed the facility to remain intact or to receive much needed funding and renovations. Yet, a potential downside is that site curators may struggle with preserving the real

Table 2.
Summary Statistics on the "Top 10 Haunted" U.S. Cities (Descending Order).

City	Description	Annual Visitors (Million)	YOY Visitation Growth	Average Length of Stay	Annual Visitor Spending (Million US$)	YOY Visitor Spending Growth Rate	Lodging Revenues (Million US$)	Total Population	Tourism Sector Revenue per Capita	City Type
Savannah, GA	Often cited as the "most haunted" city in the United States, tours focus on the antebellum era.	14.5	2.8%	2.6	3,000	3.2%	n/a	145,862	20,567	Commercial
Gettysburg, PA	A small town saddled with a bloody past, tour groups pass each other on the streets and at the historic battlefield locations.	3.8	n/a	2.0	726	n/a	691	7,712	94,126	Destination
Chicago, IL	Hard to get around such a big place on foot, tours of Chicago make heavy use of the violent gangster past and famous cemeteries.	57.7	4.3%	n/a	16,000	4.0%	2,500	2,705,994	5,913	Anchor
New Orleans, LA	Often including mention of vampires, New Orleans ghost tours are a spicy blend of voodoo, slave history, and smuggler's tales.	18.5	4.3%	4.0	9,100	3.9%	2,100	391,006	23,273	Anchor
Charleston, SC	The southern charm of Charleston turns dark as tours include mention of the great tragedies that spawned the ghost legends. Highlights include the historic Old Jail.	7.3	5.8%	4.0	8,100	9.9%	949,800	136,208	59,468	Destination
San Antonio, TX	Centered around the battle of the Alamo, legends of this town include stories of skirmishes between Spanish settlers and natives.	37.0	11.6%	n/a	15,800	n/a	3,356	1,532,233	10,284	Commercial
Salem, MA	Marketed heavily with themes of stylized witchcraft, Salem is so loaded with haunted tourism businesses that it can be argued it capitalizes too much on a sad episode in its history.	2.0	13.0%	2.5	104	n/a	756	43,559	2,388	Town
San Francisco, CA	With gorgeous scenery and challenging topography, San Francisco tours include tales of murder and mayhem. Chinatown and Alcatraz are particularly notable attractions.	25.8	1.2%	3.8	10,000	2.3%	n/a	883,305	11,321	Anchor

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

City	Description	Annual Visitors (Million)	YOY Visitation Growth	Average Length of Stay	Annual Visitor Spending (Million US$)	YOY Visitor Spending Growth Rate	Lodging Revenues (Million US$)	Total Population	Tourism Sector Revenue per Capita	City Type
Portland, OR	Bolstered mostly by the Shanghai tunnels, a dark place with colorful legends, haunted places also include saloons, restaurants, and hotels.	8.7	3.1%	3.2	5,346	4.0%	963.0	653,115	8,185	Commercial
Los Angeles, CA	This huge city has tours featuring various local neighborhoods. Notably, Hollywood ghost tours feature tales of celebrity excess and tragic deaths.	50.0	3.1%	n/a	22,700	5.1%	5,438	3,990,456	5,689	Gateway
Anchor	A city that serves as the main economic center in the region, providing connectivity and economic activity (e.g., Denver, Seattle, Boston)									
Gateway	A city that serves as an entry point for a country by being an arrival or departure point via airport or seaport (e.g., Atlanta, New York City, DC, Los Angeles)									
Metropolitan	A city that is located within a metropolitan area but is not the primary city that the metropolitan area surrounds (e.g., Jersey City, Fort Worth, Arlington)									
Destination	A city or town that relies heavily on the tourism industry, either from resorts or other attractions (e.g., Miami, Aspen, Las Vegas)									
Commercial	A city that is primarily driven by trade and commercial activity, such as financial centers and manufacturing cities (e.g., Pittsburgh, Detroit, Houston)									
Knowledge	A city or town that is significantly influenced by higher education's effects on the city's economy and demographics (e.g., Ithaca, Boulder, Bloomington, Cambridge)									
Town	A small city or township that subsists on its own and is mostly independent of regional metropolitan areas									
Rural	Communities separated from urban centers and small in population									
Downtown	Located in or proximate to the downtown area									
Urban	Not located in the downtown area but still an urban environment									
Suburban	Outside of a city or town in a more residential, less urban area									
Rural	Outside of a city or town in a more remote location									

Table 3.
Summary Statistics on the "Top 10 Haunted" U.S. Hotels (Descending Order).

Attraction	City	Property Type	Age	Number of Paranormal Attractions	Tours Available	Annual Sponsored Events	Primary/Secondary Business	Website Promotion	Social Media Marketing	Celebrity Marketing	Third-Party Travel Site Promotion	TripAdvisor Rating	Film Noir	TV Noir	Book Noir	Historic Events	Incidental Occurrence	Visitor Sightings/ Experiences	Staff Sightings/ Experiences	Visitor Sighting Evidence Promoted	City Type	Location Type
Stanley Hotel	Estes Park, CO	Hotel–luxury	1909	3	Yes	Yes	Secondary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Destination	Suburban
Crescent Hotel	Eureka Springs, AR	Hotel–upscale	1886	4	Yes	Yes	Secondary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.0	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Destination	Suburban
Lizzie Borden B&B	Fall River, MA	Bed and breakfast	1845	6	Yes	No	Primary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	5.0	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Commercial	Downtown
Hotel Monte Vista	Flagstaff, AZ	Hotel–upper midscale	1927	1	No	No	Not monetized	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	3.5	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Knowledge	Downtown
Queen Anne Hotel	San Francisco, CA	Hotel–upscale	1890	1	No	No	Not monetized	No	No	No	Yes	4.0	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Anchor	Urban
Hollywood Roosevelt	Los Angeles, CA	Hotel–upper upscale	1927	0	No	No	Not monetized	No	No	No	No	4.5	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Gateway	Urban
Hotel del Coronado	Coronado, CA	Hotel–upper upscale	1888	1	Yes	Yes	Secondary	Yes	No	No	Yes	4.0	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Metropolitan	Downtown
Omni Parker House	Boston, MA	Hotel–luxury	1855	0	No	No	Not monetized	No	No	No	Yes	4.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Anchor	Downtown
La Fonda	Santa Fe, NM	Hotel–luxury	1607/1922	0	No	No	Secondary	No	No	No	Yes	4.5	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Destination	Downtown
Menger Hotel	San Antonio, TX	Hotel–luxury	1859	2	Yes	Yes	Secondary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.0	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Commercial	Downtown

Table 4.
Summary Statistics on the "Top 10 Haunted" U.S. Restaurants (Descending Order).

Restaurant/Bar	City	Property Type	Age	Number of Paranormal Attractions	Tours Available	Annual Sponsored Events	Primary/Secondary Business	Website Promotion	Social Media Marketing	Celebrity Marketing	Third-Party Travel Site Promotion	TripAdvisor Rating	Film Noir	TV Noir	Book Noir	Historic Events	Incidental Occurrence	Visitor Sightings/Experiences	Staff Sightings/Experiences	Visitor Sighting Evidence Promoted	City Type	Location Type
Stone's Public House	Ashland, MA	Restaurant	1834	1	No	No	Not monetized	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.0	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	n/a	Yes	No	Town	Downtown
Poogan's Porch	Charleston, SC	Restaurant	1891/1976	0	No	No	Not monetized	No	No	No	Yes	4.5	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Destination	Downtown
One If By Land, Two If By Sea	New York, NY	Restaurant	1767/1973	0	No	No	Not monetized	No	Yes	No	Yes	4.0	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Gateway	Urban
Restaurant 1833	Monterrey, CA	Restaurant and bar	1833/1950	0	No	Yes	Not monetized	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.0	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Destination	Downtown
Muriel's	New Orleans, LA	Restaurant	1721/2001	1	No	Yes	Secondary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.5	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Anchor	Downtown
Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop Bar	New Orleans, LA	Bar	1722	0	No	No	Not monetized	Yes	No	No	Yes	4.5	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Anchor	Downtown
Casey Moore's Oyster House	Tempe, AZ	Restaurant	1910	0	No	No	Not monetized	Yes	No	No	Yes	4.0	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Metropolitan	Downtown
Succotash	Kansas City, MO	Restaurant	n/a	n/a	No	No	n/a	n/a	No	No	Yes	4.5	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	Commercial	Urban
Catfish Plantation	Waxahachie, TX	Restaurant	1895	1	No	No	Not monetized	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.0	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Metropolitan	Suburban

Table 5.
Summary Statistics on the "Top 10 Haunted" U.S. Attractions (Descending Order).

Attraction	City	Property Type	Age	Number of Paranormal Attractions	Tours Available	Annual Sponsored Events	Primary/Secondary Business	Website Promotion	Social Media Marketing	Celebrity Marketing	Third-Party Travel Site Promotion	TripAdvisor Rating	Film Noir	TV Noir	Book Noir	Historic Events	Incidental Occurrence	Visitor Sightings/Experiences	Staff Sightings/Experiences	Visitor Sighting Evidence Promoted	City Type	Location Type
Eastern State Penitentiary	Philadelphia, PA	Former prison	1829	1	Yes	Yes	Secondary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.5	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Anchor	Urban
Queen Mary	Long Beach, CA	Hotel/restaurant/ship	1936	8	Yes	Yes	Primary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.0	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Metropolitan	Urban
Trans Allegheny Asylum	Weston, WV	Former asylum	1864	6	Yes	Yes	Primary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.5	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Rural	Downtown
Myrtles Plantation	St. Francisville, LA	Mansion/B&B/restaurant	1796	3	Yes	No	Secondary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.5	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Rural	Suburban
Whaley House	San Diego, CA	Mansion/museum	1857/1960	4	Yes	No	Primary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.0	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Destination	Suburban
Villisca Ax Murder House	Villisca, IA	House	1912	2	Yes	No	Primary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Rural	Downtown
LaLaurie Mansion	New Orleans, LA	Mansion	1831/1838	0	Yes	No	Not monetized	No	No	No	Yes	4.0	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Anchor	Urban
Waverly Hill Sanatorium	Louisville, KY	Former sanatorium	1908	2	Yes	Yes	Primary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4.0	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Commercial	Suburban
Masonic Temple of Detroit	Detroit, MI	Masonic temple	1926	0	No	No	Not monetized	No	No	No	Yes	4.0	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Commercial	Downtown
Winchester Mystery House	San Jose, CA	Mansion	1886	3	Yes	Yes	Primary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.0	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Metropolitan	Urban

Table 6.
Business Metrics From a Convenience Sample (n = 6) of Paranormal Tourism Operators.

Market	% of Business Coming From Tourists vs. Locals	% of Ticket Sales From Preplanning vs. Impulse Buys	Annual Ticket Sales	Annual Revenues (US$)
Orlando, FL	25	>50	<1,000	50,000–99,000
Mackinaw Island, MI	50	>50	5,000–10,000	100,000–199,000
Mineral Wells, TX	>50	25	<1,000	5,000–19,000
Murrells Inlet, SC	>50	50	<1,000	5,000–19,000
Gallatin, TX	50	25	<1,000	5,000–19,000
Chicago, IL	50	50	Between 5,000 and 10,000	>200,000

history so that it is overshadowed neither by the spooky tales nor the grounds overrun with overzealous paranormal enthusiasts or other sensation seekers.

Paranormal Tourism as a Profitable Offering

Revenue Estimates

Paranormal tourism lacks comprehensive revenue surveys, and we found that the highly competitive nature of this sector undermines participation in such efforts. To provide an estimate for readers, one of us (U.A.B.) compared revenue numbers for Chicago Hauntings, Inc., with Alexa metrics for other markets that included those in Tables 2 to 5. Interestingly, Key West (Florida) alone appears to bring in more than US$20 million a year in paranormal tourism. Add cities such as New Orleans, Savannah, Gettysburg, and Edinburgh where this is a "must do" activity, and the projected revenues appear staggering. Based on our extrapolations from the available information, we estimate paranormal tourism to be at least a US$100 million industry worldwide.

Of course, this conservative estimate excludes revenues from casual or unstructured visits, activities, and associated products (e.g., books, tee-shirts, or techno-gadgets), as well as spontaneous and preplanned "legend-tripping" by consumers. It also does not account for bookings or other revenue at businesses that were directly sparked by the establishment's paranormal reputation. Likewise, crowdfunding sites such as Patreon host several podcasters and "hauntrepreneurs" who essentially subsist on paranormal-based podcasts or related entertainment services with paranormal themes. A prominent example is "The Last Podcast on the Left," which is a true crime/paranormal/dark humor podcast with more than 11,000 contributors and grossing more than US$55,000 per month. Similarly, several smaller podcasts, and even a touring "paranormal museum," have approximately 250 to 700 patrons, each contributing US$5 or US$10 a month to their projects (www.patreon.com).

Supplemental Data

For additional context, Table 6 summarizes the results from a pulse survey we conducted online with a convenience sample of ghost tour operators in the United States (n = 6) that we solicited via the "Professional Ghost Tour Guides" page on Facebook. The appendix provides our four-item questionnaire, which we encourage others to use or modify for more sophisticated studies. Ours was not intended as a large-scale representative effort suitable for statistical analysis, but instead a quick check of recent trends in often more remote or smaller markets. We further augmented this limited quantitative data with anecdotal information from unstructured, follow-up interviews with the respondents and other tour guides who did not want to disclose their revenue or customer metrics.

Our survey revealed that paranormal tourism does not always equate annually to impressively large numbers in attendance or revenue. Yet, the data strongly suggest that even smaller or more remote markets in paranormal tourism tend to have (a) both *locals* and *visitors* as attendees and (b) both *opportunistic* visitors, who spontaneously partake in attractions, and *contemplative* visitors, who apparently preplan their participation. We surmise, therefore, from the limited data that paranormal tourism can provide, at the very least, a good *supplemental* income stream from a customer base with diverse motivations and inclinations.

Paranormal Tourism as a Powerful Brand Personality

The VAPUS model for ghost narratives (S. A. Hill et al., 2018, 2019) describes cognitive–affective factors that likely help to stimulate and sustain the allure and impact of paranormal tourism. Particularly, this framework draws on systems theory to specify people's interactions with their environments and how these activities reinforce mechanisms that inform the perception of experiences or events as paranormal, such as an individual's psychological profile, current situation, and broader sociocultural context.

This model asserts that ghost narratives as sociocultural beliefs, shared stories, or putative experiences possess an influential brand personality that parallels the strong consumer engagement with social media or the most popular commercial products or services (for related discussions, see Annett et al., 2016; Edwards, 2001). To clarify, *brand personality* is a concept in consumer marketing theory and practice that Aaker (1997) defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (p. 347). Accordingly, these narratives frequently foster emotional and rational engagement within individuals of diverse demographics.

Particularly, VAPUS is an acronym that condenses the brand personality of ghost narratives to five characteristics (S. A. Hill et al., 2018):

- *Versatility*, in that narratives have flexibility to represent a cross section of moods, locations, or themes that span diverse literary genres;
- *Adaptability*, in that narratives morph, at least in part, longitudinally in accordance with societal changes;
- *Participatory Nature*, in that narratives invite interaction via individual or social activity and engagement, such as tours, clubs, private excursions, field research, and virtual activities (TV, movies, books);
- *Universality*, in that narratives are interesting or relevant to diverse demographic populations, including individuals spanning the paranormal belief–disbelief spectrum; and
- *Scalability*, in that, narratives engage people individually and collectively, via meme-like "contagious" processes (p. 119).

These characteristics can be drawn directly from the four sets of cities, hotels, restaurants, and attractions in Tables 2 to 5. For instance, the *universality* of paranormal mystique has already been discussed in terms of the common belief in ghosts and the strong psychological intrigue for the subject. Although people ostensibly differ psychologically, socioeconomically, or demographically in their entertainment preferences (e.g., Lu & Hu, 2005; Rentfrow et al., 2011), the apparent universality of people to be enthralled with entertaining ghost stories or harmless paranormal experiences is a marked advantage to this niche sector.

Versatility is demonstrated in the ability of businesses to draw on local history, customs, and traditions to empower ghostly legends. This can add new dynamism or layers of complexity to particular settings or locations, especially when coupled with the *Adaptability* and *Participatory Nature* of paranormal narratives. On this point, Aulet and Vidal (2018) noted that, "The religious comprehension of a place creates a particular set of spaces, while tourist interpretations produce a different type of space" (p. 241). Thus, some tour operators endeavor to establish their markets as "known" for ghosts, even when this is lacking in the larger public perception. For example, Chicago is famous for gangsters; yet, despite the exhausting branding efforts of various tour operators, it struggles to be known as "haunted." Therefore, multibranding often occurs in paranormal tourism, with Chicago attractions tacking ghosts to the city's major notoriety, that is, "Gangsters and Ghosts" or "Crime and Ghosts." Other markets follow suit, for example, New Orleans has "Ghosts and Voodoo" or "Ghosts and Vampires," Key West has "Graveyards and Ghosts" or "Pirates and Ghosts," and of course nearly every tour in Salem, Massachusetts, involves "Witches and Ghosts."

Likewise, a *Participatory Nature* is a key element of the sector's success and evident in the structuring of various paranormal attractions. Illustratively, consumers can actively explore the haunted premises, play makeshift roles in reenactments or share in other forms of storytelling, experiment with an attraction's Ouija board, dine at a "ghost table," and naturally take and share photographs or videos of eerie settings or seemingly supernatural images such as strange shadows or floating "orbs." More structured ghost hunts might also utilize various types of technologies (S. Hill, 2017; Potts, 2004) to gauge fluctuations in environmental variables such as ambient temperature or electromagnetic fields that enthusiasts often interpret as indicative of ghosts. Plus, many of the other activities in paranormal tourism are *Scalable* in how they work across individuals, small teams, or large groups, as well as *Adaptable* in their ability to span physical and digital spaces. Such doings essentially allow attendees to feel a sense of accomplishment of some sort of task or activity, even if they never witness a mysterious event.

Adaptability also manifests in paranormal tourism in other ways. For instance, many commercial haunts are often venues that have not historically always been paranormal tourism spots. They have instead morphed in accordance with being featured on paranormal television programs, or as the narrative around the venue evolved to include ghostly connotations as a result of evolving social forces. We explore these types of mechanisms in a later case study.

Speaking to the content validity of the VAPUS model, we stress that its components generally align to the independent work of Annett et al. (2016), who synthesized and deconstructed the experiential elements of ghostly experiences to identify four innovative ways to enhance design and engagement in consumer displays, that is, digital effects or functionality with *intensity*, *familiarity*, *tangibility*, and *shareability*. Most importantly, the five VAPUS characteristics that make ghost narratives (and associated activities) so alluring and engaging are inherently symbiotic with Russo and Richards' (2016) three market turns in tourism and hospitality. That is, as both a concept and set of tangible deliverables, paranormal tourism aligns to the new norms of

Table 7.
Chronology of Space Utilization at "Eastern State Penitentiary, Philadelphia, PA."

Year	Milestone Event
1822	Construction begins on the ESP in Philadelphia, PA
1829	ESP officially opens as the first prison in the United States to practice the "Pennsylvania System" of confinement, making it the first penitentiary in the country
1832	The first escape occurs
1858	More than 10,000 tourists visit the prison in a single year
1913	The "Pennsylvania System" of confinement is officially abandoned, although the prison remains in active operation
1929	Al Capone, the notorious Chicago gangster, spends 8 months in ESP
1965	ESP is designated as a National Historic Landmark
1971	ESP is officially closed and remains dormant. The grounds are used for city storage, but the former penitentiary becomes subject to vandalism, deterioration, and an overgrown urban forest
1988	Limited group tours of the former penitentiary begin
1991	A Halloween fundraiser is hosted in the fall, which eventually becomes the annual attraction, *Terror Behind the Walls*
1994	Daily group historic tours are offered at the former penitentiary as a means of generating income for preservation. More than 10,000 visitors attend
1996	The former penitentiary creates museum exhibits and initiates a successful marketing campaign that attracts attention from TV shows, news outlets, and even Hollywood
2007	ESP begins holding tours 7 days a week for 12 months a year, including a new Winter Adventure Tour
2016	ESP wins the Excellence in Exhibitions Award Overall Winner from the American Alliance of Museums, which is the highest award in the museum field
2017	ESP adopts a new mission with the purpose of focusing on interpreting criminal justice reform.

Note. ESP = Eastern State Penitentiary.

consumerism. We spoke generally to this point above, but an illustrative case study will underscore our argument.

Paranormal Tourism and the Three Turns in Tourism–Hospitality: The Example of "Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, PA"

Background

Eastern State Penitentiary (ESP) is an old, dark, damp, and decrepit shell of a massive stone prison that becomes riddled at night with various vermin. We stress that this description is factual, not hyperbole. Even in its prime, the imposing structure was designed to intimidate and instill a deep sense of atonement in its prisoner population. Thus, it is not surprising that the size and character of the premises have earned it the moniker, "Alcatraz of the East."

Information on the site's background and history is readily available from academic or official sources (e.g., Dolan, 2007; Greenwood, 1974; Kahan, 2008) as well as popular websites easily sourced via keyword search. EasternState.org and Wikipedia.org provide notable overviews on this historic site, but Table 7 summarizes highlights of its chronological narrative and associated brand development. For example, ESP was once the most famous and expensive prison in the world, and it has both architectural and historical significance. It is a National Historic Landmark that opened in 1829 in Philadelphia as an experiment in a new correctional theory called the "Pennsylvania System." This approach advocated and practiced separation and confinement, with the intention of creating penitence—and ultimately rehabilitation—through severe solitude.

The penitentiary hosted notorious criminals, such as gangster Al Capone and bank robber "Slick Willie" Sutton, until it was closed in 1971. The prison was designed with neo-Gothic architecture to instill fear, but it garnered widespread attention as the largest U.S. public works project of its time. The massive architectural feat attracted visitors and tour groups throughout its operations as a prison but experienced a period of decay and dormancy following its closing. After about 17 years, the former penitentiary began hosting limited group tours as part of a preservation effort in 1988, and 3 years, later these limited tours were accompanied by a Halloween fundraiser.

Eventually, the former prison became widely regarded as haunted, with visitors, staff, and paranormal enthusiasts citing stories and evidence.[1] Since 1994, ESP has financed its preservation efforts with daily historic tours, the Halloween attraction *Terror Behind the Walls*, and several museum exhibits and collections. The site's promotion and management of its ghostly reputation effectively illustrate paranormal tourism mapped against the three paradigm shifts in tourism–hospitality (Russo & Richards, 2016). Even more critical to our aims of this article, the destination also serves as a success story in the rebranding and space activation and monetization of a formerly underutilized or underoptimized asset.

The Mobilities Turn

Consumers are increasingly mobile and in flux, which makes it challenging to seize and sustain their attention and engagement. Social media platforms have accordingly become a dominant digital communications channel (Chappuis et al., 2011). Blogs, user feedback forums, and other digital outlets for consumer-generated media have become go-to tools for consumers to exchange opinions and experiences about companies, products, and services with individuals outside their personal communication network of family, friends, acquaintances, and colleagues (Dwyer, 2007; Wilson et al., 2012).

This ability to exchange opinions and experiences online is called online or "electronic word of mouth" (eWOM), otherwise known as "buzz" (Liu, 2006) or "word of mouse" (Dellarocas, 2003). eWOM allows consumers to share both negative and positive opinions and experiences from multiple sources (Chatterjee, 2001) and has an advantage over traditional WOM due to its potential to reach more consumers quite rapidly. Moreover, research has shown that there is a high level of consumer acceptance and reliance on eWOM (Duan et al., 2016; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Henning-Thurau & Walsh, 2004) and that eWOM increases product sales (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Davis & Khazanchi, 2007; Liu, 2006).

S. A. Hill et al. (2019, 2018) explored how paranormal tourism has the simultaneous advantage that its branding and aspects of the excursions themselves naturally extend to, and are boosted by, virtual environments and mobile platforms. Specifically, provocative content like firsthand testimonials, commentaries, photographs, and videos can be easily produced, efficiently digested, and quickly shared by the public. This parallels the popular formula used in ghost-hunting "reality television" programs, which have shaped how people consume and process ideas about the paranormal and especially in terms of using technological devices as symbolic forms of legitimacy (Foucault, 2003; Lauro & Paul, 2013; Williams, 2010). It also appeals to the curious who want to experience "real-world" paranormal exploits, passively and safely, in the comfort of their homes (Jacobs, 2010).

Furthermore, and most importantly, all these factors introduce two dynamics that constructively support paranormal tourism. *First*, digital content in this sector is both *business*-generated and *consumer*-generated via channels that are blended, blurred, and mutually reinforcing. *Second*, these circumstances set the stage for a successful marketing model based on "community and crowdsourcing," and correspondingly, they would seem to promote contagious or memetic behavior online and offline (cf. Berger, 2013; Heylighen, 1999; Moritz, 1990).

Consistent with these trends, ESP has established a strong "mobilities" presence and enablement. A myriad of digital content about the prison is hosted and promoted across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube. For its offerings, ESP receives strong ratings on both Yelp (4.5/5, 729 reviews) and TripAdvisor (4.5/5, 5,984 reviews, Number 4 out of 440 things to do in Philadelphia). Paranormal tourism dominates much of the ESP-related content online and within social media, but we found that ESP actively cultivates diverse content that ranges from reviews of the historic tours to its *Terror Behind the Walls* event. In fact, this latter attraction has garnered favorable reviews in its own right, with a 4/5 rating (120 reviews) and listed as Number 12 of 63 fun and games in Philadelphia.

Therefore, ESP seems to anchor neither its identity on paranormal tourism nor any particular function other than being a unique and must-see interpretation of criminal justice reform that constitutes part of Philadelphia's past and present. However, its ghostly reputation is certainly not neglected. ESP predominantly relies on *consumer*-generated and *mass media*–generated content to create and sustain "buzz" in this regard. This content falls into two main categories, that is, (a) eWOM and (b) "paranormal media," such as photographs and audio or video clips depicting macabre scenes or instances of unusual phenomena.

It makes sense for potential consumers of paranormal tourism to comb testimonials, reviews, or firsthand accounts of ghostly experiences from past customers. Alternatively, potential customers who observe no testimonials might question the attraction as a legitimate opportunity to experience the supernatural. Thus, testimonials and eWOM give potential consumers an approximation of the customer value of products or services (cf. Liao et al., 2012). However, paranormal media might work somewhat differently to influence consumers. Photographs, audio streams, or video clips might be considered the most tangible and credible form of "evidence or testimony" to promote sales in this sector; yet, cynical people might surmise that these are easily fabricated or doctored for marketing and publicity purposes.

However, these types of evidence provide opportunities to comment or debate, and thus participate in, the ghost experiences of other people. And, even more salient from a sales and marketing perspective, such content might serve unwittingly to prime consumers. In particular, consumers are often highly emotional and intuitive in their behavior, operating through the emotional centers of the brain, dictated by their "heart" or "gut feel" and often independent of conscious control (Pawle & Cooper, 2006). Damasio (1994, 2000, 2003) argued that emotions and feelings are formed in what he called the "proto-self," whereas thoughts are formed in what he termed "core consciousness." He showed that activity in the proto-self precedes activity in the core consciousness, which confirms that emotions and feelings are formed precognitively and preattentively, before any conscious information processing takes place (Damasio, 2003).

This is counterintuitive to the assumptions of most advertising models. However, when "nonconsciously processed" emotional content is "processed consciously," its effectiveness is weakened (Bornstein, 1989), suggesting that the less aware consumers are of emotional elements in advertising, the more likely they are to work, because the consumer has less opportunity to rationally evaluate, contradict, and weaken their potency. Heath et al. (2006) recommended, therefore, that if advertising wishes to build strong brand relationships, it needs to incorporate high levels of *emotional content*, and this emotional content will be most effective if *less attention* is paid to it.

These findings and insights are especially interesting given that photographic images of stark, "haunted" environments, purported ghosts, or other anomalous effects can rationally engage or otherwise induce emotional reactions in observers (see, for example, Dagnall et al., 2015; Irwin, 2015; Mayer, 2014). Accordingly, we posit that paranormal media functions as powerful "covert" emotional content for ESP's branding (and for paranormal tourism, generally), and thereby likely works in concert with eWOM for added impact on consumer psychology.

The Performative Turn

Tourism–hospitality has experienced increased and enhanced connections among tourist destinations, multiple actors, and the everyday. Likewise, paranormal attractions often are multifaceted in their scale, scope, and relationship to their local communities. For instance, the ghost narratives behind the various attractions necessarily draw from local elements and history. It can even be argued that haunts are fundamentally the tangible personifications of the "spirit and soul" of their surrounding communities and cultures (cf. Hudson, 2017). Of course, ghosts might sometimes also embody aspects of civic, state, national, and universal identities. In return, the typical celebrity status of these destinations helps to bolster the brand awareness and equity of the broader community, as well as enrichment of its economy.

Similarly, social forces encouraged ESP to assume many personalities and "everyday relationships" with the local and national landscapes. It is simultaneously an iconic and important example of neo-Gothic–style architecture, a local historic site and museum, an experiential time capsule, the location for many TV and movie shoots,[2] home to the award-winning *Terror Behind the Halls* attraction, and a "top ten" destination for visitors and enthusiasts hungry for ghostly lore. Each of these facets exudes a particular character that attracts various audiences and fosters different types of connections to Philadelphia and other "actors." Nevertheless, on an experiential or performative level with visitors, there is a marked interplay among the site's various identities.

Google the phrase "haunted Eastern State Penitentiary," for instance, and more than 300,000 entries appear. UnknownExplorers.com is one source hosting previous television segments about the prison, which are representative of the online information that is easily accessible and frequently consulted. This website gives a clear example of how the prison's personalities mesh to produce a compounded psychological effect. Specifically, the prison's long-standing history of ghost accounts reportedly started with the legendary Chicago gangster and ESP inmate, Al Capone:

> His stay at Eastern State was far more comfortable than other inmates; an article in the Philadelphia Public Ledger for August 20, 1929 described his cell "The whole room was suffused in the glow of a desk lamp which stood on a polished desk . . . On the once-grim walls of the penal chamber hung tasteful paintings, and the strains of a waltz were being emitted by a powerful cabinet radio receiver of handsome design and fine finish . . ." It was during his incarceration in Eastern State that Capone first began to be haunted by the ghost of James "Jimmy" Clark, one of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre victims and the brother-in-law of his rival Bugs Moran. Many inmates reported that they would often hear Capone screaming in his cell begging for Jimmy to go away and to leave him alone. Even after his release he claimed Jimmy would continue to haunt him till his death.

This *historically* and *celebrity*–rooted ghost narrative has since evolved to culminate in a strong and direct branding tagline on the ESP website, that is, "America's Most Haunted Prison" (see http://www.easternstate.org/halloween/sightings/).

But, recall that the prison is "haunted" by much more than entertaining ghost stories. Its persona is an amalgam of moods, stories, functions, and eras. Therefore, ESP is not just individualistic; it is social and historical, related to shared—and contested—memory and identity. Consequently, visitors are exposed to, and can engage with, a wide range of individual or collective connections, that is, they can experience an inimitable historic structure, step inside a previously unspoken and inaccessible part of Philadelphia's society, walk in the footsteps of mobsters, glimpse the penal system in early Industrial America, study the remnants of a real-life prison break, feel the nostalgia of popular movie shoot locations, and participate in a highly popular Halloween entertainment ritual. Thematically speaking, visitors are immersed within a setting and story filled with action, adventure, drama, suspense, and celebrity. In our view, these elements all blend with and enrich each other at ESP and, thus, trigger the environment to "quiver with affective energy" akin to a religious–spiritual space (cf. Thrift, 2004, p. 57).

Moreover, this confluence of identities, dimensions, emotions, and connections is recognized, appreciated, and exploited daily by other local businesses that benefit from the site's popularity and associated visitor spend. It is also important to point out that these identities and connections are not exclusively grounded in economics. For example, none of the 15 employee reviews[3] on GlassDoor.com mentioned paranormal tourism or revenues from it; however, many affirmed that ESP is one of the most fascinating historic sites in America, provides a wonderful opportunity to dive deep into its complex history, and the administration's preservation and educational work are wonderful public services. Obviously, this prison and its legacy are valued artifacts that are woven into the fabric of Philadelphia and help to tell (or relive) its history, image, and identity. Supernatural specters are merely one set of actors that work "everyday" to voice this story.

The Creative Turn

The traditional "visitor vs. place" relationship in tourism and hospitality has gradually given way to the dynamic of "commingling." The new norm is an encounter–relationship negotiation, whereby visitors and destinations are interconnected and codeterminant. Leadbeater (2012) captured this sentiment when he asserted that, "Real hospitality is not just welcoming people in on the first night, but liking that they come back and stay, fitting into the city, making their own contribution and making the place their own" (p. 9). Because ghost narratives are likewise both participatory and scalable experiences (S. A. Hill et al., 2018, 2019), visitors actively help to shape or define the ongoing identity of haunted or otherwise "sacred" locations. This observation agrees with many studies (e.g., Caputo, 2014; Lange et al., 1996; Laythe et al., 2018) that profile paranormal witnesses as active (albeit unwitting at times) participants in the construction of their experiences—much in the same way that characters in fictional ghost stories are complex, emergent products of the interplay between narrative design and narrative processing (Herman, 2000).

For example, the alleged 1947 "UFO crash" in Roswell (New Mexico) and the "Mothman creature" sightings from 1966 to 1967 around the Point Pleasant (West Virginia) area represent initially disturbing events that have continued to influence the character of these cities. In a nod to large-scale space activation and monetization, these cities or their citizens routinely stage festivities to revisit and celebrate the notoriety of these decades-old mysteries. In many ways, the original events have been socially caricaturized to serve as beloved city "mascots." Particularly, Point Pleasant held its first "Annual Mothman Festival" in 2002 and a 12-foot-tall metallic statue of the supposed creature, by sculptor Bob Roach, was unveiled in 2003. Roswell might not have an officially sanctioned replica of the supposed crashed spaceship, but on any given day, visitors can enjoy "UFO pancakes" at local eateries. These activities continue to mold the tone and meaning of the original anomalous and historical events, including their relationships to the present identities of the cities.

With ESP, one of its most fascinating aspects in its brand narrative development is that its status as a paranormal haunt is quite possibly an example of "life imitating art" (cf. Table 7). Notwithstanding the utterances by Al Capone and some vague reports as early as the 1940s about eerie experiences from officers and inmates (Sonnenberg, 2018), the prison apparently was not associated with "real" ghost experiences by visitors until after ESP launched its *Terror Behind the Walls* attraction. As explained further by Sonnenberg (2018), this fundraising event actually predated the first public tours of ESP by 3 years. The haunted house began back in 1991 as a single-night event to raise funds for conservation of the historic site.

Research suggests that the onset and content of ghostly experiences correlate with contextual variables in the environment that are available to witnesses (Harte, 2000; Lange et al., 1996). By extension, it seems likely that ESP's "make-believe" haunted house helped to stoke experiences of "real" paranormal activity by visitors, enthusiasts, or employees. Working from this assumption, it is reasonable to presume that visitor psychology at ESP actively helped to shape or reinvent the destination as it is presently *defined*, *marketed*, and *operated*. This epitomizes the creative turn. And, as a result of this evolution in branding and space activation, ESP collects another income stream to offset the conservation and operational costs associated with this historic site.

Conclusion

From an operations standpoint, our market study identifies at least five potential opportunities and benefits in leveraging paranormal tourism within broader service–hospitality concepts:

- *Branding and positioning*. Paranormal tourism can *define* the brand personality of a location/setting or merely *augment* an existing brand or marketing position to widen the appeal across a diversified customer set.
- *Community-building*. Paranormal tourism can leverage "crowdsourcing" (offline or online) to increase the brand equity or exposure of a location/setting.

- *Consumer engagement and retention*. Paranormal tourism can help to combat "consumer desensitization" to a location or setting and thereby promote increased "stickiness" and repeat visits or bookings.
- *Experiential marketing*. Paranormal tourism can reinforce and "bring-to-life" the unique historic or local characteristics of a location/setting in ways infeasible or impossible with traditional marketing and advertising platforms. Also, testimonials and media associated with paranormal tourism can work in tandem to foster both eWOM and covert emotional content.
- *Programming and merchandising*. Paranormal tourism can offer a well-defined option for year-round or seasonal space activation (i.e., Halloween) to supplement or drive potentially significant operational and nonoperational revenues.

General Discussion

The insights and findings from our formal market study, pulse data, anecdotal feedback, and personal expertise in this niche sector collectively ground the various interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations in this article. It seems fitting now to explore some ideas and conjectures that strive to make conceptual sense of the limited quantitative and qualitative data we have. Moreover, we suspect that the success of paranormal tourism as a niche sector holds valuable lessons that might extend broadly to the service–hospitality industry.

Overall, we speculate that paranormal-like experiences are appealing to many people, in part, because they are *unique* and *elusive*. Memorable "social media moments" are easily replicated nowadays with outings to trendy cities, beaches, hikes, restaurants, or other such worldly destinations. For this reason, even excursions to exotic destinations can be overly familiar and fundamentally analogous to "movie remakes"—which film scholar Anat Zanger (2006) argued represent "the desire to have the already-known experience repeated . . . accompanied by the presentiment that it will never be" (p. 121).

Yet, not everyone encounters the supernatural. By definition, these experiences are uncommon in the everyday life of the general population. Individuals, therefore, must make pilgrimages to special settings to pursue them, and such places themselves are relatively scant. Moreover, visits still do not guarantee that any anomalous events will manifest. Accordingly, paranormal experiences are very special occurrences that transport consumers to "otherworldly" destinations and make for unforgettable, unfamiliar, and supremely shareable memories and stories.

This ostensible psychology of paranormal tourism and its corresponding business opportunities (cf. "Conclusion" section) can help to optimize underutilized assets, especially those that are "historic" (i.e., very old) and incur higher maintenance or operating costs. This is important for three reasons from an asset management perspective: (a) More history typically equates to more stories that can be highlighted and shared to support the character of a location or setting; (b) "old" venues fuel a more authentic, credible atmosphere for perceptions of the paranormal, that is, they are "creepier" (McAndrew, 2015) and play to stereotypes of ghosts and haunted houses being old versus modern; and (c) historic buildings can depreciate and are more challenging to maintain (Loveland, 2016), so owners or operators must be creative in generating revenue to meet higher operating costs.

On these issues, we observed that very successful businesses in their primary income streams tend to be more passive with paranormal tourism, that is, they advertise or promote the property's haunted reputation to a lesser degree, unless the paranormal *is* their business model. In contrast, businesses with apparently tighter margins are more *active*, that is, they seize any and all chances to advertise or promote a property's haunted reputation. We even found several instances in which buyers acquired old, failing buildings, only then to recruit self-described psychic mediums or ghost hunters to "validate" (or maybe "create") rumors about spectral activity. As a result, the owners suddenly captured more visibility and business. The entrepreneurial view is that a "dated, rundown" hotel cannot effectively compete with a new, modern-fitted hotel—that is, unless it is haunted. Moreover, sales transactions of "haunted" buildings can bring higher prices if a paranormal reputation is regarded as a benefit by buyers (Behar, 2017).

Furthermore, "location" was observed as a contributing factor to business strategy in marketing and consumer experiences. Hotels, restaurants, or attractions that lack easy *accessibility* and *connectivity* to consumers (and notably opportunistic or spontaneous visitors) need to be more aggressive in targeting demand, because such sites require consumers to plan and travel deliberately to more remote locations. These destinations tend to be more dramatic in their paranormal offerings, for example, they feature more dramatic stories behind the resident ghosts or more elaborate activities, including structured ghost hunts and special overnight stays. The Villasca Ax Murder House in rural Iowa, for example, is neither easily accessible, nor part of a large tourist market or significant nearby demand generators. As a result, a site such as this must exercise a more carefully designed and executed sales and marketing strategy to attract volume visitors.

Conversely, there is the scenario where paranormal sites are located within a major tourist market, easily accessible, or proximate to cities with high connectivity. Gateway cities and anchor cities, such as Los Angeles or Boston, receive millions of visitors for business, educational, government, or leisure purposes. Therefore, paranormal destinations in these settings are within a much more competitive environment. These types of paranormal settings, such as the Queen Mary ship in Long Beach, California, maintain a competitive edge over other "nonparanormal" attractions by featuring a diversity of activities at the same location. Similarly, while visitors of Estes Park, Colorado, may be traveling specifically for the Rocky Mountain activities, the Stanley Hotel is able to capture demand by offering an additional experience—glorified by Stephen King—that is able to diversify their itinerary and provide a unique experience for casual or opportunistic visitors who happen to be in the area.

Restaurants, bars, and hotels are especially successful in using a paranormal reputation as a competitive advantage. Dining and lodging are necessities of travel, but the appeal of eating or sleeping somewhere that is reputedly haunted provides a dual brand experience for consumers. Thus, a restaurant may edge out its competitors through the rationale that a consumer would rather "dine *and* have the prospect of a paranormal experience" versus "just dine" at a regular restaurant with no sense of "elusive or virtual possibilities." The same idea holds for hotels or other establishments that can offer their guests core hospitality services *and* the opportunity for the "real magic" of a haunting that is unlikely to be replicated elsewhere.

These last points raise questions about ethics and motivations for possible chicanery in this sector. To begin with, investigators (e.g., Nickell, 2001; Roll, 1977) have discovered sensationalism and outright fraud in many claims of ghosts and haunts. Nickell (2003) outlined the infamous "Amityville Horror" case as a prime example and cautionary tale in this respect. Therefore, owners and operators should diligently avoid fabricating "paranormal" stories or deliberately embellishing such claims for investors, buyers, consumers, or the media. Of course, some detractors might fundamentally object to advertising *any* narratives that explicitly promote notions of the supernatural.

The reasoning is that paranormal tourism, even purely as an entertainment vehicle, only buttresses superstitious beliefs in the public and simultaneously undermines rational or critical thought (for discussions, see Sagan, 1996; Shermer, 2002). Some authors have even dogmatically declared that parapsychological phenomena cannot be legitimate on their face (e.g., Reber & Alcock, 2019). In response, readers should know that many informed academic and scientific authorities do take the study of these purported anomalies seriously, as currently, there is no comprehensive or compelling scientific explanation for some of the credible witness reports and instrumentation data in this domain (see, for example, Houran & Lange, 2001; Maher, 2015; O'Keeffe & Parsons, 2010).

Still, the success of paranormal tourism transcends "spooks and spirits" to hint at a larger conceptual issue facing the industry. Note that an interactionist or enactive view of space activation and monetization stems from the now dated notion of the "experience economy" (Brouder, 2012; G. Evans, 2007; Hannigan, 2005; Landry, 2000; Maitland, 2010; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Pratt, 2008; Richards, 2011; Richards & Raymond, 2000). However, we contend that this term and its underlying foundation have level-set or even undergone a form of inflation in the industry and are currently ripe for refinement if not reinvention. To be sure, affective, stimulating, or memorable experiences per se might be insufficient as effective differentiators in light of the three shifts in tourism and hospitality discussed in Russo and Richards (2016). To our way of thinking, the overarching business lesson from paranormal tourism is that *space activation (and hence monetization) is maximized when settings specifically cultivate an authentically visceral "experiential quality" for consumers*. This extra dimension to visitor motivation and expectation might differentiate paranormal tourism from competing products that are limited in scope to serious education or commercial entertainment (cf. Powell & Iankova, 2016; Stone, 2006). We propose this as an anticipated fourth industry shift, namely that the *experience economy* is transforming to an *enchantment economy*.

Our assertion assumes that the mobilities, performative, and creative turns have pushed the boundaries of what constitutes an ideal consumer experience. In this context, several authors (e.g., De Geus et al., 2016; Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011) have proposed the elements of education, escapism, aesthetics, entertainment, and a sense of "newness." Based on this interpretation, we press that many businesses might be at a marked disadvantage by strictly focusing on either (a) standard "bigger or better" product and service development or (b) traditional brand personality work, that is, consumer engagement via shared values or desirable characteristics. Remember that the allure and success of paranormal tourism arguably is not grounded in the "brand promise" that people *will* experience the supernatural, but rather being in a psychological state of *receptivity* to it. This situation seemingly mimics common wisdom in the casino-gaming world that says, "customers pay to *play*, not to *win*."

This parallel offers a key insight about the appeal of paranormal tourism that might apply across the greater hospitality–tourism market. Notably, gaming and paranormal tourism both involve consumers investing time and money in an *opportunity*, *chance*, or *risk*—not a guarantee. That is, a legitimate and responsible ghost attraction (i.e., no fraud or extreme sensationalism) cannot and should not promise mysterious manifestations as assured outcomes. Instead, consumers engage in the realm of "elusive possibilities," with an associated state of anticipation that itself could be alluring, enticing, and perhaps, as with gambling and other dopamine-inducing activities, psychologically addictive (for a review and discussion, see Begley, 2017).

Thus, there is an underlying assumption and preaccepted realization in paranormal tourism that participant outcomes can be neither predicted nor controlled by a business entity. A situation grounded in unknowns and uncertainties can bolster the "creepiness" factor (McAndrew & Koehnke, 2016), but more to the point, consumers nevertheless proceed with the purchase of the attraction, meal, hotel, and so on., apparently because the appeal of the purchase shifts from an objectively tactical experience to a subjective feeling and experience of anticipation and potential enchantment. In other words, a ghost tour is not a walk through a historic building or a meal at a remote restaurant but instead the equivalent of a lottery or raffle, that is, an *investment* in the increased odds of experiencing something that cannot be duplicated elsewhere. No matter how miniscule the chances of witnessing the supernatural, the value of the transaction comes from the *increased possibility* of an experience.

This gaming scenario can be extremely effective because consumers have a reasonable expectation of failure, that is, losing a bet or not witnessing a special or mysterious event. Credit for the gaming perspective of paranormal tourism rests, in part, with Paulas (2013), who professed that

> . . . what makes us knowingly risk a boring and terrible night out in a town in which we have a limited amount of time, is gambling for some of the simplest things of all: A chance to get scared witless, and a tale to retell our friends and scare the wits out of them. (para. 24)

But we take a slightly different view and propose that consumers are content with the risk because of the psychological enjoyment or stimulation inherent to an authentically visceral state of *anticipation* and *uncertainty*. This priming might subsequently culminate in "enchantment" if and when anomalous events actually materialize.

A vital caveat is that the gaming analogy of paranormal tourism does not consistently hold during October's Halloween season. Because ghost and hauntings tours have become a year-round business, a sort of natural sorting has occurred with two categories of consumers. Genuinely interested attendees seem to participate in paranormal tourism "off season" and largely desire to visit specific locations while accepting only a possibility of a supernatural experience. Meanwhile, our research suggests that October brings waves of unrealistic and demanding visitors wanting "to see a ghost." Tourist expectations and attitudes have reportedly become so extreme in recent years that several tour operators we consulted have even considered shutting down business in October, despite how lucrative it is. The risk to the brand equity of paranormal tour operators is amplified, because these same consumers can be very negative and vocal with eWOM when expectations for paranormal experiences are unsatisfied. From the tour operator's perspective, 4 weeks can destroy an entire year of five-star reviews.

These unrealistic expectations stem from several compounding factors. First, "ghost-hunting" television programs show all manner of anomalous occurrences within the span of 30 to 60 min, so attendees expect *at least one* paranormal event during tours that last between 2 and 3 hr. Second, there might be some consumer confusion or muddling of the difference between "haunt attractions" (i.e., manufactured events in controlled settings for entertainment, cf. America Haunts, 2019) and "legitimately haunted places," as well as the corresponding "scare factor" expectations of each.

Third, and most fascinating to us, there is a "lemming" mentality with many October customers. Tour operators we interviewed characterized it as, "Those people who attend ghost tours in October, because that is what people are supposed to do in October." These patrons invariably complain about not seeing ghosts, the "boring history," and going into "crime-infested neighborhoods." Readers would be dumbfounded at how many members of the "Professional Ghost Tour Guides" group on Facebook have received complaints about tour guides who "talked about dead people too much." Some operators have even issued refunds for this complaint, and bizarrely all this unfolds during October's peak season.

Taken altogether, we advise tour–hospitality businesses seeking a strong competitive edge to focus on researching and delivering "enchanting experiences," or at least grasping the variables that increase consumers' odds for them. Based on insights from our review of paranormal tourism, we suspect that one component to enchantment is that it derives from what consumers perceive as "naturally occurring" or "real" experiences versus those that are overtly "engineered" or "make-believe." This view strongly aligns with other authors who have specifically stressed the "authenticity" factor when speaking about the appeal and impact of religious or sacred spaces in tourism and nontourism contexts (e.g., Aulet & Vidal, 2018; Belhassen et al., 2008; Bremer, 2006; Gil de Arriba, 2006; Shackley, 2002). The idea of a "spontaneity spectrum" might also be relevant. That is, the degree of structure and personal control linked to experiences or events might contribute to the sense of enchantment.

For example, viewing an orca up close at a city aquarium can be thrilling yet the structure and certainty of the experience might undermine a strong or sustained visceral sense of awe or wonder. But a whale-watching trip on the open ocean is different, because the gaming perspective now applies. Here, there is no guarantee of a sighting, only the specter of anticipation and uncertainty. Thus, the tension and suspense of something elusive happening in the "real" world produce a different psychological experience for observers. The point is that the same event perhaps can be perceived either as "interesting" or "enchanting" depending on the degree of spontaneity and naturality framing the experience.

Finally, *enchantment* itself is an ambiguous and ill-defined construct in a quantitative sense (see, for example, Bennett, 2001; Holloway, 2006; Ostergaard et al., 2013; Schneider, 1993). Thus, future research should address this critical knowledge gap in consumer psychology. We anticipate that the hospitality–tourism industry will more effectively embrace and evolve within Russo and Richards' (2016) three paradigm shifts via new studies on the nature of enchantment that specifically leverage systems theory and perhaps aspects of S. A. Hill et al.'s (2018, 2019) VAPUS model. Investigations ideally will give up the ghost to measures and models that balance the study of attentional, perceptual, and attitudinal mechanisms in tourists or attendees (e.g., Langston & Hubbard, 2019; Olsen, 2013; Pharino et al., 2018) against environmental variables that may typify so-called sacred or enchanted spaces (e.g., French et al., 2009; Robinson & Pallasmaa, 2015). Although the findings would be enormously useful to paranormal tourism and broader hospitality alike, a dedicated research program that uncovers crucial nuances in the interactionist perspective of space activation and consumer psychology is bound to be more daunting than haunting.

Appendix

Study-Specific Survey for Paranormal Tourism Operators

Market area: ______________________________

1. What percentage of your business comes from pre-planning as opposed to last minute sales?
   a. 50%
   b. 25%
   c. Less than 25%
   d. More than 50%
   e. Significantly more than 50%
2. What percentage of your customers are tourists as opposed to locals?
   a. 50%
   b. 25%
   c. Less than 25%
   d. More than 50%
   e. Significantly more than 50%
3. What is the total number of customers you process per year?
   a. Fewer than 1,000
   b. Between 1,000 and 5,000
   c. Between 5,000 and 10,000
   d. Between 10,000 and 15,000
   e. Greater than 15,000
4. What are your annual revenues?
   a. Less than US$5,000
   b. Between US$5,000 and US$19,000
   c. Between US$20,000 and US$49,000
   d. Between US$50,00 and US$99,000
   e. Between US$100,000 and US$199,000
   f. More than US$200,000

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Notes

1. The first author participated in a 2008 National Geographic–televised investigation of Eastern State Penitentiary (ESP; "American Paranormal: Haunted Prison") and found that at least some ghost reports were related to the effects of (a) expectancy or suggestion (e.g., Houran et al., 2002; Lange & Houran, 1997) and (b) potential infrasound, which can potentially act either as a *stimulator* of unusual experiences or a context-dependent *intensifier* of already existing experiences (for overviews, see, for example, Braithwaite & Townsend, 2006; Parsons, 2012; Persinger, 2014).
2. *TV Shows filmed at the location include*—Nat Geo: American Paranormal: Haunted Prison; Travel Channel's Ghost Adventures; Fox Television's World's Scariest Places; TLC's America's Ghost Adventures; SyFy's Ghost Hunters, and MTV's Fear. *Movies filmed at the location include* 12 Monkeys (1995), Return to Paradise (1998), and Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (2009).
3. The Glassdoor aggregate rating was 3.5/5, and 45% would recommend this place of work to a friend and 68% approve of the CEO (accessed August 8, 2019).

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