

**TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF GAY AND LESBIAN TOURISTS:
A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY**

by

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of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Hospitality Information
Management

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ABSTRACT

Even though the study of gays and lesbians in the hospitality industry and specifically the tourism market is fairly recent, it is a significant indicator of the development of tourism research. The tourism industry is now choosing to focus their interests on this burgeoning segment because of changing social attitudes (Hughes, 2006) and the realization that the key to success is not mere mass-marketing but rather a strong niche position that offers something singular to a particular set of consumers (Clift & Forrest, 1999).

Given that there are theories, which posit that the character of space is influenced by sexuality and in turn that space may influence sexual identities (Bell and Valentine, 1995) and others that point out that men and women clearly experience tourism differently (Kinnaird & Hall 1994), it stands to reason that the tourism needs of the gay and lesbian travellers too will be unique.

Yet there are some drivers of travel that are common to both the gay population as well as the straight tourist. One of the research objectives is to discover needs, common to both the gay and heterosexual segments, so as to market to the gay population without alienating the other. This paper will examine four need-based motivation theories to evaluate the motivations for gay and lesbian tourists. *A gay- identity motivation model*, based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs is

proposed, which would chart the maturation of sexual-identity of gay and lesbian individuals. The model would have the potential to segment gay and lesbian travellers' motivations for travel based on their stage of sexual-identity formation. It could be utilized as a marketing tool by organizations to match, the assets and strengths (pull factors) of the destinations and the gay and lesbian travellers in a particular stage of identity development, who would best fit the current guest profile. This would ensure that there is a seamless and smooth integration of multi-segmented markets. Some recommendations for marketing are suggested based on the unique needs of the gay and lesbian population

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The impact of gay and lesbian tourism is on the rise as increasingly more and more destinations and businesses are focusing on these travellers. This awareness is not just limited to small-scale businesses, countries are jumping on this bandwagon as well.

On the 3rd of May 2012, United States' tourism website (<http://www.discoveramerica.com/>) *Discover America* posted it's first ever tourism campaign advertisement aimed at the international market segment. What was unique about this campaign was that rather than just focusing on the iconic images of America such as the Statue of Liberty, the advertisement showed the world the vast variety of cultures and ideas that America embraces. There was an emphasis on American diversity in not only the geographic features but on the American people as well. The video accented the North American qualities of inclusiveness and featured a small vignette of a gay couple vacationing in the United States (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Q4TkQN3Rjg>).



Figure 1
Snapshot of the Discover America Campaign

The backlash from the conservative segment over the *Discover America* video, which was outraged by the 4-second flash of gay tourists enjoying the wonders of America (Tashman, 2012), reveals that there is an anxiety associated with marketing to the gay and straight tourist simultaneously.

According to Johnston (2005), the field of tourism studies has been sluggish to research gay and lesbian tourism, the existing literature seems to “focus on (the) advertising trends and industry motivation for new markets”. In the past a reference to “gay tourism” (like the sex tourism niche) implied, that people would travel for the purpose of indulging in gay activities. Now this emerging segment is being assessed and evaluated as a distinct market (Community Marketing Inc. n.d.).

This market segment is expected to continue to grow as a result of the ongoing acceptance of LGBT people and changing attitudes towards sexual and gender minorities (Guaracino, 2007). The coinage of terms such as *gaycation*, which has come to imply a version of a vacation that includes a pronounced aspect of LGBT culture, either in the journey or destination (Collins, n.d.) and *DINKS*, dual income, no kids (Investopedia, n.d.) are semantic signs of this growing segment. Furthermore, it is claimed that LGBT couples travel more frequently, spend more money (because of

higher discretionary income) and have more brand loyalty than their straight counterparts (Guaracino, 2007).

Advertising about an accepting environment notwithstanding, like many other major companies the US too, has become aware of the significant capital (also known as the “pink dollar” or “pink pound”) generated by this marketing niche and has made it a point to align itself with the gay community and gay tourism campaigns (Walters, 2003).

1.2 Problem Statement

One of the major limitations of marketing to the gay community is that, the identity of space is traditionally seen as heterosexual. Homosexuals are permitted to be gay in specified spaces and places (Bristow, 1989). They are often disenfranchised and are relegated to designated areas. The public arena is not regarded as an asexual place; rather they it is referred to as “authentically and naturally” heterosexual (Valentine, 1996). In order for the hospitality industry to effectively market to this community, environments need to be welcoming to all segments, and should not estrange one in favor of another. There is a lack of research that addresses this issue of balance and the viability of marketing to the gay and straight tourist simultaneously.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the travel motivations for gay travellers?
2. Are there any differences or similarities between the motivations of the gay and straight traveller?
3. Are there ways that the hospitality industry could market both to the gay as well as the straight segments of consumers without alienating either?

1.4 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to conduct exploratory research in examining the gay and lesbian market from the perspective of the tourism industry. The research aims to assess the relative importance of this segment as perceived by the tourism market. Additionally the study will examine the motivations for travel, which may be common to the gay as well as the straight traveller, and the implications of these for the tourism industry.

The study seeks to build upon current knowledge about the gay and lesbian tourism, examine the common needs of both the gay and heterosexual segments, and identify strategies to service both segments.

It is beyond the scope of this study to provide normative recommendations for marketing, rather this paper hopes to provide an insight into the travel motivations and needs of the gay traveller and a means which would enable the hospitality industry to better understand this unique segment.

1.5 Abbreviations and Acronyms

LGBT: Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender

IGLTA: International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association

NGLCC: National gay and lesbian chamber of commerce

GLCVB: Gay and lesbian convention and visitors bureau

WTO: World Tourism Organization

1.6 Keywords

1. **LGBT** Guaracino (2007) states that this is the most inclusive term when referring to the gay community and Hughes (2006) grants that the term gay is used extensively for marketing purposes. However given the scope of this study, it will refer to the gay (men and women) population and will not indicate research on the bisexual and transgendered population. In the instances when research on lesbians is not available the term “gay men’ will be used to denote the gender. And in instances where the researcher is using the acronym LGBT , the same shall be used.

2. **Gay** broadly relates to a person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted predominantly to persons of the same sex. This attraction may be experienced by men who are openly ‘gay’, by others who are less open and by those who adopt an ostensibly heterosexual lifestyle.

3. **Tourism** is associated to ‘touring’, in this paper it also refers to a holiday that entails stay in one destination or location.

4. **Homosexual** Binnie (1997) thinks that this term engenders an undercurrent of negative denotation, however since some academic sources use it, in this paper it will refer to the gay population.

5. **Heterosexual** is a sexual orientation; heterosexuality refers to an enduring pattern of or disposition to experience sexual, affectionate, physical or romantic attractions to persons of the opposite sex. It will also be referred to as “straight”.

6. **Motivation** is a psychological feature that arouses an organism to act towards a desired goal and elicits, controls, and sustains certain goal-directed behaviors. It can be considered a driving force; a psychological drive that compels or reinforces an action toward a desired goal. For example, hunger is a motivation that elicits a desire to eat. Motivation has been shown to have roots in physiological, behavioral, cognitive, and social areas.

7. **Travel motivation** can be defined "as the global integrating network of biological and cultural forces which gives value and direction to travel choices, behavior and experience". (Pearce, Morrison & Rutledge, 1998).

9. **Heteronormativity** signifies practices, language and institutions which imply and reflect a ‘regime’ of heterosexuality as ‘normal’ (Jagose, 1996).

10. **Gay -space** Hindle (1994) defines gay space as the physical manifestation of the gay community, while Hughes (2002) describes it as a spatially discrete concentration of bars and clubs, as well cafes, shops, residences and public space that

permit gay identity to be validated by relationships with others of similar sexual orientation.

11. **Gay -friendly** places that are not necessarily managed by gays or exclusively gay, but that welcome the gay public with a more than just a tolerant attitude (Hughes, 2002).

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Stuber (2002) analyzed the market segmentation criteria for the LGBT and submits that the gay and lesbian community qualify as a viable market segment and can be reached effectively. He used the following commonly used measures:

1. *Accessibility*: Through community platforms and media
2. *Measurability*: Self-identification confirms a significant population
3. *Profitability*: Evidence of a higher discretionary spending pattern
4. *Stability*: Social acceptance is on the rise

Although the term LGBT tourism is used to classify this segment of the market, much of the research and studies in the academia has been about the gay and lesbian travel habits; there is a lack of literature relating to bisexual and transgender travel (Hughes, 2006). According to the Community Marketing Inc. (a member of IGLTA) estimates, the LGBT community has the total economic spending power of more than \$600 billion a year. An analysis of 6,648 LGBT respondents in the US, found that gay/bisexual men had taken an average 3.9 trips and lesbian/ bisexual women had taken an average of 3.3 trips in the last 12 months. The respondents were

largely mid-range travellers followed by budget and then luxury. More than 60% of the travellers cited their mid- range choice out of a desire a take more frequent trips rather than on financial consideration (WTO Report, 2012).

According to Ian Johnson, CEO of Out Now (a marketing firm for LGBT consumers), “ the LGBT travel market has advanced in major ways in the past 20 years, but the organizational structures that serve the industry has advanced little.” (as cited in Siebert, 2012). The LGBT 2020 Study done by this firm estimates that LGBT travellers spent an average of \$1,974 on leisure travel in a twelve-month period. The study further showed that 78 % LGBT community showed a marked preference to staying in gay- friendly hotels (State News Service 2012).

“The tourism market is not untouched by specific reference to the LGBT culture; the slang *gaycation* implies a vacation that has pronounced aspect of LGBT, indicative of the journey or the destination” (Collins, 2012).

2.2 Understanding the Segment

Levitt (1960) posits that “selling focuses on the needs of the seller, marketing on the needs of the buyer”, suggesting that without a strong understanding of the consumer, neither can one provide the right product and services, nor can they reach the consumers. To overcome a disconnect from this burgeoning market, the hospitality industry has to seek to better understand this segment of the market.

As heterosexuality is the norm in the society (Dyer, 1997; Haslop et al.1998) gay and lesbians are apt to feel marginalized and oppressed (Hindle, 1994;

Grossmann, 1998; Waitt & Markwell, 2006) and therefore they feel a need to define and express their sexual identity in more conscious manner than most heterosexuals (Haslop et al. 1998). Therefore to market to this segment, the industry must try to understand the underpinning of the segment's social constructs.

This niche market represented by the LGBT tourism is a very unique one for several reasons. The LGBT consumer travelling identities might be different from their "home" identities. They might either, be likely to withhold their sexual orientation when travelling or else feel encouraged to come out in LGBT friendly destinations (Friskopp & Silverstein, 1996). Hughes (1997) supports this view, that vacations present gay men prospects to experience gay cultures, practices, and lifestyles that might not be readily available to participate in at home.

As Hodges (1995) states succinctly, "Places are more than locations on maps . . . they are cultural creations with varying meanings to the different people who experience them". Hence it is very critical to this niche, that they are enabled to make the right choices before their travels. Additionally, tourism and being gay are seen by Hughes (1997) as being "inextricably linked" because of social censure of their lifestyle, many are forced to find a "gay space". The tourist in this segment requires, not only the conventional tourist information but also gay-specific information to be able experience a great vacation.

The LGBT tourism market needs to be studied and understood not just in isolation as a niche, but also needs to be analyzed within the broader tourism industry. The community represented by this market, has to be studied within political,

economic, cultural and legal framework, since it is particularly sensitive to any fluctuations within these environments and has a strong presence in the current society. Whitney (2006), suggests that the “queering of contemporary Western culture is a subtle yet ongoing process, despite strong resistance on the part of moralizing, right wing factions” (p.36).

The spatial nature of tourism makes it a very distinctive form of service, Coon (2012, p.511) says “unlike purchasing a product, tourism as consumption is about buying time in a space away from home” and thus puts the LGBT tourism industry in a dichotomous situation, where although they are sought out as valuable consumers, their very visible presence in an otherwise heterogonous environment can lead to discomfort and friction. There is a perception of awkwardness associated with grouping straight and homosexual tourists in the same venues and many destinations try to demarcate these two segments. Coon (2012) cynically, interprets the surge of study in this field, as attempts to classify travel destinations as heterosexual and homosexual based on the level of acceptance for gay travellers at these locations.

The study of tourism in the LGBT niche is further nuanced by a bias due to emphasis on research on male tourists, which is seen by some, as prejudicial since it favors the experiences of men over women (Kinnaird & Hall, 2000). Though this bias could also be a result of the concerns with HIV/AIDS and its links with gay tourism. However, Chouinard & Grant (1996) feel that this focus “reinforces notions of a patriarchal society in which the male experience is regarded as the norm subsuming the female experience.”

This is despite evidence that there are a significant number of lesbian tourists. Curve, the largest lesbian magazine in the US conducted a 2011 travel survey, drawing on almost 1000 responses, which indicated 29 % gay women spent \$2000 on tourism and 33% spent more than \$1000.

Market segments are often analyzed on the basis of the core elements of the consumers such as “baby boomers”, “ Gen X” and “seniors” and often other variables like socio-economic, racial, age, educational are not factored effectively. Similarly there is a risk in trying to define individuals singularly on their sexual orientation, especially since it is difficult to discuss “lesbians and gay men in the same breath... [as] human experience is gendered... [and] common experiences cannot be presumed” (Chouinard & Grant, 1996). Even so, as long as research recognizes the different variables, which influence all market segments also, influence the multi -faceted gay market, the study of this segment can prove to be profitable.

There are researchers who feel that canny marketers are already engineering the LGBT market. Whitney (2006) argues that, the capitalist economies play an important and deliberate role in portraying the cultural practices of the LGBT market, in a manipulatively attractive manner so that the lucrative LGBT market can be better developed since not only is the LGBT market a large one, its influence on the heterosexual market is also a very significant factor on the marketing strategies of corporations (p.37).

Regardless of the reasons for this interest, whether it may be purely economic in nature (UNWTO, 2012) or social in it’s effort to “include”, the phenomena of

marketing tourism to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) community is remarkable and needs to be researched.

Following are some of the trends and changes that the LGBT community is undergoing on different fronts:

2.2.1 LGBT Global

In 2008, Outtraveller.com published a list of popular and trending destinations popular among the gay tourists. These destinations were chosen based on criteria such as gay events, gay-rights policies, and artistic and architectural features:

1. Santiago, Chile
2. Valencia, Spain
3. Marseille, France
4. Dublin, Ireland
5. Cardiff, Wales

These were in addition to the already traditionally popular destinations:

1. Amsterdam, Netherlands
2. Miami, USA
3. New York, USA
4. Sydney, Australia
5. London, UK

Community Marketing, Inc., published its 16th LGBT Tourism Study (2012), and listed the popular International destinations

Top destinations attracting at least 4% USA LGBT travellers in the past 12 months

Europe

1. England 7%
2. France 7%
3. Italy 6%

4. Germany 5%
5. Spain 5%

Canada

6. Montreal 6%
7. Toronto 6%
8. Vancouver 5%

Mexico

9. Puerto Vallarta 5%
10. Cancun 4%

Several countries now have a dedicated “gay” page on their national tourism websites. The ‘LGBTBritain’ section on VisitBritain, lists all events, festivals, gay-friendly cities and gay history and culture (VisitBritain, n.d.). This is quite a bold step for the UK, where a survey indicated that a sizeable proportion of hotels and hostels were reluctant to house gay couples in double rooms (Tuck, 1998). Hong Kong, China hosted ‘Pink Season’ (29th September-04 December, 2012) a LGBT festival that claims to have been Asia’s biggest so far. Yet there are some regions in the world that have exhibited adverse reactions, to the presence of gay tourists, such as the Cayman Islands and the Bahamas (BBC News, 1998).

This welcome mat laid out for the LGBT tourists is the outcome of growing acceptance of this alternative lifestyle combined with supporting non-discriminatory laws. Even some culturally traditional societies like India have taken daring measures in this direction. In 2009 India struck down a law, which criminalized homosexuality (Thottam, 2009) and since then, has taken many steps to make their LGBT citizens more inclusive in the mainstream. In November 2011, New Delhi India was chosen to

host the first Asian Symposium on Gay & Lesbian Tourism. It featured educational presentations and networking opportunities for government tourism offices, visitor bureaus, destination management companies, meeting planners, and travel suppliers including airlines, hotels, tour operators and so on.

These global trends that are facilitating gay tourism, cannot be solely credited to government legislation and intervention rather they can be attributed to the exponential growth in digital communication and information systems, the Internet and the transnational corporations responsible for creation and consumption of tourism (Markwell, 2001).

This vision of the LGBT tourism market, however is not shared globally, according to the 2010 report by the ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) 76 countries around the world still consider homosexuality illegal and 5 of them punish homosexual acts with death.

2.2.2 LGBT United States

Inclusive acceptance of the LGBT community is not limited just to tourism. Former President Bill Clinton proclaimed June as the Gay and Lesbian Pride Month (2000) and later in 2009, President Barack Obama finessed the proclamation declaring June the LGBT month (Kwon, 2012).

The stigma attached to adopting this alternative lifestyle has been on a steady wane, ever since gay sports celebrities have chosen to publicly step out of the

closet and straight athletes are featuring in supportive public service videos and are quick to penalize derogatory comments (Muther, 2013). This has led to an increased participation in sports, which has served to promote sports as an attractive alternative to other “traditional” professions like fashion and entertainment.

Changing laws also play an important part in this market. A boom in the LGBT tourism business in Hawaii is attributed to the new civil union laws that went into effect in January 2012. (Nelson, 2012,p.26). Despite such a significant growth, the Hawaii Tourism Authority, which is funded by state legislature, seemed to be perceived as reluctant to target the LGBT segment. However, recently they updated their official website (GoHawaii.com) to include information about civil union and about the hotels that are cater to the LGBT community needs. Additionally they are “looking to support a festival that will align with both the LGBT community and the HTA's Strategic Plan," said David Uchiyama, the HTA's vice president of brand management (Nelson, 2012, p.26). These conflicting views within policy frames are common as attitudes undergo change.

One of the major issues in the gay community has been the topic of gay-marriage rights; it is not coincidental that states, which have ruled to grant equal marriage rights to the LGBT, have been prominent in soliciting tourism from this market. February 2012 one year after signing the civil union legislation, which provides same- sex couples the same state legal rights as married couples, Chicago

Governor Pat Quinn authorized the launch of ‘Pride Illinois’ featuring LGBT market focused section on the state tourism site (State News Service, 2012). This section lists TAG Approved[R] accommodations and destinations in the state of Illinois. The most recent is Delaware, which became the 11th state, to grant same-sex marriage rights on the 7th of May 2013.

Interestingly even the states that have had the ban of same sex marriage instituted such as North Carolina, have taken steps to launch a state tourism website geared towards the LGBT community. The OutinDurham.com will seek to promote Durham (North Carolina’s fourth largest city) as a gay-friendly destination (PR Web Newswire, 2012).

An US based LGBT survey (CMI-16th LGBTTourism Study) results implied that gay men and lesbians are more likely to travel to a gay-friendly destination in the US. However the focus group indicated that while corporate boycotts were considered valid, the LGBT community tends to overlook national or state laws because they are not inclined to penalize local communities and people. According to the focus group the stronger deterrent was the anti-gay violence associated with the state rather than an anti- gay law.

Top Cities Ranked by Population

Rank	City	Percentage of City Population	GLB Population
			population
1	New York	4.5%	272,493
2	Los Angeles	5.6%	154,270
3	Chicago	5.7%	114,449
4	San Francisco	15.4%	94,234
5	Phoenix	6.4%	63,222
6	Houston	4.4%	61,976
7	San Diego	6.8%	61,945
8	Dallas	7.0%	58,473
9	Seattle	12.9%	57,993
10	Boston	12.3%	50,540

Table 1
Top cities ranked by population

N = 6,775 LGBT USA residents.

Top 25 LGBT Destinations: Business and Leisure Combined

1. New York	35%
2. Chicago	27-29%
2. Las Vegas	27-29%
2. San Francisco	27-29%
5. Los Angeles	23-24%
5. Washington DC	23-24%
7. Fort Lauderdale	16-18%
7. San Diego	16-18%
7. Boston	16-18%
10. Atlanta	12-14%
10. Dallas	12-14%
10. Miami	12-14%
10. New Orleans	12-14%
10. Orlando	12-14%
10. Palm Springs	12-14%
10. Philadelphia	12-14%
10. Seattle	12-14%
18. Austin	7-10%
18. Baltimore	7-10%
18. Denver	7-10%
18. Hawaii	7-10%
18. Houston	7-10%
18. Key West	7-10%
18. Napa	7-10%
18. Phoenix	7-10%
18. Portland	7-10%
18. Provincetown	7-10%
18. Sonoma	7-10%
18. Tampa / St. Pete	7-10%

Table 2
Top 25 LGBT destinations

Table 1 lists the estimated LGBT populations; these numbers are based on American Community Survey data for the year 2000. Table 2 is compiled by the Community Marketing, Inc., which lists the top 25 destination cities for the LGBT tourists. There is a clear correlation between the cities with the most LGBT inhabitants and it's popularity with the gay community. According to Florida (2002) welcoming gays and other minorities into the cities will revive and rejuvenate the economies, this "creative class" brings with it highly –skilled knowledge and thus creativity.

It is significant, that the perception of gays and lesbians in the US has changed, Kong et al. (2002) finds that reflected, in the tone of interviewing about this

segment, which has become empathic. Burr (2003) states that the way one perceives sexuality has a bearing on how one treats others. She demonstrates this by the change of usage of the word homosexual as a noun instead of an adjective, which has made it personal, as something people 'are' instead of what they 'do'. This growing recognition of the gay population is a significant indicator of the changes in the attitude of the society in the United States.

2.2.3 LGBT Demographics

It is not only the increasing social acceptance for the gay community that is responsible for scrutiny and study of this market segment, it also this segment's changing and more visible demographic. The academia (Pritchard et al., 1998; Hughes, 2002) depict gay as well-educated professionals with high discretionary incomes, no children and large amounts of leisure time. They tend to travel more frequently than heterosexual (Community Marketing, 2008; Binnie & Valentine, 1999; Hughes, 2006) and while travelling are inclined to spend a lot of money (Guaracino, 2007) and are brand loyal (Pritchard & Morgan, 1996).

This segment of population like all others is constantly changing and evolving, as evidenced by new studies about the gay community led by lesbians "openly develop families, conceive or adopt children and build quasi traditional families" (Mulryan, 1995). These statistics however must be used with caution say some (Pritchard et al. 1998) since there is variance in data from homosexual households, just as there might be variance in data from heterosexual household.

Survey Demographics

This demographic profile represents over 6,700 study participants who live in the United States and 540 living in Canada. The purpose of the survey is to give guidance to travel companies considering advertising in the gay and lesbian media (print and Internet), and/or considering sponsorship of LGBT community organizations and events. Results in this report are presented by demographic segment.

Select Survey Panel Demographics

	Gay/Bisexual Men – USA	Lesbian/Bisexual Women - USA	USA LGBT Under 35	LGBT Canadians
TOTAL	5643	1005	1387	543
Living with Partner	45%	63%	36%	44%
Single/Dating	55%	37%	64%	56%
Under \$50K Income	24%	29%	42%	20%
Over \$100K Income	38%	27%	19%	33%
Children Under 18?	3%	19%		
Age Under 35	20%	26%	100%	23%
Age 36-54	53%	49%	0%	49%
Age 55+	27%	25%	0%	28%
California	18%	15%	16%	44% ON
Texas	7%	7%	8%	23% BC
Illinois	5%	4%	6%	13% AB
New York	9%	7%	11%	10% QC
Florida	8%	6%	4%	10% Other
Gay Man	97%	0%	78%	86%
Lesbian	0%	91%	15%	10%
Bisexual	4%	11%	8%	5%
Queer	2%	5%	6%	3%
Transgender	1%	2%	2%	1%
<i>Multiple selections allowed</i>				
White	85%	82%	75%	87%
Latino/Hispanic	7%	6%	13%	1%
Black/African American	4%	7%	5%	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	3%	8%	5%
Native American	1%	2%	2%	1%
Mixed	3%	6%	6%	3%
Other	1%	2%	1%	2%
<i>Multiple choices allowed</i>				

Table 3
LGBT survey demographics

1. The LGBT community increased their travel in 2011 as compared to 2012.
2. New York City always a favorite in this market segment has slightly increased its lead over the second and third, San Francisco and Las Vegas respectively.
3. NYC scored well in all three key indicators (actual visits to the destinations, most gay-friendly and personal favorite categories).

4. Approximately 3% gay men and 19% of lesbians indicate having children under 18 living at home.

The Census 2000 was an eye opener in confirming the presence and pattern of same sex unmarried couples in the United States. It delivered empirical proof that 99.3 percent of all counties in the United States had same- sex unmarried partners.

Concerns such as civil unions, gay adoption rights, partner benefits, hate crimes and anti-discrimination laws can all be affected by awareness of these numbers. Marketing to these populations is very closely related to studying the patterns and locations of the gay community. And though this community cannot be treated as a monolithic entity, there are certain patterns, which can be studied such as lesbian in the US prefer rural settings and gay men tend to be urban (Mulryan, 1995), and use the data to better plan social and commercial services.

2.3 LGBT Marketing Strategies in Hospitality Industry

One of the recent cases of this purposeful dual marketing is the Marriott Hotels, one of the first to offer its employees same-sex marriage benefits, which launched its 'Be You With Us' campaign which guarantees gay-friendly staff and several discounts (<http://www.marriott.com/marriott/marriott-gay-travel.mi>). For their gay customers they offer a gay landing webpage with occasional offers and specials.

Hyatt Corporation too, has actively promoted itself to the LGBT segment. They improved their perception as a gay-friendly company in the market with their

tasteful advertising campaign and partnered with GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), IGLTA and the Human Rights Campaign. Additionally Conrady and Buck (2011, p.198) note that they designed interactive widgets that had videos and listings of the destinations to make the message more experiential.

Accor Hotels launched their own LGBT website (www.rainbowselection.com), along with Leading Hotels of the World with its Pride Page and the Preferred Hotel Group with Preferred Pride.

Coinciding with the increased visibility of LGBT people raising children in the 1990s, an increase in family-friendly LGBT tourism has emerged in the 2000s, for instance R Family Vacations (<http://www.rfamilyvacations.com/>), which includes activities and entertainment, geared towards couples including catering to same sex marriages. R Family's first cruise was held aboard the *Norwegian Dawn* of the Norwegian Cruises with 1600 passengers, which included 600 children.

Several non-traditional hospitality options are now opening up for the LGBT tourists, such as hospitality networks of LGBT individuals, who offer each other hospitality during their travels and even home swaps where people live in each other's homes (Ragland, 2006). Additionally there are several other worldwide social groups for resident as well as tourist LGBT like social groups for resident and visiting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender expatriates and friends (Chestnut, 2002).

There are others, which serve as a platform for tourism operators, such as the TomOn Tours (www.tomontours.com), which promotes with printed travel guides, social media networks and on other marketing avenues. Navigaytour

(www.navigaytour.com) advertises itself as the ultimate gay and lesbian travel resource guide. Purpleroofs.com is a trip- planning tool with worldwide lodging options as well as Damron a subscriber-only website, with an extensive database of lodging and event information. Major online travel agencies like Orbitz, Travelocity and Expedia also have dedicated sites for gay travellers.

In 2009, TUI Travel, Europe's prominent travel company introduced a gay focused travel brochure and the next year went further and chose to fine-tune it's appeal to the lesbian traveller ("WTM", 2010).

Roth and Luongo (2002) advises gay-friendly destinations not to become too complacent and be confident of their status as a gay-friendly destination, and cautions them that just "because they are a 'traditional' gay destination, (that) they always will be, ...mature destinations need to reinvent themselves. They need to communicate to the gay market what's new; they need to emphasize events and catalysts to bring gay and lesbian travellers back". This need for innovation and evolving with the changing needs of their consumer is a very important aspect of growth in any industry.

2.4 Understanding the Motivations for Tourism

Tourism research has been described as both "enigmatic and bizarre, enigmatic in as much as there remain aspects of it difficult to define, and bizarre in that it sets out to make theoretical sense of people having fun" (Burns & Holden, 1995,p.1).

Given that, motivation is the driving force behind all behavior and is a factor in realizing satisfaction (Gnoth, 1997) without a keen understanding of consumer's motivation, successful tourism marketing is unattainable" (Fodness, 1994), it is important to take a look at some motivation theories that may apply to travel. Understanding travel motivations plays a critical role in predicting and planning for the hospitality industry.

2.5 Motivation Theories

Motivation theories are largely classified into two different perspectives: Content and Process theories. Content theories strive to explain "what" motivates people and is concerned with individual goals and needs. Process theories attempt to explain "how" motivation occurs (Luthans et.al., 1998). Since this paper's focus is on the intrinsic motivations of tourists, content theories will be analyzed. And given the scope of the paper the four theories discussed will be the *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, the *Herzberg's Two Factor Needs*, *Push and Pull Factors* and *Utilitarian vs. Hedonistic* consumption needs.

2.5.1 Abraham Maslow: Hierarchy of Needs

According to Maslow (1943) an individual strives to seek a higher need when lower needs are fulfilled. Once a lower-level need is satisfied, it no longer serves as a

source of motivation. Needs are motivators only when they are unsatisfied. He argued that if the lower needs physiological (hunger, thirst, rest), safety (security), belonging and love (affection, giving and receiving love) are fulfilled the individual would be motivated by needs of the next level of the hierarchy, esteem (self-esteem and esteem for others), self-actualization (personal self-fulfillment).

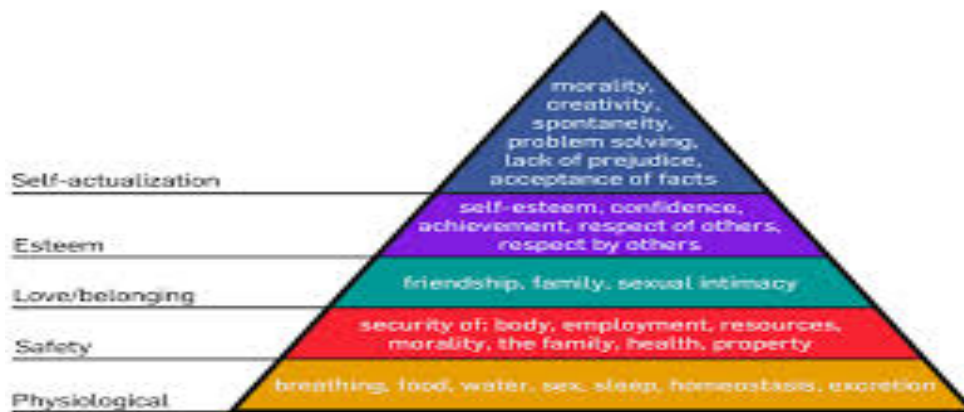


Figure 2.
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1943) clarifies that most people start at the bottom and mature in the order he ascribes, yet he does not see it as a fixed order, he contends that the order could change according to circumstances.

Conley (2007) a hotelier and motivational speaker, uses Maslow's hierarchy of needs, to create "peak" experiences among employee, investors and guests. His version of the pyramid has three levels survive, *succeed* and *transform*. The transform level is the peak and he advocates creating or facilitating a peak experience for all

three the consumers, the employees and the investors, so they are invested and involved in the organization.

2.5.2 Frederick Herzberg: Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg (1959) suggested that there are two types of factors that affect motivation. The first are the *hygiene factors*, which create dissatisfaction if individuals perceive them as inadequate, yet individuals will not be significantly motivated if these same factors are viewed as adequate or good. These extrinsic factors include salary, job security and working conditions. The other are *motivators*, are intrinsic in nature such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, nature of the work and personal growth.



Figure 3. Herzberg Two Factor Theory

Howard and Crompton (1980) adapted this theory to explain key ingredients in visitors' satisfaction with their choice of holiday destinations. The physical/ tangible and the basic level of services provided are attributes of a destination, if the quality of these is below threshold, dissatisfaction will result. Even if these services are superlative, it will be unlikely to result in a synchronized level of satisfaction, because these amenities will be the expectation and might even be considered generic. Safe

and secure environment, clean rooms and courteous staff are considered hygiene factors.

The benefit attributes that Herzberg (1959) termed motivators are the “satisfiers” that lead to a positive experience. Howard and Crompton (1980) agree that the motivators contribute to the resultant satisfaction from the “realization of desired intrinsic outcomes” of the guests. However, they caution, these factors are very dependent each other and destinations must make sure that they provide a more than adequate environment and bolster it with a high quality experience which seeks to distinguish the destination in a unique manner. Comparison with Maslow’s theory suggests that hygiene factors can be approximated to the lower-level needs and motivators to the higher level needs.

2.5.3 Push and Pull Factors

Dann (1977) adapted the push and pull factors to tourism, he theorized that the push factors are internal and makes people more likely to want to travel and the pull factor is the appeal of the destination. Gnoth (1997) further developed on this theory and explains that needs can manifest internally as well as externally and influence an individual into action (push). Needs and psychological motives together with “signs in objects, situation, and events”(pull) create motivation and act as a desire for travel (p.290-291).

Push factors are seen as the motives and needs that are felt because of some tension or imbalance, and they create desire to travel (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981). The common push factors in tourism research studies (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Botha et al., 1999) were “escaping from everyday environment”, “novelty”, “social interaction” and “prestige”. Pull factors are the features, attractions or attributes of the destination like “lake front”, “hiking trails” and “beaches”. Fakeye & Crompton (1991) identified and classified them into six categories "social opportunities and attractions", "natural and cultural amenities", "accommodations and transportation", "infrastructure, foods, and friendly people", "physical amenities and recreation activities" and "bars and evening entertainment”.

Push and pull factors are particularly attractive to the tourism industry because product and services bundled together, can be designed to focus on special segments with multi-optional demands, for instance the beach loving LGBT tourists who seek an active social environment can be attracted to the destination with packages of parties onboard boats on the marina of the hotel’s beach front property.

2.5.4 Utilitarian and Hedonistic Consumption Needs

Given the experiential nature of tourism, the tourism needs and choices made by gay tourists can be studied in the context of necessities and luxuries, functional and experiential or *utilitarian* and *hedonistic*. In order to identify the pattern of choice and

decision, it is vital that any account of consumer behavior is supported by a thorough study of the relationship between a consumer's functional goals and experiential preferences.

Necessities are objects that relieve an unpleasant state of discomfort (Berry 1994), whereas luxuries are objects of desire that provide conditions of abundance, pleasure, ease and comfort. Researchers state that luxuries are consumed primarily for hedonic pleasure while necessities are required to meet more utilitarian goals (Dubois, Laurent, and Czellar 2004; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998). While hedonic goods are multisensory and provide for experiential consumption, fun, pleasure, and excitement, utilitarian goods are primarily instrumental and their purchase is motivated by functional product aspects (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998).

Though both these types of "consumption are discretionary the difference between the two is a matter of degree or perception" (Khan, Dhar, & Wertenbroch, 2004). Hence, in comparison to utilitarian consumption, hedonic consumption may be perceived as relatively more discretionary (Okada 2005) additionally emotional desires can often dominate functional motives in the choice of products (Maslow 1968).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study was undertaken to further the understanding of the motivations for travel for the gay and lesbian tourists, identify motivations common to both the homosexual and heterosexual travellers and suggest recommendations for effective marketing to both the segments of tourists simultaneously. It is hoped that this study may provide a new perspective on the relationship between travel motivation and the sexual identity formation/evolution of a gay and lesbian traveller.

An extensive review of literature was undertaken, along with a survey of the World Wide Web researching Gay and Lesbian professional associations, publications and blogs. The review of literature and the Internet based information was relevant to the domestic and international gay and lesbian community and their travel habits. I examined several social motivation theories, which would relate to an individual's motivations for travel.

I examined four social theories in great detail *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, *Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory*, *Push and Pull Factors* and *Hedonistic vs. Utilitarian Consumption Needs Theory*.

After subsequent examination of the germane literature I identified that travel needs are steered by motivations for experiencing particular events and these are closely related to an individual's sexual identity and its level of growth and maturity. To this end I advanced a conceptual model, which charts the progression of the gay-identity and its implication as a motivator for travel for the gay and lesbian tourist. The model would have the potential to segment gay and lesbian travellers' motivations for travel based on their stage of sexual identity formation. It could be utilized as a marketing tool by organizations to match, the assets and strengths (pull factors) of the destinations and the gay and lesbian traveller in a particular stage of identity development, who would best fit the current guest profile. This would ensure that there is a seamless and smooth integration of a multi-segmented market.

I researched for pertinent literature that would theoretically support this model and a synthesis of the applicable narrative is presented. The literature supporting the theory that the *gay identity travel motivation model* could be viable tool to effectively market and segment the gay and lesbian traveller was examined. I researched several hospitality organizations, using their company web pages and press releases that have used different approaches to marketing to the gay and lesbian population. Based on some of the methods and available literature some recommendations are suggested to market to the gay and lesbian population.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The motivation theories discussed in chapter 2 do not take into account the personality of the tourist which Plog (1974) claims has a bearing on how people travel and their motivation to do so. In a spectrum of tourist types (Plog, 1991; Lowyck et al., 1992; Ross, 1998) an allocentric type is on one end and the pscyo-centric on the other end of the spectrum. The allocentric tourist is an extrovert and regards travel as a prospect for learning about cultures and is excited about experiencing novel events; whereas the pscyo-centric travels traditional routes and feels more comfortable in familiar environments.

Insofar as the type of gay tourists, there are those who are see travel as an opportunity to socialize and actively seek sexual encounters while travelling and thus visit glamorous gay- friendly destinations and others who, like the allocentric tourists are interested in exploring new cultures and are inclined to visit non- gay destinations more often than not (Clift&Forrest, 1999).

Hughes (2002) and Pritchard et al. (2000) suggest that sexuality has no impact upon the travel motivation of homosexual tourists, yet surveyed LGBT (Pritchard, 2000) tourists refused the choice of tourism to destinations where homosexuality is taboo, leading to the conclusion that though sexuality might not affect choice it could certainly be a powerful factor in culling of choices available.

4.2 Differences in Motivations Between the Gay Traveller and the Heterosexual Traveller

Some like Howe (2001), and Hughes (2006) feel that when it comes to demographic features, there aren't many apparent differences between the two segments, but since the lifestyle and identity of the gay population is more likely to show variance from that of the heterosexual one, there are bound to be some dissimilarities.

Pritchard et al. (2000) explain that the push factors (which they divide into two categories intrinsic and extrinsic) that gay tourist share with heterosexual tourists are extrinsic which govern the yearning for new surrounding. The intrinsic motivation however is closely linked to the sexuality of homosexuals and creates desires for them to escape from the heterosexual world to one where they can assert their own identity and feel safe and accepted (Pritchard et al. 2000; Hughes, 2005). In fact Pritchard et al. (1998), Howe (2001) and Hughes (2002) point out that while on vacation away from the heterosexual society, the LGBT tend to feel protected and safe.

Besides the common drivers for travel, that do not differ from the conventional tourists', such as cultural exploration, sightseeing and relaxation (Hughes, 2004; Pritchard et al., 2000), there are some that are gay-specific motivational push and pull factors (Decrop, 1999) such as the draw and attraction to the gay space

Gay men have higher expectations of having sex and having sexual encounters while on holiday than heterosexual men (Clift&Forrest, 1999;Southall, 2009; Clift& Carter, 2000; Ryan& Hall, 2001). Mintel (2006) presents data that gay and lesbian travellers are more prone to take a "long- haul" trip as compared to the heterosexual traveller.

4.3 Similarities in Motivations Between the Gay and the Heterosexual Traveller

According to Hughes (2002), Pritchard et al. (2000) and Clift& Forrest (1999), men regardless of their sexual orientation have the same motivations to go on holidays.

Lundberg (1971), Plog (1991), Smith (2001), Cooper et al. (2008), Urry (1990) all, are in agreement that the appeal of warm weather, sunshine and beaches are another 'pull' that is associated with both the gay as well as the straight traveller. Additionally the charm of interacting with the locals as well as the local culture is another similarity between the two segments (Lundberg, 1971; Crompton, 1979; Mathieson & Wall, 1987; Plog, 2005& Decrop 2006). There are some academics (Hindle, 1994; Taylor, 1997; Grossmann, 1998) however who do state, that

homosexual tourists are more keen than the straight tourists to socialize with the locals, given that they always make it a point to visit gay spaces if possible on holidays. Another commonality between the two segments is that they both are likely to visit friends and relatives during their travels (Mathieson & Wall, 1987; Lundberg, 1971; Bowen et al. 2010).



Table 4
General motivations for travel

Community Marketing Inc. surveyed LGBT respondents about where they

would like to vacation. Rest and relaxation scored the highest reason for travel, followed by exploration of new locations, break from new routines. These patterns of choices are very similar to those chosen by straight tourists.

As the survey suggests, so too the academics like Pritchard et al. (2000) deduce that the LGBT population seeks relaxation, new surroundings and unstructured leisure on holiday. Studies on tourist motivation (Urry, 1990 & Mathieson & Wall, 1987) show the same factors for the general tourist population. Additionally Hughes (2002) asserts that gay men go on holidays for socializing, self-actualization and escapism, motivations that are very similar to Crompton's (1979) findings, that people take holidays to enhance relationships, facilitate social interaction, escape their regular environment and for self exploration.

4.4 Gay-Identity Exploration Through Travel

Hughes (2006) and Burr (2003) describe identity as a belief of belonging to a particular community and not to another. Identity is further defined by Frable (1997) as "fluid, multidimensional, personalized social constructions" (p. 139) and sexual identity specifically, as defined by Howe (2001) is a "fluid set of meanings hinging on notions of sexuality and gender"(p.50).

For homosexuals the definitions of sexual identity are more complex. There are some that believe that homosexuals do not choose to become homosexuals but they do choose to identify as such (Hughes, 2006). Some like Rudd (1996), Haslop et

al. (1998), and Sinfield (1997) believe that homosexual identities are a result of the combination of the individual and their social environment. Regardless of the 'nature versus the nurture' origin of sexuality, there is overwhelming research on the very nature of homosexual identity. It is considered that gay identity is multi-faceted, dynamic and in-flux (Hughes, 1997; Rushbrook, 2002; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Cantú, 2009; Plummer, 1992, Munt, 1997; Valentine, 1993; Dyer, 1997; Johnston, 2005).

According to Grubb & Stern (1971), consumer's consumption behavior is related to their self-concept. Vacationing is seen as chance to create an ideal identity (Decrop, 2006) suggesting that holiday choices are used as opportunities to exhibit self-identity as well as a collective identity.

Tinsley & Eldredge (1995) researched psychological needs of humans and theorized that these needs can be satisfied by leisure activities sorted within groups such as "novelty, sensual, enjoyment, cognitive stimulation, self-expression, creativity, vicarious competition, relaxation, agency, belongingness and service".

Waitt & Markwell (2006) concur, they too believe that travel and leisure contribute and fulfill an essential component for sexuality development. According to them, for some gay men, "participation in gay tourism is an opportunity to (re) access the importance of sexuality in their personal identity". For some, they say, it will be life-altering and they may never go back to the way they have lived before and for others it may serve as a 'positive reassessment of their place of residence and their life in the closet', either way life is changed for the gay tourist.

Though content theories are suitable for the study of gay- identity, due to their focus on need fulfillment, they are unable to identify which need is dominant in an individual at any one time. This would be because the needs of an individual regarding self -identity are ever- evolving and keep changing in response to the environment as well as individual maturation.

4.5 Gay Identity Motivation Model

I therefore posit that there are four stages in gay-identity formation that could influence motivations for travel for the Gay and Lesbian community. The following model is an adaption of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.



Figure 4
Gay-Identity Motivation Model

Although these are scaled vertically, given the complexity of the human nature further fraught with sexual issues, which run counter to the hetero -normative world, these stages do not necessarily follow in the same pattern. It is possible for individuals to make progress up the scale and then regress. This scale is a template for the gay identity development that is in flux and is evolving. Dependent on the stage of the individual's gay-identity evolution, the individual will decide on the type of destination. It will be possible for an individual to be in two stages simultaneously, for instance even though the identity is fully transcended and affirmed the need for safety, which is the most basic of needs, will be ever- present.

4.5.1 Need for Safety

The scale begins at the lowest level of gay-identity for the individual, where the *need for safety* is the most important motivator for travel decisions. At this stage the gay individual is just concerned with the physical well-being. They will choose destinations, after a lot of research and recommendations, with a gay-friendly reputation. This individual may or may not be a new acceptor of their identity as a homosexual, they might not have come out of the closet in their own environment and may be seeking a sexual experience without fear of discovery or even ridicule.

4.5.2 Escapism Through Anonymity

The next stage is *escapism through anonymity*, given the historical exclusion that gays have encountered this need for escapism is intrinsic in their need to find

identity. At this stage the gay individual might be a little more seasoned and could still be closeted at home and so seeks sexual encounters without the pressures of commitment and the constraints of mainstream etiquettes. These encounters could be a monetary transaction or can be just be an exchange of sexual favors. They will be more likely to travel alone and choose destinations with the *need for safety* caveat but the reputation and the locales (gay neighborhood, bars, saunas and nightclubs) for a fast and exciting homosexual environment.

4.5.3 Gay-Identity Acceptance

I feel that many who would deny their natural sexual inclinations would seek safe harbor in this stage. In my opinion this stage of the development of gay-identity could be the longest lasting. Barring any harsh occurrence, this purely hedonistic stage will be all at once pleasurable, uninhibited and exciting. This will also be the stage when the self-esteem of the gay individual will be inclined to be low or erratic.

The next stage in the development would be the *gay-identity acceptance*. In this stage the individuals have come to terms with their sexuality. They have officially come out of the closet and have accepted that being homosexual is not ‘abnormal’ or ‘extraordinary’ rather it is just ‘being’. Being gay will just be one part of a compound personality that everyone possesses and will not be the focus and the hub of all that takes place in their life. The individual is more likely to be older and mature and will have started to seek committed partners. They will be less likely to be confrontational with disapproving family, friends and co-workers and would have started to feel

comfortable in their skin. This mellow attitude will result in easier adjustments in awkward situations and will lead to a more fulfilling social life.

They would be more likely to participate as an activist and spokesperson for their cause. This multi-faceted individual will be more likely to choose a destination which has a choice of activities that might interest them such as hiking, historical tours, cultural exploration and so on. Whether they are travelling with a companion or they are on their own they might like the option of a visit to the gay hot spots at the destination, but this foray into the gay space will not be the sole focus of the trip.

4.5.4 Gay-Identity Affirmation

The *gay-identity affirmation* would be the stage where the gay individual would be most mature emotionally and would be mostly likely to be in a committed long-term relationship. They see themselves not just as belonging in the mainstream rather as an integral part of the society. Their sexuality would not be the principle concern anymore rather it would now be a part of the whole. Their professional success and self-identity will take precedence over their sexual identity. This individual would have more knowledge and heightened awareness of cultural issues globally as well as locally and would have a desire to travel to further this interest and understanding.

Their choice of destination would be ones that would offer more than just “a home away from home”. It would be a learning experience that would make them thrive and become sentient beings.

Before this model is used as a robust marketing tool it needs to be tested empirically. There is no attempt intended to suggest that the gay identity at highest state of transcendence makes the sexuality of the individual null. According to Aitkenhead (1997), when openly gay celebrities argue that sexuality is “irrelevant and meaningless” they mean to imply that homosexuality is now out of the “ghetto”. He questions this stance because according to him “ few people-if any-are prepared to consider the costs of what amounts to a denial of gayness as a unique subcultural space”. Furthermore he theorizes that it takes away the element of singularity that the sexuality of gays and lesbians may use to define their identity. The *gay-identity affirmation* does not correspond with a repudiation of the sexuality of the individual rather it shifts the focus on the individual’s achievements which are not necessarily a product of their sexual orientation.

Sexuality in context with self- identity can be both a source of disenfranchisement as well as empowerment and this model seeks to explore this relationship so that there may be a deeper understanding of the unique tourism needs of the gay and lesbian population.

4.6 Literature Supporting “GAY-IDENTITY MOTIVATION MODEL”

This model I have proposed, is based on a close reading of the research in the study of the gay and lesbian tourism, social and cultural literature. I will now provide evidence to reinforce my claim.

4.6.1 Need for safety

Both Hughes (2002) and Cox (2002) agree that gay and lesbian tourists have complex choices to make, the choice of destination is not just geographical and experiential but considerations such as the social and legal environments also need to be factored in the choice. There are more than 82 countries where homosexuality (*Seventy six crimes*, 2012) is a crime, seven of those countries it is penalized with death (Amnesty International, 2008). Hughes (2002) and Pritchard et al. (2000) conjecture that gay tourists worry about showing affection for their partners and are concerned about suppressing their sexuality at such destinations to ensure their safety.

Even countries where there is no ban on homosexuality, like the Western World where it is illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation, gay tourists face social disapproval, intolerance and victimization (Kelleher, 2013).

Within the gay community, lesbians are more likely to be more concerned with a destination being gay- friendly. According to (Pritchard et al., 2000) while gay men's choices of destination was influenced by culture and architecture, gay women were more interested in eschewing destinations where their sexuality might cause a negative reaction.

Cases where gay tourists are treated with hostility have been most evident in non-industrialized societies and outside of the European and US axes (Hughes et al. 2010). There are several parts of the world where homosexuality is seen as a product of the West and as alien to indigenous cultures (Chambers, 2008), these societies are

identified by the gay tourists as unwelcoming. Almost all gay men have undergone some negative experience while travelling such as verbal abuse, intolerance and even physical attacks as a consequence of their sexuality (Hughes, 2002). Homosexuals are more likely to be the target of such violence (Brunt & Brophy, 2006) and thus they often try to avoid venues and destinations that are reputedly not gay-friendly or even notoriously homophobic (Pritchard et al., 2000).

There are many countries and cultures in the world where homosexuality is banned through legal strictures and others where cultural constraints play a part. The segment's need for safety is a very basic one and as in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, until this need is satisfied identity exploration and reflection cannot occur.

4.6.2 Escapism through anonymity

According to Pritchard et al. (2000) the anxiety and strain of being gay is the most important motivator for travel. "The hetero- normative societal expectations" prevent many in the gay population from being open about their sexuality (Kollen & Lazar 2012). On holidays they feel unrestricted due to the anonymity and are free to express their identity (Hughes, 1997; Waitt & Markwell, 2006).

In fact Carolan (2007) says that gay men especially who are not particularly candid about their sexual preferences, tend to use travel as an opportunity to have anonymous sex. Want (2002) opined that sexual encounters may be an important motivating factor for travel. These sexual encounters might take place between tourists

or might involve the locals, it could be a monetary transaction or a casual encounter without compensation (Monterrubio et al., 2007).

Waitt & Markwell (2006) state ‘that many gay men do tourism through their body’, implying that they engage in sexual activities in gay bars, gay clubs, cruising grounds and saunas (Clift & Wilkins, 1995; Clift & Forrest, 2000). Gay guidebooks detail methods and means for soliciting sex (Waitt & Markwell, 2006). Paid sex with male prostitutes is also a powerful motivator for some tourists (Luongo, 2000; Clift & Wilkins, 1995; Bunzl, 2000).

Clift & Forrest (1998) conducted a survey of gay tourists, which showed just under one third of the sample of gay men thought it was very important to have sex while travelling and just over the same number thought it was fairly important. Almost half the sample accounted having sex with upto 200 new partners. Destinations catering to gay men have a have higher incidences of sexual activity with new partners, because of higher propensity of gay men than at home (Forrest & Clift, 1998; Clift & Forrest, 1999, 2000). Clift et al. (2002) agree, their research shows sex clubs and saunas are frequented more at gay destinations as compared to non-gay destinations. Clift & Forrest (1999) further claim that “the extent of sexual activity with new partners in holiday settings appears to be much higher among gay men than it is among unattached heterosexual men” which suggest that the higher frequency of sex has some link with their sexual orientation.

The gay tourists indulge in these hedonistic activities to aid in *escapism through anonymity* but this stage of the development of identity results in self-effacement rather than a positive construction of the self-image.

4.6.3. Gay Identity Acceptance

Academics such as Haslop, Hill and Schmidt (1998), have metaphorically named the 'street' heterosexual, that is to say all reality that exists is heterosexual. Thus the perception that heterosexuality is the norm would influence any definition of homosexuality. Visconti (2008) explains that "the heterosexual mainstream requires the conservation of sharp demarcations... such easily recognizable and cartoonified homosexuality protects heterosexuals, since it makes symbolic boundaries easily detectable and almost impersonal". Thus LGBT define and identify themselves using the heterosexual social constructs. Hence to really know themselves without the heterosexual-normative context they should attempt to change the settings.

According to Cohen (1979) tourists tend to choose destinations "based on their perceived relationship to the center" (their morals and values) of the society. Those who feel marginalized or alienated from the "center" while at home often seek a sense of belonging in a tourist destination. According to Uzzell (1984) and Dann (1996), argue that the language of tourism and all the marketing strategies focus emotional and psychological needs by targeting on the "push factors" (the reasons someone might want to leave home) before presenting the specific attributes of the destination. The materials used to sell tourism can therefore reveal a great deal about

the lives that tourists leave behind while they are traveling.

In this stage of the development of gay identity, individuals seek environments where they feel safe to reveal their sexuality without fear of reprisal. Pritchard et al. (2000), define these gay friendly destinations where homosexuality is accepted and gays and lesbians can be open about their preferences. Destinations, which cater to the mainstream tourist, will not provide this opportunity to express their identity because of the hetero- normative ambiance.

Not only are hetero normative destinations not conducive for gay identity acceptance, they could even be downright dangerous considering there are many countries in the world where homosexuality is abhorred and gay tourists could face prejudice or worse (Hughes, 2002).

Gay men living in the mainstream heterosexual society habitually holiday at gay destinations to foster and develop aspects of their gay identities, this form of tourism is considered ‘identity tourism’ (Herrera & Scott, 2005). According to Cox (2002) holidays which offer gay tourists an opportunity to mingle with other gay travellers gives them not only, a prospect to create, reinforce and even transform their sexual identity, but also a means to elude social restrictions and bigotry. It is not surprising that gays in order to discover their identity seek it in the company of people with sexualities similar to their own.

In their own environment gay individuals might be a minority but when travelling to a gay –friendly destination, they gain a chance to be a part of the majority and feel a sense of acceptance. Hence the *gay factor* of the destination becomes crucial

in their choice for holidays (Clift et al., 1999). Waitt & Markwell (2006) state that 'gay space' is a "homogenous, bounded and fixed place' in a metropolitan area, with properties such as bars, restaurants, cafes, shops and residential areas (Graham, 2002). In these gay spaces the LGBT population feels free to be frank about their sexuality, feels a part of the community and also feels safe from discrimination and judgment (Taylor, 1997;Grossmann, 1998).

Another environment that LGBT tourists feel a sense of well-being is when they participate in gay events, where they are afforded a chance to not only acknowledge their sexuality but also to revel in it publically. Wait and Markwell (2006) state that public gay events serve a "community -building function and foster collective gay identity and belongingness" and Getz (2008) points that these events serve to provide visibility and recognition about the issues pertaining to LGBT community. Hughes (1997) reiterates this point of view, and believes that participating in events help to confirm and consolidate gays' and lesbians' identities as well as crate a sense of solidarity with the gay community.

This kinship results in feeling of safety and is an opportunity to show affection for their partners publically, *gay identity acceptance* in these gatherings is not just personal event for the gay community rather it is public proclamation of their choices.

This stage of gay-identity exploration is very important to those who might be closeted at home, Kollen & Lazar (2012), conducted a study in Budapest that the gay tourists who were open about their sexuality at home, were not travelling to look for an acceptance of their gay identity during their tourism experience.

4.6.4 Gay Identity Affirmation

There is research (Dumazedier, 1967; Krippendorf, 1987) that implies that the free time and vacations in the Western culture are connected to the notion of self-actualization or self-realization. This research was conducted unrelated to the sexuality of the sample, but there is additional research from academics such as Foucault (1978), Greenberg (1988) and Stein (1992) that have attributed the quality of self-reflexivity, which emerges during the process of coming out and identity formation.

Self-reflexivity (reflection) has been defined as the process that the gay individual undergoes during self-definition, social-disclosure and social acceptance (Visconti, 2008). Penalosa and Barnhart (2007) confirm that self-reflexivity is a persistent trait in minorities such as the LGBT. Their constant self-analysis and their ability to seamlessly live on the heterosexual 'street' as well as in their sub-culture gives them 'dual competence' and increases their sensitivity to the two disparate cultures (Viconti, 2008). Their travel to gay destinations provides them with an outlet for discovering their gay-self, independent of the distorted heterosexual bias, and leads them on a path to *gay-identity affirmation*.

Waitt & Markwell (2006) and Howe (2001) describe, "same sex tourism like a pilgrimage, a quest for an individual and collective identity". Binnie & Valentine (1999) and Howe (2001) use similar inspirational language when they say that the gay population has no physical or geographical homeland, that can validate their identity and so they leave their regular environs in pursuit of it.

In contrast to Hughes theory (2006) that the picks in destinations is limited, for gays, because of either unfriendly or downright dangerous environment, Ballegard & Chor (2009) state that their study of the gay and lesbian tourists in Denmark indicates that homosexuals are willing to hide their sexuality to visit places which are of interest to them. If the destination where homosexuality is forbidden or reviled, offers a unique experience and a growth in cultural awareness the survey demonstrates that gays and lesbians, thought it was essential to respect the values of that society and be willing to adapt to so that they could benefit from the distinctive experience.

There is consensus among many academics, that when gay and lesbians seek out gay spaces on holidays they not only network with others like themselves but also augment their self-respect (Waite & Markwell, 2006; Pritchard et al., 1998; Howe, 2001; Hughes, 1997). Further, Cox (2002) and Hughes (2002) concur that gay and lesbians tend to be more at-ease and sincere in the company of other homosexuals since there is no pressure on them to censor their identity and displays of affection. This leads them to feel more comfortable in their skins and thus this tourism experience aids in *gay-identity affirmation*.

There is worry and concern in the gay community that with rising social acceptance the 'integrity' of gay culture is being threatened, and a process of 'degaying' is occurring, aided equally by the gaining of rights as well as heterosexual encroachment on homosexual lifestyles (such as joint participation in gay events). According to Tatchell (1997), some are resisting this change because they are "too attached to their gay identity... (which) defines everything about them... being gay

nowadays offers a complete alternative lifestyle.... defining their sense of personhood, place and purpose”.

Chapter 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the literature in the previous chapter, I propose a model, which illustrates the overlapping of these stages of gay- identity formation and is the:

5.1 GAY-IDENTITY TRAVEL MOTIVATION MODEL

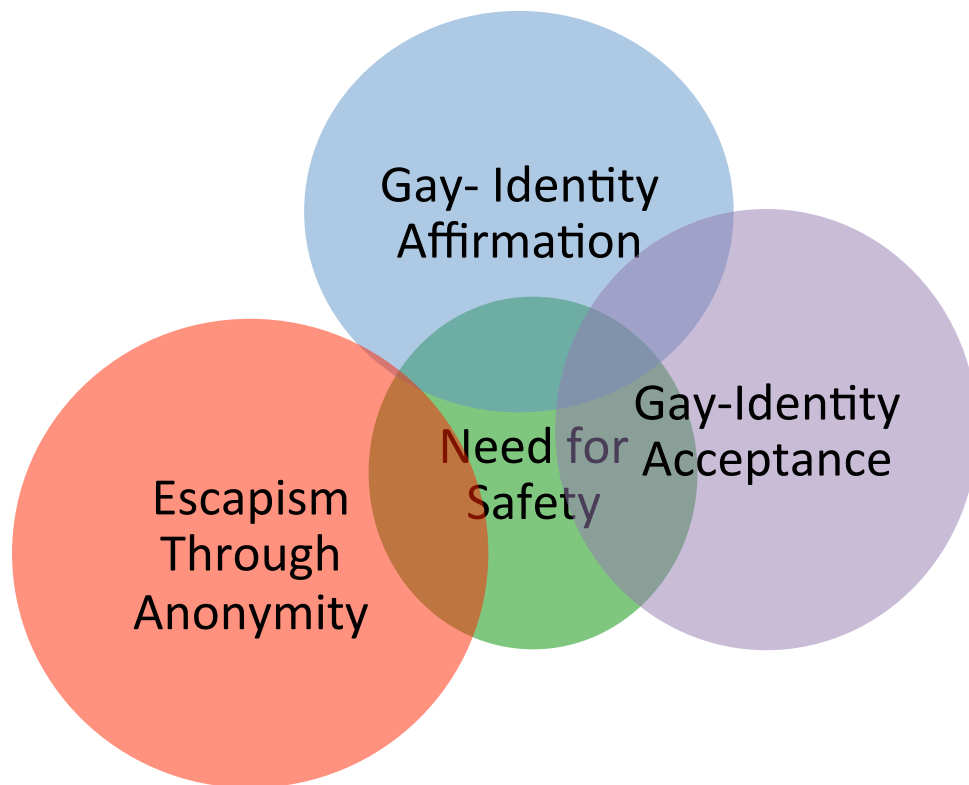


Figure 5

Gay-identity travel motivation model

The *need for safety* is present in all stages of development. There is a concurrence between *gay identity acceptance* and *gay-identity affirmation*.

5.2 Marketing Recommendations based on the Gay-Identity Motivation

Model

The gay-identity travel motivation model can be used by the tourism and hospitality industry to develop strategies for marketing to the gay and lesbian community. This model can help the hotels in designing a marketing strategy for the specific segment within the larger gay and lesbian segment, whose unique needs closely match the strengths of the destination.

According to Levitt (1983) “if you’re not thinking segments, you’re not thinking marketing”. To stand out from the competitors in the same destination market the hotels marketing strategy need to focus on the guest rather than just the “pull” factors that all the others in the area might possess too. The marketing strategy should be innovative and should be varied in terms of medium (print, on-line, visual, bran-promotional).

According to Plummer (1992) experiences of the gay community cannot be regarded as unitary in nature rather it is “ multiple, fragmented and diffuse”. Though this statement is reasonable it still behooves the tourism industry to analyze and categorize their travel experience so that accurate marketing tools are deployed to reach them with the appropriate product, which fulfills their needs.

There are some (Pritchard et al., 2000; Hughes, 2002) in gay tourism research who believe sexuality does not appear to have an impact upon the choice of destination yet there is clear evidence that the sexual orientation of the gay population influence their choice of destination (Cox, 2002).

5.2.1 Need for safety

The issue of safety while on holiday is important to all tourists, in fact it has been linked with satisfaction. It was Kozak (2007), who found that tourist who faced harassment displayed lower sense of satisfaction. Others state ‘that the risk-reduction inhibitor factors are likely to be deterministic, rather than the attributes of the amenities or attractions of a destination’ (Um & Crompton, 1992: 24) hence it becomes very important for establishments to ensure and promote an environment of security for the guest. Black (2000) found that certain groups in society, including women, might be particularly at risk when travelling and that women normally consider the risks of violence and harassment more rigorously than men.

According to Holcomb and Luongo (1996) gay tourists are drawn to destinations which are known for the welcome and hospitality to gays and furthermore gay destinations are likely to have high concentration of gay population. Hotels, which are in close proximity or in gay space, will be able to attract gay guests who are concerned foremost with safety. The guests will not have venture out too far looking for entertainment.

5.2.2 Escapism through anonymity

The hotels who would like to attract guests who are in this stage of identify formation can benefit if their properties are geographically convenient to the gay spaces; since their guests would prefer to stay in areas which have a high concentration of gay population (Holcomb& Luongo, 1996; Visser, 2003; Want, 2003).

The sense of liberation and the absence of inhibition is a feeling that all kinds of tourists desire, regardless of their sexuality (Figler et al., 1992; Carr, 2002; Kim & Jamal, 2007). According to Bell & Valentine (1995) cities offer more opportunities for being anonymous and according to Cantu (2009) urban spaces are more liberal. This perception could work to an advantage for an establishment in the urban setting, who would like to attract tourists from this stage of self- identity exploration.

5.2.3 Gay-Identity Acceptance

Properties that would like to focus on the tourists, who are in the gay identity acceptance stage, would benefit from gay events in the area. Research (Pitts, 1997; Markwell, 2002; Moner, Royo&Ruiz, 2007) indicates that gay events are a very significant pull factor for the gay tourist. Philippm (1999), Clift & Wilkins (1995), Howe (2001) and Waitt & Markwell (2006) all stress the importance of gay events in relation to gays' and lesbians' travel motivations, holiday experience and destination choice. Getz (2008) moreover states that people attend events in order to obtain new experiences and gain a feeling of group identity, and Richards (2007) believes that

people seek social cohesion at events. All these provide a strong motivator for the destinations to either sponsor/ host/support gay events.

Hotels need to make sure that their guests have a common area to meet which offers security as well as privacy. Homosexual tourists are more inclined than heterosexual tourist to seek like –minded company (Grossmann, 1998; Hindle, 1994; Taylor, 1997; Pritchard et al., 2000; Howe, 2001; Hughes, 1997).

Ailon (2007) and Lawler (2008) moreover state that the notion of identity is based upon a feeling of sameness, but, at the same time, it arises out of the feeling of differentiation from other groups. This might be part of the explanation why some homosexuals travel to gay space, seek out community and go to special events. In order for homosexuals to feel alike, they need to feel different from (heterosexual) others.

Gays and lesbians cannot be categorized and targeted as just one group. Even those gays and lesbians who seem to identify very much with their homosexual identity and, for example, believe that being gay is a lifestyle, sometimes choose to go on absolutely non-gay related holidays. This is in line with authors who suggest that even when people feel a membership of certain identity groups, each individual will still have unique experiences (Harper & Schneider; 2003; Plummer, 1992; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Clift & Wilkins, 1995).

5.2.4 Gay-Identity Affirmation

Urry (1990) states that being on vacation is about getting away from the ordinary life and into extraordinary experiences. Several authors claim that people go on holiday in order to experience something new (Graham; 2002; Plog, 2005). They look for cultural experiences, like visiting museums, exhibitions and historical sights; going to the theatre; and enjoying concerts, this motivation can be found in general tourism literature too (Mathieson & Wall, 1987; Figler et al., 1992).

Gay tourists in this stage of identity exploration might be interested in the cultural and anthropological exploration. MacCannel (1976) suggests that tourists seek authenticity and immersion in other cultures while travelling. Interaction with locals and possible social relationships is a pull factor for gay tourists as well as heterosexual tourists (Lundberg, 1971; Crompton, 1979; Mathieson & Wall, 1987; Plog, 2005; Decrop, 2006).

The research in the financial data suggested that as gay men are said to be DINKs with high discretionary incomes who travel often (Roth & Luongo, 2002; Stuber, 2002; Guaracino, 2007; Burrows & Dumoulin, 2000; Community Marketing, 2009), they both have time and money to make return trips as well as visiting new place. This demographic could be in this stage of the self-identity exploration.

Properties that are converted from old homes or historic buildings will benefit from this type of gay tourist. *Riads* in Morocco and homestay farms in India offer the benefit of staying with a local family albeit with hotel amenities.

In conclusion there are many common factors between the travel motivations of gay tourist in all stages of identity exploration. Need for safety aside the desire for sun, beach and warm weather is something that is a pull in general tourism literature and consequently a factor that gay and lesbian tourists too desire

5.3 How to market to the Gay and Lesbian Community

There are researchers like Stuber (2002) who believe that the gay market segments can be incorporated in the general marketing or alternatively be positioned as a different market, “ the approach to this market can be explicit, implicit or coded with symbolic language or signs”. The first step is to research, gather and study the data extensively. It is imperative to evaluate and analyze which would lead the organizations to make successful decisions. Companies planning to court the gay and lesbian segment will have to find out which combination of strategic options provides the best fit with their brand positioning and with their corporate policies. There are no general ‘best ways’ to set up a gay marketing strategy”.

Given the profitability of marketing to this segment, it is important to plan the strategy in detail. This market segment is very aware of decisions that corporations make that can be construed as an anti- gay stance either covertly or overtly. A corporation that chooses to be inclusive and makes an effort towards integration will win the approval of the LGBT market like the Kimpton Hotels, W Hotels, Hyatt, Red Carnation and Joie de Vivre (Mulholland, 2008). These hotels not only welcome

LGBT unreservedly, they also use the gay media for advertising, donate to LGBT charitable causes, offer Pride discounts, special amenities, sponsor gay events, and offer savvy concierge services.

	Very Motivating	Somewhat Motivating	Not Motivating
15% discount on price of room	60.4%	34.7%	4.9%
Buy two nights get a third free	59.4%	34.3%	6.3%
\$50 VISA Shopping Card	53.2%	36.1%	10.7%
Free breakfast	44.6%	42.8%	12.7%
\$25 credit at hotel restaurant	37.0%	47.2%	15.8%
10% discount on price of room	34.3%	52.3%	13.4%
Free tickets to a special LGBT event	31.7%	48.0%	20.2%
Free welcome cocktails	29.0%	40.2%	30.8%
Extra hotel loyalty points	26.3%	39.8%	33.9%
Bottle of wine in room	25.2%	37.7%	37.1%
Printed LGBT guide or map	22.0%	47.7%	30.3%
Donation or membership to LGBT organization like HRC	17.6%	48.2%	34.2%
Pass to local gym	18.7%	38.1%	43.2%
Subscription to LGBT publication	11.5%	35.9%	52.6%

Table 5
USA Gay and Bisexual Men (N= 5500)

Community Marketing Inc.'s survey in Figure 5 shows that the LGBT community is just as interested in the price discounts, complementary food and alcohol as any traveller from another subset. Even though there is discernible preference for some LGBT incentives (free tickets, subscription to Lgbt events and publication) it is the regular amenities that are the top motivators. The survey findings

did indicate that attending LGBT event was one of the key motivators, generating a high number of nights (an average of 3 nights when travelling for an event).

USA Gay and Bisexual Men N=5463
 USA Lesbians and Bisexual Women N=964
 USA LGBT Under 35 N=1372

	Major Influence			Some Influence			No Influence								
	Gay men /Lesbians/Under 35			Gay men /Lesbians/Under 35			Gay men /Lesbians/Under 35								
Articles on LGBT websites	26%	/	29%	/	30%	54%	/	51%	/	49%	20%	/	20%	/	21%
Articles in LGBT print magazines	28%	/	28%	/	25%	52%	/	52%	/	48%	20%	/	20%	/	27%
Display ads in LGBT print magazines	19%	/	19%	/	18%	54%	/	56%	/	49%	27%	/	25%	/	33%
LGBT travel maps	19%	/	20%	/	20%	50%	/	49%	/	46%	31%	/	31%	/	34%
LGBT display ads in guidebooks	15%	/	21%	/	17%	51%	/	52%	/	45%	34%	/	27%	/	38%
LGBT television shows	19%	/	21%	/	23%	45%	/	46%	/	42%	36%	/	33%	/	35%
Videos on LGBT websites	14%	/	11%	/	17%	46%	/	47%	/	45%	40%	/	42%	/	38%
LGBT email newsletters	12%	/	16%	/	12%	45%	/	49%	/	42%	43%	/	35%	/	46%
Banner ads on LGBT websites	9%	/	10%	/	11%	45%	/	47%	/	47%	46%	/	43%	/	43%
LGBT blogs	13%	/	14%	/	21%	40%	/	38%	/	44%	47%	/	48%	/	35%
LGBT Facebook pages	11%	/	17%	/	19%	35%	/	40%	/	42%	54%	/	43%	/	39%
LGBT iPhone or other smartphone	12%	/	10%	/	19%	30%	/	26%	/	45%	58%	/	64%	/	36%

Table 6
 Advertising to LGBT community

Positioning the product (lodging and the experience) is an important step to determine where the product or services fit into a competitive market place. Of equal importance is evaluating the internal practices of the organization. If the strategy to attract the LGBT market is going to be new or conscious one then the staff may need to be trained for the process. The marketing plan should include a variety of

approaches, based on research analysis and the strengths and limitations of the organization. There are myriad ways to reach out to the LGBT community through magazines, newspapers, yellow pages and websites. Roth & Luongo (2002) advise that mainstream advertisers reach out to the gay community by increasing their visibility in the gay media and the gay vendors of products and services need to make their presence felt in conventional source of advertising.

Another way would be to sponsor gay events such as Pride Parades, festivals, sporting events, conventions and film festivals. Additionally companies can join or sponsor LGBT organizations such as the IGLTA, GLCVB, GLAAD and NGLCC.

Hotel companies such as Marriott and Hyatt have taken proactive steps in reaching out to this community. The Kimpton hotels and restaurants have gone a step further and offer exclusive loyalty reward programs to their LGBT customers. They send out exclusive invitations to LGBT parties in Kimpton cities and even send out a quarterly LGBT newsletter with special offers and promotions. They have made genuine efforts to integrate LGBT -friendly policy in their work environment and are among the best place to work according the Human Rights Campaign, Equality Forum and The Advocate (indices which measure the LGBT friendly metrics).

Mintel (2006) cautions mainstream operators, to avoid gay stereotypical images, rhetoric, and politically incorrect statements. The hospitality cannot use a generic approach to the gay tourism market, which could result in missing opportunities for profit maximization. There are some in the industry who are using a highly focused market segmentation strategy such as the Lords South Beach Hotel,

Miami that opened doors in 2008. This establishment along with others such as Fort Lauderdale’s Royal Palms and Out NYC, Manhattan is focusing primarily on the LGBT market (Kaufman, 2010).

The leader in this LGBT focused market has been the Axel Hotels, a Spanish hospitality group with properties in Barcelona, Berlin and Buenos-Ares, a chain which impishly calls themselves” hetero-friendly” (www.axelhotels.com)

USA Gay and Bisexual Men		N= 5561		
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	
Location of hotel in destination	84.0%	14.6%	1.4%	
Price	79.0%	19.3%	1.7%	
Gay-friendly reputation of hotel / brand	51.1%	42.3%	6.6%	
Traveler reviews: mainstream sites	39.1%	47.8%	13.1%	
Hotel's design / vibe	32.5%	51.4%	16.1%	
Traveler reviews: LGBT sites	30.2%	50.7%	19.0%	
Hotel's loyalty program	25.5%	41.0%	33.4%	
Hotel / brand advertises in LGBT media	24.2%	53.7%	22.1%	
Hotel / brand sponsors LGBT events	23.0%	54.7%	22.3%	

USA Lesbians and Bisexual Women		N= 989		
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	
Location of hotel in destination	84.4%	13.9%	1.7%	
Price	84.6%	14.6%	0.8%	
Gay-friendly reputation of hotel / brand	52.1%	42.5%	5.4%	
Traveler reviews: mainstream sites	43.2%	47.1%	9.7%	
Traveler reviews: LGBT sites	30.9%	50.6%	18.5%	
Hotel / brand sponsors LGBT events	28.3%	54.0%	17.7%	
Hotel's design / vibe	27.4%	55.7%	16.9%	
Hotel / brand advertises in LGBT media	25.5%	56.9%	17.5%	
Hotel's loyalty program	20.2%	42.3%	37.5%	

Table 7
Factors for choice of destinations

An analysis of Table 7 shows that among gay men and lesbians, location

of the hotel, price and gay-friendly reputation of hotel /brand were the most important reason to choose one hotel over another. Traveler reviews on mainstream media was an important factor in the decision making process. The results of this survey points out that the ‘mainstream’ conveniences ranked higher than the LGBT specific motivators. This relates to the Hygiene Factor Theory, wherein once all the chief needs are met, the specific needs motivators are applied to make the final decision. To attract the LGBT market the hospitality industry has to design a package, which has all the amenities required for a comfortable stay and then use the LGBT specific attractors as icing on the cake.

It is widely established that the LGBT community spends more time online than perusing print media. Owing to the history of marginalization and exclusion that LGBT encounter (Nardi, 1992), the social vacuum of anonymity of the internet (Kiesler et al., 1984) has contributed towards a tremendous rise in its popularity amongst sexual minorities (Garry, 1999). This medium is ideal for advertisement since it can offer virtual experiences of the destination and be a very effective tool for marketing.

A national survey (Harris, 2011) found that 71% of LGBT adults are likely to remain loyal to brands that they believe to be very friendly and loyal to their community, “even when less friendly companies may offer lower prices and are more convenient”. There is more research, which supports the claim that the gay segment is characterized as being particularly loyal towards products and destinations (Pritchard

et al., 1998b; Berlingske Business, 2009; Pritchard & Morgan, 1996). Hospitality industry should reward this loyalty with continued superior service.

Ironically, destinations and hotels which are gay-friendly and serve a largely gay population, can actually deter the traveller from feeling comfortable outside the comfort zone of the hotel. According to Pritchard *et al.* (2000), though hotels that cater to gay clientele ‘may be oases of safety, they can also serve to ghettoize homosexuals and paradoxically heighten their vulnerability’. Thus operators, which serve all markets, can actually benefit from this reticence by promoting an image, which is all-inclusive.

5.4 Becoming a more Gay- Friendly Business

The decisions made by the LGBT segment are often aided by organizations such as Community Marketing Inc., which have done extensive research on gay-friendly destinations. Community Marketing Inc. launched a program, which enables the hospitality industry in reaching and serving the LGBT community as well as providing a resource to the consumers by supplying them with information on travel destinations and accommodations. These TAG Approved[R] properties enforces non-discriminatory policies, treats heterosexual and domestic partners equally in personnel policies, and provides LGBT diversity and sensitivity training for employees. In addition, the property employs staff reflective of the diversity of their community, gives back to its community, and empowers customers and employees to act as watchdogs of its LGBT business practices (Community Marketing Inc., n.d.).

There are several studies of the attitudes of the “locals” (inhabitants in the community as well as the personnel of the hotels) towards tourists, Zhang et al., (2006) refers to these as the measure of ‘impact’ of tourism. Identifying attitudes which are conducive to tourism will aid in tourism planning and development and will contribute to reducing conflict between the locals and tourists (Lankford, 1994; Pearce et al., 1996). These attitudes can influence the gay tourists in their selection of the destinations as well as for gauging interest for return visits. These impact studies are relevant to the LGBT community when the tourists may not be accepted where behavior is at variance with religious and moral norms (Dyer et al., 2007). Unfortunately, according to Chambers (2008) the attitude of locals towards gay tourism has not been researched in detail. Hughes (2006) found descriptive accounts, which are mostly journalistic and are unrepresentative of the community at large.

Brown, a former co- chairman of the LGBT- Straight Alliance, states “It would be difficult to target the GLBT community as a tourist market without having a stronger, more visible gay community (Frier, 2009). Shields (1991) talks about ‘imaginary geographies’, areas that are perceived as gay or gay- friendly, which according to Duyves (1995) is reinforced by a visible gay life and facilities and a calendar of gay events. According to Hall (1992) hallmark events (festivals, carnivals, fetes) are the “image builders of modern tourism”, he goes on to say that major celebratory events promote the image of the city as a “site for pleasure, fun and conspicuous consumption”.

The gay specific spaces thus provide not just a physical zone of safety and community; they are also “sites of cultural resistance with enormous symbolic meaning” (Myslik, 1996). On the other hand this visibility and advancement in LGBT activities is seen by some as a segregation between homosexual and heterosexual travel destinations by their nature of inclusiveness or otherwise (Coon, 2012). The establishment of gay themed areas does not necessarily mean an acceptance from the local community (Hughes et al. 2010), gay tourists for whom it identity-affirming to be accepted for their sexuality (Poria, 2006) may be welcomed merely for the economic reasons (Giddings, 2009).

Johnson (2010) enumerates steps that companies can follow that can assist LGBT consumers as well as corporations in making rational choices. His advice has a very commonsensical ring to it; he recommends a sincere effort to support the LGBT community balanced with a good business product. For companies making a new bid for the LGBT market, he recommends checking the ranking on the HRC index, which rates workplaces on LGBT equality issues.

There are some companies like the Lords South Beach Hotel, which caters to a mostly gay clientele, who donate a portion of their revenues to LGBT charities and thus provides evidence of their solidarity with the gay community

5.5 Limitations

This thesis is a mere enquiry in this vast field of study, more study would be required to truly understand the needs and motivations for travel of the gay and lesbian

traveller. There are some limitations to the study, and following are the reflections of some of the academics in the field who are aware of these limitations some of which are systemic and thus are difficult to overcome.

Theories of tourist types have been criticized for not taking into account the circumstances that even when two persons do the same things on one holiday, they might behave completely different on their next holidays (Lowyck et al., 1992). The idea that all people make different holidays (and do not just fit into a 'type' of tourist) might also make sense when discussing gay and lesbian tourist

According to Pritchard et al (1998), though there are ample prospects for tourism marketing to the gay segment, there is a “ risk of undermining the sanctity of gay spaces” which could endanger “ the hard-won oases in a largely heterosexual world”. And conversely the heretofore heterosexual spaces might have graphic and visually prominent displays of gay facilities and services. And this tourism space functions “ for both gay and straight consumption” and thus “again becomes contested” (Pritchard et al, 1998). These academics view this marketing targeted to the LGBT market with trepidation since it could result in undermining any strides that the community might make towards winning a 'space' in the heterosexual world.

Evans (1993) examined the role of tourism in the shaping of the of the (predominantly male) gay tourist market internationally, according to him, the commonly accepted perception of the gay community's focus on pleasure (mainly through sexual practices) has resulted in the commodification of gay sex. Clift & Forrest (1999) argue that the choice of vacation spots and leisure activities for gay

men in particular are influenced primarily by their need for sexual exploration. They hold on to this view despite their study showing a range of other factors, which might also be influential in the choice of destination. The image of the gay market (predominantly the gay white male) has become highly sexualized and the marketing constantly bolsters this view and image.

There are some inbuilt flaws and bias in the available data for the study of LGBT tourist (Hughes, 2006). The data sample does not seem representative of the entire community. They are often collected at gay events, social establishments or by reaching through the gay media; hence it reaches only a certain type of the population within the population. Furthermore the research and literature on the LGBT tourism rarely factor in variables such as social class, age, ethnicity or the level of education (Puar 2002; Waitt& Markell,2006) The marketing strategies are tailored to focus on white, male, professional gays, and according to Wait& Markell (2006) tend to marginalize the others in the LGBT segment such as lesbians, gays from other ethnic backgrounds and fetish gays (p.225). Cynical though it might be, one of the reasons that these minorities within the minority are ignored, might be because they are not considered financially interesting.

Badgett (2001) paints a gloomy outlook and disagrees with the optimistic data and feels that the LGBT demographics are not necessarily affluent, highly educated and childless.

It should be noted that the research conducted here has been pre -dominantly with Western gays and lesbians, apart from a minor number of exceptions. This might

indicate that the limitation of the research is that we mainly get an insight into gays' and lesbians' holiday experiences from one perspective, namely a Western. Plummer (1992) emphasizes that lesbian and gay experiences are multiple and diverse and that no universal 'gayness' exists. Bell & Valentine (1995) write that cross-cultural varieties in sexualities are present, and Clift & Wilkins (1995) assert that identities are culturally bounded. Binnie (1997) states that heterosexual researchers must acknowledge their limitations when doing work on homosexuality and must be very aware of avoiding voyeurism and misinterpretations

Researchers should be aware of the differences in national, cultural and racial factors in the gay and lesbian population and their possible implications on the results of studies conducted.

5.6 Conclusion and Future Implications for Research

Much of the literature in the field of gay and lesbian tourism is a product of the western world hence there is bound to be some ethno-centric bias in field of study. Studies conducted largely in North America and the United Kingdom may not have easily transferable knowledge to another context (Hughes 2006). It would be fascinating to discover new LGBT angles and perspective from studies from other parts of the world.

Former trends had the 'out' gay tourist frequenting mostly gay friendly destinations and facilities, now there are larger number of destinations welcoming the gay tourist (Clift et al., 2002), it is conjectured that the rising social acceptance and

effective marketing are the drivers for this change. For future studies, it would be interesting to find the effect of other factors such as globalization, the cheaper cost of international travel, and the ease of travel presented by the presence of numerous travel organizations.

In conclusion even though there might be resemblances between straight and gay/lesbian tourists' holiday motivations, gays and lesbians have an extra dimension on which to base their holiday choices, namely their sexuality. Gay and lesbian tourists are motivated to travel defendant on their need for safety, acceptance and approval of their sexuality. Consequently, destination choices are made based on the likelihood of finding gay space at the destination and venues displaying a certain level of gay friendliness, the very reasons for which gay destinations are suggested as being popular among, especially, gay men. In relation to this assumption, gay and lesbian tourists are often more conscious about their destination choices than straight tourists. The *gay-identity travel motivation model* needs be tested empirically so its validity can be assessed.

Several academics have a cynical outlook for the rising social acceptance and economic solicitation directed at the gay community “while marketers' recent attempts to lure gay and lesbian tourists to specific destinations may seem to suggest increased tolerance and societal inclusion, the specific strategies that they employ actually reveal the second-class citizen status still experienced by gays and lesbians within the rest of American society” (Coon, 2012). An attempt to market to the gay

and lesbian population should be undertaken with tact, empathy and understanding so as to not result, in disenfranchisement of this unique market segment.

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