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Think Pink in Tourism - A Study of LGBT+ Tourism

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Think Pink in Tourism - A Study of LGBT+ Tourism

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This Bachelor's thesis was conducted to study the LGBT+ market in tourism, focusing on gays and lesbians due to the lack of research done about bisexuals and transgendered tourists. By using literature and seminars as the basis of information, an online survey was conducted to get an idea of the motivations and profile of LGBT+ tourists. The thesis starts with an introduction and goes on to explain the concepts used in the thesis. Literature was studied to explain the economics of LGBT tourism and to give a brief look of the history of the research on the subject, as well as to sum up a profile of gay and lesbians tourists. Most of the research has been conducted over the last decade and the profile of an LGBT tourist has changed rapidly over the last few years. Some of the literature might be outdated.

The thesis contains a theoretical part and an empirical result part. The theoretical part was used to form the survey questions and the results of the survey were compared to the literature, to see if they support each other. Those professionals that study LGBT tourism find it to be a growing market with strong potential and great resistance. Companies are being increasingly visual and vocal about the support of the LGBT community and research finds that LGBT tourists are very loyal to brands that they find tolerant.

It can be seen both in literature as well as the survey results that the motives of both LGBT tourists and straight tourists are quite similar. In addition to traditional motives like beaches, the weather, shopping, and restaurant, the motives of LGBT tourists also include the feeling of safety and being able to express themselves in ways that they might not be allowed at home. Many find lack of tolerance a reason not to travel to a certain destination.

The empirical results were gathered by using an online survey to map the motivations as well as travel habits of those who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bi, trans, or other sexual or gender minority. The sample was international and varying in age with participants from ages under 18 to over 50. The results showed gays as being most concerned of LGBT friendliness when they travel, which goes together with the assumptions in literature that it is harder for gay men to hide their sexuality than it is for lesbians, bisexuals, and others.

As a result of the thesis, a profile of an LGBT+ tourist is outlined considering their motivations and travel patterns. Also, the clear economic benefits are pointed out as the positive results of LGBT+ positive attitude are obvious in both literature and the online survey.

Keywords: LGBT tourism, market potential, marketing, motivations

Saana Kauhanen

Turismi pinkisti - Tutkielma HLBT+ turismista

Vuosi 2015 Sivumäärä 45+5

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli tutkia HLBT+ turismia ja sen ekonomisia vaikutuksia, keskittyen homomiehiin ja lesboihin. Käyttäen kirjallisuutta ja seminaareja informaation lähteenä, tehtiin internet pohjainen kysely, jotta saataisiin kuva HLBT+ turistien motivaatioista ja profiilista. Työssä selvitetään HLBT+ turismin ekonomista vaikutusta ja esitellään lyhyesti aiheeseen liittyvää historiaa. Homo- ja lesboturistien profiilit selitetään lyhyesti. Suurin osa tutkimuksista on tehty viimeisen vuosikymmenen aikana, ja kuva HLBT+ -turistista on muuttunut paljon viime vuosina. Osassa kirjallisuudesta saattaa olla vanhaa tietoa.

Opinnäytetyö koostuu laadullisesta ja määrällisestä tutkimuksesta. Laadullista osaa käytettiin apuna kyselyn kysymysten laatimiseen ja kyselyn tuloksia verrattiin kirjallisuuteen, jotta nähtäisiin, tukevatko ne toisiaan. Ammatillaiset, jotka tutkivat HLBT+ -turismia pitävät sitä kasvavana markkinana, jonka potentiaali on vahva. Yhtiöt ovat yhä osoittavat tukevansa HLBT yhteisöä yhä näkyvämmiin ja tutkimukset osoittavat, että HLBT+ -turistit ovat erittäin lojaaleja brändeille, joita pitävät suvaitsevina.

Sekä kirjallisuudesta että kyselystä voi nähdä, että HLBT+ -turistien matkailumotivaatiot eivät eroa paljon heteroista. Perinteisten motiivien, kuten rannan, sään, ostoksien ja ravintoloiden lisäksi, HLBT+ -turistit pitävät myös turvallisuutta ja vapauden tunnetta tärkeinä seikkoina, jos haluavat osoittaa seksuaalisuuttaan matkustaessaan. Monet pitävät suvaitsemattomuutta syynä olla matkustamatta tiettyihin kohteisiin.

Tulokset saatiin analysoimalla kyselyyn saadut vastaukset liittyen motivaatioihin ja homojen, lesbojen, biseksuaalien, transsukupuolisten sekä muiden seksuaali- tai sukupuolivähemmistöön kuuluvien matkatottumuksiin. Ote oli kansainvälinen ja ikähaarukka oli suuri, alle 18-vuotiaista yli 50-vuotiaisiin. Tulokset osoittivat homojen olevan kaikkein tarkempia HLBT+ +toleranssista matkoillaan, mikä tukee letusta siitä, että homojen on vaikeampi peittää seksuaalisuuttaan kuin lesbojen, biseksuaalien ja muiden.

Opinnäytetyön tuloksena syntyi kuva HLBT+ turistista perustuen motivaatioihin ja matkatottumuksiin. Myös HLBT+ -turismin taloudelliset edut osoitetaan, sillä toleranssin ekonomiset ja sosiaaliset ovat selviä sekä kirjallisuudessa, että kyselyn vastauksissa.

Asiasanat: HLBT+ turismi, potentiaali, markkinointi, motivaatiot

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1 Introduction

What is very evident during the research for this thesis is that all academics agree LGBT+ tourism - or more commonly known as gay or pink tourism - is still an under-researched area as a tourism segment. New evidence has risen that homosexual tourists have indeed traveled for hundreds of years. According to historians, during the colonial era homosexuality was a common although socially frowned upon reason to travel. Still, it is not until thirty years ago that this possible minority group segment started to really gain the interest of researches and tourism providers. Nowadays, especially in USA and European nations, there are many tour operators who view LGBT+ tourists as their own segment and their market power is becoming more evident. (Murray 2007, 50) As the LGBT culture continues to grow rapidly, and the acceptance of the lifestyle has become more widespread, opportunities have opened up for both tourists and tourism providers. Before the global economic crisis of 2009, especially gay men were viewed as frequent holiday makers who also use intensive amount of money during their holidays. (UNWTO 2013)

The profile of a 'typical homosexual tourist' is already changing. Previous research focuses heavily on gay men and the emerging research targeting specifically lesbian tourists challenges certain stereotypes. It has become evident that viewing gays and lesbians as one group of tourists is not accurate. Both groups want to be accepted and treated as they believe heterosexuals would be while openly expressing their sexuality. (Poria 2006, 327) However, lesbians are less likely to visit a gay destination and gay space than gay men, and have more in common with other female tourists than gay tourists. Also, lesbians are more often travelling with dependent children and thus share characteristic with other parents. (Therkelsen, Stillin Blichfeldt, Chor & Ballegaard 2013, 317) It is argued as well that as an industry, gay tourism is in fact very similar to its mainstream counterpart. They both sustain social, political and economic inequalities. (Murray 2007, 49)

Defining a tourism market simply by sexuality conceals other factors such as age, occupation, social class, income, race, family, attitude, and interests. All or many of these may have a bigger role in patterns of purchase. (Hughes 2002, 153) Tom Ross (2014) reminds that the LGBT+ community represents a slice of the entire world population, which means not only are there indeed LGBT+ members of different ages and incomes, they also come from different parts of the world and their choice of destination is influenced also by where they live. Often, motivations to travel are not any different than those of heterosexual tourists and the most important motivations of LGBT+ tourists are commonly sunshine, relaxation, good food, and rest. The 'typical' LGBT+ destination is, in light of this research, a destination that meets all the usual requirements of a holiday, but also offers gay space and lack of homophobia.

(Hughes 2002, 153-154) Also, before LGBT community can be described as a segment, it is important to thoroughly research their travel motivations, destination choices, and holiday experiences (Therkelsen & co 2013, 318).

This thesis was conducted to get a clear picture of the LGBT+ tourism market and if it is actually as profitable as it is assumed to be. The thesis goes from outlining the history of LGBT+ tourism to how the market is viewed today in order to show the positive economic impact of gay tourism. The goal was also to get a picture of an LGBT+ tourist and to conclude if they differ from straight tourists. To recognize that there is a difference between LGBT+ and straight tourists, and knowing that the LGBT+ market does generate income, is important when companies advertise, so this thesis attempts to answer these main research questions: What makes a gay friendly destination, what are the most common motivations of travelling and is LGBT+ tourism a notable market segment?

A Bachelor's thesis of the same topic was conducted also by Emmi Kinnunen (2011). She conducted a thesis for Helsinki Tourism and Convention Bureau using Helsinki Pride as a case study. While the underlying idea of the thesis is the same, her methods and reasons are very different. Her thesis also focuses more on the LGBT+ tourism in Finland and the profile she provides for a LGBT+ tourist is based on research she had available. This, of course, excludes the research done in more recent years that have changed the early profile of a stereotypical 'gay tourist'. However, her reporting on LGBT+ marketing and the market as a segment is very much the same than on this thesis, and also very detailed.

2 Research Plan and Conduction

This thesis consists of qualitative and quantitative research. The aim of the research was to find out what the opinion of tourism and hospitality professionals is of the LGBT+ tourism market and how they view an LGBT+ tourist. The overall goal was to answer the question, if the LGBT+ tourism is a market to be recognized by tourism providers and destinations. However, while conducting the research, it became apparent that tourism professionals mainly focus on gay and lesbian tourists. The early research focuses heavily on gay men, so the research of lesbian tourists is more recent in comparison, with next to no information found about bisexuals or transgendered tourists. In some surveys, bisexuals and transgendered are put in the same category with gays and lesbians depending on their sex and relationship status.

2.1 Qualitative Research

This Bachelor's thesis includes both qualitative and quantitative parts. Qualitative research, which in this thesis means mostly literature and online seminars, focuses on reports on experience or on data that cannot be expressed numerically. Usually, there is no manipulation of variables and studies of behavior are conducted in natural settings. Qualitative research develops explanations of social phenomena. It is conducted to answer questions about why people behave the way they do, how opinions and attitudes are formed, how people are affected by the events around them, and how cultures have developed the way they have. (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge 2009, 6-7) According to Creswell (2003, 18), qualitative research is "one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructive perspectives or advocacy/participatory perspectives or both."

In this Bachelor's thesis, the main sources of theoretical information are literature, articles, and online seminars. To deepen the research, theme interviews were also conducted during Helsinki Pride 2015. Theories of different professionals are analyzed and cross-referenced, keeping in mind the year of publication. The online seminars provide the most recent information from tourism professionals that conduct surveys and educate tourism providers about LGBT+ tourism. The theories as well as survey results found in literature and seminars are also compared to the online survey conducted by the writer.

2.2 Quantitative Research

Creswell (2003, 18) states that "quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses post positivist claims for developing knowledge, employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data." Yilmaz (2013, 311) defines quantitative as research that uses numerical data to explain a phenomena, and this data is analyzed using mathematic based methods such as statistics.

The quantitative research of the thesis consists of an online survey. The survey can be found in the appendix. A link to the survey was put on the writer's blog and the wish was to get as many replies as possible from people that identify to be a sexual minority. The survey conducted results from lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered, and other sexual minority

groups that are introduced in chapter 3. The results of the survey are introduced in chapter 7.

The main ethical problem with the survey was the large number of participants aged under 18. While they do belong to a sexual minority group, their travel decisions, according to their own answers, are more often than not made by their parents and thus their sexuality does not often play any part. Also, their trips are financed by their parents. However, the results could still be compared with the theoretical part to offer support for the theories found during qualitative research.

2.3 Ethical Point of View

The use of correct term is important in the thesis, especially during the interviews and in the online survey. For example, transgender should not be listed under sexual minority, as it is in fact a gender. (Green & Peterson 2003, 10) Stereotyping is also another major mistake to avoid. Categorizing any sexual- or gender orientation by using the stereotype of it is abuse. Universally, stereotyping is becoming less and less justified but that was not always the case. In the 90s and early 21st century, stereotyping of black women and homosexuals was still wholly accepted. (Dyer 1999, 1) The minor sexual minority groups are also to be recognized as valid, even though the research of them is still non-existent.

3 Terms and Concepts

LGBT is the abbreviation of Lesbian-, Gay-, Bi-, and Transgender community (Hughes 2006b, 2). To avoid confusion, it is important to define the terms used in this thesis. The term 'gay' is used for a homosexual male whereas 'lesbian' is used for a homosexual female. In academic writing and in every day usage, these terms are most commonly used. It is also easier to distinguish the difference of homosexual genders this way, as 'gay' is often used for both gay men and lesbians. The widespread term 'straight' is used to identify heterosexual tourists. The term 'rainbow family' is used for a same-sex couple with children.

3.1 Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans and Other

Lesbians and gays are, most commonly, the terms used to describe female and male homosexuals. A four-dimensional definition of the word homosexual includes desire for and

attraction to people of the same biological gender, behaviors associated with that desire, identification as gay or lesbian, and feeling of belonging to a larger LGBT community. (Branchik 2002, 86) Only since the 19th century have individuals identified themselves as or been identified as homosexuals. Variations of the supposed form in the society was often labelled mentally ill and still, to this day, there are nations where homosexuality is viewed as a crime. The American Psychiatric Association (APS) did not de-classify homosexuality as mental illness until 1973 and World Health Organization (WHO) until 1992. (Hughes 2006b, 16-17) In Finland, homosexuality was de-classified as a criminal act in 1971 and as illness in 1982 (SETA 2015). This, in part, explains the lack of research of LGBT+ tourism. Bisexual is the common term for individuals who are attracted to both biological sexes. It is not defined how much a person has to be attracted to each sex and as a term it is less known and acknowledged than gay and lesbian.

Transgendered is not a sexual but a gender minority. They are individuals who identify psychologically as a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth. Transgendered individuals often wish to surgically and/or hormonally transform their body to match their inner sense of gender. For an example, a transwoman is a female who has undergone male-to-female change. The term transgender should not be mixed with transvestite. Transvestite is a person who dresses in clothing that is generally related to the opposite gender. Laws about acknowledging the correct gender of a trans individual differ from country to country. (Green & Peterson 2003, 10) In Finland, the law for verifying the correct gender of a transgendered person was confirmed in 2003 (SETA 2015).

Other concepts used in this thesis are asexual, demisexual, pansexual, genderfluid and non-binary. Asexual is an individual who does not feel sexual attraction to either gender. Non-binary describes any gender identity that does not fit into the binaries of male or female. Pansexual can feel attraction to anyone despite gender identity. They are often mixed with bisexuals but whereas bisexuals can be attracted to male and female genders, pansexuals feel attraction to all genders. Genderfluid is a gender identity referring to a gender that varies overtime (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015) Demisexual can only feel physical attraction to someone after developing a strong, emotional bond. (Demisexual research center).

3.2 Gay Space

Gay space is a place that provides a social space and support networks. Generally, it is characterized as a concentration of bars and clubs, but can also include saunas, cafes, public

places and residences. (Hughes 2006b, 22) It serves as the expression of cultural and sexual identity as well as empowerment. It is a network and a place that helps create and validate the identities of LGBT+ individuals. Still, gay space is usually limited to cities and most often found in urban locations. When a place, whether it is a beach or city destination, is identified as gay space, it reduces risk of abuse and discrimination. (Hughes 2002, 154) Historically, gay spaces were particularly important places to meet, especially before the development of the commercial sex scene and legalization of homosexual sexual activity. (Hughes 2006b, 22) Selling these gay friendly places can be controversial in the global market as these campaigns are related to particular politics, economics and subjectivities. They do, on one hand, advocate sexual diversity and promote the positive representation of lesbians and gays. However, it is argued that this might also cause hierarchies of homosexuals as some forms are identified as more accessible than others. (Waite, Markwell & Gorman-Murray 2008, 781)

Gay bars, especially, are the public front of the social scene in gay communities. In the 20th century, gay bars were the most important cultural institution for gay men. They are places where newly out homosexuals can form networks and socialize, they hold community art exhibitions and charities and even political meetings. In many major cities such as New York and San Francisco, gay bars are concentrated in one area and some researches find that they attract violence. Studies also find that younger LGBT+ persons do prefer mixed socializing over gay places. (Mattson 2014, 2)

Understanding the concepts is important when reading the thesis. With new sexual orientations being discovered, the terminology changes rapidly. Also, explaining the terms used clarifies the text and helps the reader understand why certain terms are used in various contexts.

4 The Economic Impact of LGBT+ tourism

This chapter analyzes the profits of LGBT+ tourism market. The aim is to study the profiles of gay and lesbian tourists and to see how the market has developed over the years. The role of advertising is also explained briefly.

4.1 Motivations

4.1.1 Brief History of the LGBT+ Tourism Market

While LGBT people have of course always travelled, according to Ian Johnson (2013), only 21 years ago the 'Gay Market' was still underground. It was actually the alcohol industry who first recognized a specific market in LGBT+ community. Travel industry followed the example. According to Community Marketing and Insight (CMI) Gay and Lesbian Travel Directory 2014/2015 (2014, 5), 30 years ago a few pioneers such as Hanns Ebensten started offering group tours to gay men. Before the establishment of International Gay Travel Association in (IGTA) 1983, there were a few 'gay destinations' such as Key West that offered housing to gay men. Quickly after this, the formation of RSVP, Atlantis, and Olivia - tour operators dedicated to the gay and lesbian market - proved to be a milestone in the development of the industry as these operators showed that they could move thousands of gays and lesbians every year. (CMI 2014, 5)

For the first decade, the industry was very male dominated and organized gay and lesbian travel industry was mostly conducted within the community itself. In 1993, after receiving bad press for discriminative actions towards homosexuals, American Airlines launched a campaign that specifically targeted the LGBT+ tourists. (CMI 2014, 5) Their early commitment to the market earned them a loyalty that still exists. Following their example, QANTAS published their first LGBT+ advertisement 13 years ago. This advertisement can be seen below as Figure 1. (Johnson 2013). The cities that have established their status as LGBT+ friendly destinations can trace their origins in gay tourism to solidarity during the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, and the desire that LGBT community had to battle prejudice. Businesses that served this growing market segment realized that by serving LGBT+ customers without prejudice, the customers would reciprocate by being loyal. (Jordan 2012, 10)

Thomas Roth (2014) of CMI states that when CMI was established in 1992, there were very few destinations and tourism suppliers who targeted or even acknowledged the gay and lesbian market. The first ones to emerge were Holland (Netherlands Board of Tourism) and Montreal. Roth also says that in the early 90s, companies may have put a rainbow flag in the corner of their general advertisement to show that they were welcoming of the gay community but they did not care if it generated income or not. In the early 90s though, around the same time when American Airlines launched their LGBT+ campaign, the Wall Street Journal dubbed the LGBT+ community as the 'dream market', as they were mostly DINK - double income no kids - travelers. The combination of the American Airlines campaign and the Wall Street Journal opened gates and slowly throughout the next decade, major tourism suppliers started

targeting the LGBT+ community and initiated gay and lesbian outreach programs. (CMI 2014, 5)



Figure 1: Qantas LGBT advertisement. (Qantas 2002)

4.1.2 Tourist Profile of Gays

While it is believed that gay men have sophisticated tastes and are interested in the same type of holidays as straight tourists, it should be noted that many also emphasize the desire to escape and the need for safety. Gay tourists also seek out gay space during their holidays so that they can openly express their sexuality. Gay press takes this into consideration and lists museums and attractions that are popular by everyone but also give out details of gay space. However, only a fraction of gay men seek out gay space for an opportunity to have sex, but more to be able to socialize and form networks with other gay men. This leads to a conclusion that while motivations to go on a holiday do not differ much from straight tourists - relaxation, comfort, and good food being among top reasons - there is also a need to meet other gay men and avoid homophobia. (Hughes 2006b, 55-56).

Research finds that while the western world is considered increasingly gay friendly, many western gay men still seek out to travel to escape the heteronormativity of their home country. Homelands are characterized as controlling and gays tend to feel excluded as their sexuality does not fit the norm. Leaving home is described as freeing for sexuality expression. Also, escaping close hostile circles such as discriminating family is as big of a motivator as travelling away from a heteronormative country or city. Travelling offers a psychological distance from homeland's atmosphere and a chance to find a new and more authentic sense of self. (Collins 2009, 469-476)

4.1.3 Tourist Profile of Lesbians

As stated before, LGBT+ tourism is still an un-researched area of tourism. Lesbian tourism is even more so. This is because there has been a wide disinterest in targeting lesbian market as it has been thought to be less worth pursuing than the gay market. Lesbians have not been considered economically as powerful as gay men. They are also viewed to be more difficult to reach as lesbians are less concentrated in cities, they are not as likely to socialize in gay venues, and they are more inclined to socialize privately. There are difficulties in determining the market size and the requirements of the homosexual population, whether male or female. Nevertheless, there is as little reason to believe that the profiles of lesbians' and gay men's holiday profiles are the same as there is to believe that males and females in general have the same motivations and behaviors. What also contributes to the lack of research of lesbian tourism is that researches often fail to recognize women as a significant market segment. Recently, there has been more interest in the influence of gender in tourism and while the research is not lesbian specific, it might help in understanding lesbian tourism as well. (Hughes 2007, 17-20)

Studies of women and tourism show that men and women experience tourism differently. (Hughes 2007, 20) Furthermore, based on literature on lesbian tourists, it is evident that activities engaged by lesbians during their holidays may differ from gay men. Therefore, there is a basis for considering lesbians as separate group of consumers. (Therkelsen & co 2013, 318-319). According to early research, lesbians travel less than gay men. However, in an effort to balance the overwhelming dominance of gay men in LGBT+ tourism studies, Curve - the largest magazine for lesbians in North America - conducted a survey among its readers. The results stated by IGLTA in 2012 show that lesbians in fact travel almost as much as gay men and also spend as much money, with 29% of respondents spending more than 2000 USD

and 33% more than 1000 USD during their annual travels. Interestingly, research has found that lesbians do not find the presence of LGBT+ venues as important as gay men during their holidays. Moreover, studies show that lesbians are more likely to be in a relationship than gay men and thus are less inclined to go out during holidays. It is also notable that there are less lesbian destinations than gay destinations, and while gay destinations do welcome lesbians, they are usually male dominated. (Therkelsen & co 2013, 318-319; Hughes 2007, 21)

Research that exists suggests that lesbians socialize, form communities and create space in which escaping 'heteronormativity' is possible, just like gay men. However, while sexual identity might influence holiday consumption, other identities like being a woman, a parent, a partner, or a sports fanatic may be just as important to the individual lesbian tourist. Studies also state there that are only a few public lesbian places and they are only visible to those who seek them out actively. (Therkelsen & co 2013, 319-320) In addition, public spaces and gay spaces being male dominated contributes into women, both lesbian and straight, viewing them as unsafe. Furthermore, lesbian identity is not as focused on sexual activity and consumption. (Hughes 2007, 21) Lesbian communities are a less important way to identification than gay communities are for gay males. On the other hand, it may also be that lesbians and gays build their communities in different ways. As this is related to tourism, it is more difficult for lesbian tourists to seek out lesbian communities in unfamiliar place and context, for access seems to be based on insider information as well as personal contacts. This indicates that holiday consumption of lesbians is not as driven by sexual identity as other identities. (Therkelsen & co 2013, 319-320)

4.2 LGBT+ Tourism Market

In 2012, a historical milestone was reached as 1 billion people were reported to travel in a single year. In 2013, the number grew by 5%, or 52 million travelers. These results show that despite global economic difficulties, tourism continues to grow and numbers exceed expectations of tourism professionals. (UNWTO 2014) In 2014, the number of tourist arrivals continued to grow with 4.7% and reached 1,138 million. UNWTO predicts that international tourism will grow by 3-4 % in 2015 and thus contribute even more to the global economic recovery. With the number of international tourists growing by 4.7%, 2014 is the fifth consecutive year when the growth is over average since the global economic crisis in 2009. (UNWTO 2015)

Tourism continues to be a major factor in global trading market. Tourism exports count for 30% of all global exports and is ranked 4th after fuels, chemicals, and automobile products in global exports category. For many developing countries it is the number one source of foreign income and it helps create needed jobs and opportunities for development. Tourism's estimated contribution to the worldwide gross domestic product (GDP) is around 5%. Worldwide, tourism's estimated contribution to employment is 6-7%, when counted both direct and indirect jobs created by tourism. Tourism's contribution to the countries' individual economy ranges from around 2% in diverse countries where tourism is considered a small sector, to 10% in those countries where tourism creates an important pillar of economy. (UNWTO 2012).

According to Andrew Reyes (2013), who is OutNow consultant in Latin America, the LGBT+ consumer market is the fastest growing in the world, and it is becoming increasingly important to a large number of businesses. This statement is also supported by Rika Jean-Francis (2014) in her presentation of LGBT+ tourism during the ITB 2014. According to her, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has stated that the LGBT+ travel is a dynamic and influential contribution to the tourism industry. WTTC also states that the LGBT+ sector grows faster than the tourism industry in general, with the rate being nearly 10% in 2012. The global growth that year was 3%. According to John Tanzella (2012), the estimation of the global impact of LGBT+ market was 140 billion USD. According to Thomas Roth (2014), the LGBT+ community is exceptionally brand and destination loyal and that even though they represent only 5% of adult population, according to surveys the LGBT+ travel patterns are nearly double than that of the general population.

The importance of the market has lead from tolerance to acceptance and finally respect. Many visitor bureaus are now including LGBT+ segments in their websites, with Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitor Bureau showing the way by being the only CVB in US with a designated employee whose sole responsibility is the LGBT+ market. (Richard Gray 2013) The growing understanding and tolerance can not only be seen in the effort that many tourism businesses put in to train their staff, but in a growing number of advertisements as well. According to Tom Ross (2014), a survey done in 2014 shows that if companies advertise in the LGBT+ media, it positively influences 70% to 80% of LGBT+ consumers. As an early example, a research done in Philadelphia in 2004-2005, showed that after 18 months of LGBT+ targeted tourism campaign, the city generated 153 dollars for every dollar that was invested. Figure 2 below shows the effort Britain is putting into their LGBT+ campaign. Such advertisements are becoming more and more common as more destinations realize the value of the market.



Figure 2: Visit Britain LGBT campaign (Visit Britain 2014)

To summarize, understanding the history of LGBT+ tourism is important as it indicates how much companies have already come to understand the effect of this tourism segment. As stated, tourism forms a big part of world economy, and LGBT+ tourism is growing fast, thus making it a notable market to recognize. What tourism providers should also note is that while the main motivations of gays and lesbians do not much differ from the mainstream, the choices of destinations are heavily influenced by tolerance.

5 Destinations

LGBT+ tourists, such as any other tourists, get their initial information about a possible destination from both internal and external sources. Word of mouth is used within the community to share both good and bad experiences, but just as straight tourists, gays and lesbians use travel guides and the internet. These days, many guidebooks offer an indication of LGBT+ destinations. News and articles are also good sources of information. The easiest way to indicate an LGBT+ destination is still advertisements and marketing campaigns. Some of these destinations are already popular and some are places hoping to become popular

within the community. There is no obvious way to distinguish the two. As opposed to destinations advertising themselves specifically as a LGBT+ destination, countries, cities, and resorts and other tourism providers advertise themselves in publications directed at the LGBT+ community. For example in the UK, Amsterdam features heavily in magazine Gay Times. (Hughes 2006b, 92-93) The LGBT tourism advertisement of Ontario in figure 3 indicates the LGBT+ friendliness of Canada.

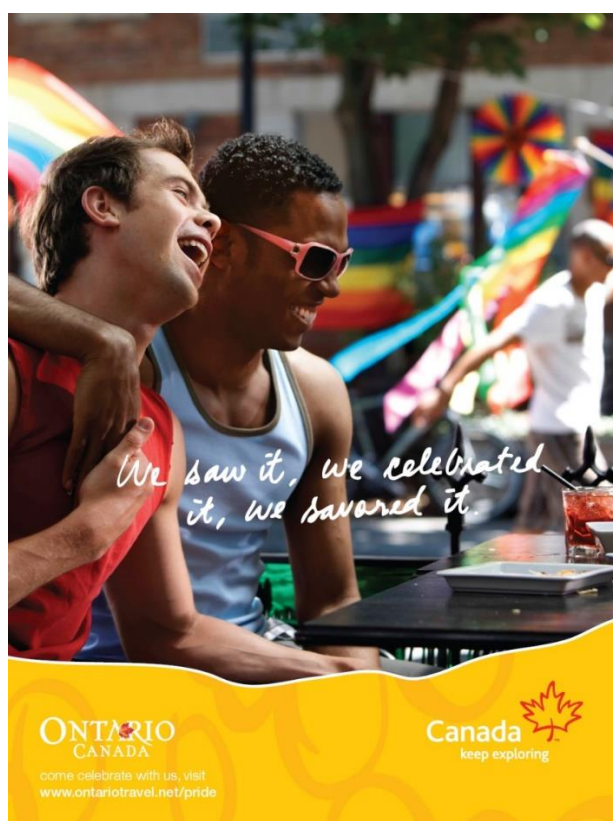


Figure 3: OntarioTravel LGBT campaign. (OntarioTravel 2014)

The most popular LGBT+ tourism destinations have been popular for a long time. These include New York, London, and Miami. (UNWTO 2013) While many destinations have a firm standing as popular destinations for LGBT+ tourists, there are many up and coming destinations as the rights of the LGBT+ community are getting better around the world. In 2008, OutTraveler listed the top new LGBT+ destinations, based on their development of LGBT+ rights and also for their magnificent historical sights and architecture. This list included such places as Santiago, Chile; Valencia, Spain; and Dublin, Ireland. Below, Table 1 by Spartacus Gay Index shows countries ranked by how well LGBT+ community is protected by the law.

Ranking	Destination	Points Scored
1	Sweden	9
	United Kingdom	9
3	Belgium	8
	Netherlands	8
	France	8
	Canada	8
	Denmark	8
	Reunion	8
9	Iceland	7
	Norway	7
	Spain	7
	Finland	7
	Luxembourg	7

Table 1: Top Destinations based on legislation ranked by Spartacus Gay Index (Spartacus 2015)

The ranking done by Spartacus Gay Index has 14 categories. Positive categories (antidiscrimination laws, marriage/civil partnership, adoption, LGBT marketing, equal age of consent) earn countries points, 9 being the maximum. Negative categories (religious influence, HIV travel restrictions, anti-gay laws, homosexuality illegal, Pride banned, local hostility, prosecution, murder, death sentences) earn minus points. United States, which has different laws in different states, earned 3 plus points and 2 minus points, giving it an overall of 1. New York State, Massachusetts, and California all scored 8 points when evaluated individually. While this thesis was being written, United States Supreme Court legalized gay marriage throughout the country. (Spartacus 2015)

For comparison, LonelyPlanet listed the top 10 LGBT+ destinations as follows:

- 1 Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2 New Zealand
- 3 Toronto, Canada

- 4 Palm Springs, USA
- 5 Sitges, Spain
- 6 Berlin, Germany
- 7 Skiathos and Mykhonos, Greece
- 8 New York City, USA
- 9 Reykjavik, Iceland
- 10 Montevideo, Uruguay

It is interesting that the country's legislation does not always contribute to its reputation as an LGBT+ tourism destination. For example, even though the atmosphere of Uruguay is advertised to be relaxed and it is said to be most progressive of the Latin American nations, it does not make it to the Spartacus top list of points scored with its legislation, though it did legalize same sex marriage in 2013. (Zeiber 2014) Iceland, Denmark and Canada are all on each list and Europe in general is considered a good destination because the legislation protects the rights of the LGBT+ community everywhere. (Janczak 2013) Also to be pointed out is that only Iceland and Denmark made it to LonelyPlanet's list out of all Northern European countries.

While the popular, safe destination assure that LGBT+ tourists have lots of opportunities to travel, on the flip side are the destinations where homosexual activities are widely unapproved of and considered even as criminal acts. Most countries that are the most hostile towards the LGBT+ community are not big tourism destinations, but there are some popular destinations such as Malaysia where male to male sexual acts will cause imprisonment. What makes destination risk charting more challenging is that many countries - while very clear that males are not allowed to interact sexually - have unclear laws about lesbians. Also, big events may draw LGBT+ people to destinations that they are otherwise advised to avoid. Most recently, Russia caused commotion with its legislation as Kremlin made it legal to arrest and hold foreign LGBT+ tourist to up to 14 days barely a year before the Sochi Olympics in 2014. (Janczak 2013)

5.1 IGLTA

Founded in 1983 as IGTA, with 'L' added in 1997, The International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) is the leading global travel network that dedicates itself to connecting and educating LGBT+ travelers, and also the businesses that welcome them and offer them support. It started with 25 members and has grown to have over 2200 dues-paying member

businesses. It offers individual, group, corporate, and student travelers the affiliates in the most popular locations in the world and helps tourists to get the best packages for a perfect getaway. It now operates in over 80 countries and all six inhabited continents. IGLTA's mission is to demonstrate the significant social and economic impact of the LGBT+ tourism and thus create value for LGBT+ travelers and expand LGBT+ tourism globally. It holds a convention annually, the 32nd being held in Los Angeles this year and 33rd in South Africa in 2016. (IGLTA 2015) It also became the first gay organization to receive an Affiliate Member status in UNWTO in 2010. (UNWTO 2012)

5.2 Gay Friendly

Gay Friendly is a slogan used by many cities and destinations - Helsinki included - to promote that they are welcoming of the LGBT+ community. For a destination to feel gay friendly, tangible things like gay bars and clubs do not rank as high as the feeling of being welcome, and an open and tolerant attitude of the locals. The country's legislation and the amount of information that is available for LGBT+ tourists are also important aspects when it comes to a destination's reputation as gay friendly. (Hodes, Vork, Gerritsma & Kras 2007, 184) The number of gay friendly destinations has grown significantly in the last 20 years. 20 years ago, openly gay tourists could generally only be found in destinations that were known for being gay friendly destinations. Historically, such destinations include San Francisco, New York, London, and Amsterdam. (Southall & Fallon 2011, 222)

Including the LGBT+ community also in normal advertising, like in the Helsinki Region Transport ad that is shown below, also promotes the attitude of the local community. What must be noted, though, is that the experience of gay friendliness is different to a tourist than it is to a local member of LGBT+ community. During a short holiday, a tourist is at low risk to experience intolerance and abuse while locals must deal with it more often, despite the destination ranked as gay friendly. Furthermore, LGBT+ tourism advertising is more visible to a tourist than a local who has no reason to pay attention to it. (Hodes & co 2007, 184-185)

When interviewed briefly during Helsinki Pride 2015, Susanna Björklund says she considers Helsinki to be a gay friendly destination when compared to other cities in Finland. However, in her opinion Finnish people in general have hard time accepting anything different. "The confused looks are the same whether I walk hand in hand with my girlfriend or help a person with down syndrome." Björklund mentions her appreciation of Helsinki having rainbow bars but also points out that going to a normal nightclub as a couple always raises some eyebrows,

though in general the youth is more accepting than the older generation. Another interviewee, Jaana Kinnari, agrees that Helsinki is Finland's most gay friendly city and the only place in Finland where two men can walk hand in hand. In some places like Oulu, she says, even hair that is colored with shock colors gets a negative reaction.



Figure 4: HSL Pride advertisement. (HSL 2014)

5.3 LGBT+ Wedding Tourism

With the rights of LGBT+ community getting better everywhere, tourism continues to grow. Since 2001, marriage equality has been recognized in many countries around the world, with the latest boom happening in 2012. Since then, the LGBT+ marriage tourism has grown significantly and there are more 'rainbow family' travel products being offered. (Jean-Francois 2013) Both the source countries and destinations are keen to develop products to LGBT+ tourists who are travelling to 'tie the knot' or going on their honeymoon. It has been observed that as marriage equality is recognized, the first ones to get married are older same-sex couples in an already solid relationship. Their motivations to travel differ from those of young LGBT+ travelers who have arguably been the most visible in research. (Jordan 2012, 10). As a clear cut example of positive impact of same-sex wedding tourism, when New York State passed marriage equality in 2011, New York City alone generated just shy of 259 million dollars in spending that related to same-sex weddings. (NYC and Company 2013)

5.4 Festivals and Events

5.4.1 Pride

The first Lesbian and Gay Pride march was organized in 1970 in New York, to commemorate the Stone Wall Rebellion. The Stone Wall Rebellion started in 1969 as a protest to police brutality when a gay bar in New York was raided by the local law enforcement. (Jobcentre Plus National Diversity Sexuality Group 2005) Police raids in gay bars in the US were common in the 1960s, but this particular raid sparked a major shift in the modern equality movement (Mundy 2015, 42). A year later, London's first Gay March was conducted to protest the unequal age of consent for gay men (21). (Jobcentre Plus National Diversity Sexuality Group 2005) Since then, Lesbian and Gay Pride Day has evolved into a carnival like celebration not only in Unites States where it started but in Canada, Europe, South America, and elsewhere. It is LGBT+ community's biggest event and also the most significant contribution to the public life. (Kates & Belk 2001, 392-395) Presently, major cities around the world celebrate gay pride and collectively attract tens of millions visitors annually. (Mundy 2015, 42)

These days many major cities, Helsinki included, hold an entire Pride Week during the week before the main event, the Pride Parade. Usually the parade includes trucks from local LGBT+ organization as well as well people on foot marching individually or with a group with assigned spots. These days, the operational context that pride organizations have is much different than what it was during the 1970s. As LGBT+ community gains more support and acceptance, the events have evolved into city wide celebrations. The events have many stakeholders that they must accommodate, including the local LGBT+ community, national LGBT+ organizations, allies and their organizations, religious groups, politicians, corporate sponsors, volunteers, and city governments. (Mundy 2015, 34)

The visibility of Pride got boosted when President Obama declared June as the 'LGBT month' in 2009, following Bill Clinton's declaration in 2002 that June be the Gay and Lesbian Pride Month of USA. (Southall & Fallon 2011, 218) An interviewee from Helsinki Pride 2015, who wished to stay anonymous, states that: "Pride is an important event because it brings out the supporters that are usually silent. The voice of acceptance is usually not as loud as the voices of those who do not agree with this lifestyle. They kick and scream because they know they are fighting a losing battle and events like this proof that." Figure 5 below from Helsinki Pride

2014 shows the immense support that the event has. The number of participants doubled in 2014 after Marriage Equality law was voted down in the spring 2014.

As a snapshot of Pride's impact on economy, Sao Paulo Turismo sponsored a research to indicate the impact of the city's Pride event in 2010 and 2011. In 2011 survey of 1664 attendees whose spending habits and length of stay were examined, Pride was estimated to reel in BRL 206 million reais (about 61 million euros) into the local economy. The amount in 2010 was BRL 188 million reais. (UNWTO 2012) In 2013 in Toronto, the 10-day Pride Toronto Festival was revealed to bring amazing value to the city of Toronto as well as the Province of Ontario. In Pride 2013, \$286 worth of purchases were made related to the event. The 10-day festival also created or maintained 3470 jobs and generated \$60.9 million in total revenue for governments. In 2013, studies also show that there was a 42% increase in the number of international attendees in Toronto. (Pride Toronto 2013)

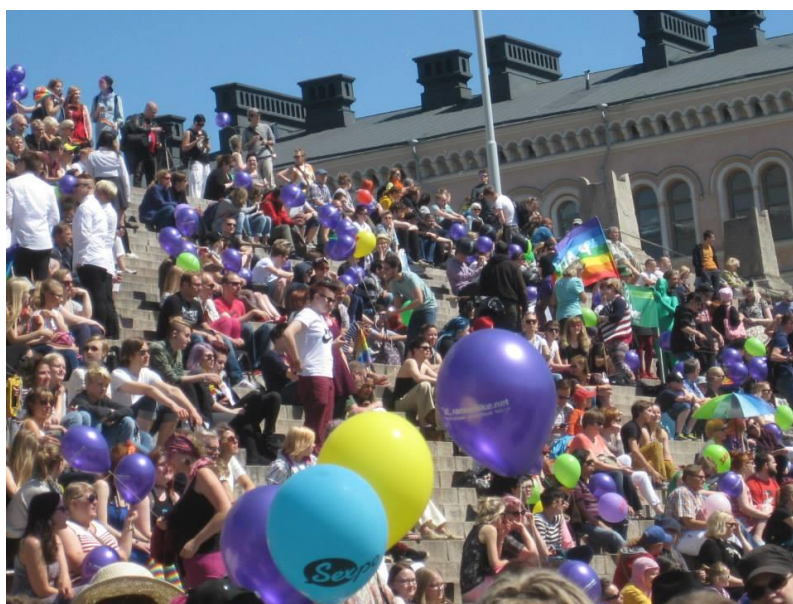


Figure 5: Helsinki Pride 2014 (Kauhanen 2014)

5.4.2 Gay Games

Gay Games are a week long athletic event held in every four years in different cities. They started in 1982 in San Francisco in an effort to promote equality and to show that LGBT+ athletes are equal to their heterosexual peers in athletic ability. It has been cited to be “one of the most inclusive sports and cultural events in the world.” Organizers are open to participants regardless of orientation, race, gender, nationality, religion, political views or

disability. When the games began in 1982, it included 1350 athletes and 17 sports. Today, the event welcomes 8000 participants from over 50 countries and they compete in 35 sports. (Reid 2014) A major difference to Olympics, for example, is also that the Gay Games do not host the event for only professional athletes but include everyone without age or health being an issue. While Gay Games acknowledge that the elite LGBT+ athletes already compete in the Olympics, it also states that its mission is not to find the best athletes but to include everyone in an atmosphere where they do not have to hide or be in the closet. Games of 2018 will be held in Paris. (GayGames 2015)

After analyzing the motivations of LGBT+ tourists in chapter 4, it is easy to realize the appeal of the top destinations listed previously. These destinations are very different when it comes to what they have to offer to a tourist. What they have in common is that they are noted for their tolerant atmosphere. What makes a gay friendly destination is not always legislation but simply what people have heard and what the local populations' attitudes are. The fact that many destinations want to be recognized by IGLTA and use slogans as 'gay friendly' indicate that many destinations want to reach out to the LGBT+ market. The numbers of LGBT wedding tourism and how much Pride generates income show that even these small segments of LGBT+ tourism profits the destinations and thus strengthens the importance of LGBT+ tourism as a market.

6 Ethical Perspectives

6.1 Tolerance Through Tourism

Studies of holidays by gay men and lesbians can contribute to a wider understanding of the diversity in society as well as issues of sexual orientation and homosexuality. Furthermore, it contributes to a wider debate considering the more general inequalities that arise from gender or sexual orientation. Tourism is a way to encourage the development of homosexual identity and community in places where it has not existed before. An even further outcome is the acceptance of homosexual lifestyle by heterosexuals. This is also influenced by tourism. Tourism, in a way, has become a new dimension to ease the tension between heteronormativity and the requirement that sexuality should only be practiced privately; this is one of the struggles for the acceptance of gays and lesbians in a society. (Hughes 2006a, 20)

Economic impact also plays a role in adapting a more tolerant attitude towards the LGBT+ population: unequal treatment of LGBT+ community has been shown to cause economic harm. (Lee Badgett 2014) This is also the case in tourism, as destinations lose tourists and thus business if they are viewed as intolerant. As a positive example, after the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage, the increase of LGBT+ tourism is expected to be at least 9%. This 9% are estimated to spend \$4.25 billion that will directly benefit the American economy. The increase in tourism will also create jobs, which makes it clear that the issue of marriage equality is no longer just a social one but also economic. (OutNow 2015)

On vacations, people often look for opportunities to be themselves, to escape, to strengthen identity or to make an intimate connection. What remains an issue are the attitudes of hosts and residents towards LGBT+ tourists seeking such holidays. Studies of attitudes of host communities are mostly positive and while locals express their awareness of negativity, the positive aspects outweigh this. There have been studies that indicate that while companies find the LGBT+ community as desirable tourists in economic sense, it is the negative attitude of locals that disapprove of their lifestyle. It is the attitude of locals that can be an important factor to assure the return visits by tourists and identifying these attitudes is significant when determining support for future LGBT+ tourism development. (Hughes, Monterrubio & Miller 2010, 774) What often contributes to a negative attitude of the host community is outdated, biased, and incorrect information of LGBT+ individuals. This kind of portrayals are shown in media and textbooks. Homosexuality and any other differentiation of the heterosexual norm is often commented to be a threat to the traditional family values and religion, and such speech is almost never officially condemned. (Council of Europe 2011, 7)

6.2 Hostility and Risk Avoidance

One major factor in LGBT+ tourism business is training employees everywhere to know how to treat LGBT+ customers, according to Ian Johnson (2013). Johnson says that receiving what has been booked and paid for is an important part of a successful holiday and being offered two queen beds instead of the king sized bed that was booked can make a mark in an otherwise good holiday. The customers may view this as homophobic and whether or not it is actually that or an honest mistake, a company lose what could potentially be returning visitors. Rika Jean-Francis (2014) reminds that there are still travel warnings to LGBT+ travelers, and the LGBT+ tourists do not always feel safe to show their sexual identity in their destination. The problem is also the violation of human rights in countries that are also tourism destinations. According to Jean-Francis, tourism can help spread tolerance and tourism leaders need to

advocate respect and speak out publically. The LGBT2020 survey done by OutNow shows that 73% of those who responded would not travel to a destination that does not treat its local LGBT+ community with respect (Ian Johnson 2013).

Studies suggest that the risk of being a victim of crime during a holiday might be higher for gays and lesbians. Tourists have a habit of minimalizing the possibility of a crime. Gays and lesbians may also visit a gay space, may act more obviously homosexual, and enjoy more alcohol during a holiday. Gay spaces have been reported to draw attention of homophobes and gays and lesbians might also draw attention to themselves by not concealing their sexuality. In studies, gays and lesbians themselves have reported to have been or to know about an incident in which a LGBT+ person was targeted. They have reported to be aware that gays and lesbians are viewed as easy targets and that these incidents particularly relate to their sexuality. (Hughes 2006b, 73)

According to Hughes (2006b, 72), almost all gay men he surveyed had experienced hostile behavior towards them while on a holiday. Usually, this behavior came out as verbal abuse rather than physical. The feeling of unease that causes homosexuals to conceal their identity is not unusual at home but it is considered more frustrating while on a holiday. To avoid such uneasiness, certain towns, cities, resorts and even entire countries are avoided and such reputation does spread through a community if it is spoken of often enough. Also, tourists might get a lot of information about their destination from general news reports regarding the LGBT+ rights issue of a certain town or a country (Hughes 2006a, 74).

This chapter aims to show how tolerance, and the lack of it, impact the travel decisions of the LGBT+ tourists. The decision not to travel due to hostility does indeed have a direct economic impact. Gay friendly is something that tourism providers and destinations should aim for, whether it is by changing attitudes completely or by educating staff. However, the attitudes of entire cities and countries does not happen easily, and these destinations do lose potential customers due to their reputation.

7 Survey Results

The purpose of the survey was to get as wide a sample as possible of LGBT+ tourists around the world. The survey questions can be found in the appendix. The main research questions are what makes a destination LGBT+ friendly and if LGBT+ tourism is a market to be

recognized. The result was conducted by asking about how important LGBT+ friendliness and venues are, about travel motivation, travel frequency, companions, and accommodation.

An international online survey was conducted to get information about the motivations and factors that directly influence decisions when travelling. The total number of answers was 106. While this cannot be considered as a conclusive number, it does give an idea about what LGBT people look for when they travel. The problem in the survey was the dominating number of gays, lesbians and bisexuals, and only a handful of answers from transgendered people. This limited the ways the answers could be used.

Also, many new sexualities and gender identities have been identified over the years. The survey generated answers from minority groups within a community that is already minor and thus getting a good picture of all sexualities is virtually impossible. The LGBT abbreviation is no longer considered all-inclusive or accurate. More commonly, researches use LGBT+ or LGBTQIA+ in an attempt to include everyone. In order to get a good result of the survey, answers from individuals with three or less with same sexual or gender identity were put under 'others'.

7.1 Demographic Information

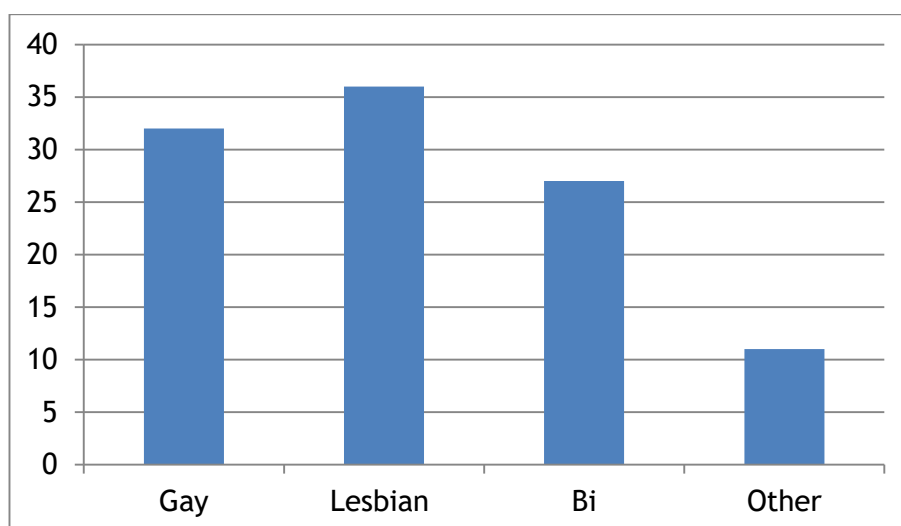


Table 2: Sexualities of participants (Kauhanen 2015)

Table 3 shows the amount of participants based on their sexuality. While gay, lesbian and bisexual are still the most commonly known within general population, many people have discovered that they do not identify with them, nor are they straight. This phenomenon is

more common amongst young people. Sexual identities listed as ‘other’ include, but are not limited to, pansexual, demisexual, and asexual.

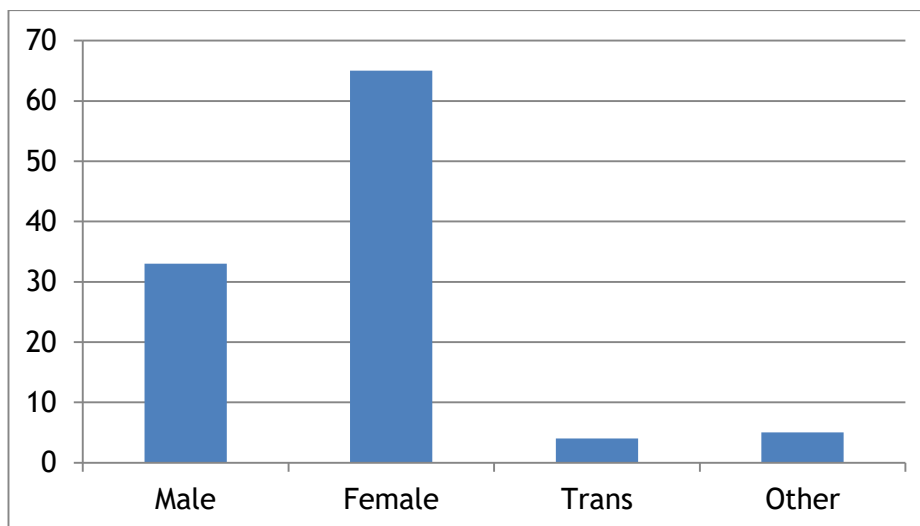


Table 3: Genders of participants (Kauhanen 2015)

Table 4 indicates the participants’ genders. It is to be noted that while there is a balance between gay and lesbian participants, the overwhelming majority of bisexuals who took the survey were females, thus explaining why the number of female participants is so much higher than male. Included in ‘other’ are participants who listed themselves as genderfluid and non-binary.

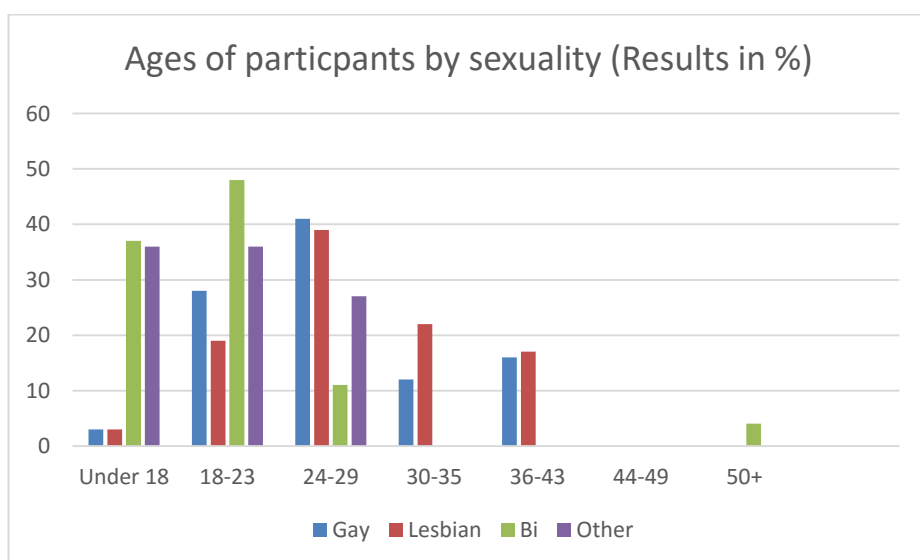


Table 4: Ages of participants by sexuality (Kauhanen 2015)

An important note when looking at the survey results is the ages of the participants. As shown in the chart above, most of bisexual participants are under 24 years old and a notable number of them are minors. The number of young bisexual participants is most likely due to the medium from which they found the survey. The link of the survey was posted on a blogging website called Tumblr, which is very popular within the young LGBT+ community and considered a safe place of young bisexuals who often feel excluded both from the heteronormative community as well as the LGBT+ community.

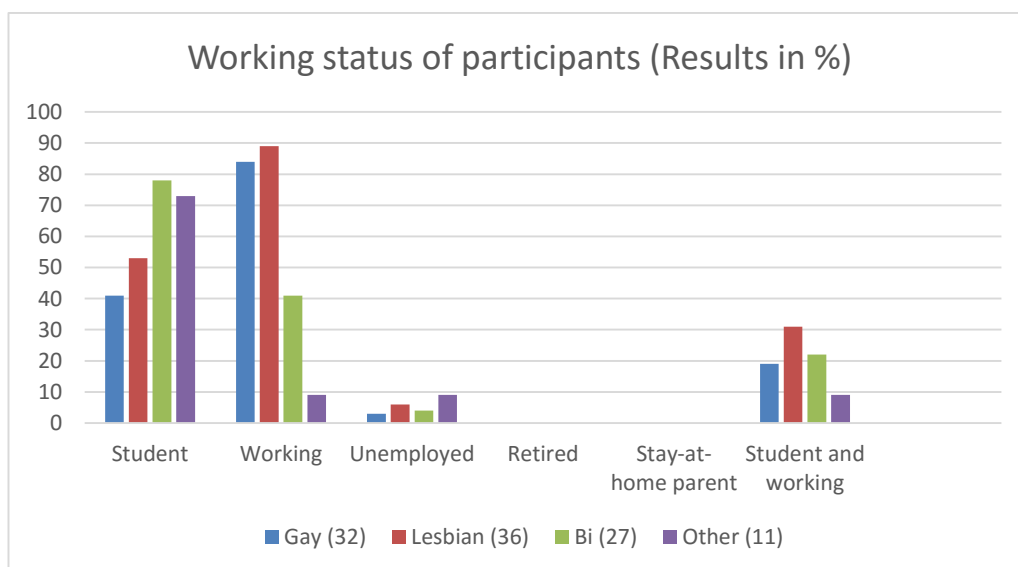


Table 5: Working status of participants (Kauhanen 2105)

As the chart shows, most lesbians and gays who took the survey are already in the working life. Some listed to be both students and working. Majority of those who listed themselves as students are bisexuals which again shows that the majority of bisexual participants are in average younger than gays and lesbians. The larger number of lesbians and gays in working life also indicates that their income level is higher than that of the bisexual participants and others.

7.2 LGBT+ Friendliness

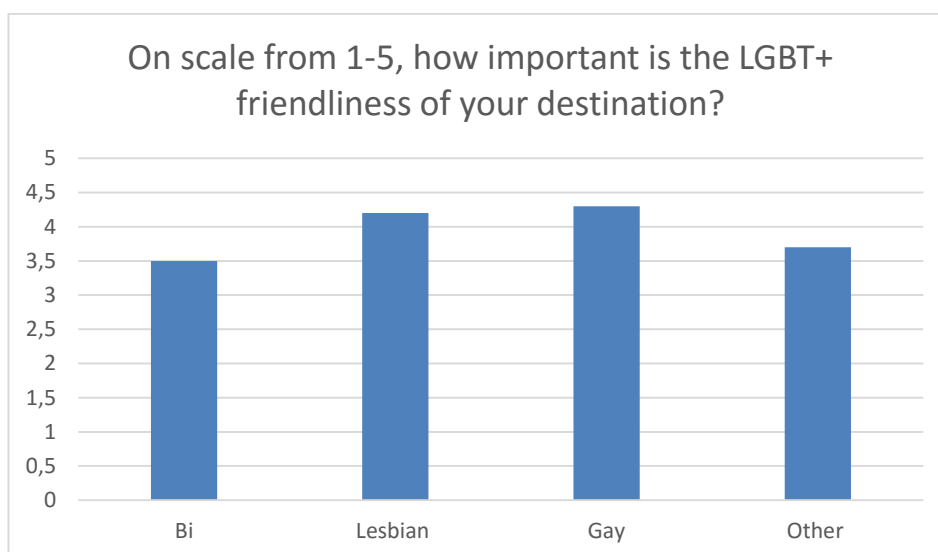


Table 6: Sexuality (Kauhanen 2015)

The results for this survey question is divided to sexuality, gender and age. Of sexualities, gays are marginally more concerned of the destination's LGBT friendliness than lesbians. The standard deviation of gays was 0.64, which leads to the conclusion that their answers were most consistent. No gay participant gave an answer below 3. For lesbians, the standard deviation is 0.92, for bisexuals 1.03 and others 0.67.

Many participants state that the importance of LGBT+ friendliness varies depending on who they travel with. Those travelling with a same-sex partner and LGBT+ friends all say LGBT+ friendliness to be highly important whereas people travelling with parents and non-LGBT+ friends have varying feelings of the importance of tolerance as they feel safe when their identity can be hidden. The highest average for this question comes from the 9 people that say to be travelling with children. They average 4.6 and the open comments are all along the lines of "We do not want our children to witness discrimination" and "We want to avoid any type of violence to protect our children".

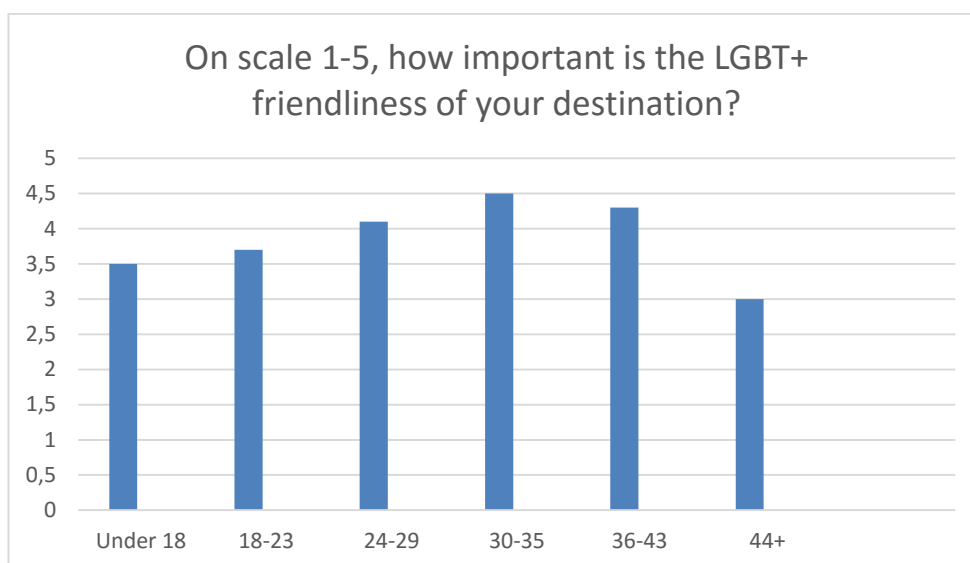


Table 7: Age (Kauhanen 2015)

The youngest participants are naturally the most likely to travel with parents and siblings and least likely to travel with partner. As stated before, travel companions affect how important the LGBT+ friendliness of the destination is. From open comments it becomes clear that those travelling with parents and siblings are either not out or not expressing their sexuality during their holiday. The destination is usually decided by the parents or the entire family. In these cases, LGBT+ friendliness is not a big priority. This explains the difference between their average compared to participants aged 24-43. The survey did not conduct any results from ages 44-49 and only one from 50+ so the results for those age groups are not conclusive. Age groups 30-35 and 36-43 are as likely to travel with a partner and participants with children also belong into these groups.

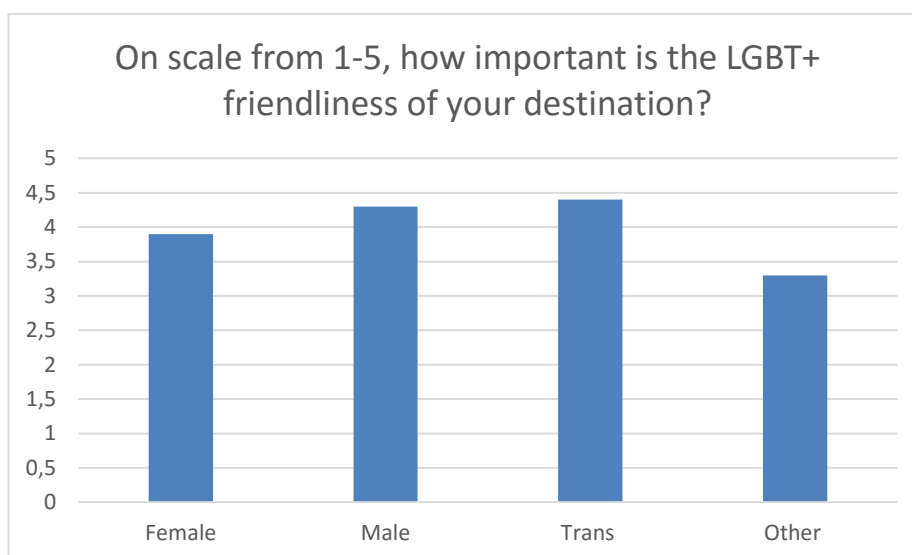


Table 8: Gender (Kauhanen 2015)

In terms of gender, males are more concerned of this issue than females. Transgendered average the highest, but the small number of participants limits the conclusiveness of the result. Transgendered participants are also included in male or female if they state to identify as one of them. The higher average of males and gays is in line with research of the thesis. It is more difficult for men to travel together without being labeled as gay whereas lesbian are often viewed as friends. What must also be noted is that the average age of male participants was higher than females and thus are less likely to travel with parents.

7.3 LGBT+ Venues

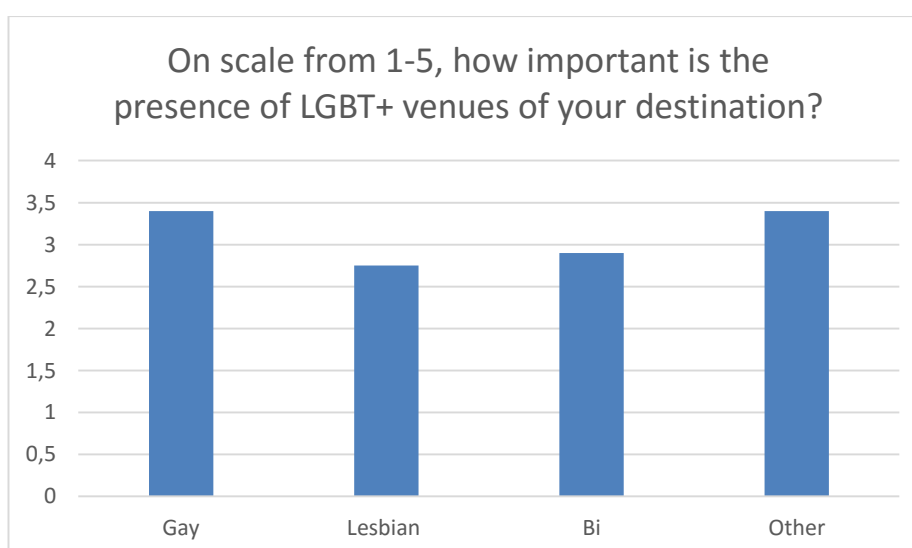


Table 9: Sexuality (Kauhanen 2015)

Those who answered to be travelling with children averaged the lowest in the importance of the presence of LGBT+ venues. One quote said: “LGBT venues are often used to find company during travels and sometimes this ends in lasting relationship. I do believe LGBT+ venues are more important to the local community as they can create networks and offer a safe environment for young people.” From the comments it was also clear that many, saw LGBT+ venues as nightclubs and bars and generally disliked the idea of them. Also many of those already in a relationship stated as LGBT+ venues are not important as they were before. Gays were, again, the most consistent with their answers, with standard deviation of 0.95. The standard deviation for lesbians is 0.98, bisexuals 1.3, and for others 0.96.

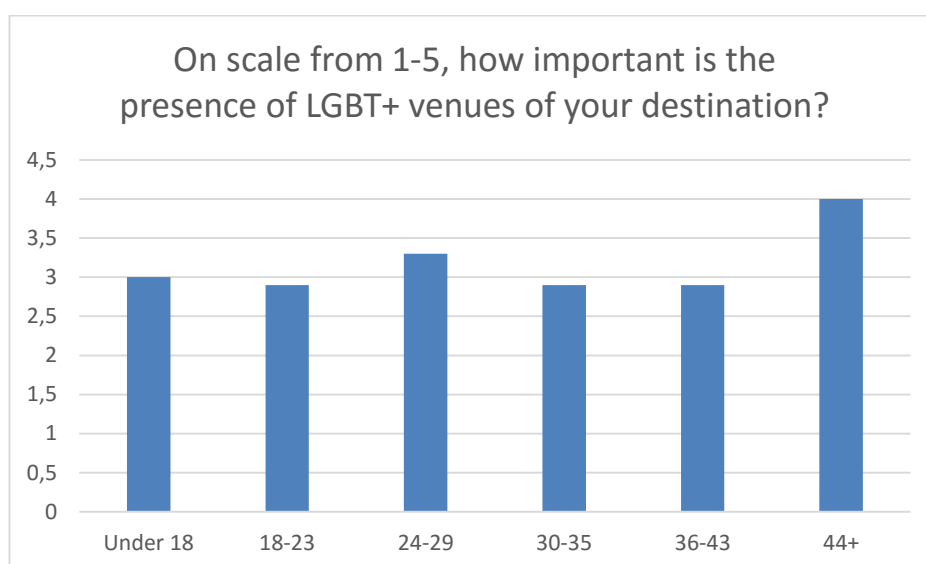


Table 10: Age (Kauhanen 2015)

The result for age group 44+ is not valid for only one of the participants belonged in this age group.

7.4 Travel Motivations

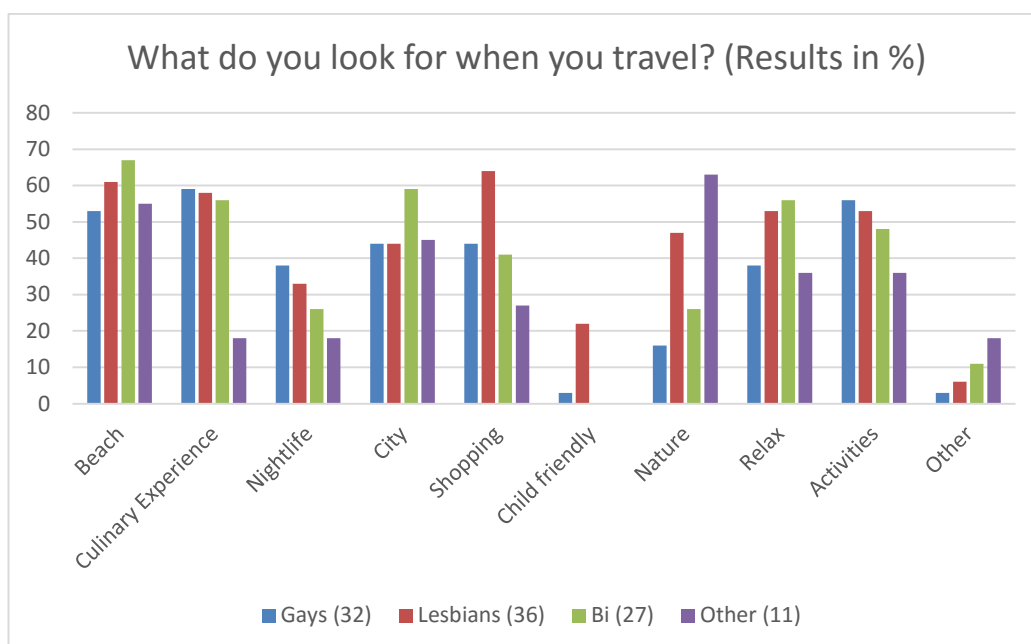


Table 11: What do you look for when you travel? (Kauhanen 2015)

The table above is the results of the survey done by the author. Below are the results of the survey done by CMI. Similarities in the two surveys can be found, even though CMI did not conduct results from people under the age of 18. In both surveys, lesbians are most likely to look for a beach in their destination. Gays are slightly more inclined to seek out culinary experiences. In the thesis survey, both gays and lesbians are as likely to enjoy activities and an urban setting. In the CMI survey gays are more likely seeking out urban activities while lesbians enjoy outdoors. In the thesis survey there is also a notable difference between lesbians and gays as to if they seek out nature during their travels. Lesbians are also slightly more likely to use resort and spa services according to CMI. In survey for the thesis, lesbians more often put 'relaxation' as to reason for travelling. One obvious similarity is the number of participants who seek out family travelling and child friendly destinations. Both surveys show clearly that lesbians are more likely to choose a destination based on those factors.

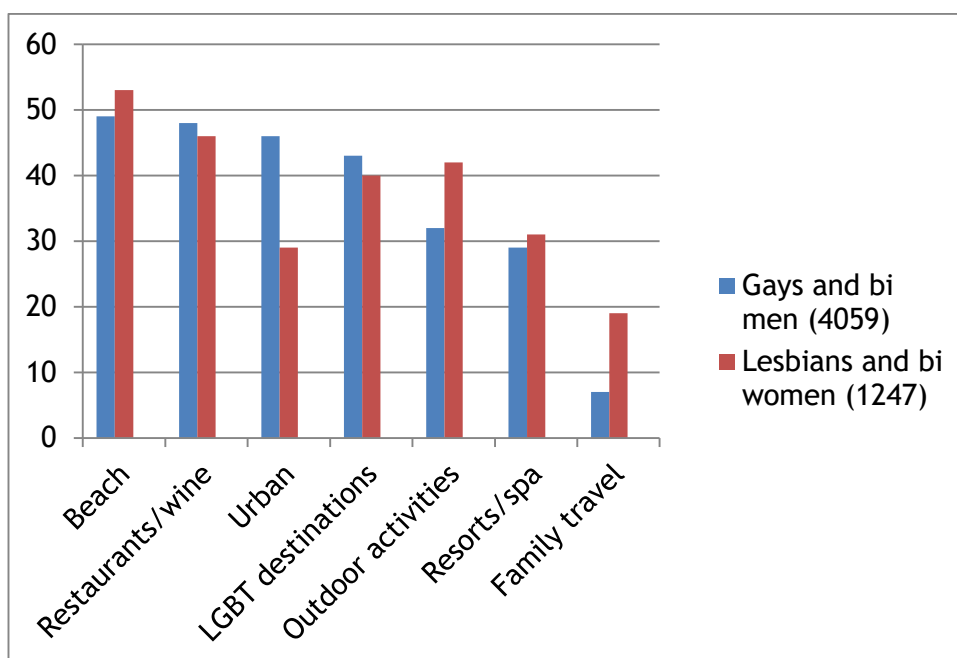


Table 12: What kind of traveler are you? (CMI 2014)

In the CMI survey, bisexuals have been categorized by their gender to either gays or lesbians. This makes it impossible to compare the results based on an individual being bisexual. There is also no indication as to whether any of the participants are transgendered. Out of all the participants who took the thesis survey, bisexuals are most likely to be motivated by a beach destination, a city, and relaxation. As already stated, bisexuals are the youngest participants and less likely to seek out nightclubs or bars. Others were most inclined to enjoy nature and also are the ones who listed most other activities, such as sports and museums.

7.5 Travel Frequency

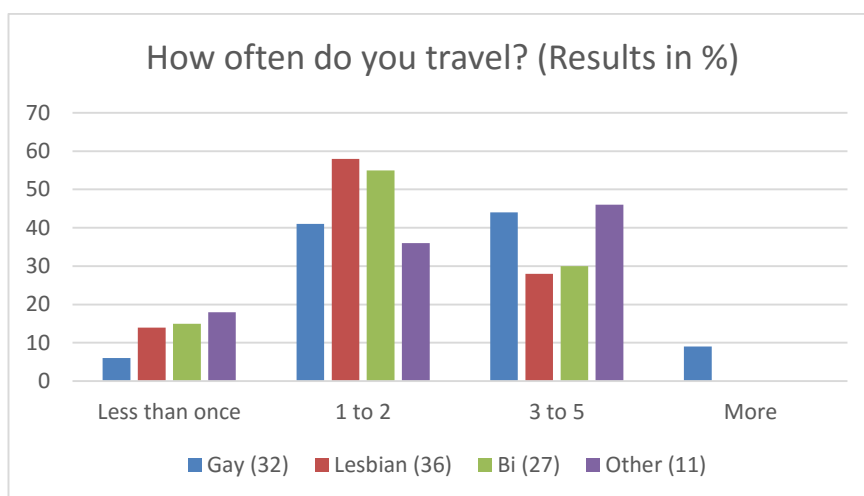


Table 13: How often do you travel? (Kauhanen 2015)

The results conducted by the survey support the early research of LGBT+ tourism, according to which gays travel more often than lesbians. The ages of the participants must be taken into the account, though. As shown in table 5, gays and lesbians are most likely to be in working life. This reflects on their income level which can affect the frequency of travelling. The youngest participants state in comments that their holidays are scheduled on school vacations and how often they can travel depends more on the family's financial situation rather than their own.

7.6 Travel Companion

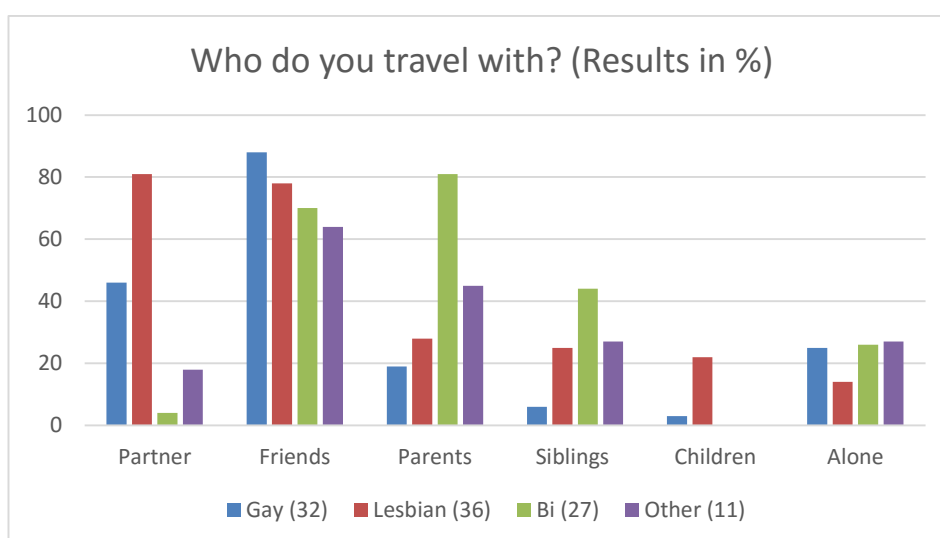


Table 14: Who do you travel with? (Kauhanen 2015)

While looking at the results Table 13 shows, it is important to note that - as shown in Table 4 - the average age of bisexuals is lower than that of gays, lesbians, and others. However, for gays and lesbians the survey results are quite consistent with literary research. Lesbians who took the survey are in average a lot more likely to travel with partner or children whereas gays are more likely to travel with friends and alone. This reflects on the results in Table 9, where it is stated that gay participants think the presence of LGBT+ venues to be most important.

7.7 Accommodation

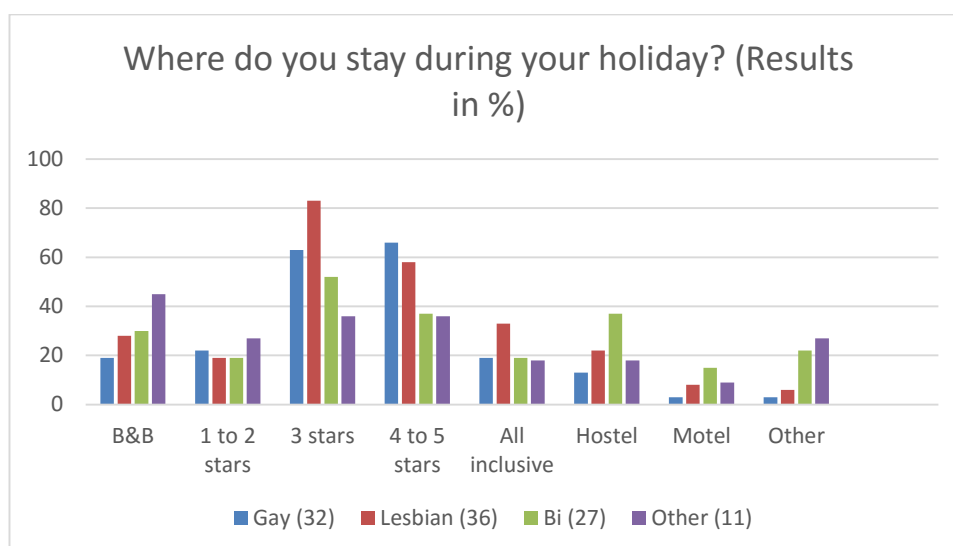


Table 15: Where do you stay during your holiday? (Kauhanen 2015)

Analyzing the results of this question has to be done remembering the ages of participants and who they travel with. Bisexuals are, according to the survey, as likely to stay in a 4-5 star hotel as in a hostel. However, the large number of bisexuals who participated are minors or under 24 years old and of all the groups, they are most likely to travel with parents. 70% of bisexual participants also stated to travel with friends, which explains why it is as likely for them to stay at a hostel. In all groups, the young tourists who travel without parents prefer cheap accommodation. What could be conducted from the results is gays' and lesbians' clear preference of hotels above all other accommodation. Lesbians are more likely to prefer an all-inclusive hotel. 7 out of 8 of the lesbians traveling with children listed all-inclusive as a likely accommodation. As 'other', participants have listed camping, friends' houses, rented apartments, and holiday homes.

The top destinations amongst participants are New York, London, and Miami. Europe as a general destination is also popular, as well as Thailand. A lot of comments state that 'sunny' was the main motivation, no matter the destination. New York is also the top Pride destination, followed by San Francisco, Miami, Stockholm, and Toronto.

8 Conclusions

While early research suggests that gay travelers have more finances and travel more than straight tourists, this conclusion of their travel habits has started to turn due to more recent research. Also, more and more studies are now also focusing on lesbian tourists as opposed to all research being about gay men. The travel habits of lesbians and gays differ from each other, with lesbians behaving more like straight women than gays behave like straight men. While research still shows that adult homosexuals are financially well off, the lifestyles of homosexuals are changing with it becoming more tolerated all around the world. Many couples are now travelling with dependent children, which makes gay and especially lesbian tourists more like straight tourists with families.

Even if the motives of gay and lesbian tourists are quite consistent with the motives of straight tourists, as is clear from both literature and the results of the survey, it is also notable how big of a factor safety and tolerance is while travelling. Some destinations are still listed as unsafe for LGBT+ tourists, though they are considered tourism destinations in general. Motivations like weather, nightlife, shopping, and so on are listed as some of the primary reasons of both LGBT+ and straight tourists, but the choices of LGBT+ tourists are slightly more limited if they wish to express their sexuality during their travelling. The survey results also show clearly that tolerance is an important factor while making travel decisions.

The risk of being harassed and violated during holidays is something that the LGBT+ community acknowledges in ways that straight tourists do not. While it has been stated that LGBT+ tourism is not as affected by major events that affect tourism in general, news of intolerance towards a member of the community can lead to avoidance and loss of business to the company. Tourism providers and destinations are starting to recognize the potential of showing tolerance, and advertising that targets the LGBT+ tourists is becoming more common. The next step would be mixing LGBT+ members and straight tourists in advertising to show that there is no difference in how they are treated. With the status of LGBT+ community getting better everywhere, it is not only the community itself that takes notice of

negative reputation of a destination regarding gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered, and other sexual minorities.

A gay friendly destination is one where the attitudes of tourism providers as well as locals are welcoming and accepting. The legislation of the country does not always count, but this means the destination must already have a reputation of being gay friendly. Some parts of Greece are a good example of this. LGBT+ tourism grows as tolerance is spread around the world, and tolerance is spread as LGBT+ tourism continues to grow. It is financially, ethically, and socio-politically beneficial for a destination to attract the LGBT+ market. However, the reputation of the country or company is not only up the leaders, but the locals and employees as well.

LGBT+ market is a market that has grown through the years, and continues to grow. The research found and conducted shows nothing but positive effects to tourism providers with a tolerant reputation. The only negative comes from hostility, as it leads to avoidance. Travelling in general is becoming easier, and tourists are reaching new parts of the world. Previously unknown places have the opportunity to get a reputation of LGBT+ friendly from the start and thus gain the trust of the community. History, numbers, statistics, and research can show the benefit of this trust. In practice, it shows as a steady flow of tourists that would otherwise choose to go elsewhere.

The most challenging part of this Bachelor's thesis was finding research that could be considered valid. Enough data was collected to understand that the LGBT+ market has more potential than a lot of tourism providers realize. This data can potentially be what will help the writer with finding a job in the tourism and hospitality industry. Connections between the literary research and online survey were easy to spot, and the amount of participants in the online survey was surprising but welcomed. In the future, the next area to investigate would be the groups that have been left without any research so far: Transgendered, bisexuals, and other sexual and gender minority groups.

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UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

Jaana Kinnari, Helsinki Pride 2015 participant, interviewed 27.6.2015

Susanna Björklund, Helsinki Pride 2015 participant, interviewed 27.6.2015.

Anonymous Helsinki Pride 2015 participant, interviewed 27.6.2015.

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Appendixes

LGBT+ Tourism Questionnaire

Survey on travel patterns of LGBT+ population for a Bachelor Thesis

* Required

Basic information

Gender *

Choose which are accurate

Male

Female

Trans

Other:

Comments

Sexuality *

You can choose more than one.

Gay

Lesbian

Bi

Other:

Age *

- Under 18
- 18-23
- 24-29
- 30-35
- 36-43
- 44-49
- 50+

Job/studies

You can choose more than one.

- Student
- Working
- Retired
- Stay-at-home parent
- Unemployed
- Other:

About your travelling habits

This survey is about leisure tourism, no business trips included.

How often do you travel? *

- Less than once a year
- 1-2 times a year
- 3-5 times a year
- More

Who do you travel with? *

You can choose more than one.

- Alone
- With partner
- With friends
- With children
- With parents
- With siblings
- Other:

On scale from 1 to 5, how important is the LGBT+ friendliness of your destination? *

1 2 3 4 5

Not important Very important

Comments

On scale from 1 to 5, how important is the presence of LGBT+ venues to you? *

1 2 3 4 5

Not important Very important

Comments

What do you look for in a destination? *

Choose at least 2 but no more than 5

- Beach
- Culinary experience
- Nightlife
- City
- Shopping
- Child friendly
- Nature
- Relaxation
- Activities
- Other:

Comments

Where would you most likely stay during your holidays? *

Choose up to 5.

- Motel
- Hostel
- Bed and Breakfast
- 1-2 star hotel
- 3 star hotel
- 4-5 star hotel
- All inclusive hotel
- Other:

What is your favorite destination?

And lastly, have you visited the Pride festival somewhere else than your home country?

Where and comments?

