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A Study of the LGBTQ Community's Perspective Regarding Finland as a Tourist Destination

Tourism Marketing and Management

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Abstract

In recent decades, LGBTQ tourism has been on the rise largely due to progress in human rights. The LGBTQ market is considered recession-proof and one of the fastest-growing markets in the world. These reasons alone could demonstrate the importance of attracting tourists from this community to Finland. Finland is already in a good position regarding human and LGBTQ rights; therefore, it seems natural to tap into the LGBTQ market. This quantitative research study aims to increase the general understanding of LGBTQ tourism in Finland through discovering the international LGBTQ community's perception of Finland and exploring which pull factors of Finland can entice them more. In addition, this paper seeks to discover the elements of gay-friendliness that are important for the LGBTQ community and the way Finland can communicate its friendliness to this community. An online survey was sent out to various LGBTQ communities on Facebook, Reddit, LinkedIn, and the Poll-Pool website from mid-February to mid-March of 2022. In total, 100 people answered this survey and out of this number 87 were from the LGBTQ community. The data analysis consists of descriptive tests, Kruskal-Wallis tests, and one-way Anova tests. The findings show that the international LGBTQ community perceives Finland positively as a tourist destination. Finland possesses all the gay-friendliness items important to the LGBTQ community and through word of mouth, electronic word of mouth, and news outlets, Finland can communicate its gay-friendliness.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Over the past two decades, human rights and equal rights movements progressed in a way that allowed minorities such as lesbian, gay, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals to reclaim their rights and become a viable part of society and, as a consequence, the market (UNWTO, 2021). The global population of this market is believed to be around 5 to 10 percent of the world's total in 2019 and the total global spending power of these consumers from the age 15 and above is believed to be around 3.9 trillion USD annually. Statistics of these kinds weren't available specifically for Finland, so, to get a general idea about this segment's spending in Scandinavian countries, the author chose Sweden in an attempt to showcase this community's spending power, which is 28 million USD annually. The estimated GDP share from the LGBTQ community's international travel and tourism in the year 2019, based on the available information for Europe, is 41.8 billion USD (LGBT Capital, 2019). Identifying the LGBTQ community as a viable market segment can achieve great economic benefit for the tourism business in Finland. Especially considering that, this market is believed to be somehow 'recession proof' and one of the rapid growing markets in tourism (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996).

Based on ILGA's report (Rainbow Europe, 2021), Finland is the sixth-most LGBTQ-friendly country in Europe and sits in a joint first place with Sweden among Nordic countries. The criteria for this ranking are based on: equality and non-discrimination, family, hate crime and hate speech, legal gender recognition and bodily integrity, civil society space, as well as asylum. A brief history of LGBTQ rights in Finland shows the evolution they have undergone to promote equality for this community. Homosexual activity became legal in Finland in 1971. Two years earlier, it was stated that homosexuality is not an illness in the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and was removed from the list of mental disorders (De Cecco, 1987). LGBTQ-linked work discrimination was abolished in 2004 and since 2017, same-sex marriage and joint adaption laws came into effect

(LGBTQ Right, 2021). From a travel point of view, Finland has been placed 18th among 150 countries around the world and 4th among Nordic countries in the LGBTQ Travel Safety Index Report (Fergusson & Fergusson, 2021). All these information point to Finland being a LGBTQ friendly country.

In Finland the most visible gay spaces are concentrated in Helsinki and extend in Turku and Tampere. Gay travel Finland map has a comprehensive list of gay-friendly hotels, restaurant, café, and gay bar and clubs. This list also includes gay-friendly events such as Tampere Vocal Musical Festival (Gay Map, 2020). In total there are one hundred and twelve gay-friendly businesses and events have been shown on the map, which in comparison by the total tourism and hospitality businesses in Finland is not that many. However, there hasn't been any report of discrimination against LGBTQ individuals in tourism industry, which shows that almost all businesses are gay-friendly. Finland as an international tourist destination is on the rise. In 2019 the number of international tourists for the first time in this country's history surpassed 3.3 million people (Clausnitzer, 2021).

Furthermore, in general travellers will not face any hostile treatment in Finland. The problem here lies with communicating this value publicly so LGBTQ community around the world can be aware of these facts and keep Finland as a destination choice in their mind. In addition, pull factors (destination's attributes) that attract LGBTQ travellers to Finland can be further investigated, so businesses can combine pull factors which are important for LGBTQ tourist with Finnish attributes.

1.2 Previous Studies and Gaps

This community is still underrepresented in research as a whole and most research have been conducted around gay men and, at some level, lesbian women. It was only in recent years that other minorities, such as transgender, bisexual, or other concepts such as gender and identities have been introduced as topics of studies (Ong, Vorobjovas-Pinta, & Lewi, 2020). There is also a lack of studies about the travel motivations or behaviour of LGBTQ tourists going to or coming

from non-western countries which do not have LGBTQ rights. A low number of studies on this topic were only about the negative side of LGBTQ tourism (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2016).

It should also be kept in mind that the majority of the studies regarding this community have been conducted in North America and other western countries with more freedom (Clift & Forrest, 1999; Hughes, 2005; Melian-Gonzalez, Moreno-Gil, & Arana, 2011; Therkelsen, Blichfeldt, Chor & Ballegaard, 2013; Ro, Olson & Choi, 2017). In western countries (and a small number of Asian and African ones) where being gay has been deemed legal or same-sex marriage has been legalized, many people can identify with this community, be out and face less to no discrimination (Flores, 2019). However, in other Asian and African countries, LGBTQ individuals cannot openly admit to being a part of this community because of fear of discrimination (Boellstorff, 2016; Izugbara, Bakare, Sebany, Ushie, Wekesah & Njagi, 2020), which results in inadequate levels of information about their travel motivation and behaviour.

Of the prior research that has incorporated push and pull theory in context of Finnish tourism a few studies have been found which can be seen in the table below. These studies were regarding to wellbeing tourism (Konu & Laukkanen, 2009; Konu & Laukkanen, 2010), rural well-being tourism (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010; Pesonen & Tuohino, 2017), and rural tourism (Pesonen, Komppula, Kronenberg, & Peters, 2011; Pesonen, 2012), while none has investigated any topic regarding the LGBTQ tourism. The only tourism article mentioning LGBTQ travellers and Finland was from Harju-Myllyaho & Jutila (2016) which observed inclusion and accessible tourism for LGBTQ travellers. Therefore, a gap can be viewed in study of LGBTQ tourism in Finland.

Table 1. Finnish push and pull studies

Well-being tourism	Konu & Laukkanen (2009); Konu & Laukkanen (2010).
Rural well-being tourism	Pesonen & Komppula (2010); Pesonen & Tuohino (2017).
Rural tourism	Pesonen et al. (2011); Pesonen, (2012).
Inclusion in tourism	Harju-Myllyaho & Jutila (2016).
LGBTQ tourism	None.

1.3 Objectives and Research Questions

There is a dire need of understanding how this community view Finland as their travel destination, or finding out if they have any idea about what Finland has to offer. There seems to be a lack of communicating Finland's LGBTQ friendliness to the world which needs to be addresses. In addition, in a future chapter of this paper that is based on previous studies, it will be stated that this community's travel push factors are close to those of heterosexual individuals. However, pull factors were for different type of tourism and destinations were different for LGBTQ travellers, and pull factors determine which destinations will be chosen at the last stage of decision making for a tourist.

This research investigates the relationship between LGBTQ travellers, their perception of Finland, and attributes of Finland as a travel destination. Due to these reasons, main questions of this study will be:

- **How do the international LGBTQ community view Finland as a tourist destination?**
- **How can the gay-friendliness of Finland be communicated to international tourists in an attractive way?**
- **Which attributes of a destination such as Finland can act as pull factors for the LGBTQ community?**

1.4 Research Approach, Context, and Limitations

Quantitative method will be used as the scientific approach to this study. This method gathers quantifiable data in order to explore the phenomena under the investigation. The purpose is to produce results which can be generalized (Creswell, 2002). The research context of this study is international LGBTQ tourists, therefore the study tried to not be limited to a specific LGBTQ group. However, finding LGBTQ participants can be challenging because of the sensitive nature of their sexual or gender identity. One of the quantitative research methods is survey which will be used in this study. The questions of this survey will be based on previous literature. SPSS software will be used in order to analyse the data.

1.5 Key Concepts

LGBTQ tourism: The International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) defines it as ‘the development and marketing of tourism products and services to lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people’ (UNWTO, 2017) .

Gay space: Most often, gay space contains physical spheres such as bars, restaurants, shops, clubs, residences, streets, and parks that can be salient for LGBTQ community members (Hindle, 1994).

Characteristics of a LGBTQ Tourist: higher education (Hughes, 2003); higher travel frequency (Hughes, 2006; UNWTO, 2017); higher average income (Guaracino, 2007, p.33); higher than average spending habit in the destination, and loyalty to gay-friendly destinations (Stuber, 2002; Guaracino, 2007, p.33; Melian-Gonzalez et al., 2011).

LGBTQ motivations: travel motivations of LGBTQ tourists are the same as heterosexual ones (Pritchard, Morgan, Sedgely, & Jenkins, 1998; Clift & Forrest, 1999).

Gay Friendliness: companies and businesses which are respectful of the LGBTQ community and have non-discriminatory policies for their employees and consumers (Tuten, 2005).

Push and Pull Theory: push factors are internal desires which motivate a person to make a travel decision. Pull factors are linked to attractions, attributes, social opportunities, or the atmosphere of the destination. They help someone in their selection of one destination over another (Dann, 1977).

Destination Image: Crompton (1979) defined destination image as: ‘the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination.’

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

In this section the structure of the thesis will be mapped out. The second chapter is a literature review which is made up of seven chapters as follows: LGBTQ Tourism, Gay Spaces, LGBTQ Tourists' Characteristics, Gay Motivations, Gay Friendliness, Destination Image, and Push and Pull Theory. In this review, LGBTQ will be used as an umbrella term to represent the different members of this community. Although this term is a broad concept and consists of various sexual and gender identities, gay men and lesbian women will have the most dominant presence in the explanation of LGBTQ tourism. The methodology is introduced in the third chapter. The fourth chapter presents results and finally in the fifth chapter, the conclusions and implications of the study are discussed.

2 Literature Review

2.1 LGBTQ Tourism

2.1.1 Definition and LGBTQ Identity

IGLTA (UNWTO, 2017) defines LGBTQ tourism as tourism products and services which are designed and marketed toward LGBTQ travellers. These products and services can be categorized into two groups. One group is the products and services that are specially made for LGBTQ tourists, are exclusive to them, and in most cases can only be purchased by them. These include such services as LGBTQ tours, LGBTQ accommodations, same-sex weddings and honeymoons, the Gay Games, and pride events and parties. A second group is the products and services that tourism suppliers, such as travel agencies, airlines, and accommodation facilities, market to try and reassure LGBTQ tourists that the destinations they want to travel to, the activities they want to partake in, or the kinds of products and services they want to choose, are inclusive and the LGBTQ customers can rest assured that they will feel welcomed and included (UNWTO, 2017).

In some parts of the world, being a member of the LGBTQ community means confinement in a more isolated environment compared to other global regions. Bell (1991) articulated the societal dangers gay and lesbian people encounter, including prejudice, discrimination, and disapproval from the heteronormative society. These might induce feelings such as isolation, insecurity, and shame in LGBTQ people, and create an environment in which actions such as verbal harassment and physical violence can be directed against them (Knopp, 1990). They might even feel excluded by the people around them, not necessarily because being LGBTQ is criminalized in their society, but because the culture or specific political ideologies might lead to them feeling targeted and ignored. A stark and sobering statistic that goes to highlight this depressing situation is that studies that covered thirty to forty years of history showed that, at that time, 70 countries around the world still punished out LGBTQ members of their society because of their sexual and gender identity. In countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan, this punishment ranged from jail time in light cases to death in the most severe cases (D'Augelli, 1992; Flores, 2019). While one

would hope that this situation has changed for the better since these two studies were conducted, this hope may not be a realistic one, especially for more conservative countries. The sad fact is that, in many of these countries, the situation has not improved and in some cases it got even worse (Human Dignity Trust, 2021).

It is understandable, therefore, to say that the majority of the LGBTQ community in those countries—and in some first world countries—still conceal their identity in fear of discrimination, rejection, and/or physical violence. For these reasons, travelling might provide these people the only opportunity they can find to be freely and openly who they want to be without fear of rejection and be able to form a connection with other like-minded people in more gay-friendly spaces and destinations (Hughes, 2003). In contrast to the idea of identity reinforcement of all LGBTQ tourists, Hattingh & Spencer (2020) conducted a survey about the importance of sexual identity. The results of this survey showed that sexual identity influences only a small number of gay men's travel behaviour. The label of gay tourism cannot be attached to all LGBTQ travellers, as specific LGBTQ-related activities—especially in 2020, when inclusion can be achieved in most of the western world— is possible for all travellers who wish to travel to many destinations.

2.1.2 LGBTQ Market & LGBTQ Tourism History

The LGBTQ market was first made public by an advertisement published in the gay newspaper, *ONE*, in 1954. The product this advertisement was selling was men's pyjamas. Some years later, in 1979, the alcohol industry, specifically vodka, was the first industry to target the gay market in a US nationwide advertisement (Branchik, 2002). If we are only considering the LGBTQ tourism publications in the media, then the first mention was found in a gay men's travel guide, first published in 1964 in the United States, by the name of 'The Damron Address Book' (UNWTO, 2017). Nowadays, LGBTQ tourism is considered to be profiting, growing, and rapidly developing, especially in North America, as a niche market that contributes up to 10 percent of the travel industry (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996; Clift & Forrest, 1999; Community Marketing Inc., 2003). However, it is noteworthy to take a serious look at the history and development of LGBTQ tourism, as this type

of tourism is not a recent occurrence and actually existed for centuries, specifically since the 18th century.

Table 2 delineates the timeline for the LGBTQ tourism market segment which has been classified into three periods (Branchik, 2002).

Table 2. LGBTQ tourism timeline (Branchik, 2002)

	Characteristic of the Era	Targeted Destinations	Travel Motivations
Underground (pre-1941)	Industrial revolution Rich and affluents gay travellers (Branchik, 2002).	Berlin, New York, London, ,Paris, and Mediterranean destinations (Aldrich, 1993 cited in Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2014).	Search for exotic culture, appealing weather, and companionship (Clift & Wilkins, 1995; Hughes, 2006).
Community building (1941-1970)	World War II relocation, the Stonewall gay riots, and other social modifications (Clift, Luongo, & Callister, 2002, p.1-8; Hughes, 2006; Coon, 2012).	North America, and UK (Branchik, 2002).	Freedom to express one's sexual identity and finding like-minded people (Hughes, 2006; Coon, 2012).
The mainstream (1970-present)	Development of LGBTQ rights and movements (Branchik, 2002; Clift et.al, 2002), and the increased high tolerance toward this community, and a change of mindset (Hughes, 2006).	All over the world (Branchik, 2002). One of the first exclusive gay tours was planned for Grand Canyon's Colorado River in 1973 by Hanns Ebensten, who is well-known for being the 'father of gay tourism' (UNWTO, 2017).	The same as straight travellers (Branchik, 2002).

From 2001 onwards, 'the mainstream' era has exerted a greater influence on LGBTQ tourism. In their book, Guaracino and Salvato (2017, p.1-5) delineated seven reasons why this industry started to blossom in the 2000s. LGBTQ travellers don't fear terrorism attacks on the same level as heterosexual tourists, because of the discrimination and prejudice they have faced at some point in their lives. They are the ideal tourists to market for after such a catastrophic event as 9/11. A second reason was the dominance of news coverage about LGBTQ issues in the mainstream media, from big-name celebrities coming out, e.g., Ellen DeGeneres and Rosie O'Donnell, to decriminalization of the gay sex act. A third reason is related to increased LGBTQ rights, which, consequently,

created opportunities for LGBTQ tourists to travel the world while having the desire and determination to choose gay-friendly destinations where they were able to feel welcome and comfortable. A fourth reason was the possibility of hosting a large number of LGBTQ travellers in the off-season for LGBTQ-exclusive events and games made LGBTQ tourism quite enticing to many destinations. Pride, the Gay Games, and LGBTQ-related cultural events were some of the events that had huge potential for attracting a large number of LGBTQ tourists to a destination in order to celebrate and participate in those happenings. A fifth reason was the strong collaboration between the LGBTQ community, tourism suppliers, and the straight allies which made LGBTQ tourism possible. A sixth reason was the ability to measure the economic impact of LGBTQ tourism, which was possible by researches done by various organizations such as Community Marketing. A seventh and final reason was the exponential growth of technology that has made the information about LGBTQ tourism readily available and accessible for this community around the world (Guaracino & Salvato, 2017).

This brief history showed that there were various levels of attempts at contribution and collaboration to market LGBTQ tourism. Before gay tourism became widespread, this community didn't have any official business representatives, which made the LGBTQ community try to present and promote destinations to the tourism companies and suppliers themselves (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996). However, after a while, there was a significant shift towards those companies realizing the spending power of the LGBTQ community, thus the beginning of a courtship by those companies began. Nowadays, companies aren't the only ones working towards attracting this market segment, but organizations on national levels are also attempting to attract this affluent market. The final change in the relationship between the LGBTQ community and business has been the attempt to export this market outside of one's own country and expand it beyond their borders to attract more international tourists (Puar, 2002).

2.1.3 The Characteristics of LGBTQ's Tourism Market

LGBTQ, as a sub-market segment, can be viewed as unique and desirable because of the presence of the gay-specific travel agencies, LGBTQ-related advertisements, an emphasis on the gay-friendliness of various cities, the LGBTQ-tailored guidebooks and itineraries (Russel, 2001), a belief that gay tourism is a profitable and strong market (Pritchard et al., 1998; Russell, 2001), and being the closest thing to a recession-resistant market, which some believe make it quite profitable (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996; Pitts, 1999; Waitt & Markwell, 2014, p.295). Although the high spending power of this community has been under scrutiny by some, it is still believed to be profitable (Ram, Kama, Mizrachi, & Hall, 2019).

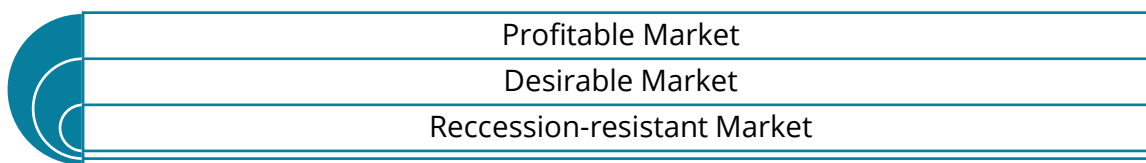


Figure 1. Most prevalent beliefs of LGBTQ tourism market

Sexual identity is believed to be the only similarity that exists between homosexuals (Canavan, 2015), and this made some people believe that this market segment is homogenous and consists of consumers who are willing to purchase and spend more (Pritchard et al., 1998; Melián-González et al., 2011). While this view seems dated, many organizations refuse to acknowledge the various motivations each person of the LGBTQ community can have for travel and they do not wish to deep dive into their individual sexual and gender identities (Blichfeldt, Chor, & Millan, 2013). However, Pritchard et al. (1998) argued that sexual orientation is not sufficient grounds to group a community into one simple category. Following on from this argument, this group can be categorised further by socioeconomic status, gender, and race. In support of this stance, Hughes (2005) also emphasized the diverse nature of this community and added other factors to this list, such as occupation, employment status, size of earnings, general lifestyle, and travel motivation. This means that this community's members have various reasons for travelling and the activities they want to do in their destinations of choice are different (Herrera, 2003).

Similar to many niche markets, the LGBTQ market is as heterogenous (Fugate, 1993; Branchik, 2002; Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2015; Hattingh & Spencer, 2020) as the characteristics that its

community members share. Based on these various traits, 'subniches' or subsegments have been created. These can include different sexual and gender identities, various races, ages, marital status, level of income, culture, and places of residence. These categories can result in different formations of various LGBTQ market subsegments (Pritchard & Morgan, 1997; Branchik, 2002). There is also a disagreement about calling the LGBTQ market a niche market. Some researches refer to the LGBTQ market as a niche market (Guaracino & Salvato, 2017; Ro et al., 2017). However, the definition of niche is in contrast with this segment. A niche market can be defined as a market with consumers who have the same characteristics and the market size is small. However, since its size is not small, and its participants don't have the same characteristics, products need be customized to the LGBTQ market's needs (UNWTO, 2007). It is more appropriate to call it a subsegment, with niche markets in various subsegments of the overall LGBTQ market (Hattingh & Spencer, 2020).

2.1.4 The Positive and Negative Sides of LGBTQ Tourism

LGBTQ tourism, in the form of LGBTQ-related festivals/events, is one of the prominent factors in attracting LGBTQ tourists. A few examples are Mardi Gras in Sydney, Eurovision, and the New York Film Festival. These festivals and events bring more international tourists (Waitt & Markwell, 2014, p.330-337), help the local economy, help in forming strong bonds between LGBTQ communities all around the world, and can guarantee a return of tourists to the destinations (Visser, 2003). Travel, in addition to reinforcing tourist sexual identity, can also help the LGBTQ locals' identities. In his study, Luongo (2002) found out, during World Pride in Rome, that the local LGBTQ members' behaviour changed after interacting with non-Italian members of this community. It helped them boost their confidence and validate their identity. One of the subsegments of gay tourism is gay sports tourism, which is quickly becoming profitable and is still on the rise. In the United States alone in 1999, this industry was believed to be worth 180 million dollars, which benefited the local economy and strengthened the LGBTQ member's relationship (Pitts, 1999).

However, LGBTQ tourism does not only bring economic and psychological benefits to locals, as sometimes its influences lead to more negative situations. Some authors believe that attracting LGBTQ tourists to a destination might have negative repercussions on both heterosexual and

LGBTQ locals (Pritchard et al., 1998; Hughes, 2003; Visser, 2003). One example of local's negative attitude toward LGBTQ tourism was Cayman Island in the Caribbean that refused entry to a gay cruise because of a local attitude towards public displays of affection amongst gay couples 10 years prior on the island. This behaviour resulted in an international human rights dispute (Puar, 2002). An example of a polarising local attitude toward LGBTQ tourism was depicted in Hughes, Monterrubio and Miller (2010) study. On one hand, the economic benefits of LGBTQ tourism were recognized and appreciated by locals. However, the behavioural issues of LGBTQ tourists which they deemed as inappropriate based on their culture was viewed as a threat to family-based and nature-based tourism, which they aspired to attract (Hughes et al., 2010).

LGBTQ tourism could also hurt the local LGBTQ residents, an example of which can be seen in South Africa. Development of gay tourism in South Africa, in terms of urban gay tourism, helped improve the gay-friendly reputation of Cape Town. However, for local LGBTQs, this type of tourism resulted in the displacement of local gay spaces. Moreover, it created class, race, gender, and wealth issues between the LGBTQ locals and tourists, as the majority of LGBTQ tourism promotion and marketing was targeted towards wealthy white gay men (Visser, 2003). In another study, interviews with Australian LGBTQs reinforced the idea of a hierarchy in LGBTQ tourism and named factors such as socio-economic income and social class as ones that play crucial roles in inclusion or exclusion of a certain member of this community from travel experiences in their own place of residence or in international travel (Casey, 2009).

Another danger of LGBTQ tourism being highly promoted in mainstream media in an effort to attract all types of tourists is the stripping of gay spaces of their own cultural and historical identity. This acts only as an amusement and a sightseeing attraction for mainstream tourists, and the LGBTQ community doesn't feel they can be free of the stranger's gaze and, in some cases, their verbal attacks. The LGBTQ community feels their behaviour has been 'diluted' to be culturally appropriate for those mainstream tourists (Hughes, 2003).

In Table 3, the negative and positive effects of LGBTQ tourism is explained in short.

Table 3. Effects of LGBTQ tourism on locals

Positive effects	Negative effects
Boosting local economy (Pitts, 1999; Visser, 2003).	Alienating the locals from LGBTQ tourists (Puar, 2002)
Increasing the number of international tourists (Waitt & Markwell, 2014, p.357)	Changing a destination's reputation (Hughes et al., 2010)
Securing tourists' return (Visser, 2003)	Creating class, race, gender, and wealth issues between the LGBTQ locals and tourists (Visser, 2003; Casey, 2009)
Reinforcing the LGBTQ tourist's sexual identity (Pitts, 1999)	Modifying gay spaces to align with straight gaze (Hughes, 2003)
Reinforcing the LGBTQ local's identity (Luongo, 2002)	-

2.2 Gay Spaces

2.2.1 What is Space and What is Gay Space?

In order to have a clear understanding of LGBTQ tourism, it is vital to explain gay spaces, which are directly connected to gay tourism. In addition, to establish an idea of gay spaces, it is useful to define how a space can be shaped. Any space or landscape can be assembled through an overarching meaning structure, which can be 'read' by people in the space. This interpretation of meaning moulds the behaviours, social interaction, and expectations in the particular space. The space then has a set of rules and beliefs, and its occupants, by behaving within this framework, again produce the same set of rules in a more 'natural, self-evident, and common sense' manner (Cresswell, 1992 cited in Nash, 2006). Spaces related to tourism and travel are formed also by social structures, and in these spheres, 'social interaction, group dynamics and self-identities' happen and can be settled (Cai & Southall, 2019). The assumed default of all spaces is heterosexual, which many people tend to be unaware of, because of the assumed "naturalness" of heterosexuality. For the LGBTQ community, all spaces that are not exclusively labelled as gay spaces are considered heterosexual. In these spaces, members of the LGBTQ community may, in some situations, feel oppression and intolerance (Valentine, 1993 cited in Kirby & Hay, 1997).

Gay spaces often contain physical spheres such as bars, restaurants, shops, clubs, residences, streets, and parks that can be salient for LGBTQ community members (Hindle, 1994). Gay spaces are closely connected to LGBTQ tourism, something that is evident in Waitt and Markwell's definition of the LGBTQ destination (Waitt & Markwell, 2014, p.18): a "social leisure space that affords an opportunity to escape terrains of heteronormativity that are ongoing and constantly becoming through the intersection of sets of heteronormative social relations stretched out over particular spaces and across geographical scales".

The default of most societies around the world is heteronormativity, which means the presumption that heterosexuality and being cis-gendered (people that identify their gender with the one that was assigned to them at birth (Cava, 2016)) are the norms. This pressure drives LGBTQ individuals to negotiate and reinforce their sexual and gender identities in more private spaces, such as gay spaces (Gabb, 2005). Hence, gay spaces and gay-friendliness play essential roles in forming and reinforcing the sexual identities of LGBTQ tourists, and they can act as sources of attraction in alluring potential LGBTQ tourists to gay-friendly destinations (Haslop et al., 1998; Hughes, 2003).

2.2.2 Characteristics of Gay Spaces

This space can contain many forms and shapes, and it can be scattered all around a destination or be concentrated in one neighbourhood (Ivy, 2001). Gay spaces are not always owned and run exclusively by members of the LGBTQ community. Non-LGBTQs owners of gay spaces welcome LGBTQ customers into their businesses with more than a tolerant attitude towards this community and a general sense of inclusion (Hindle, 1994; Hughes, 2002).

Gay spaces are not only physical places for getting together and spending time in leisure, as they can also be environments containing any LGBTQ place of importance, which can act as monuments. These monuments' underlying meanings can be culturally or historically related to the LGBTQ community and function as sources of validation regarding their sexual or gender identity. They can also provide LGBTQ tourists with an avenue where they can identify with other

LGBTQ people and improve themselves (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996). Furthermore, if tourist attraction classification is applied to gay spaces, then gay parades, such as Pride, can, for example, be categorized as live events; restaurants, bars, and cafés as commercial; and spaces predominantly connected to LGBTQ rights and movements as heritage (Swarbrooke & Page, 2012). The visibilities of these spaces can be experienced by the general public in various cues, such as the LGBTQ symbols, e.g., a pink triangle or a rainbow flag, or the fact that they are concentrated in a specific neighbourhood away from the non-LGBTQ population (Ram et al., 2019).

Gay spaces might not have the same meaning for all the LGBTQ travellers (Ivy, 2001; Blichfeldt et al., 2013). Gay men especially are attracted to a destination's gay spaces, because these places guide them in forming their identity in an environment away from their home or workplace (Ivy, 2001). This identity can be structured stronger and faster in more concentrated gay leisure spaces (Hughes, 1997; Blichfeldt et al., 2013).

On the other hand, Doan (2007) in his study concluded that queer spaces are not always welcoming to the minorities within LGBTQ communities. These spaces have been constructed based on heteronormativity and hierarchy, and favour cis-gender gay men first and lesbian women second. As discovered by Hughes (2006), most gay spaces, such as bars and clubs, tend to be more male dominant. Even the signs hanging outside these spaces tended to be designed in a way that mostly showcases masculinity, since the majority of gay space frequenters used to be wealthy white gay men (Howe, 2001). Variant gender and sexual identities are still not recognized in these spaces, mostly because the concentration of gay and lesbian individuals and couples are higher than minorities. These evidences affect the sense of safety and security which queer spaces supposedly create for everyone in the LGBTQ community (Doan, 2007).

Gay space for transgender individuals could mean something very different than gay and lesbians. For transgender people, the idea of public places before and after their transitions pose various kinds of challenges. Pre-transition, they might feel unsafe and unwelcome in public during physical activities, such as in swimming pools or in changing rooms. However, for many after

transition, when they reaffirm their gender identity and are happy with it, they feel safer moving through public spaces (Elling-Machartzki, 2017).

2.2.3 History of Gay Space

In the 1970s and 80s, the LGBTQ community started to establish very specific spaces through cultural, political, and social interaction, which were named 'gay ghettos. In time, these spaces transfigured into gay villages and gay spaces (Levin, 1979 cited in Casey, 2004). The fundamental reason for creation of these spaces in the first place was a result of a push back from the LGBTQ community that was birthed out of discrimination, harassment, abuse, and disapproval by the societies they encountered in their everyday lives (Hughes, 1997; 2002).

Historically, the majority of these spaces used to be found in urban and metropolitan areas, and they were mainly situated in places of consumption, such as bars, nightclubs, and cafés, which in return blurred the line between citizens and consumers (Haslop, Hill, & Schmidt, 1998). Commercial gay spaces, when related to global tourism, are limited to specific areas and are distributed unevenly. As mentioned earlier, the majority of these spaces could be found in urban areas such as North America and Western Europe, which makes sense because of the high concentration of this community in cities. This fact is born out of a need to relocate to bigger cities when LGBTQ people reach adulthood, in order to run away from small cities and towns filled with prejudice and discrimination, to find like-minded people and equal rights (Hughes, 2003; Ivy, 2011). It is evident that travel was one of the means of reaching this kind of space for this market segment (Hughes, 1997).

Because of the visibility of exclusive gay spaces in a certain part of a destination, these spaces might not always guarantee safety for the LGBTQ members. For homophobic people, finding easily-visible gay spaces are easy, which makes accessing and targeting LGBTQ individuals possible and can result in unfortunate episodes (Pritchard et al., 1998). One of these tragic incidents involved domestic terrorism in Pulse gay nightclub (Adams, 2018).

Nowadays, in some countries around the world, the existing discrimination against the LGBTQ community hinders the total identity fulfilment and connections which only certain destinations and spaces are able to provide. Even though they may be temporary, these spaces are much-needed spheres for escape and self-reinvention. Ergo, gay spaces in destinations that appeal to LGBTQ tourists perform as selling points (Coon, 2012).

One of the major problems derived from gay spaces is the formation of the LGBTQ hierarchy, which excludes lower-level income members and, in some cases, diminishes race identity (Nash, 2006). Although the LGBTQ community prosper around LGBTQ-related spaces and events, there needs to be a balance between exclusion and inclusion of straight life in their sphere (Gilmore, 2017, p 199).

2.2.4 Exclusive Gay Space or Including Gay Space?

Some believe that LGBTQ people are the only intended audience of those gay spaces associated with leisure activities (Hughes, 2002). This is especially true considering the fact that the LGBTQ community underwent an arduous journey to get where to they are now in terms of carving a space out for themselves in the face of the expected societal norms (Chauncey, 2014). In these arenas, gay support networks, social interactions, companionship, security, reinforcement of their identity, and shelter could all be fostered (Bell, 1991; Myslik, 1996; Hughes, 2002).

There is a certain opinion about the exclusivity of gay spaces and the integration of the LGBTQ people into straight spaces. Many adhere to the notion that gay villages acted as a source of empowerment in saving the gay ghettos from criminal activities and violence toward this community. However, the opposition to gay spaces, such as gay villages, is believed to stem from a concern about the segregation of the LGBTQ community and their further ostracization by predominantly involving them with these spaces (Collins, 2004). Furthermore, since sexual identity is losing its importance in terms of exclusivity, the desire to integrate, which the LGBTQ community inevitably will seek, might result in less exclusive gay spaces and more gay-friendly spaces (Doan, 2007). In addition, younger LGBTQs do not particularly go to traditional gay spaces anymore.

One of the reasons for this might be the existence of new dating apps, which created a virtual space, where LGBTQ members can connect with each other. The existence of these apps and the acceptance of the LGBTQ community resulted in de-gaying of gay spaces (Visser, 2014).

As regards urban gay spaces, they could be appropriately marketed as a tool to communicate a message with the implication that these destinations are open to everyone and not only LGBTQ tourists, they are lively, have high levels of tolerance, and diversity (Hughes, 2003; Binnie & Skeggs, 2004). Besides advantageous benefits such as attracting international tourists and alluring investors to the destination, inviting mainstream tourists by promoting gay spaces can also work against the LGBTQ community. Making gay urban displays as magnificent and striking as possible, without showcasing any risqué behaviour or images, could yield negative results, such as the de-gaying of a gay space, the loss of authenticity (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004), being viewed as a performance act for straight people, and the loss of its original meaning and depth (Blichfeldt et al., 2013). Moreover, a gay space that is inhabited by straight people threatens the safety and comfort of the LGBTQ community's members (Casey, 2004).

Based on the above arguments, the de-gaying of gay spaces could be achieved by an invasion of heterosexual consumers and tourists to gay spaces, and the advancement of LGBTQ app technology, which makes finding other like-minded people easier and travelling or going to a specific gay space less important. Looking at this different perspective in terms of tourism leads one to believe that exclusive gay spaces cannot always be sustainable as a form of tourist attractions, because of the normality of it in today's world and a shift of attitude towards a more cohesive society in most first world countries.

2.3 LGBTQ Tourists' Characteristics

In an earlier chapter of this literature review, the LGBTQ market was mentioned to be heterogeneous. Each letter in LGBTQ represents a different type of individual, with queer being an umbrella term for sexuality and gender identity besides the first four ones. Consumers and tourists of this market, therefore, have different traits. There is a belief that destinations with a higher

concentration of LGBTQ members and a reputation of being gay-friendly are places that this community tend to favour. Even with diminishing homophobia, both Visser and Want, in their respective studies, believe that these destinations will be LGBTQ tourists' exclusive destination choices (Visser, 2003; Want, 2003). However, thinking of this market as a homogenous one will only disservice the destination and their guests, since, as has already been mentioned, LGBTQ people are individual with various factors that make the LGBTQ tourism a heterogeneous market.

In LGBTQ studies, gay men and lesbian women have been studied separately and jointly more than any other sexuality and gender identity. As a result, more similarities and differences can be seen in these two groups. Till now, the main focus has been devoted to young-to-middle aged, white gay men living in North American and European cities with higher levels of education and no children (Hughes & Deutsch, 2010; Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2014; 2016; Ong, Vorobjovas-Pinta, & Lewi, 2020).

The most common characteristics of LGBTQ tourists is presented in the table below. The reason why all these information might not be on par with today's LGBTQ tourists is because previous studies were conducted many years ago, in form of small groups, and concentrated in just one part of LGBTQ community and mostly in western countries.

Table 4. The most common characteristic of LGBTQ tourists

	Gay	Lesbian	Transgender	Bisexual
Level of educations	Higher than straight men (Hughes, 2003; Community Marketing, 2006)	Higher than straight women (Hughes, 2003; Community Marketing, 2006)	-	-
Level of income	Less than straight men (Badgett, 1995; Clain & Leppel, 2001; Elmslie & Tebaldi, 2007; Ahmed & Hammarstedt, 2010)	More than straight women (Badgett, 1995; Clain & Leppel, 2001; Elmslie & Tebaldi, 2007; Ahmed & Hammarstedt, 2010)	-	-

Level of disposable income	Higher for gay couple (Gudelunas, 2011; Hughes, 2005)	Less than gay couple (Hughes, 2006; UNWTO, 2017).	-	-
Frequency of travel	More than straight couples (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996).	Less than gay couple (Hughes, 2006; UNWTO, 2017).	-	-
Spending habit in the destination	More than straight tourists (Internet, 2005)	More than straight tourists (Internet, 2005)	-	More than straight tourists (Internet, 2005)
Loyalty to a destination	High if the destination is proven gay-friendly (Stuber, 2002; Melian et al., 2011)	No repeat visitation (Hughes, 2006; UNWTO, 2017)	-	-

Gays and lesbians tend to have a higher level of education compared to their counterparts, with 66 percent of this community in North America being college graduates and 31 percent of them holding a master's or a doctorate degree (Hughes, 2003; Community Marketing, 2006).

One of the main characteristics of gay tourists is their higher average income, which translates to a higher disposable income. Gay same-sex couples make more money than straight couples and other members of the LGBTQ community, mostly because both partners work, the couple usually have no to few children, and because men make more money than women (Guaracino, 2007, p.33). The idea that, as a market, this group is in possession of wealth is an old myth that was first introduced as a result of the visibility of rich gay men in the tourism market. LGBTQ people, because of their heterogeneous nature, consist of many individuals from many walks of life and levels of income. Therefore, it can't be assumed that all of them earn top salaries. Thus, based on their income, their travel behaviours can be very different. For example, because of their limited budgets, gay travellers with lower incomes may choose a familiar destination with a fixed itinerary, as they might be more careful with their disposable income. Whereas, higher earning gay travellers tend to prefer travelling to new places with more experiences (Clift & Forrest, 1999; Ro et al., 2017).

US gay tourists are considered to have more disposable income (Hughes, 2005; Gudelunas, 2011) and go on holidays more frequently; the average annual number of trips taken by these tourists is 4.5 trips. Compare this to a straight tourist's average of 1 (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996). In comparison to gay men, lesbian women travel less and do not spend the same amount of money (Hughes, 2006; UNWTO, 2017). Interestingly, in a comparison, mainland Chinese gay and bisexual men travel less than lesbian and bisexual women both domestically and internationally (Community Marketing, 2014). The characteristic that makes this segment lucrative and appealing to the tourism market is their higher-than-average spending habits in a destination (Hughes et al., 2010). In an American report (Internet, 2005), the results indicated that gay men, lesbian women, and bisexual people spent more than heterosexual individuals on leisure trips. One point to note here is that this community is not always double-income-with-no-kids (DINK), as same-sex marriage and adoption are legal in many western countries and contribute to the appearance of a 'families with kids' segment within this community (Hughes, 2005; UNWTO, 2017).

Hughes and Deutsch (2010) argued that there is even a difference between young and gay travellers which can manifest itself in regards to amount of free time available, disposable income, life experience, wealth dispersion, and social class. Older gay tourists have more purchasing power, but they are not sure about travelling because of the lack of access to gay spaces and a fear of encountering homophobia. Brand loyalty is high among the gay community if destinations can prove their gay-friendliness and also give back to the LGBTQ community through social and economic means. If destinations do this, there is a higher probability that gay men will choose to travel to them (Stuber, 2002; Melian et al., 2011).

In a study conducted by Poria (2006), it was revealed that lesbian women's sexual identities are covert in nature and, because of this, they face less prejudice, harassment, and risk of physical assault than gay men on their travels (Harper & Schneider, 2003; Therkelsen et al., 2013). Nevertheless, lesbian women perceive the risk and danger of a destination, even a gay-friendly destination, to be high because of their gender, especially considering the predominantly masculine nature of gay spaces (Poria, 2006; Hughes, 2006).

These risk assessments and fear can also be found in another minority in the LGBTQ community: transgender tourists. As tourists, transgender women have a fear of discrimination, and this fear can range from being misgendered to verbal and physical harassment. Being easily recognized as transgender women (not passing as cis-gender women) can bring negative implications to their travel experiences. This is mostly because they encounter hardship such as limited access to public toilets and leisure spaces (Monterrubbio, Madera & Pérez, 2020). For transgender tourists, it might be more demanding to choose a travel destination than for other travellers. Before arriving at a destination and during their stay, they are likely to monitor how they dress in fear of violence, discrimination, and threats. This surveillance especially increases in non-queer spaces where the focus is on heteronormativity. In their study, Reddy-Best & Olson (2020) found that, before and during travel, transgender people impose monitoring on themselves in terms of their dress, which creates more hardship for them. In some cases, they pack more clothes so they can have many options depending on the situation they will be in and they are always prepared to change. This can even lead to them dressing in a way that is not authentic to their true gender identity.

2.4 LGBTQ Motivations

Motivation can be defined as a set of needs in individuals which propel them to work toward satisfying these needs through a sequence of actions (Li & Cai, 2012). One of the most common assumptions about gay and lesbian holiday motivations relate to sexual activities and finding companionship (Hughes, 2003; Hughes, 2006; Monterrubio, 2009). The importance of these two motivations is affected by various factors such as age, relationship status, destination choice, gender identity, and the degree in which they are open to the public about their sexuality. However, as is represented in Figure 5, the consensus is that an LGBTQ tourist's motivations are similar to those of a heterosexual tourist (Clift & Forrest 1999; Pritchard et al. 2000; Ivy, 2001; Visser, 2003; Hughes 2005; Therkelsen et al., 2013; Monterrubio et al., 2020).

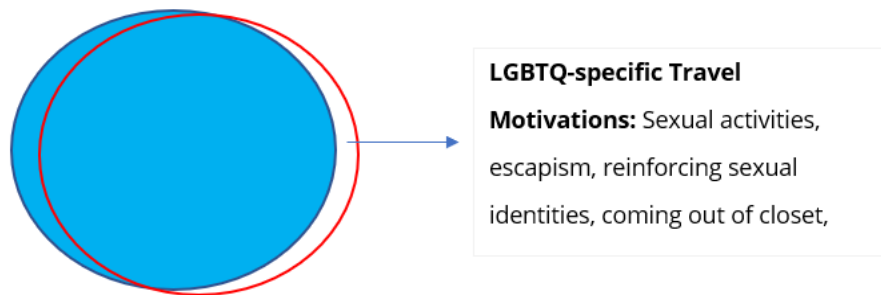


Figure 2. LGBTQ Tourists' Travel Motivations (Red circle), Heterosexual's Travel's motivations (Blue Circle)

Based on his research, Ivy (2001) developed two lists of destinations visited by both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ tourists that had high frequencies of gay spaces and gay facilities. He discovered that the top pick destinations for LGBTQ tourists were the same as those of heterosexual tourists, something that reinforced the fact that LGBTQ travellers want to travel to similar destinations as straight ones. Hughes and Deutsch (2010) conducted a study about older gay tourists, and discovered 'being with friends', renewing old companionships and making new friends were more important than any sexual activities. They also realized that older gay men have the same motivations as older straight men, the only difference being the importance of gay spaces and gay-friendliness to older gay men when they are selecting a travel destination.

A desire to have sex and finding like-minded people might not be the most common and important motivations for LGBTQ travellers. However, in terms of reinforcing and constructing their sexual identities, these motivations often play a distinctive role in their travel behaviours (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996; Hughes, 1997; Hughes, 2003; Hughes, 2006; Monterrubio et al., 2007). It is believed that gay and lesbian tourists feel motivated to participate in tourism activities as a form of an unofficial coming out process (Poria & Taylor, 2002). In order to experience their first sexual encounter, some gay and lesbian individuals feel they need to travel to a destination far away from home, where they can have anonymous intercourse to actualize their sexual identity without fear of recognition, involuntary outing, and discrimination (Hughes, 2003). This feeling is more overwhelming for closet gay and lesbian tourists (Hughes, 2006). Closeted gay men are

willing to travel to a new and gay-friendly destination to be able to be who they really are and express their authentic selves (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2015). Gay tourism provides them with an optimal opportunity to travel to a place where they can, for a short while, come out of the closet and experience their sexual identity in the fullest (Graham, 2002; Waitt & Markwell, 2014, p.351).

Nevertheless, not all LGBTQ tourists want to travel in order to come out of the closet (Blichfeldt et al., 2011; Therkelsen et al., 2013), and there are a few factors affecting the importance of this motivation. These can range from the way gay and lesbian individuals feel and perceive their sexual identity to how much value they place on their sexuality to their socio-demographics and their other identities (Hughes, 2006; Weeden, Lester & Jarvis, 2016; Hattingh & Spencer, 2020). Closeted individuals tend to travel to gay spaces where they feel more relaxed and freer from the pressure of a heteronormative society (Hughes, 2006), while transgender women's travel motivations tend not to consist of sexual gratification, reaffirming their gender identity, or communicating with other transgender people (Monterrubio et al., 2020). For transgender women, their gender identity doesn't act as a push factor, as they aspire to be viewed as cis-gender women. Their travel motivations are the same as those of cis-gender women, and these can range from relaxation to family bonding, visiting friends, and trying out various places and new cultures. For them, 'food, culture, and nature' are assumed to be among the main pull factors of a destination. However, the most important factor was the safety of a destination (Monterrubio et al., 2020).

Lesbian couples, especially married couples with kids, are not interested in travelling to visit gay spaces in a destination and do not desire to have sexual encounters there. Moreover, Their gender identity, being a woman, has a great influence on their travel behaviours. Other self-recognized identities, such as being a mother, partner, adventure tourist, or sport enthusiast, might change their destination choices and motivations. Their needs and motivations are close to other heterosexual women and they even share similar characteristics to other parents, because they travel with their children (Therkelsen et al., 2013). Also, nationality can be considered as a factor in differentiating the members of the LGBTQ community, even those members who have the

same gender. Chinese lesbian travellers identify their holiday motivations as 'stress release' from their families and work environments, and they want to be offered 'lesbian-exclusive products' (Liu & Chen, 2010). Meanwhile, western lesbian women are interested in nature, wildlife, and finding new hiking trails (Weeden et al., 2016).

In destinations with non-highly perceived gay-friendliness or negative mindsets toward the LGBTQ community, the international gay tourist's motivations for travel are not related to forming a gay identity through socializing (Kollen & Lazar, 2012). Gay and lesbian travellers, alongside other marginalized groups, develop a desire for safety, escape, freedom, and a sense of belonging (Hughes, 2000; Pritchard et al., 2000; Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2015). While for other tourists, the escapism motivation is the one defined by Iso-Ahola (1980): gay and lesbian tourists associate it with an escape from heteronormativity in their everyday lives, finding a sense of relief and authenticity, and an opportunity to be who they truly want to be in a non-judgmental space (Perlesz, Brown, Lindsay, McNair, De Vaus, & Pitts, 2006). The safety of a destination could be considered a pull factor for some members of the LGBTQ community, while for others, it can be a positive added bonus or a destination avoidance factor (Pritchard et al., 2000; Monterrubio et al., 2020).

2.5 Gay Friendliness

2.5.1 Gay-Friendliness Definition and Gay-friendliness in the Business World

The term gay-friendly, in relation to the corporate world, could point to companies and businesses which are respectful of the LGBTQ community and have non-discriminatory policies for their employees and consumers (Tuten, 2005). Gay-friendly also signifies places that are not necessarily gay-run or targeted at gay men, but which are, nonetheless, welcoming to LGBTQ consumers (Hughes, 2002).

In her study, Tuten (2005) pointed to the similarities between gay-friendliness and environmentally-friendliness, in the contexts of marketing and brand awareness. While these two concepts

share similarities, they are not the same in practice. Gay-friendliness, observed from a brand preferences perspective, could include hostility and affinity among their consumers. Therefore, the services or products associated with it take a stance beyond functionality and more toward social and political utility, which could be translated to loyalty of the said consumers (Granovetter, 1985 cited in Tuten, 2005; Kate, 2000).

Tuten and Neidermeyer (2003) carried out a content analysis of a popular LGBTQ-related website regarding the gay-friendliness of brands. Factors extracted from their study that can achieve gay-friendliness for businesses include providing same sex benefits in the workplace, publicly going against anti-LGBTQ policies and supporting pro-LGBTQ ones, promoting workplace diversity, running advertisements in LGBTQ and mainstream media, and donating money to LGBTQ-related causes. LGBTQ consumers react negatively toward anti-gay brands, and these brands show no specific interest in LGBTQ consumers and don't have any positive stances regarding them. One of the most important elements in manifesting gay-friendliness out of the abovementioned factors is when businesses provide monetary support to LGBTQ causes, charities, and events (Tuten, 2006). In line with previous studies, Gudelunas (2011) derived similar factors based on focus groups and extended new ones, such as firms choosing gay media to advertise their brands, utilizing LGBTQ imagery in mainstream media, and implementing product placement techniques in gay-themed shows.

As it can be seen from Table five, these attributes showcased two dimensions of gay-friendliness: internal and external. These factors can actually affect the purchasing behaviour of LGBTQ individuals, as they could be willing to pay more for services and products that are gay-friendly (Tuten, 2006; Oakenfull, 2013).

Table 5. Dimensions of gay-friendliness (Tuten, 2006; Oakenfull, 2013)

Internal	External
Existence of employee's policies (domestic benefits which are important for lesbian women)	Marketing
Gay rights	Giving back to the LGBTQ community (such as monetary help to charities which is also important for lesbian women)
Values promotion	Advertisement in LGBTQ media (this is more important for gay men)

However, going through researches concerning the gay-friendliness of a business, it was noticed that these studies were mostly conducted years ago, at a time when LGBTQ rights were not as evolved as they are now. Same-sex employee benefits are now a norm in most companies, due to the legalization of same-sex marriage in most western countries, and laws against discrimination of minorities have been established for years in countries with a prominent LGBTQ presence.

Earned loyalty from LGBTQ consumers is not the only benefit of gay-friendliness. A company's functionality and the existence of an LGBTQ-friendly attitude correlate positively together. Studies show that, when gay-friendliness is increased, the profitability and performance increase too. Moreover, if firms or companies are in a more gay-friendly location, this relationship becomes even more prominent. Gay-friendly firms are able to cultivate and gather intangible assets, such as 'human capital', relationships with different stakeholders, and an improvement in the firm's reputation (Fatmy, Kihn, Sihvonen & Vähämaa, 2021).

2.5.2 Reactions to Gay-friendly Advertising

As has been discussed in the above, advertising in LGBTQ-related and mainstream media is one of the factors that can influence a consumer's perception of friendliness. There are some debates about how much LGBTQ cues and images these advertisements need to include for this influence to occur. Regarding LGBTQ cues, Tuten's study (2005) concluded that gay-friendly cues

have been recognized by both LGBTQ community and straight people. While the LGBTQ community reacted positively towards these cues, heterosexual individuals didn't react negatively and their reactions were, at worst, just neutral. This showed that all consumers acknowledge the gay-friendliness attributes of a brand.

Also, it is vital to point out that LGBTQ-related advertising in mainstream media has a more prominent role in reaching a wider audience than LGBTQ-exclusive media (Kates, 2004). Gay-friendly marketing ignites positive reactions from gay and lesbian consumers, while the reactions from heterosexual ones are neutral. This shows that a brand can work on their gay-friendliness without a fear of missing out (Tuten, 2005). Referring back to the heterogeneous nature of the LGBTQ community as a market, in the past, most advertisements were targeted to this community as a whole. However, there are differences between how members of this community—according to their gender and sexual identities—view advertisements. Lesbians are not bothered with the appropriate portrayal of this community in advertisements, while gay men show a more negative attitude towards an advertisement if it's not what they expect to see or read (Burnett, 2000).

2.5.3 Gay-Friendliness and Tourism

Gay-friendliness in tourism can be viewed from various aspects, as it is not only a destination in isolation that needs to be gay-friendly. The gay-friendly aspect of a destination can depend on a country's legislation, law, and the amount of information available for LGBTQ tourists (Hodes, RK, & Gerritsma, 2007). One of the most hidden factors that affects the gay-friendliness of a destination is the destination's tourism providers. The provider's attitudes and actions toward the LGBTQ community and the way they react to positive and negative LGBTQ-related incidents can have a huge effect on how LGBTQ tourists view a destination and its gay-friendliness (Clift & Forrest, 1999; Markwell & Waitt, 2014, p.290).

Gay-friendly tourism advertisements are not as straight-forward as simply promoting the product. Gay-friendliness can be associated with an image of a country as a whole, or of a small city

inside a country. It can also be related to a specific hotel, tour activities, and/or events. Such advertisements can be released nationwide or on an international level in mainstream media or LGBTQ-related ones. As a marketing tool for gay tourism in emerging gay-friendly areas, the concept of relative regional importance can be applied. A whole continent or country might not have a very gay-friendly image, but a specific city in a country or a specific country in a continent might offer gay-friendly spaces that make them gay-friendly. By cautiously marketing these destinations to LGBTQ tourists, these people who wish to travel there can feel safe enough to fulfil their desires (Ivy, 2001). There is a need, however, for constant checking of rules and laws in those destinations where the law in this area changes through the years. For example, Istanbul in Turkey used to be considered an emerging gay destination (Ivy, 2001), but in recent years, has experienced an increase in hostility toward this community (Sansal, 2021).

For a business, such as a hotel, to be gay-friendly, it is not enough to just support the LGBTQ community through symbols such as showcasing a rainbow flag on their website (Guaracino, 2007, p.10-12). Being authentic is one of the most important factors in attracting this market. Showing a gay-friendly front, but without sincerity or the carrying out of internal modifications or implementations in the workplace, businesses can be accused of using this market for their purchasing power. Therefore, in order to gain the LGBTQ tourists' trust, before any advertising and promotional campaigns, businesses such as hotels need to go through internal change (Guaracino, 2007, p.91-95). ILGTA is dedicated to ensuring the gay-friendliness of accommodations. They do this by issuing TAG-approved (Travel Advocacy Group) certificates which requires six factors being fulfilled. These factors can be viewed in Table six.

Table 6. TAG-approved (Travel Advocacy Group) certificates requirements (ILGTA, 2021)

Enforcing non-discriminatory policies, including sexual orientation
Treating heterosexual and domestic partners equally in personnel policies
Providing LGBT diversity and sensitivity training for employees
Empowering customers and employees to be watchdogs of its gay and lesbian business practices
Giving back to their community
Employing staffs who reflect the diversity of their community

2.5.4 The Intricate Nature of Gay-friendly Tourism Marketing

There are challenges and debates surrounding the marketing of gay-friendly destinations and how they are presented as a product. These are mostly because any LGBTQ tourism marketing campaigns can move towards a specific political, economic, or biased direction. Gay tourism wants to promote the diversity of sexual and gender identities, but, on the other hand, the majority of its marketing campaigns want to promote a friendly and non-threatening view of the LGBTQ market, one that is based on heteronormativity. They don't want to challenge the idea that heteronormativity is not the baseline and that non-heteronormativity and everything else needs to be compared and measured against heteronormativity. In doing this, they omit specific salient traits of the LGBTQ community and make it sterile. Thus, this friendliness remains in the realm of heteronormativity. Moreover, they manoeuvre a certain group within the LGBTQ community to front their campaigns, such as non-sexual, masculine, white middle-aged gay men and a small number of lesbians. This then creates a hierarchy within the LGBTQ community and a myth of them being affluent travellers (Ivy, 2001; Waitt & Markwell, 2008).

Businesses and destinations market their LGBTQ-related festivals and events in order to promote the gay-friendliness of their spaces. However, they don't wish to out stage their other attributes that can also be offered to heterosexual tourists (Casey, 2009). Keeping that in mind, it is interesting to notice that the marketing of LGBTQ-related events and advertisements can affect a destination's image by making the destination look trendy, liberal, and forward thinking. It can also demonstrate the gay friendliness of that place. This can result in attracting both LGBTQ and heterosexual tourists. These events can also play a part in boosting the mental wellbeing of LGBTQ tourists by affirming their LGBTQ identities and their sense of belonging (Hahm & Ro, 2019). Events such as the Pride parade in the summer often attract more tourism to a destination compared to the non-Pride summertime (Ram, Kama, Mizrachi, & Hall, 2019). The gay-friendliness of a destination or tourism business is not a strong enough reason by itself for tourists to choose a destination for their travels. It can certainly affect the perception of a destination, but this alone is not enough to attract tourists, especially now that many destinations compete for tourists and a share of the lucrative LGBTQ market. Figure six summarizes the reasons why a popular LGBTQ destination can lose its edge (Hodes et al., 2007).



Figure 3. Why being gay-friendly is not enough anymore (Hodes et al., 2007)

This discussion shows that gay-friendliness is now a norm in most European countries who want to attract LGBTQ tourists. Countries need to improve the gay-friendliness of their images in order to present a sophisticated and inclusive destination image perception to potential tourists. Nevertheless, safety, security, and gay-friendliness are all considered to mostly be a destination's added bonus and they don't guarantee actual visits. It's the destination's attributes that have the final say in the destination selection process. The fact that there haven't been many studies carried out on the gay-friendliness of a tourist business or destination points to a lack of consideration of this concept in tourism marketing and communication.

2.6 Destination Image

2.6.1 Definition

In today's world, there are many destinations for potential tourists to choose from, and more and more countries are investing in their different attributes in order to target their potential customers. One way to enhance a destination's uniqueness is through destination brand formation and creating a more positive reputation for the destination through its image (Calantone, Di Benedetto, & Hakam, 1989). Selection of a travel destination before the trip relies heavily on the initial destination image formation (Mercer, 1971 cited by Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Gunn, 1972). In this process, locations with more positive destination images have higher probabilities of remaining in the selection process and ultimately being chosen. It can be concluded, therefore, that the perception of a destination image affects tourist behaviours and their selection choices (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Bigne, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2001). The importance of destination image can be initially tracked down to studies in the 1950s, which believed image to be an important element in affecting human behaviour rather than the reality of the relevant object (Martineau, 1958).

Prior to 1991, destination image regarding tourists' behaviour and satisfaction had been studied (Chon, 1990 cited in Pike, 2002). One of the earliest studies about destination image was Hunt's study (1975), which focused on destination image and its effect on tourists' selection choices and Crompton (1979). They both offered a definition of destination image:

Table 7. Destination Image Definition

	Destination Image Definition
Hunt (1975)	Impressions that a person or persons hold about a state in which they do not reside.
Crompton (1979)	The sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination.

Destination image is known to have four characteristics. First, if a destination is too big, the destination image changes are small. Second, the 'induce image formation' process needs to be lasting and concentrated. Third, relating to the size of a destination, if a place is small in comparison to the whole destination, then the chance of it having an independent image tends to be small. And fourth, in order for a destination to have an effective image modification, there is a need to acknowledge the present destination image (Gartner, 1994). A review of studies related to destination image showed that consumers' satisfaction and purchase behaviour are affected by destination image (Chon, 1990). Echtner & Ritchie (1991) identified six factors they believed form the destination image of a location: attributes and holistics factors; functional characteristics and psychological characteristics; and common and unique factors.

Image creation for an urban destination can be difficult because there are various stakeholders in a destination, and each plays a part in this image creation, whether it's positive or negative. This is mainly due to the various types of benefits and perspectives the stakeholders present for tourism (Forga & Cànoves, 2015). Two additional difficulties in the creation of an image of a destination is time and space. It is important to realize that these two variables shape the nature of a destination's image, because image is not a fixed and stable concept, and, therefore, not invariable. Since formation of a destination image needs to be a long process, the effect of time on the image makes sense. All destinations contain different spaces, and these could be located some distances from the place of the tourist's origin and from the geographical location of the destination. In his study, Hunt (1971 cited in Crompton, 1979) suggested that when tourists' residences are far away from the destination, they are not able to differentiate between various areas in the destination, while people living closer to the destination can acknowledge these differences (Gunn, 1972; Gallarza, Saura, & García, 2002).

As has been discussed in the above, the concept of destination image is highly correlated with the belief or knowledge that individuals have of a destination's attributes. These attributes can be categorised as perceptual/cognitive elements, and a feeling or attachment towards them, which have been considered as affective elements. Also, the effects of these elements depend on cognitive evaluation of a destination and the affective responses to it (Baloglu & McCleary,

1999). In line with this thinking, the way people view a destination's image in their minds can be explained by three components: cognitive (an individual's knowledge and belief about the place), affective (an individual's feeling about the place), and conative (conscious action, as a result of the previous factors) (Pike & Ryan, 2004 cited in Prayag & Ryan, 2011). The cognition of a tourist can be influenced by the tourist's characteristics and stimulus factors. Different information sources, tourism motivation, and sociodemographics affect cognition when no prior visits to the destination or any previous experience of the destination have taken place. Various sources of information is the stimulus representative, while consumer characteristics are the sociodemographics and motivations of the tourists (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

A product or service can exist and be marketed without the need of the image of a country being considered. However, in the marketing of a destination, products and services can, in fact, affect a country's destination image. For example, Guinness beer is known for being an Irish beer, and, whenever Ireland as a destination comes to mind, this product is associated with it (Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005). Tourism marketing can be seen to use a country in its advertising techniques and branding in order to create recognition and a destination image through international campaigns. These campaigns have been funded mostly by the relevant governments, which shows the importance of a destination's image (Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005).

2.6.2 Destination's Image Formation Elements and It's Process

In two studies conducted by Gunn (1972) and Gartner (1994) they both identifies elemnets in formation of a destination's image which can be find in Table seven and eight. Gun's study (1972) focused on two elements: organic and induced components while Gartner's (1994) expanded more and disscussed eigh elements. The formation of a destination image can affect the destination selection process for tourists, as it determines which destinations can stay in the tourists' evaluations and which can be eliminated from their selection processes (Gunn, 1972). While Gartner (1994) believed that the different factors that lead to the benefits and hinderances of a destination's image formation can be linked to cost, market penetration, and credibility. It is,

therefore, important for destination marketers to know which methods to apply in the creation of a destination image to maximise the effect of a destination image in the minds of those tourists with small resources.

Table 8. Destination image formation elements (Gunn, 1972)

Organic components	Induced components
Word of mouth (WOM) by family and friends to newspapers, media, books, and any non-tourism information.	Sources of information that purposefully target the potential buyers such as brochures and advertisements.

Table 9. Destination image formation components II (Gartner, 1994)

Overt included I	Traditional types of advertisement
Overt included II	Tour operators or sellers information
Covert included I	Endorsements of a product by second parties through traditional types of advertisement
Covert included II	Secondary endorsement of a product through unbiased reports'
Autonomous	News and pop culture
Unsolicited organic	Unrequested WOM
Solicited organic	Requested WOM
Organic	An actual experience and visit

In their study, Fakeye & Crompton (1991) offered a model of the image formation process, which includes organic image, induced image, motivation, and active searching for information for a destination. In this process, potential tourists have a very general idea and perception about a destination which, when added to their travel motivations, results in them actively searching for various sources of information. These new sources can include induced images, such as promotional videos, brochures, and travel guides. This mental process results in an evaluation of various destinations in the same category, and these destinations will be analysed based on their benefits and risks, which results in a destination selection. When the actual visitation happens, a more complicated destination image or primary image will form and this will, subsequently, affect the evaluation of alternative destinations in the assessment steps for a repeated visitation.

A destination image's perception and evaluation depend on sources of information that people directly or indirectly use. There are two types of images, primary and secondary as viewed in Table ten. A secondary image is quite important in the destination selection process when there are different destination choices (Beerli & Martin, 2004). They function as a risk avoidance, future justification of a destination selection choice, and destination image formation (Mansfeld, 1992).

Table 10. Sources of Information

Primary	Personal experience of a tourist, actual visitations to a place, number of visitations, duration of stays, and the involvement with the space during visitations (Beerli & Martin, 2004).
Secondary	The image perception of a destination cultivated by various sources of information before visitation such as promotional advertising; WOM or electronic word of mouth (eWOM); general media; non-commercial sources of information such as historical, political, and social; travel agencies; brochures; and media (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Beerli & Martin, 2004).

Travel agencies have the power to influence potential tourists' cognition in a more positive manner by sharing appealing and useful information about a destination. This shows the need for collaboration between travel agencies ;which can be traditional or online travel agencies (OTA); distribution channels, and promoters of a destination in order to acquire the best result for a desirable destination image. Furthermore, autonomous sources of information also affect the cognitive factor of the processing of an image. This means that media needs to be in close and constant collaboration with a tourism destination's marketing organizations (DMO) in a way that forms a cohesive destination image. Authenticity is one of the most important factors that can influence a tourist's cognition. This authenticity can be yielded by matching the WOM with the reality of the destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004).

Due to the above components, a destination's image can be formed in the mind of a potential tourist even without prior visitation. For this formation, motives of tourists, their sociodemographic stances, and various information sources play a part (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Moreover, a first impression for a potential customer can be created from a close relationship between their self-congruity and their ideal destination. For example, when a destination image

is closer to their actual, ideal, social, and/or ideal social self-image, they tend to develop a more positive attitude both toward that destination and during the process of choosing a destination (Sirgy & Chenting, 2000).

As can be deciphered from the above, there are many factors affecting the destination image and, consequently, the tourist's behaviour and satisfaction. An image can be formed from an idea or perception that a person cultivates from various sources of information. It is, therefore, important for a destination to develop a positive image for their target audience. In the case of the LGBTQ community, we know that safety and not facing discrimination are both important when choosing a destination. Communicating these criteria in a holistic way, then, will benefit the destination as a whole and help the destination to be considered as one of the contenders in the customer's selection process.

2.7 Push and Pull Theory

One of the most intrinsic elements of a person's behaviour that can induce, navigate, and link different aspects of it, is motivation (Iso-Ahola, 1980 cited in Crompton & McKay, 1997). Crompton and McKay (1997) defined motivation as a desire or a need which comes from within a person in order to motivate them to perform or choose a particular task. They believed that, by identifying various tourist motivations, destinations can be prepared to fulfil the needs of tourists. To continue with this concept, it is said that motivation and satisfaction go hand-in-hand. Tourists first form motivations and, based on these motivations, they act upon them. This results in experience creation and, in the end, satisfaction will or will not be achieved through these actions. Therefore, concerning satisfaction fulfilment, it is salient to identify the needs and motivations of tourists. This is especially important since many destinations nowadays offer such similar services and attributes, and, in order to differentiate themselves, there is a dire need for them to understand tourists' motivations. Lastly, motivations affect the internal decision-making processes of tourists (Crompton & McKay, 1997).

One of the traits of motivation is the propelling of people to act in a certain way. In this case, travel motivations can have negative or positive effects on tourists' destination selection choices. One can be motivated to choose a very specific destination, but destination avoidance can then occur for a number of reasons, including fear of discrimination or safety. In addition, because of differences in human culture and society, what motivates one tourist can be different from what motivates another (Gilbert & Terrata, 2001).

Dann (1977) was the first person to introduce the push and pull model to the field of tourism. He believed that push factors originated in individual's internal desires and motivations, and these pushed the individual towards forming a decision for travelling, such as in order to escape from the stresses of everyday life. Meanwhile, pull factors are mostly derived from a destination rather than from within tourists themselves. Once a person decides to go on a vacation, pull factors help them in their selection of one destination over another (Gray, 1970 cited in Crompton, 1979 ;Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979). With pull factors being external, this characteristic put them in a situation where they can be manipulated by various sources of information and a destination's image perception (Kassean & Gassita, 2013).

Based on Dann's work (1977), in his 1979 study Crompton believed motivations to be 'multidimensional'. An example of this is when a person wants to go on a trip and chooses one destination over another, they include not only one motivation but a combination of them (Oh, Uysal & Weaver, 1995). Having a complete understanding of the motivations that lie on the socio-psychological spectrum can help with market segmentation and preparation of a tourism product/service according to the customer's needs. This can then result in customer satisfaction. Furthermore, Iso-Ahola (1982) studied the importance of comprehending tourists' travel motivations, because he believed these were a foundation of human behaviour. Table 11 summarizes early studies of push and pull motivations.

Table 11. Early push and pull studies

Author	Push factors	Pull factors
Gray (1970, cited in Crompton, 1979)	Wonderlust: a desire to travel to a place outside of the tourist's everyday life	Sunlust: destination's amenities and its role in affecting the destination selection choice
Dann (1977)	Ego-enhancement and anomie. Anomie is the need that people have for communicating with one another, social interaction, and a desire for love and affection outside of their everyday lives. Ego-enhancement is a desire to be recognized and the status recognition that travel can bring.	Attractions, attributes, social opportunities, and the atmosphere of a destination
Crompton (1979)	Escape, self-exploration, relaxation, prestige, regression, kinship enhancement, social interaction	Alternative cultural motivations which included two sub-motives: education and novelty
Iso-Ahola (1982)	Escapism and seeking	-

Push factors don't always follow the same patterns of previous research, as motivations are internal, personal, and influenced from within in every individual. While tourists might share some similar travel motivations, the level of the importance of these motivations and the reason behind their choice might vary. Yuan and McDonald (1990) and Kassean & Gassita (2013) studies showed different push motivation for overseas leisure travellers. In Yuan and McDonald (1990) study, novelty was the most important push factors, whereas, Kassean & Gassita (2013) identified, rest, and relaxation as the most important motivations. Even being part of a same nationality and going to a same destination doesn't make push and pull motivations of specific travellers in one group homogenous. In a study by Gilbert & Terrata (2001) on two different age groups of Japanese travellers' trips to overseas destinations such as the UK, it was shown between that based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, members of the younger generation tend to seek self-actualization, while members of the older generation seek belonging as push factors.

Throughout the decades, many authors studied the push and pull factors of tourists and developed models and different categories. Some of the push factors include intellectual components (mental activities, learning, exploring), need for friendship/family (Ryan & Glendon,

1998), emotional components (nostalgia, romance, spiritual fulfilment), status, cultural, and personal ones. On the other hand, local hospitality, perception of a safe/secure environment, historical/cultural/sports activities, entertainment, hunting, facilities, novelty, and budget can be identified as some of the pull factors (Crompton, 1979; Oh, Uysal, & Weaver, 1995 cited in Klenosky, 2002).

There are two different school of thoughts regarding the relationship between push and pull factors. Some authors believe push factors need to be established first and then pull factors can be considered, or in another words, they appear at two separate times. Push factors establish whether a person wants to travel or not and pull factors dictate where they travel to (Klenosky, 2002). As Dann (1981, p.207) explained, a person needs to decide if they want to go on a trip or not, and then the choice of destinations, activities, and attractions can be addressed. Therefore, based on his theory, it is evident that 'push factors precede pull factors'. In contrast, other authors believe push and pull factors don't happen independently from each other during the planning of a vacation (Compton, 1979).

Prior to Klenosky's (2002) study, research focused on existing information and the existence and level of any relationship between push and pull factors (Baloglu & Uysal 1996; Oh et al., 1995). However, in his study, Klenosky (2002) investigated relationships between push and pull factors among 53 participants. He reached the conclusion that one pull factor or attribute of a destination can act as a multi-function to different push factors. For example, a beach attribute answers to the three push factors: socializing, working on the tourist's tan and feeling good about themselves, and enjoying nature and feeling refreshed.

Push and pull factors have been studied from different angles, such as destination marketing, destination image, and travelling based on a specific type of tourism. Konu & Laukkanen (2009) discussed the possibility of a relationship between an intention to travel not to a specific destination but travelling based on a specific type of tourism, such as wellbeing tourism. Three motivations or push factors—self-development, health and physical activity, and relaxation and escape—showed positive effects on travel intention for wellbeing tourism. A connection has been

found between push and pull factors and overall destination image. For tourists to Mauritius, cognitive image of a destination was the main push factor (Prayag & Ryan, 2011). Oh et al. (1995) and Baloglu & Uysael (1996) studied the relationship between push and pull factors from a marketing perspective and were able to identify various markets. The conclusion of these studies shows the existence of a major relationship between push and pull factors, which, when matched with each other, are able to create market segments and provide destinations with a means of creating more facilities that match motivations with destinations' resources. Therefore, if someone has a number of destinations in mind, they could choose a destination with more attributes that match their motivations and desires (Oh et al., 1995; Baloglu & Uysael, 1996).

Finland, and North Karelia in particular, is the subject of the present study. This part of the world possesses stunning nature, national parks, and a winter climate. These attributes lend themselves to the ideas of nature, rural tourism, and winter tourism, and knowing this can lead to attracting visitors to this destination. Therefore, the present study can benefit from analysing the push and pull factors of these types of tourism.

Pesonen et al. (2011) conducted research in Finland and Austria in order to investigate the similarities or differences between rural tourism in two different destinations, and how push factors can affect destination attributes in rural destinations. One similarity they discovered was between the relaxation and togetherness motivations that were evident in both groups of respondents. Their results also demonstrated some differences in which the nationality of respondents separates travel motivations of rural tourists. Austrian tourists valued activity, experience, and adventure more, while for Finnish tourists, 'relaxation and peace of mind' were more valuable. Although relaxation, as a push factor, was one of the major motivations of rural tourism for both groups, the meaning of relaxation was actually different for Finnish and Austrians tourists.

Kim, Lee, & Klenosky (2003) conducted a research to identify push and pull factors of national parks visitors. Their study supported the notion that push and pull factors can differ among various socio-demographic visitors, and that age, level of income, gender, and occupation affect the

relationship between push and pull factors. For example, since students thrive on adventure experiences, facilities in a given destination need to be properly prepared for them. Meanwhile, the older generation wants to enjoy scenery and nature, which means walking trails can be a good attribute to develop for national parks.

Due to similarities between LGBTQ tourists' and straight tourists' motivations and the existence of pull factors in destinations, the push and pull theory can be applied to LGBTQ tourism. However, pull factors for LGBTQ tourists may be different, since, for the majority of them, safety and non-discrimination factors can affect the destination selection process. By finding out which attribute of a destination is more appealing to this community, businesses in a destination can invest more in ways to make destination attributes enticing to LGBTQ tourists.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Method

Usually in social science, there are two main branches of research method: quantitative and qualitative methods (Mujis, 2011). In a quantitative method, numerical data are collected in order to investigate a phenomenon. This investigation is made possible when 'mathematical models and statistical techniques' are applied in analyzing the data (Creswell, 2002; cited in Ragab & Arisha, 2017).

In LGBTQ tourism studies, qualitative methods were found to be the most favorable ones. In depth understanding of the target sample was one of the main objectives of previous studies for LGBTQ tourism, and this made qualitative methods popular. However, the author of this study chose a quantitative method and there are some reasons to justify this action. A quantitative method can reach out to more LGBTQ people who wish to remain anonymous and it can help with finding a generalized understanding of this target market (Ong et al., 2020). Furthermore, the author of this study aims to investigate the perception that this community possesses of Finland, and perception can be measured through a quantitative method, as the majority of destination image papers has chosen this approach in their researches (Pike, 2002). In addition, the majority of previous studies about destination image and perception used quantitative methods and utilized questionnaires to assess respondents' opinions about destination image (Dolnicar & Grün, 2013). The target of this study was LGBTQ tourists with main focus on those that have not travelled to Finland.

Dolnicar (2013) believes that surveys in tourism research is one of the most important data collection instruments, as the survey method is considerably less time-consuming for the data collection and analysis steps of a research (Ragab & Arisha, 2017). In addition, surveys can reach out to a larger sample of data. The author wants to collect data from more than 100 participants, which can be viewed as a large sample. Therefore, selecting a survey as the quantitative method seems justified (Rowley, 2014).

Surveys are more accessible, as they can be dispersed to different geographical parts of the world more readily (Zikmund, 2003; cited in Ragab & Arisha, 2017). Geographical distribution of LGBTQ tourism papers is mostly concentrated around English-speaking countries. In Europe, the only non-English speaking countries that published one to three articles regarding LGBTQ tourism were Spain, Denmark, and the Netherlands (Ong et al., 2020). Thus, a survey can reach a wider audience not yet studied too much in LGBTQ tourism, and these are the ones that author aims to target, if possible. Survey is useful when researcher wants to gather information about concepts and ideas that are not concrete such as perception, attitude, and behavior that can't be observed directly (Rickards, Magee, Artino, 2012). It is worth mentioning that Dolnicar (2020) stated that questionnaires are one of the best mediums to find out information about perception.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Questionnaire Design

This study's questionnaire is based on a previous literature review on LGBTQ tourism, gay friendliness, push and pull theory, and destination image. All questions and measures selected from previous literature are related to the theoretical framework of this study. Since theories are important in formulating research questions in a deductive study, the use of questions and measurements from previous studies to create a questionnaire is recommended. These questions can be tailored to the current research questions, which facilitates comparison of the new research findings with previous studies (Rowley, 2014). The questionnaire is divided into four sections. The first section contains questions on demographics, followed by gay friendliness, pull factors, and destination image. The theoretical background of the survey can be found in Appendix 1 and the questionnaire in Appendix 2.

Based on the previous literature review, articles with quantitative and qualitative methods related to LGBTQs' push and pull factors were selected to determine which attributes are attractive to LGBTQ tourists. Quantitative studies have examined LGBTQ pull factors for an LGBTQ cruise

(Weeden et al., 2016), an LGBTQ destination (Hattingh & Spencer, 2020), a sun and beach destination (Melian-Gonzales et al., 2011), and LGBTQ festivals (Forga & Canoves, 2015), while the pull factors of the qualitative studies were related to LGBTQ games such as gay skiing (Coetzee, Liu, Filep, 2019) and lesbian tourists (Therkelsen et al., 2013). The author compared the above items with the Finnish pull factors obtained from studies such as Visit-Finland (2015; 2019) and Tuohino (2002), and then selected the most appropriate ones from all these studies to place in a questionnaire.

Gay-friendliness items were selected by Tuten (2005; 2006), Hodes et al. (2007), and Ram et al. (2019). Tuten (2006) had the most coherent items, so factors from other studies were compared to them and then added to the gay friendliness list. In addition, some items from LGBTQ pull studies such as Cliff & Forest (1999), Melian-Gonzalez et al. (2011), and Hattingh & Spencer (2020) were added to determine the target population's perception of gay friendliness.

Due to the large number of articles on destination image, the author selected those with the most coherent items, namely Echtner & Ritchie (1991) and Baloglu & McCleary (1999). Four items were added and modified to measure perceptions of LGBTQ tourists in Finland.

In the demographic section of the questionnaire, the question about income was not selected from a previous literature review. The question was selected by the author and her supervisor. The reason for this decision was that respondents might have different income levels depending on their geographic location. Although the gender question was modified from previous literature to make it more understandable for LGBTQ tourists, some questions were added or explained in more detail. One of these items included the gender options cis-gender male and cis-gender female, i.e., individuals whose gender identity matches their assigned sex at birth. Another item was a transgender option, which was further explained to include non-binary and non-conforming people. In this questionnaire, the author attempted to keep the number of questions short to obtain higher quality responses and avoid a high non-response rate (Herzog & Bachman, 1980; cited in Raghunathan & Grizzle, 1995).

3.2.2 Procedure

The survey method designed was a self-administered web-based electronic survey in a program called Webropol. The questionnaire contained closed-ended questions, which can sometimes be difficult to design. However, based on the extensive literature review, the author was able to determine which questions were more appropriate to answer the research questions. Closed-ended questions provide a few options for respondents to choose from. This method is quick, increases response rates, and may be easier to analyse than open-ended questions (Rowley, 2014). A 5-point Likert scale was chosen as the measure and format for responses because many studies of destination image and perception have chosen this measure (Dolnicar & Grün, 2013) and a mean score on the Likert scale of 5 to 7 is more statistically significant than 10 points (Dawes, 2008 cited in Pimentel, 2010). In addition, the Likert scale is one of the most commonly used scales for questionnaires in the social sciences and provides information about the level of agreement with a question (Pimentel, 2010).

Pretesting a questionnaire is important because it helps determine whether the questions are understandable and easy for respondents to answer and whether they work as intended. Any shortcomings, misinterpretations, and measurement errors can be identified at this stage, leading to fewer errors in data analysis (Hilton, 2017). The current questionnaire was tested on a small representative population via the internet and no additional comments were added to improve the questionnaire.

In this study, a non-probability sample is used to find the sample population. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of LGBTQ international tourists and not to test a hypothesis, so this method may be useful. The author distributed the questionnaire on different platforms and then the respondents answered it voluntarily. This method is called voluntary response sampling (McCombes, 2019). In addition, purposive sampling and snowballing were used to focus on a specific subgroup, in this case people with LGBTQ characteristics, and ask selected respondents to send this questionnaire to people with similar characteristics. In these methods, the author relied on her own judgment to find respondents who could participate in this study based on their LGBTQ attitudes. Some of the main reasons for choosing this technique are its time and

cost efficiency and the fact that only a certain number of people are able to answer this questionnaire (Dudovskiy, 2020). Therefore, one of the limitations of this study is the way the data was collected.

The questionnaire was distributed for one month, from mid-February to mid-March. Since the focus of this study was on international LGBTQ tourists, the author contacted the moderators of ten Facebook groups, five Reddit subgroups, and one LinkedIn group outside of Finland and asked permission to post the questionnaire there. In addition, the author used websites such as Poll-Pool, where the survey created on Webropol was posted, to achieve a wider reach. In addition, the survey was also sent to all known LGBTQ friends and relatives. This method does not indicate the reach of the questionnaire and only shows the author the number of people who completed it. Because the response rate is unknown, response bias is inherent in the results. Such bias could lead to problems when attempting to generalise the results of the study to a larger population of LGBTQ individuals (Dudovskiy, 2020). Finding LGBTQ respondents was not an easy task, resulting in a low number of responses to this survey. Even the Facebook groups with more than 20 thousand members were not interested in answering this survey. The author also ran Facebook ads and listed more than 100 LGBTQ interests to target the desired demographic. This ad was reached to 22,360 people and the post engagement was 836, however, no one answered the survey. The final number may be quite small and affect the generalisation of the results, but as Dolnicar (2015) mentioned in her study, numbers are "overrated" in quantitative studies and it is important to recognise how to use them as tools and not see them as the focus of a study.

3.3 Data analysis

Descriptive analysis and means were used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics allow data to be presented in a way that shows the proper way of collecting and analysing data. It is also a prerequisite for finding out what type of analysis and test to consider when dealing with the data (Spriestersbach, Röhrig, Du Prel, Gerhold, & Blettner, 2009). The goal is to answer the research

questions through the respondents' answers without hypothesising. One of the descriptive statistical measures is the mean, which indicates where the majority of responses to the variables are found. The mean can be considered as a statistical analysis because it offers the possibility to classify the exact value of each subject into its 'estimated central tendency' (McHugh & Hudson-Barr, 2003).

Two other types of tests were also performed on the present data. First is the Kruskal Wallis test which is a non-parametric test for data that are not normally distributed. The Kruskal-Wallis test is suitable for ordinal data, and when there are three or more sample groups, it can evaluate them against a single continuous variable. Since the data we have here are not normally distributed, this test can be performed (McKight & Najab, 2010; Ostertagova, Ostertag, & Kováč, 2014). In this current study, data were mostly not normally distributed; however, the test that was performed between groups was a parametric test; a one-way Anova. A parametric test can be performed on not normally distributed data when the scale is based on Likert scale and there are more than five to ten respondents in each groups. This test can yield a more rigorous result which is as close to the 'true answer' as possible. The mean scales of items can be calculated into a new mean variable in order to measure abstract concept and then a parametric test can be run (Sullivan & Artino, 2013).

In Anova test when p-values of different groups are less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. The null hypothesis says that there is no mean differences between different groups. Anova test could sometimes indicate that there is at least one group different than another in the test (Ruxton & Beauchamp, 2008). One-way Anova test could not pinpoint which groups are different than each other, therefore a post hoc analysis needs to be performed which is a form of mean comparison. One of this technique is Tukey test which shows which groups are significantly different than other groups.(Abdi & Williams, 2010).

4 Results

4.1 Demographics

The survey was opened 1,310 times and from this number 139 people started answering the questions, but only 100 people completed the questionnaire. Before starting the data analysis, new variables were calculated. Sexualities were divided into five new categories: gay, lesbian, bisexual, straight, and other sexual minorities. The author decided to group the responses of 'I prefer not to mention' and 'Others' together. A new variable named 'Place of Residence' categorized respondents' countries into five continents. Gender was divided similarly to sexuality - into 'cis-gender woman', 'cis-gender man', and 'transgender, including all other gender identities'. The author grouped transgender responses and the 'I prefer not to mention' responses into one category since the focus of the study was on cisgender tourists and transgender tourists.

Age was divided into six sections based on the number of the age reported in responses. The last new variable was related to the frequency of travel to Finland, and was divided into three sections: 'those who have visited Finland before', 'those who have never visited Finland but know some information about the country', and 'those who have never travelled to Finland and know nothing about the country' to compare their responses in the analysis part.

The author performed a crosstabs test to identify the true number of LGBTQ responses for this study. As can be viewed from Table 12, out of 100 respondents, a total of 15 identified themselves as straight. Of these 15 responses, only two belonged to transgender and all other gender identities, while ten were cis-gender woman and four were cis-gender man. Because this study is aimed at the LGBTQ community, non-LGBTQ responses were excluded. On Figure 8, the new population can be seen and the heterosexual number reported on the chart relates to transgender population. The next step was creating a filter through the data -> select case command in SPSS to exclude all non-LGBTQ responses in order to analyse the data.

Table 12. Gender and sexuality of the survey respondent

Gender/Sexuality	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Straight	Other sexual identities	Total
Cis-gender woman	0	9	20	9	5	43
Cis-gender man	29	0	5	4	1	39
Transgender and all other gender identities	6	0	3	2	7	18
Total	35	9	28	15	13	100

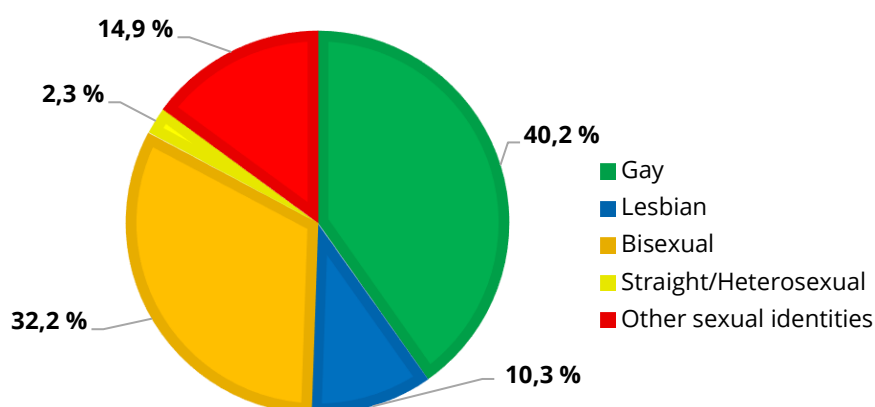


Figure 4. Percentages of sexuality of respondents after excluding non-LGBTQ respondents

After non-LGBTQ responses are excluded, sociodemographic and background information are presented in detail in Table 13. The frequency analysis of respondents shows that the number of male (40.2%) and female (39.1%) respondents were almost equal, but gay respondents (40.2%) were notably more active in answering this survey than all other sexualities. Bisexual, lesbian, other sexual identities, and heterosexual were represented by 32.3%, 10.3%, 14.9%, and 2.3%, respectively. To understand this sample, the author compared it to the CMI report (2014), which

showed a similar result in terms of the dominance of gay respondents (59%). The age of respondents ranged from 17 to 82 years old. 67.8% of respondents were in the 18-30 age group and 18.4% were between 31-43 years old, while all other age groups were below 10%. The 18-30 age group also accounted for the majority of responses in the CMI (2014) report (44%). Comparing the countries where respondents live to other LGBTQ studies, the majority of responses were from North America (21.8%) and Europe (63.2%), similar to previous studies. Only eight percent were from Asia, 4.6% from Africa, and 2.3% from Oceania.

80.5% have never travelled to Finland compared to 19.5% who have, and of those 80.5%, only 27.6% had no idea about Finland. Respondents' income level was also included in the survey and slightly less than one-third of respondents (31%) said they earned 'less than average' compared to the average income in their country of residence. People with an 'average' income accounted for 28.7% of responses and 21.8% of respondents indicated that their income was 'more than average'. 14.9% earned 'very little' while 3.4% of responses indicated a 'very high' income. These findings are close to other studies which claimed that not all LGBTQ community are in possession of high income (Clift & Forrest, 1999; Ro et al., 2017).

Table 13. Demographics of survey respondents

Count (N=87)		Count (N=87)		Count (N=87)	
Gender		Sexuality		Salary	
Cis-gender woman	34 (39.1%)	Gay	35 (40.2%)	Very low	13 (14.9%)
Cis-gender man	35 (40.1%)	Lesbian	9 (10.3%)	Less than average	27 (31%)
Transgender	18 (20.7%)	Bisexual	28 (32.2%)	Average	25 (28.7%)
		Heterosexual	2 (2.3%)	More than average	19 (21.8%)
		Other sexual identities	13 (14.9%)	Very high	3 (3.4%)
Age		Continent		Travel companion	
Under 18	2 (2.3%)	Europe	55 (63.2%)	Solo	21 (24.1%)
18-30	59 (67.8%)	North America	19 (21.8%)	With a partner	27 (31%)
31-43	16 (18.4%)	Asia	7 (8%)	With friends	21 (24.1%)
44-56	8 (9.2%)	Oceania	2 (2.3%)	Family members	18 (20.7%)
57-69	1 (1.1%)				
70-82	1 (1.1%)				
Education		Travel to Finland		Marital status	
No degree	5 (5.7%)	Have visited Finland before	17 (19.5%)	Marriage	5 (5.7%)
High school degree	18 (20.7%)	Not visited Finland but know something about it	46 (52.9%)	Single	50 (57.5%)
College degree	10 (11.5%)	Not visited Finland and know nothing about it	24 (27.6%)	Civil union	2 (2.3%)
Bachelor's degree	33 (37.9%)			In a relationship, living together	17 (19.5%)
Master's degree	18 (20.7%)			In a relationship, living separately	12 (13.8%)
PhD	2 (2.3%)				
Others	1 (1.1%)				

4.2 Perception of Destination Image

There are three research questions in this study. The author began by analysing the first research question about the perception that the LGBTQ community has of Finland. Questions 14, 15, and 16 of the questionnaire were analysed to answer this question. A descriptive analysis of the responses to these questions is shown in Table 14, 15, and 16. Question 14 is based on 5-point Likert scale and one represents disagree and five represent agree, with three being the neutral option.

Table 14. Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 your agreement with the above statements

Items	Mean	Std.	Min	Max
Finland is a safe place for LGBTQ people. (N=87)	3,8506	0,69095	2,00	5,00
Finland is a gay/LGBTQ-friendly country. (N=87)	3,8391	0,67984	2,00	5,00
I would recommend my LGBTQ friends to visit Finland. (N=87)	3,6207	0,68610	2,00	5,00

Question 15 contained only one statement and the scale is 5-point Likert scale with highly unfavourable being number one and highly favourable number five. As you can see from Table 15, the total number of answers is 79. The reason for the lower number of answers is the added sixth variable "I do not know", which the author classified as a missing value and did not take it into account, since it does not provide any additional value to the answers.

Table 15. How would you evaluate the overall image that you have about Finland as a travel destination?

Items	Mean	Std.	Min	Max
Image of Finland (N=79)	4,1519	0,71770	2,00	5,00

Question number 16 was designed with a 5-level semantic differential scale, and Table 16 contain the descriptive information about this question. For this question one represents the positive value while 5 presents the negative. However, all the other questions of this questionnaire

had a value of negative to positive, such as not at all important=1 to very important=5. For this reason author decided to reverse the scale to match the scale of other questions.

Table 16. As a tourist destination, I consider Finland (Arousing=5 Sleepy=1; new scale)

Items	Mean	Std.	Min	Max
Arousing - Sleepy (N=87)	3,3333	0,99612	1	5
Pleasant - Unpleasant (N=87)	3,9655	0,90795	1	4
Exciting - Gloomy (N=87)	3,6092	0,98070	1	5
Relaxing - Distressing (N=87)	3,9655	0,94559	1	5

To make the calculations easier, the author has created a new variables. The three sub-statements in question 14 were converted into a new variable using SPSS's compute command, in order to calculate its mean value. Similar steps were taken to calculate means for the other two questions.

Table 17 represents the mean values of these new variables. The final step in order to find an answer for the first question is to calculate the mean average of question 14, 15, and 16 and through descriptive analysis, this value can be calculated (mean = 3.9).

Table 17. Destination Image's Means

Questions	Mean	Std.
D1	3.77	0.6064
D2	4.15	0.7177
D3	3.97	0.7517

4.3 Gay-friendliness of Finland

Questions 10 and 11 asked several items about the gay-friendliness of a destination. By analysing these two questions through descriptive analysis, the most important aspect of gay friendliness can be determined. The scale of both questions is based on 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being Not at all important and five representing very important. Information about mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum can be viewed from Table 18. Any items that have a mean closer to five was selected by author because it represent the most important factors for gay-friendliness of a destination from respondents view. These items were: 'same-sex marriage', 'feeling welcome in the destination', 'open and tolerant attitude of locals', 'existence of gay/LGBTQ culture', 'Identified by friends as a gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination', 'identified by independent sources as a gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination' and 'opportunities to connect with LGBTQ people'.

Table 18. Please indicate how important each item of gay-friendliness is to you

Items	Mean	Std.	Min	Max
Same-sex marriage laws	4,1379	0,82367	2,00	5,00
Placing advertisement in gay media	3,5057	0,90056	1,00	5,00
Including gay/LGBTQ themes or images in mainstream media	3,9885	0,84212	2,00	5,00
Identifying itself as 'gay/LGBTQ-friendly' in its marketing communications	3,9655	0,90795	2,00	5,00
Donating to LGBTQ charities and/or causes	3,8046	0,92559	2,00	5,00
Identified by friends as a gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination	4,0115	0,81404	2,00	5,00
Identified by independent sources as gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination	4,0230	0,83495	2,00	5,00
Providing specific information about gay/LGBTQ attractions and activities	3,7931	0,87787	1,00	5,00
Feeling welcome in the destination	4,7356	0,55948	3,00	5,00
Open and tolerant attitude of locals	4,5862	0,62042	3,00	5,00
Existence of good nightlife	3,3103	1,07087	1,00	5,00
Existence of gay/LGBTQ culture	4,1264	0,88665	1,00	5,00
Existence of gay/LGBTQ venues	3,9080	0,87114	1,00	5,00
Existence of gay/LGBTQ cafés/bars	3,8391	0,87436	1,00	5,00

Existence of gay/LGBTQ restaurants	3,2989	0,89071	1,00	5,00
Existence of gay/LGBTQ saunas	2,9770	1,06724	1,00	5,00
Existence of gay/LGBTQ shops	3,1954	0,90012	1,00	5,00
Existence of gay/LGBTQ-friendly accommodation	3,9770	0,87573	2,00	5,00
Opportunities to socialise with LGBTQ individuals	4,1149	0,79862	2,00	5,00

The same procedure was performed for question 11, and Table 19 shows the information regarding this question. The gay-friendly items that were interpreted as being the most important were: 'anti-gay/LGBTQ of a destination (against LGBTQ rights)', and 'gay/LGBTQ-friendliness of a destination'.

Table 19. How important are above-mention dimension of gay/LGBTQ friendliness when selecting a destination?

Items	Mean	Std.	Min	Max
Destination's domestic partner benefits policy	3,3103	1,00360	1,00	5,00
Gay/LGBTQ-friendliness of a destination	4,2529	0,76582	2,00	5,00
Destination's supports of gay/LGBTQ causes	3,9540	0,76109	2,00	5,00
Destination's donation to gay/LGBTQ causes	3,4368	1,03093	1,00	5,00
Anti-gay/LGBTQ of a destination (against LGBTQ rights)	4,1379	1,23111	1,00	5,00
Destination's donation to anti-gay/LGBTQ causes	3,9425	1,22338	1,00	5,00
Destination's advertisement of gay/LGBTQ-friendliness	3,7126	0,88801	1,00	5,00
Gay/LGBTQ icons on destination communications	3,2529	0,86560	1,00	5,00
Choose destinations my friends prefer	3,4713	0,93807	1,00	5,00

After realizing which gay-friendliness items are important for the LGBQ community, the author used Question 20 to identify which channels are most important in communicating Finland's gay-friendliness to the LGBTQ population. The author performed a descriptive analysis in order to calculate the means for each channels and find out which channels are the most important ones.

Table 20. Communication Channels

Items (N=87)	Mean	Std.	Min	Max
Travel agents	2,6207	1,22229	1,00	5,00
Brochures/Travel guides	3,4253	1,13744	1,00	5,00
Friends/Family members	3,8161	1,00613	1,00	5,00
Airlines	3,4483	1,09713	1,00	5,00
Tour operator	2,8391	1,22829	1,00	5,00
Advertisements	3,0460	0,95123	1,00	5,00
Book/Movies	3,1264	1,06536	1,00	5,00
Articles/News	3,6092	0,96877	1,00	5,00
Direct mail from destination	2,5977	1,02820	1,00	5,00
Search engines	3,8161	1,04022	1,00	5,00
Facebook	2,8276	1,20278	1,00	5,00
Instagram	3,0920	1,20688	1,00	5,00
TikTok	2,4828	1,32824	1,00	5,00
Twitter	2,3103	1,23241	1,00	5,00
LinkedIn	2,0230	1,09944	1,00	5,00
Reddit	2,3678	1,23998	1,00	5,00

4.4 Pull Factors

The third research question is related to the pull factors of Finland. To obtain the result, a descriptive analysis was performed on Questions 18 and 19. Question 18 represents factors that might be important to LGBTQ tourists when planning a holiday, while question 19 refers to factors that might be important to LGBTQ tourists when planning a holiday in Finland. 'I don't know' option was also included for these two questions and the author recorded them as missing values. The final number for Question 18 was 61 and for Question 19 this number was 54.

The factors considered most important are those with means close to five. The author selected those items and arranged the most important ones in Table 21 and 22.

Table 21. Pull factor of travelling in general

Items	Mean	Std.	Min	Max
LGBTQ-friendliness of a destination	4,0357	0,76751	2	5
Safe and secure destination related to personal safety	4,5765	0,58506	3	5
Dramatic/beautiful landscape and scenery	4,3563	0,69845	1	5
Quality eating experience	4,0588	0,98020	2	5
Exploring new places	4,2941	0,72084	2	5
Relaxing atmosphere	4,3250	0,68943	2	5
Accessibility of a destination	4,1548	0,75241	1	5
Opportunity to see wildlife and nature	4,0588	0,98020	1	5
Accessibility of a destination	4,0930	0,91559		
Adequate infrastructure	4,1647	0,79951	2	5
Cultural site	4,1059	0,80213	2	5
Northern lights	3,9398	1,12996	1	5

Table 22. Pull factors for travelling to Finland

Items	Mean	Std.	Min	Max
LGBTQ-friendliness of a destination	4,1803	0,76394	2	5
Safe and secure destination related to personal safety	4,4754	0,59460	3	5
Dramatic/beautiful landscape and scenery	4,3279	0,74658	1	5
Quality eating experience	4,1639	0,79959	2	5
Exploring new places	4,1311	0,76323	2	5
Relaxing atmosphere	4,3279	0,72391	3	5
Adequate infrastructure	4,0000	0,68313	2	5
Finnish cultural sites	4,0164	0,88491	1	5
Opportunities to see wildlife and nature	4,1639	0,79959	1	5
Northern Lights	3,9180	1,18737	1	5

4.4.1 Travel to Finland Groups

One of the questions in the demographic section was whether the respondents had ever travelled to Finland or, if not, whether they already had information about Finland. The author wanted to compare this variable with the question about the image of the destination and find

out if there was a difference between the three groups in terms of their perceptions of Finland. To accomplish this, the author first created a new variable called, which is the mean of questions 14, 15, and 16. The next step was to compare the mean of this variable with the groups of people travelling to Finland. This was done using the Compare Mean command in the SPSS software and the result can be seen in Table 23.

Table 23. Travel_to_Finland

Travel_to_Finland	Mean	Std.
I have visited Finland before (N=17)	4,0065	0,60870
I have not visited Finland before but I know something about the country (N=46)	3,9541	0,46338
I have not visited Finland and I know nothing about Finland (N=24)	3,8542	0,57287

At first glance, travelling to Finland would seem to improve LGBTQ tourists' perceptions of Finland. But, beyond mere perception, is there any statistical significant among these groups? To determine if the differences found for the 3 values of the variable Travel_to_Finland were statistically significant, the author decided to conduct a Kruskal Wallis test.

In this type of test, a p-value equal to or less than 0.05 indicates that the test is statistically significant and there are differences between groups. In this scenario, the null hypothesis is rejected and further analysis can be performed to identify these differences (Ostertagova et al., 2014). However, the p-value from this test in this survey was 0.667, which is a larger number than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected and there are no statistically significant differences in the perception of Finland for the different groups of the Travel_to_Finland variable. Because of the small number of respondents, a non-parametric test might not be as strong as a parametric test; therefore, the author decided to do a one-way Anova test to find out if there was a difference between perception. The p-value derived from this test was 0.985 with a F-value of 0.016. As the p-value is still bigger than 0.05, we can say there is no statistical difference between these three groups.

The one-way Anova was performed on other sets of variables, such as gay-friendliness items and pull factors. The results showed that the p-value for all those items except one were greater than 0.05 and there was no statistical significance differences between the Travel-to-Finland groups in terms of gay-friendliness and pull factors which can be seen in Table 24, 25 and 26. 'Quality eating experience' had a p-value of 0.01 which is less than 0.05. This number indicates that there is significant difference between mean value for some of the groups and the null hypothesis that there is no differences between means can be rejected. In order to find the answer, the author performed a hoc post analysis in form of Tukey. Pairwise comparison of Tukey revealed a p-value of 0.011 which points toward a significant difference between those who never travelled to Finland and have some information about it (Mean=4, SD= 0.78), and those who never travelled to Finland and know nothing of Finland (Mean=45, SD=0.50).

Table 24. . One-way Anova test (gay-friendliness)

Items (gay-friendliness)	F-value	Sig.
Destination's domestic partner benefits policy	0,570	0,567
Gay/LGBTQ-friendliness of a destination	0,569	0,568
Destination's supports of gay/LGBTQ causes	0,341	0,712
Destination's donation to gay/LGBTQ causes	1,425	0,246
Anti-gay/LGBTQ of a destination (against LGBTQ rights)	0,074	0,929
Destination's donation to anti-gay/LGBTQ causes	0,606	0,548
Destination's advertisement of gay/LGBTQ-friendliness	0,445	0,642
Gay/LGBTQ icons on destination communications	0,725	0,488
Choose destinations my friends prefer	0,390	0,678

Table 25. One- way Anova test (gay-friendliness)

Items (gay-friendliness)	F-value	Sig.
Same-sex marriage laws	0,391	0,678
Placing advertisement in gay media	0,861	0,426
Including gay/LGBTQ themes or images in mainstream media	0,076	0,927
Identifying itself as 'gay/LGBTQ-friendly' in its marketing communications	0,155	0,857
Donating to LGBTQ charities and/or causes	0,163	0,850
Identified by friends as a gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination	0,995	0,374
Identified by independent sources as gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination	0,497	0,610
Providing specific information about gay/LGBTQ attractions and activities	1,854	0,163
Feeling welcome in the destination	1,827	0,167
Open and tolerant attitude of locals	1,248	0,292
Existence of good nightlife	0,529	0,591
Existence of gay/LGBTQ culture	2,397	0,097
Existence of gay/LGBTQ venues	1,903	0,156
Existence of gay/LGBTQ cafés/bars	0,486	0,617
Existence of gay/LGBTQ restaurants	0,581	0,561
Existence of gay/LGBTQ saunas	0,015	0,985
Existence of gay/LGBTQ shops	1,436	0,244
Existence of gay/LGBTQ-friendly accommodation	1,635	0,201
Opportunities to socialise with LGBTQ individuals	2,044	0,136

Table 26. One-way Anova test (pull factors)

Items (Pull factors)	F-value	Sig.
LGBTQ-friendliness of Finland	0,137	0,872
Safe and secure destination related to personal safety	1,491	0,231
Dramatic/beautiful landscape and scenery	1,431	0,245
Getting off the beaten track	0,757	0,472
Convenient and cheap holiday packages	0,379	0,686
Visiting art galleries and museums	0,404	0,669
Opportunities to see wildlife and nature	2,039	0,137
Quality eating experiences	4,424	0,015
Explore new places	0,154	0,857
Relaxing atmosphere	0,311	0,733

Unique accommodations	0,419	0,659
Good sporting facilities/exercise	1,846	0,164
Accessibility of destination	0,772	0,466
Local gastronomy	2,605	0,080
Adequate infrastructure	0,987	0,377
Finnish cultural sites	1,127	0,329
Finnish sauna	0,074	0,929
Cycling	1,062	0,350
Mountain biking	0,283	0,754
Hiking	0,594	0,555
Swimming	0,555	0,576
Sailing	0,229	0,796
Fishing	0,037	0,964
Paddling	0,294	0,746
Canoeing	0,230	0,795
Ice swimming	1,826	0,168
Ice fishing	0,786	0,459
Skiing	0,709	0,495
Sleigh ride pulled by huskies	0,175	0,839
Sleigh ride pulled by reindeer	0,056	0,945
Moomins	0,218	0,804
Santa clause	1,118	0,332
Northern lights	0,815	0,446

5 Conclusions

5.1 Discussion

For many years, LGBTQ tourists chose European destinations for their big cities and beach destinations. In recent years, however, these trends have shifted to new European destinations. Europe is considered one of the most desirable destinations for same-sex couples to visit. Reasons for this could include perceived gay friendliness, safety, and acceptance of this community in some European countries (Jordan & Traveler, 2018). The current research paper aims to firstly discover more about Finnish pull factors, secondly how to raise awareness and communicate Finland's gay-friendliness to the international LGBTQ community, and lastly, the perception that the international LGBTQ community has of Finland.

Three research questions were developed to fulfil the purposes of this study. These and the answers that this research study discovered are presented in Table 27.

Table 27. Research questions and their answers

Research Question	Answer
How do the international LGBTQ community view Finland as a destination?	The international LGBTQ community has a positive view of Finland
How can the gay-friendliness of Finland be communicated to international tourists in an attractive way?	Through recommendations from family and friends, and specific channels, the most important being search engines (Google) and news articles.
Which attributes of a destination such as Finland can act as pull factors for the LGBTQ community?	Northern lights, relaxing atmosphere, exploring new places, Finnish cultural sites, quality eating experiences, adequate infrastructure, opportunities to see wildlife and nature, dramatic/beautiful landscapes and scenery, a safe and secure destination related to personal safety, and the LGBTQ friendliness of Finland.

Comparing the data for three different groups of respondents in this study showed that those who have travelled to Finland before, those who have not travelled but know some information about Finland, and those who never travelled to Finland and have no information about it have the same positive perceptions of Finland. As a favourable and positive reputation of a destination can increase its uniqueness (Calantone, Di Benedetto, & Hakam, 1989), the result of this study shows that the LGBTQ community already has a positive perception of Finland, whether they have travelled before or not and whether they had information about Finland or not. As the results show, Finland has a firm place in the minds of the LGBTQ community and this place is significant enough for them to consider it a safe and secure country without knowing anything at all about the rules and regulations of the country. One of the reasons for this perception could be the widespread content that can be found on social media and online news outlets about Finland in many other countries, which could create an unconscious and unintended awareness of Finland. Also, Finland has been named the happiest country in the world for five years in a row (Hunter, 2022), and Tom of Finland is a well-known comic in the LGBTQ community that has had a notable impact on late-20th century gay culture, fashion, and identity (Lahti, 1998).

In order to convey Finland's gay-friendliness, we must first know what elements of gay-friendliness are important to the LGBTQ community. One of the items extracted from the data was 'Anti-gay/LGBTQ of a destination (against LGBTQ rights).' In a study by Tuten (2006), the LGBTQ community was found to be more responsive to anti-LGBTQ campaigns and donations, which is also true for this study. The gay/LGBTQ friendliness of a destination was another important issue that stood out in her study. The author argued in the gay friendliness chapter of the literature review that some of the items, such as same-sex marriage and same-sex benefits as indicators of gay friendliness, are outdated because most first-world countries have this law, but in the current study, same-sex marriage is still one of the most important gay-friendly aspects for the LGBTQ community. A reason for this could be the high number of LGBTQ marriages around the world and the desire for these married couples to be recognized as a legally married couple, and if they can travel without incident, sometimes with their children if they have any. Another reason may be to renew their vows, get married, and/or spend their honeymoon in another country

(George, 2021). The fact that LGBTQ marriages have only been recognized for the last few decades raises the question whether LGBTQ married couples are still highly aware of others' perceptions of LGBTQ marriage. Gay marriage was legalized in USA in 2005, in UK in 2013, and in Germany as recently as in 2017 (Masci, Podrebarac Sciupac, Lipka, 2019); therefore, on the grand scheme of things, this has only been a very short amount of time for a complete change in mindset of people in this category. One would think, however, that as the years go by this sensitivity that members of the LGBTQ community seem to feel about LGBTQ marriage will lessen more and more.

The inclusion of gay/LGBTQ themes/imagery in mainstream media was another factor mentioned in Gudelunas' study (2011). Since heterosexual tourists react neutrally to these issues, a destination can be sure that they won't lose its more conservative customers (Tuten, 2005). When a potential LGBTQ customer sees these themes or images in mainstream media, the idea of gay-friendliness is imprinted in their mind (Tuten, 2005), especially in today's world where inclusion is a very important aspect for minorities in almost every facet of their daily life (Theriault, 2017; Lewis & Kern, 2018). The majority of respondents of the current study were from North America and Europe, where social acceptance of the LGBTQ community is positive and this positivity is on the rise (Slenders, Sieben, Verbakel, 2014; Adamczyk & Cheng, 2015), therefore, people who have a more tolerant attitude toward the LGBTQ community are more likely to have a more liberal view about LGBTQ themes in advertisement and media (Um, 2014). One caveat to note here is that the studies (Tuten, 2005; Gudelunas, 2011; Um, 2014; Fatmy et al., 2021) that analysed the issue and the image of LGBTQ in mainstream media were conducted in Western countries where the LGBTQ community is not discriminated against. In other countries where discrimination still exists, media of this nature does not currently make it into state-sanctioned media outlets. However, from the author's own experience, many people in these countries can still access these broadcasts, especially through VPNs and other means of circumventing government censorship. In such situations, these topics and images could show the destination country's gay-friendliness and make viewers want to visit a country where the LGBTQ community enjoys more equal rights.

Opportunities to connect with LGBTQ individuals and the existence of a gay/LGBTQ culture were derived from studies of pull factors and included in the list of gay-friendliness. The definition of gay-friendliness cannot be accurately described by these two items, as the gay-friendliness of a destination depends on the country's legislation and available information. However, this could be countered by the fact that the presence of an LGBTQ culture and the presence of other LGBTQ people can create a sense of safety, security, and familiarity for international LGBTQ people. Following this train of thought, the other two important points were 'feeling welcome in the destination' and 'open and tolerant attitude of the locals'. Being gay-friendly is about being authentic (Guaracino, 2007, p.10-12), following what the businesses preach, and therefore it is not enough to just show a united front. LGBTQ tourists want to feel as safe as possible and not experience backhanded comments and disrespect. The last notable factors were 'identified by independent sources as a gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination' and 'identified by friends as a gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination'. This can also be considered the source of information that this community has access to and values the most, as family and friends were the primary channel used when seeking information about a destination. From these points, it can be inferred that while all of the gay-friendliness items selected by the respondents were important, if a destination or tourism business is not authentic in practice, the reputation of friendliness cannot really be conveyed to potential LGBTQ tourists. It can be argued that identified by independent sources and family/friends as a gay/LGBTQ friendly destination' is a very important aspect of gay friendliness that can influence a destination's image. The LGBTQ community values this source of information and this intimate channel can greatly influence their members' perceptions. Since first-hand information can only occur in a destination, therefore, all aspects of a destination or tourism business must be prepared and trained in gay friendliness.

Tables 21 and 22 compare factors that might be important to the LGBTQ community while planning to travel both in general and to Finland. It was discovered that both responses were identical for all answers except for one item. The reason for lack of importance of accessibility for Finland might lie with Finland being a Nordic country and availability of regular flights for travelling to Europe. Furthermore, the security and LGBTQ-friendliness of Finland acted as important pull factors for travelling both in general and to Finland, which were also mentioned as items of gay-

friendliness. Previous researches had two views of these two items, one group consider them as pull factors, while others thought of security and gay-friendliness as an extension of a destination (Pritchard et al., 2000; Monterrubio et al., 2020). Placing these two items in both gay-friendliness and pull factor categories showed that they are indeed on LGBTQ community members' minds while thinking of travelling. They might not be the sole reason of their travel to a destination, but they represent noteworthy aspects which need to be fulfilled in a destination. One can argue based on what type of travel or what kind of destination one has in mind that these two items can make or break a destination (Kollen & Lazar, 2012).

None of the pull factors from VisitFinland (2019), in which Finland stands out more than its competitors, were selected by LGBTQ respondents. However, nature and new experiences were frontrunners of pull factors, the same as in VisitFinland's study (2019), where nature was the main pull factor for tourists. Finland has a unique landscape and environment with many forests, lakes, and the northern lights, which can be alluring for this type of tourism. Out of the mentioned activities of the Lakeland study (Tuohino, 2002), no options were important for respondents, which may show that they want to enjoy a relaxing atmosphere and avoid activities they might not be familiar with or are norms for them. Quality eating experiences was also an important pull factor, which was also mentioned in the VisitFinland study (2015) for all tourists coming to Finland. The Northern lights was deemed as an important pull factor by this current study's LGBTQ respondents, and it was the only Finnish-specific pull factor that was chosen. The author believes that the title of the study might influence the result. This phenomenon is well-known and many people associate it with Nordic countries, which could contribute to the selection of this option by respondents for both questions. The author had a few comments on Facebook about Moomins, which was a novel concept for most of the respondents and made them search for it online, but it wasn't selected by any.

'Quality eating experience' was the other important pull factors, however, the degree of importance was different for different groups of Travel-to-Finland variable. For those who never travelled to Finland and know nothing of Finland this pull factor was more important than those who never travelled to Finland and have some information about Finland. This difference might

be because when people have no notion of Finnish food they think of them as an exciting new experience and they want to try them. However, for those who have some information about Finland, they might not find Finnish food enticing or unique to try. This might be because of Finnish food culture's lack of exposure on social media, news, and cooking programs (books and shows).

On par with the author's argument in the chapter on gay spaces, including LGBTQ elements in attributions of a destination is more important than exclusive LGBTQ attractions. As indicated by the results, only two LGBTQ specific items: existence of gay culture and socializing with LGBTQ people were selected for gay-friendliness and all the other exclusive LGBTQ attributions, such as LGBTQ cafés or restaurants, were not as important as the former two. It can be viewed that inclusion is the answer to today's LGBTQ tourist's demand, not exclusion of heterosexuals in gay spaces. As Doan (2007) envisaged, a world where gay-friendly spaces will be more important than exclusive ones because of the desire of being treated like any other tourists.

5.2 Theoretical Contribution

Using LGBTQ themes/imagery was one of the most important aspects of gay-friendliness in both the Tuten (2006) and Oakenfull (2013) studies, similar to one of the items in the current research. Providing financial support to gay causes was the other most important factor in both the Tuten (2006) and Oakenfull (2013) studies. However, this item wasn't deemed important in this current research. Interestingly one item: anti-gay/LGBTQ of a destination (against LGBTQ rights) was on top of the list of important gay-friendliness items. This item could create strong feeling and reaction in LGBTQ community, especially with the rise of cancel culture (Ng, 2020) a destination with that item could easily be shunned by LGBTQ community. As was presented in the discussion section, some of the typical Finnish activities were not important for the respondents. This finding might point us toward selecting primary pull factors that can be promoted to the LGBTQ community first and then, when they are in the destination, more detailed activities could be introduced to them.

Finland's destination image was positive for all the respondents and there was no difference between this perception for people who had information about Finland and for those who didn't. This shows that the organic components (Gunn, 1972) of a destination image formation, such as unrequested WOM or news and pop culture (Gartner, 1994), could unconsciously affect the image formation for those respondents who didn't have any information about Finland.

5.3 Managerial Contribution

This research can offer multiple efficacious contributions that could benefit Finland and the North Karelia region to better understand international LGBTQ customers as well as what pull factors are important to them. Moreover, now that the gay-friendliness factors have been established, the DMO of a destination can develop these items and use them in building their gay-friendliness reputation through organic information channels. Finland, especially North Karelia, has a very strong traditional food culture. In addition, there are many restaurants in this region that serve high-end non-Finnish food. Traditional Finnish food could act as an alluring factor for the international LGBTQ tourist especially for those who know nothing of Finland, since quality eating experiences was one of the most important pull factors for them. Joining food festivals in different countries could create an understanding of Finnish food for others which in return could create a positive word of mouth. In addition by highlighting restaurants and cafes which offer high-end non-traditional Finnish food, a sense of novelty and security or familiarity could be built for the international LGBTQ tourists.

Other pull factors, such as opportunities to see wildlife and nature, dramatic/beautiful landscape and scenery, and exploring new experiences, were also important for this target market. DMOs, with the participation of the local authority, could plan a cohesive design to support infrastructure and a specific budget for the maintenance of the areas and provision of these experiences. Many places already do this work, but it is clear from studies such as the current one that this area is ripe for further investment and development.

Finland already has a very progressive view on LGBTQ issues and rights. The same-sex rights have been established for a while in this country, such as non-discrimination law and same-sex marriage. All of the current study's notable gay-friendliness items already exist in Finland, except the following two: gay/LGBTQ themes/images in mainstream media and items identified by independent sources as a gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination. It would, therefore, benefit LGBTQ-friendly Finnish companies to create advertisements that incorporate LGBTQ themes/imagery, post them online, and market them to areas or regions of the world where LGBTQ people who are willing to travel live. This study identified a number of these areas, such as North America, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Being identified by independent sources as a gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination and being given information about a destination from family and friends could be considered in a same category. The on-going training of staff in tourism businesses and the awarding of LGBTQ certificates, such as 'We Speak Gay', can greatly influence the gay-friendliness of tourism businesses and create a sense of safety and inclusion for LGBTQ tourists. These can create authenticity, which the LGBTQ community greatly desires, and people could recommend such a destination to their family and friends or post about it online.

5.4 Evaluation of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

In a quantitative study, validity and reliability are the two most important characteristics to consider when conducting a study with a measurement scale. Without these two, positive results cannot be obtained (Sürücü & Maslacki, 2020). If the observation or result of a study is replicable or repeatable, then it is reliable. In other words, the measurement instruments of a study must be stable and consistent over time and produce similar results at different time points when the instruments are applied (Golafshani, 2003; Sürücü & Maslacki, 2020). In the present study, the author took scales from previous studies whose reliability were tested. Therefore, it may be sufficient to perform one of the internal consistency tests, such as the alpha reliability coefficient (Sürücü & Maslacki, 2020). An alpha coefficient value of between 0.6 and 0.7 is acceptable, but a Cronbach's alpha coefficient with a value between 0.7 and 0.9 shows that the scale has internal consistency (Hair et al., 2014; Sürücü & Maslacki, 2020). A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.944 was the result of reliability of this research, which points to the internal consistency.

On the other hand, validity is defined as obtaining information that is applicable to the intended use of the measurement instrument (Whiston, 2012 cited in Sürücü & Maslacki, 2020); in simpler terms, validity shows whether the study really measures what it is supposed to measure. The author of this study did not develop any new scales, but derived all the scales for the measurement items from previous studies whose reliability and validity were tested, and the scales were subsequently approved by the supervisor of this study.

5.4.1 Limitations

There are a number of limitations with respect to this study. First, the number of respondents was less than what the author intended. Originally, it was hoped that more than one hundred people would respond, but the response rate was less than that number, exactly 100. There were many challenges in obtaining a sufficient number of respondents. Engagement in LGBTQ travel groups on Facebook and Reddit was low, so the survey was sent to other LGBTQ groups. Because the author did not have complete control over who responded to the questionnaire, some respondents (n=13) identified themselves as non-LGBTQ, bringing the total number of respondents down to 87, which was a smaller sample size than the author intended. The sexuality question included the heterosexual/heterosexual option, so people who are part of the LGBTQ+ community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and *all* other types of sexuality) had a choice if they were in the plus minority. People who identify as polyamorous or asexual may find it easier to check the heterosexual box than other sexual identities because they may be in a heterosexual relationship. In order to prevent this issue, at the beginning of the questionnaire it can be asked if they are part of the LGBTQ community or not, and if they are they will be directed to the next question.

The second limitation was the use of the 'I don't know' option in some questions, which created a situation where the author was forced to record those answers as missing values and not include them in the analysis. This also made the response rate even smaller for some of the ques-

tions. This limitation should have been discovered during the testing of the questionnaire; however, the author's inexperience with SPSS analysis resulted in this not being noticed as a problem.

The third limitation was not utilizing some of the survey questions in answering the research questions. During the questionnaire design, the author decided to include all questions found from previous literature which, after analysing the data, seemed to be of no use. If those questions were not included, there might have been a better chance of more respondents, since the author received a few comments about the number of questions being too many. The author needed to edit out those questions to make a better and more cohesive questionnaire.

5.4.2 Further Studies

As this study was not exhaustive, similar studies in the future would do well to analyse the link between the perception of Finland with the country being once again voted the happiest in the world and with such LGBTQ-influencing brands as Tom of Finland. Those LGBTQ responses that didn't have any prior information about Finland had a positive perception of Finland.

Using gay themes/imagery in gay and mainstream media was one of the most important gay-friendliness items. While Finland welcomes tourists from more conservative countries such as China, Japan, and Russia, future research could be done to find out the willingness of members of the LGBTQ community in these countries to travel to Finland because of advertisements that feature or don't feature gay themes/imagery. On the other hand, by including non-LGBTQ people in the mix, the difference between the perceptions of a country could be identified. Moreover, a good thing to find out would be if there is a difference in reactions of LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ people after viewing advertisements containing LGBTQ themes/imagery.

A study with more respondents could yield more concrete results since a larger number of respondents will lead to a more generalized understanding from a piece of research. Moreover, respondents can be categorized based on their sexual and gender identities, and their answers

can be analysed separately to further the understanding of this community. For example, identifying which pull factors are important for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender tourists can help direct tourism businesses toward working on those elements.

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Appendix 1. Theoretical background of the survey

Category	Source	Questions	Scale
Demographic	Gender (modified from Ram et al., 2019)	Q1	Nominal
	Age (Ram et al., 2019)	Q2	Ratio
	Residence (Ram et al., 2019)	Q3	Nominal
	Education (derived from Hattingh & Spencer, 2020)	Q4	Ordinal
	Income	Q5	Ordinal
	Marital status (modified from Ro et al., 2017)	Q6	Nominal
	Who they travel with	Q7	Nominal
	Sexuality (derived from Tuten, 2005)	Q8	Nominal
	Prior travel experience (modified from Melian-Gonzalez et al., 2011)	Q9	Nominal
Gay-friendliness	Gay-friendliness perception (modified from Cliff & Forest, 1999; Tuten, 2006; Hodes et al., 2007; Melian-Gonzalez et al., 2011; Hattingh & Spencer, 2020)	Q10	Ordinal
	Influence agent (modified from Tuten, 2006)	Q11	Ordinal

	Purchase intention (modified from Tuten, 2006)	Q12	Ordinal
	Price sensitivity (modified from Tuten, 2006)	Q13	Ordinal
	Attitude toward gay-friendly (modified from Tuten 2006); (modified from Ram et al., 2019)	Q14	Ordinal
Pull factors (attributes)	Pull factors (modified from Tuohino, 2002; Visit Finland, 2015; Weeden et al., 2016; Visit Finland, 2019)	Q18, Q19	Ordinal
Destination image	Overall image (Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001)	Q15	Ordinal
	Affective evaluation (derived from Baloglu & McCleary, 1999)	Q16	
	Perceptual/Cognitive evaluations (derived from Hernández-Lo-bato, Solis-Radilla, Moliner-Tena, & Sánchez-García, 2006; Buhalis, 1999)	Q17	Ordinal
	Sources of information (modified from Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Choi, Tkachenko, & Sil, 2011)	Q20, Q21	Ordinal

Appendix 2. The original survey

Demographic questions

Q1	<p>Gender:</p> <p>You are a:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cis-gender woman 2. Cis-gender man 3. Transgender (including non-binary/non-conforming) 4. Prefer not to mention
Q2	<p>Age:</p> <p>You are X years old</p>
Q3	<p>Residence</p> <p>Your country of residence is X</p>
Q4	<p>Education</p> <p>What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, what is the highest degree you have received.</p> <p>No degree</p> <p>High school degree</p> <p>College degree</p> <p>Vocational training</p> <p>Bachelor's degree</p> <p>Master's degree</p> <p>PhD</p> <p>Other</p>
Q5	<p>Income</p> <p>How would you estimate your level of income in your own country?</p> <p>Very low</p> <p>Less than average</p> <p>Average</p> <p>More than average</p> <p>Very high</p>
Q6	<p>Marital status</p> <p>What is your marital status?</p> <p>Marriage</p> <p>Single</p>

	Civil union In a relationship and living together In a relationship and living separately Prefer not to answer
Q7	How do you normally travel? Solo With a partner With friends With family members
Q8	Sexuality What is your sexual identity? Gay Lesbian Bisexual Straight/Heterosexual Others Prefer not to answer
Q9	Prior travel experience Have you ever been to Finland? Y/N

Gay-friendliness, pull factors, and destination image questions

Q10	<p>Thinking of what the term gay-friendly means to you, please indicate how important each item is for a tourist destination making a claim of “gay-friendly”. (5-point Likert-type scale, Not at all important, Unimportant, Neither important nor unimportant, Important, and Very Important).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same-sex marriage laws • Placing advertisements in gay media • Including gay/LGBTQ themes or images in mainstream media • Identifying itself as ‘gay/LGBTQ-friendly’ in its marketing communications • Donating to LGBTQ charities and/or causes • Identified by friends as a gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination • Identified by independent sources as gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination • Providing specific information about gay/LGBTQ attractions and activities • Feeling welcome in the destination • Open and tolerant attitude of locals • Existence of good nightlife • Existence of gay/LGBTQ culture • Existence of gay/LGBTQ venues • Existence of gay/LGBTQ cafés/bars • Existence of gay/LGBTQ restaurants • Existence of gay/LGBTQ saunas • Existence of gay/LGBTQ shops • Existence of gay/LGBTQ-friendly accommodation • Opportunities to socialise with LGBTQ individuals
Q11	<p>How important are these following dimensions of gay/LGBTQ-friendliness when choosing a travel destination? (5-point Likert scale: Not at all important, Unimportant, Neither important nor unimportant, Important, and Very Important).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination’s domestic partner benefits policy • Gay/LGBTQ-friendliness of a destination • Destination's supports of gay/LGBTQ causes • Destination's donation to gay/LGBTQ causes • Anti-gay/LGBTQ of a destination • Destination's donation to anti-gay/LGBTQ causes • Destination's advertisement of gay/LGBTQ-friendliness • Gay/LGBTQ icons on destination communications • Choose destinations my friends prefer
Q12	<p>How likely are you to go to a travel destination that is gay/LGBTQ-friendly rather than a destination without a similar claim (assuming price and quality are the same for both)? (5-point scale, not at all likely [1-2-3-4-5] very likely).</p>
Q13	<p>How likely are you travel to a destination that is gay/LGBTQ-friendly rather than a destination without a similar claim when the price is higher for the gay/LGBTQ-friendly destination? (5-point scale, not at all likely [1-2-3-4-5] very likely).</p>
Q14	<p>Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 your agreement with the following statements: (5-point scale strongly disagree [1-2-3-4-5] strongly agree)</p> <p>Finland is a safe place for LGBTQ people</p>

	Finland is a gay/LGBTQ-friendly country I would recommend my LGBTQ friends to visit Finland
Q15	How would you evaluate the overall image that you have of Finland as a tourist destination? (Single 5-point rating. Ranging from highly unattractive [1-2-3-4-5] to highly attractive).
Q16	I consider Finland as a tourist destination (Please choose an option even if you don't know anything about Finland) (5-point semantic differential scale) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arousing [1-2-3-4-5] Sleepy • Pleasant [1-2-3-4-5] Unpleasant • Exciting [1-2-3-4-5] Gloomy • Relaxing [1-2-3-4-5] Distressing
Q17	How important are each of the attributes listed below when assessing a travel destination: (5-point Likert-type highly unimportant [1-2-3-4-5] highly important). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources and scenery • Security • Accessibility • Amenities (accommodation and catering facilities, retailing, other tourist services) • Available packages (pre-arranged packages by intermediaries and principals) • Ancillary services (services used by tourists such as banks, telecommunications, post, newsagents, hospitals, etc.) • Quality of the products/attractions/services match the price • Atmosphere and Culture • Entertainment, Shopping, and Night life
Q18	Which of the following factors would be important to you if you were planning a holiday? (5-point Likert scale: Not at all important, Unimportant, Neither important nor unimportant, Important, and Very Important). LGBTQ-friendliness of a destination Safe and secure destination related to personal safety Dramatic/beautiful landscape and scenery Getting off the beaten track Convenient and cheap holiday packages Visiting art galleries and museums Opportunities to see wildlife and nature Quality eating experiences Explore new places Relaxing atmosphere Unique accommodations Good sporting facilities/exercise Accessibility of destination Local gastronomy Adequate infrastructures

	<p>Cultural sites</p> <p>Sauna</p> <p>Cycling</p> <p>Mountain biking</p> <p>Hiking</p> <p>Swimming</p> <p>Sailing</p> <p>Fishing</p> <p>Paddling</p> <p>Canoeing</p> <p>Ice swimming</p> <p>Ice fishing</p> <p>Skiing</p> <p>Sleigh ride pulled by huskies</p> <p>Sleigh ride pulled by reindeer</p> <p>Moomins</p> <p>Santa clause</p> <p>Northern lights</p> <p>I can't say</p>
Q19	<p>Which of the following factors would be important to you if you were planning a holiday to Finland? (5-point Likert scale: Not at all important, Unimportant, Neither important nor unimportant, Important, and Very Important).</p> <p>LGBTQ-friendliness of Finland</p> <p>Safe and secure destination related to personal safety</p> <p>Dramatic/beautiful landscape and scenery</p> <p>Getting off the beaten track</p> <p>Convenient and cheap holiday packages</p> <p>Visiting art galleries and museums</p> <p>Opportunities to see wildlife and nature</p> <p>Quality eating experiences</p> <p>Explore new places</p> <p>Relaxing atmosphere</p> <p>Unique accommodations</p> <p>Good sporting facilities/exercise</p> <p>Accessibility of destination</p> <p>Local gastronomy</p> <p>Adequate infrastructures</p>

	<p>Finnish cultural sites</p> <p>Finnish sauna</p> <p>Cycling</p> <p>Mountain biking</p> <p>Hiking</p> <p>Swimming</p> <p>Sailing</p> <p>Fishing</p> <p>Paddling</p> <p>Canoeing</p> <p>Ice swimming</p> <p>Ice fishing</p> <p>Skiing</p> <p>Sleigh ride pulled by huskies</p> <p>Sleigh ride pulled by reindeer</p> <p>Moomins</p> <p>Santa clause</p> <p>Northern lights</p> <p>I can't say</p>
Q20	<p>Please rate each information category as to how important it would be for you when searching information for a travel destination. 5-point Likert scale: Not at all important, Unimportant, Neither important nor unimportant, Important, and Very Important).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel agents • Brochures/Travel guides • Friends/Family members • Airlines • Tour operator • Advertisements • Books/Movies • Articles/News • Direct mail from destination • Search engines • Facebook • Instagram • TikTok • Twitter • LinkedIn • Reddit • Others (please specify)
Q21	<p>Please write any other sources of information that you would use in searching information for a travel destination.</p>