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Homosexual not Homogeneous: A Motivation-Based Typology of Gay Leisure Travelers Holidaying in Cape Town, South Africa

Chris Hattingh, DTech  and John P. Spencer, D.Ed

Department of Tourism and Events Management, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa

ABSTRACT

The gay traveler, a segment of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) travel market, is perceived to be a homogeneous market segment as a result of the assumption that gay men have a unique “homosexual lifestyle.” This assumption is problematic as it conceals many other important variables, and it may hinder effective destination marketing. A Web-based electronic survey was completed by 469 gay male travelers, and attribute-based benefit segmentation was carried out by applying a hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward’s procedure with Euclidean distances. The typology is based on the push and pull framework; the motivations of travelers were assessed both in terms of their socio-psychological motivations and destination attributes of Cape Town. The typology empirically suggests that gay travelers are not homogeneous, and that sexuality influences the travel behavior of a minority of gay men. Consequently, not all gay travelers or activities by these travelers can be labeled as “gay” tourism.

KEYWORDS

Attribute-based benefit segmentation; Cape Town; cluster analysis; gay traveler; homogeneous; motivation; push and pull factors

The LGBT travel market consists of a variety of segments, of which the gay male traveler is one such segment (or segments; Ro, Olson, & Choi, 2017); however, as argued by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2017), research into these segments is extremely limited as the field of LGBT tourism is fairly new in academe.

Tourism destinations, including tour operators, travel agents, accommodation establishments, and airlines, have shown interest in targeting the gay segment (Hughes, 2005) and have considered gay men especially (more so than lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people) to be a worthy market segment (Hughes, 2006), largely based on the much-contested myth that gay men represent an affluent segment (Coon, 2012). Furthermore, it is assumed gay men have a unique “lifestyle” (Khan, 2013), and because they

CONTACT Chris Hattingh  hattinghch@cput.ac.za  Department of Tourism and Events Management, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Engineering Building, Room 3.70M, Corner of Keizersgracht and Tennant Street, Cape Town 8000, South Africa.

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are homosexual, they are treated as a homogeneous market segment. Sexual orientation seems to be the principal distinguishing characteristic of this segment (Canavan, 2015). Two decades ago, Pritchard, Morgan, Sedgely, and Jenkins (1998) argued that sexual orientation, by itself, is insufficient as a segmentation criterion and stated that, for example, seniors and young people are categorized according to their age, and gay people in terms of their sexual orientation, which is rather simplistic as it conceals many other important variables. Bell and Binnie (2000) agreed that gay travelers should not be treated as a homogeneous segment just because they are homosexual, as sexuality is crosscut by socioeconomic status, race, and gender. Hughes (2005) supported this view, contending the gay population is as diverse in their occupations, employment status, incomes, ethnicity, general lifestyles, and reasons for traveling as is the rest of society, and as underscored by Herrera (2003), do not necessarily hold the same motivations and morals or pursue the same activities. Therefore, as Canavan (2015) and Schofield and Schmidt (2005) noted, using sexual orientation as a segmentation criterion may be an inappropriate and ineffective means of segmenting gay consumers.

Despite the developing global interest in gay tourism, most mainstream organizations and tourism destinations targeting the gay traveler continue to regard these travelers as a homogeneous group (Blichfeldt, Chor, & Ballegaard-Milan, 2011; Hattingh, 2017). This perception is, however, problematic as it may hinder effective destination marketing. The research was therefore motivated by the limited knowledge of the specific subsegments of gay leisure travelers and is built on the calls of Cohen, Prayag, and Moital (2014), Herrera and Scott (2005), Hughes (2006), and Weeden, Lester, and Jarvis (2016) for further consumer research on the diversity of potential subsegments among gay travelers.

The gay traveler: A market segment, market niche, or neither?

Over the years, the term *market* has assumed various meanings. In its original meaning, a market was “a physical place where buyers and sellers gathered to exchange goods and services” (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 1999, p. 239). The term currently refers to “a group of actual or potential consumers with similar needs or wants” (George, 2008, p. 140). Within a market, a market segment is a homogeneous group of consumers that portrays distinctly different characteristics from those in other segments (Dibb & Simkin, 1996) and shares characteristics causing them to have homogeneous needs (Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff, & Terblanche, 2008). In this light, some researchers have pointed to the age differences within the gay segment (Hughes & Deutsch, 2010; Pritchard et al., 1998); for example, a gay man in his early 20s might have some very different needs, preferences, and travel behavior in comparison with older gay men. Furthermore, Ian Johnson, Out Now founder and chief

executive officer, stated, “you would not expect a Generation X traveler to share the interests of a retiree or a honeymooner in the mainstream market, and nor should you when it comes to gay and lesbian travelers” (Global Travel Industry News, 2008, para. 4). Hughes and Deutsch (2010) argued in a similar vein that apart from “the life experiences of older and younger gay men differing considerably resulting in an intergenerational gap” (p. 455), there are variations in disposable income, wealth distribution, class, and available leisure time (retired versus employed), suggesting that a single gay market segment does not exist and therefore is not homogeneous.

Furthermore, as recently as 2017, many researchers still referred to gay travel as a form of niche tourism (Guaracino & Salvato, 2017; Ro et al., 2017). However, Kinnunen (2011) questioned a “gay niche market” and argued that this reference is perhaps outdated as knowledge of the gay market segment(s) and its size has increased considerably. Traditionally, a niche market is a small market consisting of consumers with similar characteristics (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2007) in order for services and products to be tailored directly to them (Kinnunen, 2011). According to Kotler (2000), a niche is identified by dividing a segment into a subsegment, and thus to equate the gay market segment to a niche market would be incorrect. It would, however, make more sense to refer to the subsegments of the gay segment as niches as it is more likely that individuals within these subgroups are homogeneous in variables such as demographics, psychographics, and behaviors. According to the above arguments, travel by gay men should not be regarded as a market segment as a single gay market segment does not exist, nor is it a form of niche tourism as gay travelers are heterogeneous in a wide variety of characteristics.

Rationale for attribute-based benefit segmentation

Market segmentation is a strategic analytical tool used by marketers to divide a market into smaller, homogeneous segments that share similar characteristics, wants, needs, attitudes (George, 2008), and/or behavioral patterns (Weaver & Lawton, 2002). By segmenting a market, marketers obtain knowledge of the actual or potential consumers and thus discover particular subgroups whose members will be most profitable to focus their marketing efforts on (Thomsen, 2008). There is, however, a variety of approaches to segment a market (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2006). The literature refers to two principal market segmentation approaches, namely the “a priori” approach and the “post hoc” approach (Bigné, Gnoth, & Andreu, 2008), also referred to as “a posteriori” or data-driven methods of segmentation (Dasgupta, 2011; Dolnicar & Grün, 2011). The a priori segmentation approach involves selecting the base to be used for segmentation in advance (Dolnicar & Grün, 2011). The population is therefore divided according to prior knowledge to identify tourist segments—also

referred to as “commonsense segmentation” (Dolnicar, 2004). The most popular bases to segment a market using the *a priori* approach in tourism include: purpose of travel, use of package tours, destination preference, distance traveled, duration of trip, mode of travel, accommodation types, length of time spent planning the trip (Smith, 1995), and geographic variables or demographic variables (Boekstein, 2012), which are then used to identify similarities and differences in the variables of interest between/among the resulting segments (Prayag, 2010).

The *post hoc* or data-driven segmentation approach is increasingly used by tourism researchers (Bigné et al., 2008), where a set of variables (data) is first used as the base to cluster the respondents in homogeneous groups (Prayag, 2010) based on similar responses to the variables in the segmentation base (Dolnicar & Grün, 2011). For example, tourists can be segmented according to the attributes (pull factors) that attract them to a destination. These destination attributes would become the data according to which the tourists are segmented, based on the relative importance attached to each attribute, often referred to as “attribute-based benefit segmentation,” a form of benefit segmentation in which the destinations’ attributes are used as benefits (Frochot & Morrison, 2000). Andereck and Caldwell (1994) noted two decades ago that demographics rarely varied among market segments and concluded that they provide insufficient information on which to base marketing strategies. Johns and Gyimóthy (2002) supported this view and argued that although socioeconomic and demographic characteristics such as income, gender, and age have traditionally been used for segmentation purposes and to predict purchasing behavior, these characteristics offer indirect indications of buyer intentions and may therefore “be more useful as supplementary rather than as primary bases for defining tourist market segments” (p. 316). Loker and Perdue (1992) argued “benefit segmentation has the advantage of being based upon predictive, causal factors, and when combined with key descriptive variables, provides clear insight into marketing and communication strategy formulation” (p. 35). Therefore, tourism segmentation studies increasingly use benefit segmentation as this method offers a variety of applications in contrast with traditional segmentation methods, since it has the ability to provide marketers with “a more complete picture of customers, from their motivational profiles to behavioral and socioeconomic characteristics, which may be useful in a positioning or promotional strategy” (Boekstein, 2012, p. 94).

One of the most popular statistical methods to conduct *post hoc* (data-driven) segmentation is factor-cluster segmentation, which, unlike *a priori* segmentation, produces segments analytically by means of a two-step procedure, a factor analysis followed by a cluster analysis (Dasgupta, 2011; Smith, 1995). The application of a factor-cluster segmentation approach, where factor analysis reduces the number of

variables before clustering (pre-processing of data), has been questioned by some researchers (Dolnicar, 2002a; Dolnicar & Grün, 2008, 2011; Weaver & Lawton, 2005). Dolnicar (2002a) argued that “by running factor analysis, part of the structure (dependence between variables and thus distance information) that should be mirrored by conducting cluster analysis is eliminated” (p. 8). Dolnicar and Grün (2008) concluded that the factor-cluster segmentation approach “significantly reduced the success of segment recovery” (p. 70). Therefore, data pre-processing, when possible, should be avoided (Dolnicar & Grün, 2011). Owing to criticism, an increasing number of researchers conduct cluster analysis without pre-processing the data when segmenting tourism markets and developing tourist typologies (Boekstein, 2012).

Typologies significantly assist with tourism planning and development (Coccossis & Constantoglou, 2006); therefore, the processes of developing a typology and the methodology applied are critical as the success of future marketing actions based on a suggested typology depends on the quality of the segments produced (Dolnicar, 2002b). Therefore, the next section provides an overview of the methodology including the segmentation approach applied for this study.

Methodology

Gavcar and Gursoy (2002), and Smith and Costello (2009) reiterated the importance of investigating motivations in attempting to understand the different desires of travelers and stated that these motivations can serve as a basis for segmenting travelers. Cohen et al. (2014) and Prayag (2010) argued that the push-pull framework is widely used to measure tourist motivation and is most useful for market segmentation purposes. The framework suggests motivations fall into two categories, namely, push motivations and pull motivations (Klenosky, 2002). Push motivations refer to the “specific forces that influence a person’s decision to take a vacation” (Kim, Lee, & Klenosky, 2003, p. 170) and have been theorized as “motivational factors or needs that arise due to a disequilibrium or tension in the motivational system” (Kim et al., 2003, p. 170). Push factors include, for example, escape, adventure/nature, rest and relaxation, nostalgia, self-actualization, social interaction, status/prestige, romance/sex, and novelty (Hattingh & Spencer, 2017). Pull motivations relate to the attractions, features or attributes that pull travelers toward a particular destination (Kim & Lee, 2002) and include, for example, currency exchange, friendliness of local residents (Prayag, 2003), inexpensive airfares, beaches, sunshine (Klenosky, 2002), wildlife, events, local food and wine, gay villages and nightlife, same-sex marriage laws (Hattingh & Spencer, 2017), or any potential activity offered by a destination to the traveler (Kassean & Gassita, 2013.)

This study made use of the push-pull framework to segment gay travelers holidaying in Cape Town in order to develop a motivation-based typology of these travelers. Of the prior research that has examined push and pull factors, few have examined them in an African context (Kassean & Gassita, 2013; Prayag, 2010; Zhou, 2005), while none has examined the push and pull factors of gay travelers to African destinations such as Cape Town, a destination that has received less interest as a tourism destination in the academic literature (Prayag, 2010). Therefore, this study is uniquely “African” in terms of the destination used as a case study.

A quantitative research methodology was employed to explain the heterogeneity of gay travelers, by means of subsegmenting these travelers into different subgroups according to their leisure travel motivations. Essentially, for this study, a priori or “commonsense” segmentation was conducted first as the “starting point is already a subgrouping of the population of tourists” (Dolnicar, 2004, pp. 244–245), i.e., gay leisure travelers. It is suggested that the use of quantitative techniques and multivariate analytic methods could significantly assist with the segmentation process (Eftchiadou, 2001) by categorizing data sets into similar behavioral groupings derived mainly through these quantitative techniques (Dolnicar, 2002a; Isaac, 2008; Weaver & Lawton, 2005), thus a questionnaire survey was deemed to be the most appropriate method of primary data collection for this study.

Self-administered Web-based electronic survey

The method of survey administration used was a self-administered Web-based electronic survey, designed in a program called SurveyPlanet. The Internet is most effective in addressing sensitive issues (Malhotra & Birks, 2007), which is of particular importance as this study dealt with sexuality, which could be regarded as a sensitive issue. In addition, in order to reach a high geographically dispersed sample, the Internet yielded the highest ability (George, 2008) to reach international and domestic gay travelers from South Africa.

The survey was administered in English and covered three sections: a section on travel motivations that included a list of 13 push factors and 24 pull factors; a section covering holiday-related information, and a traveler profile section. As suggested by Prayag (2010), participants were requested to rate the importance level of the push factors in their decision to take a holiday, as well as to rate the importance level of the pull factors that attracted them to Cape Town, a favored gay sun and beach tourism destination, and informally known as the “Gay capital of Africa” (Jordan, 2014), on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *not at all important*, to *unimportant*, *neither important nor unimportant*, *important*, and *very important*. The survey’s reliability and validity were assured, as the variables were borrowed, and adapted where necessary, from previously validated tourism studies,

specifically Kassean and Gassita (2013), Kim and Lee (2002), Prayag (2003), and Zhou (2005), supplemented with gay-oriented tourism studies such as Clift and Forrest (1999), Hughes (2002, 2006), and Pritchard, Morgan, Sedgely, Khan, and Jenkins (2000).

Sampling method

The gay traveler can be regarded as a “hidden population” (Hughes, 2004) as it is “difficult to randomly confront people for an interview because homosexuality is a sensitive sexual identity, which is not visible unless people want to express it themselves” (Månsson & Østrup, 2007, p. 5). The object of analysis being strictly personal and confidential did not allow the use of traditional sampling techniques. Therefore, this study employed a mixture of nonprobability sampling methods, specifically judgmental, and snowball sampling. First, gay travelers were targeted through contacting a judgment sample of gay travel agencies and tour operators, to distribute the survey hyperlink to gay consumers on their databases who had previously visited Cape Town for leisure purposes. Second, a judgement sample of gay travel-related groups on social networking sites was contacted and requested to share the hyperlink to the survey. Finally, prior to submitting the electronic survey, the final question asked participants to recommend and forward the hyperlink to other potential participants; thus the study also implemented snowball sampling.

Oversampling was expected to overcompensate for the weaknesses of the nonprobability sampling methods employed for this study, which attempted to double the suggested minimum sample size ($n = 200$) (Malhotra & Birks, 2007) required for nonprobability sampling by aiming for a sample of 400. Data were collected over a period of eight months (May 2016 to January 2017), when a sample size of 469 was reached, and included responses from 38 countries across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia, and Europe.

Results and discussion

Identification of the segmented clusters

A “post hoc” method of segmentation was performed to explain the heterogeneity of gay travelers and to develop a typology of these travelers by applying a hierarchical cluster analysis on the scores of the pull factors (destination attributes) using Ward’s procedure with Euclidean distances. With hierarchical clustering, the number of clusters is not defined a priori; instead, clusters are suggested by the data (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). In other words, members were clustered according to their natural similarity. The pull factors were used as the main segmentation base for market segmentation

without pre-processing the raw data as recommended by Dolnicar (2002a), Dolnicar and Grün (2011), and Weaver and Lawton (2005).

The number of clusters were identified in a heuristic manner by visually analyzing the dendrogram (Dolnicar, 2002a). Solutions with two, three, four, and five clusters were explored, and a four-cluster solution was selected as the most balanced and discriminatory, i.e., common pull factors within clusters, yet different pull factors across clusters (Table 1), after analyzing the dendrogram and comparing cluster sizes. In addition, the four-cluster solution was the most readily interpreted and most favorably met the criteria of segmentation: identifiability, sufficiency, stability, and accessibility.

Interpretation and profiling of the segmented clusters

To ensure the stability and the quality of the cluster analysis results, several statistical analyses were performed. Analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to assess how clusters are distinct in terms of pull factors followed by the Tukey post hoc test of pairwise mean comparisons to further explain where the differences lie, as suggested by Prayag (2010) and Weaver and Lawton (2005). As Table 2 illustrates, ANOVAs indicated that all 24 pull factors contributed to distinguishing between the four clusters ($p < 0.05$), thus confirming that the segments were statistically different from one another in their mean scores and that internal validity was present.

External validity, or external criterion analysis, was examined by comparing the clusters with background variables that did not form part of the cluster analysis (Dolnicar, 2002a; Malhotra & Birks, 2007). In this study chi-squared tests were used to compare the clusters against the push factors to determine the most important push factors of each cluster. The results of the chi-squared test were interpreted by their significance and strength of association. The strength of association is important from a practical viewpoint as the strength of association is of interest only if the association is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$; Malhotra & Birks, 2007). The four clusters were cross-tabulated with the 13 push factors, and chi-squared tests revealed statistically significant differences between the importance scores of all push factors ($p < 0.05$; Table 3). A label was then applied to each cluster to reflect the most important push or pull or both factors that differentiated each cluster.

Table 1. The four clusters ($n = 469$).

Number	Name	Size	% of sample
Cluster 1	Passive Relaxer	83	18
Cluster 2	Active Explorer	126	27
Cluster 3	Culinary Enthusiast/Foodie	183	39
Cluster 4	Gay-Centric Traveler	77	16

Table 2. Results of ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc multiple comparisons for pull factors in the four clusters of gay leisure travelers.

Category	Pull factor (destination attribute)	Passive Relaxer (N = 83)	Active Explorer (N = 126)	Culinary Enthusiast/ Foodie (N = 183)	Gay- Centric Traveler (N = 77)	F-statistic	Sig. level
Culture and sights attributes	Dramatic/beautiful landscape and scenery	4.04	4.50	4.52	4.66	12.624	0.000*
	General tourist attractions/well- known tourist sites	3.11	3.79	4.04	4.52	27.520	0.000*
	Beaches	2.98	3.34	4.16	4.64	44.310	0.000*
	Unique "African" city	2.14	3.83	3.58	4.49	54.886	0.000*
	Culture and history (monuments, heritage, arts, local customs)	2.99	3.64	3.57	4.17	14.525	0.000*
	Nature, adventure offering (hiking, shark-cage diving, abseiling)	2.29	3.13	3.50	4.22	32.232	0.000*
	Wildlife, special animals	1.92	3.13	3.16	3.91	34.081	0.000*
Comfort and relaxation attributes	Mainstream event	1.55	1.79	2.90	3.86	102.263	0.000*
	Relaxing atmosphere	3.58	4.23	4.46	4.70	31.772	0.000*
	Local food and wine including restaurants	3.29	4.10	4.55	4.56	40.985	0.000*
	Climate/weather	3.02	3.85	4.20	4.32	29.223	0.000*
	Ease of access into destination	2.16	3.31	3.76	4.55	86.284	0.000*
	Cost/value for money (inexpensive holiday)	2.42	3.63	3.66	4.12	36.417	0.000*
	Shopping facilities	1.86	2.91	3.42	4.25	79.583	0.000*
Gay-related attributes	Unique accommodation	1.73	2.92	3.32	4.13	67.344	0.000*
	Sport/exercise & wellness facilities	1.49	2.30	2.63	3.83	59.628	0.000*
	Gay-friendly environment/ friendliness of locals towards gays	2.81	3.60	4.31	4.61	60.892	0.000*
	Safe and secure destination related to personal safety	2.60	3.65	4.19	4.65	67.729	0.000*
	Diversity and cosmopolitan reputation	2.30	3.71	4.08	4.61	87.169	0.000*
	Local gay culture/gay venues (gay village)	2.47	2.76	4.05	4.56	77.772	0.000*
	Nightlife (bars, clubs, and other entertainment)	2.10	2.59	3.73	4.34	91.898	0.000*
	Same-sex marriage laws	1.29	2.42	3.22	4.62	118.110	0.000*
	Gay/nude beach	2.00	1.93	2.80	4.25	61.137	0.000*
	Gay event	1.36	1.81	3.05	4.18	113.244	0.000*

*Significance at the 5% level.

Table 3. Cross-tabulation and chi-squared test results of clusters compared with push factor variables.

Category	Push factor (importance scores)	Passive Relaxer % (N= 83)	Active Explorer % (N = 126)	Culinary Enthusiast/ Foodie % (N = 183)	Gay-Centric Traveler % (N= 77)	Chi-square probability
Physiological	Opportunities for rest and relaxation	59	79	82	90	0.000*
	Escape from everyday life/daily routine	68	77	71	88	0.008*
	Opportunity to have a sexual adventure	13	14	42	52	0.000*
	Escape from disapproving society to freely express gay identity	2	10	30	61	0.000*
Knowledge	Novelty (discovering/ exploring a new/exciting place)	45	68	71	87	0.000*
	Enriching myself intellectually (learn something new)	37	55	60	82	0.000*
Self-actualization	Exploration and evaluation of self (gain insight about self)	18	33	46	71	0.000*
Belonging	Enhancement of kinship relationships (family/ friends)	46	49	57	75	0.002*
	Social interaction with other gay people	15	18	48	83	0.000*
	Opportunity to develop close friendships/ romance	19	31	44	75	0.000*
	To get married/go on honeymoon	1	8	12	22	0.000*
Personal Esteem	Nostalgia	18	27	31	42	0.000*
	Social recognition/ego enhancement	5	10	25	53	0.000*

*Significance at the 5% level.

In order to identify the four clusters meaningfully for marketing purposes, the clusters were cross-tabulated with sociodemographic and travel behavior characteristics (Table 4). Chi-squared tests revealed no statistically significant differences across the four clusters in terms of level of education ($p = 0.289$); occupation ($p = 0.240$); openness of sexuality ($p = 0.213$); home environment classification ($p = 0.415$); how often respondents took international leisure trips ($p = 0.097$); number of times they visited the destination (return vs first-time visitor; $p = 0.404$); length of stay ($p = 0.059$); booking methods ($p = 0.408$); family planning ($p = 0.087$); holiday/trip type ($p = 0.312$); travel cohort ($p = 0.568$); and holiday planning time ($p = 0.133$). The clusters were, however, significantly different in terms of age ($p = 0.003$), relationship status ($p = 0.011$), and

Table 4. Cross-tabulation and chi-squared test results of clusters compared with sociodemographic and travel behavior variables.

	Passive Relaxer % (N = 83)	Active Explorer % (N = 126)	Culinary Enthusiast/ Foodie % (N = 183)	Gay-Centric Traveler % (N = 77)	Chi- squared probability
Education level					0.289
No formal education	0	0	0	1	
Primary completed (Seven years of schooling)	1	0	<1	0	
Secondary completed (More than seven years of schooling)	6	8	8	7	
Certificate/diploma	19	26	30	30	
Undergraduate degree	18	25	26	23	
Post-graduate degree	56	41	36	39	
Occupation					0.240
Student	1	2	4	4	
Education	0	9	5	3	
Admin/sales	5	7	7	8	
Manager/executive	23	24	21	21	
Business professional	24	18	22	21	
Technical	1	2	3	4	
Government employee	5	5	5	5	
Self-employed	19	15	19	13	
Unemployed	1	<1	1	4	
Retired	7	6	3	4	
Homemaker	0	0	0	2	
Medical professional	5	10	5	5	
Other	9	2	5	7	
Openness of sexuality in home environment					0.213
Yes	90	91	89	88	
No	0	3	2	7	
Somewhat	10	6	9	5	
Classification of home environment					0.415
Variety of gay life and venues	75	77	70	69	
Limited/no gay life and venues	25	23	30	31	
Frequency of international leisure travel					0.097
Once a year	23	26	19	29	
Twice a year	13	21	14	16	
More than twice a year	17	26	26	27	
Once every two years	24	11	24	14	
Other	23	16	18	14	
Number of times visiting Cape Town (return vs. first-time visitor)					0.404
First-time visitor	27	29	20	16	
Return visitor	73	71	80	84	
Length of stay					0.059
Less than two weeks	85	83	77	73	
Between two weeks and a month	12	15	15	14	
More than a month	3	2	8	13	
Booking methods					0.408
Internet	70	76	80	75	
Mainstream travel agent	6	4	3	5	

(Continued)

Table 4. (Continued).

	Passive Relaxer % (N = 83)	Active Explorer % (N = 126)	Culinary Enthusiast/ Foodie % (N = 183)	Gay-Centric Traveler % (N = 77)	Chi- squared probability
Gay travel agent	2	4	3	7	0.087
Telephone	21	11	12	12	
Other	1	5	2	1	
Family planning					
Yes, I have a child(ren)	12	9	10	6	0.312
No, I do not want children	66	54	58	52	
No, but I plan on having children in the future	5	20	17	26	
Maybe/undecided	17	17	15	16	
Holiday/trip type					0.568
Independent (self-planned)	97	92	97	91	
Packaged holiday	2	7	3	8	
Other	1	<1	0	1	
Travel cohort					0.133
Partner	50	52	54	49	
Family	7	6	4	0	
Friends	13	17	20	21	
Alone	30	25	22	30	0.003*
Other	0	<1	<1	0	
Holiday planning time					
Spontaneous decision	21	17	15	25	
Less than 1 month	39	44	40	47	0.011*
1 to 3 months	24	25	26	9	
4 to 6 months	12	6	12	10	
7 to 12 months	2	7	7	8	
Other	2	1	0	1	0.009*
Age					
18–30	6	23	19	33	
31–50	61	52	64	57	
51+	33	25	17	10	0.009*
Relationship status					
Single	33	29	38	44	
In a relationship	53	34	37	33	
Married/civil union	13	36	25	22	0.009*
Divorced/widow/widower	1	1	<1	1	
Accommodation type					
Gay-friendly guest house/B&B/ hotel	12	14	28	34	
Mainstream guest house/B&B/ hotel	39	38	29	23	0.009*
Rent full house/apartment	11	20	22	20	
Hostel	2	2	2	0	
Family or friends	31	25	14	21	
Other	5	1	5	2	

*Significance at the 5% level.

accommodation preferences ($p = 0.009$). These descriptives were used to interpret and profile the clusters. This is important for marketing strategy formulation as it provides practical, usable, and readily translatable information for each cluster (Sarigollu & Huang, 2005).

Cluster 1: *Passive relaxers*

This cluster contained the third largest sample of respondents (83) and had relatively low mean scores across most pull factors (Table 2). Likewise, low importance scores were evident for most push factors (Table 3). However, in comparison with the other three clusters, this cluster was unique in the sense that respondents seemed to be only attracted to the dramatic and beautiful landscape and scenery of the destination. The only important push factors with importance scores higher than 50% for respondents in this cluster were to escape from everyday life, and for opportunities for rest and relaxation, suggesting a passive traveler seeking rest and relaxation.

In terms of sociodemographics and travel behavior characteristics (Table 4), respondents in this cluster were mostly between the ages of 31 and 50. However, when compared with other clusters, only 6% were young travelers between the ages of 18 and 30, while a significant percentage (33%) were above the age of 51, suggesting that many respondents in this cluster were mature gay travelers. Respondents were mostly partnered and preferred mainstream hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, and staying with family and friends. It is thus clear that sexuality had no influence on these respondents' travel behavior, and therefore they are labeled *passive relaxers*.

Cluster 2: *Active explorers*

Active explorers was the second largest sample of respondents (126), and although attracted by similar pull factors as *passive relaxers*, this cluster was particularly attracted to Cape Town as a unique African city, and attached significant importance to the tourist attractions/well-known tourist sites as well as the culture and history of the destination (Table 2). The respondents in this cluster seemed to be pushed to travel for similar reasons as *passive relaxers*, such as to escape from everyday life and to rest and relax. In addition, and different from *passive relaxers*, they traveled to enrich themselves intellectually (learn something new) and to discover/explore new and exciting places (novelty; Table 3), suggesting an active traveler who did not like routine, was eager to learn new things while holidaying and visiting new places and was, therefore, labeled *active explorer*.

In terms of sociodemographics and travel behavior characteristics (Table 4), travelers in this cluster were similar to *passive relaxers* in that they were mostly between the ages of 31 and 50. However, a significant percentage (25%) were also above the age of 51. The *active explorer* was mostly married or partnered and also preferred mainstream hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, and staying with family and friends. The pull factor mean scores for gay-related attributes of this cluster, when compared with those of *passive relaxers*, appeared to be higher, suggesting that these gay-related attributes could enhance the destination's appeal, but that they are not critical (Table 2). However, mean scores of gay-related attributes for both *passive relaxers* and *active explorers* failed to load higher than 4, the

important score, suggesting that sexuality had very little, if any, influence on the travel behavior of respondents in these two clusters. One interpretation of these findings could be that “gayness” during the holidays is simply not that important to some gay travelers (Blichfeldt et al., 2011), resulting in travel behaviors similar to those of mainstream travelers (e.g., seeking a dramatic and beautiful landscape and scenery, to escape from everyday life, and to rest and relax).

Cluster 3: Culinary enthusiast/foodie

The *culinary enthusiast/foodie* cluster was the largest and contained 183 respondents. Although this cluster was attracted by similar pull factors when compared to *passive relaxers* and *active explorers*, respondents placed higher importance on a good climate/weather, the beach, and, in particular, the culinary offerings (food and wine) of the destination as this was the most important attribute for this cluster; they were, therefore, labeled the *culinary enthusiast/foodie*. In terms of gay-related attributes, a gay culture/village, a “gay-friendly” environment/friendliness of locals toward gays, a safe, secure, diverse, and cosmopolitan destination appeared to be very important attributes for this cluster, although slightly less important than for the *gay-centric traveler* (see cluster 4). The respondents in this cluster appeared to be pushed to travel to enrich themselves intellectually and to enhance kinship relationships with family and friends. Opportunities for sexual adventures, social interaction with other gay people, and to develop close friendships and/or romance were significantly more important to this cluster than to *passive relaxers* and *active explorers*, although they did not seem to be the main motivations for travel (Table 3).

In terms of sociodemographics and travel behavior characteristics (Table 4), respondents in this cluster were also mostly between the ages of 31 and 50, with some younger and some more mature travelers, thus suggesting a cluster with a mixture of different ages. Furthermore, respondents in this cluster were a mixture of single and partnered couples and preferred both “gay-friendly” and mainstream hotels, guesthouses, and B&Bs. It is thus evident that the *culinary enthusiast/foodie* travelers’ travel behavior is influenced by their sexuality to a certain degree.

Cluster 4: Gay-centric traveler

The *gay-centric traveler*, the smallest cluster with 77 respondents, had the highest mean scores across all the pull factors (Table 2) as well as the push factors (Table 3). This cluster seemed to attach a higher importance to a relaxing atmosphere, mainstream events, wildlife, sport/wellness facilities, unique accommodation, shopping, ease of access of destination, nature and adventure offerings such as abseiling, shark-cage diving, and hiking, culture and history, as well as an inexpensive holiday offering value for money, suggesting a traveler interested in a wide variety of mainstream destination

attributes. However, when this cluster was compared to *passive relaxers*, *culinary enthusiasts/foodies*, and *active explorers*, it was evident that respondents in this cluster were heavily influenced by their sexuality, and their travel behavior centered on the gay aspects of a holiday. Thomsen (2008) argued that only travelers whose holiday behaviors are influenced by their sexuality might be regarded as gay tourists—hence this cluster was labeled the *gay-centric traveler*. The gay aspect of the destination appeared to be a necessity as all pull factors loaded above 4 (the important score) in the gay-related attributes category. They regarded a “gay-friendly” environment/friendliness of locals toward gays and a safe, secure, diverse, and cosmopolitan destination with a strong local gay culture/gay village more important when compared to the *culinary enthusiast/foodie*. However, unique to this cluster when compared to other clusters was the importance placed on the pull factors of same-sex marriage laws, the gay and/or nude beach, gay events, and nightlife, which indicates a pleasure traveler seeking a “gaycation,” a slang term for a gay vacation that includes “a pronounced aspect of LGBT culture” (Smith, MacLeod, & Robertson, 2010, p. 80), in a more historical destination such as Cape Town (Table 2). Furthermore, unique to this cluster, the respondents traveled to socialize with other gay people, to explore and evaluate themselves, for sexual adventures, to develop close friendships and/or romance, to escape disapproving society, to freely express their sexual identity, and for social recognition/ego enhancement (Table 3).

In terms of sociodemographics and travel behavior characteristics (Table 4), respondents in this cluster were also between the ages of 31 and 50. However, when compared with other clusters, a third (33%) of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 30, and almost half (44%) were single, suggesting that many travelers in this cluster were younger, single gay travelers. These findings support Hughes and Deutsch’s (2010) argument that younger gay individuals “were more likely to live their social lives in a gay milieu” (p. 460) than were older gay individuals, and this followed through into holidays as the gay-related attributes of the destination appeared to be a necessity. Furthermore, respondents in this cluster preferred “gay-friendly” hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, and staying with family and friends. Higher than 4 (important score) mean scores of pull factors indicate that all gay-related attributes were important to *gay-centric travelers*, whereas only some were important to the *culinary enthusiast/foodie*, suggesting that sexuality influenced the travel behavior of respondents in these two clusters, and more so for the *gay-centric traveler*.

ANOVAs were further used to assess how clusters are distinct in terms of spending patterns and annual monthly net incomes. No significant differences were found among cluster incomes ($p = 0.97$). However, the four clusters had statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) based on the spending categories

Table 5. ANOVA test results of clusters compared with income and spending patterns in US\$.

Spending categories & Income	Passive Relaxer (N= 80)	Active Explorer (N= 122)	Culinary Enthusiast/ Foodie (N = 181)	Gay-Centric Traveler (N= 76)	F-statistic	Sig. level
Monthly net income	4,668	4,764	4,487	4,749	0.82	0.970
Entertainment	75	87	146	193	7.234	0.000*
Shopping	176	325	390	440	3.698	0.012*
Nightlife	76	107	160	256	7.248	0.000*
Tourism-related activities	176	225	209	209	0.142	0.935
Food & drinks including restaurants	341	516	567	512	2.113	0.098
Accommodation	1,020	974	942	1,479	0.708	0.548
Transport	198	172	251	185	0.819	0.484
Total average trip expenditure	2,062	2,406	2,665	3,275	-	-

*Significance at the 5% level.

entertainment ($p = 0.000$), shopping ($p = 0.012$), and nightlife ($p = 0.000$; highlighted in Table 5).

In terms of spending behavior, *gay-centric travelers* spent the most on entertainment per visit (an average of \$193), shopping (an average of \$440), and nightlife (an average of \$256). *Passive relaxers* spent the least in these categories (averages of \$75, \$176, and \$76 respectively). Although not statistically significant, it is interesting to note that *culinary enthusiasts/foodies* spent the most on food and drinks compared with the other three clusters, further confirming and validating the label assigned to this cluster. *Gay-centric travelers* spent the most per person per trip (an average of \$3,275), followed by *culinary enthusiasts/foodies* (an average of \$2,665). The *passive relaxers* spent the least per person per trip (an average of \$2,062). It is also noteworthy that although the *gay-centric traveler* spent the most per person per trip, the *active explorer* had the highest average monthly income (\$4,764), while the *culinary enthusiast/foodie* had the lowest average monthly income (\$4,487).

A motivation-based typology of gay leisure travelers holidaying in Cape Town, South Africa

“Attribute-based benefit segmentation” provided insights into specific sub-segments of gay leisure travelers and were used to develop the typology of gay leisure travelers, presented in Figure 1.

The typology is based on the push and pull framework; the motivations of gay leisure travelers were assessed both in terms of their socio-psychological motivations and the destination attributes of Cape Town. The typology thus provides a framework for relating the destination

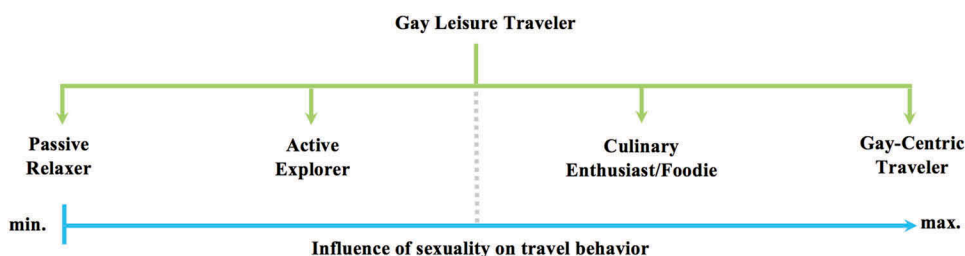


Figure 1. A motivation-based typology of gay leisure travelers holidaying in Cape Town, South Africa.

attributes (pull motivations) to the important push motivations that influence tourist decision-making and travel behavior, and it is therefore useful to the destination in developing product and promotional strategies (Oh, Uysal, & Weaver, 1995). The splitting of the continuum suggests typologies of four unique gay travel subsegments ranging from *passive relaxers* on the one end through *active explorers* and *culinary enthusiasts/foodies* to *gay-centric travelers* on the extreme end. The typology represents two segments in which travelers' behavior is not influenced by their sexuality, while the sexuality of travelers in the two other segments influences their travel behavior to varying degrees.

Passive relaxers and *active explorers* could be regarded as mainstream tourism by gay people as the influence of these travelers' sexuality on their travel behavior is at an absolute minimal level for *passive relaxers*, while the influence is only slightly higher for *active explorers*, which suggests that gay-related attributes could enhance the destination appeal, but that they are not critical for a satisfactory holiday. *Passive relaxers* and *active explorers* are mostly coupled, and ages range between 31 and 50, with a significant percentage mature (older than 51). Both segments prefer mainstream accommodation options and are attracted to the destination's landscape and scenery, and primarily go on holiday to rest, relax, and escape their everyday lives. In addition, *active explorers* are attracted to Cape Town's being a unique African city and attach significant importance to the tourist attractions/well-known tourist sites as well as the culture and history of the destination. They primarily go on holiday for intellectual enrichment and to explore new and exciting places (novelty).

Gay-centric travelers, at the opposite extreme, could be regarded as gay tourists as the influence of these travelers' sexuality on their travel behavior is at an absolute maximum level, and, although they are actively involved in nature and adventure offerings and interested in a wide variety of mainstream destination attributes, their travel behavior centers on the gay aspects of a holiday. In short, these travelers seek a bit of everything; however, this subsegment is unique in that they are particularly attracted by same-sex

marriage laws and are interested in a “gaycation” that offers gay/nude beaches, gay events, and nightlife. Furthermore, they go on holiday to socialize with other gay people, to explore and evaluate themselves, for sexual adventures, to develop close friendships and/or romance, to escape disapproving society, and for social recognition/ego enhancement. *Gay-centric travelers* are mostly younger, single gay travelers that prefer “gay-friendly” accommodation options.

Culinary enthusiasts/foodies can be seen as a hybrid of mainstream and gay tourism. The influence of these travelers’ sexuality on their travel behavior is much higher than for *passive relaxers* and *active explorers*, although lower than for the *gay-centric travelers*, as some travelers in this category are younger, and some are more mature. Apart from constituting a mixture of different ages, the subsegment includes a mixture of single and partnered couples and prefers both “gay-friendly” and mainstream accommodation options. They are attracted to mainstream destination attributes, including a good climate/weather, the beach, and, in particular, the culinary offerings. In addition, they are attracted to gay-related destination attributes, including a gay culture/village, a “gay-friendly” environment/friendliness of locals toward gays, and a safe, secure, diverse, and cosmopolitan destination. These all appear to be very important to this traveler, although slightly less important than for the *gay-centric traveler*. They, too, go on holiday for intellectual enrichment as well as to enhance kinship relationships. Social interaction with other gay people, opportunities for sexual adventures, and developing close friendships and/or romance are significantly more important to them than to *passive relaxers* and *active explorers*, although not the main motivation for travel.

Although the typology suggests that no subsegment is completely homogeneous, as some push and pull motivations overlapped and were important to all clusters, there are group characteristics that strengthen membership. It is, however, important to note that group membership “hinges on everyday life context, civil status of the gay in question and the, at the time, identity (or identities) that a specific holiday should reinforce” (Blichfeldt et al., 2011, p. 21). The typology empirically suggests that travelers are not all alike, and that this is precisely the case for the gay leisure traveler holidaying in Cape Town. In fact, the cluster analysis found that these travelers are heterogeneous in travel motivations (cf. Tables 2–3), age, relationship status, accommodation preferences (cf. Table 4), and spending patterns (cf. Table 5).

Implications for destination marketing

The typology indicates which destination attributes are likely to attract each subsegment identified, while assisting with eliminating destination attributes

that do not have a significant impact on the travelers' decision to choose a holiday destination. Furthermore, the typology may be used to successfully match these destination attributes to push motivations to improve future marketing strategies. For example, in targeting the *culinary enthusiast/foodie*, resources could be devoted to developing a promotional message that includes sightseeing and visiting general tourist attractions in a safe, relaxing, and "gay-friendly" environment. In particular, the culinary offerings may be offered in the form of food and wine festivals or the option of visiting a variety of authentic dining facilities combined with wine farm tours and, perhaps, a visit to the gay village as these travelers are also interested in the gay culture/village of the destination. The promotional message should match the subsegment's socio-psychological needs (push motivations), i.e., Cape Town provides ideal opportunities for escaping from a mundane home environment, enhancing kinship relationships, and learning something new. A selection of "gay-friendly" and mainstream accommodation options should be offered as part of the message.

Some findings of this study can also be used to develop better promotional strategies with the four identified market subsegments. Travel agents and tour operators targeting gay travelers may be encouraged by these findings to consider offering a more diverse range of tourism products and services to gay travelers who perhaps fall outside the *gay-centric* subsegment, i.e., those less interested in a "gaycation."

The findings of the cluster analysis showed that no subsegment is completely homogeneous as some push and pull motivations overlap and are important to all clusters. For example, both *passive relaxers* and *active explorers* prefer mainstream accommodation options and are attracted to the destination's landscape and scenery; they primarily go on holiday to rest, relax, and escape their everyday lives. *Culinary enthusiasts/foodies* are attracted to mainstream destination attributes, including a good climate/weather, the beach, and, in particular, the culinary offerings. Therefore, marketing to these segments can easily be integrated with existing market segments of the destination, i.e., cultural, outdoor, and culinary market segments. A distinct marketing strategy may be required to attract the *gay-centric traveler* as these travelers' behavior centers on the gay aspects of a holiday.

Implications for future gay tourism literature

This study aimed to develop a typology of gay leisure travelers by segmenting gay travelers holidaying in Cape Town into homogeneous subsegments and attempted to contribute to the gap in literature regarding these travelers' heterogeneity. The findings of this study make several contributions to the body of literature on gay tourism.

First, no known academic research study to date has attempted to segment gay leisure travelers based on behavioral grounds. Empirical evidence, albeit not universally representative of all gay leisure travelers, suggests that gay travelers who visit Cape Town are not homogeneous and that there are divergent groups of consumers with different consumer behaviors.

Second, only the subsegments of the gay leisure traveler may be referred to as niches as individuals within these subgroups are homogeneous in respect of certain characteristics.

Third, only a distinct subsegment, the *gay-centric traveler*, can be described as a gay tourist as sexuality heavily influences the travel behaviors and holiday decision-making processes of travelers in this subsegment. Consequently, not all gay travelers or activities by these travelers can be labeled as “gay” tourism.

Conclusion

Tourist typologies are used by destinations as “heuristic devices to bring about deeper understanding of tourists so that it is possible to understand, explain and predict their behaviour” (Isaac, 2008, p. 75) and assist in designing and implementing the products and services required to satisfy them (Boekstein, 2012). The typology of gay leisure travelers proposed by this study was developed by conducting attribute-based market segmentation. Consequently, the identified subsegments, each with its own set of motivations, could help the destination refine its target marketing strategies and may assist in understanding the different opportunities each subsegment presents. Furthermore, it should assist travel agents, destination managers, travel planners, and tour operators targeting the gay traveler holidaying in Cape Town, in ensuring that products and services, designed for and promoted to these travelers, actually meet their needs. Indeed, as Cook, Yale, and Marqua (2010) argued, the more tourism professionals know about travelers and how to meet their needs, the more successful the destination will be. The significance of segmenting gay leisure travelers could be profound, as Schewe and Meredith (2006) reiterated “finding groups of consumers with strong, homogeneous bonds is the ‘Holy Grail’ of marketing” (p. 51).

This study supports that of Isaac (2008) in that the static idea that travelers have to belong to one type or another can be questioned. Isaac (2008) argued that people are complex—consequently, it may be impossible to describe adequately all their behaviors in terms of a single simple category. However, the cluster analysis clearly showed that only a distinct subsegment, the *gay-centric traveler*, can be described as a gay tourist. The other subsegments may be classified as mainstream tourism by gay people. Better yet, *passive relaxers*, *active explorers*, and *culinary enthusiasts/foodies* may be referred to as just that.

Limitations and future research

While this study may be regarded as one of the first in attempting to segment gay leisure travelers, a caveat should be attached to the findings. Respondents were Internet users and self-selected to participate in this study, and findings may therefore be biased toward gay individuals who self-identify as such, resulting in non-Internet users as well as those who “hide” their sexual orientation being under represented. It is, however, felt that through adopting a Web-based electronic survey, the researcher aimed to avoid further biased research findings (i.e., only surveying openly gay individuals who patronize gay bars and attend gay events at the destination), as respondents could opt to remain anonymous on the Web. Although oversampling was implemented to overcompensate for the weaknesses of the nonprobability sampling methods employed for this study, the findings cannot be generalized to the whole gay population.

A potential limitation with data-driven segmentation is that the researcher made a judgment about the characteristics (variables or data) to use for cluster analysis. The variables for cluster analysis were borrowed from secondary data sources and did not come from primary data, i.e., open-ended questions in the survey. Therefore, although tourism stakeholders were requested during pilot testing to add attributes (pull motivations) of Cape Town that were presumed to be of importance to gay travelers but not included in the draft survey, it may be possible that the final list of attributes was not exhaustive. The same applies to the push motivations used for the survey.

The use of the push and pull framework limited the typology to a specific destination as pull factors are destination specific (Zhou, 2005). The typology may therefore only be of use to the destination studied. There is no reason to believe that the motivations of gay travelers visiting Asia or Europe are the same for those travelling to Africa, or Cape Town more specifically, for example.

Qualitative research could investigate whether the same traveler may be part of other market segments as gay individuals may, at different points in their travel career, choose different types of holidays, i.e., investigating gay travelers’ sexual identity maturation over time and how this influences their travel behaviors and holiday decision-making processes. This should essentially answer the question posed by Blichfeldt et al. (2011, p. 22): “When and under which circumstances do people want to be a certain type of tourist,” instead of researching what a certain group of tourists are like.

As the profiles of gay leisure travelers holidaying in Cape Town revealed by the sample may not be typical of those to other tourism destinations, further research with different samples of gay leisure travelers is recommended. Replicating and adapting this study to other destinations popular among gay travelers may assist in developing an improved typology of gay leisure travelers.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

ORCID

Chris Hattingh  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3849-6094>

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