



Salient factors influencing gay travellers' holiday motivations: a push-pull approach

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Abstract

Gay travel is regarded as one of the fastest-growing markets in the international travel industry which leads to an increasing number of tourism destinations attempting to attract gay travellers. There appears to be a specific lack of direction in attracting the gay traveller to Cape Town despite the City's attractiveness to these travellers, which may hinder effective destination marketing. The understanding of gay travel was enhanced by examining the salient factors influencing gay travellers' holiday motivations within the push-pull framework. A self-administered web-based electronic survey was used to survey 439 international and domestic gay travellers to Cape Town. The findings suggest that rest and relaxation are at the core of gay travellers' push motivation, as with most other travellers, followed by escape, novelty, intellectual enrichment and enhancement of kinship relationships. The most salient pull motivation was Cape Town's dramatic and beautiful landscape and scenery, followed by the relaxing atmosphere, the local food and wine, climate/weather and a gay-friendly environment, suggesting that some gay travellers' travel behaviour, in particular their pull motivations, are influenced by their sexuality. Tourism stakeholders may be encouraged to offer a more diverse range of tourism experiences to gay travellers as opposed to the "gay stereotypical holidays" characterised by partying, promiscuity and the pursuit of sexual encounters. It is suggested that resources be devoted to developing a well-organised travel package that resembles the most salient pull attributes and that the promotional message should match the most salient socio-psychological needs (push motivations).

Key words: Cape Town, gay travel, motivation, push and pull factors, travel behaviour

Introduction

Cape Town – informally known as the 'Gay capital of Africa' – is a favoured gay travel destination (Mngomeni, 2014). Competition among international 'gay-friendly' tourism destinations is intensifying owing to gay tourism's rapid and continuing growth (Guaracino, 2007:153; Morris & Carney, 2009:5) and its associated economic contribution (Hattingh, 2011:127; UNWTO, 2017:8). Gay travel is one of the fastest-growing markets in the international travel industry as approximately 36 million overnight visitors who travelled to international destinations around the world were part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community (UNWTO, 2017:44). Gay travellers, a segment of the LGBT travel market, are estimated to contribute around R1.8 billion to the Cape Town economy each year (Grove, 2014) as it is estimated that 10 to 12% of all travellers to Cape Town are gay (UNWTO, 2012:23).



It is thus evident that the importance of these travellers is well known by the tourism industry; however the understanding of LGBT travellers preferences when they are travelling and visiting a destination has not yet been so broadly researched (UNWTO, 2017:46). This seems to be the case for Cape Town. The destination targets the gay traveller in addition to the cultural, outdoor and culinary traveller (Cape Town Tourism, 2017), however there appears to be a specific lack of direction in attracting the gay traveller despite the City's attractiveness to these travellers, warranting the investigation of gay travellers' motivations for going on holiday and travelling to Cape Town specifically. Very few if any investigations have examined the motivations of gay travellers to an African destination. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap and could assist travel planners, destination managers, gay tour operators and travel agents, and Cape Town in particular, in ensuring that products and services designed for and promoted to gay travellers, actually cater to their needs through developing distinct travel products and packages.

Literature review

Goossens (2000:302), Amirtahmaseb (2007:12) and Khuong and Ha (2014:490) point to the criticality of investigating motivations in order to identify the diverse desires of travellers. Motivation is classically defined as "... a state of tension within the individual which arouses, directs and maintains behaviour toward a goal" (Mullen & Johnson, 1990:91) or incentive (Luthans et al., 1988:136) and drives an individual to act in order to reach personal fulfilment (Beerli & Martín, 2004:626). Goossens (2000:302) is of the opinion that in order to reach personal fulfilment, an individual must be aware of a service or product and perceive the purchase of that service or product will assist in attaining personal fulfilment and satisfying a need (Goossens, 2000:302). Tourism services and products can be developed and promoted as a solution to an individual's needs (Fodness, 1994:555). Therefore, needs are seen as the "... forces which arouse motivated behaviour" (Boekstein, 2012:85). As Jago (1997:104) contends, in order to fully comprehend consumer motivation, it is crucial to have in-depth knowledge of the needs that consumers strive to fulfil and how these needs can be fulfilled. There is an increasingly important body of research regarding the study of motivation in the travel and tourism industry specifically (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004:388), with numerous motivation theories having developed over time to help explain the complexity of tourists' behaviour (Isaac, 2008:80). Undoubtedly, one of the most important contributions to the development of tourism motivation theories is the one proposed by Dann (1977).

Dann's Push-Pull Theory (1977)

The push-pull framework suggests motivations fall into two categories, namely, push factors and pull factors. Push factors refer to the "... specific forces that influence a person's decision to take a vacation" and have been theorised as "... motivational factors or needs that arise due to a disequilibrium or tension in the motivational system" (Kim et al., 2003:170). Push factors include, for example, rest and relaxation, self-actualisation, adventure/nature, status/prestige, novelty, escape, social interaction, nostalgia, or romance/sex and are confirmed by the theories and typologies developed by Gray (1970); Dann (1977); Crompton (1979) and Iso-Ahola (1982). Pull factors can be viewed as relating to the supply dimension and are characterised by the attributes, features or natural attractions that pull travellers towards a specific destination and include, for example, festivals or special events, recreational activities, cultural resources (Kim & Lee, 2002:258), sunshine, beaches, sports facilities, inexpensive airfares (Klenosky, 2002:387), quality of service and favourable location (Awaritefe, 2004:313), friendliness of local people, population density, urban layout, currency exchange, pricing structures (Prayag, 2003:42-43) or any potential activity offered to the traveller (Kassean & Gassita, 2013:5-6).

Dann's (1977) push-pull framework suggests that motivation is a complex phenomenon and is best understood by means of both push and pull forces. However, according to Goossens (2000:303), most



researchers "...do not consider both factors as a single integrated concept". The push and pull factors of tourist behaviour are "...two sides of the same motivational coin" and explains that the "concept of emotion" is a psychological factor that connects these factors, i.e. tourists are pushed by their emotional needs and pulled by the emotional benefits of a leisure holiday (Goossens, 2000:302). Phau et al. (2013:272) suggest that push factors "...drive the tourist to travel, leading to an external search for an appropriate destination ... pull factors then come into effect by convincing the tourist that a particular destination is appropriate for them". Therefore, several researchers have contended to market a destination effectively, it is crucial to understand both push and pull motivations (Oh et al., 1995:124; Goossens, 2000:302; Eftichiadou, 2001:9).

Several empirical investigations have made use of push and pull factors. Although push and pull factors are interdependent as discussed in the preceding paragraph, the investigations applied different research approaches resulting in some identifying push factors only (Dann, 1977; Fodness, 1994; Cha et al., 1995), pull factors only (Sirakaya & McLellan, 1997; Gavcar & Gursoy, 2002; Zhou, 2005; Prayag, 2010), or a combination of push and pull factors (Hughes, 2002; Klenosky, 2002; Kim et al., 2003; Kassean & Gassita, 2013; Khuong & Ha, 2014). From these empirical investigations, it can be deduced that the push-pull framework has a proven success rate and, as Goossens (2000:302), Klenosky (2002:388), Prayag (2010:2) and Khuong and Ha (2014:490) argue, is one of the most useful frameworks for measuring tourist motivation. Considering the importance of investigating both push and pull factors, this study used the push-pull framework to determine the salient factors that influence gay travellers' holiday motivations.

Factors influencing gay travellers' holiday motivations

The Clift and Forrest study (1999) is one of the first empirical investigations on the holiday motivations of gay men specifically. They found that gay men were motivated to travel by factors comparable to those of mainstream tourists: guaranteed sunshine, good food, comfort and relaxation (Clift & Forrest, 1999:622). Pritchard et al. (2000) conducted a qualitative, exploratory investigation of the holiday motivations of gay men and lesbians, and focused on the interrelationships between tourism spaces, tourism behaviour and sexuality. The study confirmed Clift and Forrest's (1999) idea that gay travellers travel for similar reasons as mainstream travellers, but found that sexual identity plays a significant role for many gay travellers in their travel decisions. The need for a safe environment, to escape from heterosexism and to interact comfortably with like-minded people were found to be key factors influencing their destination choice (Pritchard et al., 2000:267) and directly connected to the respondents' sexuality, especially regarding the need for safety and escape. In these authors' opinion, the most salient motivating factor for leisure travel was the need to escape a heterosexual world, often to specifically 'gay spaces', particularly for those who hid their sexuality at home (Pritchard et al., 2000:274-275).

Expanding on the studies of Clift and Forrest (1999) and Pritchard et al. (2000), Hughes (2002) examined the factors that influence gay men to choose and reject holiday destinations, with specific focus on risk, by interviewing 40 gay men. Hughes (2002:304) found that his study was consistent with the two previously discussed studies in that "... the 'types' of holidays that gay men go on are identical to those of the rest of society". They are attracted (pulled) by holidays that offer heritage, culture, scenery, sun and sea, entertainment and sport. It was also found that push factors such as ego-enhancement, regeneration, prestige, escape, evaluation of self, social interaction, self-realisation and freedom apply equally to gay men (Hughes, 2002:310). There are, however, specific push and pull factors related to gay travellers. Based on the original push-pull motivation framework by Dann (1977), Hughes (2002:299) applied it to gay travellers, stating that "... gay space is targeted at, and used primarily by, gay people and is predominantly associated with leisure activities ... [and] ... acts as the pull factor that meets the needs caused by push factors of censure, disapproval, abuse, discrimination and criminalisation, with a consequent desire to relate to others, be oneself" (as depicted in Figure 1). Hughes (2002:300) supports the Pritchard et al. (2000) argument that the continuous social disapproval in a heterosexist world leads to the holiday being particularly significant for gay men. He argues that "... the factors that push a gay man to seek out 'gay

space' or a 'gay-friendly' space, will be important in choosing a holiday destination" and "... he will wish to ensure that negative push factors (i.e. social censure, abuse, discrimination, criminalisation) are not present, and that positive pull factors (i.e. toleration and 'gay space') are present" (Hughes, 2002:300).

It thus appears that despite some studies arguing that gay travellers travel for the same reasons as mainstream travellers, evidence exists that some particular push and pull factors apply to these travellers (Hughes, 2006:56; Monterrubio, 2008:81).

Push motivations specific to gay travellers

The specific push motivations that 'separate' gay travellers from other travellers appear to include escaping heteronormativity, constructing and validating gay identity through travel, and pursuing sex/romance, discussed next.

Escaping heteronormativity

Various sources in the literature (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996; Pritchard et al., 1998; Philipp, 1999; Hughes, 1997, 2005, 2006, 2007; Pritchard, et al., 2000; Apostolopoulou, 2013) emphasise that some gay individuals go on holiday to escape a heteronormative world as a result of anti-gay discrimination and social disapproval, commonly experienced in the home environment (Herrera, 2003:22). Ballegaard and Chor (2009:48) argue that some gay individuals feel a need or push to escape their usual environment to express their gay identities freely while on holiday. This need is, however, not linked to Iso-Ahola's (1982) Social Psychological Model of Tourism Motivation in which escaping is proposed as a motivator to escape the everyday environment. In the context of gay tourism, as Lucena et al. (2015:275) argue, it refers to a specific need to escape the burdens of being gay in a largely heterosexual world.

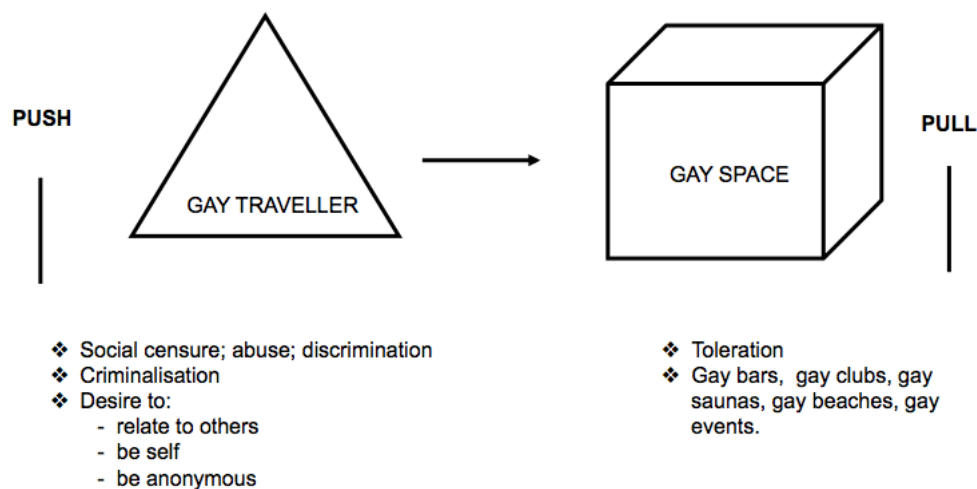


Figure 1: Push and pull factors related to gay tourism

Source: Adapted from Hughes (2002:300)

Constructing and validating 'gay identity' through travel

Frale (1997:139) states that "...identities are fluid, multidimensional, personalised social constructions". More specifically, sexual identity is described as a "...fluid set of meanings hinging on notions of sexuality and gender" (Howe, 2001:50). It has been widely reported in the literature that holidays to 'gay-friendly'



destinations are likely to significantly contribute to constructing and validating a 'gay identity' for some individuals (Hughes, 1997:5; Clift & Forrest, 1999:616; Waitt & Markwell, 2006:6; Monterrubio, 2008:74; Hughes & Deutsch, 2010:459; Khan, 2013:37; Fimiani, 2014:6; Lucena et al., 2015:275) with some scholars referring to this type of tourism as 'identity tourism' (Hughes, 1997:5; Howe, 2001:35; Herrera & Scott, 2005:260). Owing to the social disapproval, discrimination and possible intolerance experienced in their usual environments, the construction and validation of a 'gay identity' often depends on being a tourist (Hughes, 1997:5; Monterrubio, 2008:74) as the holiday away from this environment "... can provide a further opportunity to be gay and provide the only, or an extra, opportunity to validate identity by living and playing, over a continuous period of time, in 'gay space' or at least a place that is gay-friendly" (Hughes, 2002:299). Herrera and Scott (2005:260) argue that the holiday will provide gay travellers with a "...more positive conception of self" as they gain new insights about themselves, pointing to the self-actualisation need of travel motivation (Hughes, 1997:6; Carolan, 2007:3). Identity also has relevance to the 'need for belonging' as referred to in the literature on travel motivation, and identity can be explained as the feeling of belonging to a certain community (Hughes, 2006:17).

Pursuing sex/romance

It has been argued that travelling permits the traveller to indulge in sexually permissive behaviour that is often socially constrained in the home environment (Dann, 1977:188; Hughes, 2002:307; Monterrubio & Bello, 2011:17). Sex is a predominant feature in many gay male tourism studies (Hughes, 1997, 2002; Clift & Wilkins, 1995; Clift & Forrest, 1999; Luongo, 2000; Clift et al., 2002; Want, 2002; Waitt & Markwell, 2006), so too is the phenomenon evident in mainstream tourism studies (Elliott et al., 1998; Oppermann, 1999; Herold et al., 2001; Bauer, 2007; Hesse & Tutenges, 2011; Johnson, 2012). Therefore, casual sex should not be considered as exclusive to gay travel as it is evident in heterosexual travel behaviour too (Ryan & Hall, 2001:103). The difference, however, is that some gay men, more so than lesbians, especially those gay men who conceal their sexuality and those living in small cities or heteronormative communities (which enhance the limited opportunities for social interaction with other men), tend to travel in pursuit of anonymous sex and/or romance (Clift & Forrest, 1999:616; Carolan, 2007:36; Hughes & Deutsch, 2010:456). They may also be subject to some laws in places that strictly outlaw same-sex sexual activity (Hughes, 2002:304), resulting in the push to escape those environments, even if only temporarily.

Pull motivations specific to gay travellers

The specific pull motivations that 'separate' gay travellers from other travellers as found in the literature appear to include, inter alia, 'gay friendliness', gay marriage or civil partnerships, gay events/festivals, and 'gay space'/infrastructure.

'Gay friendliness'

It has been argued that the escape from a heteronormative environment can be a significant push motivation for some gay individuals. This escape however can only be realised in a 'gay-friendly' or gay-exclusive social setting during a holiday, more so than a heteronormative social setting, as a heteronormative social setting on holiday could subject gay travellers to the same prejudices and discrimination which exist in their home environment (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996:712; Hughes, 1997:6, 2005:57), and thus not offer an escape (Pritchard et al., 2000:278).

Gay marriage and civil partnerships

The ongoing legalisation of gay marriage and/or civil partnerships in certain destinations throughout the world is encouraging visits for the purpose of marriage and has subsequently resulted in a new market in wedding tourism (Hughes, 2006:137-138; Bömkes, 2011:188; UNWTO, 2012:9; Rosenbloom, 2014;



Luongo, 2015; Sanders, 2016). As gay marriages and/or civil partnerships are only possible at a few destinations, it may be an increasingly important pull factor (Hughes, 2006:135), meaning that some gay individuals travel to destinations for the sole purpose of getting married or celebrating a honeymoon (Luongo, 2015).

Gay events/festivals

Events/festivals are increasingly staged to draw visitors to a particular destination as tourism traditionally depends on natural attractions (Markwell & Waitt, 2009:163). Furthermore, when gay individuals attend gay events, a perception of being part of a majority is created (Waitt & Markwell, 2006:216), which might not be the case in their home environments, thus providing an opportunity to escape heteronormativity. These events also range in type and include, but are not limited to, sport events (Guaracino, 2007), circuit parties (Mansergh et al., 2001; Weems, 2007), pride parades (Stella, 2013; Adams, 2014), and conventions and conferences (UNWTO, 2012:29).

'Gay space'/infrastructure

It has been argued that the escape from a heteronormative environment, validating gay identity and pursuing sex/romance could be significant push motivations for some gay travellers, and these needs can be fulfilled in a 'gay-friendly' or gay-exclusive social setting during a holiday (Hughes, 1997:6; Haslop et al., 1998:318; Herrera & Scott, 2005:251; Fimiani, 2014:38), commonly referred to as the gay scene or 'gay space' (Hughes & Deutsch, 2010:459) in which homosexuality is the majority and the norm (Ballegaard & Chor, 2009:70) with no risk of rejection and homophobia (Fimiani, 2014:38).

Examining the salient factors influencing gay travellers' holiday motivations within the push-pull framework enhanced the understanding of gay travel. The main objectives of this research were to investigate the socio-psychological (push) motivations that influence gay travellers to go on holiday and to determine the pull factors (destination attributes) that attract gay travellers to an African sun and beach tourism destination by using Cape Town as a case study.

Methodology

This study applied a quantitative research method by means of a self-administered web-based electronic survey. First, gay travellers were targeted through contacting a judgement sample of gay travel agencies and tour operators to distribute the survey hyperlink to customers on their databases who had previously travelled to Cape Town. Second, a judgement sample of gay travel-related groups and virtual (online) communities on the social networking sites Facebook.com, Twitter.com and Tumblr.com was contacted and requested to share the hyperlink to the survey with a short message. Third, the study was advertised through banner advertisements, as well as email blasts to the databases of *Gay Times Magazine* (UK) and Edge Media Network (US) as the UK and the US are the top two leading international source markets for the Western Cape and yield the largest numbers of international tourist arrivals (PwC, 2014:15).

It has been recognised that researching issues related to homosexuality is complex and one particular complexity when investigating gay tourism is locating informants (Monterrubio, 2008:146). The gay traveller can be regarded as a 'hidden population' (Hughes, 2004:72). In other words, gay travellers are 'invisible' as researchers cannot identify them by "... simply using their eyes, as they can with, say, male, female, black, Latino, Asian or Caucasian travellers" (Guaracino & Salvato, 2017:9). It was therefore decided to use a web-based electronic survey as the main mode of data collection as virtual (online) communities provide access to specific populations who share special interests and have common attitudes, opinions and values regarding an activity, issue or problem (Wright, 2005; Malhotra & Birks, 2007:426), which makes it ideal for surveying the gay population.



The structured survey for this study covered three sections: a section covering holiday-related information, a section on travel motivations, and a traveller profile section. Respondents' travel motivations included a list of 13 push factors and another list of 24 pull factors. The push motivations included in the survey were adapted from Kim and Lee (2002), Correia et al. (2007), and Kassean and Gassita (2013). As there appear to be some specific push motivations for travel among gay individuals, these were included in this section of the survey. The pull motivations included in the survey were adapted from Prayag (2003) and Zhou (2005) who researched the attractive attributes of Cape Town among mainstream travellers. It is understood that these research findings on the most important attributes will not necessarily all apply, or be equally important to gay travellers visiting Cape Town, as some specific attributes (pull factors), as discussed in the literature review, are attractive to gay travellers, which were also included in this section of the survey.

Participants were requested to rate the importance level of the push factors in their decision to take a holiday as well as rate the importance level of the pull factors that attracted them to Cape Town on a five-point Likert scale (1 = not at all important, 2 = unimportant, 3 = neither important nor unimportant, 4 = important, 5 = very important). The survey was available online for eight months and was completed by a sample of 439 gay travellers. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the most salient push and pull motivations and to develop a gay traveller profile for Cape Town. Cross-tabulations using Pearson chi-squared values were used to identify relationships between certain pairs of variables.

Results and discussion

Traveller profile and holiday-related information

The majority of respondents were international travellers (54%) and 46% were domestic travellers. Regarding the traveller profile, most gay men that participated in the study were from the UK (14%), aged between 31 and 50 years (59%) and held a postgraduate degree (42%). They travelled from open-minded large cities with a variety of gay life and venues (72%) and were open about their sexuality in their home environments (89%). Almost half were in an executive position (43%), suggesting a sample of upscale professionals, who did not want children (59%), were avid international travellers taking between one and two international leisure trips per year (40%). This research therefore supports Buford's (2000) findings in that gay travellers are less likely to have children, consequently, and according to the UNWTO (2017:42), they will have more discretionary income and time to spend on services and products such as travel and entertainment. In addition, heterosexual travellers with children may be limited to travel during school holidays, whereas the lack of children for gay travellers allows for flexibility and enables them to travel at any desired time (Hughes, 2006:8). This leads to less seasonal behaviour (Pritchard et al., 1998:277) and is, therefore, particularly advantageous for tourism as tourism is highly dependable on seasons (Kinnunen, 2011:18).

It is evident that most respondents travelled with their partners (52%), and stayed between one to two weeks (34%) in mainstream hotels and guesthouses (32%). Gay travellers seemed to be very loyal to Cape Town as they had visited more than three times (53%) and indicated that they would return to the destination in the future (95%). They would also recommend Cape Town as a 'gay-friendly' destination (95%). Revisit and recommendation intention has been highlighted as an increasingly important factor in a saturated marketplace (Puad Mat Som et al., 2012:39) in which competitive destinations attempt to adjust their marketing strategies to increase visitor loyalty and build long-term relationships with these visitors (Baloglu, 2001; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Return visitors not only provide a constant source of income and revenue for the tourism destination, increase market share, and generate positive word-of-mouth, but also minimise the costs of destination marketing and operation (Khuong & Ha, 2014:491). The gay traveller, therefore, seems to be the ideal target market for Cape Town.



Travel motivations – push factors

Table 1 provides a detailed analysis of each push factor, categorised under the following headings: physiological, knowledge, belonging, self-actualisation, esteem and personal needs. The percentage of respondents regarding these push factors as 'Important' or 'Very important' is categorised under the heading 'Salient push factor', the percentage regarding them as 'Neither important nor unimportant' under the heading 'Neutral push factor' and the percentage regarding them as 'Unimportant' or 'Not important at all' under the heading 'Weak push factor'. The average for 'Salient push factor' in each category of push factors is given. This illustrates the relative importance of specific push factors within the respective categories, and the relative importance of the categories in relation to one another. Only two push factor groups (categories) had a 'Salient push factor' average of 50% or more, namely 'physiological' needs and 'knowledge' needs.

Table 1: Push factors grouped into categories (n = 439 in %)

Category	Push factors	Weak push factor	Neutral push factor	Salient push factor	Average (Salient push factor)
Physiological	Opportunities for rest and relaxation	7	15	78	52
	Escape from everyday life/daily routine	9	17	74	
	Opportunity to have a sexual adventure	50	18	32	
	Escape from disapproving society to freely express gay identity	56	19	25	
Knowledge	Novelty (discovering/exploring a new or exciting place)	13	16	71	67
	Enriching myself intellectually (learn something new)	18	23	59	
Self-actualisation	Exploration and evaluation of self (gain insight about self)	32	26	42	42
Belonging	Enhancement of kinship relationships (family/friends)	23	21	56	37
	Social interaction with other gay people	31	30	39	
	Opportunity to develop close friendships/romance	33	24	43	
	To get married/go on honeymoon	77	13	10	
Personal	Nostalgia	44	27	29	29
Esteem	Social recognition/ego enhancement	52	25	23	23

Physiological needs category

The first group, 'physiological' needs category, had two 'Salient push factors' with more than 50% of respondents regarding these as important. A large majority of respondents (78%) were motivated by opportunities for rest and relaxation which ranked as the most important overall push factor, followed by 74% of respondents travelling to escape their everyday life/daily routine, which was ranked as the second most important overall push factor. Although opportunities for rest and relaxation and to escape from everyday life/daily routine were important push factors found in most mainstream tourism studies (Klenosky, 2002; Kassean & Gassita, 2013), so too did these push factors appear in gay tourism studies (Ballegaard & Chor, 2009; Hughes & Deutsch, 2010; Fimiani, 2014), which suggested that the most salient factors that push gay individuals to travel were in fact comparable with those of mainstream travellers.

Two 'physiological' push factors that were less important or 'Weak push factors' were opportunities to have



a sexual adventure and to escape their disapproving societies to freely express their gay identities. Clift and Forrest (1999) found that nearly two-thirds of gay men placed some emphasis on the importance of sexual activity in their holiday motivations. More recently, Ballegaard and Chor (2009:108-109) and Hughes and Deutsch (2010:459) found that only some gay men enjoy pursuing sexual encounters while on holiday, whereas the majority of their samples did not regard sex as an important motivation for travel. Almost a third (32%) of respondents attached importance to travelling for sex in this study, supporting Ballegaard and Chor (2009), and Hughes and Deutsch (2010) in that travelling for sex is only important to some, but by far not the most important push factor for gay travellers, as 50% of respondents attached no importance to this factor. In addition, one quarter (25%) of respondents travelled to escape a disapproving society, contradicting the findings of Pritchard et al. (2000:274) who identified this as the *most* important push factor for gay travellers to go on holiday.

Knowledge needs category

The second group, the 'Knowledge' needs category, had two 'Salient push factors', novelty and intellectual enrichment. More than two-thirds (71%) of respondents were motivated by novelty, i.e. to discover and explore a new or exciting place. Novelty, one of many psychological needs that play a significant role in causing a person to feel a disequilibrium that can be corrected through a tourism experience (Kim & Lee, 2002:257), seemed to be one of the salient push factors for mainstream travel (Klenosky, 2002; Prayag, 2010). It seems that the same applies to gay travel as novelty was the third most important push factor overall (cf. Table 1). More than half (59%) of respondents were motivated to travel to enrich themselves intellectually. This finding correlates with previously conducted mainstream studies that found 'learning-related' push factors to be important (Klenosky, 2002; Correia et al., 2007; Khuong & Ha, 2014). Therefore, the 'Knowledge' needs category suggested that gay travellers go on holiday to discover and explore new and exciting places and to enrich themselves intellectually, as do most other travellers.

Self-actualisation needs category

Less than half of the respondents (42%) were motivated to travel to gain insight about themselves. In contrast to scholars arguing that the holiday significantly contributes to the construction and validation of a 'gay identity' for some gay individuals, Carolan (2007:36) found little evidence in his study on Irish gay men's travel motivations to support the notion that gay men travel as a means of constructing or strengthening a 'gay identity'. It is worthwhile to note that the study sample is based on Westernised perspectives. The Western world is considered increasingly 'gay friendly' (Kauhanen, 2015:13) and could explain why these gay men did not feel a need to travel to construct and validate a 'gay identity'. Similarly to Carolan (2007), Köllen and Lazar (2012:66) did not find this motive to be of significance for the majority of the interviewees in their study; however, it was found to be especially relevant to those that did not live an openly gay lifestyle and those from smaller cities without a significant gay community/space, thereby supporting Clift and Forrest's (1999:623) and Herrera and Scott's (2005:249) findings in that gay individuals who live in village or rural areas or closed-minded small cities and towns, which have a limited or no obvious gay community or 'gay space', might be more prone to social censure and thus have a need to travel to 'gay-friendly' environments in which they can express their 'true' identities.

Belonging needs category

While slightly more than a third of the respondents (37%) were motivated to travel related to the 'Belonging' needs category, some 56% regarded the enhancement of kinship relationships (family and friends) as an important factor to go on holiday. This push factor was another classical socio-psychological motive first identified by Crompton (1979). Oh et al. (1995), Yuan and McDonald (1990), Formica (2000), Yoon and Uysal (2005), and Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) all point to the importance of this push factor in that many travellers develop the need for visiting family and/or friends in a different destination.



Of the less important push factors in the 'Belonging' needs category appeared to be for opportunities to develop close friendships/romance, which 43% of respondents regarded as important, while 39% attached importance to social interaction with other gay people. The literature review suggested that some gay travellers have a specific need to socialise with like-minded gay people. According to the findings of this study, it could be suggested that *some* gay travellers travel to 'gay-friendly' destinations where they can meet and develop close friendships and/or romance and interact with other gay people, possibly because of a lack of gay friends/partners in the heteronormative home environment or purely because they prefer socialising with like-minded gay people on holiday. Friendships and relationships play an important role in people's psychological wellbeing in general, and their recreation and leisure experiences in particular (Hummel, 2010:79). It should however be noted that owing to the lower importance levels attached to these push factors, developing close friendships/romance and being with other gay people while on holiday are not important to all gay travellers as this heteronormative environment may not exist, and therefore, they may have ample gay individuals to socialise and develop close friendships with at home. In addition, the need to develop new friendships is not restricted to gay travel, as this push factor is evident in some mainstream tourism studies too (Crompton, 1979; Kim & Lee, 2002; Kim et al., 2003; Correia et al., 2007).

The least important push factor in the 'Belonging' needs category is also the overall least important push factor (cf. Table 1). To get married or go on honeymoon was important to only 10% of respondents while an overwhelming majority (77%) regarded this factor as unimportant. Gay marriages and/or civil partnerships may be a specific push factor for gay travellers owing to gay marriages and/or civil partnerships being illegal in the home environment (Thomsen, 2008:43), resulting in a push to get away from these environments. This push factor, as tested by Thomsen (2008:60), had no relevance to the holiday decision-making process of Danish homosexual men, possibly since gay marriages are legal in Denmark. The current study, although the sample of respondents included individuals from 38 countries, found this to be a 'Weak push factor' and therefore supports Thomsen's (2008) finding.

Personal needs category

A significantly less important push factor was nostalgia, i.e. longing for the "good old days" (Dann, 1977:190) or visiting places for "old times' sake" (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004:390) which appeared to be a 'Weak push factor', as only 29% of respondents attached importance to this factor. Nostalgia is a classic push factor for travel first suggested by Dann (1977:186), but surprisingly, it is not commonly found in the tourism literature. Kassean and Gassita (2013) found that nostalgia was the second most important push factor among international tourists in Mauritius, while Zhou (2005) found it to be one of the least important push factors among international tourists in Cape Town. As 44% of the respondents of this study regarded nostalgia to be unimportant, it is suggested that it is not a salient push factor for gay travellers.

Esteem needs category

Several years ago, Dann (1977:187) proposed that 'ego-enhancement' relates to individuals who seek recognition and status through travelling and hope to boost their ego by taking on an entirely different personality to that at home (Dann, 1977:188). In addition, Dann (1977:187) argued that just as there is a need for social interaction, so too is there a need to be recognised, often described in terms of 'status'. Crompton (1979) named this specific push factor 'prestige'. Regardless of the different descriptions used, this particular push factor stems from Maslow's 'esteem' needs. Prayag (2003:52-53) argued that a potential tourist who has a strong need for recognition in his social environment may travel to a destination simply because 'everyone else' has been to that destination. This particular push factor was important to 23% of the respondents in this study, while more than half (52%) attached no importance to this need. Therefore, social recognition/ego enhancement appeared to be a 'Weak push factor' for gay travellers.



Travel motivations – pull factors (destination attributes)

Table 2 provides a more detailed analysis of each pull factor, categorised under the following headings: Culture and sights attributes, Comfort and relaxation attributes, and Gay-related attributes. The percentage of respondents regarding these attributes as 'Important' or 'Very important' is categorised under the heading 'Salient pull factor', the percentage regarding them as 'Neither important nor unimportant' under the heading 'Neutral pull factor', and the percentage regarding them as 'Unimportant' or 'Not important at all' under the heading 'Weak pull factor'. The average for 'Salient pull factor' in each category of attribute is given. This illustrates the relative importance of specific attributes within the respective categories, and the relative importance of the categories in relation to one another. All three pull factor groups (categories) had a 'Salient pull factor' average of 50% or more.

Table 2: Pull factors grouped into categories (n = 439 in %)

Category	Pull factor (destination attribute)	Weak pull factor	Neutral pull factor	Salient pull factor	Average (Salient pull factor)
Culture and sights attributes	Dramatic/beautiful landscape and scenery	3	7	90	57
	General tourist attractions/well-known tourist sites	10	20	70	
	Beaches	15	20	65	
	Unique 'African' city	23	18	59	
	Culture and history (monuments, heritage, arts, local customs)	16	25	59	
	Nature, adventure offering (hiking, shark-cage diving, abseiling)	29	21	50	
	Wildlife, special animals	33	27	40	
	Mainstream event	46	32	22	
Comfort and relaxation attributes	Relaxing atmosphere	5	10	85	56
	Local food and wine including restaurants	7	13	80	
	Climate/weather	10	22	68	
	Ease of access into destination	18	29	53	
	Cost/value for money (inexpensive holiday)	19	31	50	
	Shopping facilities	28	29	43	
	Unique accommodation	31	29	40	
Sport/exercise & wellness facilities	49	25	26		
Gay-related attributes	Gay-friendly environment/friendliness of locals towards gays	11	21	68	51
	Safe and secure destination related to personal safety	15	19	66	
	Diversity and cosmopolitan reputation	14	20	66	
	Local gay culture/gay venues (gay village)	21	24	55	
	Nightlife (bars, clubs and other entertainment)	25	29	46	
	Same-sex marriage laws	41	21	38	
	Gay/nude beach	46	19	35	
Gay event	49	20	31		

Culture and sights attributes

The first group, 'Culture and sights attributes', had six 'Salient pull factors' with more than 50% of respondents regarding these as important. Almost all respondents (90%) were attracted to Cape Town for its dramatic and beautiful landscape/scenery. This is of course Cape Town's number one selling point and together with one of the new seven global wonders of nature, Table Mountain (South African Tourism, 2012) as its backdrop, the destination offers the tourist a world of experiences, set in some of the most dramatic scenery to be seen anywhere in the world (Tebje & Ozinsky, 2004). Formica (2000:2) argued that



tourism has been defined as a “landscape industry”. Therefore, the importance attached to this attribute by respondents comes as no surprise.

Some two-thirds of respondents attached importance to the general tourist attractions/well-known tourist sites (70%) and beaches (65%). Despite classically being of the most important attributes in tourism literature on destination attributes (Turnbull & Uysal, 1995, Klenosky, 2002, Kassean & Gassita, 2013, Khuong & Ha, 2014) and Cape Town known as the ‘African Riviera’ (Pirie, 2007:4), it is surprising that these two attributes were not among the top five overall salient pull factors (cf. Table 2). More than half of respondents (59%) were attracted to Cape Town’s culture and history and its uniqueness as an African city respectively, while half (50%) of respondents were attracted to the nature and adventure offerings of the destination, including special interests such as hiking, shark-cage diving and abseiling. Although Cape Town is easily comparable to Western gay capitals, its ‘African-ness’ is unique (Oswin, 2005:577). Pirie (2007:7) argued that Cape Town is a “...nostalgic trip into the European past” and only marginally ‘African’, as the city is the only one in South Africa where black South Africans are in a demographic minority, thus offering a Westernised experience completely different from the rest of South Africa (Prayag, 2003:252). This was confirmed by one respondent who stated: “Cape Town is mentioned as a ‘unique’ African city – most will agree – it’s not really representative of South Africa or Africa, it’s more of a Eurocentric city in Africa.” Therefore, it seems that this unique attribute of Cape Town attracts gay travellers. The findings of the current study contradict those of Community Marketing Inc. (2011:5) which argued that gay individuals are much more likely to identify as “urban core travellers” than “outdoor adventure travellers”. As one respondent stated: “Cape Town dramatically outperformed Joburg and Pretoria in its adventure offering which was my main reason for visiting the Cape.” Therefore it is unlikely that more gay travellers could regard themselves as urban travellers, at least for the sample of this study, as 50% regarded the adventure attribute to be important.

Of slightly less importance in this category was to see wildlife and special animals, referring to the attraction of the Big Five safaris near Cape Town, as 40% attached importance to this attribute while 33% had no interest in seeing wildlife or special animals. This finding correlates with that of Clift and Forrest (1999) who found that 52% of gay men attached importance to this attribute when planning a holiday. The least important pull factor in the ‘Culture and sights attributes’ category is also the overall least important pull factor (cf. Table 2). Mainstream (general) events, such as the Cape Town Cycle Tour and the Two Ocean Marathon, seem to be the least sought-after attribute, with only 22% of respondents attaching importance to this attribute compared with 46% that attached no importance to mainstream events. Although events can create high levels of interest and involvement on the part of both visitors and residents, and some destinations pursue the development of events as a cornerstone of their competitive strategy (Crouch, 2007:27), this attribute does not seem to attract gay travellers to Cape Town and can therefore be regarded to be a ‘Weak pull factor’.

Comfort and relaxation attributes

The second group, ‘Comfort and relaxation attributes’, has five ‘Salient pull factors’ with more than 50% of respondents regarding these as important. Almost all (85%) respondents viewed a holiday in Cape Town as an opportunity to relax as they were attracted by the destination’s relaxing atmosphere, and a further 80% regarded the culinary offerings (local food, wine and restaurants) to be important. These findings are supported by Clift and Forrest (1999), Ersoy et al. (2012), and Apostolopoulou (2013) who all found that comfort/relaxation and good food are among the most popular pull factors for gay leisure travel. Although a relaxing atmosphere is an important attribute found in most mainstream tourism studies, hospitality services (e.g. food, beverages and restaurants) have traditionally only served a supporting role within the larger tourism industry, and despite being an essential component of the product mix, were not regarded as a strong enough pull factor to attract travellers (Smith, 2007:1). Smith and Costello (2009:46-47) argued that food is increasingly an important pull factor that attracts travellers to visit a particular destination for



the unique culinary experience offered. It would appear that the findings of the current study support Smith's (2007:1) notion regarding the increasing importance of food, as the culinary offerings of Cape Town is one of the most salient attributes (third overall important pull factor – cf. Table 2) that attracted gay travellers, an attribute they regarded more important than, for example, the climate/weather, supposedly a universally important destination attribute (Hu & Ritchie, 1993:32; Formica, 2000:39) to which 68% of respondents attached importance. This could be attributed to the fact that Cape Town was voted third in the Condé Nast Traveller World's Best Food Cities Readers' Choice Awards in 2015 (*Condé Nast Traveller*, 2015). This accolade, therefore, appears to draw gay travellers. Accessibility refers to the overall ease involved in getting to and into the destination and includes factors, among others, such as entry visas, route connections and airport capacities (Crouch, 2007:28). As more than half (53%) of the respondents regarded Cape Town's ease of access to be important, it can be regarded as another 'Salient pull factor'. Owing to the decrease in the price of international air travel, especially with the introduction of low-cost carriers, many developing long-haul destinations (such as South Africa) are becoming more accessible and more affordable (Sarker et al., 2012:162). South Africa has a favourable exchange rate providing value for money (Cohen, 2016), which Prayag (2003) and Zhou (2005) found to be one of the most important attributes international travellers considered when choosing Cape Town as a holiday destination. The current study supports this notion in that half (50%) of the respondents regarded the 'inexpensive' offering of Cape Town attractive and it would therefore appear to be a salient attribute for gay travellers too.

The 'comfort and relaxation attributes' that were less important were common attributes easily accessible in the travellers' home environments such as shopping, which was important to 43% of respondents, while 28% did not regard this attribute to be important. This finding is comparable to that of Prayag (2003:198) who found that 43% of mainstream travellers to Cape Town regarded shopping as an important attribute when selecting Cape Town as a holiday destination. Therefore, it would appear that gay travellers attached the same level of importance to shopping as mainstream travellers. Accommodation is one of the most basic requirements for making a traveller's stay a pleasant one (Gie, 2011:7), and is part of the built environment of a destination designed primarily to serve tourists. It can be an important element of the destination's attractiveness (Crouch, 2007:27-28). For the current study, less than half (40%) of the respondents were attracted to the destination's unique accommodation offering, while a third (31%) did not regard this to be an important attribute.

The least important attribute in the 'comfort and relaxation' category was another common attribute easily accessible in the travellers' home environment. Only 26% of respondents viewed sport/exercise and wellness facilities as important, while half (49%) regarded them as unimportant; this can therefore be considered a 'Weak pull factor'. This particular attribute's importance differs across various studies. Oh et al. (1995), Sirakaya and McLellan (1997) and Klenosky (2002) found this pull factor to be an important destination attribute for mainstream travellers; Clift and Forrest (1999) found that 34% of gay men attached importance to this attribute, while 66% attached no importance to it. Therefore, the findings of this study support those of Clift and Forrest (1999), but it would be inaccurate to confirm that sport/exercise and wellness facilities are unimportant to all gay travellers as Thinley (2008) and Kassean and Gassita (2013) found that sport, fitness and wellness facilities were not important destination attributes for mainstream travellers visiting Bhutan and Mauritius respectively. Therefore, it can be assumed that this attribute might be important for *some* gay travellers and might even be more important depending on the destination.

Gay-related attributes

The third category, 'Gay-related attributes', had four 'Salient pull factors' with more than 50% of respondents regarding these as important. 'Gay friendliness' and tolerance (friendliness of locals towards gays) might serve as an attribute attracting gay travellers to Cape Town given the destination's 'gay-friendly' reputation and gay-tolerant society (Cock, 2002:35). More than two-thirds (68%) were attracted to Cape Town's 'gay-friendly' environment and friendliness of locals towards gay individuals, while only 11%



attached no importance to this attribute. This finding correlates with that of Melián-González et al. (2011:1032), who found that 70% of their study sample attached importance to the 'gay-friendly' environment of Gran Canaria. Blichfeldt et al. (2011:9) and Retnam (2012:41) found that 'gay friendliness' was not an important consideration for their study samples, as many of the respondents felt that their sexual orientation had no relevance to their holiday decision-making process. Surprisingly, despite a large majority (89%) of the current study's respondents being open about their sexuality in their home environments, and a further 72% classifying their home environments as liberal, most regarded the 'gay-friendly' environment of the destination to be important, suggesting that gay travellers' travel behaviour are indeed influenced by their sexuality, thereby contradicting the argument of Blichfeldt et al. (2011:9) and Retnam (2012:41) that gay travellers were not influenced by their sexuality on holidays.

The need for safety represents a primary motivational force behind human behaviour (Crouch, 2007:32) and is another universally important pull factor in destination selection (Hu & Ritchie, 1993:32) and evident in most mainstream studies on tourism destination attributes (Zhou, 2005; Khuong & Ha, 2014). Although travelling may present obvious risks for all travellers, gay travellers are particularly vulnerable in unfamiliar places owing to the threat of harassment, disapproval, verbal or physical abuse, discrimination and even criminalisation initiated by destinations that oppose homosexuality (Hughes, 2005:57). Two-thirds (66%) of respondents attached importance to Cape Town's safety and security related to their personal safety and can therefore be considered a 'Salient pull factor'. Equally important as the attribute of safety was Cape Town's diversity and cosmopolitan reputation, as 66% of respondents attached importance to this attribute. Cape Town is known to be a cosmopolitan city (UNWTO, 2012:23) with a diverse ethnic mosaic comprising various cultural traditions and lifestyles (Zhou, 2005:35) and located in a country that has a progressive democracy that acts with sensitivity and tolerance towards diversity (Tebje & Ozinsky, 2004). Hughes (2006:176) argues that "... cosmopolitanism is associated with acceptance of difference, whether that is of ethnicity or sexuality", and is therefore one of the 'Salient pull factors' attracting gay travellers to Cape Town.

Pritchard et al. (2000:274-275), Retnam (2012:41-42) and Fimiani (2014:38) argued that 'gay space' is a critical requirement in order to attract gay travellers, and is particularly important for those who hid their sexuality at home and as Hughes and Deutsch (2010:456) argue, if companionship is limited at home. Blichfeldt et al. (2013), however, contradict these findings and claim that the literature may be over-emphasising the significance of 'gay space' for gay holidays, although they acknowledged the fact that their study samples were drawn from Western gays who could regularly socialise in the ample 'gay spaces' in their home environments, and therefore might have a lesser need to experience these spaces on holiday. It has also been argued that the post-modern gay generation see no need to codify exclusionary 'gay spaces' (Nash, 2013:249; Visser, 2014:477), as heterosexual spaces increasingly welcome a comfortably mixed following (Rink, 2013:82). It is however clear from the findings of this study that the local gay culture and gay venues of Cape Town were important to more than half (55%) of the respondents, despite the fact that most respondents (72%) travelled from open-minded large cities with a variety of gay life and venues and were open about their sexuality in their home environments (89%).

The 'Gay-related attributes' category had four 'Weak pull factors' with less than 50% of respondents regarding these as important and therefore appear to be unimportant in varying degrees. Cliff and Forrest (1999:620) and Hughes (2002:306) found nightlife at a destination to be an important pull factor for gay men. Melián-González et al. (2011:1034) concluded that nightlife was a critical success factor for gay sun and beach tourism destinations. The current study contradicts the findings of Melián-González et al. (2011:1034) as it was found that less than half (46%) of respondents attached importance to Cape Town's nightlife, and therefore not a critical success factor, while 25% did not regard this attribute to be important. This attribute is not exclusive to gay travellers and the importance level varies across mainstream tourism studies (Formica, 2000; Prayag, 2003; Zhou, 2005; Kassean & Gassita, 2013).



Same-sex marriage laws could be an attribute attracting gay travellers to Cape Town, as South Africa is the only country on the African continent in which same-sex marriages are legal (Abbott, 2012; Burns, 2012:22). This attribute was important to 38% of respondents, while 41% attached no importance to it. Although lower in importance when compared with the other pull factors, and being categorised as a 'Weak pull factor', it has to be noted that this was an important attribute to more than a third of the study sample suggesting that a gay wedding niche market exists for Cape Town. Therefore, this study supports Hughes's (2006:135) argument that owing to gay marriages and/or civil partnerships being possible in only a few destinations, same-sex marriage laws may be regarded as an important pull factor, although not one of the most important attributes that pull gay travellers to Cape Town. Cape Town's Clifton 3rd Beach has specifically been named as one of the top ten global gay beaches (Raymundo, 2010), while Sandy Bay Beach, Cape Town's only nudist beach (Murphy, 2007:426), has been rated one of the most beautiful nudist beaches in the world (Harrison, 2005:44). The gay/nude beach was an important pull factor for about a third (35%) of respondents and ranked significantly lower than the mainstream beaches (cf. Table 2). Therefore, it can be confirmed that these two particular beaches serve as a specific attribute that attract *some* gay travellers, although not all, as almost half of respondents (46%) attached no importance to this attribute.

Much of the literature on gay travel points to events/festivals being a crucial component for a successful gay or 'gay-friendly' destination (Pritchard et al., 1998:277; Visser, 2003:176; Tourism Northern Ontario, 2014:147) and influence the development of these destinations and their popularity among gay travellers (Verdugo, 2010:9). Despite Cape Town's numerous gay events/festivals, this pull factor seems to be the least important (31%) in attracting gay travellers in the 'gay-related attribute' category. In addition, this pull factor was unimportant to almost half (49%) of respondents. Therefore, this study supports the findings of Thomsen (2008:59); Köllen and Lazar (2012:66) and Retnam (2012:40) in that not all gay travellers are attracted to gay events/festivals. However, given that almost a third of respondents were attracted to the gay events/festivals, it could be argued that this pull factor is important to at least *some* gay travellers.

Comparisons of push and pull factors

More than a quarter (28%) of the study sample originated from conservative environments with very few if any gay life and venues, and could therefore be regarded as heteronormative home environments. It was important not to make conclusions based on Westernised perspectives only, as a majority of respondents to this study originated from large liberal cities in the Western world. It was therefore necessary to determine if the place in which respondents resided at home (i.e. conservative versus liberal environment) had a significant influence on their push and pull motivations as some gay travellers might have very different travel motivations depending on the situation and circumstances in their home environments. Chi-squared tests were conducted and revealed a statistically significant difference for one of the push factors ($p < 0.05$) among respondents travelling from a conservative environment and those travelling from a liberal environment, while none of the pull factors revealed significant differences ($p > 0.05$). To 'escape from disapproving society to freely express gay identity' ($p = 0.001$) was significantly more important to those travelling from a conservative home environment compared with those that travelled from a liberal environment.

Similarly, Chi-squared tests revealed statistically significant differences among those that were open and those that concealed their sexuality ($p < 0.05$). These differences, apart from one push factor, had surprisingly little relevance to sexuality. Travellers who concealed their sexuality attached significantly more importance to push factors 'to enrich myself intellectually/learn something new' ($p = 0.009$), 'nostalgia' ($p = 0.007$) and 'to escape from disapproving society to freely express gay identity' ($p = 0.025$). Furthermore, the pull factors 'mainstream event' ($p = 0.000$) and 'cost/value for money' ($p = 0.019$) were also significantly more important to those who concealed their sexuality when compared with those who were open about



their sexuality, while travellers who were open about their sexuality attached more importance to Cape Town's 'dramatic/beautiful landscape and scenery' ($p = 0.005$).

This study therefore supports Hughes's (2006:56), Ballegaard and Chor's (2009:48) and Köllen and Lazar's (2012:66) argument that the need to escape heteronormativity depends on the extent to which the individual lives an openly gay lifestyle, as those concealing their sexuality have a particular need to escape the tension and burdens brought about by their conservative home environments. This study further supports Clift and Forrest's (1999:623) and Herrera and Scott's (2005:249) findings in that this need for escape applied to gay individuals who lived in conservative environments that had a limited or no obvious gay community or 'gay space'. In addition, this study does not support Clift and Forrest's (1999:616), Carolan's (2007:36) or Hughes and Deutsch's (2010:456) argument that those living in conservative environments and those concealing their sexuality travel in pursuit of sex. No statistically significant differences were found between the need to travel for sex and those concealing their sexuality or those travelling from conservative environments.

Conclusions and implications for destination marketing

This study used the push-pull framework to determine the most salient motivations of gay travellers in an African context. Of the prior research that has examined push and pull factors, few have examined them in an African context (Awaritefe, 2004; Zhou, 2005; Prayag, 2010; Kassean & Gassita, 2013), while none has examined the push and pull factors of gay travellers to African destinations such as Cape Town, a destination that has received less interest as a tourism destination in the academic literature (Prayag, 2010:11). Thinley (2008:6) argued that the success of marketing destinations should be in line with tourists' motivations. Therefore, the findings of this study can improve the knowledge of tourism stakeholders in Cape Town and contribute to the destination's marketing plan now that they know the profile of gay travellers and understand gay travellers' behaviour. The findings suggest that gay travellers to Cape Town are upscale professionals, who did not want children and will therefore have more discretionary income and time to spend on services and products such as travel and entertainment (UNWTO, 2017:42). In addition, the absence of children allows for flexibility and enables them to travel at any desired time. Furthermore, they are loyal travellers as they have very high rates of future revisit and recommendation intentions, thereby making the gay traveller the ideal target market for Cape Town.

The salient push motivations at the core of gay travel motivation in this study were physiological needs (i.e. opportunities for rest and relaxation, escape from everyday life/daily routine), knowledge needs (i.e. novelty and intellectual enrichment), and belonging needs (i.e. enhancement of kinship relationships), suggesting that the most salient factors that push gay individuals to travel were in fact comparable with those of mainstream travellers. The salient pull motivations in the 'Culture and sights attributes' category included Cape Town's dramatic/beautiful landscape and scenery, general tourist attractions, beaches, unique 'African' city, culture and history, and the nature/adventure offering. The salient pull factors in the 'Comfort and relaxation attributes' category included a relaxing atmosphere, local food and wine, climate/weather, ease of access and value for money. In terms of the 'Gay related attributes' category, gay travellers were pulled by a gay-friendly environment, their personal safety in the destination, the diverse and cosmopolitan reputation and the local gay culture/gay venues, suggesting that some gay travellers' travel behaviour, in particular their pull motivations, are influenced by their sexuality.

It is suggested that the salient push and pull motivations should be used as a competitive advantage due to the intensifying competition among international 'gay-friendly destinations'. Furthermore, gay travel agents and tour operators may be encouraged by these findings to consider offering a more diverse range of tourism experiences to gay travellers as opposed to the "gay stereotypical holidays" characterised by partying, promiscuity and the pursuit of sexual encounters (Canavan, 2015:3). Resources should be devoted to developing a well-organised travel package that resembles the most salient pull attributes, i.e.



sightseeing and visiting general tourist attractions in a safe, relaxing and gay-friendly environment. In particular, the culinary offerings (food and wine) 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 De Waterkant gay village as gay travellers are also interested in the gay culture/village of the destination. The promotional message should match the most salient socio-psychological needs (push motivations), i.e. Cape Town provides the ideal opportunity to escape from a mundane home environment, a destination that rejuvenates itself by continuously offering new and exiting things to do, a place to meet new and old friends, and a place where one can learn something new.

Limitations and recommendations for further research

Respondents self-selected to participate in this study, and findings may therefore be biased towards gay individuals that self-identify as such, resulting in those who 'hide' their sexual orientation being under represented. In addition, only gay travellers who were Internet-users were included for this study. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to the whole gay population. As the profile of gay travellers to Cape Town revealed by the sample may not be typical of those to other tourism destinations, further research with different samples of gay travellers is recommended. This study may, therefore, be replicated (and adapted where required) at a selection of other destinations popular among gay travellers. A comparison of the motivations for gay leisure travellers to different destinations would then be possible.

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