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GAY TOURISM IN MANZANILLO, COLIMA: PUSH AND PULL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL THROUGH CROMPTON MODEL

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Abstract:

Internationally, gay or LGBT tourism represents a potential market of 180 million people and an annual expense in the tourism industry of 200 billion dollars. In addition to this, gay tourism grows at a rate of 10.4% each year, more than double of conventional tourism.

Mexico is already taking some actions to take advantage of the opportunity represented by attracting this new type of market. However, Manzanillo has been a tourist destination that has not joined the actions carried out by the Ministry of Tourism to become a gay-friendly destination.

The objective of this study is to analyze the current situation in Manzanillo regarding gay tourism; to identify actions taken and the reasons why it has not yet developed. To this end, the research question is as follows: Why is Manzanillo not considered a gay-friendly destination and what strategies can be carried out to achieve it?

The question is answered through research carried out with a mixed approach methodology, the empirical method complemented by the method of analysis of surveys and interviews.

The responses received show that Manzanillo is not considered a gay-friendly destination because it does not have a tourist offer destined for this market segment, but despite this, it has the potential to become a pink destination.

Taking the above into account, five strategies were carried out as a proposal to diversify the tourist offer of Manzanillo with the creation of activities and establishments destined for gay tourists.

Keywords:

gay tourism, gay-friendly destination, tourist offer

JEL Classification: L83

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Introduction

It is important to mention the concept of tourism to contextualize the subject in this segment. The World Tourism Organization (2007) defines tourism as a social, cultural and economic phenomenon related to the movement of people to places outside their regular residence place for personal or business reasons where they perform activities implying a touristic expense.

Taking the definition above and according to the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (2018), LGBT tourism is defined as the development and commercialization of services and products for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

The moment when the LGBT tourism started cannot be specified because it is an activity carried out throughout decades in the past, the difference is that, as LGBT rights and global acknowledgement have grown, the community is obtaining more visibility and, therefore, specialized products, associations and destinations have been created in the industry, starting the LGBT tourism.

One of the first acknowledgements to this sector as one with specific needs, was the creation of publications directed to male gay travelers. In 1964, the first publication on this, was the travel guide for homosexual men, "The Damron Address", published by the Damron company in the United States, followed by the "Spartacus International Gay Guide" written in Germany in 1970 (UNWTO, 2017).

It is also important to mention, for the LGBT tourism, a substantial liberation moment for the community rights in 1969, the Stonewall riots in New York as these started a global movement for the community rights along with the appearance of pride-themed tourism. Events of WorldPride, activism and celebration, as well as several festivals that aim at promoting LGBT equality and raising awareness of the rights attract tourists (UNWTO, 2017).

In 1973, Hanns Ebensten, considered the father of homosexual travels, went on a tour for the first time: a trip through the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. Nowadays, there is a great number of specialized agents and tour operators that take LGBT people on excursions around the world (UNWTO, 2017).

The WTO (2017) mentions that during the 1980s, due to the increasing visibility of the community, authorities of some of the main destinations decided to form LGBT chambers of commerce that would carry out touristic marketing activities. Gradually, more countries have followed this type of strategies, with touristic boards implementing marketing campaigns, creating websites for LGBT customers and associating with entrepreneurs to develop specialized products for these travelers.

In 1983, a group of travel agents founded the International Gay Travel Association (IGTA), in Florida, then the "L" was added in 1997, becoming the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA). Currently, it is an association with presence all around the globe and its members include companies from more than 70 countries, from housings, travel agencies, tour operators to media and LGBT-friendly events (UNWTO, 2017).

The Association reached a new level of relevance in 2010, after becoming the first LGBT organization affiliated member of the World Tourism Organization. Two years later, the nonprofit Foundation IGLTA is created, this foundation supports initiatives for organizations of the industry, companies and communities to promote LGBT tourism around the globe.

As social acceptance and the enjoyment of rights of the group grow, there is also an increase in tourism, a clear example of this is the wedding-based tourism, from 2001, when the Netherlands became the first country to legalize same-sex marriage, the list of countries where this was legal continued to grow, this turned out advantageous to the tourism industry as wedding destinations and honeymoon celebrations also increased.

The present research paper is an analysis of the potential that Manzanillo holds to develop as a gay-friendly destination providing such destination has achieved advances favoring the LGBT+ community throughout recent years, nonetheless, visitors prefer other sun-and-beach destinations, disregarding Manzanillo as the main option to visit.

The above mentioned is due to different factors, such as the lack of innovation of new tourist products and personnel training, making Manzanillo an unattractive destination for this segment of tourists.

Nowadays, tourism has developed exceptionally, this is why many destinations prefer doing research on the travelers' tastes and preferences to persuade them visit such destination, regarding the LGBT+ community a noteworthy segment. Destinations like Puerto Vallarta outstanding CDMX, Guadalajara, Morelos, among others have been forerunners in Mexico as favorites to this community.

This article will present the theoretical-conceptual framework related to LGBT tourism, the LGBT+ community, and its relation to human rights, in addition to the theory of Crompton, which was used to carry out the research.

The methodology used in the research was empirical, with a mixed approach, the sample to apply surveys was established, and the designs of instruments to gather information were included to determine the potential of this segment in Manzanillo.

Throughout the development of this research the question to be answered was: why is Manzanillo not considered a gay-friendly destination and what strategies can be carried out to achieve this?

The most relevant results and proposals are detailed, and some proposals are made, targeted to attracting the gay segment of tourism to Manzanillo, finally, conclusions are made, referring to gay tourism.

1. Gay tourism now

Gay tourism emerged in the mid-60s with the appearance of the first guide of gay tourism,

“Damron Men’s Travel Guide”, which provides homosexual men with information about gay-friendly establishments. From that moment, gay trips started to get promoted in different gay magazines and newspapers. By the eighties, LGBT trips rose as different nations provided equality to same-sex couples (Chaudhri, 2017).

Tourism is a complex phenomenon continuously changing and looking for innovation. In order for a destination to be considered competitive in the market, it must be up to date in account of innovations developed each year.

One of the strongest trends is gay tourism, which is considered a developing market, with a segment a lot of countries have decided to target.

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA), this is one of the markets with highest growth in the world with nearly 35 million arrivals of international tourists in 2016, they count with a high acquisitive level and curiosity to know new destinations and cultures, according to the Mexican Secretary of Tourism (SECTUR, 2018).

On the word of the World Travel and Tourism Council, LGBT tourism moves more than 10% of tourists globally and it is estimated to produce an economic spillover of 185 billion dollars each year.

1.1 Gay tourism in Mexico

In a report, the Mexican Secretary of Tourism emphasizes that Mexico has been endorsing actions to become a first choice destination for tourists belonging to the LGBT+ community, such as the innovation of new tourist products, training and recognizing the service providers that are specialized in this niche market and formalizing the membership of the Tourism Promotion Council to the IGLTA in 2015. Nearly 3.5 million tourists belonging to this segment are received in Mexico every year (SECTUR, 2018).

A reference for this industry is the state of Morelos, which stands out for its efforts of inclusion and LGBT tourist offer. In 2017, the Secretary of Tourism organized a familiarization trip around the state for tourist operators in the LGBT segment, to know the sites, the personnel qualified for this labor and the attractions found in some of Morelos' destinations (Informador, 2018).

It is important to mention that Mexico counts with eight destinations preferred by gay tourists and that count with a great variety of gay-friendly certified establishments, with an open acceptance of the LGBT+ community members and that hold different interesting events for gay tourists, these are: Guadalajara, CDMX, Morelos, Puerto Vallarta, Cancún, Oaxaca, Acapulco y Veracruz.

1.2 Gay tourism in Manzanillo

According to Alexis Plascencia Salmerón, president of the Consultative Council of the State Committee of Sexual Diversity from Colima (in Spanish: Consejo Consultivo del Comité Estatal de Diversidad Sexual de Colima), the state has great potential to become one of the most favored gay destinations, highlighting that, inside the state of Colima, Manzanillo is the destination that has achieved the most advances in this matter, although they have kept a low profile, and gay-friendly hotels do not comment on it openly (AFmedios, 2013).

It is also relevant to mention that in 2019, events aimed at the LGBT+ community have been held in the municipality, such as the first Pride March, supported by the local government and carried out on June 22, also, on October 5 a party called "Pool Party LGBTTTTI" was held in the Plaza Tucanes hotel, this could be the first step towards the creation of different events of interest for LGBT tourists provided that it shows there is motivation to carry out activities destined for the community and to draw tourists' attention.

Although this destination counts with tourist attractions ideal to be offered to gay tourists, it lacks in gay-friendly certified establishments and service providers to take care of this market segment,

adding to the little initiative from the public and private sector to hold events of interest to attract tourists belonging to the community.

2. Theoretical-methodological framework

2.1 Crompton's theory

The Crompton Model (1979) has been chosen for the development of this research, according to this model, tourists travel because they are moved either by internal motives or because they are attracted by external motives related to the destination. These motives are denominated push factors and are related to the tourist's internal and emotional aspects, such as the desire for escaping their routine, resting and relaxing, adventure activities or social interaction. Pull factors, on the other hand, are related to external, cognitive and situational aspects, such as the destination's attractions, its recreative setups, the natural and cultural settings or the activities it has to offer.

According to Crompton (1979) motivations are classified into two groups: psychosociological and cultural, which are all at once subdivided into other more specific motivations shown in the following table.

Table 1. Crompton's classification of the motivations

Psychosociological motivations (push factors)	
Escape from the regular environment	Consists on a temporal change of the ambiance from the residence place, home or work environment, i.e., the tourist seeks for a destination different from the regular environment.
Self- exploration and evaluation	From the tourist's perspective, the trip is taken as an opportunity to both, explore their own identity and discover themselves, also put images of themselves into practice together with an evaluation of themselves.
Relaxation	It refers, more than physical relaxation, to the mental relaxation derived, for example, from hobbies and interests that cannot be performed in a day-to-day basis. Some tourists even express having less energy after them.
Prestige	Although the access to means of transportation has become more available and tourism has been more generalized, traveling supposes a

	high lifestyle and the status associated to it is increasingly uncertain.
Regression	It is presented in two ways: 1. Breaking with daily-to-day life roles and responsibilities, which enables a more irrational and teenage-like behavior and 2. tourists can be motivated by the desire of going back to an age where their lifestyle was simpler.
Enhancement of kinship relationships	Traveling represents a good opportunity to reunite with family members and enrich their relationships.
Facilitation of social interaction	There are people-oriented trips, rather than the traditional destination-oriented. Vacation periods are a good time to meet new people and to exchange opinions, expand the number of social contacts or to simply enjoy the company of people outside family.
Cultural motivations (pull factors)	
Novelty	Identified as the curiosity, the adventure, the search for what is new and different, and most of all, in the sense of experiencing something new. Nonetheless, there are some cases where tourists choose a familiar destination: 1. they can be individuals trying to satisfy psychosociological needs more than cultural motives. 2. They adopt a conservative strategy to reduce the risk of not being as satisfied by an unknown destination. 3. They can be conditioned by their fear of the unknown.
Education	Traveling is a form of both, satisfying educational needs and acquiring cultural baggage, and knowing those places, particularly those accessible, is almost considered an obligation.

Source: Crompton (1979) adapted from Castaño (2005).

2.2 Mixed methodology

For purpose of this research, the research type used was empirical, with a mixed approach as quantitative and qualitative data were collected to obtain the results of the study.

According to (Cruz, 2018), empirical research refers to any research founded either on experimentation or observation, generally conducted to answering a specific question or hypothesis.

As stated by (Hernández, Méndez , & Mendoza, 2014), proving a theory through two different methods, more reliable results can be obtained. Although this is still a controversial approach, its expansion has been considerable in recent years.

As a first step, documented information about gay tourism was gathered at international, national and statewide levels, focused at municipal level afterwards, so as to recognize the state in question to know what has been done related to the research subject, based upon this, a proposal has been presented with the purpose of generating new knowledge.

The next step was the collection of information through different instruments, such as surveys and observation to obtain specific requirements of information. The surveys were applied to tourists visiting Manzanillo to know their interest in the gay tourism segment.

2.2.1 Extraction of sample for surveys applied to visitors

Here, the procedure to obtain the sample size is presented. The data were obtained via DataTur, the attendance statistics of tourist influx from 2018. A sample of 73 surveys applied to tourists was obtained through the formula

$$n = \frac{N \times Z_a^2 \times p \times q}{d^2 \times (N - 1) + Z_a^2 \times p \times q}$$

Where the formula has the following meanings:

N= Target population

Zx= Trust level 90%=1.645

P= Success probability =1 95%=1.96

Q= Failure probability =1 99%=2.575

D= Standard deviation/maximum error allowed

To be substituted with these data:

N= 1, 294,460

Zx= 99%

P= 0.99

Q= 0.01

D= 0.03

Trust level

.

Resulting in:

$$N = \frac{1,294,460(2.575)^2(0.99)(0.01)}{(0.03)^2(1,294,460 - 1) + (2.575)^2(0.99)(0.01)}$$

$$N = \frac{1,294,460(6.630625)(0.0099)}{(0.0009)(1,294,459) + (6.630625)(0.0099)}$$

$$N = \frac{1,294,460(0.0656431875)}{1,165.0131 + 0.0656431875}$$

$$N = \frac{84,972.48049125}{1,165.0787431875}$$

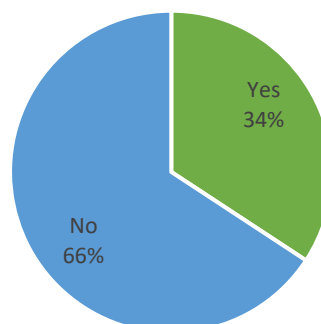
As a result, the sample obtained is: $N = 72.9328$

3. Analysis and interpretation of results

The collection of information was carried out through an online survey to tourists visiting the municipality of Manzanillo. The study is based on a sample of 73 tourists, the analysis and noticeable results will be presented hereafter.

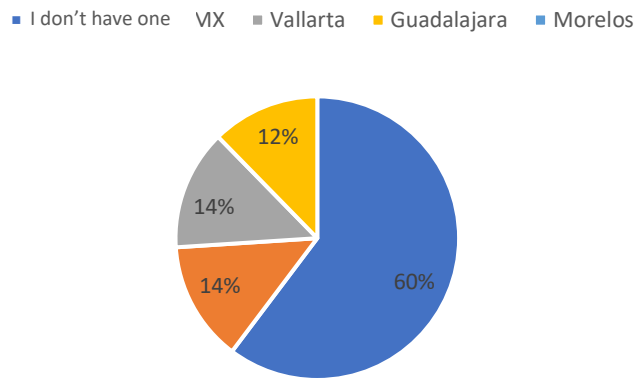
It was found that, from the people surveyed for this research, only 34% consider themselves members of the LGBT+ community, from which 12 were men, 12 women and one transsexual.

Figure 1. LGBT+ community members



Source: Author's own creation.

Figure 2. Favorite gay-friendly destination



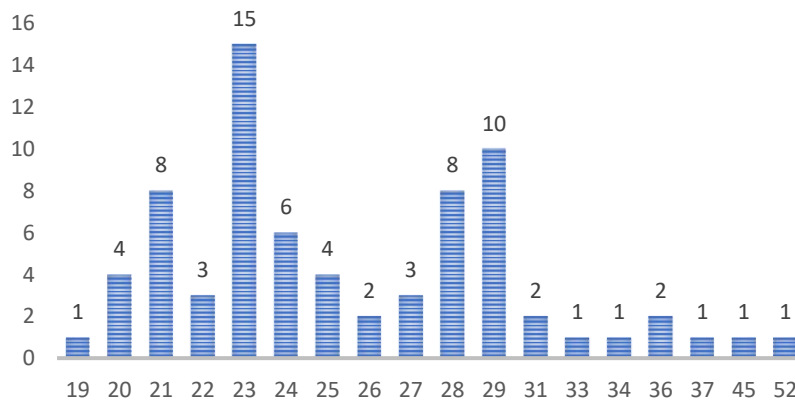
Source: Author's own creation.

The cities of Vallarta and CDMX are the favorite gay-friendly destinations as they were voted 14% each.

It can be inferred that 60% of those people who mentioned not to have a favorite destination are the same participants who did not identify themselves as members of the LGBT+ community.

It is suitable to mention that the age range is between 23 and 29 years old, provided that most of the participants were around these ages, as shown in the chart, this can be used to identify the target public of gay tourism, this could be a potential market or a target market, consistent with Figure 3.

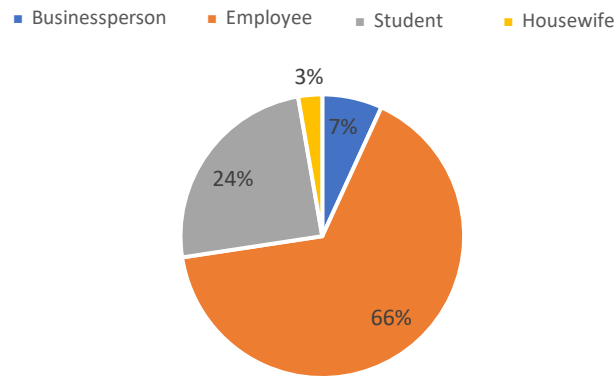
Figure 3. Tourists ages



Source: Author's own creation.

66% of the participants are employees, this is equivalent to 48 people from the total amount of those surveyed, taking this into account, it can be inferred that a high percentage of the participants count with a fixed economical income, thus, it can be implied that they can go on vacation only during certain seasons per year

Figure 4. Occupations

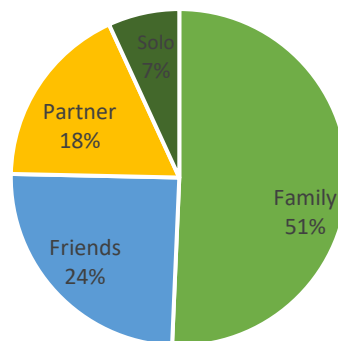


Source: Author's own creation.

According to the third government report of 2013, tourists perceive Manzanillo as a destination mostly visited by families.

In Figure 5, it can be observed that 51% of the surveyed people visit Manzanillo in the company of their families.

Figure 5. Companionship

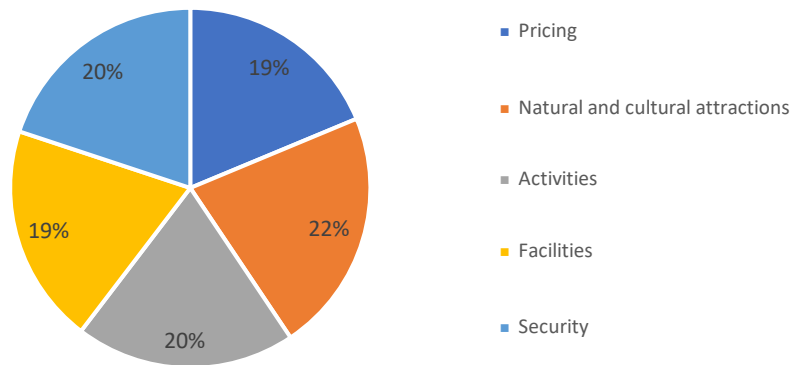


Source: Author's own creation.

The participants were requested to rate the following aspects according to the level of importance they give them when choosing a destination to visit, it is worth noting that, with a 22%, for most of the surveyed tourists natural and cultural attractions are the most important.

In proportion to the comparison, the municipality of Manzanillo has a shortcoming in the cultural aspect as it does not count with museums whatsoever, nor other fixed or itinerant cultural activities.

Figure 6. Aspects to consider when choosing a destination to visit

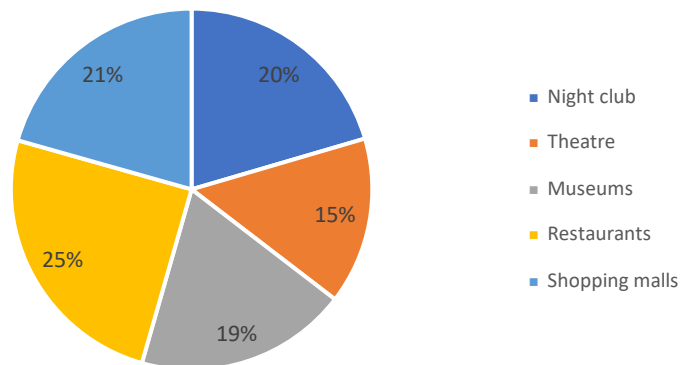


Source: Author's own creation.

Manzanillo possesses a wide variety of establishments offering food and drink services, about 50 restaurant and 13 bars as well as two shopping plazas (SECTUR, 2015).

Doing a comparison with Figure 7, the surveyed tourists find restaurants to be the most interesting, with 25% of the votes, followed by shopping malls and night clubs with 21 and 20% respectively.

Figure 7. Sites of interest to visit during the trip

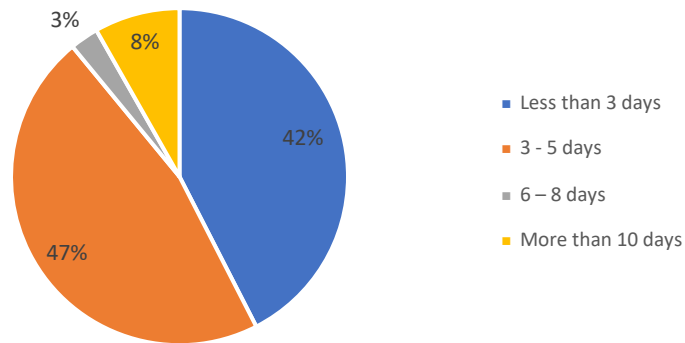


Source: Author's own creation.

In accordance with the touristic competitive agenda (2013), the calculated average stay for Manzanillo's municipality is 2.5 days.

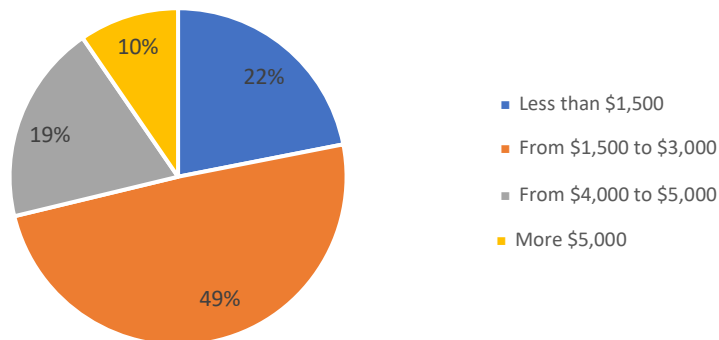
The approximate days of stay during a visit to Manzanillo for the surveyed participants is around 3 to 5 days as can be observed in the following chart with a 47% value which demonstrates their stay goes beyond the average value during their visits.

Figure 8. Days of stay in Manzanillo per visit



Source: Author's own creation.

Figure 9. Approximate expense during their stay in Manzanillo

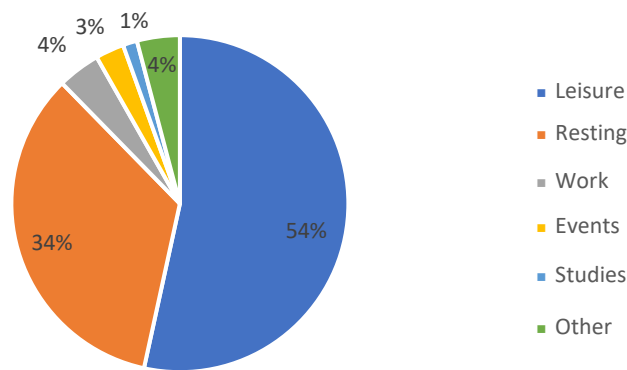


Source: Author's own creation.

The third government report from 2013 showed that the average expense per tourist in Manzanillo is around \$1,740.55 Mexican pesos.

The data obtained from the survey indicates that 49% of the participants have an approximate expense between \$1,500 and \$3,000 pesos. These values are within the range of the information provided in the government report.

Figure 10. Traveling motives to visit Manzanillo

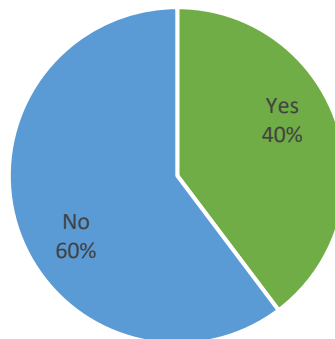


Source: Author's own creation.

With 37.9%, resting was the main motivation to travel in households, according to the National Survey of Tourism Expenditure in Households (Encuesta Nacional de Gasto Turístico en los Hogares (2013)), followed by visits to family and friends, with a 35.5%.

The main motive of the participants to visit Manzanillo was leisure with 54%, nevertheless, with a 34%, resting was the second motive with the highest number of votes, which would confirm the information from the National Survey of Tourism Expenditure.

Figure 11. Manzanillo identified as a gay-friendly destination



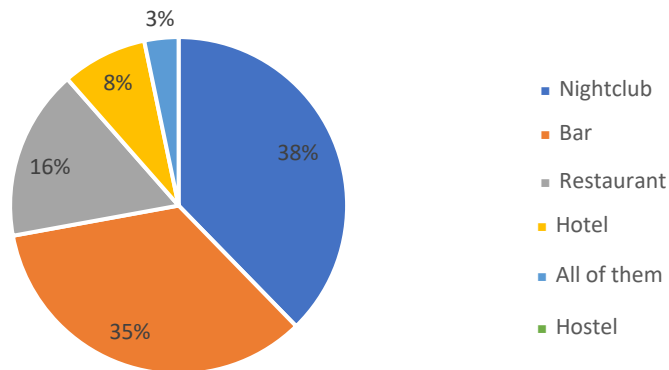
Source: Author's own creation.

60% of tourists surveyed consider Manzanillo cannot be identified as a gay-friendly destination due to the deficiency in the promotion to the gay tourist segment, along with the little interest in holding gay events to attract them, in addition to the shortage of certified gay-friendly spaces or facilities openly stating the acceptance of people belonging to the LGBT+ community and the lack of tolerance towards the community.

On the other hand, the remaining 40% of participants consider it actually is because there is tolerance and respect from the population, they have not witnessed any form of

discrimination acts towards people from the LGBT+ community and because the Pride March has been held.

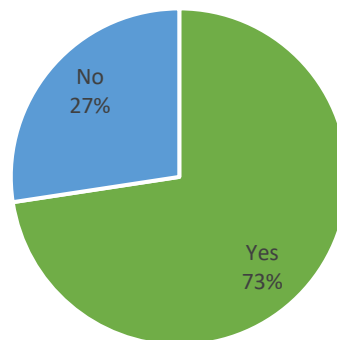
Figure 12. Desirable gay-friendly establishments to be open in Manzanillo



Source: Author's own creation.

With 38%, nightclubs were the most voted establishments by surveyed tourists, whereas restaurants occupied the second place with 35% of the votes, this is greatly related to the motivation when deciding to visit Manzanillo (see Figure 12).

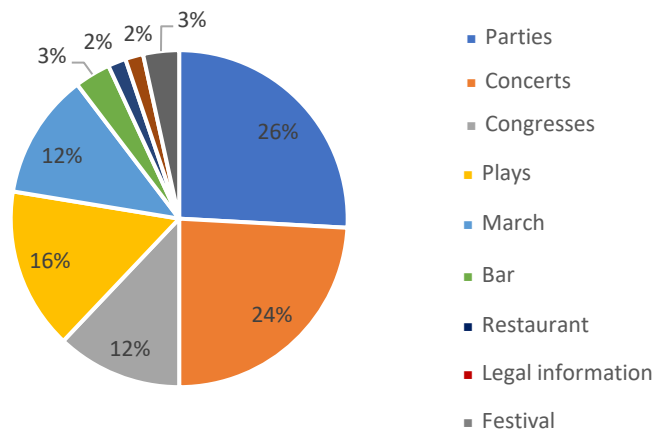
Figure 13. Acceptance of the creation of gay events in Manzanillo



Source: Author's own creation.

About 73% of the tourists surveyed agreed on the creation of gay events within the municipality of Manzanillo stating that this type of activities is essential to attract tourists to the destination and to have a wider variety in the offer of products and tourist service.

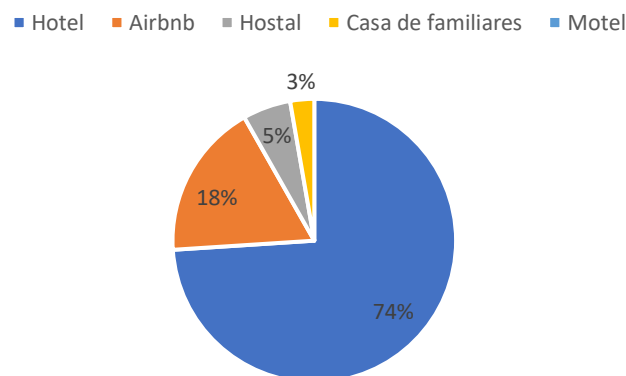
Figure 14. Desirable gay events to offer in Manzanillo



Source: Author's own creation.

Within the new types of events chosen, parties stand out with 26% of the votes along with concerts with 24%, this is related to tourists' traveling motivations beforehand mentioned, where the main motivation to visit Manzanillo is leisure, but it is worth noticing that if there were a hosting service fulfilling this characteristics, a wider-ranging service could be provided and more reserves could be obtained for the destination (see Figure 14).

Figure 15. Desirable hosting establishment in Manzanillo



Source: Author's own creation.

Amongst the hosting establishments for tourists, hotels were found to be the most desirable with a 74% of preference.

Manzanillo counts with a wide variety of hosting establishments, according to the National Tourism Registry, there are 7 5-star establishments, 20 4-star establishments and 34 3-star establishments, 20 2-star establishments and 34 1-star hotels, making a total of 115 establishments. It is worth mentioning that none of the establishments holds a gay-friendly certification.

4. Proposals

Based on the investigation carried out during this research project, the information obtained from the surveys and interviews was used to determine which strategies could be implemented in Manzanillo to diversify the destination's tourist offer and increase the consumer demand from the gay tourist segment, likewise, its positive and negative aspects were examined through an analysis.

As a base for the five proposals exposed in this section, the gay tourist profile was defined, based upon the documented information and the data obtained empirically.

Gay tourist profile

It is suitable to mention that, although the LGBT+ community has been referred to as a whole in some subjects previously developed in the document, the practical approach of this research work is exclusively toward male gay tourists, it has been decided this way because of time matters for the fulfillment of the research, as the LGBT+ community is quite extensive and tourists belonging to each identity of the community have their own needs, desires and different motivations.

Male gay tourists are the main profile inside the LGBT+ community, and they even were forerunners in the acknowledgement of gay tourism, since the first openly gay activities celebrated were destined for them.

The following table shows the most relevant characteristics found related to gay tourists:

Table 2. Gay tourist characteristics

Characteristic	Description
Age	According to the Observatorio Integral de la Región Turística de Puerto Vallarta (Puerto Vallarta Integral Observatory of the tourist region), (2017) the age range of gay visitors is between 35 and 50 years old.
Job	They are active in the workforce, mostly employees.
Educational level	This type of tourist is considered to have a medium-high level as most of them have a bachelor's or master's degree.
Income	Because of the educational level they possess, their annual income is above 120 thousand dollars (Dachary & Arnaiz, 2017).

Average expense during trips	According to the National Association of LGBT Tourism and Commerce (2018), they spend about \$765 dollars a day.
Means to travel	They usually travel accompanied by their friends or their significant other. It is also suitable to mention that they are tourists who usually travel with their pets.
Stay	Their average stay is 4-night long, accommodated in hotels or Airbnb, and traveling around during low seasons (SECTUR, 2018).
Motivations	A large percentage of tourists travel for leisure and resting motives.

Source: Author's own creation

The first proposal is the creation of a nightclub since it was the most desirable according to the surveys on gay-friendly establishments to open in Manzanillo. Because the leisure industry is a rising sector with lots of potential in Mexico, clients' needs grow and companies from this industry are forced to create strategies to achieve a proper function and thus guarantee their own permanence in the market.

NIGHTCLUB	
Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive to LGBT+ community members. • Expansion of the destination tourist offer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive target market • Consumers' preference for this type of establishments.
Weakness	Threat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having a strategic location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other bars and clubs in the destination.

Source: Author's own creation.

The next proposal is to carry out different theme events destined for the gay community from the municipality, which, without a doubt would motivate tourists to give themselves a chance to visit Manzanillo, in several destinations, the organization of events has helped the number

of tourists to grow exponentially each year. The secret lies in the variety of events, as they can attract quite different audiences. Here are some examples: concerts, diverse festivals, expositions, congresses and conventions. All this guarantees an exceptional attendance.

THEME EVENTS	
Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are one of the most demanded services in the country. • Capacity to attract masses • Wide locations near the beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set Manzanillo as a destination with a diverse tourist offer. • High occupancy from the visitors. • Manzanillo is Guadalajara nearest beach destination
Weaknesses	Threads
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of location for mass events • Little interest from businesspersons in holding such events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events suspension due to different motives. • Competitors' reaction.

Source: Author's own creation.

The third subject is same-sex wedding celebrations, this is one of the most profitable and solid proposals as Manzanillo is, nationally, the only sun-and-beach destination authorized to celebrate same-sex marriages, moreover, gay weddings represent a great opportunity to expand several businesses' client bases, not to mention the numerous service providers favored by the organization of these events, such as: real estate agencies, food industry, event planners, entertainment industry, photo studios, hotel industry, etcetera. Indirectly, many other economic sectors are benefited.

WEDDINGS	
Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouses' acquisitive power • Only sun-and-beach destination in the country authorized to celebrate formal weddings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manzanillo is Guadalajara nearest sun-and-beach destination. • High hotel occupancy from visitors. • Destination's tranquility
Weakness	Threats

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The destination is deep-rooted about satisfying families rather than couples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The destination's connectivity
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Source: Author's own creation.

The following proposal has its foundation in a comment from one of the surveyed participants that was judged significant by the research team, this person mentioned that, before proceeding to the organization of events or the gay-friendly certification of companies, it would be important the accessibility to a place where legal information related to supporting laws and the gay community rights in the destination were available, therefore, the proposal suggests the design of a website where the above mentioned information can be found, in addition to other relevant information about the destination, such as services of the food and drinks, accommodation services, natural and cultural attractions, coming events, among others.

The fourth proposal is a website design that could be implemented to attract the gay tourist segment to Manzanillo:

WEBSITE	
Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism-related TICs are maneuvered to promote the destination. • There are successful touristic pages intended for gay tourists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One instrument to attract tourists belonging to the gay segment. • It can be useful to any tourist interested in visiting Manzanillo.
Weakness	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no one in charge of updating and maintaining the website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It could be unattractive for tourists • Network related problems to access.

Source: Author's own creation.

Finally, to close this research, the last proposal consists of the organization of gay tours, there are success cases as is the case of Puerto Vallarta, where a wide variety of tours is offered for gay tourists, from food tasting to horseback ridings on the beach, night excursions consisting of tours to gay bars, and even cruises or romantic dinners, activities designed to be done as a couple, as a group when traveling with friends, or even just to meet new people.

This type of activities could be advantageous since a wider range of services would be offered and they are interesting activities for tourists from this segment.

GAY TOURS	
Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of activities for tourist offer. • Exploitation of natural and cultural attractions from the destination. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set Manzanillo as a destination with a diverse tourist offer. • Attract gay tourists through different seasons of the year.
Weakness	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of special guides for the tours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of tours due to diverse motives. • Tours resulting unattractive to tourists

Source: Author's own creation.

Conclusions

Making Manzanillo an openly gay destination is a big challenge, yet it is not impossible to achieve, nowadays, it is a fairly tolerant destination and tourists from the gay segment are interested in Manzanillo developing more toward this type of tourism.

Fortunately, it could be noted that the private sector has taken action to boost gay tourism, exclusively referring to hotel owners who are working towards the fulfillment of agreements with some associations that will train in hosting establishments to obtain gay-friendly certifications, alongside with the municipal government of Manzanillo to develop public politics.

Furthermore, some hotels have already decided to hold LGBT+ theme events awaiting others to join and to obtain better benefits from a segment favoring economic and social aspects in the destination, to additionally satisfy tourists' needs and offering the best possible experience during their stay.

The detected reasons why gay tourism has not totally developed within the destination lie in the following aspects: the first one is that Manzanillo is a destination that has been identified as familiar over time setting other specialized markets aside, such markets could be directed and persuaded in a favorable way.

Another aspect is the scarce training from service providers to attend this segment of the market, many of these providers face the setback of believing gay tourists must be treated differently from any other tourist and in an attempt to make them feel welcomed and special, they go beyond the limit, which actually lead tourists to feel uncomfortable.

Manzanillo possesses hotel facilities, natural attractions like their calm beaches, a wide variety of restaurants, and night life, but as for leisure and entertainment attractions, they

are scarce as are the leisure and entertainment activities, which is another significant aspect able to stop the touristic development in the destination, tourists search for new experiences and an extensive variety of places to go to when visiting a tourist destination.

Additionally, there is no promotion directed for gay tourists, no establishment promotes itself as openly gay-friendly and even the Secretary of Tourism focuses its promotions through different media on the family market.

Even when the LGBT+ community is gaining visibility, it can be stated that, in many parts of Mexico, this subject is still considered taboo to a certain degree, and Manzanillo is inside this box in some respects as its culture is rather conventional, for example, the municipality is not considered to be tolerant the LGBT+ community is not openly discussed due to the fear of other types of clients believing they will be seen as an exclusively gay-friendly establishment, and even some tourists mentioned having felt badly or inappropriately observed when entering some business with their significant other.

Finally, it can be perceived that there are more positive aspects around Manzanillo having potential to develop gay tourism, tourist services providers are not against attracting this segment and are even taking actions in order to achieve it, also, they are attracted to the trade that could come off though they do not take action. It worth mentioning that a lot of tourists from the community visit the destination for personal preference reasons disregarding its certification or lack of it, emphasizing the phrase "*el mayor distintivo es el que te da tu propio cliente*" roughly translated as "the highest distinction is the one given by your own client".

Conflict of Interest: None

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