

INCLUSIVE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MONTENEGRO STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES AND STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR LGBTQ+ MARKET GROWTH

RAZVOJ INKLUZIVNOG TURIZMA U CRNOJ GORI PERSPEKTIVE ZAINTERESOVANIH STRANA I STRATEŠKE PRILIKE ZA RAST LGBTQ+ TRŽIŠTA

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Abstract: *This study examines the potential to develop inclusive tourism in Montenegro, with a specific focus on the LGBTQ+ market segment. Based on a combination of secondary data analysis and primary qualitative research through interviews with key tourism stakeholders, the paper explores current levels of awareness, attitudes, and readiness for engaging with LGBTQ+ tourism. The findings reveal that stakeholders generally recognize the economic and social value of LGBTQ+ tourism, particularly through its association with high-spending travelers and destination diversification. However, significant structural and societal barriers remain, including limited institutional support, insufficient legal protections, a lack of targeted strategies, and prevailing social prejudices. Despite these challenges, the research highlights growing openness among tourism providers and identifies opportunities for strategic development through education, infrastructure improvement, and inclusive marketing approaches. The study emphasizes the need for a coordinated, multi-stakeholder strategy to position Montenegro as a welcoming and competitive destination for LGBTQ+ travelers. The paper contributes to the understanding of emerging inclusive tourism markets and provides a foundation for future policy-making and business strategies aimed at fostering sustainable and socially responsible tourism development.*

Keywords: *LGBTQ+ tourism, tourist destination, stakeholders, Montenegro.*

Сажетак: *Ова студија испитује потенцијал за развој инклузивног туризма у Црној Гори, са посебним фокусом на сегмент LGBTQ+ тржишта. На основу комбинације секундарне анализе података и примарних квалитативних истраживања кроз интервјуе са кључним актерима у туризму, рад истражује тренутне нивое свјести, ставова и спремности за ангажман у LGBTQ+ туризму. Налази показују да заинтересоване стране углавном препознају економску и друштвену вриједност*

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LGBTQ+ туризма, посебно његову повезаност са високо платежним путницима и диверзификацијом дестинација. Међутим, значајне структурне и друштвене препреке и даље постоје, укључујући ограничену институционалну подршку, недовољну правну заштиту, недостатак циљаних стратегија и превађајуће друштвене предрасуде. Упркос овим изазовима, истраживање истиче растућу отвореност међу туристичким пружаоцима и идентификује прилике за стратешки развој кроз образовање, унапређење инфраструктуре и инклузивне маркетиншке приступе. Студија наглашава потребу за координираном, „више stakeholderskom” стратегијом која ће позиционирати Црну Гору као гостољубиву и конкурентну дестинацију за LGBTQ+ путнике. Рад доприноси разумијевању нових тржишта инклузивног туризма и пружа основу за будуће креирање политика и пословне стратегије усмјерене на подстицање одрживог и друштвено одговорног развоја туризма.

Кључне речи: *LGBTQ+ туризам, туристичка дестинација, заинтересоване стране, Црна Гора.*

JEL Classification: *Z32.*

INTRODUCTION

LGBTQ+ tourism, as a rapidly growing tourist niche, is increasingly interesting, both in the market and as a socio-cultural phenomenon whose existence and development depend, among other things, on the degree of liberalization of society and the sense of security of the gay population in the destination (Lacmanović & Raspor, 2024b).

In the context of the study of LGBTQ+ tourism, as well as other phenomena related to it, the first problem that arises is the naming itself. In the scientific discourse, it is still not fully clarified what the terms gay and lesbian include, to what extent and for what purposes other terms such as queer, LGBTQ+, etc. are appropriate. Taking into account previous studies, as previously mentioned, there is a good opportunity to search for some aspects of LGBTQ+ tourism concerning the tourist destination Montenegro. Montenegro is a transitional society, and the acceptability of the mentioned type of travel can be a good basis for increasing inclusiveness both in tourism and in society in general.

The goal of the research is to gain insight into the state and perspectives of the LGBTQ+ tourist market concerning the possibilities of the tourist destination of Montenegro.

The paper offers preliminary research results as a description of the state of awareness regarding the mentioned type of tourism in Montenegro.

The purpose of the research is to form a starting platform for the implementation of the next steps in the institutional and economic environment (Lacmanović & Raspor, 2024b), and as a basis for the

development of a possible Program for the development of tourism offers for LGBTQ+ tourists in Montenegro.

The attitudes of key stakeholders in the tourist destination of Montenegro toward LGBTQ+ tourism were examined. The following key stakeholders were selected: the LGBTQ+ community, the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro, hotels, local tourist organizations, local self-government, restaurants and travel agencies. This was done for institutions, organizations or industries that are important concerning the possibilities of developing LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro. Twenty two representatives of the aforementioned organizations, institutions and activities were interviewed, which can be defined as an insufficient for more thorough conclusions, but sufficient number of respondents to describe the level of awareness regarding the possibility of LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro.

The results of the research are presented in the form of simple processed statements of respondents as an extended abstract regarding the state and perspective of LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro.

The main research question is: What are the attitudes of key stakeholders in the tourist destination of Montenegro regarding LGBTQ+ tourism?

The paper is structured into four chapters: introduction, literature review, research results and conclusion. Through the introduction, the subject and aim of the paper as well as the methodological framework and structure of the research, are presented. The first chapter presents theoretical backgrounds and new research in the domain of LGBTQ+ tourism. The second chapter deals with methodological notes and research results. The conclusion points to the main research implications and offers some important conclusions for the tourism industry in Montenegro.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Tourism aimed at the gay population is a dynamic and colourful phenomenon. The definition of gay tourism is quite complex; however, it is generally described as a form of specific tourism related to the development and marketing of tourism products and services intended for lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other LGBTQ+ people (UNWTO & IGLTA, 2017; Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021). LGBTQ+ travelers are the target group for some products and services, such as wedding trips and ceremonies for same-sex couples, or exclusive arrangements and tours for groups of gay men or lesbians. Also, some destinations or travel service providers (e.g., airlines and hotel chains) want to provide safety and respect for LGBTQ+ consumers when they arrive at their destination or use their

product or service (UNWTO & IGLTA, 2017). Although the term "gay" technically refers to gay men and lesbians, it can also be used in a broader sense to encompass all other sexual orientations or gender identities under the LGBTQ+ banner (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021).

Gay tourism is not fundamentally different from general tourism, and the selective expression or affirmation of queer diversity is economical and sufficient to satisfy the gay clientele. This clientele is also willing to pay for that diversity. So, on one level, tourism services to gay tourists are heteronormative tourism but disguised through clever marketing and reshaping of standardized products and services (Wenjie & Carol, 2021). The authors believe that although LGBTQ+ tourism is no different from general tourism, a tourist offer that is sufficiently inclusive and non-discriminatory can count on a larger number of travellers of this type of tourism and thus differentiate itself from less inclusive tourist destinations.

The term 'LGBTQ+-friendly' is also known as 'gay-friendly'. It can be argued that the term 'gay-friendly' is more recognizable and user-friendly. In a broader sense, the term 'gay-friendly' implies a space such as a bar, restaurant or hotel that is welcoming and inclusive to all LGBTQ+ people (not just gay men or women) and that tries to eliminate homophobia and heterosexism. It is suggested that the definition of 'gay-friendly' is very subjective and that it is 'not purely scientific [...] but an experience and an environment that one simply feels' (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Grimmer, 2021).

In the past, the term 'gay' had a negative meaning, and tourist spots shunned associations with this group. Today, an image has been created that mimics many clichés and stereotypes about gay tourists, with a 'positive' meaning. In comparing these two images, an obvious improvement has been made. Yet the new image of LGBTQ+ tourists (in reality, male gay tourists) ends up levelling internal diversity in favour of a white, male, 'politically correct' media image, hiding other groups that might be less attractive to tourist destinations due to their economic or even racial characteristics. There are many clichés about gay tourists: They have more purchasing power, travel more often, are more willing to spend, have a higher level of education, and have a special interest in cultural events. Such stereotypes, although widespread, do not always reflect the truth. Gay tourists travel for a variety of reasons, have unequal purchasing power, and travel to 'gay-friendly' places as well as other places. Describing an alleged gay tourist is usually done according to the users of certain places. This implies a lot of bias and casts doubt on the generalization of a homogeneous category of tourists (Valcuende et al., 2023).

Gay spaces are understood as physical manifestations of gay communities in discrete concentrations of cafes, clubs, coffee shops, shops, apartments and public spaces. These spaces transform certain physical

infrastructures and events into symbolic materializations of safety, acceptance and tolerance. Therefore, they are an important component of destinations and events in gay tourism (Monterrubio, 2021).

The growth of the gay tourism industry has been noted since the 1970s, emphasizing the economic gains for industry players and the key social implications of inclusivity. Gay tourism is categorized into three clusters: expression and exploration of identity, sense of community and camaraderie, and sexual honesty. Gay tourism is portrayed as a way for individuals to escape heteronormative constraints, expressing and embracing their identity. The establishment of various gay spaces, including bars, nightclubs, tourist complexes, and even entire neighbourhoods and communities, is seen as a response to the desire to escape. The provision of gay spaces has been identified as a key factor encouraging the growth of gay travel, highlighting the importance of these spaces in facilitating self-identification and self-presentation within the LGBTQ+ community (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021).

Research shows that by leaving the everyday heteronormative environment, gay travellers use tourism as an opportunity to recognize, shape and strengthen their identity. Apart from travellers' motivations similar to those of heterosexuals, gay travellers, in particular, travel for reasons of escape, finding their own identity and searching for a sense of belonging, which is closely related to the process of coming out of the closet (Wenjie & Carol, 2021).

Vacations for gay travellers focus on a sense of "self" (Wenjie & Carol, 2021). They are more about self-discovery, finding community, and strengthening identity than observing others. Travelling to cities like Amsterdam, London and San Francisco, many gay men and lesbians escape from their everyday heteronormative environment, and some experience their first sexual experience while on vacation (Wenjie & Carol, 2021). In addition, engaging in sexual activity is highlighted as a key differentiating factor for many gay men. On the other hand, lesbian tourists may not identify so much with sexual elements, but emphasize the need for acceptance and escape when choosing destinations (Wenjie & Carol, 2021). In general, recognized gay destinations provide a safe and comfortable space where gay travellers can express their identities without anxiety and fear (Wenjie & Carol, 2021).

Risk avoidance is the main concern of gay men and lesbians when choosing destinations (Wenjie & Carol, 2021). Many gay tourists often avoid destinations where homosexuality is illegal or not socially accepted. In addition, studies have shown that gay and lesbian tourists are quite self-conscious about the perceptions of other tourists, especially families with heterosexual parents (Wenjie & Carol, 2021). Based on this argument, the

question arises: If gay travellers exclude family-friendly destinations, which destinations will they choose when vacationing as a family unit? (Wenjie & Carol, 2021).

With increased legal protection and social recognition, more and more gay parents are travelling as a family unit to enjoy the benefits of family vacations. Research shows that most gay and lesbian families have a similar lifestyle to heterosexual families. However, they tend to be more egalitarian and show less power imbalance compared to heterosexual families (Wenjie & Carol, 2021).

According to a 2013 study by the Williams Institute, about 37% of adults who belong to the LGBTQ+ community have been parents at some point in their lives, while about 3 million LGBTQ+ Americans have had a child and as many as 6 million children and adults in the US have LGBTQ+ parents. The Institute also reports that among those under 50 who live alone or with a married or cohabiting partner, almost half of LGBTQ+ women (48%) are raising a child under the age of 18, along with a fifth of LGBTQ+ men (20%) (UNWTO & IGLTA, 2017).

The term 'pink dollar', 'pink pound' or other 'pink currency' is used to describe the collective spending or purchasing power of LGBTQI+ communities. A study conducted by Roy Morgan in 2016 found that 5.2% of Australian men and 3.1% of women identified as homosexual. Although they make up a relatively small part of the total population, gay men and lesbians exhibit specific shopping behaviours that highlight their importance as a consumer group. This recognition has led to the emergence of 'pinkwashing', a phenomenon in which companies, destination management organizations and even politicians use different marketing strategies to promote products, destinations or ideas, emphasizing gay-friendliness and inclusivity, presenting themselves as progressive, modern and tolerant (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021).

New forms of LGBTQ+ tourism are more diverse than conventional forms, which previously mainly relied on trips focused on urban nightlife or beach holidays, often combining these two elements. A frequently mentioned motivator in the literature was sexual orientation, and conventional holiday forms provided a 'safe space' for open living. New forms of alternative tourism embrace a more nuanced version of the traveller, combining diverse interests that include, but are not limited to, sexual orientation. Travellers, therefore, see meeting like-minded people who share common interests as a primary motivator (Dahl & Barreto, 2021). Different types of travel empower travellers to express and experience multiple aspects of their personality—combining them to create a new kind of vacation experience. For example, nature and adventure travel can be acceptable ways to enter the LGBTQ+ tourism market. In

short, tourism operators are encouraged to think beyond the usual focus on urban/beach destinations and develop diverse forms of tourism to cater to a growing and diverse audience (Dahl & Barreto, 2021).

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The main research methods are the desktop research method and the interview method.

The secondary sources research method was used in the first phase of the research and included the collection, study and selection of scientific and professional publications (books, articles, conference announcements, master's and doctoral theses, strategies, studies, etc.), collection and processing of statistical databases, and the search and processing of web resources related to the subject of research. The purpose of applying the desktop research method is to create a review of the literature related to the research subject.

The method of personal interview (Zelenika, 2000) in direct contact (face-to-face) was applied in the collection of primary data³.

The research was realized in the period from June 2023 to December 2023.

A questionnaire with open questions was used as a research instrument. Respondents were asked the same set of questions in the form of an unstructured interview (Zelenika, 2000). The questionnaire contained five questions plus a question to determine the profile of the respondent, as well as an introduction to the interview. Interview

questions are:

1. What is your general knowledge about LGBTQ+ tourism and its possibilities, i.e. on how to take advantage of this market sub-segment?
2. Please assess the level of importance of LGBTQ+ tourism for the tourist offer in Montenegro?
3. How would you describe the current state of offer of LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro?
4. How interested is your company in placing its capacities on the LGBTQ+ tourism market?
5. What is the support of local and national tourism organizations and the relevant ministry in the development of tourism offers for LGBTQ+ tourists?

In the sample planning process, a deliberate sample (Pfeffermann & Rao, 2009; Keung Tony Ng & Heitjan, 2022) based on value judgments

³

was selected as the optimal sampling method, according to the subject of the research. The sample was formed based on the significance of the influence of the institution, organization or industry on the possibilities of developing LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro: Representatives of the LGBTI community (2 respondents), the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro (1 respondent), hotels (7 respondents), local tourist organizations (7 respondents), local governments (1 respondent), restaurants (2 respondents) and travel agencies (2 respondents).

The sample included 22 respondents.

The structure of the sample according to the type of activity and municipality location is presented in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Structure of the sample according to type of activity and municipalities

Type of basic activity performed by the company/institution (NACE Rev.2 classification of activities):	Number of respondents	%
I5510 Hotels and similar accommodation	7	31,82%
I5610 Activities of restaurants and mobile catering establishments	2	9,09%
N7911-7912 Activities of travel agencies; activity of a tour operator	2	9,09%
O841 State administration, economic and social policy(local tourist organizations, municipality government)	8	36,36%
S941 Activities of business and professional organizations and employers (Chamber of Commerce, Board for Tourism)	1	4,55%
S9499 Activities of other membership-based organizations (NGO sector in the field of LGBTQ+ rights)	2	9,09%
Total	22	100,00%
Municipality location	Number of respondents	u %
Podgorica	8	36,36%
Herceg Novi	1	4,55%
Kotor	2	9,09%
Budva	3	13,64%
Bar	2	9,09%
Ulcinj	2	9,09%
Kolašin	1	4,55%
Berane	1	4,55%
Bijelo Polje	1	4,55%
Žabljak	1	4,55%
Total	22	100,00%

Source: Own processing

The results obtained from the research are presented in the form of an extended summary which is extracted from the answers of the respondents.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. Research results

Considering the answers received, it is possible, based on the type of stakeholders represented by the respondents, to formulate the following results:

- The interviewees point out failures in continuity and research in this area, and point to the radicalization of society and resistance to LGBTQ+ people. They also emphasize the importance of safety and acceptance for LGBTQ+ tourists, as well as the financial aspect and potential of this segment of tourism. Respondents criticize the lack of clear initiatives and strategies on the part of the state and the hotel industry and emphasize the need for the protection and support of LGBTQ+ guests. In conclusion, the respondents state additional benefits and aspects of LGBTQ+ tourism and call for cooperation and integration of all stakeholders to create an inclusive and safe environment for tourists.
- Respondents point out the change in the perception of LGBTQ+ people in society, and the impact on the economy and tourism. They also compare the situation in Montenegro with Croatia and state the stages of acceptance and algorithms for targeting LGBTQ+ tourists. Respondents recognize the interest in LGBTQ+ tourists as high-income tourists and suggest caution in direct promotion and specialization in romantic weddings and same-sex marriages. Respondents also suggest a connection with strategic plans, the role of the organization in strategic documents, the board as a tool for discussion, cooperation with international associations, visiting experts, an economic perspective, research on consumption and guest satisfaction, data on arrivals of the LGBTQ+ population, cooperation with travel agencies, escort cruise tourism, solving and improving infrastructural problems, education and awareness, the role of the National Tourism Organization, consideration of same-sex weddings, implementation of plans and marking of spaces. In conclusion, the respondents call for the active involvement of all stakeholders in the development and promotion of LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro.
- Respondents describe the attitudes, practices and challenges of hotels concerning LGBTQ+ guests and the community, and emphasize the need for greater awareness, support and strategy for the development of this segment of tourism. They also list examples of good practices and opportunities for smaller hotels and private accommodations. In conclusion, the respondents emphasize the

importance of the state's role and cooperation with NGOs in promoting LGBTQ+ inclusivity and tourism in Montenegro.

- Respondents show a high level of awareness of the importance of this market segment and emphasize the need for an inclusive approach and adaptation of services to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere for LGBTQ+ tourists. They also indicate the lack of information, support, initiatives and resources for the development of LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro, and suggest possible solutions that include increasing awareness, education, promotion and strategies for improving the image of the destination. In conclusion, the respondents emphasize the urgency and necessity of changing the social climate towards greater tolerance and acceptance of diversity, as a key factor for the successful development of LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro.
- The respondents analyze the role of the Municipality of Kotor in the development and promotion of LGBTQ+ policy in Montenegro. They cite the legal framework, international cooperation, continuing obligations and leadership in supporting the LGBTQ+ community as the main aspects of the Municipality of Kotor's work in this area. They also emphasize the importance of the "LGBTQ+ Policy Guidelines" project as an example of good practice and cooperation between cities. In conclusion, the respondents call for further improvement of LGBTQ+ policy in the local community.
- Respondents presented the attitudes and practices of the hospitality industry towards the LGBTQ+ population. They cite openness and inclusiveness, awareness of needs, image of the facility, conservative context and difference during the seasons as the main aspects of their work in this area. They also highlight the challenges and opportunities for improving LGBTQ+ policy in the local community.
- Respondents formulate the attitudes and practices of travel agencies in Montenegro towards LGBTQ+ tourism. They cite lack of demand, perception and acceptance, positive experiences and shortcomings, challenges in acceptance and opportunities for improvement as the main aspects of their work in this area. They also point out the possibilities for improving LGBTQ+ policy in the local community.

3.2. Research implications

The results presented in the previous chapter represent the basic views of the respondents, which will be discussed and compared with existing knowledge in this chapter to obtain a basis for making key findings

and recommendations regarding the situation on the LGBTQ+ tourist market in Montenegro.

There is a visible positive perspective towards changes in the perception of LGBTQ+ persons in Montenegro, which are connected with economic aspects and the open attitude of businessmen. In comparison with the situation in Croatia, the continuation of the acceptance process is predicted.

The potential of attracting LGBTQ+ tourists is observed, highlighting the algorithmic approach and high spending power of this population, which seems consistent with the results of other research (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021; Usai et al., 2022) although there are also studies which call into question this characteristic of LGBTQ+ tourists (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021; Valcuende et al., 2023). The specifics of the Montenegrin market and regions are also considered, and it is suggested to focus on specific destinations in the first step.

The attitude of a neutral approach towards LGBTQ+ tourism was noted, and the importance of education, infrastructure improvement, and the implementation of concrete plans was highlighted. Also, the desire to create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ tourists is emphasized, which is similar to the attitudes found in other research when it comes to the relationship of the tourism industry to the diversity of the tourist offer (Dahl & Barreto, 2021).

In the responses of the majority of respondents, awareness was expressed about the importance of LGBTQ+ tourism, the need for an inclusive approach, and the importance of adapting services to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere for LGBTQ+ tourists, which is consistent with the results of research on the topic (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Grimmer, 2021).

It is emphasized that the key is to achieve tolerance and understanding of diversity to enable the prosperity of LGBTQ+ tourism, especially through the implementation of strategies that promote an inclusive environment at all levels of Montenegrin society.

Sensitivity to human rights issues and openness to different groups are shown, while at the same time the ways to emphasize this are being re-examined, especially when it comes to adaptations for people with special needs.

Undoubtedly, the importance of openness in tourism was emphasized not only from an economic perspective but also in the context of respect for universal human rights. It also suggests that any restriction or lack of openness could pose a problem for the tourism sector.

The development of educational programs on the acceptance of diversity is encouraged.

A lack of information and awareness about businesses dealing with LGBTQ+ tourism was observed, and the need for additional research or information on specific offers or services available in this context is suggested.

The importance of promoting tolerance for the tourism sector in Montenegro is strongly suggested.

The need to raise awareness among decision-makers about LGBTQ+ tourism is expressed and their education regarding the potential and specifics of LGBTQ+ tourism is suggested, as well as the development of educational programs on acceptance of diversity. Activities for increasing awareness, training companies and creating strategies to take advantage of the opportunities of LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro are additionally emphasized. It also highlights the need for research and development to identify barriers and improve conditions for this market segment.

The development of strategies that include LGBTQ+ tourism to improve the destination's image and attract new tourists is considered essential in the further process of devising tourism policy actions.

It is considered that companies that offer LGBTQ+ tourism most likely do not have a special expert or department dedicated to this segment, which provides additional insight into the management's perception of the presence of expertise in companies that deal with LGBTQ+ tourism and indicates the need for additional research and development of expertise in this segment.

It was assessed that no significant funds were allocated for the development of the LGBTQ+ offer, which gives insight into the challenges of financial support for LGBTQ+ tourism, emphasizing the need for a change in priorities and additional commitment to the development of this tourist offer. The expectation for stronger involvement of the state and tourist organizations in the promotion of LGBTQ+ tourism is highlighted, as well as the need to launch local and national initiatives to support the sustainable development of this tourism segment.

CONCLUSION

Analyzing the theoretical literature on LGBTQ+ tourism as well as the results of research on the perception of LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro, we can draw several important conclusions and recommendations:

1. From the answers of the majority of the respondents in the field research, it is clearly stated that LGBTQ+ tourism is an important

segment of the market, which has great economic potential, but also social importance, and that an integrated and holistic strategy is needed for its realization, which can be summarized as follows:

- a. Hotel Splendid and Hotel Hyatt Kotor Bay, as well as the Ribnica restaurant, are successful examples of inclusive and responsible tourism, which provides equal service to all guests regardless of their sexual orientation and supports and cooperates with the LGBTQ+ community.
 - b. Montenegro faces numerous challenges related to LGBTQ+ issues, such as prejudice, violence, lack of legislation and infrastructure, and insufficient awareness and education, which affect the development and quality of LGBTQ+ tourism.
 - c. Montenegro also has numerous opportunities for the development and improvement of LGBTQ+ tourism, such as recognition of the potential and high income of this population, openness and change in the perception of this type of tourism, possible connection with a well-known brand and franchise values on the LGBTQ+ tourism market, and the possibility of improving the destination's image and attracting new tourists (Lacmanović & Raspor, 2024a).
 - d. Different strategies are needed for the promotion and support of LGBTQ+ tourism, such as cooperation between different sectors, market and needs research, support for the economy and organizations, education and awareness raising, creation of an inclusive environment, and promotion of tolerance and human rights.
 - e. LGBTQ+ tourism is an important factor in the development and progress of Montenegro and requires an integrated and holistic approach that includes all relevant actors and resources.
2. In terms of using the opportunities of the market sub-segment of LGBTQ+ tourism, it is recommended:
 - **Promotion of inclusivity and tolerance for all types of tourists:** Authorities, tourism organizations and local leaders should actively promote inclusivity and tolerance towards all guests, including LGBTQ+ people. This includes educating the public and encouraging conversations about LGBTQ+ rights.
 - **Training employees in tourism about LGBT people and their needs:** Employees in tourism should be trained about LGBTQ+ people and their needs so that they can adequately meet these needs.
 - **LGBTQ+-friendly accommodation:** Encouraging the development of accommodation that is open to all guests

regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This includes promoting LGBTQ+-friendly hotels, apartments and hostels.

- **Organization of LGBTQ+ events:** Organization of LGBTQ+ events such as pride parades, film festivals, art exhibitions and concerts that can attract LGBTQ+ tourists and their friends. These events can also contribute to the promotion of the culture and art of Montenegro.
- **Partnerships with LGBTQ+ organizations:** Collaboration with LGBTQ+ organizations and the community can be essential. These organizations can provide useful information and resources to attract LGBTQ+ tourists.
- **Safety and legal protection:** Ensure that LGBTQ+ tourists are safe during their stay. This includes protection from discrimination and violence, as well as clear laws that protect LGBTQ+ rights.
- **Marketing campaign:** Develop marketing campaigns targeting LGBTQ+ tourists. This may include the promotion of Montenegro as an LGBTQ+-friendly destination in the international media and on social networks.

These recommendations can help Montenegro develop LGBTQ+ tourism, attract new tourists and promote a positive image as an inclusive destination.

There is still some specificity in the presented research results caused mostly by the design of the sample, which is one of the limitations of this research. In general, the presented findings might be used as a starting point for future activities in developing this type of tourism in Montenegro.

Applicability of the research:

The findings of this research are highly applicable to policymakers, tourism boards, and private sector stakeholders in Montenegro aiming to diversify and expand the country's tourism offerings. By understanding the attitudes and perceptions of key actors, this study provides a foundation for developing inclusive tourism strategies that integrate LGBTQ+ tourism as a valuable niche market.

The insights can assist in:

- Policy development, particularly in addressing legal and infrastructural gaps that currently hinder LGBTQ+ tourism.
- Business strategies, helping tourism service providers identify and tap into a high-spending travel demographic.

- Marketing and destination branding, by promoting Montenegro as an inclusive and welcoming destination.
- Educational initiatives, aimed at raising awareness and reducing prejudice within the tourism sector and local communities.

Additionally, the research offers a model for other emerging destinations facing similar challenges and opportunities in developing LGBTQ+ tourism. It serves as a starting point for future studies, enabling a deeper understanding of the socio-economic impacts of inclusive tourism development.

Limitations of the research:

While this study provides valuable preliminary insights into the attitudes of key stakeholders regarding LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro, several limitations should be noted:

- **Sample Size and Scope:** The research was limited to a relatively small group of stakeholders, primarily from the tourism sector. This may not fully capture the broader societal attitudes or the perspectives of all relevant institutions and organizations. The sample of 22 respondents is still insufficient for more thorough conclusions and serves as a basis for directing new and more thorough research.
- **Geographical Focus:** The study focused on key tourism areas within Montenegro, potentially overlooking regional differences in attitudes and readiness for LGBTQ+ tourism development in less prominent destinations.
- **Depth of Stakeholder Engagement:** Time constraints and availability of participants may have limited the depth of interviews and discussions, potentially affecting the richness of the data collected.
- **Social Desirability Bias:** Given the sensitivity of LGBTQ+ topics in Montenegro, there is a possibility that respondents provided socially desirable answers rather than expressing their true opinions, which may affect the authenticity of the findings.
- **Preliminary Nature:** This research represents an initial exploration. More comprehensive, longitudinal studies are needed to measure changes over time and to include the perspectives of LGBTQ+ travelers themselves.
- **Theoretical relevance:** Since apart from some theoretical studies on the issue of perception of LGBTQ+ tourism in Montenegro, there is no significant research, and therefore, a more concise synthesis of literature, more closely related to the Montenegrin context and research problem, is not possible.

LITERATURE

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