



COCKTAILS, COAST, AND CULTURE TOURISM DEMAND IN MAHAHUAL AND COSTA MAYA PORT

INTERNSHIP REPORT FOR TAKATA EXPERIENCE, JANUARY 2020

BOON, ELISABETH

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INTRODUCTION

Mahahual's economy is extremely dependent on and affected by cruise tourists and the port. Being a fisherman village before the creation of the port, Mahahual has developed rapidly and not in the most sustainable manner as a response to the surge of tourists. The effects of tourism are both direct, indirect, and induced. Direct impacts include tourists eating at a particular restaurant, and indirect impacts are, for example, the rise in property rental prices over the years. Finally, a key induced impact is seen in port employees coming to Mahahual to work in cruise tourism but spending their money in another town or city where they live. Despite the influx of tourists, only five percent of cruise passengers actually leave the port to come to the village of Mahahual. As repeated in other reports, key negative impacts are a lack of infrastructure and facility maintenance, few public services, environmental degradation, high price of living, and a lack of community feeling within Mahahual village.

The imbalance of positive and negative impacts of tourism are considered by locals as a result of poor management of the village, rather than on tourists who visit. As such, there is still support from the local community for tourism to continue in the destination. What is needed is an adaptation of infrastructure to reduce the negative impacts tourism has.

The aim for TAKATA research center and the tourism interns is to develop a product that would benefit more the local community and cater to the cruise tourism demand. The two main proposals for this would be the creation of a local tour around the lesser-known parts of Mahahual where tourists would be able to meet local artisans, learn more about the culture and tradition of the region, and maybe try their hand at cooking a traditional food. The second project would be the creation of a local market, as most towns in Mexico have one. A local market is the perfect location for tourists to fully experience the vast diversity of culture and traditions that are found in Mahahual, it would provide an area for locals to socialize with one another - increasing the community feeling - and with tourists. Locals who are currently not directly involved in tourism would have the opportunity for employment and engagement with tourists. There is currently a high demand for a local market by the population of Mahahual, but no action has been taken yet.

From these two products we hope to bring a greater community feeling to the local population of Mahahual while also providing tourists with a more authentic and local experience of the village they are visiting. We hope for it to bring the locals a sense of purpose and incentivise the better maintenance of the streets, especially with regards to trash, as well as more efficient maintenance of infrastructure and facilities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

MAIN RESEARCH AIM

The objective of the internship was to provide important information to Takata regarding the structure of the tourism industry in Mahahual and the demand that is present from tourists who travel to the area. As such, the main research aim was:

To find out and understand what tourists' interests are and how the tourism is structured in Mahahual and Costa Maya, to see how services provided by the local community can match these interests and fit within the structure.

SUB RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Sub-research questions were created in order to help answer the main research aim. These revolved around the themes of perception, experience and expectation, information provision, tourism organisation, and cruise ship organisation. For the final report, some of the questions have been altered or removed (compared to the ones mentioned in the internship plan) to better suit the data collected.

- 1. Perception**
 - a. What is the perception of tourists on the locals, and village, of Mahahual?
 - b. Are cruise tourists aware of Mahahual history?
- 2. Experience and expectation**
 - a. What motivates tourists to come to Mahahual?
 - b. What motivates tourists to partake in specific tours/activities?
 - c. What products would be of interest for tourists visiting Mahahual?
- 3. Information provision**
 - a. What knowledge/information is already provided to (cruise) tourists about Mahahual?
- 4. Tourism organisation**
 - a. What are the agreements between tourism businesses in Mahahual and Costa Maya port?
- 5. Cruise ship organisation**
 - a. What are the itineraries of the ships that dock in Mahahual?
 - b. How is Mahahual promoted as part of the cruise itinerary?
 - c. What activities are offered or promoted by the cruise company and within the port?

METHODOLOGY

A combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used for the internship research, these are elaborated in the following section.

Qualitative

Literature review

Preliminary literature research serves as a basis for creating an understanding of cruise ship organisation and cruise ship passenger expectations and experiences. Looking at previous research on similar topics helped with the creation of relevant questions for interviews and questionnaires as well as obtaining a general understanding of research already conducted on the theme of tourism demand, with further focus on cruise ship tourism demand.

Interviews

A total of 9 informal interviews were conducted with relevant tourism stakeholders (see appendix for detailed list), as well as short interviews with some of the tourists filling out questionnaires. Information gathered from these provide a more in-depth understanding of tourism demand and the structure of tourism in Mahahual and Costa Maya port.

Participant observation

The researcher conducted some observations of the conversations and interactions that occur within the port area and Mahahual, as well as trying to participate in some of the tours offered in order to obtain a better understanding of tourist experience, motivation, and information provided to them.

Quantitative

Questionnaires

A questionnaire was developed with a set of 29 questions covering basic tourist demographics, satisfaction, motivation for travel, participation in activities, and interest in suggested activities as well as price willing to pay for said activities.

The initial objective was to have 300 questionnaires filled out; however, due to time and environmental reasons of using so much paper, only 150 were printed and collected over the period of two months (October-November). The questionnaires were in both English and Spanish, as most of the non-cruise tourists are from around Mexico. An online version has been created to continue gathering data which can be used and analysed by future interns. This questionnaire is currently only in English. It already has eight responses, these were not used for the data analysis of this report.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A basic investigation on current research and literature on the topic of cruise tourism, tourism product, and tourist experiences and satisfaction was conducted. This served to gain a more general understanding of how cruise tourism is operated, and what is taken into account when researching it. Further, the literature provides some theoretical support to the selection of recommendations for product development in Mahahual, which would benefit the local community while also meeting tourism demand. The literature review additionally helped to formulate the questionnaire which was later used to gather information on tourism demand in Mahahual.

Responsible tourism

The most common definition for sustainability comes from the Brundtland report; where development meets the needs of the present without affecting those of future generations.

Sustainable tourism has been defined as tourism development that considers environmental factors, economic benefits, and maintaining cultural identity (Klein, 2011). However, this definition does not take into account the effects tourism has on the local community. Klein proposes the way to resolve this is to use the term 'responsible tourism' rather than sustainable tourism. Since the International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations (RTD), the social and ethical aspects of development have been included in development definitions. As a result, responsible tourism focuses on environmental impacts, equal distribution of economic benefits, and reducing negative socio-cultural impacts. This takes into account the individuals affected by the said development. As such, the concept of responsible tourism seems more adapted for the tourism research Takata is initiating.

Responsible Cruise Tourism

Klein (2011) researched problems revolving around Cruise Tourism and Sustainability with regards to the three main foci of responsible tourism. Environmental impacts cannot be as easily managed or altered by Takata so this section of the article was not considered. However, the analysis on economic issues and socio-cultural issues are of relevance. As was noted by a previous intern, many cruise passengers do not leave the ship; if they do, they book an activity via the ship. This entails that none of the money that is gained from these tourists reaches

the local community. Cruise lines will also make the activities they offer far more expensive as they take a large percentage of the cut. This is seen in the Costa Maya port where they have developed their own tour agencies in order to keep all the benefits.

As for socio-cultural impacts, Klein notes a 'pack behaviour' for the tourists. Where they all move together as one uniform masse, which can cause some unease in the local population. This must also be considered when aiming to change the impact of tourism on Mahahual; trying to break this 'pack behaviour' by minimizing crowds or providing opportunities to reduce the number of people moving together. Authenticity is another important factor to take into account, as tourists seek authentic and unique experiences when travelling. Responsible tourism entails that tourists may interact and experience the local culture with respect and without altering it. Information provided to tourists by onboard staff and port employees may be misleading and wrong. Therefore, better information-provision on Mahahual needs to be included in order to ensure the local community is not negatively impacted.

Tourist experiences

Experiences of tourists in a destination are an important component when trying to better understand tourism demand. Experiences are formed by tourists in everything that they do in a destination. There is a quest for authentic experiences that are unique and memorable. The experience economy in tourism needs to shift their focus away from "delivery-focused" service economy to the "staged" experience economy, this allows for the creation of experiences that are catering to the demands of tourists today.

Oh et al. (2012) use the four realms of experience (figure 1) to explain what needs to be taken into account in order to create the optimal tourism experience. The tourist participation axis ranges from passive to active. In passive participation, which includes entertainment and aesthetics, the tourist does not influence the performance. On the other side of the axis is active participation, including education and escapism. In this the tourist will directly affect the performance or even play a role in it. The other axis of absorption-immersion involves the tourist absorbing entertainment and education, and immersing themselves in aesthetics and escapism. The four dimensions are further explained below:

- *Entertainment* is the overlap between absorption and passive participation where the tourists merely observes. Entertainment needs to grab the attention of the crowd.
- *Education* are experiences that increase the skills and knowledge of the tourists through engaging the mind and the body.
- *Aesthetics* involve the tourist being in the destination environment without affecting or altering it, merely passively appreciating. Just being there is enough.
- Finally, *escapism* which involves active participation and immersion. The authors note three kinds of escapism; (1) avoiding routines of the daily life; (2) Destination-driven; and (3) Active involvement which allows for the creation of new identities. Escapism is a core concept in tourist experiences and the reason that individuals travel. Using this concept to develop destination experiences is therefore highly valuable.

**FOUR REALMS OF EXPERIENCE (ADAPTED FROM
PINE AND GILMORE, 1999, WITH PERMISSION)**

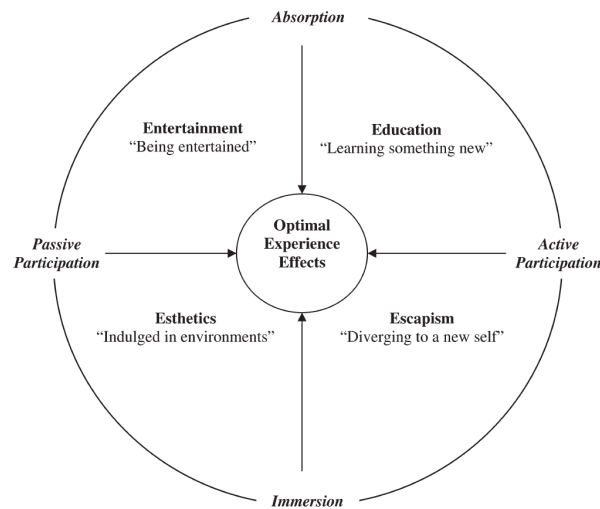


Figure 1 – Four realms of Experience (Oh et al., 2012)

A combination of these four dimensions provides the optimal tourist experience. As the tourist is able to be entertained while learning something new, indulging in the environment in which they find themselves, and can diverge into a new self. This figure and explanation of tourism experience is useful when trying to develop new products that meet tourism demand. They have been taken into consideration and added in the formulation of recommendations found further below in the report.

Tourist typology (for Mahahual)

Understanding the types of tourists that come to a destination allows for the development of a tourist product which caters to the different needs and expectations of these typologies. Different tourism research has created a variety of typologies, depending on the destination and what it offers. Yiannaki and Gibbon (1992) developed a typology of leisure-based tourist roles with a list of 14 different types of roles tourists take on when travelling (Figure 2). Each role entails varying behaviour, expectations, and reasoning for travelling. These roles can be classified into broader categories of travel-related roles; environmental travel, high contact travel, spiritual travel, pleasure first travel, and exploitative travel. Knowing the types of roles tourists take on in Mahahual would be useful to develop a product that caters to these roles.

Sun Lover (SNL)	Interested in relaxing and sunbathing in warm places with lots of sun, sand and ocean
Action Seeker (ACT)	Mostly interested in partying, going to night clubs and meeting the opposite sex for uncomplicated romantic experiences
Anthropologist (ANT)	Mostly interested in meeting local people, trying the food and speaking the language
Archaeologist (ARC)	Mostly interested in archaeological sites and ruins; enjoys studying history of ancient civilizations
Organized Mass Tourist (OMT)	Mostly interested in organized vacations, packaged tours, taking pictures and buying lots of souvenirs
Thrill Seeker (TRS)	Interested in risky, exhilarating activities which provide emotional highs, such as sky diving
Explorer (EXL)	Prefers adventure travel, exploring out of the way places and enjoys challenges involved in getting there
Jetsetter (JST)	Vacations in elite world class resorts, goes to exclusive night clubs, and socializes with celebrities
Seeker (SKR)	Seeker of spiritual and/or personal knowledge to better understand self and meaning of life
Independent Mass Tourist (IMT)	Visits regular tourist attractions but makes own travel arrangements and often "plays it by ear"
High Class Tourist (HCT)	Travels first class, stays in the best hotels, goes to shows, and dines at the best restaurants
Drifter (DTR)	Drifts from place to place living a hippie style existence
Escapist (ESC)	Enjoys taking it easy and getting away from it all in quiet and peaceful places
Sport Lover (SPL)	Primary emphasis while on vacation is to remain active engaging in favorite sports

Figure 2 – Typology of leisure-based tourist roles (Yiannaki & Gibbon, 1992)

Due to time and resources, the intern was not able to conduct research in order to create a better understanding of tourism typologies in Mahahual. However, the Consejo de Promocion Turistico of Quintana Roo (CPTQ) completes yearly surveys on the tourists in Quintana Roo. Part of the results they gather is used to create a tourist profile, so data from these reports could be used for further tourism research (see appendix for contact). It must be noted that the results do not include cruise tourists. Further, the intern was able to obtain the questions which were used for the research of Yinnaki and Gibbon. These are attached in the appendix if it is ever needed for future interns.

Tourism product

A tourism product primarily arises from the destinations physical, environmental, and socio-cultural characteristics (Benur & Bramwell, 2014). The tourism product is unique as it is a combination of tangible and intangible factors which encompass the tourist experience. The appeal for a destination is connected to transportation, information, and marketing. A differentiation of tourists into segments according to typologies can allow for a better catering to different demands. Further, a segmentation of the market allows for a better understanding of what gaps still need to be filled by developing new tourism products. It is important to note that products are not just physical objects but also services, places, ideas, etc., which all constitute tourism.

Smith (1994) developed a model for breaking down the tourism product into five different elements (Figure 1). Moving from the core to the periphery, the tourist becomes more and more involved in decision-making and creation of the elements.

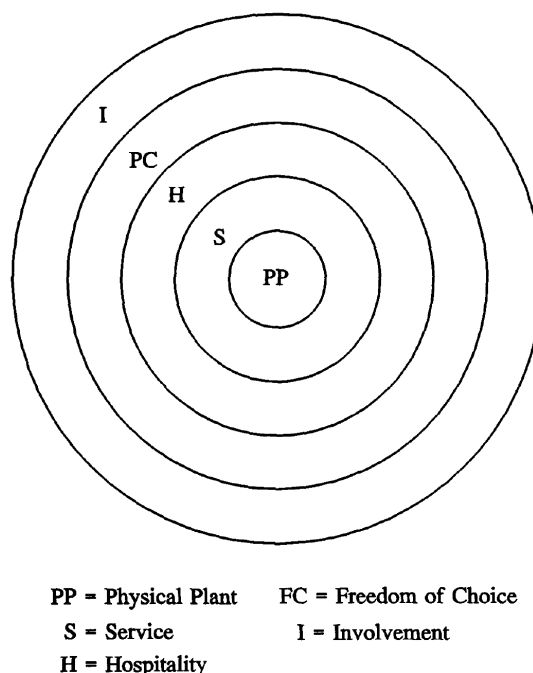


Figure 3 – Elements of the tourism product (Smith, 1994)

Below is a general explanation for each of the elements and how they can be analysed:

1. **Physical plant** – This is the actual site, the infrastructure and environment of the area. The hotels that are found in Mahahual and the cruise ship in which tourists arrive (out of our control). This service can be assessed by seeing if the product enhances the tourist experience, protects the environment, and if it provides access to all kinds of tourists.
2. **Service** – The performance of completing specific tasks which are required to meet the needs of tourists. This can be measured by assessing the quality of the service; for example, how staff act in comparison to set criteria of hospitality.
3. **Hospitality** – This regards more the attitude of service individuals when completing a said task. This can be measured through customer feedback.
4. **Freedom of choice** – This is the element where the tourists has influence on the tourism product. It involves the range of options which are available to the tourist, which depends on the type of tourist (their experience, budget, knowledge, etc). Freedom of choice, or perception of, needs to be included in any kind of service so the tourist has a feeling that they can choose their own activities. This enhances the tourist feeling of control and satisfaction, while also reducing the risk of blame being placed on the tour operator or agent if poor choices are made. Further, the concept of (perceived) spontaneity is a useful tool to increase the satisfaction of tourists experience as it makes them feel happy or fortunate that they were in the right place at the right time.
5. **Involvement** – The final element in which the tourist can play or relax in a way that is personally satisfying. Everything else is taken care of, so they feel safe and secure. The tourist can take the pleasure of passing time without noticing it.

When developing a new tourism product, these elements need to all be considered. Data collected from questionnaires can allow for the development of a tourist type. Observations and interviews of the tourism node in Mahahual allow for a better understanding of the market segments currently present in the area, and therefore provide knowledge on where there are gaps which could be filled. Tourists want to create their own experiences from products that destinations offer them, this is why the freedom of choice, or perception of, is essential. The co-creation of a tourism product allows for a better refining of the product through building trust

and a good reputation. Currently, Costa Maya is a “concentrated mass tourism destination” where a few key tourism products have been developed and are intensively used by all tour operators (both local and port).

RESEARCH RESULTS

The following section is an overview of the research results from the quantitative and qualitative data collected. The section begins with a general overview of the findings from the questionnaires, followed by a description of the different tour operators in Mahahual. Information on this was gathered through semi-structured interviews with managers of the tour companies and participation in some of the tours themselves. Finally, an overview of the tourism demand in Mahahual is described.

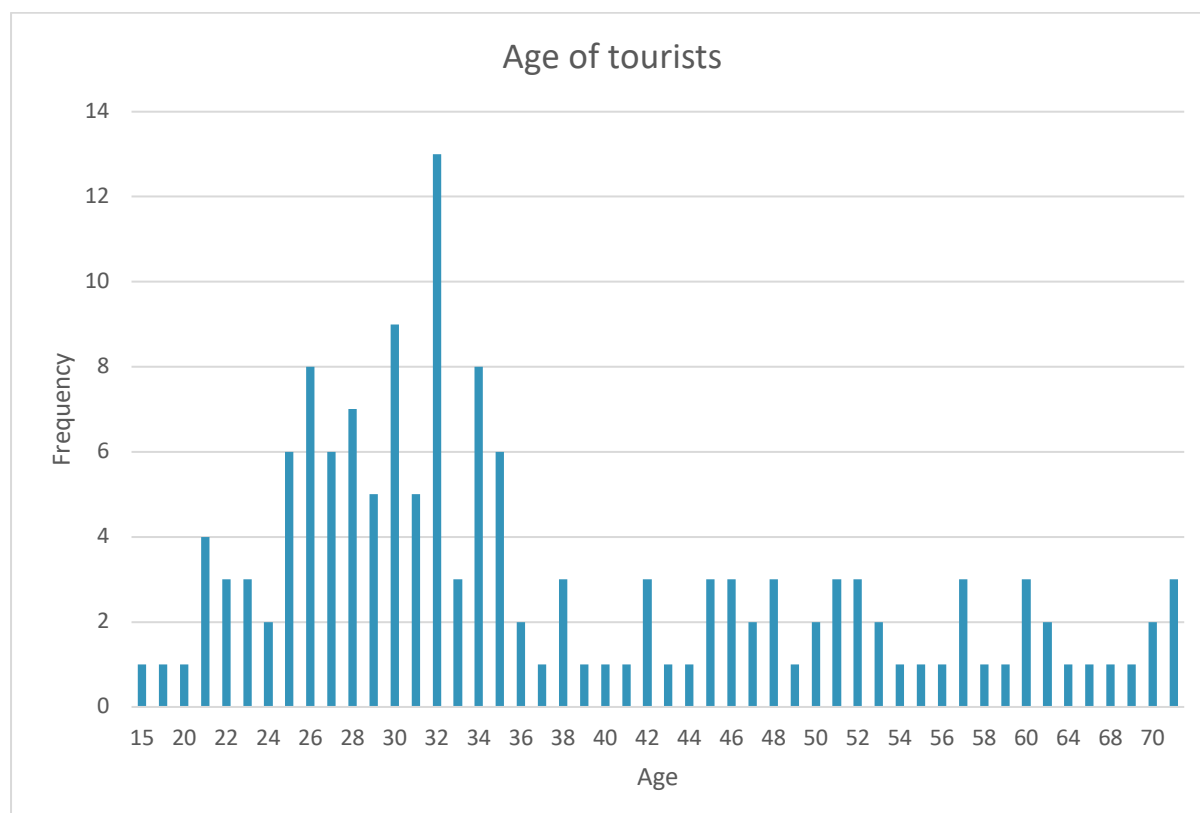
Questionnaire findings

The following section breaks down relevant data that was obtained from the 150 questionnaires which were distributed over the course of two months. As 97 of the responses were from cruise tourists, and 54 from other tourists, the data covers more cruise tourists than other types of tourists. Therefore, part of the analysis involves comparing cruise and other tourists’ responses. The data was inserted and analysed with the computer software SPSS.

Basic demographics and information of tourists

The average age of tourists arriving in Mahahual is of 33 years. With most of the respondents staying within the range of 26 to 35 years of age.

Table 1 – Bar chart age distribution of tourists



The majority of the tourists are American, the second most recurring nationality is Mexican (16%), followed by mostly European countries.

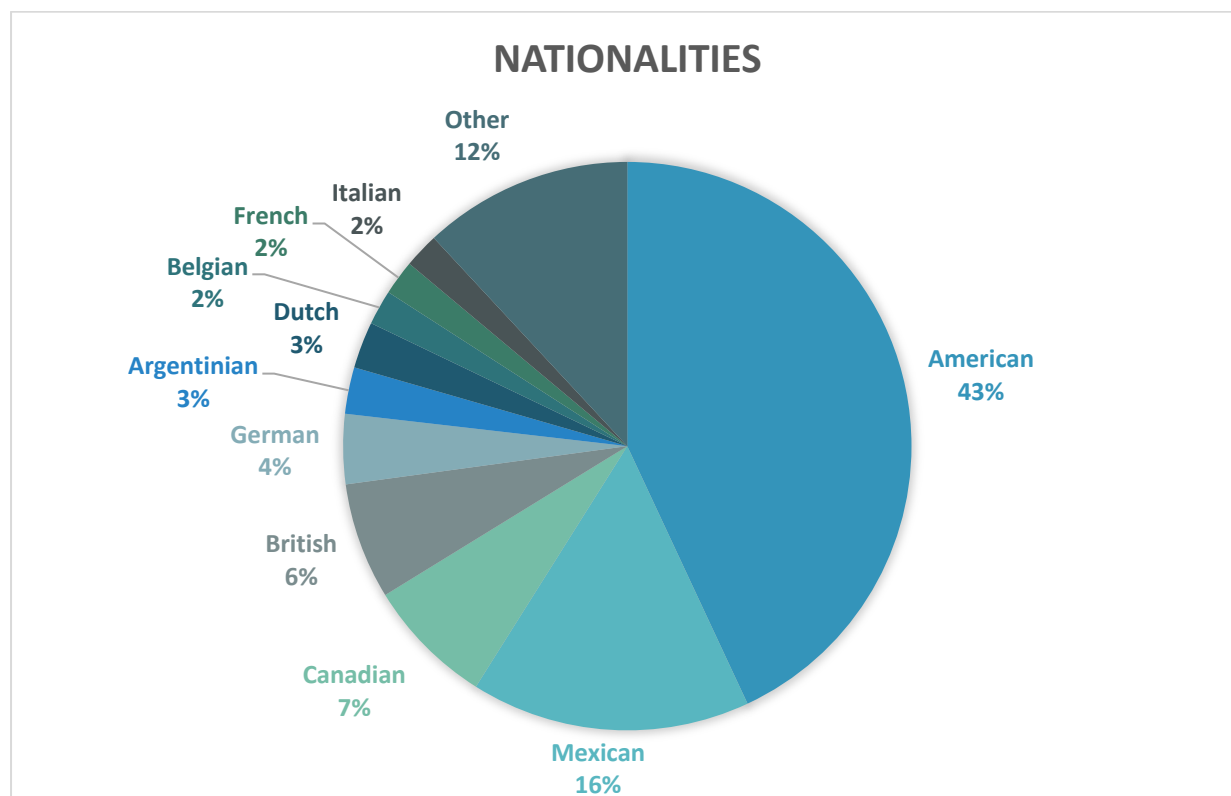


Figure 4 – Pie chart nationalities distribution of tourists

Tourists arrive mostly with their partners (43%), meaning that the most common party number is two. Followed by family groups of 3 (13%) or 4 (11%). Therefore, products should consider the average group size when developing tours.

Once again, due to the majority of respondents being from the cruise ship, most length of stay for tourists is less than a day. This is important to note as a product developed to cater to the demand of these tourists should only be a few hours long. For more than 60 percent of the tourists it was their first time travelling to Mahahual.

Reason for travelling to Mahahual

The most common response for reasons to travel to Mahahual was obviously because of the cruise ship. Relaxation, beach holiday, and nature were the three following most recurring responses. These three categories are what Mahahual offers to tourists and should therefore be promoted and safeguarded if tourism is to develop in a sustainable manner. When comparing cruise and other tourists in their reasons for travelling to Mahahual (not including that they arrived on a cruise ship), both have relaxation as the second most common response. This falls in line with literature that states tourists want to have a travel experience in which they feel that everything is taken care of and they don't have to worry about anything. The next most common reason was a beach holiday. Clearly Mahahual is known for its beautiful beaches as a main tourist attraction. Finally, the third reason for other tourists choosing Mahahual was for its nature and climate and experiencing new cultures for cruise tourists. This comparison shows that there is not much difference between tourists in their reason for travelling to Mahahual.

Transportation

Once again, cruise ship was the most common mode of transportation for tourists arriving in Mahahual. With rental cars being the second most common. As for the mode of transportation used while in Mahahual, walking was the most prominent, with taxis as the second. When comparing cruise and other tourists, walking is more commonly used by other tourists and shuttles are used more by cruise tourists. This can be explained by cruise tourists often travelling around with transportation organised by tour operators.

Satisfaction

A set of 16 different factors were used to measure the satisfaction of tourists experience in Mahahual. The figure below shows an overview of the satisfaction for tourists combined.

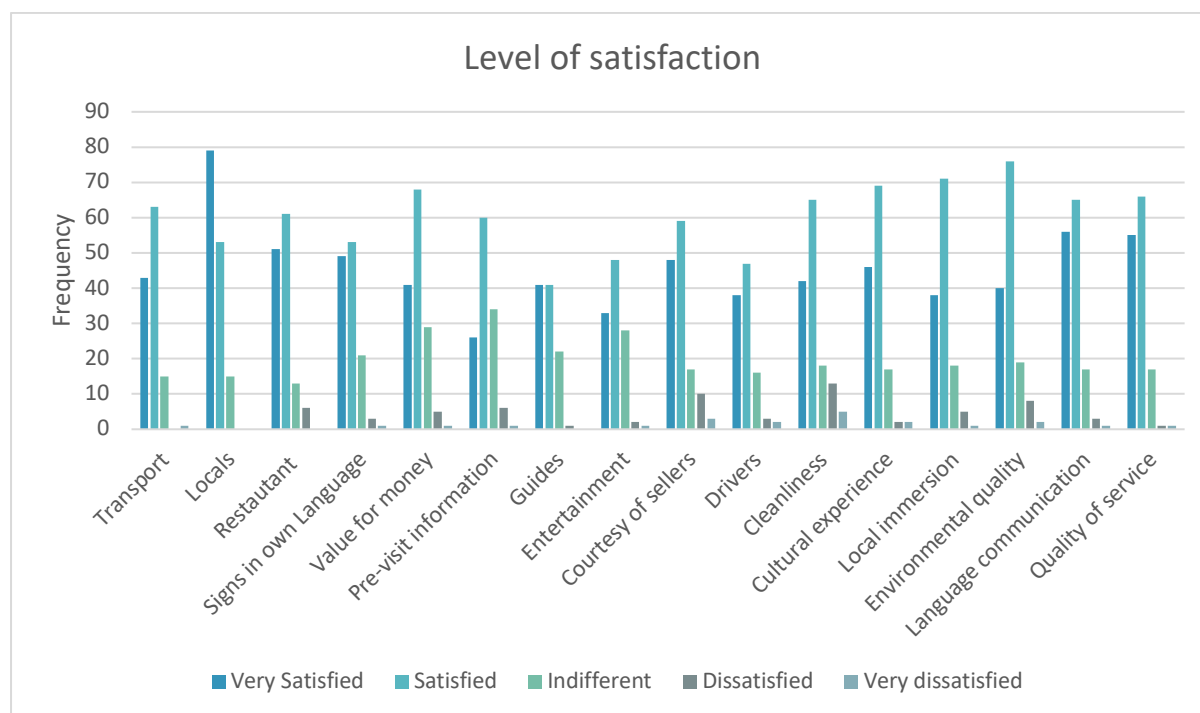


Figure 5 – Level of satisfaction for different factors

What can be noted is that the most common response was 'satisfied', even though when looking online one can find a lot of complaints with regards to cleanliness, environmental quality, and courtesy of sellers. From observations and speaking with tourists it was noted that the satisfaction depends on where in Mahahual the tourists have visited. The questionnaire contained an open question where respondents could provide recommendations¹ for increasing their satisfaction if they were dissatisfied with anything. The general responses revolved around cleanliness (of the beaches and litter lying around) and pushy sellers. A comparison was made in terms of satisfaction between tourists for these two factors, with environmental quality also added as it can be considered part of cleanliness of the beaches.

¹ A list of these responses can be found in Appendix 4

Table 2 – Comparison for type of tourist level of satisfaction with cleanliness

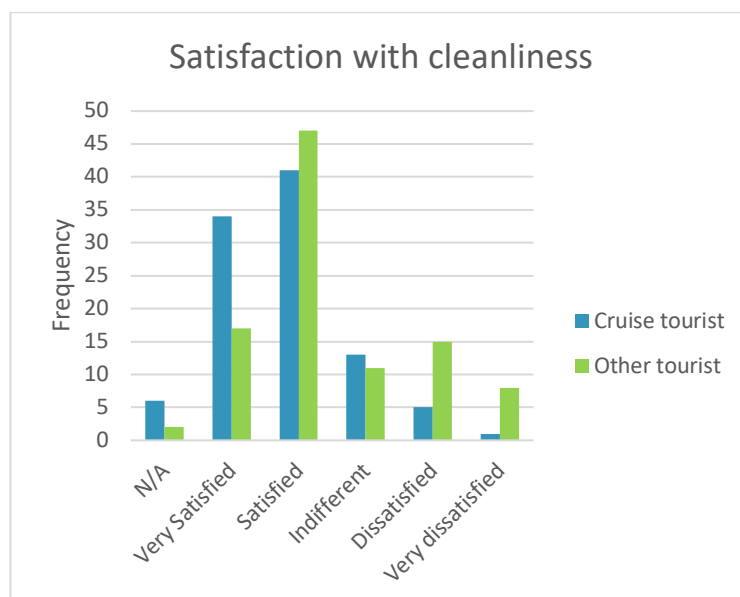
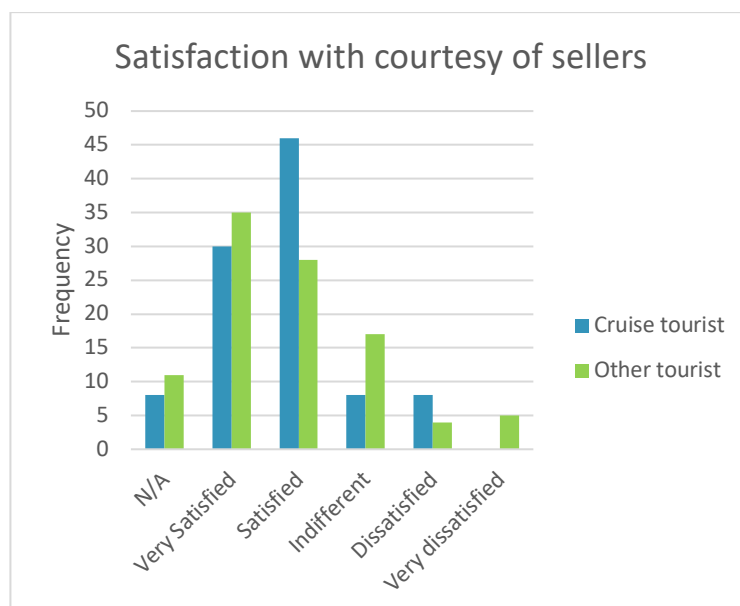


Table 3 - Comparison for type of tourist level of satisfaction with environmental quality



Table 4 - Comparison for type of tourist level of satisfaction with courtesy of sellers



What can be noted from these graphs is that there is no prominent difference in satisfaction between cruise tourists and other tourists.

Based on these results of high satisfaction, it is logical that the most common response for likelihood to return to Mahahual was “very likely”. Cruise tourists more frequently said they were “likely” to return, compared to other tourists who mostly responded with “very likely”. This shows that Mahahual has an appeal and leaves an overall positive impression on tourists who visit the area.

Expenditure

Spending of tourists on different categories is useful to know when trying to develop a product and imagine the price that would be asked of tourists. The table below shows the average responses for expenditure of tourists per person per day.

Table 5 – Average expenditure per person per day

What	How much per person per day (USD)
Food and beverage	10 to 20
Souvenirs	Under 10
Transportation	10 to 20
Tours	N/A
Guides tips	Under 10
Activities	Under 10
Accommodation	N/A

To the researcher, this data does seem a little odd. When looking at it one would assume that tourists do not spend that much when staying in Mahahual. Observations and conversations with locals sometimes demonstrates the contrary. A short conversation with a local vendor about tourist consumption mentioned that American tourists are more likely to spend irrationally and exuberantly, whereas European tourists are more cautious. The vendor said this might be because Europeans then need to consider taking everything back in the airplane, which limits what and how much they can buy. They may also be a little more conservative with their money.

The low average for spending could also be explained by the fact that cruise tourists have everything included on the ship. So, they do not have the necessity to go onshore and spend a lot. Another explanation is that the majority of questionnaires were completed outside the port, so expenditure within the port is not considered.

Activities

A section of the questionnaire involved asking tourists about the kind of activities they participated in and the method they used to book these activities, as well as the reason they would choose an activity.

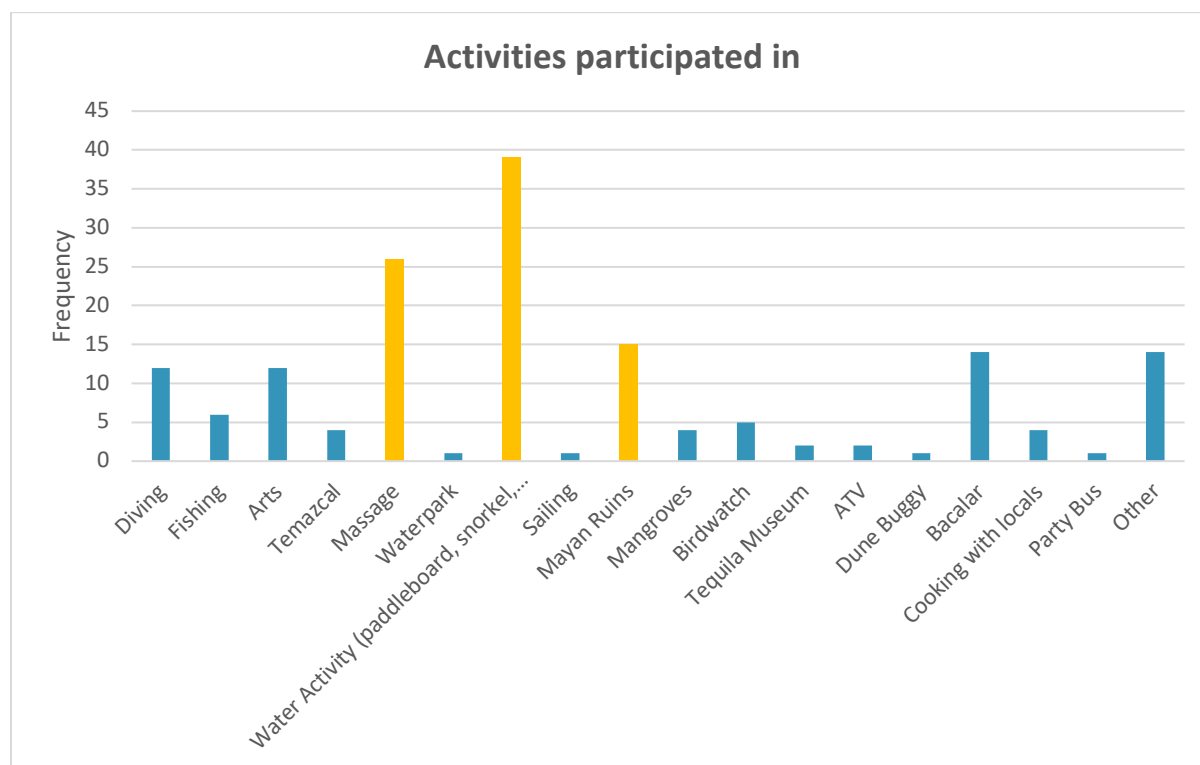


Figure 6 – Bar chart of different activities tourists participate in

The most common activities that tourists participated in were water activities, massage, and Maya ruins. This reflects the reasons why tourists come to Mahahual, which was mainly for relaxation and beach holidays. The Mayan trips are the third most common activity since Costa Maya port is the closest cruise port to Mayan Ruins, therefore a strong selling point for tour operators. Most of the activities are booked either through the internet (17%), a local guide (14%), or the cruise line (13%). 91% of respondents did not feel like there were any activities missing to their experience, and 61% of cruise tourists felt that their time on shore was enough to do all the activities they wanted.

The four main reasons for choosing an activity were adventure, relaxation, price, and new experiences (orange colour for emphasis).

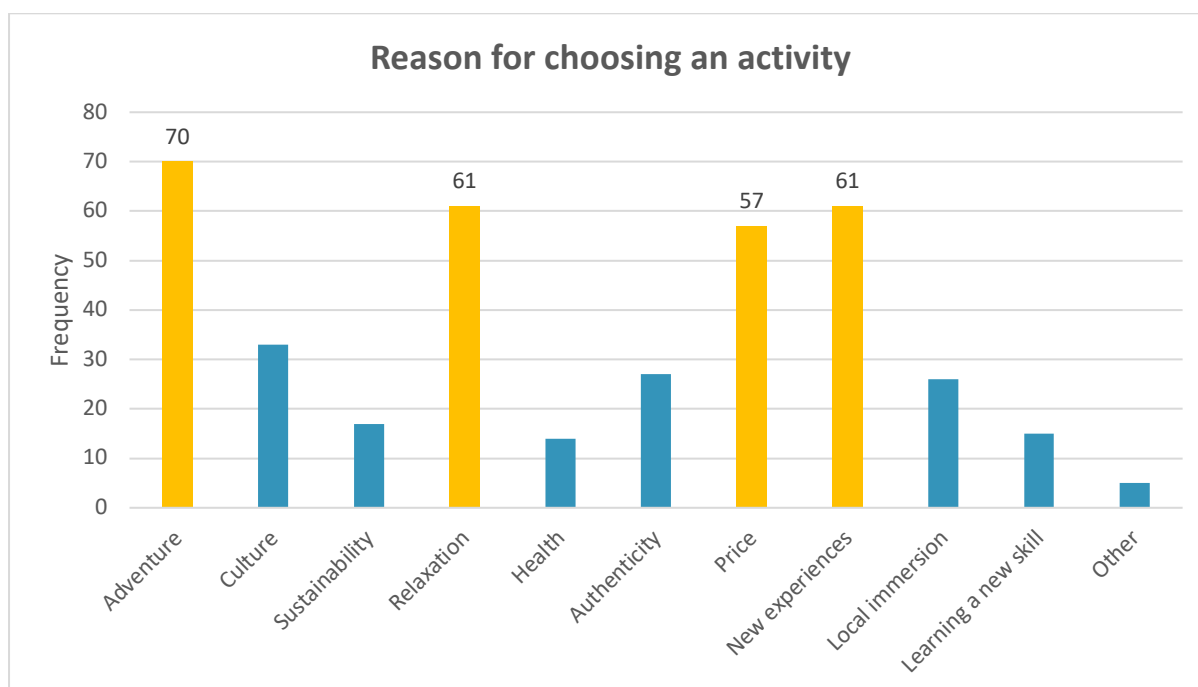


Figure 7 – Bar chart of reasons for choosing specific activities (orange colour for emphasis on most frequent)

These four categories should be taken into account when trying to develop a new product as well as why advertising the product. Once again, we see the responses reflecting the main reason for travelling is for relaxation. The fact that price is the third most common reason shows how important it is to know how much tourists would be willing to pay for a certain activity. The results for this question are discussed below.

Interest in activities

Seven different activities were suggested to tourists, and they were asked to mention if they would be interested in participating or not. The two most common activities were a cultural tour and a fishing tour in which you cook what you caught. The third most common response was a cooking class.

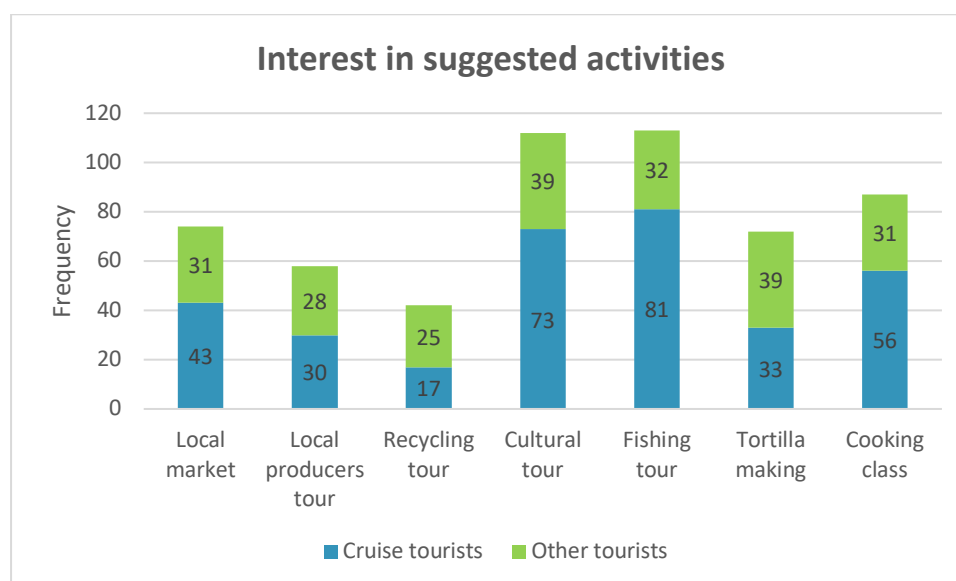


Figure 8 – Bar chart comparing types of tourists interest in suggested activities

Respondents were also asked how much they would be willing to pay (in USD) for said activities.

Table 6 – Table of average and maximum price willing to pay for suggested activities

Activity	Price Average USD	Price Max
<i>Local Market</i>	21	100
<i>Producers tour</i>	22	100
<i>Recycling tour</i>	12	100
<i>Cultural tour</i>	20	100
<i>Fishing trip</i>	40	200
<i>Tortilla making</i>	16	70
<i>Cooking class</i>	16	100

A comparison was made in the price willing to pay according to type of tourists (figure 8).

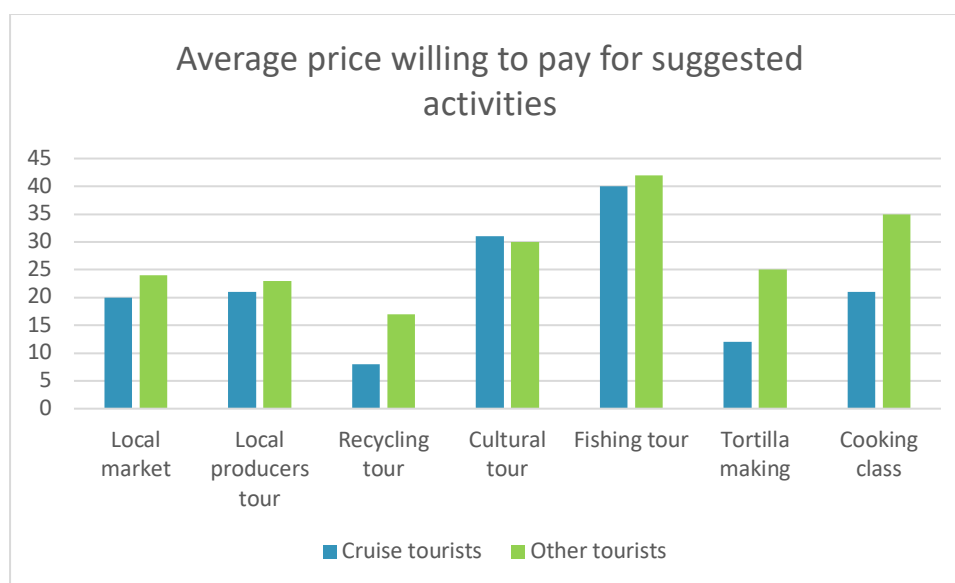


Figure 9 – Bar chart comparing type of tourist average price willing to pay

What can be seen from this graph is that other tourists are willing to spend more on activities than cruise tourists. This information can be useful when considering the possibility of having different prices for the tourism product depending on the tourist of target.

Organisation of tourism in Mahahual and Costa Maya port

Tourism typology

An attempt was made at using the 5-point likert scale questionnaire Yiannaki and Gibbon (1992) used for their research on tourist roles. This proved too much work for one intern, since there was already another questionnaire being distributed. However, from looking at the list of roles (figure 2) and results from questionnaires it can be deduced that the Sun Lover and Organized Mass Tourists would be the most common type of role tourists take on when in Mahahual. The data from the CPTQ show that the most tourists identify with the personality of “pampered” (like to spend most of their vacation in the hotel) or “explorer”. The most prominent activities they partook in were visiting nearby cities, water activities, and archeological zones.

Tour operators in Mahahual

The tour operators found in Mahahual can be divided into two broad categories; those found within the port and those without. All operators offer tours to Mayan ruins and the Bacalar lagoon. Chacchoben is the closest archaeological site to the port, and so the most popular. Some also go to Kohunlich but it is less frequent due to the distance. The third most common tour is any kind of beach experience. Most operators offer combo deals where tourists can choose more than one experience, for example Mayan ruin and Bacalar lagoon together. The operators all have private transportation; however, if necessary they do call upon taxis to help with transporting their customers.

Port tour operators

Within the port, there are four different tour operators; Aviomar, Explora, Aventura, and a company of the port.

Aviomar is the first company to work with cruise ships in Mexico, it has been running for 50 years. Due to this long experience and contact with cruise ships, when the Costa Maya port was built cruise ships agreed to dock only if Aviomar was running the tours. The port had no other choice but to agree. Aviomar is divided into three companies; Aviomar, Explora, and Aventura. This is what they do in every port, three companies made out of one, to allow for each to focus on different excursions. After Hurricane Dean in 2007, the port created its own tour company, taking almost all the tours that Aviomar had at the time (personal communication, December 2019).

Aviomar has been receiving pressure from cruise companies, who in turn are receiving pressure from the United Nations, to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and reducing their environmental impact. As such, the company already holds a Travelife certification. From this, they are already taking actions such as reducing plastic consumption, collecting rain water, etc. However, this is mostly for Aviomar in Cozumel and not as much yet in Mahahual. There is also the plan to promote the creation of zero-impact tours. Aviomar is extremely interested in working together with Takata to obtain a certification showing their efforts and initiatives they are taking towards being more ecological, sustainable, and socially responsible.

The Native Choice

The Native Choice is a local tour operator that offers excursions for cruise passengers. It is located just a few hundred meters from the port. The tours it offers include visiting the Mayan ruins, kayaking in Bacalar, and a Mayan experience in which tourists are treated to an authentic Mayan lunch in a local home near the ruins. The tour guides have an A4 paper (see appendix) with small guiding instructions for as to what they should mention to the tourists during the hour-long drive to the destination. These hints include mentioning the history of Mahahual, basic information on Costa Maya port, high and low tourist season, flora and fauna, Mayan history, etc. The tours additionally pass through Pedro Santos, "Pineapple Town", where all of the residents are involved in agriculture, specifically the growing of pineapples. This extra stop allows for locals who sell pineapples and other fruit along the road to also benefit from the tourists who dock at Costa Maya port. Most of the tours are done in English. In the tour that passes through the village of Chacchoben there is the option to eat in a local Mayan household. The tour company has helped the household organise the garden and house to make it appealing to tourists. The Mayan women pre-prepare a typical lunch and teach tourists how to make tortillas. There is also a small table selling local crafts, such as embroidered shirts, and products such as hot sauce and vanilla. The other house used for this part of the tour is the home of one of the managers. Here, they can experience a cacao ceremony and taste natural 'hot chocolate'.

Toucan tours

Toucan tours is a local company which has been working in Mahahual since 2003. The manager claims that they were the first company working here. They offer the same tours as all other companies; mainly Mayan ruins and

a trip to Bacalar. From this, different options can be chosen. A 'combo tour' with a local lunch included is an option, the lunch happens either at the beach in a local restaurant (Big Mamas) or in the village with a local family. These families were found through the workers of the company approaching management and informing them about someone they know who would be able to provide food for the lunch experience.

Mahahual Eco-tours

A very small tour operator run by one individual who is already in close contact with Takata. Mahahual Eco-tours focuses on providing quality experiences for small groups of individuals. The two main activities offered are bird watching and kayaking in the mangroves. The manager includes a local lunch as part of the tour, so they stop in different locations depending on the tour. One of the tours takes people to Pedro Santos, where they can learn about the plantation and cook a lunch there. The tours are sustainable, no plastic bottles are provided, tourists can bring their own which they can refill. They must also either use organic sunscreen or no sunscreen at all. The manager did have an idea of creating a local walking tour, but due to time was unable to go through with the idea. Some of the aspects of the walking tour idea he shared have been included in the recommendation for a walking tour.

Costa Maya Adventours

Still a small organisation that takes small groups on the usual tours of Chacchoben and Bacalar. They focus on family groups. They do have contact with a local artisan in Kohunlich and provide the tourists the opportunity to purchase some of his crafts. The manager has mentioned that he would be more than happy to bring some of these crafts to the local market if there is one.



Figure 10 – Images of artisan crafts from Kohunlich

Mayan trips

This is the youngest tour operator in Mahahual. Currently not a lot of information is known on this tour operator as an interview was not possible in the time the intern was doing research. Contact has been made though, and the future intern could organise an interview with the manager.

Analysis

Below is a short answering of each sub-research question that was formulated to help answer the main research aim. The Cruise ship organisation section and information provision section were merged as the questions being answered were deemed similar enough to group together.

1. Perception

- a. *What is the perception of tourists on the locals, and village, of Mahahual?*
- b. *Are cruise tourists aware of Mahahual history?*

Tourists have an overall positive view of the locals and village of Mahahual. The main comments for lack of satisfaction revolved around cleanliness of the beaches and courtesy of the sellers. Both of which are aspects that Takata cannot change directly. Increasing opportunities for locals to sell their products to tourists could help in reducing the intensity with which they try to sell to tourists. Whereas cleanliness could be changed through further developing the recycling project and Eco-Mahahual certification and increasing education of the community.

Tourists are mostly unaware of the history of Mahahual. Those who partake in tours do receive a small summary of the village and its history. As was seen from the questionnaire responses, there is a strong interest in learning more about its history. With 80% responding that they would be interested in learning more about the history of Mahahual. Therefore, including an explanation of the history of Mahahual into a local walking tour would be a good option.

2. Experience and expectation

- a. *What motivates tourists to come to Mahahual?*
- b. *What motivates tourists to partake in specific tours/activities?*
- c. *What products would be of interest for tourists visiting to Mahahual?*

Most tourists who come to Mahahual arrive from the cruise ship, therefore the reason they choose the cruise is not specifically for the destination of Mahahual. The village is known for its beautiful beaches, which is what tourists come for. As such, the main activities tourists do revolve around the beach and water. The motivation for partaking in an activity has to do with adventure, relaxation, and price. The main activities they would be interested in are cultural, fishing, and cooking classes.

3. Information provision & Cruise ship organisation

- a. *What knowledge/information is already provided to (cruise) tourists about Mahahual?*
- b. *What are the itineraries of the ships that dock in Mahahual?*
- c. *How is Mahahual promoted as part of the cruise itinerary?*
- d. *What activities are offered or promoted by the cruise company and within the port?*

The main issue with information provision is noted in the ignorance of most cruise tourists who visit Mahahual. When in conversation with them, most were not aware of exactly where they were in the Caribbean. Often thinking that Costa Maya, the name they commonly use to refer to the area due to the port name, is an island. The research uncovered that cruise tourists from MSC cruises receive a small booklet every morning with information about the port they are arriving to². This booklet uses the name of the port (Costa Maya) rather than Mahahual. It does mention Mahahual in the description of the area but the way it is phrased makes it seem like it is another village to visit if one is interested. The map that is provided in the booklet also only shows a map of the port, making it seem like the port is the village and there is nothing nearby. They do mention the

² See appendix 5 for images of booklet

problem of sargasso seaweed that is currently the source of many online complaints and negative reviews from tourists.

4. Tourism organisation

a. *What are the agreements between tourism businesses in Mahahual and Costa Maya port?*

From observations and interviews with tourism businesses, what can be clearly noted is the disjuncture and competition there is between the port and other businesses outside the port. There is an association for the restaurants and hotels however, none for tour operators or dive centers. This would make it difficult to try and organise meetings or networks between tourism businesses in Mahahual. From an interview, it was mentioned that the bigger non-port tour operators (those who take tourists to the Mayan ruins and Bacalar as well as the beach), did have a meeting together once with regards to conflict they were facing with the taxi drivers. Other than this, an interviewee mentioned that there is some tension between the managers of Toucan Tours and The Native Choice. Therefore, the community feeling is lacking also at the business level.

There are agreements between the port tour operators and businesses along the Malecon. As for example, with cruise tourists being taken to Maya Bar, a restaurant located along the Malecon. However, other beach clubs along the Malecon (Beach Escape) and further South on the beach (La Bamba) are all owned by the port and exclusive to cruise passengers. There is a tour which allows cruise passengers to learn how to dance salsa and make salsa (the dish), which happens in 40 Cañones, a non-port-owned business.

Tourism product in Mahahual

The majority of tourists who travel to Mahahual are not really looking to fully engage themselves in any kind of *active* activity. Tourists mainly come to relax and enjoy the beach, to escape their daily life and routine. The aesthetics of the beachside is what draws tourists to come to Mahahual. This means that a tourism product should revolve mostly around entertainment which tourists can merely observe; as, for example, with a dance performance. The way they can be educated through this passive entertainment is by having an individual explaining the performance that is currently happening. Telling a story about the history of Mahahual, the different cultures that can be found in such a small village. As was mentioned by Oh et al. (2012) in the figure on the four realms of tourism experience (figure 1), the concept of escapism is extremely important in tourism experiences. This is a tool that needs to be used for the development of destination experiences. The idea of a local market (elaborated further below) and a tour around the village are a form of escapism as the tourists may feel that they are immersing themselves into a completely different environment where they can create new identities and experience a culture other than their own. This experience needs to be perceived as authentic as possible. From an interview with a local resident who runs an NGO it was discovered that the cruise is currently missing 'experiences tour'. They are therefore looking for ideas and projects that could offer this. The interviewee explained this is also the reason why cruise tourists all go to Bacalar or the ruins rather than staying in Mahahual. The idea of a local tour would be able to fill this current gap by providing an authentic experience where tourists can immerse themselves in the local community and nature.

Recommendations

Specific projects to initiate

From the data gathered and analysed for tourism demand, four main recommendations are suggested. These are: the development of Mahahual into a sustainable destination, creating a walking tour through the village, initiation of a local market, and the adaptation of the eco-certification for all businesses in Mahahual.

Development of Mahahual into a sustainable destination

The idea with this project is to focus mainly on the development and expansion of the hashtag EcoMahahual. This hashtag encompasses other projects and initiatives such as Takata's recycling project which is already well developed. The objective with the promotion of the hashtag is to support initiatives which are aimed at making Mahahual into a more sustainable destination. We have created a document with ten small actions that businesses and tourists can easily do, they can then take a picture of this action and share it on social media using the #EcoMahahual (see appendix). This would allow for a greater exposure of Mahahual as a destination aiming to be more ecological and sustainable, as well as educating tourists on being more conscious. The document will be distributed to hotels and restaurants in Mahahual, asking them to place it somewhere in their business where tourists can see it.

Examples of initiatives that could be further included in the #EcoMahahual include:

- **Plastic:** Complete banning of plastic straws in all of the village and promoting alternatives to single-use plastic. This could be done in partnership with the organisation Menos Plastico es Fantastico (local non-profit), which already has a lot of initiatives towards this. Banning plastic completely is an ambitious goal, but due to the current size of Mahahual it is not an impossible objective.
- **Seafood guide:** this is a future project which could be taken on by a tourism intern or a marine ecology intern where they would develop a stoplight guide for the consumption of fish. This method of raising awareness on consumption is already quite prominent in other locations around the world. The red, orange, and green classification of fish depends on the locality. As such, each fish guide will vary depending on the destination.
- **Community garden:** The development of a community garden is more in line with the supply and community aspect of tourism research, but it would be an interesting component to add to the walking tour project if ever it is created. Making tourists pass through the community garden would provide an original context for tourists to meet and interact with locals, while also learning more about the area they are visiting. They could learn more about the plants which can be found in the area and the food which can be prepared with it. This project should be developed in coordination with the Takata eco-certification project, where a guide for gardening has already been created by the previous intern.

This initiative links to the objective of obtaining a Green Destinations certification for Mahahual. Obtaining the certification would provide international recognition of the environmental efforts that are being made in the village, as well as hopefully attracting the kind of tourists who are interested in this kind of tourism and initiatives. This objective is already underway, with email contact having been made with the Green Destinations organisation. Currently, what is missing is finding an organisation that serves as the link between the public and private, which can act as the representative of the destination. For example, a public authority tourism department (maybe SEDETUR). Contact has already been made with the local representative of Green Destinations in Mexico.

A partnership with Carnival Corporation would be a good option for the funding and support of this initiative. This is the only cruise company so far with who we have obtained an interview and have somewhat regular contact.

Walking tour

Through combining results from research on tourism demand and supply, the development of a local walking tour is currently underway. By partnering with Aviomar, we are able to use the contacts, resources, and networks that they already have in place. A walking tour allows tourists to have a different experience of the destination they are visiting where they can meet and interact with locals and go 'off the beaten track'. This kind of tour also allows for the feeling of a more authentic experience due to the smaller groups and transportation

method, as well as having a local resident as a guide. As there are multiple stops that could be included in the tour, which will be too much for one, the idea is to create two different themed tours that stop at different places. This would also allow tourists to have a choice in the type of walking tour they want to partake in, which increases their sense of having the power to shape their experience while also being completely taken care of once partaking in the tour.

The tour will include the four different elements of tourism experiences (education, entertainment, escapism, and aesthetics) mentioned earlier in the literature review. Education will be in the form of storytelling; the local guide will inform tourists on the history of Mahahual and the environmental changes that have been noted. By involving local residents and fishermen, personal stories, and accounts of how the area has changed can also serve to educate the tourists about Mahahual and its people. Walking through the village allows for a sense of 'escaping' the big crowds and obtaining a unique experience, which is what tourists are now searching for. The whole walking tour and the different stops incorporate the entertainment experience. Finally, aesthetics will prove to be the most difficult to control. As most tourists' complaints are with regards to the Sargasso, which cannot easily be controlled other than removing it from the beaches. The cleanliness of kilometre 55 needs to be a priority if a walking tour is to happen through it. The idea is to include the local market (third project mentioned below) as part of the tour, most likely in the end so tourists do not have to walk around with the things they may have purchased at the market.

The tour would be divided into two tourist groups; cruise tourists and non-cruise tourists. The tours will be given in English or Spanish and the guides will be local residents from Mahahual. Aviomar agrees this is the best option as no one knows the village better than someone who actually lives in it.

A very important factor that needs to be considered for the tour's success is the guarantee that cruise passengers can make it back to the ship on time. Currently, the tours offered by operators last a maximum of 5 hours. Cruise passengers are fearful of booking tours outside of those offered by the cruise ship as they think there is not as much guarantee that they are back on time. Creating a relation of trust and reliability that they are back in the port on time before the ship leaves is therefore essential to the success of the tour. As a result, partnering with Aviomar to initiate the local tour idea would be a viable option. As they are within the port and already have an established relation of trust, they have the capacity to provide this guarantee that is more difficult to create when external to the port.

Local market

The creation of a local market is one of the project ideas which received the most interest when mentioning it during interviews. Stakeholders and tourists who were interviewed strongly enjoyed the idea of having a market. A common way for people to truly get to know a culture and its people is through food. A local market allows for tourists to feel that they have the choice in the level of involvement they want with the local community. They can choose to merely walk past, browse through the stalls, eat local food... The local market could be part of the walking tour; either as the ending point or a stop during the walk where tourists can have a local lunch. This market would provide an area for local artisans and producers to sell their crafts, products, and fruit and vegetables. Further, it would be an area where locals can come to socialize, interact with tourists, and also buy fresh products.

Contacts are slowly being created to initiate this project. From interviews, the basic requirement for producers and artisans to come and sell their things at the market would be for the travel costs to be covered. If this is ensured, it will be easy to ask surrounding producers to come to the market. This sums up to around 200 pesos per artisan, which is also the basic salary that most people gain per day working in Mahahual.

The necessary steps to take for the development of a local market are as follows:

1. Identify the location where it will happen. There needs to be an agreement among the local community for this, as well as permission from the mayor.
 - a. Does the area need to be rented, is it provided by the municipality, etc...
2. Create an agreement to use the said area.
3. Identify the local producers in Mahahual and other producers around Mahahual who would be interested in selling their products at the market.
4. Identify municipal state permits and secretary of health requirements. (We have a contact who is willing to help with this).
5. Make the structures for the market; “rustic” cabins with wood and thatch/iron/cement
6. Make a list of all the vendors and start approaching the local businesses asking them if they would be interested in promoting.
7. Creating a civil society organisation that would take care of the project (along with Takata?)

Finding a location for the market will take place once the urban management interns of Takata have completed their research on the optimal place to have a market. Until then, finding local artisans and producers who would be willing to sell their crafts would be the most logical action to take.

Adaptation of Eco-certification for all businesses in Mahahual

This is a big project and may take a lot of work from the following intern to complete and set in place. Starting with only tour operators is a good plan before trying to adapt the certification to any kind of business found in Mahahual. As tour operators are connected to other businesses, specifically restaurants, it makes it more difficult to use the current Eco-Certification as some of the actions cannot as easily be implemented or are not in the hands of the Tour operator to change. Currently, the certification is in process of being adapted for tour operators. With the help of Aviomar, who already holds a certification given by Travel Life³, we will go through the actions of the current eco-certification and determine which are the ones that do not fit well or cannot be achieved by tour companies.

Once a final version of the certification is complete, we can begin certifying Aviomar then contacting other tour operators to see if they would like the same. After adapting the certification for tour operators, and certifying some operators, the goal would be to adapt the certification further for all businesses in Mahahual. This links to the certification of Green Destinations mentioned above.

Other recommendations and further research

An investigation into tourism movement patterns would be useful to see what the most frequented areas of the village are. These could then be used for information provision or the development of a small tourism product (such as a artisans’ stall). For example, the cruise tourists who book from non-port tour operators have to walk a bit through the casitas neighborhood in order to reach the office, this could be a viable area for the development of some kind of tourism product.

The next tourism intern should work on the development and initiation of the projects above. Further research into the fourth theme of the research sub-questions (tourism organisation) would also be very interesting and useful to explore. Understanding the specific agreements between the businesses (40 Cañones) and the port would allow for more information on how, and under what conditions, the port associates with local businesses.

With regards to information provision: having a small infographic within the port or the shuttle that takes tourists to the Malecon, mentioning Sargasso and the reasons tourists may see a lot when arriving in Mahahual,

³ A training, management, and certification initiative for tourism companies committed to reaching sustainability” (travelife.info, 2020)

could help to reduce the negative reviews commonly found online. The infographic could then further include tips on what tourists can do so they do not contribute to the proliferation of Sargasso, which then falls in line with the #EcoMahahual. Further, changing the maps that are given to cruise passengers, so they are more aware of the village and how it actually looks would help with proper information provision. This is a very ambitious project as it requires the cooperation of the port, which clearly aims to keep tourists within its walls as much as possible. Another possibility for this would be to work through the cruise ships, since they do offer information onboard about the port they will dock at. Most cruise ships have some kind of social responsibility or community engagements, promotion of points of interest within the village through a map of the area which would allow for locals to benefit more from cruise tourists fits well in line with social responsibility and sustainability.

Finally, partnerships and continued contact with specific cruise companies is recommended. We already have good communication with Carnival Corporation, who have shown interest in the current projects Takata is working on. The previous intern also got a contact with someone from Norwegian Cruise Line, there has still been no reply despite multiple emails. Attempts have been made to contact other companies too with no reply to date.

Appendix

Appendix 1 - Stakeholders list

Who	What	Contact	Interaction	Notes
David	The Native Choice manager	+52 19841156448	Interview	
Teresa Ruan	Toucan tours manager	tucancostamaya@yahoo.com	Interview	Very enthusiastic about the idea of developing a local market
Benjamin Jiménez	Strategic Planning Executive Director of CPTQ (Consejo de promoción turística de Quintana Roo)	Benjamin.jimenez@cptq.mx	Interview	CPTQ does research on tourism profiles in the area, nothing yet for Mahahual specifically.
Alanna Enge	Carnival Cruise Liners Sustainability Manager	aenge@carnival.com	Interview with Juliana	Interested in collaborating and helping Takata with research projects
Marco	Operations manager Costa Maya Adventours	+52 5532236340	Interview	Enthusiastic about helping out with the local market
Victor	Aviomar manager in Mahahual	+52 19831254824	Interview + meeting with Anthony for certification + meeting for walking tour	Collaboration with Takata; certification and walking tour
Sergio Israel Padilla Castillejos	Strategic Planning Director of SEDETUR	pacasti@gmail.com	Emailed questions about SEDETUR	
Carlos Arrabal	Mayan Trips manager	mayantrips@gmail.com	Attempted to get interview which never happened due to time constraints	
Mario Torres	Works in Bacalar, used to be in politics	+52 1983 192 9888	-	Willing to help with the development of the local market in Mahahual, and anything else. Gave the steps necessary to achieve this project
Meybi Karina Pat Canche	Aviomar sustainability coordinator	mpat@aviomar.com.mx	None yet	
Fuensanta Rodriguez	Quality assessment of tours in the port	+52 1 55 4064 6563	Meeting with Takata people	Link between port and Takata
Yanina	Mariposario			Attempt was made to work together with the

				recycling, not very successful.
Victor Rosales	Mahahual eco-tours		Interview	
Ana	Menos Plastico		Interview	Has contacts of local artisans. Idea of making a plastic museum and murals in the 55. Offered the area in National Beach Club for the local market.

Appendix 2 - Tourism roles questions

1. I mostly relax and sunbathe
2. I spend most of the day on the beach, go out every night, drink with friends, and do crazy things
3. I enjoy meeting the local people, trying the food, and speaking the language
4. I visit museums which house archaeological artifacts from ancient sites and civilizations.
5. I leave all the planning, hotel reservations, organized tours, etc., to my travel agent
6. I participate in activities involving an element of risk such as sky diving, rock climbing or ski jumping
7. I go on an adventure travel such as a hike down the Grand Canyon, jungle treks, and the like
8. I go to exclusive night clubs, attend yacht parties, and socialized with celebrities
9. For me, vacations are a sort of a spiritual quest in which I try to discover knowledge about my roots, history, or traditions
10. I visit regular tourist attractions but I avoid packaged vacations and organized tours
11. I stay in first class hotels, go to shows and dine at the best restaurants
12. I try to make it on my own, living with the local people, and often took jobs to keep myself going
13. I take it easy, getting away from it all
14. I stay physically active engaging in my favorite sports
15. I participate in planned study programs which may include lectures, workshops and the like
16. I go to a warm place with lots of sun, sand and ocean
17. I try to meet people of the opposite sex for uncomplicated romantic experiences
18. I try to get to know the ways of the culture, and generally avoid the regular tourist route
19. Visiting the sites, and studying the history of ancient civilization have a special meaning for me
20. I take packaged vacation and organized tours
21. I engage in risky/exhilarating activities which provide me with emotional highs
22. I explore out of the way places and enjoy the challenges and hardships involved in getting there
23. I vacation in elite, exotic, or out-of-the-way world class resorts such as Monte Carlo, Tahiti, or the French Riviera
24. My purpose in travel is to explore the meaning of life and what I can learn about myself
25. While I leave some of my travel arrangements to my travel agent, I plan my own route/destination, make my own hotel reservations, and often "play it by ear"
26. I travel first class, and stay at the best luxury resorts.
27. I drift from place to place living a hippie-style existence
28. I head for places that were quiet, and peaceful such as a deserted beach, a cabin in the hills, etc.
29. I go on vacation mostly to engage in my favorite sports (e.g. tennis, sailing, golf, skiing, hunting, etc.)
30. I take educationally oriented vacations that enable me to study and/or acquire new skills and knowledge

Appendix 3 - Questionnaire



- Mahahual visitor Questionnaire -

Thank you for taking the time to answer our questions. The aim of this survey is to gather basic information on cruise tourism, and passenger perceptions and opinions on specific topics. This is part of an internship research project with Takata (a dive and research center in Mahahual). This will take you around 10 minutes. Your responses will remain anonymous and will only be used for statistical purposes. Please answer **ALL** the questions that apply to you as either a cruise passenger or tourist.

1.	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other	2.	Age: _____	3.	Nationality: _____
4.	Country of residence: _____	5.	How many times have you visited Mahahual before this? <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1 time <input type="checkbox"/> 2 times <input type="checkbox"/> 3 times <input type="checkbox"/> 4 times <input type="checkbox"/> 5 times or more		
6.	With how many people did you travel with to Mahahual? <input type="checkbox"/> Alone <input type="checkbox"/> With a friend <input type="checkbox"/> With my partner <input type="checkbox"/> With my partner and _____ children <input type="checkbox"/> Alone and with _____ children <input type="checkbox"/> With a group of _____ friends <input type="checkbox"/> With my family of _____				
7.	What mode of transportation did you use to come to Mahahual?	<input type="checkbox"/> Bus <input type="checkbox"/> Taxi <input type="checkbox"/> Rental car <input type="checkbox"/> Own car <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise ship <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
8.	What mode of transportation did you use while in Mahahual? Select all that apply	<input type="checkbox"/> Bus <input type="checkbox"/> Taxi <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle <input type="checkbox"/> Rental car <input type="checkbox"/> Own car <input type="checkbox"/> Walking <input type="checkbox"/> Pickup/shuttle <input type="checkbox"/> Golf cart <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
9.	How did you hear about Mahahual?	<input type="checkbox"/> Friends/family <input type="checkbox"/> Internet <input type="checkbox"/> Travel agency <input type="checkbox"/> Travel guides <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise ship <input type="checkbox"/> Travel brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
10.	How long is your stay in Mahahual?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 day or less <input type="checkbox"/> 2 – 4 days <input type="checkbox"/> 5 – 7 days <input type="checkbox"/> 8 – 14 days <input type="checkbox"/> 15 days or more			
11.	What are your main reasons for traveling to Mahahual? Select all that apply	<input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Nature experience <input type="checkbox"/> Beach holiday <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual holiday <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural holiday <input type="checkbox"/> Adventurous holiday <input type="checkbox"/> Nightlife <input type="checkbox"/> Eco-tourism <input type="checkbox"/> Diving <input type="checkbox"/> Snorkeling <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting family <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxing <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping <input type="checkbox"/> Low travel cost <input type="checkbox"/> Experiencing different cultures and ways of life <input type="checkbox"/> Climate/ temperature <input type="checkbox"/> Buying local crafts and handiwork <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise ship itinerary <input type="checkbox"/> Other			

SATISFACTION

12. Please rate how satisfied you are with the following							
		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Indifferent	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
	Transportation around Mahahual						
	Friendliness of locals						
	Availability of restaurants						
	Availability of signs in your language						
	Value for money						
	Pre-visit information						
	Performance of guides						
	Availability of entertainment						
	Courtesy of sellers						
	Bus and taxi drivers						
	Cleanliness of Mahahual						
	Cultural experience						
	Local immersion						
	Environmental quality						
	Level of language communication						
	Quality of services offered						
14.	If you were dissatisfied with any of the above, please mention what could contribute to increasing your satisfaction.						

- Mahahual visitor Questionnaire -

ACTIVITIES

15.	Please mention if you participated in the following activities (Select all that apply):						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Diving <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing <input type="checkbox"/> Local arts and crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Tamazcal <input type="checkbox"/> Massage <input type="checkbox"/> Waterpark <input type="checkbox"/> Water Sport (kayaking, paddleboard, snorkeling) <input type="checkbox"/> Sailing <input type="checkbox"/> Mayan ruins trip <input type="checkbox"/> Mangroves tour <input type="checkbox"/> Bird watching <input type="checkbox"/> Tequila museum <input type="checkbox"/> ATV trip <input type="checkbox"/> Dune buggy trip <input type="checkbox"/> Bacalar lagoon trip <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking with locals <input type="checkbox"/> Party bus <input type="checkbox"/> Other						
16.	How did you book the activities above? <input type="checkbox"/> Travel agency <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise line <input type="checkbox"/> Internet <input type="checkbox"/> Local guide <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> N/A						
17.	What determines your choice for an activity? Select all that apply <input type="checkbox"/> Adventurous <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Authenticity <input type="checkbox"/> Price <input type="checkbox"/> New experiences <input type="checkbox"/> Local immersion <input type="checkbox"/> Learning a new skill <input type="checkbox"/> Other						
18.	Did you feel any activities were missing to your experience in Mahahual? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (which ones?) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No						
19.	ONLY For cruise tourists	Do you feel your time on shore was enough to do all the activities you wanted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
20.	Based on your experience in Mahahual, how likely are you to return as a tourist? <input type="checkbox"/> Very likely <input type="checkbox"/> Likely <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unlikely <input type="checkbox"/> Very unlikely						
21.	Please mention the places you visited when in Mahahual. Select all that apply <input type="checkbox"/> El faro (the light house) <input type="checkbox"/> Malecon (beach promenade). <input type="checkbox"/> Kilometro 55 <input type="checkbox"/> Craft shops <input type="checkbox"/> El puerto (the port) <input type="checkbox"/> Casitas (residential area next to the port) <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant (which one?) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> N/A						
22.	While in Mahahual how much do you spend for each of the following per day: (parenthesis is in Mexican pesos)						
	Food and beverages	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 10\$ (200 pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> 10\$ to 20\$ (200 to 400) <input type="checkbox"/> 20\$ to 30\$ (400 to 600) <input type="checkbox"/> Over 30\$ (600+ pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> Included in tour <input type="checkbox"/> N/A					
	Souvenirs and local products	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 10\$ (200 pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> 10\$ to 20\$ (200 to 400) <input type="checkbox"/> 20\$ to 30\$ (400 to 600) <input type="checkbox"/> Over 30\$ (600+ pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> N/A					
	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 10\$ (200 pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> 10\$ to 20\$ (200 to 400) <input type="checkbox"/> 20\$ to 30\$ (400 to 600) <input type="checkbox"/> Over 30\$ (600+ pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> Included in tour <input type="checkbox"/> N/A					
	Tours	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 50\$ (1000 pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> 50\$ to 100\$ (1000 – 2000) <input type="checkbox"/> 100\$ to 150\$ (2000 – 3500) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Over 150\$ (3500+ pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> N/A					
	Tour guide services (Tips)	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 10\$ (200 pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> 10\$ to 20\$ (200 to 400) <input type="checkbox"/> 20\$ to 30\$ (400 to 600) <input type="checkbox"/> Over 30\$ (600+ pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> N/A					
	Activities (Diving, snorkeling, paddle boarding...)	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 10\$ (200 pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> 10\$ to 20\$ (200 to 400) <input type="checkbox"/> 20\$ to 30\$ (400 to 600) <input type="checkbox"/> 30\$ to 40\$ (600 to 800) <input type="checkbox"/> 40\$ to 50\$ (800 to 1000) <input type="checkbox"/> Over 50\$ (1000+ pesos) <input type="checkbox"/> Included in tour <input type="checkbox"/> N/A					
23.	When going out to eat, what determines your choice of restaurant? Select all that apply <input type="checkbox"/> Local street food <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanliness <input type="checkbox"/> Online reviews <input type="checkbox"/> Price <input type="checkbox"/> Authenticity <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations <input type="checkbox"/> Location <input type="checkbox"/> Menu options <input type="checkbox"/> Tour deals						
24.	Do you know about kilometro 55 (local neighbourhood in Mahahual)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	25.	Would you be interested in a tour around kilometro 55? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	26.	Are you aware of the history of Mahahual? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially	27.	Would you want to know more about the history of Mahahual? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

- Mahahual visitor Questionnaire -

28.	Please mention if you would be interested in participating the following activities (ask researcher for further elaboration if necessary). If selecting YES, indicate how much you would be willing to pay for said activity in AMERICAN dollars .		
a.	Local Market (with local crafts and food)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Price _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No
b.	Local producers tour	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Price _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No
c.	Recycling tour	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Price _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No
d.	Cultural tour	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Price _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No
e.	Fishing trip with learning to cook what you caught	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Price _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No
f.	Make your own tortillas	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Price _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No
g.	Cooking class of traditional Mexican food	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Price _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No
29.	If you have ideas for <u>activities</u> you would like to see in Mahahual please mention these below:		

----- Thank you for your time! -----

Appendix 4 - Questionnaire open-question responses

Question 14: recommendations for increasing satisfaction

- Cleanliness of Island
- Sellers too pushy, trying to sell – I'm on vacation and don't want to be bombarded
- Too many people pressuring to sell
- Beaches could be cleaner
- We don't speak Spanish and not a lot speak English
- Low prices of food and transportation for local people
- Too many sellers
- Trash along the seashore
- Taxi driver didn't understand proper English
- Courtesy of sellers (not all)
- Needs to be a little cleaner
- Higher quality in more bars and restaurants, looking a bit dirty, annoying sellers
- Cleaning the beach
- Sellers shouldn't offer their stuff so aggressive
- A little outside the town there is so much plastic in the water
- Sellers are aggressive. Some places are very expensive. There is no recycling (except at Takata). Garbage is put in the forest.
- Trash collection, locals not littering
- I personally don't like cigarette smoke and there are a lot of places where people smoke
- Could be cleaner
- Si podria mejorar la limpieza de basura en las playas sobre todo las mas alejado del centro. He visto pajaros comer entre la basura
- More recycling
- No me gusta que haya chicos cada pocos metros intentando vender algo. Demasiado barcos motor.
- Less tourists
- Sellers pushing too much
- The cruise ship did not have enough local information
- Sales people on the street very pushy
- Falta mucha limpieza en el pueblo (de basura, etc) y en la playa (sargazo). Falta capacitacion a choferes de taxi y autobuses
- More responsibility of the environment (plastic, etc...)


Question 18: activities missing

- Local market (Apples and bananas)
- Life guards, nightlife
- More space to enjoy the beach
- Yoga and vegetarian/vegan food
- More information about walking routes, etc...
- Manglar, cocinar con locales

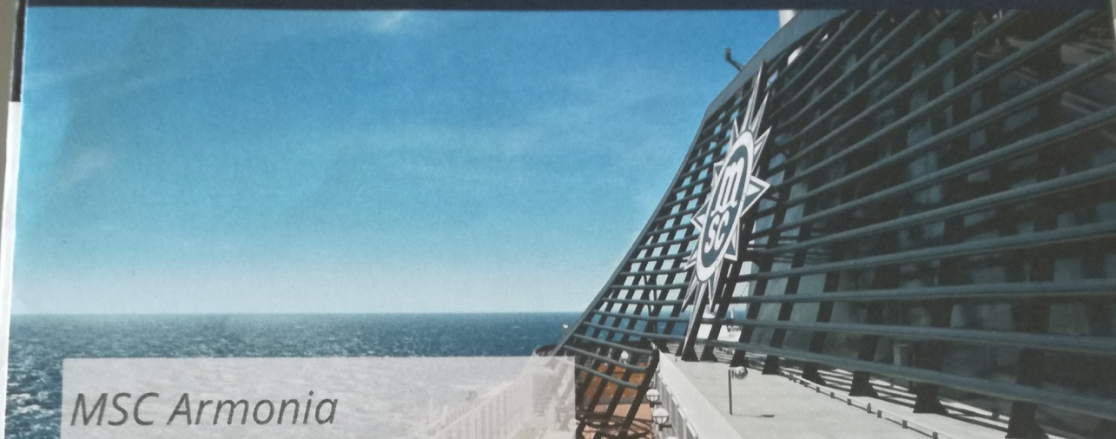
Question 29: Ideas for activities

- Bird watching tours
- Beach volleyball/sports
- Kitesurfing lessons
- Jet skis, quad bikes
- Better food options would be great
- Tequila/Mezcal tours
- Creative workshops for kids
- Would do all the activities suggested if I would stay for a month
- Limpieza de playas colectivas por locales y turistas para ver el impacto que la vidia diaria puede generar en la playa


- Fumigacion hay demasiado mosquitos fuera del centro
- Local food – better bicycle rentals
- Good service in the restaurants, recreational areas
- Escuchar musica tradicional de la region. Disfrutar bailes tradicionales y juegos tradicionales de la region. Observar concursus de actividades de personas locales de Mahahual y pueblos cercanos.
- Natural – plants uses, wild animals
- Una danza Maya. Saber como teje una amaca
- More recycling activities
- Orden de los comerciantes
- Shows, theatres





DAILY PROGRAM




MSC Armonia


27°C / 84°F min
37°C / 104°F max


8:00am Arrival time
5:30pm All aboard
6:00pm Departure time


6:45am Sunrise
6:27pm Sunset


Next Port:
 Cozumel, October 11, 2019


TIME CHANGE +1 HOUR
 Did you remember to move your clocks **FORWARD 1 HOUR** last night?

WELCOME TO COSTA MAYA

Thursday October 10, 2019

"Mexico is a mosaic of different realities and beauties."

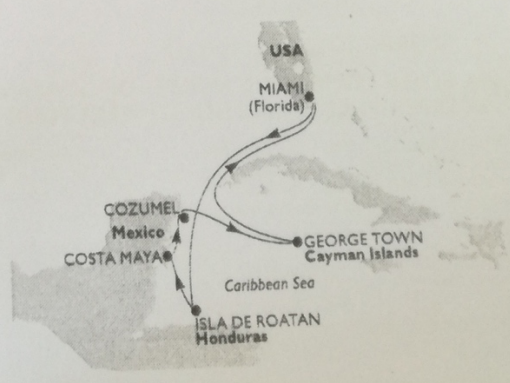
Enrique Pena Nieto

Nautical information

MSC Armonia will continue to sail all night with a NWE route speed of about 15 knots at a time of the port of Costa Maya. Mexican tourist region in the municipality of Othon p. Blanco, in the state of Quintana Roo, the only state delimited by the Caribbean Sea in the East. At 6:30am, just before sunrise, we will board the pilot who will assist us in the mooring maneuvers that will end at 7:30am. Once the moorings have been released around 6:00pm and the pilot MSC Armonia has landed, he will take route N and speed about 11 knots towards the island of Cozumel.

Customs and Agriculture Regulations

Please note that, due to Agriculture regulations and strict requirements of the local Authorities, it is prohibited to take ashore any kind of food, plants, seeds or shells and commercial merchandise: heavy penalties will apply to guests found with these prohibited items.



Distance from Costa Maya to Cozumel: 124 nautical miles.



DISCOVER COSTA MAYA!

The peninsula of Costa Maya is a charming holiday destination in the western Caribbean, close to the border with Belize. Explore the pretty villages of Mahahual and Xcalak and the delightful fishing village of Mahahual with its soft, sandy beaches, thatched 'palapas' buildings, offshore coral reef and good bars, restaurants, and shops. Costa Maya remains unspoilt, with the cruise terminal a recent addition. Water sports like snorkelling and diving offer a real escape, and whilst ashore you might like to visit Mayan archaeological sites such as the stunning temples and intricately carved Pyramid of the Mask at Kohunlich, deep in the jungle, the city of Chacchoben dating back to 350 AD, or the ruins at Dzibanche near Mahahual. The new developments at Costa Maya make it ideal for cruise passengers: fun 'swim-up' bars, great facilities and the fabulous island backdrop give it a holiday feel as soon as you disembark.

SARGASSUM SEAWEED

Sargassum is a large brown type of seaweed that is abundant in the Caribbean during the warmer seasons. This floating habitat provides food, refuge and breeding grounds for an array of critters. Several factors could explain the proliferation of Sargassum in the Caribbean in recent years. These include the rise of sea temperature and the change of sea currents due to climate change. Also, nutrients from agricultural fertilizers and wastewater from the cities that end up in the sea could also make the algae bloom.

ALL ON BOARD AT **5:30pm**

MSC Excursions



Deck 5 Mid
7:30am - 9:30am
5:00pm - 11:00pm

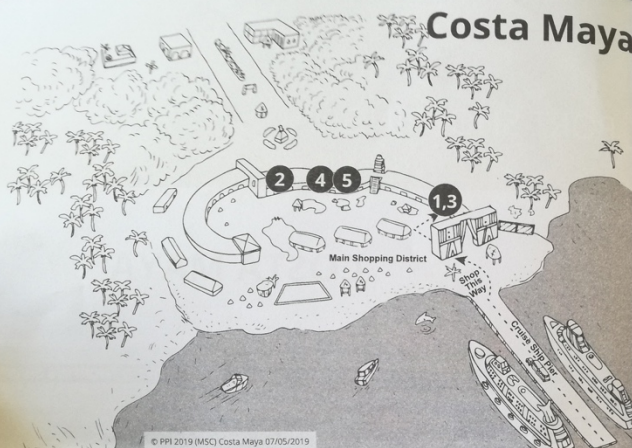
Miss the ship?

Onboard Satellite Phone
00870-773925402/03

MSC Agency in Costa Maya

ACS S.A. DE C.V. TERMINAL
MARITIMO COSTA MAYA
Tel. + 52 983 834 5674

Only the stores on this map are backed by the shopping guarantee.



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- Round vs. Crown of Light diamond? Find out which sparkles more
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Exclusive Home to Saffi Kilima Tanzanite

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- Island Collection: one-stop shop for custom island apparel
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Fun Facts

About Costa Maya

The EARLIEST MAYA SETTLEMENTS date to approximately 1800 BC.

Mayans were among the FIRST TO USE THE ZERO SYMBOL.

According to scholars, in addition to their written language and the use of books, their most distinctive achievements were ABSTRACT MATHEMATICS and ASTRONOMY.

The Ancient Maya were INCREDIBLE ENGINEERS, constructing PYRAMIDS and TEMPLES that rival those of Egypt. The PEAK OF LA DANTA is one of the WORLD'S LARGEST PYRAMIDS.

The ANCIENT MAYA had their own version of SOCCER.

According to recent studies, around SEVEN MILLION DIRECT DESCENDANTS OF THE MAYANS LIVE IN THE AMERICAS today.

Notes

Treat Yourself To A Little Retail Therapy!

Diamond Essentials

☐ ring ☐ pendant ☐ bracelet ☐ cocktail ☐ engagement