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The sexual and gender normativities of servicescapes: A queer social identity perspective

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ABSTRACT

The tourism and hospitality industry encompasses a wide range of customer segments, including a diverse representation of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. This study explores the experiences of LGBTIQ+ customers within servicescapes via social identity theory. Adopting a queer ethnographic approach, the study conducted in-depth interviews with twenty-seven participants identifying with non-normative sexual and gender identities within the Pan-Asian region. Through inductive thematic analysis, six key themes are identified: heteronormativity, cisnormativity, endonormativity, gender essentialism, gender patriarchy, and misandry myth. The study introduces a novel conceptualisation of sexual and gender normativities, with interdisciplinary implications, that challenge the conventional knowledge of servicescapes. Additionally, the study includes practical recommendations for businesses and policymakers to foster more inclusive societies.

Introduction

In recent decades, a surge of scholarly interest has been dedicated to exploring the experiences of LGBTIQ+ communities and reflecting on how to create inclusive environments in various settings, such as healthcare (Gandy-Guedes, 2018; Griefinger et al., 2013; Wilkerson et al., 2011), education (Day et al., 2019; Yost & Gilmore, 2011), leisure (Barbosa et al., 2020), cruises (Valcuende et al., 2023), social work (Williams et al., 2020), workplaces (Vongvisitsin & Wong, 2021), and elderly homes (Sussman et al., 2018). Furthermore, tourism scholars have observed the emergence of established safe spaces, including gay resorts (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2018), Pride events (Markwell & Waitt, 2009; Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2021), and other LGBTIQ+ events (Ong et al., 2021), where people can freely express their identities and make genuine connections. Also, the cultivation of a friendly destination image has been shown to enhance economic resilience and perceptions of safety, thereby impacting the revisit intentions of LGBTIQ+ travellers (Lai et al., 2024; Ram et al., 2019).

Whilst efforts have been made to integrate sexual and gender diversity into tourism and hospitality businesses, the actual experiences may diverge from promotional portrayals (Lamberton, 2019). Concerns regarding authenticity arise from *'rainbow-washing'* campaigns that excessively utilise rainbow flags and symbols (de Jong, 2017). Moreover, LGBTIQ+-friendly spaces often remain segregated from the mainstream, perceived as restrictive, dangerous, or unsafe for this community (Monterrubio, 2021; Reddy-Best & Olson, 2020; Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2018). Scholars in queer studies elucidate how the presumption that everyone is *'straight'* within a male-female dichotomy has historically shaped the construction and design of everyday spaces, perpetuating the marginalisation of LGBTIQ+ communities (Berry et al., 2021; Broussard & Warner, 2019; Hartal & Sasson-Levy, 2018; Jackson, 2018). Hence, this study acknowledges this gap and seeks to further investigate LGBTIQ+ tourists' encounters within conventional service settings outside of *'gay'* spaces.

This research employs social identity theory as a theoretical framework to comprehensively explore the experiences of LGBTIQ+ groups within servicescapes, focusing on the interplay between their multifaceted non-conforming identities and traditional service encounters (Lewis & Reynolds, 2021). Social identity theory posits that individuals categorise themselves and others into social groups based on societal expectations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Meanwhile, the servicescape concept, encompassing both physical environments and social interactions (Bitner, 1992; Gannon et al., 2019; Ryu & Jang, 2007), offers nuanced contexts in which LGBTIQ+ customers navigate their identities in relation to sexual and gender norms. Through social categorisation processes, LGBTIQ+ customers may either conform to dominant societal expectations as *'in-group'* members or confront them as *'out-group'* members, leading to diverse responses ranging from favourable to hostile situations (Formby, 2017; Miles-Johnson, 2016). Therefore, the study aims to explore the perspectives of LGBTIQ+ customers within normative servicescapes through the lens of social identity theory.

This study seeks to contribute to tourism and gender studies by revealing the service perceptions and experiences of LGBTIQ+ customers and conceptualising the prevailing sexual and gender normativities within servicescapes. The study adopts an anti-categorical, self-defined approach by recognising the heterogeneity within the LGBTIQ+ communities, aiming to thoroughly investigate their shared and unique patterns of experiences whilst navigating multiple and concurrent identities linked to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (Green, 2007; Monterrubio, 2021). Drawing on the social identity framework, this study also explores the interactions between various normativities and their impacts on perceived in-group and out-group memberships. Moreover, the study discusses the complex interplay between multiple identities and each normativity, providing insights into the challenges faced by the LGBTIQ+ communities within normative servicescapes.
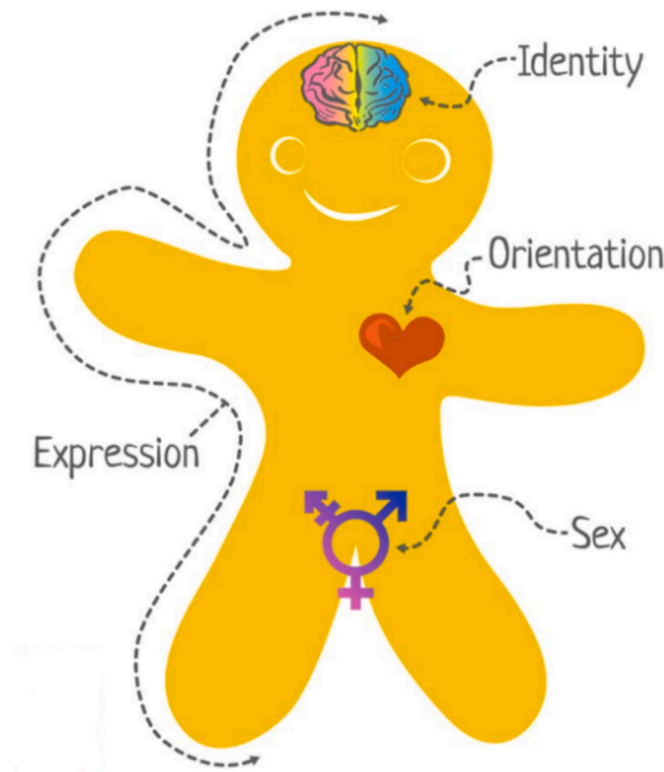

Fig. 1. The Genderbread Person (Killermann, 2017).

Literature review

Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics

The concept of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics moves beyond categorising LGBTIQ+ individuals into specific identity labels to focusing on shared traits for greater inclusivity (Lewis & Reynolds, 2021; Smith, 2023; Trithart, 2021). Individuals vary greatly in their characteristics and experiences, so not everyone feels they fit neatly into a particular group (Simm, 2020). By considering individuals based on their multiple distinct identities rather than a single group label, this study allows for a clearer investigation of the underlying antecedents of exclusion and discrimination experience with a more inclusive approach (Plaut et al., 2011).

Sexual orientation includes a range of identities regarding a person's sexual attraction, behaviour, and identity, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and pansexual (Park, 2019; Thomas & Weber, 2019). Whilst gender identity refers to the internal perception and experiences of gender, gender expression means the external presentation that may or may not conform to the sex assigned at birth (Thomas & Weber, 2019; Trithart, 2021). Sex characteristics refer to biological features related to sex, such as gonads, chromosomes, sex hormones, and genitals (International Organisation for Migration, 2020). Intersex individuals possess unique sex characteristics that do not align with typical binary notions of male or female bodies. The Genderbread Person (Fig. 1) depicts these multifaceted components and serves as a useful framework for applying social identity to comprehend how LGBTIQ+ individuals navigate their experiences within both in-group and out-group contexts in society.

Social identity theory and LGBTIQ+ experiences

Social identity theory posits that a key aspect of an individual's self-concept stems from the social groups they identify as being a part of (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Specifically, social identity theory suggests that when people categorise themselves as members of a group, this shapes their identity individually and as part of the group (Tajfel, 2010). This theory emphasises how group membership defines who one is based on the attributes and characteristics of the group. As social identity theory explains, prevailing sexual and gender norms frequently lead to the social categorisation of LGBTIQ+ individuals into either *'in-group'* or *'out-group'* members of their chosen groups (Formby, 2017; Miles-Johnson, 2016).

Specifically, non-heterosexual individuals often encounter prejudice and stereotyping of their sexual behaviour as deviant (Lee Badgett & Frank, 2007). Also, transgender individuals face challenges in obtaining recognition and appropriate treatment based on their gender identity in various settings (Salden et al., 2023). The prevailing belief that sex and gender should be always aligned creates anxiety and discomfort regarding their bodies, expressions, appearance, and interactions with others (Worthen, 2016). Coping with these pervasive societal norms, LGBTIQ+ individuals often conceal their sexual and gender identities to align themselves with the perception of being *'in-group'* members. Meanwhile, intersex individuals may be viewed as out-group members because their sex characteristics do not neatly fit into binary biological male or female categories. Due to the historical pathologisation of intersex conditions, they constantly encounter non-consensual medical interventions, stigmatisation, and discrimination aimed at modifying their bodies to align with sex norms (Orr, 2022).

These social categorisation processes reinforce the dominance of sexual and gender norms that marginalise LGBTIQ+ individuals within society. The constant pressure to conceal their sexual and gender identities or conform as *'in-group'* members results in LGBTIQ+ individuals experiencing internalised stress and conflicts. Conversely, being perceived as *'out-group'* members often leads to overt exclusion and discrimination across various social, institutional, and political realms (Tran et al., 2023). In tourism and hospitality sectors, some spaces may cater to specific groups, such as gay men, and provide a source of safety within a confined area (Olson & Park, 2019). Despite the progress, LGBTIQ+ individuals continue to face significant barriers whilst travelling, ranging from discriminatory practices to outright hostility (Usai et al., 2022). This hinders their ability to be genuinely accepted and included by society, reflecting broader patterns of institutionalised prejudice (Ong et al., 2021).

Servicescape and LGBTIQ+ experiences

Servicescape, initially defined by Kotler (1973), refers to the physical environment that impacts people's emotions and purchasing behaviour. Bagozzi (1975) emphasised the significance of place and management in defining servicescape as the setting where interactions between consumers and staff take place. Servicescape have been extensively studied in various fields, including environmental psychology, marketing, and architecture. One notable contribution to the concept of servicescape is Bitner's servicescape model (1992), which builds upon the Stimulus-Organism-Response model. Bitner's model consists of three physical dimensions: ambiance, spatial layout, and signs, which aim to influence consumers' perceptions, cognition, emotions, behaviours, and outcomes.

However, Bitner's servicescape model has been criticised for oversimplifying the complex interactions between consumers and their environment. Some researchers argue that whilst physical dimensions may play a role in influencing consumer perceptions, cognition, emotions, and behaviours, they cannot fully capture the multifaceted nature of consumer experiences within a service environment (Baker et al., 2020). These criticisms have led to the development of a more comprehensive understanding of servicescape, which includes social and symbolic dimensions. The idea of a social servicescape acknowledges the importance of social interactions and the symbolic meanings embedded in the service environment (Kim & Moon, 2009; Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011).

In the context of tourism and hospitality, studies have primarily focused on restaurants and theme parks to examine the influence of servicescapes on consumer perceptions, emotions, and behavioural intentions (Hanks & Line, 2018; Kim & Moon, 2009; Ryu & Jang,

2007). Researchers have predominantly utilised quantitative research methods and established scales, building upon the Stimulus-Organism-Response model to measure the impact of servicescapes on consumer experiences (Line et al., 2018; Lockwood & Pyun, 2020). However, there is a growing recognition of the need to consider the needs of marginalised consumers, incorporate cultural symbols to assess their influence on service evaluations, and investigate more diverse settings (Olson & Park, 2019).

While quantitative research establishes objective relationships, it may oversimplify complex phenomena like exclusionary servicescape experiences. Particularly, Olson and Park (2019) conducted a study aimed at examining the impact of physical servicescape, social servicescape, and age on gay consumers' evaluations of advertisements for gay bars. Whilst the study made valuable contributions in assessing perceptions of gay friendliness, it focuses on the servicescapes that were marketed as *'welcoming'* and *'comfortable.'* This study considers broader social dynamics and symbolic meanings within the mainstream servicescapes that potentially shape stigma and traumatising experiences for LGBTIQ+ customers. By addressing the limitations of existing servicescape models, it proposes a more nuanced framework to enhance understanding of the complex interactions between LGBTIQ+ customers and their service environments. This expanded conceptualisation aims to provide deeper insights into how the interconnected elements of servicescapes shape in-group and out-group experiences for LGBTIQ+ customers.

Research methods

This study references queer theory in framing its ontological and epistemological research paradigms. Queer theory provides a critical sociological lens that contests and reshapes the established frameworks of knowledge production in different disciplinary contexts and within anti-normative frameworks (Browne & Nash, 2010; de Lauretis, 1991). Ontologically, queer theory aligns with *'social relativism'* suggested by social constructionism which views realities as pluralistic and co-created through interactions within certain social circumstances (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Epistemologically, queer theory offers rigorous excavation and in-depth analyses of identities and 'subjectivities' with its deconstructionist impulse (Green, 2007). It emphasises the role of normativity in shaping the discursive construction of sexualities and genders, advocating for inclusive and diverse understandings (McDonald, 2015).

Ethnography is selected as a methodological paradigm to investigate lived realities and their (mis)alignments with normative cultures that are nuanced and complex (Boellstorff, 2010). Particularly, queer ethnography acknowledges the researchers' positionality as *'insiders'* whilst examining the notions of a stable ethnographic self and an achievable distance from the researched (Rooke, 2010). Matching researchers to participants with shared sexual and gender identities promotes a deeper, more reflexive and authentic research approach, enhancing familiarity and comprehension of the context, thus facilitating rapport and co-constructing tacit knowledge of queer culture (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Robards, 2017). This approach increases emotional sensitivity, fosters a non-judgmental and comfortable environment, and enhances the trustworthiness of responses (Lewis & Reynolds, 2021; Monterrubio et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Dorans, 2018). To maintain distance from the participants, the researchers refrained from sharing personal experiences of prejudice that could sway the responses whilst the participants shared their own stories (Berger, 2015).

By situating the research within the Pan-Asian context, the study presents new perspectives that diverge from the Western-centric viewpoints predominant in gay and lesbian studies (Browne & Nash, 2010; Lewis & Prayag, 2022). Asian countries generally comprise highly diverse contexts, ranging from relative liberalism to religious and social conservatism, making certain LGBTIQ+ spaces highly controversial. In some countries where LGBTIQ+ identities are still criminalised, *'coming out'* is not a common practice for advocating inclusivity (Monterrubio et al., 2023; Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2016). Whilst reconciling the Western LGBTIQ+ rights movements, Asian LGBTIQ+ communities have a unique and complex history due to the tolerance of same-sex relationships in various Asian cultures, such as China and India, as well as the recognition of gender neutrality in Southeast Asian countries, during pre-colonial times (Alegre, 2022; Wong & Tolkach, 2017). Therefore, Pan-Asia is a valuable research context because of the range of highly tolerant and hostile environments experienced by LGBTIQ+ communities, reflecting prevalent sexual and gender normativities ingrained in mainstream servicescapes, both overtly and subtly.

Guided by a queer ethnographic paradigm, the study employed observations and in-depth interviews as research approaches. The study utilised a purposive sampling method to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and uncover inherent meanings within the conventional servicescapes (Hennick et al., 2011). To address the heterogeneous, fluid, and performative nature of queer identities, the researchers adopted an anti-categorical self-defined approach to recruit the participants (Green, 2007; Monterrubio, 2021). Instead of categorising them into specific LGBTIQ+ groups, the study refers to their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (Park, 2019; Smith, 2023). To ensure the quality and relevance of the data, the study followed these inclusion criteria: (1) individuals who do not identify as heterosexual and cisgender, (2) aged >18 years, (3) originating from Asian territories, (4) having extensive experiences in domestic or international leisure travel. The participants were recruited via connections from a regional network, namely the Asian Region of the LGBTI Association, and through Asian LGBTIQ+ activist groups.

Adhering to the code of ethics, the study ensured informed consent, voluntary participation, the right to withdraw from the research, and confidentiality and anonymity of the collected data. The research protocols, including the guided interview questions, underwent a thorough review by the institutional review board to ensure compliance with ethical standards. Specifically, the researchers developed an interview guide based on the reviewed servicescape and queer studies literature (Appendix 1). The interview started with participants' socio-demographics and delved into their service experiences based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. Specific questions regarded physical environments (Bitner, 1992), as well as social interactions with service employees and other customers (Hanks & Line, 2018; Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011). The interview questions were piloted with three gender studies experts and five Asian LGBTIQ+ activists.

Inductive thematic analysis was conducted to identify internally consistent yet externally distinctive themes (Marshall & Rossman,

2006). Data were transcribed verbatim and carefully screened for relevance to the study. During the initial phase of thematic analysis, open coding was performed to diverge all possible initial codes, which were subsequently organised into themes. Then, axial coding was conducted to identify common patterns amongst the first-level themes and further categorise them into second-level themes. To ensure a comprehensive and exhaustive exploration of the dataset, thematic saturation was reached by continuously reviewing and refining emerging themes inductively from the data until no new themes or insights were discovered (Guest et al., 2020). For instance, the codes *'public affection,'* *'not out,'* and *'assumption'* were grouped under *'heteronormativity.'* Meanwhile, *'gender recognition'* and *'gender-based discrimination'* were put under *'cisnormativity.'* Additionally, *'accused as sexual predators'* and *'discomfort against men'* were thematised as *'misandry myth.'*

Findings

This study conducted 27 in-depth interviews with participants aged 21 to 52 years old (mean age 35.62). Whilst the study aimed for Pan-Asian coverage, most participants (*n* = 13) were from Southeast Asia, followed by East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia. Regarding sexual orientation, 17 identified as non-heterosexual, including gay, lesbian, pansexual, and bisexual, whilst 10 identified as heterosexual. For gender identity, 20 were gender-diverse, including transgender women, transgender men, non-binary individuals, and tomboys, whilst 7 were cisgender. Gender expression included 12 masculine, 9 feminine, 5 androgynous, and 1 fluid. Additionally, 16 identified as endosex, with 8 assigned female at birth and another 8 assigned male at birth. Nine participants were non-endosex, including individuals who were pre-operative, intersex, post-operative, and non-operative. The remaining 2 participants did not specify their sex characteristics. Table 1 presents participants' socio-demographics, sexual and gender identities, and characteristics. Detailed accounts of their servicescape experiences and contexts are provided in Appendix 2.

The participants experienced differing levels of inclusion and exclusion in the servicescapes based on their degree of conformity to binary gender norms and heterosexual relationships. The findings focus on their distinct experiences tied to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics within conventional servicescapes. Generally, non-heterosexual participants faced either discrimination and mistreatment or acceptance depending on whether their intimate relationships were revealed or concealed. Also, participants with non-cisgender identities experienced misgendering, discrimination, and exclusion from service employees but they could avoid such incidents when their gender identities went unnoticed or when their gender expression matched their gender presentation. Other participants with physical sex variations, including those transitioning, were also marginalised. Specifically, the study discusses six analytical themes: heteronormativity, cisnormativity, endonormativity, gender essentialism, gender patriarchy, and misandry myth.

Table 1
Profiles of participants (*n* = 27).

Pseudonym	Age	Place of origin	Occupation	Sexual Orientation	Gender identity	Gender expression	Sexual characteristics
R1	27	Thailand	Company employee	Heterosexual	Transgender woman	Feminine	Post-operative
R2	29	Indonesia (Bali)	Tour guide	Heterosexual	Transgender man	Masculine	Pre-operative
R3	28	Indonesia (Jakarta)	Medical doctor	Heterosexual	Transgender woman	Feminine	Pre-operative
R4	25	India	NGO worker	Pansexual	Non-binary	Androgynous	Intersex
R5	37	Hong Kong SAR	Health professional	Pansexual	Non-binary	Androgynous	Female
R6	21	Nepal	Student	Heterosexual	Transgender woman	Feminine	Non-operative
R7	30	Vietnam (Hanoi)	NGO worker	Gay	Cisgender man	Masculine	Male
R8	28	Hong Kong SAR	Consultant	Heterosexual	Transgender man	Masculine	Pre-operative
R9	42	The Philippines	Educator	Gay	Non-binary	Androgynous	Male
R10	41	The Philippines	Workshop owner	Heterosexual	Man	Masculine	Intersex
R11	41	South Korea	NGO worker	Bisexual	Cisgender woman	Feminine	Female
R12	40	Lebanon	Educator	Gay	Cisgender man/ Non-binary	Masculine/ Androgynous	Male
R13	42	Pakistan	NGO worker	Heterosexual	Transgender woman	Feminine	Not specified
R14	32	Malaysia	NGO worker	Gay	Non-binary	Masculine	Male
R15	36	Hong Kong SAR	Insurance broker	Lesbian	Tomboy	Masculine	Female
R16	52	The Philippines	NGO worker	Lesbian	Cisgender woman	Fluid	Female
R17	38	Hong Kong SAR	Investment banker	Lesbian	Cisgender woman	Feminine	Female
R18	43	China (Yunnan)	Educator	Gay	Cisgender man	Masculine	Male
R19	34	Thailand	Educator	Gay	Cisgender man	Masculine	Male
R20	41	Hong Kong SAR	Journalist	Pansexual	Non-binary	Androgynous	Female
R21	33	Taiwan ROC	Entrepreneur	Lesbian	Tomboy	Masculine	Female
R22	34	Thailand	Entrepreneur	Heterosexual	Transgender woman	Feminine	Not specified
R23	25	Kazakhstan	Company employee	Gay	Non-binary	Masculine	Male
R24	47	The Philippines	Educator	Heterosexual	Transgender woman	Feminine	Pre-operative
R25	45	The Philippines	Unemployed	Heterosexual	Transgender woman	Feminine	Pre-operative
R26	36	Malaysia	Sales staff	Lesbian	Tomboy	Masculine	Female
R27	34	Mongolia	IT professional	Gay	Non-binary	Feminine/ Androgynous	Male

Heteronormativity

The study observed heteronormativity prevalent in traditional servicescapes contributing to insensitive encounters and potential discrimination against non-heterosexual participants. At hotel check-ins, assumptions that all couples are heterosexual led to the delegitimisation of participants' sexual identities. This delegitimisation occurred when their *'special request'* for a king-sized bed was denied, positioning them as members of an out-group in comparison to heterosexual customers. Whilst concealing sexual identity was a viable solution, participants had limited choices to assert their request, compelling them to *'out'* their sexual identity or bribe the staff for not reporting their *'illegal'* acts to authorities, as expressed by the participants below:

> *The receptionist asked me like "Do you want to have the two rooms because two boys in one room may be uncomfortable?" So, it's not really stigma type, but I think it's kind of social norm [that] people just think that two men should not stay in the same room when they travel.* (R7)

> *That's a problem that happened to me. They put the bed separately. And, if you put them together, they'll question you then discuss what's going on, why, and they can kick you out. When I did that last time in Egypt, I was putting in like, every day, 10–15$ for the room service, and it worked! No one asked [anything]. But there [needed to be] a budget to bribe.*
>
> (R12)

Meanwhile, the heteronormative servicescapes create a situation where service employees may show insensitive verbal or non-verbal cues to customers who appear as a same-gender couple. Specifically, the study revealed that some of the lesbian and gay participants received intrusive questions about their relationships with their companions. For example, *"How is [my] relationship? Are [we] friends? Are [we] sisters [or] cousins?"* were the questions encountered by R11. All male participants who identified as gay unanimously reported receiving negative reactions (e.g., quirking, sighing, gazing, whispering) from frontline staff. As a result, these individuals reported experiencing psychological distress, including anxiety and discomfort. In the Pan-Asian context, which comprises a wide range of legislation on homosexuality, the study revealed that the low level of socio-legal acceptance within a destination, such as Malaysia, can significantly contribute to the invalidation, delegitimisation, or even criminalisation of non-normative sexual identities within servicescapes. To prioritise safety throughout the service processes, R14 decided not to disclose their sexual identity, as described in the following scenario:

> *I remember that we were conscious about ourselves, and we kept telling everyone […] who's playing the music from table to table. We were put in the situation, [where] we kind of protected ourselves, like we [need] to [put] a disclaimer before people asked us more questions. "We're like good friends. Can you play a song that is not romantic, a song for friends, something along those lines?"*
>
> (R14)

Cisnormativity

Gender-diverse participants, including transgender, non-binary, and intersex individuals, reported discrimination and rejection from certain service providers. In conservative environments, transgender women encountered service denials from hotels, shopping malls, and bars, due to the perception of their gender identity as *"abnormal."* As shared by R13, transgender identity in Pakistan is often accompanied by negative stereotypes, such as being labelled as *"beggars"* or *"sex workers"* if they are *"presentable or look like financially empowered trans women."* In Thailand, R22 faced discrimination from the hotel staff who assumed that she was a *"prostitute."* To avoid negative encounters within cisnormative servicescapes, many participants (R4, R16, R20) viewed *'passing'* as a strategy to feel secure and seamlessly integrate their gender identity and expression. For instance, R4 mentioned, *"I have to very constantly keep in mind that, for all practical purposes, I have to be a woman, binary person […] for my safety and the safety of others around me."* Nevertheless, disparities existed between those who were able to *'pass'* as cisgender and those who were unable to conform to the cisgender identity, as exemplified by R6 below:

> *For [a] trans woman who still has facial hair, I think, it might be difficult, or who has not taken hormones and just put on a dress [without] any transition process yet. It's a very different situation.* (R6)

Additionally, a significant number of transgender and non-binary participants voiced their frustration and confusion over sex-segregated facilities, leading to insensitive encounters and exclusion. For instance, R25 shared her transphobic experience when using spas in the Philippines: *"They usually do not allow us in the public wet (jacuzzi and steam room) and dry (sauna) areas. So, they either tell us we cannot use the wet and dry areas, or we can only use [them] if there are few customers. We pay in full, but we are not cared for the same way as our counterparts."* This experience made her, and her friends, feel excluded as the out-group due to their gender identity. To cope with anxieties and avoid discrimination in the next encounter, they either refrained from the services or put conscientious effort to *'pass'* as in-group members in the normative gender group. Specifically, R8 expressed his experience in a men's toilet: *"I walked like crushing my back [to] make sure my chest [wouldn't] pop out as much [....]. And I always looked down […] and made sure I didn't have any eye contact."*

Moreover, the gender-diverse participants shared their experiences of service providers determining their use of gendered language when addressing their customers. Their word choices were often based on their own subjective judgments and rigid gender binary mindset. For instance, gendered salutations, such as *'Sir'*, *'Madam'*, *'Ma'am'*, *'Mister'*, and *'Miss'*, are employed by service providers as a

tradition to address customers politely and respectfully. Given the incident where the hotel receptionist addressed an intersex woman with a male name but a female gender marker on the document as *"Sir,"* R10 expressed: *"She [was] really mad […] because she's wearing a dress […] and she [had] long hair. I don't understand because she's trying to look beautiful and really [looked] like a female. Still, people don't understand!"*

Although the study found various gender-neutral salutations, such as *"Kakak"* and *"Saudara"* in Bahasa Indonesian (R3), as well as *"Khun"* in Thai (R34), these terms are used for local customers only. The gender-diverse participants reflected that these gender-neutral salutations did not create insensitive encounters between service providers and themselves. However, during their overseas travels, the use of English as a lingua franca often reinforces the cisnormativity within the servicescapes, thereby invalidating their gender identities. Nonetheless, due to their ability to *'pass'* as cisgender, several transgender participants (R1, R6, R22) reported that service providers often greeted them with affirming gendered salutations. Despite the growing awareness regarding the use of affirming gendered salutations, the impact of cisnormativity remains due to the misconception that gender identity and expression always align, as shared by R16 below:

> I [asked] them, *"Why do you refer to me as Sir?"* And they told me, *"Because, in some people who look like you, if we call them Ma'am, they [will] get mad. And they [will] tell me that they should be referred to as Sir."* So, they started stereotyping that all masculine-looking persons should be referred to as Sir. I said no, some would. You just have to ask. Even if the person looks feminine, you always have to ask, *"How do you want me to refer to you?"*
>
> (R16)

Endonormativity

Besides gender appearance and same-gender partners, the study identified sex characteristics as another significant factor contributing to discrimination and exclusion by service providers. The study highlights how endonormativity, the division of customers into two discrete *'biological'* sexes—male and female, can influence servicescapes. This factor is often understood as cisnormativity because biological sex can shape the visible aspects of one's body, such as height, hair patterns, and bone structure, resulting in the misperception of gender identity by others. For example, due to the incongruent body features, several non-binary participants faced rejection when attempting to access sex-segregated facilities, as expressed by R27 below:

> I went to this spa in Japan, and it was weird how the receptionist asked me invasive questions if I [was] transgender and had surgery already. Since it was for men, the other males were looking at me from head to toe. It can be quite troubling when travelling as a non-binary person.
>
> (R27)

However, this study uncovered the nuanced experiences of the gender-diverse participants, including transgender, non-binary, and intersex individuals, when required by service providers to expose their internal sex characteristics, such as chest and genitals. Relevant servicescapes included hot springs, saunas, washrooms, changing rooms, spas, and beauty parlours. Transgender and intersex participants frequently reported feelings of anxiety, embarrassment, secrecy, and shame in these servicescapes. For instance, R4 expressed: *"As an intersex person, […] I'm very actively avoiding [being] naked in front of someone because there's a lot of awkwardness and a lot of [uncertainty]. I'm scared that […] they'd realise there was something wrong with me."* A similar frustration was also reported by transgender participants with pre- and non-operative conditions due to their sex characteristics that do not conform to endonormative assumptions, as shared by R3 below:

> I asked the lady to wax around my genital [.…] It's just a new and uncomfortable experience for me and her as well because she wasn't very aware. If I want to access those kinds of treatments that reveal [my] body part, […] I prefer to not tell them […] and leave them out of my genitalia. (R3)

Gender essentialism

Gender-diverse participants often faced issues with legal identification documents within conventional servicescapes, as many Asian countries lack comprehensive legislation recognising gender diversity. Many transgender participants (R2, R3, R13, R22, R24) expressed concerns about legal gender markers being tied to birth-assigned sex on identification documents, name, and title, used for verification by service providers, such as hotels, airlines, and trains. The belief that gender is fixed and immutable leads to misgendering incidents when legal gender conflicts with gender identity and expression leads to misgendering incidents. For example, R24 shared: *"Most airlines follow the passport details. So, if it is male there, then they automatically assign male salutations. It is frustrating especially when you are called out via intercom […]. Honestly, it is one of my sources of stress when travelling."* Additionally, R6 shared that her *"Gender O passport"* issued by Nepalese authorities added more difficulties due to the rigid system that service providers need to put either *"M"* or *"F."*

Service providers adhere to traditional binary gender norms when documenting and processing customers' *'official'* gender information, failing to accommodate diverse gender identities. In some traditional hotels, several employee-customer personalised touchpoints like e-mails, phone calls, and televised or written welcoming messages rely on this gender information, often containing misgendered salutations. The study found that the insensitivity of service providers, who often failed to acknowledge the privacy of

official names and genders, not only caused fear and anxiety amongst the gender-diverse participants but also exposed them to embarrassing situations with their travel companions, as shared by R22 below:

> The hotels sometimes like to satisfy guests with greetings on the card or in-room television. They referred to me as "Mr." then my last name because of my passport. I felt so embarrassed to my partner and just turned off the television for the whole stay.

(R22)

Gender patriarchy

The study discovered that all participants, based on their gender identity and expression, experienced pressures regarding gender roles within their intimate relationships in conventional servicescapes. Many participants noted that service providers projected traditional masculine and feminine roles on them when interacting with their significant others. The expectation that men should assume the role of the primary breadwinner in heterosexual relationships was experienced by participants across the entire LGBTIQ+ spectrum. For instance, R11 shared: *"Sometimes they give the bill to [my] butch lesbian [partner] who [is] like [a] manlier person."* Similarly, R20 mentioned: *"It is still very common amongst people of Asian descent [...]. For example, if I go to a restaurant or check into a hotel with my significant other, the staff will unconsciously or consciously assign certain gender [roles], as in who's taking charge and who's taking care of the bill."* Although gay and lesbian participants appeared as couples of the same gender, many of them (R11, R15, R16, R17, R20, R21) reflected that such patriarchal gender roles have also been applied to their gender expression as perceived by the service providers.

Moreover, the study uncovered psychological struggles amongst the transgender participants regarding their gender roles within conventional servicescapes. Whether at early or advanced stages of their gender transition, R8 and R22 perceived subtle indications from service providers that they should adhere to the traditional norms of masculinity and femininity to align with specific cultural conventions in traditional service settings. In the context of Chinese culture, R8 consistently sensed a pervasive societal expectation that men should bear the financial responsibility for women whilst expressing his deep thought: *"Do I wanna be known as a transgender man or do I just wanna be known as a guy? [...]. To be honest, because I don't feel 100% comfortable with society thinks men should pay bills [...] but not because I don't see myself as a man."* Meanwhile, from a transgender woman's perspective, R22 shared her experience during the hotel check-in with her male partner:

> I was the one who took charge of choosing and booking the hotel, paid the fee and everything. I asked several questions about breakfast and facilities. The receptionist just ignored me and answered my questions to my male partner, thinking that he was the one in charge. I felt disrespected.

(R22)

Misandry myth

The study participants who identified as transgender women faced unjust accusations of sexual harassment or crimes. Due to the perception that transgender women are not *"real women,"* the study found that they were often subjected to bias by some service providers who viewed them as *"men pretending to be women,"* as expressed by R24. In sex-segregated settings, such prejudice could place transgender women at risk of being accused of having ulterior motives when accessing women-only service facilities. In this connection, R24 shared her traumatising experience in using a women's toilet in a high-end shopping mall in Hong Kong: *"I was approached [...] by civilians claiming to be authorities. They asked to see my ID card and questioned me in a threatening way, asked me why I went to the women's toilet if I wasn't female, and asked if I had a sex reassignment surgery whilst looking through my bag, wallet, and phone."* The study shows how perceiving transgender women as *"dangerous men"* in women's spaces invalidated their gender identity and dehumanised them as criminals.

Moreover, R13 observed servicescapes in South Asian countries like Pakistan that rigidly divide customers based on the male-female binary, driven by the stereotype of men as the sexually active gender. For example, domestic airlines and trains in Pakistan enforce seat allocation based on the legal gender on official identification documents. Regarding this, R13 shared: *"We are not comfortable to sit with men or in a men's row [...]. They [asked for my] national identity card and [my] passport. And, they [said] you are male, so you must sit with your male [fellows]."* Hence, the public fear of men harassing women when placed together in proximity could result in the exclusion of transgender women with *'male'* legal gender from spaces that validate their gender identity. This causes discomfort and compromises their safety within these servicescapes.

Additionally, the study found tomboys and some non-binary participants with female sex characteristics (R11, R15, R16, R20, R26) experienced discomfort with male service staff serving them in confined spaces. This highlighted the mutual biases against the *"male"* gender between service employees and customers. For these participants, internalised stigma against cisgender men stemmed from growing up in male-dominant Asian cultures. For instance, R15 exemplified: *"When we did [the] staycation thing [and] they sent food into [our] room. When my girlfriend and I, two girls, [were] in the room, they always sent the guys. I felt a bit uncomfortable [when] a single guy came in. I know it's not his problem, possibly mine to assume that the guy [would] look at me as something very odd."*

Discussion and implications

Drawing on six analytical themes, this study adopts a queer theory perspective to conceptualise the sexual and gender normativities of servicescapes into a model (Fig. 2). This model features three core dimensions: heteronormativity, cisnormativity, and endonormativity *(blue layer)*, which signify the foundational societal biases and expectations encountered by LGBTIQ+ customers. These dimensions are key to understanding how LGBTIQ+ customers navigate their experiences within servicescapes based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics *(grey layer)* (Formby, 2017; Miles-Johnson, 2016). The normative frameworks shape how LGBTIQ+ customers interact with servicescapes at the individual level, either challenging or conforming to societal biases and expectations. Based on social identity theory, the engagement of LGBTIQ+ customers with each normativity results in varied service experiences, influenced by dynamic social categorisation processes that determine whether they are perceived as 'in-group' or 'out-group' members by service providers and other patrons *(dotted layer)*. By explicitly linking these processes in Fig. 2, the model visualises how LGBTIQ+ customers experience normative servicescapes.

Specifically, to mitigate the risk of discrimination and exclusion from conventional servicescapes, LGBTIQ+ customers often cope with each normativity by striving to *'pass'* as in-group members by performing the stereotypical images of traditional men and women (Monterrubio et al., 2020). However, not all gender-diverse customers have access to the *'passing'* privilege due to their specific sex characteristics, resulting in their anxieties and avoidance of certain conventional servicescapes (Ong et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the study reveals that non-heterosexual couples may adopt an identity concealment strategy in destinations where homosexuality is criminalised. These 'in-group' strategies offer the opportunity for LGBTIQ+ customers to ensure their safety and pleasant service experiences within conventional servicescapes.

The study also uncovers that the dominant sexual and gender normativities experienced by LGBTIQ+ customers detrimentally impact their service encounters when perceived as *'out-group'* members within traditional service settings. In particular, hetero-normativity fosters internalised fear and oppression amongst non-heterosexual customers through subtle and pervasive discrimination, violent policing, and overt exclusion (Browne, 2021; Jackson, 2018). Meanwhile, cisnormativity leads to stereotyping, prejudice, and cognitive bias against individuals with non-conforming gender identity and expression, risking discrimination and criminalisation (Broussard & Warner, 2019; Fine et al., 2023). Although endonormativity is often conflated with cisnormativity, the study highlights
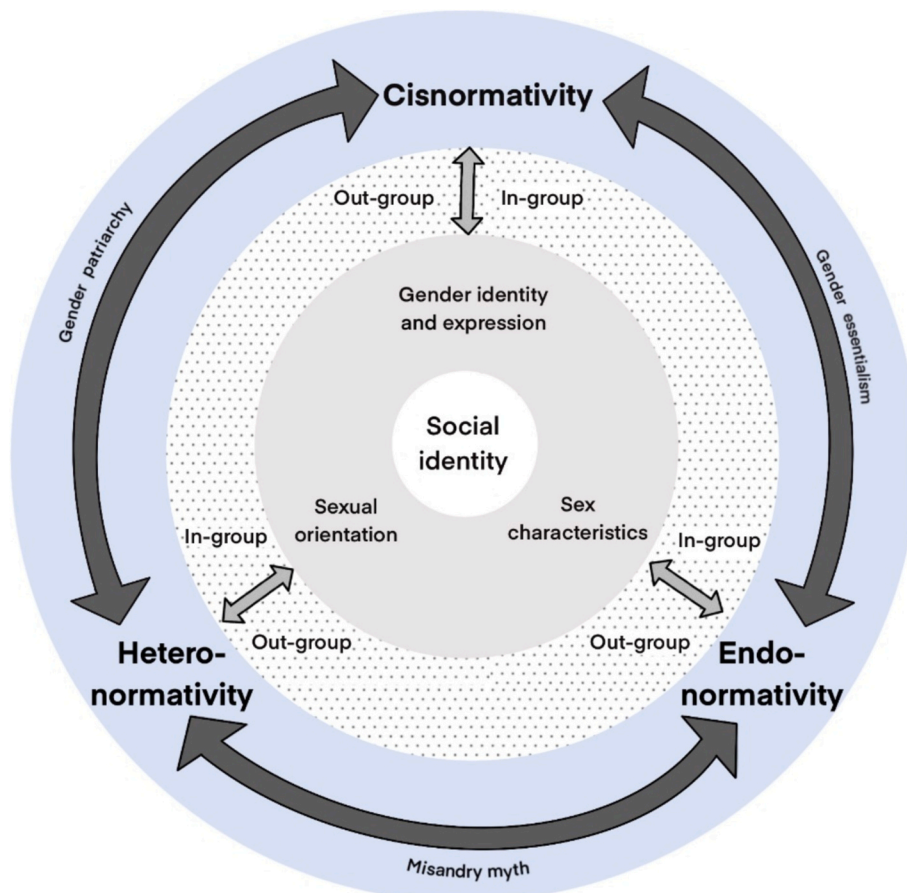

Fig. 2. The sexual and gender normativities of servicescapes.

their distinction by exploring the nuanced experiences of gender-diverse customers with sex variations across different stages of their transition journey or intersex conditions (Carpenter et al., 2023; Henningham & Jones, 2021). Additionally, endonormativity places them in a vulnerable position as the *'embarrassing other'* or an out-group member and leads to their withdrawal from some traditional servicescapes (Frank, 2018; Hart & Shakespeare-Finch, 2022).

Moreover, the study highlights the complex interplays between sexual and gender normativities which create three common dimensions: gender essentialism, gender patriarchy, and misandry myth. These dimensions are fluid and interactive, resulting in compounded challenges within the conventional servicescapes encountered by LGBTIQ+ customers. The combined effects of cis- and endonormativity create the belief that one's body must correlate with one's legal gender and gender identity, leading to misgendering practices (Fine et al., 2023; Monterrubio et al., 2020). Also, hetero- and cisnormativity collaborate to impose patriarchal gender roles on LGBTIQ+ customers based on subjective judgment of their gender identity and expression, which, in turn, results in economic and psychological expenses (Jackson, 2018; Lindsey, 2015). Besides, hetero- and endonormativity synergistically contribute to the surveillance of transgender women within women's servicescapes, often accusing them of *'impersonating another gender'* as a criminal act, described as a misandry myth (Hopkins-Doyle et al., 2024).

Theoretical implications

The conceptualisation of the sexual and gender normativities of servicescapes marks a significant advancement in tourism and queer studies. The study uncovers the underlying normative conceptions regarding the traditional facilitation of servicescapes to cater to the needs of mainstream customers. By centring a queer theory perspective in the context of conventional servicescapes, this study brings previously overlooked perceptions and experiences of discrimination and exclusion to the forefront of discussion (Daly et al., 2022). To foster safety, inclusivity, sensitivity, and a positive attitude towards LGBTIQ+ customers, this study introduces a comprehensive framework that addresses the deeply rooted binary sex/gender beliefs perpetuated by sexual and gender normativities. This framework revolutionises the conventional homogenised understanding and application of servicescapes (McDonald, 2015) towards a more nuanced, equitable, and inclusive approach that embraces sexual and gender diversities.

Moreover, by expanding the queer scholarly discussions to the conventional servicescape setting, the study provides a holistic understanding of servicescape challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ communities. Specifically, it offers empirical evidence shedding light on their service experiences and obstacles to receiving equal treatment. In the Pan-Asian context, where restrictions and hostility towards queer expressions vary, the findings underscore the complex and fluid nature of these identities. This complexity is especially evident when LGBTIQ+ customers interact with prevailing norms in conservative and collectivist cultures, utilising a range of strategies to either conform to or challenge these normativities. Specifically, the study illuminates the intricacy and interconnectedness of multiple sexual and gender identities, demonstrating how they intersect and shape individuals' perceptions and experiences regarding which identities hold significance in the public eye (Frank, 2018). Their compounding effects are driven by the interactions amongst sexual and gender normativities, resulting in gender essentialism, gender patriarchy, and misandry myths. This novel framework, grounded in the conventional servicescape setting, signifies a major theoretical step forward in queer and gender studies by investigating the macroscopic influences of culture, law, and faith on sexual and gender identities and their interactions within these environments.

Furthermore, as a methodological implication, the study demonstrates the applicability of the anti-categorical, self-defined approach in queer ethnographic research (Green, 2007; Monterrubio, 2021). It argues that screening the research participants based on specific groups within the LGBTIQ+ spectrum can lead to merely surface-level analysis of their experiences that may overlook subtle and complex phenomena. For instance, the research shows that the diversity of gender expressions amongst lesbian and gay individuals results in their distinct experiences. Also, transgender people may encounter different incidents due to the evolving sex characteristics during their transition. Based on social identity theory, the model dissects this multiplicity and provides tangible evidence that LGBTIQ+ individuals exhibit both shared and unique perceptions and experiences within conventional servicescapes. Hence, the study urges future research to incorporate multiple sexual and gender identities, including sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics, rather than categorising participants into specific LGBTIQ+ groups, to enhance clarity, precision, inclusivity, and universalisity in methodology (Park, 2019; Smith, 2023; Trithart, 2021).

Practical implications

The study offers a queer lens for service providers who seek to drive organisational change towards LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the context of service design (Vongvisitsin & Wong, 2021). The findings serve as a guideline for developing diversity training and gender sensitisation programmes that equip service staff with competency in response to LGBTIQ+ customers' needs. This may entail proactive modifications to standard operating procedures to ensure safety, sensitivity, inclusivity, empathy, and respect for LGBTIQ+ customers (Griefinger et al., 2013; Hartal & Sasson-Levy, 2018). For example, this could involve adjusting reservation systems that enable individuals to have self-determination in selecting their name, pronoun, and gender. Additionally, the practitioners may explore adjustments in physical settings to create gender-neutral facilities and ensure the privacy of individuals' sexual identities. By understanding the impacts posed by sexual and gender normativities, the study ultimately seeks to inspire the tourism and hospitality industry to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion in service provision.

As not all Asian countries have anti-discrimination, legal gender recognition, and same-sex union laws, the study serves as a benchmark for information and narratives needed by those affected states. The findings offer the policymakers empirical cases to make informed decisions, shape effective policies, conduct comprehensive reviews, foster educational initiatives, and promote positive shifts in societal attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, this study can encourage non-governmental organisations and social workers to help

track and document differing states of discrimination and exclusion experienced by LGBTIQ+ people. Consequently, these collective efforts will foster diversity, equity, and inclusion, thereby improving experience and engagement for both domestic and international clients.

Conclusion, limitations, and future research directions

Societal norms significantly influence interactions based on sexual and gender identities within conventional servicescapes. The Pan-Asian context, characterised by diversity within a collective culture, provides insights into the norms dictating behavioural dynamics and traditional gender relations. Specifically, LGBTIQ+ customers face discrimination and exclusion due to the expression of sexual and gender identities, which may challenge conventional norms (Broussard & Warner, 2019; Daly et al., 2022; Hart & Shakespeare-Finch, 2022). These challenges stem from the historical pathologisation of sex and gender variations and the persistent belief that sex/gender is fixed, immutable, and confined to a male-female binary framework (Butler, 2004; Haghighat et al., 2023). As a result, conventional servicescapes have predominantly been created for *'straight'* customers (Jackson, 2018; Thomas & Weber, 2019).

Specifically, the study addresses a significant knowledge gap by dissecting multiple social identities regarding people's sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics to investigate the underlying phenomena (Park, 2019; Thomas & Weber, 2019; Trithart, 2021). Based on social identity theory, the intricate connections of sexual and gender identities to wider social structures governing conventional servicescapes lead to customers having experiences that position them as members of an out-group (Formby, 2017; Jackson, 2018). Using a queer ethnographic approach, the study delves into the distinct interactions between individuals and servicescapes, as these individuals present various sexual and gender identities simultaneously. Whilst some experiences are shared across LGBTIQ+ groups, many are considered unique to only individuals with specific identities or expressions. Consequently, the study conceptualises the findings within the framework of sexual and gender normativities present in servicescapes, discussing their impact on gender essentialism, gender patriarchy, and misandry myth.

The study acknowledges its limitations and offers inspiration for future directions. The data collection process was challenging because of hostility towards LGBTIQ+ communities in West and Central Asia, resulting in an uneven distribution of participants. Future studies could collaborate with local civil society organisations to ensure more participation from these particular sub-regions whilst prioritising interviewees' anonymity and privacy. Also, the nuances across various Pan-Asian sub-regions can be explored through cross-cultural research. Moreover, the researchers can triangulate findings by exploring service providers' perspectives, comparing LGBTIQ+-friendly service establishments (e.g., five-star international hotels) with local counterparts in conservative sub-regions, and examining material consequences (Colliver & Duffus, 2022). Furthermore, future research could delve into the coping mechanisms used by, and the psychological repercussions experienced by, LGBTIQ+ travellers, including their experiences of anxiety (Smith et al., 2022). Lastly, this study calls for investigations on multiple and fluid gendering, as well as genderlessness, pushing theoretical boundaries towards open-ended variety and emergent queer movements (Lorber, 2018). To fully capture the nuances of marginalisation, future studies should adopt a critical and intersectional approach that considers how class, age, race, and ethnicity intersect with diverse gender and sexual identities, alongside the unbalanced power dynamics between service providers and customers (Browne & Nash, 2010; Kim & Aggarwal, 2016).

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Thanakarn Bella Vongvisitsin: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Antony King Fung Wong:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Resources, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Brenda Rodriguez Alegre:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Resources, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Fanny Manner-Baldeon:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Resources, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Po Man Tse:** Writing – original draft, Resources, Investigation.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

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Appendix 1. Semi-structured interview question guide

Introduction	Overarching questions	Probing questions		
	1.) Can you please introduce your background?	● What pronouns do you personally feel most comfortable and respected?		
	2.) Can you describe your sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), if this is appropriate to you?	● How open are you about your sexual and gender identities in different areas of your life (e.g., work, family, friends)?		
	3.) What pronouns would you prefer that I use to address you respectfully during our conversation?	● Can you please describe when you first became aware of your sexual and gender identities and how was the experience?		
Conventional servicescape experience	4.) Can you share some of your service experiences related to travel (e.g., airlines, accommodations, restaurants, attractions) in general?	● Do you have any memorable moments or unforgettable experiences being able to express yourself freely whilst traveling? Any examples?		
	5.) How would you describe your service experiences in these settings in relation to your authentic self?	● Do you have any encouraging stories about times when employees sincerely tried to understand and accommodate your needs? Any examples?		
		● Can you please share any experiences where you felt unsafe, excluded, or like you didn't fit in when receiving services? Any examples?		
		● Can you please describe any sensitive situations or moments where you felt uncomfortable with the services you were receiving?		
		● Have you experienced any issues with physical environments (e.g., design, layout, signage, decoration) that made you feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or disrespected? Any examples?		
		● Have you experienced any issues with the attitude and behavior of service employees that made you feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or disrespected? Any examples?		
		● Have you experienced any issues with the attitude and behavior of other customers that made you feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or disrespected? Any examples?		
		● What are some simple things service providers have done that made you feel safer, more accepted, more respected, more fit-in, or concerned?		
Sexuality- and gender-based experiences	**Sexual orientation**	**Gender identity**	**Gender expression**	**Sex characteristics**
	● Do you have any specific issues regarding your intimate relationship with your partner when receiving services? Any examples?	● Do you have any specific issues where people questioned your gender identity when receiving services? Any examples?	● Do you have any specific issues where people questioned your gender expression when receiving services? Any examples?	● Have you encountered any issues when people questioned your sex features (e.g., chest, genital) when receiving services? Any examples?
		● Have you experienced any issues related to the documents that affect your gender? Any examples?	● Have you experienced any issues related to the documents that affect your gender? Any examples?	● Have you experienced any issues related to the documents that affect your gender? Any examples?

Appendix 2. Service experiences and contexts of participants in normative servicescapes

Pseudonym	Service experiences and contexts reported by the participants
R1	● Microaggressions during hotel check-ins;
	● Feeling secure when passing as female whilst travelling.
R2	● Gossiping by service staff;
	● Feeling secure when passing as male whilst travelling.
R3	● Misgendering, microaggressions, and stigmatisation during hotel check-ins;
	● Reluctance from beauty therapists to provide genital waxing services.
R4	● Misgendering, microaggressions, discomfort from gender-related questions, and potential exposure of sex characteristics during travel check-ins, at hotels and beauty salons;
	● Feeling secure when passing as female whilst travelling.
R5	● Misgendering and service denial by hotel staff;
	● Gazes, discomfort, and feeling unsafe using facilities while presenting in an androgynous manner in hot spring;
	● Feeling inconspicuous when using men's toilets whilst passing as male.
R6	● Confusion of her *"Gender O passport"* by hotel receptionists and transport service providers;
	● Feeling accepted when using women's facilities, including toilets, whilst passing as female.
R7	● Intrusive questioning with gazes by hotel receptionists regarding room arrangements and personal matters gossiping;
	● Feeling safe and comfortable in LGBTIQ+-friendly places.
R8	● Misgendering by service providers and discomfort from gazes in female restrooms;
	● Misgendering, discomfort from gazes, unease with gender questions in hotel forms, and arbitrary exposure during services like massages;
	● Gendered expectations from restaurant staff regarding bill payment;
	● Feeling secure when passing as male whilst travelling.
R9	● Fear of displaying authentic self in public;
	● Feeling at ease when passing as male whilst presenting an identification document and travelling in conservative countries.

(*continued*)

Pseudonym	Service experiences and contexts reported by the participants
R10	● Misgendering and microaggressions during travel check-ins; ● Invasive exposure during services, and discomfort in gender-segregated facilities; ● Feeling secure when passing as male whilst travelling.
R11	● Additional and judgemental questioning by hotel receptionists about the room arrangement; ● Prohibition from couple packages at theme park; ● Intrusive questioning from taxi drivers.
R12	● Prohibition on bringing male partners and getting double-bed rooms in hotels; ● Expectations to bribe hotel staff to avoid reporting same-sex relations; ● Intrusive questioning and gossiping by service staff ● Feeling safe wearing female dresses during Pride month.
R13	● Interrogation, stigmatisation, and assumptions as sex workers by shopping mall security guards and hotel staff; ● Exclusion from female-designated seating on airline and train service; ● Feeling respected by hotel receptionists inquiring about preferred name and pronouns.
R14	● Insistence to arrange a twin-bed room with judgmental stares from hotel receptionists; ● Feeling obligated to conceal non-heterosexual relationships in romantic settings, such as having Valentine's dinner at the restaurant.
R15	● Discomfort and gendered expectations at hotels; ● Judgmental gazes from female restroom users and cleaners at female-designated facilities like hot springs, changing rooms, and restrooms; ● Gendered expectations from restaurant staff regarding bill payment.
R16	● Misgendering, judgmental gazes, and discomfort in gender-segregated spaces like restrooms, changing rooms, and massage services; ● Pre-arranged twin rooms and gendered expectations from hotel/restaurant staff regarding room arrangements and bill payment; ● Feeling unsafe and fearful of public displays of affection with partners in foreign conservative places; ● Feeling empowered by being perceived as a male client whilst receiving service in domestic patriarchal settings.
R17	● Fear of displaying public affection; ● Feeling gratified and welcomed by hotel services tailored specifically for a lesbian couple.
R18	● Fear of displaying public affection; ● Judgmental gazes from hotel receptionists when insisting on king-sized bed arrangements; ● No negative experiences whilst travelling as a gay male customer in most service premises in LGBTQ+-friendly countries.
R19	● Judgmental gazes and intrusive questioning from hotel staff about bed arrangements; ● Fear of travelling to homophobic destinations with the male partner; ● Discomfort with heteronormative representations and assumptions about guests across hotels and services; ● No negative experiences whilst travelling as a gay male customer in most service premises in LGBTQ+-friendly countries.
R20	● Gendered expectations from restaurant staff regarding bill payment; ● Misgendering by service providers across hotels, restaurants, transportation, and other service contexts; ● Discomfort and feeling unsafe in enclosed service spaces like massage rooms or spas when male service providers are present and take control of the environment; ● Feeling at ease without the need to pass as male in LGBTIQ+-inclusive bars and upscale branded hotels.
R21	● Discomfort when service staff questioned her gender.
R22	● Misgendering and gossiping by hotel receptionists; ● Fear of female-designated facilities like hot springs and spas; ● Discrimination by beauticians; ● Feeling secure when passing as female whilst travelling in conservative countries.
R23	● Misgendering by service providers; ● Gazes and intrusive questions from hotel receptionists; ● Feeling secure when passing as male whilst travelling in conservative countries.
R24	● Misgendering by service providers; ● Exclusion from female-designated spa areas Interrogation when using female restrooms.
R25	● Misgendering by service providers; ● Exclusion from female-designated spa areas.
R26	● Uncomfortable questioning about gender identity by hotel staff during check-in; ● Gossiping and unwelcoming stares from service staff; ● Hesitation to use female-designated hotel facilities due to fear of discrimination.
R27	● Misgendering by spa providers; ● Intrusive questioning by hotel receptionists; ● Judgemental stares and gazes from service providers.

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