

LGBTQ+-Friendly Destination Image Scale: A Multi-Dimensional Identity-Based Approach

Abstract

This study develops and validates a multi-dimensional identity-based scale for measuring LGBTQ+-friendly destination images, grounded in the sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression dimensions. Through qualitative and empirical testing with 654 international tourists in Thailand, the scale demonstrates strong psychometric properties, including reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and nomological validity. The overall LGBTQ+-friendly destination image significantly predicts tourists' satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and revisit intentions, highlighting its predictive validity. Notably, LGBTQ+ friendliness has universal relevance; while friendliness toward diverse sexual orientations and gender expressions is a central determinant for all tourists, including non-LGBTQ+ travelers, friendliness toward diverse gender identities holds particular importance for LGBTQ+ travelers. The scale is designed for broad application in assessing LGBTQ+-friendly destination images in diverse tourism contexts. This validated tool offers destination marketing organizations a comprehensive framework to assess and enhance LGBTQ+ friendliness, benefiting both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ travelers through its association with general safety and openness.

Keywords: LGBTQ+-friendly tourism; Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE); destination image scale; destination marketing, sexual and gender identities; tourist satisfaction

1. Introduction

The global LGBTQ+ travel market has emerged as a significant driver of tourism industry growth, generating substantial economic impact while advancing the visibility and acceptance of diverse identities worldwide (Globetrender, 2023a; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2024). The global LGBTQ+ communities, estimated at 388 million people aged 15 and above, wield considerable economic influence, with a combined wealth of US\$30 trillion and a collective GDP of US\$4.7 trillion, led by major markets such as the US, China, and Japan (LGBT Capital, 2023). As a key travel segment, LGBTQ+ tourists spend approximately US\$218 billion annually—a figure expected to rise to US\$568.5 billion by 2030—highlighting substantial market growth and spending power (Globetrender, 2023b; LGBT Capital, 2023). This market trend has also encouraged an industry shift toward inclusivity in various global destinations (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2017). To equip tourism and hospitality professionals with the necessary tools to foster inclusivity and ensure that LGBTQ+ travelers feel welcome, the International LGBTQ+ Travel Association Foundation (IGLTAF, 2024a) has recently published a comprehensive guide for LGBTQ+-inclusive communication. Evidenced by Airbnb hosts worldwide, the use of LGBTQ+-inclusive language has risen nearly 90% since 2017 (Airbnb, 2023). These patterns underscore the need for reliable tools to measure and enhance LGBTQ+ friendliness at the destination level, supporting both economic growth and social inclusion.

Despite increasing market significance, LGBTQ+ travelers continue to face violence, discrimination, and exclusion (Vongvisitsin et al., 2025). Meanwhile, destinations positioned as LGBTQ+-friendly tend to attract more travelers from this market, enhance their memorable experience and satisfaction, and foster their loyalty and revisit intention (Algueró Boronat et al., 2025). LGBTQ+-friendliness also implies overall safety perceptions, creating positive appreciation by all tourists regardless of their affiliation with the community (Ram et al., 2019). In this study, LGBTQ+ travelers refer to individuals who travel while identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, or beyond. An LGBTQ+-friendly destination is defined as one that is welcoming, safe, inclusive, and supportive—demonstrated through inclusive marketing, anti-discrimination policies, positive local attitudes, and enabling travelers to express their identities without fear (UNWTO, 2017; Veilleux et al., 2020).

Destination image is one of the most prevalent topics in tourism marketing studies (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Chaulagain et al., 2019). A growing body of scale development studies in measuring destination image has been observed because of its impactful solutions, such as monitoring tourist satisfaction (Veasna et al., 2013), tourist loyalty (Zhang et al., 2014), revisit intention, and intention to recommend others (Choe & Kim, 2018). While traditional scales effectively capture the cognitive and affective components of destination images, they often overlook perceptions specifically related to LGBTQ+ friendliness. Due to the heterogeneity of LGBTQ+ communities and the diversity of their travel experiences (Monterrubio, 2021), a limited understanding of how these perceptions intersect with distinct sexual and gender identities constrains destinations' ability to ensure their relevance to the lived realities of LGBTQ+ travelers. These critical gaps are particularly significant in light of the documented economic and attitudinal benefits of LGBTQ+-friendly tourism destinations, including higher levels of tourist satisfaction and broader economic gains (Ram et al., 2019).

The prevailing literature on LGBTQ+-friendly tourism destinations has predominantly utilized case-study or event-based approaches, such as Pride events (Kaygalak-Celebi et al., 2020). This methodological approach provides valuable insights into specific aspects of LGBTQ+ friendliness; however, they do not fully capture the continuous and overarching role of LGBTQ+-friendly images at the destination level (Sousa-Silva et al., 2024). Significant literature, including Hadjisolomou et al. (2023), Melián-González et al. (2011), Wong & Tolkach (2017), and Vorobjovas-Pinta and Hardy (2016), primarily addresses destinations marketed as “*gay-friendly*.” Nevertheless, this term is often narrowly focused and may not adequately represent the diverse and complex needs of the broader LGBTQ+ communities (Veilleux et al., 2020). Hence, it is important to critically assess and expand this terminology to better encompass the broad spectrum of LGBTQ+ identities and experiences. The IGLTAF (2024b) further emphasizes the critical need to address specific concerns within the transgender and gender-diverse communities, advocating for LGBTQ+-friendly practices that extend beyond the predominantly gay and lesbian tourist segments. This advocacy highlights the necessity of employing a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to LGBTQ+ friendliness and inclusivity in travel and tourism.

To address these shortcomings, a more nuanced approach that references the multi-dimensionality of sexual and gender identities specifically, rather than rigidly categorizing individuals into LGBTQ+ segments, is advocated by scholars in socio-legal, human rights, and policy studies (Gilbert & Thar, 2019; McKenzie et al., 2022; Weiss, 2021). This multi-dimensional identity-based approach can be achieved by clearly delineating the distinctions between sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), which are essential for accurately understanding and representing the LGBTQ+ communities (Park, 2019; Smith, 2023). While SOGIESC has been widely applied in examining inclusivity and non-discrimination in healthcare, education, and the workplace (Jadav & Chakrapani, 2023; McKenzie et al., 2022; Ng et al., 2025), its application in tourism research remains limited. Meanwhile, sexual characteristics (SC), referring to biological variations, including chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs (National Institutes of Health, 2024), are excluded due to their clinical nature, which demonstrates minimal relevance to destination marketing research. Hence, the present study focuses on SOGIE dimensions as constructed through social interactions, shaped by others’ subjective perceptions, assumptions, and potential biases. Through this multi-dimensional identity-based approach, this research advances a more holistic approach to developing LGBTQ+-friendly destination images, moving beyond conventional gay-centric, event-specific studies (Veilleux, 2021), while contributing to both academic scholarship and industry practice.

Thailand was selected as the foundational context for scale development due to its unique position as both an established LGBTQ+-friendly destination and a society with complex, evolving gender norms. The country’s international recognition for LGBTQ+ friendliness has translated into the highest economic impact among comparable destinations, with inbound LGBTQ+ visitors contributing 1.23% of GDP (US\$6.5 billion) in 2019 (LGBT Capital, 2023). Moreover, its visible LGBTQ+ communities and progressive industry initiatives, reinforced by Asia’s largest Pride events in Bangkok, provide an ideal setting to capture the broad spectrum of SOGIE-related destination perceptions (Central Pattana, 2025; Veilleux et al., 2020). Methodologically, this approach aligns with established principles of scale development, which recommend studying constructs in contexts where they are sufficiently

observable to allow for complete dimension identification (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2017). Situated within Thailand's observable LGBTQ+ tourism ecosystem, this context enables the integration of diverse dimensions of destination friendliness into scale items. Also, its cultural particularities—characterized by widespread social tolerance yet incomplete legal equality—provide a stringent test of the scale's capacity to capture nuanced perceptual differences. This strategic selection ensures the development of a theoretically robust measurement tool whose foundations in the universal SOGIE framework allow for future adaptation across diverse cultural contexts.

Overall, this study aims to develop and validate a multi-dimensional identity-based scale for measuring an LGBTQ+-friendly destination image in Thailand, grounded in the SOGIE framework. This comprehensive lens allows for a nuanced understanding of diverse identities and experiences within LGBTQ+ communities. In tourism contexts, subjective perceptions of an individual's SOGIE can lead to differential treatment, discrimination, or feelings of exclusion. Feeling safe to express one's authentic self without fear of prejudice is critical to a positive tourism experience (Vongvisitsin et al., 2025). Therefore, analyzing destination friendliness through the SOGIE lens provides valuable insights for creating inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ tourists, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of destination marketing organizations (DMOs) in fostering inclusivity.

2. Literature review

2.1 Destination image measurement

Destination image is a fundamental construct in tourism research, recognized as a critical determinant in tourists' decision-making processes and destination selection (Chaulagain et al., 2019; Hunt, 1975). Its conceptual foundation lies in competitive positioning, where destinations must cultivate distinctive and favorable mental representations to differentiate themselves within increasingly saturated tourism markets (Lewis et al., 2019). Contemporary tourism scholarship predominantly conceptualizes destination image through a two-dimensional framework encompassing cognitive (belief-based) and affective (emotion-based) components (Ragb et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2014). This structure acknowledges that perceptions arise from both rational evaluations of tangible attributes and subjective emotional responses, although the exact operational boundaries between these components remain debated due to tourism's inherent complexity (Gallarza et al., 2002; Ragb et al., 2020).

The formation of destination images is theoretically understood as a dynamic, multi-sourced process grounded in information processing and social construction. Gunn's (1988) seminal model identified two primary formative influences: organic sources, such as word-of-mouth and independent media coverage, and induced sources, such as destination marketing communications. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) added a third category, autonomous inputs, referring to uncontrolled events or independently produced content such as news reports and documentaries. Kim and Richardson (2003) further demonstrated how perceptual, cognitive, and affective components interact dynamically through these channels to shape holistic destination representations. This work reinforces that image construction is socially mediated and evolves through cumulative information processing across multiple

touchpoints. Within this theoretical context, the SOGIE framework explains how identity-related information circulates through these same channels for LGBTQ+ travelers: organic inputs may involve community word-of-mouth or peer travel blogs, induced inputs may include targeted LGBTQ+ marketing or inclusive tourism campaigns, and autonomous inputs may consist of global news about equality developments or discrimination incidents. These SOGIE-specific pathways influence both the cognitive component (e.g., beliefs about safety, legal rights, and inclusivity) and the affective component (e.g., feelings of safety, comfort, and belonging), while also contributing personality-like perceptions of openness, authenticity, and respect for diversity.

Empirical research has identified numerous cognitive sub-dimensions within this framework. Chalip et al. (2003) proposed nine factors, including developed environment, natural environment, value, sightseeing opportunities, risk, novelty, climate, convenience, and family environment. Obenour et al. (2005) identified six factors, such as priority, attractiveness for overnights, resources, facilities, peripheral attractiveness, and reputation. Hui and Wan (2003) suggested eight dimensions spanning leisure and tourist amenities, shopping and food paradise, residents and nightlife, political stability, adventure and weather, local culture, cleanliness and personal safety, and convenience. Aksu et al. (2009) distilled these into five core elements, emphasizing shopping, health and hygiene, information, transportation, and accommodation. The present study extends this body of work by demonstrating that SO friendliness, GI friendliness, and GE friendliness perceptions operate as identity-specific cognitive sub-dimensions, capturing evaluative beliefs about inclusivity, representation, and equal access that are not addressed in existing taxonomies.

Equally important, destination image extends beyond cognitive evaluations to encompass affective responses, which are also shaped through the same formation channels. As Phillips and Jang (2008) and Ragb et al. (2020) emphasize, destination image is fundamentally a collection of experiences and feelings, making affect a critical component. Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) and Beerli and Martin (2004) demonstrated how affective states such as pleasure, relaxation, arousal, and excitement emerge from tourists' processing of organic, induced, and autonomous inputs. In the SOGIE contexts, these affective responses may include feelings of safety, belonging, pride, or anxiety, depending on perceived inclusivity and support for diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. This confirms that affect's integral role in the holistic image construct also encompasses identity-specific emotions that meaningfully influence destination choice.

Despite these theoretical parallels, mainstream destination image frameworks have largely overlooked identity-based perceptions grounded in SOGIE dimensions, such as LGBTQ+ friendliness. This omission limits the explanatory power of destination image theory in accounting for the diverse factors that influence travelers' destination appraisals (Ram et al., 2019; Ro & Khan, 2022). Recent developments in the servicescape literature (Vongvisitsin et al., 2025) further underscore the need to recognize how sexual and gender sensitivities are activated cognitively through visible cues and affectively through intangible atmospheres. The intersectional and fluid nature of sexual and gender identities adds complexity to the assessment of inclusivity, highlighting the limitations of conventional destination image models.

To address this gap, the present research introduces the first systematic integration of a holistic framework theoretically grounded in gender studies into destination image theory. By conceptualizing LGBTQ+-friendly destination image through the identity-based approach, this study systematically captures both cognitive (e.g., beliefs about equal treatment, legal recognition, and visible representation) and affective (e.g., feelings of safety, comfort, and belonging) components within the established cognitive–affective paradigm. Furthermore, the multi-dimensionality of the SOGIE framework is linked to destination personality theory by showing how travelers’ evaluations of SO, GI, and GE friendliness give rise to human-like personality traits attributed to destinations. For example, destinations perceived as supportive of diverse SOGIE are more likely to be described as open-minded, authentic, or respectful. These traits emerge from the interplay between cognitive beliefs and affective responses, thereby extending existing destination personality models to include identity-based attributes that shape destination evaluation and choice. This integration responds directly to recent calls for greater attention to social identity in destination image formation (Chen et al., 2024) and expands the theoretical scope of destination image research to encompass the intersectional and fluid nature of SOGIE.

2.2 LGBTQ+ friendliness

LGBTQ+ individuals often face discrimination in various facets of their lives, from healthcare to education and employment (Aleshire et al., 2019; Yilmaz et al., 2021). These experiences highlight the need for non-discriminatory but actively inclusive environments. The imperative for LGBTQ+ friendliness in sectors like healthcare and education signals a broader societal requirement for inclusivity (Aleshire et al., 2019; Russell et al., 2014), which is equally crucial in the tourism industry. Recognizing the unique needs and significant economic contributions of LGBTQ+ travelers, the global tourism industry has begun to emphasize the importance of inclusivity. According to the IGLTAF and the UNWTO, LGBTQ+ communities represent a dynamic and influential market segment. Reports from these organizations highlight destinations known for their LGBTQ+ friendliness that not only foster greater visitor loyalty and satisfaction but also enjoy substantial economic benefits (UNWTO, 2017).

Although tourism scholars and practitioners have acknowledged the importance and benefits of LGBTQ+ friendliness (Guaracino & Salvato, 2017; Vongvisitsin & Wong, 2021), very few efforts have been made in developing a standardized scale of LGBTQ+-friendly destination image and examining its consequences. In addition, current LGBTQ+ tourism studies often use case study or event-specific approaches to evaluate the LGBTQ+ friendliness of a destination (e.g., Ram et al., 2019). However, respondents who have a positive attitude toward the event do not necessarily have a positive attitude toward the destination image in terms of LGBTQ+ friendliness. Thus, tourism scholars must avoid generalizing research findings from perceptions of specific LGBTQ+ events. These do not necessarily reflect the broader perception of LGBTQ+-friendly destination image. In this regard, LGBTQ+ friendliness refers to places, people, policies, or institutions that are welcoming to LGBTQ+ people and create a supportive environment respectful of LGBTQ+ people and their relationships and identities (Giuffre et al., 2008). In this study, LGBTQ+-friendly destination image refers to an overall evaluation of a holistic impression of the place based on the level of LGBTQ+ friendliness.

2.3 Multi-dimensional identity-based approach to measuring LGBTQ+-friendly destination image

Destination image can positively affect tourist impressions (Jenkins, 1999). Analyzing LGBTQ+-friendly destination images through a multi-dimensional identity-based approach is crucial to fostering positive attitudes and impressions among LGBTQ+ tourists. Referring to the SOGIE framework, scholars have widely applied this approach within fields, such as law, human rights, and healthcare (Gilbert & Thar, 2019; McKenzie et al., 2022; Weiss, 2021). Within the UN's human rights framework, the UN member states have established the special procedures, which include the mandate of the Independent Expert tasked with addressing violence and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity (United Nations Development Program, 2022). This framework acknowledges the importance of a multi-dimensional, identity-based approach to holistically reflect the lived identities and realities of LGBTQ+ individuals and inform development policy and practice (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2025). However, this important concept has not received significant attention in tourism literature despite being a powerful tool in explaining the underlying dimensions of the LGBTQ+ communities.

Sexual orientation (SO) refers to sexual and emotional attraction to another person, that is, men, women, both, or other gender identities (Jourian, 2015; Aleshire, 2016). A previous study indicated that sexual orientation can be fluid (Diamond, 2008). Several words can be used to describe sexual orientations in the LGBTQ+ communities, such as homosexual, gay, lesbian, and agender (Jourian, 2015). Recently, the binary definition in gender studies has been rejected because it cannot represent the diversity of sexual orientation (Matsuno & Budge, 2017). Some terms were created to define sexual orientation clearly, such as monosexual, pansexual, omnisexual, ambisexual, and polysexual (Jourian, 2015). In this study, SO friendliness destination image refers to the perceptions of the destination's environment that is welcoming to non-heterosexual people.

Gender is defined as the social, cultural, and psychological characteristics and roles that a society attributes to people, which may or may not align with their sex assigned at birth (Jourian, 2015). Specifically, gender identity (GI) refers to the sense of being a male, female, or alternative gender. Meanwhile, gender expression (GE) refers to the way people present their gender in their lives, including their appearances and behaviors (Aleshire, 2016). GI may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. Someone whose GI and sex assigned at birth do not correspond can identify as transgender or gender-diverse (Aleshire, 2016). In addition, GE may or may not be along with GI as well (Rieger et al., 2008). Many terms can describe GI and GE. For example, man, woman, transgender, gay, lesbian, genderqueer, agender, and others describe GI, while masculine, feminine, and androgynous describe GE (Jourian, 2015). In this study, GI- and GE friendliness destination image refers to the perceptions of the destination's environment that is welcoming to people who identify with different genders from their sex assigned at birth and people who present themselves in genders different from stereotypical gendered images, respectively.

2.4 Impact of LGBTQ+-friendly destination image on tourist perceptions and behaviors

Extensive research in tourism and hospitality has established that LGBTQ+-friendly environments significantly enhance visitor experiences, leading to higher satisfaction, stronger perceptions of safety, increased visit intentions, and greater loyalty (Algueró Boronat et al., 2025; Oakenfull, 2013; Ram et al., 2019; Ro, 2025). These findings underscore the critical need to understand and systematically measure LGBTQ+-friendly destination image attributes. However, current literature lacks robust, multi-dimensional, and identity-based scales that specifically capture this construct and examine its nuanced effects on tourist perceptions and behaviors (Sousa-Silva et al., 2024).

In particular, most existing studies rely on broad inclusivity measures that do not capture how different aspects of LGBTQ+ friendliness uniquely influence decision-making, on-site experiences, and post-visit evaluations (Ong et al., 2022; Sousa-Silva et al., 2024). Furthermore, both academic research and industry practice often treat LGBTQ+ travelers as a single, homogeneous market, despite evidence of important differences in needs, preferences, and experiences (Vongvisitsin & Wong, 2021; Beeth & Schänzel, 2024). For example, the visibility and unique challenges faced by transgender and gender-diverse travelers often differ substantially from those of cisgender gay or lesbian travelers, influencing perceptions of safety, inclusivity, and comfort. Moreover, much of the existing literature that claims to examine “*LGBTQ+ friendliness*” disproportionately focuses on gay and lesbian segments, overlooking the distinct realities of bisexual, transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse travelers. This narrow focus risks producing incomplete or misleading assessments of inclusivity. These differences highlight the need for a more nuanced analytical approach. The SOGIE framework offers an inclusive and systematic foundation for capturing the broad spectrum of identities, thereby providing more theoretically robust and practically valid measures of LGBTQ+ friendliness. By adopting SOGIE, this study addresses this gap, enabling a more precise examination of how distinct identity dimensions shape tourism decision-making, on-site experiences, and post-visit evaluations.

The conceptual relationship between LGBTQ+-friendly destination image and tourist behavioral outcomes can be understood through environmental psychology’s stimulus–response framework. In this context, the three SOGIE dimensions—SO friendliness, GI friendliness, and GE friendliness—function as environmental stimuli that directly influence key tourist behaviors. Specifically, SO friendliness attributes (e.g., recognition of same-sex couples), GI friendliness features (e.g., availability of gender-neutral facilities), and GE friendliness elements (e.g., visible acceptance toward diverse gender expressions) each represent concrete aspects of LGBTQ+ friendliness that can shape travelers’ satisfaction with the destination, intention to revisit, and likelihood of recommending the destination to others (Jang & Namkung, 2009; Lin et al., 2017; Ram et al., 2019; Ro, 2025). As shown in **Figure 1**, these three SOGIE dimensions collectively create a friendly environment that directly influences satisfaction, revisit intention, and positive word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations. This direct-effect model aligns with established scale development protocols that prioritize demonstrating fundamental predictive relationships (Ghosh & Mandal, 2019). The study contributes by conceptualizing LGBTQ+-friendly destination image through the multi-dimensionality of sexual and gender identities and empirically validating their stimulus–response effects, offering destination managers an identity-sensitive foundation for targeted strategies and inclusivity initiatives.

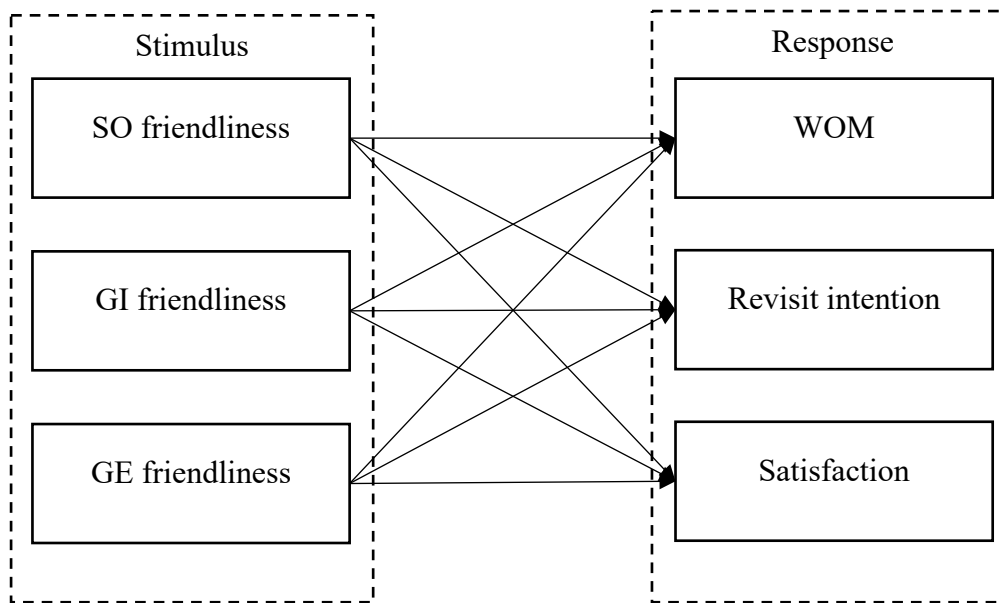


Figure 1. Direct effects of SOGIE-friendly destination on tourist outcomes

3. Research methods

The scale development process followed established methodological protocols (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2017) and tourism-specific best practices (Choe & Kim, 2019; Wong & Kim, 2020), comprising six key phases: (1) subdomain specification, (2) item generation, (3) expert review, (4) item purification, (5) pilot testing, and (6) main survey validation (see **Appendix 1**).

3.1 Specifying the definition of subdomain

The initial phase involved specifying subdomains of LGBTQ+-friendly destination images through content analysis of destination image literature (Ceylan et al., 2020; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Ragb et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2014), gender studies, and international LGBTQ+ friendliness reports (Burchiellaro, 2021; Everly & Schwarz, 2015; Lubowiecki-Vikuk & Borzyszkowski, 2016; Ram et al., 2019; Vongvisitsin & Wong, 2021). Thematic analysis systematically identified key themes and insights from these sources.

LGBTQ+-friendly destination image was defined as the beliefs, ideas, and impressions individuals hold regarding a destination's level of friendliness toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and non-binary people. Four external experts in destination image and gender studies verified both this definition and the resulting dimensionality. The content analysis demonstrated alignment with the SOGIE framework (Weiss, 2021). Notably, this framework had not yet been applied in tourism and destination image studies, despite its established use in gender studies. Despite SC being considered as a potential separate subdomain, this dimension revealed inconsistencies and was excluded due to the typically clinical and less observable nature of SC in shaping destination image, following deliberation with two additional gender studies scholars. This process yielded three final dimensions: SO friendliness, GI friendliness, and GE friendliness.

3.2 Generating sample items

The second step involved generating an initial pool of measurement items through qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and an open-ended survey. These approaches facilitated theme identification, item clarification, and content validation for the newly developed scale. A total of 24 items were derived from journal articles (Andrade et al., 2019; Kama & Ram, 2020; Hughes, 2002; Ram et al., 2019; Thelen, 2021; Vongvisitsin & Wong, 2021) and industrial reports (Asher & Lyric, 2021; Community Marketing & Insights, 2019; ILGA Europe, 2021; Spartacus, 2021; UNWTO, 2017).

Three domains were proposed: SO friendliness (9 items), GI friendliness (9 items), and GE friendliness (6 items). Given the multi-dimensional nature of LGBTQ+-friendly perceptions across different stakeholders, the scale was designed to capture these distinct dimensions. To assess predictive validity, three dependent constructs were incorporated: visitor satisfaction (3 items; Liu et al., 2017), WOM intention (2 items; Prayag et al., 2017), and visit intention (3 items; Hung et al., 2016).

3.3 Experts' review of an initial pool of measurement items

In-depth interviews with ten LGBTQ+ tourism experts were conducted to refine the measurement items and identify potential omissions (DeVellis, 2017; Wong & Kim, 2020). Participants, selected through purposive sampling, included scholars, activists, human rights lawyers, and therapists specializing in LGBTQ+ issues. Semi-structured interviews (30-70 minutes duration) incorporated both literature-derived questions and contextual probes. The interview protocol began with general perceptions of LGBTQ+ friendliness and experiences with unfriendly service encounters. Experts then evaluated the preliminary 24-item pool for appropriateness and construct representation. Items were eliminated if either: (1) >50% of experts questioned their relevance, or (2) they demonstrated conceptual redundancy with other items. Following this evaluation, participants provided experiential insights and recommendations for item modification. This process resulted in the removal of five items due to duplication or ambiguity. All retained items underwent refinement based on expert feedback to enhance face and content validity, yielding a final set of 19 items for subsequent analysis.

3.4 Pre-test and pilot test

A pre-test was conducted with 40 doctoral students majoring in gender studies and tourism management. This sample was selected based on their expertise in scale development methodologies and familiarity with both LGBTQ+ concepts and destination image research. The pre-test focused exclusively on item purification rather than expansion, maintaining the original scope of measurement items. Using established criteria (Lawshe, 1975), two items were eliminated for failing to meet the required thresholds: both demonstrated mean and median values below 5.0, along with content validity ratios under 0.29. This refinement process resulted in a finalized set of 17 items for pilot testing.

A pilot test was conducted to verify the proposed multi-dimensionality of the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale. The sample included 156 tourists who visited Thailand in the last three years. Tourists in Thailand were selected because Thailand is friendly to the LGBTQ+ communities (World Nomads, 2021; Veilleux et al., 2020). Regarding respondents' demographic features, about 33.3% were male, 57.7% were female,

and 9.0% were gender-diverse. Moreover, 35.9% identified themselves as part of the LGBTQ+ communities. Most of the respondents were 20–29 years old (44.9%), followed by 30–39 years old (42.3%). Among respondents, 35.9% had a university degree and 43.6% held a master's degree or above. Meanwhile, 30.8% of the respondents reported an annual household income less than USD12,000, followed by those who earned USD24,001–36,000 (16.7%), USD12,001–24,000 (15.4%), and USD36,001–48,000 (15.4%).

Principal component analysis with Promax rotation revealed a robust three-factor structure for the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale (67.01% cumulative variance explained). All 17 items demonstrated adequate psychometric properties, with communalities and factor loadings exceeding 0.40 (Stevens, 2009) and inter-item correlations above 0.30 (Everitt, 2002). Reliability analysis showed excellent internal consistency across all dimensions (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.81$). The final solution comprised three distinct factors: (1) sexual orientation friendliness, (2) gender identity friendliness, and (3) gender expression friendliness. These 17 items were subsequently employed in the main survey.

3.5 Data collection of the main survey

The study selected Thailand as its research context following a scale development methodology that prioritizes environments where the focal construct is clearly observable (Churchill, 1979). Thailand's internationally recognized LGBTQ+ friendliness and visible queer communities (World Nomads, 2021; Veilleux et al., 2020) provided an ideal setting for capturing the broad spectrum of SOGIE-based destination perceptions. Also, specifying Thailand in the questionnaire ensured that respondents could meaningfully reflect on LGBTQ+ friendliness based on direct experiences, which may not be feasible in less LGBTQ+-friendly destinations at the scale development stage.

After rigorous pre-testing and pilot validation, the main survey was administered using Qualtrics, targeting international tourists who had visited Thailand within the previous three years. Focusing on this group allowed the measurement of LGBTQ+-friendly destination image to be grounded in more nuanced insights derived from lived experiences, rather than relying solely on hypothetical expectations or perceptions shaped by secondary sources. While destination image can also be influenced by indirect sources among those who have never visited, this approach was prioritized to ensure robust scale validation and to capture nuanced perceptions grounded in actual travel experiences. Prior research recommends using post-visit evaluations to ensure more accurate and comprehensive assessments of destination attributes, as tourists' perceptions are shaped and refined through actual travel experiences (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Prayag & Hosany, 2014).

To enhance external validity and capture diverse cultural perspectives, a maximum variation approach was applied, including participants across a wide spectrum to identify common patterns that transcend cultural differences (DeVellis, 2017; Etikan et al., 2016). Consistent with this principle, a quota sampling method was employed based on Thailand's tourist arrival statistics to ensure representative coverage across six key source markets: Australia, China, India, Malaysia, the UK, and the USA. By incorporating respondents from these varied cultural backgrounds, the study maximized heterogeneity in perspectives on LGBTQ+ friendliness while also enabling the identification of cross-cutting patterns that support the universality and cross-cultural applicability of the developed scale. Each target country contributed a minimum of 100 qualified respondents. Eligible participants were non-

Thai nationals who had visited Thailand within the previous three years. Data collection was completed in May 2024, yielding 680 initial responses. To ensure data quality, the survey incorporated multiple attention-check questions throughout the questionnaire. Following rigorous screening, 26 responses were excluded due to inconsistent or inattentive responding patterns. The final dataset retained 654 valid responses for subsequent analysis.

4. Findings

4.1. Demographic profile

The demographic profile of the study sample highlights a diverse range of participant characteristics, crucial for the contextual interpretation of the results. The gender distribution was nearly equal, with 50.0% male, 49.2% female, and 0.8% identifying as gender-diverse, reflecting balanced representation. Cultural diversity was also well represented, with substantial proportions of respondents from China (18.2%), the UK (17.3%), the USA (16.8%), Malaysia (17.0%), Australia (15.4%), and India (15.3%). This global representation enriches the study's international perspective. Notably, 28.9% of participants identified as part of the LGBTQ+ communities. Professional backgrounds varied, with 50.6% employed in companies, followed by professionals (8.9%), business owners (8.1%), and students (3.5%). Annual household income levels also ranged widely, from 15.0% earning above US\$168,001 to 8.0% earning less than US\$12,000. This diversity ensured the inclusion of a broad range of views and experiences relevant to tourism and destination imaging.

4.2. Cross-validation of data

The dataset was randomly divided into two subsets to facilitate a robust cross-validation process. First, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed on one half of the data ($n = 327$) to identify the underlying dimensions of the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale. Using principal axis factoring with Promax rotation, a three-factor solution consistent with the SOGIE framework was extracted. These factors explained 58.56%, 7.16%, and 6.37% of the variance. Internal consistency for each factor was high, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.93, 0.94, and 0.82 (**Table 1**). Another EFA also conducted for WOM, revisit intention, and satisfaction, confirming one-factor solutions explaining 85.32%, 78.33%, and 75.68% of the variance, respectively. Cronbach's alpha values of 0.83, 0.86, and 0.84 confirmed high internal consistency for these constructs (**Table 2**).

Next, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted in the second half of the dataset ($n = 327$), producing satisfactory fit indices. A full CFA with the entire dataset ($N = 654$) was then performed to validate the structure of all constructs, including the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale, WOM, revisit intention, and satisfaction. During this analysis, two items (SO6 and GE5) were removed due to low factor loadings. The standardized loadings for the remaining items ranged from 0.706 to 0.888, exceeding the recommended cutoff of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2013). The overall model demonstrated excellent fit, with indices including a normed chi-square of 2.334 ($\chi^2[df=203] = 473.724, p < 0.001$), comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.97, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.97, incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.97, normed fit index (NFI) = 0.95, root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.06, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.05.

The constructs exhibited strong convergent validity, with average variance extracted (AVE) values of 0.59, 0.65, and 0.59 and composite construct reliability (CCR) values of 0.89, 0.92, and 0.85 for SO friendliness, GI friendliness, and GE friendliness, respectively. All AVE values surpassed the 0.5 benchmark, and CCR values were above the 0.7 threshold (Hair et al., 2013), affirming measure adequacy. Discriminant validity was also confirmed because the AVE values for each construct were greater than the squared correlation coefficients between constructs, adhering to the criteria set by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Table 1. EFA result for LGBTQ+-friendly destination image (N=327)

Dimensions and items		Communality	Factor loading	Mean
Dimension 1: GI friendliness (eigenvalue: 9.955, variance explained: 58.556%, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$, grand mean: 5.09)				
GI1	Overall, I think that Thailand recognizes and respects people who identify themselves as having a different gender from at birth.	0.684	0.891	5.12
GI2	Overall, I think that Thailand is a place where it is acceptable for people to use a bathroom that is affirming to their gender, which is identified differently from their sex at birth.	0.723	0.848	4.92
GI3	Overall, I think that Thailand is a place that is welcoming for transgender people to go through sex reassignment surgeries.	0.703	0.832	5.09
GI4	Overall, I think that Thailand is a good place for people to consult and pursue hormone adjustment to a gender that is identified differently from their sex at birth.	0.797	0.901	5.09
GI5	Overall, I think that Thailand is a place that is friendly for people who hold a legal document that indicates sex at birth/gender title that does not conform to their gender identities.	0.744	0.931	5.08
GI6	Overall, I think that Thailand is a place that provides equal job opportunities for people who identify themselves as a different gender from their sex at birth.	0.697	0.741	5.23
Dimension 2: SO friendliness (eigenvalue: 1.216, variance explained: 7.155%, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$, grand mean: 4.92)				
SO1	Overall, I think that Thailand is a good place to develop romantic relationships with gay, lesbian, and bisexual people.	0.773	0.874	4.88
SO2	Overall, I think that Thailand is a good place to hold marriage ceremonies for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people.	0.805	0.905	4.81
SO3	Overall, I think that Thailand is a good place to celebrate honeymoon for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people.	0.795	0.93	5.03
SO4	Overall, I think that Thailand is a good place to welcome gay, lesbian, and bisexual parents with kids.	0.814	0.986	4.91
SO5	Overall, I think that Thailand is a place that is acceptable for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people to visit their significant others in the hospital.	0.750	0.735	4.96
SO6	Overall, I think that Thailand is a place that provides equal job opportunities for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people. *	0.752	0.681	4.94
Dimension 3: GE friendliness (eigenvalue: 1.083; variance explained: 6.373%, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$, grand mean: 5.09)				
GE1	Overall, I think that Thailand is a friendly place for people to dress up themselves in a gender that is different from their daily life.	0.551	0.406	5.35
GE2	Overall, I think that Thailand is a friendly place for people to use gender-non-conforming speech patterns.	0.719	0.688	5.16
GE3	Overall, I think that Thailand is a friendly place for people to pose body gestures that do not conform to the gender norms of society.	0.686	0.624	5.07
GE4	Overall, I think that Thailand is a place that provides equal job opportunities for people who express themselves differently from the gender norm of society.	0.656	0.46	5.07
GE5	Overall, I think that Thailand does not recognize and respect people who identify themselves as a different gender from their sex at birth (R). *	0.605	0.972	4.78

* Item marked for removal because of low factor loading in the CFA

Table 2. EFA of other constructs (N = 654)

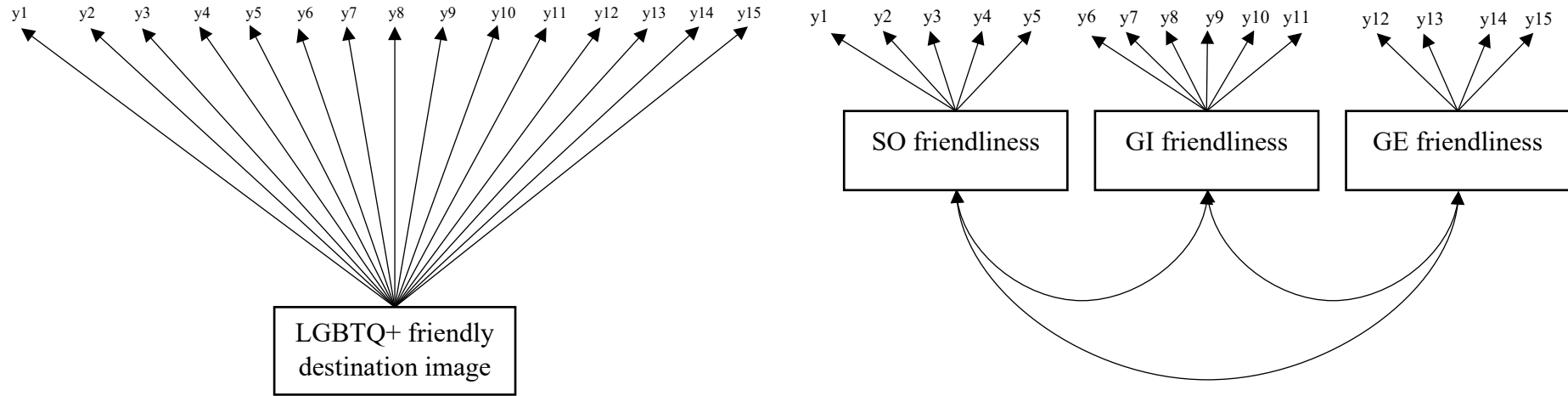
Dimensions and items		Communality	Factor loading	Mean
WOM (eigenvalue: 1.706, variance explained: 85.324%, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.83$, grand mean: 5.72)				
WOM1	I will say positive things about Thailand to other people.	0.853	0.924	5.74
WOM2	I will recommend Thailand to families and/or friends.	0.853	0.924	5.69
Revisit intention (eigenvalue: 2.350, variance explained: 78.331%, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$, grand mean: 5.56)				
RV1	I intend to (re)visit Thailand within the next three years.	0.773	0.879	5.53
RV2	I'd love to travel to Thailand within the next three years.	0.753	0.868	5.65
RV3	I think I will go/go back to Thailand within the next three years.	0.824	0.908	5.51
Satisfaction (eigenvalue: 2.270; variance explained: 75.681%, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$, grand mean: 5.79)				
SAT1	I really enjoyed the trip to Thailand.	0.774	0.880	5.88
SAT2	I think visiting Thailand was a wise choice.	0.759	0.871	5.77
SAT3	I think my travel experience in Thailand was what I expected.	0.738	0.859	5.73

4.3. Model comparison of LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale

Three distinct model configurations were assessed and compared to determine the optimal model for conceptualizing the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale. **Figures 2** illustrate these alternatives: Model 1 is a first-order model consisting of a single factor with 15 items; Model 2 is a first-order model segmented into three factors; and Model 3 is a second-order model comprising three factors. The goodness-of-fit indices for each model are presented in **Table 3**. The analysis revealed that Model 2, the first-order model with three distinct factors, demonstrated superior fit indices and was subsequently identified as the most appropriate model for measuring the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale. Given these findings, the first-order model with three factors was selected as the most effective approach in this study, providing robust support for the multi-dimensional nature of the construct.

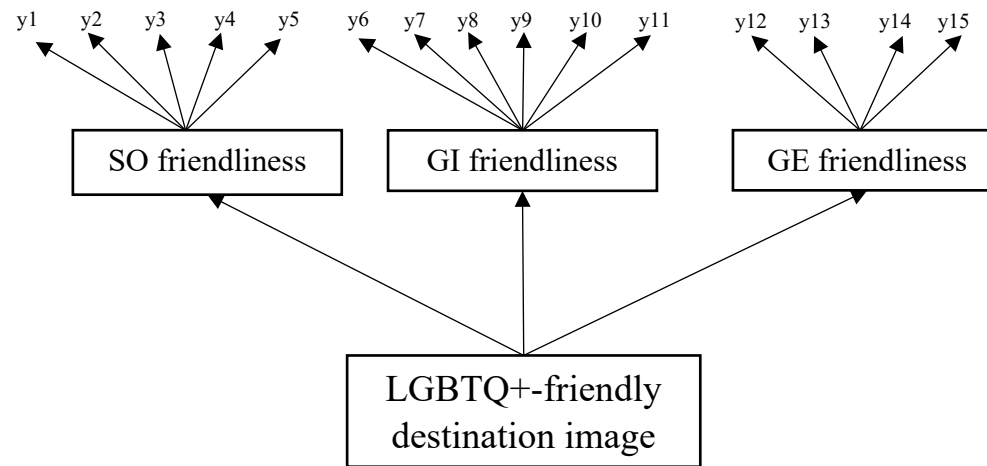
Table 3. Model comparison for dimensionality of the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale (N = 654)

Goodness-of-fit indices	Measurement model		
	Model 1: First-order model with one factor	Model 2: First-order model with three factors	Model 3: First-order model with two factors
RMSEA	0.104	0.054	0.061
GFI	0.844	0.957	0.944
CFI	0.897	0.976	0.966
NNFI	0.880	0.967	0.959
χ^2	724.755	223.082	295.425
df	90	76	87
χ^2/df	8.053	2.935	3.396



Model one: First-order model with one factor

Model two: First-order model with three factors



Model three: Second-order model with three factors

Figures 2. Model comparison of the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale

4.4. Measurement invariance test

Two distinct tests of measurement invariance were conducted to enhance the validity of the measurement scale employed in this study. The participant sample was divided into subgroups based on gender and another random criterion to facilitate these tests. **Table 4** illustrates that the invariance of the model across different groups was evaluated using differences in chi-square ($\Delta\chi^2$) and degrees of freedom. The comparative analysis between the two gender groups yielded a $\Delta\chi^2$ of 10.680 with a p -value > 0.05 , indicating no significant difference across genders. Similarly, the comparison between two randomly divided samples resulted in a $\Delta\chi^2$ of 9.411 with a p -value > 0.05 . These findings affirm that the measurement model maintains consistent reliability and convergent validity across different subgroups. Overall, the results confirm that the measurement model performs robustly and invariantly, lending further credence to its applicability and generalizability.

Table 4. Model comparison for the measurement invariance test

Fit indices	Self-identified gender (n= 327 in male; n= 322 in female)		Randomly split groups (n= 327 in first dataset; n= 327 in second dataset)	
	Unconstrained	Full metric invariance	Unconstrained	Full metric invariance
χ^2	863.238	873.918	968.671	978.082
χ^2/df	2.105	2.047	2.363	2.291
df	410	427	410	427
GFI	0.897	0.896	0.885	0.884
RMSEA	0.041	0.040	0.046	0.044
TLI	0.944	0.947	0.933	0.936
CFI	0.955	0.956	0.945	0.946
IFI	0.955	0.956	0.946	0.947
NFI	0.918	0.917	0.910	0.909
	$\Delta\chi^2 = 10.680 (p > 0.05)$		$\Delta\chi^2 = 9.411 (p > 0.05)$	

4.5. Internal consistency of the scale

The internal consistency within each domain of the scale was evaluated by conducting reliability assessments using three distinct datasets: the entire sample (N = 654), individuals identifying as part of the LGBTQ+ communities (n = 189), and those identifying as not part of the LGBTQ+ communities (n = 465). Recognizing that different community perspectives can influence the interpretation of constructs, akin to how contextual factors affect perceptions within different groups, examining the scale's reliability across these diverse segments is important. The Cronbach's alpha values, ranging from 0.751 to 0.914 across all dimensions and datasets, demonstrated a high degree of internal consistency for each domain.

4.6. Nomological validity

Nomological validity refers to the extent to which a scale correlates with other theoretical constructs (Mentzer & Flint, 1997). Hair et al. (2013) suggest that the strength of these correlations helps assess a scale's nomological validity. In this study, prior research indicates that LGBTQ+ friendliness significantly impacts tourists' WOM, revisit intentions, and satisfaction (Lai et al., 2024; Madinga et al., 2023; Ram et al., 2019; Ro & Khan, 2022, 2023; Ro & Olson, 2014). Thus, this study evaluated the nomological validity of the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale by examining the correlations between the scale's domains and the constructs of WOM, revisit intention, and satisfaction. The results, presented in **Table 5**, show that all variables are positively and significantly correlated. This significant correlation across the constructs supports the scale's nomological validity and reinforces the theoretical framework posited by the existing literature.

Table 5. Nomological validity of the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(1)	1					
(2)	0.755*	1				
(3)	0.695*	0.766*	1			
(4)	0.450*	0.461*	0.539*	1		
(5)	0.524*	0.520*	0.555*	0.680*	1	
(6)	0.455*	0.464*	0.545*	0.743*	0.727*	1

Note: * $p < 0.001$,

(1) = SO friendliness, (2) = GI friendliness, (3) = GE friendliness, (4) = WOM, (5) = Revisit intention, (6) = Satisfaction.

4.7. Predictive validity

Predictive validity is a crucial aspect of measurement validation, assessing the ability of a scale to predict outcomes related to other constructs (Kline, 2016). Hence, multiple regression analyses, focusing on how the measurement scale predicts three dependent variables: employee attitude, employee satisfaction, and organizational commitment, were performed. The variance inflation factor scores were all below 3.471, indicating the absence of significant multicollinearity concerns, because these scores are well under the threshold of 4.0 (Dattalo, 2013). As outlined in **Table 6**, variables such as SO- and GE friendliness were significant predictors of the three dependent variables. Additionally, the regression analyses revealed varying levels of explanatory power between the two groups. Overall, the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale demonstrated moderate explanatory power, effectively confirming its predictive validity by capturing significant variations in tourist behavioral intention and satisfaction.

Table 6. Effects of LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale on three dependent variables

Independent variables	Dependent variable: WOM								
	All samples ($N = 654$)			LGBTQ+ communities ($n = 189$)			Non-LGBTQ+ communities ($n = 465$)		
	β	t -value	VIF	β	t -value	VIF	β	t -value	VIF
SO friendliness	0.116	2.400*	2.521	0.214	2.719**	2.155	0.083	1.381	2.607
GI friendliness	0.052	0.853	3.157	0.09	0.971	2.255	0.039	0.501	3.471
GE friendliness	0.447	7.797***	2.624	0.348	3.652***	2.213	0.474	6.728***	2.722
	$F = 93.776$ ($p < 0.001$), $R^2 = 0.302$			$F = 31.770$ ($p < 0.001$), $R^2 = 0.340$			$F = 48.969$ ($p < 0.001$), $R^2 = 0.284$		
Independent variables	Dependent variable: Revisit intention								
	All samples ($N = 654$)			LGBTQ+ communities ($n = 189$)			Non-LGBTQ+ communities ($n = 465$)		
	β	t -value	VIF	β	t -value	VIF	β	t -value	VIF
SO friendliness	0.224	4.389***	2.521	0.317	3.753***	2.155	0.195	3.090**	2.607
GI friendliness	0.126	1.941	3.157	0.185	1.853	2.255	0.099	1.209	3.471
GE friendliness	0.375	6.205***	2.624	0.208	2.034*	2.213	0.423	5.724***	2.722
	$F = 116.096$ ($p < 0.001$), $R^2 = 0.349$			$F = 33.939$ ($p < 0.001$), $R^2 = 0.355$			$F = 78.433$ ($p < 0.001$), $R^2 = 0.338$		
Independent variables	Dependent variable: Satisfaction								
	All samples ($N = 654$)			LGBTQ+ communities ($n = 189$)			Non-LGBTQ+ communities ($n = 465$)		
	β	t -value	VIF	β	t -value	VIF	β	t -value	VIF
SO friendliness	0.108	2.478*	2.521	0.056	0.755	2.155	0.13	2.438*	2.607
GI friendliness	0.042	0.757	3.157	0.229	2.599**	2.255	-0.034	0.626	3.471
GE friendliness	0.413	7.986***	2.799	0.355	3.940***	2.213	0.44	7.023***	2.722
	$F = 96.691$ ($p < 0.001$), $R^2 = 0.309$			$F = 32.249$ ($p < 0.001$), $R^2 = 0.343$			$F = 64.002$ ($p < 0.001$), $R^2 = 0.294$		

5. Discussions and implications

This study introduces a multi-dimensional identity-based approach to evaluating the LGBTQ+-friendly image of tourism destinations, with a particular focus on the differentiation between the concept of SOGIE. Previous studies, including Algueró Boronat et al. (2025), Ram et al. (2019), and Ro & Khan (2022), have predominantly explored “*gay-friendly*” destinations that cater primarily to non-heterosexual tourists. This narrow scope has often overlooked the broader range of identities within the LGBTQ+ communities, particularly those related to transgender and gender-diverse individuals, thus potentially skewing perceptions of inclusivity. The adoption of the SOGIE framework is instrumental in bridging these gaps. This framework encompasses sexual orientation while also providing insights into GI and GE, recognizing the complex and intersecting identities within the LGBTQ+ communities. Employing SOGIE is crucial for a holistic understanding of how various factors of LGBTQ+ friendliness influence tourists’ attitudes and behavioral intentions across a wide spectrum of identities. Specifically, the visibility and unique challenges faced by transgender and non-binary individuals are especially significant (IGLTAF, 2024b). Unlike SO, GI and GE are more visible, which exposes these individuals to heightened risks of targeted discrimination. Such vulnerability can profoundly affect their travel choices and experiences. Therefore, the newly developed measurement scale incorporates the SOGIE framework, emphasizing key factors such as perceived safety, social and public acceptance, and the accessibility and availability of facilities, visitation rights, and employment opportunities, addressing the diverse needs of the LGBTQ+ communities and contributing to a more inclusive understanding of tourism destinations.

The findings underscore the critical impact of LGBTQ+-friendly destination image, with GE friendliness emerging as a particularly strong determinant of tourist satisfaction, WOM, and intentions to revisit. This broad-based effect suggests that GE friendliness is not merely a niche concern for LGBTQ+ travelers but a central element shaping overall perceptions of a destination and influencing diverse tourist behaviors. In contrast, while SO friendliness attributes remain significant, they appear to be regarded as a baseline expectation among today’s travelers. Increasingly, tourists seek destinations that not only accommodate but actively celebrate sexual and gender diversity (Ram et al., 2019), reflecting a broader societal shift toward visibility and recognition of diverse gender and sexual identities in public spaces (Kirby et al., 2024). This trend challenges destinations to adopt comprehensive inclusivity that embraces a fuller spectrum of LGBTQ+ identities and experiences.

The pronounced importance of GE friendliness can be better understood through the lens of gender performativity theory (Butler, 1988; 1990). According to this theory, gender is not an inherent or fixed trait, but is continually created and recognized through repeated acts, expressions, and performances in social contexts. In Thailand, gender diversity is highly visible in public life, as seen in the presence and cultural recognition of “*kathoey*”—usually refers to transfeminine individuals—and other non-binary gender identities (Totman, 2011). However, despite a reputation for tolerance, people with diverse gender expressions may still encounter social stigma or legal uncertainties, especially outside of major urban and tourist centers. Because gender expression is often highly visible in public settings, it is more likely to be scrutinized, policed, or subject to discrimination (Vongvisitsin et al., 2025). As Butler (1988; 1990) and subsequent scholars have noted, the ability to safely express one’s gender in public is fundamental to individual dignity and psychological well-being (Meyer, 2003; Testa

et al., 2012). This theoretical perspective helps explain why GE friendliness serves as a strong predictor of positive tourist outcomes. When destinations visibly support diverse gender expressions, travelers can authentically express themselves without fear. This sense of acceptance and safety subsequently enhances satisfaction and increases the likelihood that visitors will revisit or recommend the destination. For many individuals, especially those with diverse gender expressions, GE friendliness represents not only comfort but also safety and self-affirmation. These findings should also be interpreted in light of the cultural context. Thailand provides a distinctive environment where gender diversity is visible in public life, yet legal recognition and protections remain incomplete. In more conservative or less supportive societies, expressions of gender identity or gender non-conformity may be more contested or restricted, which could change how travelers evaluate SO, GI, and GE friendliness (Fergusson & Fergusson, 2023). Drawing on six nationalities, this study incorporates diverse cultural perspectives, but future research could examine how the scale performs in destinations with different cultural and legal contexts to better understand the influence of societal norms on perceptions of LGBTQ+ friendliness.

The study also revealed a non-significant impact of GI friendliness on travel decisions. One possible explanation is the gap between tourists' perceptions and the actual legal and social landscape in Thailand. While Thailand is internationally recognized for its visible transgender and gender-diverse communities and appears welcoming on the surface, formal and legal gender recognition and protections remain limited (Veilleux et al., 2020). Many tourists may assume that transgender and gender-diverse individuals are widely accepted and legally recognized, due to the highly visible transgender and gender-diverse communities and the tourism commodification of them. This perception can result in tourists overlooking or undervaluing GI friendliness attributes when choosing destinations, as they may not accumulate the insights into gender recognition locally. At the same time, the absence of formal recognition means that the needs of transgender and gender-diverse individuals are insufficiently addressed within the tourism infrastructure. Thus, the non-significant impact observed may reflect both a lack of tourist awareness about institutional gaps and a resulting underappreciation of the importance of GI friendliness features.

Furthermore, the research reveals the nuanced impacts of LGBTQ+ friendliness on both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ tourists. While LGBTQ+ friendly practices predictably support positive experiences among LGBTQ+ travelers, the findings highlight that LGBTQ+ friendly destination images also significantly influence the emotions and behaviors of non-LGBTQ+ tourists. This phenomenon can be explained through the lens of signaling theory (Connelly et al., 2011), which posits that individuals interpret visible cues and practices as signals of underlying qualities and values. In this context, LGBTQ+ friendliness serves as a highly visible signal that a destination upholds principles of safety, openness, and cosmopolitanism, attributes that are appealing not only to LGBTQ+ travelers but also to a broader audience. Non-LGBTQ+ tourists often associate LGBTQ+-friendly destinations with social progressiveness, a welcoming atmosphere, and enhanced security. These perceptions significantly contribute to higher levels of visitor satisfaction and loyalty (Hughes & Deutsch, 2010; Waitt & Markwell, 2006). Notably, the positive effects of LGBTQ+ friendliness on WOM, revisit intentions, and satisfaction are even more pronounced among non-LGBTQ+ tourists, potentially due to greater visibility and societal awareness of LGBTQ+ issues. These findings suggest that LGBTQ+ friendliness functions as a proxy for universal hospitality and

progressive social values, thereby benefiting all visitors regardless of identity. Future research should further investigate which specific aspects of LGBTQ+ friendliness resonate most with both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ tourists, and how these perceptions collectively shape destination choice and overall travel experience, ensuring that the benefits of inclusive practices are understood and optimized for all travelers.

5.1 Theoretical implications

This study advances destination image theory by systematically incorporating the SOGIE framework—sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression—into the established cognitive and affective components of destination image. As one of the first applications of a theoretically grounded framework from gender studies and sociology to this field, it addresses a long-standing limitation in tourism research by moving beyond the tendency to focus on partial segments such as gay travelers or on event-specific contexts (Ong et al., 2022), which has often overlooked the distinct needs and experiences of bisexual, transgender, non-binary, and other gender-diverse travelers (Wong & Tolkach, 2017). By capturing the broad spectrum of identities and expressions, the SOGIE framework provides a nuanced approach to assessing destination friendliness that is more inclusive and socially relevant to the lived realities of LGBTQ+ travelers. The development of SO friendliness, GI friendliness, and GE friendliness dimensions shows that perceptions of LGBTQ+ friendliness are central to understanding both cognitive evaluations (beliefs about legal recognition, equal opportunities, and visible representation in marketing and services) and affective responses (feelings of safety, comfort, and belonging). SO friendliness items capture acceptance of same-sex relationships and rights, while GI friendliness and GE friendliness items reflect awareness of resources such as gender-affirming facilities or policies, as well as the emotional comfort associated with gender expression. These dimensions also shape the perceived personality of a destination, contributing to impressions of openness, authenticity, and respect for diversity, and together they offer a theoretically robust and empirically validated framework for understanding how travelers perceive and experience destinations through the lens of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. This theoretical integration demonstrates that the SOGIE framework not only enriches the traditional cognitive–affective paradigm but also provides a foundation for developing empirically validated measures of LGBTQ+ friendliness in tourism.

In addition, the development of a validated and reliable multi-dimensional identity-based scale to measure the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image represents a significant theoretical advancement in tourism research. This new scale facilitates a systematic and empirical approach to assess how well destinations accommodate and appeal from the perspective of LGBTQ+ friendliness, introducing a quantifiable metric into an area that has often been characterized by qualitative analyses (Sousa-Silva et al., 2024). This methodological innovation extends the theoretical frameworks used in tourism studies by providing a tool that allows for the nuanced exploration of LGBTQ+ friendliness as a distinct aspect of destination image (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). The introduction of this scale does more than fill a research gap—it fundamentally shifts how researchers can study and understand the impact of inclusivity on destination appeal. By enabling the precise measurement of LGBTQ+ friendliness, the scale supports a more detailed examination of how this dimension interacts with other factors to influence overall destination perception among various traveler groups (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). Furthermore, the scale's development encourages the

refinement of existing theories on destination image by incorporating the perspectives and experiences of a broader range of travelers, particularly focusing on the inclusivity of LGBTQ+ individuals. The ability to gather data specifically related to this dimension allows for the construction of more inclusive and representative theoretical models, potentially leading to broader applicability and deeper insights into how destination images are formed and evolved.

Building on the methodological advancements introduced by the LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale, this study further refines theoretical implications in the field of tourism by emphasizing the diversity and intersectionality within the LGBTQ+ spectrum (Vongvisitsin & Wong 2021). This nuanced approach significantly enhances the understanding of LGBTQ+ travelers, moving beyond generalized assumptions about the community's travel preferences and needs (Beeth & Schänzel, 2024; Usai et al., 2022). The importance of differentiating among various elements of the LGBTQ+ spectrum is crucial for developing more precise marketing strategies and a deeper understanding of the diverse factors influencing travelers' decisions and perceptions. This differentiation allows for the recognition of unique needs and preferences within the LGBTQ+ communities, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of a homogenized approach to LGBTQ+ friendliness in tourism. By incorporating these distinctions, the scale not only broadens the conceptual framework of destination image studies but also introduces a more inclusive and accurate depiction of destination attributes as perceived by diverse tourist groups.

5.2 Practical implications

This newly developed scale to assess LGBTQ+-friendly destination image offers valuable guidance for DMOs. The scale enables DMOs to accurately measure their standing in terms of LGBTQ+ friendliness, serving as a critical indicator of overall appeal to a diverse range of tourists (Tressoldi et al., 2023). By identifying both strengths and areas for improvement, DMOs can enhance the experience for LGBTQ+ visitors while also making destinations more welcoming for all tourists. Notably, this study indicates that LGBTQ+-friendly destination images have a significant impact not only on LGBTQ+ travelers but also on non-LGBTQ+ tourists. Many non-LGBTQ+ visitors perceive LGBTQ+-friendly destinations as safer, more open, and socially progressive, which enhances the destination's attractiveness to the broader market. This demonstrates that LGBTQ+-friendliness serves as a marker of universal hospitality, benefiting visitor satisfaction, loyalty, and positive WOM across diverse demographic groups.

Building on these insights, DMOs can use the scale to regularly assess how their destination is perceived in terms of LGBTQ+ friendliness and track changes over time. This information can guide marketing efforts by identifying which aspects of the destination image are most attractive to both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ tourists. For instance, if tourists view the destination as especially welcoming or safe, these strengths can be featured in promotional campaigns and visitor information. If the assessment reveals weaker areas, such as a lack of visible support or community acceptance, DMOs can address these issues through clear communication and engagement with local stakeholders. By using data from the scale, DMOs can set measurable goals for destination image, monitor progress, and adjust their strategies to better meet the expectations of a diverse tourist base. This approach can

help increase satisfaction, encourage repeat visits, and strengthen positive WOM for the destination (Algueró Boronat et al., 2025).

Another crucial practical implication of the newly developed scale is its role in promoting greater friendliness, which contributes significantly to creating a safer and more welcoming environment for all visitors (Algueró Boronat et al., 2025). The scale provides empirical data that DMOs and local stakeholders can use to assess and enhance LGBTQ+ friendliness in ways that align with community values and tourism objectives. By highlighting specific areas for improvement, such as hospitality training, public safety, and cultural programming, the scale encourages progress that is both organic and sensitive to local contexts. This approach fosters ongoing dialogue among LGBTQ+ communities, businesses, and tourism authorities, ensuring that efforts to increase friendliness are meaningful and sustainable. Over time, such initiatives not only enhance a destination's appeal to a diverse range of travelers but also strengthen its reputation as a welcoming and friendly place for all (Lai et al., 2024).

6. Limitations and suggestions for future study

This study develops and validates an LGBTQ+-friendly destination image scale through a multi-dimensional identity-based approach by applying the SOGIE framework within the unique context of Thailand. Thailand's setting, noted for its gender diversity and established LGBTQ+ tourism sector, provided a salient context for scale development and validation. Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study did not disaggregate participants by specific LGBTQ+ identities. More detailed subgroup analyses (e.g., gay men, lesbian women, transgender individuals, non-binary, and intersex travelers) could yield deeper insights into how perceptions of SO-, GI-, and GE friendliness attributes vary across diverse segments within the community. While destination images often emphasize observable SOGIE elements, future research should also examine the potential role of SC in shaping travel perceptions and experiences, especially among intersex and other non-endosex travelers.

Second, while the inclusion of respondents from six nationalities offered cultural diversity, the data were collected within a single destination. Future research could apply this scale in comparative studies across diverse social, cultural, and legal contexts to better understand how societal norms shape perceptions of LGBTQ+ friendliness. Although grounded in the universal SOGIE framework, the relative salience of SO, GI, and GE friendliness is likely to be culturally contingent; in more conservative societies, for example, GE friendliness may be contested or restricted, potentially altering how tourists evaluate LGBTQ+ inclusivity. These observations underscore the theoretical boundary conditions of the scale, as the applicability of SOGIE constructs may shift depending on socio-cultural and legal environments. Longitudinal designs could also provide valuable insights into how evolving societal attitudes toward LGBTQ+ issues influence tourist perceptions over time.

Third, this study included only travelers who had visited Thailand, omitting two important groups: (1) potential travelers who have never visited, including non-LGBTQ+ tourists who may evaluate LGBTQ+ friendliness differently, and (2) local residents, whose perspectives shape the lived realities of inclusivity. Comparing these groups would help uncover differences between perceived and experienced LGBTQ+ friendliness, particularly how pre-travel expectations align with (or diverge from) on-the-ground realities. Finally, future

research could explore the impact of specific marketing initiatives designed to promote LGBTQ+ friendliness. Identifying which strategies are most effective in enhancing destination images would contribute to building more inclusive and welcoming tourism environments globally.

References

- Afshardoost, M., & Eshaghi, M. S. (2020). Destination image and tourist behavioral intentions: A meta-analysis. *Tourism Management*, *81*, 104154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104154>
- Airbnb. (2023, May 24). Hosts double down on inclusivity: LGBTQ+ affirming language on the rise. Accessed on 24 July 2025, from <https://news.airbnb.com/hosts-double-down-on-inclusivity-lgbtq-affirming-language-on-the-rise/>
- Aksu, A. A., Caber, M., & Albayrak, T. (2009). Measurement of the destination evaluation supporting factors and their effects on behavioral intention of visitors: Antalya region of Turkey. *Tourism Analysis*, *14*(1), 115-125. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354209788970199>
- Aleshire, M. E. (2016). Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression: What are they?. *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, *12*(7), e329-e330. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nurpra.2016.03.016>
- Aleshire, M. E., Fallin-Bennett, A., Bucher, A., & Hatcher, J. (2019). LGBT-friendly healthcare providers' tobacco treatment practices and recommendations. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*, *55*(4), 546-553. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ppc.12395>
- Algueró Boronat, M., Rodríguez Artola, R. M., & Moliner Tena, M. A. (2025). Queer-friendly tourist destinations: how are they perceived by the LGBTIQ+ communities?. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *28*(16), 2630-2648. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2024.2378137>
- Andrade, H., Breda, Z., & Dinis, G. (2019). Perspective on the LGBTQ segment: The view of tourism accommodation establishments of the city of Porto. In *Critical Tourism Studies Proceedings* (Vol. 2019, No. 1, Article 86). Thompson Rivers University. <https://digitalcommons.library.tru.ca/cts-proceedings/vol2019/iss1/86>
- Asher & Lyric (2021). *The 150 Worst (& Safest) Countries for LGBTQ+ Travel in 2021*. <https://www.asherfergusson.com/lgbtq-travel-safety/>
- Baloglu, S., & Brinberg, D. (1997). Affective images of tourism destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, *35*(4), 11-15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004728759703500402>
- Baloglu, S., & McCleary, K. W. (1999). A model of destination image formation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *26*(4), 868-897. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(99\)00030-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00030-4)
- Beerli, A., & Martin, J. D. (2004). Factors influencing destination image. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *31*(3), 657-681. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2004.01.010>
- Beeth, F., & Schänzel, H. (2024). Queer tourism geographies and placemaking: beyond homonormativity. *Tourism Geographies*, *26*(7), 1177-1196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2024.2412557>
- Burchiellaro, O. (2021). Queering Control and Inclusion in the Contemporary Organization: On 'LGBT-friendly control' and the reproduction of (queer) value. *Organization Studies*, *42*(5), 761-785. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840620944557>
- Butler, J. (1988). Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. *Theatre Journal*, *40*(4), 519-531. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3207893>
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Central Pattana. (2025, May 20). *Central Pattana celebrates Thailand's Pride Celebration 2025: "Pride for All" for the 6th consecutive year, promote Thailand as global Pride landmark*. <https://www.centralpattana.co.th/en/shopping/shopping-update/lifestyle-activities/1425/central-pattana-celebrates-thailands-pride-celebration-2025-pride-for-all-for-the-6th-consecutive-year-promote-thailand-as-global-pride-landmark>
- Ceylan, D., Çizel, B., & Karakaş, H. (2020). Testing destination image scale invariance for intergroup comparison. *Tourism Analysis*, *25*(2-3), 239-251. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354220X15758301241756>

- Chalip, L., Green, B. C., & Hill, B. (2003). Effects of sport event media on destination image and intention to visit. *Journal of Sport Management*, 17(3), 214-234.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.17.3.214>
- Chaulagain, S., Wiitala, J., & Fu, X. (2019). The impact of country image and destination image on US tourists' travel intention. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 12, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2019.01.005>
- Chen, G., Bie, S., Zhang, C., & Li, Z. (2024). Exploring tourists' social identities in a similar-others destination: the case of Chinese tourists in North Korea. *Tourism Review*, 79(4), 825-839.
- Choe, J. Y. J., & Kim, S. S. (2018). Effects of tourists' local food consumption value on attitude, food destination image, and behavioral intention. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 71, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2017.11.007>
- Choe, J. Y. J., & Kim, S. S. (2019). Development and validation of a multi-dimensional tourist's local food consumption value (TLFCV) scale. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 77, 245-259. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.07.004>
- Churchill Jr, G. A. (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16(1), 64-73.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3150876>
- Community Marketing & Insights (2019). *24th Annual LGBTQ Tourism & Hospitality Survey*. http://www.cmi.info/documents/temp/CMI_24th-LGBTQ-Travel-Study-Report2019.pdf
- Connelly, B. L., Certo, S. T., Ireland, R. D., & Reutzel, C. R. (2011). Signaling theory: A review and assessment. *Journal of Management*, 37(1), 39-67.
- Dattalo, Patrick. (2013). *Analysis of multiple dependent variables* (Annotated ed., Pocket Guides to Social Work Research Methods). Oxford University Press.
- DeVellis, R. (2017). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (Fourth Edition.). SAGE.
- Diamond, L. M. (2008). *Sexual fluidity: understanding women's love and desire*. Harvard University Press.
- Dwyer, L., & Kim, C. (2003). Destination competitiveness: determinants and indicators. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 6(5), 369-414.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500308667962>
- Echtner, C. M., & Ritchie, J. B. (1993). The measurement of destination image: An empirical assessment. *Journal of Travel Research*, 31(4), 3-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/004728759303100402>
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1-4.
- Everitt, B. (2002). *The Cambridge dictionary of statistics* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Everly, B. A., & Schwarz, J. L. (2015). Predictors of the adoption of LGBT-friendly HR policies. *Human Resource Management*, 54(2), 367-384.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21622>
- Fergusson, A., & Fergusson, L. (2023, June 5). *The 203 worst (& safest) countries for LGBTQ+ travel in 2023: LGBTQ+ travel safety index*. Asher & Lyric.
<https://www.asherfergusson.com/lgbtq-travel-safety/>
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. (1981). Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error: Algebra and Statistics. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(3), 382-388. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3150980>
- Gallarza, M. G., Saura, I. G., & García, H. C. (2002). Destination image: Towards a conceptual framework. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(1), 56-78.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(01\)00031-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(01)00031-7)

- Ghosh, T., & Mandal, S. (2019). Medical tourism experience: Conceptualization, scale development, and validation. *Journal of travel research*, 58(8), 1288-1301.
- Gilbert, D., & Thar, N. H. M. (2019). Moving from the Shadows: Law and SOGIE Rights in Myanmar's Democratic Transition. *Australian Journal of Asian Law*, 20(1).187-195
- Giuffre, P., Dellinger, K., & Williams, C. L. (2008). "No retribution for being gay?": Inequality in gay-friendly workplaces. *Sociological Spectrum*, 28(3), 254-277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02732170801898380>
- Globetrender. (2023a). The future of queer travel. Accessed on 24 July 2025, from <https://globetrender.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/GLOBETRENDER-FUTURE-OF-QUEER-TRAVEL.pdf>
- Globetrender. (2023b, June 20). *Globetrender reveals trends shaping the future of queer travel*. <https://globetrender.com/2023/06/20/globetrender-reveals-future-queer-travel-trends/>
- Guaracino, J., & Salvato, E. (2017). *Handbook of LGBT tourism & hospitality : a guide for business practice*. Harrington Park Press.
- Gunn, C. A. (1988). *Vacationscape : designing tourist regions* (2nd ed.). Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Hadjisolomou, A., Walters, K., Nickson, D., & Baum, T. (2023). 'Boys will be boys?': Submissive masculinity and sexual harassment in the gay tourism industry. *Hospitality & Society*, 13(3), 173-200. https://doi.org/10.1386/hosp_00068_1
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2013). *Multivariate data analysis*: Pearson Higher Ed.
- Hosany, S., Ekinci, Y., & Uysal, M. (2007). Destination image and destination personality. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 1(1), 62–81. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17506180710729619>
- Hughes, H. (2002). Gay men's holiday destination choice: a case of risk and avoidance. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4(4), 299-312. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.382>
- Hughes, H. L., & Deutsch, R. (2010). Holidays of older gay men: Age or sexual orientation as decisive factors?. *Tourism Management*, 31(4), 454-463.
- Hui, T. K., & Wan, T. W. D. (2003). Singapore's image as a tourist destination. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 5(4), 305-313. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.437>
- Hung, W. L., Lee, Y. J., & Huang, P. H. (2016). Creative experiences, memorability and revisit intention in creative tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 19(8), 763-770. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2013.877422>
- Hunt, J. D. (1975). Image as a factor in tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 13(3), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004728757501300301>
- ILGA Europe (2021). *Rainbow Europe 2021*. <https://ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/Rainbow%20Europe%20Index%202021.pdf>
- International LGBTQ+ Travel Association Foundation (2024a). Comprehensive guide for LGBTQ+ inclusive communication in the tourism industry. https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/iglta/IGLTA_LGBTQ_Guide_Final_1__dbb7faad-7035-4ced-b99d-4d167983da8d.pdf
- International LGBTQ+ Travel Association Foundation (2024b). Transgender Advisory Group. <https://www.iglta.org/foundation/leadership/transgender-advisory-group/>
- Jadav, S., & Chakrapani, V. (2023). Learning without fear: Supporting inclusive education for sexual and gender minorities. In *Transforming Unequal Gender Relations in India and Beyond: An Intersectional Perspective on Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 305-314). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

- Jang, S. S., & Namkung, Y. (2009). Perceived quality, emotions, and behavioral intentions: Application of an extended Mehrabian–Russell model to restaurants. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(4), 451-460. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.01.038>
- Japan International Cooperation Agency. (2025). *Guidance note on conducting research on the inclusion of diverse SOGIESC*. Accessed on 19 August 2025, from https://www.jica.go.jp/english/activities/issues/gender/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2025/04/09/GuidanceNote_SOGIESC_Research_EN.pdf.
- Jenkins, O. H. (1999). Understanding and measuring tourist destination images. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 1(1), 1-15. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1522-1970\(199901/02\)1:1<1::AID-JTR143>3.0.CO;2-L](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1522-1970(199901/02)1:1<1::AID-JTR143>3.0.CO;2-L)
- Jourian, T. J. (2015). Evolving Nature of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2015(152), 11-23. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.20142>
- Kama, A., & Ram, Y. (2020). “Hot Guys” in Tel Aviv: Pride Tourism in Israel. *Israel Studies Review*, 35(1), 79-99. <https://doi.org/10.3167/isr.2020.350106>
- Kaygalak-Celebi, S., Kaya, S., Ozeren, E., & Gunlu-Kucukaltan, E. (2020). Pride festivals as a space of self-expression: tourism, body and place. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 33(3), 545-566. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-01-2019-0026>
- Kim, H., & Richardson, S. L. (2003). Motion picture impacts on destination images. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30(1), 216-237. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(02\)00062-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(02)00062-2)
- Kirby, T. A., Barreto, M., Korine, R., Hendy, J., Osman, L., Stadie, S., & Tan, D. (2024). To conceal or reveal: Identity-conscious diversity ideologies facilitate sexual minority identity disclosure. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 54(1), 199-218. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2996>
- Kline, R. (2016). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (Fourth ed., Methodology in the social sciences). New York: Guilford Press.
- Lai, I. K. W., Wong, J. W. C., & Hitchcock, M. (2024). A study of how LGBTQ tourists’ perceptions of residents’ feelings about them affect their revisit intentions: an emotional solidarity perspective. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 32(1), 223-244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2022.2130339>
- Lawshe, C. H. (1975). A quantitative approach to content validity. *Personnel Psychology*, 28(4), 563-575. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1975.tb01393.x>
- Lewis, C., Kerr, G., & Burgess, L. (2019). Positioning a destination as fashionable: The destination fashion conditioning framework. *Tourism Management*, 72, 209-219. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.12.004>
- LGBT Capital. (2023). LGBT market statistics. Accessed on 24 July 2025, from https://www.lgbt-capital.com/index.php?menu_id=2
- Lin, C. H., Morais, D. B., Kerstetter, D. L., & Hou, J. S. (2007). Examining the role of cognitive and affective image in predicting choice across natural, developed, and theme-park destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46(2), 183-194. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287506304049>
- Liu, X., Li, J., & Kim, W. G. (2017). The role of travel experience in the structural relationships among tourists’ perceived image, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 17(2), 135-146. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358415610371>
- Lubowiecki-Vikuk, A. P., & Borzyszkowski, J. (2016). Tourist activity of LGBT in European post-communist states: The case of Poland. *Economics & Sociology*, 9(1), 192-208. <https://doi.org/10.14254/2071-789X.2016/9-1/13>
- Madinga, N. W., van Eyk, M., & Amoah, F. (2023). LGBT Tourism in South Africa: the influence of customer value on behavioural intention. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 26(11), 1813-1827. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2022.2070458>

- Martín, S. H., & Del Bosque, I. A. R. (2008). Exploring the cognitive–affective nature of destination image and the role of psychological factors in its formation. *Tourism Management*, 29(2), 263-277. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.03.012>
- Matsuno, E., & Budge, S. L. (2017). Non-binary/genderqueer identities: A critical review of the literature. *Current Sexual Health Reports*, 9(3), 116-120. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11930-017-0111-8>
- McKenzie, C., Mulé, N. J., & Khan, M. (2022). Where Is LGBTQ+ in Ontario’s Health Care Policies and Programs?. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 19(2), 610–621. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-021-00577-8>
- Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. A. (1974). *An approach to environmental psychology*. the MIT Press.
- Melián-González, A., Moreno-Gil, S., & Araña, J. E. (2011). Gay tourism in a sun and beach destination. *Tourism Management*, 32(5), 1027-1037. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.08.015>
- Mentzer, J. T., & Flint, D. J. (1997). Validity in logistics research. *Journal of Business Logistics*, 18(1), 199-216.
- Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological bulletin*, 129(5), 674. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674>
- Monterrubio, C. (2021). The significance of gay tourism spaces for local gay men: empirical evidence from Mexico. In O. Vorobjovas-Pinta (Ed.), *Gay tourism: New perspectives* (pp. 34–51). Channel View Publications.
- National Institutes of Health. (2024, September 23). Sex, gender, and sexuality. In NIH style guide. <https://www.nih.gov/nih-style-guide/sex-gender-sexuality>
- Ng, W. Z., Yang, D. W., Sim, D., Ubalde, J., Conron, K., & Tan, R. K. J. (2025). Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace: The Lived Experiences of Singaporean LGBTQ+ Individuals. *Diversity & Inclusion Research*, 2(1), e70009. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dvr2.70009>.
- Oakenfull, G. W. (2013). What matters: Factors influencing gay consumers’ evaluations of “gay-friendly” corporate activities. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 32(1_suppl), 79-89. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.12.050>
- Obenour, W., Lengfelder, J., & Groves, D. (2005). The development of a destination through the image assessment of six geographic markets. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 11(2), 107-119. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766705052569>.
- Ong, F., Vorobjovas-Pinta, O., & Lewis, C. (2022). LGBTIQ+ identities in tourism and leisure research: A systematic qualitative literature review. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(7), 1476-1499. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1828430>
- Park, A. (2019). Yogyakarta plus 10: a demand for recognition of SOGIESC. *North Carolina Journal of International Law*, 44, 223–272.
- Phillips, W., & Jang, S. (2008). Destination image and tourist attitude. *Tourism Analysis*, 13(4), 401-411.
- Prayag, G., & Hosany, S. (2014). When Middle East meets West: Understanding the motives and perceptions of young tourists from United Arab Emirates. *Tourism Management*, 40, 35-45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.05.003>
- Prayag, G., Hosany, S., Muskat, B., & Del Chiappa, G. (2017). Understanding the relationships between tourists’ emotional experiences, perceived overall image, satisfaction, and intention to recommend. *Journal of Travel Research*, 56(1), 41-54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287515620567>.
- Ragb, H., Mahrous, A. A., & Ghoneim, A. (2020). A proposed measurement scale for mixed-images destinations and its interrelationships with destination loyalty and travel

- experience. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 35, 100677. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100677>.
- Ram, Y., Kama, A., Mizrachi, I., & Hall, C. M. (2019). The benefits of an LGBT-inclusive tourist destination. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 14, 100374. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2019.100374>.
- Rieger, G., Linsenmeier, J. A. W., Gygax, L., Garcia, S., & Bailey, J. M. (2008). Dissecting “gaydar”: Accuracy and the role of masculinity-femininity. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 37(2), 124-140. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-008-9405-2>.
- Ro, H. (2025). Intentions to choose LGBTQ+ friendly hotels: self-concepts and branding approaches. *Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality*, 20(2), 186-199. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CBTH-05-2024-0165>
- Ro, H., & Khan, M. (2022). The impact of LGBT friendliness on sexual minority customers’ perceptions and intentions to stay. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 102, 103181. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103181>.
- Ro, H., & Khan, M. (2023). LGBT Friendliness: Internal Actions and Marketing Communications. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2023.2270165>.
- Ro, H., & Olson, E. D. (2014). The effects of social justice and stigma-consciousness on gay customers’ service recovery evaluation. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(6), 1162-1169. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.05.006>.
- Russell, S. T., Toomey, R. B., Ryan, C., & Diaz, R. M. (2014). Being out at school: The implications for school victimization and young adult adjustment. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 84(6), 635–643. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000037>.
- Smith, R. A. (2023). *From LGBTQIA+ to SOGIESC: Reframing sexuality, gender, and human rights*. OpenGlobalRights. <https://www.openglobalrights.org/lgbtqia-to-sogiesc-reframing-sexuality-gender-human-rights/>.
- Sousa-Silva, S., Diéguez-Castrillón, M. I., & Gueimonde-Canto, A. (2024). Past, Present, and Future of LGBTIQ Tourism Literature: A Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 1-34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2024.2417186>.
- Spartacus (2021). *Gay Travel Index 2021*. <https://spartacus.gayguide.travel/gaytravelindex.pdf>
- Stevens, J. (2009). *Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences* (5th ed.). Routledge.
- Testa, R. J., Sciacca, L. M., Wang, F., Hendricks, M. L., Goldblum, P., Bradford, J., & Bongar, B. (2012). Effects of violence on transgender people. *Professional Psychology, Research and Practice*, 43(5), 452–459. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029604>
- Thelen, T. (2021). Between 1990s’ Nostalgia and ‘LGBT-friendly’ Tokyo Olympics: Representations of LGBTQ People in NHK’s Morning Drama Series. *Japanese Studies*, 41(2), 241-255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10371397.2021.1948321>
- Totman, R. (2011). *The third sex: Kathoey: Thailand's ladyboys*. Souvenir Press.
- Tressoldi, C., Espartel, L. B., & Rohden, S. F. (2023). Authentic brand positioning or woke washing? LGBTQI+ consumer perceptions of brand activism. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 43(1), 55-71. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-05-2022-0126>.
- United Nations Development Program. (2022). *UNDP LGBTI inclusion index & handbook part II*. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-03/UNDP_LGBTI_Handbook_Part_II_EN.pdf.pdf
- United Nations World Tourism Organization. (2017). *Affiliate Members Global Reports, Volume 15 – Second Global Report on LGBT Tourism*. <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284414581>

- Usai, R., Cai, W., & Wassler, P. (2022). A queer perspective on heteronormativity for LGBT travelers. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(1), 3-15.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520967763>.
- Veasna, S., Wu, W. Y., & Huang, C. H. (2013). The impact of destination source credibility on destination satisfaction: The mediating effects of destination attachment and destination image. *Tourism Management*, 36, 511-526.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.09.007>.
- Veilleux, A. (2021). *LGBTQ tourism in Thailand in the light of globalization: Capitalism, local policies, and impacts on the Thai LGBTQ community*. Milan: FrancoAngeli.
- Veilleux, A., Broeck, A. V., & Van, M. (2020). The political economy of LGBTQ tourism in Thailand. *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, 35/36, 63-92.
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/630011164.pdf>
- Vongvisitsin, T. B., & Wong, A. K. F. (2021). Organisational change towards LGBTQ+ inclusion in hospitality and tourism: Managerial perspectives. *Tourism Management*, 86, 104331. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104331>.
- Vongvisitsin, T. B., Wong, A. K. F., Alegre, B. R., Manner-Baldeon, F., & Tse, P. M. (2025). The sexual and gender normativities of servicescapes: A queer theory perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 103898. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2025.103898>.
- Vorobjovas-Pinta, O., & Hardy, A. (2016). The evolution of gay travel research. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(4), 409-416.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2059>.
- Waitt, G., & Markwell, K. (2006). *Gay tourism: culture and context*. Haworth Hospitality Press.
- Weiss, M. L. (2021). Building solidarity on the margins: Seeking SOGIE rights in ASEAN. *Journal of Human Rights*, 20(2), 194-210.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2020.1841610>.
- Wong, A. K. F., & Kim, S. S. (2020). Development and validation of standard hotel corporate social responsibility (CSR) scale from the employee perspective. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 87, 102507. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102507>.
- Wong, C. C. L., & Tolkach, D. (2017). Travel preferences of Asian gay men. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 22(6), 579-591.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2017.1308396>.
- World Nomads (2021). How Friendly is Thailand for LGBTQ+ Travelers?
<https://www.worldnomads.com/travel-safety/southeast-asia/thailand/thailand-for-lgbtqi-travellers>
- World Travel & Tourism Council. (2024). *Travel & tourism economic impact research (EIR)*. <https://wttc.org/research/economic-impact#:~:text=In%202024%2C%20the%20sector%20supported,to%20reach%20US%24%201.9%20trillion>
- Yilmaz, Irmak, A., & Oskay, Ümran. (2021). Changes in sexual intentions of LGBT people and their adaptation to social life. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*, 58(4), 1248-1257.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ppc.12922>.
- Zhang, H., Fu, X., Cai, L. A., & Lu, L. (2014). Destination image and tourist loyalty: A meta-analysis. *Tourism Management*, 40, 213-223.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.06.006>.