



## Gay domestic tourists' motivation: the case of Bali

### Motivação de turistas domésticos gays: o caso de Bali

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Received: 12.06.2022; Revisions required: 03.09.2022; Accepted: 10.03.2023

#### Abstract

Building upon existing literature on gay tourism, gay tourist motivation, and homosexuality, this article explores the primary determinants of motivation to travel for gay tourists in a conservative market and their satisfaction with Bali, an Asian and peripheral destination. The study aims to provide valuable insights for destination marketers and stakeholders in Indonesia, enabling them to develop improved marketing strategies tailored to this niche tourism market. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing self-administered questionnaires distributed among gay tourists in Jakarta, Indonesia. Descriptive and multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to analyze the experiences of 150 gay domestic tourists in Bali, Indonesia, as a tourist destination. The findings identified escape, experience, and peace as significant factors influencing gay tourists' satisfaction, while friendliness, venue, beach, nightlife, and natural beauty were identified as destination attributes impacting holiday satisfaction. These findings contribute to the existing body of literature on gay tourism, particularly within the Asian context, and provide valuable insights for destination managers and marketers seeking a deeper understanding of this niche market segment.

**Keywords:** Attraction, Bali, gay tourism, gay tourist motivation, satisfaction.

#### Resumo

Com base na literatura sobre turismo gay, motivação de turistas gays e homossexualidade, este artigo examina os principais determinantes da motivação para viajar de turistas gays num mercado turístico conservador e sua satisfação com o destino de Bali. Os resultados determinaram atributos importantes que podem ser úteis para os profissionais de marketing e *stakeholders* na Indonésia, a fim de desenvolver estratégias de marketing mais eficientes e obter um melhor conhecimento desse nicho de mercado. Foi utilizada uma abordagem quantitativa a partir de questionários distribuídos entre turistas gays em Jacarta, Indonésia. Análises descritivas e de regressão linear múltipla foram utilizadas para analisar as experiências de 150 turistas gays domésticos na ilha de Bali. Os resultados identificaram escape, experiência e paz como fatores significativos para turistas gays, e amizade, locais, praia, vida noturna e beleza natural como perspectivas de destino que afetam a satisfação com as férias. Os resultados aprimoram o corpo existente de literatura sobre turismo gay, especificamente no contexto asiático, e são úteis para gestores e profissionais de marketing no melhor entendimento desse segmento de mercado de nicho.

**Palavras-chave:** Atração, Bali, turismo gay, motivação, satisfação.

#### 1. Introduction

One of the growing segments in the tourism field is that of gay tourism (Guaracino, 2007; Guaracino & Salvato, 2017; Melian-Gonzalez, Moreno-Gil, & Arana, 2011). This has been accompanied with growth in various other gay events such as Pride events, sports events, and film festivals (Guaracino & Salvato, 2017; Ro & Khan, 2022; Waitt & Maxwell, 2014). The gay market plays a major role in tourism and is increasingly being described as a powerful and profitable market segment (Usai, Cai, & Wassler, 2022) and now has increased awareness across the global tourism industry (Bomkes, 2011; Caruana, 2017; Yilmaz, Irmak, & Oskay, 2022). In 2016, approximately 36 million overnight visitors who travelled to international destinations around the world were part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community (UNWTO, 2017) and the LGBT travel market's global value was estimated to be over USD 21 billion (Out Now Global, 2016). While same-sex tourists have obviously travelled in the past (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996), it is only in the last 30 years that this segment has attracted academic interest (Therkelsen, Blichfeldt, Chor, & Ballegaard, 2013). Webster and Drury-Smith (2022) stated that from the research evidence, academicians commonly agree that LGBT tourism- or simply known as gay or pink tourism- is still an under researched area as a segment. Despite the growing gay tourism market, marketers and destination

managers have limited information about "the gay community", and even less has been written on this topic, especially in countries with Muslim majority populations, in which talking about gay culture is still considered as taboo.

As noted by Fimiani (2014), even though sexual identity is constructed by the individual, it needs validation from other people, both gay and straight individuals. Therefore, the acceptance of the gay identity is seen as quite fundamental. Hughes (1997) noted that the gay identity might be painful due to the society's reaction to homosexuality, and this is one of the constraints to conduct research about this segment of tourism. Because of society's reaction to homosexuality, the acceptance of the gay identity is dependent on an act as being a 'tourist', in which many gays will choose to travel to find an anonymous or safe environment to show their gay identity. Conceptually, it has been argued that searching for a gay identity is part of tourism (Hughes, 1997). Cox (2001) mentioned that a holiday destination provides gay men with a means to reveal their sexual identity, even though it is temporary, due to society's reaction towards the gay identity. Gay travelers will avoid places where they are not truly welcome (Wong & Tolkach, 2017), and they tend to travel to places with a reputation for hospitality to homosexuals (Leach, 2017). Oong, Vorobjovas-Pinta, and Lewis (2022) mentioned that as the LGBT visibility and acceptance has grown in societies



combined with the acknowledgement of this niche segment, the gay tourists have started to break away from the boundaries of exclusive gay spaces.

Scholarly research on different LGBT segments has gained researchers' attention, encompassing same-sex parented families (Lucena, Jarvis, & Weeden, 2015; Monterrubio & Barrios-Ayala, 2015; Subyubon, Thongrom, Tiwasing, & Chaya, 2022), and gay tourism in traditionally non-liberal markets such as the Middle East (Mahadeen, 2021; Hartal & Sasson-Levy, 2019). In the present research, within the broader LGBT segment, this study focuses on gay male tourists, whereby gay, often in the context of men, refers to "sexual or romantic attraction to people of one's same sex" (Merriam-Webster, 2020). As a niche yet lucrative segment, gay tourism is a powerful and profitable market segment (Hattingh, Spencer & Venske, 2011; Usai, Roberto & Wassler, 2022) that has recently gained in popularity and awareness in the tourism industry globally (Bomkes, 2011; Caruana, 2017; Plog, 2005; Pritchard, Morgan, Sedgley, & Jenkins, 1998). Until the mid-1990s, however, gay tourism had been isolated from mainstream tourism in terms of products, services, and marketing (Southall & Fallon, 2011).

The gay market's growth has opened new vistas for tourism and tour operators, with the increasing availability of gay resorts, gay cruises, gay tours, and gay travel packages to varied destinations (Plog, 2005). This has been accompanied by trends such as destinations increasingly portraying themselves as gay-friendly, such as in Greece and Spain (Apostolopoulou, 2016; Melian-Gonzalez et al., 2011), and recognition that gay tourists' service "needs and expectations" as a segment are distinct from other segments, such as families and solo travelers (Berezan, Raab, Krishen, & Love, 2015). One of the important areas within gay tourism that has received significant research attention is gay tourists' "motivation" (Pritchard, Morgan, Sedgley, Khan, & Jenkins, 2000; Sien Leong, Hussain, & Abdullah, 2022) and their tourist experiences (Bailey, 2021; Pritchard et al., 2000; Satham & Scuzzarello, 2021).

Indonesia is one of the countries which offer a lot of tourist activities due to its natural attractions and tropical weather (Hendijani, 2018). Among different destinations in this country, Bali has received the largest number of domestic and international tourists (Wonderful Indonesia, 2019). Bali is also declared as one of the world's top destinations for tourists (The Jakarta Post, 2017). Even though gay tourism is still underdeveloped, gay activities have started to emerge in big cities of Indonesia, particularly Jakarta and Bali. According to Out Now (2015), Bali is one of the top 10 LGBT destinations in the Asia Pacific and Middle East. Therefore, it is important to know about the motivation of gay tourists to choose a destination.

In the context of previous studies on gay tourism, this study derived several observations. First, past studies have predominantly examined the gay tourism segment in open and liberalized contexts (e.g. the Western world) and focused on White gay men. Recently, homosexuality has gained broader

acceptance across different parts of the world; however, there remains an absence of gay tourism literature in accounting for these social shifts, and observations that are not "stereotyped or generalized projections" of gay travelers (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2014, p. 635). Within gay tourism studies, further understanding is required in the context of moderate and conservative markets, where this segment oscillates between being predominantly hidden and occasionally open, due to social and political marginalization. There is limited research on gay tourists in markets where same-sex attraction within an institutional context remains taboo, and where being gay is still a deeply closeted issue (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2016, p. 640; Wu, Ai, & Chang, 2021).

Second, research is scarce regarding destinations that do not promote themselves as gay destinations but still cater to and remain popular with gay tourists, especially in Southeast Asia. This is important because past studies have reported that gay tourists visit places that are popular with heterosexuals and need not specifically be deemed gay destinations (Hughes, 2002a), thereby unlocking future research possibilities for Asian destinations. Past studies related to Asian gay destinations have tended to limit themselves to sex and male-prostitution issues (Kong, 2017; Kumar, Minichiello, Scott, & Harrington, 2017; Wilke & Kleiber, 1992).

Third, little is known concerning the motivating factors, demographic profiles, and consumption patterns of gay tourists from non-White male communities, or more specifically Asian men (Wong & Tolkach, 2017), and their holiday satisfaction levels. For example, past studies on gay tourism have attached importance to gay spaces as a deciding factor for gay tourists, which may not be an inherent aspect for certain Asian destinations, given the socio-political aspect.

Lastly, as noted by Wong and Tolkach (2017), given the cultural aspects, there is an unwillingness and hesitation on some Asian respondents to "explicitly express their sexuality" and associated discussions related to their travels (p. 586). Therefore, this study adopts a deductive approach.

To address some of these issues, this paper's main objective is to identify the determinants of gay tourists' motivation in a conservative market and evaluate their experiential satisfaction associated with a peripheral gay destination, Bali. This study also offers an understanding of gay tourists' experiential satisfaction of peripheral gay destinations, which do not necessarily promote themselves as gay tourist destinations but nevertheless remain popular within the segment. Past studies have either neglected non-Western gay tourists and destinations, reported them as markets avoided by gay tourists (Hughes, 2002a) based on the perceptions of risks associated with these destinations, or labelled them as "primitive" destinations for "Utopian" sexual opportunities (Waitt & Markwell, 2014). This study recognizes the need to establish expansive research agendas to know non-Western gay segments and destinations and encourage the development of



their own alternative narratives to be integrated within the larger LGBT tourism discourse.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Gay Tourists' Motivation and Destination Choice

Within the larger literature scope on tourist motivations (Dann, 1981; Egger, Lei, & Wassler, 2020; Fodness, 1994), some attention has been paid to gay tourists' motivations (Clift & Forrest, 1999; Hughes, 2005; Peruzzella, Allan, & Lavner, 2022; Pritchard et al., 2000; Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2014). The gay tourist segment has emerged within the broader LGBT tourism category, which has existed for much longer due to "discrimination and persecution", thereby forming an elusive group for academic studies (Jordan, 2018, p. 13).

Past studies have also indicated motivational factors for gay tourists' travel, including social interactions, regeneration, self-realization, freedom, ego-enhancement, and the evaluation of self/prestige (Clift & Forrest, 1999; Wong & Tolkach, 2017). Gay people's holiday motivation is driven by their need to escape from stresses such as being gay in a heterosexual environment, wanting to be with similar people (Madinga, Eyk, & Amoah, 2022; Pritchard et al., 2000), and the need to form and consolidate their identity (Hughes, 1997). In this context, for gay people, "vacations offer the chance to enjoy oneself and to enjoy the possibilities which a gay social setting offers" (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996).

Sexuality and identity have both emerged as important yet understudied aspects of motivation in gay tourism. Beyond the biological conceptualization, Marietta (1997) stated that "sexuality is not something that can be separated from the total being of a person" (p. 24) and that there is a need to account for the "psychological and social aspect of human sexuality...[or else] it is unnecessarily reductionist, which makes it an incomplete concept of sexuality" (p. 20). The gay tourism literature therefore has attempted to understand the role of holidays in gay tourists' identity exploration, formation and development, and affirmation (Campbell, Hammack, Gordon, & Lightfoot, 2022; Hughes, 1997; Montebburio, 2009). In the little researched Asian gay tourists' category, sexuality is reported as an uncomfortable variable. For example, in their study of 27 Asian gay men in Bangkok, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Taipei, & Tokyo, Wong and Tolkach (2017) found that respondents were conservative in their expression of meeting other gay men and the role of sexuality in their travel planning.

For many gay tourists, holidays offer the opportunity to meet new people and engage in sexual encounters (Carolan, 2007; Want, 2002). A sexual encounter is defined as a "rich experience of his or her sexuality and body" and the existence of "double reciprocal incarnation...and being aware of being desired..." (Marietta, 1997, p. 25). Gay-tourist-motivation academic studies have reported mixed findings on the significance of sex in gay holidays, with recent literature suggesting that the sex-gay-tourism relationship is a hyped assumption (Ro, Olson, & Choi, 2017; Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2016). Similarly,

Monterrubio (2009) argued that sex is an important aspect of gay tourism but it "cannot certainly be categorized as an ever-present phenomenon in gay tourism...".

The relationship between searching for self and travel is well-established in tourism studies (Cohen, 2010; Hibbert, Dickinson, Gössling, & Curtin, 2013). In the context of gay tourism, past studies have reported that self-actualization and escapism, rather than socialization, are important travel motivations for gay people (Hughes, 2002a). The dominant heterosexist environment and expectations of everyday life are stressful for many gay people (Köllen & Lazar, 2012). Holidays in such cases allow them to be freely expressive of their identity (Hughes, 1997; Monaco, 2022). Gay men's travel in "search of themselves" (Devall, 1979, p.188) has been deemed a sacred act, with comparisons drawn with undertaking a "pilgrimage" to find one's own truer self (Waitt & Markwell, 2006). Given the societal reaction towards homosexuality, Hughes (1997, p. 6) observed that, for many gay men who keep their identity hidden, holidays offer an opportunity to "come out, [even] if only temporarily [with] the gay identity...adopted and confirmed in secret".

In choosing a destination, gay tourists consider several factors, including the gayness aspect of the destination (Monterrubio, 2009) and the price, alongside "reactions" and "behavior modifications" (Hughes, 2005) which contribute to the making of travel of gay men. Studies have also reported that destinations likely to be less homophobic and perceived as gay-friendly, i.e. being a "safe haven" with minimal associated risks (Hughes, 2005, p.57), are preferred by gay tourists. The level of acceptance of LGBT among the local community also could have an impact on LGBT's choice of destination (Silva & Vareiro, 2020). Bailey (2021) mentioned that LGBT tourists prefer to travel to destinations with a reputation for hospitality towards homosexuals. A study on the local community's attitude toward gay tourists at a Mexico beach showed that the locals felt disturbed by gay lovers' behavior in public. Also, findings confirmed the conflict between locals and gay tourists (Hughes, Monterrubio, & Miller, 2010). Contrastingly, gay tourists may also actively engage in destination avoidance (Lucena, Jarvis, & Weeden, 2015). In another study of gay tourists of Tel Aviv, findings reported that despite sensitive "geo-political" situations, markets benefit from a gay-friendliness approach which helps in "building resilience for urban destinations" (Ram, Karma, Mizarchi, & Hall, 2019).

### 2.2 Indonesia, LGBT, and Gay Tourism

Previous Asian gay tourism research has studied countries such as Thailand (Liu, Fu, Yuan, Li, & Suknuch, 2023; Sanders, 2002; Statham & Scuzzarello, 2021), China (Liu & Chen, 2010; Zhou, Wu, Filep, & Weber, 2021), and Hong Kong (Wong, 2008; Yu, 2020). The absence of a research agenda for the Asian LGBT community and tourism represents an important gap. Asian culture still lacks an identity system for the LGBT community compared to Western culture, where such a system has been evolving for the past two centuries (Chan, 1997; Yang & Ong, 2020), highlighting the importance of studying the Asian context.



Indonesia is one of the fast-growing countries in terms of the tourism industry in Asia. Tourism accounts for approximately 4% of the GDP (the government is aiming to double this in the future), with Jakarta and Bali being the two main entry points into the country (Indonesia Investments, 2016). Indonesia offers many tourist activities for local and international tourists due to its natural attractions and tropical weather. Among Indonesia's varied tourism destinations, Bali receives the greatest number of local and international tourists (Wonderful Indonesia, 2019).

Gay tourism is still underdeveloped in Indonesia and the government's tourism website and communications do not declare any open welcome for this tourist segment. However, gay activities have recently emerged in Indonesia's bigger cities, particularly Jakarta and Bali. The Hindu-majority island of Bali has long been considered more tolerant of different sexual identities compared with other parts of Indonesia (Abdillah, Supriono, & Supriyono, 2022; Walden, 2018). Hence, it is popular with gay tourists globally.

According to Out Now (2015), Bali is one of the top 10 LGBT destinations in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions. Though not overtly aggressive in marketing the island as a gay destination, Bali is a preferred destination for gay travelers for vacations. According to Mollman (2016), Bali is popular among gay travelers, having one of the most robust gay nightlife scenes in Asia and a gay-bar district. Law (2014) noted that, for young Indonesian gay people (being away from their families), Bali provides an opportunity to be openly homosexual for the first time.

The lack of data has previously been recognized as one of the main difficulties, not only for reliably evaluating the size and importance of this market, but also for destinations in making strategic decisions to attract such tourists (Holcomb & Luongo, 1996; Hughes, 1997; Monterrubio, Mendoza-Ontiveros, Rodriguez-Madera, & Perez, 2021; Pritchard et al., 1998; Wong & Tolkach, 2017), and this is the case for Indonesia. In general, Indonesians are tolerant towards gay people, particularly those who live in urban areas, such as the capital city, Jakarta. However, in Indonesia, there has been a recent growing wave of hostility towards the LGBT community from the government and the public (Jakarta Globe, 2018). For example, the controversial Family Resilience, a draft bill proposed in February 2020 by members of the House of Representatives, has sought to interpret LGBT as deviance and seeks their reporting by families to suitable agencies, and remedial treatment through "spiritual guidance, and social, psychological, and medical rehabilitation" (Sutrisno, 2018). LGBT issues are still considered taboo in conservative parts of the country, e.g. Aceh and Lombok to name a few (Gunara, Setiawan Susanto, & Cipta, 2022; Suroyo & Greenfield, 2014). This research is the first of its kind undertaken in Indonesia.

### 3. Research Methodology

To identify the determinants of gay male tourists' motivation in a conservative market and evaluate their experiential satisfaction, questionnaires comprising five sections were distributed via the Internet. Understanding the potential

challenges of researching sensitive issues related to sexuality and the Indonesian context, this study used purposive and snowball sampling to collect questionnaire data. Through purposive sampling, some people known to be gay men tourists were first identified, and other participants were selected through snowball sampling (Sudman, 1976; Zikmund, 1997), which facilitated reaching some of the identified members of a difficult-to-reach population, who in turn helped "identify other members of the population" (Handcock & Gile, 2011, p. 3). This study collected the opinions of a sample of gay tourists residing in Jakarta who had recently been to Bali on holiday. To collect the data, personal contact was made with the target respondents through email and various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and gay-specific social media, such as Grindr and JackD), and respondents were subsequently invited to participate in this study; following their consent, the questionnaire link was sent. This study chose online data collection based on prior research involving gay respondents asserting that "participants...declare themselves as gay when they feel that the responses are anonymous and social risk is minimized" (Poria & Taylor, 2002, p.274).

The questionnaire was based on a review of the literature and further modified for content validity. The first section comprised six questions measuring gay tourists' different self-motivators, as adapted from Clift and Forrest (1999) and Hughes (2004). The second part comprised eight questions measuring the destination's attraction, as taken from Hughes (2005), Hughes and Howard (2005), Lucena et al. (2015), and Melian-Gonzalez et al. (2011). Section three measured tourists' overall experiential satisfaction of their trip with four questions, using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The fourth section measured gay tourists' travel behavior with six questions (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012). The final section comprised questions related to the respondents' socio-demographics.

To ensure the questionnaire's reliability and validity, a pilot test was conducted using 17 participants, in line with Sekaran and Bougie (2016), who advocated that a pilot test should use a small number of respondents to test the appropriateness of the questions and their comprehension, and Lackey and Wingate (1998), who recommended engaging with approximately 10% of the final study size.

The questionnaire generated a Cronbach reliability factor above 0.6 and, therefore, was valid for conducting the study (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The respondents were between 19 and 37 years old, and the satisfaction factors were associated with the research subjects' age rather than their sexual orientation. Data was collected from April to June 2018. After discarding incomplete questionnaires, 150 (85.71%) valid questionnaires were used for the analysis. The survey was prepared in Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language). In addition to the usual descriptive analysis of means, standard deviations, and frequencies, multiple linear regressions were also employed to identify the determinants of gay tourists' motivation and evaluate their experiential satisfaction.



#### 4. Results

The respondents' ages ranged between 19 and 37 years old (mean=28). Most respondents identified their marital status as

single (N=128, 85.3%) and most were employees (N=81, 54%). Regarding education, most respondents had a university degree (N=118, 78.7%). Table 1 presents the respondents' profile.

**Table 1 - Profile of the Respondents**

Categories		N (%)
Age	Min	19
	Max	37
	Mean	28
Marital status	Single	128 (85.3%)
	Committed relationship	22 (14.7%)
Occupation	Employee	81 (54%)
	Student	49 (32.7%)
	Government staff	6 (4%)
	Unemployed	4 (2.7%)
	Other	10 (6.7%)
Education	University degree	118 (78.7%)
	High school	32 (21.3%)

In terms of accommodation type, the respondents preferred to stay in hostels (N=59, 39.3%). Hostels emerged as the preferred location, given that the respondents were mainly young adults and employees, who preferred to save money on their accommodations. Most respondents preferred to travel with their friends (N=72, 48%), followed by with partners (N=28,

18.7%), alone (N=26, 17.3%), and with their families (N=17, 11.3%). Regarding travel frequency, most respondents travelled one or two times a year (N=66, 44%). For hotel booking methods, online booking websites (Agoda, Traveloka, etc.) were the most-used online booking method (N=97, 64.7%). Table 2 presents gay tourists' traveling behavior.

**Table 2 - Traveling Behavior of Gay Tourists**

Traveling Behavior		Frequency (%)
Types of accommodation	Hostel	59 (39.3%)
	4-5 star hotel	44 (29.3%)
	1-2 star hotel	38 (25.3%)
	Bed and breakfast	37 (24.7%)
	3 star hotel	32 (21.3%)
Travel companions	Friends	72 (48%)
	Partner	28 (18.7%)
	Alone	26 (17.3%)
	Family	17 (11.3%)
	Others	7 (4.7%)
Booking method	Booking website	97 (64.7%)
	Hotel website	36 (24%)
	Shared economy	21 (14%)
	Telephone	13 (8.7%)
	Deal website	12 (8%)
	Travel agent	10 (6.7%)

The impact of personal factors on gay tourists' overall satisfaction (see Table 3) was significant [(F<sub>6, 143</sub>)=10.601,  $\rho=0.000$ ] and accounted for 30.8% (R<sup>2</sup>=0.308) of tourists' satisfaction. The low value of R<sup>2</sup> shows that destination attractions satisfy gay tourists during their visits more than

personal factors. The findings indicated that "escaping" ( $\beta=0.199$ ,  $\rho=0.016$ ), "experience" ( $\beta=0.163$ ,  $\rho=0.043$ ), and "peace" ( $\beta=0.278$ ,  $\rho=0.017$ ) were the significant factors affecting gay tourists' overall satisfaction.

**Table 3 - Multiple Regression Analysis for Satisfaction (Personal Motivator Factors)**

Variables	$\beta$ .	p.
Escape	.199	.016
Encounter	.100	.182
Experience	.163	.043
Quality	-.133	.129
Peace	.278	.017
Relaxation	.130	.235
R <sup>2</sup>		.308
F-Statistics		10.601
Sig.		.000



The impact of destination attractions on overall satisfaction of gay tourists (see Table 4, which presents the outcomes of a multiple linear regression analysis) was significant [ $(F_{6, 143}) = 18.222, p=0.000$ ] and accounted for 50.8% ( $R^2=0.508$ ) of tourists' satisfaction. The findings indicated that "friendliness"

( $\beta=0.482, p=0.000$ ), "venue" ( $\beta=0.513, p=0.000$ ), "beach" ( $\beta=0.305, p=0.000$ ), "nightlife" ( $\beta=0.256, p=0.002$ ), and "natural" ( $\beta=0.193, p=0.006$ ) were the significant destination attractions affecting gay tourists' overall satisfaction.

**Table 4 - Multiple Regression Analysis of Destination Attractions**

Variables	$\beta$ .	p.
Friendliness	.482	.000
Venue	-.513	.000
Beach	.305	.000
Nightlife	.256	.002
Shop	.021	.738
Natural	.193	.006
Attraction	.161	.147
Event	.149	.128
R <sup>2</sup>		.508
F-Statistics		18.222
Sig.		.000

**5. Discussion and Conclusion**

The findings revealed the main method of booking an accommodation is through a hotel website and the main source of information is from friends. Previous studies have also mentioned the most frequently used sources for gay travelers are the Internet, friends and relatives, tourism offices, travel agencies, and travel magazines (Rivera & Lee, 2012). The most common booking method was online probably because most respondents were young adults, who are comfortable with technology (Erickson, 2012; Hanman, 2005; Talwar, Dhir, Kaur, & Mantymaki, 2020).

Regarding personal factors, the findings indicated that "escaping" from a routine environment ( $p=0.016$ ) is one of the significant factors affecting gay travelers' satisfaction. Holidays can be a good opportunity to be gay and reaffirm one's identity by acting in places that can be considered at least gay-friendly. The findings are supported by previous research suggesting that gay people travel to escape from their routine environment, which may be heteronormative; travel allows them to express their sexuality and facilitate their identity formation on a holiday (Hughes, 1997). Hughes (2002a) indicated that there are similar travel motives among homosexuals and heterosexuals; therefore, motives such as freedom and escape from one's routine apply equally to gay men and others. Having new "experiences" is one of the motivational reasons for gay people going on a holiday and this influences satisfaction with the destination. Since gay people's living environment is constrained due to their sexual orientation, they tend to travel to different cities for new experiences. Such experiences represent one of many psychological needs that play a significant role in causing a person to feel a disequilibrium that can be corrected through a tourism experience (Kim & Lee, 2002). This finding is in line with previous studies suggesting that gay people like to explore and get to know the destination (Köllen & Lazar, 2012; Lewis, Mehmet, & McLaren, 2023). The findings also showed that "peace" had the greatest effect on

gay tourists' satisfaction, i.e. gay travelers are looking for destinations that offer peace of mind. This supports previous studies (Hattingh & Bruwer, 2020; Hughes, 2002b; 2006) suggesting that, given their search for peace, gay people tend to avoid destinations perceived as risky (terrorism, health hazards, etc.) and that may not be gay-friendly or that discriminate against gay people.

The findings revealed that "sex encounter" was not one of the motivational factors affecting satisfaction. This might be due to the respondents feeling that a sex encounter during a holiday is a possibility rather than a key factor. This finding is supported by previous research suggesting that sex encounters are not an important factor for gay travelers when choosing a holiday destination (Hughes, 2002a) and that only some gay men enjoy pursuing sexual encounters while on holiday, whereas the majority of them do not regard sex as an important motivation for travel (Hughes & Deutsch, 2010; Trihas, 2018). The results of this study showed three personal factors (escape, experience, and peace) affect the satisfaction of gay tourists. Researchers have mentioned that the overall satisfaction of tourists is a central factor for the success of a tourist destination (Alegre & Garau, 2010); hence, it is important to know which aspects of personal factors make vacation more satisfying. If tourism authorities know which personal factors affect the satisfaction of gay tourists, they may develop proper marketing strategies to increase their satisfaction (Babolian Hendijani et al., 2013).

In terms of destination attractiveness, the findings of this study revealed that the "gay-friendliness" of a destination ( $p=.000$ ) have a significant effect on satisfaction. This might be because the community in the destination itself (Bali) is as accepting of gay tourists as of their straight counterparts. This finding is supported by prior research suggesting that gay people tend to travel to destinations that they feel are comfortable and less risky (Hughes, 2002a), and that holidaying to "gay-friendly" destinations is likely to significantly contribute to constructing and validating a "gay identity" for some individuals (Fimiani,



2014; Lucena et al., 2015; Waitt & Markwell, 2006), with some scholars referring to this type of tourism as “identity tourism” (Herrera & Scott, 2005; Howe, 2001).

“Gay venues/spaces” ( $p=-0.513$ ) had a significant and negative effect on satisfaction. However, gay venues/spaces had the lowest effect on satisfaction for Bali as a gay-friendly destination, meaning that visiting gay spaces/venues decreases gay travelers’ satisfaction. This might be because the gay venues/spaces in Bali do not meet gay people’s needs or expectations. Hughes (1999) asserted that in the heteronormative world, gay venues/spaces provided gay people with a sanctioned place where same-sex attraction is a norm and there is no risk of rejection or homophobia. Gay venues/spaces are important as they cater to gay people who may not feel confident in a mixed environment or prefer to be surrounded with like-minded people. Some studies (Fimiani, 2014; Retnam, 2012) have argued that a gay space is a critical requirement to attract gay tourists, particularly important for those who hide their sexuality, especially if companionship is limited at home (Hughes & Deutsch, 2010). This finding is supported by Nash (2013) and Visser (2014), who argued that the post-modern gay generation sees no need to codify exclusionary gay spaces, as heterosexual spaces increasingly welcome a comfortably mixed following (Rink, 2013).

The findings also revealed “beaches” ( $p=0.305$ ) as attracting gay travelers to Bali. This may be because Bali is well-known for its beaches, which are among the most preferred attractions that gay travelers seek in their destinations. This is in line with Melian-Gonzalez et al. (2011), who asserted that sun and sea destinations are important for gay travelers, and Hattingh and Spencer (2020), who proclaimed that sunshine and beaches are among a destination’s important features or natural attractions that motivate travelers towards a specific destination.

The findings revealed the “nightlife” ( $p=0.002$ ) in Bali as one of the significant factors affecting gay travelers’ satisfaction. This may be because most respondents are young adults who want to have fun and meet new people. Thus, they perceive the nightlife as important for a destination. Bali offers a variety of nightlife activities and specific night clubs and bars for gay people, thus providing an opportunity to find friends. This finding is supported by previous studies suggesting that nightlife activity is important for gay travelers (Bailey, 2021; Liu, Fu, Yuan, Li, & Suknuch, 2023) and that the nightlife is a critical success factor for gay sun-and-beach tourism destinations (Lewis, Prayag, & Pour, 2021; Melian-Gonzalez et al., 2011).

“Natural attractions” ( $p=0.006$ ) were also destination attractions affecting gay travelers’ satisfaction. Markwell and Waitt (2009) asserted that tourism traditionally depends on national attractions to lure tourists. Bali offers a variety of natural attractions and scenery popular with tourists interested in exploring the beauty of this island; for gay travelers, these natural attractions are important and affect their satisfaction. This finding is in line with that of previous studies, which

reported that seeking natural attractions is important for gay travelers on holiday (Hughes & Howard, 2005; Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021). There is an increasing number of gay travelers to Asian countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines (UNWTO, 2008); however, there is an absence of studies and data on Asian gay tourism and their travel motivations. The main aim of this study was to identify the determinants of motivation of gay tourists in a conservative market and evaluate their experiential satisfaction associated with a peripheral gay destination, Bali. This study has identified the personal factors and destination attractions affecting gay travelers’ satisfaction. These findings offer a better insight into gay travelers’ travel behavior in the Asian market.

### 5.1 Managerial Implications

Regarding managerial implications, different parties can benefit from the study’s findings, which can improve the understanding of this niche segment for a sun-and-beach destination such as Bali. Marketers, for example, can create strategies to reach out to this market segment, while the hospitality industry can design and offer its services for this market base, given their specific needs and special requests.

The study findings indicated “escape”, “experience”, and “peace” as the key personal motivators for Asian gay travelers in choosing a holiday destination. This information can be used by destination marketers to approach and attract this market more successfully. The findings also indicated that “sex encounter”, “quality”, and “relaxation” are not motivating factors.

Regarding destination factors, gay travelers were attracted to the “friendliness of a destination”, “venues/spaces”, “beach”, “nightlife activities”, and “natural attractions”. Managers can better position their destinations if they maintain these attractions and improve their quality over time. “Shopping”, “attractions”, and “events”, however, did not affect gay travelers’ satisfaction. Marketers can use these findings to better position their destinations to promote and enhance gay travelers’ experiences. As gay tourists use the Internet as an information source, application developers can expand their market by implementing better communication strategies to capture this market. Marketers and the hospitality industry can use the findings concerning the key push-and-pull factors in Bali to design better policies and communications to attract new tourists from this niche segment, preserve or improve the valuable resources that are in a good condition, and also create or improve relevant resources.

### 5.2 Theoretical Implications

In terms of the theoretical application, the findings can add to the literature about the Asian gay market and their behavior. The results of this study contribute to the understanding of the diversity of Asian gay travelers. This study also added to literature about conservative countries since very little is known about gay travelers where homosexuality is not legally and/or socially accepted. It has also sought to raise the level of



awareness of some of the concerns and needs of gay tourists. While the body of literature predominantly draws on Western gay tourists, this study adds to the literature about Asian gay tourists. The results of this study can be used as the basis for a questionnaire to augment future studies.

### 5.3 Limitations and Future Suggestions

As this study was based on a quantitative approach, future studies should adopt a qualitative approach capturing in-depth information from Asian gay travelers. As this study was conducted from gay travelers' perspectives, future studies should aim to understand gay tourism from the host community's and hospitality industry's perspectives to understand their perceptions of gay travelers. The data of this study was collected in 2018 and before the COVID-19 pandemic affected the tourism industry. It is suggested that future studies to be conducted in this niche segment of tourism to find out if there are any changes in gay tourists' behavior in the post-COVID era. Due to the difficulty of reaching this niche segment of tourists and just by using some media, it is suggested for future researchers to collect data directly from gay tourists on Bali Island.

**Declaration of competing interest:** None

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