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# Towards SDG5 Unveiling the Dynamics of the Gay Tourism Industry through Social Media Analysis and Implications for Gender Equality

Songyu Jiang<sup>1</sup>, Xiaojun Ke<sup>2\*</sup>

## Abstract

*The advancement of the gay tourism industry is a critical step towards realizing gender equality in tourism (SDG5). This study sought to penetrate the layers of the gay tourism market by analyzing pertinent tweets, thus illuminating the dynamics of this crucial sector of sex minority tourism. Using the NVivo 12.0 software, we embarked on an exploration of a robust data-set of 2202 tweets related to gay tourism. The resultant analysis yielded gay tourism perspective and gay travel experience are primary nodes within the landscape of gay tourism. Analysis of the tweets revealed various themes such as gay tourism bars, events, sex tourism, relationships, rights, and more. Each theme was explored in detail and supported with tweets to provide context. Word frequency analysis provide the dominant position of gay and identity in gay tourism. Hierarchical analysis identifies the attribution of different codes. Comparative analysis proves the theoretical saturation of the coding process. Sentiment analysis further shed light on public sentiment, ranging from very negative to very positive, offering a rich tapestry of varied perspectives and experiences. In the gay tourism perspective, salient themes emerged, such as the need for gay tourism assistance, the exploration of the 'gay tourism gene', understanding gay tourism relationships, the role of gay tourism bars, and the relevance of gay tourism events. The gay travel experience node presented an array of key themes like travel plans for gay individuals, the challenges and experiences of air travel for gay individuals, the influence of gay tourism books, and popular travel areas for the gay community. Finally, we conceptualize the gay tourism with a theoretical framework. The research offers crucial insights into the representation and discourse of gay tourism on social media. The mixed-methods approach, involving both qualitative and quantitative aspects, can serve as a blueprint for future researchers studying similar sociocultural phenomena. The exploration of public sentiment and the diverse experiences of gay tourists provide valuable cues for the tourism industry to foster a more inclusive environment. It also signifies the power of social media as a tool to gauge public sentiment and draw actionable insights for the improvement of tourism experiences for the LGBTQ+ community.*

**Key words:** SDG5, Tourism industry, Gender equality, Gay tourism perspective, Gay travel experience, Sustainable development.

## Introduction

Tourism for sustainable development has attracted worldwide attention, more and more countries have joined the development camp encouraging tourism for sexual minorities (Labadi

<sup>1</sup> Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin, Nakhon Pathom, 73170, Thailand., Email: [jiang.song@rmutr.ac.th](mailto:jiang.song@rmutr.ac.th)

<sup>2</sup> \*Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology, Guangzhou, 510540, China, (Correspondence) Email: [dxjke@gzist.edu.cn](mailto:dxjke@gzist.edu.cn)

et al., 2021). Canada, Sweden, Malta, Taiwan, and United States have achieved the most cutting-edge results. These countries have become the most popular gay tourism destinations (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021).

Gay tourism, also known as pink tourism, is a niche tourism market for gays (Lawrence, 2020). The main components of the pink tourism industry are cities and countries that want to attract gay tourists, and these places aim to provide gay-friendly destinations. Almost all the gay tourists want to travel with the peers and focus on culture and safety factors of destination (Lawrence, 2020). Most companies in the pink tourism industry have taken note of the enormous profits in this market. They have decided to ally with the gay community and promote gay tourism (Usai et al., 2022). The pink tourism market is a trend (Lawrence, 2020). Gay tourism is a market with high purchasing power, generating revenues four times higher than the average value of tourism, generating an annual revenue of 250 billion euros worldwide (Fang, 2020).

With the development of civilization around the world and the enhancement of inclusiveness in social concepts, although there are still controversies about gay in different regions, most countries have adopted measures to deal with the issue of gay marriage, and people's attitudes towards gay people are gradually changing (Ketola & Helander, 2020). There has been a shift from being secretive in the past to being more tolerant now. The ubiquity of gay people online is palpable on social media, gay culture has never been more prominent than it is today, and the gay economy has exploded (Liu, 2022).

China, a market involving 70 million gay and an annual consumption of up to 300 billion US dollars, has been ridiculed by many media as a money-printing machine that will soon be put into production (Liu, 2022). Although there is no specific investigation on the contribution to the tourism market, the considerable population welfare has become an important driving force for tourism development. The more developed the economy, the more concentrated the population, and the higher the degree of social tolerance, the homosexual population is relatively concentrated. The idea that the gay economy refers to the next outlet, a gold mine, and a money printing machine is not new (Myles, 2022).

As a significant gay tourism destination in Asia, Thailand hopes to attract new tourist groups in the 2022 tourism promotion plan, especially Korean gay groups (Lai et al., 2022). The Thai Tourism Bureau hopes to attract Korean rotten drama production teams to film in Thailand (Prasannam, 2019). At that time, they will first invite the producers and screenwriters of rotten Korean dramas to Thailand for on-the-spot investigations in order to use movies to attract more tourists to Thailand (Lai et al., 2022).

Despite this, in the current development of the tourism industry, the emphasis on gay tourism is still not high enough, and even discrimination and prejudice still exist in many places (Statham & Scuzzarello, 2023).

Currently, the research results on gay tourism are relatively affluent because the discussion on this topic reached a climax at the end of the 20th century (Hartal, 2019, 2022; Hartal & Sasson-Levy, 2021). The previous research on the forms and destinations of gay tourism has deciphered the travel behavior and travel preferences of this group (Corbisiero & Monaco, 2022; Ram et al., 2019). After entering the 21st century, psychological issues in gay tourism (Yasami et al., 2023), including cultural identity (Monterrubio, 2019; Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021), tourism values (Hartal, 2019), tourism experience, and destination decision-making, have become the main content (Liu et al., 2023; Monaco, 2022). These studies are based on the fact that many countries have recognized the cultural and economic value that gay tourism can create (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021).

As a result, more and more developed countries and regions often attract gays from all over the world by holding themed cultural activities such as gay pride festivals and gay friendship alliances (Tobin & Moon, 2019). Gay tourism in the digital age has entered a new stage of development (Abidin, 2019). Although gay tourism continues to flourish in this era, social media has brought great significance to the equal rights of gay tourism (Yang, 2019). More and more people are beginning to understand and grasp the social life of gays and the value they may create for the tourism industry (Coetzee et al., 2019).

As an essential tool for tourism research, social media has achieved unexpected results in the interpretation of tourism behavior, tourism psychology, and tourism destinations (Yang, 2019). As a data blueprint for qualitative research, Twitter has considerable influence in social media worldwide (Luo et al., 2022). Therefore, the study of tourism introduction through tweet analysis cannot be underestimated in the digital age (Luo et al., 2022). Unfortunately, the use of social media to interpret research on LGBT tourism is surprisingly rare. Therefore, this article aims to explore the connotation of gay tourism from the perspective of social media, to expound tourism for gender equality from a broader perspective and explore the tourism situation of sexual minorities in more depth.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Social Media for Tourism**

Cultivation theory believes that the impact of social media in the era of big data on tourist behavior is beyond everyone's imagination (Aho & Duffield, 2020). In many cases, users make travel decisions based on information from social media (Oliveira et al., 2020). Social media is often used to help users analyze travel conditions, calculate travel costs and specify travel plans (Lim et al., 2019). The current results on social media for tourism are vibrant, and related models and quantitative research on the positive effect of social media on tourist destination intention have been carried out in many contexts (Cheung et al., 2021). Furthermore, as much data support qualitative research, social media has become essential (Lim et al., 2019).

In recent years, the divergent and interactive nature of tourists' complaints on social media has brought new challenges to the tourism industry (Liu et al., 2021). Travel companies have increasingly high requirements to deal with value co-creation or avoid co-destruction (Liu et al., 2021). Social media content analysis and internally reported data to provide destination managers with valuable insights as social media information spreads quickly and widely (Femenia-Serra & Gretzel, 2020). Users of different age groups are adept at using social media for travel information sharing and communication in this era (Nilashi et al., 2021). Although the social media behavior of some tourists is mysterious, the recognition, internalization, and compliance in social media have gradually attracted the attention of the tourism market to social media (Vecchi & Brennan, 2022).

Additionally, tourism research has begun to focus on the psychology of social media acceptance and use, particularly regarding changes in tourism information (Zhou et al., 2020). These studies aim to address the issue of the credibility of travel and tourism information sources on social media platforms.

From the perspective of sustainable tourism, the use of social media by different generations in tourism destination marketing has also become one of the critical clues because social networking sites and online reviews are often effective in helping travelers make decisions in

emergencies (Miah et al., 2022). It is a process in which tourists use social media platforms to publish, comment, share, and pay attention to tourism information (Zhou et al., 2020).

Although research on social media for tourism has achieved specific results, in the era of digital tourism, diverse forms of tourism have brought new responsibilities to social media for tourism (Luo et al., 2022). Social media for tourism must take into account the contribution to sustainable development (de las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020). The social media for tourism emphasized in the study, discusses the tourism of sexual minorities from the perspective of SDG5, precisely the response of gay tourism in social media, and determines the relevant tourism guidance and inspiration through the interpretation of gay tourism in social media.

## **2.2 Tourism for Gender Equality (SDG5)**

Tourism for gender equality is generally understood as improving women's social status and work income through tourism and reducing gender discrimination at work (Hutchings et al., 2020; Zhang & Zhang, 2021). Nowadays, in the study of gender diversity, tourism for gender equality should be a broader topic, not only focusing on women, but also emphasizing the rights and development of sexual minorities in the tourism industry (Alarcón & Cole, 2019). Specifically, it is the recognition and respect gay as tourists to receive during the travel process, and the gay should gain the equality and support as practitioners in the tourism industry (Alarcón & Cole, 2019).

Discussing the inter-linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and tourism from a gender perspective is not new. The current tourism for gender equality focuses on the role of international tourism development in women's empowerment (Nassani et al., 2019). It is expected to reveal the situation that gays and their communities are supported in emerging tourism countries (Rinaldi & Salerno, 2020).

With the advent of the Industrial 4.0 era, most groups in the tourism industry have a new understanding of gender diversity and gender equality (Russen et al., 2021). How to locate gender in hotel and tourism management research has become an essential issue in tourism for gender equality (Rinaldi & Salerno, 2020). Despite the issues of gender inequality in tourism, positive answers to these issues are vague, especially when it comes to tourism involving sexual minorities, which seem to be more sensitive (Ro & Olson, 2020).

The majority of the workforce in the tourism sector is female, and there is also a sizable representation of sexual minorities (Nawaz et al., 2021). While these institutions offer enormous opportunities for empowerment and gender equality, many inequalities exist (Gopal et al., 2020). At present, tourism practitioners must master more gender knowledge and analyze the progress of tourism equality research.

The current gender equality model in the tourism industry has a positive explanation for the development of the tourism industry and gender equality issues (Zhang & Zhang, 2020). In addition, Tourism for gender equality has great potential to promote the tourism industry of emerging economies (Rinaldi & Salerno, 2020).

However, it is clear that the scope of tourism for gender equality is limited to comparing job opportunities and empowerment between the sexes, and sexual minorities and gay tourism are still secrets hidden in the closet.

## **2.3 Gay Tourism Industry**

Gay, as an essential consumer in the tourism industry, has created rich value and diverse cultures for many tourist destinations (Cao & Smith, 2023). Manchester and Amsterdam, as

gay-friendly European destinations, have grown thanks to gay events and festivals that create gay identities for these cities, attracting gay tourists from all over the world (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021). Cape Town has gradually become a popular destination for European gay tourists. Their contribution has made Cape Town tourism authorities aware of the attractiveness of overlapping tourism and leisure space development to Cape Town's emerging gay tourist attractions (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021).

Due to different tourism cultures, although gays occupy the primary market, the problems are becoming more and more prominent (Corbisiero & Monaco, 2022). The tourist destinations and vacation motivations of gay men living in the south of England also shows that gays have a vital role in tourism consumption (Fang, 2020). Some issues encountered while on vacation include sexual activity and sexual risk behavior in the holiday setting (Liu, 2022). Alternatively, the ambiguous solution for gays to encounter cultural conflicts in tourism has become the primary resistance to tourism development among gay groups (Lai et al., 2022).

Although there are many discussions about the background of gay tourism research, they come from different disciplines, and most study empirical social science and cultural conflict (Mannarini et al., 2020). How to successfully conceptualize the gay tourism industry and understand the issues is worth to discussing.

This study aims to fill this gap by using social media to understand the connotation of gay tourism and transfer it to the practice of specific tourism activities to clarify what gays need and what gay travelers need to do. Although not many works of literature discuss gay tourism, the content of its attention has been broken in recent years. Table 1 introduces the main results of gay tourism research in recent years.

**Table 1.** The Contributions of Gay Tourism Research.

<b>Hartal &amp; Sasson-Levy (2021).</b>	<b>Urban development has had a positive effect on the birth of gay tourism, and many big cities have gradually entered the era of pink tourism.</b>
Hartal (2022).	Gay tourism has a driving effect on urban development and represents a high degree of civilization and progress in the city.
Statham & Scuzzarello (2021).	Tourist attractions offer gay community obtained new social opportunities and more respect.
Hattingh and Spencer (2020).	Sexual behavior during tourism has a severe negative impact on gay tourism.
Monterrubbio (2019).	Gay tourism is an essential channel for cultivating identity and social identity, and it has brought about more diverse and attractive changes in tourist destinations.

**(Source:** by this Research).

Therefore, although the development of the gay tourism industry is still the tip of the iceberg in tourism research, its importance to cities, society, and sexual minorities to exceed most people's cognition. Nevertheless, the interpretation of gay tourism in the context of global tourism and from multiple perspectives is essential. However, gay tourism in social media seems to have not attracted everyone's attention (Ram et al., 2019). Maybe most users are learning about gay tourism through social media, and even gays themselves are using social media to pay attention to tourism. However, social media is used as research data to explain

gay Tourism (Cheung et al., 2021). This study may still be one of the few attempts which have particular significance for enriching and understanding gay tourism and can further enrich tourism for SDG5.

### 3. Research Method

To conceptualize gay tourism in social media, the research used "gay tourism, gay travel, gay traveling, gay tourist" as search terms on Twitter. N-capture in Nvivo12.0 helped the research obtain 2342 tweets. After reduplication processing, 2202 tweets were obtained, forming the database analyzed in this paper. NVivo 12 is a software that supports qualitative and mixed search methods. It is designed to help researchers organize, analyze, and find unstructured or qualitative data. This software is especially good at processing data in social media (Ram & Titarenko, 2022). Therefore, the research uses NVivo 12 to research and Perform topic coding analysis, which is based on a grounded theory approach, except that NVivo 12 can provide automatic coding.

Grounded theory is a systematic research approach that focuses on the generation of theory from collected data, instead of beginning a study with a preconceived theory. The goal of grounded theory is to formulate, test and refine a theory so that it fits with the data and provides an explanatory framework. Grounded theory is often used in studies where little prior theory exists.

In this study on gay tourism, the grounded theory approach was appropriate because of the dynamic and evolving nature of social media discourse. The use of social media and the way it reflects and shapes user's attitudes and behaviors, especially in niche areas like gay tourism, is a relatively under explored field. Therefore, a preconceived theory may not accurately capture the patterns and themes emerging from the data.

Coding in grounded theory consists of three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Open coding involves a line-by-line analysis of the data, with the aim of identifying as many concepts as possible. These concepts are then categorized based on their similarities and differences.

Axial coding is the process of relating codes (categories and concepts) to each other, via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking. This process helps to build more of a narrative that helps explain the larger story emerging from the data.

Finally, selective coding is the process of integrating and refining the categories. This is the phase where the "core" categories or main themes of the study are decided upon.

The research collected 2342 tweets using the terms "gay tourism, gay travel, gay traveling, gay tourist". Reduplication resulted in a final data set of 2202 tweets. These tweets were imported into NVivo 12, a software platform designed to support qualitative and mixed methods research. An initial review of the data set was performed to gain familiarity with the content. Each tweet was analyzed line by line to identify initial concepts or categories. These categories were created based on the ideas, themes, and patterns observed in the data. The initial categories were then linked together based on their relationships. The aim here was to develop a narrative that explains the connections between categories. Finally, the categories were refined, and the core categories or main themes of the study were identified. These core



categories represent the primary findings of the research. The grounded theory approach was chosen for its ability to deal with the complexity and evolving nature of social media discourse. It was also preferred for its flexibility and for allowing the themes to emerge organically from the data, providing a richer, more nuanced understanding of gay tourism as conceptualized on social media.

The data analysis was performed using the NVivo 12 software, which has robust features for handling large datasets, especially from social media. The software was used for the coding process, as well as for the subsequent analysis of the themes identified. It facilitated the identification and categorization of concepts (open coding), the establishment of relationships between these categories (axial coding), and the synthesis of these into overarching themes (selective coding). This software was also utilized to perform automatic coding, which sped up the analysis process, while still allowing for manual adjustments and refinements. This provided a balance between efficiency and accuracy in analyzing the dataset. Automatic coding also helped to minimize potential biases that might emerge during manual coding.

The decisions regarding the choice of grounded theory as a research method and the use of NVivo 12 for data analysis were informed by the nature of the data, the research objectives, and the need to generate an unbiased, data-driven understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The grounded theory approach, in conjunction with NVivo 12's capabilities, provided the best fit for the project's requirements and aims.

The research synthesizes automatic and manual coding results and summarizes the two-level coding. This purpose is to let the coding reach the saturation stage to develop the concept level of gay tourism further.

On this basis, the process continues to carry out word frequency analysis, hierarchy analysis, cluster analysis, comparative analysis, and sentiment analysis. These tools help further structure the dimensions of gay tourism in social media and have explored the connotation of gay tourism on a deeper level and to provide clues to the development of gay tourism.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Theme Coding Results

Research conducted data using procedural grounded theory coding, but the coding differs from traditional ones. The traditional grounded theory coding method divides the process into open, axial, and selective coding (Xu et al., 2022). Because the data sample is large, the number of open coding extracted is complex, and the research only describes the axial and selective coding in Table 2. Hence, it is beneficial to clarify the coding process and results. Two selection codes appear in Table 2: Gay tourism perspective and Gay travel experience. This result means that there are two dimensions to gay tourism.

**Table 2.** The Theme Coding Results of Gay Tourism.

	<b>Name of theme</b>	<b>Files</b>	<b>References</b>
Selective coding	Gay tourism perspective	4	462
	gay tourism bar	3	23
	gay tourism event	2	31
Axial coding	gay sex tourism	2	4
	gay tourism agenda	1	7
	gay tourism paradise	3	3

	Name of theme	Files	References
	gay tourism assistant	1	211
	gay tourism gene	3	96
	gay tourism relationship	4	59
	gay tourism rights	2	6
	gay tourism website	1	1
	gay tourism allies	2	2
	gay tourism destination	1	1
	gay tourism identities	1	1
	gay tourism towns	1	17
Selective coding	Gay travel experience	2	110
	Air travel for gay	1	15
	Digital travel for gay	1	1
Axial coding	Gay tourism books	1	27
	Travel area for gay	1	11
	Travel bans for gay	1	6
	Travel plans for gay	2	50

(Source: by this Research).

The gay tourism perspective is to emphasize the connotation of gay tourism. From the results of analyzing social media data, users think that the awareness of Gay tourism is mainly concentrated in the gay tourism assistant with 211 references, which means that there are many problems in gay tourism. Relevant help is needed to solve the problems in travelling. In addition, the gay tourism gene (96) has also attracted the attention of social media users. Gay gene discussions are always biased. Therefore, the gay tourism gene is more prominent in social media discussions, reflecting the gay tourism gene in social prominence. Gay tourism relationship (59) is still widely discussed because a gay relationship is often a sensitive issue in the travel process, and different relationship travelers may have different understandings. Hence, the evidence on social media further proves the validity of gay tourism relationship importance. In addition, gay tourism bars and gay tourism events further reflect bars and events that reflect gay tourism from a gay perspective. Because many gay bars indeed easily attract people's attention in this era, it seems that gay bars have become a new kind of tourist place.

On the other hand, events such as affairs, safety, and making friends during this process are common facts in gay tourism. In addition to gay bars, gay tourism towns (17) have become essential social media destinations. At the same time, gay sex tourism, gay tourism agenda, and gay tourism paradise are some less apparent contents of the gay tourism perspective, but there is a great value. Finally, gay tourism rights, gay tourism allies, and gay tourism identities further remind tourists of tourism rights and identities from the perspective of gays and social media users. It means that the Gay tourism perspective is a vision that focuses on the equal development of gay tourism and interprets the issues of assistance and equality faced by gay tourism from different perspectives.

As for the gay travel experience, it deeply interprets social media users' perceptions of the gay travel experience. Plans and books are crucial to the gay tourism experience, which seems to determine the outcome of gay tourism. The help needed in gay tourism mentioned in the Gay tourism perspective, indicates that gay tourism may face many troubles. Social media data encourages stakeholders to address them as well.

In gay travel experience, airplane travel, travel ban, and digital travel have become the topics of gay travel experience sharing, which is also one of the main problems in the current development of gay tourism.



The analysis of the tweets, with both selective and axial coding, yielded two major themes: Gay Tourism Perspective and Gay Travel Experience. Each theme was supported by several sub-themes or categories, which were generated through the axial coding process.

#### Theme 1: Gay Tourism Perspective

This theme emerged most prominently with 462 references across 4 different files. The axial coding process further divided this theme into multiple sub-themes:

**Gay Tourism Bar:** This sub-theme, with 23 references in 3 files, involved discussions around bars that were either gay-friendly or specifically catered to gay tourists.

**Gay Tourism Event:** With 31 references in 2 files, this category dealt with events—such as pride parades or gay film festivals—that attracted gay tourists.

**Gay Sex Tourism:** This was a less common sub-theme, with just 4 references in 2 files, often discussing ethical issues.

**Gay Tourism Assistant:** This sub-theme had a high number of references (211) in a single file, indicating discussions around services or guides specifically assisting gay tourists.

**Gay Tourism Gene:** With 96 references in 3 files, it likely involves discussions about intrinsic motivations or tendencies toward travel in the gay community.

While a few other categories emerged, they had relatively fewer references, indicating they are less dominant in the data set.

#### Theme 2: Gay Travel Experience

With 110 references in 2 files, this theme revolved around the travel experiences of gay individuals. The sub-themes or categories under this theme were:

**Air Travel for Gay:** With 15 references in 1 file, this category likely includes tweets discussing the experiences of gay individuals while flying, which could involve issues with airlines, airports, or other passengers.

**Gay Tourism Books:** There were 27 references in a single file. This could mean discussions around travel books written specifically for gay tourists, offering travel advice and recommendations.

**Travel Plans for Gay:** With 50 references in 2 files, this category suggests extensive discussions around planning travel for gay individuals, including choosing destinations, booking accommodations, and designing itineraries.

Again, other categories emerged but had less prominence based on the number of references.

In conclusion, the tweets under study revealed a vibrant discourse around gay tourism and gay travel experiences, with various sub-topics. It is important to note that these are general interpretations of categories based on the reference and file counts. The actual research paper would delve into the specifics of each category and sub-theme, with example tweets and more detailed analysis.

To sum up, gay tourism consists of two dimensions: gay tourism perspective and gay tourism experience, which means that gays will encounter related problems during travel and need much support, among which identity, relationship, and tourist destination. Become a critical part of mastering travel from a gay perspective. At the same time, gay tourism in social media

named relevant guidelines, including the importance of books, prohibitions, plans, and routes in experience. These conclusions remind the whole society to continue to pay attention to gay tourism and maintain recognition, respect, and help for this group in tourism.

Table 3 defines the coding. These interpretations are based on the specific content of the tweets.

**Table 3.** The Definition of the Coding

Theme / Sub-theme	Definition
Gay Tourism Bar	Discussions or mentions of bars that specifically cater to or are welcoming of gay tourists.
Gay Tourism Event	Tweets about events that attract or are aimed at gay tourists, like Pride parades, LGBTQ film festivals, etc.
Gay Sex Tourism	Discussions of travel specifically for gay sexual encounters, which can have a range of ethical implications.
Gay Tourism Agenda	Tweets discussing the politics or strategic planning associated with promoting destinations as gay-friendly or targeting gay tourists.
Gay Tourism Paradise	Representation or discussion of certain destinations as idyllic or particularly welcoming for gay tourists.
Gay Tourism Assistant	Tweets discussing services or guides that specifically help or cater to gay tourists.
Gay Tourism Gene	Discussions about intrinsic motivations or tendencies for travel within the gay community. It might involve the sociological or psychological factors influencing travel habits among gay individuals.
Gay Tourism Relationship	Tweets discussing the role of travel in forming or maintaining relationships within the gay community. This could cover aspects such as romantic getaways for gay couples or the shared community experience of group travel.
Gay Tourism Rights	Discussions on the rights of gay tourists, including experiences of discrimination, advocacy for more inclusive travel policies, etc.
Gay Tourism Website, Allies, Destination, Identities, Towns	Discussions around specific resources, allies in the travel industry, preferred or popular destinations, identity expression in different travel contexts, and towns known for being particularly welcoming to gay tourists.
Air Travel for Gay, Gay Tourism Books, Travel Area for Gay, Travel Bans for Gay, Travel Plans for Gay	Tweets discussing specific aspects of travel experiences for gay individuals - air travel experiences, resources like books, specific areas popular with gay tourists, travel bans impacting the gay community, and discussions or advice around travel planning.

(Source: by this Research).

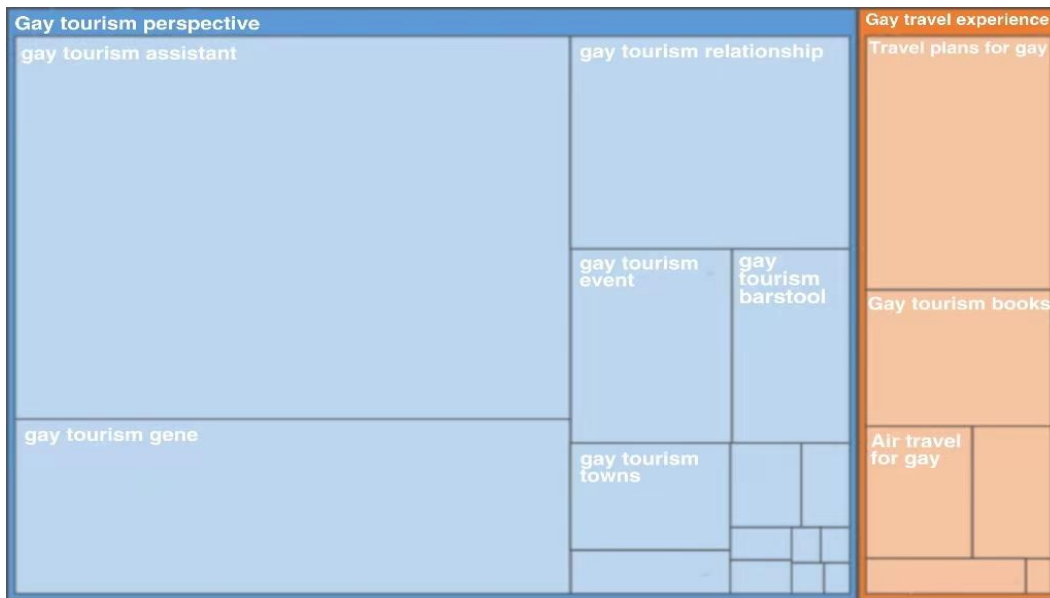
## 4.2 Word Frequency Query Results

Word frequency analysis is to count and analyze the frequency of occurrence of essential words in the text, and it is a necessary means of text mining. It is a traditional and representative content analysis method in bibliometrics. The basic principle is to determine hot spots and their changing trends through the changes in the frequency of words (Luo et al., 2022).



At the same time, gay tourism events, bar stools, and towns exist in gay vision, which may provide clues for the development of gay tourism in the future. Continue to pay attention to related events of gay tourism, including marketing time, safety events, and hot events. Relevant tourism industries should also pay attention to creating distinctive gay bars and gay towns.

Although the Gay tourism experience only accounts for one-third of the plate in Figure 2, travel plans, travel books, and plane travel are mainly concerned with these experiences, reflecting the current lack of these contents, which encourages related industries. There are more tolerance and arrangements for the tour guide and traffic guide.



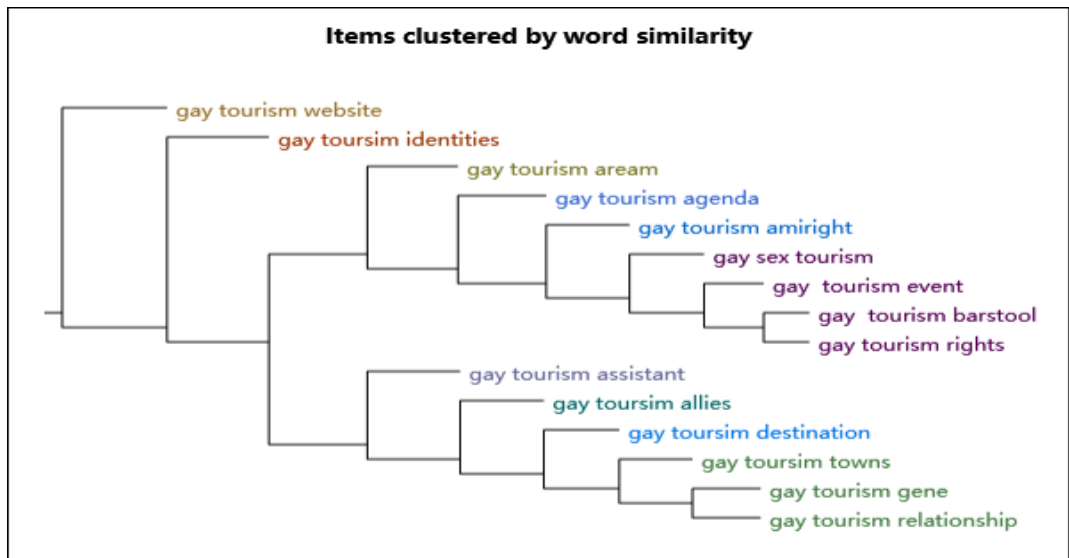
**Figure 2.** The Hierarchical Analysis Plot of Gay Tourism.  
(Source: by this Research).

#### 4.4. Cluster Analysis Results

The purpose of cluster analysis is to calculate the correlation between topics through the Pearson correlation coefficient, find related clusters, and establish a clustering framework to determine the commonality between different topics and dimensions (Pu & Jiang, 2021). Figure 3 depicts the clustering framework for the gay tourism perspective, where the two most significant clusters are formed between gay tourism identity and gay tourism website. Assistants, allies, destinations, and gay tourism towns form a cluster, and the commonality between them is the same as the cluster formed by gay tourism area, agenda, and aright. There is a typical value between these degrees: unity. Whether it is alliances, assistance, or agency structures, they all demonstrate the core development force in gay tourism, and this is a process that requires everyone's joint efforts to promote. Finally, the clusters between genes and relationships are connected with towns, and towns and destinations build a larger cluster, which shows that the creation of gay tourism destinations is conducive to the formal identification of gays because genes and relationships reflect the deeper content that comes out is the identification with gay.

Similarly, the relationship between the clusters formed by rights and bar stool and event occurrence indicates that gay tourism events are mostly related to bars and rights struggles.

Therefore, all aspects of society should formalize the rights, equality, and identity of gay tourism and try to avoid vicious incidents. Therefore, these incidents were related to gay sex tourism. Then the above clusters were themes such as agency and alliance, returning to the fundamental identity, especially the identity on the website.



**Figure 3.** The Cluster Analysis Framework of Gay Tourism Perspective.

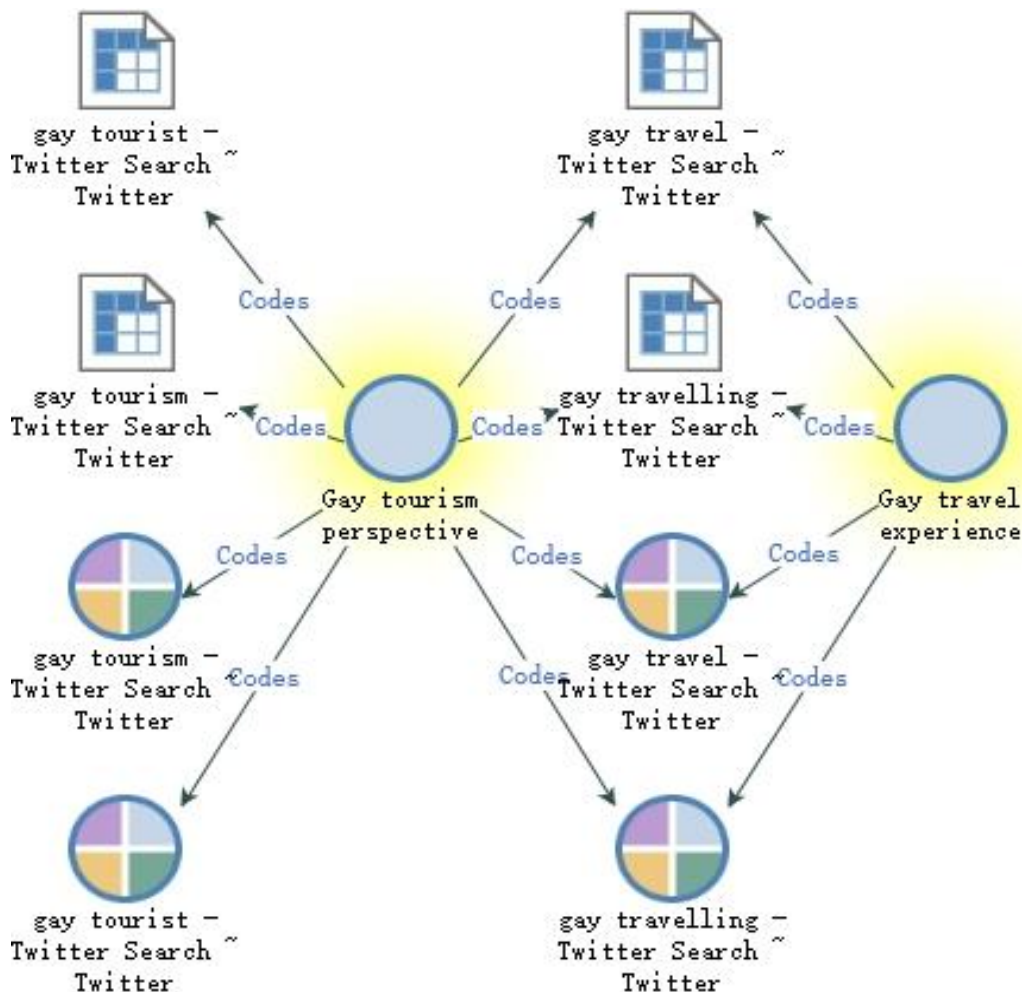
(Source: by this Research).

This study performs a cluster analysis on the topics of gay tourism experience, introducing the clustering between tourist areas and travel books, indicating that most books may be a guide to gay tourism, introducing different tourist areas. The clusters formed by them form a relationship with two important themes of modern tourism, air travel, and digital travel, emphasizing the importance of transportation. Going one step further, the clustering of these four themes forms clusters with travel bans and plans. The gay tourism experience emphasizes the importance of guidance and advice.

#### 4.5 Comparative Analysis Result

The purpose of comparative analysis is to observe the sources of coding and compare the commonalities and differences of these coding sources, to discover the commonalities and differences between the coding of gay tourism (Pu & Jiang, 2021). From the perspective of the two topics, as shown in figure 5, two data sources, gay tourists, and gay tourism, are provided for the related coding of the gay tourism perspective. Gay travel and gay traveling have the same effect. However, the source of the gay travel experience is only gay travel and gay traveling. Therefore, the two data documents of gay travel and gay traveling are more comprehensive, although there are similar conclusions after being transformed into a case.

The comparative analysis results show that the familiar sources of gay tourism perspective and gay travel experience are gay travel and gay traveling. The two data sources of gay tourists and gay tourism expand the connotation of the gay tourism perspective. Therefore, the foundation of coding analysis is relatively solid, and the correlation between data sources is also relatively prominent.



**Figure 5.** Comparative Analysis Results.  
(Source: by this Research).

#### 4.6 Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis aims to extract subjective text with vibrant color using natural language processing and text mining technology (Sánchez-Garcés et al., 2021). Text sentiment analysis research covers many fields, including natural language processing, text mining, information retrieval, information extraction, machine learning, and ontology. It has attracted the attention of many scholars and research institutions, and it is one of the hot issues in text mining and text mining (Sánchez-Garcés et al., 2021).

NVivo 12's sentiment analysis feature summarizes users' emotional attitudes towards gay tourism perspective and gay travel experience. In Table 4, it is evident that there are 202 Moderately positive emotional nodes in the Gay tourism perspective, indicating that users support gay tourism more, reflects that social media considers tourism issues from a gay perspective. However, the number of positive emotional nodes in gay travel experience is relatively small and relatively speaking, there are slightly more negative emotions. Social media users have a clear tendency to perceive unsatisfactory or specific problems in the gay travel



experience. There are not many negative emotions in the Gay tourism perspective, although it also occupies a certain amount. After all, from the results of the above comparative analysis, this theme is supported by four databases, so the number of nodes has an obvious advantage.

**Table 4.** sentiment Analysis Results.

	<b>Very negative</b>	<b>Moderately negative</b>	<b>Moderately positive</b>	<b>Very positive</b>
Gay tourism perspective	23	20	202	7
Gay travel experience	13	10	9	4

(Source: by this Research)

Table 5 provides relevant tweet data to prove the reliability of sentiment analysis and assists the research in further interpreting the content of sentiment analysis.

**Table 5.** Tweets Exemplification for Sentiment Analysis

<b>Sentiment Category</b>	<b>Example - Gay Tourism Perspective (GTP)</b>	<b>Example - Gay Travel Experience (GTE)</b>
Very Negative	Context: A local Pride parade was cancelled by the local government. Tweet: "So disappointed with the local government's non-supportive stance towards the gay community. We need change!"	Context: A passenger on a flight experienced direct homophobia. Tweet: "Travel industry, step up! The lack of sensitivity to LGBTQ+ issues on my recent flight was appalling."
Moderately Negative	Context: A tourist visiting different cities notices a lack of inclusion. Tweet: "A bit disheartened by the lack of LGBTQ+ inclusive events at popular tourist destinations."	Context: A traveler struggles to find suitable accommodation. Tweet: "Finding gay-friendly accommodations isn't always easy. We need more resources."
Moderately Positive	Context: A city launches a campaign to attract LGBTQ+ tourists. Tweet: "Great to see some cities taking initiative to be more LGBTQ+ friendly. Still, more needs to be done."	Context: A user tries a new travel app designed for LGBTQ+ individuals. Tweet: "Had an OK experience with the new gay-friendly travel app. It's a start, but improvements are needed."
Very Positive	Context: A city has successfully hosted an LGBTQ+ festival. Tweet: "So proud of my city's commitment to becoming a leading gay-friendly tourist destination!"	Context: A gay tourist returns from a trip to an LGBTQ+ focused resort. Tweet: "Best vacation ever at an LGBTQ+ focused resort. Truly felt seen and valued. Can't wait to go back!"

(GTP: Gay Tourism Perspective; GTE: Gay Travel Experience).

(Source: by this Research).

To sum up, the research confirms that gay tourism in social media supports gay groups through tourism and helps them form tourism alliances and identities. To some extent, gay tourism is a commercial value concept. The current imperfect tourism environment

gives this market more opportunities. Gay tourism has received mixed reviews. Interpretations of gay tourism on social media include clues to pornography, sex, bars, transportation, and tourist destinations, which can easily lead to vicious incidents and entertainment during travel.

Conceptualizing gay tourism from the perspective of social media, particularly Twitter, and considering the sentiment analysis and thematic coding we performed, we can outline several key insights:

**Public sentiment to gay tourism:** The public sentiment towards gay tourism ranges from very negative to very positive. Some tweets show dissatisfaction or disappointment regarding the lack of inclusive and representation in the tourism sector. Conversely, others express positive experiences and praise inclusive efforts made in specific destinations or by travel service providers.

**Gay tourism perspectives and experiences:** Differentiating between 'Gay Tourism Perspective' and 'Gay Travel Experience' uncovers more nuanced understandings. Perspectives often involve a broader view on how the tourism industry is responding to the needs of gay tourists and how destinations market to this demographic. Experiences, on the other hand, are often individual accounts of how gay tourists interact with different elements of the tourism industry, such as air travel, accommodations, and events.

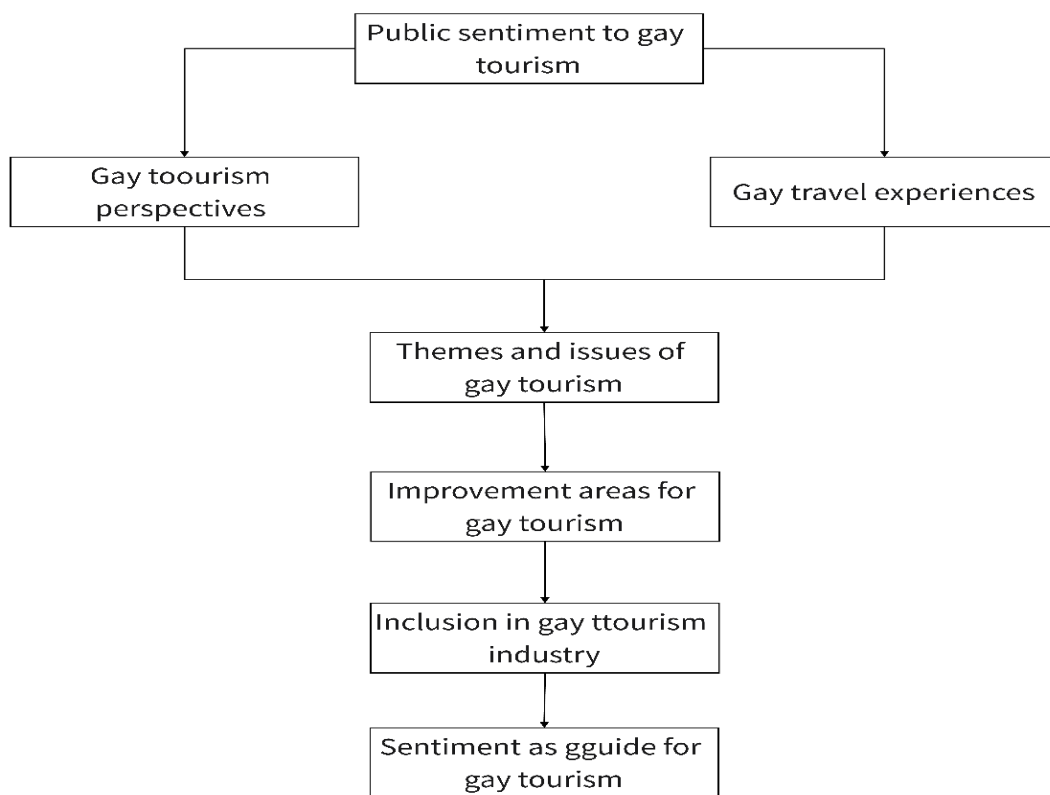
**Themes and issues of gay tourism:** The thematic coding reveals a variety of themes that are significant in the discourse around gay tourism. From discussions about specific gay-friendly bars, events, and destinations, to broader topics such as travel planning, tourism rights, and even unique themes like 'gay tourism gene' and 'gay tourism relationships', we see a wide array of topics that need to be addressed by the tourism industry.

**Improvement areas for gay tourism:** While there are positive sentiments and experiences shared, the data also highlight areas for improvement. There are calls for increased representation, better resources, and more sensitivity towards LGBTQ+ issues in the travel industry. The tourism sector can use this data to better understand the needs and experiences of gay tourists and improve their offerings accordingly.

**Inclusion in gay tourism Industry:** The data underline the importance of inclusion in the tourism industry. Tweets that carry a positive sentiment often praise instances of inclusive, suggesting that more efforts towards inclusion can lead to better experiences for gay tourists.

**Sentiment as a guide for gay tourism:** The different levels of sentiment can serve as a guide to understanding the intensity of feelings towards various aspects of gay tourism. For example, very negative sentiments may point to pressing issues that need immediate attention, while very positive sentiments could highlight successful practices that can be replicated or built upon.

It's essential to bear in mind that these insights are drawn from social media data, which may not wholly represent the diverse experiences and perspectives of gay tourists globally. However, they do provide valuable snapshots and can serve as starting points for more in-depth research into the subject. Figure 6 construct the theoretical framework of the gay tourism.



**Figure 6.** The Theoretical Framework of Gay Tourism.  
(Source: by this Research).

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The study conducted a mixed method to finish the data analysis based on a large amount of tweet information about gay tourism, used grounded theory to encode the tweet information, and obtained two levels of topic coding: gay tourism perspective and gay travel experience. On this basis, the paper implemented the word frequency, hierarchy, cluster, comparative, and sentiment analysis. Finally, the results conceptualize gay tourism, and the connotation and latitude of gay tourism in social media were determined. The ultimate goal of social media for gay tourism is to develop recognition and respect for sexual minority tourist groups and, simultaneously, face up to the problems they encounter and the hope they bring during travel.

As an essential tool for tourism research, social media has produced many achievements in previous studies, expounding the cognition of tourism destinations, tourism forms, and tourism development trends in social media (de las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020). Social media is often a variable in the research of tourism behavior and has a positive effect on shaping tourism behavior (Liu et al., 2021). However, there is currently little research on gay tourism behavior through social media or their problems during travel. Therefore, this paper uses the information in social media to construct the concept and dimensions of gay tourism and deepens the contribution of social media to tourism objects and tourism issues.

Twitter has long been an essential tool for social media for tourism (Leelawat et al., 2022). In the era of big data, there are many achievements in solving tourism problems by mining Twitter

data (Leelawat et al., 2022; Park et al., 2016). Although gays are vital users of Twitter, the content about gays on Twitter is abundant (Hardy & Miller, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to dig out the relevant knowledge of gay tourism through tweet analysis, which is one of the main contents of this paper. Gay tourism is not an unfamiliar topic (Ong et al., 2022). The promotion of gender equality through gay tourism research and the body identity of minority groups was kicked off many years ago (Rinaldi & Salerno, 2020). The results on tourism behavior, psychology, and destinations are remarkable. Gay tourism in the digital age should have new interpretation methods and latitudes. As a good entry point, social media has explained the connotation of gay tourism in depth in this study.

The results illustrate social media users' perceptions of gay tourism and discover the shortcomings of the gay tourism market. Although the gay tourism economy can contribute to the development of the market economy, many tourism organizations or units do not provide any information on the gay tourism market. Although there have been a handful of gay travel tailor-made companies and programs that have surfaced recently, these are not enough to satisfy the gay travel market (Corbisiero & Monaco, 2022). The findings highlight the importance of assistants in the travel process, especially support in planning, destinations, emergencies, and travel relations, which may be more likely to attract gay consumption.

Furthermore, to promote the development of the gay tourism market is to further face up to the equality and opportunities of sexual minorities, especially to give sufficient identity and emotional care (Hartal, 2019). The sentiment analysis results further inspired gays to preview travel routes to ensure smooth travel. At the same time, it also emphasized that various departments in social life should give enough recognition to gay tourism and promote social development from a psychological level: gender equality and progress.

Finally, the research encourages all stakeholders to be active in creating a peaceful and healthy gay tourism environment. Gay tourism is prone to incidents, sex, bars, infectious diseases, and drugs despite becoming eye-catching in many tourist destinations. It is a crucial landscape but also a fuse that quickly leads to contradictions and conflicts. Therefore, it is imminent to regulate the gay tourism market reasonably and legally. Providing corresponding policy support and legal norms is essential to promote the sustainable development and virtuous circle development of gay tourism.

Although the research has defined and conceptualized gay tourism, it cannot be fully explained only from the evidence in tweet data analysis because social media applications in the digital age are too rich. There are too many applications that illustrate gay tourism, especially the tourism information in some gay social software is more helpful in deepening the research on gay tourism. Secondly, the research uses the data mined from Twitter, which is only based on a few approximate keywords. The conclusions may be more affluent if the search scope can be expanded.

Therefore, future research can pay more attention to the information on gay tourism in multiple social media, determine the dimensions of gay tourism through classification, comparison, and analysis, and construct relevant knowledge and content. From the quantitative research perspective, if social media is used as a variable to explain gay tourism behavior, it will have many benefits for enriching the pink economy or gay tourism economy.

The study uses qualitative tools to conduct coding analysis from tweets to construct the concept and dimensions of gay tourism. Through the in-depth understanding of the gay tourism perspective and gay travel experience, the vital information in the process of gay

tourism is determined, thus emphasizing the importance of gay identity in the process of tourism and also emphasizing the importance of assistants, support, and guidance on gay tourism positive effects. Then, the results of word frequency analysis and hierarchical analysis further prove the scientific and completeness of the coding results. The content expressed by sentiment analysis enriches the conclusions, and social media users' attitudes and emotional values towards gay tourism are vividly displayed. Finally, these results provide recommendations for promoting tourism market development and respect for sexual minorities tourism, especially the importance of assistants and support, a more comprehensive and diverse understanding of gay tourism, and contributing to tourism economic development, gender equality and tourism equality.

### **Authors Contribution**

Conceptualization: S. J;

Data collection: Songyu Jiang, X.K;

Data analysis: Songyu Jiang, X.K;

Writing & editing: Songyu Jiang, X.K;

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### **Authors**



Dr. Songyu Jiang, advisor of the international programs in Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin. He is interested in sustainable education, sustainable tourism, and AI in sustainable development, and has over 40 academic publications. Email: [jiang.song@rmutr.ac.th](mailto:jiang.song@rmutr.ac.th)



Dr. Xiaojun Ke, Associate professor at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology. He is interested in private higher education research, organizational behavior, transnational enterprises management, and has over 20 academic publications, Email: [drxjke@gzist.edu.cn](mailto:drxjke@gzist.edu.cn)

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