

STUDY OF INFLUENTIAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT LGBTQ'S
TRAVEL DESTINATION CHOICE DECISION

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STUDY OF INFLUENTIAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT LGBTQ'S
TRAVEL DESTINATION CHOICE DECISION

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Study of Influential Factors That Affect LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice
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ABSTRACT

LGBTQ tourism is a very promising market with annual worldwide economic impact at more than US\$140 billion. The global LGBTQ tourism market is expected to reach US\$568.5 billion by 2030. The LGBTQ tourism market is important both economically and socially. LGBTQ travelers are often high-spending and frequent travelers, and their tourism dollars can have a significant impact on local economies. With the introduction of the 'pink dollar,' organizations hope to tap into members of the LGBTQ community who are willing to spend big. The 'pink dollar' refers to money spent by members of the LGBTQ community in the United States. It has boosted the US economy by billions of dollars. Additionally, by creating welcoming and inclusive travel experiences for LGBTQ individuals, the tourism industry can help promote greater acceptance and understanding of LGBTQ people around the world. LGBTQ travelers have unique needs and preferences when it comes to travel, and the tourism industry has responded with a range of products and services designed to meet these needs. These may include LGBTQ friendly accommodation, events, and tours, as well as marketing and outreach efforts that specifically target the LGBTQ community.

The purpose of this research is to study the factors influencing LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision. These factors include nine independent variables: Recommendations (RE), Popularity (PO), Destination Information (DI), Special Offers (SO), Nearness (NN), Amenities/Facilities (AF), Safety and Security (SS), Destination Features (DF), Strategic Fit (SF) and one dependent variable: Travel Behavior (TB). Over 400 samples were collected using an electronic questionnaire

through social media. We used Structural Equation Models (SEM) for data analysis. The result shows that since the RMSEA, which is an absolute fit index that assesses how far our hypothesized model is from a perfect model, for this model is .04 (<.05) which strongly indicates a “close fit” and the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) value is .904 (>.90), the model seems to fit well according to the descriptive measures of fit. More importantly, Recommendations (RE) and Safety & Security (SS) are significantly defined as significant influential factors that affect LGBTQ’s travel destination choice decision due to their p-values are equal and less than .05. That means that many LGBTQ choose their travel destination if it’s strongly recommended by friends & family, online & social media, and customer positive review & sharing tips. Moreover, LGBTQ prefer the destinations that offer personal safety and safe accommodation and destinations that they won’t be taken advantage of financially i.e. safe and sound destinations without being scammed.

Keywords: LGBTQ tourism, SEM, Travel Destination, Choice, Decision

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

LGBTQ tourism is a very promising market with annual worldwide economic impact of more than US\$140 billion. The global LGBTQ tourism market is expected to reach US\$568.5 billion by 2030. The LGBTQ tourism market is important both economically and socially. LGBTQ travelers are often high-spending and frequent travelers, and their tourism dollars can have a significant impact on local economies. With the introduction of the 'pink dollar,' organizations hope to tap into members of the LGBTQ community who are willing to spend big or more than their straight counterparts. The 'pink dollar' refers to money spent by members of the LGBTQ community in the United States and around the world. It has boosted the US economy by billions of dollars. Additionally, by creating welcoming and inclusive travel experiences for LGBTQ individuals, the tourism industry can help promote greater acceptance and understanding of LGBTQ people around the world. LGBTQ travelers have unique needs and preferences when it comes to travel, and the tourism industry has responded with a range of products and services designed to meet these needs. These may include LGBTQ friendly accommodation, events, and tours, as well as marketing and outreach efforts that specifically target the LGBTQ community with authentic marketing campaigns designed to appeal to them.

LGBTQ tourism has had a substantial economic impact and measurable effect on the worldwide travel sector. Destinations that actively welcome LGBTQ visitors can profit from greater income, job growth, and improved local infrastructure. Tailored advertising campaigns, collaboration with LGBTQ influencers, and highlighting LGBT-related events and activities are all common components of effective marketing strategies. The rise of social media has impacted how LGBTQ people plan their vacations. Instagram, Twitter, and LGBTQ-specific travel applications all offer real-time information, peer rankings, and visual representations of LGBTQ-friendly destinations that appeal to this sought after demographic. This

digital interaction has given LGBTQ tourists the ability to make more educated decisions and connect with other travelers.

LGBTQ tourism represents a dynamic and evolving sector within the broader travel industry. Recognizing LGBTQ visitors' motivations, interests, as well as worries is critical for both locations and the travel industry as a whole (Smith G., 2017). As cultural perceptions change, it is critical for destinations to foster inclusive cultures that celebrate diversity while also ensuring the safety and well-being of all passengers, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

1.2 Statement of Problem

In recent years, there has been an increasing awareness of the importance of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) tourism as an important aspect of the lucrative and expanding worldwide travel business. This growing phenomenon has motivated experts to investigate the specific factors that influence LGBTQ people's vacation destination preferences. Understanding the underlying motivations behind these decisions is critical for the travel and hospitality industries, as it allows for the development of focused marketing tactics and the construction of inclusive and welcoming environments for LGBTQ visitors.

While previous research has looked into specific areas of LGBTQ tourism, there is still an absence in our understanding of the full collection of relevant factors that influence LGBTQ travelers' decisions when choosing travel destinations. Some studies have looked at safety concerns and levels of acceptability (Booking.com). However, an in-depth investigation of factors such as legislative frameworks, cultural attitudes, social media effects, and community suggestions, as well as their interplay when shaping an LGBTQ individuals' destination preferences, remains relatively under explored.

Furthermore, due to varying levels of legal recognition, cultural norms, and social views toward LGBTQ groups, the dynamics of LGBTQ tourism may differ dramatically between geographical regions around the world. As a result, a more complex and geographically focused investigation, especially in Thailand is required

to understand how these factors interact and influence LGBTQ travelers' destination selections. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by undertaking an in-depth assessment of the wide range of factors that impact LGBTQ individual's travel destination preferences.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are demonstrated as follows:

1. To study the effect of Recommendations on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.
2. To study the effect of Popularity on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.
3. To study the effect of Destination Information on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.
4. To study the effect of Special Offers on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.
5. To study the effect of Nearness on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.
6. To study the effect of Amenities/Facilities on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.
7. To study the effect of Safety and Security on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.
8. To study the effect of Destination Features on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.
9. To study the effect of Strategic fit on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The research study surveys the Influential Factors That Affect LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision. The questionnaire is used as tool for a survey in this research.

The scope of the research study as follow:

1. The research is focused on: Recommendations, Popularity, Destination Information, Special Offers, Nearness, Amenities/Facilities, Safety & Security, Destination Features, Strategic Fit that effect and influence on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.
2. The research targeted peoples who live in Bangkok and only the people who consider themselves as part of the LGBTQ community.
3. The research study is conducted with survey research using questionnaires with a sample size of over 400 respondents. Questionnaires are distributed within the area of Bangkok, Thailand only.
4. The research study was conducted from the period of February 2023 – April 2023.

1.5 Limitations of Research Study

The output of this research study can be applicable only for people in and around the area of Bangkok, Thailand. The findings of this research study cannot be confidently transferred to other choice factors, age groups, alternative locations for data collection, and other research procedures. This research study's users should be aware of its inherent limitations.

1.6 Contribution of the Study

The findings of this current research can be contributed to the individuals, and the related organizations in terms of business managerial implication and academic performance. For individuals, they can know and understand the Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision For business and managerial implications, the LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choices and government policy makers can be prepared to align themselves with the customers and able to provide the suitable management decisions to attract more of this important demographic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the relevant theories, related literature, and previous research, overall conceptual thinking and hypotheses related to the analysis of LGBTQ's travel destination selection and influencing factors.

2.1 Related Theories and Articles

2.1.1 Concept Theories of Travel Destination Selection Recommendation Effect

The theories of travel destination selection recommendation effect include destination image theory, social influence theory, personalization theory, information cascades in travel decisions, social media and social proof.

According to destination image theory, tourists making opinions about vacation locations based on a variety of sources of information, including recommendations from others. Positive recommendations can help to improve a destination's image, influencing travelers' decisions to visit a specific location (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

Social influence theory posits that people are influenced by the opinions and behaviors of those around them. In the context of travel destination recommendations, individuals are more likely to choose a particular destination if they perceive it to be popular or recommended by others (Cialdini, 2008).

Personalization theory suggests that tailored recommendations based on individual preferences and characteristics can enhance the decision-making process. Travel recommendations that consider a traveler's interests, past behaviors, and demographic information can lead to more satisfying experiences that at once help them to both belong within their chosen community but also to be able to feel that an experience is quite tailored to their own specific wants and desires.

The information cascade theory applies to travel decisions as well, where individuals tend to follow the choices of others without necessarily evaluating the

information themselves. Travel destination recommendations can trigger such cascades, leading to the popularity of certain destinations because the consumers that followed after chose actions or destination choices because others who did the same things first. (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, & Welch, 1992).

Social media platforms play a significant role in travel recommendations, as in older marketing models that sent out marketing campaigns directly to consumers. Now campaigns are sent out, but may reach various consumers through shares, likes, and friends sending links, in other words to people outside of the direct line of the marketing campaign. This then attracts a greater audience to the information, especially from people who might have been outside of the original intentions of the campaign. Social proof, demonstrated by likes, shares, and reviews, can influence individuals to choose destinations that are popular on social media (Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker, & Bloching, 2013).

2.1.2 Concept Theories of Travel Destination Popularity Effect

The theories of the travel destination popularity effect include the network effect theory, social influence and the bandwagon effect, availability heuristic, cumulative advantage, along with word of mouth and social proof.

Network effects theory suggests that the value of a product or service increases as more people use it. Applied to travel destinations, this theory implies that the popularity of a destination can create a positive feedback loop, attracting more visitors due to the perceived value of consumers wanting to be where others are (Shapiro & Varian, 1999).

The bandwagon effect implies that people tend to follow the actions of others, assuming that if many people are choosing a particular destination, it must be a good choice. Social influence, through recommendations and social media, contributes to this effect (Kuran & Sunstein, 1999).

The availability heuristic suggests that people tend to judge the probability of an event based on how easily examples of that event come into their mind or is the

first and only thing that they can think of as a response. In the context of travel destinations, well-known and frequently mentioned places are more likely to be perceived as popular and available for immediate recall. (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973).

The cumulative advantage theory posits that once something gains a small advantage over others, that advantage tends to grow and snowball over time until it becomes a dominant factor. In the context of travel, popular destinations can gain more attention or more positive reviews then leading to even greater popularity and financial success (Merton, 1968).

Word of mouth recommendations and social proof play a significant role in the popularity of travel destinations. Positive recommendations from friends, family, or online reviews can lead to more people choosing those destinations.

2.1.3 Concept Theories of Travel Destination Information Effect

The concept theories of travel destination information effect include the information search theory, and the persuasion theory.

Information assessment search theory focuses on how individuals gather and process information to make decisions. In the context of travel destinations, this theory explains how travelers search for and assess information from various sources (such as websites, reviews, and recommendations) before making their travel decisions (Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1998).

Persuasion theory explores how communication influences attitudes and behaviors. In the context of travel destinations, targeted persuasive messages, such as marketing campaigns, advertisements, ratings and recommendations, can shape a traveler's perceptions of certain destinations and choices.

2.1.4 Concept Theories of Travel Destination Safety and Security Effect

The concept theories of travel destination safety and security effect include the risk perception theory, trust theory, destination image and perceived risk, cognitive appraisal theory and perception of control and safety theory.

Risk perception theory suggests that individuals evaluate potential risks and benefits when making decisions. In the context of travel destinations, travelers consider the safety and security aspects of a destination before making their travel choices.

Trust theory focuses on how trust in institutions, information sources, and other individuals affects decision-making. In terms of travel destinations, perceived safety and security can build trust and confidence in a particular place, influencing travelers' decisions to visit (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998).

Destination image theory suggests that a traveler's perceptions and mental images of a destination can influence their decisions. Perceived risk is a component of this theory, where concerns about safety and security can also negatively impact a destination's image and deter potential visitors from choosing it (Gartner, 1993).

Cognitive appraisal theory explores how individuals evaluate and respond to different situations. In the context of the LGBTQ market segment, travelers will assess the safety and security of a destination through their own cognitive appraisal, the perceived local resources to help them, which influences their decisions and behaviors.

The perception of control theory suggests that people feel safer when they perceive that they have control over their environment. Travelers are more likely to choose destinations where they feel they can exercise control and mitigate potential safety and security risks by themselves without outside help.

2.2 Previous Studies

2.2.1 Effect of Recommendation on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ Consumers

The travel behavior of LGBTQ individuals has been a subject of interest for researchers and practitioners in recent years given the fast-rising segments importance for travel professionals. Various recommendations, whether from friends, family, or online platforms, and social media can have a significant impact on the travel choices and behaviors of LGBTQ individuals. These recommendations can influence destination choices, travel activities, accommodations, and their ultimate overall travel experiences.

LGBTQ individuals often seek out destinations and experiences that are known to be LGBTQ-friendly, authentic, and inclusive. Recommendations from their LGBTQ peers and LGBTQ-specific travel resources can play a crucial role in shaping travel decisions. Positive recommendations can lead to a sense of safety and belonging, as LGBTQ travelers are more likely to choose destinations and accommodations that align with their identity and personal values.

Conversely, negative recommendations or reports of discrimination in certain destinations can deter LGBTQ individuals from visiting those places. Safety concerns, legal protections, and social acceptance are also important factors that can be influenced by recommendations (Chang & Lee, 2018). As a result, travel-related recommendations can significantly impact the travel behaviors and choices of many LGBTQ individuals.

2.2.2 Effect of Popularity on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's

The travel behavior of LGBTQ individuals is significantly influenced by the popularity of a destination. The level of acceptance, safety, and available amenities play pivotal roles in shaping the decision-making process. Popular destinations often offer a sense of security and acceptance due to well-established and well-known LGBTQ infrastructure. LGBTQ travelers tend to choose destinations where they can freely express their identities without fear of discrimination.

Popular LGBTQ-friendly destinations provide opportunities for LGBTQ individuals to connect with their community. These destinations often host events, pride parades, and LGBTQ-specific spaces that facilitate networking and socializing. Waitt and Markwell (2006) highlighted how LGBTQ travelers are drawn to these

spaces not only for leisure but also for building meaningful connections with like-minded individuals to build strong community bonds.

The popularity of certain destinations within the LGBTQ community can sometimes lead to commercialization. While commercialization brings economic benefits, it can also dilute the authenticity of LGBTQ experiences. Clift and Forrest (2019) discussed how some travelers perceive overtly commercialized destinations as less authentic and may seek out lesser-known destinations for a more genuine experience directly related to the LGBTQ experience.

The popularity of LGBTQ-friendly destinations can significantly contribute to their local economies. Popular destinations experience a boost in tourism revenue due to LGBTQ travelers seeking out LGBTQ-owned businesses, events, and accommodations. This economic impact often leads to increased efforts by these destinations to maintain and enhance their LGBTQ-friendly offerings so they can be marketed in this way.

The popularity of a destination within the LGBTQ community can also lead to increased visibility and representation of the community, which hopes for even more acceptance. As LGBTQ travelers frequent a destination, it encourages local businesses and communities to cater to their needs as it becomes a very profitable niche business. This, in turn, fosters a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ individuals which causes the destination to grow and be seen as a premiere LGBTQ destination.

In conclusion, the popularity and knowledge of a destination has a profound impact on the travel behavior of other LGBTQ individuals. From destination selection to the overall travel experience, LGBTQ travelers are influenced at a higher rate by the level of acceptance, safety, and authenticity to the community that a popular destination offers. Destination management should strike a balance between commercialization and authenticity for the community to provide a welcoming and meaningful experience for LGBTQ travelers that they will want to return to again and again.

2.2.3 Effect of Destination Information on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's

The availability and content of destination information have a significant impact on the travel behavior of LGBTQ individuals. LGBTQ travelers often seek out information regarding the safety and legal rights of LGBTQ individuals in their potential travel destinations. Information about anti-discrimination laws, LGBTQ rights, local customs social attitudes can heavily influence their decision-making process. This is extremely important as these travelers have to weigh any possibility for dangerous complications that might arise from misunderstandings between the destination and home countries of the travelers. Destinations that provide comprehensive and accurate information about LGBTQ legal rights and human rights protections are more likely to attract knowledgeable LGBTQ travelers.

LGBTQ travelers often rely on online communities and reviews to gather information about destination safety. Personal accounts and experiences shared by other LGBTQ travelers help shape perceptions and influence travel. Safety considerations also influence whether LGBTQ individuals travel alone or in groups. Group travel can provide a sense of safety and camaraderie, especially in destinations where LGBTQ safety may be a concern. Destinations that actively promote themselves as safe and LGBTQ-friendly benefit economically. When LGBTQ travelers feel safe and welcomed, they are more likely to spend on accommodations, dining, entertainment, and other activities.

This information plays a crucial role in helping LGBTQ travelers identify LGBTQ-friendly accommodations, restaurants, bars, and other establishments. LGBTQ travelers prefer destinations that openly advertise and promote these options, as it creates a sense of security and comfort in knowing they will be welcomed and the wider public presumably is also more accepting of the community.

Up-to-date information about specialty LGBTQ events, pride celebrations, and community activities in a destination can greatly impact travel decisions. LGBTQ individuals often seek destinations that offer opportunities to engage with the local LGBTQ community and participate in events that resonate with their identity while also demonstrating that tourism overall can be more welcoming and diverse, and

inclusive for everyone. Destination materials that highlight LGBTQ historical sites, neighborhoods, and cultural attractions can contribute to a sense of authenticity and inclusivity. Providing insight into the LGBTQ heritage and presence within a destination can attract travelers looking for meaningful and culturally enriching experiences not only from the LGBTQ sector but other liberal and progressive travelers as well. User-generated content, such as online reviews and personal travel experiences shared on platforms like social media, also influence travel behavior. Positive experiences recounted by LGBT travelers can create a snowball effect, causing the destination to trend on social media which encourages others to visit these LGBTQ-friendly destinations.

The accessibility of this LGBTQ-specific information is crucial. Destination websites, travel guides, and apps that offer well-organized and easy-to-find information helps LGBTQ travelers navigate their options effectively.

In conclusion, destination information significantly shapes the travel behavior of LGBTQ individuals. From safety and legal considerations to the availability of LGBTQ-friendly establishments and events, the information available directly influences their decisions. For destinations seeking to attract LGBTQ travelers, providing accurate, up-to-date, and comprehensive information about LGBTQ offerings are essential.

2.2.4 Effect of Special Offers on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's

Special offers and promotions targeted at the LGBTQ community can have a significant impact on the travel behavior of LGBTQ individuals. Special offers, such as discounted rates or package deals, can be particularly appealing to LGBTQ travelers who may be budget conscious. Conversely selective upscale packages that are directly related to special events such as pride festivals or circuit parties, which offer better access or special VIP packages are also quite marketable. Traveling can be expensive, and exclusive deals can make destinations more accessible and appealing to both ends of the economic spectrum.

LGBTQ specific offers send a message of inclusivity and acceptance to the community. When LGBTQ individuals see that a destination or business is actively

reaching out to them with special deals, it creates a sense of feeling valued and welcomed. Special offers may influence destination choices. LGBTQ travelers may be more inclined to visit places that not only embrace their identities but also offer them unique benefits, such as tailored experiences, events, or amenities.

Many LGBTQ individuals travel in groups, whether with friends or as part of LGBTQ organizations. Special offers that cater to larger group travel needs can encourage larger gatherings, creating a sense of community and shared experience. Destinations that offer special deals around LGBTQ events and celebrations, such as Pride festivals, can attract travelers looking to combine leisure with activism and cultural engagement. Positive experiences resulting from special offers can lead to word-of-mouth recommendations within the LGBTQ community. This can amplify the influence of such offers, potentially drawing more LGBTQ travelers to the destination.

A destination that actively promotes LGBTQ special offers demonstrates its commitment to diversity and inclusion. This positive image can attract not only LGBTQ travelers but also travelers who value destinations that embrace social progress. Effective special offers can lead to increased tourist spending, benefiting local economies as this is often linked to stronger local economies that rely on tourism revenue. When LGBTQ travelers feel that their patronage is valued through tailored deals aimed at the community, they may be more inclined to spend on the participating accommodations, dining outlets, and expensive add on activities.

In conclusion, special offers tailored to the LGBTQ community have a substantial impact on their travel behavior. By acknowledging the unique needs and interests of LGBTQ travelers through incentives and promotions, destinations and businesses can attract this valuable demographic, fostering a positive travel experience and promoting diversity and inclusion.

2.2.5 Effect of Safety and Security on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ consumers

Safety and security play a critical role in shaping the travel behavior of LGBTQ individuals. The perception and reality of a destination's safety and security measures significantly influence their travel decisions, choices of destinations, and

overall travel. Safety and security are primary factors in destination selection for LGBTQ travelers. Destinations that are known to be LGBTQ friendly and have strong anti-discrimination laws are more likely to attract LGBTQ tourists. The perception of a safe and accepting environment directly influences whether LGBTQ individuals choose to visit a particular location.

Hotels, airlines, and other service providers that have LGBTQ inclusive policies and codes of conduct are more attractive to LGBTQ travelers. Being assured that they will be treated with respect and dignity significantly influences their travel decisions. LGBTQ travelers often gauge the social attitudes and local acceptance of LGBTQ individuals in a destination. The presence of LGBTQ friendly influences neighborhoods, establishments, and events indicates a more welcoming environment and can positively impact their overall experience.

In conclusion, safety and security considerations strongly impact the travel behavior of LGBTQ individuals. A destination's reputation for LGBTQ inclusivity, anti-discrimination laws, social acceptance, and legal protections all contribute to whether LGBTQ travelers choose to visit, creating a more positive and enjoyable travel experience for the community.

2.2.6 Effect of Strategic Fit on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ Consumers

The concept of strategic fit refers to how well a destination's offerings align with the preferences, values, and needs of LGBTQ travelers. The degree to which a destination strategically caters to the LGBTQ market can significantly influence the travel behavior of LGBTQ individuals. LGBTQ travelers are more likely to choose destinations that align with their interests and identities. If a destination is perceived as LGBTQ friendly and offers LGBTQ specific amenities, events, and attractions, it becomes more appealing for LGBTQ travelers.

Strategic fit involves tailoring marketing messages to resonate with LGBTQ travelers. When a destination effectively communicates its LGBTQ friendly offerings through advertising, social media, and promotional materials, it captures the attention of LGBTQ individuals who prioritize inclusion and acceptance. Destinations that strategically host or promote LGBTQ specific events, such as Pride parades, LGBTQ

film festivals, and drag shows, can attract travelers seeking to participate in cultural and community experiences that resonate with their identity.

LGBTQ travelers look for accommodations that understand and address their needs. Destinations that offer LGBTQ-friendly hotels, guesthouses, or resorts with inclusive policies, knowledgeable staff, and LGBTQ-oriented amenities create a more comfortable and welcoming environment. Strategic fit extends to culinary and nightlife offerings. Destinations with LGBTQ-friendly restaurants, cafes, bars, and clubs that actively promote themselves as safe spaces for LGBTQ patrons can draw LGBTQ travelers looking for social and cultural experiences.

Strategic fit of the travel industry involves showcasing LGBTQ representation in their own destination imagery, advertising, and marketing materials. When LGBTQ individuals see themselves genuinely represented, they feel acknowledged and validated by the destination, greatly influencing their decision to visit as they can picture themselves there. Destinations that engage with LGBTQ travelers online through LGBTQ-focused content, social media interactions, and LGBTQ-related partnerships for festivals and special events can create a strong idea of the strategic fit.

In conclusion, the strategic fit between a destination and the preferences of LGBTQ travelers profoundly shapes their travel behavior. By aligning offerings, marketing, and activities with the values and interests of the LGBTQ community, destinations can attract and retain LGBTQ travelers, resulting in positive travel experiences and economic contributions.

2.3 The Hypothesized Model

Independent variables: Recommendations (RE), Popularity (PO), Destination Information (DI), Special Offers (SO), Nearness (NN), Amenities/Facilities (AF), Safety & Security (SS), Destination Features (DF), Strategic Fit (SF)

Dependent variable: Travel Behavior (TB)

2.4 Hypothesis

H1: Recommendations factor will effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H2: Popularity factor will effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H3: Destination Information factor will effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H4: Special Offers factor will effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H5: Nearness factor will effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H6: Amenities/Facilities factor will effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H7: Safety & Security factor will effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H8: Destination Features factor will effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H9: Strategic fit factor will effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter demonstrated the research design of the study and consisted of the major sections as following:

- Research Strategy
- Population and Sample Selection
- Research Instrument
- Validity and Reliability Assessment
- Data Collection Procedure
- Preparation and Data Analysis
- Statistical Method for Data Analysis

3.1 Research Strategy

This dissertation conducted research on the Influential Factors That Affect LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision. The methodology used in this research was adapted from a quantitative approach and incorporated the survey method of data collection using questionnaires. The data was then examined using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) methodology to test the structural relations of influential factors.

3.2 Research Instrument

This research uses research tools in the following order:

3.2. Conduct suitable study data collection using questionnaire surveys. And created a questionnaire using factors from related publications and articles, variables including Recommendations, Popularity, Destination Information, Special Offers,

Nearness, Amenities/Facilities, Safety and Security, Destination Features, Strategic Fit and Travel Behaviors. The whole questionnaire is only in English.

3.2.2 The questionnaire is based on nine independent variables such as Recommendations, Popularity, Destination Information, Special Offers, Nearness, Amenities/Facilities, Safety and Security, Destination Features, Strategic Fit and one dependent variable of Travel Behaviors.

3.3 Validity Assessment

Validity is the fundamental assessment of the research tool's ability to actually measure what it is attempting to study.

3.3.1 Each question in the questionnaire was tested for validity using the test research instrument. Three experts were asked to assess and verify the questionnaire's suitability for supporting this research using the Item Objective Consistency index (IOC), as shown in the figure below.

$$IOC = \frac{\sum R}{N}$$

IOC = The result for Item Objective Congruence Index

$\sum R$ = Total evaluated points given from each expert

N= Number of qualified experts

Each question on the questionnaires to be reviewed for the IOC has three grading scales:

+1 means that the question is consistent and comprehensive with the objective of the questionnaire.

0 means that the question is uncertain or unclear with the objective of the questionnaire.

-1 means that the question is inconsistent and incomprehensible with the objective of the questionnaire.

Project values with a score less than 0.5 are regarded invalid, however project values with a score more than or equal to 0.5 can be researched. Consequently, my research can gain content validity by calculating the following results with the support and feedback of three experts.

Table 3.1: IOC Results From Three Experts

NO	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	IOC	Data analysis
RE1	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
RE2	1	0	1	0.667	Acceptable
RE3	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
PO1	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
PO2	1	1	0	0.667	Acceptable
PO3	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
DI1	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
DI 2	0	1	1	0.667	Acceptable
DI 3	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
SO1	1	0	1	0.667	Acceptable
SO2	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
SO3	0	1	1	0.667	Acceptable
SO4	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable

NN 1	1	1	0	0.667	Acceptable
NN 2	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
NN 3	1	0	1	0.667	Acceptable
AF 1	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
AF 2	1	0	1	0.667	Acceptable
AF 3	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
SS 1	0	1	1	0.667	Acceptable
SS2	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
SS3	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
DF1	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
DF 2	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
DF 3	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
SF 1	1	0	1	0.667	Acceptable
SF 2	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
SF 3	0	1	1	0.667	Acceptable
TB 1	1	1	0	0.667	Acceptable
TB 2	1	1	1	1.000	Acceptable
TB 3	1	0	1	0.667	Acceptable
TB 4	1	1	0	0.667	Acceptable

The result of the IOC is listed below

$$IOC = \frac{27.38}{32}$$

$$= 0.85$$

According to the IOC results of the 32 questions in the questionnaire, the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) index value is 0.84 with all the questions are higher than the value of 0.5.

3.3.2 Reliability Assessment

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was applied by the researcher for evaluating the reliability of the questionnaire. As a pilot test, the researcher conducted a sample of 30 people. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire must be more than 0.70 for all parts, indicating that the questionnaire is reliable (Taber, 2018).

Table 3.2: Criteria of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Cronbach's alpha coefficient	Reliability Level	Desirability Level
0.80 – 1.00	Very High	Excellent
0.70 – 0.79	High	Good
0.50 – 0.69	Medium	Fair
0.30 – 0.49	Low	Poor
Less than 0.30	Very Low	Unacceptable

Table 3.3: The Result of Cronbach's Alpha Test from 30 Samples: All Factors

Statement of each part	Alpha Coefficient	Accepted/ Not
Recommendations	0.922	Accepted
Popularity	0.918	Accepted
Destination Information	0.895	Accepted
Special offer	0.903	Accepted
Nearness	0.762	Accepted
Amenities/Facilities	0.824	Accepted

Safety & Security	0.851	Accepted
Destination Features	0.923	Accepted
Strategic Fit	0.859	Accepted
Travel behavior	0.911	Accepted
All Variables	0.924	Accepted

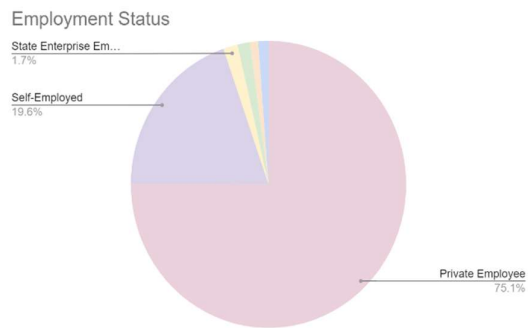
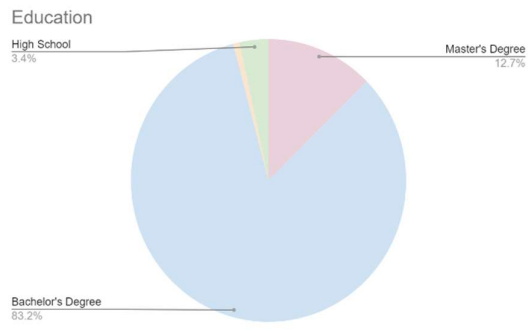
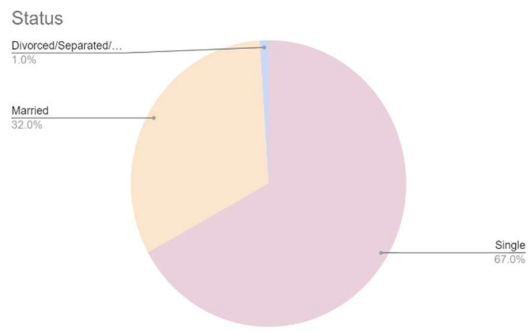
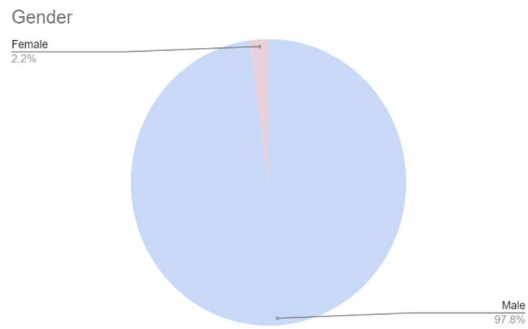
Table 3.3 showed that the result of all factors conducted by the Cronbach's Alpha based on 30 samples pilot test. The result of Cronbach's Alpha test for each factor are Recommendations factor with 0.922, Popularity factor with 0.918, Destination Information factor with 0.895, Special offer factor with 0.903, Nearness factor with 0.762, Amenities/Facilities factor with 0.824, Safety & Security factor with 0.851, Destination Features factor with 0.923, Strategic Fit factor with 0.859, and Travel behavior factor with 0.911, respectively. All of the results are greater than the 0.70, so that each factor is highly reliable. The total result of Cronbach's Alpha test is 0.924 which is greater than 0.70, hence the whole set of questionnaires is very high reliable.

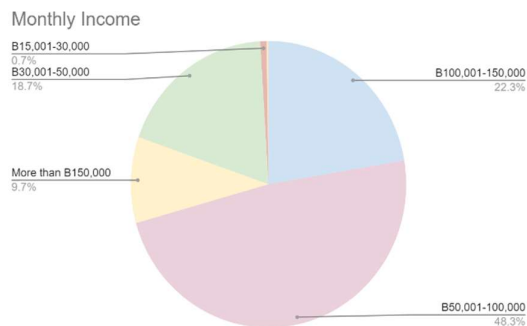
3.4 Population and Sample Size

3.4.1. Population

The population is defined as LGBTQ adults aged 18 years and older. The target population lives, works, or was visiting Bangkok during the survey period. The questions looked at gender, age, relationship status, employment status, education level and monthly income as seen in table 3.4.1 below.

Table 3.4.1 Population





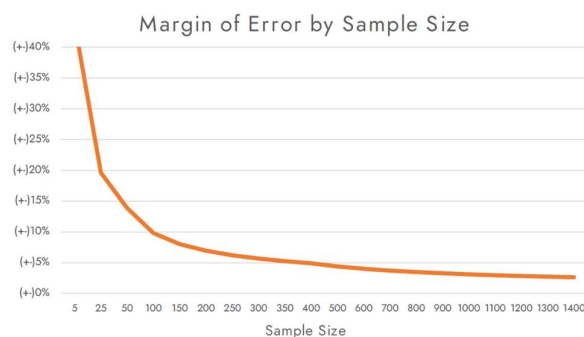
3.4.2 Sample Size

Structural equation modeling is both a flexible and powerful extension of the generic linear model. It makes a lot of assumptions, just like any other statistical method. To achieve reliable results, certain assumptions should be achieved or at least approximated. In Structural equation modeling (SEM), determining the optimum sample size is very important. Unfortunately, there is no agreement in the existing literature on what sample size is most suitable for SEM.

According to James Stevens' *Applied Multivariate Statistics for the Social Sciences*, a good general rule for sample size in a conventional ordinary least squares multiple regression analysis is 15 cases per parameter (Stevens, 2009). SEM is closely associated with multiple regression in some respects, fifteen cases per measured variable in SEM is not unreasonable. According to the Bentler and Chou (1987), researchers can use as few as five cases per parameter to estimate in SEM analysis if the data is perfectly well-behaved (i.e., generally distributed, no missing data or outlying cases, etc.). Bentler and Chou describe five cases per parameter estimate rather than each observed variable. Because measured variables typically have a minimum of one path coefficient related to another variable within the analysis, as well as a residual term or variance estimate, it is critical to identify that the Bentler, Chou, and Stevens recommendations dovetail at a minimum of 15 cases per measured variable. Many researchers recommend that using the sample sizes of at least 200 or 5/10 cases per parameters (Kline, 2005).

Larger samples are required when data is not normally distributed or is otherwise faulty in some way (usually the case). When data is skewed, kurtotic, incomplete, or otherwise less than perfect, it is difficult to give complete recommendations on sample sizes. The usual advice is to collect additional data wherever possible. However, the current research investigation is limited to just over 400 samples. Many commercial research companies suggest a sample size of 400 is often considered the baseline for survey research, as it allows for high precision ($\pm 5\%$ error) at a cost-effective sample size as shown in the chart below. (Howell, 2020.)

Table 3.4.2 Margin of Error, (Howell, 2020)



3.5 Data Collection

A structured questionnaire is a closed question that requires the respondent to choose a choice from a list. A semi-structured questionnaire is a blend of closed and open questions in which the responder chooses from a list and answers the questions in their own way. Unstructured questionnaires are questions that are left free for the respondent to answer in their own way (Hauge, Morgan, & Hague, 2013). To collect data for this study, an online structured questionnaire was used.

3.6 Data Analysis

The collected Data was analyzed by using the IBM SPSS Amos and IBM SPSS Statistics. The output data will be presented in this research with the format of tables all along with the respective descriptions. The appropriate descriptive statistics

of the sample are stated in Chapter 4. The Factor analysis statistical method is employed to analyze the collected data with the purpose of analyze the Influential Factors That Affect LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.



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CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this research is to investigate the Influential Factors That Affect LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision. This article is based on a survey of 400 people who consider themselves as LGBTQ, and it collects data that will be measured and confirmed using SPSS data analysis.

In this chapter, the researcher will show the research findings which resulting from the data analysis were presented as follows:

Part 1: Correlation of the Variables

Part 2: Fit Indices

Part 3: Hypothesis

4.1 Correlation of the Variables

In the following part, we will go over the various goodness-of-fit criteria for testing the model. One of the review criteria for model evaluation is root mean square residuals (RMR), and a model is considered acceptable or sufficient if the RMR value is low. The root mean square of the residuals is indicated by RMR. RMR is the sum of the squares of the sample variances and covariances minus the estimated variances and covariances, as well as the square root of the mean. If RMR is less than 0.08, it is okay. The lower the RMR, the better the fit. The lower the RMR, the better the fit. The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) is a measure of goodness-of-fit that can theoretically be a negative number with no significance. For the model to be proclaimed acceptable, the GFI should be equal to or greater than 0.90. The adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) is the adjusted GFI value and should be more than 0.9 to be considered acceptable. The parsimonious normed fit index (PGFI) determines whether the research model is excessively complex, and similar models with the same sample information perform better with a higher parsimonious score. PGFI >0.50 indicates that the model is satisfactory.

Table 4.1: RMR, GFI

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.072	.904	.913	0.65
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.741	.299	.185	.313

According to the above table of our SEM result, the value of root mean square residuals (RMR) is less than 0.8, the model is better fit. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) value is .914 (>.90), the model seems to fit well according to the descriptive measures of fit. For the PGFI, our result is 0.65, which is greater than 0.50, so that our model can be considered satisfactory.

4.2 Fit Indices

Holmes-Smith, Coote, & Cunningham (2006) note that there are three types of model fit statistics that can be used.

The three types of model fit are as follows:

- Absolute fit indexes,
- Incremental fit or comparative fit index, and
- Indices of model parsimony

There are various methods for testing model fit, and criteria for minimum acceptable levels of fit indices exist (Byrne, 2001). Some researchers, however, warn that the evaluation process can be difficult because different fit indices may be used in different studies or recommended by different reviewers (Maruyama, 1998), resulting in a lack of reliable standards for assessing fit (Kenny & McCoach, 2003).

Nonetheless, fit indices such as CFI, TLI, and RMSEA are widely employed (Kenny & McCoach, 2003). Hulland, Chow, and Lam (Hulland, Chow, & Lam, 1996) suggest that the CFI, NFI, and IFI should be between 0 and 1, with values near to 1 indicating a better fit. An acceptable fit is indicated by values between 0.90 and 0.95, while values greater than 0.95 suggest a very good fit.

Because of its unique relative power of the combination of attributes, RMSEA has great importance in the evaluation of fit indices. One of the most revealing principles in covariance structure modeling is the RMSEA fit statistic (Byrne, 2001). A value of RMSEA less than 0.05 suggests a good match, whereas a value greater than 0.08 shows that there are reasonable approximation errors in the population. (Browne & Cudeck 1992) and (Byrne 2001).

Table 4.2 RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.040	.041	.053	.769
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.178	.174	.183	.000

Since the RMSEA, which is an absolute fit index that assesses how far our hypothesized model is from a perfect model, for this model is .040 ($<.05$) which strongly indicates a “close fit”.

4.3 Hypothesis

Table 4.3 Hypothesis

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
TB <--- RE	-.067	.035	-1.907	.050	
TB <--- PO	.011	.027	.412	.680	
TB <--- SO	.009	.030	.316	.752	
TB <--- NN	-.002	.052	-.032	.974	
TB <--- AF	.000	.032	-.012	.991	
TB <--- DF	.005	.033	.155	.877	
TB <--- SF	-.053	.050	-1.056	.291	
TB <--- DI	.017	.032	.543	.587	
TB <--- SS	-.245	.078	-3.148	.002	

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary of Research

This study focuses on a set of potential influencing factors on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision including Recommendations, Popularity, Destination Information, Special Offers, Nearness, Amenities/Facilities, Safety and Security, Destination Features, and Strategic Fit. We use Structural Equation Modeling to capture structural relationship of all these variables on Travel Behavior. The findings of SEM show that our model fits well with the data based on SEM criteria and brand and platform feature are the most important factors that would influence on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

5.2 Hypothesis Result

H1: Recommendations factor does have effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H2: Popularity factor does not have effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H3: Destination Information factor does not have effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H4: Special Offers factor does not have the effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H5: Nearness factor does not have the effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H6: Amenities/Facilities factor does not have the effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H7: Safety and Security factor have the effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H8: Destination Features factor does not have the effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

H9: Strategic fit factor does not have the effect on Travel Behavior of LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision.

5.3 Discussion

According to our SEM result, Recommendations (RE) and Safety and Security (SS) are significantly defined as significant influential factors that affect LGBTQ's travel destination choice decision due to their p-values are equal and less than .05. That means LGBTQ choose their travel destination if it's strongly recommended by friends & family, online & social media, and customer positive review & sharing tips. Moreover, LGBTQ consumers prefer the destinations that offer personal safety and safe accommodation and destinations where they won't be taken advantage of financially making these safe and sound destinations without the fear of being scammed.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The scope of our findings in this study has prompted considerations for future research projects, particularly in enhancing the depth and specifics of our understanding of factors influencing the LGBTQ market's choice of holiday destinations. To refine the insights that this research has provided, future investigations should deliberately target different age groups within the LGBTQ community to see if the findings are different, or perhaps even the same. While our study encompassed adults aged 18 and above, narrowing the focus to specific age brackets can provide more detailed and tailored insights into the preferences and considerations of different age segments within the LGBTQ demographic this information would further guide future marketers to create even more targeted campaigns to different age groups based upon the future research.

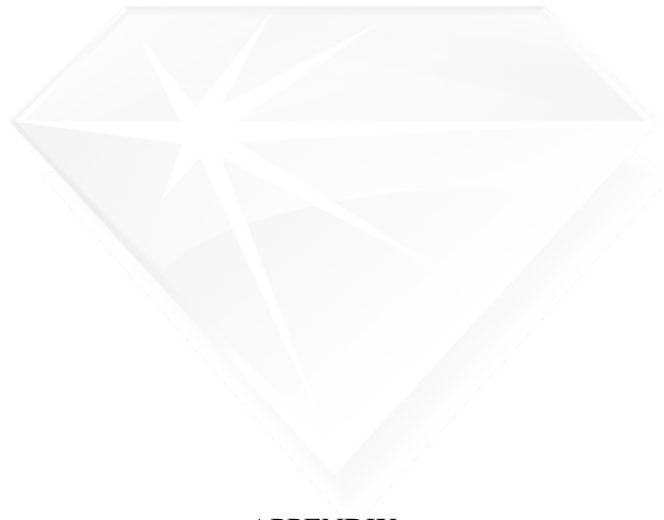
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APPENDIX

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Questionnaire

Topic: Study of Influential Factors That Affect LGBTQ's Travel Destination Choice Decision

Part I:

Q1: Are you considered LGBTQ?

Yes (continue)

No (stop here)

Q2. Please rank the following influential factors that affect your travel destination choice decision: 0(no effect), 1(minimum effect), 2(mild)..., 7(maximum effect)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2.1 Recommendations (RE)

2.2 Popularity (PO)

2.3 Destination Information (DI)

2.4 Special Offers (SO)

2.5 Nearness (NN)

2.6 Amenities/Facilities (AF)

2.7 Safety & Security (SS)

2.8 Destination Features (DF)

2.9 Strategic Fit (SF)

2.10 Travel Behavior (TB)

Q3. Please rank the followings on the scale of 1 to 5: 1(strongly disagree), 2(somewhat disagree), 3(neutral), 4(somewhat agree), 5(strongly agree)

1 2 3 4 5

3.1. Recommendations (RE)

3.1.1 Friends' and family's recommendations affect my travel destination choice decision.

3.1.2 Online and social media's recommendations affect my travel destination choice decision.

3.1.3 Customer positive review and sharing tips about the location affect my travel destination choice decision.

3.2. Popularity (PO)

3.2.1 The popularity of the destination affects my travel destination choice decision.

3.2.2 I prefer to go where other tourists are going.

3.2.3 I like to go to some places that are considered as must-see in the tourism world.

3.3. Destination Information (DI)

3.3.1 Comprehensive information online affects my travel destination choice decision.

3.3.2 I always make informed decision on my travel destination.

3.3.3 Tourist destinations should have a good website and an active social media that's responsive and informative.

3.4. Special offers (SO)

3.4.1 I always look for deals and discounts that can help make travel cheaper.

3.4.2 Offering special discounts is highly useful and visibility on sites that offer discount schemes is extremely important to my choice decision.

3.4.3 For me to choose a specific location over another, the availability of offers can be crucial.

3.5. Nearness (NN)

3.5.1 I don't like to travel long distances and the geography of the location still plays an important role.

3.5.2 I like to choose destinations that are easily accessible and which don't require days of travelling.

3.5.3 I prefer destinations that are geographically close and easy-to-reach.

3.6. Amenities/Facilities (AF)

3.6.1 I prefer the destinations that offer decent activities such as jogging, hiking, climbing, water sports, etc.

3.6.2 I prefer the destinations that offer decent facilities such as spa, body & foot massage, clean restrooms, shopping centers, famous local shops, famous food & restaurants, etc.

3.6.3 I always look for destinations that their room or home has a touch of luxury.

3.7 Safety and Security (SS)

3.7.1 I prefer the destinations that offer personal safety and safe accommodation.

3.7.2 I prefer destinations that I won't be taken advantage of financially.

3.7.3 I prefer safe and sound destinations without being scammed.

3.8 Destination Features (DF)

3.8.1 I prefer the destinations that are universally accessible and have unique characteristics of both built & natural attractions which appeal to visitors.

3.8.2 I prefer the destinations that have good climate and traditions.

3.8.3 I prefer the destinations that give me quality & memorable experiences.

3.9 Strategic Fit (SF)

3.9.1 I prefer the destinations that fit with my lifestyle.

3.9.2 I choose destinations that fit with my time table.

3.9.3 I choose destinations that fit with my desire at the moment whatever that is.

3.10 Travel Behavior (TB)

3.10.1 I prefer to travel alone.

3.10.2 I like to travel with my boy/girl friend.

3.10.3 I like to travel in a group of friends & family members.

3.10.4 I prefer to travel in group tours.

PART II: Demographic Information

Instruction: Please answer the following question and put " that matches you most.

1. Gender

1. Male

2. Female

2. Age

1. 18 to 23 years

2. 24–29 years old

3. 30-39 years old

4. 40-49 years old

5. Equal and over 50 years old

3. Status

1. Single 2. Married 3. Divorced/ Widowed/ Separated

4. Level of education

1. Under Bachelor's Degree

2. Bachelor's degree

3. Master's Degree

4. Doctorate Degree

5. Others, please specify

5. Monthly income

1. Less than and equal to 15,000 baht

2. 15,001-30,000 baht

3. 30,001-50,000 baht

4. 50,000- 100,000 baht

5. 100,001-150,000baht

6. More than 150,000 baht

6. Professional Status

- 1. State enterprise employee " 2. Private employee
- 3. Self-Employed " 4. Searching for a job
- 5. Retired " 6. Students



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