

# RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF GAY TOURISM: EXPLORING ATTITUDES, SEXUAL PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION, AND PLACE IMAGE

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## Abstract

While numerous studies have explored residents' attitudes towards tourism in general, limited research exists on their perspectives towards gay tourism, especially in non-Western contexts. Most existing studies focus on Western countries, where there is generally higher acceptance of homosexuality, overlooking majority Muslim countries. Residents' attitudes towards tourism are believed to be key factor in the sustainability of tourism development. This study aims to investigate the residents' attitudes towards gay tourism. This study investigates residents' attitudes towards gay tourism, focusing on the influence of place image, perceived impacts, and sexual prejudice. The study finds a significant positive relationship between perceived economic and socio-cultural impacts and residents' supportive attitudes towards gay tourism. However, no correlation is found between place image and attitudes, while sexual prejudice and discrimination play a role in shaping negative attitudes towards gay tourism. This research provides an analysis of the perceptions of gay tourism among residents by incorporating, for the first time, the variables of place image and sexual prejudice toward tourism and cultural studies.

**Keywords:** *Residents' Attitudes, Gay Tourism, Perceived Impacts, Place Image, Sexual Prejudice*

## INTRODUCTION

Research on residents' attitudes and support towards tourism has grown significantly in recent years (Hadinejad et al., 2019). One of the crucial determinants of residents' attitudes and support towards tourism is residents' satisfaction level, understanding local satisfaction with tourism impacts and their support for further development is significant for the success of tourism ventures (Wani et al., 2024). The success of tourism development is also significantly dependent on residents' hospitality (Kim & Park, 2023). Identifying attitudes can aid in tourism development and reduce tensions between locals and tourists in many types of tourism (Lankford & Howard, 1994). Past studies have discussed many types of tourism in its correlation to the residents' attitudes and support, some of them are towards ethno-tourism (Mukatova et al., 2024), ecotourism (Lokonon et al., 2023), community-based tourism (Ebrahimi & Khalifah, 2014; Nugroho & Numata, 2021; Wani et al., 2024), cruise tourism (Chiappa et al., 2019), and gay tourism (Adamczyk & Cheng, 2015; Silva & Vareiro, 2021; Sousa-Silva & Vareiro, 2023). The latter type of tourism has been considered niche market. The gay tourism niche has witnessed notable expansion, with many tourist destinations now actively competing to attract this market segment through specialized advertising campaigns.

Initially disregarded by tourism professionals, the gay travel market gained recognition when it became apparent that catering to the "pink pound" or "pink dollar" could lead to heightened revenue streams (Apostolopoulou, 2016). This market is frequently positioned in economic terms as 'fast growing' and 'resilient' extracting profitable industry by its commentators (Usai et al., 2022; Waitt & Markwell, 2015). Strangely, though profitable and growing business sector, and the increasing desire on its discourse, gay tourism remains an under-researched topic (Thu Thuy Nguyen, 2023). Globally, Western countries like in Europe, North America, and Australia place the highest level of approval for gay identity (Adamczyk & Cheng, 2015). Meanwhile, in other parts of the world, gay tourism has not received the same support as those in the Western destinations. In Asia, gay tourists tend to avoid destinations that are less friendly to them (Wong & Tolkach, 2017a). The destinations that are less friendly to gay individuals are typically found in Asian Moslem-majority countries, where several challenges are encountered regarding homosexuality and gay tourism, such as legal risks, religious conflicts, lack of community

support, and societal attitudes (Scull & Mousa, 2017). In Islam as a religion, the state of a person identifying as homosexual is condemned (Stevenson, 1995). Indonesia is one of the most prominent samples in this case, with 4,1% of its GDP is contributed from tourism industry (Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif Republik Indonesia, 2024). As Moslem-majority country, religions, often if not always, tend to be intolerant towards individuals identifying as homosexual, creating challenges for the country in accepting homosexual self-identification (Coşkun, 2021). Hence, unlike the Western countries that create 'safe gay spaces' (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2016), Indonesia is considered as 'dangerous' place for gay people (McPhail & McNulty, 2015).

Jakarta and Bali are two main entry points for tourists in Indonesia. The latter serves as the most important tourist gate as the country relies heavily on Bali for its tourism (Nanang Ganda Prawira, 2023). In 2023 alone, the number of international tourists arriving in Bali reached 5.2 million or 44.9% of the country's overall international tourist arrivals (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2024). Bali places the number one island destination for traveling in 2024 by DestinAsia Magazine (Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif Republik Indonesia, 2024). Yet, little research has been found in studying gay tourism niche market in Bali. Though Bali is not a gay destination, it still caters gay tourists (Hendijani, 2023) along with many destinations that specializes in catering gay tourists. Most discussions of gay tourism in Bali are anecdotal and journalistic instead of scientific, supporting (McPhail & McNulty, 2015) that Indonesia is a dangerous place for gay people. Gay friendliness and acceptance or prejudice and discrimination of the residents remains key issue in gay tourism development in Bali. However, although limited, previous studies in Bali pointing gay tourism are on gay tourists' motivation (Hendijani, 2023) and gay tourism industry (Waite & Markwell, 2015). This subsequently points to residents' acceptance of gay tourism.

In addressing the residents' attitudes in tourism literature, scholars seem to agree that the perceived impacts using social exchange theory (SET) are key issues (Hadinejad et al., 2019). Using SET on theoretical framework, residents' support for tourism development is based on the idea that they will be more inclined to support it if they perceive the benefits outweigh the costs (Sharpley, 2014). The impacts are measured through cost-benefit analysis, while another approach is to assess the impacts through economic, social, cultural, and environmental (Hadinejad et al., 2019). Meanwhile, other recent studies have proved that residents' place image has played a major role in affecting the impacts and the further support for tourism development (Stylidis et al., 2014; Stylidis, 2016; Stylidis et al., 2018). However, limited research on observing the residents' attitudes and support towards gay tourism have neglected this important variable, to which this study is bridging the gap.

Having the previous studies addressed, this research delivers three key issues. First, while there have been many studies on residents' attitudes towards many types of tourism, there is limited research available on residents' attitudes and support towards gay tourism, with issue that remains circulating in closeted identity (Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2021). Second, having recent studies focusing on the gay tourists' point of view, it is valid to emphasize the importance of examining the residents' point of view and of observing the sexual prejudice and discrimination affecting their attitudes and support. Lastly, little to no research that has studied destinations catering gay tourists without explicitly promoting gay tourism (Hendijani, 2023), especially in the context of Bali as popular tourist destination for predominantly mature gay men (Waite & Markwell, 2015). To address these issues, this study offers examination of residents' attitudes and support towards gay tourism in an important tourist destination for Indonesia, Bali, with a focus on understanding their levels of acceptance, support, and perceptions with examining the role of place image, sexual prejudice and discrimination, and the impacts economically, socio-culturally, and environmentally.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Gay Tourism

In a larger tourism context, the perceptions and opinions of residents have remained a central area of investigation within tourism studies for an extended period (Šegota et al., 2024). Researchers have long focused on residents' attitudes through perceived impacts which lead to their supports towards tourism itself (Chambwe & Saayman, 2023; Eslami et al., 2018; Md. A. Halim et al., 2022; Wani et al., 2024) to maintain its sustainability. These previous studies seemed to agree that of these are economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts. Achieving equilibrium among these impact dimensions of tourism is imperative for ensuring the industry's sustained well-being (Kim & Park, 2023). (Eslami et al., 2018; Nugroho & Numata, 2021; Wani et al., 2024) studied that perceived impacts of residents' economy, socio-culture, and environment are positively impacting the residents' attitudes and support towards tourism. Limited past studies have found that locals generally exhibited positive attitudes towards homosexuality and gay tourism, one rare study mentioned that residents expressed more concerns specifically related to gay tourism compared to other forms of tourism in a small Mexican beach (Hughes et al.,

2010). In North Portugal, locals encourage the government to invest more in gay tourism as they believe that their region is well-suited to attract the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) market, citing hospitality, historical and cultural heritage, natural landscapes, and recent advances in LGBT rights as key advantages for tourism development (Silva & Vareiro, 2021). Meanwhile, on the tourist study, individuals identifying as homosexual are less inclined to visit countries or regions such as China, Jamaica, Turkey, Muslim-majority nations, Arab countries, and African countries (Hughes et al., 2010). On this research, the term "residents' attitudes" is borrowed from what (Hughes et al., 2010) argues as feelings and behaviors. Since attitudes and support towards gay tourists are influenced by broader attitudes towards homosexuality itself (Hughes et al., 2010). On the other hand, culturally, Indonesians spark concerns on the presence of homosexual individuals since the practice of Islam is predominant, while politically, rejections of homosexuality are presence through comments from political figures that are against homosexuality (Adihartono, 2023). Individuals with high religious fundamentalism are also likely to show prejudice and discrimination against gay men in Indonesia (Arli et al., 2020). Thus, in this study, unlike other past studies on residents' attitudes towards tourism, it is imperative to acknowledge the presence of sexual prejudice and discrimination.

### **Sexual Prejudice and Discrimination**

Discrimination can be viewed as the behavioral manifestation of negative attitudes towards a particular social group and its members (Hogg & Vaughan, 2008). Discrimination and sexually prejudiced attitudes are present by gay tourists as studied by (Monterrubio Solís et al., 2023) in Mexico. Highlighting even further on sexual prejudiced attitudes and discrimination by gay men, this variable is also present in previous studies by (Ro & Olson, 2020; Sousa-Silva & Vareiro, 2023; Waitt & Markwell, 2015). Given the discrepancy from previous studies mentioned, it is necessary on this research to assess if the residents' attitude towards gay tourism can be analyzed though the presence of the sexual prejudice and discrimination towards gay people. (Ro & Olson, 2020) argue that gay tourist's discrimination is of both blatant discrimination and subtle discrimination, the former is overt and legally contestable, and the latter is less conspicuous and often not punishable under anti-discrimination legislation. Having a discriminatory space like this makes it difficult to create "safe space" for marginalized community like gay people (Hartless, 2018). Attitudes toward gay tourists may reflect broader opinions on homosexuality, often resulting in negative perceptions rooted in concerns about behavior and impacts on others, rather than explicit homophobia (Hughes et al., 2010).

While Western countries offer space providing a chance for individuals of the gay people to freely express themselves in their safe spaces, unencumbered by worries of discrimination or societal stigmas (Vorobjovas-Pinta & Hardy, 2016). In recent years, as gay tourism has become increasingly available to individuals from the global north with limited incomes, organized trips now occur in diverse "gay hotspots" such as Bangkok, Cape Town, Buenos Aires, and Barcelona. These destinations attract visitors looking for spaces of unrestrained sexual expression and leisure (Munt, 2019). Bali, on the other hand, places fourth as the most LGBT-friendly places in Asia. This ranking is somewhat contradictory to the previous "gay unfriendliness" journalistic evidence. The absence of previous study investigating locals' attitudes in Bali towards gay tourism makes this research even more crucial to assess the true extent of acceptance and tolerance within the community. It is also imperative to argue that the previous ambiguity of Bali's stand towards gay tourism, Indonesia is not ready for massive niche market of gay tourists, meanwhile, on the other hand, Indonesia prioritizes tourism as a key sector for driving economic growth (Maulana, 2019). Furthermore, as the epicentrum of tourism industry in Indonesia, Bali deserves its spotlight for gay tourism discourse. Yet, there are very minimal studies that have focused on gay tourism in Bali in the eyes of residents. Previous studies in Bali have pointed the residents' attitudes towards film tourism (Kim & Park, 2023), community-based tourism (Pradnyantara & Lestari, 2021), and sustainable eco-tourism (D. K. Halim & Ervina, 2021). It only signifies further the importance of this research to assess if gay tourism is welcomed in Bali amidst the growing market of gay tourists.

H1: Sexual prejudice and discrimination of gay people has significant relationship with the residents' attitudes towards gay tourism.

### **Resident's Place Image**

In the tourism literature, the common-used term is "destination image" analyzed from the tourists' point of view to observe the motivation of tourists selecting the destination. To ensure that tourism development positively impacts the local community, it's important to consider not only the tourists' perception of the destination but also

how residents view their own community, because the local image of the place is way more complex compared to tourists' destination image (Stylidis et al., 2018). The concept of place image is described as the collective beliefs, ideas, and impressions that individuals hold about a particular location (Crompton, 1979). (Stylidis et al., 2018) finds that on the managerial level, assessing the residents' place image could enhance or even change the image of a place to better understand the market and make the place more attractive. Residents' place image has been studied frequently by scholars and they find that it is positively affecting both the tourism impacts and support towards tourism development (Shen et al., 2019; Stylidis et al., 2014; Usai et al., 2022; Zaman & Aktan, 2021). In gay tourism literature, previous study argues that one of the factors in the election of destinations in homosexual tourism is the image of the city (Prat Forga & Valiente, 2014). However, despite the fact gay tourism is part of tourism, residents' place image has not been studied on their support towards it and has been an under researched topic. Therefore, the present study is the first to adopt this variable on gay tourism literature.

H2: Residents' place image has relationship with the residents' attitudes towards gay tourism.

H3: Residents' place image has relationship with the perceived economics impacts of tourism.

H4: Residents' place image has relationship with the perceived socio-cultural impacts of tourism.

H5: Residents' place image has relationship with the perceived environmental impacts of tourism.

### **Economic, Socio-Cultural, and Environmental Impact of Gay Tourism**

Although social exchange theory is used in most attitudes towards tourism studies (Hadinejad et al., 2019), previous studies regarding residents' attitudes towards gay tourism does not seem to have a single common theory for its examination. In this study, researchers adopt this theory for its wide application on previous tourism studies through examining impacts of economy, socio-culture, and environment perceived by the residents. The literature also classified those impacts to identify supportive attitudes towards tourism (Uslu et al., 2023). Economically, gay friendly destinations are benefited by the gay tourists' contribution to the local economy and local labor market (Hadjisolomou et al., 2023). Gay tourism has generated significant economic benefit (Valcuende et al., 2023) and gay tourists has been ultimately referred to as high earning (Dixon, 2024). (Prabawati et al., 2019) find gay tourist in Bali positively impact employment and community income. Given these findings and borrowing other studies' items in measuring economic impacts on tourism, this study examines these impacts such as living standard, job opportunities, infrastructure, economic income, and land prices (Uslu et al., 2023) that are proved to positively impact the residents' attitudes.

The impacts of socio-cultural to community defined by scholars are events, cultural heritage, traditions, and service quality (Uslu et al., 2023). Socio-culturally, gay tourist attractions with venues like nightclubs and bars offer opportunities for relaxation and socializing (Wong & Tolkach, 2017b). According to (Waite & Markwell, 2015) Bali is increasingly popular as a gay tourism destination, attracting both Indonesian and Western men, but nightclubs are often viewed as centers of gay life. Thus, to assess the socio-cultural impacts, several items are examined: recreation areas, cultural activities/entertainment, socialization, community atmosphere (Uslu et al., 2023). On rare research by (Hughes et al., 2010) environmentally, among several concerns in gay tourism destination are the raised concern about litter, syringes, and condoms found on the beach. On the other hand about the positive environmental impact of tourism noted by (Ozturk et al., 2015) including increased environmental awareness, improved environmental management, restoration of historical sites and monuments, and protection of natural and cultural heritage sites. Thus, to observe the environmental impacts, key items are crowdedness, traffic congestions, noise level, and environmental pollution (Uslu et al., 2023).

H6: Residents' attitudes towards gay tourism have positive relationship with economic impacts of gay tourism.

H7: Residents' attitudes towards gay tourism have positive relationship with socio-cultural impacts of gay tourism.



H8: Residents' attitudes towards gay tourism have positive relationship with environmental impacts of gay tourism.

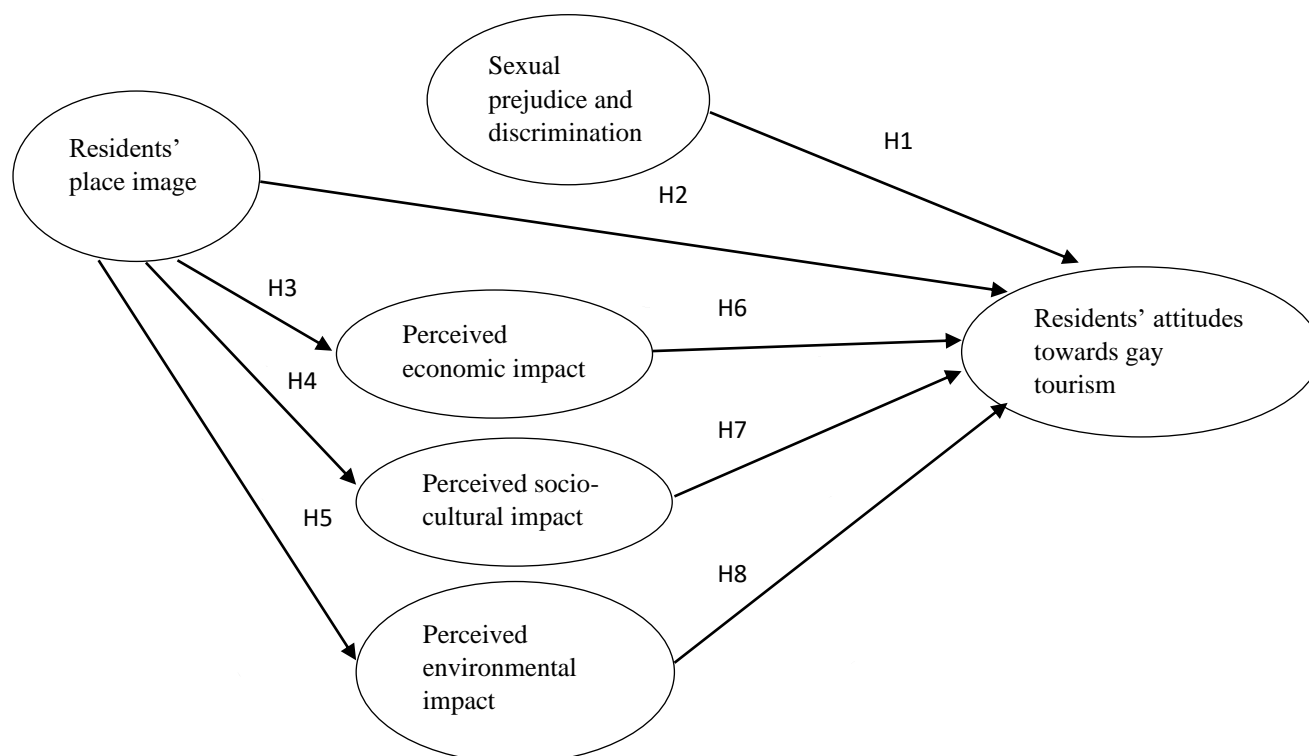


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## METHOD

This study features quantitative approach which has been the dominant approach used to assess the residents' attitude towards tourism. The setting is set in Indonesian tourism destination of Bali, comprising the locals in the area. In this research, the term 'locals' refer to those residing in Bali. The study targeted residents of the most-packed tourism region providing several gay tourism industries nearby (such as spas, nude hotels, bars, and clubs) namely Seminyak, Legian, Kuta, Canggu, Denpasar, and Karangasem. An online and printed questionnaire survey was distributed. The study's sampling method was judgmental and snowball sampling. Method was taken into consideration when determining the sample size so the minimum sample size was 150 (5 times 30 indicators). Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test both the measurement and structural models. Data were analyzed using Smart-PLS 4. The survey mainly comprised closed-ended questions in Bahasa Indonesia and English provided as translation.

This research that was conducted in May 2024 consists of seven parts. The first part includes the residents' place images of five items adapted from (Stylidis, 2016). The second part includes the economic impacts of five items. The third part consists of five items to measure perceived socio-cultural impacts. The fourth part consists of five items to measure perceived environmental impacts. The fifth part gathers data on sexual prejudice and discrimination with five item. The sixth part consists of three items for residents' attitudes towards gay tourism and the last part is for socio-demographic of the respondents. The questionnaires utilize Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Cross-sectional time horizon is applied for this study. The questionnaire was distributed to 628 respondents with 33,7% response rate (N=212). As much as 10% out of the total sample was previously taken for pilot testing to ensure the questionnaire's reliability and validity using confirmatory analysis. The pilot test result shows two items had low loading values (<0.70) which were then removed after the reliability and validity test.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Profile of Respondens

From 212 respondents, profiles were slightly dominated by men (54.7%, N=116). The predominant age ranges are 18 to 24 years (44.3%, N=94), most respondents had undergraduate degree (42.9%, N=91). As for their occupation, most of them work as private employees (52.4%, N=111). In terms of monthly income, half of all respondents had a monthly income range of under IDR 5,000,000 (56.1%, N=119). Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents.

**Table 1. Profile of the Respondents**

Respondents		Sample (n = 212)	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	116	54.7
	Female	96	45.3
Age (in years)	18-24	94	44.3
	25-34	79	37.3
	35-44	26	12.3
	45-54	11	5.2
	>54	2	0.9
Education	High school	79	37.3
	Diploma	34	16
	Undergraduate	91	42.9
	Graduate	6	2.8
	Postgraduate	2	0.9
Occupation	Student	61	28.8
	Private employee	111	52.4
	Civil servant	11	5.2
	Entrepreneur	20	9.4
	Retiree	1	0.5
Monthly income gender	Less than IDR 5,000,000 <sup>1</sup>	119	56.1
	IDR 5,000,000 – IDR 10,000,000	40	18.9
	Male	116	54.7
	Female	96	45.3
	Less than IDR 5.000.000	119	56.1

### Validity and Reliability

The measurement model and structural model was examined to test the validity and reliability. On the validity test, several items namely PSI2, PSI4, PSI3, PENI2, PENI4, PENI5, RPI3, RPI4, and SPD6, were removed because of the low loading values (<0.70) after a confirmatory analysis was conducted. All other items show the loading values exceeding the threshold of recommended value >0.7. On the reliability test, the items were tested using composite reliability for it produces better estimate of true reliability than Cronbach's alpha under identical research. The composite reliability exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.7. On the other hand, the minimum acceptable value for average variance extracted (AVE) is 0.50. Table 2 reflects the test results.

**Table 2. Reflective Measurement Model**

Construct/indicators	Item loadings	Composite reliability	AVE
<b>Resident's place image</b>		0.953	0.910
RPI1	0.950		
RPI2	0.957		
<b>Perceived economic impacts</b>		0.940	0.758
PECI1	0.869		
PECI2	0.863		
PECI3	0.910		
PECI4	0.858		
PECI5	0.852		
<b>Perceived socio-cultural impacts</b>		0.764	0.626
PSI1	0.633		
PSI5	0.922		
<b>Perceived environmental impacts</b>		0.868	0.767
PENI1	0.918		
PENI3	0.831		
<b>Sexual prejudice and discrimination</b>		0.861	0.557
SPD1	0.708		
SPD2	0.848		
SPD3	0.856		
SPD4	0.681		
SPD5	0.605		
<b>Attitude towards gay tourism</b>		0.951	0.867
ATGT1	0.925		
ATGT2	0.951		

A test on discriminant validity was then conducted using the criterion mentioning the square root of each construct's value of AVE should be greater than the correlations with other latent constructs. The constructs of factor loading value reflect greater number than other loads and being more than 0.7. Table 3 depicts the test result on discriminant validity.

**Table 3. Discriminant Validity using the Criteria of Fornell and Larcker**

	ATGT	PECI	PENI	PSI	RPI	SPD
<b>ATGT</b>	<b>0.931</b>					
<b>PECI</b>	0.721	<b>0.871</b>				
<b>PENI</b>	-0.352	-0.368	<b>0.876</b>			
<b>PSI</b>	0.643	0.686	-0.332	<b>0.791</b>		
<b>RPI</b>	0.620	0.728	-0.400	0.603	<b>0.954</b>	
<b>SPD</b>	0.603	0.532	-0.548	0.604	0.573	<b>0.746</b>

## Structural Model

The hypothetical relationships of the model were evaluated in the investigation. The results of the hypotheses are presented on Table 4.

**Table 4. Path Coefficients**

Hypothesis	Relationship	$\beta$ -Value	T-Statistics	$p$ -Value	
H1	SPD → ATGT	0.247	3.017	0.003	Supported
H2	RPI → ATGT	0.076	0.069	0.975	Rejected
H3	RPI → PEGI	0.728	20.021	0.000	Supported
H4	RPI → PSI	0.603	13.078	0.000	Supported
H5	RPI → PENI	-0.400	5.898	0.000	Supported
H6	PEGI → ATGT	0.437	5.223	0.000	Supported
H7	PSI → ATGT	0.157	2.201	0.028	Supported
H8	PENI → ATGT	0.027	0.061	0.660	Rejected

It shows the following: SPD → ATGT ( $\beta=0.247$ ,  $t=3.017$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), RPI → PEGI ( $\beta=0.728$ ,  $t=20.021$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), RPI → PSI ( $\beta=0.603$ ,  $t=13.078$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), RPI → PENI ( $\beta=-0.400$ ,  $t=5.898$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), PEGI → ATGT ( $\beta=0.437$ ,  $t=5.223$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), PSI → ATGT ( $\beta=0.157$ ,  $t=2.201$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), the result indicated that H1, H3, H4, H5, H6, and H7 were accepted. Meanwhile, RPI → ATGT ( $\beta=0.076$ ,  $t=0.069$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and PENI → ATGT ( $\beta=0.027$ ,  $t=0.061$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) mean H2 and H8 were rejected.

## Discussion

This study supports the significant positive relationship between sexual prejudice and discrimination and attitudes towards gay tourism (H1). This finding shows further validation of sexual prejudice role as a critical factor in shaping negative attitudes towards gay tourism. These results underscore the deeply ingrained biases that continue to challenge the development of gay-friendly tourism in regions like Bali. This study supports the finding on previous study about the prejudiced attitudes perceived by gay tourists either being single tourist or group tourists (Ro & Olson, 2020). It also confirms previous study by Monterrubio (2023) that suggests prejudice and discrimination are experienced by non-supportive community in which homosexuality is disapproved in the region. Furthermore, the finding of the study shows no correlation between residents' place image and attitudes towards gay tourism (H2). It contradicts with previous studies that supports this relationship (Stylidis et al., 2014; Zaman & Aktan, 2021). It seems that it is due to the difference type of tourism being analyzed. These previous studies analyzed the model to test the support of tourism, regardless the type of tourism. This study is the first to adopt the model with the role of residents' place image in the discourse of gay tourism. The status of Bali as gay-friendly destination as opposed to gay destination may have probably caused this hypothesis to be rejected.

Even with only two items being analyzed where six items were being measured under residents' place image, the current study supports its relationships with the triple bottom line impacts which are economic (H3), socio-cultural (H4), and environmental (H5). However, the latter shows a negative relationship that does not support previous studies on place image-impacts relationship (Stylidis et al., 2014, 2018). This may be due to the nature of how place image is constructed in Bali's tourism context. Bali's tourism is primarily centered around economic growth and cultural tourism, where residents may associate the place image with economic opportunities and cultural vibrancy rather than environmental concerns. In contrast, previous studies in other contexts may have shown a positive relationship due to stronger environmental consciousness or more direct environmental impacts from tourism activities.

Moreover, the positive relationship between perceived economic impacts and attitudes towards gay tourism is supported, (H6). This suggests that the higher economic benefits that the residents gain and the lower the costs that residents must bear from gay tourism, the more supportive attitudes shown by the residents (Sharpley, 2014). This supports the previous studies that suggest the cost-benefit relationship in other types of tourism in India (Wani et al., 2024), Malaysia (Eslami et al., 2018) and gay tourism in Portugal (Sousa-Silva & Vareiro, 2023). The results show a significant positive relationship between perceived socio-cultural impacts and residents' attitudes towards gay tourism (H7). This suggests that when residents perceive greater socio-cultural benefits, such as enhanced cultural exchange and diversity, they are more likely to support gay tourism. On contrary, the study does not support the relationship between perceived environmental impacts and attitudes towards gay tourism with high  $p$ -value of 0.249 (H8). It contradicts with previous study by (Wani et al., 2024) where though it positively links to quality of life and support towards tourism, the relationship was found not to be very strong. In the present study, the absence of a



significant relationship may be because Bali is not explicitly marketed as a gay destination, and there is no concentrated area specializing in gay tourism. From the residents' perspective, without a visible concentration of gay tourism activities that could directly affect the local environment, e.g. venues or events, environmental concerns specific to gay tourism may not be visible accordingly. This differs from places like Mexico, where specific areas for gay tourism, e.g. gay nudist beach, are more likely to generate noticeable environmental impacts that influence residents' attitudes (Hughes et al., 2010).

## CONCLUSION

The current study explores the investigation of factors affecting the attitudes and support by the residents towards gay tourism. The residents' place image is taken into place in investigating the overall model. Additionally, the overlooked SET framework in studying gay tourism analyzes the residents' attitudes and support towards gay tourism by drawing the triple bottom line dimensions of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts perceived by the residents. This study is the first to have these variables considered in analyzing gay tourism. This study explains the problem aforementioned where it: 1) enriches the discourse on residents' attitudes towards gay tourism; 2) examines the residents' point of view instead of tourists' standpoint; and, 3) explores the research on destinations that are not promoting gay tourism while catering gay tourism. As per the findings of the study, important practical implications is for the stakeholders involved in the tourism industry. They could adopt the community-based concept of gay tourism in Bali by emphasizing economic benefit, people's participation, and responsible tourism. In this way, for example, focused promotional activities on the creation of jobs, income opportunities for residents and development of the city infrastructure, can help the population to rationally understand the vicious economic and other developments without creating discordant elements. Involvement in the community, which may take place in some workshops or cultural exchanges, can also prevent stereotypes from existing since it encourages acceptance and understanding thereby dealing with the social context. It is also possible that such residents may actively support the project as they will consider it as protecting the environment and therefore such practices should be adopted.

Not least importantly, though the environmental impacts are not rated very highly in this study, concern for sustainability should also be a priority of stakeholders. This will further help position Bali as a responsible tourism destination, thus making it more attractive to a wider market than just gay tourists by facilitating eco-friendly practices and educating residents and tourists alike on environmental conservation. This study suggests that when residents have positive image of their place, they are more likely to develop supportive attitudes towards gay tourism. A strong place image fosters pride and a sense of ownership, which can translate into more welcoming and inclusive attitudes towards different types of tourism, including niche markets like gay tourism. Therefore, enhancing the overall place image through sustainable development, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship could contribute to increased resident support for gay tourism. These findings contribute to the theoretical landscape along several dimensions, through the variable of sexual prejudice and discrimination, this study has illustrated how general social attitudes affect residents' support for gay tourism. SET has been extended by its application in the context of gay tourism, showing that support from residents is related closely to perceived economic and socio-cultural benefits; it therefore fills the gap in the literature, as these kinds of niche tourism markets, such as gay tourism, have not typically been considered. The study also introduces the aspect of residents' place image regarding gay tourism-a new twist on how the residents' own perceptions about their place affect their levels of support. While the literature on this topic remains in its early stages, this study provides a meaningful contribution to advancing the understanding of gay tourism in non-Western contexts.

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