

Opportunities for Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer/Questioning Tourism in Vietnam

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Abstract : The lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer/questioning tourist (LGBTQ+) travels more frequently, spends more money on travel, and is more likely to travel internationally compared to their straight/heterosexual counterparts. For Vietnam, this represents a huge opportunity to increase international tourism, considering social advancements and recognition of the LGBTQ+ have greatly increased in the past few years in Vietnam. For example, Vietnam's Health Ministry confirmed in 2022 that same-sex attraction and being transgender is not a mental health condition. A robust hospitality ecosystem of LGBTQ+ tourism suppliers already exists in Vietnam catering to LGBTQ+ tourists (e.g., Gay Hanoi Tours, VietPride). Vietnam is a safe and welcoming destination with incredible nature, cosmopolitan cities, and friendly people; however, there is a dearth of academic and industry research that has examined how LGBTQ+ international tourists perceive Vietnam as an LGBTQ+ friendly destination. To rectify this gap, this research examines Vietnam as an LGBTQ+ destination in order to provide government officials, destination marketers, and industry practitioners with insight into this increasingly visible tourist market segment. A self-administered survey instrument was administered to n=375 international LGBTQ+ tourists to examine their perceptions of Vietnam. A factor analysis found three categories of LGBTQ+ factors of visitation to Vietnam: safety and security (Eigenvalue = 4.12, variance = 32.45, $\alpha = .82$); LGBTQ+ attractions (Eigenvalue = 3.65 variance = 24.23, $\alpha = .75$); and friendly interactions (Eigenvalue = 3.71, variance = 10.45, $\alpha = .96$). Multiple regression was used to examine LGBTQ+ visitation factors and intention to visit Vietnam, $F=12.20$ (2, 127), $p < .001$, $R^2 = .56$. Safety and security ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$), LGBTQ+ attractions ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < .001$) and friendly interactions ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$) are predictors to visit Vietnam. Results are consistent with previous research that highlight safety/security is of utmost importance to the community when traveling. Attractions, such as LGBTQ+ tours, suppliers, and festivals can also be used as a pull factor in encouraging tourism. Implications/limitations will be discussed.

Keywords : tourism, LGBTQ, vietnam, regression

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