



“Gender” in English Political News in Thailand: A Keyword and Collocational Analysis of LGBT

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how LGBT people are represented in Thai political online news discourse by analyzing the use of the term “gender.” Utilizing a corpus of English-language articles from Prachathai and Bangkok Post published between 2020 and 2024, the research employed corpus-assisted discourse analysis, combining quantitative keyword and collocation analyses with qualitative thematic analysis. The quantitative analysis identified “gender” as the most prominent keyword, uncovering key themes such as “gender equality,” “identity,” “recognition,” “markers,” and “neutrality.” Collocational analysis provided further insights, revealing strong connections between “gender” and terms with the aforementioned emerging themes. Also, the qualitative thematic analysis added context and nuanced interpretations to these findings. The results highlighted both advancements in LGBT advocacy and ongoing issues, such as discrimination and negative representations. This study sheds light on the news media’s role in shaping societal views on gender and sexuality within a specific socio-political framework. The use of methodological triangulation enhances the reliability and depth of the interpretations.

	Keywords: Corpus-assisted discourse analysis, language and gender, online political news, LGBT, Thailand
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Introduction

In recent years, discussions surrounding gender and LGBT issues have gained considerable attention in Thailand's political news, mirroring global trends toward greater inclusivity and diversity (UNDP, 2019). Scholars (e.g., McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Van Dijk, 1998) emphasize the media's significant role in shaping public perceptions, both reflecting and influencing societal attitudes toward gender diversity. Media discourse not only mirrors social realities but also plays an active role in shaping them. Particularly in this study, media discourse is defined as online news discourse. In the Thai context, the socio-political landscape is uniquely characterized by the coexistence of traditional cultural norms and progressive movements advocating for gender equality and LGBT rights. Despite Thailand's reputation for tolerance, legal protections, and recognition for LGBT individuals remain uneven (Winter, 2011). Also, Winter (2011) highlights that although public support for LGBT rights in Thailand is on the rise, political news narratives often lag, framing these issues through traditional moral perspectives that can marginalize LGBT voices.

Entman (1993) has shown that the language used in news media can significantly impact public opinion and policymaking. The increasing awareness of LGBT issues in Thailand's political news highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the language shaping these discussions. Therefore, this study aims to explore how online political news discourse constructs the term "*gender*" for LGBT people in Thailand.

Although LGBT-related topics have become increasingly visible in Thai news media, there remains a lack of linguistic research specifically examining how the term "*gender*" is constructed in English-language political news discourse in Thailand. Previous studies, such as those by Chuaikun and Wijitsopon (2021), explored LGBT representations in the Bangkok Post but did not focus on the linguistic patterns surrounding the term "*gender*." Likewise, Klomkaew and Kanokpermpoon (2024) investigated the use of terms, e.g., "*trans*" and "*transgender*" in digital media, yet their work did not address political news regarding the term "*gender*." This reveals a significant gap in the literature, particularly in studies that employ corpus-assisted discourse analysis to examine how "*gender*" is framed in relation to LGBT issues within Thai political contexts. Specifically, this paper aims to explore LGBT-related topics through a keyword and collocational analysis, addressing the following two research questions:

- 1) What are the key collocates of the term “gender” in English political news discourse in Thailand related to LGBT issues?
- 2) How is the term “gender” discursively represented in English political news in Thailand regarding LGBT topics?

Review of Literature

This section provides a brief overview of Thailand's political context, outlines the use of corpus-assisted discourse analysis, and reviews relevant past studies.

Historical Context of LGBT Political Issues in Thailand

Thailand's history of LGBT rights reflects a blend of acceptance and ongoing challenges. Pre-modern Thai society displayed a degree of fluidity in gender and sexuality, influenced by the Buddhist religion and beliefs that were inclusive of diverse sexual orientations (Winter, 2011). However, colonial influences during the 19th and 20th centuries introduced stricter gender norms, leading to the marginalization of non-heteronormative identities (Sakdinan, 2014). The economic growth of the 1980s and 1990s brought greater visibility to LGBT communities, marked by the rise of pride parades and cultural events in urban centers (Bennett, 2010). While homosexuality was decriminalized in 1956, legal recognition for LGBT people has remained limited, particularly in areas such as marriage and family rights (UNDP, 2019).

In the past few years, Thailand's political and legislative environment regarding LGBT rights has experienced significant developments. Between 2020 and 2024, various legislative proposals and discussions emerged in parliament concerning same-sex marriage and civil union laws. Notably, in 2022, the Civil Partnership Bill received cabinet approval in principle; however, it faced criticism for providing fewer legal rights than those afforded to heterosexual couples (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Alongside this, the proposed Marriage Equality Bill, which seeks to revise the Civil and Commercial Code to allow marriage irrespective of gender, attracted widespread support from advocacy groups and opposition parties. Nevertheless, by 2023, efforts to achieve marriage equality had gained considerable momentum, especially following the electoral victory of the Move Forward Party, which openly endorsed comprehensive LGBT rights (Bangkok Post, 2023). Simultaneously, mainstream news media platforms increasingly featured discussions on gender diversity and non-binary identities, bolstered by youth-led movements and digital activism. Despite persistent opposition from conservative factions and bureaucratic obstacles, these initiatives indicate a growing shift toward both legal reforms and

societal acceptance of LGBT individuals. All in all, accounting for Thailand's socio-political evolution, particularly the legislative and discursive changes from 2020 to 2024, is essential to understanding how LGBT issues are represented in political news and how such representations intersect with broader debates on gender equality and identity rights.

Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis

Corpus linguistics encompasses a broad range of applications in fields, such as linguistics, applied linguistics, and language teaching. In this study, however, corpus linguistics is applied with a focus on quantitative methods, particularly keyword and collocation analyses. These methodologies have proven valuable in linguistic research, especially within political discourse, as they uncover patterns in language use that reflect underlying biases and societal attitudes (Woods, 2012). Kijratanakoson (2022) highlighted the integration of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis, using keyword and collocation analyses for methodological triangulation combining quantitative and qualitative approaches.

In political contexts, keyword analysis has been instrumental in examining politicians' electoral language, revealing how word choices reflect broader ideological positions (Kübler, 2021). This demonstrates the critical role of language in political communication and emphasizes the importance of analyzing public narratives. Baker (2006) further supports this by demonstrating the value of keyword analysis in understanding how specific terms are framed in public discourse, shaping perceptions of social issues such as gender and sexuality.

In addition to keyword analysis, collocational analysis has also been widely employed in political discourse. Pritchard (2016) analyzed environmental rhetoric to uncover ideological stances embedded in language use, highlighting the interplay between language and power. Similarly, studies on LGBT issues have utilized this technique to examine societal attitudes toward sexual minorities. For instance, Koller (2008) analyzed British newspaper coverage of same-sex marriage, identifying collocates of terms such as “*marriage*” and “*rights*” that perpetuate stereotypes and biases. By employing this method, this study seeks to analyze Thai political news related to LGBT issues, revealing the linguistic patterns that shape societal attitudes toward gender and sexuality and deepening understanding of the media's influence on political narratives.

Previous Studies

Recent research by scholars taking an international perspective, such as Bartley and Benitez-Castro (2016), analyzed the discourse on homosexuality in Irish newspapers during the 2008 economic downturn. Using corpus-assisted discourse analysis (CAD) and appraisal theory, they uncovered predominantly negative portrayals of gays and lesbians, emphasizing the stereotypes of immorality, corruption, and abnormality. This evaluative language reinforced societal homophobia and ideologically biased reporting.

Specifically in the Thai context, some scholars, such as Klomkaew and Kanokpermpoon (2024) and Kijratanakoson (2022, 2023), employed CAD to examine news media portrayals of LGBT individuals and issues across diverse contexts. To begin with, Klomkaew and Kanokpermpoon (2024) explored language use in English media, distinguishing between positive terms, e.g., “*transgender*” and “*trans*,” and negative ones, e.g., “*transsexual*” and “*tranny*.” Their findings highlighted themes on advocacy, equality, bias, discrimination, and derogatory language, showcasing a wide range of representations from supportive to marginalizing. In a similar vein, Kijratanakoson (2022) studied how Thai English-language media (2000-2019) depicted male sex workers (MSWs) through keyword and collocation analyses. The findings revealed neutral and non-offensive language that minimized their societal threat. However, challenges and behaviors faced by MSWs were only indirectly portrayed, contrasting with explicit representations of groups like Thai authorities or individuals in the sex industry. Additionally, Kijratanakoson (2023) further investigated the Bangkok Post’s coverage of transgender rights in Thailand. Key themes included legal barriers (e.g., restrictive marriage laws), societal discrimination (e.g., challenges in teaching and blood donation), and progress in advocacy (e.g., workplace policies allowing gender-congruent expression). All in all, these studies reveal that online news media portrayals of LGBT issues are shaped by their socio-political contexts, balancing advocacy efforts and the reinforcement of stereotypes. This is aligned with the stated gap in which there remains a lack of linguistic research specifically examining how the term “*gender*” is constructed in English-language political news discourse in Thailand. Previous research creates a foundation for analyzing the keyword “*gender*” in LGBT political news discourse.

Methodology

Research Design

In order to answer to the research questions, this study employed a mixed-methods approach, with the quantitative component centered on corpus analysis, which included keyword and collocation analyses. This is to answer the first research question in discovering the highest frequency of keyword and the frequent collocates. In the quantitative phase, corpus linguistics played a pivotal role in data collection, with the primary dataset comprising English political news in Thailand. The consolidation of this data resulted in the creation of specialized corpora. At this stage, corpus analysis was essential, utilizing keyword and collocation analyses as primary tools to organize the data before transitioning to the qualitative analysis. On the other hand, the qualitative phase focused on discourse analysis (DA), with an emphasis on thematic content analysis. This approach was used to address the second research question, which explores how the term “*gender*” is discursively represented in English-language political news in Thailand in relation to LGBT topics. Moreover, this phase adopted an inductive approach, allowing the data from the quantitative phase to inform emerging themes and uncover representations of LGBT individuals within online news discourse. In summary, the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses were integrated through methodological triangulation to ensure a comprehensive and reliable interpretation of the results.

Data Collection

This study employed corpus-assisted discourse analysis, integrating corpus linguistics and discourse analysis. In addition, news articles were selected based on publication years from 2020 to 2024 and their relevance to LGBT-related issues in Thai digital news, reflecting contemporary political topics concerning LGBT people in Thailand. The inclusion criteria required articles to specify publication dates and journalists’ names (Kijratanakoson, 2022) and focus exclusively on LGBT issues, excluding content addressing only male- or female-specific topics. Articles were limited to English-language publications by Thai digital news agencies operating in Thailand. To compile the Thai Digital News Corpus (TDNC), Thai digital news articles were compiled using AntConc version 4.2.0. The analysis focused on political news articles from the Prachatai English and the Bangkok Post. The former is an independent news outlet emphasizing reliable reporting within the context of restricted media freedom (Prachatai, n.d.), while the latter is Thailand’s oldest English-language newspaper and holds a longstanding reputation for quality

journalism (Bangkok Post, 2019). Thus, analyzing LGBT representation through these platforms could provide nuanced insights into the research focus. As such, 120 articles were screened to ensure relevance to LGBT political issues, with data extracted using keywords such as *LGBT*, *gay*, *transgender*, *ladyboy*, *trans*, *Tom*, *lesbian*, and *LGBT rights*. All in all, the TDNC corpus comprised 89,906 tokens, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

News Agencies for the Compilation of the TDNC

Genre	News Agency	Country	Years of Publication	No. of Article	No. of Token
Political News	The Prachathai English	Thailand	2020-2024	55	53,967
	The Bangkok post	Thailand	2020-2024	65	35,939
Total				120	89,906

Keyword Analysis

Keywords are “words that occur significantly more frequently in one corpus compared to a reference corpus” (Subtirelu & Baker, 2018, p. 113). In this study, the target corpus (TDNC) was compared to the Leipzig Corpora Collection, which served as the reference corpus (Goldhahn et al., 2012). The reference corpus was drawn from the News category, aligning with the study’s discourse focus and covering the same time frame (i.e., 2020–2024). Comprising 2,277,507 tokens, at this point, the size of the reference corpus seemed too large and might affect the comparison of the target corpus. Arguably, the reference corpus’s larger size was consistent with Brezina’s (2018) recommendation for effective keyword analysis. Larger reference corpora provide more reliable comparisons by accurately reflecting word frequencies and highlighting differences in corpora. Keywords, identified through a statistical analysis in this study, serve as linguistic markers, revealing patterns emphasized by text producers (Baker, 2004). The analysis involved determining lexical items with significantly higher frequencies compared to the reference corpus (Subtirelu & Baker, 2018). Keywords were restricted to content words (Mautner, 2016), and significance was determined using a log-likelihood score of 6.63 or higher ($p < 0.01$) as the threshold (Gabrielatos & Marchi, 2011).

Collocation Analysis

Collocation refers to the statistically significant co-occurrence of words within a corpus, offering insights into lexical associations (Feola & Jaworska, 2019). This approach identifies patterns that reveal how specific terms are represented, providing valuable insights for qualitative research (Kania, 2020). Scholars argue that collocations evoke cultural associations, where one word triggers related notions (Wilkinson, 2019; Kijratanakoson & Gadavanij, 2022). For instance, the frequent co-occurrence of “muscular” with “men” may evoke masculinity. To enhance validity and reliability, this study employed a collocation analysis to triangulate the findings, complementing keyword analysis. Using LancsBox corpus software, developed at Lancaster University (Brezina et al., 2015), the analysis included automatic part-of-speech tagging and explored representations of LGBT issues in Thai digital news. Significant collocates needed to meet three criteria: content words only (Mautner, 2016), an MI score of three or higher (Reyes-Menendez et al., 2019), and a span of five words on either side of the node (Hunt & Jaworska, 2019). In a nutshell, the keyword “gender” was selected as the node with the top 25 collocations reported.

Figure 1

The Screenshot of the Node “Gender” as Appeared in AntConc Software

	File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1	Prachathai ...	...against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOT),	gender	equality and LGBTQ rights activist groups Queer Riot, Femir
2	Prachathai ...	... a protest at the Ministry of Education to call for	gender	equality and LGBTQ rights in the school system. The
3	Prachathai ...	... gram pages Feminist FooFoo, which publish content about	gender	equality and LGBTQ rights, and said that they would
4	Prachathai ...	... the “Three Miracle Laws” campaign which aims to promote	gender	equality and LGBTQ rights. The three bills are: Proposed ,
5	Prachathai ...	... ose who defend sexual and reproductive rights or fight for	gender	equality and LGBTQ rights are often considered “controvers
6	Prachathai ...	... that even people in the movement do not understand how	gender	equality and democracy are related, or think that gender
7	Prachathai ...	... venting further motions from being submitted in the case.	Gender	equality and democracy must go hand-in-hand, says
8	Prachathai ...	... BTQIA+ community. Do these companies really care about	gender	equality and accept LGBTQIA+ rights in the workplace? Or
9	Prachathai ...	... discrimination is human right’: a young activist’s fight for	gender	equality and democracy Mimi, 17, is a gender equality activ
10	Prachathai ...	... the Code to redefine terms under the law to ensure	gender	equality and diversity. Under the bill, relevant agencies wou
11	Prachathai ...	... the Civil and Commercial Code to redefine terms to ensure	gender	equality and diversity. The House’s approval of all
12	Prachathai ...	... the Civil and Commercial Code to redefine terms to ensure	gender	equality and diversity. All four bills received 369 of 380 vot
13	Prachathai ...	... democratic country.” Chumaporn “Waddao” Taengkliang, a	gender	equality and LGBT rights activist, also gave a speech
14	Prachathai ...	... dership position. Women and LGBTQ activists who work on	gender	equality and women’s sexual and reproductive rights also
15	Prachathai ...	... private organisations, announced their intention to ensure	gender	equality in six areas. Among the organisations and compan

As illustrated in Figure 1 above, the node “gender,” generated by the AntConc corpus software from the earlier stage of keyword analysis, was selected as the primary node or search word for this current study due to its highest frequency compared to other keywords of the whole corpus. Furthermore, the surrounding words and phrases on both the left and the

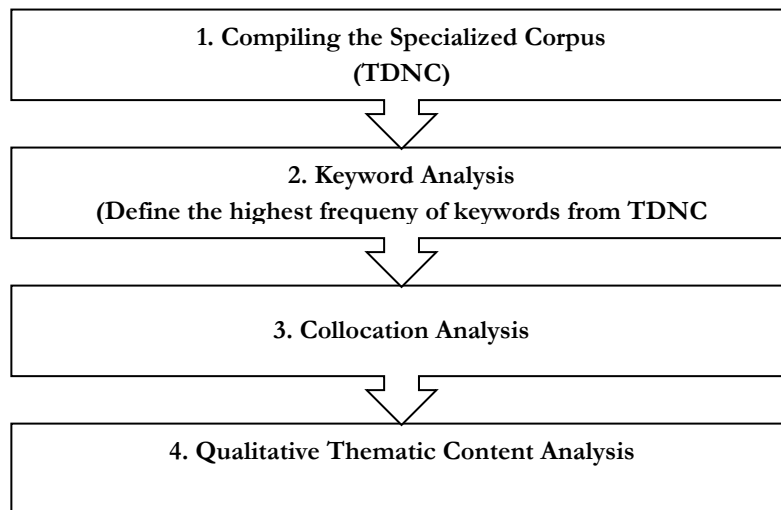
right of the node represent significant collocates, which contribute to the identification of emerging themes. This is particularly valuable for the qualitative thematic content analysis conducted in this present study.

Thematic Content Analysis

Thematic content analysis was employed as an additional methodological triangulation between corpus linguistics techniques, such as keyword and collocation analyses, and discourse analysis. This phase followed an inductive approach, prioritizing the data to identify emerging themes from the previous two stages. The analysis focused on examining each concordance line from the Thai Digital News Corpus (TDNC), specifically investigating text segments containing significant keywords and collocates identified in earlier analyses. The qualitative analysis extended beyond the word-level investigations of keyword and collocation analyses by examining the broader textual context surrounding the identified node word. For example, if the word “good” is identified as a significant keyword, without qualitative exploration, it may remain unclear whether the term emphasizes “*positive attributes*” or “*critiques of good qualities*” (Kijratanakoson & Gadavanij, 2022, p. 69). Thus, the qualitative analysis provides essential interpretative depth to the data. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the contextual nuances and thematic representations within the corpus, complementing the insights gained from quantitative analyses.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings, and to enhance the reliability of the qualitative analysis, this study employed intra-rater reliability as a key method of validating the findings. In this case, one of the researchers, who also acted as the sole coder, carefully re-examined the dataset multiple times to ensure that the interpretation of the data remained stable and accurate throughout the analysis. A structured intra-rater reliability process was employed across the three stages to maintain consistency throughout the analysis. Initially, coding was conducted after data collection using thematic content analysis to categorize concordance lines as obtained from the keyword “gender” into major themes. In the second stage, the data were revisited after a break to minimize bias and reassess earlier coding decisions, documenting reflections in a journal. Finally, a subset of data was rechecked during the writing phase to ensure alignment with the study’s objectives. In sum, this multi-stage process enhanced the reliability and credibility of findings, particularly given the complex nature of LGBT representation in political discourse.

Figure 2 below summarizes the key concepts, methods, and analytical stages of the methodology used in the present study.

Figure 2*The Processes of Key Concepts, Methods and the Analytical Stages*

Research Findings

This section summarizes the key findings, highlighting the top five keywords and 25 collocations. Thematic content analysis complemented the quantitative results, focusing on “*gender*” as the most significant keyword, aligning with the study’s objective of examining LGBT representation in Thailand’s political news discourse.

The Top Five Keywords

Table 2 summarizes the results of the keyword analysis, evaluated using two primary metrics: normalized frequency and keyness score. At this juncture, the normalized frequency was calculated per 10,000 words, considering that the target corpus contained fewer than 100,000 tokens (Rühlemann, 2010). A significance threshold of 6.63 or higher was employed, adjusted using the Bonferroni correction to maintain a significance level of $p < 0.01$ (Gabrielatos & Marchi, 2011). Consequently, out of 629 identified keywords derived from the 89,906 tokens of the target corpus (TDNC) in comparison with the 2,277,507 tokens of the reference corpus, the most prominent of the top five keywords from TDNC are detailed below.

Table 2*Top 5 Keywords Obtained from TDNC*

Keyword	Freq. in Target Corpus	Freq. in Reference Corpus	Normalized Freq. in Target Corpus	Normalized Freq. in Reference Corpus	Keyness (LL)
gender	623	115	69.29	0.50	3449.77
marriage	604	139	67.18	0.61	3249.53
Thailand	429	52	47.72	0.23	2482.79
rights	532	361	59.17	1.59	2305.93
equality	400	62	44.49	0.27	2258.80

Based on Table 2, the data highlighted a set of positive keywords. In summary, all of the identified keywords were categorized as positive, as their frequency of occurrence in the target corpus surpassed that of the reference corpus. Furthermore, all the keywords exhibited significantly higher normalized frequency in the target corpus compared to the reference corpus, further substantiating their classification as positive keywords central to this study. Notably, the top five keywords, which were ranked highest in the analysis, include “gender” (ranked 1st), “marriage” (2nd), “Thailand” (3rd), “rights” (4th), and “equality” (5th), respectively. The primary focus of this study centers on the keyword “gender,” which appeared most frequently in the Thai Digital News Corpus (TDNC). A total of 623 concordance lines containing the term were closely examined. Each occurrence was analyzed and thematically categorized based on patterns emerging from the specialized corpus. The following section presents the key themes that emerged from this analysis.

The Emerging Themes of the Keyword “Gender” from TDNC

The following Table 3 below depicts the emerging themes of the key term “gender.”

Table 3*The Emerging Themes, Percentage, and Raw Frequency of the Keyword “Gender”*

Keyword	Theme	Percent	Raw Frequency (n=623)
gender	Gender Equality	19.42%	121
	Gender Identity	10.75%	67
	Gender Recognition	9.31%	58

Keyword	Theme	Percent	Raw Frequency (n=623)
	Gender Marker	5.46%	34
	Gender Neutrality	5.14%	32
	Miscellaneous	49.92%	311
Total		100%	623

The analysis in Table 3 reveals that the keyword “gender” reflected five main emerging themes as obtained from the TDNC. Out of a total of 623 occurrences in the concordance lines, the first emerging theme, “*Gender Equality*,” appeared 121 times (19.42%), followed by “*Gender Identity*,” which occurred 67 times (10.75%). Additionally, “*Gender Recognition*” was noted 58 times (9.31%), while “*Gender Marker*” had 34 occurrences (5.46%). The final sub-theme, “*Gender Neutrality*,” was observed 32 times (5.14%). In contrast, 49.92% of the occurrences, or 311 instances, were categorized as “*Miscellaneous*.” This was because the evidence from the concordance lines did not exhibit recurring patterns or connections to the five identified themes, and these instances were thus excluded from the analysis in the present study.

In the next section, the findings in terms of collocational analysis as performed by LancsBox software are demonstrated.

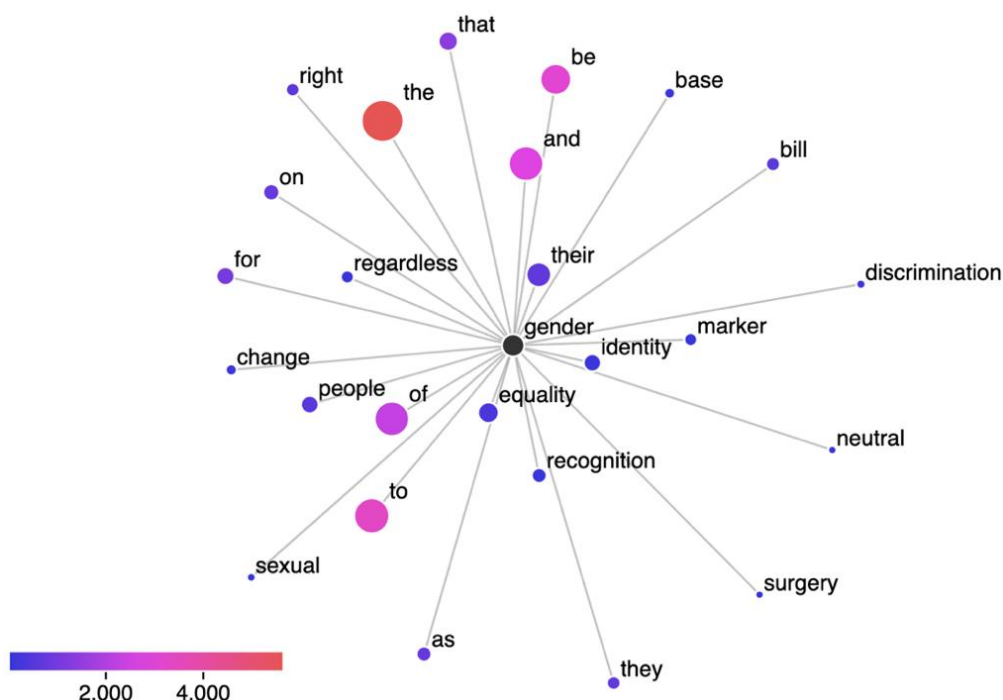
Collocation Analysis of “*Gender*” from TDNC

In contrast to the previous step, which focused on word frequency, this stage analyzed the close association between two words. The purpose of this collocational analysis was to gain deeper insights into the representation of LGBT people and related issues by examining the collocates found in the digital news within the TDNC. The keyword “gender” was used as a main node word to search for collocations. The reason behind this is that the most frequent keyword occurred among 629 keywords from the TDNC widened the scope of the analysis. As such, the following visualization demonstrates the collocations of the keyword “gender.”

in the legend beneath the figure. Prominent colors were associated with grammatical collocates, which appeared frequently but were excluded from the study's analysis as well. Complementing Figure 3, Figure 4 presents the top 25 collocates in close proximity to the keyword, serving to triangulate and confirm the emerging themes identified through the keyword analysis.

Figure 4

Top 25 Collocations from TDNC as Generated by LancsBox



By focusing on the top 25 collocations in close proximity to the main node, terms such as “equality,” “identity,” “recognition,” “marker,” and “neutral” were found to have a strong associative relationship with the node, reflecting a meaningful lexical connection. Interestingly, these five collocates had already been identified in the keyword analysis as the five main emerging themes of the keyword “gender.” This suggested that the findings from the keyword analysis aligned with those from the collocational analysis. Table 4 below presents the top 25 collocations extracted from TDNC. Grammatical words, as shown in Figures 3 and 4, were excluded from this analysis.

Table 4*The Emerging Themes, Percentage and Raw Frequency of the Keyword “Gender”*

No.	Collocate	Frequency Collocation	MI Value
1	identity	86	6.8
2	recognition	80	6.9
3	equality	108	5.2
4	regardless	48	7.0
5	people	75	7.2
6	bill	61	3.9
7	discrimination	37	5.1
8	change	31	5.6
9	neutral	27	7.2
10	sexual	29	5.6
11	diversity	27	6.5
12	legal	31	4.8
13	surgery	26	6.0
14	markers	24	7.3
15	marker	24	7.3
16	gender	46	3.4
17	rights	42	3.5
18	said	52	3.1
19	marriage	38	3.1
20	ensure	19	5.5
21	allow	20	4.9
22	binary	18	5.6
23	orientation	17	6.7
24	expression	17	6.4
25	law	23	3.5

As shown in Table 4 above, the top 25 collocations of the node “gender” are listed, focusing on content words. The selection of “gender” as the node was justified by its status as the most frequent keyword among all keywords, where it ranked first. At this juncture, Table 4 clearly demonstrates that the top 25 collocations, generated using the latest version of the LancsBox software, were ranked based on both collocation frequency and Mutual Information (MI) values. However, relying solely on MI values for ranking posed challenges for data interpretation. For example, the collocate “titles” (ranked 38th) had the highest MI score but appeared only 11 times in the corpus. In contrast, the collocate “identity” (ranked 1st) had a much higher frequency of 86 occurrences but a relatively lower MI value of 6.8. This discrepancy highlights a limitation of using MI values alone, as high MI scores do not necessarily correspond to high-frequency terms. As a result, “titles”

was not included in the top 25 collocations reported here. To address this limitation, both collocation frequency and MI values were used proportionately to provide a more balanced and comprehensive analysis. This section also aimed to provide substantive evidence of the connection between keyword analysis and collocational patterns. Notably, Table 4 aligns closely with the earlier keyword analysis, with collocates such as “*identity*” (1st), “*recognition*” (2nd), “*equality*” (3rd), “*neutral*” (9th), and both the singular and plural forms of “*marker*” (15th) and “*markers*” (14th) reinforcing the key themes that emerged in the previous analysis.

In addition to the findings from the two stages of the quantitative phase, the following section presents evidence derived from the concordance lines of TDNC as part of the qualitative analysis. This qualitative component serves to complement the quantitative findings, enhancing the validity and reliability of the overall findings of the study.

The Emerging Themes from Keyword and Collocation Analyses

In this qualitative phase, each main theme identified in the previous two stages was substantiated with evidence in the form of sample sentences extracted from the concordance lines. The extracted samples supporting each major theme were categorized into two groups: “*factual information*” and “*public opinion*.” This classification ensured that the samples represented a diverse range of individuals and institutions as reported through online news discourses. Focusing on the most frequently occurring keyword, “*gender*,” the term was often used to refer to individuals with diverse sexual identities, including non-binary people. While the analysis initially yielded six major themes related to this keyword, only five were retained for in-depth discussion, as the category labeled “*Miscellaneous*” was excluded from the thematic interpretation.

Gender Equality

The first theme, “*Gender Equality*,” emphasizes the promotion and support of the rights of all genders, including both binary and non-binary individuals in Thailand. Examples of factual information (1) to (3) along with opinions (4) to (6) are illustrated in the extracts, respectively.

(1) The report notes that such attacks intensify when women and LGBTQ activists challenge unequal power relations and tradition norms of gender [...] and those who defend sexual and reproductive rights or fight for *gender equality and LGBTQ rights* are often considered “controversial”. (*The Prachathai*, 4 February 2021)

(2) The government previously promised to **help support gender equality** under the law but also during **pro-LGBT events**, such as **Pride**. (*The Bangkok Post*, 23 December 2023)

(3) The student activist group Bad Student staged a protest at the Ministry of Education to **call for gender equality and LGBTQ rights** in the school system. (*The Prachathai*, 22 June 2021)

(4) He said that it is a good thing that every sector of the society approved of the bill and that it is the “first door to open toward building **gender equality in Thailand.**” (*The Prachathai*, 28 March 2024)

(5) Chumaporn “Waddao” Taengkliang, a **gender equality and LGBTQ rights** activist, also gave a speech on the main stage of the protest during the night, stressing the importance of **listening to women’s and LGBT people’s voices** and seeing them as equal to those of men. (*The Prachathai*, 30 September 2020)

(6) Activist Kornkanok Khumta said that even people in the movement do not understand how **gender equality and democracy** are related or think that gender justice is not a priority. (*The Prachathai*, 4 February 2021)

The selected samples (1) to (3) convey factual information by detailing confirmed events, such as protests advocating for gender equality and LGBTQ rights and government statements supporting gender equality at events such as Pride. These samples provided objective accounts of public actions and official commitments without speculation or subjective interpretation. In contrast, samples (4) to (6) reflect public opinion, showcasing activists’ views on gender equality and LGBTQ rights in Thailand. Moreover, they emphasized legislative progress, the need to amplify women’s and LGBTQ voices, and concerns about misunderstandings linking gender equality to democracy, as well as related issues, e.g., sexual harassment and insensitivity. Taken together, these samples capture diverse perspectives within the public online news discourse on topics regarding LGBTQ people.

Gender Identity

Within the similar keyword, a second theme on “*Gender Identity*” emerged in Thai online news, addressing societal and institutional challenges. The discourse also linked gender identity to broader issues, such as same-sex marriage and HIV stigma, reflecting its increasing influence on Thailand’s legal, educational, and health systems. This is evident through the excerpts (7) to (9) regarding factual information and excerpts (10) to (12) for public opinions.

(7) Trans rights activist posted on her Facebook page that, for the past two years, Worawalun has been applying for teaching positions, but her applications were **rejected due to her gender identity**. (*The Prachathai*, 29 April 2020)

(8) The Ministry of Education must amend the 2020 haircut regulations to **allow LGBTQ students** to choose the hairstyle that matches their **gender identity**. (*The Prachathai*, 30 July 2020)

(9) If enacted, the bill would **allow two individuals to legally marry** regardless of their sexual orientation or *gender identity*. (*The Prachathai*, 3 July 2023)

(10) “It is affirming our bodies and our *gender identity*, and leads to **marriage equality**, because I wouldn’t want to get married while still being called “Miss.” I would want to get married while also affirming my gender,” he said. (*The Prachathai*, 11 May 2023)

(11) I identify as non-binary, but they **didn’t care about my *gender identity***, and what was so shocking to me was that they have never heard of LGBT. (*The Prachathai*, 18 June 2021)

(12) Young patients growing up with HIV, despite their *gender identity*, would be **criticised by healthcare providers** over the possibility of them spreading the disease to their partners ..., Mr Niwat said. (*The Bangkok Post*, 16 June 2024)

Based on the extracts, examples (7) to (9) highlight challenges related to gender identity and LGBTQ rights in various contexts. The first discussed workplace discrimination faced by a trans activist, emphasizing the need for inclusivity. Example (8) advocated for education policy reforms allowing LGBTQ students to choose hairstyles aligning with their gender identity, promoting affirmation in schools. Sample (9) supported a proposed bill to legalize marriage regardless of sexual orientation or gender, stressing legal recognition. Regarding opinions, examples (10) to (12) focused on public perspectives and personal stories. They included affirming gender identity in marriage, frustration over societal ignorance of LGBTQ identities, and the stigma HIV-positive youth faced from healthcare providers. Together, these examples highlight the need for greater acceptance of gender identity and LGBTQ issues in Thai society.

Gender Recognition

Moving on to the “*Gender Recognition*” theme, both factual information and public opinion on this issue appeared to be discussed in parliament, where the keyword “*gender*” frequently co-occurred with the term “*recognition*.” This likely refers to legal frameworks or bills related to gender recognition. The concordance lines extracted from TDNC are evident in the excerpts (13) to (18) below, respectively.

(13) Parliament on Wednesday voted to reject the Move Forward Party (MFP)’s ***Gender Recognition bill***, which proposed to allow trans and non-binary people to change gender markers ... (*The Prachathai*, 23 February 2024)

(14) A civil society network has also launched a petition to introduce a ***gender recognition bill to parliament***. Called the Recognition of Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristic Bill. (*The Prachathai*, 23 February 2024)

(15) The event was held recently to discuss the ***gender recognition law*** and collect opinions at Thammasat University Tha Prachan Campus by the House committee on children ... (*The Prachathai*, 23 February 2024)

(16) Some employers said that transgender people would only be hired if they dressed according to their sex assigned at birth, not their gender identity because **the lack of legal gender recognition hampers transgender** people's ability to get jobs, often resulting in automatic rejections. (*The Prachathai*, 16 December 2021)

(17) Knight said. "While **legal gender recognition** will not ease all the hardships transgender people in Thailand face, it is a crucial step toward equality and nondiscrimination." (*The Prachathai*, 16 December 2021)

(18) She said the bill on **gender recognition and the rights of transgender people**, advocated by the main opposition Move Forward Party, was voted down ... (*The Bangkok Post*, 15 May 2024)

At this juncture, samples (13) to (15) provided factual updates on gender recognition legislation in Thailand. The first reported parliament's rejection of the Move Forward Party's Gender Recognition bill, which aimed to let trans and non-binary people change gender markers on official documents. Moreover, the second highlighted a civil society network's petition for a similar bill, while the third described a public event at Thammasat University, where a parliamentary committee gathered opinions on the law. Conversely, samples (16) to (18) expressed public views on transgender challenges. They covered employer discrimination due to the lack of legal gender recognition, emphasizing legal recognition as a crucial step toward equality, and reflecting the opposition to the Move Forward Party's bill. These examples showcase legislative actions and societal perspectives on transgender rights in Thailand.

Gender Marker

The fourth theme, "*Gender Marker*," highlights the call for gender markers or gender-neutral terms to refer to LGBT individuals in accordance with their gender identity. This is evident in excerpts (19) to (24), which present both factual information and public views, respectively.

(19) Parliament voted to reject the Move Forward Party (MFP)'s Gender Recognition bill, which proposed to **allow trans and non-binary people to change gender markers** on their official documents. (*The Prachathai*, 23 February 2024)

(20) The bill lists penalties for filing false documents and issuing false certificates, as well as for **changing gender markers** to avoid military conscription, or receive benefits under women's rights or gender equality promotion schemes. (*The Prachathai*, 23 February 2024)

(21) Instead, they would have the **right to choose a gender marker** when they turn 7, or 15 if they had not done so earlier. (*The Prachathai*, 29 September 2023)

(22) Nachale said that, in societies where people are taught that there are only two genders, campaigns for gender recognition often face many questions, including whether **changing gender markers** would allow cisgender men to avoid military conscription ... (*The Prachathai*, 29 September 2023)

(23) Nachale does not think **the X/Other *gender* marker** would make a person a target of persecution; instead, it would give members of a marginalised group that already faces discrimination increased visibility and give society a chance to learn. (*The Prachathai*, 29 September 2023)

(24) One concern raised by Mr. Srettha was that the government would have to also speed up replacing military conscription with voluntary recruitment so that those who **change their *gender* marker from female to male** won't have to face forced conscription, said Mr. Chai. (*The Bangkok Post*, 25 October 2023)

The three samples (19) to (21) above provided factual updates on gender marker regulations in Thailand. The first detailed parliament's rejection of a bill allowing trans and non-binary individuals to change gender markers on official documents. The second highlighted penalties for falsifying documents or changing markers to avoid conscription or gain benefits. The third mentioned a provision allowing individuals to select a gender marker at age 7 or 15, emphasizing legal procedures around gender marker changes. Conversely, samples (22) to (24) reflect public concerns. These include fears of misuse, such as avoiding conscription, calls for an "X/Other" marker to increase visibility for marginalized groups, and the need for conscription reform to address issues for transitioning individuals. Together, these samples explore legal and societal complexities of gender marker changes in Thailand.

Gender Neutrality

The last sub-theme was "*Gender Neutrality*." This seems to advocate for proper gender markers/terms, which was quite in line with the previous theme on "*Gender Marker*." The evidence from the concordances from both factual information as well as the opinions from the public are presented in extracts (25) to (30), respectively.

(25) It would allow non-binary or intersex people to use the *gender-neutral* marker **Other/X and not be required to place a gendered title before their name**, as well as prohibit sex selective surgery ... (*The Prachathai*, 23 February 2024)

(26) The rationale of the proposed amendments says that *gender-neutral* language is used so that **the same rights, duties, and legal recognition are granted** to persons of every gender and sexuality. (*The Prachathai*, 29 November 2021)

(27) The bill will amend the Civil and Commercial Code, using "spouse" in place of "husband" and "wife" and "person" instead of "man" and "woman" to **allow for *gender-neutral* marriage registrations**. (*The Prachathai*, 20 June 2024)

(28) Fortify Rights, which served as an advisor to the committee, said that parliament should consider whether to include the *gender-neutral* term **"parent," in addition to the terms "mother" and "father,"** to the bill, noting that the committee did not include such changes in the draft it will return to parliament. (*The Prachathai*, 28 March 2024)

(29) "The legalisation of same-sex marriage in the country is just the first step on a long journey, as there are many social issues waiting to be resolved, such

as subordinate legislation to **allow people to use *gender-neutral* pronouns,**” said Mr. Vitaya. (*The Bangkok Post*, 27 May 2024)

(30) Civil groups suggest using the word **“first-level guardian”** along with **“father” or “mother”** to refer to their couple in sections related to guardianship as it is a *gender-neutral term* to ensure the inclusive guardianship of all families. (*The Bangkok Post*, 16 June 2024)

Samples (25) to (27) outline efforts to promote gender neutrality in Thailand. The first proposed allowing non-binary and intersex individuals to use an “Other/X” marker and banning non-consensual surgery on intersex children. Furthermore, the second supported adopting gender-neutral language to ensure equal rights for all genders. The third discussed a bill replacing terms, e.g., “husband” and “wife” with “spouse” for gender-neutral marriage registration. Nonetheless, samples (28) to (30) reflected public opinion from activists advocating for gender neutrality. Suggestions included adding “parent” alongside “mother” and “father” in legislation, addressing gender-neutral pronouns beyond same-sex marriage legalization, and using “first-level guardian” for inclusive family guardianship. Together, these examples highlight efforts to advance gender-neutral language in Thai law and society as reflected through news discourse.

Discussion

This present study investigated the collocation of the key term “*gender*” and how is it represented regarding LGBT people by employing keyword, collocation, and discourse analyses in Thai political online news. Two primary research questions guided the analysis, focusing on how the term “*gender*” is utilized in keyword and collocational contexts to portray LGBT people. Moreover, the findings from both methods revealed consistent themes. The keyword “*gender*” ranked highest in frequency within the corpus and served as a focal point for identifying recurring linguistic patterns in concordance lines, leading to emergent themes. This stage, involving manual coding, allowed for data-driven theme generation. Subsequently, collocational analysis using LancsBox software corroborated the manual findings, demonstrating methodological triangulation, as seen in previous studies by Kijratanakoson (2022, 2023), where quantitative corpus analysis complemented qualitative discourse analysis.

Beyond methodological triangulation, this study’s findings aligned partially with Kijratanakoson’s (2023) study, which highlighted the challenges faced by non-binary people as referred to “*transgender*” in various domains. The findings of this study reflected an issue of recognition and discrimination. To amalgamate, the challenges included legal barriers, such as restrictive marriage laws; societal discrimination, including obstacles in education and

blood donation; and progress in advocacy, exemplified by workplace policies supporting authentic gender expression. Similarly, the present study identified several societal challenges encountered by LGBT people in Thailand. Themes such as “*Gender Identity*” reflected issues reflecting discrimination within the educational system and HIV-related stigma, while the theme “*Gender Recognition*” emphasized struggles for legal rights, particularly concerning same-sex marriage. On top of that, themes such as “*Gender Markers*” and “*Gender Neutrality*” highlighted the demand for appropriate gender markers and gender-neutral titles to address LGBT people respectfully. Although data from Kijratanakoson’s (2023) study spanned from 2012 to 2021, the persistence of these challenges was reflected in this study’s findings, indicating the slow pace of societal change in Thailand. However, some progress was evident, as the theme “*Gender Equality*” illustrated advocacy efforts for both binary and non-binary people, including the recent legalization of same-sex marriage in Thailand after a decade of activism.

The qualitative findings, focusing on factual information regarding issues of recognition and discrimination, reveal that the first three themes—gender equality, gender identity, and gender recognition—are interconnected and central to the LGBT rights movement in Thailand. These themes highlight both progress, such as growing public support and some legislative changes, as well as ongoing challenges, including discrimination and legal barriers. The themes of gender markers and gender neutrality also underscore the need for inclusive language and legal frameworks that accommodate non-binary identities, reflecting efforts to move beyond traditional gender classifications. In this context, the LGBT legal rights movement in Thailand, as presented in this study, supports Bennett’s (2010) claim that greater visibility has been brought to this group in the Thai context.

Some aspects of the present findings reveal the presence of prejudice, as previously mentioned. This may be attributed to the influence of long-standing religious beliefs in Thai society, as claimed by Winter (2011), which have shaped the views of pre-modern individuals. Nevertheless, the qualitative analysis of public opinion in the news discourse reveals a multifaceted narrative. On one hand, there is strong advocacy for *gender equality*, with activists and citizens actively supporting LGBT rights and gender justice. On the other hand, ongoing discrimination and limited understanding, particularly regarding *gender identity* and the need for legal *gender recognition*, persist as significant challenges. Discussions about *gender markers* and *gender neutrality* highlight both support for inclusive language and legal reforms, as well as concerns about societal resistance and potential misuse. A common theme across the factual and public opinion findings is the slow pace of legislative progress, reflecting the continued struggle of LGBT people for full acceptance and equality in Thailand. While same-sex marriage has

recently been legalized, societal attitudes remain divided, though generational shifts may lead to greater inclusivity in the future.

With regard to another aspect concerning language and representation, the findings partly supported Klomkaew and Kanokpermpoon's (2024) study on LGBT representation in the news genre using the ready-built NOW corpus. Their research indicated that LGBT portrayals, regardless of the news genre, often skew negative or sarcastic, though calls for advocacy and equality remain prominent. Similarly, this study identified ongoing negative representations of LGBT people, particularly in relation to healthcare challenges, resonating with Bartley and Benitez-Castro's (2016) findings on stereotypes of abnormality and homophobia in Irish media discourse.

Pedagogical Implications, Limitations and Recommendations

Incorporating the analysis of the term “*gender*” and LGBT representation in Thai political news into educational contexts offers considerable pedagogical advantages. By employing keyword and collocational analysis, educators can enhance students' critical media literacy, particularly in disciplines such as mass communication, political science, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This approach enables students to identify biases and deconstruct media narratives, fostering critical thinking and informed citizenship. It also encourages an understanding of how language shapes societal attitudes and public discourse, promoting linguistic awareness and highlighting the role of language in political contexts. To deepen the pedagogical value of the study, concrete findings, such as common collocates of the term “*gender*” (e.g., *identity*, *equality*, *rights*, *recognition*), can be transformed into practical teaching resources in ESP and linguistics courses. Educators might develop corpus-driven activities or Data-Driven Learning (DDL) tasks, where students examine how these keywords are portrayed in political news articles. Such exercises not only build language proficiency but also encourage students to critically engage with power dynamics and ideological structures embedded in authentic news media discourse. This fosters both analytical skills and a heightened understanding of relevant social issues. Moreover, integrating these methods into the curriculum fosters cultural sensitivity by presenting diverse narratives, encouraging empathy and respect for various gender identities, and creating an inclusive learning environment. Teaching these analytical techniques, such as keyword, collocation, and discourse analyses, could provide students with valuable research skills, preparing them for advanced studies in fields, e.g.,

linguistics, journalism, and related disciplines. It can also enhance their ability to interpret data critically. Solely relying on one method of analysis, such as keyword or discourse analysis, can be subjective since the emerging themes often depend on manual coding. To strengthen and validate the analysis, triangulation with another method, such as collocational analysis, is recommended. This approach utilizes software to produce more objective, accurate, and unbiased findings.

Despite the implications of this study, certain limitations should be acknowledged. First, as the study focused solely on the Thai context, it offers insights limited to the representation of LGBT people in Thai political discourse. Future research could address this limitation by conducting comparative studies, for example, examining political news in Thailand and other countries with similar socio-political contexts, such as Taiwan, which has also legalized same-sex marriage in Asia, or even Western nations. Such studies could reveal similarities and differences in the representation of LGBT people across contexts. A second limitation lies in the reliance on a single keyword for analysis. Expanding the scope of keyword analysis in future studies would enable researchers to uncover more comprehensive findings and deeper insights into news media representations.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates how the potential key term “*gender*” as obtained from keyword, collocation, and discourse analyses of the compiled corpus reflects the multifaceted challenges and advocacy efforts surrounding LGBT people in Thai political online news. The results of the study revealed that the use of the term “*gender*” demonstrated the advancements in LGBT advocacy and ongoing issues, such as discrimination and negative representations. While substantial progress has been made in areas such as legalizing same-sex marriage, persistent issues—such as discrimination in the education system, stigmatization in healthcare, and negative media portrayals—present significant challenges. Consistent with previous research, this study underscores both the adaptability of advocacy movements and the persistent societal biases in LGBT representation in Thailand.

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