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Cultural differences and the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction. The case of Walt Disney

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Master's in Hospitality and Tourism Management

Supervisor:

PhD Ana Margarida Mendes Camelo Oliveira Brochado, Associate Professor with Habilitation, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, ISCTE-IUL.

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BUSINESS SCHOOL

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As I approach the end of my student journey, I reflect upon the challenges and triumphs that have shaped these unforgettable days. The path was not always easy, but it was during these moments of struggle and perseverance that I truly discovered my strengths and capabilities. I would like to start off by expressing my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Ana Brochado, for your encouragement and guidance during my entire research journey. Your patience, expertise, and depth of knowledge have been essential in guiding my work and enhancing my understanding of the subject. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had such a dedicated mentor by my side.

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Resumo

A Walt Disney Company, detentora da Disneyland, orgulha-se de oferecer um excelente serviço e de manter uma base de clientes leal e bem estabelecida.Esta dissertação inicia com uma análise aprofundada das diferenças culturais, qualidade de serviço, satisfação do cliente e seu impacto.

Os principais objetivos do estudo são explorar como as variações culturais influenciam o serviço ao cliente, a satisfação dos hóspedes e a experiência global na Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland e Disneyland California. Explora também as expectativas de serviço de visitantes de diferentes origens culturais e como diferentes tipos de viajantes valorizam diferentes aspectos da sua visita. Através de uma análise das avaliações do TripAdvisor, a pesquisa fornece insights sobre como os parques temáticos podem atender melhor às preferências dos seus diversos visitantes.

Para alcançar estes objetivos, foi utilizada uma abordagem de estudo independente. Avaliações online dos Parques Disney foram analisadas usando palavras-chave específicas. Os resultados foram comparados visualmente através de gráficos, nuvens de palavras e mapas conceituais do Leximancer para fornecer insights valiosos.

Por último, esta dissertação preenche uma lacuna significativa na literatura ao explorar detalhadamente o impacto das diferenças culturais no serviço ao cliente, na satisfação dos hóspedes e na experiência global nos parques temáticos. Através de uma análise aprofundada das avaliações do TripAdvisor, oferece uma compreensão detalhada de como a diversidade cultural afeta as expectativas e perceções dos visitantes nos três parques temáticos. Fornece insights valiosos e recomendações práticas para a gestão de parques temáticos e para a indústria hoteleira em geral.

Palavras-chave: Disney, Disneylândia, Qualidade de Serviço, Avaliações Online, Satisfação do Cliente, Diferenças Culturais.

JEL Classification: L83- Tourism, Z32- Tourism and Development

Abstract

The Walt Disney Company which owns Disneyland, prides itself on delivering great service and maintaining a well-established loyal customer base. This dissertation first gives an in-depth review of studies that are related to cultural differences, service quality and customer satisfaction, and the impact cultural differences have on them.

The primary objectives of the study are to explore how cultural variations influence customer service, guest satisfaction, and the overall experience at Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California. It also explores the service expectations of visitors from different cultural backgrounds and how different types of travellers value different aspects of their visit. Through an analysis of TripAdvisor reviews, the research provides insights into how theme parks can better meet the preferences of their diverse visitors.

To achieve these objectives, an independent study approach was used. A content analysis of online reviews left by visitors using chosen keywords of the three renowned Disney Parks was carried out. The results are analysed and compared using charts, word clouds, and Leximancer conceptual maps.

Lastly, this dissertation fills a significant gap in literature by thoroughly exploring the impact of cultural differences on customer service, guest satisfaction, and the overall theme park experience. Through an in-depth analysis of TripAdvisor reviews, it provides a detailed understanding of how cultural diversity affects visitor expectations and perceptions across the three theme parks. It offers valuable insights and practical recommendations for theme park management and the wider hospitality industry.

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<center>CHAPTER 1.</center>

<center>**Introduction**</center>

Walt Disney constructed a one-of-a-kind destination focused around narrative and immersive experiences when he opened Disneyland in Anaheim, California, on July 17, 1955, ushering in a new era of family entertainment. Disney has evolved into one of the world's leading providers of family travel and leisure experiences, with iconic businesses including six resort destinations in the United States, Europe, and Asia.[1]

Delivering customer experience is a relatively new idea that goes beyond customer satisfaction because satisfied consumers can still defect (Jones and Sasser, 1995). In the past, businesses have focused solely on the physical attributes of the product, completely disregarding the emotional and value aspects, and as a result, have lost a significant number of customers over time (Nunes and Cespedes, 2003).

Kim and Jogaratnam (2019) define cultural differences as distinctive beliefs, norms, customs, and practices shared by groups of people who live and work together in a certain geographic region or social situation. To provide a truly immersive experience for guests, Disney parks in different countries have had to adapt to local customs and cultures. Offering unique food options, incorporating local traditions into parades and shows, and training cast members to be culturally sensitive and aware are all examples of this (Goukassian, 2019). In the context of hospitality, these cultural differences may influence the expectations, preferences, and behaviours of guests. For example, cultural differences may exist in terms of gastronomic preferences, methods of communication, and social attitudes, all of which may have an effect on the guest experience and their degree of satisfaction.

Customer loyalty is essential to a company's success since it affects whether or not the company will succeed. It has been proven that acquiring new clients (recruiting) is far more expensive than generating recurring business. (Saleh, 2014). According to Allerton (1997), Disney as a company has been very successful in building customer loyalty. The Walt Disney Company has mastered consumer loyalty by establishing strong relationships with its visitors (Lawrence &

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[1] https://www.adventurestudenttravel.com/8-differences-between-disneyland-and-disneys-california-adventure/

Greene, 2020).The internet has changed the way hospitality and tourism businesses are managed. Through The internet has changed the way hospitality and tourism businesses are managed. Through the wide impact of (positive and negative) content shared by users via the Internet, the restrictions on time and space have decreased (Huang et al., 2010), therefore, increasing the wide impact of tourists' comments about their experiences (Sparks & Browning, 2010). Information shared on the internet by fellow travellers has become an essential part of trip planning, influencing consumers in their decision-making processes (Cox et al., 2009; Stringam et al., 2010; Wilson et al., 2012) as people now tend to believe information coming directly from other consumers (Stringam et al., 2010; Schetzina, 2012; Simms, 2012; Weilin & Svetlana, 2012).

The social platform, TripAdvisor, has grown to become one of the world's leading sources of travel information, with more user-generated content than any other travel website and forums that connect people (Jeong & Jeon, 2008; Barcala et al., 2009; Huang et al., 2010). Users can consider the overall satisfaction, value (cost-benefit), location, sleep quality, rooms, cleanliness, service, and/or add additional criteria when they submit reviews. The scale of reviews ranges from 1 to 5, with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best. In addition to ratings, the website encourages users to elaborate through comments so that other users can acquire the most relevant information (Limberger et al., 2014).

User generated content have been used by research to identify the dimensions of the guest experience in many research contexts. According to Marchiori & Cantoni (2015), user-generated content is one of the most valuable sources of information for research, since the content is totally voluntary and non-biased based on the user's own personal experience.

The aim of this study is to investigate how cultural differences influence customer expectations and views of the service quality at Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California.

The objectives of this study are to determine specific cultural elements that affect how satisfied and loyal guests are to these theme parks. We also explore whether there are differences in service quality and guest level of satisfaction between these parks depending on their physical locations and the diversity of customer backgrounds. Lastly, the study attempts to deliver significant observations to the theme park industry to promote management techniques that improve guest experiences while recognising cultural diversity by addressing the research questions.

Finally, the findings in this study also have managerial implications. By analysing the guests' online reviews on the platform TripAdvisor and constructing charts comparing the service quality

dimensions, we will be able to identify the main themes that help meet the requirements of visitors and minimise their negative experiences. Furthermore, these results are expected to assist in figuring out how the quality dimensions vary according to the traveller type, for example, how does a family experience at Disney compare to that of someone travelling alone? For the purpose of this research, we selected six keywords to collect 450 reviews in total, 150 for each of the three Disneyland parks that are analysed. This dataset includes a primary dataset, which will be evaluated to address the study's research questions and aims.

To conclude, this research highlights the importance of taking cultural differences into account when designing services, hiring staff, and training employees. Study findings provide valuable insight into how cultural differences, service quality, and guest satisfaction interact in the hospitality industry.

1.1. Research objectives

This study will examine the effects of cultural difference and service quality on customer satisfaction in Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California. A comprehensive research approach is used in this study, which is supported by clear research questions, objectives, and aims.

The primary research objectives of this thesis is to explore the influence of cultural differences on guest expectations, attitudes toward service quality, and satisfaction with experience at three renowned Disney theme parks: Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California. In these culturally diverse environments, we also aim to determine the key components that lead to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The study focuses on providing observations and suggestions to optimise the overall guest experience by catering to the distinctive cultural backgrounds of visitors from all over the world. This is achieved by evaluating the different managerial techniques and service quality initiatives implemented at these theme parks. This study will shed light on the complex relationship between cultural differences, customer service, and guest satisfaction in the global theme park setting through the collection and evaluation of guest reviews from TripAdvisor.

The three main research questions that frame this research and outline the aims and objectives of the study are as follows: The first fundamental question explores how cultural differences affect guests' expectations, perceptions on the quality of service received, and overall satisfaction at Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California. This study aims to highlight the

subtle manner in which cultural diversity influences the experiences and expectations of guests to theme parks.

Beyond the scope of cultural influences, the second question shifts attention to comprehending the key aspects of guest experiences in these theme parks that appeal to various traveller types. Families, solo travellers, business travellers and couples all bring their own views and expectations to theme parks which is discussed later in this research study. This research aims to identify the essential characteristics that determine guest satisfaction for each category by identifying distinctive preferences and priorities of different demographics.

Lastly, the study wraps up by posing a key question about the application of its conclusions. How can theme park management practises be improved by incorporating the underlying cultural influences and traveller preferences? This research serves as the link between theoretical understanding and real-world application. The study aims to inform management strategies in theme parks by obtaining useful insights from cultural variances and traveller preferences.

CHAPTER 2.

Literature Review

Geissler and Conway (2011) point out that theme parks, particularly Disney parks, have been the predecessors in the growing experience economy. Even though the concept of staging and selling experiences has spread well beyond theme parks, they remain at the forefront of inventive design, marketing, and delivery of unforgettable experiences. Their study emphasises the importance of analysing and interpreting theme park visitor satisfaction data gathered over the years. In their study they also state that: according to David Camp, Director of Economics Research Associates Europe/Middle East/Africa: 'Parks should monitor customers' perception of value for money by conducting research, including regular customer surveys, and be reactive to them' (TEA/ERA, 2009: 3).

2.1. Cultural differences

According to Baker (2019), cultural differences are the distinctive traits, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals from various cultural backgrounds that might affect their expectations, perceptions, and behaviours with service providers. Cultures form particular values, identities, and norms for their members (Bechtoldt et al., 2012). Kim and Jogaratnam (2019) refer to cultural differences as "distinctive values, norms, customs, and practices shared by groups of people who live and work together in a particular geographic region or social setting". With the increase in globalisation in the current economic climate, cultural differences can be a critical factor in shaping customers' expectations of service quality and satisfaction (Kim et al., 2009).

Understanding the cultural differences and guest expectations can assist theme park operators to provide more personalised services, which can lead to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty (Hyun et al., 2016). The design and operation of theme parks should take cultural variables such as customer behaviour, nationality, and expectations into account, as they may significantly affect guest'' satisfaction and experiences (Hyun et al., 2016). Disney has employed a variety of strategies to manage cultural differences in its worldwide parks, such as employing local staff, developing menus and merchandise that are suitable for the local culture, and designing attractions that take into account regional customs and traditions (Mattila and Mountinho, 2003).

Cultural differences in Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California shape the guest experience by incorporating cultural elements into attractions, shows, food, and customer service. These differences create a unique and memorable guest experience that reflects the culture and history of each park's location. Each park includes cultural themes and aspects in its attractions and shows. For instance, the 'It's a Small World ride' at Tokyo Disneyland has dolls dressed in traditional Japanese attire and in Paris, the same ride plays the music in French, while the Phantom Manor ride at Disneyland Paris takes visitors through a spooky French mansion. The Pirates of the Caribbean attraction at Disneyland California features a Caribbean-based plot that reflects American history and culture.[2]

Disneyland California is a theme park in the US that mostly attracts American guests. Individualism, consumerism, and entertainment are extremely influential on American society, and this can be seen in the atmosphere and attractions of the park. The park also places a strong emphasis on values that are significant to American culture, such as innovation and technological advancement.[3]

The French theme park Disneyland Paris mostly serves European visitors. The park's layout and attractions are a reflection of European culture, which is renowned for its appreciation of art, history, and architecture. The park also promotes the value of fine food and drink, which is a significant part of French culture.[4]

Japan's Tokyo Disneyland mostly serves Japanese visitors. The ambiance and architecture of the park are reflective of the Japanese culture's emphasis on harmony, order, and respect. The park also prioritises customer service and hospitality, which are prominent Japanese cultural values.[5]

"Tokyo Disneyland is known for its high levels of customer service and attention to detail, which have helped to create a loyal customer base" (Milman, 2010, p. 232). Yeh et al. (2015, p. 72) also note that the success of Tokyo Disneyland has been because of the management of overcrowding because of the implementation of effective crowd control measures, which help to maintain customer satisfaction levels.

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[2] https://ivypanda.com/essays/disneyland-in-american-japanese-european-cultures/

[3] https://www.mouselists.com/disney-vs-disney-ranking-all-12-disney-theme-parks/

[4] https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowTopic-g29092-i65-k399138-o10-Disneyland_vs_Disneyland_Paris-Anaheim_California.html

[5] https://www.mousehacking.com/blog/ranking-every-disney-park

Cultural differences may impact the experiences, satisfaction, and customer service of guests to the Disney parks around the world. Tom Sawyer's Island is a well-known attraction in the United States theme parks. However, since the character isn't as widely recognised in Europe, there's Discoveryland, which pays tribute to European visionaries like Leonardo da Vinci. In this section, visitors can enjoy the Orbitron attraction, a rocket ship ride inspired by the concepts of the Italian inventor. Additionally, there's a nod to Jules Verne with Les Mystères du Nautilus. Tokyo Disneyland, for example, is recognised for its top-notch customer service, which reflects the Japanese cultural values of hospitality and respect for customers. In contrast, Disneyland Paris has received criticism for not conforming to visitors' expectations and neglecting to adjust to regional cultural differences. Finally, Disneyland California has a strong emphasis on storytelling and nostalgia, which relates to American culture (Liu and Tse, 2020). Each park offers food and dining options that are representative of the local cuisine and culture. In contrast to Disneyland Paris, which has a wide selection of French pastries and cuisine, Tokyo Disneyland offers unique snacks like mochi (a Japanese rice cake) and traditional Japanese sweets. Churros and corn dogs are just a couple of the classic American amusement park foods available at Disneyland California.[6]

Cultural differences impact how visitors to Tokyo Disneyland and DisneySea are assessed. For instance, while foreign visitors may value attractions and entertainment options, Japanese visitors may prioritise cleanliness and efficiency (Lee et al., 2013). According to a cross-cultural study of the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in theme parks in the United States and China, Chinese consumers appreciate service quality and customer satisfaction more than American customers. Based on the study, in order to satisfy the demands of customers from different cultural backgrounds, managers should optimise service quality and customer satisfaction (Ai and Li, 2020).

2.2. Service quality

Service quality is one of the main determinants of customer satisfaction (Nunkoo et al., 2017). Service quality has become one of the most important factors for gaining a sustainable competitive advantage and gaining customers' confidence as it can provide the hospitality industry with great opportunities to create competitive differentiation for organisations (Al-Ababneh, 2017). Service

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[6] https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20121213-different-disneylands-around-the-world

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quality is identified as a crucial determinant of memorable tourism experiences, especially in a cross-cultural context (Kim et al., 2012).

According to some previous studies, service quality can be defined as the degree to which a service meets the demands or expectations of customers, or it can be viewed as a customer's overall perception of the service's weakness or competence. However, rather than "what the supplier puts in," service quality is defined as "what the consumer obtains out of and is willing to pay for". As a result, service quality might be defined as the difference between what is expected and what is actually received (Al-Ababneh, 2017).

Many service quality measurements have been developed in the tourism industry for evaluating service quality; however, the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988) has become the most popular model for measuring service quality. The model consists of five dimensions, namely: empathy, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and tangibility. It assesses customers' perceptions of service quality based on the gap between customers' expectations and their perceptions. To achieve consumer satisfaction, businesses must match the expected and perceived service quality to each other.

In his service quality model, Gronroos (1984) identified three components of service quality: technical quality, functional quality, and image (see Figure 1)
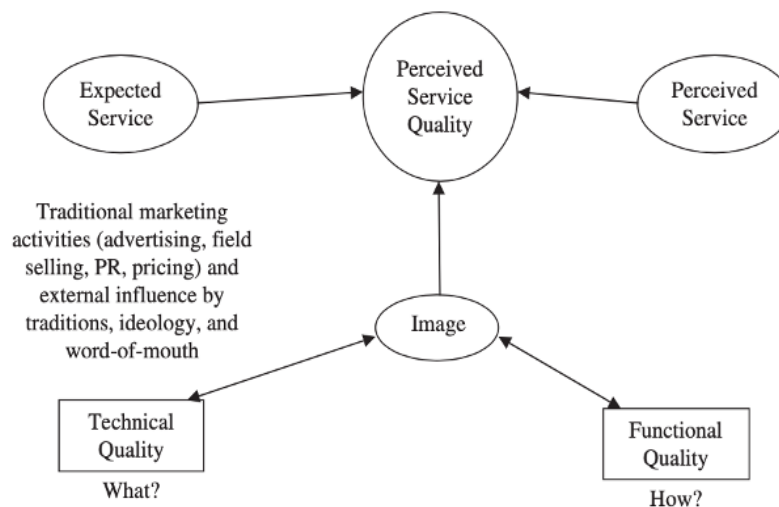
M. Zaibaf et al.

FIGURE 1 Gronroos' (1984) service quality model.

1. Technical quality refers to what the customer receives as a result of their communication and is critical in determining service quality.

2. Functional quality refers to how a consumer receives a technical result. This is significant in terms of their perceptions of the service.

3. For service organisations, image is extremely essential, and it is primarily determined by the technical and functional quality of service, as well as other aspects such as tradition, ideology, word-of-mouth, pricing, and public relations (Zaibaf et al., 2013).

Research conducted by Kang and James (2004) found Gronroos' (1984) model to be an adequate instrument to measure service quality.

Additionally, the SERVQUAL model is highly relevant as it helps companies to assess customer perceptions and expectations of service quality, as well as advises managers of the customers' needs and helps them set quality standards and consequently, helps them compete in the market. Research on service quality proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985,1988) determined that customer satisfaction is measured as the difference between expected and perceived service. For more than two decades, the concept of service quality has been a popular and important topic among practitioners and researchers. The impact of service quality on consumers' decision-making process has been documented in previous studies by the research (Zeithaml et al., 1996). As a result, in the hospitality and tourism industries, service quality is crucial (Rauch et al., 2015). Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) suggested that higher levels of perceived service quality result in increased consumer satisfaction (Zaibaf et al., 2013).

Parasuraman et al. (1985) identified distinct gaps in service quality, which are shown below. These gaps refer to differences in managerial perceptions of service quality. The model identifies the gaps between the perceived service and the expected service, in which:

Gap 1 = Difference between consumer expectation and management perception;

Gap 2 = Difference between management perception and service quality specifications;

Gap 3 = Difference between service quality specifications and service delivery;

Gap 4 = Difference between service delivery and external communications;

Gap 5 = Difference between service expectation and perceived service quality

The SERVQUAL model is derived from the study of Parasuraman, ZeithamI, and Berry in 1985 and originally 10 dimensions of service quality were reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/knowing the customer,

tangibles. These variables were later tested and reduced to five factors including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

According to a study by Lee and Jan (2011), due to the park's fame and the high ticket costs, visitors to Disneyland California typically have high expectations for the quality of the services they receive. According to the research, the park's management team understands how critical it is to live up to these high standards in order to keep guests satisfied.

Every cast member's job in providing exceptional service has two components: the mechanical and the personal touch. The mechanical is the job function that an employee has been allocated, such as serving meals, selling items, driving a monorail, or assisting visitors on and off an attraction. This aspect of the job must be performed correctly and in a way that exceeds the expectations of the guests. "The personal touch is the eye-to-eye contact, the smiles, the pleasant, courte-ous tone, the sincere caring that comes through the transaction. This is the competitive edge that companies strive for in the service business. Disney has found it can't force personal touch. To obtain it, the company must go for the emotions in people to get them to "buy in" and play their role in the show" (Johnson, 1991, p. 39).

"Cultural differences between American and European travellers may impact their expectations of service quality at theme parks. For example, European travellers may value more personalised and individualised service than American travellers" (Sparks and Pan, 2008, p. 69). Outstanding customer service is prioritised at Tokyo Disneyland, where cast members are trained to go above and beyond for guests and create special experiences (Jung & Lee, 2017). Customer satisfaction with the park experience is highly dependent on the employee's ability to meet their expectations (Wang & Chen, 2017).

2.3. Customer satisfaction

The Walt Disney Company is a great example of how a business should be operated. With cast members that are dedicated to serving visitors, they provide a one-of-a-kind guest experience. Disney is a paradise for many people and a place where they may express their inner kid. Their motto, "The Happiest Place on Earth," implies that they want customers to be happy, which will lead to loyalty (Lawrence & Greene, 2020).

Parasuraman et al. (1985,1988) measure customer satisfaction as the gap between expected service and perceived service (Padma & Ahn, 2020). Customer satisfaction, according to Oliver

(1980), is a measure of the gap between customers' expectations before purchasing a service/product and their evaluation of that service/product after purchase. Customer satisfaction refers to a person's overall cognitive and emotional response to a service encounter, or sometimes to a long-term service relationship (Oliver, 1981).

Park and Nicolau (2015) studied that consumers view extreme ratings (positive or negative) as more useful than moderate ratings, and negative as more useful than positive ones. Everything Disney does is catered to the needs of the visitors. The company's success, as well as the success of its theme parks, is largely due to its ability to consistently meet and surpass the expectations of its visitors. The goal of repeat business and extended patronage is evident in all operations; therefore, customer happiness is a top priority. Disney distinguishes itself from its competition by paying close attention to details and investing continuously in anything that affects the customers' experience (Borrie, 1999).

According to Bright (1987), "Disneyland is an environment in which architecture, landscaping, characters, food, merchandise and the costumes of the employees all blend together in one harmonious whole" (Borrie, 1999). Disney goes above and beyond to please and entertain. The visitor is kept from becoming bored, reflecting deeply, or analysing the encounter. Disney is one of the leading crowd control experts. Visual magnets, known as 'weinies' in Disney terminology, such as castles, can be found at the end of each route to draw you further. Disney characters work in a similar way as a mobile attractant to help crowds disperse (Borrie, 1999).

Customer satisfaction levels may be impacted by cultural differences between Disneyland Paris and its visitors. For example, French visitors to the park might have higher standards for luxury and elegance, whereas non-French visitors would be more concerned with efficient and friendly service (Al-Tamimi and Robinson, 2005, p. 314).

"Customer satisfaction is a critical component of the success of any tourism and hospitality operation, and this is especially true in the case of theme parks" (Milman et al., 2010). Milman (2010) points out that the quality of service that employees provide determines guest satisfaction with a theme park. Disney understands that engaged employees deliver better service, which increases customer satisfaction (Johnson, 2016). Cast members are first empowered by the notion of "making happiness" for guests. The Walt Disney Company then provides thorough training, ongoing communication, and solid support mechanisms to help the cast provide the best guest service possible for each visitor interaction (Johnson, 1991). The training is visible in the actions

of "onstage" cast members who interact directly with guests, as well as the performance of "backstage" cast members who perform behind the scenes to keep the business running smoothly (Cockerell, 2008), (Reyers & Matusitz, 2012).

Disney recognises that it has devoted fans with high expectations. Many individuals travel long distances to visit this place. Disney acknowledges that it cannot let a guest down; if it does, the guest may never return. Disney's service is "guest-driven" because of this understanding (Johnson, 1991, p. 39). The concept that individuals (both guests and cast members) are products of their environment is at the heart of the Disney philosophy. The appropriate reactions of people within that environment can be predicted to the extent that an environment can be controlled. As a result, Disney tries to control as much of the resort's atmosphere as possible while remaining profitable. Both the guest's and the cast's experiences are managed to be as positive as possible, despite the fact that they adhere to different standards (Johnson, 1991).

Quality service is defined by the organisation as a set of actions displayed by cast members in front of guests. Smiling, making eye contact, using pleasant phrases, performing their assigned tasks, and implementing the many additional elements that contribute to the "personal touch" in the eyes of guests are examples of such behaviours. Disney is always keeping track of guest data like demographics, current marketing tactics, attraction evaluations, payment preferences, pricing sensitivity, and the economy (Johnson, 1991, p. 39).

"Different cultures have different expectations and demands on service quality, and it is essential for theme parks to understand the unique cultural features of their visitors in order to provide appropriate and high-quality service" (Lee & Jan, 2011). Customer loyalty is critical to a company's success since it affects whether or not the company will succeed. Customer loyalty consists of customers' attitudes and behaviours. According to Person (1996) customer loyalty can be defined as "the mind-set of the customers who hold favourable attitudes toward a company, commit to repurchase the company's product/service, and recommend the product/service to others".

Dick and Basu (1994) define customer loyalty as "the strength of the relationship between an individual's relative attitude and repeat patronage). They mention that businesses are popular when they focus on customer loyalty. The entertainment sector relies on customer loyalty to thrive. Some claim that it is necessary for all businesses. The Walt Disney Company has mastered consumer loyalty by establishing deep bonds with its visitors. (Lawrence & Greene, 2020).

Customers are referred to as "guests" by Disney since they care about how they feel. They strive to fulfil every visitor request so that the consumer is satisfied and would share their positive experience (Lawrence & Greene, 2020).

CHAPTER 3.

Contextualisation

In order to achieve its main objectives and collect answers to the research questions, this study relies on the analysis of the reviews of the chosen Disneyland amusement parks from the platform TripAdvisor.

The first amusement park built by Disney was the Disneyland amusement park in Anaheim, California. Currently, there are Disney parks and resorts in Paris, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Tokyo, as well as a Disney cruise line that operates globally. The Walt Disney Company, the holding company, unites the Disney parks and resorts. Focusing on the attendance at some of the most successful amusement and theme parks in the globe, Disney parks were among the best at generating a significant increase in visitors in 2021. Disney topped the list of the most profitable theme park operators in the world in 2021, bringing in a total of 16.6 billion US dollars.[7]

Consequently, three renowned Disney theme parks: Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California are selected to be part of this study. The following mentions a brief description and contracts between each park:

Disneyland Paris: Disneyland Paris, also known as Disneyland Resort Paris, is a Disney theme park located in Marne-la-Vallée, France. It opened its doors in 1992 and is the largest theme park in Europe. The resort features two main theme parks: Disneyland Park, which is similar to the original Disneyland in California, and Walt Disney Studios Park, focused on the world of cinema. Disneyland Paris offers a unique blend of Disney magic with a European flair, and it has attracted visitors from across Europe and around the world.[8] Disneyland Paris, one of the most well-known amusement parks in Europe, attracted 9.93 million people to Marne-la-Vallée, close to Paris, in 2022.[9]

A miniature model of the Statue of Liberty, which France gifted to America as a gift in 1886, welcomes guests to Europe's only location of this American theme park as they enter Disneyland Paris. In Disneyland Paris, the image of a smoking, wine-drinking Frenchman is upheld. Although

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[7] https://www.statista.com/statistics/236154/attendance-at-the-disneyland-theme-park-california/

[8] Disneyland Paris News. (2023). Retrieved from https://disneylandparis-news.com/en/history/

[9] https://www.statista.com/statistics/639475/disneyland-paris-theme-park-visitor-numbers/

the theme park is intended to have designated smoking areas, many visitors claim that most smokers seem to smoke in all the open spaces, including waiting in line for attractions.[10]

Tokyo Disneyland: Disney-themed resort located in Urayasu, Chiba, Japan was the first Disney theme park established outside of the United States. It consists of two theme parks: Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo DisneySea. Tokyo Disneyland, opened in 1983, follows a layout similar to the original Disneyland in California, while Tokyo DisneySea, opened in 2001, features a nautical and exploration theme unique to this park. The resort is known for its meticulous attention to detail and exceptional customer service, and it has become a beloved destination for both Japanese and international visitors.[11] Tokyo Disneyland attracted about 6.3 million visitors in 2021.[12]

Tokyo Disneyland, which is bigger than the original Disneyland in California, is the third most popular theme park in the world, behind the two Disney parks in the US. The princess's qualities of duty and a strong work ethic are said to resonate more strongly in Japanese culture than Sleeping Beauty, whose castle is featured in the centre of Disneyland California. Cinderella's Castle, like Walt Disney World in Florida, is situated in the centre of the park.[13]

Disneyland California: Disneyland in California, USA, is the original Disneyland theme park that opened in 1955. It consists of two main theme parks: Disneyland Park, often referred to as Disneyland Resort, and Disney California Adventure Park. Disneyland Park offers the classic Disney experience with iconic attractions like Sleeping Beauty Castle and Pirates of the Caribbean. Its commitment to customer service and creating magical experiences has made it a top tourist destination in Southern California.[14] Disneyland California welcomed about 18.7 million guests in 2019. This fact confirms Disneyland's active popularity, indicating that the theme park continues to bring in millions of visitors every year. It serves as an important measure of Disneyland's success and offers insightful information.[15]

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[10] https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20121213-different-disneylands-around-the-world

[11] Tokyo Disney Resort. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.tokyodisneyresort.jp/en/

[12] https://www.statista.com/statistics/236159/attendance-at-the-tokyo-disneyland-theme-park/#:~:text=Tokyo%20Disneyland%20attracted%20about%206.3%20million%20visitors%20in%202021.

[13] https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20121213-different-disneylands-around-the-world

[14] Disneyland Resort. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://disneyland.disney.go.com/

[15] https://blog.gitnux.com/disneyland-visitor-statistics/#:~:text=FAQs-,What%20is%20the%20average%20number%20of%20visitors%20per%20day%20at,season%2C%20and%20time%20of%20week.

CHAPTER 4.

Methodology

4.1. Research aims and propositions

The research approach will be used to examine the impact of cultural differences and service quality on guest satisfaction at Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California. The research questions, objectives, and aims frame this research approach.

Our research questions focus on how cultural differences influence visitors expectations, perceptions of service quality, and overall satisfaction at these renowned Disney theme parks. To accomplish this, the research will attempt to:

1. Study the impact of cultural differences on its visitors' views and expectations of service quality.

2. Identify factors in these theme parks that leave an impact on guest satisfaction and loyalty.

3. Examine whether regional and cultural differences may be used to explain differences in service quality and visitor satisfaction among the parks.

This study collected secondary data to address research questions and objectives. 450 TripAdvisor guest reviews (150 reviews per park) were collected using chosen keywords related to service quality, cultural aspects, overall experience, visitor expectations, park atmosphere, and crowd management. This keyword-based strategy indicates an extensive mix of guest experiences was gathered.

By taking the two models discussed in the Literature Review above, into account and the different dimensions of service quality the following hypotheses are constructed that relate customer satisfaction to service quality dimensions at the Disneyland Paris, Disneyland California and Tokyo Disneyland taking into account the cultural differences:

Proposition 1: The cultural differences between different countries impact the guest experience and customer service at Disney parks.

Proposition 2: Guests from different cultures have different expectations and preferences when it comes to theme park experiences, which can affect their satisfaction level.

Proposition 3: Guest satisfaction and perceptions of service quality in the Disney Parks are influenced by a range of factors, including cultural differences.

The research aims to thoroughly analyse the collected data in order to comment on these propositions and whether they prove to be true or not.

4.2. Data collection

Following a careful examination of the list, the research customers were chosen from among the parks' significant numbers of TripAdvisor reviews. The most recent 25 reviews for the selected keywords from each of the relevant Disney theme parks were then compiled into an excel document, totalling 450 reviews. Disney park location, rating, review context, and guest demographic were extracted for each review.

TripAdvisor, a well-established online platform where visitors share their experiences and reviews different attractions, including theme parks, was used to obtain data for this study. The user must rate the reviewed attraction on a scale from "Terrible" (1) to "Excellent" (5) in order to submit a review on Tripadvisor. Users rated the parks "Excellent" (43.3%) in majority of the ratings that were assembled giving them a rating of 5. Considering that only 11.6% of visitors provided the parks a rating of 1, "Terrible" was the least popular rating. The majority of visitors (58.9%) were family travellers, and the fact that only 0.2% of the sample belonged to the business traveller demographic indicates that Disney parks are not particularly popular for this demographic.

All of the information was manually collected and sorted in an excel sheet. The purpose of the data collection was to compile an adequate set of guest reviews for the three distinct Disney theme parks: Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California. When collecting these reviews, it could be seen that there is a substantial difference between the total number of reviews for each park.

A total of 6,986 reviews were submitted for Tokyo Disneyland, with about 47.21 percent of them being in English. The park received an impressive 59.19% of 5-star reviews, demonstrating a high level of tourist satisfaction. In contrast, only 2.95% of reviewers gave it a rating of one star. There was a fairly even distribution of gender among reviewers, with 37.33% identifying as female, 55.33% as male, and 7.33% not specifying their gender.

On the other hand, Disneyland Paris accumulated up to 49,069 reviews. Approximately 39.81% of the reviews on this location were written in English. The park received decent ratings for customer satisfaction, receiving a 5-star rating from 46.41% of respondents. Notably, 8.15% of

reviewers gave it a 1-star rating. A considerable 39.33% of reviewers didn't indicate their gender, whereas 26.67% of men and 34% of women indicated as such.

27,947 reviews of Disneyland Park California were gathered in total. About 85.58% of the reviews were written in English, indicating a greater percentage of English-speaking visitors. A notable 63.70% of visitors gave the park a 5-star rating, suggesting a high level of overall tourist satisfaction. On the other hand, 3.47% of the reviewers gave the park a 1-star rating. In terms of gender distribution, 28.89% of respondents categorised as female, 32.59% as male, and a significant 38.52% opted from doing so.

When comparing statistics from Tokyo Disneyland, Disneyland Paris, and Disneyland Park California, multiple significant contrasts and comparisons are seen. Tokyo Disneyland appears to have the highest percentage of 5-star reviews, indicating a very high level of guest satisfaction, but Disneyland Paris and Disneyland Park California also retain reasonable levels of guest satisfaction. Additionally, Disneyland Park California stands out for having largely English-speaking visitors, with 85.58% of reviews being submitted in the language. Tokyo Disneyland, in comparison, has a more evenly distributed mix of English and non-English ratings.

In line with the research questions and objectives, there is a contrast in the data across Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California. This comparison, following the approach of Sparks and Browning (2011), determines the differences in guest satisfaction and perceptions of service quality among the three theme parks based on regional and cultural factors.

The following table summarises the descriptive analysis of the population and sample reviews used for this study.

	Tokyo Disneyland	Disneyland Paris	Disneyland Park Califronia
Total number of reviews	6,986	49,069	27,947
% of English reviews	47.21%	39.81%	85.58%
% of 5 stars	59.19%	46.41%	63.70%
% of 1 star	2.95%	8.15%	3.47%
% of Female	37.33%	34.00%	28.89%
% of Male	55.33%	26.67%	32.59%
% Gender not available	7.33%	39.33%	38.52%
No. of reviews collected	150	150	150

Table 4.2.1.1 Sample Descriptive Analysis. Source: Tripadvisor and Self-elaboration.

By taking out the average of the reviews collected from TripAdvisor, the data is illustrated in different bar charts to compare the key findings and obtain a visual comparison. This will be discussed in detail later in the dissertation.

Furthermore, the key words and additional frequent terms of the 450 collected reviews were uploaded into the free online software "WordCloud generator". The program allows users to automatically select the most recurring words used, grouping them in a graph that allows researchers to instinctively demonstrate the most repeated terms used by guests.

Lastly, the programme "Leximancer" was used to conduct a text mining study on each review's content. This software provides unsupervised quantitative content analysis on user-submitted texts and produces results that highlight the analysis's most significant themes and concepts. "Leximancer offers both conceptual and relational analyses, measuring not only the presence of defined concepts in texts but also how these concepts are interrelated." (Brochado & Brochado, 2019, p. 7). Researchers can find clusters of concepts and themes and determine conceptual comparisons by examining the concept maps constructed by the software.

4.2.1. Secondary data collection

"Secondary data refers to data that were collected for some other purpose but that can be adapted to the present research." (Hair et al., 2019, p. 171). In the context of this thesis, secondary data

collection describes the practice of gathering data and insights from existing sources and datasets rather than directly from the method of primary data collection. It comprises identifying, examining and analysing data that has already been collected, documented, and made accessible for research purposes.

4.2.2. Review selection

A systematic keyword-based method was used for obtaining relevant reviews. Service quality, cultural attributes, overall experience, guest expectations, park atmosphere, and crowd regulation were among the keywords utilised to focus on specific components of the theme park experience. These keywords were chosen to gather various aspects of visitor experiences while also ensuring a complete dataset.

   The selected keywords for data collection were as follows:

Service: Refers to the quality of service provided by the theme park staff and the overall guest experience in terms of customer service (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985).

Culture: Encompasses the cultural elements and differences that may influence visitor perceptions and expectations within a theme park context (Hofstede, 1980).

Experience: Denotes the overall visitor experience at the theme park, including attractions, entertainment, and overall enjoyment (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Expectation: Refers to the preconceived notions and anticipations that visitors have before their park visit, which can influence their satisfaction (Oliver, 1980).

Atmosphere: Encompasses the ambiance, theming, and overall feel of the theme park environment (Baker & Cameron, 1996).

Crowd: Relates to visitor experiences and perceptions of crowd size, waiting times, and overall crowd management strategies within the park (Yeh, Wai Aliana, & Zhang, 2015).

For each keyword, 25 reviews per keyword were collected, resulting in a total of 150 reviews for each park. Therefore, resulting in a total of 450 reviews. This methodology was chosen to ensure a balanced representation of various factors of the visitor experience at each park while making sure of consistency in the dataset.

4.2.3. Demographic groups

To further categorise the collected reviews and achieve understanding of guest characteristics, demographic data related to the reviewers that chose to share on the TripAdvisor platform was used. The following categories of demographics can be identified in the dataset for the different traveller types:

Family: Represents guests who visited the park with their family members, including children.

Friends: Visitors who visited the parks with a group of friends or peers.

Couples: Indicate park visitors who visited as a couple or with a significant other.

Solo: Refers to guests who visited the park alone.

Business: Visitors who may have come to the park for business-related activities or events.

Not Applicable: This category includes reviews for which demographic data was either not available or not provided.

These demographic categories help better understand the different types of reviews and determine whether demographic differences influenced the feedback they provided.

The next section outlines the data analysis methods employed to extract valuable information from the collected reviews and to draw conclusions that relate to the impact of cultural differences and service quality on visitor satisfaction at Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California.

CHAPTER 5.

Results Analysis and Discussion

This study examines 450 online reviews that were methodically collected solely from English-speaking participants in order to examine guest satisfaction Notably, the dataset contains 83 reviews from the United States, 80 reviews from the United Kingdom, and 40 reviews from Australia, offering detailed insights into the English-speaking world.

5.1. Wordcloud Analysis

The 450 collected reviews' key words and other recurrent terms were input into the free online word processing tool "WordCloud generator." The software enables users to choose most frequently used terms automatically and place them in a graph so that researchers can effortlessly demonstrate what terms are most frequently used by visitors.

The software "WordCloud Generator" was used to create wordcloud based of the collected reviews in order to properly comprehend and examine the narrative of the reviews. This software created the graph below by uploading an excel file, illustrating the frequency of each word used in review titles and descriptions, the demographics, traveller types and locations of the visitors. The significance of the words in this diagram corresponds to how frequently they appear in the overall narrative. Figure 5.1.1. show that the most frequently used terms in these results by customers are those that are directly related to the Disneyland experience: "Family", "Service", "Atmosphere", and "Experience." This is because these are all key features that visitors are seeking while visiting Disneyland.

At Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland California, visitors from the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (USA) predominate. This is due to a number of reasons. First off, Disney's tremendous cultural influence makes these parks a nostalgic and culturally relevant visit in both the UK and the USA, where generations have grown up with Disney characters and stories. Additionally, the collection of reviews that are only in English makes it easier for visitors who speak English to voice their experiences.

Additionally, 9 wordclouds, one for each park, each relevant traveller type; family, friends, couples and solo for all three parks, visitor satisfaction and dissatisfaction at all three parks was considered in this study, were generated and included in the annexes section of this research.

However, the study focuses mainly on the generated wordcloud for the overall Disneyland experience in all three Disney Parks as the sample size for others is too small to give us accurate representation.

Figure 5.1.1. Generated Word Cloud for the overall Disneyland Experience in Paris, Tokyo and California. Source: Tripadvisor.

5.2. Collection Method and Analysis

An overall analysis was performed of the 450 reviews collected which led to us constructing bar charts to visually compare and contrast the key factors in the three parks. By graphically analysing these charts we can see a distinction between these parks. The following pages contain charts that summarise the descriptive analysis of the sample of the 450 reviews used for this study.

5.2.1. Disneyland California

In Figure 5.2.1.1. The keyword "Atmosphere" seems to be the most frequent factor that attracted positive reviews from users at Disneyland California. Whereas, the keyword "Service" has the least average review rating and therefore concluding that it is the factor least favourable characteristic at Disneyland California.
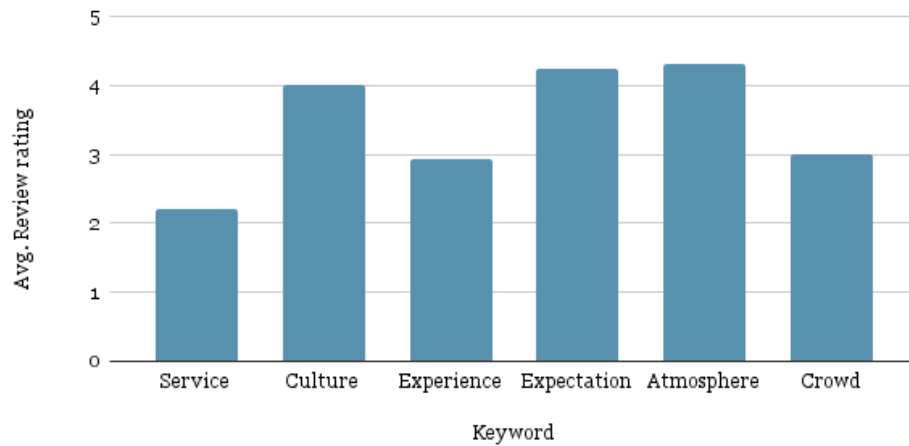
Moving onto Figure 5.2.1.2. When it comes to the demographic, most visitors travelled as couples and Disneyland California is proven to not be very popular among solo visitors.

Figures 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.1.2. Generated charts for Disneyland California comparing the average review rating with keywords and average review rating with demographic, respectively.
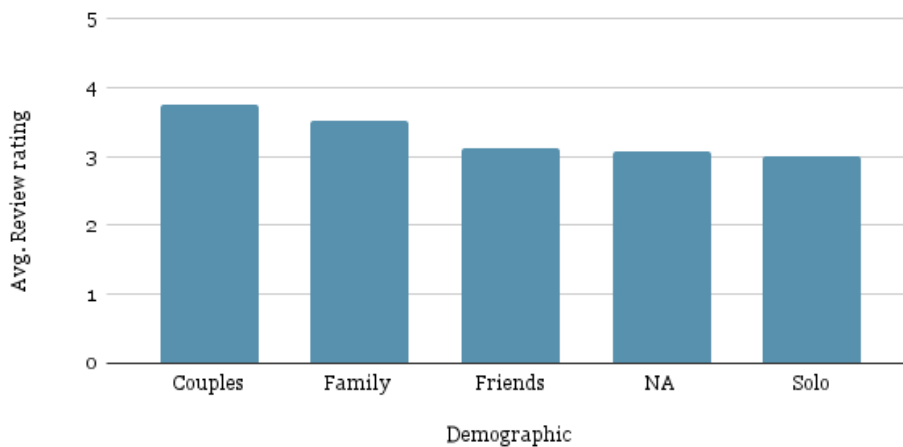**Source: Self-elaboration.**

Review rating vs Keyword
Disneyland California

Review rating vs Demographic
Disneyland California

5.2.2. Disneyland Paris

In Figure 5.2.2.1. The keywords "Experience" and "Atmosphere" were the most frequent terms that attracted positive reviews from guests visiting Disneyland Paris. Whereas, the keyword "Service" has the least average review rating and therefore concluding that it is also the least favourable characteristic at Disneyland Paris as seen in the Figure 5.2.2.1. below.
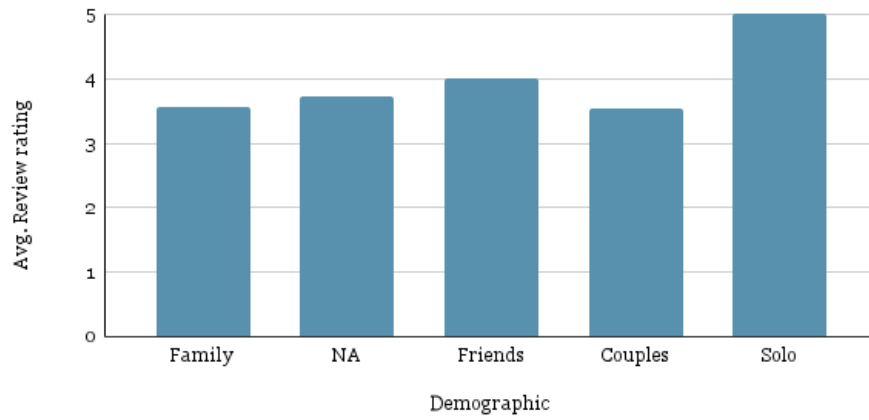
Moving onto Figure 5.2.2.2. When it comes to the demographic, most visitors travelled solo and Disneyland Paris is proven to not be very attractive to couples as compared to the other demographic categories. Paris is often viewed as the "city of love" and therefore an attractive destination for couples. The research results, on the other hand, seem to suggest otherwise and hence proving that the demographic preferences differ when it comes to this location.

Figures 5.2.2.1 and 5.2.2.2. Generated charts for Disneyland Paris comparing the average review rating with keywords and average review rating with demographic, respectively.

Source: Self-elaboration.

5.3.1. Tokyo Disneyland

In Figure 5.3.3.1. The keywords "Culture" and "Atmosphere" result to be the most recurring terms that attracted positive reviews from guests visiting Tokyo Disneyland. Whereas, the keyword "Crowd" has the least average review rating and therefore concluding that it is the factor least favourable characteristic at Tokyo Disneyland.

Moving onto Figure 5.3.3.2. When it comes to the demographic, most visitors travelled as friends or couples to Tokyo Disneyland. The demographic category with the lowest average review rating is shown to be Not Applicable meaning that the user failed to state their demographic when submitting the review on TripAdvisor.

Figures 5.3.3.1. and 5.3.3.2. Generated charts for Tokyo Disneyland comparing the average review rating with keywords and average review rating with demographic, respectively.
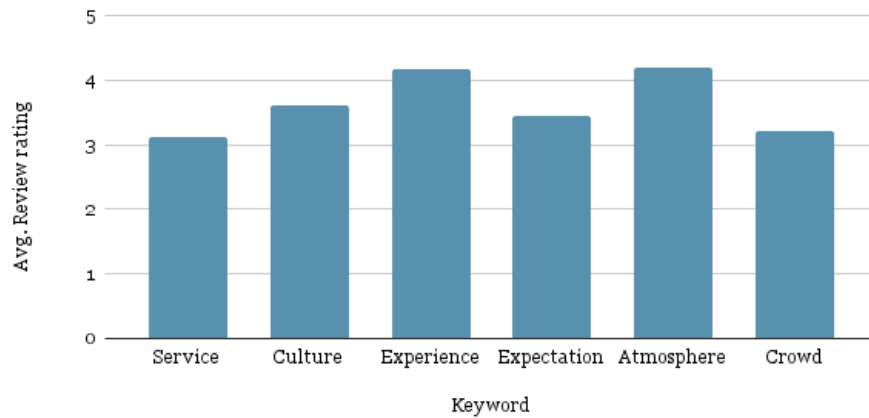**Source: Self-elaboration.**
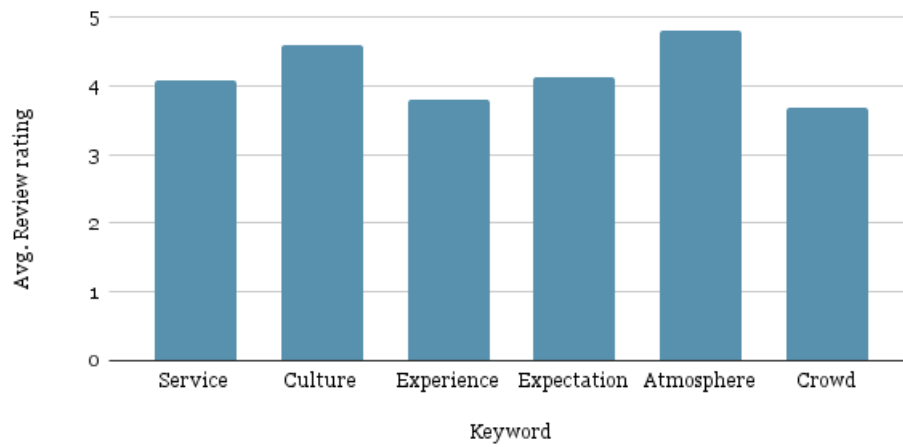
5.4. Leximancer Analysis and Concept Maps

The following analysis was performed by manually extracting the content of the reviews collected from the platform TripAdvisor to an Excel file. In o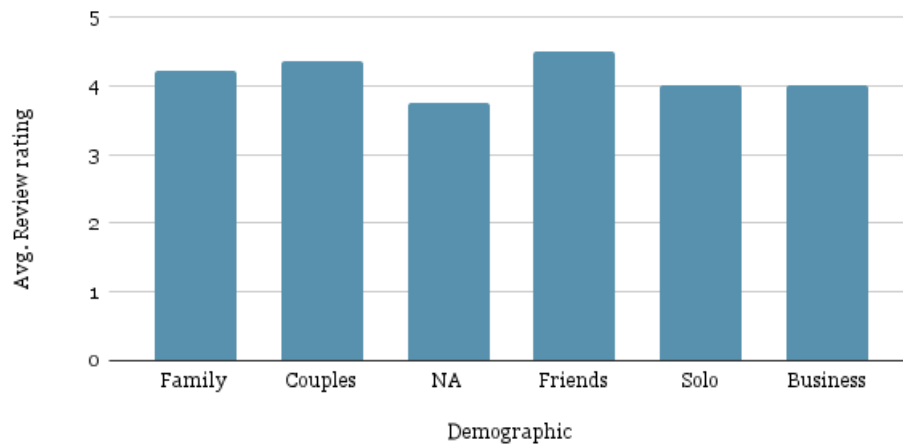rder to obtain the results, the following information was extracted: name and location of the Disneyland Park, date of the visit, title of the review, content of the review, rating, traveller type, and nationality. Due to the huge amount of data and the impossibility to analyse it manually, the excel file was imported into Leximancer, a software that categorises the content into themes and concepts, delivering the key ideas and insights.

To complement this research, the Leximancer analysis was performed considering different criteria, in order to obtain output related to the Disneyland experience in California, Paris, and Tokyo. Therefore, the following analyses were performed, and their respective outputs are presented in the following pages:

1. Overall Analysis of all Dimensions of the Disneyland experience according to the three park location
2. Analysis of Disneyland experience in all parks
3. Dimensions of the Disneyland experience according to the Traveller Type
4. Dimensions of the Disneyland experience according to Rating

5.4.1. Overall Analysis

The overall analysis of the parks was performed with the data from the three chosen Disneyland Parks revealed 15 themes. The following pages contain a detailed analysis of dimensions identified by Leximancer and how they relate to the study's chosen keywords.

Figure 5.4.1.1. Concept Map generated for the overall Disneyland Experience.
Source: Leximancer and Self-elaboration.

The Leximancer output offers valuable insights into visitor experiences at Disneyland. The term "park" emerges as the most frequently mentioned, with a substantial count of 566, signifying its central importance in discussions and boasting a high relevance of 61%. "Rides" closely follows with a count of 492 and a relevance of 53%, underlining extensive conversations about the park's attractions. "Time" (count: 383, relevance: 41%) and "day" (count: 350, relevance: 38%) likely refer to discussions about wait times, park hours, and visit duration.

"Experience" accumulates a count of 246 with a relevance of 26%, revealing a focus on sharing overall park experiences, while "wait" (count: 243, relevance: 26%) pertains to discussions about

waiting times. "Visit" (count: 223, relevance: 24%) possibly relates to individual park visits, and terms like "crowds" (count: 166, relevance: 18%) and "line" (count:165, relevance: 18%) signify discussions about crowd sizes and queue-related experiences.

These statistics not only provide a quantitative overview of the central themes but also highlight their relevance within visitor discourse. The Leximancer output indicates a strong emphasis on visitor satisfaction and enjoyment, as suggested by terms like "magical" (count: 140, relevance: 15%), "fun" (count: 99, relevance: 11%), and "amazing" (count: 85, relevance: 9%). Conversely, terms like "rude" (count: 41, relevance: 4%) and "closed" (count: 55, relevance: 6%) point to potential areas for improvement within park operations, such as staff interactions and ride availability. These insights offer a nuanced understanding of visitor sentiments and areas that may require attention and enhancement.

Culture is a keyword central to the analysis. While it doesn't appear explicitly in the Leximancer output, it's implicitly related to several terms. For instance, discussions about "crowds" (relevance: 18%) and "visit" (relevance 24%) can be associated with cultural differences in visitor behaviour and preferences. Analysing these crowd dynamics in relation to cultural backgrounds can provide valuable insights into how culture influences the park experience. A review for these dimensions is as follows: "First of all, for those who are wondering if a visit is worth it for your family after you see the ticket prices and know that it's going to cost you an arm and a leg: Hey, this is Disneyland; it's an American cultural experience, and you owe it to yourselves and your kids to see it. Be sure to stay for the evening fireworks, since they're a big part of the fun…" (Couples, Tokyo Disneyland, Rating 4).

"Experience" (relevance: 26%) and "atmosphere" (relevance: 10%) are closely linked. Visitors frequently discuss their overall experience, and part of this experience often revolves around the park's atmosphere. The atmosphere can be shaped by cultural elements, and it's crucial to explore how different cultural backgrounds perceive and contribute to the park's ambiance. A typical review related to this theme reads as follows: "Just Amazing. I have been to both Disneyland and Disney World and Disneyland is not quite as large but offers a lot for the kids and family to do." (Couples, Disneyland California, Rating 3). "Experience" (relevance: 26%) directly aligns with the chosen keyword. The frequency of this term indicates that visitors share and value their theme park experiences. It's important to delve deeper into these experiences to identify any cultural nuances or differences that affect visitor satisfaction and loyalty. A visitor from India shared their review

for Disneyland Paris "Not happy at all. Spent 350 euros for 3 of us (couple and 5 year old kid)." (Family, Rating 2).

"Expectations" (16%) are a significant aspect of visitor discussions. Understanding how cultural differences impact visitor expectations can provide insights into whether visitors from different regions have varying anticipations regarding the park experience. This can be crucial for managing and meeting diverse visitor expectations effectively. In contrast to the negative review above this guest shared their memorable experience as: "Yes it is a very expensive vacation, but for us it is worth it. Our teen kiddo turns into a 7 year old child the minute we cross the gate and that includes my husband as well, the memories created are priceless." (Family, Disneyland California, Rating 5) This particular reviewer comes from a totally different background, the United States, and hence their priorities and expectations are different to that of visiting from India.

"Service" (relevance: 15%) is another relevant keyword. Guests often discuss their interactions with park staff and the quality of service received. Analysing how cultural factors influence visitor perceptions of service quality can help identify areas for improvement and tailor services to different cultural groups. Service can be grouped with the dimensions "staff", "people", and "better". Since the dataset contained reviews from different parts of the world catering to a global audience there were many reviews that made sure to mention the service that was provided. In general, this theme describes how the staff contributes to a great experience. A typical review of this dimension is: "My husband decided to go to the lost and found, hoping that someone would have been so kind to return it. The customer service was extremely nice." (Couples, Tokyo Disneyland, Rating 5)

Lastly, "Crowds" (relevance: 18%) directly relates to the keyword "crowd." Understanding how cultural backgrounds affect visitor preferences for crowd sizes and queue-related experiences is essential. For instance, some cultural groups prefer smaller crowds and shorter wait times, while others are able to embrace larger gatherings. Consequently, this concept mainly falls under the themes "rides" and "attractions". One visitor from the United Kingdom mentioned that: "It is a safe magical experience but the crowds are overwhelming for someone who didn't know what to expect at all." (Disneyland Paris, Rating 4).

5.4.2. Park Analysis

After performing the overall analysis, a new concept map is extracted with information regarding each Disneyland Park, in order to understand their differences and similarities, and how the criterion influences guests' experience and satisfaction.
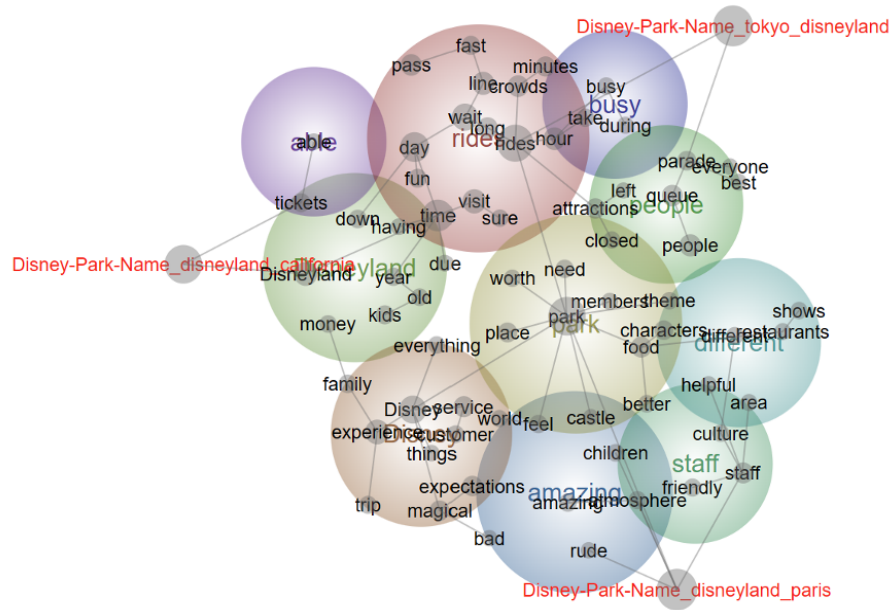

Figure 5.4.2.1. Concept Map generated for the overall Disneyland Experience at each Park.
Source: Leximancer and Self-elaboration.

The Concept Map identified distinctive themes that align with the different cultural and regional contexts of the parks.

In examining the common themes across all three renowned Disneyland parks—Tokyo Disneyland, Disneyland Paris, and Disneyland California—it is evident that certain terms hold universal importance in the context of the theme park experience. "Park" and "Rides" are notably prevalent, both in terms of count (566 and 492, respectively) and relevance (61% and 53%). These terms emphasise the importance of park rides and attractions among visitors, underlining their significant contribution to retaining the core components of the theme park experience. Similarly, "Time" and "Day" (counts 383 and 350) and relevance percentages of 41% and 38%, respectively, indicate discussions related to park hours, visit duration, and time related characteristics of the

theme park experience. "Experience" and "Wait," with counts of 246 and 243 and relevance of 26%, underscore the focus on sharing overall park experiences and addressing concerns related to waiting times.

When it comes to each park's distinctive themes, Tokyo Disneyland stands out with "Disneyland" and "Disney," which have counts of 81 and 86, respectively, showing the significant popularity and presence of the Disney brand. In line with Tokyo Disneyland's reputation for drawing substantial numbers of visitors, their relevance percentages of 36% and 28% reflect significant but not overwhelming domination. In addition, themes like "Everyone" and "Busy" (which have high likelihoods of 53% and 52%, respectively) signal towards subjects such as crowd sizes and the popularity of the park, while "Parade" and "Best" (both at 51%) indicate an emphasis on parades and recognising the most memorable experiences.

By comparison, terms like "Rude" (with a likelihood of 61%) and "Children" (with a likelihood of 59%) serve as examples of Disneyland Paris' distinctive themes relating to guest attitudes and complaints. These conversations almost certainly centre around behavioural concerns, social etiquettes and experiences concerning children. Additionally, there is a lot of attention paid to the words "Queue" (with a value of 83) and "Trip" (with a count of 43), indicating considerations for wait times and planning challenges. Regarding the theme "service", guests usually use Tripadvisor's reviews to leave compliments or complaints to the staff and facilities as, for example, the concept "Rude".

Additionally, "Able" and "Tickets," which have high likelihoods of 67% and 53%, respectively, are two of Disneyland California's defining themes. These words indicate claims concerning the accessibility of park attractions and the availability of admission tickets. Furthermore, the words "Service", which has a score of 55, and "Customer", which has a total of 24, suggest an emphasis on service quality and customer experiences.

In conclusion, these distinctive themes and the statistics that accompany them correspond with the diverse cultural and geographic contexts of the parks. Tokyo Disneyland places a significant emphasis on parades and finding the best experiences, reflecting the popularity of the Disney brand and crowd-related concepts. The Disney brand receives precedence at Tokyo Disneyland, reflecting the popularity of the brand in Japan. Whereas, themes concerning rudeness, children, and other issues are prominently discussed in Disneyland Paris, along with queues and travel planning. These in addition focus on visitor behaviours and issues that could be influenced by

cultural norms in Europe. Alternatively, the practical components of Disneyland California, such as ticket availability, service standards, and visitor experiences, are highlighted. The American theme park places a practical emphasis on ticketing and service excellence. In addition to qualitative evaluations, the quantitative insights provide an overview of the unique aspects and visitor concerns at each park.

5.4.3. Traveller Type Analysis

After conducting prior analysis, another new concept map containing information regarding each traveller type was generated, in order to comprehend how this demographic affects the Disneyland experience across the three locations. The conceptual map that follows highlighted new themes, including park, rides, Disney, food, visit, parade, staff, busy, and restaurants. It also revealed connectivity rates across different traveller types, which will be examined in the pages that follow.
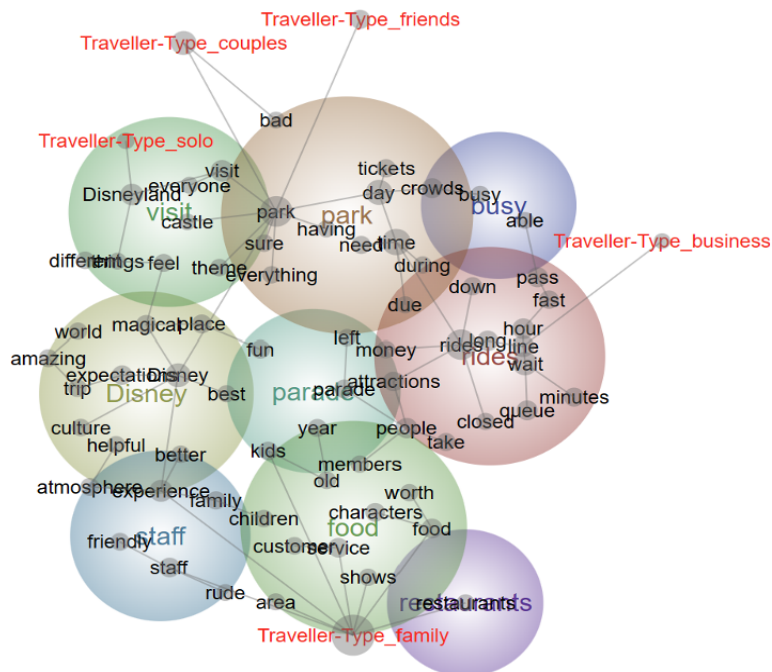

Figure 5.4.3.1. Concept Map generated for the overall Disneyland Experience according to each Traveller Type. Source: Leximancer and Self-elaboration.

Family travellers, the largest segment, place a significant focus on the park itself, using the word "park" 208 times. This demonstrates the desire they have for trying out Disneyland's

numerous sights and attractions. Additionally, the word "rides" is mentioned 163 times in relation to family travellers, highlighting the value of attractions and entertainment activities. The word "Disney," which is referenced 85 times, probably alludes to a variety of elements of the Disney brand, such as merchandise, characters, and the whole Disney experience. Additionally, the word "food" is relevant to family travellers (52 times), indicating that they are thinking about dining possibilities at Disneyland. The word "visit" is used 42 times, emphasising its importance in their whole experience at Disneyland. The word "parade" appears 29 times, indicating that family tourists love parades as part of their trip. In addition, "staff" is mentioned 32 times, showing that visitors' contacts with Disneyland employees have a significant impact on their experience. Despite appearing less frequently, the word "busy" (31 times) conveys that regulating crowds is a concern, particularly during peak hours. The word "restaurants" is mentioned 21 times, which suggests that family visitors ought to consider dining options and meal breaks while they are visiting.

A family from the UAE had a wonderful time at Disneyland California: "A very pleasant experience. Nice and friendly staff good food and a relaxing atmosphere. The rides are fun and the variety is great" They praised the helpful staff members, great cuisine, relaxing atmosphere, and enjoyable rides. The review supports the constructive conclusions noted by Leximancer analysis, highlighting the friendly staff and enjoyable attractions.

Couples highlight the importance of the park by using the word "park" 112 times, while also praising the park itself. The word "Rides" appears 92 times, which demonstrates how strongly they value entertainment and attractions. The term "Disney" appears 39 times, indicating the connection with the Disney brand. Couples, who made up 30 of the mentions, are somewhat less interested in "food" than family travellers are. With the word "visit" appearing 61 times, it's clear that couples see a trip to Disneyland as an essential part of their experience. There is some interest in parades as evidenced by the 23 mentions of "parade". In the same way, the word "staff" appears 24 times, suggesting that encounters with Disneyland workers are noteworthy for couples. The word "busy" is used 13 times, showing some crowd control discussion, although less than for family travellers. The term "restaurants" is mentioned 16 times, proving that couples think about dining possibilities when planning their trip.

An Italian couple's trip to Tokyo Disneyland was pleasant: "...One of the cleanest amusement parks we've visited. Food is great, activities are fun." They appreciated the park's cleanliness, language convenience, and excellent cuisine. However, a number of issues, possibly including the

long waiting periods, had an impact on their overall rating which was 3. This feedback corresponds with the data, which indicates that although people are still satisfied with the cleanliness and services, long queues may have a negative impact on their overall satisfaction.

Friends who frequent Disneyland also place an emphasis on the park, using the word "park" 26 times. With 46 mentions, "Rides" is extremely important to them and demonstrates a keen interest in attractions and entertainment purposes. The 14 references to "food" imply that dining options are of interest. With its 27 occurrences, the word "visit" emphasises the significance of accompanying friends to Disneyland. The word "parade" is mentioned ten times, showing that they were aware of parades while they were there. Similarly, "staff" is referenced ten times, indicating that this traveller group acknowledges their contact with Disneyland staff. The word "busy" is used 10 times to indicate some crowd control consideration, although less often than for family travellers. When compared to families and couples, "restaurants" is mentioned twice, showing a significantly lower emphasis on dining options.

Tokyo Disneyland enchants visitors with its magical setting, friendly staff members, and exciting entertainment. However, complaints with crowds, wait times, and a lack of food alternatives persist. A visitor from the USA praised the staff's friendliness and their attempts to make everyone's experience enjoyable: "...Staff: So professional and helpful. Yes, there might be a bit of a language barrier but they'll make sure that you are served right."

Business travellers to Disneyland are a smaller group, and the theme frequencies indicate their interests and plans. They mention "park" seven times, showing some curiosity in learning more about Disneyland's attractions. Six mentions of "Rides" are pertinent, suggesting some interest in the options for entertainment. Only twice does the word "food" appear, suggesting that business travellers might not be as interested in dining options. Four times, the word "visit" is used to refer to the act of going to Disneyland as part of the experience. Only one "parade" reference is made, indicating little interest in parades. In a comparable way, the word "staff" appears twice, indicating some consideration for interactions with Disneyland staff members. Two references to "busy" suggest that crowd control will be taken into account throughout their visit. It's interesting to note that the word "restaurants" only occurs once, suggesting that business visitors might not be overly concerned with their dining options compared to the other traveller types.

The review by a business traveller: "... the crowd of people who were lined up made us unhappy…" expresses disappointment regarding the long waiting times and crowded conditions at

Disneyland Tokyo. The emphasis placed on wait times and the effects of busy times stresses the practical factors that business travellers take into account when scheduling trips to popular destinations. For business travellers and their companions, it emphasises the significance of efficient crowd management and wait time management for big crowds.

Solo travellers account for a lesser percentage of visitors. They mention "park" 12 times, indicating that their visit's main focus is on exploring Disneyland. With five mentions, "Rides" is significant and demonstrates their interest in entertainment and attractions. The word "food" appears twice, implying that some thought about dining options. The word "visit" is used three times, highlighting the importance of visiting Disneyland for solo travellers. One reference of "parade" suggests a lack of interest in parades. Similarly, the word "staff" appears twice, indicating that interactions with Disneyland employees have received some attention. The word "busy" appears 4 times, suggesting that crowd control is a concern. One mention of "Restaurants" suggests that dining alternatives might not be a top priority for solo travellers.

In one particular review; "Cast members were happy to assist me even though I can't speak Japanese fluently. Rides were similar like it's a small world. But splash mountain exceeded my expectations at this park." This Australian solo traveller praises the Tokyo Disneyland staff, particularly for their assistance despite the language barrier. Additionally, the guest also notes their amazement at Splash Mountain exceeding expectations, suggesting a positive experience with the attractions. The mention of specific rides and the helpfulness of staff members indicates a focus on the park's offerings and the quality of service, which are crucial aspects for any visitor, including business travellers. The experience of the individual is highlighted, with an emphasis on the positive aspects of the park. As this review demonstrates, solo travellers frequently seek out unique and immersive experiences and value the staff's compassion and friendly service.

5.4.4. Rating Analysis

Rating can be said to be a critical variable to analyse to be able better comprehend the key variables that influence guests' decisions to either endorse or critique certain aspects of their visit to the Disneyland theme parks.
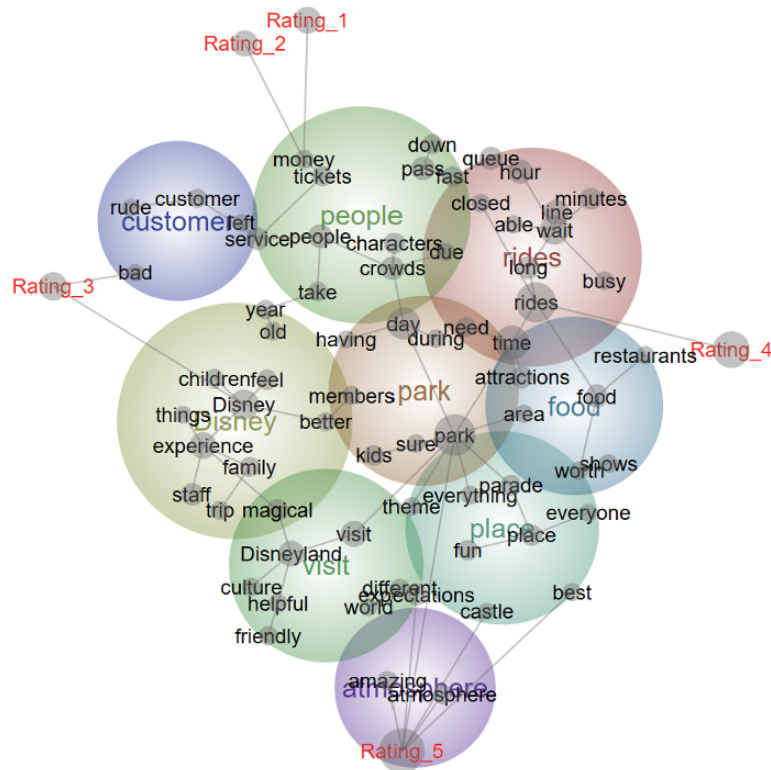
Figure 5.4.4.1. Concept Map generated for the overall Disneyland Experience Rating.
Source: Leximancer and Self-elaboration.

The magical ambiance and enjoyable experiences of the park are frequently praised by guests in reviews with **a rating of 5**. The use of terms like "amazing," "magical," "friendly," and "fun" indicates a highly optimistic atmosphere. These occurrences revolve around families and kids, as demonstrated by the frequent usage of words like "family," "children," and "kids." High praise is given for the interaction with staff and the standard of the services, highlighted by adjectives like "helpful," "friendly," and "service." Additionally, the wide range and quality of entertainment options, which are referred to as "attractions," "shows," and "rides," add to the sense of positivity overall. Even if it isn't stated explicitly, the reasonable wait times and positive experience suggest outstanding value for money, raising the level of customer satisfaction overall. Out of the 195 reviews in this category, these positive characteristics have been noted in the majority of them, demonstrating an overall satisfactory experience for these visitors.

Reviews that received **a rating of 4** on the other hand emphasise a more complex experience. The parks' wide range of amenities, indicated by adjectives like "different," "attractions," and "rides," all contribute to the positives. However, as implied by terms like "busy," "crowds," and "wait," tourists also take things like wait times and crowd control into consideration. The parks' family-friendly atmosphere ("family," "children," and "staff") and positive experiences with staff members ("helpful," "friendly," and "staff") are notable aspects. Although guests are made aware of the crowds and wait times, the reports indicate an overall favourable experience. Out of the 82 reviews in this category, these factors help to balance the visitors' positive yet balanced opinions.

Reviews with **a rating of 3** show that the experiences were varied. A wide range of emotions are expressed by visitors, including dissatisfaction with waiting times ("wait" and "crowds"), staff interactions ("staff" and "customer"), and the overall experience ("bad" and "rude"). The word "expectations" suggests that visitors' perceptions of the theme parks may have an impact on how happy they are with it. Although there are some positive factors, such as the variety of attractions ("rides" and "experience"), the overall attitude is less consistent than in reviews with higher ratings. Guests express a wide variety of experiences in the 58 evaluations in this category, indicating an adequate degree of satisfaction.

Reviews that receive a **rating of 1 or 2** generally convey a bad experience. The perceived value for the money (referred to as "money"), staff interactions (referred to as "staff" and "customer"), and wait times (referred to as "wait" and "crowds") are among several aspects that visitors express dissatisfaction with. The dominating negative attitude suggests a generally less pleasurable experience. Visitors consistently express discontent in all of the reviews in this category, suggesting a significantly unsatisfactory evaluation of their Disneyland experience.

5.5. Verification of Propositions

In the following pages, the study discusses the various reviews and analyses that support the propositions by demonstrating how cultural differences affect various aspects of guest experiences, such as staff interactions, entertainment preferences, and culinary offerings, impacting customer satisfaction and perceptions of service quality at Disney Parks.

Proposition 1: Customer service and guest experiences at Disney parks are greatly impacted by geographic cultural differences. For instance, reviewers of Tokyo Disneyland typically referred to the park's unique fusion of Disney magic with traditional Japanese hospitality.

According to one guest, "The respectful and polite staff added a touch of Japanese culture, making our experience truly special." By conforming to Japanese cultural norms, this cultural adaptation had a positive influence on guest relationships.

Proposition 2: Different cultural expectations and preferences influence the degree of satisfaction among guests. European visitors to Disneyland Paris reported a preference for leisurely experiences that place a strong focus on relaxation and scenic beauty. According to one review, "The serene atmosphere and beautiful gardens catered perfectly to our European taste for tranquillity." Visitors from vibrant cultures, such as those from India, on the other hand, enjoyed the captivating performances as well as interactive activities. One review claimed, "The energetic parades and interactive shows kept us thoroughly entertained, meeting our lively cultural expectations."

Proposition 3: Cultural differences are just one of many variables that affect how satisfied guests are with the service that they receive at Disney Parks. Service quality was frequently linked with staff friendliness and efficiency in Disneyland Park California, corresponding with the American expectation for exceptional customer service. One visitor observed, "The cheerful staff and their helpful attitude enhanced our experience, reflecting the American hospitality we expected." Food preferences were also influenced by cultural quirks. Visitors from Asia appreciated Tokyo Disneyland's diverse Asian cuisine choices, commenting that "the availability of authentic Asian dishes met our culinary expectations, adding to the overall satisfaction of our visit."

Analysing visitor reviews from Disneyland California, Disneyland Paris, and Tokyo Disneyland has provided important insights into the components that influence visitors' experiences at these renowned theme parks. By emphasising on the keywords and demographic data provided in the reviews, the study attempted to understand visitor satisfaction, preferences, and potential areas for improvement.

The enchanting atmosphere and immersive experiences highlighted by visitors are consistent with studies emphasising the significance of atmosphere and theming in enhancing visitor enjoyment (Kim, Vogt, & Knutson, 2013). The positive correlation between visitor satisfaction and the park's atmosphere is well-documented in the literature, emphasising the pivotal role of ambiance in shaping memorable experiences (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003).

At Disneyland California, guests overwhelmingly appreciated the park's pleasant and family-friendly ambiance, praising its enchanting atmosphere. Couples and families gave the park excellent reviews, although solo travellers seemed to be a little less enthusiastic. Although noteworthy in certain cases, service quality additionally indicated space for improvement, indicating a need for specialised staff development and training.

Similar praise was shown for Disneyland Paris' overall experience and immersive atmosphere, with solo travellers making up a greater percentage of visitors than was previously thought. It was highlighted that the level of service quality at Disneyland Paris was comparable to other factors, which emphasises its significance of maintaining consistent service standards across the park.

Despite being praised for its cultural appeal and fascinating atmosphere, crowd control issues at Tokyo Disneyland had an adverse effect on the overall visitor experience. The majority of visitors were friends and couples, demonstrating the park's attraction to these particular groups of people. To maximise tourist happiness, it is crucial to address crowd control strategies and personalise experiences for various visitor groups, including solo travellers and couples.

The observed demographics, such as the predominance of English-speaking tourists from the United Kingdom and the United States, are consistent with research that highlight the general appeal of Disney theme parks and the influence of cultural factors on visitor behaviour (Apostolopoulos & Gayle, 2002). Understanding visitor diversity and tailoring experiences accordingly is consistent with the principles of market segmentation and targeted marketing strategies advocated in destination management literature (Litvin, 2003).

It is advised that Disneyland parks prioritise service quality improvements through focused employee training and continuous monitoring of customer interactions in light of these findings. A seamless and enjoyable visit for all guests also depends on managing crowd control issues, especially in parks with high visitor density like Tokyo Disneyland. Real-time feedback systems and customised engagement methods for various visitor groups can help the parks grow and thrive. In its conclusion, this study emphasises how crucial it is to comprehend demographics and visitor happiness in order to preserve the appealing qualities and popularity of these beloved Disney destinations.

Additionally, studies demonstrating the impact of visitor density on visitor satisfaction and overall park experience supports the significance of addressing crowd control concerns (Yu &

Egger, 2020). Successful theme park operations have been identified as requiring efficient crowd management strategies and real-time monitoring of visitor flow (Wang & Xu, 2016).

In conclusion, the results are consistent with all three claims, showing that park atmosphere significantly affects visitor satisfaction, demographic factors have a direct impact on visitor preferences, and it is crucial to address service quality and crowd control issues in order to improve overall satisfaction. The findings not only verify the propositions but also offer helpful insights for managing theme parks and enhancing guest experiences.

CHAPTER 6.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In-depth responses to the research questions were made possible by a comprehensive examination of reviews from Tokyo Disneyland, Disneyland Paris, and Disneyland Park California. The analysis of the guest experiences across different theme parks, which took into account cultural differences, traveller types, and satisfaction factors, provided insight into a number of significant aspects.

In response to the first research question, "What effects do cultural differences have on visitors' experiences?" It is clear that cultural differences have a big impact on how people perceive an environment. For instance, Japanese tourists responded well to Tokyo Disneyland's emphasis on the local culture, producing a unique and culturally rich experience. The creation of diverse and immersive universes, in contrast, was a strength of Disneyland Paris, which catered to tourists looking for an exciting adventure. Disneyland Park California stood out for its exceptional service, which was notably appreciated by visitors from the US and the UK, highlighting the park's ability to accommodate various cultural expectations.

In response to the second research question, which concerned visitors' various preferences and expectations, the analysis emphasised different priorities across different traveller types. Families placed an emphasis on "Family," "Service," and "Atmosphere," indicating a desire for positive experiences. On the other hand, solo travellers expressed a preference for in-depth exploration while seeking "Immersive" experiences. Business travellers placed an emphasis on "Efficiency" and "Convenience," highlighting the importance of seamless and time-saving experiences.

Addressing the third research question on cultural differences influencing guest satisfaction, it became prominent that the parks' ability in understanding and responding to these differences had a direct impact on guest satisfaction. The capability of Tokyo Disneyland to offer culturally distinct experiences has received high praise from Japanese tourists. The focus that was placed on diverse settings and environments at Disneyland Paris attracted a large international audience, boosting overall satisfaction. The outstanding customer service at Disneyland Park California, which was especially praised by tourists from the US and the UK, greatly enhanced guest satisfaction.

To conclude, the results demonstrate the importance of accommodating all kinds of traveller types and preferences while also confirming the impact of cultural differences on theme park experiences. A rise in guest satisfaction is closely linked with the thematic parks' abilities to adapt

their offerings in consideration of cultural differences and visitor expectations, confirming the critical importance of recognizing diverse guest needs for delivering enjoyable theme park experiences.

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

This thesis provides significant contributions to the fields of tourism, hospitality, and visitor experience research through its in-depth analysis of theme park guest reviews and use of technologically advanced text analysis tools. Firstly, the examination of visitor reviews using advanced text analysis tools such as Leximancer has highlighted the promising potential of such methods in identifying complex factors that contribute to guest satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This underlines the significance of using advanced analytical techniques in tourism research since they allow a deeper comprehension of visitor preferences and perspectives.

The study also explores cultural differences that affect guests' perceptions and preferences in theme parks. The examination of certain themes and keywords related to various cultural groups strengthens the awareness of how cultural factors influence the experiences of visitors. This work highlights the importance of managing theme parks with a culturally sensitive approach and offers a theoretical framework for incorporating cultural elements into visitor experience models.

6.2. Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, the conclusions drawn offer beneficial insights for theme park management and marketing efforts. Most importantly, it is essential to understand different cultural expectations and preferences of visitors. Theme parks should adapt their entertainment, offerings, and services to satisfy the distinctive needs of the various guest demographics. For example, suitable cultural activities, themed tourist attractions, or dining options could improve the whole visitor experience.

Furthermore, incorporating modern technologies can improve visitor engagement. This includes mobile applications and augmented reality experiences. Theme parks could invest in interactive mobile apps which offer updates in real time, virtual maps, and tailored recommendations. Attractions incorporating augmented reality can offer immersive experiences that attract tech-savvy guests and improve overall satisfaction.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

While conducting this research, a number of limitations were noted that should be considered when interpreting the results. Firstly, the study's dependence on TripAdvisor reviews may have biassed its sample because individuals who don't utilise these sites might have different perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, this study primarily focused on reviews provided in English, thus omitting the preferences and experiences of non-English-speaking visitors. The use of broad demographic categories like nationality, which might not adequately represent the subtle cultural variations within each nation, is another drawback. Finally, although Leximancer generated valuable data, its analysis might lack the depth of qualitative approaches like focus groups or interviews, implying a potential gap in comprehension of visitor experiences.

Future research could conduct longitudinal studies to overcome these constraints, providing an in-depth analysis of visitor trends over time. Cross-cultural research inside parks might examine how experiences are influenced by culture. Quantitative data sometimes overlooks emotional factors, therefore integrating qualitative methods may help. Targeted insights might result from concentrating on particular visitor segments. Investigating the effects of emerging technology and the viewpoints of employees could improve services. Utilising RFID and other technology to analyse visitor behaviour may help with crowd control. Exploring such possibilities could strengthen research on the theme park visitor experience and improve guest satisfaction and park management.

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9. Annexes

Annex A - Word Cloud generated for Disneyland Paris

Annex B - Word Cloud generated for Tokyo Disneyland

Annex C - Word Cloud generated for Disneyland California

Annex D - Word Cloud generated for demographic traveller type: Family for all three Disneyland Parks

Annex E - Word Cloud generated for demographic traveller type: Couples for all three Disneyland Parks

Annex F - Word Cloud generated for demographic traveller type: Friends for all three Disneyland Parks

Annex G - Word Cloud generated for demographic traveller type: Solo for all three Disneyland Parks

Annex H - Word Cloud generated for Ratings 1 and 2 for all three Disneyland Parks

Annex I - Word Cloud generated for Ratings 4 and 5 for all three Disneyland Parks