

**Cruise Travelers' Service Perceptions: An Evidence
from Cruise Passengers' Reviews by
Using Leximancer**

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ABSTRACT

Given the cruise sector's importance to the tourism industry and the dearth of prior research in this area, this study qualitatively explores cruise tourists' perceptions of cruise-line services by evaluating the cruise attributes that matter to passengers. Leximancer 4.5 software is used to analyze 2000 voluntarily submitted customer evaluations on a cruise guide website (cruisecritic.com) in order to discover main cruise tourism themes and then assess whether these themes are conveyed negatively or positively. Eight of the most popular cruise ships, as determined by cruisecritic.com, were chosen. The cruise's perceived quality was described around ten themes, according to the analysis. “Ship”, “staff”, “food”, “entertainment”, “room”, “area”, “embarkation”, “excursion”, “disembarkation” and “port” are the themes that found as dominant themes shared by cruise travelers in their narratives. Furthermore, the results show that themes like “ship”, “staff”, “food”, “entertainment”, “room” and “area” are associated with high satisfaction (excellent/very good), in contrast, “embarkation”, “disembarkation”, “excursion” and “port” are associated with low satisfaction (poor/terrible).

Keywords: cruise, travel, service quality, content analysis, ship industry, guest perception, online reviews

ÖZ

Çalışmanın amacı, cruisecritic.com sitesinde bulunan ve kruzaviyer turu deneyimine sahip yolcuların kruvaziyer turu hizmet kalitesi algılarını incelemektir. Buna göre, kruvaziyer yolcularının, kruvaziyer gemileri hakkında paylaştıkları toplamda 2000 çevrimiçi inceleme Leximancer yazılımı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sonucunda, toplamda 10 ana tema yolcuların hizmet kalitesi algısı konusunda ön plana çıkmıştır. Bunlar; “gemi”, “personel”, “yemek”, “eğlence”, “oda”, “alan”, “gemiye binış”, “gezi”, “karaya çıkış” ve “liman”. Çalışmanın bir diğer amacı bulunan temaların hangilerinin memnuniyet/memnuniyetsizlikle bağlantılı olduğunu bulmaktır. Yapılan analizler sonucu, “gemi”, “personel”, “yemek”, “eğlence”, “oda” ve “alan” gibi temaların yüksek memnuniyet (mükemmel/çok iyi) ile ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Buna karşın, “gemiye binış”, “karaya çıkış”, “gezi” ve “liman” temaları düşük memnuniyet ile ilişkilendirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: gemi yolculuğu, seyahat, hizmet kalitesi, içerik analizi, kruvaziyer endüstrisi, misafir algısı, çevrimiçi incelemeler.

DEDICATION

To my family...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ÖZ	iv
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Problem Statement	2
1.3 Contribution to the Current Knowledge.....	3
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.1 Cruise Tourism.....	5
2.2 Service Quality in the Cruise Industry	16
2.3 Cruise Service Quality Dimensions	20
2.4 Role of Web Reviews in Service Quality Studies	24
2.5 Service Quality and The Nature of Hospitality Services	29
2.6 User-Generated Content.....	32
2.7 COVID-19 and Cruise Tourism.....	46
3 METHODOLOGY	44
3.1 Research Context	44
3.2 Data Collection	45
3.3 Methodological Approach	46
3.4 Leximancer Software	47

4 FINDINGS	52
4.1 General Description of Cruise Travel Perceived Quality	52
5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	72
5.1 Managerial Implications	81
5.2 Limitations and Future Research	84
REFERENCES	87

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Global Cruise Industry Deployment Market Share in 2019, by Region.....	6
Table 2. Number of Cruise Passengers Worldwide	8
Table 3. Number of Cruise Passenger Embarkations Worldwide in 2019	9
Table 4. Number of Available Bed Days in the Global Cruise Industry in 2019	10
Table 5. Main Themes, Concepts and Relevancy Percentages	62

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Concept Map	53
Figure 2. Different Satisfaction Groups' Evaluation of Perceived Cruise Quality....	69

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Cruise tourism is a rapidly developing, worldwide market (Di Vaio et al., 2021; Xie, Qian & Wang, 2021; James, Olsen & Karlsdóttir, 2020; Paiano, Crovella & Lagioia, 2020; Mangano et al., 2020). Developing countries as well as developed countries are attempting to participate in cruise tourism, which can make an important economic contribution (MacNeill & Wozniak, 2018; London, Lohmann & Moyle, 2021; Han et al., 2019; Cervený et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Jászberényi & Miskolczi, 2020; Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020). Cruise tourism is one of the most rapidly upwardly mobile sectors in the tourism industry, generating approximately USD 134 billion yearly (CLIA, 2019). The industry estimates that the number of functioning vessels will grow from 264 ships in 2018 to around 472 cruise ships by the year 2027 (CLIA, 2017). The growing number of passengers as well as operating ships and ports support this statement (Casado-Díaz et al., 2021; Park et al., 2019; Vega-Muñoz et al., 2020; Mahadevan & Chang, 2017; Weeden et al., 2011). In line with the growth of the cruise industry, this is exerting a dual influence on the economies of the destination ports (Santos et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2018). Therefore, research dedicated on cruise will be both academically as well as practically important.

Although cruise tourism is among the tourism phenomena that are experiencing significant growth (Mangano et al., 2020), it has not received much attention from an

academic point of view (Sun et al., 2018; Papathanassis, 2012), especially in terms of cruisers' service quality perceptions. This is worrying, since service quality studies can assess how successful service ambassadors fulfill tourists' needs according to tourists' perceptions, helping cruise ship staff to prioritize tourists' needs, wants, and expectations (Yusof et al., 2014).

The delivery of expected service quality is broadly accepted as an essential antecedent of customer satisfaction as well as loyalty, which can ultimately lead to greater competitive performance (Malik et al., 2020). Additionally, service quality as well as customer satisfaction is predominantly multifaceted for the service sector (Jiang & Zhang, 2016). This is valid for the cruise industry, which has a complex service process spanning from embarkation to disembarkation (Robles et al., 2015).

1.2 Problem Statement

Due to the homogenous characteristics of the core service delivered (i.e., moving tourists and products from one place to other), cruises accomplish differentiation through the delivery of a superior quality of service (Hwang & Han, 2014). Several investigations have demonstrated that service quality ingenuities have turned out to be vital for organizations to be able to compete with rivals (Nejati & Nejati, 2009) as well as sustain customer satisfaction (Barber et al., 2011). Hence, for cruise companies, service quality and its role have had key significance in the last decade in the main corporate policy of differentiation (Chua et al., 2015).

Despite the growing amount of cruise-related research and recent calls for further research (Weaver & Lawton, 2017; Weeden & Klein, 2018), the literature remains scarce, especially regarding service quality. Limited studies on cruise service quality

have often used questionnaires to gather data (Hwang & Han, 2014; Chua et al., 2015). To our knowledge, there is no study in the literature that focuses on the service quality perception of tourists, investigated using content analysis, on cruise ships. While a number of investigations have used content analyses by collecting reviews within different service-based industries, these studies collected user-generated content to define perceived service quality from the tourist angle (Brochado et al., 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2017; Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020). Furthermore, such studies concluded that further research should gauge the possible factors that can influence the service perceptions of travelers.

1.3 Contribution to the Current Knowledge

As highlighted above, despite the vast amount of cruise-related research and recent calls for further research (Weaver & Lawton, 2017; Weeden & Klein, 2018), the literature remains limited, especially regarding service quality. Limited studies on cruise service quality have often used questionnaires to gather data (Hwang & Han, 2014; Chua et al., 2015). These so-called factors directly affect the user-perceived quality of specific leisure products.

Therefore, bearing in mind the new quality perceptions obtainable via online word of mouth (WOM), the current research examines the main themes in relation to service quality and which service attributes lead to higher/lower levels of satisfaction. Given the importance of the cruise segment in the tourism sector and the few studies in the field, our research findings will add to the literature and shed light on how to determine the best strategies for the cruise industry.

Even though perceived value for money as well as service quality have been revealed to be associated with travelers' positive WOM, the current studies are still vague as regards the service components that are considered to represent higher value for money (Brochado et al., 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2017; Rajaguru, 2016). To the best of our knowledge, no known study has investigated the attributes of service quality of cruises using tourists' online reviews. Based on the gaps highlighted above, the current research sought to analyze online reviews from cruise passengers. The two primary objectives of this research were to find the dominant themes in relation to perceived cruise quality and to examine which concepts were linked with higher and lower value for money ratings from the tourists' perspective.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

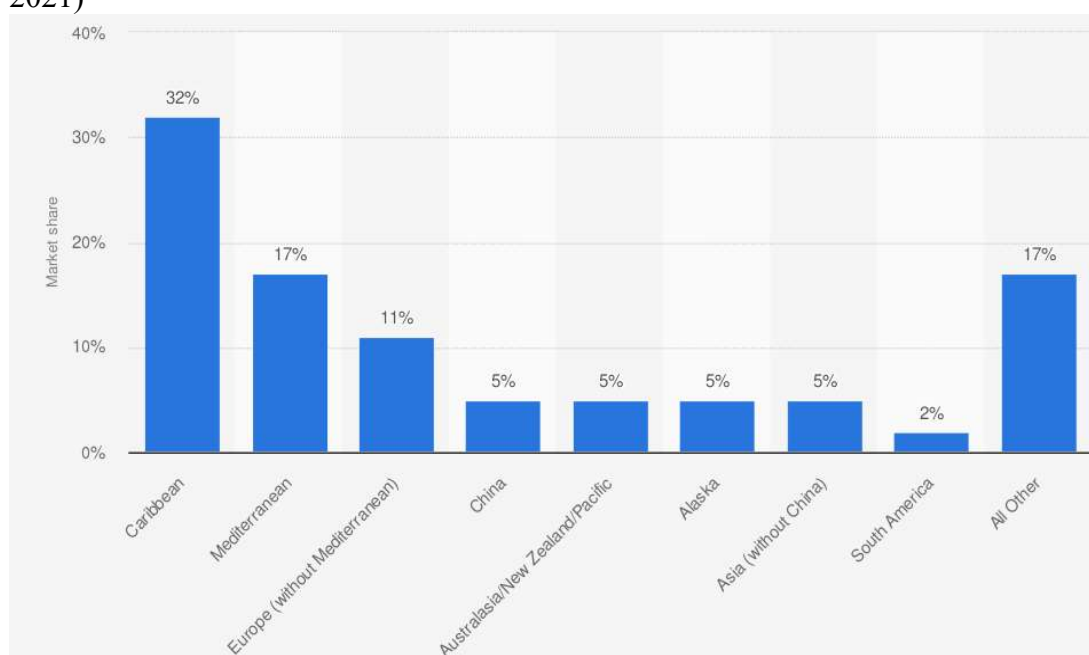
2.1 Cruise Tourism

Cruises are regarded sophisticated goods that cater to the demands of visitors who are continuously on the lookout for unique experiences by allowing them to visit several places in a single trip (Roth-Cohen & Lahav, 2021). Along with bars, clubs, dining halls, and a casino, contemporary cruise ships have mega-facilities such as shopping promenades, theatres, ice skating rinks, pools, and water slides (Hung et al., 2020), transforming cruise ships from “floating hotels” to “floating resorts” (Papathanassis, 2012). Broadly speaking, both developing and developed nations are striving to participate in cruise tourism, which has the potential to be a significant economic contributor (MacNeill & Wozniak, 2018; London, Lohmann & Moyle, 2021; Han et al., 2019; Cervený et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Jászberényi & Miskolczi, 2020; Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020). Cruise tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourist business, with an annual revenue of USD 134 billion (CLIA, 2019). The industry estimates that the number of functioning vessels will grow from 264 ships in 2018 to around 472 cruise ships by the year 2027 (CLIA, 2017). The growing number of passengers as well as operating ships and ports support this statement (Casado-Díaz et al., 2021; Park et al., 2019; Vega-Muñoz et al., 2020; Mahadevan & Chang, 2017; Weeden et al., 2011). In line with the cruise industry's expansion, this has a twofold impact on the economy of the destination ports (Santos et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2018).

Therefore, research dedicated on cruise will be both academically as well as practically important.

The number of passengers on cruise ships continues to rise across the world, with an annual growth rate of 6.63 percent from 1990 to 2020 (Casado-Díaz et al., 2021; Cruise Market Watch, 2019). After the Caribbean (34.4 percent), the Mediterranean area is the second most popular cruise destination (17.3 percent) (CLIA, 2019). Cruises are one of the most rapidly expanding segments of the worldwide tourism business. The cruise industry's income has increased to 37 billion dollars in the last decade, representing the most successful and perhaps transformational moment in the industry's history. As depicted below, Table 1 reveals the worldwide cruise industry deployment market share by region in 2019. With 32 percent of all deployments, the Caribbean led the way, followed by the Mediterranean with 17 percent.

Table 1: Global Cruise Industry Deployment Market Share in 2019, by Region (CLIA, 2021)

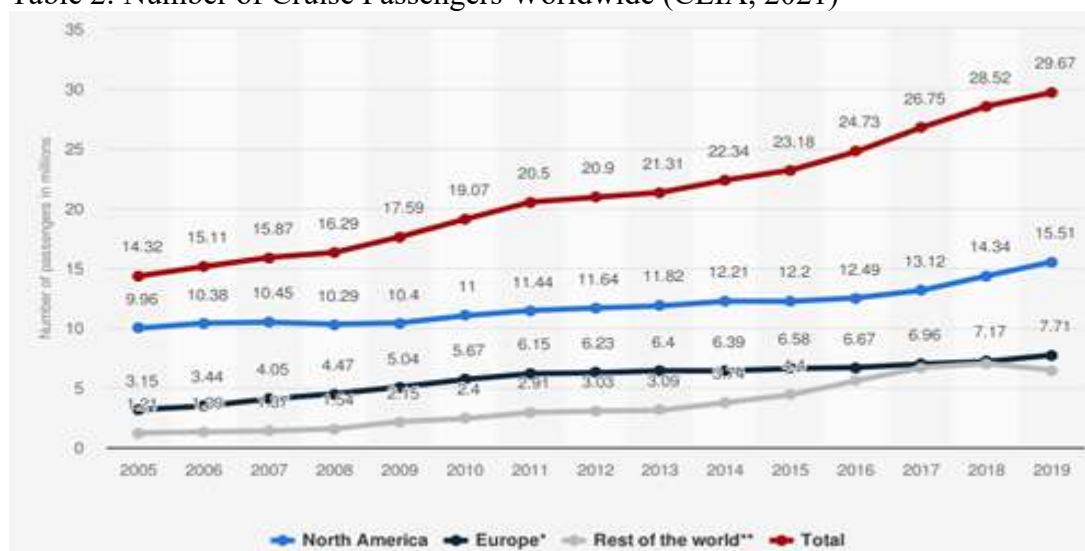


While river, sea, and ocean cruises were formerly deemed antiquated, new travel locations and a wide range of cruise products, services, and personalized experiences have made cruise vacations a popular holiday option for people all over the world. This increased demand for leisure, pleasure, and luxury sea travel has spurred the manufacture and deployment of boats that are increasing in both quantity and size: In 2019, the worldwide cruise market's average passenger capacity reached an all-time high of 550 passengers; however, with the emergence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which devastated the cruise business and continues to halt the whole global travel and tourist industry, this capacity was essentially left undisturbed in 2020.

The cruise tourism industry is a type of leisure travel that incorporates an all-inclusive vacation on a cruise ship. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), cruise tourism encompasses "a wide range of activities for travelers in addition to its conventional duty of providing transportation and lodging." The cruise business is the fastest-growing segment of the travel business, with demand expanding at a rate of 7.0 percent per year over the last decade and cruise passenger numbers topping 30 million in 2019 (CLIA, 2020; Wondirad, 2019). According to recent data published in 2020 by Cruise Lines International Associations (CLIA) revealed that between 2009 and 2019, the number of passengers on ocean cruises increased considerably over the world. The global ocean cruise sector handled 17.8 million passengers in 2009. This statistic peaked at 29.7 million in 2019. In addition, In 2019, the worldwide cruise industry's average passenger capacity of ocean-going boats was 550 thousand. This amount has increased by nearly 30 thousand travelers from the previous year (CLIA, 2020).

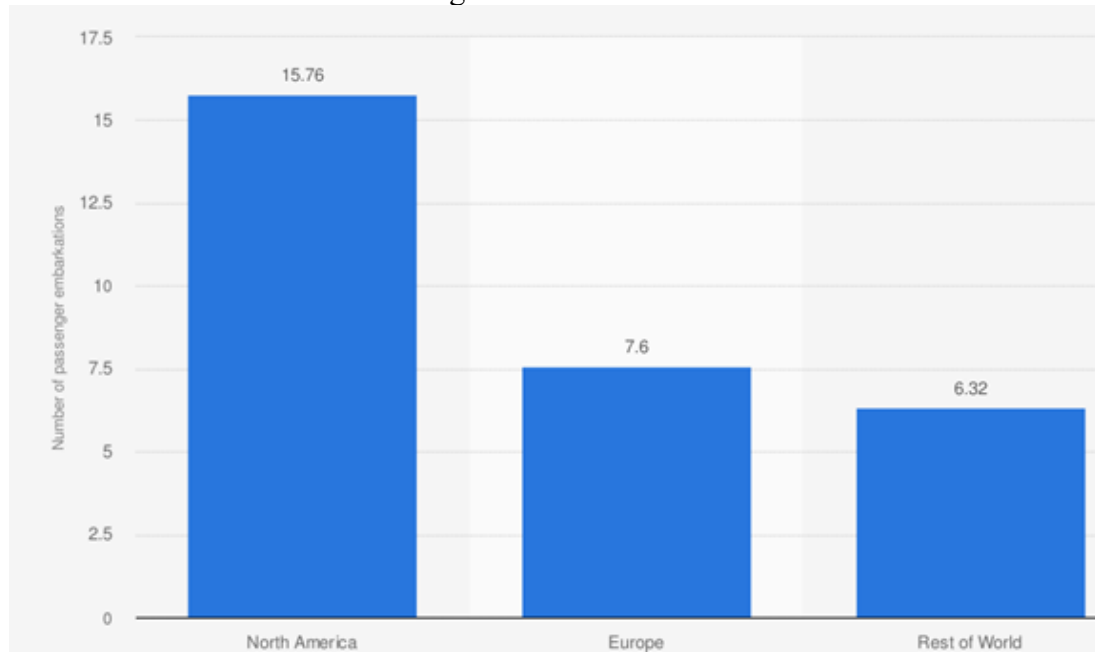
As it can be seen in table1, the number of cruise passengers climbed steadily between 2005 and 2019. The number of passengers reached a high of over 29.7 million in 2019. North America was the most important source market in that year, with over 15.5 million cruise passengers.

Table 2: Number of Cruise Passengers Worldwide (CLIA, 2021)



As it can be seen in table 2, as a most important cruise destinations, the Caribbean Sea has grown to become the world's major center for cruise tourism, spanning 2.75 million square kilometers and boasting over 7,000 islands, more than 20 surrounding nations, and year-round sun. In recent years, the area has surpassed the Mediterranean as the most significant market for this type of tourism, accounting for around one-third of world cruise passenger capacity. In 2019, the largest number of cruise passenger embarkations were recorded in North America. North American passengers accounted for over 15.7 million cruise passenger embarkations in that year, while Europe accounted for about 7.6 million.

Table 3: Number of Cruise Passenger Embarkations Worldwide in 2019



At the same time, the industry is perceived to be extremely risky and capital-intensive (Syriopoulos, Tsatsaronisv & Gorilav, 2020). When compared to commercial ocean ships, newbuilt cruise ships can cost up to \$1.3 billion per vessel, housing up to 6000 people, though at reduced operational unit costs (Syriopoulos, Tsatsaronisv & Gorilav, 2020; Lester & Weeden, 2004). Despite this, the cruise sector underwent considerable upheaval in the 1990s as a result of a series of failures and consolidations. Larger corporate cruise firms purchased smaller competitors, which continued to operate as “brands” under the new operations, serving returning customers and providing a variety of quality and service options (Syriopoulos, Tsatsaronisv & Gorilav, 2020).

Table 3 shows that the Caribbean was the area with the most available bed days in the cruise industry worldwide. There were around 65 million cruise bed days available in this region in that year. With over 33 million cruise bed days available, the Mediterranean came in second in the ranking.

Table 4: Number of Available Bed Days in the Global Cruise Industry in 2019

Characteristic	Available bed days in millions
Caribbean	65.24
Mediterranean	32.98
Europe (without Mediterranean)	21.22
Asia	17.94
Australia/New Zealand/Pacific	9.34
Alaska	8.9
South America	4.21
Rest of the World	30.74

Showing entries 1 to 8 (8 entries in total)

The cruise shipping industry provides cruise passengers with a comprehensive package of worldwide shipping and tourist services, including vacation services on board and ashore, as well as a wide range of recreational tourist-related activities. Over time, however, the worldwide cruise industry has undergone a fundamental strategic shift (Garin, 2005). Whereas cruise shipping services used to be primarily targeted at high-net-worth luxury clients at a high cost, the industry has increasingly diversified to show market segmentation and to attract a large number of average-income cruise passengers of all ages and social profiles.

Attractive cruise service packages at reasonable pricing have aided this trend, since vast newbuilt vessel capacity has resulted in significant economies of scale benefits. Cruise shipping is widely seen as a “customer's market”, driven by changing consumer preferences and trends. Passengers on cruise ships tend to be more interested in “paying more for experiences than for stuff”.

Carnival Corporation, Royal Caribbean Cruises, and Norwegian Cruise Line, all located in the United States, currently dominate the worldwide cruise business. While Royal Caribbean Cruises runs some of the world's largest and most costly cruise ships, its primary competition, Carnival Corporation, remains the world's most profitable cruise line. Carnival Corporation & plc made 20.8 billion dollars in income in 2019, mostly from ticket sales and onboard items like as alcoholic beverages, casino gaming, spa services, and shore excursions. The Carnival cruise line fleet concentrates on onboard entertainment alternatives ranging from waterslides to rollercoasters, as the name implies. This emphasis on the customer experience has helped the sector compete with land-based holiday options and attract new customers. It remains to be seen whether this plan would be adequate to reignite traveler demand once cruise companies restart operations in 2021 (Statista, 2021).

2.1.1 History of Cruise Tourism

Cruise tourism is described as an opulent kind of travel that entails all-inclusive vacation packages on a cruise ship that last at least two days (Hung et al., 2020; Wondirad, 2019). The modern era of cruise tourism began in the 1970s and has since expanded globally (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2019). Cruise tourism is the fastest expanding component of the tourist industry now (Wondirad, 2019). The introduction of new ships and voyages, the addition of new cruise destinations, the changing demographics of cruise passengers, technology advancements, and the cruise line corporations' tremendous marketing strength all contribute to this expansion (Hung et al., 2020). Cruise tourism is one of the most rapidly upwardly mobile sectors in the tourism industry, generating approximately USD 134 billion yearly (CLIA, 2019). The industry estimates that the number of functioning vessels will grow from 264 ships in 2018 to around 472 cruise ships by the year 2027 (CLIA, 2017). The growing number

of passengers as well as operating ships and ports support this statement (Casado-Díaz et al., 2021; Park et al., 2019; Vega-Muñoz et al., 2020; Mahadevan & Chang, 2017; Weeden et al., 2011). Akin to the growth of the cruise industry, this is exerting a dual influence on the economies of the destination ports (Santos et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2018). Therefore, research dedicated on cruise will be both academically as well as practically important. Although cruise tourism is among the tourism phenomena that is experiencing significant growth (Mangano et al., 2020), it has not received much attention from an academic point of view (Sun et al., 2018; Papathanassis, 2012).

Historically, the Francesco I, bearing the flag of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, provided an early cruise experience in Italy, a typical highlight of the Grand Tour. The Francesco I was built in 1831 and departed from Naples in early June 1833, following an extensive advertisement effort. Nobles, authorities, and royal princes from all over Europe boarded the cruise ship, which sailed to “Taormina”, “Catania”, “Syracuse”, “Malta”, “Corfu”, “Patras”, “Delphi”, “Zante”, “Athens”, “Smyrna”, and “Constantinople” in just over three months, entertaining passengers with excursions and guided tours, dancing, card tables on the deck, and onboard parties (London, W., & Farias, 2019). P&O originally advertised passenger-cruising services in 1844, selling marine cruises from Southampton to places such as Gibraltar, Malta, and Athens. These journeys were the forerunners of current cruise vacations, and they were the first of their sort. P&O Cruises is the oldest cruise line in the world. Later, the firm began offering round journeys to places like Alexandria and Constantinople. In the later part of the nineteenth century, it saw a period of tremendous development, constructing larger and more opulent ships to satisfy the continually rising market. The SS Ravenna, built in 1880, was the first ship to have a completely steel superstructure, while the SS Valetta, built in 1889, was the first ship to employ electric lighting (Cruise

News, 2012). Albert Blain was the first person to introduce passenger transportation by cruise ships in 1890. There was a complete absence of equipment and service between passenger and cargo ships during those years. These missions did not arouse much attention in the globe since there was no difference (Yilmaz & Incekara, 2002).

Cunard and White Star Line, both founded in England at the turn of the twentieth century, are competing. The Cunard line was founded on the principle that "speed comes before comfort." White Star Line, the market's largest rival, has a strategy that is quieter and more all other previously traveling on the transoceanic route offering safe travel passengers by building and floating larger and safer ships than was to create a difference in transportation (Gibson, 2012).

Cunard's White Star Line firm is roughly 30.5 meters longer and quicker than ships, with a passenger capacity of 3,500 persons. He designed three Olympic-class ships. Their surnames will also reveal whether they are related. The names Olympic, Titanic, and Britanic (Giantic) were assigned in the following order: (Lunn,2010). The company's first year of operation was in 1910. Olimpik is the only one of these three ships that is unsinkable, having been introduced as one of the largest and most opulent cruise ships in the world.

The rise of cruise tourism coincided with the decrease of transoceanic ship travel and the arrival of the first nonstop flights between the United States and Europe in the early 1960s. The 1970s and 1980s were a time of gradual development, with passenger numbers rising from half a million in 1970 to 1.4 million in 1980 and 3.8 million in 1990 (Brida & Zapata, 2010).

In the 1990s, cruise travel expanded throughout Europe, Asia, and Oceania, kicking off an era of rapid expansion. From 1990 to 2007, the average yearly increase rate in the number of cruise passengers worldwide was 7.4%. It has grown at about double the pace of general tourism, and this trend is anticipated to continue in the future (Klein, 2005).

Moreover, Brida and Zapata (2010) stated that “the Caribbean region continues being the most preferred cruise destination, accounting for 41 percent of all itineraries while Cruise Lines International Association members carried 12.56 million worldwide passengers. This represented an increase of 4.1 percent over the previous year. Cruise passenger arrivals in the Caribbean region increased from 3 million in 1980 to more than 25 million in 2007”.

The number of passengers on cruise ships is growing, as is the size of the ships, influencing where they dock. In parallel with Klein et al. (2003), “in Asia, Australia, and Europe, the sector is also flourishing. The popularity of cruising is growing rapidly in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy, with similar growth in Spain but less so in France”. The unique model that cruise tourism offers is responsible for the worldwide increase in demand for cruise travel. Today's cruise ships provide a wide range of activities that appeal to travelers of all ages, backgrounds, and socioeconomic status.

Vacationing aboard a cruise accepted as a reliable, trustworthy, inexpensive, as well as convenient alternative. Cruising is the epitome of globalization: physical mobility, intangible wealth that can be transported anywhere and at any time, workers from several nations on the same ship, advantageous legislation, and carefully chosen

marine registrations (Lois, Wang, Wall & Ruxton, 2004; Radic, 2019; Le & Arcodia, 2018; Casareale et al., 2017; Liu, Pennington-Gray & Krieger, 2016).

2.1.2 Cruise Category

The cruise category divides ships into groups based on the services they provide aboard. Customers' buying decisions are generally aided by rating systems, which are used to measure this variable. Before selecting, potential clients might examine the current distinctions among cruise lines (Casado-Díaz et al., 2021). These classifications are analogous to hotel star ratings, which serve as a quality indicator for potential clients (Mohsin, Rodrigues & Brochado, 2019).

Cusano, Ferrari, and Tei (2017) suggested that the Mediterranean cruise industry is highly differentiated. These cruises are divided into three categories: “modern”, “premium”, and “luxury” (Sun, Xu & Kwortnik, 2021; Ioana-Daniela et al., 2018; Casado-Díaz et al., 2021). In the meanwhile, the Berlitz ship rating system divides cruise ships into four categories: normal, premium, luxury, and exclusive cruise ships (Ward, 2015).

In the cruise literature, this method is now the most often used categorization (e.g., Han, Hwang & Lee, 2018; Han & Hyun, 2019). The “Berlitz guide” weights and converts six primary onboard features, including the “ship itself”, “lodging”, “gastronomy”, “services”, “entertainment”, and “cruise experience”, into stars (from 1 to 6+). According to Swain and Barth (2002) stated that “like other popular cruise guides, has been chastised for its inconsistency, lack of clarity, and failing to account for a wide range of other elements that might influence star ratings”.

If the costlier cruises (luxury and exclusive) are afforded by affluent passengers compared to the price paid by common cruise travelers, the disparities in passenger expenditures may rely on cruise type (Casado-Díaz et al., 2021). “Luxury” and “exclusive” cruises, on the other hand, are distinguished by “high-quality onboard amenities” and “customized experiences” with guide excursions typically included in the overall fee paid (Casado-Díaz et al., 2021; Ward, 2015), decreasing off-board fees.

2.2 Service Quality in the Cruise Industry

The cruise tourism business is a global industry that is rapidly expanding. Therefore, it's not surprising that retaining existing clients is one of the cruise lines' major goals in today's competitive cruise line business (Di Vaio et al., 2021). Both developing and developed nations are striving to participate in cruise tourism, which has the potential to be a significant economic contributor (Jászberényi & Miskolczi, 2020; Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020). Cruise tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourist business, with an annual revenue of USD 134 billion (CLIA, 2019). The industry estimates that the number of functioning vessels will grow from 264 ships in 2018 to around 472 cruise ships by the year 2027 (CLIA, 2017). The growing number of passengers as well as operating ships and ports support this statement (Casado-Díaz et al., 2021; Park et al., 2019; Vega-Muñoz et al., 2020; Mahadevan & Chang, 2017; Weeden et al., 2011). According to the cruise industry's expansion, this has a twofold impact on the economy of the destination ports (Santos et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2018). Therefore, research dedicated on cruise will be both academically as well as practically important.

The number of passengers on cruise ships continues to rise across the world, with an annual growth rate of 6.63 percent from 1990 to 2020 (Casado-Díaz et al., 2021; Cruise Market Watch, 2019).

There are few studies on cruises. This is most likely due to the lack of an overarching topic and a clear hypothetical outline in cruise research, as well as tourism studies in general (Larsen et al., 2013). Furthermore, research on cruise tourism has focused on a variety of topics, including tourist satisfaction (Dai et al., 2019) and port experiences (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2010), as well as motivations (Hung & Petrick, 2011; Larsen & Wolff, 2016), antecedents of visitors' experience at a cruise destination (Sanz-Blas et al., 2019), and the service supply chain (Veronneau et al (Stewart et al., 2011)).

Much of the prior research on cruises' perceived service quality is based on traditional pen-and-paper surveys. On the other hand, it may be claimed that conducting surveys while traveling is a burden, not only in terms of expense but also in terms of safety and travelers' comfort (Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020; Martin-domingo et al., 2019). As a result, social media sites where travelers may discuss their experiences are becoming a new source of data (Brochado et al., 2019).

Only a few studies have employed internet reviews in the cruise industry (Tao & Kim et al., 2019; Bahja et al., 2019). In the literature, the most common factor is service quality (Fisk et al., 1993). Furthermore, it is an important component in intra-organizational competitiveness. Businesses must provide a high-quality product and service to please their consumers to get an advantage in a competitive market (Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020).

This is especially true in the cruise ship business. A variety of factors impact passengers' perceptions of cruise quality in the cruise line business. Both physical and intangible traits are included in these criteria (Tao & Kim, 2019). In the cruise industry, several researchers have discovered that service quality is a predictor of consumer happiness (Chua et al., 2015; Bahja et al., 2019; Fisk et al., 1993). A research performed in Hong Kong, for example, investigated the influence of perceived service quality in affecting tourist happiness and willingness to return. A related study explored five service quality attributes: accommodation, food and beverages, entertainment, other facilities, and staff.

Furthermore, the survey found that the most important antecedents of satisfaction are food and beverage facilities and personnel performance. Other qualities, such as “attractiveness, variety, and organization of entertainment”, “sport/fitness, retail, and childcare facilities” and “seating space at F&B outlets” were found to be unsatisfactory in that research (Qu & Ping, 1999). To determine the onboard characteristics of a cruise, one study polled 254 guests and 153 potential passengers.

The data revealed that when selecting to book a cruise, existing and potential passengers frequently evaluated entertainment, leisure and recreational facilities, accommodation, restaurants and cuisine, fitness and health offers, children's activities, and personnel (Xie et al., 2012). Chua and colleagues looked at the links between quality variables (such as physical environment, interactional quality, and result quality), contentment, emotional commitment, and behavioral intents across gender and age groups in a research. According to their findings, the happiness of cruise passengers was strongly associated with both interactional and result quality (Chua et al., 2017).

Petrick employed four SERV-PERVAL measurement items (great quality, reliability, dependability, and consistency) in an empirical study of Caribbean cruise passengers. SERV-PERVAL is a concept that highlights the reliability elements in the SERVQUAL paradigm. The quality model, rather than the pleasure or perceived value models, was the best for predicting behavior (2004).

In addition, a recent study looked at the antecedents of passenger loyalty and statistically examined the moderating effects of service recovery on the connections between the antecedents and customer loyalty. Customer loyalty was positively impacted by service quality and customer happiness, according to the findings of the study (Chiou et al., 2020). A survey of 330 American cruisers was also collected for a research on cruise experiences. Food quality, personnel, entertainment, facilities, ports of call, children's activities, and room amenities all had a significant impact on the perceived cruise quality, according to the research (Chua et al., 2015).

The SERVQUAL measure was used in one study to assess the relationship between cruise travel service quality and satisfaction. According to the findings, service quality is a precursor to contentment, and visitors' perceptions of value and satisfaction play a key influence in their choice to return or revisit a destination (Petrick et al., 2004). In the cruise business, academics have stated that increasing service quality is a necessity for a cruise company's success (Veronnau et al., 2015; Petrick et al., 2004; Teye & Leclerc, 1998). In addition, the research looked at eight aspects of cruise travel service: food and drink quality, personnel service, entertainment, room amenities, kid-friendly activities, and lodging quality. It is widely established that cruise passengers have high expectations for service quality, and that this perception impacts their overall impression of cruise travel (Hwang & Han, 2014).

2.3 Cruise Service Quality Dimensions

Service quality is widely recognized as a vital component in business success and a key source of competitive advantage (Yoon & Cha, 2020). With the cruise industry's rapid development, cruise lines should consider distinguishing (Sanz-Blas, Buzova, & Schlesinger, 2019), and because service quality is a significant component in creating customer loyalty, developing a service improvement strategy based on service quality monitoring is important (Yoon & Cha, 2020).

This is likely because cruise research, as well as tourism studies overall, lack an overarching theme and a clear hypothetical outline (Larsen et al., 2013). Furthermore, works in relation to cruise tourism have paid attention to different topics—for instance, tourist satisfaction (Dai et al., 2019) and port experiences (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2010) as well as their motivations (Hung & Petrick, 2011; Larsen & Wolff, 2016), antecedents of visitors' experience at a cruise destination (Sanz-Blas et al., 2019), the service supply chain (Veronneau et al., 2015), the undesirable environmental effects of cruise tourism in different regions (Jabour, 2011; Klein, 2008; Stewart et al., 2011), host countries' perceptions of the cruise industry (Stewart et al., 2011).

Much of the previous literature on cruises' perceived service quality is based on traditional pen and pencil questionnaires that measure perceived service quality. Conversely, it could be argued that employing surveys during travel can be a burden, in terms of not just cost but also further matters such as safety and travelers' relaxation (Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020; Martin-domingo et al., 2019). Consequently, social

media platforms on which passengers can share their experience are becoming an alternative data source (Brochado et al., 2019).

When dealing with cruise service quality, it is vital to evaluate cruise service characteristics since service quality is an entire evaluation of service characteristics given by providers (Baker & Crompton, 2000). According to a research, cruise service is separated into three categories: prior to boarding, while boarding, and after disembarking, with supplier procedures, encounter processes, and customer processes (Yoon & Cha, 2020).

Onboard features that impact the decision-making of existing and future cruise consumers were provided by Xie et al. (2012). Potential consumers place a higher value on leisure and sports features (sports platform, wall climbing, miniature golf, and ball facilities), ancillary features (library, internet café, business center, and laundry), and fitness and health features (spa, fitness center, beauty salon, and swimming pools/hot tubs/whirlpools) than current customers.

Whyte (2016) examined the relative relevance of the cruise qualities of onboard environment, onboard social contact, and onboard recreation. Cleanliness, decent look of ships and amenities, pleasant environment, safe environment, high-quality food and restaurants, relaxing and stress-reducing atmosphere, high-quality lodging, private space, diversity of food and restaurants, and an uncrowded onboard environment are all aspects of the onboard environment.

The goal of Yoon and Cha's study (2020) was to see if there were any variations in service quality between ships operating in the Asian market. Cited authors offered

ideas for enhancing the quality of cruise services based on the findings, including bringing the newest big ships and high-tech facilities, adhering to sailing schedules, increasing the number of staff members per passenger, developing a cruise personnel training system, and extending membership program operations.

Customer experience has been researched extensively in the hotel industry via service quality because marketing effectiveness necessitates an awareness of how customers perceive their experience (Yi et al., 2014). The SERVQUAL instrument has been established and adjusted to tourist and hospitality sector contexts to assess consumer satisfaction levels and perceived service quality (Badri et al., 2005; Miranda et al., 2018). However, three dimensions proposed by Brady and Cronin—1) physical environment (i.e., the physical setting of the cruise ship); 2) interaction (i.e., employee services); and 3) outcome (i.e., the benefits received by the cruise customer during a service encounter)—have been widely accepted in the context of cruises. Cruise quality qualities, on the other hand, are the most well-known and widely utilized dimension of service quality in the business (Han et al., 2019; Chua et al., 2015; Kworntnik, 2008; Xie et al., 2012; Miranda et al., 2018; Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020).

More precisely, Chua et al. found that cruise passengers' pleasure was strongly linked with quality aspects (physical environment, interaction, and result). Another research found that the onboard amenities of a cruise impact visitors' impressions of service in areas including entertainment, leisure and athletic activities, extra amenities, essential products and services like the room, room service, and meals, as well as entertainment activities for children (Xie et al., 2012). In addition, one study found that the desirable and unfavorable aspects of cruise travel influenced tourists' opinions of the experience. The most significant service aspects for cruise guests were staff, food/drink, ship

amenities, ports of call, child/teen facilities, accommodations, pricing, excursions, and cruise security, according to the research (Petrick et al., 2006).

In a study done by the Cruise Lines International Association, rooms, food, entertainment, spa/wellness choices, and excursions were judged critical in the eyes of visitors when selecting cruise travel (Petrick, 2004). According to a research conducted in North America, the physical environment, interaction, and outcome elements were all linked to cruise consumer pleasure and loyalty.

Cruise tourism is a rapidly developing, worldwide market (Di Vaio et al., 2021; Xie, Qian & Wang, 2021; James, Olsen & Karlsdóttir, 2020; Paiano, Crovella & Lagioia, 2020; Mangano et al., 2020). Developing countries as well as developed countries are attempting to participate in cruise tourism, which can make an important economic contribution (MacNeill & Wozniak, 2018; London, Lohmann & Moyle, 2021; Han et al., 2019; Cervený et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Jászberényi & Miskolczi, 2020; Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020). Cruise tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourist business, with an annual revenue of USD 134 billion (CLIA, 2019). According to industry projections, the number of operational cruise ships will increase from 264 in 2018 to about 472 in 2027. (CLIA, 2017). This assertion is supported by increasing passenger numbers as well as operational ships and ports (Casado-Daz et al., 2021; Park et al., 2019; Vega-Muoz et al., 2020; Mahadevan & Chang, 2017; Weeden et al., 2011). In line with the cruise industry's expansion, this has a twofold impact on the economy of the destination ports (Santos et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2018). As a result, cruise-related research will be significant both academically and practically.

2.4 Role of Web Reviews in Service Quality Studies

The internet offers many intriguing options for gaining a better knowledge of customer behavior (Gour, Aggarwal & Erdem, 2021). For hospitality researchers, every information presented on any travel website provides a possible data source (Karetsos & Ntaliani, 2021; Pourfakhimi, Duncan & Coetzee, 2020; Muritala et al., 2020; Sánchez-Franco et al., 2019). For example, a hospitality researcher may gather a collection of TripAdvisor reviews and do text mining, or obtain satisfaction scores for statistical analysis, or figure out the link between price and page ranking at an online travel agent (Han & Anderson, 2021).

A typical hospitality research study may want data from many hotels in various markets over a lengthy period; manually gathering this data may be extremely time consuming and tiresome. As a result, hospitality researchers must automate the process of collecting and storing data from travel websites. Web scraping is useful in this situation (Wong, Rasoolimanesh & Sharif, 2020; Moro, Ramos, Esmerado & Jalali, 2020).

The growth of Internet technology has significantly reduced information asymmetry in recent years by providing customers with consistent access to a variety of information sources, such as online review platforms. Before going on a trip, almost 95% of people read internet reviews (Popescu, 2015). Many online communities (e.g., Booking.com) provide feedback mechanisms for users to assess peer evaluations via features such as “helpfulness” votes due to an overflow of online information (Arasli, Saydam, Gunay & Jafari, 2021).

Vlachos (2012) found that over 87 percent of tourists used multiple websites to plan and arrange their vacation, with 43 percent checking reviews from other travelers to confirm that the service was of good quality. In addition, over half of online consumers stated that after utilizing service products, they thoroughly evaluate and share their ideas by submitting evaluations (Santos & Matos, 2014).

The tourism business has evolved dramatically because of advances in information and communication technology, particularly with the introduction of the internet (Chong et al., 2018; Navío-Marco et al., 2018). Currently, the internet is a primary source for selecting travel services, and it has made a significant change in the process of disseminating tourist information (De Pelsmacker et al., 2018; Ahani et al., 2019; Nilashi et al., 2019; D'Acunto et al., 2020; Chiang & Huang, 2021; Xu, 2018; Fu, Cheng, Bao, Bilgihan & Okumus, 2020; Ho, Withanage & Khong, 2020).

Measuring quality is puzzling because of preference heterogeneity among experts. Online reviews offer a solution through quality features extracted from review text (Korfiatis et al., 2019). As stated earlier, studies have mostly utilized questionnaires to pinpoint as well as confirm the main scopes of travelers' experiences (Tian et al., 2019; Drus & Khalid, 2019; Martin-Domingo et al., 2019). Moreover, a couple of investigations lately have featured the benefits of dissecting on the web audit information for considering passengers experience of the aircraft services (Zhang & Cole, 2016; Liao & Tan, 2014).

As previously indicated, scholars utilized questionnaires to identify and validate key components of cruise passengers' perceptions of the trip's quality. (Hwang et al., 2014; Chua et al., 2015). Web-based studies can also be used for cruise research. This

provides a chance to investigate customer views of service quality. As a result, contemporary research relies on internet evaluations rather than traditional survey methods.

Even though service quality has been extensively researched in the literature, it is still unclear which service qualities determine service quality. Understanding the essential service characteristics that contribute to tourist satisfaction is crucial (Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020). Most researchers have relied on survey methodologies to assess service quality in service-based businesses from a methodological standpoint (Medina Munoz et al., 2018). However, several recent studies have demonstrated the benefits of using user-generated content on the Internet. It may be critical to determine these fundamental features in a wider context (Brochado et al., 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2017).

A rising proportion of visitors read and share online travel-related information, especially if it is shown or created by their friends (Filieri and McLeay, 2013). Customer online reviews are accelerating the growth of online word-of-mouth (WOM) (Martin-Domingo et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2019). Because of intangible features such as purchasing risks, they are especially significant for service businesses (Nikookar et al., 2015).

These evaluations have been identified by academics as a natural environment for studying tourists' perceptions of quality (Zhang & Cole, 2016). Travelers may now easily submit their opinions on the internet for others to read. Both tourists and academics generally see internet reviews as readily available, trustworthy, and safe (Stoleriu et al., 2019; Tseng et al., 2015).

According to managers, adopting online reviews provides benefits such as gathering client input in a cost-effective and timely manner (Zhang & Cole, 2016; Du et al., 2019; Marine-Roig, 2019). Scholars previously investigated internet reviews to discover the important aspects of visitors' overall perceptions in various hospitality sectors. One research in China, for example, looked at shopping tourism (Wu et al., 2014). In another research, romantic tourism sites in Australia were investigated (Pearce & Wu, 2016). In addition, one study looked at the factors that influence destination image formation in China's inbound tourism (Tseng et al., 2015). In addition, a research investigated airline customers' perceptions of service quality (Brochado et al., 2019). Rodrigues and colleagues conducted research on the perceptions of service quality in medical tourism (Rodrigues et al., 2019).

Studies about cruise has been overlooked, and fragmented. Since cruise research, as well as tourism studies in general, lack a merging theme and a clear theoretical outline (Larsen et al., 2013). Furthermore, works in relation to cruise tourism has paid attention on a different of topics for instance tourists' experiences and their satisfaction (Brida, et al., 2012), port experiences (Andriotis & Agiomirgianakis, 2010) as well as their motivations (Hung & Petrick, 2011; Larsen and Wolff, 2016; Dai, Hein and Zhang, 2019), antecedents of tourists' experience at a cruise destination (Sanz-Blas et al., 2019), service supply chain (Véronneau, Roy and Beaulieu, 2015) negative environmental impacts of cruise tourism in different regions (Jabour, 2011; Klein, 2008), host' perception towards cruise industry (Stewart, Dawson, & Draper, 2011), security and risk concerns (Klein, 2008). Among this research, only one exceptional study focused on cruise service quality. A data collected from 405 cruise tourists, researcher found that service quality dimensions related to customer satisfaction (Chua et al., 2015).

According to Fisk et al. (1993) the most prevalent phenomenon in the services marketing arena is quality of service. Furthermore, it has gotten a lot of attention because of the critical duty it has in producing competitive advantage. Businesses must deliver high-quality products and services that satisfy their customers to achieve a competitive advantage. This is true for the cruise ship business. In the cruise line industry, several features influence tourists' cruise involvements.

These qualities encompass both real and intangible cruise line characteristics (Arasli et al., 2020). A growing amount of study has dedicated on the association regarding service quality and customer satisfaction and loyalty in the cruise industry. In this business, some research has shown the antecedent importance of service quality in customer happiness. Passengers are happier when the perceived service quality is better (Petrick, 2004; Teye and Leclerc, 1998; Chua et al., 2015).

Qu and Ping (1999) examined cruise tourists in Hong Kong and evaluated the impacts of the satisfaction on their intentions to revisit. They demonstrated five service quality attributes: accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment, other facilities, and staff respectively. Travelers reported a high satisfaction level with food and beverage facilities and quality and staff performances. However, in that study there was a dissatisfaction on some attributes which were "Attractiveness, variety and organization of entertainment", "Sport/fitness, shopping, and childcare facilities", and "Seating space in F&B outlets".

Petrick (2004) used the SERVQUAL measure to investigate the link between perceived cruise service quality, satisfaction, and intent to return. According to the author, service quality, as well as a customer's perceived value, are antecedents of

contentment, and satisfaction has a moderating effect on their proclivity to return. In the cruise industry, practitioners and scholars have specifically emphasized that enhancing service quality is critical for the success of a cruise company (Petrick, 2004; Teye & Leclerc, 1998; Veronneau & Roy, 2009). Moreover, it is reported that eight types of cruise experience service factors: food and beverage quality, staff/crew performance, entertainment, cruise amenities, attractions for children, as well as cabin quality. It can be concluded that cruise passengers have relatively high expectations in terms of service quality and that perceived service quality effects the overall evaluation of a cruise trip (Hwang & Han, 2013).

2.5 Service Quality and The Nature of Hospitality Services

The tourist industry has grown highly economically important in recent decades since it has become one of the fastest growing sectors in the modern corporate environment. For example, in 2013, worldwide international visitor arrivals hit a new high of 1.087 billion, while international tourism income hit a new high of US \$1.159 billion (UNWTO, 2019). This demonstrates how tourism may help tourist locations thrive economically by providing job possibilities, improving infrastructure, and generating foreign exchange profits (Chen, 2007; Li et al., 2018).

Tourism's economic impact can be studied from a variety of angles, including direct effects such as “sales, employment, tax revenues, and income levels” which result from direct impacts of tourist spending (Brida et al., 2008; Chen, 2007; Park & Jeong, 2019), indirect effects such as “prices, quantity and quality of products and services, taxes and property, and social and environmental impacts” which result from indirect impacts of tourist spending (Li et al., 2018), and indirect effects such as “prices, quantity and quality of products and services, taxes and property, and social and

environmental”. As a result, prior research has identified tourism as a significant source of economic growth variance in many nations (Park & Jeong, 2019).

Service quality in tourism is one of the elements that has gotten a lot of scholarly attention. For example, SERVQUAL, the most representative model for assessing service quality, has been used in research articles published in academic publications (Meesala & Paul, 2018). Despite its effect on travelers' destination choices, service quality in tourism has yet to be adequately evaluated. Furthermore, due to tourism's broad reach, which includes a variety of business contexts, few studies have examined service quality in tourism from a holistic viewpoint (Park & Jeong, 2019).

The tourism industry has gotten a lot of attention lately because it's one of the fastest growing commercial sectors on the planet. Tourist service quality has grown to be a key component of economic growth; nevertheless, the focus on tourism service quality has yet to be adequately or thoroughly examined. As a result, a study done by Park and Jeong (2019) combined bibliometric, citation network, and keyword network analysis to perform a comprehensive literature review. From the SCOPUS database, cited authors chose the top five tourist journals and then gathered publications based on their keywords. Their findings highlighted the most important challenges, subjects, and trends in tourist service quality study throughout time. The importance of service quality on tourist behavior and service quality evaluation were among the critical issues addressed, with topics including (1) tourist satisfaction, (2) sustainable issues in tourism, (3) value of service quality for customers, (4) restaurant service quality, (5) customers' perceptions of tourism, and (6) service quality evaluation.

Organizations must maintain a continuous pool of capable, friendly, responsible, attentive, and motivated employees to compete in active marketplaces (Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020; Boninsegni, Furrer & Mattila, 2020; Prentice et al., 2020; Wen, Huang & Hou, 2019; Jung & Takeuchi, 2018; Alhelalat, Ma'moun & Twaissi, 2017; Triantafillidou et al., 2017; Adhikari, Choi & Sah, 2017; Chang & Jo, 2019). A vast amount of academical pieces revealed substantial association regarding service quality, customer satisfaction and business success (Boonlertvanich, 2019; Priporas, Stylos, Vedanthachari & Santiwatana, 2017; Ramamoorthy, Gunasekaran, Roy, Rai & Senthilkumar, 2018, Liat et al., 2017; Ali et al., 2017). Especially in the service-based sectors, because of the intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability of services, a variety of business activities and actions must be performed in very different ways (Koc, 2020).

Service quality constructs trustworthiness for the organizations from the angle of consumers (Malik et al., 2020). Service quality can be considered as a serious element that assists organizations to seize novel chances from the setting they compete in (Ali et al., 2015). Some of the research agreed on that existence of organizations is associated to the quality of services it supplied to its consumers (Malik et al., 2020). In the context of hospitality, a quality service might be mirrored considering number of methods, however crucial factors of good service excellence namely are hygiene, security, service of accommodations as well as friendliness as well as helpfulness of the hotel personnel (Ramamoorthy, Gunasekaran, Roy, Rai & Senthilkumar, 2018).

Depending on the type of service, the degree of service quality may change. Guests' rooms, for example, will have varying prices and capability heights. Parallel with this, clients will have different opinions as well as anticipations regarding the amenities that

will be supplied by the hotel (Lee, 2013). Features for instance the technological equipment's of the room, interior architecture of the hotel as well as hygiene can portray the perceived service quality of guests (Dabestani et al., 2016). Maintaining the same level of service quality across all units is one of the most difficult problems in the hospitality sector. Any service provider's success is determined on how well they serve their customers (Qiu et al., 2019). Customer purchasing decisions are influenced by their happiness with service providers, and customer satisfaction and loyalty are strongly linked to the quality of hospitality services (Stamolampros et al., 2019). Grönroos (2007) defines service quality as a comparison of consumers' expectations of a service and their perceptions of the service's execution. Redda and VanDeventer (2017), on the other hand, defined service quality as “employees' ability to perform the promised service accurately, their willingness to assist customers and provide prompt service, their knowledge and courtesy toward customers, and their ability to foster trust and confidence in their customers.”

2.6 User-Generated Content

In line with Vlachos (2012), almost 87 percent of tourists used various website to be able to arrange as well as organize their journey and 43 percent of them have read reviews by other travelers to be able to make sure the quality of service. Additionally, about half of online users shown a willingness to search for and share information on service items by writing reviews (Santos & Matos, 2014).

Measuring quality is puzzling because of preference heterogeneity among experts. Online reviews offer a solution through quality features extracted from review text (Korfiatis et al., 2019). As stated earlier, studies have mostly utilized questionnaires to pinpoint as well as confirm the main scopes of airline passengers' experiences.

Moreover, a couple of investigations lately have featured the benefits of dissecting on the web audit information for considering passengers experience of the aircraft services (Zhang & Cole, 2016; Liao & Tan, 2014).

Online reviews play prodigious and significant role when the point comes to growth of business, performance as well as development of passenger perception, and let the aviation industry commercials to generate bilateral interaction with their customers (Saha & Theingi, 2009) which is very important for the airline companies' strategies.

Furthermore, e-WOM posted by other airline customers are viewed to be honest, concise, and extensive (Brochado et al., 2019). Novel research has emphasized on the role of analysis of web-based user-generated content for service quality studies (Brochado et al., 2019; Ban & Kim, 2019). Scholars have “recognized online reviews as a pure setting for the studies of tourists or travelers” (Zhang & Cole, 2016: 16).

Since continual growth of diverse web platforms, it turned out to be very important for the passengers as well as travelers, people can now effortlessly give their reviews online for every person to see (Brochado et al. 2019). Over-all, online reviews are supposed as easy to get to, trustworthy, sincere as well as readily accessible information for travelers as well (Park & Nicolau, 2015; Pavlou & Dimoka, 2006).

Hospitality sector has transformed enormously afterward the growth of the information and communication technology as well as largely with the development of the Web 2.0 (Brochado et al., 2019; Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020; De Pelsmacker, Van Tilburg & Holthof, 2018; Dinçer & Alrawadieh, 2017; El-Said, 2020; Yi, Li & Jai, 2018; Ahani et al., 2019; Mariani, Borghi & Gretzel, 2019; Phillips et al., 2017;

Luo, Huang & Wang, 2021; Chakraborty, 2019). The Web 2.0 is a key basis of selecting travel destination (Luo, Huang & Wang, 2021).

Nowadays, users of smartphones can share their feelings as well as thoughts regarding goods and services. The impact of these advancements is improving in daily basis (Khorsand, Rafiee & Kayvanfar, 2021).

Currently, hospitality institutions widely available on a lot of platforms, for instance Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TripAdvisor, Expedia and so on (De Pelsmacker, Van Tilburg & Holthof, 2018; Dinçer & Alrawadieh, 2017). Consumers can learn regarding goods and services as well as can share content regarding it. With the rise of internet and easy use of smartphones, consumers search online for being attentive of the hotels' features and other consumers' response regarding the hotels to be able to make the best selection (Khorsand, Rafiee & Kayvanfar, 2021). One of the mostly used online platform when the point comes to share online content regarding the touristic aims is TripAdvisor.com (Brochado et al., 2019).

Guests predominantly consume great energy to get a feel for what a hotel experience will be like before their trip and for that aim they look for online tourist' user-generated content on online platform for instance TripAdvisor or Yelp (Filieri, Alguezaui & McLeay, 2015). Online customer content also known in the literature as User-Generated Content (UGC) can be acknowledged as a form of e-WOM, which denotes to 'any constructive or deleterious content generated by prospective, current or past guests regarding product or organization, which is made obtainable to a multitude of individual and organizations via the online platform (Filieri, Alguezaui & McLeay, 2015).

A vast amount of pieces in e-WOM has predominantly paid great attention on the motivation of guests who share as well as posts UGC (Brochado et al., 2019), on the impact of UGC on the buying choices of other consumers (Filieri, 2015; Mariani, Borghi & Gretzel, 2019), and on the role of UGC in impacting the sales of various kind of goods (Filieri, Alguezaui & McLeay, 2015; Cui, Lui, & Guo, 2012).

A plenty of academical pieces dedicated in the field hospitality has provided proof that UGC tourists' purchase intentions regarding which destination to travel to (Jalilvand, Ebrahimi & Samiei, 2013; Abubakar, 2016), and perceived cruise experience (e.g., Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020). In addition, UGC have been illustrated to be vital regarding officially given content (Kladou & Mavragani, 2015). Online platforms such as TripAdvisor have turn out to be prevalent regarding tourists that they possibly impact the travel choices of about 200 million users who use online platform such as TripAdvisor and comment as well as recommend the goods or organization (Filieri, Acikgoz, Ndou & Dwivedi, 2020). In addition to bright side, there are also vast number of media emphasizing that fake and advertising content posted on UGC (e.g., Tuttle, 2012).

Against this backdrop, TripAdvisor newly been enforced by the United Kingdom Advertising Standards Authority to eliminate its 'misleading' mottos raising to the reliable and frank nature of all the UGC posted on their online platform. Thus, maintaining high levels of trust towards UGC appeared to be a more and more puzzling duty for the executives of these online organizations (Filieri, Alguezaui & McLeay, 2015).

Furthermore, currently tourists as well as travelers use online platforms, to reveal their views toward product or services (Gonzalez-Rodríguez et al., 2021). The content that shared by consumers online is named as user-generated content. Some research has scrutinized the inspirations of tourists to reveal user-generated content. Duffy (2013) stated that social requirements are the key motivation for tourists to share reviews on social platforms. By showing knowledge, travelers not only gain social position however also generate a computer-generated distinctiveness that can cooperate with other individuals and receive recognition for their contribution (Ukpabi & Karjaluoto, 2018; Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013; Tsiakali, 2018; Mendes-Filho et al., 2018; Assaker, 2020; Nilashi et al., 2018).

In addition, travelers who reveal as well as transfer their views via social platforms seek to accomplish their humanitarian needs (Barreda & Bilgihan, 2013; Gonzalez-Rodríguez et al., 2021). In addition, some other travelers might search for to reward or encourage a place where they feel bond or sympathy (Chen et al., 2018). In addition, Litvin and co-authors (2018) reported that sharing online is one of the enjoyments of journey. Hence, hedonic inspirations will continuously be current in the aspiration to generate and reveal online content (Yen & Tang, 2015). Extra-version was found to be a continuing inspiration to share online reviews, particularly in the catering sector (Jeong & Jang, 2011).

A research conducted by Jeong and Jang (2011) reported that articulating positive moods is an important persuader for sharing online content regarding restaurants. Though the studies propose number of drivers of user-generated content, no average user-generated content user' occurs (Gonzalez-Rodríguez et al., 2021; Dixit et al., 2019).

Past and present research documented that social relations among people play a prodigious role in supporting computer-generated groups, as well as that online social communication among such public participants can be strengthened via interfaces that augment shared experience and pleasantness (Novakovich, Miah, & Shaw, 2017). Online platforms such as TripAdvisor, Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook inspire online communication among individuals (Gonzalez-Rodríguez et al., 2021).

2.7 COVID-19 and Cruise Tourism

As of August 2021, World Health Organization has received reports of 203,295,170 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 4,303,515 fatalities. A total of 4,033,274,676 vaccine doses has been given as of August 8, 2021 (WHO, 2021), the pandemic is one of the most highly infectious calamities in recent human history (Sharma et al., 2021). Because of the rapid speed with which the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) spreads, governments all around the world have been forced to implement lockdowns (Karatepe et al., 2021).

The spread of the virus has put people's lives in jeopardy, while measures like lockdowns have put people's livelihoods in jeopardy (Sharma & Mahendru, 2020). The pandemic's economic repercussions are being felt across all industries and sectors across the world. While some industries have been able to adapt to digital platforms and continue their fight for survival (Mehroliya, Alagarsamy, & Solaikutty, 2020), others have experienced unanticipated failures due to travel restrictions and social distancing, making it extremely difficult to survive the pandemic (Rahimizhian & Irani, 2020). Tourism is a business that cannot survive without the mobility of visitors. The threat of a 60 percent to 80 percent drops in tourist numbers throughout 2020 (compared to 2019) and a 22 percent drop in tourist numbers in the first quarter of

2020 (compared to the same quarter of 2019) are just two examples of the havoc that the COVID-19 pandemic can wreak on the global tourism industry (World Tourism Organization, 2020).

One of the most labor-intensive industries is tourism. Such a downturn in the sector may jeopardize millions of employments, threatening to reverse progress achieved toward sustainable development goals (Sharma et al., 2021). The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic turned the hospitality industry upside down. As most governments internationally implemented “stay-at-home” measures to reduce the speed of the spread of the virus, normal travel was heavily disrupted (Mao et al., 2020). As a result, global leisure tourism spending roughly halved in 2020 over the previous year, while business tourism spending worldwide dropped by over 60 percent (Statista, 2021). In 2021, with mass vaccination campaigns taking place around the world, several countries started to discuss the introduction of COVID-19 “travel passports” – also referred to as “vaccine passports” – to relaunch travel and tourism during the pandemic, while lessening the jeopardies of new COVID-19 contaminations (Forbes, 2021).

The historic and unprecedented drop in travel demand has made it difficult for sectors especially for hospitality industries to keep business as usual (Dube, Nhamo & Chikodzi, 2021). However, some big hospitality chains, locations are envisaging immerse progress in business over the coming year due to the medical advancements, and measures deployed to mitigate the spread of the virus (Fox Business, 2020).

As consumers emerge from their limit their expectations, experience, and adjustment to the new norm, will influence what they anticipate from booking. Guests will

prioritize their safety and comfort which should be at the forefront of each employee's mind. The hospitality industry has been characterized by the ever-increasing rivalry between service providers, leading to keen competition (Nunkoo et al., 2020). In the already highly competitive tourism industry, providing tourist satisfaction has become even more difficult, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering this, how will an organization gain a competitive advantage in this new era? What will they need to do to attract maintain their old customers and attract new ones? To keep their current customers, and attract other consumers, hospitality organizations generally need to deploy novel strategies in order to improve their service quality and ensuring guest satisfaction (Malik et al., 2020). Scholars have expressed a keen interest in the measurement of customer satisfaction among hospitality guests due to its ability to sustainable competitive advantage (Malik et al., 2020; Nunkoo et al., 2020). Most of the service-based research has found that service quality is an antecedent of satisfaction (Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown, 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant worldwide changes in both healthcare and the economy. This pandemic has resulted in significant changes in consumer habits and behaviors, mostly because of confinement-related problems. Although numerous studies have been conducted to analyze customer satisfaction using surveys and online customer evaluations, the influence of COVID-19 on customer satisfaction has not been examined so far. For example, Nilashi et al. (2021) collected data regarding tourists' worries from TripAdvisor in the form of online reviews on the COVID-19 pandemic and numerical ratings on hotel services from a variety of perspectives. The research of online customer evaluations indicated that service quality influences hotel performance criteria and, subsequently, on customer satisfaction during COVID-19.

Subsequently, service quality has been broadly accepted as an antecedence of loyalty, which can eventually cause superior competitive performance (Fatima, Malik & Shabbir, 2018; Shankar & Jebarajakirthy, 2019). However, it is extremely difficult to provide satisfaction among guests especially in service-based industries (Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020). This is also valid for the hospitality industry, which comprises a broad service flow (Ali et al., 2015). In the global economy, as well as many local economies, the cruise sector is creative and vital. This sector has also contributed significantly to various communities and stakeholders all around the world.

The cruise industry's closure because of COVID-19 influences any country where it plays a significant role (da Silva, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, several outbreaks on cruise ships demonstrated the susceptibility and frailty of restricted cruise travel. Passengers are confined to a cruise ship for days or weeks at a time, with poor ventilation in-cabin cabins, increasing the risk of disease transmission from person to person (Rocklöv et al., 2020). Because of the increased transmission, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a No Sail Order in March 2020, advising Americans to postpone any cruise travel (CDC, 2020).

All this public information, as well as social and conventional media debates regarding the cruise ship, has had a detrimental influence on possible future passengers. As the globe grapples with COVID-19's problems, it's clear that passengers, staff, and destination communities have risen to the top of the priority list for cruise companies (CLIA, 2020). Major cruise companies, for example, have vowed to establish more stringent measures to protect passengers' health and safety.

Cruise lines, on the other hand, might endeavor to better understand their passengers' attitudes, perceptions of crisis management, and negative bias to plan for post-crisis operations. In this scenario, a traveler's view of a cruise line during a crisis (despite admitting unfavorable results) may have a detrimental impact on their post-crisis purchasing intent (Pan et al., 2021). More strikingly, the cruise ship business was one of the fastest expanding areas of the worldwide tourist industry before the COVID-19 epidemic (Papathanassis, 2019). The cruise industry was expected to achieve a record level of 32 million passengers in 2020 (Cruise Lines International Association, 2019b), with an estimated annual value of more than \$USD150 billion.

Cruise holidays became increasingly popular during the first two decades of the twenty-first century and Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) were particularly significant markets. For example, Australia exceeded expectations in achieving one million passengers in 2014, six years earlier than market predictions (Dowling & Weeden, 2017). Australia was performing strongly in cruise travel, with cruising becoming the country's fastest-growing tourism sector (Cruise Lines International Association Australasia, 2017, Cruise Lines International Association Australasia, n.d.).

Australia was the fifth-largest source nation for passengers in 2018, after the United States, China, Germany, and the United Kingdom (CLIA, 2019a), and had the highest market penetration of any country. Significantly, Australia was the only market where up to one out of every seventeen individuals had cruised (CLIA Australasia, 2019). According to industry statistics, the cruise industry contributed \$AUD 5.2 billion to the Australian economy in the 2018/19 financial year (The Maritime Executive, 2019).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK had seen steady development, with a rising number of cruise lines operating out of the country as cruising demand grew. In 2018, slightly over two million cruise passengers came from the United Kingdom and Ireland, making the UK the second largest European market behind Germany (CLIA, 2019a), accounting for 28 percent of all European cruise passengers (Business Research & Economic Advisors, 2019). In 2017, the cruise industry brought in €10.4 billion to the UK economy (Cruise Lines International Association, 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has devastated the cruise sector, with widespread disruption and cancellations affecting millions of passengers and people employed directly or indirectly through the cruise industry. The cruise sector was particularly and immediately affected due to high infection rates among crew and passengers (Mizumoto & Chowell, 2020, Rocklöv et al., 2020). Thousands of passengers were stranded onboard as cruise ships were held in quarantine or refused entry to ports as borders closed.

Over 700 people were infected onboard the cruise ship Diamond Princess, with 14 deaths (Leffler & Hogan, 2020). By the end of the first quarter of 2020, over 50 cruise ships had confirmed cases of COVID-19 documented, which was one-fifth of the global ocean cruise fleet (Dolven et al., 2020).

Within these, the Ruby Princess gained notoriety as some of the first cases in Australia were passengers disembarking the ship. There were 28 deaths linked to the Ruby Princess (22 in Australia, the rest in the USA) (Walker, 2020), and controversy erupted over the management and handling of the initial outbreak. Given the pandemic's catastrophic impact on the cruise industry, it's critical to comprehend COVID-19's

possible impact on how people think about and feel about the riskiness of cruise vacations (Holland et al., 2021).

As highlighted above, the cruise industry's closure because of COVID-19 influences any country where it plays a significant role (da Silva, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, several outbreaks on cruise ships demonstrated the susceptibility and frailty of restricted cruise travel. In a nutshell, the pandemic of COVID-19 onboard multiple cruise ships, as well as the abrupt cancellation of hundreds of cruises, had a severe impact on the notion of cruising as a "safe" vacation (Holland et al., 2021).

While cruises have long been thought of as a "safe" option, the COVID-19 epidemic has underlined the vital role of risk perceptions. This is noteworthy since cruisers are typically believed to be risk-averse (Tarlow, 2006), and the cruise industry places a premium on providing a safe and healthy voyage (Liu-Lastres et al., 2019). Tourists are wary of sailing on cruise ships in the short term, fearing exposure to COVID-19 in the restricted atmosphere onboard (Holland et al., 2021).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Context

Cruise tourism is a fast-growing sector across the world. Both developing and developed countries are vying for a piece of the cruise tourist pie, which contributes significantly to the global economy (Han et al., 2019; Chua et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2019). Cruise tourism is one of the fastest expanding segments of the tourist business, with a reported annual value of US\$134 billion (CLIA, 2019). According to industry projections, the number of ships in service might increase from 264 in 2018 to 472 in 2027. (CLIA, 2017).

The growing passenger number, as well as operating ships and ports, support this statement (Vega-Muñoz et al., 2020; Mahadevan & Chang, 2017; Weeden, Lester & Thyne, 2011). In line with the growth of the cruise industry, it is also exerting a dual influence on the economies of the destinations' ports (Lamers and Pashkevich, 2018).

Although cruise tourism is one of the fastest-growing tourist segments (Ruiz-Guerra et al., 2019), it has received little academic attention (Papathanassis, 2012; Sun et al., 2018), particularly in terms of cruiser service quality perceptions. It's concerning since service quality studies may reveal how well service ambassadors meet visitors' demands based on their views, aiding administrators in prioritizing tourists' needs, wants, and expectations from a tourist's perspective (Yusof, Rahman, Jamil, and

Iranmanesh, 2014). The eight cruise ships were picked for their popularity from CruiseCritic.com, in accordance with the facts and importance of the business. The data for this study is derived from comments on the Cruise Critic website.

Cruise Critic is a website that is widely regarded as the largest online cruise community in the world. Individuals who intend to go by cruise ship consult Cruise Critic while arranging their vacation. They receive assistance with their journeys by talking with experienced consumers.

The site was founded in 1995 and has grown to become the most influential website devoted to cruise lines. Cruise Critic, the world-renowned website, provides comparative information on almost 500 cruise ships and over 300 ports across the country, as well as tour arrangements and reviews (Oğuzbalaban & Kizilirmak, 2017). This website selects the finest and most popular cruise ships each year based on visitor ratings. Cabins, Dining, Entertainment, Public Rooms, Fitness Recreation, Family, Shore Excursion, Enrichment, Service, and Value for Money are among the assessment categories (Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020). Therefore, we included cruise passenger's online reviews to compose an awareness toward perceived service quality of cruisers.

3.2 Data Collection

Convenience sampling was used to guarantee that the number of reviews necessary to employ Leximancer software was met, as well as to match the sample size of prior studies in the field. For example, one study looked at passengers' service quality observations about carriers (n = 1200 surveys) (Brochado et al., 2019), another looked at online reviews to analyze medical tourists' perceptions (n = 603) (Rodrigues et al.,

2017), another looked at guests' service perceptions toward World Heritage sites (n = 226) (Stoleriu et al., 2019), and yet another looked at sentimental travel (n = 226).

Only English reviews were considered for the current study, following the technique employed by previous researchers (Rodrigues et al., 2017; Stoleriu et al., 2019). The reviews left by travelers on Cruisecritic.com were gathered and stored in an Excel (CSV. Comma Delimited) database. The information was gathered by the study team from passenger evaluations on Cruisecritic.com between June and August of this year. The review title, content, and tourist score on a 5-point scale with the following classifications: 1 (awful), poor (2), average (3), very good (4), and excellent (5) were all included in the database (5).

3.3 Methodological Approach

Tourists publish their impressions on an internet platform and rely on the reviews left by other tourists when making travel decisions (Au et al., 2014). Content analysis of web surveys is increasingly being used in the context of travel industry research.

Content analysis has grown in popularity over the last decade as a useful tool for understanding the rapidly changing Internet domain. Textual information can be processed using both subjective and quantitative assessments (Zhang & Cole, 2016). As a result, the content analysis may be carried out using structured quantitative or unstructured subjective techniques.

These tasks include identifying terms and noting obvious content highlights, as well as gaining insight into what has been produced (Krippendorf, 2018). Leximancer programming was utilized in this study, which looks at word occurrences as co-events

in a survey to find fundamental concepts (i.e., groups of normally linked words) and arrange them into themes (Leximancer, 2020).

Leximancer is a program that uses its computations to look for capabilities inside text entries by mining the main concepts. It is a quantitative approach to dealing with subjective research that employs various computations for different phases (Tseng et al., 2015). In addition, the associated application assists scholars by generating an inductive repository of fundamental subjects with minimal participation (Leximancer, 2020).

Using computations and nonlinear components, referenced programming screens quantitative operations according to the Bayesian measurable hypothesis (Oliveira, Brochado, Moro & Rita, 2019; Brochado, 2019; Brochado, Troilo, Rodrigues & Oliveira-Brochado, 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2014). The method makes use of three basic elements: words, concepts, and themes. Leximancer also identifies connections between concepts. An "idea map" is a depiction that uses related frequencies. On the map, related concepts are clustered together.

3.4 Leximancer Software

Leximancer is a piece of software that analyzes natural language text data. This program extracts both semantic (meaning) and relational data (more later). A concept map, network cloud, quantitative data, and concept thesaurus are among the software's outputs (Angus, Rintel & Wiles, 2013). Leximancer, a program that does unsupervised quantitative content analysis of natural language words supplied in an electronic format, was used in this study (Brochado, Rita & Moro, 2019; Arasli et al., 2020a; Ozturen et al., 2021; Brochado & Brochado, 2019).

Leximancer tracks mathematical steps parallel with Bayesian statistical theory utilizing algorithms and engaging machine learning (Brochado, 2019; Dambo et al., 2021; Dambo et al., 2020; Brochado et al., 2019). As mentioned earlier, Leximancer software focuses on algorithms generally concentrate on three prominent elements: phrases, concepts, and themes (Pearce & Wu, 2016; Brochado, Oliveira, Rita & Oliveira, 2019). Leximancer, therefore, analyzes the occurrence of frequent phrases in the sentence and then groups those concepts into the theme (Wu et al., 2014; Rodrigues & Brochado, 2021). Leximancer does not apply word frequency or coding of terms and words. The software, functioning with its processes, is utilized for gauging the senses located in sentences by finding the striking as well as vital words (Tseng et al., 2015). Leximancer software also implements a mathematical approach to conduct qualitative analysis by using several algorithms for phases (Chiu, Bae & Won, 2017).

The concepts that occur close to each other regularly in the script or similar conditions are close together on the map. The Leximancer software generates a concept map and it gives the theme in colors with grey nodes (Sotiriadou, Brouwers & Anh Le, 2014). Concept nodes are heat-mapped, in that hot colors (red, orange) means the highly correlated concepts, and cool colors (blue, green), means the least correlated among themes (Thomas, 2014; Wilk, Soutar & Harrigan, 2019; Arasli et al., 2020a; Arasli et al., 2021). In addition, Leximancer, unlike NVivo or ATLAS, does not use word frequency (Tseng et al., 2015). The most prominent notion develops as the theme of a cluster, whereas concepts arise depending on their frequency of recurrence (Dambo, 2021). Because the word list generated by the program is based on the text we input, it solves the issue of dependability and validity (Angus et al., 2013). In general, content analysis relies on dependability, which is defined as an agreement among coders when categorizing material (Riffe et al., 2019; Su et al., 2017).

While differences in how coders identify material might damage the repeatability of coding findings, an increased level of dependability can help to reduce researcher biases and optimize the reproducibility of outcomes (Krippendorff, 2018). Reaching a high degree of dependability in human-coded content analysis is difficult in general, especially when dealing with large amounts of data because it increases the risk of the researcher making mistakes (Su et al., 2017; Riffe et al., 2019). Leximancer software was utilized to analyze the data to avoid making mistakes while creating the themes. Many studies have also found that Leximancer software is reliable because it requires minimal manual intervention from the researcher and it provides objective data analysis by removing researcher bias coder subjectivity, which can improve the validity of the results (Dambo et al., 2021; Sotiriadou et al., 2014).

3.5 Content Analysis

In this study, content analysis is used, which is one of the most significant research methodologies in the social sciences for analyzing data within a given context (Krippendorff, 1989). Content analysis is “a research method that provides a systematic and objective means to make valid inferences from verbal, visual, or written data to describe and quantify specific phenomena” (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992: 314; Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019; Moghadam et al., 2013). It is used to analyze the content of publications, novels, comic books, films, and television shows, among other things (Salem et al., 2021). Because it may be used to determine the statistical frequency of thematic or rhetorical patterns (Salem et al., 2021), it is considered a quantitative approach. It's also a popular qualitative research method (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) for examining group, individual, social, or institutional attention (Weber, 1990).

Weber (1990) clarified content analysis as a “technique that facilitates the systematic and objective identification and categorization of communication themes or characteristics also categories can be identified through this technique”. Another scholar defines content analysis differently. For example, one study defines content analysis as “a variety of methodologies for analyzing text” (Powers et al., 2010).

Vaismoradi et al. (2013) defined content analysis as “a method of unobtrusively studying vast volumes of textual data to find trends and patterns in the words used, their frequency, their interconnections, and the structures and discourses of communication”. According to Krippendorff (2004) “...when using content analysis, the primary aim is to describe the phenomenon in a conceptual form” (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

The content analyst views data as representations not of physical events but of texts, images, and expressions created to be seen, read, interpreted, and acted on for their meanings, and must therefore be analyzed with such uses in mind” (Krippendorff, 2004). Both content analysis and theme analysis appear to have the same goal of analyzing narrative elements from life experiences by breaking them down into “small content units” and subjecting them to descriptive treatment (Sparkes, 2005).

Content analysis methodologies can be used to address queries like, “What are people's worries about an event?”, “What are the reasons why individuals use or don't use a service or procedure?” (Ayres, 2007). For example, Vaismoradi et al. (2011) recommend using content analysis to investigate the varied, significant, and sensitive phenomena. Content analysis may be appropriate for the straightforward reporting of

frequent difficulties highlighted in data while undertaking exploratory work in an area where little is known (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

It is feasible to analyze data subjectively while also quantifying it by employing content analysis (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Both the “coding of the data” and “the interpretation of quantitative counts of the codes” in content analysis (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992) take a descriptive approach.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

4.1. General Description of Cruise Travel Perceived Quality

An idea map was made to exhibit the shared topics and ideas found in the surveys, as well as the recurrence of events and co-events. The analysis showed 10 major themes: “ship”, “staff”, “food”, “entertainment”, “room”, “area” (public spaces), “embarkation”, “excursions”, “disembarkation” and “port” (see Figure 1).

Leximancer software enabled us to compose this map, which contains concepts (illustrated by the smaller gray nodes) that are grouped into themes (shown by the larger shaded circles). Leximancer's concepts are groups of words that typically flow in unison throughout the text. When the map is produced, the concepts are grouped into higher-level “themes”. Concepts that appear often in the same pieces of text have a strong attraction to one another and so tend to cluster together in the map space. The themes help in understanding by grouping clusters of thoughts; they are depicted on the map as colored circles (Arasli et al., 2020a, b). The content analyses revealed the existence of 10 themes in cruise travelers’ online descriptions of perceived cruise quality. Table 5 shows the abovementioned themes and concepts and their relevancy percentages.

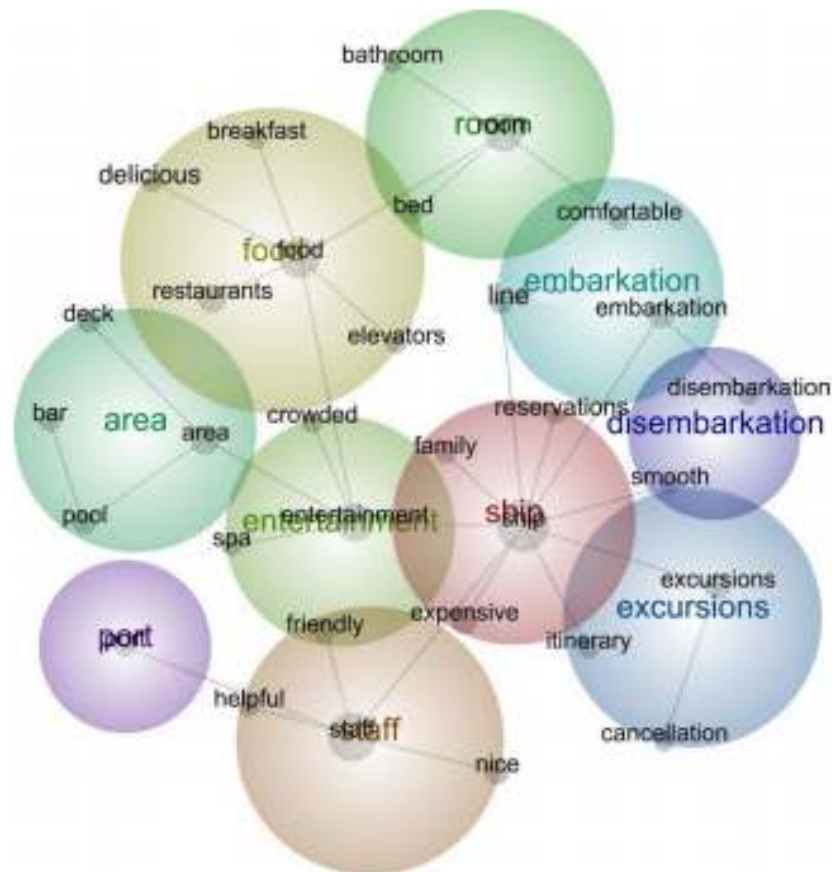


Figure 1: Concept Map

As mentioned above, nine major themes were found, and all had a connectivity percentage of much more than 10%. According to Pearce and Wu (2016), connectivity rates confirm that inner content within the confine of the theme is being revealed collectively in a particular percentage. It shows the comparative significance of themes (the highly significant theme is usually at 100%). The theme identified first is “ship”, which contains the theme of “ship” (relevance =100 percent), “family” (suitability for the families) (36 percent), “reservation” (17 percent), and “expensive” (11 percent).

Some typical reviews for the theme of “ship (cruise)” was mentioned below:

“Staff members were washing every surface you could see. Everything, including lift buttons, casino slots, railings, and stands. I even saw two employees cleaning every escalator stair by hand. We were kept up to date on the current situation in each of the havens we holiday at. While our ship attempted to return to its destination on a penultimate day, the captain made a statement regarding the present situation. Overall, I was extremely impressed

with the professionalism and level of care provided by Norwegian cruise line workers at this difficult time! I would enthusiastically suggest them to anybody planning a future cruise!”

Another reviewer added:

“In March 2020, my wife and I embarked on the Epic with several pals. This was our first time on a cruise ship. San Juan was the departure point. Embarkation and disembarkation were simple and well-organized. The balcony suite 11056 was where we stayed. It was enjoyable for us. The restaurant was all fantastic. We recommend dining at all three locations. The casino was enjoyable. Alan, our cabin porter, was AMAZING. Every one of the personnel with whom we came into touch was enjoyable. The bars were packed, but we made it through just fine. We had a great time dancing the evenings away. We have overdressed a tad. We weren't exactly dressed to the nines...”

One tourist shared:

“This ship has the best entertainment of any of the previous cruises we have been on. Although you must sometimes make reservations ahead of time to see a show in the main theater and wait in line in smaller venues to get in, the quality of the shows is worth it.”

Another tourist shared:

“On 2/6/20, we picked this trip because of the schedule and the inexpensive price, which dropped even further afterward we reserved. We arrived in Puerto Rico while seeing the forts, some fantastic restaurants. We arrived at 1:00 p.m., were temperature checked, checked in on priority (Platinum), completed some paperwork, received our key cards, and were on the ship within 15 minutes of our temperature check. Not as seamless, but once we figured out which line to join, we waited approximately 45 minutes until being allowed off with the first 100 or so individuals. Customs was simple (no paperwork or questioning), and we simply held our pass.”

One review still reads:

“We chose this trip because we've had positive experiences with Norwegian in the past, and it was available for the only week we could go. We also enjoy the Freestyle cruises since they give us more freedom to do what we want when we want. We were looking for a complete relaxation holiday, and we found it. While there will always be things that "go wrong" during a vacation, how they

are handled makes all the difference. All of the specialized eateries were fantastic.”

Another tourist shared:

“Ocean Blue, LaCucina, and Le Bistro were among the restaurants where we dined. All of them were excellent. The meal was fantastic. All of them come highly recommended by me. We also dined twice in the Manhattan dining room and once at Savor. These dining halls served great meals. We weren't in Hungary one night, so we ate at O'Shehans bar and grill. The menu isn't spectacular, but the food is delicious, and the service is prompt. The service at the bars on the first day and at busy periods on the ship is the only "big" complaint with our cruise. A drink might take a long time to arrive. Others were irritated more than I was since I didn't drink much and had to wait a long time for a drink when I did. That was nice. Plenty of room. The entertainment was top-notch. There are lots to do at night.”

The second theme is highly relevant to internal customers of the cruise who are “staff” (connectivity rate of 78%). The theme of “staff” contains concepts of “friendly” (38%), “helpful” (36%) and “nice” (21%).

A tourist shared online:

“Cruise recommended by friends, went with friends, (4 couples). The awesome ship, awesome food, had the beverage and dining packages... highly recommended. Great entertainment, bars, and lounges everywhere...Super staff and crew. Happy Happy Happy”

Another tourist stated:

“The wait staff was always kind and accommodating. Freddy, our cabin steward, was amazing. Every day, towel sculptures are a nice touch. He's also well-versed in health and safety issues, and he's a sincere and kind person. The entire crew was perfect. The Broadway shows Rock of Ages and Burn the Floor was as good as any on the mainland. Playing Freddie Mercury with Queen Flash was wonderful as well. Excursions to Belize and the ruins of the Costa Maya (great tour guide). Harvest Caye was stunning. There's more work to be done than you can reasonably complete in a week. I could go on, but there's so much more, and it's all fantastic, just like the cruise. NCL has done an excellent job.”

One cruiser posted:

“We like cooler summer temperatures and wanted to go outside of the United States for the first time. This cruise was ideal for our needs! We found the large Breakaway to be rather busy, but the personnel took excellent care of us and dealt with any unexpected congestion effectively. We like to stay to ourselves most of the time, but we loved sharing adventure stories with families from various nations. We were extremely blessed to be able to share our 2-day Alla Comfort Tour in St. Louis. The tour guides were highly knowledgeable. Their location selection was fantastic. St. Petersburg's cuisine was delicious and genuine! Our one caveat is that, while children of certain ages are free in St. Petersburg, parents were expected to pay for their children's lunches. That caused some confusion for a family on our tour, but I believe the intention was that small children would want to buy more kid-friendly meals than what Alla presumably pre-orders for the adults as a group order. As a result, be forewarned. Even though children are welcome in St. Petersburg, expect to pay for their lunches. This entire voyage is a once-in-a-lifetime experience! It comes highly recommended from me!”

Another cruiser posted:

“It was a great time! The staff was fantastic! I suggest Norwegian! I'm looking forward to going again. It's difficult to choose what to do onboard because there are so many options. Don't be shocked if you don't see your children for 7 days. There are several activities for youngsters.”

One tourist stated:

“I cruised on the Epic for two weeks in a row from March 1 to 15, 2020. Fortunately, no one got sick on this trip, and everyone had a fantastic time. I sail with NCL regularly and have always had a positive experience with them. I'm not sure why folks are writing such nasty comments regarding the boat. Deprived of exception, everyone was a pleasure to work with. The staff was always kind and eager to assist.”

One cruiser shared:

“The staff was fantastic! Our stateroom steward was always kind and attentive to our needs. All we had to do was inquire if we needed anything.”

Another tourist posted:

“Because the weather was bad for the first few days, we had to spend a lot of time inside the ship. The people were quite nice, and the Atrium entertainment

was outstanding, which I believe made all the difference. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make it happen. See you on the Escape in January 2019!!!! I've gone on several NCL cruises and have thoroughly liked them. This trip aboard the Breakaway on January 5th was the only one with so many weather-related issues. It was a lot of fun thanks to the fantastic management. Thank you very much!"

The third major theme was "food" in this current research. Food theme contained concepts such as "food" (56%), "breakfast" (48%), "restaurants" (47%), "delicious" (22%) and "elevators" (19%). Some typical reviews for the theme of 'food' was mentioned below:

"The Epic is a beautiful ship with a fantastic staff. The meal was delicious, and the performance was fantastic! The ship's sole significant flaw is its lack of access to the sea. Most of the windows are in sections that are not open to the public, such as dining rooms, duty-free shops, and staff spaces."

One cruiser posted:

"The cruise's food was excellent, with two different but equal dining rooms, the Garden Buffet, and several specialized restaurants (I did not try). I was relieved that the buffet was available until 11:30 p.m. for late munchies."

Another cruiser posted:

"Food was good but nothing special, even the specialty restaurants."

One tourist stated:

"On the last day of the cruise, there was a problem with the meal package in Le Bistro, which was mismanaged by the hostess in charge, resulting in the event being destroyed, which was regrettable on the last day of the trip. However, the food was wonderful, and the service had been good up to that time. Our favorite lunch was in the complimentary Jasmine Garden, and I loved the Sushi Bar."

Another tourist stated:

“The meal selection is excellent. If you are organized enough to make a restaurant reservation ahead of time, you will not have to wait long.”

One cruiser shared:

“As always, the food was excellent. The complimentary eateries, as well as the specialized restaurants, were both excellent. The Epic is fantastic since it has a Chinese restaurant. Very nice. In terms of atmosphere, the Manhattan room was our favorite. For a specialist restaurant, we like French cuisine.”

Another tourist posted:

“The meal was excellent, with no shortages or lack of variety. The Buffet was usually stocked with enough food to feed the throngs of hungry patrons. Seeing all the trash was the most difficult part. Every bite was delicious! And you liked the washy sweetheart who greeted you every time you went to the Buffet. On our tour, we never had anyone become sick.”

One cruiser stated that:

“The Restaurant, Cagne's Steakhouse, and Hibachi Grill were all fantastic. We recommend dining at all three locations. The casino was enjoyable. Alan, our cabin porter, was amazing. Every one of the personnel with whom we came into touch was enjoyable. The bars were packed, but we made it through just fine.”

The fourth theme was “room” in this research. The theme included concepts such as “room” (55%), “bathroom” (48%) and “bed” (38%). The fifth striking theme in the result of the analysis was “entertainment”. This theme contained some concepts such as “entertainment” (53%), “crowded” (27%) and “spa” (26%). Some typical reviews for the theme of the “room” were mentioned below:

“The room was very clean and there was also plenty of room.”

One tourist stated:

“On the Breakaway, we had an incredible week. Excellent weather, excellent meal, excellent service, and excellent people. Throughout the week, we had a lot of "vacation heroes." On the last day, from our room steward Richard to our beach trip clerk. We couldn't have had a more perfect week. Our cabin was fantastic, and the views from each port were breathtaking. Dining in the main dining rooms was a pleasant surprise.”

One cruiser posted:

“The accommodation was nice, however, the bed needed to be replaced because it was not very comfy. The shower was fantastic, with plenty of water pressure and enough room.”

Another tourist stated:

“Cabins 9322 and 9922 were next to one other on the aft deck. Those balconies were my favorite location on the yacht. The mattresses were comfortable, and our room steward was always willing to go above and above for us.”

One traveler shared:

“Our aft-facing Penthouse Suite surpassed any 5-Star luxury hotel suite we've ever stayed in, and it couldn't have been more extravagant or spectacular. This arrangement was incredible, from the spacious rear-facing terrace with enough area and furnishings for an 8-person party to a separate bedroom with a beautiful ensuite bathroom equipped with a large soaking tub and separate shower - all with windows overlooking the balcony and ocean beyond - In addition, the apartment included a tiny guest bath with a shower, which was ideal for a husband's "private" space. This suite also came with a sweet Butler, Choi, who would give us different afternoon treats every day and would also deliver room service. Even though these aft-facing cabins aren't on deck 16, they still have full Haven access, and we found the treks back and forth to be useful in counteracting the increased daily calorie intake we were giving ourselves.”

Another tourist shared stated:

“Room was roomy, washroom was wonderful, dual sinks, large shower with multiple jets.”

Another reviewer added:

“On the 10th level, we had a balcony room with views of the oceanfront bar area. The accommodation was nice; however, the cabin doors were open, and we could hear people partying until 2 or 3 a.m.”

One cruiser stated:

“The cabin was spotless and comfortable. A small suite with a balcony was available to us. It was identical to any other balcony room, with the exception that the bathroom was bigger. The elevators were usually packed and took an eternity to go through.”

Another cruiser shared:

“The ship seemed enormous, but we quickly got a sense of where we were. We enjoyed our stay on the 9th level. On 6/7/8, it's close to the activity, but it's still a good walk up to 15 for the buffet. We never used the elevators, which we were grateful for. The condition of our stateroom was satisfactory. Others had complained about the lack of drawers, but it didn't bother me. Towards the conclusion of the week, we discovered drawers under our "couch." We had plenty of room because I'm an over-packer.”

Another cruiser posted:

“The cabin was wonderful, peaceful, and in a nice location, close but not too close to elevators, just over the entrance to the splash academy pool, restaurant, and spa, which was just two stories above Stewart. The room was always clean, and the shower was great. The concerts were fantastic; however, I didn't like the Levity group of comedians. We had a fantastic experience.”

Another reviewer shared:

“On the 11th deck, we had an accessible balcony room. Large and comfy, but noisy from the slamming doors symphony most nights till 2 a.m. (Many bars=many drunks and bartenders are taught to sell above everything else.) The toilet broke down, but it was immediately fixed. There was no sofa in the room, even though there was plenty of space.”

The fifth important theme was “area”. This research area refers to public spaces within the cruise. This theme contained number of concepts such as “area” (33%), “pool”

(30), “deck” (22%) and “bar” (20%). Some typical reviews for the theme of the “area” were revealed below:

“We didn't feel too crowded or shoulder to shoulder in the public spaces, even though the trip was fully booked. However, we felt that the Atrium area was underutilized; it would have been wonderful to hear live music there all day while sipping a drink from the bar.”

Another tourist shared:

“Beautiful ship, well-appointed, lovely restaurants, and venues; my only disappointment is the casino, which I wish NCL would prohibit smoking in all public spaces, including the casino. Passengers are required to pass through the casino, which is positioned in the ship's center to access other places, including restaurants, and the smoke smell was overwhelming at times.”

Another reviewer stated:

“Movies are occasionally shown in the packed public area (not in the theater, but in the atrium, which is constantly busy and noisy). So much so that they just put subtitles on the film because they know you won't be able to hear it), but that's all there is to it. Do you wish to play a game of fun like ski ball, bowling, or darts? So, here's where you put your credit card to pay for a game. Do you want something to drink? \$22 for two glasses of wine that costs \$3 a bottle (that was our only spent money, and it was only because we were lied to about getting a free drink package included.). If you wanted a cup of coffee after your dinner, even some of the gratis eateries had a price tag. We don't drink coffee, thank goodness.”

One reviewer shared:

“There are lounge chairs strewn throughout the public spaces, although they're mostly next to the three-story atrium or in the bar sections. The ship's public sound system continually 'advertised' the next sale or auction throughout the day. Typically, the system is only utilized by the bridge to provide passengers with information or by the cruise director to inform passengers that the ship has been approved by port authorities.”

Another tourist posted:

“All public spaces were packed, loud, and lacked enough seating. Weeks were chosen incorrectly. Even though we experienced a bomb threat, an earthquake,

a tropical hurricane, and two emergency evacuations that disrupted our whole schedule, NCL was merciless and only reimbursed each passenger a pittance.”

The sixth theme was “embarkation” which appeared because of the analysis. This theme contained concepts such as “embarkation” (15%), “line” (11%) and “comfortable” (9%).

Seventh major theme was “excursions”. Relevant theme contained concepts such as “excursions” (19%), “cancellation” (15%) and “itinerary” (15%).

The eighth striking and important theme in this study was "disembarkation". Relevant themes contained concepts such as “smooth” (14%).

The last and ninth theme in this study was “port”. Relevant theme contained concept which is “port” (11%).

Table 5: Main themes, concepts, and relevancy percentages

Themes	Concepts	Relevancy (%)
Ship	Ship	100%
	Family	36%
	Reservation	17%
	Expensive	11%
Staff	Staff	78%
	Friendly	38%
	Helpful	36%
	Nice	21%
Food	Food	56%
	Breakfast	48%
	Restaurants	47%
	Delicious	22%
	Elevators	19%
Area (public spaces)	Area	33%
	Pool	30%
	Deck	22%

	Bar	20%
Rooms (cabins)	Room	55%
	Bathroom	48%
	Bed	38%
Entertainment	Entertainment	53%
	Crowded	27%
	Spa	26%
Embarkation	Embarkation	15%
	Line	11%
	Comfortable	09%
Excursions	Excursions	19%
	Cancellation	15%
	Itinerary	15%
Disembarkation	Disembarkation	11%
	Smooth	09%
Port	Port	11%

As highlighted in table 5, Leximancer is a textual analysis program that analyzes texts “from words to meaning to insight”. Essentially, it employs a quantitative approach to qualitative investigation. It collects statistics on the frequency of occurrence of words and their co-occurrences. It generates a concept co-occurrence matrix based on frequency data and word co-occurrence (Pearce & Wu, 2016). After producing a notion, the program generates a thesaurus of closely related terms, therefore providing semantic or definitional information around the concept (Rooney, 2005). Leximancer then categorizes the concepts into themes based on their frequency of occurrence within a piece of text. The technique of extracting semantic patterns is summarized in table 5, as are the three primary units of Leximancer analysis: word, concept, and theme. As seen in table 5, ten major themes were found; each of these themes had a connection rate of more than 10% (Pearce & Wu, 2016). In the context of this research, the connectivity rate refers to the percentage of times that internal elements in the theme are mentioned together. It reflects the relative importance of themes (the most significant is the top topic, which has a 100% weighting) (Pearce & Wu, 2016).

4.1.1 Analysis of Different Satisfaction Groups

The second aim of this study was to analyze how to cruise travelers with different overall evaluations (4 or 5 out of 5 points vs. 1 or 2 out of 5) responded to the perceived cruise quality user-generated content shared by cruisers. The outcomes of the analysis demonstrate that, cruise travelers who gave a cruise a 4 (“Very good”) or 5 (“Excellent”) rating more often shared narratives around the themes of a ship, area (public space), staff, entertainment, and food.

The results of the analysis demonstrated that cruise travelers who rated cruises 4 (“Very good”) or 5 (“Excellent”) for the value for money generally shared narratives around “area” (public space), “entertainment”, “room”, “food”, “staff” and “ship”. An assessment of the themes for this group found that their highest-connected concepts were as follows: “area” (public space) (80% likelihood of co-occurrence), “entertainment” (71%), “comfortable” (69%), “helpful” (67%), “room” (66%), “food” (61%), “deck” (61%), “breakfast” (61%), “friendly” (61%), “bathroom” (59%), “staff” (58%), “bed” (57%), “spa” (56%), and “ship” (55%).

In general, they were the group who used the most expressive terms for their perceived cruise quality. Typical comments from this group include the following:

“With almost 25 trips under our belts, my wife and I have a lot of expertise. Overall, we had a great time on this trip and would recommend it to others, despite the concerns listed below. Musical entertainment onboard is varied and of high quality. There are also a variety of places. Staff members have an optimistic attitude. Almost everyone smiles when they see you. Everywhere we could see, the ship was maintained immaculately clean. The itinerary is excellent. A wide range of experiences at several ports.”

Another tourist shared:

“It doesn't matter if you're not a pool person. The food was likewise amazing in this world. The Manhattan dining room was fantastic; there were music or concerts and a dance floor throughout dinner, and the service was outstanding. They also didn't allow shorts or hats in one dining room (but did in the others), so it was a bit more formal, which I enjoyed in their normally laid-back atmosphere.”

One cruiser stated:

“I'm not sure how Norwegian manages it, but I've never had trouble getting a table at the buffet. They truly know how to handle crowds, which is a continuous annoyance on other cruise lines. Take a few moments to go over the ship's map. It wasn't until the fifth day that we discovered an outdoor theater on the top deck that played movies. It was almost like going to a drive-in movie without having to drive, and it was a lot of fun. I would strongly advise!”

One satisfied tourist shared:

“The Breakaway is a fantastic vessel! Embarkation was a rather simple operation, even though thousands of passengers were boarding at the same time. Disembarking was also very simple, but I didn't enjoy having to wait in line for an hour outdoors. The groups were called too close together, and there were too many individuals wanting to be scanned off at the same time, in my opinion.”

Another tourist revealed:

“I believe that the groups might be summoned at greater intervals, making the procedure of boarding the ship go more smoothly. Except for Grand Cayman, the ship sailed straight up to the port, and we walked right off. There was usually some form of conveyance to and from the boat, which made things a lot easier, especially because some of those docks were very lengthy!! Before we came back on board, the crew greeted us at the pier with a cool towel and a drink. “It's quite refreshing.”

One reviewer stated:

“The ship's public areas are very spectacular. There are so many lovely locations to meet as a group or to sit quietly and have a discussion or play a game. I like all the dining options, particularly the Manhattan Room. Except at the Cirque de Solais, the cuisine was superb. That was unquestionably not worth the money we spent on it. Aside from that one dinner, I was quite happy with the cuisine.”

One reviewer added:

“Every day, there was a wonderful selection of cuisine to choose from; there was always something new to try. My sole suggestion is that O'Sheehan's provide more mini-meals or snack-type things late at night. We were searching for a snack after dancing, and the buffet closed before the evening's performance ended. A full dinner at 3 a.m. is a frightening idea, and the nachos, while delicious, grew old during a 10-day trip. The show was quite entertaining. One of the finest shows I've ever seen on land or water was Burn the Floor. Every day, there was a wide choice of music to choose from, with something to suit every mood. I wished there was more live music at the poolside.”

One of the tourists stated:

“We went on a cruise to Tortolla, St. Thomas, and Great Stirrup Cay in the eastern Caribbean. We chose to stay in The Haven, as we usually do. It is certainly worth the extra money because it eliminates all of the difficulties associated with cruising. Embarkation is a snap, and check-in took less than ten minutes once we got through security. We were taken straight to the Haven area.”

Another tourist stated:

“We met our butler and then had lunch at the Haven restaurant. There is usually a delicious menu to choose from, or you can pretty much order whatever you want. They will cater to your specific preferences. The house wine selection is more than acceptable, and the premium wine selection is exceptional. The Haven bar area was one of our favorites. It's a fantastic location to mingle with the other Haven visitors.”

One tourist stated:

“There are no lines to wait in, and no one is attempting to force their way past you. The bartenders are the finest in the business, and they love coming up with innovative cocktails. Our favorite bartender made an incredible Amaretto, Baileys, and pineapple juice cocktail. Our room was kept in order by our room steward, who greeted us by name no matter where he was working along the hall. He would make sure that our room was set up by the time we returned. Our butler was attentive to our unique needs. He was interested in how much of the afternoon room snacks we would consume or not consume. We enjoyed the freshly made cookies with which he provided us. The concierge made certain that we got on and off the cruise safely.”

Another cruiser stated:

“He was always available to schedule our excursions and ensure that we arrived at our meeting location on time and without having to queue. In conclusion, if you enjoy cruising but are wary of standing in lines and battling for privacy, the NCL Haven should be on your radar. It isn't cheap, but it is worth the extra money to my wife and myself. It will be difficult to look forward to a voyage without The Haven once you have experienced it.”

One reviewer posted:

“I was on the Breakaway for two trips in a row from October 6 to 20, 2019. I could stay in the same stateroom as the other passengers, which was fantastic. This was my tenth trip with NCL, and I have thoroughly enjoyed each one. Both the specialized restaurants and the larger dining rooms had excellent meals. My balcony-equipped mid-ship mini-suite was fantastic. The employees were all wonderful; I never had a problem with any of them.”

One tourist mentioned:

“From the first day, the drink servers at the casino and the Vibe beach club addressed me by my first name and knew exactly what I wanted to drink. I'm wondering if any of these folks were on the same ship as me after reading some of these reviews. The only conclusion I can draw is that certain individuals are impossible to satisfy, no matter what you do for them. I've already booked three more NCL cruises and am looking forward to them.”

Another reviewer stated:

“The crew did everything they could to make this a memorable voyage. Our Butler and the housekeeping crew deserve special mention. All of the restaurants we visited served excellent food. The Haven's personnel went above and beyond what was expected of them. If I had any criticisms, it would be that the Shore Excursions were far too short and hurried. The ship was spotless in every location [;] not only the haven but all public spaces as well.”

One reviewer shared:

“There is a variety of fun entertainment, with something for everyone. The cuisine is great, always hot, and diverse, with a choice of restaurants; there is a variety of enjoyable entertainment, with something for everyone. But it is the great personnel that sticks out the most: nothing is too much bother; they are always polite and helpful.”

Another cruiser stated:

“We had a fantastic experience. The meal was delicious, the beverages were fantastic, and the personnel went out of their way to make us feel at ease. Clay, the cruise director, went above and above to ensure that our vacation was one to remember. He managed to be both professional and amusing at the same time. We admired his calm demeanor. We will certainly take another Norwegian cruise.”

One reviewer mentioned:

“The ship is beautiful, the cuisine was delectable, the bed was comfy, and the entertainment was excellent! The personnel at Haven went out of their way to get to know us and make us feel like VIPs.”

A reviewer wrote:

“We had a fantastic experience. From the time we boarded until the time we exited. The meal was delicious, the beverages were incredible, and the service went above and beyond to make us feel at ease.”

In contrast, those who rated their cruise perceptions as “terrible & poor” were grouped quite closely in Figure 2.

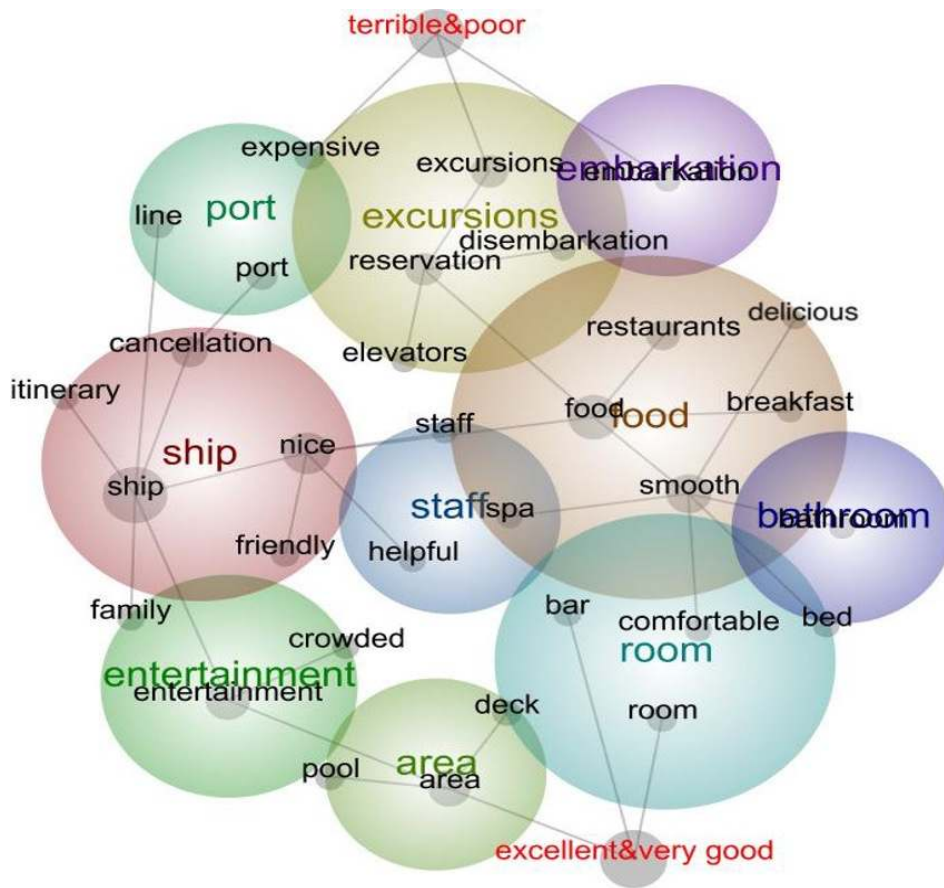


Figure 2: Different Satisfaction Groups' Evaluation of Perceived Cruise Quality

An evaluation of the perceptions associated with this group's accounts showed that the regularly repeated concepts were "expensive" (49%), "reservation" (48%) "line" (47%), "elevator" (40%), "cancellation" (38%), "embarkation" (38%), "port" (34%), "excursion" (30%), and "disembarkation" (30%) (Figure 2). Instances of undesirable narratives regarding the abovementioned concepts emphasized the embarkation/disembarkation process, excursions, cancellations, and reservation problems. Passengers expressed their problems with the embarkation/disembarkation process as follows:

"Embarkation and disembarkation were both sluggish. After barely 60 minutes of disembarking, the ship was 30 minutes behind schedule."

“The worst parts of the journey were the embarkation and disembarkation. It took a long time, and I felt terrible for the elderly and those with young children who had to stand in line for such a long period.”

Some passengers shared negative experiences regarding “cancellations”, “expenses”, “excursions”, as well as “port”. Some example negative reviews by cruise travelers are given below:

“The excursions were expensive and not very good. We took an excursion to a brewery, which turned out to be a bus ride to a store.”

“I was under the impression that this was a more respected firm. I suppose [the] agent was desperate for the money. There doesn't appear to be any reason why they shouldn't remove the travel insurance from my bill. We planned a costly trip with them anyhow, and we'll almost certainly spend money aboard the ship for extras and excursions. I'd think they'd want to keep the future client pleased and satisfied!!! In this situation, the firm has missed the boat when it comes to customer service!!! They should be ashamed of themselves!!!”

“Overcrowding, overcrowding, overcrowding. Elevators were scarce, and even the stairwells were packed. This ship seemed packed no matter when you strolled about, even early in the morning. Also, most individuals had purchased the Ultimate Beverage Package, which meant that they were all drunk.”

“The port and shore excursions were expensive, and there were few choices. This cruise was not worth our time or money in the end. It did not go down well with the children. The cuisine, port and shore excursions and general services were all rated as disappointing by adults. This cruise will not be recommended to any of our friends or family.”

“We will not choose this cruise for future vacations due to questionable and costly cabin price, delayed embarkation, port cancellation, and questionable/lack of answers from the firm.”

“The meal was bland, uninteresting, and limited in variety. Every night in the dining room was a different adventure. It seemed that we were playing musical tables. We'd be moved just as we'd gotten established. Did it make a difference when we arrived or whether we had a reservation? Every meal was an unplanned experience. The island of Coco Cay was a nightmare. The ship

advertises a gorgeous private island, but when you arrive, it is under construction, congested, filthy, and the dining service is chaotic.”

“Worst of all, they served us rotten food for supper, and my kid became ill. When we attempted to visit the ship's doctor, they demanded 100 euros. They refused to offer us any medication or even a thermometer, and the onboard pharmacist was unable to assist us.”

“The meal was dreadful and monotonous. There is a very limited selection of cuisine. The meal is not at the proper temperature. We discovered lipstick stains on the "clean" cups on a few instances. There were queues for everything, and it was quite congested.”

“The meal is disgusting. The quality of the food and the hours that the restaurants are open are both poor. Breakfast is only available from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m., lunch is from 12 a.m. to 3 p.m., and dinner is from 530 a.m. to 9 p.m. Outside of those hours, there was the worst pizza I've ever had. How could one go wrong with pizza?!?!?!”

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As highlighted above, cruise tourism is a rapidly developing, worldwide market (Di Vaio et al., 2021; Xie, Qian & Wang, 2021; James, Olsen & Karlsdóttir, 2020; Paiano, Crovella & Lagioia, 2020; Mangano et al., 2020). Both developing and established nations are striving to participate in cruise tourism, which has the potential to be a significant economic contributor (MacNeill & Wozniak, 2018; London, Lohmann & Moyle, 2021; Han et al., 2019; Cervený et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Jászberényi & Miskolczi, 2020; Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020).

Even though cruise tourism is one of the fastest-growing tourist segments (Mangano et al., 2020), it has gotten little academic attention (Sun et al., 2018; Papathanassis, 2012), particularly in terms of cruisers' assessments of service quality. This is concerning, because service quality studies can determine how well service ambassadors meet tourists' demands based on their views, allowing cruise ship crews to prioritize passengers' needs, wants, and expectations (Yusof et al., 2014).

The provision of expected service quality is widely recognized as an important antecedent of customer happiness and loyalty, both of which can lead to improved competitive performance (Malik et al., 2020). Furthermore, the service sector's service quality and customer happiness are primarily multidimensional (Jiang & Zhang,

2016). This is especially true in the cruise sector, which has a lengthy service procedure from embarkation through disembarkation (Robles et al., 2015).

Cruises achieve distinction via the offering of a better level of service due to the homogeneous qualities of the primary service offered (i.e., transferring visitors and things from one location to another) (Hwang & Han, 2014). Several studies have shown that service quality ingenuity is critical for companies to compete with competitors and maintain customer happiness (Nejati & Nejati, 2009). (Barber et al., 2011). As a result, service quality and its position in the cruise industry's major business differentiation policy have been increasingly important in the recent decade (Chua et al., 2015).

Despite an increase in cruise-related research and recent recommendations for further study (Weaver & Lawton, 2017; Weeden & Klein, 2018), the literature, particularly on service quality, remains sparse. Questionnaires have frequently been used to collect data in limited research on cruise service quality (Hwang & Han, 2014; Chua et al., 2015). To our knowledge, no study in the literature focuses on visitors' perceptions of service quality on cruise ships, which was studied using content analysis.

While other research has utilized content analytics to collect evaluations from various service-based sectors, these studies employed user-generated material to quantify perceived service quality from a tourist perspective (Brochado et al., 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2017; Arasli, Saydam & Kilic, 2020). Furthermore, similar studies suggested that further study should be conducted to determine the various elements that impact passengers' views of service.

Despite the large quantity of cruise-related research and recent demands for more study (Weaver & Lawton, 2017; Weeden & Klein, 2018), the literature is still sparse, particularly in terms of service quality. Questionnaires have frequently been used to collect data in limited research on cruise service quality (Hwang & Han, 2014; Chua et al., 2015). These so-called variables have a direct impact on the quality of certain leisure items as judged by users.

As a result, the current study investigates the major themes in connection to service quality and which service qualities contribute to higher/lower levels of satisfaction, considering the new quality perceptions available via online word of mouth (WOM). Given the importance of the cruise segment in the tourist business and the paucity of study in the subject, our findings will contribute to the literature and offer insight on how to select the best cruise industry tactics.

Even though perceived value for money and service quality have been linked to good WOM among passengers, current research is still ambiguous as to which service components are judged to be of better value for money (Brochado et al., 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2017; Rajaguru, 2016). To the best of our knowledge, no study has looked at the aspects of cruise service quality utilizing internet reviews from visitors.

As underlined above, our study used user-generated content evaluations from cruise passengers to fill in the gaps identified above. The study's two main goals were to identify the prevalent themes in connection to cruise quality perceptions and to investigate which themes were associated with a higher and lower value for money evaluations from the tourists' perspective.

The information given here adds to the existing body of knowledge and helps us better understand cruise customers' opinions of service quality. Although the current study has some similarities to the few previous studies that evaluated perceived service quality in the cruise industry, it is distinct from them. The study focused on the major themes related to perceived cruise quality, as well as the notions linked with a higher and lower value for money evaluations from the perspective of tourists. Furthermore, consumer behavior research in the cruise sector is limited (Chua et al., 2015). The paper contributes several theoretical advances to the cruise literature by overcoming this gap. To begin, the present study identified the major narrative motifs associated with greater (4 or 5 out of 5) and poorer (1 or 2 out of 5) cruise value for money evaluations. The content analysis indicated that these two tourist groups have distinct definitions of cruise quality in mind when writing their online evaluations, resulting in opposing themes in the narratives submitted to the travel site by the two groups. Second, this study goes beyond past cruise studies that focused on a few specific tours (Petrick, 2004; Petrick et al., 2006) by examining a broader range of characteristics and including client responses from Cruise Critic's online platform.

Consequently, a complete picture of the connections between cruise ship characteristics and customer service impressions emerges. Third, although cruise service quality has been examined in previous studies, it is still unclear which service qualities contribute to service quality (Zhang & Cole, 2016). It's critical to understand the essential service qualities that lead to tourists' satisfaction. The great majority of researchers have used the survey technique to assess service quality in the cruise industry from a methodological standpoint (Han et al., 2019; Chua et al., 2015; Juan & Chen, 2012).

However, a handful of recent studies have highlighted the benefits of looking at traveler evaluations on the internet. As a result, this study goes beyond the usual survey approach and focuses on passenger evaluations in connection to cruise quality perception.

As highlighted above, cruise tourism is one of the fastest developing markets internationally. Developing countries as well as developed countries are trying to get a share from cruise tourism, which has important economic contributions (Han et al., 2019; Chua et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2019). The growing passenger number, as well as operating ships and ports, support this statement (Vega-Muñoz et al., 2020; Mahadevan & Chang, 2017; Weeden, Lester & Thyne, 2011). In line with the growth of the cruise industry, it is also exerting a dual influence on the economies of the destinations' ports (Lamers & Pashkevich, 2018).

Although cruise tourism is among the tourism phenomena that experience significant growth (Ruiz-Guerra et al., 2019), from the academic point of view has not received much attention (Papathanassis, 2012; Sun et al., 2018) especially on cruisers service quality perceptions. It is worrying since service quality studies can find how successful service ambassadors fulfill tourists' needs according to the latter perceptions, assisting administrators to priorities tourists' needs, wants, and anticipations from the tourists' viewpoint (Yusof, Rahman, Jamil & Iranmanesh, 2014).

The delivery of superior service quality is broadly accepted as an imperative source of customer retention and loyalty, which can eventually lead to greater competitive performance (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Improving service quality and accomplishing customer satisfaction is predominantly multifaceted in service-based industries (Malik

et al., 2020). This is valid for the cruise industry because the cruise industry faces a much greater challenge in delivering a high-quality service at the time of product consumption, which begins when passengers initially embark on the cruise until they disembark at the end of the journey (Teye and Leclerc, 1998; Robles et al., 2015).

To our knowledge, no study in the literature focuses on the service quality perception of tourists using content analysis on cruise ships. While many studies such as Brochado et al (2019) and Rodriguez et al (2017) used content analyses by collecting reviews in different service-based industries, they called for the use of this type of data in more studies. Other research could measure probable elements that might impact service volumes of customer ratings, which represent people's genuine experiences of city travel, hotel accommodation, restaurant eating, and so on, according to the mentioned authors.

These scores directly reflect the user's perception of a certain leisure product's quality. As a result, considering the unique quality signals available via online WOM, this study analyzes the major topics in connection to cruise service quality and which service attributes represent a higher/lower level of value for money. Additionally, this study promises to find out which themes are related to the future behavior of the tourists such as spreading positive word of mouth as well as suggesting cruise companies to acquaintances. Considering the essence of the cruise category regarding the tourist business and the scarcity of past research in the field, the results of our research will add as well as enlighten current literature and throw light on deciding decision-makers tactics. Although perceived value for money and service quality are linked with customers' positive behavioral intentions, the existing literature is still unclear about which service features provide better value for money (Rajaguru, 2016).

Additionally, the relationship between the cruise experiences of tourists and intention to recommend remains mysterious (Hosany and Witham, 2010). Given this research gap, the present study sought to examine the narratives shared online by cruise travelers.

The two primary objectives of this study were: (1) to find out the main themes that describe overall impressions of cruise experiences shared on the online platform; (2) to pinpoint the themes most closely aligned with a higher and lower value for money ratings.

Unlike most prior studies in service perception research, this one focuses on how cruise passengers utilize natural language to shape their opinion of cruise quality. User-generated material was our first choice. As a result, we have collected 2000 cruisers' online reviews from Cruisecritic.com. Leximancer 4.5 was used to assist evaluate the information gathered. The primary goal of this study was to examine online user-generated content to establish ideas that would provide deep insight into cruise passengers' perceptions of quality.

This objective was reflected in a concept map of cruise visitors' overall perceptions of perceived quality (see Figure 1). “Ship”, “staff”, “food”, “entertainment”, “room”, “area” (public areas), “embarkation”, “excursions”, “disembarkation” and “port” were among the ten key themes identified by the research. The theme of “ship” (cruise) was 100 percent relevant to other themes, which is a metric that measures the level of service excellence (Chua et al., 2015). The theme of ship is connected to all aspects of travel impressions in the study. The theme of “ship” and “family” were mentioned often in the reviews in the research. The cruise quality was evaluated highly (very good

and excellent) by groups who included both the ship and their family in their narratives, indicating that people who chose to cruise with their spouse and children were happy with their trip. The value of the staff, the second most significant subject, was also verified by the outcomes of this study.

The staff's qualities (e.g., helpful, pleasant) were frequently highlighted by travelers. In earlier service quality scales, "staff" theme was also shown to be a key component (Chua et al., 2015). Furthermore, the most well-known aspects in service quality studies include onboard amenities like food and entertainment, as well as the quality of the ports (Petrick et al., 2006). Another major subject in the research was food. Some prior research has focused on the significance of "food". For example, in the hotel sector, consumer satisfaction with food and drinks was a critical factor in determining tourists' willingness to repurchase and disseminate good WOM (Kandampully et al., 2003). Furthermore, food quality influences passengers' perceptions of travel quality (Hwang & Han, 2014), and another study found that meeting cruise passengers' food expectations is critical to visitor satisfaction (Andriotis, 2010).

Another important subject in this research was "public spaces". According to research, cruise passengers like open areas (decks, etc.) more than their private accommodations (Zhang & Cole, 2016). Cabins are mostly used for changing clothes and sleeping, while spectacular open zones provide guests with a variety of facilities and opportunities to exercise (Coffman, 2020). Another topic on which cruise passengers shared stories in this study was entertainment. High-quality entertainment is important for cruise passengers' happiness as well as the development of a brand image (Hwang & Han, 2014). In line with these findings, one research found that cruise entertainment

creates positive memories and helps to build a positive brand image (Zhang & Cole, 2016).

“Cabin quality” was another concern that came up in the research (Hyun & Kim, 2014). Cabin quality is a major service quality antecedent that contributes to cruise customer pleasure, according to one study (Qu & Ping, 1999). Another study (Heung, 2000) stressed the significance of room noiselessness, while another found that beds and toiletries were significant factors in determining the quality of cruise inboard lodges (Choi & Chu, 2001). The perspective of onboard housing is one of the most important components in assessing the service quality given by cruise companies, according to a survey of 212 cruise tourists' perceptions of Cyprus. Embarkation and disembarkation were major subjects in the same research (Lois, 2009).

Another study found that the processes of “embarkation” and “disembarkation” had a substantial impact on passenger satisfaction (Lois & Wang, 2005). In addition to the results, one research discovered that a perfect cruise experience requires seamless embarkation and disembarkation (Zhang & Cole, 2016). In the current study, the port theme was also discovered. Previous cruise study has found that port quality and price perception/sensitivity are important factors in cruise customers' decision to choose/repurchase a certain cruise company (Chua et al., 2015; Sun et al., 2019).

The current research's second objective was to determine whether cruise passengers who rate the cruise quality as higher (4 or 5 out of 5) or (1 or 2 out of 5) lower value for money write different sorts of reviews concerning the perceived quality (Brochado et al., 2019; Rajaguru, 2016).

The outcomes of this investigation illustrated that, cruise travelers who rated the cruise quality as 4 (“Very good”) or 5 (“Excellent”) more often shared narratives around the themes of “ship”, “area” (public space), “room”, “staff”, “entertainment”, and “food”. In contrast, those who rated their cruise quality as 1 (terrible) or 2 (poor) out of 5 shared narratives with words like “expensive”, “reservation”, “line” (queue), “elevator”, “cancellation”, “embarkation”, “port”, “excursion”, and “disembarkation”.

5.1. Managerial Implications

Considering tourists' ratings as a representation of perceived quality can assist cruise industry decision-makers in identifying essential elements that can lead to a good post-purchase attitude and reduce negative views among cruise passengers. As a result, tourist reviews not only provide a profitable means for cruise companies to collect feedback from their customers, but also a chance to discover strategies to generate good post-purchase intents. To secure good guest feedback and positive word of mouth intention, cruise companies should deliver the desired service quality starting from the port where they embark and continuing right up to the disembarkation process.

The examination showed 10 themes that account for passengers’ perceived cruise quality: “ship”, “staff”, “food”, “entertainment”, “room” and “area” (public spaces) belonged to the high satisfaction group (Excellent/Very Good), while “embarkation,” “excursion,” “disembarkation,” and “port” belonged to the low satisfaction group (Poor/Terrible).

According to these findings, the cruise's success is strongly linked to perceptions of the area (public spaces), cuisine, entertainment, and crew, whereas unhappiness was linked to excursions, the embarkation/disembarkation procedure, cancellations, and

ports. As a result, cruise companies must pay close attention to unfavorable incidents connected with these ideas to identify the root causes and develop ways to prevent future unfavorable events and their detrimental consequences on tourists' perceptions of quality.

Cruise line operators may try to minimize boredom associated with repeat cruise vacations by offering a range of onboard activities each year to improve fresh cruise experiences. Cruise line operators may provide seasonal (e.g., “spring”, “summer”, and “winter”) or theme-based onboard goods (e.g., “Halloween” and “Christmas”). The outcomes of this study revealed that when cruise line operators provide high-quality onboard experiences, such as “food and drinks”, “lodging”, “entertainment”, and “auxiliary facilities” cruise visitors feel a sense of novelty.

One of the most common themes in cruisers' evaluations was food and drinks. As a result, cruise operators should make delivering exceptional dining experiences for cruise guests a top priority. Vacations may allow sampling new cuisines because individuals are away from their daily routines. Cruise guests may feel as if they are missing out on unique dining experiences if they do not visit the specialty restaurants. As a consequence, providing specialty restaurants with international cuisines and menus produced by well-known chefs may be beneficial.

Restaurants with varied menus inspired by some of the world's most intriguing places may add to the novelty factor. Exotic food and private dining events may also be used to create new eating experiences. Room (cabin) was another dominant theme that emerged in this current study. Therefore, High-quality bedding (e.g., “pillows”, “mattresses”, and “linens”), furnishings, and luxuries may all be added to a cabin (e.g.,

name-brand bath and shower products). Additionally, resources should be focused on increasing the room's ambiance.

Another key aspect that influences cruise tourists' new experiences is entertainment. Cruise line operators should provide high-quality entertainment activities for people of all ages. More precisely, collaborating with world-famous performers or celebrities is advantageous to provide holidaymakers with exclusive and exciting experiences. It is recommended that cruise companies may offer a variety of entertainment activities to appeal to different types of holidaymakers. Finally, auxiliary amenities are key components of a cruise vacationer's unique experience. Because the cruise business is extremely competitive and growing increasingly homogeneous, shipboard facilities should be renovated and enhanced regularly.

In today's competitive cruise business climate, cruise companies must understand that providing comfortable cabins, delicious food, and engaging activities to cruise passengers is no longer sufficient. Today's cruise customers are intelligent, and they evaluate their cruise vacation as a whole, including cabins, restaurants, entertainment programs, onboard activities, incidental amenities (such as WiFi), and cruise ship atmospheres.

People are more likely to stay in a clean atmosphere. In addition, a clean workplace conveys a professional and high-quality image (Chua et al., 2015). As a result, cruise ship public facilities (such as eating rooms, deck) should be regularly checked for cleanliness. Clean-ups are required regularly in public places due to the constant influx of people. This ensures passenger pleasure. Cleanliness is arguably easier to handle from a cruise management standpoint than other tangible elements.

Unlike at airports, many cruise passengers are first-time users, and effort should be made to make the gangway easy to use even for unfamiliar guests. Ramps with broad travel lanes, few twists, and a short travel distance tend to enhance passenger comfort in my opinion. Additionally, the literature supports my assertions. Additionally, the use of glass creates an open atmosphere and mitigates claustrophobic effects. Additionally, passenger comfort is enhanced with lighting, carpeting or other cushioned non-skid floors, and weather protection. Also suggested are safety elements such as railings and guardrails, audio and visible alerts, and level rest spaces. To defend against the elements, an enclosure skirt or bimini is advised between the gangway and the ship/terminal, similar to what is used on airport jetways.

To mitigate resistance to luxury cruise lines' high prices, firms may enhance pleasant experiences of passengers' two-way contact with workers, which has a positive correlation with information expenses saved in the future. One might hypothesize a link between two-way communication and passengers' perceptions of pricing and information costs. The research indicates that contact between customers and workers plays a vital role in value generation and service satisfaction throughout the service delivery process. It is self-evident that communication supplies passengers with vital pricing information, favorably impacting their price perception. Reasonable and appropriate arguments for a price policy can explain why a luxury cruise is so expensive while decreasing the likelihood that passengers will perceive the strategy as exploitative or resulting in excessive business profits.

5.2. Limitations and Future Research

The current research has some limitations that need to be considered. First, only eight cruise ships were considered in this research. Future studies can give a wider vision of

cruise travelers' internet-based narratives by including other types of cruises (for example, family vs. luxury) and more firms in the samples. Enlarging samples may allow future researchers to evaluate the differences in links between satisfaction levels and the core themes of cruise travelers' experience for each firm. Second, we only concentrated on one platform which was cruisecritic.com. Another research can use the data from other platforms, which will present more generalizable results.

In addition, user-generated content and ratings are changing time by time. Therefore, to address the changeable tourists' needs, the future study can consider methods to investigate the electronic opinions and ratings in an incremental manner (Nilashi et al., 2021). Future research could include user-generated content from another online platform (for example, TripAdvisor) to evaluate the congruence with this study's results.

Lastly, the research focused only on the tourist and hospitality industries. Thus, extrapolating the outcomes of this study to other domains, particularly within the COVID-19 framework, is necessary, as the factors affecting customer satisfaction vary according to the kind of rated product or service.

The current paper did not consider the various types of cruise lines when measuring perceived quality (i.e., mass market, first-class, and luxury). The cruise line's influence on the cruise experience is also worth investigating. It would be interesting to investigate how cruise passengers' views of cruise line quality change based on the cruise line's groups or classes. Additionally, a question that merits more research is whether the themes of travelers' overall perception differ consistently with the demographic profile of the travelers (e.g., sex or nationality) or not. This might offer

us more understanding concerning the market segmentation in the cruise industry. Future studies could also utilize other qualitative approaches to augment the current results on cruise travelers' attitudes.

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