APPRAISAL EVALUATION IN ONLINE CUSTOMER REVIEWS OF OCEAN PARK HONG KONG

TSE Tak Po, Jamie (Student No: 232702m)

INTRODUTION - OCEAN PARK HONG KONG

- Opened in 1977
- Collective memory of the Hong Kong people
- Renowned for its marine attractions, thrilling rides, and animal shows

- Visitors can learn more about biodiversity & animal conservation

- Educational and entertainment programmes (Ocean Park Hong Kong, 2024, p.1)

Hong Kong Ocean Park (images extracted from https://www.oceanpark.com.hk/tc/

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THEME PARK TOURISM & ONLINE REVIEW

- Theme park visitors posting and reviewing their stay and personal experience on online travel platforms

- Theme parks have become important destinations for tourists as they provide unique experiences and decorations

- Increasing attention of online platforms as forums for sharing opinions and experiences in Chinese, English, and other languages

- Online visitor reviews have emerged as a valuable source of information and insights (Kim & Kim, 2022)
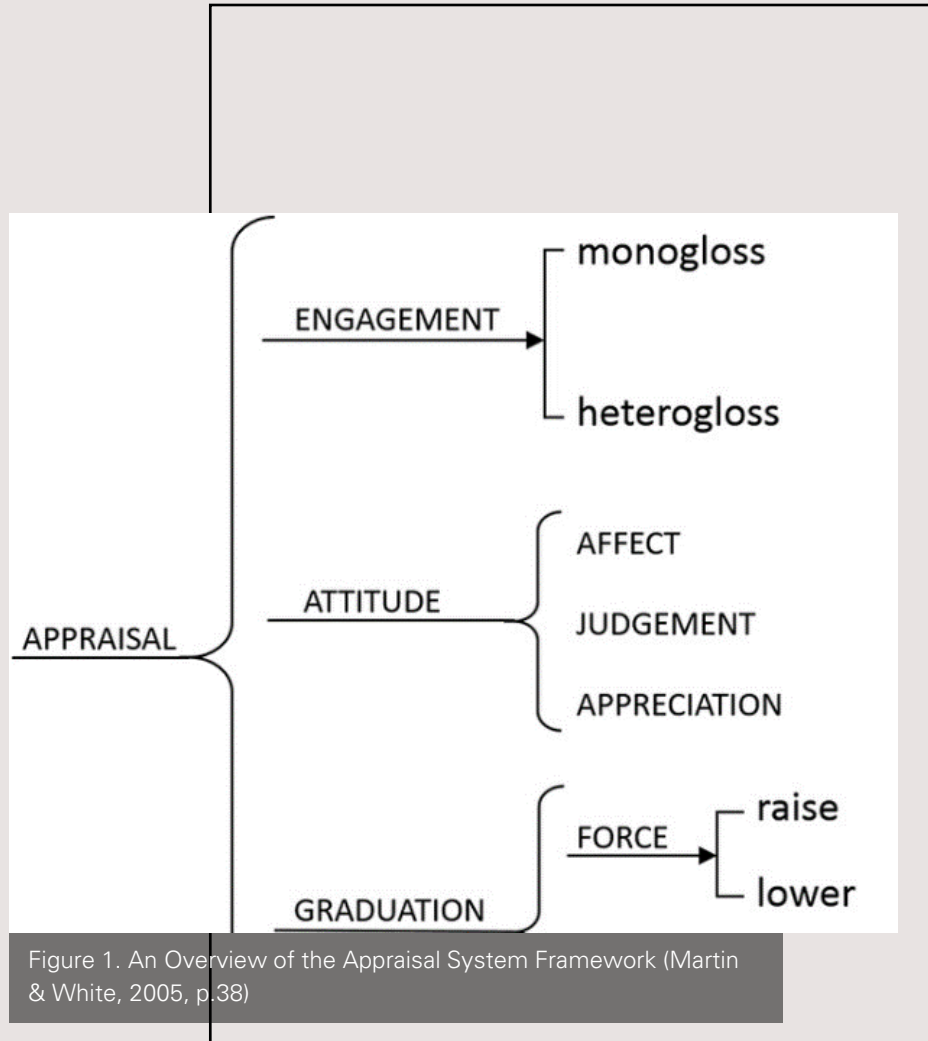
- Trip.com, TripAdvisor, Agoda…
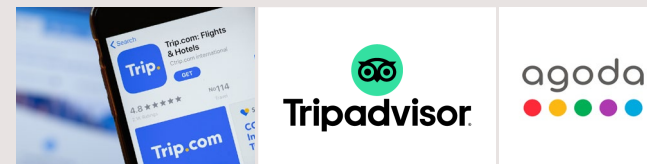
Figure 1. An Overview of the Appraisal System Framework (Martin & White, 2005, p.38)

OBJECTIVE

- The present study aims to explore the generic stages, attitudes and language identity of local (HK) visitors and non-local visitors through an analysis of online customer reviews of Ocean Park Hong Kong.

- Appraisal framework developed by Martin and White (2005)
  - **Affect**: emotions and feelings
  - **Appreciation**: object descriptions
  - **Judgement**: attitudes regarding human behaviours

METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative text analysis

- **Interpret and analyze** visitors' online **reviews and comments**

- **Publicly accessible user-generated reviews**

- Dataset consists of a selection of theme park reviews that were taken from well-known online travel platforms

- Travellers make **comments and ratings, sharing their travel tips and stories**

- For example, **TripAdvisor** website → previous visitors have posted their own reviews according to their positive and or negative experiences

MAJOR FINDINGS

Amusement rides / roller coasters

Entrance

Attractions

Staff service

Animal shows and performances

Ticket price and admissions

ENTRANCE

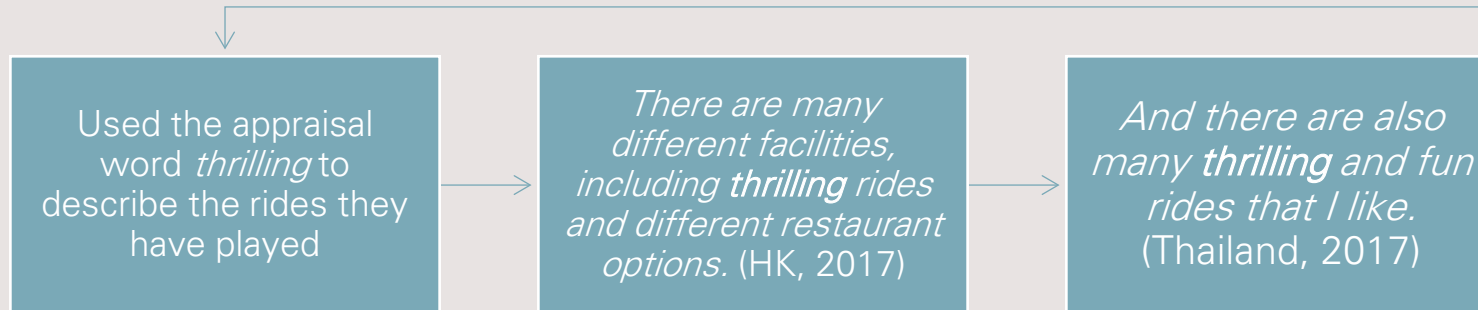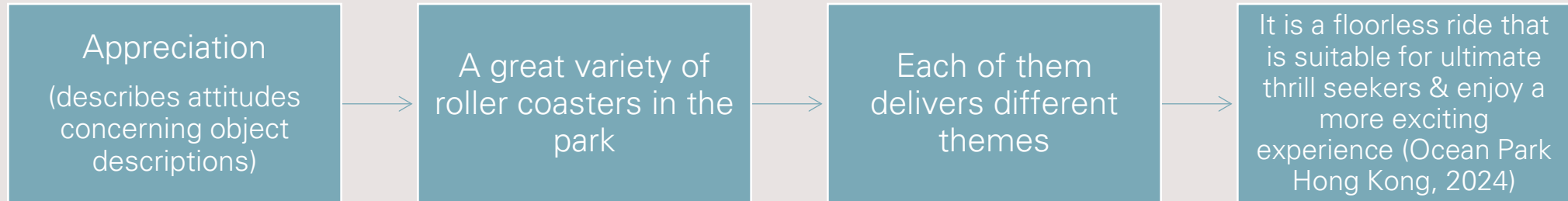Hong Kong Ocean Park (images extracted from https://www.oceanpark.com.hk/tc/

- Appreciation (describes attitudes concerning object descriptions)

- The park itself is easy-access

- MTR South Island Line > direct access to the park main entrance

- Examples:
  - *Now that the subway is open, it is even **more convenient!*** (Mongolia, 2017)
  - *The transportation was **very convenient***. (Taiwan, 2018)
  - *Traveling is **convenient** by MTR train starting from the station. Arrived at Ocean Park Station.* (Thailand, 2019)
  - *With the South Island Line, going to Ocean Park is **undoubtedly more convenient** and faster.* (HK, 2019)
  - *Now it's **accessible** by MTR, so it's **much more convenient***. (HK, 2018)

AMUSEMENT RIDES / ROLLER COASTERS

Appreciation (describes attitudes concerning object descriptions)	A great variety of roller coasters in the park	Each of them delivers different themes	It is a floorless ride that is suitable for ultimate thrill seekers & enjoy a more exciting experience (Ocean Park Hong Kong, 2024)

Used the appraisal word *thrilling* to describe the rides they have played	*There are many different facilities, including* **thrilling** *rides and different restaurant options.* (HK, 2017)	*And there are also many* **thrilling** *and fun rides that I like.* (Thailand, 2017)

Hong Kong Ocean Park (images extracted from https://www.oceanpark.com.hk/tc/
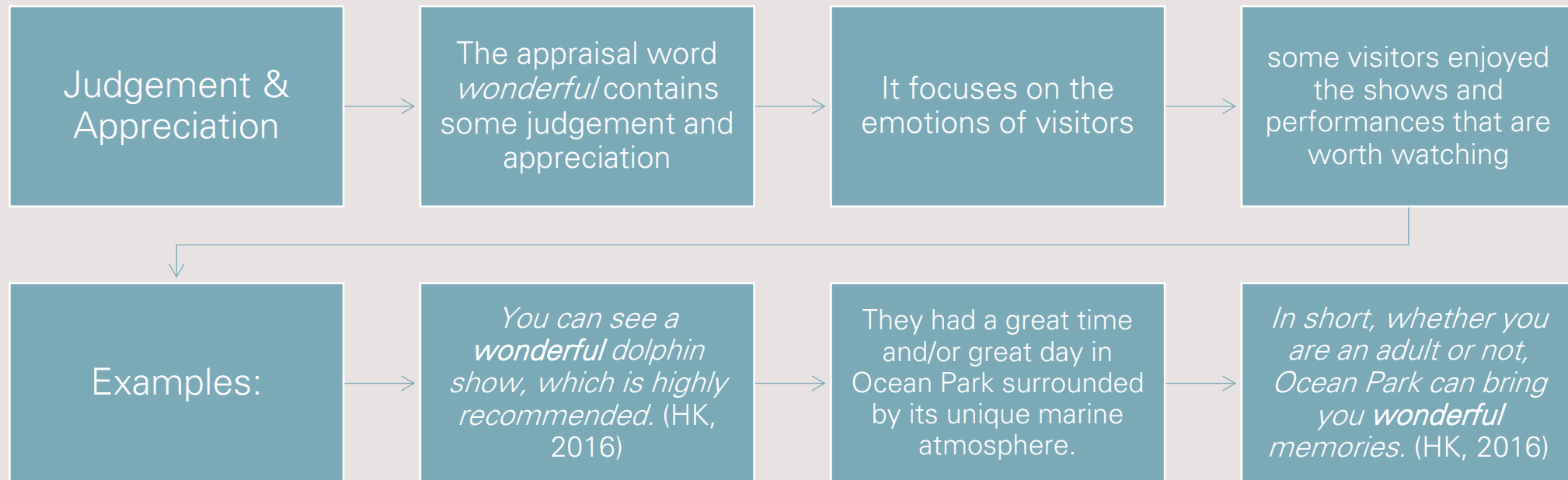
ATTRACTIONS

- Appreciation (describes attitudes concerning object descriptions)

- Local visitors focus on the **amounts** of it

- Non-local visitors are more likely to know whether they are **user-friendly or interesting enough**

- Examples:
  - *There are **many different facilities**, including thrilling rides and different restaurant options.* (HK, 2017)
  - *The attractions are **a little old** and the wait is very long.* (France, 2017)

- Non-local visitors express more about their disappointment towards the closed attractions or rides during the day of visit, while this is not being found in local visitor reviews.
  - *It cost about AUD$100 each to enter Ocean Park but we found that half of the attractions **were closed** for "maintenance.* (Australia, 2019)
  - ***Unfortunately,** many of the rides were closed when we visited.* (Germany, 2019)

ANIMAL SHOWS AND PERFORMANCES

Hong Kong Ocean Park (images extracted from https://www.oceanpark.com.hk/tc/

Judgement & Appreciation → The appraisal word *wonderful* contains some judgement and appreciation → It focuses on the emotions of visitors → some visitors enjoyed the shows and performances that are worth watching

Examples: → *You can see a* **wonderful** *dolphin show, which is highly recommended.* (HK, 2016) → They had a great time and/or great day in Ocean Park surrounded by its unique marine atmosphere. → *In short, whether you are an adult or not, Ocean Park can bring you* **wonderful** *memories.* (HK, 2016)

TICKET PRICE AND ADMISSIONS

- Appreciation (describes attitudes concerning object descriptions)

- Local visitors: worth the price or cheaper than Disneyland

- The perceived admission price is one of the strongest components in shaping visitor satisfaction and intention to revisit (Milman et al., 2020)

- The uniqueness and originality

- Examples:

  - *I think it's* **worth the ticket price**, *and the performances are also worth seeing. (HK, 2019)*

  - *Compared with Disney, the* **ticket price is cheaper** *and the transportation is relatively convenient. (HK, 2014)*
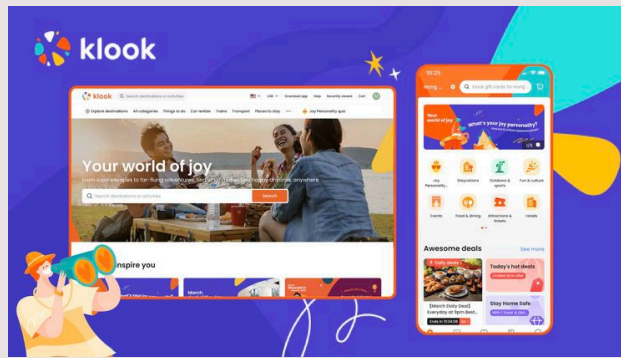
- Non-local visitors: relatively high-ticket price and the quality of the facilities

- Some even included the amount that they have purchased

- Examples:
  - *Unfortunately, the bad impression prevails and for a price of **48 euros** per person, it's just too bad.* (Germany, 2019)

  - *The toilets are not very clean and the **ticket prices are high**.* (Taiwan, 2019)

- Online ticket purchasing platform – klook

- Cheaper and more affordable

- Examples:
  - *It's even better to buy tickets on **klook**. It's **cheaper** there than on the official website, but everything works.* (Russia, 2019)

  - *I bought the ticket online **(klook)**. The price is more **affordable** and your ticket comes to your phone immediately.* (Turkey, 2017)

STAFF SERVICE

- Judgement (attitudes regarding human behaviors)

- The quality of service directly influences behavioral intention, consumer satisfaction and visitors' experience (Bayang et al., 2022)

- Local visitors: complain about the service or attitude of the staff

- Unfriendliness

- Examples:
  - *This **unfriendly attitude** seriously affected our playing experience. I sincerely hope that Ocean Park can take these issues seriously, improve service quality* (HK, 2023)
  - *Quite a few rides and exhibits were closed, and many staff looked **grumpy**.* (HK, 2022)
  - *Because the attitude of the staff is **so bad**!* (HK, 2024)

Non-local visitors: whether the staff speak English or not

Helpful? Friendly?

Examples:

. The staff who work there don't speak very good English, were very unfriendly (bordering on rude at times) and unhelpful (Saudi Arabia, 2017)

I am fairly tickled by the amounts of the staff who *doesnt speak English* (Indonesia, 2013)

So, hiring a bilingual staff would be a no brainer, but sadly the more and more I ask the staff for help the more I found out that most of them *doesn't speak English*. (Indonesia, 2013)

CONCLUSION

- Advance our understanding of theme park visitor's attitudes

- By analyzing their language choice, expressions (and identity markers later)

- The important role of language in expressing attitudes and behaviors in the theme park experience.

- For Ocean Park Hong Kong itself:

- Can be used by the park to tailor its communication, marketing and promotional efforts

- Better connect with Chinese and international visitors

- Provides Ocean Park Hong Kong with valuable feedback on how to improve the visitor experience

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