An Attitude Analysis on Google Maps Reviews of Singaporean Tourist Destinations:
An Appraisal Perspective

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Abstract. This research delves into the realm of attitude analysis within the context of Google Maps reviews, focusing on three prominent tourist destinations in Singapore: Marina Bay Sands, Gardens by The Bay, and Universal Studio Singapore. Drawing upon appraisal framework, the study aims to identify the types of affect, judgment, and appreciation expressed within these online reviews. Additionally, it seeks to delineate the distribution of these appraisal types across three distinct location types—a hotel, a garden, and a theme park. Ultimately, this study aims to reveal potential implications of attitudes in review texts and to provide new perspectives for its readers. Employing an embedded multiple-case study methodology, the attitudes employed in 15 selected review texts are selected based on specific criteria and manually scrutinized. The study finds that appreciation is the most prominent in all three domains. The variations of attitude (sub)types, when compared to its surrounding contexts, reveal the characteristics of the tourist destinations as well as their cultural (and possibly the geographical) background. The themes being talked about hint towards the visual aspects of the tourist destinations and Singapore and imply the communicative functions of reviews.

Keywords: Attitude Analysis, Google Maps Reviews, Appraisal Framework, Singaporean Tourist Destinations, Discourse Analysis.

1   Introduction

In the world of tourism, online travel reviews have grown in popularity as a form of easy-to-access, electronic word-of-mouth (Vasquez, 2014a in Seargeant & Tagg, 2014). In particular, it serves as a forum for travelers to share their trip stories and, more importantly, "to recommend a tourism product/service or to complain about it" (De Ascaniis & Gretzel, 2013:157). It plays a crucial role in the decision-making process of prospective tourists since online travel review serves as a form of testimony which shows the 'attitude' of the author towards the product/service based on his/her experiences, which in turn reveals the strengths and weaknesses of a tourism product/service.

One well-known platform which is highly accessible, used worldwide and acts as a great source of online travel reviews is Google Maps. Google Maps–a Google web mapping platform and, more importantly, consumer application– is an app that allows

its users to contribute to reviewing tourism places including its attractions and amenities. Based on statistics in the US (Paget, 2023), Google Maps exceeds other review platforms such as Facebook, Yelp, and Trip Advisor in terms of the quantity of the review contributors.

In the world of critiques and opinions within Google Maps review platform, the use of evaluative language has proved to be prevalent, therefore, it is viable and essential to focus on the attitudinal aspects of review texts. Regarding attitude, the appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2007), which is a derivation of the interpersonal meta-function of Systemic Functional Linguistics proposed by M.A.K. Halliday (1994), is concerned with evaluation, which some of its aspects such as attitude is a part of.

Documented in Google Maps, Singapore, as one of the most famous countries in the world, strives in the tourism industry as the major economic contributor of the country. Garnering 13 million total visitors in 2023 and peaking in over 19 million in 2019 (Stan, 2024), it is the home of some of the most iconic tourist attractions that Asia has to offer, such as Marina Bay Sands, Universal Studio, and Gardens by The Bay. The three tourist attractions offer different experiences. Marina Bay Sands is a luxury hotel which is iconic for its structure, showing three towering buildings and a ship-like structure connecting the three of them. Universal Studio is an internationally known theme park providing entertainment and thrills. Lastly, Gardens by The Bay is a nature park or garden which features futuristic design and innovative technology. From the lens of appraisal, the three types of locations may show different use of attitude within the reviews due to numerous factors which affect a tourist's attitude towards a service/product (Cenni & Goethals, 2017; De Ascaniis & Gretzel, 2013; Vasquez, 2014b).

Previous studies on online reviews have been done. Numerous studies were done to contrast reviews from authors of different cultures and nationality (Cheng, 2014; Cenni & Goethals, 2017; Kim, 2019; Cenni & Goethals, 2020; Wang & Zhang, 2022). Underlying cultural context of the authors is essential, however previous studies are mainly conducted based on the reviewers/review authors' perspective, while studies focusing on the perspective of the objects being reviewed are still yet to be done. In addition, methodologically, previous research has been using automated data collection techniques (Tian, 2013; Chen & Farn, 2020; Darko et al., 2022; Hosain & Rahman, 2023) which may hinder the depth of analysis and identification of detailed nuances. In addition, the implications of scrutinizing online reviews have merely been focusing towards benefiting the tourism managerial aspect (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Jia, 2020) and readers' perspective (Shu et al., 2024; Akgul & Montazemi, 2025) but have not been aimed towards how online reviews may reveal the identity or branding of the tourist destinations and the country in which the destinations are situated.

According to the previously mentioned studies, some gaps are still being left by the previous researchers for future research to be conducted. Firstly, contrasting how attitude is realized within different tourist destination types has yet to be studied. Secondly, considering that the appraisal framework is commonly used in the review genre due to its evaluative properties, the depth of the research results is still lacking due to its automated data collection method. Lastly, previous research's implications are mainly focused from the perspective of sellers and readers alike, but have not touched on the

identity or branding of the locations and its surroundings (such as the country in which the tourist destinations are situated). The research questions that arise are then formulated into:

1) What are the types of affect, judgment, and appreciation within Google Maps reviews of three tourism objects: Marina Bay Sands, Gardens by The Bay, Universal Studio Singapore?

2) How are affect, judgment, and appreciation distributed within Google Maps reviews on three different location types (a hotel, a garden, and a theme park) and their possible implications to their discoursal characteristics?

In conducting this research, the researcher aims to make practical and theoretical contribution. In terms of practical contribution, the main goal is to give a clearer picture of how affect, judgment, and appreciation are used by reviewers within the Google Maps platform. the discussion of this study is hoped to shed light into how reviews are, providing a new perspective for readers of online reviews (such as potential visitors, tourist destination managers, as well as future researchers) to understand implications within review texts and for future review authors to improve their own tourism evaluative review writing for other reviewers or travelers to read. In terms of theoretical contribution, this study aims to be useful in terms of appraisal education and aims to contribute in developing the framework by implementing it in real-world cases. The study of appraisal is significant in linguistics since it deals with evaluative language, a feature used in many aspects of life occurring daily. A focused discussion of how appraisal is applied within the review genre is crucial in unraveling the insights it holds, thus further deepening the knowledge of appraisal and the review genre simultaneously.

The scope of this research is limited to affect, judgment, and appreciation subcategories of attitudinal subsystem of appraisal. The analysis is conducted on 15 selected data sources (review texts) from Google Maps, specifically, from three Singaporean tourist attractions: Marina Bay Sands, Gardens by The Bay, and Universal Studio.

2   Method

2.1   Research Design

This study adopts the naturalist paradigm, therefore qualitative, and is descriptive in nature. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that qualitative research can be seen from its plural, constructed, and holistic nature of reality. Appraisal's attitude, a part of language of evaluation, has a plural nature of reality since it is highly dependent on context and point of view. It is constructed in that it is shaped by (and exists within) the social community and it is holistic in the same way that it is context-dependent, therefore needing to be seen in a wider perspective. The paradigm suggests the researcher to examine attitude and its components within Singaporean tourist destination online reviews. Thus, the findings will also be described individually and relative to each of its components.

This research is focused on the types of attitudes within English online Google Maps review of Singaporean tourist destinations: Marina Bay Sands, Gardens by The Bay

and Universal Studio Singapore (henceforth abbreviated as MBS, GBTB, USS). These three types of locations provide context that helps in analyzing attitude within the few selected review texts based on predetermined criteria. The attitudinal items found in the texts will reveal how affect, judgment, and appreciation are used in giving opinions and evaluations towards tourism objects in the form of reviews.

In addition to appraisal theory, the three types of location proposed help in providing contexts to the evaluative language used in the text. Thus, the approach will ultimately give a holistic view of how attitude is used in the review genre and ultimately reveal the linguistic patterns of online review texts—specifically, Singaporean tourist destination review texts from Google Maps.

An embedded multiple-case study method is used in approaching attitudinal analysis of review texts. It uses multiple-case study because three different types of locations are selected as a source, namely a hotel, a garden, and a theme park. Data sources from the three types of locations are then scrutinized deeply and implicitly contrasted. The chosen type of case study method is embedded since the research has established procedures. Ultimately, the method allows the researcher to reveal how attitude works within the review genre and how it differs from (types of) location to location.

2.2   Data Source and Data

Data sources can be gathered from the 'reviews' section of each type of research location. Five review texts are selected from each location type (further details are discussed in the sampling section). Noting that three types of location are used, fifteen review texts will be collected in total. Ultimately, the types of locations of the reviews will give context to the analysis. In this study, primary data are obtained from directly examining the fifteen review texts collected (five from MBS, five from GBTB, and five from USS). All attitudinal items are collected by the researcher while also taking the context of the location type as well as the prosodic nature of the text into consideration (Martin & Rose, 2007; Santosa et al., 2023). This will provide a holistic view of how attitude plays a role in the review genre. The subsequent discussion is on the examples of data collected.

To help in the analytical process, the collected data are codified and classified. In order, the format consists of the domain (MBS, GBTB, or USS), text number, data number, the type of attitude (affect, judgment, or appreciation), attitude type, attitude subtype, and finally its polarity. So, the codification can be seen as follows.

$$location/text\ no./data\ no./attitude/attitude\ type/subcategory/[+ \ or \ -] \qquad (1)$$

2.3   Sampling

The Google Maps online review platform contains thousands of potential data sources (review texts) in just one type of location. Analyzing all data sources would be unnecessary since the researcher only needs to select a few based on the research objectives (Santosa, 2021). In other words, the employed data source sampling technique is purposive sampling. To achieve this, three criteria are established to select which review

texts are the most appropriate for examination. Firstly, the review texts need to contain attitude since that is the focus of this research. Secondly, the reviews collected are those which have five-star ratings. Subsequently, the data sources need to be approximately 70-100 words in length to ensure the completeness of the structure and the abundance of attitudinal items while considering the average review length in Google Maps.

After the data sources are selected, the next step is to consider how to collect the data. A manual identification of attitude within the source texts are conducted with the help of surrounding contexts (location type and cohesiveness). Therefore, all data found are analyzed to gain a holistic, ultimately deep understanding of patterns within the review genre. In other words, total data sampling is employed within this inquiry.

2.4   Validity

To achieve trustworthiness, triangulation methods are utilized to provide different perspectives within research, ensuring the credibility of data and, thus, the research method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The method applied in this research is the data source triangulation method since many review texts from three different types of location are selected and all the stages of the generic structure are examined. Therefore, the triangulation method gives the research multiple perspectives of how attitude can be realized within online reviews of tourist destinations.

2.5   Analytical Procedure

Generally, inductive and qualitative data analysis procedure follows four stages (Spradley, 1980), namely domain analysis (context), taxonomy analysis (category), componential analysis (context + category), and cultural theme analysis (interpretation within the real world). However, in practice, these processes happen simultaneously with data identification or, in other words, does not always happen in a linear manner (Santosa, 2021). In more details, the domains of this study are the five review texts each from MBS, GBTB and USS, while the taxonomy are affect (Dis/inclination, Un/happiness, In/security, Dis/satisfaction), judgment (Social Esteem, Social Sanction), and Appreciation (Reaction, Composition, Valuation). Componential analysis is where domain and taxonomy are observed together in order for patterns to emerge from the collected data. Finally, cultural theme analysis is done to seek substantive theory (Santosa, 2021) by relating the trends found from componential analysis with context of use, theory from experts, and previous studies.

3   Result and Discussion

3.1   Result

After conducting a manual examination on each of the data sources, attitude items are recorded and categorized based on the taxonomy which includes subcategories of attitude including affect, judgment, and appreciation as well as their subcategories and

polarities. The categorization is displayed together with the context provided from the domain which contains the numbered selected review texts and the three locations types, namely a hotel (MBS), a garden (GBTB), and a theme park (USS).

Table 1. Overview of attitude distribution

Location/avg w.c.	Affect	Judgment	Appreciation	Σ
MBS/82	5 (10.64%)	4 (8.51%)	38 (80.85%)	47
GBTB/84.8	10 (21.28%)	0 (0%)	37 (78.72%)	47
USS/82.6	15 (32.61%)	2 (4.35%)	29 (63.04%)	46
Σ	30	6	104	140

A total of 140 data is selected from the chosen Google Maps review texts. The characteristic of the texts in terms of word count are consistent (around 83 words per text). Similarly, the number of data collected from each of three location types have no significant differences, ranging only from 46 to 47 attitude occurrences. Therefore, the uniformity of the data sources due to the criterion-based sampling (mentioned in chapter III) is also mirrored in the frequency of data.

Out of 140 data, the distribution of attitude type leans heavier towards appreciation with 104 occurrences, followed by affect with 30 occurrences, and judgment being the least used attitude at only 6 occurrences. There are some variations to the distribution of the three categories between the three locations. In MBS and GBTB, for instance, appreciation takes up approximately 80% of distribution, while affect and judgement take the remaining 20%. However, the difference lies between affect and judgement where judgement is entirely absent in GBTB review texts. The data found in USS shows a shift of balance where affect occurrences take up a third of the whole USS data. Because of this, appreciation data in USS is lower than in MBS and GBTB since it was aforementioned that the data sources across the locations show uniformity. The prominent use of appreciation indicates that their evaluation or appraisal focuses more towards things, such as facilities and experiences, while affect shows the feelings imbued in their experiences visiting these destinations. More details and specifics can be delved by considering the categorization of the attitudes shown below.

Table 2. Affect distribution

Domain	Affect															Σ
	Dis/inc		Un/hap				In/sec					Dis/sat				
			Unh		Hap		Insec		Sec			Dissat		Sat		
	Fear	Desire	Mis	Anti	Che	Af	Disq	Sur	Dist	Con	Tru	Enn	Disp	Int	Adm	
MBS								1	1						3	5
GBTB		1						1		1			1		6	10

USS	1			4		1	1	2		4	2	15
∑	1	1		4		1	2	4	1	5	11	30

Table 3. Judgment distribution

Domain	Judgment										∑
	SE						SS				
	Nor				Cap		Ten		Ver		Prop	
	Fate		Spe									
	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	
MBS						3		1					4
GBTB													
USS						1						1	2
∑						4		1				1	6

Table 4. Appreciation distribution

Domain	Appreciation										∑
	Reac				Com				Val		
	Imp		Qual		Bal		Comp				
	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	
MBS		1		16		1	1	8		11	38
GBTB		6		19			1	4		7	37
USS		2		9	1	5	1	4		7	29
∑		9		44	1	6	3	16		25	104

Due to the contrastive nature of this study, an important perspective to consider is from the perspective of the domains. In general, appreciation resources are the most numerous while the judgment category has the least occurrences. Specific to MBS, appreciation has the most weight compared to the distribution of appreciation data in other locations. In addition, judgment resources are most numerous in MBS as well. In contrast, GBTB reviewers still tend to use appreciation but judgment occurrences are none. Instead, reviewers seem to prefer using affect resources in GBTB. In USS, the appreciation category is still the most prominent, but it occurs the least when compared to the appreciation resources in other domains. The distribution of affect in USS diminishes the weight of appreciation category in USS

Delving into more details, MBS has positive quality as the most prominent occurrences. Moreover, appreciation resources in USS often intersect with the judgment category. In fact, all judgment data in MBS all have an intersection with appreciation. The intersecting occurrences are found between positive quality with and positive capacity (occurring 3 times) with the addition of 1 occurrence of positive valuation and positive tenacity. In addition, positive complexity in MBS is the most prominent compared to other domains, evaluating the variety of amenities which provide a wide range of choice. On the other hand, the affect resource which occurs the most in MBS is admiration. The in/security category in MBS displays the occurrences of confidence, which is used by the reviewer to persuade reader's visitation, as well as distrust to evaluate the weather aspect.

In GBTB, appreciation is still the most prominent aspect, but judgment data lacks completely. Therefore, intersectionality between appreciation and judgment does not

exist in GBTB, but some occurrences of appreciation-affect intersection still happen. Positive quality resources in GBTB are the most prominent in contrast to the other domains. Together with positive impact, which is also most prominent in GBTB compared to the other locations, they tend to be used by the reviewers to highlight the sight, experience, and atmosphere. The second most recurring subcategory in GBTB is positive valuation, in which the resources are used by reviewers to invite readers' visitation and, sometimes, give recommendations for the readers to prevent any inconveniences and gain the best possible experience. In addition, positive composition in GBTB talks about the grand and sophisticated appearance of the garden. On the other hand, the most prominent affect category in GBTB is the admiration category, which is also the most prominent in GBTB compared to the other locations.

Lastly, USS has the least appreciation occurrences compared to the other domains, though appreciation is still the most recurring subcategory in USS, specifically positive quality. However, positive quality use in USS is significantly lower in comparison to the other locations, which is thought to be due to the reviewers' preference of using affect in USS. In addition, USS reviewers use positive valuation and positive composition (balance and complexity) to, respectively, give advice for preventing potential inconveniences and to evaluate the arrangement of amenities and attractions, saying that it provides convenience. While judgment use is minimal in USS, affect resources are the most abundant in USS compared to the other locations. USS reviewers show cheer as well as displeasure the most. Cheer is used by the reviewers to express how they feel when visiting the theme park, while displeasure is used by the reviewers to point out to the inconveniences at USS such as weather and crowd while subsequently presenting advice for what the readers should do in facing the potential inconveniences.

Summary of Findings. Summarizing from the perspective of the attitudes, reviewers often express affect-admiration towards MBS and GBTB, with some associating their positive experiences with other figurative words, while also voicing critiques towards weather, crowd density, and technical issues at USS by employing dissatisfaction and insecurity. Additionally, reviewers commonly use security-confidence to persuade others to visit, with happiness and excitement being more frequently expressed towards USS than MBS or GBTB. In terms of judgment, reviewers mainly evaluate service and hospitality, particularly at MBS. Notably, MBS reviews feature significant occurrences of intersection with the appreciation category. Lastly, appreciation distribution reveals patterns of intersectionality with affect (prominent in USS) and judgment (prominent in MBS). Reviewers use positive quality to discuss architecture, atmosphere, and service, though there is a strong tendency to express feelings at USS, while positive impact resources are less inclined to evaluate service and most prominent in GBTB. In using positive valuation, GBTB reviews often invite readers to visit, while USS reviews often convey advice to manage potential inconveniences. Reviewers also discuss management and appearance by employing positive composition, with MBS and USS focusing on the practicality of amenities, and GBTB emphasizing the grand and sophisticated visual and atmospheric attractions.

The analysis of the review texts reveals distinct patterns across three main attitudes—namely affect, judgment, and appreciation—but examining the distribution

from the perspective of the domains is necessary as well. In all three domains, appreciation resources predominantly occur, though they decrease in number in USS texts. Looking at the variation in the other taxonomy (affect and judgment), MBS has most recurrences of judgment–all of which intersect the appreciation category. In the context of affect in MBS, some admiration resources also surface as well as confidence resources where the reviewers recommend the readers' visitation to the tourist destination. This case is similar in GBTB but, instead, the reviewers use positive evaluation to invite readers. GBTB, however, does not have any judgment occurrences but appreciation-positive-quality resources are most prominent, highlighting architecture together with positive impact. Admiration is the most prominent in GBTB compared to other domains. On the other hand, USS reviewers tend to use affect (especially cheer and displeasure) more than MBS and GBTB, which may be the cause of the decrease of appreciation resources in USS. USS reviewers utilize positive valuation to invite readers to visit and, sometimes, give advice to the readers so that the readers would not have to experience the same inconveniences should they decide to visit USS. This is similar to affect-displeasure in the sense that reviewers tend to give advice while evaluating certain aspects.

3.2   Discussion

The findings section reveals insightful patterns in the use of affect, judgment, and appreciation within Google Maps reviews of three prominent tourist destinations in Singapore: Marina Bay Sands (MBS), Gardens by the Bay (GBTB), and Universal Studios Singapore (USS). By analyzing these reviews, how tourists articulate their experiences, express emotions, evaluate services, and appreciate various aspects of these locations can be uncovered. Delving into the last step in the analytical procedure, the discussion section will delve into how the patterns found in the findings section link with the broader cultural theme and existing research in similar fields. Thus, this section seeks to answer the second research question, especially regarding the implications of the analysis of attitude within Google Maps reviews of MBS, GBTB, and USS.

Reviewing previous studies, various methods have been employed to examine the distribution of linguistic resources, such as natural language processing, sentiment analysis, and content analysis (Catahan & Woodruffe-Burton, 2019; Amira & Irawan, 2020; Bai et al., 2023). However, in examining what the findings might imply, one reasonable approach to be conducted is thematic analysis. In other words, apart from observing patterns of occurrences and non-occurrences of attitude resources, the researcher needs to consider the themes of the reviews. Thus, the next subsections will talk about the themes found based on the distribution of attitude resources in reviews of MBS, GBTB, and USS.

The Characteristic of The Destinations. The purpose of online tourism review is ultimately to give assessments towards general or specific aspects of the tourist destination (Vasquez, 2014b). By taking into consideration multiple perspectives on a certain tourist destination, the characteristic of the destination takes shape from the appraisals of the reviewers. Moreover, based on the findings, some attitude categories seem to be

utilized by the reviewers to talk about similar topics. The collective opinions of reviewers towards a place become something on which managements should focus, as implied in various studies (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Jia, 2020; Hanks et al., 2022).

MBS reviews, apart from visual aspects (which will be discussed further in the next section), also focus on the convenience and luxury of the hotel, often highlighted through positive complexity. Reviewers frequently mention the sophisticated amenities, the easy access provided by the arrangement of the high-end facilities, and the overall opulence of the venue. The positive complexity of these reviews emphasizes the intricate and well-thought-out accommodation arrangements that contribute to a memorable stay. This is in accordance to Cenni & Goethals' (2017) findings where accommodation is one of the most important aspects to guests. Similar to Smirnova's (2022) findings, MBS guests appreciate the convenience offered by the hotel's amenities, such as the infinity pool, easy-access shopping, and fine dining options. In turn, this collectively create a sense of effortless luxury and indulgence offered by a five-star luxury hotel called MBS.

A notable contrast can be seen when comparing the service/staff evaluations between MBS and GBTB. In MBS reviews, judgment resources are prominently employed to assess the capabilities and hospitality of the staff. Reviewers highlight the staff's ability to live up to the guests' expectations as well as their commitment to enhance the visitor experience, thereby reflecting positive capacity and tenacity resources. Similar to previous research (Park & Lee, 2021; Smirnova, 2022), service quality is relevant in the hospitality industry because keeping guests happy is essential for long-term benefits (Barrows et al., 2012:666). In stark contrast, GBTB reviews lack judgment items altogether, indicating that reviewers do not focus on service but rather on other aspects of their visit. Mahfiroh & Mahripah's (2023) findings are consistent with this study in the sense that garden-type tourist destinations reviews tend to not touch upon service and staff related aspects.

For GBTB, reviewers frequently utilize positive quality resources to describe the atmosphere and experience induced by the garden. These reviews often highlight the grand and sophisticated appearance of the garden's attractions, such as the Supertrees and the Flower Dome. The emphasis on atmosphere underscores the garden's role as a serene and visually stunning retreat within the city, where visitors can immerse themselves in nature and marvel at the innovative design and landscaping (Mahfiroh & Mahripah, 2023). This most likely has something to do with nature and vegetation's ability to induce mental serenity as researchers believed (Ulrich, 1979; Shi et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2024). Observing GBTB reviews where reviewers tend to gravitate towards talking about the experience and atmosphere, it can be said that GBTB may be successful in creating 'a theatre of things', the concept of how space and objects can influence one's attitude, as how Sloterdijk (2016; as cited by Paterson in Eckersall & Grehan, 2019) describes it.

USS reviews, on the other hand, focus more on the overall experience, often realized through affect-cheer resources. In line with the findings of Costa et al. (2023), reviewers express their happiness, excitement, and thrill derived from the various rides, shows, and attractions. Despite many displeasure (which will be discussed later), the use of affect-cheer resources seems to highlight the theme park's ability and goal to deliver

memorable and enjoyable experiences, emphasizing the fun and entertainment value that USS offers to its visitors. Referring to USS media plan (Lim et al., 2012), one of the marketing objectives of USS is to communicate "that USS has many fun and thrilling rides". The emotional responses captured in these reviews reflect the dynamic and energetic atmosphere of the theme park and the characteristic of a theme park as advertised by the USS media planning team.

The evaluations used by the reviewers seem to indicate that the branding and identity of each tourist destination are successfully carried out and asserted to the customers. MBS is recognized for its luxurious convenience and exceptional service, GBTB for its awe-inspiring atmosphere and visual appeal, and USS for its exhilarating and enjoyable experiences. These distinct characteristics are effectively communicated through the reviews, reinforcing each destination's unique appeal and aligning with their intended branding strategies. Further analyses on the characteristics of the reviews in relation to the domains are discussed in the next sections.

Visuals of Singaporean Tourist Destination. The dominance of appreciation resources is consistent with the findings from previous studies which employ appraisal approach on tourism evaluative language research (Binarkaheni, 2019; Ekawati & Puspitasari, 2021; Smirnova, 2022; Mahfiroh & Mahripah, 2023). Amongst the studies, some utilizes thematic approach in unveiling what is hidden under the particular discourse. Approaching the data of this research thematically, one of the most frequent topics touched by the reviewers is the visual aspects of the destinations. The resources used in expressing evaluation towards the visual aspects vary, namely positive quality as well as positive complexity in certain domains. Examining this aspect of the findings may reveal how it is connected to other data and contexts.

Contrary to USS, the findings of this study suggest that MBS and GBTB are the domains in which the visual aspects are brought up the most. Taking a look at visual assessments in MBS, reviewers tend to talk about the view of the city (from the hotel) as well as the venue itself, while GBTB reviewers tend to talk about atmosphere and, also, the venue. It may be normal to talk about the 'beautifulness' of a botanic or scenic garden because that is what it mainly offers (Lindsay & Middleton, 2018). However, in hotel evaluations, visual matters are not usually considered as much. For example, Smirnova's (2022) study—which scrutinizes reviews of hotels in UK—discovered that appreciation items are utilized in talking about comfort the most, followed by overall impression, convenience, appreciation of food, worthiness, while visual and ambience rank last.

The contrast is most likely due to the slight difference in the objects being reviewed. While Smirnova's study focuses on reviews aimed towards hotels in general (which include hotels ranging from 1-star to 5-star hotels), MBS is categorized as a 5-star luxury hotel which may offer a much wider variety of amenities and luxuries, often highlighting high-end characteristics, 'stunning' visuals, and luxury (Thirumaran et al., 2023; Sands, 2023). This results in distinctions of customer's attention when evaluating the hotel, where MBS reviewers turn out to be drawn by the visual aesthetics offered by the luxury hotel.

In contrast to MBS, positive quality resources in GBTB are realized in order to highlight atmospheric or experiential aspects, as mentioned in the previous section. In other words, reviewers of GBTB tend to focus more on the experience rather than visuals. Notwithstanding the tendency towards atmospheric aspects, it cannot be denied that visual aspects play a big role in mood building. When talking about the urban planning of Singapore, former Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew (in Nparks, 2020), believes that concrete-filled urban setting ruins the spirit, while the greenery of nature vitalizes it. Additionally, previous studies have concluded the therapeutic benefits scenes of nature can offer, such as a study conducted by Ulrich (1979) (also cited by Shi et al., 2024 and xu et al., 2024) which founds that exposure to nature, especially in contrast to urban settings, can increase one's mood and even alleviate mental fatigue and disorders.

From this point of view, GBTB reviewers lean towards using resources categorized as complexity to mention about the visual aspects in GBTB. More specifically, the findings of positive complexity in GBTB talks about architecture and the venue in general.

Some of the findings show the utilization of positive complexity resources in highlighting GBTB's architecture. The examples emphasize how 'magnificent' and 'sophisticated' GBTB is, with its grand visuals as well as complex arrangements (especially technical arrangements) which makes the garden possible. Some examples are GBTB's technical feats such as the climate-controlled vegetation display which allows GBTB to have a large collection of plants which are non-native to Singaporean air and climate (Lindsay & Middleton, 2018).

Based on these cases within MBS and GBTB, the highly visual nature of Singapore combined with horticultural approach to a tourist attraction is renowned and ties deeply with the identity of Singapore. *Sustainable Singapore Blueprint* by National Climate Change Secretariat Singapore (2016) mentions that Singapore faces many environmental challenges such as climate change and urbanization, which is an urgent problem to consider due to the limited area of Singapore's land. Thus, the need for sustainability becomes urgent in Singaporean setting. Since 1967, these challenges were addressed and 'Garden City' programme was launched. Since then, numerous endeavors have been done to pursue the 'Garden City' vision, pursuing affordable housing and public infrastructure such as clean water, sewers, roads, education, and jobs (NCCS, 2016)

One of the manifestations of the 'Garden City' vision is the construction of GBTB, showing Singapore's commitment towards the vision and boosting the nation in multiple aspects. Based on Lindsay & Middleton (2018), GBTB supports the 'land-scarce' Singapore with a large variety of plants displayed in grand architectural structures. Apart from that, GBTB surely has some impacts towards the image of Singapore. Kristina (2024) argues that the branding which is imposed in a tourism destination can indirectly upgrade the branding of a Nation. In reality, GBTB has long been called as 'the people's garden', representing belonging and ownership of the citizen as well as representing Singapore's identity (Lenden-Hitchcock, 2016).

Communicative Functions in Reviews. On a more applicable sense, each review serves as a media for its author to express his/her opinions and stances tailored to the

context and type of destination being reviewed. In building a tourism review or evaluation, authors show their attitudes towards a certain tourist destination so that the readers may give their considerations on the reviewed object (Chipkin, 2012; Smirnova, 2022). With this in mind, researchers have thought about what motivates people to leave reviews and evaluations on things (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; De Ascaniis & Gretzel, 2013; Hanks et al., 2024).

Based on the findings of this study, reviewers may have certain motivations which prompts recurrences of attitudes to assess or assert similar topics. For example, reviewers, especially categorized in the USS domain, tend to consistently utilize negative affect to show discomfort. Taking an example from USS I, the reviewer explains how the weather can get 'quite hot and raining'. However, before saying that, the reviewer also gives a tip or advice for the readers, warning the readers to 'bring extra sunscreen and an umbrella' due to the discomfort aforementioned. Considering that one of the motivations of interacting in online review platforms is to seek advice (Hennig-Thurau, 2004), this dual purpose of sharing personal experiences while providing helpful tips exemplifies how reviews can guide and prepare others for their visits, fulfilling the advice-seeking endeavors.

Although this study scrutinizes reviews with positive (5-star) ratings, the data in the findings section show mixed valences of attitude as mentioned previously. In other words, reviews tend to seemingly manifest criticism to some extent while aiming for general helpfulness, showing this 'two-sidedness' perhaps as a 'face-saving, politeness strategy' (Cenni & Goethals, 2017; 2020). The 'two-sidedness' of the review, however, is believed by previous researchers to enhance credibility and helpfulness (Cheung et al., 2012; Filieri et al., 2018; Li et al., 2020 in Akgul & Montazemi, 2025). By mixing positive evaluations with the negative ones, a review may be perceived as more critical and thorough (Herr et al., 1991). In addition, Park & Lee (2009) and Park & Nicolau (2015) argue that reviews which are deemed as critical or negative are more significant and helpful both for readers and the management, so the mix of polarities may be seen as an endeavor towards helpfulness.

Another aspect which seems likely to be used to attract the readers' attention is the use of positive valuation in the reviews. Martin & Rose (2007) highlight that the valuation category concerns with the evaluation of the social impact or significance of things. In other words, it assesses whether or not something is worthwhile or defines the deemed social status or shared community values viewed and embedded in the evaluated object (Pounds, 2011: 206; Xu et al., 2021: 7). The findings of valuation resources in MBS, GBTB, and USS mirrors this definition of valuation.

In MBS and GBTB, the reviewers tend to assert the popularity as well as the worthiness aspects of the destinations. Conversely, Smirnova (2022), studying hotel reviews, finds that reviewers tend to focus more on comfort and overall impression instead of its popularity, worthiness, or visual aspects as discussed previously. This contradiction most likely has something to do with MBS being an icon in Singapore which is popular internationally (Haykal & Lissimia, 2021; Thirumaran et al., 2023; Ling, 2024), an impression which the reviewers also seem to feel about Singapore's MBS. Positive valuation results in GBTB reviews, however, are in line with Mahfiroh & Mahripah's study (2023) on a garden in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. In this sense, reviewers tend

to 'recommend' the readers to visit due to aspects such as worthiness, affordability, and functionality (see: extract 20).

Similarly, USS' positive valuation resources are also used by the reviewers to give recommendations. Particularly, positive valuation in USS focus more on the amenity called 'express ticket' to mitigate the inconveniences of 'crowd' and 'long waiting lines', which turn out to be similar to Costa et al.'s study (2023) where 'crowd' is one of the main negative factors of customers' enjoyment. This is comparable with the use of negative affect in addressing inconveniences while giving practical advice. Relating it to a study by Hanks et al. (2024), it seems likely that what motivates the reviewers to utilize these resources in such a way is due to motivations towards 'altruism', which refers to giving benefits to others, either the readers or the management, without expecting anything in return (Cheung & Lee, 2012). Their study seems to suggest that the employment of positive valuations is an endeavor from the reviewer to benefit the management, while the critiques (seen by the negative affects) are focused towards benefiting the readers.

In conclusion to the discussion, this study essentially suggests that Google Maps reviews of MBS, GBTB, and USS show two implications. Firstly, review texts reveal the identity and characteristics of tourist destinations, seen by the recurring themes of the reviews. In particular, the reviews in each domain uncover how each location is to the visitors, such as how MBS is convenient, how GBTB is serene, and how USS is enjoyable and memorable. In turn, this reveals the identity of Singapore which accentuate sustainability seen from its visual appeal and arrangements. Secondly, reviews have certain communicative functions motivated by factors such as credibility, altruism, and helpfulness. Upon deeper analysis, the communicative functions displayed are to advise readers, recommend visitation/purchase, and criticize the destinations. In other words, the reviewers' purpose alternate between benefiting the readers/future visitors and the management of the tourist destination.

4   Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study strengthen the previous literature about review texts (shown by the consistencies with previous studies) while displaying some new insights which fill the research gaps, potentially providing a new perspective for readers of Google Maps reviews. Specifically, the discussion finds that reviews towards three different tourist destinations show differences in the attitude distribution and in characteristics that each of the tourist destination possesses, revealing the visually prominent aspect due to the abundance of appreciation resources. A thorough thematic analysis is conducted and deeply reveals various implied aspects of reviews such as the identity of each tourist destination as well as Singapore itself as a sustainable city. In expressing these attributes, which ultimately reveals Singapore's tourism identity, reviewers have certain motivations and strategies which differ from domain to domain. From that, the manifested pattern of attitude use shows the communicative functions of reviews which serve as the goals for each reviewer. Thus, these insights may be utilized by review

readers (such as potential customers, managers, and future researchers) as a new perspective in considering the implications of online reviews.

For further studies, the researcher believes that future researchers can also scrutinize graduation and engagement subsystems to find deeper meanings within the reviews and reveal a wider range of implications. Methodologically, future studies can examine a bigger size of data sources to produce an even more generalized view of appraisal study towards online reviews. In addition, the analytical procedure of this research does not consider the cultural backgrounds of the reviewers. Thus, future research can conduct a more cultural approach in employing appraisal study towards online Google Maps reviews of Singaporean tourist destinations.

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