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A study of the social media perceptions and guest satisfaction concerning recent changes related to the Genie+ system in the Walt Disney World theme parks

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in Human Ecology

By
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Under the mentorship of Dr. Thomas Sweeney

ABSTRACT

This study examines the social media perceptions and guest satisfaction rates concerning recent changes related to the introduction of the Genie+ system in the Walt Disney World theme parks. Social media has allowed the public to share these opinions about changes in the Walt Disney World theme parks, but it is not known how these opinions compare to the lived guest experience. It is said that with the introduction of a paid standby queue bypass system the Walt Disney Company is making that aspect of its parks less accessible than in the past (Austin, 2022). This study uses a mixed methods approach of qualitative and quantitative questions including a Likert-type scale, to measure participants' satisfaction rates and opinions against the Genie+ system's perceptions via social media comments. The data has shown that social media is significantly more negative than the guests' experience rates found in the survey.

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All my life I have planned out what I want to accomplish. Walt Disney once said: All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them. I am thankful that I had the courage to pursue writing an honors thesis as with the conclusion of this research paper I am one step closer to having my dream come true.

I would like to thank my family and friends who have supported me through this new and exciting process of research. They have all been gracious enough to hear me constantly talk about Walt Disney World and Genie+, at least this time with a more focused purpose. I would also like to thank my mentor, Dr. Thomas Sweeney, for helping me through this process. I would also like to extend a special thanks to Dr. Trent Maurer, my professor for my thesis course.

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A study of the social media perceptions and guest satisfaction concerning recent changes related to the Genie+ system in the Walt Disney World theme parks

Introduction

Walt Disney World is known for its emphasis on guest experience around the world, but little is known about the difference between social media and guests' lived experiences. This project will address what consumers and guests at Walt Disney World think about the introduction of the Genie+ system compared to the reactions on social media. A social media post's comments as well as a survey will be analyzed and compared to gain insight into the perceptions of the Genie+ system in the Walt Disney World theme parks.

This topic is important to dive deeper into because it will give more information on what The Walt Disney Company and other similar companies should focus on when planning future changes that will impact guests. Since the Walt Disney Company is a flagship organization in the recreation and tourism industry, the decisions they make that affect guest satisfaction will contribute to future decisions that similar organizations will be making. Accessibility rates in regards to socioeconomic levels, which are becoming a focus in the theme park industry, have also been impacted since the introduction of the Genie+ system. With the introduction of a paid standby queue bypass system, the Walt Disney Company is making that aspect of its parks less accessible than in the past (Austin, 2022). The introduction of the Genie+ system can also possibly increase the minimum level of ability that is required to have a high level of guest satisfaction during a park visit. The wheels of knowledge disparity is a concept that explains the varying levels of ability that guests' possess and how those levels of knowledge may affect their experience, which can attribute the lowering levels of accessibility (Defunctland, 2021). Many

articles have been written about the increasing level of knowledge that is needed to navigate the Genie+ system (Theme Park Tourist, 2022). Overall, this topic is not widely researched in an academic setting. This research should be able to bring awareness to issues similar to this which could be valuable to the future of academic research in the field of recreation and tourism.

Literature Review

There is little known about lived guest experiences in relation to Genie+ in the Walt Disney World theme parks and how those are reflected by what is posted to social media when it comes to people's opinions about the goings on at Walt Disney World. There is a good amount of research conducted regarding the theme park guest experience and the factors that contribute to their experience.

The Disney Way

There has been copious amounts of research done on the Walt Disney Company, its theme parks, and its customer service practices. Disney has five keys of service that are vital to the Disney culture and how Disney has become a leader in not only the theme park industry, but guest service as a whole (Daley, 2018). Guests' experiences are not only impacted by the implementation of the 5 keys of Services, but also the music in the Disney theme parks (Camp, 2017). Disney creates immersive environments in their theme parks through music by selecting specific sounds and tracks for specific lands to add to the guests' experiences. The Disney Imagineers create a narrative through music to tell the story they want to convey to guests. A perfect example of this practice is in Disney's Hollywood Studios, *StarWars: Galaxy's Edge*. The sounds of this land are transmissions from other planets, hydraulics from ships, and droids being used to unload cargo.

The emotional regulation of Walt Disney World cast members was analyzed to see how it contributed to “...Disney’s frontline attrition rate [being] only 15% as compared to the rest of the hospitality industry at 60%” (Pell, 1995). The level of service that goes into creating the “magical” environment of the Disney Parks, is a major part of guest satisfaction rates. Disney has become a global brand not only through marketing, but because of their branding, globalization, and leadership of the company. Disney knows how important having a positive brand image is for a company’s success (Robbins, 2014).

Queuing and how it is changing

Some terms are important to understanding the psychology of wait times, first is the balking point. Balking point is the point in which a guest decides that they won’t wait longer than a specific posted wait time, which is why some guests will refuse to enter the queue due to a long-anticipated wait time. Quality of the wait is also important as it is why the Walt Disney Company first started to introduce a line-bypass system and changed the designs of their queues. The quality of the wait is determined by a few factors such as the design of the queue, the posted wait time, the actual wait time, and distractions in the queue like pre-show videos and interactive queues (Defunctland, 2021).

Queuing systems and priority bypass queues can look to the guidelines for improving customer satisfaction and minimizing the perception of the wait duration by Masiter. These guidelines consist of eight points (Ledbetter et al., 2013):

1. A queue design needs to foster engagement
2. The queue environment should maintain the guests’ level of interest in the attraction
3. Queue environments should support positive affect
4. Comfort should not be overlooked in queues

5. Visually separate inequitable wait queues
6. Line layout should facilitate interpersonal interaction
7. Guests should be adequately informed about the wait duration
8. Line design should encourage the guests' feeling of consistent progression toward the attraction

If these guidelines are followed guests should have a more enjoyable wait. Disney parks have been following these guidelines more closely in recent years as they build more interactive and immersive lands and attractions. These guidelines can especially be seen in the queue for Rise of the Resistance in *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* at Disney's Hollywood Studios. These queues, standby and Lightning Lane, follow the first guideline by having a design that helps to immerse the guests in the land and story of the attraction with the "...quasi-dieselpunk aesthetic often attributed not only to the Star Wars franchise but the rustic underdog aesthetic often associated specifically to the Rebellion and Resistance" (Zauha, 2022). The standby queue can maintain the guests' interest as it is equipped to interact with the Star Wars: Datapad experience in the Play Disney Parks mobile app. The Resistance Encampment game allows players to actively participate within the narrative of Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance. Guests have the option to choose between two versions of the Datapad experience either as a member of the Resistance or the First Order, each option provides the guests with a unique storyline that helps to fully immerse them in the land. The standby queue also has small benches throughout for guests to sit down while waiting as well as having the majority of the queue be in an air conditioned show building. For Rise of the Resistance, the only time the guests see the Lightning Lane, which is the official name for the standby queue bypass queue, from the standby queue is at the queue entrances and when the queues merge together. The standby queue is in the

switchback format, which allows for guests to communicate with each other for the majority of the wait. Like all attractions on Walt Disney World property there is a wait time posted at the entrance of the standby queue as well as on the My Disney Experience app. The queue creates a sense of progression by having multiple sections: an outdoor queue portion, a covered outdoor portion, and the cave system portion with multiple rooms.

The Disney Genie and Genie+ System

The Disney Genie and paid queue bypass system, Genie+, were implemented in the Walt Disney World theme parks on October 19, 2021. The Disney Genie is a free system on the My Disney Experience app that allows guests to create individualized itineraries for their visits to the theme parks. Within the Disney Genie system in the My Disney Experience app, there are two main pages for guests to choose between. One is the My Disney Day tab which is where the individualized itinerary will populate. The other is the Tip Board, which has attraction wait times and the next available Lightning Lane booking return time.

In order to enter the Lightning Lane, a guest must either have purchased Genie+ for each member of their party for each day they wish to use the Genie+ system, have received a Lightning Lane as compensation, or use the Disability Access Service offered by Walt Disney World. The Genie+ system must be purchased through the My Disney Experience App at 7 am EST on the day of the guest's park reservation. The Genie+ system previously cost a flat rate of \$15 per day per guest, but starting on October 12, 2022, the rate for Genie+ can fluctuate from \$15 to \$29 per day per person. The price is determined based on the number of park reservations that day and if it is peak season at the Walt Disney World theme parks. There is also an Individual Attraction Selection for Lightning Lanes that are an additional cost per person per ride. These prices fluctuate depending on the number of park reservations that day as well as the

popularity of the attraction. For example, Seven Dwarfs Mine Train at Magic Kingdom can be \$11 while Rise of the Resistance at Disney's Hollywood Studios can be \$20 on the same day.

Genie+ Lightning Lane return times can be booked via the My Disney Experience app starting at 7 am EST the day of the guest's park reservation once they have purchased Genie+ for that day. Guests will visit the Tip Board page of the My Disney Experience app and select the Lightning Lane box under the attraction they wish to bypass the standby queue. The Lightning Lane return time that populates will be the next available time that has a remaining return time entrance available. Guests are able to try and find an earlier return time by refreshing the page. Guests are able to book one Lightning Lane return time at 7 am EST. Once the park that they are visiting that day opens the 120-minute rule can start. The 120-minute rule means that a guest must wait 120 minutes after making their Lightning Lane booking before they can make another Lightning Lane selection unless they tap into their Lightning Lane entrance before the 120 minutes is over. In some instances, there are two tap-in locations in the Lightning Lane queue, in these cases, the 120-minute rule will be overruled at the second tap-in location. Taping-in is when the guest taps their Magic Band, a device that has Disney Magic Mobile enabled, or their paper ticket to the touchpoint located at the entrance of the park as well as at the entrances to the Lightning Lanes and/or before joining the standby queue from the Lightning Lanes. Once the 120-minute rule has been met or the guest has tapped in at the Lightning Lane they are free to make another Lightning Lane selection, this is where the concept of stacking Lightning Lane entrances comes into play. Stacking is when a guest would have multiple Lightning Lane entrance return times booked at the same time. There is no maximum number of Lightning Lane entrance return times that a guest can have booked at once. Although a guest can only book a Lightning Lane for any given attraction one time that day. A guest could enter through the

Lightning Lane more than once if they were to receive a Lightning Lane as compensation for an attraction experiencing downtime (Chieffi, 2023).

The Widespread Nature of Issues Pertaining to Priority Bypass Queues

With the introduction of a paid standby queue bypass system the Walt Disney Company is making that aspect of its parks less accessible than in the past (Austin, 2022). The possible increasing minimum level of ability that is required to have a high level of guest satisfaction is directly related to the wheels of knowledge disparity. This is a concept that explains the varying levels of ability that guests' possess and how those levels of knowledge may affect their experience (Defunctland, 2021). Many articles in the Disney and theme park community have been written about the increasing level of knowledge that is needed to navigate the Genie+ system (Theme Park Tourist, 2022). In the Poseidon Entertainment YouTube video, *The Fall of Disney Parks (Part 1): Disney Genie's Impact on Guest Experience*, the host says, "I've spent a lot of time highlighting the issues of Disney Genie because it fundamentally changes the park experience and continues to show Disney's disregard for the guest experience." There are advantages and disadvantages to having a priority queue as "longer waiting times have a negative effect on customers in the main queue but a positive effect on customers with a priority pass" (Alexander et al., 2012). "There is the irony that the more successful these systems, the more people purchase the priority pass and the more the likelihood that premium customers will also have to wait. In other words, these systems become the victims of their own success" (Hernandez-Maskivker et al., 2013).

Research Questions/Hypotheses

The guiding research question for this project is: What do guests at Walt Disney World think about their experience since the introduction of the Genie+ system compared to the social

media comments on a prominent Disney blog? The research questions used in this research are going to focus on the guest's opinions and experiences after visiting the Walt Disney World Theme parks after the introduction of the Genie+ system. The questions will revolve around guest satisfaction with their experience as a whole and individually with the Genie+ system, the Genie system, and the My Disney Experience App. Together these questions will help to form a better understanding of guests' experiences since Genie+ started and how they feel it is affecting their vacation experience.

Method

Sample and Participant Selection

The survey was distributed through a link. It was sent out to multiple groups via social media and online information portals, "GroupMe". The survey link was posted in online information portals used by Kappa Kappa Gamma, Southern Adventures Staff, the Georgia Southern Honors College, the Catholic Eagles, and Southern Leaders. The survey link was also posted to the authors Facebook page and LinkedIn profile. The final sample included 41 guests of the Walt Disney World Theme park since October 19, 2021 ranging in age from 19-61 years old with the mean being 33.5. From the sample we received, 53.7% identified as Female participants, 9.8% identified as Male participants, 0.00% identified as Gender-queer or Non-Binary and 0.00% self-reported their identity as "A better description not specified above". None of the participants preferred not to answer, being 0.00%, and 36.6% did not report a gender identity at all. The ethnicities reported were, 0.00% American Indian/ Native American, 0.00% African American/ Black, 0.00% Asian/ Asian American, 2.4% Hispanic/Latino/Latina, 63.4% White, 0.00% Multiracial, 0.00% reported "A better description not specified above", and 34.2% did not report an Ethnicity at all.

The analyzed social media post is from the AllEars.net Instagram account. The post was selected because it was about how the Genie+ system will function. The post is from October 8, 2021. The post had a total of 455 comments and 288 were analyzed, as comments that only tagged an Instagram user were not included.

Assessments and Measures

This research study used a survey that included one open-ended question, questions regarding the participants visit(s) to the Walt Disney World Theme Parks, along with a Likert-type scale for participants to rate statements regarding the My Disney Experience App, the Disney Genie service, what they were able to accomplish on their trip, and their views on the planning and knowledge required for a trip to Walt Disney World. As there were no previous measures or research on the specific subject of guest satisfaction related to Genie+ in Walt Disney World, the measures in this study are original to the study itself. The survey itself uses a mixed methods approach of qualitative and quantitative questions for participants to answer. The first question was quantitative and gave participants the option of “Yes” or “No” regarding if they had visited the Walt Disney World theme parks since October 19, 2021. If the participant selected “No”, they were then taken to the end of the survey which thanked them for their time. The survey then moves into more quantitative questions regarding the time spent in the Walt Disney World theme parks, examples of some of the questions are: “What parks did you visit during this trip?”, “How long were your park days on average?”, and “How many guests were in your party during this trip?” The next set of questions were also quantitative, instead pertaining to the preparations done for the trip. These questions are: “What resources did you use when researching Genie+ before your Walt Disney World trip?” and “How soon before your trip did you start your research and planning?” The next set of questions asked participants if they used

Genie+ while in the parks and how often they go to the parks. The next question was qualitative, asking “When thinking about what you accomplished during your trip to Walt Disney World, in your own words how would you describe your experience? What attractions, shows, and dining options you were able to experience compared to what you had hoped to experience?” The next question was the Likert-type scale. Here, participants were presented with 6 statements in total about possible opinions related to what they accomplished during their trip, thoughts about the My Disney Experience app and Disney Genie, and the knowledge required to have a satisfactory experience on a trip to Walt Disney World. Participants are instructed to rate these factors from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Finally, participants were asked three questions asking them to disclose their age, gender identity, and race. See Appendix for the complete questionnaire.

Procedure

Survey participants were recruited as described above and notified about the survey through a post which provided a brief description of the purpose of this research study, as well as informing participants that there was no compensation for participation in the survey. Upon clicking on the provided link, participants were then led to the informed consent page where they were made aware of the voluntary nature of the survey and that any and all responses would remain anonymous. After participants read the informed consent document, they were made aware that through the action of clicking to the next slide, they confirmed that they had read the informed consent and agreed to continue with the survey.

The first page of the survey asked the participants to select “Yes” or “No” if they had visited the Walt Disney World theme parks since October 19, 2021 so that only participants who had experienced the Walt Disney World theme park since the introduction of the Genie+ system

could complete the rest of the survey. If the participant selected “Yes,” then the participants were presented with the survey body and answered the multiple choice, slider, open-ended, and Likert-type scale questions. Once participants have moved through and answered the survey questions, they were led to a set of demographic questions to answer including their age, gender, and race/ethnicity. Finally, at the end of the survey, participants were met with a thank you message for participation in the survey.

Results

This study was aimed at comparing the guest satisfaction rates of recent guests of the Walt Disney World theme parks since the introduction of the Genie+ system to social media comments regarding the introduction of the Genie+ system. Using a qualitative and quantitative approach to collect the data, I was able to analyze and understand the differences between the lived guest experience and social media perceptions.

Quantitative Results

The quantitative data from the social media post comments was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The comments on the AllEars.net Instagram post were cataloged and designated as unrelated, negative, positive, or a question. A total of 288 comments were analyzed and designated. Comments that only consisted of tagging another Instagram user were not included in the analysis. The results are as follows: 21.9% (63) were unrelated, 32.6% (94) were negative, 5.9% (17) were positive, and 39.6% (114) were questions.

The quantitative data from the survey was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The participants were asked questions regarding the time of year, length of park days, and parks visited. See Table 1-3 for results.

Table 1.

Month	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Number of Participants	8	3	4	8	3	4	2	4	6	5	8	3

Table 2.

Park	Magic Kingdom	EPCOT	Disney's Hollywood Studios	Disney's Animal Kingdom
Number of Participants	29	25	24	19

Table 3.

Length of Park Days	Rope Drop (13-11 hours)	10-8 hours	7-5 hours	4 hours or less
Number of Participants	10	19	3	1

A question posed to participants was “Answer each of the following questions by selecting which statement you agree with the most” followed by definitions to terms used in the questions. The definitions were as follows: “The My Disney Experience app is the free app that guests use to book Genie+, view theme park maps, view attraction wait times, and plan their day” and “The Disney Genie is the free system that generates an itinerary for guests within the My Disney Experience app”. A total of 27 survey participants answered all 6 questions on the Likert-scale. For descriptive statistics see Table 4.

Table 4.

Question	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Mean

I was able to experience the attractions I hoped to experience during my trip.	11% (3)	4% (1)	0% (0)	33% (9)	52% (14)	4.1
Disney Genie within the My Disney Experience app was helpful when planning my park day.	7% (2)	7% (2)	33% (9)	30% (8)	22% (6)	3.5
The My Disney Experience app was easy to use and user friendly.	0% (0)	7% (2)	11% (3)	37% (10)	44% (12)	4.2
The My Disney Experience app caused me to spend more time on my phone during my park days than I would have preferred.	15% (4)	22% (6)	7% (2)	26% (7)	30% (8)	3.3
You must have a strong knowledge of the parks in order to have a satisfactory experience.	15% (4)	11% (3)	11% (3)	33% (9)	30% (8)	3.5
Disney trips require more planning than other vacations.	0% (0)	0% (0)	11% (3)	41% (11)	48% (13)	4.4

Note. Number in parentheses = Number of participants. Responses were scored 1-5 with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree

A total of 32 participants answered the following question, “Did you purchase or use Genie+ while in the parks? Genie+ being the paid online system to bypass the standby queues in the Walt Disney World theme parks”. See Table 5 for the results.

Table 5.

Multiple choice options:	Number of participants
I purchased and used Genie+ while in the parks.	17
I did not purchase Genie+, but another member of my party purchased it for me.	3
I did not use or purchase Genie+.	7
I did not purchase Genie+, but I did use it because I was given a Lightning Lane as compensation (e.g. for an attraction being down).	2
I did not purchase Genie+, but I did use Lightning Lane as a part of the Disability Access Service.	3

Qualitative Results

Qualitative data was gathered from the one open-ended question within the survey and the comments on the AllEars.net Instagram post. The social media analysis of the AllEars.net Instagram post garnered beneficial qualitative data via the comments left on the post. One negative comment read:

Disney's greed during a pandemic where so many families have been struggling emotionally and financially is truly astounding. Their greed has no bounds. I am a DVC member and a season pass holder. This disgusts me. I understand making a profit and responsibility to shareholders but when will it end? Will it just be a place for the elite upper class?

While a positive comment read:

I'm excited to have an option to minimize wait times while not having to pay for a VIP tour. We loved the ultimate day of thrills tour, but it's still not being offered. This gives an 'in between' option without the hefty price tag of the private tours currently available.

The open-ended survey participants were asked "When thinking about what you accomplished during your trip to Walt Disney World, in your own words how would you describe your experience? What attractions, shows, and dining options were you able to experience compared to what you had hoped to experience?" The responses could be placed into five categories:

negative which had 3 responses (11.5% of the responses) (e.g., “Crowded. We were really hoping to ride Rise of the Resistance, and it broke while we were on it. We even switched our second Magic Kingdom day to another Hollywood Studios day to be able to try to ride it again, but it was either broken the entire time or a 2-3 hour wait all day. Most of our dining reservations were a little overwhelming. We did absolutely LOVE breakfast at Chef Mickey's and my kids still talk about that. Otherwise, Toy Story world was probably the highlight for my kids.”); met expectations which had 8 responses (30.7% of the responses) (e.g., “Using Genie+ during our trip allowed us to ride Remy’s Ratatouille Adventure, Test Track, and Mission: Space Orange without waiting for hours.”); almost met expectation which had 11 responses (42% of the responses) (e.g., “I was able to accomplish almost everything I wanted to in my trip. My main priority was riding new rides that had not been open during my previous trip and with only one exception (Rise of the Resistance) I was able to do that.”); Disability Access Service specific which had 2 responses (7.7% of the responses) (e.g., Using Genie + not as much as hoped, the other person in my party had DAS and using a mixture of both Genie+ and DAS we accomplished everything we wanted to but if it was Genie+ alone I do not believe we could have.”); and neutral which had 2 responses (7.7% of the responses) (e.g., “Fun, we just went to kill time while in Orlando.”).

Discussion

In anticipation of completing the research portion of this project, I had many questions which encouraged me to continue this research and study this topic. All of those questions lead to this project comparing the social media perceptions and lived guest experiences to find out more about how organizations that focus on providing guest experiences should conduct research pertaining to future projects. Following many social media accounts about the Walt Disney

World theme parks and seeing most posts have negative comments abundant in their comment sections I began to wonder why most people I know have positive things to say after visiting the parks. The psychological bias known as "negativity bias" may cause this phenomena as it is when people focus on negative experiences. This "negativity bias" can occur in situations where the negative event is the same magnitude of a positive event, therefore people can feel negative events more intensely than positive events (*Negativity Bias*, n.d.). After seeing these trends and learning about the "negativity bias" it made me question whether social media was an accurate view of guest experiences at Walt Disney World theme parks.

After detailed analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected, it is apparent that social media is far more negative than the lived guest experience. I was surprised to see that the majority of participants were able to experience the attractions they had hoped to experience during their trips at 85% (n= 23). When asked whether the Disney Genie service within the My Disney Experience App was helpful when planning their park days, 52% (n=14) of participants agreed. The second most popular designation of the social media post comments were negative regarding the Genie+ system, while 62.5% (n=20) of participants opted to use Genie+ while in the parks whether purchased by themselves or another member of their party. 57.5% of the participants were in the parks for 10-8 hours, which tells us that they were all in the parks for similar times and had similar time frame constraints to accomplish their goals for their trip. The participants also visited the Walt Disney World theme parks across a variety of months, which allows for us to know that the data is not skewed for a certain season or crowd level.

The qualitative data mirrored the quantitative data closely, as the open-ended responses showed that recent guests were able to accomplish most, if not all, what they had hoped and planned to experience. If a survey participant responded that they were not able to experience all

attractions they had hoped to experience, most cited Rise of the Resistance in Disney's Hollywood Studios as the attraction they were not able to experience due to long wait times and extensive down times.

If The Walt Disney Company were to exclusively use social media posts and comments to gather data on guest experiences, they would have an inaccurate image of the current guest experience. Overall, the survey participants had a majority positive experience while at the Walt Disney World Theme Parks.

Limitations and Future Directions

With this project being an undergraduate research project there are many limitations and considerations for future projects. The main limitation of this project was the lack of funding to conduct the research. If proper funding were to be secured this project could have had a much larger scope and surveyed a larger number of participants.

Another limitation is the lack of prior research. This specific research study has never been done before, which meant I had to design and build my project from scratch. This project would have been much easier if I had a blueprint to follow, but it made the project more meaningful and impactful for me which helped to drive my passion for this research project.

For future directions on this research project more analysis should be conducted on social media, choosing multiple social media platforms and posts to analyze would also be beneficial for ensuring the research is as comprehensive as possible.

Reflective Critique

This research project has been the most challenging, yet most rewarding project I have been a part of during my college career. To make an entire research project and carry it out from a simple idea I thought of while walking home from class, has been such an enriching and

valuable life experience for me. Prior to this project, I had very little research experience, which consisted mostly of research papers in my English courses. I have learned so much about the process of research and data collection as well as the importance of time management skills. This research project also taught me the APA format and the art of academic writing. Throughout this project I was faced with tasks that I had never done before, which allowed me to learn and grow as not only a student, but also as a research scholar. I am so thankful for the opportunity the Georgia Southern Honors College has given me that has allowed me to spend the last 15 months researching a topic and company that I am so passionate about!

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Appendix A

Guest Satisfaction Related to Genie+ in Walt Disney World

Start of Block: Welcome!

Q20 Welcome! This research study will explore guest satisfaction concerning recent changes related to the Genie+ system in the Walt Disney World theme parks. The data is being collected for a student's thesis project in the University's Honors College.

Page -
Break

Q21 COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES SCHOOL OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

Informed Consent for A study of the social media perceptions and guest satisfaction concerning recent changes related to the Genie+ system in the Walt Disney World theme parks.

1. This study is being done by Kylie Bennett, an undergraduate student in the University Honors College. All data collected will be used for a capstone thesis project as part of the Honors College requirement.
2. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to obtain insight into guest satisfaction at the Walt Disney World Theme Parks in relation to the introduction of Genie+.
3. Procedures to be followed: Participation in this research will include completion of an online survey. Participants will be asked to answer one open-ended question along with multiple choice, Likert scale, slider questions.
4. Discomforts and Risks: There is no discomfort or risk associated with the topic of this survey.
5. Benefits:
 - a. The benefits of participation include the opportunity to reflect on one's experiences while at the Walt Disney World Theme Parks since the introduction of Genie+.
 - b. The benefits to society include revealing possible areas in which the Walt Disney Company and other similar companies should focus on when planning future changes that will impact

guests.

6. Duration/Time required from the participant: You will only be involved in a one-time survey. The estimated time of participation is 10 minutes long.

7. Statement of Confidentiality: The survey is completely anonymous; no questions will be asked in regard to identifiers. All data will be stored on a password protected personal computer of the Principal Investigator and the co-investigator's password protected work computer. Data will also be stored and collected on the principal investigator's password protected accounts on Qualtrics and Google Drive, provided through the university.

8. Future use of data: The data will be maintained for future use in a de-identified fashion. The method used to render it anonymous for future use is that, no identifying data will be collected, all responses will be anonymous.

9. Right to Ask Questions: As a participant, you have the right to ask questions and have those questions answered. If you have questions about this study, please contact the researcher named below or the researcher's faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board at 912-478-5465 or irb@georgiasouthern.edu.

10. Compensation: There will be no compensation offered for participation in this survey.

11. Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to end participation at any time throughout the duration of the survey. If you decide to stop participation, you can do so by exiting the survey.

12. Penalty: You may decide at any time they do not want to participate further and you may withdraw without penalty or retribution.

13. You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this survey. This project has been reviewed and approved by the GS Institutional Review Board under tracking number H23082.

Title of Project: A study of the social media perceptions and guest satisfaction concerning recent changes related to the Genie+ system in the Walt Disney World theme parks.

Principal Investigator: Kylie Bennett, kb30462@georgiasouthern.edu

Research Advisor: Dr. Thomas Sweeney, (912-478-5463), tsweeney@georgiasouthern.edu

End of Block: Welcome!

Start of Block: Dates spent in Walt Disney World

Q1 Have you visited the Walt Disney World Theme parks since October 19, 2021?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Have you visited the Walt Disney World Theme parks since October 19, 2021? = No

Q15 What dates were you in the parks? (Please answer in mm/dd/year)

End of Block: Dates spent in Walt Disney World

Start of Block: Time Spent in Walt Disney World Theme Parks

Q1 What parks did you visit during this trip? (Check all that apply)

- Magic Kingdom Park (1)
 - EPCOT (2)
 - Disney's Hollywood Studios (3)
 - Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park (4)
-

Q2 How long were your park days on average?

Rope Drop meaning you arrived to the parks prior to the park opening and waited for the park to open at the gates or roped section inside of the park.

- Rope Drop to Park Close (13-11 hours) (1)
 - 10-8 hours (2)
 - 7-5 hours (3)
 - 4 hours or less (4)
-

Q14 How many guests were in your party during this trip?

02468 1 1 1 1 1 2
0 2 4 6 8 0

Drag the slider to select your party size. ()



Q17 Were any of the guests in your party under the age of 18?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
-

Display This Question:

If Where any of the guests in your party under the age of 18? = Yes

Q18 How many guests in your party were under the age of 18?

1245789 1 1 1 1
1 2 4 5

Click to write Choice 1 ()

Display This Question:

If Where any of the guests in your party under the age of 18? = Yes

Q19 When thinking of the youngest child in the party, how old were they?

023579 1 1 1 1 1
0 2 4 5 7

Click to write Choice 1 ()

End of Block: Time Spent in Walt Disney World Theme Parks

Start of Block: Questions Pertaining to the Preparations for the Trip

Q3 What resources did you use when researching Genie+ before your Walt Disney World Trip?

Check all that apply.

- Disney/Travel Blogs (1)
 - Disney World YouTube Content (2)
 - disneyworld.disney.go.com (3)
 - Disney Certified Travel Agent (4)
 - Other (5) _____
-

Q4 How soon before your trip did you start your research and planning?

- 1 year or more (1)
- 11-9 months (2)
- 8-6 months (3)
- 5-3 months (4)
- 2-1 months (5)
- Less than 30 days (6)

End of Block: Questions Pertaining to the Preparations for the Trip

Start of Block: Demographical Questions

Q7 Did you purchase or use Genie+ while in the parks?

Genie+ being the paid online system to bypass the standby queues in the Walt Disney World theme parks.

- I purchased and used Genie+ while in the parks. (1)
 - I did not purchase Genie+, but another member of my party purchased it for me. (2)
 - I did not use or purchase Genie+. (3)
 - I did not purchase Genie+, but I did use it because I was given a Lightning Lane as compensation (e.g, for an attraction being down). (4)
 - I did not purchase Genie+, but I did use Lightning Lanes as a part of the Disability Access Service. (5)
-

Q8 Are you an Annual Passholder?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
-

Display This Question:

If Are you an Annual Passholder? = Yes

Q9 How long have you been an Annual Passholder?

Q10 How often do you visit the Walt Disney World Theme Parks?

- Multiple times a month (1)
- More than twice a year (2)
- Twice a year (3)
- Once a year (4)
- Once every 2 years (5)
- Once in the past 5 years, outside of the most recent trip. (6)
- Once in the past 10 years, outside of the most recent trip. (7)
- This is my first trip. (8)
- It has been more than 10 years since my previous trip. (9)

End of Block: Demographical Questions

Start of Block: Block 3

Q5 When thinking about what you accomplished during your trip to Walt Disney World, in your own words how would you describe your experience? What attractions, shows, and dining options you were able to experience compared to what you had hoped to experience?

End of Block: Block 3

Start of Block: Block 4

Q6 Answer each of the following questions by selecting which statement you agree with the most.

The My Disney Experience app is the free app that guests use to book Genie+, view theme park maps, view attraction wait times, and plan their day.

The Disney Genie is the free system that generates an itinerary for guests within the My Disney Experience app.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I was able to experience the attractions I hoped to experience during my trip. (1)	•	•	•	•	•

Disney Genie within the My Disney Experience app was helpful when planning my park day. (2)

The My Disney Experience app was easy to use and user friendly. (3)

The My Disney Experience app caused me to spend more time on my phone during my park days than I would have preferred. (4)

You must have a strong knowledge of the parks in order to have a satisfactory experience. (5)

Disney trips require more planning than other vacations. (6)



End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Demographic Questions

Q12 Age

1 2 3 4 5 5 6 7 8 9 10
8 6 4 3 1 9 7 5 4 2 0

Click to write Choice 1 ()

Q13 Gender

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / Genderqueer (3)
- A better description not specified above (4)
- Prefer not to say (5)

Q16 What is your race?

- American Indian/Native American (1)
- African American/Black (2)
- Asian/Asian American (3)
- Hispanic/Latino/Latina (4)
- White (5)
- Multiracial (6)
- A better description not specified above (7)

End of Block: Demographic Questions
