



Winning isn't everything: Push and Pull factors of casinos in coastal Europe

Nuno Carvalho

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Rodrigues

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Author: Nuno Carvalho

Abstract

Gambling tourism is a subject that has been gaining a lot of interest and notoriety as of the last two decades.

Push and pull factors have for long been the backbone of tourism studies and this thesis seeks to expound on this concept within the area of casinos.

In this study, 1383 google reviews were extracted and analysed with Leximancer. These reviews were from 5 casinos in 5 different coastal cities in Europe: Algarve (Portugal), Cannes (France), Monte-Carlo, Malta, and Thessaloniki (Greece). Leximancer processes these reviews, through a process that transforms data into semantic patterns.

The objective of this study was to extract concepts in the review and then pinpoint what category this concept belonged to and how relevant this factor was when it came to the tourist going to a destination.

Leximancer generated a concept map and a dashboard that revealed the push and pull factor for casino goers at these 5 locations.

Leximancer generated a concept map and a dashboard that revealed the push and pull factor for casino goers at these 5 locations. The dashboard gave a much more detailed analysis, where a hierarchy of strength, relative frequency, and prominence for these concepts in each category was given. Push factors consisted of tables, slot, play, machines, casino, games, atmosphere and beautiful.

Pull factors consisted of win, money, fun, time, place and staff. These are considered the critical factors for success when it comes to these 5 casinos in coastal areas of Europe.

Key Words: Gambling Tourism, Casino, Push factors, Pull factors

Título: Ganhar não é tudo: Os fatores “push” e “pull” de casinos na costa da europa

Autor: Nuno Carvalho

Nas últimas duas décadas o turismo de jogos tem vindo a ganhar interesse e notoriedade. Os fatores que impulsionam este tipo de atração têm sido a espinha dorsal da investigação no setor do turismo e esta Dissertação procura analisar os fatores determinantes que impulsionam os casinos.

Neste estudo, analisa 1383 avaliações de turistas no Google onde foram extraídas e analisadas através do software de análise qualitativa Leximancer. Essa análise inclui cinco Casinos situados em cinco cidades costeiras na Europa: Algarve (Portugal), Cannes (França), Monte-Carlo, Malta e Thessaloniki (Grécia). Posteriormente o software Leximancer processou as avaliações transformando os dados em padrões semânticos.

O objetivo deste estudo foi extrair os principais conceitos (por exemplo, máquinas de jogos) e catalogar (os temas que se enquadram em fatores “push” e “pull”). Esse processo permitiu analisar a relevância dos principais temas que impulsionam este tipo de turismo e destino.

O Mapa conceptual gerado pelo software Leximancer indica claramente os fatores “push” e “pull” relevantes para os turistas em cinco casinos na Europa. A análise de quadrantes indica uma análise detalhada, por hierarquia de força, frequência relativa e destaca os conceitos em cada uma das categorias. Os fatores de pressão consistiam em mesas de jogo, caça-níqueis, jogo, máquinas, casino, jogos, ambiente bonito e equipa. Os fatores de atração consistiam em ganhar, dinheiro, diversão, tempo, lugar e equipa. Estes são considerados os fatores críticos de sucesso nos cinco casinos em áreas costeiras na Europa.

Palavras-chave: turismo de jogos de azar, casino, fatores push e pull

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ABBREVIATIONS

ART – Attention Restoration Therapy

F&B – Food and Beverage

RTP – Retention to Player

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1.INTRODUCTION

Since the 1800s, gambling has been a prominent feature of human society and its evolution has given way to a new marketplace. Locations like Las Vegas and Macau nowadays boast billion-dollar casino resorts that contribute to a yearly revenue figure of several billion (Stutz, 2020).

This phenomenon in tourism happens due to certain factors that pertain not only to the gambling destination itself (pull factors) but also to the people and geography that surrounds said destination (push factors).

As gambling has evolved, not only have the games changed but so has the casino business model. For example, nowadays Las Vegas's non-gaming revenue is higher than gaming revenue (Summary, 2020).

Along with the time the business model of casinos has shifted to now adopt different revenue streams such as hotel, dining, and entertainment, giving way to casino resorts offering a multitude of services, providing the client with a much more encompassing experience than just gambling (Schwartz, 2019).

Gambling tourism is of relevance because it is an activity that brings wealth to a city/location and can raise the level of income of a location, as seen by places like Macau, which before Covid, was set to overtake Qatar as the richest place in the world (Tang, 2018).

By investing in gambling tourism, there will be a multiplier effect on other areas like hotels, shopping, dining, and entertainment, which will, in turn, raise the level of income and prosperity in a region and can have a positive impact on society (Leiper, 1989; Rosenbaum & Wong, 2015).

When it comes to destination attractiveness, there are pull and push factors that define how the tourists behave. Push factors include benefits, learning, entertainment, costing, socialization, escape from pressure are all factors that "push" the tourist into the need to go on a gambling trip (Wong & Rosenbaum, 2012).

Pull factors, which have been much less studied, are factors that entice the consumer into choosing a specific location (in this case, to go gamble). A location's reputation, leisure activities, the number of casinos or the size of the casino (number of tables/slots), the quality

of hotels, and food in the said location are all considered pull factors that will bring in people who want to gamble.

The topic has been studied from different perspectives namely (Hup et.al, 2015;Li,Wong & Kim, 2017; Wong & Rosenbaum, 2012) which addressed the push and pull factors of casino tourists that visit Macau but it lacks to understand the push and pull factors of casino goers in coastal areas of Europe.

What makes a gambling destination in a coastal European area attractive?

By tapping into that question, it will allow us to understand the consumer better (its pull and push factors), how different will it be from the results found in academia.

The research objective is to identify factors of attractiveness for 5 coastal gambling destinations in Europe.

The methodology that will be employed in this study will be a conceptual model that will analyse and compile online reviews of casinos by the beach at 5 locations in Europe. These online reviews will give us insight into the push and pull factors of the gambling tourists at casinos by the beach.

The chosen platform of online reviews is Google Review. By utilizing Leximancer, this study will compile hundreds of reviews and reveal the most common and relevant pull and push factors cited on google reviews for the 5 casinos by the beach and demonstrate relationships between concepts.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 – The Spread of Gambling Tourism

Gambling has been present in human society since the genesis of organized societies (Schwartz, 2000) and is an activity in which, as the technology of the games evolves, the marketplace and the primary agents involved in it are constantly changing as well, leading to a rapidly changing industry that has come into prominence in the last 100 years.

The first wave in America happened between colonial times and the middle of the nineteenth century; the second after the civil war in the USA; the third started in the 1930s when casinos were legalized in Nevada (with Las Vegas emerging as a gambling mecca); the Fourth wave is currently ongoing since the 1980s; Internationally the first rush took place in the 60s (when Las Vegas casinos ownership transformed into publicly traded corporations, being owned by organized crime groups previously) the second wave occurred at the same time as the 4th American wave, in the late '80s and 90s (Richard, 2010).

The marketplace has had a radical transformation in the last 150 years, from saloons to casinos to mega-resorts and from being owned by and associated with organized crime to be in the stock market and being “utilized” by normal citizens (Schwartz, 2019).

Gambling tourism has increased substantially in Macao, Las Vegas and other places in South-East Asia like Singapore, Australia, Philippines, and South Korea becoming great hubs within the gambling tourism world (Henderson, 2008).

Gambling, alongside tobacco, alcohol, and legalized marijuana, is defined as a contested market. Contested markets are markets that are subject to moral challenge and are viewed as less favorably and illegitimate by the general populace (Humphreys, 2010).

As the marketplace has changed and gambling becomes ever more normalized and common, the perceptions regarding gambling change significantly leading to gambling becoming a legitimate activity (less associated with crime and more associated with businesses).

With the diffusion of Casinos all over the world, the emergence of online gambling and sports betting and the lottery, gambling has become a leisure activity and the gambling industry has grown astonishingly in the last 30 years, gaining normative, regulative, and cultural-cognitive legitimacy (Humphreys, 2010; Westberg et al., 2017).

As the public discourse surrounding gambling changes, and the perceived positive effects of gambling outweigh the negative, the perception of gambling alters, and gambling is seen favorably by the population (Humphreys, 2010; Vong, 2009).

The perception of a population towards tourism is closely tied to Butler's “Tourist Area Life Cycle Theory (Butler, 1980) and this has been “transported” to the gaming arena, with Vong

and McCartney utilizing the Gaming Impact Matrix to link these stages to the perception of residents to the impact of gaming (Vong, 2009).

2.1.2 – Impact of Gambling on Society

The impact of the legalization of casinos on society is varied, having an economic, societal, and environmental impact and tangible and intangible effects on a location.

The economic impact that has been witnessed in places like Macau and Las Vegas has been staggering, fundamentally reshaping cities.

Casinos bring economic benefits to a location, with employment and GDP per capita increasing substantially (M. Nichols et al., 2002; Rosenbaum & Wong, 2015).

The spill-over or the multiplier effect is the most important approach to measuring the economic impact of gambling.

There are 3 effects of the multiplier process: direct; indirect and induced (Witt, Brooke, and Buckley, 2013). The direct effect concerns only the casino industry itself; the indirect effect relates to creating an economy around casinos, by investing in casinos, besides the employment it creates for workers in the casino (direct effect), it also creates employment for businesses that operate around the casino, like shops, restaurants, malls, and hotels. The induced effect is the rise of household income in this context.

One of the big reasons why casino gambling has recently become so popular is the tax benefits it generates. In 2009 casino gambling industry alone contributed to 72.64% of total tax revenue in Macau and accounted for 23.44% of employment in 2013 (Gao, n.d.).

The ability to then utilize these taxes to invest in the economy and society brings a lot of value to gambling as a viable business opportunity from the government's point of view.

Gambling legalization might also lead to income inequality, as any form of tourism benefits all groups, however, the lower a person is at the socio-economic ladder, the less this person will benefit from tourism than other labor-intensive export activities (Gu et al., 2017).

As such, with gambling and other forms of tourism, a just redistributive system is seen as a measure to mitigate the negative side effects of all forms of tourism (Gu et al., 2013).

The crime effect from gambling has yielded mixed results, with studies like Ochrzym (1988) indicating that the overall crime in the city increased due to gambling tourism. Other studies have shown that gambling tourism doesn't increase crime compared to other types of tourism and that in fact, ski resorts led to higher crime rates than casino resorts (Park & Stokowski, 2011).

However, there can also be a positive social effect from gambling. Gambling can have a restorative potential in customers, as tourists who engage in tourism gambling experience relief from mental fatigue and stress according to ART (Rosenbaum & Wong, 2015).

Studies have shown that gambling can produce very positive environmental impacts on a city. M. W. Nichols (1998) observed that the casinos in Atlantic City led to investment in tourism industries, convention facilities, and tourist capacities.

Vong (2009) conducted 2 studies in 2004 and 2009, comparing Macau's attitudes towards gambling. It showed that residents had developed more conservative views towards gambling as it was perceived to be causing an increase in pollution, traffic, and overcrowding.

2.2 – Casino Features

Analysing casinos, one very prominent feature that pops up when it comes to the gambling experience of the consumer, is the servicescape.

The servicescape is the physical space where a service is offered (in this case the casino) and it has a very important effect on the consumer as it can influence behaviour and create an image that affects the whole consumer experience (Bitner, 1992).

According to Lam et al. (2013) a perceived servicescape causes a cognitive response that influences people's beliefs about the workers and product. So the servicescape is something that not only influences the behaviour of the consumer but also alters the perception of the service and the experience of the consumer itself.

Features such as lighting, color, signage, textures, quality of materials, style of furnishings, layout, wall décor, temperature, etc can all be utilized to elicit a cognitive response and emotional reaction from a consumer (Bitner, 1992).

This is a very powerful tool that can convince a consumer to repurchase the service again or not, as according to Wakefield & Blodgett (2014), the general attractiveness of the environment will influence servicescape satisfaction levels.

Lucas (2003) and Lam et al. (2011) both argued that ambiance, navigation, seating comfort, interior décor and cleanliness are huge factors when it comes to predicting customer satisfaction and intention to revisit casino.

2.3 – Gambling Tourism Destination Success

As the casino resort evolves into having several non-gaming services, it begins to draw players who look for a holistic experience that encompasses gaming, and these non-gaming services become a decisive factor in choosing a traveling destination (Bryant & Walker, 2010).

The comp strategy of offering a free or discounted drink or meal or hotel stay leads the consumer to invest much more money than what the casino invested in the comp (Philander et al., 2015). Suh et al. (2012) demonstrated that revenue is highly correlated with comps, as gaming volume increases the more comped dinners exist.

There is complementarity between gaming and non-gaming products, meaning the complementary products create more demand together than they would by themselves (J. H. Kim & Kang, 2018).

In conclusion, many factors go into the assessment of what makes a gambling tourism destination successful. A huge factor is the geography that surrounds said destination and the gambling markets present in that region (Leiper, 1989).

Macau and Las Vegas emerged in similar circumstances, it was the only place in China and the USA respectively, where gambling was legal. This means that it was the only place that would serve the demand for gambling for a population of hundreds of millions (Leiper, 1989).

Macau in the last 6 years has had to deal with renewed competition from Australia, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Singapore, with the latter becoming the third-largest casino hub in the world in an incredibly short amount of time (Henderson, 2008).

As such, Macao utilizes its mega-casinos like the Venetian and its reputation to compel or pull gambling tourists to visit and utilize similar packaged service experiences like Disneyland (Luke & Luke, 2010).

2.4 Push and Pull Framework

2.4.1 – Push Factors

Travel motivation, although only being one variable, is widely considered the most important variable in studying tourist motivation and the most widely studied in travel motivation literature (J. Crompton, 1992; Goossens, 2000).

In tourism studies, travel motivation is usually divided into two categories: push and pull (Aref et al., 2010; Chen & Chen, 2015; Prayag & Ryan, 2011).

Push factors, or motivations, are what pushes a person to travel due to needs that come forth as a consequence of an emotional and/or motivational disequilibrium, in the process creating a desire to travel (Isaac & Çakmak, 2014). Motivations are multi-dimensional and tourists seek to satisfy more than one push factor at a time and the push factors have a hierarchical order that varies from tourist to tourist (Oh et al., 1995).

The idea of push factors started with G. M. S. Dann (1977). According to this study push factors are intrinsic motivational influences on a person that generates an unbalanced emotional situation, which can be resolved with traveling.

These can be anywhere from escape from mundane activities, fatigue, socialization, thrill-seeking, learning, discovery, and amongst others.

According to Dann (1977), who is one of the forefathers of travel studies, motivations were divided into anomie (the need to overcome the feeling of isolation that derives from everyday

mundane life and get away from it all) and ego-enhancement (need for recognition that is acquired through the status increase that is gained from traveling (Fodness, 1994).

Later on, J. L. Crompton's (1979) study was the first empirical approach, identifying seven socio-psychological needs (escape, exploration, relaxations, prestige, regression socialization, and kinship-enhancement). This would form the basis of the push and pull framework that would become prevalent in future studies.

Since then, several studies have shown different factors, such as ego defense, knowledge, reward maximization, value expression (Fodness, 1994).

15 years after Dann, Iso-Ahola (1982) put forward a more complex thesis where identifying motivations is paramount in tourist behaviour analysis, proposing two dimensions, escaping and seeking. Escape relates to escaping from everyday mundane life or personal problems; Seeking relates to, for example, seeking relaxation from mental fatigue or seeking learning from a new culture (S. S. Kim et al., 2003).

According to Jang & Liping (2002), who analysed six push factors for British tourists across seven destinations, the push factors, in ranked order, were knowledge-seeking, escapism, spending time with family and friends, novel experiences, fun, and excitement, and relaxation.

More recently, Aref et al. (2010) concluded that the motives to travel to Jordan were the need for prestige and social interaction. Chen & Chen (2015) conducted a widely renowned study on bird travelers' push and pull factors, with push factors consisting mainly of novelty seeking, competition, contribution and sharing, and spiritual refreshment.

In the last 7 years, a study by Prayag & Hosany (2014) observed the main reasons for UAE travelers to travel to Paris were socialization with family/friends, novelty, prestige, and relaxation.

In a study analyzing motivations to travel to Macau, Li, Wong & Kim (2017) concluded that knowledge, relaxation, entertainment, and prestige were the main motivations to travel to Macau.

This study is especially important to this thesis as it relates to the biggest gambling mecca in the world, and understanding the motivations of traveling to the city as a whole will give us a more global perspective on how a gambling mecca operates.

Analysing gamblers' psychology and motivations, people engage in gambling because it provides them with some kind of emotional or psychological stimulation, and gambler push motives include socialization and learning, escape, challenge, and winning (Lee et al., 2006). Lee et al. (2006) conducted a study on gambling motivations of gamblers in South Korea as well, developing and testing 30-factor analysis indicated that escape/relief, social approval/enjoyment, challenge/monetary reward, and social bond were recognized as the most important factors in gambling motivations.

Hup et al. (2015) explored the differences among Chinese casino gamblers' (to Macau) characteristics, motivations, and behaviours. This study was conducted with 2 subgroups, gamblers from Hong Kong and Mainland China.

In the gambling motivation, it was concluded both prioritised winning as the main motivation, with challenge/social/escape coming after.

Cotte (1997) perhaps giving academia what is one of the building blocks of casino goers motivations, divided the types of rewards from gambling into three types: hedonic, economic, and symbolic. Hedonic includes pleasure induction to enhance self-esteem or for entertainment (add thrill to mundane existence); Economic concerns possible monetary gains; Symbolic is connected to independence, escape from boredom, and control.

Wong & Rosenbaum (2012) observed Chinese casino tourists' push and pull factors and identified push factors as excitement, adventure, escape, and sightseeing or exploration; vacation time with family.

2.4.2 – Pull Factors

Pull factors are tangible characteristics, features, or attractions that attract tourists to a certain destination and these factors are external, situational, or cognitive aspects to the tourist (Klenosky, 2002).

Pull factors are considered the supply side of tourism and are features like cultural attractions, the beach, nature, and activities such as casinos or theme parks (Lehto et al., 2014).

Dimitrios (2000) stated that a tourist destination is a combination of services, attractions, and experiences that are consumed under the destination's brand, providing the tourist with an integrated experience.

Back in 1991, in one of the first comprehensive studies of its kind, Fakeye & Crompton, (1991) utilized 32 attributes and identified six pull factor areas, those being Social opportunities and Attractions (such as festivals or concerts), Natural and Cultural amenities (such as attractive scenery and parks), Accommodation and transports, Infrastructures, food, and friendly people; Physical amenities and recreation activities (such as weather and golfing) and Bars and evening entertainment (such as nightclubs).

In the (Jang & Liping, 2002) study the five pull factors British tourists valued above all were cleanliness and safety, sunny and exotic atmosphere, natural and historical environment, outdoor activities, ease of access and value of the deal, and outdoor activities.

Aref et al. (2010) studied the push and pull factors of tourists to Jordan and found that pull factors included heritage (the monument of Petra being a perfect example, given its historical richness and impact), natural attraction, food, and culture. Mohammed and Son gave importance to including attributes such as safety, affordability, friendly image, and hospitality that had a huge impact on creating the ideal conditions so the previously mentioned pull factors could come into effect.

Prayag & Hosany (2014) analysed the motives and attractions of UAE outbound tourists to Western Europe (Paris). Amongst these were luxury shopping, cultural exploration, luxury accommodation, and customized activities. It must be said this is a specific kind of tourism,

mostly luxury shopping tourism, but it gave a great insight as to what a specific group of tourists looks for in a certain destination.

Li, Wong & Kim (2017) analysed pull factors for Macau and concluded food, unique European culture, casinos, nightlife, convenient transportations were amongst the highest scoring pull factors of tourists visiting Macau. This study is very important to give us an overview of how to give a diversified number of pull factors to entice as many tourists as a gambling destination can.

According to Klenosky (2002) pull factors may vary quite a bit among tourists as they value different destination attributes on different levels and get information from very different sources. It can be inferred that having a destination with several different offerings can pull tourists for very different reasons, and exploring these different pull factors and their overlaps is a great way to attract the biggest number of tourists a destination can, albeit a destination must not lose sight of its competitive advantage and spread out too much.

Mihalic (2000) studied destination competitiveness and discovered eleven elements... What differs here is cost/price economic and social ties. It also takes into account negative factors or deterrent that may deter a tourist from going there (e.g political instability, health, and medical concerns, poor sanitation).

Mihalic also emphasized the management of environmental quality as paramount to increase destination attractiveness and competitiveness.

In gambling tourism, especially in South East Asia (Henderson, 2008) the major increase of integrated resorts is visible. An example is The Venetian (that simulates Venice and consumers can ride a gondola) that was in 2007 the biggest leisure attraction (Fowler, 2007).

A picture starts to form that what attracts people to these mega-resorts isn't just gambling, but a holistic experience that is generated around gambling that provides a total encompassing travel experience (Anonymous, 1994).

According to Li, Wong & Kim (2017) destinations with several leisure offerings like shopping, dining, and entertainment, pull tourists to travel to a destination.

The servicescape and the set-up of the whole complex resort are paramount to offer a complete encompassing experience that provides consumers with leisure entertainment, novelty-seeking, and sightseeing (Rosenbaum, 2006).

In their study of Chinese gamblers to Macau, Hup et al. (2015) found the primary reasons for travelling were primarily gambling in both sub-groups, with shopping and cultural exploration closing off the 3 top reasons.

Themed shopping malls, grandiose gaming floors, luxury hotel accommodations, and renowned Vegas-style architecture are some of the pull motives that lure millions of casino goers to the casinos of Macau (Wong and Rosenbaum, 2012).

2.4.3 Push and Pull Interaction

These two factors have usually been identified as being two different decisions at different stages of the traveling decision-making process, pull denoting where to go and push denoting on whether to go or not (G. M. Dann, 1981).

However, other studies such as Klenosky (2002) have advocated that these 2 factors should not be seen as independent, as opposed to Crompton (1979), but as intrinsically connected engaging in a more dynamic interaction between the two, as Oh et al. (1995) showed that push and pull factors interact dynamically and symbiotically with each other.

Klenowksi (2002) utilized a “means-end” approach, where the means are the pull factors and the end is the push factors. This was a different approach to analysing the relationship between the two as previous studies, and I quote:

“relied exclusively on multivariate analysis of existing data sets and consequently only focused on if and to what degree push and pull factors are related.”

A means-end approach is a different approach to these previous studies focusing on the chain of links between the push and pull factors and how strongly and why these factors are connected.

According to Oh et al. (1995) product bundles are how different pull factors might match up with different push factors, incentivizing a tourist to travel to a certain place because of its perceived benefits and how these perceived benefits will satisfy their motivations or needs (Aref et al., 2010).

It is paramount to successfully match up push and pull factors to create a marketing strategy in destination areas, as this will ensure that travelers' motivations are deeply understood and which pull factors are ideal to fulfill those specific push factors.

By understanding what a destination possesses or can build on, how these attributes differ from competitors, and understanding how and who these attract, a tourist destination can create a competitive and enticing traveling package for the consumer (Oh et al., 1995).

3.METHODOLOGY

3.1 Information Source and Data Collection

The data for this study were collected from online user-share-generated reviews content shared on google reviews. Google reviews are nowadays the biggest customer review site (Reviewsite 2018), with google scoring 66.64% on the question “Which of the following review sites are you most likely to check before visiting a business?”. Yelp scored 45.18% and Trip advisor 30.03% in comparison.

The 1383 reviews were collected in total, from 5 different casinos in coastal areas of Europe, these being Algarve (Portugal), Cannes (France), Monte-Carlo, Malta, and Thessaloniki (Greece).

The casinos were Casino Estoril, Casino Barriere La Croisette, Casino de Monte Carlo, Casino Malta, and Regency Casino Thessaloniki respectively.

These casinos were chosen because they were in coastal areas of Europe and because they had a big enough number of reviews from which a good sample could be extracted from. These casinos are located in different parts of Europe, so it can give a more diversified sample of peoples’ reviews of casinos, making it more relevant to gambling tourism as a whole, and not gambling in a specific location.

3.2 Leximancer Data Analysis

Leximancer was chosen as the software to analyse online reviews. This software transforms data into semantic patterns (Pearce & Wu, 2016).

Leximancer is a computer-assisted quantitative data analysis tool and is designated as an unsupervised semantic mapping of natural language that provides automated analysis based on statistical properties of text, extracting semantic and relational information (Sotiriadou et al., 2014).

As opposed to Nvivo, ATLAS.ti, and CAPTAC, which require manual handling of the data and coding (supervised) and utilizes word frequency or coding terms (Tseng et al., 2015). Leximancer is unsupervised. This is considered one of the big advantages of Leximancer as it utilizes its algorithm, is unbiased, and uncovers hidden structures and meanings within texts by extracting main concepts and ideas.

Leximancer produces concept maps that offer a pictorial representation of the data, enabling the reader to visually understand how concepts and themes are related while also showing the number and strength of connections. These concepts will be part of themes, which represent a cluster of concepts that are closely related, and the closer they are to each other, the closer the relationship is (Lin et al., 2019).

Leximancer also produces an “Insight Dashboard” that produces a quadrant overview of concepts and what strengths (if we were to choose a concept, such as tables, what is the probability it will produce a positive review) and relative frequency (what is the likelihood that this concept will be mentioned in the data) these concepts possess within each category (in this case push and pull factors) relative to one another.

Other sections in the dashboard are concept for categories by rank, which includes relative frequency, strength, and prominence, ranked compound concept (what are the most likely concept pairings in the data, e.g tables, and poker).

The objective is to collect reviews and transpose them to Leximancer. Once Leximancer processes the data and produces the insight dashboard and the concept maps, the occurrences, and co-occurrences of concepts and categories will be demonstrated and it will be possible to understand what appeals to the casino goer and what are the critical factors for success.

An example of a pull factor would be games available at the casino like poker or roulette, something special about that casino differentiates it from other casinos so that it can attract gambling tourists and satisfy their needs.

Examples of push factors would be winning, socialization, or even learning. Many players feel a need to travel somewhere and gamble for several reasons, and even socializing with other players or the croupier or engaging in gambling and winning satisfies an individual's certain needs.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Concept Map

The analysis of content with Leximancer produced a concept map (see Figure 1) demonstrating the most re-occurring themes and concepts in the casino reviews that were collected. Leximancer identified 6 themes: Casino, Place, Machines, Win, Drinks, Fun. These themes have relevancy that ranges from [8% to 45%].

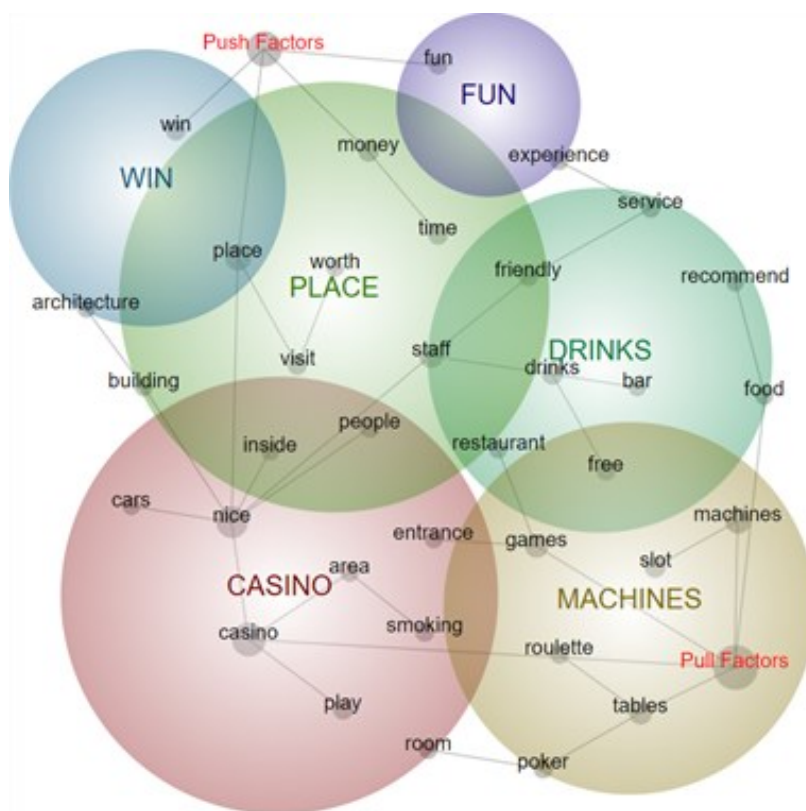


Figure 1-Concept Map- Casinos Attractiveness based on push and pulled factors

These are Casino (45%), Place (27%), Machines (23%), Win (12%), Drinks (11%) and Fun (8%).

Within the themes, some concepts form and connect the themes. These concepts include games within machines or the area or entrance within the casino for example (relating to its

servicescape or physical layout). When looking at the concept map from the Leximancer analysis, it is important to denote the colors (which relate to its importance) and the closeness of the themes as these will indicate a relationship and/or connection. Pull factors are denoted by machines, casinos, and drinks. Push factors are denoted by fun, win, and place.

To further explore this concept, when looking at the concept map, casinos and machines are closely connected as number and type machines are dependent on the layout and size of the casino and the servicescape will have a huge effect on the games. Another example would be Place, the theme that shares the most boundaries with other themes. The sharing of boundaries delineates a close relationship with drinks, casino, win, and fun as these are all closely tied to a location's reputation and experience and act almost as a lynchpin to connect a lot of the themes and concepts.

4.2 Dashboard

A dashboard was extracted from Leximancer, and this denotes both the relative frequency (within a certain category, push or pull, what percentage does it represent relating to the total reviews of that specific category) and strength (if the concept is mentioned, what is the likelihood it is a push or pull factor). Prominence is given by joint probability divided by the product of marginal probabilities.

The dashboard's (in Figure 2) contents contains a quadrant overview; ranked concept by category; ranked compound concept by category; supporting text summary; ranked count and all supporting text.

In this paper, the focus on the dashboard results will lay on the first 3.

For this thesis, the level of strength that denotes a strong and predictive relationship is above 50% strength.

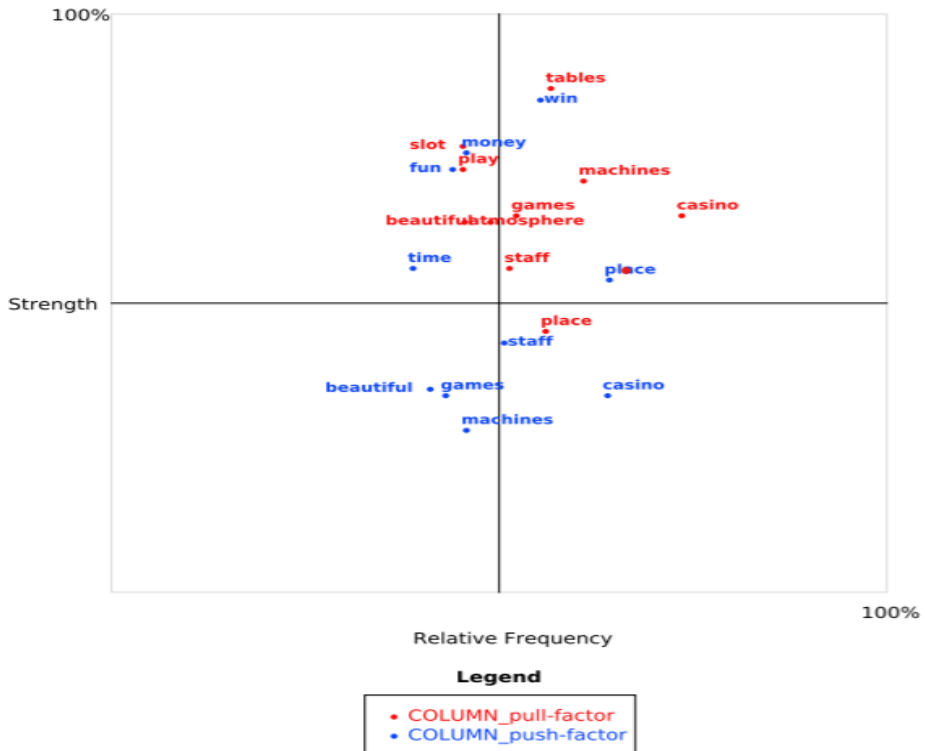


Figure 2-Dash Board- Casinos major push and pull factors

Observing the quadrant report overview, (in Figure 3) for the category of pull the relevant pull factors are machines, games, casino, staff, tables, beautiful and atmosphere. For the push category, the relevant push factors are win, place, fun, time, money.

In the second part of the dashboard analysis, the ranked concept for Categories, we can see the exact relative frequency and strength each factor possesses.



















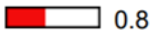
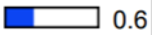
Category: COLUMN_pull-factor				Category: COLUMN_push-factor			
Concept	Rel Freq (%)	Strength (%)	Prominence	Concept	Rel Freq (%)	Strength (%)	Prominence
tables	14	87	 1.6	win	13	85	 1.9
slot	8	77	 1.4	money	8	76	 1.7
play	8	73	 1.3	fun	8	73	 1.6
machines	17	71	 1.3	time	6	56	 1.3
casino	30	65	 1.2	place	19	54	 1.2
games	11	65	 1.2	staff	10	43	 1.0
atmosphere	8	64	 1.2	beautiful	7	35	 0.8
beautiful	10	64	 1.2	games	7	34	 0.8
staff	11	56	 1.0	casino	19	34	 0.8
place	13	45	 0.8	machines	8	28	 0.6

Figure 3- Ranked Concepts by category

Pull factors:

Tables have 14% relative frequency and 87% strength, with a prominence of 1.6.

Slot has 8% relative frequency and 77% strength with prominence of 1.4

Play has 8% relative frequency, 73% strength, and 1.3 prominence.

Machines have 17% relative frequency, 71% strength, and 1.3 prominence.

Casino has 30% relative frequency, 65% strength, and 1.2 prominence.

Games have 11% relative frequency, 65% strength, and 1.2 prominence.

Atmosphere has 8% relative frequency, 65% strength, and 1.2 prominence.

Beautiful has 10% relative frequency, 64% strength, and 1.2 prominence.

Staff has 11% relative frequency, 56 % strength and 1.0 prominence.

Push factors:

Win has 13% relative frequency, 85% strength, and 1.9 prominence.

Money has 8% relative frequency, 76% strength, and 1.8 prominence.

Fun has 8% relative frequency, 73% strength, and 1.6 prominence.

Time has 6% relative frequency, 56% strength, and 1.3 prominence.

Place has 19% relative frequency, 54% strength, and 1.2 prominence.

What can be deduced from these results is that if a factor has a high relative frequency and high strength, this is a factor that is present in a lot of comments of a certain category (relative frequency), and if a concept is mentioned, this concept will be linked to a certain category (strength).

If a factor has a high relative frequency, but low strength then it is a factor that commonly showed up in the reviews but is not as conclusive as to whether it is a push or a pull factor.

If a factor has a low relative frequency, but high strength, then this means within a category (e.g push factor) it isn't represented in as many reviews of push factors overall, however, most of the reviews mentioning this specific concept (e.g fun) indicate that it is a push factor.

For example, looking at tables, there is a comparatively high relative frequency of 14% and a high strength of 87%, indicating that tables are a concept that frequently came up in the pull factor reviews and it is usually indicative of being a pull factor.

Casino, on the other hand, has the highest relative frequency (30%), but a lower strength (65%) compared to other highly-ranked concepts. This indicates that the casino concept is a prominent in pull factors but if the word casino comes up it's not as indicative as tables if it is a push or pull factor. If one were to see a casino in a review, there's less certainty of it being a pull factor than if one were to see tables for example, although casino has a higher probability to appear in pull factor reviews as it showed up in more pull factor reviews.

The third part of the dashboard insights is ranked compound concepts for categories.

This part of the dashboard insights reveals the pairing of more common concepts, and like section 2, have relative frequency, strength, and prominence.

For pull factors, the top 5 ranked compound concepts were beautiful and building (relative frequency 2%, strength 72% and prominence 7.9), tables and roulette (2% relative frequency, strength 100% and prominence 7.2), tables and blackjack(1% relative frequency, 90% strength and 7.2 prominence)tables and poker (3% relative frequency,91% strength, and 6.7 prominence) and slot & machines(5% relative frequency, 73% strength and 6.5 prominence).

For push factors, the top 5 ranked compound concepts were money & lose (2% relative frequency, 91% strength and 17.8 prominence), money & night (less than 1% relative frequency, 100% strength and 8.8 prominence), time & euros (less than 1% relative frequency, 80% strength and 8.3 prominence), money and fun (less than 1% relative frequency, 100 strength and 5.8 prominence) and time & bar (less than 1% relative frequency, 75% strength and 5.3 prominence).

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Tags -Pull factors

Pull factors relate to attributes that attract tourists and differentiate locations. Casino, machine, and drinks are all factors that play a part in pulling the gambling tourist to a certain location. Casino, machines, and drinks are all closely tied because gambling machines and games are what make a casino a casino, and drinks play a big part in the customer experience at a casino.

Casino-The casino theme in total had 650 reviews (47%).

Taking into consideration this study is focused on casinos, it's natural that casinos would be one of the central themes. Casino being red on the concept map indicates the importance and frequency of the theme.

The Casino theme is composed of the subsequent concepts with their respective word count and relevancy percentage: casino, nice, play, smoking, inside, room, area, cars, entrance.

Typical review: *“The Casino is beautiful by day and night. My husband and I were here in September 2019 for our anniversary. We loved Monte Carlo and you can't visit without going to the Casino. The supercars lined up outside are worth a visit by themselves! La Trinité bar inside has a wonderful martini selection. Great photo opportunities outside looking back towards the Casino from the park in front.”*

Machines-The theme machines were present in a total of 406 reviews (29%).

Machines are also a vital theme, as it relates directly to gaming/gambling in the casino. It is comprised of six concepts < machines, games, tables, slot, poker, roulette.

Typical review: *“Awesome casino in equally awesome surroundings! The building is beautiful, from the inside too. The good thing about the casino for beginners/casual/novice gamblers is that the entry to the slot machine area is free so you can get in, have some fun and get out without much damage :) the cafe de Paris adjacent is a great experience”.*

Drinks-The theme of drinks was present in a total of 311 reviews (22%).

Drinks contain the upcoming concepts: drinks, free, friendly, service, restaurant, food, bar, recommend

Typical Review: *“Great casino experience, separated areas for smoking and not smoking people. Minimum bets on roulettes 5euros and 10 euros on blackjack. Plenty of tables also a poker room, very nice staff, pretty cheap drinks especially during happy hours Monday to Friday 18-22.”*

5.2 Tags-Push Factors

Push factors relate to motivations to engage in certain behaviour. Win, fun, and place are all under push factors as these indicate or imply what motivated these casino tourists to travel to a certain location for gambling. Winning and having fun are closely related to place as the RTP or perceived RTP (retention to player) percentage of a casino or location has influenced the decision of a player to go there.

Place -Place, as a theme, existed in 543 online reviews (39%).

Place, as previously mentioned, is the theme that connects several concepts and other themes, which makes sense since places invoke several associations. The place is comprised of eight concepts: place, staff, money, people, time, visit, building, worth

Typical review: *“Quite an amazing place. Registration is very strict the staff told us it was due to money laundering? Security is very tight too. They have to take a copy of your passport and issue you a plastic membership card. I think this is too much trouble for tourists who need to keep their travel docs insight and also the environment doesn't need another piece of plastic thrown at it. Most people probably want to pop in for a quick visit or flutter they don't*

need a full-on membership. The ambiance is nice and there is plenty of space and choice of tables for everyone. I am not a gambler and have only visited a few casinos so it was and an interesting eye-opener for me and I recommend a visit."

Win-Win is composed of 92 reviews (12%).

Two major concepts are win, architecture

Typical review: *"I played slots because I am not a gambler and I thought that was the simplest one. It is simple, no strategies needed, every spin seems random. I left as soon as I found myself winning."*

Fun- Fun includes 64 reviews (8 %)

Typical review: *"It is a place of fun for those who like games of chance and chance or even just give a relaxed, have a romantic dinner or with family and friends and watch musical shows, but always wallet very well stuffed, does not need to have much careful to still bring it empty."*

5.3 General discussion push and pull factors of 5 casinos

The question set out at the start of this study was what the push is and pull factors of 5 casinos in coastal areas of Europe. The analysis of 1383 reviews on Google reviews of these 5 casinos revealed that within the 2 categories (push and pull factors), the most important pull factors are tables, slot, play, machines, casino, staff, games, beautiful and atmosphere and the most important push factors are win, money, fun, time, place and staff.

Logically, one of the highest-scoring or most re-occurrent concepts in this study would relate to machines and/or games, as this is what the heart of gambling is. The top pull factors were tables, slot, play, machines, and below casino, games.

Because table encompasses physical forms of games such as poker, blackjack, and roulette (although the virtual mode of these games does exist, these reviews tend to refer to the physical table form).

These results contradict the literature when it comes to the idea that slot machines are more popular in the western world and represent a value of around 70-85% in revenue (Harvard, 2018).

Since this study was from reviews of casinos throughout Europe, it would make sense to represent and follow this trend of Europe, however, it must be noted that machines and slot are separate in this dashboard and these probably mean the same so one cannot certainly surmise that slot machines are less popular than table games solely from this.

It does indeed put a huge emphasis on games, playing, and the fact that for casino goers, the major pull factor is related to the heart of the casino operation. What can be surmised with certainty is that gambling is the main attraction and this is confirmed in the literature review (Hup et al., 2015).

The casino concept was one of the most important concepts, having a relative frequency of 30% and a strength of 65%. It would seem intuitive that in a study concerning the push and pull factors of casinos, the casino would be one of the most important concepts. However, there is more than meets the eye and one must look beneath the surface and uncover what the theme casino means here.

The casino is related to the servicescape, meaning the physical space where the customer of the business (in this case the casino) partakes in the activity, and this has a big effect on the consumer's behaviour and image of the service the consumer is consuming (Bitner, 1992). This can be supported by two other concepts in the upper quadrant, beautiful and atmosphere. The use of bright lights and colors to keep the customer awake; or having no clocks to incentivize the consumer to lose track of time and/or lack of windows to enable the customer to immerse into the experience "reference" are ways to impact or enhance the consumer's experience and behaviour.

The servicescape is extremely important in any activity for a consumer, as according to Lam et.al (2011) and Lucas (2003) the ambiance, navigation, interior décor, seating comfort, and cleanliness were predictors of customer satisfaction and intention to revisit a casino.

In the theme of the casino, the concept of architecture relates directly to interior décor and it was evident in many of the reviews. The word beautiful was many times paired with

architecture, inside and building, and both the word beautiful (10% relative frequency, 64% strength, and 1.2 prominence) and atmosphere (8% relative frequency and 64% strength and 1.2 prominence) are closely tied to the concept of casino and its servicescape.

One of the most highly ranked compound concepts was beautiful and architecture.

Architecture plays a big part in transmitting an image of glamorousness, with grandiose gaming floors and luxury accommodation influencing the consumer experience and pulling the consumer to the casino (Wong and Rosenbaum, 2015).

The ambiance in this case related to area and smoking within the theme of Casino. When it came to smoking there were mixed reviews, but a majority complained about casinos not having separate smoking areas, which confirms Chan et al. (2012) study that second-hand smoke worsened air quality in casinos and affected people negatively.

Cars in a casino could be considered a form of décor, as these cars act as a cue of high quality and have a cognitive impact on the consumer's experience contributing to an image of prestige (Bitner, 1992).

Win is the most relevant push factor in the dashboard, having a 13% relative frequency, 85% strength, and 1.9 prominence. The second concept with the highest prominence (8% relative frequency, 76% strength, and 1.7 prominence) is money and this is closely tied to winning as in the reviews, the mentions of money would usually refer to ending the night winning or losing a lot of money and that having a huge impact on their experience. As seen in the literature review, this is one of the main reasons why gamblers gamble. The ultimate purpose is to win (Lee et al., 2006; Cotte, 1997; Hup et al., 2015). The objective of gambling at the end of the day is to place a wager and try to predict an outcome or win in some manner. The place has strong connectivity with the win because gamblers make a strong association with places when it comes to winning. It was visible in the comments people would complain about the retention to the player being much lower than what the casino claimed and making claims that the casino was hacking the machines. It must be said there are different kinds of gamblers (Lee et al., 2006) and some believe they can beat the game and do it solely for the win (usually these traits are more associated with problem gamblers) and others simply do it for fun and usually don't value so much winning. So this result does support the consensus read in the literature review regarding the main motivation of many gamblers.

Fun (hedonic or pleasure-inducing) is a push factor according to Cotte (1997), but given the comments, it usually also indicated other push factors that were mentioned in the literature review. Fun would also point either to socialization or somewhere to pass the time and relax, or explore something new (Li, Wong and Kim, 2017; Prayag and Hosany 2010; Jang & Liping, 2002). Li, Wong & Kim (2017) denoted that nightlife was one of the major attractions in Macau, which coincides as well with Las Vegas room, F&B and other activities revenue being superior to gambling (Summary, 2012) demonstrates that besides gambling, a big part of the gambling experience is to have a good time and only a part of it is solely gambling to a sizable portion of gamblers (Bryant & Walker, 2010).

Another concept worth mentioning is place (19% relative frequency, 54% strength, and 1.2 prominence). Place is somewhat an abstract concept, in this case, it relates to concepts like time (having a great time was a common theme in the reviews), visit (it was worth the visit), and staff (the social aspect to the interaction) as seen in the concept map. Although seen in the literature review usually as a pull factor (Aref et al., 2010) in the casino context and in this study's context, staff can be considered both as it implicitly points to a need for socialization and escape (Lee et al., 2006).

Lee et al. (2006) show a need for social approval as well, that comes from interacting with other players and with the croupier (something that was mentioned in reviews). Staff points to learning as well (Wong & Rosenbaum, 2012; Lee et al., 2006; Hup et al., 2015) as comments mentioned the croupiers teaching players how to play the games enhanced the consumer's experience.

It must be said staff could be both push and pull, but in this scenario, the staff is indicative of a push factor that was implied but was obvious given the context, so for this study, it was decided staff would be considered a push and pull factor. According to Klenowski (2002), these push and pull factors are so dynamic and closely tied that it is hard to distinguish sometimes and must go by the context of what the overall data tells the reader to extract the push factor.

Drinks were present in 311 reviews. Even though it is not as critical to success as the aforementioned concepts, it is still important to mention as this can be a differentiating factor among casinos.

The food and beverage industry has always had a very deep and intertwined connection with the casino industry as the two have always been used symbiotically to provide the consumer

with a great experience. The casino industry might well be the industry that has mastered the use of complementarity of F&B (and hotel) and promotions to entice the customer to gamble (Philander et al., 2015). Casinos usually have similar machines as well, so these promotions are what differentiates them from the competition.

These promotional comps have a positive relationship with both revenue and gaming volume (Philander et al., 2015). All this demonstrates the relationship between gambling and food and beverages are huge for the consumer and is proof of a more holistic experience, enhancing one another.

6.CONCLUSION

6.1 Main Conclusion

The question set out at the beginning of this thesis was what the push are and pull factor of 5 casinos in coastal areas of Europe. The objective was to pinpoint the critical factors of success of casinos, which were the push and pull factors extracted in the Leximancer analysis, presented in the dashboard and quadrant overview's upper quadrants. These are the push and pull factors above 50% strength which indicate this is a critical factor of success.

Regarding pull factors, the concepts that were extracted through Leximancer are tables, slot, play, machines, casino, staff, games, beautiful and atmosphere.

Regarding push factors the main concepts are win, money, fun, time, place and staff.

Even though staff had higher strength in pull factors, staff in the reviews usually indicated a need for socialization and/or learning and/or social approval. People consistently mentioned this in the reviews.

Drink was a prominent concept in the concept map and throughout the reviews. As previously mentioned, this is a very important way to incentivize consumers to spend (through comps) and a way for casinos to differentiate amongst one another.

In conclusion these are the main factors and concepts to consider when analysing what the ingredients for success of casinos are.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

The theoretical contribution in this study stems from the Leximancer analysis results, namely the dashboard and the concept map. The dashboard enabled this study to present and pinpoint the main push and pull factors that draw casino goers to the casino, which is visible in the upper quadrant visible in the quadrant report. The focus on gamblers usually is related to their motivations and push factors, meaning that this study can fill in a piece of the research gap that existed regarding pull factors (the focus on games, be it table games or slot machines) and has confirmed how important the servicescape is about the casino goer's experience. On the push factor side, it has confirmed what the literature's overview on push factors views as the main motivations.

6.3 Managerial Implications

The finding in this study can help casino managers in providing customers with the best experience. This understanding will result in an improved customer experience and appreciation as to what pull factors draw casino goers to the casino and what their underlying motivation is. In the service industry, much more than just the product goes into fulfilling the customer's expectation, and having a full understanding of the client gives the business an edge over its competition.

Having a wide array of games, a large number of the most recent table games and slot machines will give the customer a more than satisfactory interaction with the casino. Having a servicescape and casino that impresses the customer (giving cues of prestige) and alters their cognitive experience will result in a much more happy and enticed casino goer who will want to repeat the experience.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research

The main limitations in this study are the low number of casinos from which this data was extracted (only 5 casinos); the fact this data was only extracted from European casinos(although this might provide us with a better understanding of European casino goers and having been done in Europe and not the two gambling meccas of the world, Macau and Las Vegas.

Data is extracted from online reviews might give the data less credibility and a sampling bias, as people who leave online reviews may pertain to a less diversified sample and can influence results.

The quantitative analysis could bring more validity to these results, as it could compensate in areas where qualitative analysis is lacking. Having both a quantitative and qualitative analysis would be ideal.

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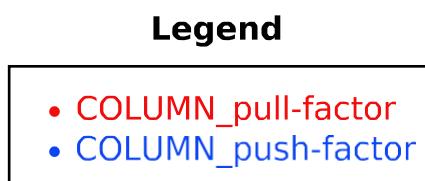
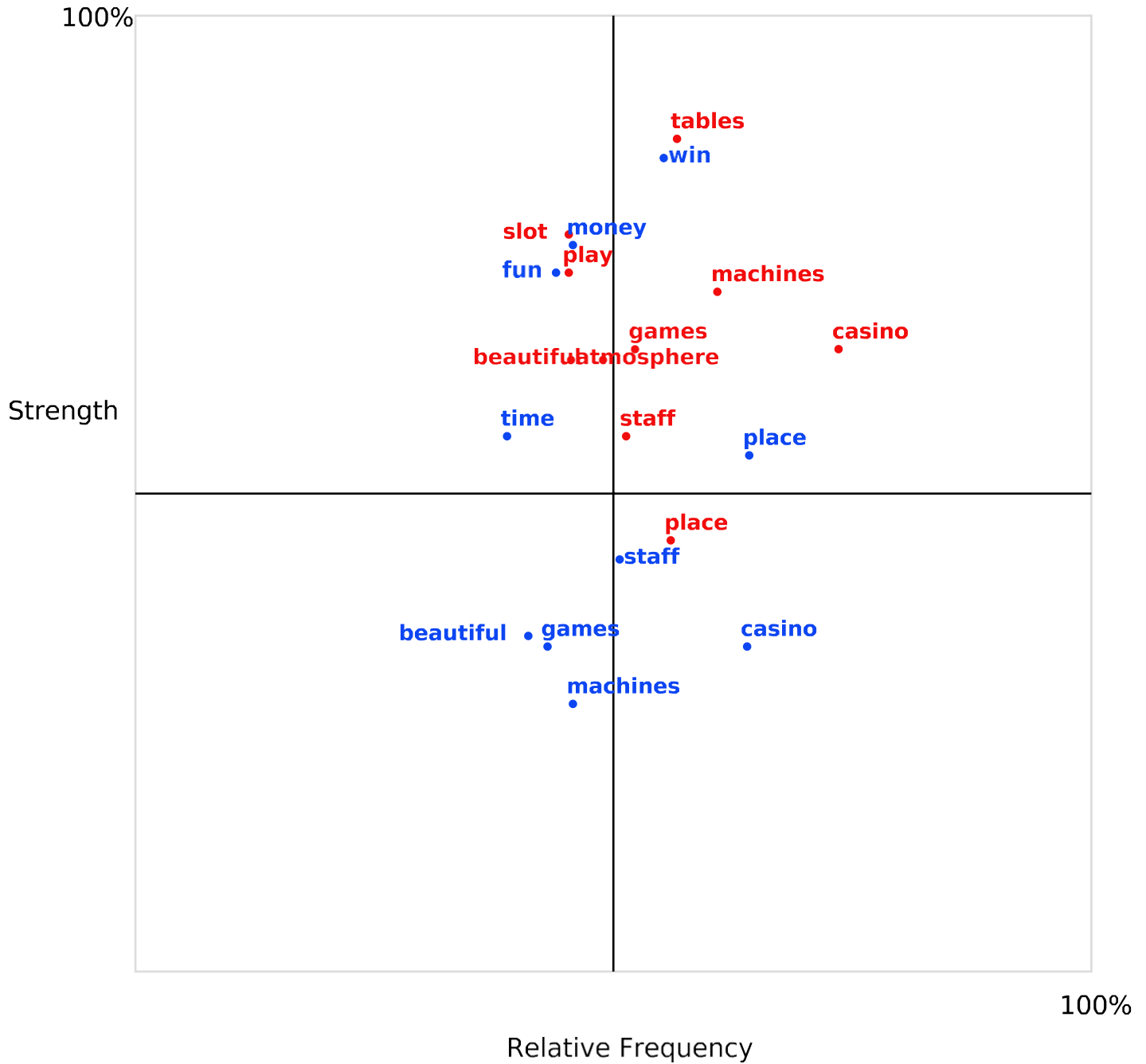
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Appendices

1. Quadrant Report










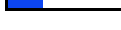


2. Ranked Concepts for Categories

Category: COLUMN_pull-factor






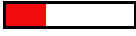

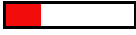
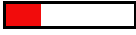
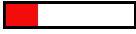

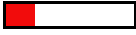
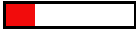







Concept	Rel Freq (%)	Strength (%)	Prominence
tables	14	87	 1.6
slot	8	77	 1.4
play	8	73	 1.3
machines	17	71	 1.3
casino	30	65	 1.2
games	11	65	 1.2
atmosphere	8	64	 1.2
beautiful	10	64	 1.2
staff	11	56	 1.0
place	13	45	 0.8

Category: COLUMN_push-factor





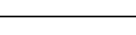
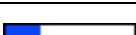
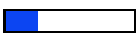

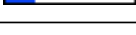
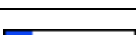
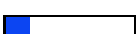
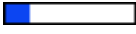
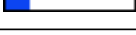
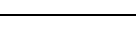
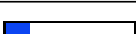
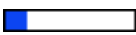




Concept	Rel Freq (%)	Strength (%)	Prominence
win	13	85	 1.9
money	8	76	 1.7
fun	8	73	 1.6
time	6	56	 1.3
place	19	54	 1.2
staff	10	43	 1.0
beautiful	7	35	 0.8
games	7	34	 0.8
casino	19	34	 0.8
machines	8	28	 0.6

3. Ranked Compound Concepts for Categories

Category: COLUMN_pull-factor

Concept	Rel Freq (%)	Strength (%)	Prominence
beautiful & building	2	72	 7.9
tables & roulette	2	100	 7.2
tables & blackjack	1	90	 7.2
tables & poker	3	91	 6.7
slot & machines	5	73	 6.5
games & bar	1	80	 5.7
beautiful & architecture	1	47	 5.3
beautiful & inside	1	82	 5.1
play & entrance	< 1	83	 5.0
staff & friendly	2	62	 4.7
tables & slot	2	100	 4.4
beautiful & cars	< 1	55	 4.4
atmosphere & smoking	1	90	 4.4
tables & games	4	87	 4.3
tables & play	2	89	 4.2
games & roulette	1	77	 4.2
machines & bar	1	80	 4.2
play & poker	1	82	 4.1
tables & drinks	2	89	 3.9
play & roulette	< 1	86	 3.9

Category: COLUMN_push-factor

Concept	Rel Freq (%)	Strength (%)	Prominence
money & lose	2	91	 17.8
money & night	< 1	100	 8.8
time & euros	< 1	80	 8.3
beautiful & architecture	2	53	 7.3
money & fun	1	100	 5.8
time & bar	< 1	75	 5.3
games & euros	< 1	56	 5.2
fun & night	< 1	100	 4.6
beautiful & cars	< 1	45	 4.5
win & euros	< 1	100	 4.4
money & people	< 1	86	 4.2
win & lose	< 1	75	 3.9
beautiful & building	< 1	28	 3.8
fun & blackjack	< 1	100	 3.7
staff & friendly	2	38	 3.7
games & room	< 1	67	 3.6
money & blackjack	< 1	100	 3.6
fun & place	3	76	 3.5
money & recommend	< 1	67	 3.4
win & night	< 1	100	 3.2

