

THE INFLUENCE OF REFERENCE GROUP VALUES AND RETAIL IMAGE ON SHOPPING PATRONAGE AT AIRPORTS

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ABSTRACT

Airport retailing is a relatively new and unique area of retail research. The development of this sector has been growing with the steady increase of passenger's and shopping mall type design settings within the airport terminals. As the mix of services becomes more diverse, airports as shopping malls appeal to a wide range of consumers. Knowing exactly what influences consumer shopping behaviors needs further investigation. This study was conducted to identify the relationship between reference group values and retail image as a predictor for shopping patronage at airports. The result of the analysis shows strong significance and support for reference group values and how they can influence shopping patronage decisions. Further support indicates a strong significance when testing similarities and difference, as they relate to personal values, which suggests that personal values can co-relate in understanding consumer behaviors and possibly predicting shopping patronage. When testing the relationship of shopping patronage and retail image, results further indicated a high level of significance among the majority of the variables (atmospherics, retail mix, and safety) and indicated a significant contribution to the prediction of shopping patronage.

JEL: M3, M1

KEYWORDS: Shopping Patronage, Reference Group Values, Retail Image

INTRODUCTION

Shopping patronage for consumers has taken a dramatic shift from the traditional model of visiting a particular store or typical shopping mall. Consumers now have higher levels of retail choices in diverse locations and setting. This evolution has prompted an increasing need for management to understand consumer patronage behaviors in entirely new ways for particular trade markets (Ghosh and McLafferty 1987, Crawford and Melewar, 2003). These new retail formats have become more specialized and decentralized from the conventional shopping mall model and are interacting in our daily activities through many different venues, which have led to an increasing need to further understand the processes concerning how consumers make retail choice decisions (Fernie 1995; Clarke et al. 1997; Omar and Kent 2001, Lysonski and Durvasula, 2013). One retail format in particular, *airport retailing* has undergone a major transition and now occupies a central position in revenue generating strategies and the need to identify determinants of shopping patronage.

Airport shoppers are now being recognized as a lucrative specialty market and airport retailing is evolving to understand the behavioral purchasing motivations of passengers (Crawford and Melewar, 2003). Airport authorities, retailers, and developers see retailing at airport as a means to derive more income from these commercial activities rather than from the aeronautical charges and fees. Retail and its related income has therefore become of paramount importance to the long-term survival of the airport industry (Freathy and O'Connell, 1998, Freathy and O'Connell, 2000). Each airport has a unique, distinctive set of passenger markets, all of whom use the airport differently, and have varying shopping motivations and characteristics.

This study will explore the determinants of shopping patronage at airports with the behavior variables within *reference group values* and *retail image*. Current research in this area has been neglected and been quantitatively driven with variables that lack in consumer behaviors. Therefore, further research is worthy of investigation to begin to understand the role that retail at airports has in affecting the shopping decisions of the consumer. This study will proceed to develop a theoretical framework with a review on the relevant literature in the areas of *reference group values* and *retail image*. The next section provides an empirical study data and methodology, followed by research results. Concluding comments will summarize the research presented as well as the implications, limitations and future research suggested.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Airport retailers must develop effective strategies to gain a competitive advantage and increase shopping patronage. Patronage studies in the past have attempted to explore the determinants of shopping patronage using various descriptive and causal attributes. The objective of this study is to identify how *Reference Group Values* and *Retail Image* affect shopping patronage decisions at airports. According to the study of choice sets conducted by Siggle and Sewall (1987), the retailer establishments that consumers patronize, form choice sets that share similar responses. Furthermore, they assert that prior knowledge, previous experiences, current information obtained from friends, advertisements, and other sources, influences the consumer's needs, motivations, and evaluation criteria to patronize particular retail outlets. Homer and Kahle (1988) found that people's personal values (i.e. self-actualization and social affiliation) were significantly related to shopping patronage. Telci (2012) concluded that shopping patronage has a direct effect on shoppers and provides a need for social recognition. Baltas et al. (2010) contend that a focused strategy of patronage can only be effective if consumers share in common characteristics and when correlated, can further predict targeting efforts of shopping behaviors.

Westbrook and Black (1985) find that shopping motivations and social interaction are affiliated with *affiliation theories*. They describe affiliation theory as: "*The motivation to affiliate directly or indirectly with other shoppers. Direct affiliation involves social interaction and communications, while indirect affiliation describes the process in which shoppers identify with particular reference groups through their patronage, dress, or mannerism in retail settings*" According to Rokeach (1973), *Value* is defined as: "*As an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence*"..... *Once a value is learned, it becomes part of a value system in which each value is ordered in priority relative to other values*" (pp. 9-17).

Pitts and Woods (1992, 1994) provided a strong argument between values and choice criteria. They verified a positive relationship exists between values and various aspects of consumer behavior and attitudes in determining shopping preference. Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) believe that what drives a person's decision stems from a value system rather than a single value. They argue that an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and behavior, as a whole, can provide more reliable information than a single value when understanding the consumer (Kamakura and Novak, 1992).

Much of the literature on in the area of store choice suggest that shopping patronage by retail image attributes has not been extensively explored and the majority of academic research has focused on the retail image of individual stores, but few have examined the image of shopping centers (Birtwistle et al., 1998, Frasquet et al., 2000, Arslan et al., 2010, Gudonaviciene and Alijosiene, 2013). Further research suggests that because shoppers are not homogenous in nature and are seeking different benefits from retail outlets, segmenting of shoppers by image attributes is important and can predict patronage (Dennis et al., 2001, Dubihlela, 2014). Consequently, there has been an on-going debate between research practitioners as to whether markets can be segmented in a reliable way using causal variables of purchasing behavior and patronage (Assael H. and Roscoe, M. 1976, Zimmer and Goldberg, 1988).

In 1958, Martineau defined retail store image as: “...*the way in which the retail store is interpreted in the shopper’s mind partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes*”

Although store image has been defined in various ways, Hook (1989) concluded: “*Store image consists of a combination of tangible or functional factors and intangible or psychological factor that a consumer perceived to be present*”

An overview of retail image studies identifies: *atmospherics*, *merchandising* (i.e. retail mix), *accessibility* (i.e. safety) as part of the main attributes for shopping center image, and these characteristics have been used as the main focus of most studies in this area (Levy et al., 1998, Bell 1999, Berman et al., 2001, Frasquet et al., 2001). Although a recent study suggests that atmosphere, parking and professionalism are the distinguishing three attributes that resulted in their study (Gudonaviene and Alijosiene 2013). Mejia and Benjamin (2002) have studied the idea that non-spatial factors, particularly *image and mix*, are as important to shopping patronage as spatial factors. Grewal et al. (1998) suggest retail image is the consumer’s perception of store attributes such as merchandise quality, service, and convenience. Chowhury, Reardon, and Srivastava (1998) found that structured and unstructured image ratings are comparable about effectiveness. Kirkup and Rafiq (1994) highlight that tenant mix affects the overall image of a shopping center. Anikeeff (1996) asserts that the retail mix is more important to shopping centers than to any other type of commercial property. Mejia and Benjamin (2002) concludes that non-spatial factors remain important because of the competitive environment; they promote brand identity as retail establishments increasingly have alternative non-physical store formats and represent a means of shopping center intangible value.

Atmospherics is revealed an important attribute for shopping patronage (Sit, Merrilees and Birch, 2003). Kotler (1973) originated the term *atmospherics* to describe the intentional control and manipulation of environmental cues. According to Wakefield and Baker (1998) and Nicholls (1995), *atmospherics* are environmental cues perceived by the consumer; atmospheric elements include the layout, interior architecture, décor, lighting, music, aromas, and cleanliness (Donovan and Rossiter 1982, Baker, 1986, Turley and Milliman, 2000, 2004). Past research contends that the physical environment of retail outlet centers affects store patronage (Bellenger et al., 1980, Donovan and Rossiter 1982, McGoldrick et al., 1992b, Bitner 1992, Turley and Milliman, 2000, 2004, Singh and Sahay, 2012). According to Mazursky and Jacoby (1986), and Smith and Burns (1996), environmental cues of retail outlets act as the lines of communication to the consumer’s and act as determinants of the image perceived by the shopper, this image, whether good or bad affects a consumers patronage behavior. Milliman and Turley’s (2000) article unveiled sixty studies on *atmospherics* and found all having some connection with shopping behavior.

The assortment of the retail mix has been widely recognized in the retail literature as an important element for consumers in determining the image of a shopping facility and in turn, store choice (Kirkup and Rafiq, 1994, Finn and Louviere, 1996, Wakefield and Baker 1998, Akir and Othman, 2010). Brown (1992) delineates the retail mix as the combination of stores occupying a shopping center. Anikeeff (1996) found that the retail mix is more important to shopping centers than to any other type of commercial property. Finally, in the Wakefield and Baker Study (1998), they conclude that the retail mix induces excitement among the consumers image of the facility and in turn influences patronage. Schiffman L. and Kanuk (1997) explain that many consumers are risk-averse and will not shop if there is perceived danger. Lee et al. (1999) believes that new attractive shopping facilities elicit a false sense of security to its shoppers and is attractive to criminals. He further explains that ecological based research and theory to crime causation can be explained with the combination of human ecology, rational choice, and deterrence concepts. Cohen and Felson (1979) argue that three social conditions must take place: (1) the availability of suitable targets to victimize, (2) the presence of motivated offenders to commit the crimes, and (3) the absence of capable guardians to deter potential deviant behavior. They state the occurrence of all three conditions presents the

highest time places of crime occur. Whereas at the lowest time places of crime occur is when these variables are not prevalent. While retail officials now have a new criminal, *terrorism* to contend with, security concerns at shopping facilities are of the utmost importance and effecting shopping choice behavior (Bilefsky et al., 2002). Despite its significance, there are very few studies that link safety to store choice; the most significant ones are Bellenger and Greenberg (1977), who researched *security* against the *quality of the center*. Wee (1986), found that a *safe place to be* was associated with the *facilities*; and finally Frasquet and Molla (2001) believe that personal security was associated with atmosphere/leisure attributes.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

A study conducted by Tauber (1972) on motivations underlying shopping behavior found that there are many psychological needs of the consumer beyond those relating to the product. Tauber identified both personal and social motives that influence shopping behavior, the main social factors included: (1) social interaction outside the home, (2) communication with others having similar interests, (3) affiliation with reference groups, (4) obtaining increases in social status, and (5) achieving success in negotiations.

The following hypotheses are developed: H1₀: Consumer behavior patterns of *shopping patronage* at airports are not influenced by *reference group values*. H1: Consumer behavior patterns of *shopping patronage* at airports are influenced by *reference group values*. Many studies have suggested that *atmospherics*, *merchandising* (i.e. retail mix), *accessibility* (i.e. safety) are among the factors that influence patronage behaviors of the consumer, (Levy et al., 1998, Bell 1999, Berman et al., 2001, Frasquet et al., 2001). For the purpose of this study, retail image will be empirically tested using these well-known attributes and their relationship to consumer shopping patronage in a retail airport setting. The following hypotheses are developed: H2₀: Consumer behavior patterns of *shopping patronage* at airports are not influenced by the *retail image* (i.e. atmospherics, retail mix and safety).

H2: Consumer behavior patterns of *shopping patronage* at airports are influenced by the *retail image* (i.e. atmospherics, retail mix and safety). Shopping patronage behaviors were measured using instruments already tested for good reliability and validity - *Reference Group Values: The Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence Scale* (Bearden, Netmyer and Teel, 1989) and *List of Values (LOV)* (Kahle 1983) scale. *Retail Image: Consumer Image of Retail Stores* (Osgood et al., 1957, Dickerson and Albaum, 1977). However, to ensure for content and face validity as well as reliability of the questionnaires, pre-testing was conducted on a small sample at two airports and a small focus group evaluated the results before continuing with the main study (Nunnally 1978, 1994). Taking into account these factors and the number of passengers that pass through each airport a day, this study found a sample size of (N=375) three hundred and seventy five was adequate. A field-based study was employed over a two-week period on a random sample of departing passengers, at two airports, equal in size and distance, were asked to complete a self-administered written survey. Consequently, a total of all 375 surveys were filled out, only 334 completed questionnaires were analyzed for this study, after eliminating 41 incomplete surveys from the data analysis, for a response rate of 89%. * *Shopping Patronage* = the number of visits to the airport in the last three months

RESULTS

The following sample descriptive results were found from the survey: the majority of respondents were female (75.5%, n= 253), the largest group of respondents (n=145, 43.3%) were between 35-44 years old, the largest group is those that earned a high school diploma (n=89, 26.6%) and the largest group is Caucasians (n=168, 50.1%). In analyzing the relationship between consumer behavior of shopping patronage and the *influences of reference group values*, the following analysis is reported: Factor analysis extraction was performed to reduce the number of items (unrotated) in the measure that tested consumer's

willingness to conform to the expectation of others regarding purchase decisions. The 12 descriptives were entered for analysis Table 1.

Table 1: Factor Analysis – Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.180	43.166	43.166	5.180	43.166	43.166
2	2.170	18.086	61.252	2.170	18.086	61.252
3	1.197	9.973	71.224	1.197	9.973	71.224
4	0.932	7.770	78.994			
5	0.666	5.550	84.545			
6	0.566	4.719	89.263			
7	0.438	3.649	92.912			
8	0.344	2.867	95.779			
9	0.206	1.718	97.497			
10	0.175	1.454	98.951			
11	0.084	0.704	99.656			
12	0.041	0.344	100.000			

This Table shows the results of a Factor Analysis Extraction of 12 items that are used to test Consumer's Willingness to Conform to the Expectation of Others, Regarding Purchase Decisions. Components: 1. Want to be Like Someone, 2. Consult People, 3. Others Like Brands I Buy, 4. Observe What People Buy, 5. Friends Approval, 6. Identify With People, 7. Ask Friends, 8. Buy What Others Would Approve, 9. Know of Brands that Make Good Impressions, 10. Gather Information, 11. Others Seeing Me Use Product & 12. Achieving a Sense of Belonging

The Eigenvalues were examined for results greater than 1. The first two met these statistical criteria: (1) *If I want to be like someone, I often try and buy the same brands that they buy (eigenvalue = 5.18)* and (2) *I often consult other people to help choose the best alternative available from a product class (eigenvalue = 2.17)*. Next, to examine the relative magnitudes, a scree test was conducted to further evaluate the extracted factors. It showed the same results, therefore the next stage, to obtain more meaningful results; a factor analysis rotation was conducted. The rotated factors were correlated and computed among the twelve factors. The results presented the first and second factors accounted for 39.51% and 14.09% of the variance of the ten variables. In total, the two factors accented for 53.60% of the variable variance. To further test these rotated extracted variables, a correlation analysis was conducted of the dependent and the two extracted independent variables. Table 2 shows that *Consulting Others* correlates with shopping patronage in an inverse position, $r = -0.185$, $p < 0.01$. The magnitude of shopping patronage with the other measured variable *Want to be Like Someone*, showed no correlation or significance with *shopping patronage*.

A Chi-Square test was conducted to test whether the actual values are similar to the expected values. The two measurable factors used previously were used for testing. The first sample yielded significant differences with the two variables. The greatest discrepancy was with the question 1, *If I Want to be Like Someone, I Often Try and Buy the Same Brands That They Buy*. The actual $N=134$ to the expected $N=66.8$, with a residual = 67.2 that chose the answer, *I Agree*. The Chi-Squares were both significant at a 99% level (significance < 0.01) and indicates the values are not independent of each other.

Next, a paired-sample t-test was conducted to evaluate the two measured factors (questions 1, and 2,) in pairs in order to understand the influence of *reference group values* on *shopping behaviors*. The results indicated that the mean concern for *Wanting to be Like Someone* (question 1) $\underline{M}=2.72$, $\underline{SD}= 1.07$, was significantly lower than the mean concern for *Consulting Other People* (question 2) $\underline{M}=3.21$, $\underline{SD}= 1.17$, $t=-8.252$, $p < 0.001$. These results also indicates that a significant correlation exists between these two

variables $r=0.525$ and a significance level of $p<0.001$ indicating that those who *Want to be Like Someone* (question 1) *Tend to Consult Others* (question 2), Table 3.

Table 2: Correlation

		Frequency Traveled In Last 3 Months	Want to Be Like Someone	Consult Others
Frequency traveled in last 3 months	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.026	-0.185**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.638	0.001
	N	334	334	334
Want to be Like Someone	Correlation Coefficient	0.026	1.000	0.414**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.638	.	0.000
	N	334	334	334
Consult Others	Correlation Coefficient	-0.185**	0.414**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.000	.
	N	334	334	334

This Table shows the results of the Correlation Analysis of the Dependent Variable (Frequency Traveled in the Last 3 Months) with the two extracted Independent Variables: 1. *Want to be Like Someone* & 2. *Consult Others*. * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$ and *** $p<0.001$

Table 3: Paired Samples T-Test and Correlation

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Want to be Like Someone	2.72	334	1.077	0.059
	Consult Others	3.21	334	1.175	0.064
			N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Want to be Like Someone & Consult Others		334	0.525***	0.000

These Tables show the results of a Paired Samples t-Test and Correlation analysis between the two variables: 1. *Want to be Like , Someone* & 2. *Consult Others*. * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$ and *** $p<0.001$

The second scale tested consumer’s similarities and differences as they relate to personal values both internally and externally. A correlation analysis was conducted to summarize the strength and direction of association between the interval variables. All measured variables were highly correlated with each other with a range from $r=0.973$ to $r=0.980$. All the variable were significant $p<0.001$. Next a Chi-square was performed to test the observed frequencies/proportions to the expected frequencies/proportions of all the variables. All but seven results had large discrepancies between the actual and expected variables. The largest discrepancy being between *Self Respect and Sense of Accomplishment* with a residual= 50.9. The smallest being between *Warm Relation with Others and Fun and Enjoyment* with a residual =0.1. The results support high Chi-square values ranging from $r=78.06$ to $r=225.29$, significant where $p<0.001$. for all values and a cell count of 37.7% indicating that, the majority of measured variables are not independent of each other.

The finding from all the above data are statistically significant at the 99% level, so it can be concluded the null hypothesis can be rejected. The results for the first scale showed a strong correlation and significance $p<0.001$ between the three extracted variables, as well as small differences between the means, which ultimately supports how influential reference groups can be in making purchase decision. The results from the second scale also indicate significance $p<0.001$ for all variables and correlation outcomes that were

very strong, which indicated how these personal values can co-relate in understanding consumer behaviors and possibly predicting shopping patronage.

In analyzing the relationship between *consumer behavior of shopping patronage and the retail image*, the following analysis is reported: A correlation analysis was performed to measure the strength and association between the variables. The results showed that thirteen of the twenty variables indicated a high level of significance, $p < 0.05$, with strong magnitudes of correlation. The highest correlation between cleanliness/dirty and safe/unsafe with $r = 0.628$. To reduce the amount of variables and identify the variation among measures, an unrotated factor analysis was conducted. The test determined to extract six variables with eigenvalues greater than 1. The highest eigenvalue magnitude was with the measured variable cleanliness/dirty (5.18) and accounted for 25.93% of variance of the variables. The second measured variable extracted was good lighting/poor lighting (3.53), which accounted for 17.67% of variance among these variables, the third variable extract was unattractive décor/attractive décor (2.839) and accounted for 14.197% of variance, the fourth variable was dirty store/clean store (1.38) and accounted for 6.93% of variance, the fifth variable was easy to park/difficult to park (1.31) and accounted for 6.59% of variance, and finally the sixth variable was nearby/distant (1.23) and accounted for 6.18% of the variance among the variables. Factor rotation was then used to analyze the correlations between each variable and the factors for a Varimax rotation to recognize interpretable outcomes.

The results of the factor loading matrix indicted correlations between each of the variables and the factors for a Varimax rotation. It showed that items 3 (0.832), 4 (0.541), 7 (0.832), 12 (0.717), 17 (0.704), and 18 (0.520) are associated with Factor 1, items 13 (0.893), 14 (0.501), and 15 (0.944) are associated with Factor 2, items 1 (0.602), 10 (0.887), and 11 (0.902) are associated with Factor 3, items 2 (0.650), 5 (0.361), 6 (0.668), 8 (0.569), and 9 (0.846) are associated with Factor 4, items 16 (.878), and 21 (.468) are associated with Factor 5 and lastly, item 19 (0.788) is associated with Factor 6. The factors were then associated and identified to form clusters. Factor 1: *Atmosphere* (Décor, Clean, Hours, Poor, Location, and Products). Factor 2: *Identity* (Favorite, Friends, and Prices). Factor 3: *Visible* (Cleanliness, Safe, and Known). Factor 4: *CONVENIENCE* (Lighting, Parking, Proximity, Layout, and Drive). Factor 5: *Impression* (Ads, and Class). Factor 6: *Layout* (Spacious). The proportion of variance accounted for each of the rotated factors indicating the relative importance was reported to be 12.8% for the first, 19.91% for the second, 7.10% for the third, 6.20% for the fourth, 9.51% for the fifth and 12.92% for the sixth of the twenty variables. In total accounted for 68.49% of the variable variance.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the prediction of *shopping patronage and retail store image* (i.e., atmospherics, retail mix and safety), Table 4. All the independent variables were used to test this relationship against the dependent variable of *number of visits in the last three months (shopping patronage)*. From the results, all variables met the entry requirement to be included in the equation. The model represented significance and a good data fit ($p < 0.01$), with an F-value of (29.0), and represents that they are significantly related. Table 5 shows that the R-value = 0.812, which was a substantial correlation between the predictor variables and the dependent variable. The R^2 -value = 0.660 indicated that about 66% of the variance in the dependent variable, the *number of visits in the last three months (shopping patronage)*, was explained by the predictor variables. The β value that has the highest influence on shopping patronage was the variables of *favorite stores* (1.1), followed by *convenience of location* (0.801), and then *frequency of ad seen* (0.770). The direction of influence for nine of the variables was positive and eleven were negative. Four of the variables significance values were indicated to be more than .1 and therefore, not reliable: Safe (0.757), Known (0.508), Prices (0.209), and Class (0.936). The seventeen remaining variables all indicated strong significance. Based on these results, the remaining *store image* measures appear to be better predictors of shopping patronage.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	390.065	20	19.503	29.022	.000(a)
	Residual	200.935	29	0.672		
	Total	591.000	31			
			9			
			9			

This Table shows a Regression Analysis to evaluate the prediction of Shopping Patronage and Retail Store Image. (a) Predictors: Upper/Lower Case Shoppers Attracted, Convenience of Loc., Fav. Store, Known Airport, Parking, Dirty/Clean Store, Spacious/ Crowded Layout, Drive, Decor, Prices, Quality of Products, Clean/Dirt, Lighting, Layout, Frequency of Ad Seen, Poor vs. Good Place to Shop, Proximity, Hours of Operation, Safe/ Unsafe Place to Park, Friends Shop Here. (b) The Dependent Variable: Frequency traveled in last 3 months.
 * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ and *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5: R-Values

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.812(a)	0.660	0.637	0.820

This shows that the R-Value has a substantial correlation between the Predictor Variables and the Dependent Variable. The R Squared explains 66% of the variance in the Dependent Variable. (a) Predictors: Upper/Lower Case Shoppers Attracted, Convenience of Location, Favorite Store, Known Airport, Parking, Dirty/Clean Store, Spacious/ Crowded Layout, Drive, Decor, Prices, Quality of Products, Clean/Dirt, Lighting, Layout, Frequency of Ad Seen, Poor vs. Good Place to Shop, Proximity, Hours of Operation, Safe/ Unsafe Place, Friends Shop Here. The (b) Dependent Variable: Frequency traveled in last 3 months.

Based on these results, the individual variables make a significant contribution, Sig. F = <0.01, to the prediction of shopping patronage and therefore, the null hypotheses is rejected. This test also produced a high R²-value = 0.66 indicating a strong use of these variables for explaining shopping patronage. Patterns of responses were also identified and clustered into groups that had similar needs, wants, and behaviors. Six groups were classified, and based on these clusters, profiles can be determined to define segments and target markets. Therefore, Based on the tests performed, it can be concluded that *retail* outlet image (i.e. atmospherics, retail mix, and safety) statistically can influence shopping patronage.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Airport retailing is a new branch of retail activity and has become popular with the steady increase in passenger traffic throughout the world. Retail at airports, in terms of shopping, has a captive, restrictive, and unique mindset consumer and does not follow the traditional shopping mall patronage patterns. Therefore, understanding the thought process, needs, and preferences of consumers shopping at airports becomes of great interest to researchers and practitioners for theoretical and practical bases. This study’s primary research was to explore the preferences and behaviors in regards to *reference group values* and *retail image* as a means to predict *shopping patronage* within an airport setting.

With the association between *reference group values* and *shopping patronage*, two scales were used for this hypothesis. The first scale was reduced to two factors of the twelve, which accounted for the majority of variance among the variables. The first variable, *Want to Be Like Someone*, showed no association or significance. The second variable extracted, *Consulting Others*, indicated an inverse association with strong significance to *shopping patronage*. This first sample showed significant differences with both variables and were both significant and not independent of each other. Further testing was performed, and it was found that a significant association exists between these two variables. From the second scale, all variables indicated a strong association and significant levels. Large differences also existed between the measured variables, meaning they are not independent of each other. As a result, H1 was supported.

With the association between *retail image* (atmospherics, retail mix, and safety) and *shopping patronage*, there was a strong association with 13 of the 20 measured variables, as well as a high level of significance. Six factors were extracted and showed high levels of association and significance. From the Varimax rotation, the variables were associated and identified to form clusters, as a result the following clusters were formed from the factors, Factor 1: Atmosphere, Factor 2: Identity, Factor 3: Visible, Factor 4: Convenience, Factor 5: Impression, and Factor 6: Layout. In total, the proportion of variable variance also was reported to account for 68.9%. The current study suggests that segmenting consumers into homogenous clusters with similar behaviors and preferences can better predict *shopping patronage*. As a result of the findings, H2 was supported.

The finding of this study concludes the impact of *reference group values and retail image* does have an influence on consumer shopping behavior within an airport retail setting. Particularly with internal and external retail image factors of the environment, which can play an important role in recognizing strategic opportunities in planning and positioning retail marketing mixes. Furthermore, the significant correlation outcomes regarding personal values indicate a co-related understanding of consumer behaviors and a possible predictor of shopping patronage. The overall research found strong support with the hypotheses and most relationships were found to be significant. Given the importance of retail placement, attempting to transition toward including consumer behavior variables and patterns would add value to researchers and practitioners when planning marketing strategies. These variables would provide a measure that is more complete in understanding shopping behaviors, as well as providing a model that can project revenues across the retail mix at a particular location. More specifically, the establishment of *reference group values and personal values* showed the formulation of judgments and patterns that can provide dominant shopping patronage influences. This information can then be integrated with behavior model variables to create a powerful target-marketing framework.

In addition, the association with *retail image* (atmospherics, retail mix, and safety) and *shopping patronage* has been established. The value to researcher's in understanding *retail image* factors is the ability to go beyond the simple delineation of a single retail outlet and incorporate the macro and micro variables of the whole travel process. Many studies to date either focus on the individual retail store to attract shoppers or the agglomeration of retail outlets to attract a broader segment of shoppers that want to maximize shopping costs. The merging of the macro and micro aspects may further delineate the different consumer groups into viable market segments that represent the suitable retail mix.

This study was also able to classify the retail image factors into sub-segment clusters to identify similarities among the samples. This technique is particularly beneficial and has an ease of application and interpretation for practitioners. Since the growth of airport retailing has provided opportunities for management and operation, which has become an integral part of the overall funding system for airports globally, new strategies will benefit airport retail operators and managers by giving them a new tool that can be practically applied and can evolve to meet the changing needs of airport users. There are certain inherent limitations associated with this study, one being the results of this research will not reflect the general nature of all passengers at all airports. In addition, the sample for this study was composed mainly of females (76%), which have limited the results to reflect a possible gender bias. Future research to replicate and extend this study should continue to be examined, perhaps using other unique shopping settings. Another area for future study should investigate the inclusion of other marketing factors that reflect the evolution of consumer behaviors, such as 1) customer value, (2) service quality, (3) satisfaction, and (4) loyalty to study shopping patronage.

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