Developing a typology of airport shoppers

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Abstract

In view of the interrelationship between shopping and tourism, the increasing number of travellers, and the rising amount of shops and sales at the airport, insight in airport shopping motivations and airport shopper types is crucial to work out an optimal marketing strategy for airport shops. Because traditional shopping motivations and shopper type research is mainly focused on home-, clothing and grocery shopping and the specific character of an airport environment creates the impression of different shopping needs and shopper types, travellers at the Brussels airport are questioned by means of a standardized questionnaire. The results revealed two traditional shopping motivations—experiential and functional—and two motivations relating to the airport infrastructure and atmosphere. Travellers can be incited to consume by characteristics that are typical for an airport environment, with multilingual shop communication and the possibility to pay with different currencies on the one hand and impulse purchase, purchase out of boredom and purchase urged by the surrounding atmosphere on the other. Furthermore, three airport shopper types were distinguished: “mood shoppers”, “shopping lovers” and “apathetic shoppers”. The apathetic shopper is the most universal shopper. This type of shopper is indifferent to shopping no matter the context. “Mood shoppers” and “shopping lovers” are both motivated to purchase due to features of an airport. While the mood shopper is mostly triggered by atmospheric and mood elements typical for an airport environment, shopping lovers like shopping in all its aspects, although the airport-infrastructure appears to be an extra stimulation for purchase.

Keywords: Airport shopping; Shopping motivations; Shopper typology

1. Introduction

Shopping is considered to be one of the oldest and most important aspects of tourism. For many tourists no trip is complete without having spent time in shops, malls or at local markets (Hudman & Hawkins, 1989; Keowin, 1989). Several authors even believe in the “urge to shop” as a motivator to travel (Heung & Qu, 1998; Lundberg, 1976). “To be able to peruse, to examine, to feel and to think of the joys derived from purchasing certain merchandise is indeed pleasurable to millions of people, and for them it is a minor, if not a major reason for travel” (Lundberg, 1976). Because of this inter-relationship between tourism and shopping, airport policymakers no longer consider the transportation of passengers between one destination and another as the solely purpose of an airport. They believe that an airport can be a leisure attraction and primary destination in its own right (Freathy & O’Connell, 1999). Also retailers realized that waiting passengers could be a lucrative source of revenue and increased their involvement in airports in general and in departure lounges in particular (Rowley & Slack, 1999). Despite these changes dictated by commercial imperatives, airport retailing and its customers remain an under researched and poorly illustrated area of study (Freathy & O’Connell, 1999). For example, the question arises how do travellers perceive this “airport shopping mall”? More importantly, it is unclear by which shopping motivations airport travellers are driven, as well as what different types of shoppers can be distinguished among travellers at an airport. Indeed, quite a lot of studies deal with shopping motivations and shopper typologies (see Geuens, Brengman, & S’Jegers, 2002 for a review;
Sulzmaier, 2001), but either they pertain to home-, clothing or grocery shopping and not to airport shopping or if they do relate to tourism and airports, they only take the motivation for tourism and leisure activities into account. The objective of the current study is to carry out a quantitative study at the Brussels airport to discover all possible shopping motivations of Belgian travellers. Besides defining consumers’ shopping motivations, an attempt will be made to deduce a shopper typology of travellers applied to the airport environment.

2. Shopping motivations

2.1. Airport shopping motivations

Several authors believe that shopping is one of the most popular tourist activities because it satisfies part of people’s need for leisure and tourism (Kent, Shock, & Snow, 1983). Shopping is viewed as a form of recreation that provides enjoyment and relaxation (Bussey, 1987; Gratton & Taylor, 1987; Timothy & Butler, 1995). At an airport, especially holiday or leisure travellers (contrary to business travellers) are motivated for tourism and leisure because they spent most of their time in the terminal (Vester, 1996; Tosic, 1992; Wells, 1986). Tourism and leisure activities are dictated by two motivational structures: (1) the wish to contrast day-to-day or ordinary life routines and (2) the wish to be out-of-place. The break from everyday routine can be reached by dramatizing the ordinary as shopping malls and themed environments. Nowadays, tourist attractions of the past like historical sites, nature and large commercial cities have been taken over by new attractions such as leisure parks and large malls (Urry, 1995; Rojek & Urry, 1997). The airport of Munich, for example, has attracted more tourists than Ludwig’s castle Neuschwanstein and is Bavaria’s tourist attraction number one (Sulzmaier, 2001).

2.2. General shopping motivations

On the basis of an extensive review of general shopping literature Geuens et al. (2002) conclude that in general three different types of shopping motivations can be distinguished: (1) functional motivations, (2) social motivations and (3) experiential or hedonic motivations. Functional motivations pertain to tangible aspects such as product assortment, product quality, convenience, price, etc. (Sheth, 1983; Westbrook & Black, 1985; Shim, Gehrt, & Holikova, 1998; Dholakia, 1999; Geuens et al., 2002). Social motivations reflect the need to communicate with others sharing the same interests, affiliating with peer groups, interactions with salespeople, etc (Tauber, 1972; Reynolds & Beatty, 1999; Dholakia, 1999; Geuens et al., 2002). Experiential/ hedonic motivations consist of the need for sensory stimulation, and new or enjoying experiences (Tauber, 1972; Sheth, 1983; Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980; Dholakia, 1999; Geuens et al., 2002). The importance of each motive depends on personal (e.g. some people are born to shop while others cannot appreciate it) and situational variables (e.g. time pressure), as well as on the product category sought for (groceries evoke less experiential andhedonic motivations than apparel) and the distribution format chosen (e.g. online versus mall shopping) (Falk & Campbell, 1997; Eastinck & Feinberg, 1999; Aylott & Mitchell, 1998; Dholakia, 1999; Van Kenhove, De Wulf, & Van Waterschoot, 1999). Although these general motivations were mainly found in a traditional home-, grocery and apparel situation, there is no reason to assume that these motivations would not be present in an airport environment.

3. Shopping in an airport environment

Airport shopping can be considered as a specific type of in-store shopping, where grocery products as well as clothing, are sold next to several other types of products. The most common commercial outlets and activities found at the airport are convenience stores, specialty stores, duty-free shops, food and beverage services, passenger service facilities, leisure facilities and airport advertising or telephone services. However, with a view to maximize the revenues some airports go even further. Schiphol airport (The Netherlands) e.g. provides a casino and imaginary golf facilities, while Changi airport (Singapore) possesses a karaoke, a swimming pool and bathing room in order to increase customer satisfaction, sales of the duty-free and retail shops and the usage of leisure facilities (Kim & Shin, 2001). Therefore, airport shopping can be seen as a mix of grocery, clothing and other types of shopping. Indeed, the airport mall is a specific combination of a wide variety of traditional as well as more exotic stimuli and situations, which may evoke more different motivations than previously were found in an airport context. Next to the motivation to contrast day-to-day routine and the motivation to be out-of-place (which are inherently connected to travelling), more general motivations pertaining to home-, grocery and apparel shopping as well as more specific travel-related motivations may be expected as well.

1. First of all, an airport can trigger several functional motivations such as a good price, convenience, product assortment, and quality shopping. Despite the abolition of duty free and tax-free shopping for intra-European flights in 1999, prices at airports are still cheaper than in regular shops (except for liquors,
cigarettes and electronics) due to the Travel Value system.\footnote{The Travel Value concept stands for the travel value of a product and serves as a substitute for the well-known tax-free concept. It can be defined as “doing purchases while travelling, at a price that is cheaper than in regular shops”. Its main function is to limit the losses in turnover due to the abolition of tax-free and duty-free shopping for intra-European flights.} Therefore, airport consumers may be price-driven. Secondly, the presence of shops at the airport is very convenient for the traveller. It allows him or her to buy food or other travel goods at any time. A third factor is the large and various product assortments, with both international brands and local specialties. As most products are of well-known international brands, quality is usually assured. Qualitatively seen, consumers have more faith in airport products than in products of local souvenir shops. A last determinant is the outstanding service delivered at airport shops: multilingual communication, high speed service, professional advice, etc (Vlitos Rowe, 1999).

2. Also social motivations can be expected to appear in an airport context: meeting other people, communicating with others sharing similar interests, affiliating with peer groups, interaction with salespeople, etc. For some people travelling causes feelings of insecurity, fear or excitement, leading them to search for comforting, reassuring and encouraging behavior from salespeople (Dube & Menon, 2000).

3. Experiential motivations are mainly of significant importance if travellers are shopping in function of the surrounding atmosphere and the environment. The conclusions of a multitude of studies on atmospheres point unequivocally to the fact that the atmosphere is often more determining of the purchase decision than the product itself (a.o. Kotler, 1973; Spies, Hesse, & Loesch, 1997; Turley & Milliman, 2000). Moreover, in advanced consumer societies, shopping and strolling around the airport can become a symbolic act, a ritual that gives expression to the consumers’ self-presentation and “self-fashioning”. People engaging in those activities may come to the airport to become part of the cosmopolitan flair to be found there. “Authenticity is not necessarily what they are looking for, hyper-reality and hypersignification can become a more plausible version of reality as the disneyfication of urban and suburban shopping malls and town centers shows” (Sulzmaier, 2001). Finally, it has been shown that the use of airport offerings is characterized by impulse purchases (Sulzmaier, 2001), which indicates the influence of the surrounding atmosphere and the environment.

4. Besides functional, social and experiential motivations encountered in traditional in-store shopping situations, airport shopping may elicit travel-related motivations. First, there are the motivations to contrast day-to-day routine and to be out-of place as was discussed earlier. However, these motivations are almost inherent to travelling and can be considered to be present the moment one starts travelling. Nevertheless, other more specific travel-related motivations may be expected. Several authors agree that the shopping and purchasing habits of a tourist often vary considerably from his/her normal pattern at home (Timothy & Butler, 1995; Brown, 1992). For example, an important difference between a traditional and an airport environment is the waiting time. Waiting travellers shop because they are bored and seek entertainment in shopping (Rowley & Slack, 1999). Another motivation is that travellers leaving a certain country are shopping in order to spend their remaining foreign currencies. Furthermore, the habit of buying souvenirs and presents motivates travellers to shop (Sulzmaier, 2001). A unique duty- and tax-free wrapping, a special design, handy travel sets, additional promotional gadgets and small presents make airport shopping often more desirable and prestigious than shopping in the local souvenir shops. Large international brands design new product lines exclusively for duty- and tax-free shops in order to seduce travellers to buy an unique souvenir (Vlitos Rowe, 1999).

Based on the previous arguments, following hypothesis is advanced:

H1. Airport shopping is driven by both the motivations typically found for domestic shopping (functional, social, and experiential motivations) and travel-related motivations (contrast day-to-day routine, be out-of place, etc.).

4. Shopper typologies

The most frequently used variables to classify consumers are personal and/or situational variables (see Geuens et al., 2002). For example, Lesser and Hughes (1986) identified seven different shopping segments: (1) Inactive shoppers (not interested in shopping and not concerned about price, service or product assortment), (2) Active shoppers (looking for value for money, and interested in exclusive products and retailers with an upper middle class appeal), (3) Service shoppers (pay higher prices for additional services, seek convenient stores with friendly personnel), (4) Traditional shoppers (not enthusiastic about shopping, neither very price sensitive nor very demanding), (5) Dedicated fringe shoppers (continuously looking for new products and new ways of shopping, neither brand, nor store loyal, not interested in socializing), (6) Price
shoppers (willing to give up quality, service and assortment for the lowest price), (7) Transitional shoppers (young people who often switch stores). More recently, Boedeker (1995) segmented consumers into “new type shoppers” and “traditional shoppers”. New type shoppers are very demanding consumers valuing not only the recreational, but also the economic and convenience characteristics of a store. They prefer a good above a nearby store, value service, and often do not pre-plan purchases. Traditional shoppers, on the other hand, only buy pre-planned products and are not in for impulse buying, are not the first to buy new products, compare prices, look for bargains, and do not value recreational aspects. Finally, Geuens et al. (2002) hypothesized six different segments depending on the time the consumer has available (time-poor or time-rich), the extent to which social interactions are important, and the extent to which experiential elements are important: (1) Convenience shoppers (time-poor, no social nor experiential interest), (2) Low-price shoppers (time-rich, neither social nor experiential interest), (3) Social shoppers (time-poor, social but no experiential interest), (4) Intense social shoppers (time-rich, social but no experiential interest), (5) Experiential shoppers (time-poor, experiential interest), and (6) Recreational shoppers (time-rich, experiential interest). One author (Sulzmaier, 2001) made up a shopper typology pertaining to all types of airport shoppers. Besides travellers there a number of other potential—mainly unaddressed—consumers available at the airport: persons picking up or bringing passengers, employees and staff, airline crews, visitors, persons attending meetings, business community, visitors and local residents (Doganis, 1992; Jarach, 2001; Sulzmaier, 2001). She found that these potential consumers could be categorized into four core segments based on their similar motivational structures:

1. Strollers and half-day trippers (relaxers) are motivated by the international flair, the exciting atmosphere and the variety of offerings that are sold at the airport.
2. Leisure-interested employees, amusement-seekers and airline crew members staying overnight. This type of consumers demands extended evening opening hours as a precondition for using offerings. Important in that respect is that employees who live close to the airport are the ones interested in spending their leisure time at the airport.
3. Employees during their working time who want to be served by customized offerings.
4. Local residents (convenience shoppers) and persons picking up someone (pragmatics). This segment is easy to serve due to its down-to-earth expectations.

Since none of the previous studies really dealt with solely travellers at an airport it is hard to hypothesize which specific airport shopper types can be expected. Therefore, a general hypothesis is advanced:

H2. As is the case for domestic shopping, different airport shopper types can be distinguished going from previously found types (such as the convenience, low-price, apathetic, social, experiential, recreational or new-type shopper) to more travel-related shoppers (souvenir, exclusivity or exchange shopper, strollers, etc.).

5. Research objective

The objective of the current study is twofold. The first objective is to determine airport-shopping motivations by having respondents (travellers) indicate (1) the importance of several (tangible and non-tangible) aspects of airport shopping, as well as (2) the extent of agreement with statements concerning the nature of the purchase. The second objective is to deduce a shopper typology on the basis of factors that seem to determine shopping behavior in this specific context such as shopping motivations, personal and situational factors.

6. Research method

6.1. Participants

Belgian travellers leaving from the Brussels airport were asked to fill in a written questionnaire, either in the public departure hall (25%) or at the gates (75%). No reward was granted for participating. In total 236 Belgians filled in the questionnaire, of which 88 (37.4%) were female and 147 (62.6%) male. About 29% of the respondents were aged between 20 and 30 years, 55.5% fall in the category 31–50 years and 15.5% are older than 50. Forty-two percent of the respondents were holiday travellers, 50% business travel and 8% travelled for both reasons.

6.2. Measures

Opinions about travelling by plane and the facilities offered by airports are measured by means of (1) a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1=total disagreement till 5=total agreement, and (2) a 5-point Semantic Differential. The Likert type scale contains five items: (1) Shopping at the airport is part of travelling, (2) Prices at the airport are attractive, (3) Airports should not resemble shopping malls, (4) I compare prices at the airport with prices in shops in the city and (5) I like pondering in shops without buying. The semantic differential contains following poles: (1) Airports are merely terminuses for planes versus airports need to continue developing commercial activities, (2) Airport shops should offer the widest
range of products possible versus airport shops should continue offering mainly luxury goods, (3) Airport shops must be centralized at one point versus shops must be spread throughout the building or located near a gate, (4) Travelling by airplane remains expensive versus airfares have become inexpensive, (5) Travelling by airplane is very relaxing versus travelling by airplane excites me and/or makes me nervous, (6) Since the abolition of tax-free shopping, I select rather non-EU destinations versus the abolition of tax-free shopping does not have any impact on the selection of my destination, (7) The time to shop is too short versus the time between the check-in and boarding is too long, (8) My purchases are pre-planned versus my purchases are impulsive.

Shopping motivations are measured by means of (1) a 14-item scale concerning tangible and non-tangible aspects of airport shopping and (2) a 5-item scale on the nature of the purchase. For the 14-item scale, respondents have to indicate the importance of each item on a 10 points scale (the higher the score, the more important the criterion). The scale includes following items: convenience, offering of local goods/specialties, attractive prices, service in the shops (the professional advice being given by sales staff), wide product assortment, presence of international brands, speed of service at the check out, quality of the goods offered, possibility to pay with different currencies, multilingual shop communication (both sales, staff and marketing messages), possibility to buy souvenirs, promotions and demonstrations, buying to indulge yourself and crowded shops. The five items relating to purchase (impulse, planned, influenced by surrounding atmosphere, out of boredom or out of cost considerations) are rated on a 5-point Likert type scale going from 1 = total disagreement to 5 = total agreement.

Finally, respondents indicated socio demographic data (age, gender and nationality), travel behavior (frequency and capacity) and purchase behavior at the airport (frequency, location of the shop at the airport, preferential type of shop).

It took respondents on average only 10 min to fill out the questionnaire. In view of the fact that the questionnaire was relatively short and respondents were just waiting for boarding time, there is no reason to believe that answers are distorted due to fatigue problems.

6.3. Research results

To test H1, two Principal Component Analyses with Varimax rotation are applied on the 19 items measuring shopping motivations. The cut-off value to ascribe items to a factor is (1) a minimum factor loading of 0.5 and a maximum loading of 0.3 on another factor and (2) deleting the item does not imply an increase in the factor’s Cronbach’s Alpha.

Four latent dimensions explaining 58.63% of the variance were retained (see Table 1):

1. An airport-infrastructure related dimension consisting of the items “service in the shops”, “multilingual shop communication” and “the possibility to pay with different currencies”. This dimension seems to be a combination of the traditional social motivation and a functional motivation to deal with an unusual situation of foreign currencies, languages, and professionalism.
2. An airport-atmosphere related dimension determined by the items “impulse purchase”, “pre-planned purchase” (reverse scored), “purchase out of boredom” and “purchase influenced by the surrounding atmosphere”.
3. An experiential dimension with items loading high on “promotions” and “buying to indulge yourself”. This

Table 1
Airport shopping motivation dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Airport related</th>
<th>Atmospherics</th>
<th>Experiential</th>
<th>Functional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>0.664</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilingual communication</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility to pay with foreign currencies</td>
<td>0.747</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-planned purchase (reversed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.742</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse purchase</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.769</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase out of boredom</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.673</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase because of atmosphere</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souvenir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.778</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.764</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indulge purchase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.612</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
dimension is comparable to the experiential motivations quoted in previous studies (Geuens et al., 2002).

4. A functional dimension relating to “convenience”, “price” and “quality”, which is similar to the functional motivation in home-, clothing and grocery shopping (Geuens et al., 2002).

On the basis of the foregoing, we can conclude that the data generally support H1. A wide range of motivations—including functional, experiential, airport-atmosphere and airport-infrastructure-related motivations—seem to drive airport shopping. The previously found “contrast day-to-day routine” and “being out-of-place” motivations are incorporated in both the airport-atmosphere and airport-infrastructure-related dimensions. On the one hand the airport atmosphere dramatizes routine shopping and makes tourists feel out-of-place because of its exotic aura. On the other hand, tourists may also feel out-of-place because of the airport-infrastructure with its possibility to pay with foreign currencies and the multilingual shop communication. No pure social motivation dimension was detected, probably due to the fact that the questionnaire did not contain many items probing social motivations. Another reason could be that the “airport related” motivation incorporates some of the social motivations traditionally found in home–grocery or clothing shopping motivation taxonomies.

In order to make up a shopper typology for consumers at the airport, a hierarchical and a K-means cluster analysis is carried out on the four shopping motivations. The three-cluster solution appeared to be most appropriate (see Table 2):

1. Mood Shoppers score high on airport-atmosphere-related motivations and moderately on experiential motivations, while valuing airport-infrastructure related and functional motivations slightly negative.
2. Apathetic or Indifferent Shoppers score low on all dimensions.
3. Shopping Lovers enjoy shopping in all its aspects and score high on the airport-infrastructure-related, the experiential and functional motivation dimensions.

Besides shopping types found elsewhere, such as the apathetic shopper and the shopper lover, also a solely travel-related shopper type (mood shopper) is discovered. The apathetic shopper is in most aspects similar to the inactive shopper as defined by Lesser and Hughes (1986), while the shopping lover shares some, but not all, characteristics with the previously found “dedicated fringe shoppers”. However, one important difference is that the shopping lover is also inclined to shop because of airports' infrastructure-related features such as the multilingual shop communication and the possibility to pay with foreign currencies. The mood shopper is different from the experiential shopper found by Geuens et al. (2002). Both are driven by experiential elements, however, the mood shopper is mostly triggered by atmospheric and mood elements of airports, such as the specific airport atmosphere and the fact that the shopper is bored while waiting for the plane. Of course, the mood shopper is similar to the strollers and half-day trippers of Sulzmaier (2001) as she classified all travellers in that category. As a consequence, the data lend support to H2.

Chi-square and One Way Anova analyses with cluster membership on the one hand, and opinions about travelling by plane and the facilities offered by airports, travel behavior, purchase behavior at the airport and sociodemographics on the other, were used to profile the three clusters (see Table 3). Mood shoppers can be defined as mainly male, impulsive shoppers who prefer centralized shops. Respondents belonging to the apathetic cluster are mainly male, do not consider airport shopping as part of the journey, consider airports merely as a terminus for planes and are more likely to pre-plan their purchases. Shopping lovers are predominantly female, prefer one large shop above several small shops, have a slight preference for shops located near the departure gates, experience travelling by plane as exciting and/or causing tense, and are more likely to buy on impulse than to pre-plan their purchases. No significant difference is found between the three clusters in terms of age, travel frequency and travel capacity. The latter is rather surprising as it is often assumed that businessmen and tourists see airport-shopping possibilities in a different way (Sulzmaier, 2001; Tosić, 1992). Independent sample $t$-tests on shopping motivations, did not reveal any difference between businessmen and tourists either. This indicates that gender is a much more determining factor of airport shopping segments than travel capacity.

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2Since 90% of businessmen were male, we repeated these analyses with only males. The result remained the same: no significant difference between tourists and businessmen could be observed.
Tables 3

Profiling the different airport shoppers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mood shoppers</th>
<th>Apathetic shoppers</th>
<th>Shopping lovers</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males in cluster/cluster size</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>0.0030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males in cluster/males in sample</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females in cluster/females in sample</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Shopping at the airport is part of the journey</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.44*</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Airports resembling shopping malls is disturbing</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.73*</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I prefer one big shop where I can find everything I need</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>3.45*</td>
<td>0.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The mission of an airport is transporting people vs. airports need to continue developing commercial activities</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.68*</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Shops at the airport should be centralized vs. shops should be near to a departure gate</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>3.28*</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Travelling by plane is relaxing vs. excites me and/or makes me nervous</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>3.34*</td>
<td>0.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Purchases are pre-planned vs. purchases are impulsive</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>2.71*</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a This cluster is significantly different from the other two clusters.

*b This cluster is significantly different from the other cluster with the mean printed in bold.

7. Conclusions

On the one hand airport shopping seems to be driven by traditional needs such as functional and experiential motivations and on the other hand by travel-related needs such as airport-atmosphere-related and airport-infrastructure-related motivations. The travel-related motivations enclose the previously found motivations “to contrast day-to-day” and “to be out of place”, as the airport atmosphere and infrastructure dramatizes routine shopping and make tourists feel out-of-place (at an exotic place). No pure social motivations dimension was detected. Perhaps this could be explained by the fact that the questionnaire did not really contain items probing into social motivations such as “the need to communicate with others sharing similar interests”, “interactions with family members”, etc. Moreover, the airport-infrastructure-related motivation partly incorporates social motivations by including items such as “the need for professional advice from shop personnel” and “the need for multilingual communication”. Based on the four shopping motivations, three types of airport shoppers can be distinguished: “mood shoppers” (especially driven by airport-atmosphere-related and experiential motivations), “apathetic shoppers” (indifferent towards shopping, react to all motivations negatively) and “shopping lovers” (enjoy airport shopping in all its aspects, scoring high on the experiential, airport-infrastructure-related and the functional motivation). The mood shopper is a type of shopper that is totally different from all other shopper types ever distinguished in a home—grocery and apparel context. The mood shopper can exclusively be found in an airport environment because his/her motivation to shop is solely dictated by the airport atmosphere and other typical characteristics such as shopping out of boredom while waiting. “Shopping lovers” are similar to “dedicated fringe shoppers”, although the former are especially stimulated to shop by the airport infrastructure. The apathetic shopper is not at all interested in shopping, no matter whether he is in a shopping mall at home or at an airport. Confirming previous research (Lunt & Livingstone, 1992), men are more likely to belong to “apathetic shoppers” or “mood shoppers”, while more females belong to the “shopping lovers” than to the other clusters. Apparently, men are not inclined to shop unless boredom or the specific airport atmosphere drives them to shop. Furthermore, an interesting finding is that travel capacity (tourist or business) does not determine the shopper type. As a consequence, a different positioning of airport stores according to travel capacity seems irrelevant. Unlike shopper typologies for home-, clothing or grocery shopping, no “functional economic shopper” is discovered between airport shoppers. This could be explained by the fact that people do not shop at the airport for reasons of functionality only. The main reason for people being at the airport is their desire to catch a plane and not because they have to do some shopping. However, while waiting, passengers can be persuaded to shop. As a consequence, it is reasonable to believe that airport shopping will be more influenced by experiential, travel-related and atmospheric factors than by functional factors. In the airport environment functionality appears to be an additional reason to buy, but not a main motivation.

In terms of a marketing strategy for airport shops, shop owners have to bear in mind that about 40% of the travellers do not like shopping and pre-plan purchases. The other 60% are in for impulsive purchases, although the mood shopper (36%) will only do so when feeling really bored or to a lesser extent, when triggered by a pleasant atmosphere. Actually this means that only the shopping lovers form an attractive target group for airport shop owners (25%). Since shopping lovers indicate they would prefer larger stores where they can...
find a wide range of products or shops located near the gate, airport shop owners are advised to take this into account. When approached in the right way, mood shoppers can also become an interesting target group for airport retailers. Mood shoppers can be triggered to shop by creating an agreeable, pleasant, though exciting and exotic atmosphere. Therefore, airport retailers should emphasize the airports' contrast with day-to-day routine, its exotic environment and its offerings giving flair to one's holiday. Moreover, airport-infrastructure-related shopping motivations can be induced in mood shoppers. The possibility to exchange foreign currencies and multilingual shop communication should be communicated as extra-ordinary and exclusive currencies and multilingual shop communication should emphasize the airports' contrast with day-to-day routine, its exotic atmosphere. Therefore, airport retailers should emphasize the airports' contrast with day-to-day routine, its exotic environment and its offerings giving flair to one's holiday. Moreover, airport-infrastructure-related shopping motivations can be induced in mood shoppers. The possibility to exchange foreign currencies and multilingual shop communication should be communicated as extra-ordinary and exclusive features of airport shopping. Further, insight in airport shopping motivations and airport shopper types can be valuable information for training airport shop personnel.

Concerning research suggestions, a cross-cultural study is called for to check whether the Belgian findings also hold for other nationalities. Furthermore, future research could include more items measuring social motivations in order to test the influence of social motivations on airport shopping.

References


