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Entrepreneurship within airside food and beverage outlet patronage: The creation of ecosystems using outlet context and passenger's emotions

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Abstract

In this chapter, we investigate experiences of air passengers in the airside setting of commercial airports. While the concept of liminality has found increased interest in tourism studies, only few studies have contextualized the airside experience as a liminal one. We investigate the role of food and beverage consumption in this context as well as factors influencing food and beverage outlet patronage intentions. Using a European non-hub commercial airport as practical unit, we applied a mixed methods single case study methodology to investigate food and beverage outlet choice in the airside setting. It becomes evident that perceptions of liminality play an important role in this context. Findings support the claim that the airport environment constitutes a special context, an encapsulated or protected space; not only for passengers, but for employees alike. Whilst airports have a certain uniformity to regular travellers, infrequent travellers perceive air travel as an extraordinary activity, often paired with a certain uncertainty about related procedures. Evidence suggests that passengers' emotional states play a key role in consumption decisions. Depending on travel purpose and direction, passengers showed differing consumption behaviours. Understanding the airport airside area as a liminoid space and using the concept of boundary work for the transition between home and work realms (and back again) thus serves as a suitable frame of reference to help understand the phenomena that were observed and analysed in this study. Food and beverage consumption can then be understood to support the mental transition between home and work realms. Our findings thus allow linking the passenger clusters' different consumption behaviour to prevailing emotional states in their transgressions between work and home realm in the liminoid airside context.

Key Words: Liminality; Airport; Food and Beverage Consumption; Qualitative Analysis

Word Count: 7'675

Introduction

Over 3.8 billion passengers travelled in 2016 globally with figures estimated to near double by 2035 (IATA, 2016). With revenues from Food & Beverage consumption in airports being about 6\$ per enplanement (ACI, 2014), the non-aviation side of air travel plays a significant role in passenger satisfaction and experience as well as drives air travel growth (Castillo-Manzano, 2010; Schulz & Baumann, 2010). Nevertheless, research has overlooked the passenger experience in the airside context.

In a liminal state, participants are no longer in the initial status, but have not yet moved on to the next stage. Not only do the airport airside settings become a place where people transcend between locations, but also between realms, and are subject to time- and spacelessness (Rowley & Slack, 1999), the airport airside context can be considered to be a liminoid place. This issue has gained increasing attention in recent years (e.g., Huang, Xiao, & Wang, 2018; Merkle, Vlachos, & Keane, 2016).

Food and Beverages do not only fulfil physiological needs. Besides the physiological dimension of *feeding* the human body, the consumption of foods and beverages serves cultural and social purposes as well (Anderson, 2014). Eating and drinking can furthermore be a hedonistic and pleasurable experience (Delaney & McCarthy, 2014). In a post-modern perspective, consumption focuses on experience, as well as on ritual, myth and symbolism (Bareham, 2004; de Rezende & de Avelar, 2012; Tian & Tian, 2011; Williams, 2012), food and meals can then be perceived as symbols of culture and of social difference (Allen, Gupta, & Monnier, 2008; Morgan, Watson, & Hemmington, 2008). As Paddock (2011) elaborates, food consumption can mark particular occasions, both ordinary and extraordinary. Such occasions can also be the transitions between work and leisure realm, as Nippert-Eng (1996) claims.

Literature

In this section, we review literature dealing with *Air Passenger Experiences* in general as well as the *Role of Food and Beverages* before moving on to *Air Passenger Consumption Behaviour*.

Air Passenger Experience

Rowley and Slack (1999) examined the concepts of timelessness and spacelessness in the departure lounges of various airports globally. Whilst not explicitly clarified, it can be inferred from the context of their research that they dealt with airside departure lounges. Although claiming that many departure lounges offered similar facilities and similar ranges of goods, Rowley and Slack (1999) investigated those areas as environments where transit passengers are subject to a sense of disorientation in relation to time and place.

Following their investigation on passenger experiences and interactions within an international airport, Popovic, Kraal, and Kirk (2009) argue “*a gap exists in qualitatively addressing passenger experience in a way that includes flight and non-flight services*” (Popovic et al., 2009, p. 2).

This is in line with a model presented by Fodness and Murray (2007) who investigated passengers’ expectations of airport service quality in the North American context. They argue that the three dimensions *Servicescape*, *Service Personnel* and *Services* (including Food and Beverage concessions) would influence passengers’ airport experience. The *Servicescape* relates to the ambient conditions and the physical environment that is perceived by customers and has an effect on their behaviour (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). The model was later developed on re-specified for Airport Service Quality to include the dimensions *Function*, *Interaction* and *Diversion*. *Diversion* in this context refers to a dimension which allows “*a turning aside from the fact that the passenger is, in effect, “trapped” in the airport Servicescape toward activities that redirect their attention or stimulate them aesthetically*” (Fodness & Murray, 2007, p. 501).

The Role of Food and Beverages

Food is more than merely nutrition for the body. The consumption of foods and beverages serves cultural and social purposes as well (Anderson, 2014). In that perspective, the choice of food and beverages is influenced by cultural and religious norms, resulting in ways of eating that then are considered to be good or bad (Delaney & McCarthy, 2014). Food items can have a symbolic dimension and the customs and traditions of consuming it are manifested in ritualistic behaviour that varies in different cultures (Hegarty & O'Mahony, 1999). Eating particular foods in certain instances can “*be transformed into a sacred experience*” (Delaney & McCarthy, 2014, p. 106). As Paddock (2011) elaborates, food consumption can mark particular occasions, both ordinary and extraordinary. In a symbolic meaning, “*meals are*

used to mark special occasions, to celebrate rites of passage or to reinforce bonding” (Morgan et al., 2008, p. 114). Such occasions can also be the transitions between work and leisure realm (Nippert-Eng, 1996). According to boundary theory (Zerubavel, 1991; 1996), consumption of food and beverages can facilitate transgressing from the work to the leisure realm (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Consumption then can become part of a liminoid experience. The concept of liminality emerged from ethnographic studies of rites of passage. Liminality then refers to a transitional phase between two structural states (Lugosi, 2007). In a liminal state, then, the participant is no longer in the initial status, but has not yet moved on to the next one. The context in which consumption takes place has been shown to play a role by sociologists. As Mansvelt (2005) showed, “spectacular spaces” such as shopping malls, theme parks, or other enclosed venues can be disorienting or anxiety producing. Ritzer (1999) claimed that leisure and consumption experiences can be understood to replace inauthentic, alienating experiences in such spaces. Due to their enclosure and separation from other social spheres, airports can be seen to be such “spectacular spaces”. The notion of sacred spaces (Turner, 1974) connects to the concept of liminality in rites of passage (Turner, 1987). Airports have been conceptualized as liminal spaces by a number of authors (Christiansen, 2010; Eriksen & Døving, 1992; Lloyd, 2003), since they are a place in-between origin and destination for passengers.

The role of food consumption in the airport airside setting can thus be understood not only to serve physiological needs, but also to have a cultural and sociological dimension facilitating air passengers’ transgressions between origin and destination, but also between the home and the work realm.

Air Passenger Consumption Behaviour

Airports establish unique market conditions for food & beverage (F&B) outlets (Popovic et al., 2009), particularly for airside areas beyond security control. Airside passengers are essentially a captive audience (Bork, 2007), and the choice of F&B outlets can be more emotional than rational (Bork, 2007; Crawford & Melewar, 2003; Omar & Kent, 2001). For example, Rowley and Slack (1999) posed that the airport context creates a certain disorientation in relation to time (timelessness) and place (spacelessness), which stimulates an impulse behaviour to passengers. Impulse behaviour relates to unplanned decisions to buy products or services (Vänniä, 2013).

Since the time needed to clear security at commercial airports can vary considerably, travellers can become uncertain and anxious about the time available in the airside setting (Appold & Kasarda, 2006; Pompl, 2006). On the other hand, airports and airlines encourage passengers to arrive at the airport and to pass through security early, which leads to increased amounts of time spent waiting in the airside area. With time inbuilt between check-in and boarding, consuming foods and beverages can be an entertainment option that could increase pleasure and reduce arousal for air passengers (Bowes, 2002). Thus, shopping and dining activities serve as a means for the reduction of anxiety and boredom (Crawford & Melewar, 2003) and relax the feelings of a captive airside passenger (Fodness & Murray, 2007). In that setting, shopping and consumption behaviour often occur spontaneously as a pastime activity (Perng, Chow, & Liao, 2010). In line with findings presented by Castillo-Manzano (2010), Torres, Domínguez, Valdés, and Aza (2005) found that, within the context of one medium-sized Spanish airport, consumption at the airport increased with (waiting) time spent at the airport.

The effects of the airport environment on impulse buying behaviour were investigated by Crawford and Melewar (2003). The airport environment, as well as psychological effects of air travel, produce a disposition towards impulse buying behaviour. Airport concessionaires can increase revenues primarily by reducing anxiety and boredom for the passengers. Crawford and Melewar (2003) introduced a travel-stress diagram visualizing that passengers are 'captive' for retailers in the airside area. Once inside that area, passengers no longer follow standard purchase decision processes, but rather show impulse purchasing and consumption behaviour, linked to a relative insignificance of price in this environment (Bork, 2007). Bowes (2002) found that air passengers experience stress and excitement and that making use of retail and F&B facilities in the airside setting reduced those feelings. This view is supported by Caves and Pickard (2001). Bork (2007) supports the idea of reduced stress after security screening, and claims that excitement is increasing from the moment of arrival at the airport until boarding the plane.

Wansink and Sobal (2007) suggested that food-related decisions could be influenced by environmental cues unconsciously made by consumers. The servicescape influences emotions (Mari & Poggesi, 2013; Wakefield, Wakefield, Blodgett, & Blodgett, 2016) and, mediated by emotional states, *in turn influences consumer decision* (Fliess, 2009; Hoffman & Turley, 2002; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The stimulus-response model posits that atmospheric stimuli influence three basic emotional states: *pleasure - displeasure; arousal -*

non-arousal, and *dominance – submissiveness* (Fliess, 2012). Extending the initial Mehrabian-Russel model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), Liu and Jang (2009) found that perceived value mediated the relationship between emotional responses and behavioural intentions.

In this vein, the emotional state during airport-related processing activities is likely to influence passenger behaviour (Caves & Pickard, 2001; Fisher, 2011; Pragma, 2007) and shopping and consumption behaviour often occur spontaneously as a pastime activity (Perng et al., 2010). Omar (2002) found that impulse shopping could reduce boredom and confusion (e.g. between continents as well as between time zones, thus linking to the concept of timelessness and spacelessness (Rowley & Slack, 1999)), offering an explanation for the occurrence of airside impulse shopping which he defined as “*the airline passenger’s tendency to shop around, spontaneously, unreflectively and immediately*” (Omar, 2002, p. 92).

Following the concept of social visibility he claims that impulse shopping should be more likely to materialize in contexts that provide relative social anonymity – as airports do.

The presence or absence of other consumers may have a varying effect on dining pleasure and experience. Tse, Sin, and Yim (2002) found that customers associated high levels of crowdedness with high food quality, good reputation and low prices; and low levels of crowdedness with low food quality, high prices and poor reputation. Whilst Wall and Berry (2007) suggested social factors to be dominant in the evaluation of perceived services for hedonic consumption contexts, Kim and Lee (2012) found that the *number of other customers present* served as a quality indicator for potential customers in the pre-consumption stage. Andersson and Mossberg (2004) found that customers were even willing to pay more for the presence of other customers, for a nice interior as well as for quality service.

The role of food consumption in the airport airside setting can thus be understood not only to serve physiological needs, but also to have a cultural and sociological dimension facilitating air passengers’ transgressions between origin and destination. As airports constitute special places that are not easily researched, we apply a multi-method case approach, aiming at a more holistic perspective on the phenomena.

Materials and Methods

Based on the review of extant literature, we derive the need for a more holistic investigation of the factors that influence passengers’ decision-making in the airside context. We argue that, based on the context, passengers’ emotional states play a role in food and beverage-related decision-making in the airside setting of commercial airports.

In order to investigate the factors that influence passengers' patronage intentions in the airside setting and to explore the role of service brands in that context, an exploratory case research strategy using mixed methods was applied in order to address that gap (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). Mixed methods in this context refers to the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods within one case study. As Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state, "*both qualitative and quantitative researchers are concerned about the individual's point of view. However, qualitative investigators think they can get closer to the actor's perspective through detailed interviewing and observation*" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 10). In quantitative methods, then, the researcher is understood to be more independent from the researched (Saunders et al., 2012).

Based on access that could successfully be negotiated, one medium-sized commercial airport in Germany was selected as the practical unit of the case study. The airport, named as DEU airport, is a medium-sized, German commercial airport being one of the 10 largest non-hub airports in Germany, offering flights to both domestic and international destinations. Despite facing fierce competition from the mega-hubs in Frankfurt and Munich, small and medium-sized commercial airports still play an important role in German commercial aviation (Merkle & Lewis, 2014). With only some 0.3% of all commercial air passengers in being transit passengers, DEU airport almost exclusively serves origin & destination traffic. As such, the selected airport is a representative medium-sized commercial airport.

There are several terminals in the airport. All terminals are inter-connected on the airside in which all departing passengers can move freely, irrespective of which security checkpoint they have used to enter the airside areas. With the exception of one other airport, this terminal layout is found in all medium-sized German commercial airports. We thus argue that the airport chosen serves as a typical case for its class.

A total of ten different food and beverage outlets are located in the airside area of the airport on the main passenger level (**Error! Reference source not found.**)(Airport, 2014). All F&B outlets operate since the opening of the terminal, with most of them being refurbished and rebranded over the last two decades. All Food and Beverage outlets in the airport are operated by two concession companies; each of them being exclusively responsible for different terminals.

Outlet name	Location	Description	Offer	Seating available	Opening times	Operator
Bar	Terminal 1, Level 3	Bar-style outlet	Snacks and beverages	Yes	04:30 to 21:00	Company Alpha
Coffee	Terminal 3, Level 2	Coffee bar	Coffee, alcoholic beverages	No	Varying opening times	Operator 2
Coffee	Terminal 3, Level 2	Coffee bar	Coffee, alcoholic beverages	No	Varying opening times	Operator 2
Bar	Terminal 1, Level 2	Bar-style outlet	Snacks and beverages	No	05:00 to 20:00	Company Alpha
Bar	Terminal 1, Level 2	Bar-style outlet	Snacks and beverages	No	05:00 to 20:00	Company Alpha
Bar	Terminal 1, Level 3	Bar-style outlet in the non-Schengen area	Snacks and beverages	No	Varying opening times	Company Alpha
Café	Terminal 3, Level 3	Café-style outlet	Meals and beverages	Yes	04:00 until last departure in terminal 3	Operator 2
Restaurant	Terminal 3, Level 3	Italian-style outlet	Meals and beverages	Yes	04:00 until last departure in terminal 3	Operator 2
Bar	Terminal 1, Level 3	Bar-style outlet	Snacks and beverages	Yes	04:30 to 21:00	Company Alpha
Bar	Terminal 4, Level 1	Bar-style outlet	Snacks and beverages	No	Varying opening times	Company Alpha

Table 1. Airside F&B Outlets at DEU Airport

Qualitative study

For the qualitative study, data were collected through unstructured observations, semi-structured interviews with passengers, concessionaire staff and management, as well as through a focus group discussion with passengers during 2014. Observations and interviews

were conducted in-situ in the airside area, the focus group was held in a landslide conference room at the airport.

Initially, one researcher participated in discussions about food and beverage outlet choice in a German web forum on commercial air travel with frequent travellers (Vielfliegertreff, 2015) for 6 months before data collection began.

Passenger Interviews

Interview participants were passengers at DEU airport. Interviews were conducted in-situ in the airside area by one of the authors. Since semi-structured interviews were not feasible with passengers in-situ, a structured interview approach was chosen. iSurvey, an online tool that allows to create questionnaires and to subsequently load them onto an iPad, was used (Harvestyourdata, 2014). During four days, a total of 48 passengers were randomly selected, 18 denied participation and 30 agreed to participate, resulting in a response rate of 62.5%. Different weekdays and different times of days were selected in order to increase the variation in passenger types within the sample. Raw data from iSurvey was exported to Microsoft Excel for descriptive analysis and QSR NVivo for thematic analysis. Themes that emerged from the open questions were triangulated with data from interviews with staff, managers and the focus group (Brooks & King, 2012, 2014).

F&B Outlet Staff Interviews

One F&B company, named as company Alpha, agreed to take part in this study. Both staff and directors were interviewed. F&B outlet staff observe and deal with passengers on a constant basis, thus their participation in the study can offer insights on understand especially salient characteristics of passenger behaviour. Nine semi-structured interviews of different lengths were conducted with employees of company Alpha. Interviewees were selected based on their availability. Interviews were conducted in situ during breaks before or after interviewees' shifts. After 9 interviews, data saturation had been achieved, i.e. no new themes emerged from the interviews, and interviews with F&B staff were concluded.

F&B and Airport Management Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with two F&B Managers of the company Alpha followed the interviews with their staff. The managing director provided insights on airport management company's perspective on passenger behaviour and satisfaction.

Focus Group

The recruitment of the focus group participants took place through personal contacts, social media as well as one of the authors' involvement with an air travel related online community and was thus researcher-driven (Bryman, 2012). In total, 9 participants could be recruited for the focus group discussion. Extant literature agrees for a group size of between 8 and 12 participants per group to be suitable (Barbour, 2008; Kvale, 2007; Smith, 2010). One frequent traveller from the online forum participated in the focus group. Prior to the focus group discussion, participants had received a description of the research objectives, a questionnaire asking details about their travel behaviour, as well as a consent form. The focus group discussion was staged in the conference centre in the landside of the airport. Even though the conference centre is located on the landside, this choice of location helped contextualize the discussion and also to maximize participation (Barbour, 2008). **Error! Reference source not found.** presents the profiles of Focus Group Participants.

Gender	Profession	Segments	Segments from DEU Airport	Percentage on business	Segments with lounge access
Female	Journalist	2	2	0%	0
Male	Sales Manager	10	6	100%	6
Male	Quality Auditor	6	3	33%	0
Male	General Manager	10	2	70%	0
Male	Global Account Director	30	14	95%	14
Male	Business Consultant	6	1	0%	0
Male	General Manager	20	10	80%	10
Female	IT Consultant	65	15	0%	15
Male	Sales Director	20	10	80	8

Table 2. Focus Group Participants' Profiles

Coding and Template Analysis

Template analysis was used for the qualitative data analysis with the help of QSR NVivo version 10 (Brooks & King, 2014; King, 2012). The template analysis method produces a list of codes (also referred to as a template) representing the themes that emerge from the data (Waring & Wainwright, 2008). As such, whilst some codes may be defined a priori, they will be modified and added as the researcher works through the textual data (King, Cassell, & Symon, 2004, p. 256). In that sense, template analysis combines inductive and deductive approaches, since (predetermined) codes can be amended or added as data are collected and analysed (Saunders et al., 2012; Waddington, 2004). Analysis of the data includes identifying patterns and themes across the data set with open and axial coding (Brooks & King, 2014). Open coding identifies central themes or categories and axial coding analyses categories into subcategories and uncovers links between themes or categories.

Overall, a total of 137 different codes were identified. The coding was done during a period of three months after all evidence had been collected. In line with expectations, coding followed an iterative process until all coding was perceived to be appropriate and the template was considered finalized. Decisions relating to the adding, deleting and amalgamating of codes were taken between the authors in order to avoid bias. All codes were hierarchically arranged in four levels, relating back to the four top-level codes “*food and beverage outlet*”, “*airport*”, “*type of trip*”, and “*passenger*”. Findings emerging from the qualitative stage then were the basis for the passenger survey.

Passenger Survey

The survey questionnaire was developed based on the findings of the qualitative inquiry (Bryman & Bell, 2011) with an aim to test and to further investigate the concepts and their relationships emerging from the qualitative analysis. The survey was conducted during a six-week period between June and July which represents the busy season at DEU airport in question with both leisure and business travellers.

The questionnaire was pre-tested with a number of passengers. Certain questions were rephrased and the questionnaire layout was redesigned. The questions were translated into English and back-translated into German in order to ensure consistency of meaning. The final questionnaire was then presented in English and German language, with most questions being presented in combination with Likert scales.

In line with the approach used by Castillo-Manzano (2010), passengers were solicited for their participation. Questionnaires were distributed to customers by F&B outlet staff after a purchase had been made. Every day, a random number N ($0 < N < 6$) was selected and outlet staff were instructed to distribute questionnaires to every N^{th} customer only. This random element was introduced in order to avoid selection bias. Completed Questionnaires were then put in a collection box and mailed to the researchers. Data typing into a spreadsheet was done by an external party, with 10% of the questionnaires being randomly checked for errors.

1,000 questionnaires were printed and shipped to the airport. 108 unused questionnaires were left at the end of the survey period, about 20% of the passengers refused to participate right away. 325 completed questionnaires were received with 3 of them containing erroneous information. Overall, 322 valid completed questionnaires were collected which represents a response rate of 29%. With an estimated population size of 1.000.000 consuming passengers per year, a minimum sample size of 384 is required in order to achieve a confidence level of 5% and a margin of error of 5% (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekeran, 2001; Saunders et al., 2012). With 322 questionnaires, the margin of error was 5.46% for a 5% confidence level (Systems, 2015). Since a follow-up with non-respondents was impossible, it was not feasible to assess non-response bias (Lineback & Thompson, 2010).

Data Analysis

Principal components analysis was applied in order to explore whether variables could be reduced to a smaller number of components (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014; Pallant, 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). After components were extracted, the amount of components to be retained was assessed through the use of a scree plot as well as through

parallel analysis (Costello & Osborne, 2009; O'Connor, 2000; Pallant, 2013). Reliability of the underlying scales was assessed using Cronbach alpha as well as the mean inter-item correlation (Pallant, 2013). The assumption of independent sampling was met (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2012) and the subject to item ratio of > 35 indicates that the sample size was large enough to conduct principal components analysis (Costello & Osborne, 2009). Prior to performing the principal components analysis, the suitability of the data was assessed. Missing values were excluded pairwise (Pallant, 2013). Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of 0.25 and above. The KMO value of 0.57 is slightly below the threshold value of 0.6 (Pallant, 2013) but above 0.5 which is adequate for this type of research (Leech et al., 2012). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated significance at the $p < 0.01$ level. The results of direct oblimin rotation indicated low values (all below 0.16) in the component correlation matrix. Based on this, varimax rotation was subsequently used (Pallant, 2013).

Subsequently, multinomial categorical regression was applied. Multinomial categorical regression is a form of logistic regression that allows predicting category membership when the dependent variable is measured at nominal level of measurement and has more than two possible outcome categories (Field, 2014). Logistic regression thus allows testing models to predict categorical outcomes (Pallant, 2013). As Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) elaborate, the predictor (independent) variables in multinomial logistic regression then can be categorical or continuous or a mix of both. The method then emphasizes the probability of a particular outcome for each case. Outlet Patronage intention was asked through open questions in the survey instrument. Open responses received were then coded thematically, resulting in four distinct categories. Due to the nature of the survey instrument, only a subsample of 75 respondents was included in multinomial categorical regression analysis.

With 75 valid cases and 7 independent variables, the ratio was 10.7 and the requirement for a minimum ratio of 10 to 1 for valid cases to independent variables was satisfied (Hair et al., 2014). The dependent variable, outlet patronage intention, was measured through open questions in the survey instrument. Open responses received were then coded thematically, resulting in four distinct categories. The variable was thus coded at nominal level (1 – Price; 2 – Offering; 3 – Atmosphere/Staff; 4 – Distance/Time). The analysis then allowed linking emotional states to outlet patronage intentions. Following Field (2014), stepwise methods may be usefully employed for theory building.

Results

Qualitative Study

The initial coding resulted in 137 hierarchical codes. Template analysis revealed three overarching types of factors influencing passenger choice behaviour: 1) airport-related factors, 2) outlet-related factors, and 3) passenger-related factors. **Error! Reference source not found.** displays the codes under key themes and factors. Airport-related factors relate to the context of the airport setting and its influence on air passenger behaviour. Outlet-related factors then deal with the attributes of the food and beverage outlets in the airside setting, whereas passenger-related factors relate to passenger demographics.

- **Airport-related factors**

Airport atmosphere includes topics such as the atmosphere as an encapsulated space and airport architecture. The airport as a liminal place “in between” plays a role here. Whilst airports can be a place with an interesting atmosphere, the uniformity of airports has also been brought up in the focus group discussion. In this way, airport atmosphere does not influence F&B outlet choice since all outlets share the same servicescape and further, most airports look like the same. This finding is in contradiction with a rich literature on Airport servicescape in the F&B outlet choice.

Security process: After check-in, a certain level of uncertainty regarding the duration of security controls can be considered to be a ‘*pull*’-factor that encourages passengers to go through security as soon as possible. This then results in passengers spending increased amounts of time in the airside setting.

- **Outlet-related factors**

Presence of other passengers:

The presence of other passengers has shown to have an effect on F&B outlet choice. During both the in-situ interviews and the focus group discussion, passengers reported that they did not appreciate long waiting times and queues at the food and beverage outlets, but preferred

quick service. Interestingly, the importance of quick service has not been raised by management, neither the caterer's nor the airport's. On the other hand, passengers also perceived the presence of other customers to be a sign of quality for an outlet. Where the presence of other passengers at a food and beverage outlet can have a negative effect on expected waiting time, it can also have a positive impact since passengers tend to prefer busy outlets over quiet ones, assuming that a higher demand represents a higher quality of the food and beverages on offer.

“Well, high revenues mostly also stand for higher quality. [...] You know, when it is good and there are other people, then I go there as well.” (focus-group participant, male, infrequent flyer)

Smell: Airport management as well as food and beverage concession staff have mentioned the effect of smell on behaviour. At one outlet, a large snack bar, bread and similar products are baked freshly on site throughout the day. The smell of fresh bakery products has been reported to have an influence on behaviour. It is interesting to note that the effect of smell has not been mentioned by passengers. This could indicate that passengers may not perceive the effect of smell on behaviour consciously.

Product Offers. Passengers mentioned that they preferred a wide choice of products on offer, whereas outlet staff pointed out that the choice should not be too wide. High quality speciality coffees as well as local specials were mentioned by passengers to be attractive. Whilst speciality coffees are available at DEU airport, neither food and beverage concession staff nor the caterer's management have mentioned local specials. This could indicate that they may possibly not be aware of this demand.

Outlet Design and Layout: Passengers highlighted the importance outlet ambiance. Comfortable seating and a quiet ambiance were essential and passengers also appreciated the view on the tarmac. View was not mentioned by airport nor caterer management. *Attractiveness* of an outlet can thus be understood to include atmospheric and design components, but also smell and whether the outlet is busy.

Proximity to the departure gate has shown to be a factor influencing outlet patronage intentions with differing effects. Whilst some passengers preferred to remain close to their gate, others were willing to walk through the terminal in order to consume at an outlet they

found to be more attractive. During the focus group discussion, proximity to the gate was not perceived to be an important factor influencing outlet patronage intentions. Focus group participants reported that outlet attractiveness was more important for them than proximity to the gate. This could indicate that proximity to gate is only rated important when passengers find themselves in-situ.

Price was mentioned several times by passengers. Whilst there seems to be a general understanding for food and beverages to be more expensive in the airport airside environment than elsewhere, a number of passengers found the airside offer excessively overpriced, even though they still consumed. Since sales prices however typically are similar between different outlets within one airport, price does not constitute an important factor influencing outlet patronage intentions. Where the sales price is perceived to be too high, the choice is then reduced to non-consumption for passengers.

Brands: The analysis of the qualitative evidence suggests that service brands only play a minor role in outlet patronage intentions. During the focus group discussion, two participants, both infrequent flyers, mentioned they actively avoided service brands altogether when consuming airside, since they preferred consuming local foods and beverages when travelling. An exploration of the qualitative data revealed a more detailed picture of the importance of service brands in the airside context. Food and beverage concession staff reported that only few travellers ever asked for service brands. Those who did were mainly younger travellers and looking for branded fast food. Service brands that were mentioned were McDonald's and Burger King. Participants in the focus group discussion were of the opinion that the type of outlet and the types food and beverage on offer were more important than service brands. During the interview with airport management, a possible reason for the lack of food service brands in German airside areas emerged. With service brands, customers typically have the possibility to compare sales prices; something that airports try to avoid since sales prices are higher than outside. A certain brand loyalty has been identified as a potential factor influencing behaviour when it comes to coffee.

- **Passenger-related factors**

Stress and nervousness: Due to security controls and the specifics of the airside setting, passengers seem to show increased levels of **stress and nervousness**. Behaviour does not always follow rational decision-making processes in this setting.

“There are many people that just come in and sometimes they are shoving, they don’t look left or right.” (F&B outlet employee, male)

Airport management furthermore pointed out that the perceived stress is more likely to occur with inexperienced travellers.

Type of passengers: Both frequent and infrequent travellers in the focus group reported that they usually did not feel stressed or nervous because of these processes and controls.

However, they reported that travel became stressful when they lost control, such as travelling with family and children or through unexpected events, such as late-minute gate changes or airline strikes. The evidence collected from interviews with staff and management suggests that infrequent travellers show more signs of airside stress and nervousness than frequent travellers do. This concept of airside stress and nervousness however is mainly mentioned by employees and management, but not so much by passengers. Interviews with employees revealed that the consumption of food and beverages is indeed understood to be one strategy for passengers to reduce said stress and nervousness.

after eating and drinking ... the majority are more relaxed, calm.” (F&B outlet employee, male)

Available time: Besides the personal attitude towards airside consumption, available time showed to play an important role in airside consumption decisions. The evidence suggests that most passengers tend to pass through security as soon as possible after check-in, due to a perceived uncertainty about the duration of the procedures and the subsequent uncertainty of available time before boarding. Whereas business travellers often arrive later and thus have less time available in the airside area prior to the departure of their flight, leisure travellers tend to arrive earlier and thus take more time.

When aggregating the evidence collected in the qualitative enquiry, passengers’ emotional states when travelling by air seem to be emerging key concepts influencing airside behaviour. The development of the template revealed a number of key emotional states that play a role in this context: *Fear* (e.g. of missing the plane, of getting lost in the airport), *Stress and Nervousness* (e.g. due to the unknown location and the security protocols) and *Enjoyment or pleasure* (e.g. of the airside context as a special space and in anticipation of the flight).

Stress has been conceptualized as an unpleasant state or experience that arises when individuals perceive that the demands of an event strain their ability to cope effectively (Kassin, Fein, & Markus, 2008). Zimbardo (1992) includes the organisms' response to those situations into the definition of stress.

Pleasure then describes a mental state that individuals perceive when experiencing something positive, or enjoyable (Zimbardo, 1992). The concept of *Fear* relates to an emotion that signals danger (Kassin et al., 2008). Following Zimbardo (1992), the fear response arises from perceived danger. Danger thus needs not to be actually present, the perception of danger alone is sufficient to trigger fear.

Figure 1 illustrates the Airside F&B Outlet Patronage Model based on the qualitative analysis. Whilst the qualitative enquiry has shown the influence of airport-related, passenger-related as well as of outlet-related factors on outlet patronage intentions, the nature of the relationship between passengers' emotional state and patronage intentions remained unclear. This was addressed in the survey.

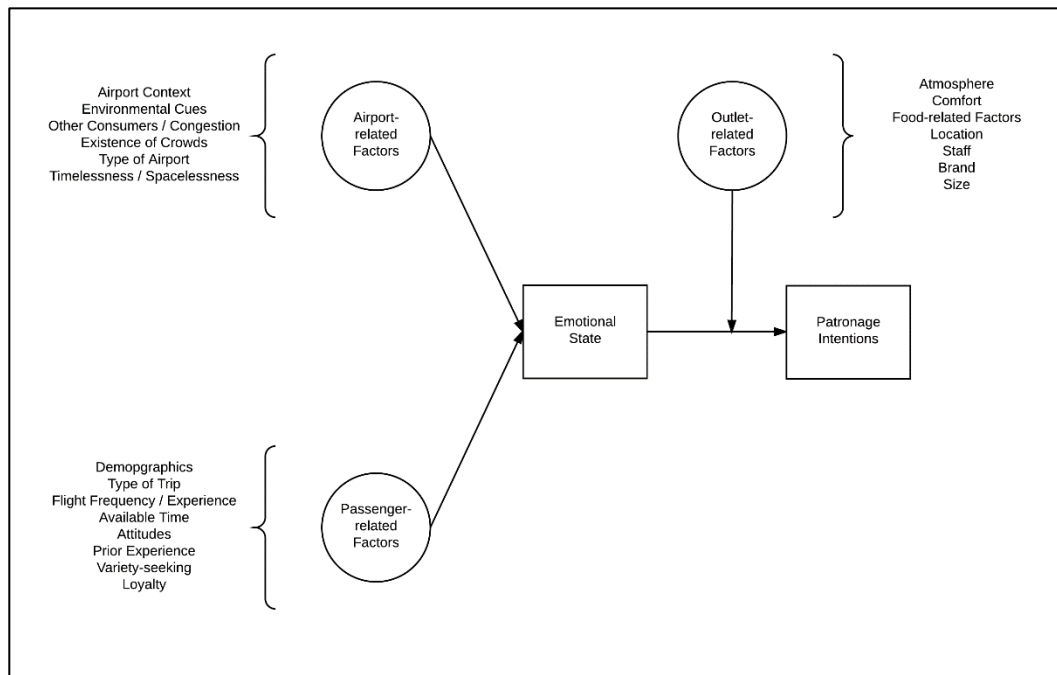


Figure 1. Factors influencing outlet choice

Passenger Survey

The principal component analysis revealed three underlying dimensions for variables measuring airside behaviour, indicating three components with eigenvalues above 1, explaining 25.49% (AirsideEnjoy), 20.47% (AirsideStress), and 16.1% (AirsideFear) of variance respectively. Furthermore, scree plot analysis and a Monte Carlo simulation parallel analysis (Costello & Osborne, 2009; Ledesma & Valero-Mora, 2007; O'Connor, 2000) suggested retaining three components.

The reliability of the emerging components was supported by the simple structure with all items clearly loading on only one component and with no crossloadings in the 0.3 to 0.7 range (Garson, 2016). Regarding reliability, the Cronbach alpha value was 0.65 for the AirsideEnjoy, 0.73 for AirsideStress, and 0.51 for AirsideFear. The inter-item correlation for AirsideFear of 0.26 was well within the range indicated by Pallant (2013). Based on the relatively low Cronbach alpha value for AirsideFear, the composite reliability (CR), as well as the average variance explained (AVE) were further assessed (Hair et al., 2014). AirsideEnjoy had CR = 0.76 and AVE = 0.71, AirsideStress showed values of CR = 0.87 and AVE = 0.86 and AirsideFear had CR = 0.7 and AVE = 0.61. The composite reliabilities of each component met or exceeded the benchmark of 0.7, the values of AVE all exceeded the threshold of 0.5 (Tajeddini, 2016). Despite the somewhat low Cronbach Alpha value for AirsideFear, it can be concluded that all three scales showed acceptable levels of reliability.

AirsideEnjoy conceptually relates to enjoying the stay in the airside setting and to perceiving food and beverage consumption as something relaxing. *AirsideStress* relates to the concepts of perceived stress and nervousness, linked to the procedures and protocols of commercial air travel and of entering the airside area. *AirsideFear* then is linked to the fear of missing the plane and thus moving through security as soon as possible and looking for the departure gate immediately when entering the airside area. The result of the principal components analysis can thus be seen to support the qualitative analysis and the finding that passengers' emotional states influence air passengers' airside behavioural intentions.

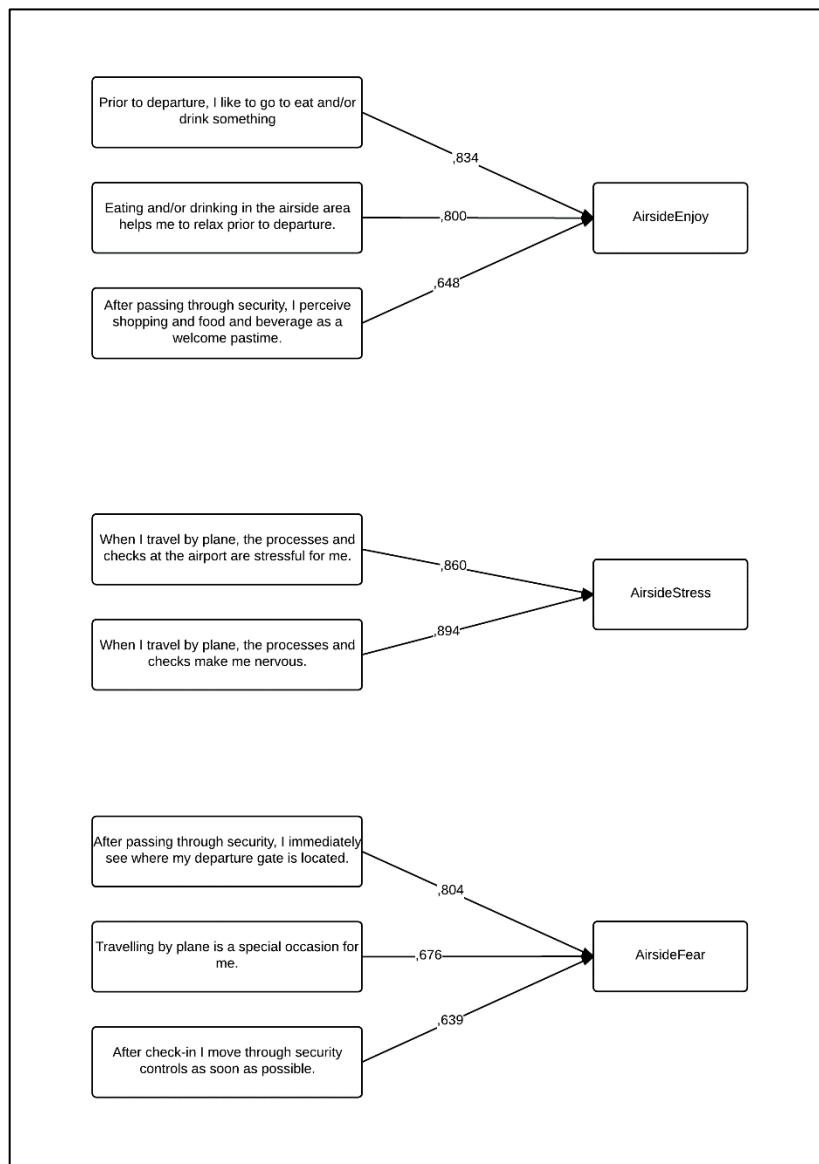


Figure 2. Dimensions and their components

Multinomial categorical regression was used in order to further investigate the factors influencing outlet patronage intentions. A stepwise approach was thus chosen, first assessing the main effects of the variables and then the interaction effect between *Attractiveness* and *AirsideEnjoy*. Conceptually, this interaction effect can be understood to exemplify that enjoyment of the airside context (e.g. in anticipation of the journey) is connected to a food and beverage outlet (or in other cases a retail store) which is perceived to be attractive and then allows the fulfilment of enjoyment. The outlet then serves as a means to realize the enjoyment. The Chi-Square value the final model was significant ($\chi^2 = 84.826$, $p < .001$). Pearson and Deviance statistics showed non-significant values of 0.845 and 1.000 respectively, indicating a good model fit (Field, 2014). The model as a whole explained between 67.7% (Cox & Snell R square) and 72.8% (Nagelkerke R square) of the variance and correctly classified 70.7% of cases. Whilst with 55.6%, the value for *Atmosphere/Staff* is lower than for the other categories, the validity of the overall model is still very high with 70.7% of the cases correctly classified.

The multinomial categorical regression shows that experiencing *AirsideFear* (odds = 7.86, 1 d.f., Wald = 6.98) and *AirsideStress* (odds = 7.45, 1 d.f., Wald = 5.43) increase the likeliness of consuming at an outlet based on the perceived attractiveness of the offering, all other things being equal., Rating high on rational selection furthermore increases the likeliness of choosing an outlet based on offering (odds = 5.57, 1 d.f., Wald = 7.4). It is interesting to note that in the model available time does not significantly contribute to predicting outlet patronage intentions. Male passengers are less likely than female passengers to be influenced by the offering over price in their outlet patronage intentions (odds = .041, 1 d.f., Wald = 4.0). Rating high on *AirsideStress* then increases the likeliness of consuming at an outlet based on its atmosphere and staff (odds = 3.888, 1 d.f., Wald = 4.84), all other things being equal., Passengers that rate outlets to be attractive based on price then are less likely to choose the outlet based on atmosphere/staff (odds = .035, 1 d.f., Wald = 4.466). Experiencing *AirsideFear* increases the likeliness of selecting the outlet based on distance and available time (odds = 3.167, 1 d.f., Wald = 4.106). Although significant in the overall model as well as in the likelihood ratio tests, the interaction effect of *Attractiveness* and *AirsideEnjoy* did not contribute significantly in the parameter estimates. This supports the interpretation that *AirsideEnjoy* relates to enjoying the airside context more generally and connected with airside consumption (or shopping) activities, however without reference being made to specific food and beverage (or retail) outlets.

Whilst passengers may perceive Stress, Fear and Enjoyment whilst in the airside setting, only perceived Stress and Fear seem to influence airside outlet patronage intentions.

Discussion

As Babin and Harris (2011), as well as Solomon (2015) claim, an experiential perspective on consumer behaviour fits well with hedonic values. Hedonic values have shown to influence airside consumption mainly for passengers travelling for leisure when on the outbound segment and those travelling for business when on the inbound leg. In this vein, the experiential perspective on airside consumption behaviour has proven helpful to explain some of the phenomena encountered. The symbolic meaning of meals to be used to “*mark special occasions, to celebrate rites of passage or to reinforce bonding*” (Morgan et al., 2008, p. 114) can serve as explanation for behaviour. Hedonic consumption, impulse behaviour and a relative insignificance of price link well with the concept of the airside area being a liminoid place, a place in-between (Christiansen, 2010; Eriksen & Døving, 1992; Lloyd, 2003; Turner, 1987). Outbound leisure travellers can be understood to be no longer at home but not yet at their holiday destination. Inbound business travellers in turn can be understood to be no longer at work but not yet at home. As such, both passenger groups that showed hedonic consumption and impulse behaviour can be considered to be in-between places. A number of passengers furthermore reported that the consumption of food and beverages was seen to be part of the overall air travel experience. As such, the experiential perspective on consumer behaviour can offer insight into parts of the phenomenon.

As Kaern (1994) elaborates, the mental travel between work and home can be symbolized by the bridge metaphor; since bridges allow transcending the limits of one territory to another (Adams & Sydie, 2002). Where Nippert-Eng (1996) now claims that home-work transitions can be seen as mental bridges, this concept of transcending from one territory to another is also applicable to the airside setting of the airport. The airport airside setting itself then becomes a place where people transcend between realms. In that sense, the airside airport context can be understood to be a liminoid place. Liminality, according to Turner (1987), is the ambiguity that occurs during rituals when participants are no longer in the pre-ritual state and are not yet in the state that follows once the ritual is complete (Bigger, 2009). The airport setting has been conceptualized as a liminoid place by a number of authors (Christiansen, 2010; Eriksen & Døving, 1992; Lloyd, 2003). In this vein, passengers have been understood to be “in between” at the airport, namely no longer at their origin but not yet at their

destination. Using the terms coined by Genep (1960), the “rites of passage” contain three phases, namely preliminal (separation), liminal (transition), and postliminal (incorporation). This notion of “rites of passage” has also served as explanation when conceptualizing the transition between home and work roles (Fonner & Stache, 2012). The stay in the airside departures lounge thus can be understood to be a liminal experience relating to the transition phase. As Bigger (2009) points out, the liminal period itself is outside of the official social structure and may even acquire a quasi-structural position of its own (Nippert-Eng, 1996).

In connection with the concept of boundary work, however, this liminoid space at the airport then obtains a new dimension. Passengers are not only in between places physically; they can also be seen to be in between realms of work and home mentally. The concept of boundary work can thus help explain air passengers’ food and beverage consumption behaviour in the sense that consumption itself may become a rite of passage in the liminoid space. Not only is the transition between realms facilitated through rituals, these rituals usually also differ whether one is moving from home to work or from work to home. Consumption can now be understood to be part of that mental transition between realms, classified as a behavioural tactic in the terminology suggested by Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep (2006). This understanding is rooted not only in certain food and beverage items’ physiological effects, but also “*because of their even more overwhelming symbolic characteristics*” (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Nippert-Eng (1996) furthermore discusses the use of different foods and beverages as part of the mental transition between the home and the work realm. This can now be seen to explain why leisure travellers tend to consume more on their outbound segment whereas business travellers tend to consume more on the inbound segment. In that sense, alcoholic drinks after work for instance have become a common custom in many societies, since they help relax and unwind at the end of a workday. Passengers travelling for business on their way back home (inbound segment) are typically transcending from work to the home realm. In a larger context, the same applies for leisure travellers on the outbound segment. Typically, they are transcending into the non-work or home realm. The concept of boundary work here helps explain what other authors have described as *holiday mood* to serve as explanation for the consumption behaviour of passengers travelling for leisure. Coffee and caffeine beverages, on the other hand, are connected with preparations for serious activities, such as work. When transitioning from home to work, coffee is thus the common choice of drug. The same can be observed with (business) passengers’ choice of beverage on outbound segments.

Air passengers' consumption behaviour can thus be interpreted in light of the concept of boundary work to be part of their transition from the home to the work realm.

Understanding the airport airside area as a liminoid space and using the concept of boundary work for the transition between home and work (and back again) can thus serve as a frame of reference to help understand the phenomena that were observed and analysed in this study.

Consumption can be understood to be part of the mental transition between home and work realms. This understanding is rooted not only in certain food and beverage items' physiological effects, but also "because of their even more overwhelming symbolic characteristics" (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Nippert-Eng (1996) furthermore discusses the use of different foods and beverages as part of the mental transition between the home and the work realm. The findings of the case study thus allow linking passenger clusters' different consumption behaviour to prevailing emotional states in their transgressions between work and home realm in the airside context.

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Annex: Attach Questionnaire