**INTERGENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE
IN AIRPORT EXPERIENCE:
THE CASE OF PHL
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT**

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by
Yelizaveta Li
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Thesis Approvals:

Yang Yang, Thesis Advisor, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Xiang (Robert) Li, Committee Member, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Lu Lu, Committee Member, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management

ABSTRACT

Airports serve as one of the main economic engines and connection hubs for a country, and therefore, their performance is of rising importance. Airport performance can be measured by various methods along numerous dimensions; however, the key remains the passenger-perceived service quality and satisfaction. This paper assumes heterogeneity of passengers by classifying them into generational cohorts and investigating whether there is an intergenerational difference in passenger experience at the Philadelphia International Airport and what factors may explain that. The study utilizes the survey data collected through the questionnaire distributed to departing/connecting PHL passengers. The methodology includes regression analysis, ANOVA model and cross-tabulations. The findings confirm the presence of variation in passenger experience and satisfaction with the airport depending on their generational affiliation. The intergenerational difference was particularly significant in the overall experience with PHL, which includes 24 items related to experience outside of the airport, outside of the terminal, and inside the terminal, as well as retail/shopping experience and information sources and needs. The intergenerational difference was not significant in the passenger food/beverage experience at PHL.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Airports represent important elements of the tourism and hospitality industry and serve as powerful economic engines for the country (Freidheim & Hansson, 1999). Apart from generating more than $1.4 trillion in annual economic output and supporting 11.5 million jobs in 2017, they accounted for more than 7 percent of the U.S. GDP (ACI, 2018). Covid-19 crisis and its impacts severely affected airports' revenue in 2021, with North American region airports' revenue declining by 14.2% compared to 2019, which equals a loss of $4.9 billion (ACI, 2022). Consequently, the importance of understanding the changes in passenger experience, behavior, and satisfaction as one of the driving forces of airport rehabilitation, cannot be overemphasized.

The study uses data collected during the passenger survey at Philadelphia International Airport (PHL). PHL is a primary airport hub in the city of Philadelphia. As of today, the airport serves 32.24 million passengers annually with 25 airlines and nearly 500 daily departures to 140 destinations worldwide. PHL Airport is self-sustaining and plays an important role as one of the largest economic engines in the region, contributing billions to the economy and accounting for more than 100,000 jobs annually. As the mission of the airport is to "proudly connect Philadelphia with the world," driven by the vision of being the "world-class global gateway of choice" (PHL, 2022), the importance of constant growth and improvement of the airport is hard to underestimate. To meet the world-class standards of service and constantly evolving customer expectations, the airport needs to keep its finger on the pulse of the rapidly changing environment, have a better

understanding of its passengers, and diagnose and improve any potential cavities to achieve recognition and excellence (PHL, 2022).

1.2 Airport Industry Overview

It is essential to represent the study in the context of the recent changes in the industry to interpret and understand the results more accurately. Several phenomena in the airport industry took place during the study.

After two years since the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and associated travel restrictions and policies in place, the tourism and hospitality industry is now seeing recovery. With the introduction of vaccines and boosters, the perceived levels of personal risk when traveling and using hospitality settings have gradually improved. Consumer sentiment towards air travel is also showing a positive trend, and passenger traffic is expected to rebound in the next years, reaching and surpassing the pre-pandemic levels (Fox, 2022).

According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, as of May 2022, U.S. airlines carried 71.2 million domestic and international passengers, which is 29.7% more compared to the same month last year (Bureau of Transportation, 2022). In its Air Passenger Market Analysis, IATA reports that total international air traffic in April 2022 was up 76% compared to the same month in the previous year (IATA, 2022). Despite promising forecasts, high willingness to travel abroad, and optimistic views of IATA General Director Willie Walsh, who believes that "*with the lifting of many border restrictions, we are seeing the long-expected surge in bookings as people seek to make up for two years of lost travel opportunities*" (Wood, 2022), there are several factors that can negatively affect travelers,

including surging jet fuel prices, inflation, labor shortages, political instability in certain regions and low consumer confidence. As a result, travelers' experience can be considerably deteriorated and lead to lower satisfaction levels and backlash to hospitality organizations.

The overall Airport Satisfaction Study by J.D. Power revealed satisfaction to be down 25 points in 2022, primarily due to fewer available flights, flight delays and cancellations, overcrowded terminals, and spare food and beverage offerings (Effler, 2022). Travel intelligence lead at J.D. Power, Michael Taylor, states that:

> *The combination of pent-up demand for air travel, the nationwide labor shortage and steadily rising prices on everything from jet fuel to a bottle of water have created a scenario in which airports are extremely crowded and passengers are increasingly frustrated—and it is likely to continue through 2023.* (Bloom, 2022).

Thus, the outcomes of the study might be heavily influenced by the context of the study and recent economic, market, and socio-cultural changes.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Building upon relevant theories on the role of demographic variables, particularly the generational affiliation of passengers, in shaping passenger experience and satisfaction, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate the existence of intergenerational difference in passenger experience among Philadelphia International Airport departing/connecting passengers. This paper assumes the definition of generational cohorts to include Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1996), and Generation Z (1997-2012) (Dimock, 2019). It includes an investigation of behavioral

patterns of passengers, acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of passengers from the cohort perspective and outlining of actionable managerial implications. This thesis is based on the results of the survey of departing/connecting passengers at PHL and is intended to provide insights to the hospitality and tourism industry about the factors affecting passenger satisfaction at the airports, passenger experience, and behavior from a generational cohort perspective.

1.4 Significance of the Study

All dimensions of the previous investigations are centered around passengers, as these days, service-intense hospitality settings like airports recognize the significance of a passenger-oriented approach, considering service quality and passenger satisfaction, which directly affect non-aeronautical revenue and profitability of airports (Jiang & Zhang, 2016).

Relevant studies attempted to segment airport passengers by age group and compare the difference in airport experience by age cohorts. For instance, the study of Melbourne Airport revealed that there are differences between passengers' expectations of service quality and actual satisfaction, with the former being consistently higher among older passengers (Jiang & Zhang, 2016). However, the previous studies did not recognize the heterogeneity of passengers segmented by generational cohorts and various factors associated with certain generational characteristics such as the shared background. Therefore, instead of looking at passengers as a homogeneous group, this study will focus on their intergenerational differences in satisfaction and behavior and provide a customized approach and practical implications such as market segmentation, communication channels, and service failure management to the aviation industry.

1.5 Research Questions

The present study is intended to discuss the generational cohort effect of PHL passengers by answering the following research questions:

1) Is there an intergenerational difference in the PHL passenger experience, and if yes, what are these differences?

2) Is there an intergenerational difference in behavior in the context of food/beverage and retailing at PHL Airport, and if yes, what are these differences?

3) Is there an intergenerational difference in information source and search behavior among passengers of PHL Airport, and if yes, what are these differences?

1.6 Research Methods

This study is based on the data collected during the 2022 PHL Passenger Survey Project conducted by Temple University's U.S.-Asia Center for Tourism and Hospitality Research. It involved more than 4,050 PHL originating and connecting passengers surveyed between February and May 2022. The purpose of the project was to understand the experiential journey of PHL departing passengers and assess their satisfaction with the airport experience. The thesis is centered around the variables related to overall satisfaction with the airport, satisfaction with food and beverage/retail, the amount of spending on food and beverage/retail, and the information needs and search behavior of PHL passengers. The survey data was processed to include the relevant period between February 8, 2022, and June 7, 2022, along with the 4,050 valid responses only. An additional variable with participants binned by four generations was generated, totaling the number of observed

responses to 4,003 (excluding representatives of the Silent Generation and participants younger than 18 y.o.).

The methodology of the present thesis is based on the analysis of survey data with ANOVA model, cross-tabulations, and regression analysis, and with the use of statistical tools SPSS and Excel. The goal will be to investigate whether there is a relationship and difference between generational cohorts and their overall satisfaction with the airport, food/beverage/retail, and information search behavior and needs.

The one-way ANOVA model or Analysis of Variance is a widely used tool for evaluating the relationship among variables with a single independent variable of interest and comparing means between two or more groups. This method is used to compare the mean satisfaction with food/beverage/retail scores of four generational cohorts. The single factor ANOVA also provides significance values such as F and p-values are used to test the statistical significance of the difference between the variables.

Cross-tabulation or contingency tables are used to quantitatively analyze the relationship between multiple variables. The present study used it to investigate the patterns in food/beverage and shopping spending behavior of passengers and the types of businesses used depending on their generational affiliation. It is also used to identify whether there are any patterns in the sources relied upon for information on PHL and the type of information needed across four generations. The analysis includes the identification of chi-square, degrees of freedom, and p-value. A chi-square statistic is used to measure the discrepancy between the observed and expected frequencies of the outcomes of a set of variables and test for the statistical significance of the relationship between the variables.

F and p-values are also used to determine whether the test is statistically significant when observing the relationship between 24 items related to passenger satisfaction with experience outside and inside of the airport and generational cohorts.

Regression analysis is a prominent statistical method used to investigate the relationship between multiple variables, particularly the influence of independent variables on a dependent variable. It is used to examine the relationship between generational affiliation and overall satisfaction with the PHL experience.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Intergenerational Difference

    2.1.1 General theories. Passenger expectations, shopping behavior, and satisfaction with the airport are determined by numerous factors. One of the factors affecting passengers' experience at the airport is their association with a certain generational cohort group. People from the same generational group create a cohort effect which implies that they exert similar behavioral patterns and have comparable values and attitudes as a result of intrinsic characteristics built around their previous experiences (Beldona, 2005). It is important to understand those generational differences in behavior, motivations, and attitudes as they are directly related to overall satisfaction with the airport and consequently the airport's non-aeronautical revenue. Although there is no single consensus regarding the time interval of each generation, this study is focusing on four generational cohorts: Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials or Gen Y (1981-1996) and Generation Z (1997-2010) (McKinsey & Company, 2018). Baby Boomers and Gen X are considered older generations while Millennials and Gen Z are referred to as younger generations. According to Statista, as of 2021, the resident population in the U.S. by generation statistics show that the largest share of the population belongs to Millennial Generation (72.19m people), followed by Baby Boomers (70.23m), Gen Z (68.6m) and Gen X (65.8m) (Statista, 2021).

    According to Parment (2013), different generational cohorts have various backgrounds, preferences, values, and experiences which result in different purchase behavior, level of involvement, and motivations. Beldona (2005) argues that cultural and

social factors are important characteristics in consumer behavior and individuals with an analogous set of experiences and background specific to a certain generation have similar traits and consumption patterns. The same notion is supported by Lehto, Jang, Achana, and O'Leary (2008) that the collective preferences, attitudes, and behaviors of age groups are believed to be dependent on political and socio-economic events of the time, technological advancements, lifestyle changes, and educational opportunities. One of the earliest studies that laid a basis for the concept was Strauss-Howe's generational theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) which supports the idea that the same age cohort exhibit and shares similar values, beliefs, interests, skills, capabilities, and expectations. Recent study by Li et al. (2013) used a generational analysis to investigate the differences and similarities among American international travelers in the context of tourism consumer behavior. Although the study provides a comprehensive analysis of four generations (Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y) in tourism context, the generalization of the results can be limited as the airport context is different from other hospitality settings, due to fact that passengers' major purpose at the airport is not shopping (Omar & Kent, 2001) or other travel and recreational activities.

2.1.2 Intergenerational Differences in Travel and Consumer Behavior.

Baby Boomers. Baby Boomers represent the share of the population born between 1946 to 1964 and, by many scientists, are claimed to be one of the most important generation groups due to the size of this cohort group and a relatively higher purchasing power (Worsley, Hunter, & Wang, 2010). They have a unique social and historical background that binds them together and makes them distinct in their attitudes and

behaviors from other generations. For instance, Lehto, Jang, Achana, and O'Leary (2008) claim that Boomer seniors, although might have limited physical and mental abilities, are still seeking active and self-fulfilling leisure activities and experiences in their life, such as traveling. This generational cohort is characterized by the need to have fun elements in their travels (Wei & Milman, 2002) and, interestingly, are more willing to engage in adventurous activities, personal challenges, and cultural and novelty experiences (Horneman, Wei, & Sherrie, 2002) (Schiffman & Sherman, 1994). This is supported by the results of the study (Lehto, Jang, Achana, & O'Leary, 2008), which revealed that Baby Boomers predominantly preferred experiences related to going on trips with the family, romance and intimacy, and adventure and excitement. Moreover, some seniors in the cohort have a higher participation rate in outdoor activities and nature-based locations. In addition, older Boomers are claimed to be closer to the younger cohorts such as Gen X, than to be aspired by previous generations. Nevertheless, they still share some similarities with other types of mature travelers, including an interest in dining, nature and cultural tourism, and sightseeing.

Baby Boomers as an aging population tend to have a higher risk of suffering from various diseases and have limited mobility which can affect their food and beverage consumption habits and shopping behavior (Worsley, Hunter, & Wang, 2010). They tend to prefer traditional and quality food options, are price-conscious, and pay attention to nutritional value. Personal values, education, and income are also believed to be related to the food choice and purchasing decisions of baby boomers. For example, universalist and benevolence values had a positive correlation with high-quality food shopping among baby

boomers, such as natural foods and healthy diets for family members, and had a negative impact on price minimization, particularly among men of this group (Schwartz, 1992). Another study of older consumers in New Zealand (Goodwin & Mcelwee, 1999), revealed that service quality and easily recognized brands were the key dimensions for those consumers in terms of shopping, where service quality is based on convenience, personal interaction, and store image (Lu & Seock, 2008).

Worsley and Wang (2011) support this idea with their findings that Baby Boomers base their choice of food and beverage establishments on the following factors: convenience, quality, price, availability of healthy foods, and a user-friendly environment. Retired baby boomers are more price-conscious, and their satisfaction with food shopping also depends on social interaction. Despite that, the study revealed that the interest in savings decreases as people become older, and other determinants such as gender, household income, and marital status affect their decision-making. Baby Boomers are also less concerned about environmental sustainability in their shopping, such as recycling facilities at the stores.

Generation X. Generation X are people born between 1965-1980 and are characterized as individuals with greater life experience and family responsibilities compared to younger generations. They tend to seek higher quality products and services, compare them and attempt to get more information about future purchases. They are pragmatic and flexible in their behavior and tend to be cautious and skeptical about new things. Their main values include family and friends, and they are more likely to prefer

spiritual values, opportunities, and intellectual development rather than accumulate material wealth (Glass, 2007).

In terms of travel behavior, Omnitrak's Traveltrak America (Omnitrack Compass, 2021) data from a survey report that "Active Gen X" travelers tend to spend more per trip ($914 on average) and travel in larger groups (2.49 persons) compared to representatives of other generations since they are typically in the workforce, have family and are engaged in the community and social activities. In addition, Gen X travelers reported the highest interest in travel as of the fourth quarter of 2020 and are expected to lead the recovery in domestic leisure travel. They prefer cultural experiences such as sightseeing, museums and art galleries, and historical sites and monuments (McIntyre, 2022). They are also attracted to locations such as beaches, theme parks, and spectator sports.

Concerning shopping behavior, they often engage in online shopping for relaxation; however, their purchasing decision tends to be less influenced by traditional online advertising (Mintel Group Ltd., 2016). Other studies contradict this by stating that, similar to Millennials, Gen Xers are more likely to trust the personal experiences of other individuals who share their opinion through eWoM (electronic word of mouth), rather than company-controlled advertisements and promotional spots (Chawdhary & Dall`Olmo Riley, 2015). The result of the study also showed that when making a purchasing decision, particularly Gen Xers' choice of food and beverage products, they rely on online information and comments from other consumers, especially paying more attention to any possible criticism or flaws of the products and services, as well as the food products characteristics. According to the authors, Gen Xers are more difficult to approach due to

their higher income and education which entitle them to be more pragmatic and responsible in assessing the credibility of social media comments, and the life experience that made them more cautious concerning purchasing decisions.

Millennials (Gen Y). Millennials are categorized as the "younger" generation born between 1981 and 1996. Along with the other generations, millennials share the same traits, attitudes, and beliefs. They are influenced by the social, historical, economic, and political events and changes in the world that took place during their lifetime, particularly increased technological integration in their everyday lives (Moreno, Lafuente, Avila, & Moreno, 2017). Understanding Millennials is of growing importance for all tourism and hospitality industries as they constitute the largest share of the U.S. population, and their purchasing power and consumption patterns make them an attractive target for businesses. People belonging to this cohort are characterized by increased connectivity, adaptation, and use of social media, new communication channels, and digital technology, including television, smartphones, computers, video games, and Internet-based platforms (Omar, Sallehuddin, Hafizah, & Hassan, 2016).

In terms of traveling, Bilgihan (2016) describes them as travel lovers who prefer to spend money on experiences. According to another study by Rita, Brochado, and Dimova (2018), Gen Y is motivated to travel to relax and experience a different lifestyle at the same time, while its most appealing destination activities are found to be trying local food and sightseeing.

Their shopping behavior includes the search for brands and products that correspond to their personality, lifestyle, image, and social values (Moreno, Lafuente,

Avila, & Moreno, 2017). Weyland (2011) also suggests that Gen Y is attracted to strong brands, and companies with strong values, social ethics, distinctive brands, and non-hierarchical environments. Compared to previous generations, Gen Y has a strong sense of self-identity (Nichols, Raska, & Flint, 2014). Compared to other generations, they tend to be less brand loyal and rely on emotions. This segment enjoys unique shopping experiences both offline and online, particularly valuing utilitarian benefits such as value for money and visually appealing website designs. Lissitsa and Kol (2016) also reveal that Millennials tend to make purchases more frequently and impulsively, while social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram are one of the most important sources of information and confidence in online sellers. Gen Y spends more effort on high-involvement product decisions than older generations (Parment, 2013). Millennials are characterized as quick-spenders of their income compared to previous generations and they value the personal life-work balance. According to Weber (2015), in terms of food and beverage preferences, they opt for healthier, fresher food choices and prefer restaurants that offer customizable menu options.

Generation Z. Generation Z captures people born in the timespan between 1997-2010. They are described as true digital natives, influencers, and trendsetters as they were born in the time of booming use of the Internet, social networks, mobile systems, and other advanced technologies. One of the main drivers for this generational cohort is the search for truth; therefore, they are sometimes referred to as "True Gen" (McKinsey & Company, 2018). They value self-expression and avoid labels and stereotypes, while their decision-making and attitude towards organizations and institutions are highly analytical and

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pragmatic. Representatives of Gen Z are realistic, individualistic, and competitive. Although young, they tend to be financially conscious and tech-savvy.

In the travel context, Gen Zs are driven by escapism, seeking adventure and novelty, or following the popular travel culture (Wood, 2013). This generational cohort tends to search for travel experiences and value for money. Haddouche and Salomone (2018) claim that for Gen Zs traveling is also a means of socialization, empowerment, and conviviality. They are often driven by the fear of missing out (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013). Another study (Liu, Wang, Zhang, & Qiao, 2022) shows that Gen Z is more likely to be influenced by entertainment, trendiness, interaction, and WOM. According to Robinson and Schanzel (2019), Generation Z travel experiences are affected by three influences: immediate influences (e.g., home events, family, friends), destination influences (e.g., socio-political, cultural, physical features/attributes), and global influences (e.g., geopolitics, economic, technological). For example, one of the immediate influencers can be the country of origin which pre-determines the spending patterns and behavioral and attitudinal patterns of individuals. Among destination influences, terrorist attacks can affect the mindset of international tourists and their perception of safety and security. However, the research found that Gen Zs became accustomed to the constantly changing global environment. Moreover, they are concerned about environmental issues such as the crisis with plastic bags in the destination, and socio-political issues, such as discrimination against certain people or work ethics. Some global influences, such as information communication technology that enables the younger generation to be linked to

services and the outer world, and easily access information, facilities, and places are also found to have impacts on their travel decisions.

Their consumption patterns reflect the need to access rather than possess, express their identity, and be concerned about ethics. Like Millennials, they do the research, reading reviews and relying on eWoM, before making a purchase. They value the quality of products and services and look for competitive prices. Currently, most Gen Zs are kids, teenagers, and young adults. Interestingly, the statistics about the kids' influence in the U.S. showed that 71% of parents solicit and consider their kids' opinions when making a purchase, while 95% of parents seek their kids' opinions when buying products for them. This means that although their count is comparatively smaller, they exert a considerable influence on older generations in their purchasing decision-making. According to Sladek and Grabinger (2022), Gen Zs are socially aware, healthy and environmentally conscious, and creative.

According to Wood (2013), four major trends characterize post-Millennials as consumers. The first one is the focus on innovation and design features or aesthetics differentiation as they have always lived in a market saturated with various products and services. However, the fact that they have already been born to current technology and innovative offers rather than witnessing the radical transformation and evolution of industries such as retail, makes them expect less continuing future changes compared to previous generations. The second trend among Gen Zs is the increased emphasis on convenience and personalization in product attributes, delivery, experience, and marketing efforts. In addition, Gen Zs along with Millennials, show considerably less concern

regarding consumer monitoring by large companies, viewing it as a necessary practice that would help them deliver more personalized products. The third pattern in consumer behavior of this cohort group is an underlying search for financial security. This makes them less brand-loyal and more price-conscious. Lastly, they are characterized by the tendency toward escapist consumption including entertainment, extreme sports, dining out, and popularizing social communities and networks. This desire is facilitated by technological advances such as virtual reality video games, greater mobility of devices, and greater access to social networks.

Table 2.1 Comparison between Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y, and Gen Z

Attributes	Baby Boomers 1946-1964	Gen X 1965-1980	Gen Y (Millennials) 1981-1996	Gen Z 1997-2010
Context	• Post–World War II	• Political transition • Capitalism	• Globalization • Economic stability • The emergence of the Internet and digital technologies	• Mobility and multiple realities • Social networks • Digital natives
Values	• Spending quality time with the family • Social interaction	• High quality • Family-oriented • Health • Financial security • Spiritual values • Intellectual development	• Utilitarian • Life-work balance • Connectivity	• Diversity and inclusion • Self-expression • Realistic

Table 2.1 (continued)

Attributes	Baby Boomers 1946-1964	Gen X 1965-1980	Gen Y (Millennials) 1981-1996	Gen Z 1997-2010
Values	• Adventure and excitement			
Behavior	• Idealistic • Collectivist • Universalists • Benevolence • Hard-working	• Pragmatic • Cautious • Skeptical • Individualistic • Self-reliant	• Self-oriented • Impulsive buying • Globalist • Collective learning	• Analytical and pragmatic • Search for Truth • No identity labeling • Radically inclusive and ethical
Travel patterns	• Have fun • Adventurous activities • Personal challenges • Cultural and novelty experiences	• Visiting iconic landmarks, museums and art galleries, and historical sites and monuments	• Relax and experience a different lifestyle • Trying local food • Sightseeing and festivals	• Escapism • Adventure and novelty • Following popular travel culture

Table 2.1 (continued)

Attributes	Baby Boomers 1946-1964	Gen X 1965-1980	Gen Y (Millennials) 1981-1996	Gen Z 1997-2010
Purchasing behavior	• Traditional, healthy, and quality foods • Price-conscious • Convenience • Social interaction • user-friendly store environment	• Online shopping for relaxation • Rely on eWoM • Luxury, brands, status	• Brands and products that match their personality, lifestyle, image, and social and community values • Healthier, fresher food choices • Customizable menu options • Rely on eWoM	• Innovation and design features • Reliance on convenience • Financial security • Escapism • Self-expression

Source: McKinsey & Company (2018)

2.2 Airport Experience

Nowadays, understanding and shaping passenger experience is vital for airport performance, particularly investing in enhancing facilities and services that contribute to passenger satisfaction and, as a result, generate higher non-aeronautical revenue and profitability for the airport (Jiang & Zhang, 2016). Passenger experience is believed to be measured by performance indicators such as service quality at the airport (Merkert & Assaf,

2015). The concepts of customer service and perceived service quality are the key to sustainable competitive advantage for the airport and, therefore, are the focus of this section.

2.2.1 Components of airport experience based on industrial standards. One of the fundamental theories of service quality measurement proposed by Parasuraman et al. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) is SERVQUAL which implies the gap between customer expectations and perceived service outcomes. SERVQUAL gives organizations the ability to understand customer expectations and perceptions, compare themselves with competitors and evaluate their own performance. It is not designed to identify customer satisfaction post-factum, however, serves as a tool to determine the attributes driving customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This conceptual model of service quality outlines seven possible gaps in service: knowledge/listening gap, standards gap, communications gap, perceptions gap, delivery gap, interpretation gap, and service gap (Figure 2.1). SERVQUAL includes ten components based on which customers form service expectations and evaluate perceived service quality. Those dimensions include access, understanding/knowing the customer, communication, competence, credibility, responsiveness, courtesy, reliability, security, and tangibles (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985).
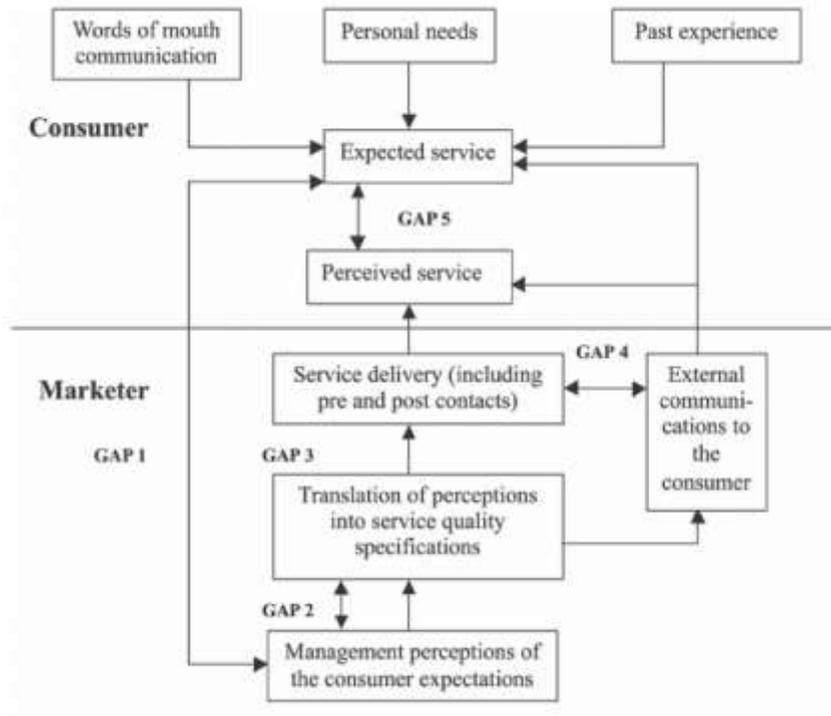
Figure 2.1. SERVQUAL gaps. Source: Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1985)

2.2.2 Components of airport experience based on scholarly works. Although this general theoretical framework can be applied to any service-based organization, other alternative theories are more specific to the airport context and are used to measure airport performance. In attempts to extend the original SERVQUAL model, Fodness and Murray (2007) contribute to the development of the ASQ framework by showing the importance of the passenger-centered approach, servicescape, and activities facilitated by waiting time and available services (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2. A preliminary conceptual model for airport service quality. Source: Fodness & Murray (2007)

A wide variety of services in the airport value chain adds complexity and variation to the attributes and dimensions of service quality and airport performance. For example, international airport associations such as Airports Council International (ACI, 2022) and Skytrax (Skytrax Ratings, 2022) assess performance by several service attributes. ACI established Airport Service Quality (ASQ) – a globally recognized program that measures overall passenger satisfaction and surveys passengers in 34 areas related to eight service dimensions: airport facilities, airport environment, access, check-in, passport/personal identification control, security, finding your way, and arrivals services (Isa, Ghaus, Hamid, & Tan, 2020). Skytrax at the same time releases airport rankings based on key performance indicators related to various areas from airport website, and wayfinding to terminal design, cleanliness, seating, restrooms, airport facilities, accessibility, shopping, and dining (Skytrax Ratings, 2022) (Table 2.1).

Another example is the study of the Melbourne Airport passenger experience, which provides 30 components for airport service items. For simplicity of interpretation and management, they are classified into three major categories: *"essential airport services",*

"*service items for comfort, convenience, and enjoyment", and "services related to business travel and baby changing facilities*" (Jiang & Zhang, 2016, p.89). Moon et al. (2015) examine the relationship between airport physical environments, customer emotion, and satisfaction, where the physical environment is focused on tangible and visible surroundings and consists of four variables such as facility aesthetics, layout accessibility, functionality, and cleanliness. In van Oel (2013), the emphasis is also put on the design of passenger areas and terminal buildings, particularly tangible elements such as exterior factors of design, architecture, and accessibility, interior factors such as colors, atmospherics, and materialization, and other factors such as layout, decoration, signage, and greenery. Bezerra and Gomes (2015) include similar service attributes such as check-in, security, convenience, ambiance, basic facilities, mobility, and prices. Alternatively, Hong et al. (2020) categorize items into interactional quality with personnel, physical environment, and convenience (Pandey, 2016).

Other studies are more customer-centric and include sensory, affective, creative cognitive, physical, behavioral and lifestyle, and social-identity experiences in their multidimensional concept of passenger experience (Verawati, Octora, Setiawan, & Pradana, 2020). One of the dimensions of Bitner's concept of servicescape is ambient conditions, which include lighting, temperature, noise, scent, and other sensory factors (Bitner, 1992).

Table 2.2 Industry and recent literature-based components of airport experience

Industry-based Components			Literature-based Components	
ASQ	**Skytrax** (2022)	**PHL Passenger Survey (2022)**	**Jiang & Zhang** (2016)	**Bezerra and Gomes** (2015)
Access - Public transport - Car park - Trolleys	Getting to and from the Airport, Ease of Access Public transport options, efficiency and prices Taxi availability and prices Availability of luggage trolleys (airside & landside)	Travel to PHL - Parking at the airport - Off-side parking - Rental car - Taxi or limousine - Ride share - Hotel shuttle - Public transportation	Surface transport to/from airport Airport parking Baggage cart/trolleys	N/A
Check-in - Waiting time - Courtesy of staff	Check-In facilities, queuing systems and seating	Clarity of airline check-in signage Cleanliness/condition of airline check-in area Ease of finding airline check-in and wait time Efficiency of airline luggage check-in procedure	Check-in waiting time Courtesy and helpfulness of check-in staff Self check-in facilities	Check-in - Wait time at the check-in - Check-in process efficiency - Courtesy and helpfulness of check-in staff

Table 2.2 (continued)

Industry-based Components			Literature-based Components	
ASQ	**Skytrax** (2022)	**PHL Passenger Survey (2022)**	**Jiang & Zhang** (2016)	**Bezerra and Gomes** (2015)
Passport control - Waiting time - Courtesy of staff	Immigration - queuing times / system Immigration - staff attitude	N/A	Waiting time at immigration Courtesy and helpfulness of immigration staff	N/A
Security - Waiting time - Courtesy of staff - Feeling of safe and secure	Waiting times at Security screening Family security screening options Courtesy and Attitude of Security staff Perception of security and safety standards	Courtesy and helpfulness of security screening checkpoint staff Clearly communicated instructions at the security screening checkpoint Cleanliness/condition of security check area Wait time in security check line	Waiting time at security check Courtesy and helpfulness of security staff	Security - Wait-time at security checkpoints - Thoroughness of security screening - Courtesy and helpfulness of security staff - Feeling of being safe and secure

Table 2.2 (continued)

Industry-based Components			Literature-based Components	
ASQ	**Skytrax** (2022)	**PHL Passenger Survey (2022)**	**Jiang & Zhang** (2016)	**Bezerra and Gomes** (2015)
Finding your way - Flight connection - Flight information - Walking distance	Standard of airport website information Standard of airport app Wayfinding and terminal signage Clarity of boarding calls and airport pa's Flight info screens - clarity / quality of information Ease of transit through airport Location of airline lounges	Information Source and Needs Roadway signs/Wayfinding or Directions Signs in parking facility Usefulness/helpfulness of flight info displays Ease of finding your way through airport Ease of making connections with other flights Gate signage	Clear directional signs Flight information screens Flight transfer Availability of power outlets	Mobility - Wayfinding - Flight information - Walking distance inside the terminal Convenience - Availability and quality of food facilities

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Table 2.2 (continued)

Industry-based Components		Literature-based Components		
ASQ	**Skytrax (2022)**	**PHL Passenger Survey (2022)**	**Jiang & Zhang** (2016)	**Bezerra and Gomes** (2015)
Airport facilities - Shopping - Food & beverage - Wi-fi - Lounge - Availability & cleanliness of toilets - Courtesy of staff	Friendliness of airport staff Language skills for airport staff Washroom and shower facilities in terminal Cleanliness of washrooms Hygiene standards Tv and entertainment facilities Quiet areas, day rooms, hotel facility, rest areas Children's play area and facilities	Availability of restrooms Availability/ease of use of connecting to Wi-Fi Condition/cleanliness of restrooms Condition/cleanliness of seating areas Satisfaction with the retail and shopping experience - Spending in stores Satisfaction with the food and beverage experience	Bank/ATM facilities Baby changing facilities Internet/Wi-Fi access Toilets Moving walkways and escalators Boarding gate seating Business lounge Business center Children's playing area Battery recharge facilities Airport shopping	- Availability and quality of stores - Availability of Banks/ATM/Exchange Basic Facilities - Availability of washroom/toilets - Cleanliness of washroom/toilets

Table 2.2 (continued)

Industry-based Components			Literature-based Components	
ASQ	**Skytrax** (2022)	**PHL Passenger Survey (2022)**	**Jiang & Zhang** (2016)	**Bezerra and Gomes** (2015)
	Choice of shopping - tax free and other outlets Prices in shop outlets Choice of bars, cafes and restaurants - Prices in bars, cafes and restaurants Standard of wifi service Power charging facilities Telephone and fax locations Bureau de change facilities Atm facilities	- Spending in bars, cafes and restaurants Amenity Use - Lounge - Wheelchair assistance/mobility services - Indoor animal relief area - Mamava /nursing suite - Outdoor animal relief area Availability of parking Value for money for parking facilities Safety/security in parking facility for self and vehicle		- Departure lounge comfort Prices - Prices at food facilities Prices at stores

Table 2. (continued)

Industry-based Components			Literature-based Components	
ASQ	**Skytrax (2022)**	**PHL Passenger Survey (2022)**	**Jiang & Zhang** (2016)	**Bezerra and Gomes** (2015)
Airport environment - Cleanliness - Ambience	Smoking policy / smoking lounges Standards of prm access and facilities Terminal comfort, ambience and design Terminal cleanliness, floors, seating and public areas Seating facilities throughout terminals	Attractiveness of airport grounds Drop off space in front of the terminal Sensory perceptions - Comfort - Smell - Brightness - Cleanliness - Quietness Overall satisfaction with the PHL experience	Art displays Music in the terminal Natural light in the terminal Smoking area Temperature in the terminal	Ambience - Cleanliness of airport facilities - Thermal comfort - Acoustic comfort
Arrival services - Passport - Baggage reclaim - Customs	Baggage delivery times Priority baggage delivery efficiency Lost luggage services	N/A	Speed of baggage delivery	N/A

Sources: Isa, Ghaus, Hamid, & Tan (2020)*; World Airport Awards* (2023)*; Bezerra & Gomes* (2015)*;* (U.S.-Asia Center for Tourism and Hospitality Research, 2022)

Among the dimensions of airport service quality, the passenger experience is shaped only by several components. According to the study of San Francisco International Airport (SFO) customer satisfaction, the key drivers of overall satisfaction were retail shops and restaurants, artwork and exhibitions, signs and directions inside the terminal and roadways, airport rental car services, Wi-Fi services, and overall cleanliness of SFO. Among them, overall cleanliness, signage inside SFO, artwork, exhibitions, and restaurants were found to be the most essential determinants of overall satisfaction (Singh, Yoo, & Dalpatadu, 2019). At the same time, another research conducted in an attempt to measure air passenger satisfaction and identify the major service attributes in the terminal reveals that some service aspects have an insignificant impact on overall passenger satisfaction. Some of them include the services related to the helpfulness of personnel, airport environment, airport signage, condition of restrooms inside the terminal, and availability of public transportation (Eboli & Mazzulla, 2009). Bogicevic et al. (2013) provide insights into major satisfiers, dissatisfiers, and passenger-oriented performance factors of ASQ. Their findings identify cleanliness and a pleasant environment to spend time in as the major drivers of passenger satisfaction. In contrast, unclear signposting and inadequate dining offers were claimed to be the major dissatisfiers in the airport setting (Bogicevic, Yang, Bilgihan, & Bujisic, 2013).

2.2.3 Determinants of the airport experience. Bezerra and Gomes (2015) in their study based on the data collected at the main Brazilian airport emphasize the importance of determinants, such as passenger characteristics in measuring passenger satisfaction with airport service quality. Those included the type of traveler, trip purpose, and other context-

related characteristics (Fodness & Murray, 2007). Determinants such as age, nationality, gender, trip purpose, and mobility were found to affect overall satisfaction. For instance, the research at Melbourne Airport showed that older passengers tend to have higher expectations of service quality and actual satisfaction compared to younger passengers (Jiang & Zhang, 2016). Moreover, passengers' earlier arrival at the airport may result in higher overall satisfaction, as it allows them to avoid large lines at the security checkpoints and related anxiety. According to the results of the study, passengers arriving at the airport more than 3 hours before the flight departure time were 20.8% more likely to be satisfied, compared to passengers arriving more than 2 hours but less than 3 hours before flight departure time. Moreover, early arrival, convenience, and pastime are the main motivations for making purchases at the airport, since the passengers' primary purpose at the airport is not shopping (Omar & Kent, 2001). Passengers' perceptions of the ambient conditions and prices have also been recognized as important factors for airport service quality. In addition, the frequency of flights among passengers was also found as a determinant of satisfaction. For instance, less frequent flyers that traveled no more than 2 times in the last year are 15.7% more likely to have higher overall satisfaction with the airport when compared to passengers who traveled more often (Bezerra & Gomes, 2015). Passenger satisfaction survey in 15 airports in the USA and Canada conducted by Kramer, Bothner, and Spiro (National Academies of Sciences, 2013) suggests that the most important factors contributing to customer experience include courtesy of staff, cleanliness, processing times, concession choices, and gate experience. However, some factors are out of the managerial control of the airport, such as delays during arrival at the airport, parking congestion, delays in public transportation, bad weather conditions, and flight cancellations.

2.3 Food and Beverage/Retailing Behavior and Experience

The non-aeronautical sector is critical for airport profitability as it generates relatively high-profit margins and, according to ACI (2018), accounts for more than 40% of total revenue. Therefore, increasing commercial profit by growing passenger consumption through a deeper understanding of their purchasing behavior and patterns, can increase passenger satisfaction and enhance their airport F&B and retail experience (Choi & Park, 2022). According to Bezerra and Gomes (2020), the increasing levels of satisfaction among passengers and positive airport experience make them less likely to complain and influence passengers' intentions to engage in commercial activities at the airport, particularly in food and beverage and retailing businesses. In addition, Kramer, Bothner, and Spiro found that highly satisfied passengers are more likely to spend 45% more than dissatisfied passengers (National Academies of Sciences, 2013).

Some of the general theories on consumer behavior and psychology include the theory of planned behavior (TPB) originally proposed by Ajzen in (1985). It is considered one of the most prominent and widely recognized frameworks for predicting and explaining the socio-psychological behavior of consumers and is an extended version of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) which had certain limitations (Ajzen, 1991). According to the theory, an individual's attitude and subjective norms shape behavioral intention. An individual's attitude is based on behavioral beliefs and includes a positive or negative perception of engaging in a certain behavior (Ajzen & Albarracin, 2011). Subjective norms imply an individual's normative beliefs and perceived social pressure to engage or not in the behavior (Yuzhanin & Fisher, 2016).
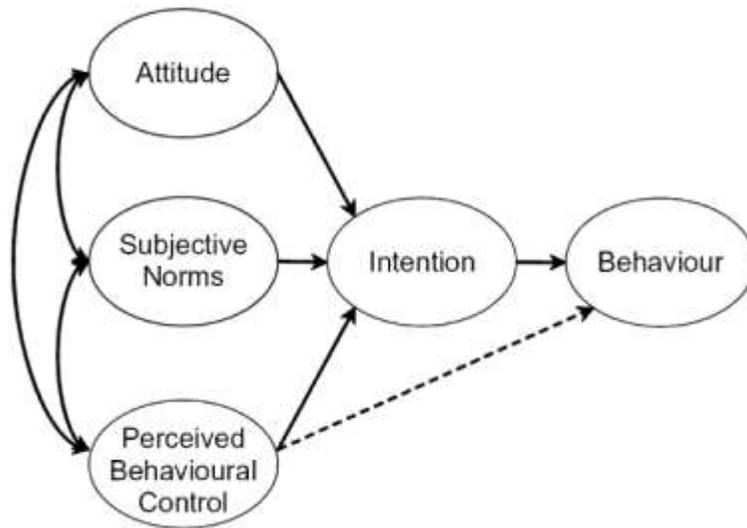
Figure 2.3. Theory of planned behavior. Source: Ajzen (1991)

Ulker-Demirel & Ciftci (2020) discuss TPB in the context of tourism, leisure, and hospitality management and concluded that there is still not enough research to analyze the effect of intentions on actual behavior in tourism, leisure, and hospitality fields. They refer to three major studies (Goh & Jie, 2019; Joseph & Wearing, 2014; Goh & Lee, 2018) that focused on consumer generations and their motivational, attitudinal factors and behavioral intentions in different aspects. A more recent study (Kasim, Winter, Liu, Keebler, & Spence, 2021) applies TPB as a theoretical foundation in reviewing the factors affecting passengers' behavioral intentions on using biometrics at airports. Nevertheless, TPB has never been directly used in analyzing passengers' behavior and intentions in the context of airport retail and food and beverage shopping.

2.3.1 Components of food and beverage/retailing experience. Although the results of the survey in an international airport (Freathy & O'Connell, 2012) suggest that 61.5% of respondents' time was dedicated to shopping (20.3 mins on average), and 27% (9

mins on average) of the time in the airport's bars and restaurants, other studies suggest that not all passengers necessarily undertake commercial activities. Hence, Omar and Kent (2001) classify airport shopping travelers into three types: the shopping traveler, the browser traveler, and the fast-track traveler. The products that passengers usually purchase are related to luxury goods or travel necessities and their purchasing is influenced by time pressure and impulse buying tendency, particularly if the store is crowded and the quantity of items is limited.

There are several studies describing the components of food and beverage, along with retailing experience and consumption behavior of passengers. Chiappa, Martin, & Roman (2016) include 13 items such as price, quality of product, variety of food, presentation and originality of dishes, location convenience, cleanliness and internal atmospherics, friendliness of staff, speed of service, and provision of entertainment as the major dimensions. Another study by Lin and Chen (2013) reveals that passenger shopping motivations positively affect commercial activities at the airport including dining and leisure activities, particularly motivated by favorable price and quality, culture and atmosphere, and communication. Alternative studies reviewed the airport passenger landside retail experience in the following categories: landside and airside retail locations, macro-level experience, non-retail locations, payment methods, purchase type, and interaction with purchase (Livingstone, Popovic, Kraal, & Kirk, 2012).

2.3.2 Determinants of food and beverage/retailing experience. Consistent with other researchers (Chiappa, Martin, & Roman, 2016), certain demographic, psychographic and socio-economic factors perform as determinants of airport food and beverage/shopping

behavior and experience. For example, the authors mention age, gender, nationality, occupation, and income as traits that can partially explain the spending and consumption behavior of passengers. According to the determinants of airport retail revenue literature review by Chen et al. (2020), which covers 50 studies from 1998 to 2018, 26 factors were identified and grouped into five categories related to the airport, passenger demographics, travel patterns, psychology, and resources. Chen, Wu, Koo, & Douglas (2020) mention such factors as the allocation of bigger airport space to commercial areas, comfortable relaxing and familiar environment of the airport, higher passenger traffic, accessible and convenient location of food and beverage concessions, and retail stores, high level of service as well as product characteristics such as price level, brand image, and quality, as determinants that positively affect passenger decision to spend, increase their spending and airport retail revenue.

Several studies were consistent with certain passenger demographics, such as age, gender, and nationality, that pre-determine their decision to spend and the amount to spend. For instance, younger passengers are more likely to shop than the middle-aged group; however, the latter tends to spend more once the decision to purchase was made. Despite having a higher purchasing power, older passengers (aged 65+) tend to be less satisfied with F&B offers compared to younger travelers (Chiappa, Martin, & Roman, 2016). Moreover, elderly passengers are claimed to be less at ease in airport environments and tend to stay closer to their assigned gate, which may explain their low engagement with salespeople and facilities (Castillo-Manzano, 2010).

The research by Freathy and O'Connell (2012) shows that demographics, such as age and gender, along with travel characteristics, such as the composition of the group, travel purpose, frequency, and duration of the visit, influence shopping behavior. Considering gender, 63% of female passengers spent more than one hour in the commercial area, whereas 46% of males spent less than 10 minutes shopping.

On top of the findings that females tend to spend more time shopping than males, the study by Lu (2014) also suggests that males prefer products of well-known brands and tend to shop impulsively, while females opt for entertainment products related to pleasure, relaxation, and novelty.

According to Freathy and O'Connell (2012), passengers who travel alone, business travelers, and domestic passengers were also found to spend less time in the commercial area and actually shopping. Additionally, the duration of the trip also pre-determined the shopping behavior, as the length is the trip, the longer passengers tend to spend time in commercial areas. The findings are consistent with other studies (Graham, 2008), where younger passengers who travel several times a year for leisure were found to spend more, while low-cost carrier passengers were frequent users of food/beverage establishments at the airport. Manzano (2010) also agrees that frequent flyers are more likely to make a purchase in retail stores or consume food/beverages at the airport due to their familiarity with airport environments and feeling of ease in such facilities.

2.3.3 Shopping psychology and behavior. According to the literature reviewed, most of the previous studies focus on passenger shopping behavior, intentions to purchase, and spending patterns. For instance, the research conducted at international airports in

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Taiwan (Lu, 2014) reveals that passengers' purchases at the airport are mostly driven by pre-planned intentions and influenced by the commercial environment. Moreover, the personal characteristics of passengers and their travel experiences pre-determine various shopping behaviors. For example, it is believed that passengers with higher disposable income tend to spend more at the airport; however, Lu (2014) found that the increase in household income decreases pre-planned shopping intentions.

Another study at Incheon International Airport in South Korea (Choi & Park, 2022) shows that flight delays increase the pre-flight expenditure in duty-free stores to a certain level unless the flight delay is excessive. Dwell time is also found to be essential in airport retailing. Wu & Chen (2012) define dwell time as the time between passenger arrival at the airport check-in area and departure time of the flight when passengers are most likely to look around and shop at the airport to pass the time. According to experts, passengers are also more likely to engage in food and beverage consumption in their dwell time. Manzano (2010) through his investigation shows that a long waiting time before embarking makes passengers seek escape from boredom and satisfy their food and beverage needs. Hence, once the decision to consume food/beverages is made, the amount of spending increases with the waiting time.

Choi and Park (2022) also investigate the characteristics of not only passengers but flights that have a strong effect on purchasing behavior. For example, they find that although low-cost carriers have lower total spending, this can be attributed to the airport's policy of assigning those flights to inconvenient shopping locations.

Freathy and O'Connell (2012) reveal that the majority of purchases were made by surveyed passengers for personal use rather than for a gift. Moreover, the majority of retail purchases appear to be pre-planned, whereas gift items tend to be more on the impulse purchase side.

Another topic related to passenger shopping behavior at the airport is impulsive shopping and its nuances. Chen et al. (2020) in their literature review emphasize the importance of encouraging passengers to engage in impulsive shopping to increase revenue and facilitate positive emotions about airport shopping while addressing passengers' concerns regarding the perceived disadvantage of shopping at the airport due to their impulsive purchase. One of the typically perceived disadvantages of airport shopping might be passenger belief that the price level of airport goods is much higher than outside of the terminal.

Although extensive literature covers topics related to airport shopping and food/beverage, consumer behavior, motivations, intentions, and spending patterns, the studies are limited in considering the generational factor in behavioral differences among passengers in the international airport context.

2.4 Information Source and Search Behavior

Information acquisition and alternative sources of information among travelers remain one of major topics of interest for marketers, particularly in the tourism and hospitality industry. Airports are especially expected to offer effective communication of various information to passengers, from flight and airline information to basic wayfinding and signage around the airport grounds and terminals. Cave, Blackler, Popovic, and Kraal (2013), for instance, state that confusion and hard airport navigation decisions may

contribute to passenger dissatisfaction, missed flights, or delays, while familiarity with the airport is positively correlated with intuitive navigation. Moreover, being a part of the hospitality industry and an important economic unit for a country, international airports are expected to provide world-class customer care and service and increase their non-aeronautical revenue. Therefore, it is inevitable for the airport to understand passenger information needs and information search behavior to achieve this efficiency and enhance performance.

Some of the early theories include the consumer information acquisition and processing model proposed by Assael (1984) which shows information search as a problem-solving task in purchase situations. Thus, by making this problem-solving stage easier and seamless for the passengers and encouraging the subsequent purchase and consumption stage, airport marketers need to understand passenger information needs and search behavior.
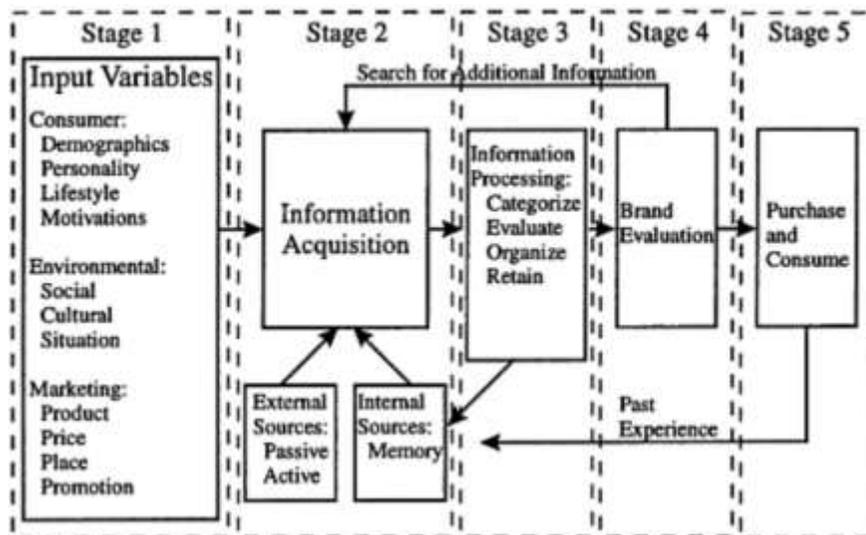
Figure 2.4. Consumer information acquisition and processing model. Source: Assael (1984), Vogt & Fesenmaier (1998, p.552)

However, Vogt & Fesenmaier (1998) claim that the framework is oversimplistic and proposed an alternative conceptual model which postulates that an individual's decision-making is based on functional information search needs, along with the visual and aesthetic needs in the search process.

According to the authors (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998), although information in the tourism context is collected primarily for functional reasons such as trip planning, there can be other needs such as leisure and recreation-based motivations (e.g., information for visual, entertainment, social, innovation, and creativity purposes). Alternatively, Luo, Feng, and Cai (2008) in their investigation of tourist information search behavior, apply the theory of consumer behavior (Berkman & Gilson, 1986) as the conceptual model.

Nowadays, there are various sources of information and marketing channels that companies use to communicate with their customers and share information, such as the Internet, social media, radio, newspapers, television, magazines, journals, etc. (Beldona, 2005). Peterson and Merino (2003) postulate that Internet has a major impact on consumer information search behavior. Particularly with the development of the Internet and its global reach, digital marketing channels such as search engines, email marketing, social media platforms, and mobile apps have evolved the ways consumers are looking for information and marketers providing it (Beldona, 2005). The author suggests that when comparing Baby Boomers and Gen X, the older generation has reported slightly higher increases in travel information searches than younger cohorts, which can be attributed to retirement planning initiatives. According to another research (Huang, Petrick,

Benckendorff, Moscardo, & Pendergast, 2009), Baby Boomers rely on traditional sources of information such as newspapers.

Dabija, Brandusa, and Tipi (2018) claim that Gen Xers are best reached through marketing channels such as travel advisors, travel packages, price discounts, and coupons. Other studies (Littrell, Ma, & Halepete, 2005) describe Gen Xers as realists, who tend to have a high level of education and are believed to rely more and more on recommendations from online sources such as blogs, forums, or social networks (Acar, 2014). Unlike Millennials, Gen Xers tend to be more cautious and responsible when they use information obtained from social media or other online sources, as they only became users of mobile devices and modern communication technology at an older age (Dabija, Brandusa, & Tipi, 2018). Moreover, Gen Xers are less familiar with newer sophisticated technologies that are more accepted by digital natives of the younger generation.

Millennials, at the same time, are defined as digital natives accustomed to the use of technologies and e-commerce. Moore (2012) claims that their broad experience and knowledge of the Internet tend to influence their search for information using Internet-based marketing channels, including social media, blogs, e-mails, mobile apps, and review platforms. Moreover, Valentine and Powers (2013) support many other researchers who claim that representatives of this generational cohort dislike marketing efforts through conventional methods, and they are more willing to trust the opinions of their friends, relatives, or other customers and eWoM (electronic word of mouth) when making a purchase decision. This group prefers collective learning and constantly expresses their opinion, in a way that they can influence other people. They enjoy when their knowledge

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and opinion is considered an expert and they rely on their peers' opinions. Their strong urge to position and express themselves and share their opinion, feedback, and experience, whether positive or negative, towards a product or service makes them use both traditional and electronic means, such as eWoM (Moreno, Lafuente, Avila, & Moreno, 2017). Martin (2005) claims that credibility and relevance play a major role in their buying decisions and they trust the posts on their friends' social media. Rahman (2015) also suggests that Millennials are attracted to ads offering discounts and innovative interactive displays. Moreover, the author points out that traditional offline advertising such as billboards and banners remained attractive to them.

Younger generations, particularly Gen Zs, also tend to rely heavily on eWoM in their travel decisions, especially on social media reviews. Social media represents the ideal platform for finding and exchanging information among Gen Zs, and they tend to compare, rank, and rate tourist destinations to establish preferences (Liu, Wang, Zhang, & Qiao, 2022). According to McKinsey&Company (Francis & Hoefel, 2018), Gen Z is recognized as a hypercognitive generation capable of collecting and cross-referencing many sources of information. Moreover, they are highly global-minded and receptive to new cultures, innovations, technologies, and experiences. They are active users of social media networks which makes them highly connected to trends and people around the world. They do not access information through newspapers or T.V. anymore, rather new alternative methods such as the Internet and social media (Sladek & Grabinger, 2022).

Although the previous literature includes several studies dedicated to information sources and consumer information search behavior in tourism and recreation contexts,

there is limited research conducted to investigate information sources and searches in the airport context, recognizing different information needs and information search patterns among distinct generational cohorts.

3. DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH METHOD

The study utilized the secondary data collected through the distribution of a passenger questionnaire at the PHL International Airport. The questionnaire used a probability systematic sampling method. The survey was designed to evaluate passenger satisfaction with different areas of the airport and included both quantitative and qualitative questions. The quantitative approach incorporated a Likert scale questionnaire, which provided the data for the analysis. A Likert scale was used to evaluate the degree of satisfaction with different airport-related items, where passengers indicated their satisfaction from 1 (not satisfied at all) to 7 (completely satisfied). Some items covered in the questionnaire include travel means to PHL (i.e., parking at the airport, public transportation, rental car), check-in and TSA (i.e., clarity of airline check-in signage, cleanliness/condition of the airline check-in area, courtesy and helpfulness of security screening checkpoint staff, clearly communicated instructions at the security screening checkpoint), airport facilities and environment (i.e., availability of power outlets, availability of restrooms, availability/ease of use of connecting to Wi-Fi) and other airport related items. The survey also included questions related to the sensory or perceptual experience of passengers (i.e., brightness, smell, sounds, comfort), their shopping behavior and spending patterns (i.e., retail stores and food/beverage stores), as well as their experience at other airports (within and outside of the U.S.).

Out of 4050 valid responses recorded during the survey, which targeted departing and connecting PHL passengers aged 18 and above, 4003 valid responses were used in this study, extracting the population representing four generations of interest (Baby Boomers,

Gen X, Gen Y, and Gen Z). Among the responses relevant to this study, 20.8% are Baby Boomers, 25.2% are Gen X, 34.7% are Gen Y and 19.3% are Gen Z. The sample distribution is close to the population distribution in the United States by generation in 2021 (Duffin, 2022). Concerning gender, 56.4% of them were female, 41.6% were male, 0.8% were non-binary/third gender, 0.2% were other, and 1.0% preferred not to say. The majority of the respondents (96.3%) came from the U.S. and 66.0% of them reported traveling for leisure or visiting friends and relatives (VFR). Approximately 73% of respondents were repeated passengers at PHL and around half of the respondents (50.1%) traveled alone.

The study included regression analysis, a single-factor ANOVA, and cross-tabulations. Regression analysis is a statistical method used to detect the relationship between dependent and independent variables. It answers the following questions: *Which factors matter most? Which can we ignore? How do those factors interact with one another? How certain are we about all these factors?* (Gallo, 2015). Specifically, t statistic is used in a t-test to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between variables. For example, it is used to determine the airport-related components that affect the overall satisfaction of PHL passengers across generations.

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is also used as a statistical method to estimate the difference between the mean values of variables. The F statistic is a result of the ANOVA test which allows for determining the variability between groups and within groups. It is utilized in the study to detect any significant difference between the mean satisfaction of PHL passengers with retail/shopping, and food/beverage experience.

Finally, cross-tabulation or contingency (two-dimensional) tables are used in the analysis of the relationship between multiple variables. The Chi-square statistic is used for testing the statistical significance of the cross-tabulation table. It shows whether the variables are dependent or independent and whether the test is statistically significant. Results are "statistically significant" at the .05 or 5% level. The study relied on SPSS and Excel as the main statistical tools.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Experience at PHL

A single-factor ANOVA analysis was used to derive the difference in average overall satisfaction with PHL experience among the four generations and indicated a p-value of 0.03 and an F statistic of 3.0, which implies that the test is statistically significant and there is a significant difference in mean values of groups. Even though the difference in average satisfaction is not large, Baby Boomers showed a slightly higher overall satisfaction score (5.42 out of 7, where 1 – not satisfied at all and 7 – completely satisfied) compared to other generational cohorts. It was followed by Gen Z with 5.31, and the lowest satisfaction rate was reported by Gen Y (5.27) and Gen X (5.26).

The survey breaks down the overall experience at PHL into various areas and measures passenger satisfaction with each of them separately. It included 24 items in 3 main fields: related to experience outside of the airport, outside of the terminal (up to security check), and inside of the terminal (past security check). Overall, the results show that Baby Boomers were consistently more satisfied with different items of airport experience across all three fields, while Gen Xers were least satisfied with experiences outside of the airport. Gen Zs were found to be least satisfied with their experience outside of the terminal, and inside of the terminal along with Millennials. The test was statistically significant with a p-value<0.05 in the following items: roadway signs/wayfinding or directions, drop-off space in front of the terminal, availability of parking, clarity of airline check-in signage, cleanliness/condition of the airline check-in area, ease of finding airline check-in and wait time, the efficiency of airline luggage check-in procedure,

usefulness/helpfulness of flight info displays, courtesy and helpfulness of security screening checkpoint staff, clearly communicated instructions at the security screening checkpoint, cleanliness/condition of security check area, wait time in security check line, availability of power outlets, availability of restrooms, availability/ease of connecting to Wi-Fi, condition/cleanliness of restrooms, condition/cleanliness of seating areas, ease of finding your way through the airport, and gate signage (Table 4.1). At the same time, the intergenerational difference was not significant in the following areas: the attractiveness of airport grounds, value for money for parking facilities, safety/security in parking facility for self and vehicle, signs in the parking facility, and ease of making connections with other flights.

Table 4.1. ANOVA results of satisfaction with experience at PHL

How would you rate your satisfaction with your experience outside of the PHL airport?						
	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB	F-statistic	p-value
Attractiveness of airport grounds	4.95	4.93	4.94	5.09	1.778	0.149
Roadway signs/ Wayfinding or Directions	5.33	5.31	5.29	5.52	**3.531**	**0.014**
Drop off space in front of the terminal	5.14	5.19	5.23	5.42	**4.221**	**0.005**
Availability of parking	4.62	4.61	4.36	4.36	**3.177**	**0.023**
Value for money for parking facilities	4.34	4.24	4.15	4.26	0.993	0.395

Table 4.1. (continued)

How would you rate your satisfaction with your experience outside of the PHL airport?						
	Gen Z	**Gen Y**	**Gen X**	**BB**	**F**	**p-value**
Signs in parking facility	4.97	4.90	4.90	4.90	0.213	0.888
Clarity of airline check in signage	5.37	5.49	5.6	5.65	**5.274**	**0.001**

How would you rate your satisfaction with your experience outside of the terminal (up to security check)?						
	Gen Z	**Gen Y**	**Gen X**	**BB**	**F**	**p-value**
Cleanliness/condition of airline check in area	5.28	5.37	5.38	5.67	**8.875**	**<0.001**
Ease of finding airline check in and wait time	5.65	5.7	5.77	5.86	**3.081**	**0.026**
Efficiency of airline luggage check-in procedure	5.48	5.47	5.63	5.81	**6.712**	**<0.001**
Usefulness/helpfulness of flight info displays	5.6	5.63	5.77	5.93	**9.257**	**<0.001**
Courtesy and helpfulness of security screening checkpoint staff	5.29	5.51	5.64	5.8	**14.198**	**<0.001**
Clearly communicated instructions at the security screening checkpoint	5.48	5.54	5.66	5.76	**5.21**	**0.001**
Cleanliness/condition of security check area	5.21	5.29	5.39	5.61	**9.644**	**<0.001**
Wait time in security check line	5.53	5.78	5.84	5.99	**10.778**	**<0.001**

How would you rate your satisfaction with the inside of your terminal at PHL (past security)?						
	Gen Z	**Gen Y**	**Gen X**	**BB**	**F**	**p-value**
Availability of power outlets	4.74	4.83	4.89	5.09	**4.072**	**0.007**
Availability of restrooms	5.67	5.61	5.78	5.96	**10.783**	**<0.001**
Availability/ease of connecting to Wi-Fi	5.23	5.34	5.53	5.59	**6.565**	**<0.001**
Condition/cleanliness of restrooms	4.81	4.82	4.96	5.22	**9.1**	**<0.001**
Condition/cleanliness of seating areas	5.26	5.22	5.28	5.52	**6.723**	**<0.001**
Ease of finding your way through airport	5.88	5.84	5.98	6.05	**6.048**	**<0.001**
Ease of making connections with other flights	5.32	5.32	5.47	5.45	1.56	0.197
Gate signage	5.82	5.87	6.06	6.08	**10.124**	**<0.001**

Note: The value in bold indicates significance at a 5% level

A regression analysis was conducted to determine independent variables that have an impact on overall satisfaction with PHL experience across four generations. As a result, satisfaction with retail and shopping experience was found to influence the overall satisfaction in the case of Gen Zs, Gen Y, and Gen Xers (Table 4.2). Satisfaction with food and beverage experience was found to influence only all four generations' overall satisfaction with PHL (Table 4.3).

Table 4.2. Regression results with satisfaction with the retail and shopping experience at PHL as an independent variable

	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB
R Square	**0.0101**	**0.017**	**0.015**	0.0004
P-value	**0.01**	**9.52E-07**	**0.00011**	0.575

Note: The value in bold indicates significance at a 5% level

Table 4.3. Regression results with satisfaction with the food and beverage experience at PHL as an independent variable

	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB
R Square	**0.023**	**0.044**	**0.064**	**0.018**
P-value	**1.88E-05**	**2.76E-15**	**3.01E-16**	**0.00011**

Note: The value in bold indicates significance at a 5% level

A regression analysis (Table 4.4) also revealed that among all the factors contributing to overall satisfaction with the experience at PHL, Baby Boomers were found to be influenced by gate signage (p-value=0.022), usefulness/helpfulness of flight info displays (p-value= 0.017), cleanliness/condition of security check area (p-value=0.0002) and waiting time in security check line (p-value=0.0005) (Table 4.4). Gen X's experience, at the same time, was impacted by the clarity of airline check-in signage (p-value=0.001), usefulness/helpfulness of flight info displays (p-value=0.047), and cleanliness/condition of security check area (p-value=0.001). Millennials are influenced by 7 factors including

drop-off space in front of the terminal (p-value=0.004), signs in parking facility (p-value=0.022), clarity of airline check-in signage (p-value=0.008), the efficiency of airline luggage check-in procedure (p-value=0.016), condition/cleanliness of restrooms (p-value=0.0003), ease of making connections with other flights (p-value=0.017), and gate signage (p-value=0.0003). Finally, Gen Zs are influenced by the cleanliness/condition of airline check-in area (p-value=0.0006), usefulness/helpfulness of flight info displays (p-value=0.012), clearly communicated instructions at the security screening checkpoint (p-value=0.034), cleanliness/condition of security check area (p-value=0.024), availability of restrooms (p-value=0.039), ease of finding your way through airport (p-value=0.0002), and gate signage (p-value=0.002).

Overall, the findings provide evidence that there is an intergenerational difference in airport experience among PHL passengers, particularly experience inside the terminal, and various factors affect this experience depending on the generational cohort.

Table 4.4. Regression analysis coefficients with components of airport experience as independent variables

How would you rate your satisfaction with your experience outside of the PHL airport?	BB	GX	GY	GZ
Attractiveness of airport grounds	0.149	0.172	0.162	0.140
	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.026)
Roadway signs/ Wayfinding or Directions	-0.005	-0.009	0.004	0.010
	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.025)
Drop off space in front of the terminal	0.014	0.022	**0.052***	0.005
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.024)

Table 4.4. (continued)

How would you rate your satisfaction with your experience outside of the PHL airport?	BB	GX	GY	GZ
Availability of parking	-0.018	-0.026	-0.008	0.007
	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.024)	(0.037)
Value for money for parking facilities	-0.008	0.026	0.013	-0.052
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.028)	(0.040)
Safety/security in parking facility for self and vehicle	-0.003	0.017	-0.002	0.055*
	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.023)	(0.034)
Signs in parking facility	-0.018	-0.045	**-0.057****	-0.056
	(0.035)	(0.032)	(0.025)	(0.037)
Clarity of airline check in signage	0.029	**0.067*****	**0.044*****	0.094
	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.017)	(0.022)
R-square	0.091	0.136	0.130	0.117
Sample size	831	1008	1391	773
How would you rate your satisfaction with your experience outside of the terminal (up to security check)?	BB	GX	GY	GZ
Cleanliness/condition of airline check in area	0.132	0.115	0.098	**0.107*****
	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.021)	(0.031)
Ease of finding airline check in and wait time	-0.029	0.034	0.034*	0.042*
	(0.027)	(0.025)	(0.019)	(0.027)
Efficiency of airline luggage check-in procedure	-0.008	-0.020	**-0.030*****	-0.030
	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.020)
Usefulness/helpfulness of flight info displays	**0.054****	**0.041****	0.074	**0.060*****
	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.017)	(0.024)
Courtesy and helpfulness of security screening checkpoint staff	-0.003	0.029	-0.003	0.044
	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.023)	(0.032)
Clearly communicated instructions at the security screening checkpoint	-0.009	-0.018	-0.015	**-0.071****
	(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.024)	(0.033)
Cleanliness/condition of security check area	**0.136*****	**0.104*****	0.120	**0.079****
	(0.036)	(0.032)	(0.025)	(0.035)

Table 4.4. (continued)

How would you rate your satisfaction with your experience outside of the terminal (up to security check)?	BB	GX	GY	GZ
Wait time in security check line	**-0.104*****	-0.039*	-0.017	-0.017
	(0.030)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.028)
R-square	0.125	0.159	0.163	0.130
Sample size	831	1008	1391	773
How would you rate your satisfaction with the inside of your terminal at PHL (past security)?	BB	GX	GY	GZ
Availability of power outlets	0.017	-0.026*	0.008	0.001
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.012)	(0.019)
Availability of restrooms	0.020	0.043*	0.019	**0.050****
	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.017)	(0.024)
Availability/ease of connecting to Wi-Fi	-0.004	0.005	-0.001	-0.003
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.017)
Condition/cleanliness of restrooms	0.015	0.023	**0.053*****	0.000
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.015)	(0.021)
Condition/cleanliness of seating areas	0.302	0.319	0.256	0.210
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.030)
Ease of finding your way through airport	0.205	0.160	0.190	**0.129*****
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.025)	(0.035)
Ease of making connections with other flights	-0.018*	0.015	**-0.024*****	0.003
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.015)
Gate signage	**0.071****	**0.061****	**0.090*****	**0.097*****
	(0.031)	(0.033)	(0.025)	(0.031)
R-square	0.400	0.378	0.389	0.267
Sample size	831	1008	1391	773

Notes: (1) *, **, *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively. (2) Standard errors are presented in parentheses.

4.2 Retail and Shopping Experience

Among the four generations, Gen X showed the highest percentage of people who used retail (59.0%), while the majority of passengers who haven't used retail shopping

stores belonged to the generation of Baby Boomers (48.0%) (Table 4.5). At the same time, over half of the representatives of Gen Y and Gen Z used retail establishments. The Pearson Chi-Square for the test is 44,027 with a degree of freedom of 21 and an asymptotic significance of 0.002. It can be partially explained by the fact that Baby Boomers might have limited mobility and familiarity with the airport since over 30% of them indicated that it was their first visit to the airport in the last 12 months.

Table 4.5. Percentage of respondents who used/not used retail and food/beverage stores by generation

Retail/shopping stores used?	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB
Yes	54.9%	53.6%	**59.0%**	52.0%
No	45.1%	46.4%	41.0%	**48.0%**

Note: The percentage in bold indicates the largest one in each row

Table 4.6 shows the results of a one-way ANOVA test, where although the difference in the average satisfaction with retail and shopping experience at PHL among generations is not significant, Baby Boomer passengers have higher average satisfaction compared to other generational cohorts (5.26). In addition, Generations Y and Z had a similar pattern of the lowest average satisfaction of 4.97 and 4.91, respectively. The ANOVA model also supports the findings with a p-value of 0.001 and F of 5.32, which indicates that there is a difference between the mean values of groups, and the test is statistically significant.

Table 4.6. ANOVA results of satisfaction with retail and shopping experience

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance	F	p-value
BB	432	2272	**5.259**	2.141	5.32	0.001
GX	595	3056	5.136	2.333		
GY	745	3705	4.973	2.198		
GZ	424	2083	4.913	2.170		

Note: The value in bold indicates the largest in the column

As can be derived from Table 4.7, there is a pattern in retail and shopping expenditure among generations. For example, all four generations tend to spend less than $10 or between $10 and $30 on retail and shopping. In particular, the majority of Gen Z tended to spend less than $10 per person while at the airport, while Baby Boomers and Gen X tended to spend between $10 to $30. Additionally, Gen Xers were more likely to spend between $30 to $100 compared to other generations. Gen Y and Gen X were more inclined to make purchases totaling $100 to $300 per person. Pearson's Chi-Square statistic for the test was 30.99 with a degree of freedom of 15 and an asymptotic significance of 0.009, which indicated that the association between variables is significant.

Table 4.7. Cross-tabulation of the percentage of expenditure on retail/shopping per person while at PHL

Approximately how much did you spend on retail and shopping per person while in the airport? mn1	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB
Less than $10	**50.9%**	45.8%	36.8%	42.6%
$10 - $29.99	33.7%	36.8%	**40.0%**	**39.4%**
$30 - $49.99	10.1%	9.5%	**14.5%**	10.9%
$50 - $99.99	3.8%	5.5%	**6.9%**	5.6%
$100 - $299.99	0.9%	**1.9%**	1.7%	1.4%
$300 and above	0.5%	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%

Note: The percentage in bold indicates the largest one in each row

When investigating the types of retail businesses visited by different generations, a few distinguishable patterns can be outlined. Overall, gift shops and books/magazines stores were found to be the most popular across all four generations (Table 4.8). Particularly, Baby Boomers were found to have the most interest in book/magazine stores (53.0%), while gift shops were popular mostly among Gen Y (34.5%) along with electronics (9.8%). On top of that, Gen Xers, although also interested in book/magazine stores (46.6%) and gift shops (30.6%), tend to visit clothing stores (7.6%) more than other generations. A higher percentage of passengers belonging to Gen Z were interested in toiletries/cosmetics (20.2%), electronics (10%), and clothing stores (8.2%). The chi-square test resulted in 80.4 with a degree of freedom of 12 and a p-value close to 0. The results support the previous studies (Omar, Sallehuddin, Hafizah, & Hassan, 2016), where younger generations, particularly Gen Y, were described as a cohort that is characterized by increased connectivity and digital natives. Overall, the results suggest that the intergenerational difference in retail and shopping behavior of passengers exists and can be explained by various factors, including intergenerational theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Table 4.8. Cross-tabulation of retail and shopping businesses visited

Which retail and shopping business did you visit?	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB
Gift shops	31.4%	**34.5%**	30.6%	28.1%
Book/Magazine shops	30.2%	33.7%	46.6%	**53.0%**
Clothing	**8.2%**	6.7%	**7.6%**	6.7%
Electronics	**10.0%**	**9.8%**	5.3%	5.5%
Toiletries/Cosmetics	**20.2%**	15.4%	9.9%	6.7%

Note: The percentage in bold indicates the largest one in each row

4.3 Food and Beverage Experience

In general, the data showed that passengers tend to use food and beverage establishments more than retail and shopping stores at PHL. Similar to retail and shopping store visitation trend, food and beverage stores were visited by Gen X more compared to other generations, while Baby Boomers remained the least frequent customers at food and beverage establishments (Table 4.9). The test was significant as the Pearson Chi-Square was 47,738, with the degrees of freedom 21 and asymptotic significance <0.001.

Table 4.9. Percentage of passengers who used/not used food and beverage stores

Food/beverage stores used?	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB
Yes	75.9%	76.2%	**78.2%**	69.1%
No	24.1%	23.8%	21.8%	**30.9%**

Note: The percentage in bold indicates the largest one in each row

Considering statistics in Table 4.10, the single-factor ANOVA test revealed that the difference between the average satisfaction with food and beverage among generations is not significant, with a p-value of 0.23 and F statistics of 1.41. Despite the small difference in average satisfaction, Baby Boomers were still found to be more satisfied with food and beverage experience (5.34) compared to other generations, while Millennials were the least satisfied (5.19). The results contradict the earlier study (Chiappa, Martin, & Roman, 2016), where older passengers (65+) were found to be least satisfied by food and beverage stores.

Table 4.10. ANOVA of satisfaction with food and beverage stores

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance	P-value	F
BB	574	3064	**5.338**	2.130	0.237	1.412
GX	788	4169	5.291	2.171		
GY	1060	5505	5.193	2.251		
GZ	587	3072	5.233	2.128		

Note: The value in bold indicates the largest one in each column

A cross-tabulation in Table 4.11 shows the spending patterns among generations when purchasing food and beverage at the airport. It was found that although the majority of passengers spent less than $10 or $10 to $30 on food and beverage, Gen X and Baby Boomers were more likely to spend between $30 and $100. Gen Z and Millennials were found to have similar spending behavior. The chi-square statistic resulted in 49.45 with a degree of freedom of 12 and a p-value less than 0.001, which indicates that the difference is statistically significant.

Table 4.11. Cross-tabulation of the percentage of expenditure on food/beverage per person while at PHL

Approximately how much did you spend on food and/or beverage per person while in the airport?	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB
Less than $10	**39.4%**	32.5%	31.0%	34.7%
$10 - $29.99	**51.1%**	**51.1%**	48.4%	**50.0%**
$30 - $49.99	7.5%	11.1%	**13.8%**	**12.4%**
$50 - $99.99	1.9%	**4.4%**	**5.1%**	3.0%
$100 and above	0.2%	0.8%	**1.8%**	0.0%

Notes: The percentage in bold indicates the largest one in each row

According to the results in Table 4.12, quick-service restaurants were found to be the most visited food and beverage establishments across the four cohorts. Pre-packaged food item providers were found to be the most popular among Baby Boomers (20.4%), while full-service restaurants were mostly visited by Gen Xers (17.0%). At the same time,

a higher percentage of Millennials used coffee shops (33.0%) compared to other cohorts, and quick-service restaurants were preferred by Gen Zs (38.3%). The chi-squared statistic equaled 15.26 with a degree of freedom of 9 and a p-value of 0.08, which indicates that the difference between generations is not significant.

Table 4.12. Cross-tabulation of food and beverage businesses visited

Which food and beverage business did you visit?	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB
Full-service restaurants	12.3%	15.5%	**17.0%**	13.3%
Quick service restaurants	**38.3%**	34.0%	33.7%	36.2%
Pre-packaged food item providers	**19.7%**	17.5%	18.0%	**20.4%**
Coffee shops	29.6%	**33.0%**	31.3%	30.1%

Notes: The percentage in bold indicates the largest one in each row

4.4 Information Source

The data in Table 4.13 revealed that among the four generational cohorts, 87.1% of Gen Zs relied on information about the PHL, which is 2% higher than Gen Y and Gen X. A higher proportion of Baby Boomers (16.1%) have not looked for information about PHL at all. Although airline websites/apps were found to be the most popular source of information across all four generations, Baby Boomers relied on airline websites/apps more than other generations. This contradicts an earlier study (Huang, Petrick, Benckendorff, Moscardo, & Pendergast, 2009), where Baby Boomers were claimed to rely more on traditional sources of information such as newspapers. At the same time, Gen Xers relied on corporate travel planners, the local newspaper (print or online), and radio more than other cohorts. On the contrary, online travel agencies' websites (Expedia, Priceline, etc.), search engines (e.g., Google, Bing, etc.), airport websites (phl.org), and business associates were found to be most popular among Millennials. It is supported in other studies (Moore,

2012), where Gen Ys were found to prefer Internet-based marketing channels, including social media, blogs, e-mails, mobile apps, and review platforms. Gen Z relies on a higher rate on information sources such as relatives/friends, YouTube, travel agencies, TV, social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), and online review platforms (TripAdvisor, Yelp). Especially social media is claimed to represent the ideal platform for finding and exchanging information among Gen Zs (Liu, Wang, Zhang, & Qiao, 2022). The results are statistically significant with a chi-square of 177.355, a degree of freedom of 42, and a p-value<0.001.

Table 4.13. Sources of information used by different generations

What sources have you relied upon for information on PHL?	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB
Airport websites (phl.org)	12.5%	**13.5%**	12.3%	12.1%
Airline websites/apps	19.7%	21.8%	26.5%	**29.1%**
Online Travel Agencies' website (Expedia, Priceline, etc.)	4.4%	**5.1%**	4.9%	4.5%
Search engines (e.g., Google, Bing, etc.)	13.2%	**15.1%**	12.8%	12.7%
Relative/friend	**15.9%**	9.4%	9.1%	10.7%
Business associate	1.2%	**2.1%**	1.5%	1.1%
Youtube	**3.2%**	2.6%	1.0%	0.5%
Travel agency	**3.1%**	2.2%	2.4%	2.5%
Corporate travel planner	1.1%	1.7%	**2.9%**	2.0%
Local newspaper (print or online)	0.4%	0.8%	**1.2%**	0.8%
Radio	0.7%	1.1%	**1.3%**	0.8%
TV	**3.3%**	2.6%	2.3%	1.5%
Social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)	**5.1%**	4.6%	4.2%	3.0%
Online review platforms (TripAdvisor, Yelp)	**3.3%**	2.9%	3.1%	2.4%
Haven't looked for info on PHL	12.9%	14.6%	14.7%	**16.1%**

Notes: The percentage in bold indicates the largest one in each row

In essence, among various information needs before the trip, flight schedule was found to be the most demanded by passengers across the four cohorts, particularly among

Baby Boomers (37.6%) (Table 4.14). They were also interested in information related to parking (14.4%), available airlines (10.5%), and airport facilities (7.1%) more than younger generations. Similarly, Gen Xers wanted to know information about parking (14.2%), ground transportation (8.0%), and hotels near the airport (5.3%) more than other generations. A higher percentage of Gen Y were found to be interested in ground transportation (8.1%) and airport facilities (7.4%). The youngest generational cohort (Gen Z) were more interested in airport map (13.6%), available airlines (10.9%), airport dining and shopping facilities (9.9%), security information (7.2%), and airport reputation (5.8%). The results are statistically significant with a chi-square of 186.75, degrees of freedom of 27, and a p-value<0.001.

In general, the findings suggest that the intergenerational difference in information source and needs among PHL passengers does exist and points out the alternative ways to approach distinct generations and provide them with the information they need effectively.

Table 4.14. Sources of information used by different generations

What types of information did you want to know about PHL before your trip?	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	BB
Airport reputation	**5.8%**	3.8%	2.6%	2.0%
Airport map	**13.6%**	10.6%	8.6%	7.7%
Flight schedule	27.8%	29.3%	32.4%	**37.6%**
Security info	**7.2%**	6.4%	5.9%	5.5%
Ground transportation	5.7%	**8.1%**	**8.0%**	6.8%
Parking	9.0%	12.0%	**14.2%**	**14.4%**
Available airlines	**10.9%**	9.3%	7.6%	**10.5%**
Hotels near airport	3.7%	3.6%	**5.3%**	2.7%
Airport facilities	6.4%	**7.4%**	6.7%	**7.1%**
Airport dinning and shop facilities	**9.9%**	**9.5%**	8.6%	5.7%

Notes: The percentage in bold indicates the largest one in each row

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

A number of previous studies have emphasized the importance of airports as hospitality organizations, playing a connecting role not only across cities but connecting a nation with the rest of the world (Freidheim & Hansson, 1999). More importantly, the airport performs as a complex platform for numerous hospitality organizations such as retail stores, food/beverage establishments, safety and security organizations, and others. They all might affect the brand image of not only the airport but the whole destination. Particularly in the times of instability, such as during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the economic downturn, labor shortages, and shifts in passenger traffic negatively affect airport operations and performance (Effler, 2022). Therefore, hospitality professionals emphasize the significance of a passenger-centered approach in understanding the drivers of satisfaction with the airport experience, which may result in economic and reputational benefits for the airport (Jiang & Zhang, 2016). Thus, many scientists and industry professionals have come up with various models to assess passenger experience and segment passengers into different cohorts to better understand their needs and demands. For example, passengers can be classified into demographic cohorts depending on their age, gender, nationality, and other factors. Age was found to be an especially important demographic factor as the difference between various age groups or generations along with other factors can predetermine or affect passenger behavior and satisfaction with the airport. According to generational theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991), distinct generations share a

similar background, set of experiences, values, and beliefs that tend to affect their consumption behavior and traits.

Therefore, this study was aimed at investigating whether there is an intergenerational difference in passenger experience, including retail and food/beverage experience, the difference in information source and needs, and how this difference might affect passenger behavior. There is no single consensus on generational cohorts' timespan; however, this study was focused on generations born between 1946-2004, which include Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y (Millennials), and Gen Z.

Research Question 1. To understand the intergenerational difference in airport experience, it is important to define airport experience, its components, and its determinants. According to the literature review, several models have been developed to define components of airport experience and access service quality at the airport such as industry-based Skytrax (Skytrax Ratings, 2022), ASQ (Fodness & Murray, 2007), and scholarly-based models such as SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) and others. The PHL Passenger Survey was based on similar components of airport experience such as transportation and parking at the airport, clarity of signage, cleanliness/condition of different areas, information source and needs, food and beverage and retail experience, amenity use, sensory perception, and others. The results of the study showed that there is an intergenerational difference in the PHL passenger experience. Particularly in the average overall satisfaction with the airport, where Baby Boomers were found to be the most satisfied and the lowest satisfaction rate was reported by Gen Y and Gen X. Moreover, Baby Boomers were consistently more satisfied with different items of airport experience

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across all three fields (outside of the airport, outside of the terminal, inside of the terminal), such as clarity of airline check-in signage, wait time in security check line, gate signage, and others. Meanwhile, Gen Xers were least satisfied with their experience outside of the airport, and Gen Zs were found to be least satisfied with their experience outside of the terminal, and inside of the terminal along with Millennials. In addition, regression analysis revealed the areas that had the biggest impact on the overall experience for four generations. Gen Xers' experience was particularly impacted by the clarity of airline check-in signage, and the usefulness/helpfulness of flight info displays. Millennials are influenced by 7 factors, including drop-off space in front of the terminal, signs in the parking facility, clarity of airline check-in signage, the efficiency of airline luggage check-in procedure, condition/cleanliness of restrooms, ease of making connections with other flights, and gate signage. Focusing on those areas might improve the overall satisfaction results of the airport. The findings contradict the earlier research (Chiappa, Martin, & Roman, 2016), where older passengers (65+) experienced the lowest satisfaction compared to younger generations. Although variation in results may occur, the importance of Baby Boomers as well as Gen Y cannot be neglected due to the proportion of the population that they take. Similarly, Gen X, although smaller in size, is also important due to their higher purchasing power.

Research Question 2. The study was particularly focused on the retail and food/beverage experience of passengers, as these areas are critical for the airport's non-aeronautical profitability. The data analysis revealed that the intergenerational difference in retail and shopping experience does exist, while the difference in food and beverage

experience was found to be not significant. Satisfaction with retail and shopping experience was found to influence the overall satisfaction in the case of Gen Zs, Gen Ys, and Gen Xers, while satisfaction with food and beverage experience was found to influence all four generations. Gen Zs and Gen Ys were the least satisfied with both retail and food/beverage establishments at PHL.

Gen X and Gen Y were found to be more likely to spend more on retail/food/beverage while at the airport compared to Gen Z and Baby Boomers, who tend to spend no more than $10 per person. According to earlier studies, the spending behavior of passengers at airports is heavily influenced by time pressure, availability of stores, impulse shopping tendency, and other factors such as disposable income (Omar & Kent, 2001). Although the majority of respondents arrived at the airport 1.5-3 hours before embarking (53.4%), a slightly higher percentage of Millennials arrived less than 1 hour (5.8%) or 1-1.5 hours (32.7%) before the departure. This minimizes their dwell time and may result in lower spending and visitations to retail stores around the airport.

Moreover, the intergenerational difference in household income can also contribute to the difference in spending behavior among passengers. For instance, Gen Zs were found to typically have the lowest income compared to older generations, ranging between less than $15,000 and up to $45,000 (29%). In addition, they tend to be less brand loyal and more careful in where they spend their money due to the underlying search for financial security (Wood, 2013). This can explain their lower expenditure on retail items at the airport. Approximately 36.7% of Millennial passengers earned between $45,000 and $105,000 a year, while older generations such as Gen Xers (39.1%) and Baby Boomers

(25.5%) earned more than \$150,000. It supports the previous studies (Omnitrack Compass, 2021), where it was found that older generations, particularly Gen Xers, who are often in the workforce, have family and are engaged in the community and social activities, spend more per trip and travel in larger groups compared to passengers of other generations.

In addition, according to Worsley, Hunter, and Wang (2010), older generations tend to be more vulnerable to health issues and may have mobility limitations, which affect their food and beverage as well as shopping behavior. For instance, Baby Boomers were found to prefer pre-packaged food items more than other generations, which suggests they value convenience and are price-conscious, however, it depends on other factors such as household income and savings. Gen Xers' higher engagement in full-service restaurants can be explained by Chawdhary and Dall`Olmo Riley (2015) who claim that representatives of this generation usually have higher income and education, which entitles them to be more pragmatic and search for superior service and quality. Millennials at the same time opt mostly for either quick-service restaurants or coffee shops. This can be explained by the fact that the airport has limited food choices and passengers are time-constrained before their flight. For example, some terminals might have more full-service restaurants, while others might only have coffee shops and pre-packaged food.

Research Question 3. Another topic of interest in this study was information source and search behavior, which is essential for airports to understand how to communicate effectively with passengers and deliver the information that they need the most. The data has revealed that there is an intergenerational difference in information source and search behavior among passengers of PHL Airport. For example, Baby

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Boomers tend to rely on airline websites/apps, which are also the most popular source of information for other generations. Gen Xers were found to rely on corporate travel planners, radio, and local newspapers more than other generations. This finding supports the previous studies (Mintel Group Ltd., 2016; Dabija, Brandusa, & Tipi, 2018), where Gen Xers were claimed to rely less on traditional online advertising, and more on travel advisors. However, other studies (Chawdhary & Dall`Olmo Riley, 2015) where Gen Xers were claimed to heavily rely on eWOM such as review platforms and social media, and consider online sources of travel information more important than Generation Y (Li, Li, & Hudson, 2013), were not evident in the results of this study. Millennials were found to use sources of information such as online travel agencies' websites, search engines, airport websites, and business associates more than other cohorts. It is supported in other studies (Moore, 2012), where Gen Ys were found to prefer Internet-based marketing channels, including social media, blogs, e-mails, mobile apps, and review platforms. Previous studies (Liu, Wang, Zhang, & Qiao, 2022) were consistent with the finding that relatives/friends, YouTube, travel agencies, TV, social media, and online review platforms were popular among Gen Zs due to their heavy reliance on social media and eWoM.

5.2 Implications

The theoretical and practical implications of this study include the segmentation of passengers based on their generational affiliation, which contributes not only to the research on passenger experience at the airport but the broader understanding of intergenerational differences and behavior. The existing literature, although categorizes passengers based on their age as one of the demographic factors, does not emphasize the

generational cohort effect and its influence. Although the sample used is specific to PHL airport, it is useful in illustrating the intergenerational difference in passenger experience and behavior in various areas of the airport. It provides an alternative segmentation method for airport managers who want to enhance their understanding of passengers and improve their experience with a customized approach.

The study might be useful for airport managers in improving certain airport facilities and areas with the lowest satisfaction rates among Gen Y and Gen X to improve their experience at PHL. For instance, improving the availability of parking may increase satisfaction with experience outside of the airport among Gen X, while improving the condition/cleanliness of restrooms may positively affect Millennials' satisfaction with experience inside the terminal. Since Gen Zs and Gen Ys were the least satisfied with both retail and food/beverage establishments at PHL, this might signal to the airport managers to pay closer attention to these generations' needs and demands in order to improve their performance and profitability. They could focus on the stores that are mostly visited by passengers belonging to those generations, such as gift shops, books and magazines stores, and toiletries/cosmetics stores, to increase their expenditure on retail. Similarly, managers could focus on introducing more coffee shops and quick-service restaurant options and improve the service quality to appeal to all generational cohorts.

Concerning information sources and search behavior, airport managers should closely work and collaborate with airlines and their websites in order to deliver the necessary information and image of the airport. Moreover, airport managers should realize the growing importance and popularity of alternative sources of information, such as

eWoM such as social media platforms, search engines, online review platforms, and others. According to previous research (Li, Li, & Hudson, 2013), paid advertising and traditional travel intermediaries are losing their effectiveness and popularity. Reaching passengers and establishing effective communication through trusted platforms would greatly benefit the airport by not only delivering necessary information but also improving the airport's reputation and helping passengers to navigate and become more familiar with the airport. This could affect their overall experience at the airport and even increase their time and willingness to spend more on the airport premises.

Future research could focus on a particular area of interest, such as the intergenerational effect on airport shopping behavior (i.e., pre-planned intentions, impulse purchasing) and psychology (i.e., motivation, values, perception) or intergenerational effect on information search behavior and alternative sources of communication.

5.3 Research Limitations

Although study plays its part in contributing to the understanding of the subject, there are several limitations to acknowledge. First, the study was based on the data collected during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic between February to May 2022, which had a major contribution to the abnormality of passenger traffic, as well as passenger behavior, priorities, and perceptions. For example, due to health concerns, passengers may tend to prioritize safety, cleanliness, and hygiene more than usual, and this might affect their food and beverage consumption and shopping habits. Moreover, external factors such as understaffing, limited services, flight delays/cancellations, and surging prices may also affect the passenger experience at the airport. While pre-pandemic and future studies might

reflect this deviation, the present study is one of the few that investigates passenger experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Second, the study had a skewed sample age, which focused on passengers aged 18 and above. This implies that Generation Z could not be fully captured, as representatives of this generation include individuals under the age of 18 (born between 2005-2010). On top of that, the Silent Generation (born between 1925-1945) was excluded from the study due to the insufficient sample size of this generation to make a comparison with younger cohorts.

Lastly, the interpretation of the results is limited to a certain airport context, particularly departing and connecting passengers at Philadelphia International Airport, which might be a limitation when trying to generalize or compare the results with other airports or other service environments. There is a number of factors, such as geographical location, size, passenger traffic, and other attributes, that might affect the difference in the results. In addition, this study was utilizing secondary data rather than relying on the primary, and although it helps to answer the research questions in this study, it limits the investigation of the detailed explanation of the differentiation.

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