

(Re)Defining Airport Experience: A New Framework Proposition

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Abstract. This chapter investigates the airports' transformation into dynamic commercial servicescapes and their profound effects on travelers' emotions and underlying behaviors. We examine how feelings influence overall satisfaction, airport revisit intentions, and the likelihood of favorable word-of-mouth. Emphasis is given on previously underexplored concepts that impact travelers' experiences with a particular focus on sense of place, environmental responsiveness, and human-related factors. Following the review of relevant studies and theories, a new conceptual framework is proposed offering a new perspective for airport servicescape analysis and its impact on traveler behavior. Finally, we provide a review of how advances in technology and psychological stimuli within the environment attempt to mitigate managerial uncertainty and enhance behavioral intention forecasts within a given airport setting.

Keywords: airport experience, emotions, WOM, revisit

1 Introduction

From the drudgery of long waits and delays to the wonders of exploration, the metamorphosis of airports worldwide is evident. Nowadays, airports are presently on the altar of technological achievements with robot assistants, automobile events, butterfly gardens, aquariums and artificial waterfalls serving as just a few employed examples for grabbing our attention. Things, nevertheless, have not always been this way. When one looks at the history of the airport industry, it was primarily owned by the wider public sector and served as a vital operational area for travelling to another nation or city.

A turning point in the airports' evolutionary pathway was their deregulation in the 1970s which propelled the industry into new marketing-oriented strategies. This provided marketeers with much needed freedom in enhancing traveler experiences by offering Wi-Fi connectivity, inserting pieces of art in naturally mundane long corridors

and developing luxurious VIP lounges. Nowadays, airport spaces are consisted not only of security checks and check-in desks but also of PlayStation entertainment areas, retail shops, dining areas and indoor waterfalls (see Jewel at Changi airport, Singapore).

The convenience of transportation by air encourages an increasing number of individuals to live this experience. For 2022 passenger numbers of global airlines reached the 3.7 billion mark [1] all of whom had to spend time in the airport environment its procedures, personnel, available dining option and the rest of its unique features. Billions of hours are spent annually in this global network of airport environments providing in the process exceptional opportunities for marketers in enhancing traveler experiences and widening the range of available options being offered. Waiting time of passengers is used to market experiences for both essential and luxurious items, carefully positioning relevant products to serve as gifts, indulge impulse buys, or for enhancing experiences during flight time and/or at the destination.

From the tourism literature new forms of travel behavior have recently emerged including *Dark tourism* [2], morbid places where tragic events took place are visited, *Literary tourism* [3], where birthplaces, homes and gravesites of favorite book authors serve as major attraction points and *Shopping Tourism* [4] where the purpose of travel is primarily founded on purchasing goods. As such purchasing behavior on airport grounds can be affected by the purpose of travel. For example, in the case of shopping tourism, airport retail shops serve as starting points of the shopping experience which will be carried on at the travelers' shopping destination.

Travel research demonstrates that travelers' expectations shift on a regular basis and while the airport industry is constantly expanding to accommodate these, not every situation and experience is as rosy as it seems. Many travelers encounter less developed settings, less functioning procedures and spaces, and thus less pleasant experiences [5]. Others describe their experience as nothing out of the ordinary, or as something exactly to what they have previously seen. These experiences fall short of projected expectations minimizing in the process emotional arousal - an important antecedent for satisfaction and favourable perception synthesis that leads to word-of-mouth dissemination, service engagement and something we further analyse later on. As such conceptualising and blueprinting airport process to identify points of vulnerability is essential for gaining a better understanding of the factors that influence experiences. The wider academic community acknowledges that travelers' assessments and behaviors have great variations ultimately making airport settings complex servicescapes for analysis [6]. Opinions vary on which environmental elements contribute the most to passengers' experiences with some research supporting that departure lounges are most significant in travelers' experiences thus creating a need for better-positioned and purposeful designs [7] while others position human related factors as the epitome of interactions and experiences [8].

In this chapter, our aim is to review environmental elements that influence airport experiences focusing on both physical features (i.e., decoration and informational

displays) and social cues (i.e., check-in and security personnel). In a volatile and ambiguous world, passengers' needs and expectations surrounding airports evolve over time and are greatly impacted by various situations such as financial crises, terrorist attacks, pandemics and advances in technology. The recent emergence of Covid-19 has altered dramatically passengers' airport experiences [9] yet, as mentioned, passenger numbers of global airlines reached the 3.7 billion mark in 2022 [1], doubling the number of air travelers in 2020 and thus signaling the industry's path to recovery from the pandemic [10]. Such experiences have a big impact on passengers' emotions, demonstrating that 'exciting atmospheres' are important for overcoming anxiety with post-covid travelling [11].

At the same time, more airports are adopting technology innovations for streamlining check-in processes and informing travelers. Check-in kiosks have been converted into self-service kiosks, passport procedures have become automated, and gates have been turned into 'smart-gates' as biometric technology has advanced. Dubai International Airport, one of the busiest airports in the world, has been using facial sensors to scan and identify travelers since 2017, significantly lowering wait times ever since [12]. Munich's Airport utilizes an AI robot named 'Josie Pepper' that assists travelers, while in Philadelphia, 'Gita' delivers meals to the airport's visitors [13]. The 'Airstar' Robot assistant in Incheon International Airport of Seoul guides passengers from their terminal to crowding information, while offering a selfie menu to pose with. More and more airports are utilizing robotic assistance for language translation, navigation, cleaning services, and security procedures. Use of robots in airport facilities can offer huge steps towards the improvement of passenger experiences through service standardization for both entertainment and efficiency purposes. As airports continue to expand, the deployment of robotic technology demonstrates the industry's dedication to innovation and customer-centricity and serves as just one of the multiple entities that constitute an airport's environment.

The following sections review and evaluates different approaches for defining what an environment is, its malleable and fixed elements, and subsequently its unique link with evoked emotions and desired actions.

2 Within the milieu: Defining the Environment

The value of the environment has long been appreciated, and the idea of constructing an impressive environment extends back centuries, with temples in ancient times and palaces in the Renaissance [14]. When evaluating and defining the environment of a place, one can speak of its atmosphere, surroundings, and people. An environment involves a variety of variables that shape the entire experience. As individuals walk in, they are met with a variety of environmental signals, collected through the five senses, which allow them to perceive and understand what it is that surrounds them.

Several scholars have sought to categorise the environment through the five senses [15], while others classified it according to stimulus type [8]. The most common distinction, nevertheless, is between the categories of ambience, space, and symbols [16]. Academic research expanded the investigation into more settings, introduces new stimuli, categories, and restrictions in both the knowledge of the environment and its impact on consumer behavior. The transition to the experience economy prompted academics and practitioners to look for new approaches to attract humans. Lighting, music, and scents are environmental signals with substantial research confirming their influence on emotions and behavior [6], [16]. To further understand the impact of environment on experiences, consider the example of visiting your favorite restaurant. When asked, “Why is it your favorite?”, possible answers could include “the atmosphere”, “the service”, “the people”. In essence the deliberate designs and the place’s management are what cause us to think, feel, and evaluate along with our experience in it.

Initial conversations concerning the use of surroundings, featured airports and terminals as examples of places that are purposefully designed with contemporary elements [15]. There are studies that determine airport experience using environmental stimuli such as layout, signage, and ambience, as well as other studies that focus mainly on cognitive and emotional, features [17],[18]. In the case of airports, when the environment is at the forefront of the research, there is a propensity to explore broader categories of ambience, layout, convenience, and functionality [19], [20]. Colours, decoration, hygienic concerns, passenger crowding, space arrangement, and ease of access from one spot to another are among the explored stimuli on a more micro level.

It is perhaps surprising that only recently human aspects have been under the microscope of servicescape research, especially when manned airport check-in desks, security personnel and cafeteria waiters all serve as critical components of the traveler’s journey and experience. A rude waiter is likely to stain the overall experience while a responsive and informative passport control officer is likely to tilt it the other way. The proposed conceptualization in this chapter acknowledges and considers the importance of the human factor in airport environments.

3 The Inner Echoes

3.1 Emotions and Decisions

As experience-seeking individuals, we expect our consumption choices to evoke feelings that explore, complement, and expand our emotional pallet. Ultimately, we make decisions that facilitate complex emotional experiences that allow for memorable moments [21]. Links between emotions and decisions are well documented in decision-

making research addressing in the process interesting questions: *Will my decisions be affected by my current emotional state? Perhaps a feeling of mental exhaustion will affect my choice of food consumption?* Adequate light is shed on these and other interesting inquiries. When in a sad state, I am more likely to take more time to make a deliberate decision compared to me being in a happy state [22] and probably I will indulge myself with a high calorie cake when I feel mentally tired compared to me preferring a fruit salad when not [23], [24].

Insight from psychology acknowledge that the multitude of crises that have recently afflicted humanity created a sense of insecurity. According to the most recent statistics, one in every four people worldwide suffers from a mental health illness, the most common of which are anxiety and depression [25]. This forced organizations and practitioners to change, adapt, and innovate their service experiences in order to contribute to individuals' emotional well-being and enhance experiences [26]. If a customer is in an environment where negative feelings outnumber positive ones, he or she is less likely to recommend or revisit that place [27]. It has been argued that the emotional reactions of individuals regulate the effect of external cues on actual behavior. Specifically, when an individual is satisfied with his or her surroundings it is reflected in his or her feelings. Individuals' perceptions and attitudes towards the environment are influenced by these emotional reactions [28]. Thus, the richer the environment, the greater the emotional stimulation and in return the higher the likelihood for enjoyment.

Someone's excitement or dissatisfaction might be expressed shortly after an interaction. Similarly, an individual's whole experience might determine whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied. Satisfaction can be either a consequence or a process in a behavioral journey [29]. Because definitions of satisfaction vary, one common explanation in the marketing literature frames satisfaction as the alignment of expectations and experience [30]. In most cases, is investigated as a collection of evaluations that serve as a main motivator for intentions and behavior [31]. Individuals place a high value on their experiences with various service providers. This explains why corporations consider satisfaction to be one of the most reliable indicators of future behavior intentions. The findings presented above provide a challenge to practitioners. The environment, in particular, is recognised as an aspect that can add to people's well-being. That is why its significance is emphasised, as well as its design in such a way that it pleases people and generates pleasurable experiences. Individuals' experiences may be created and managed using their newly formed environment as a tool. After all, this is one of the primary reasons that attention is drawn to the numerous stimuli that contribute to the creation of a holistic environment. Perhaps stimuli that do not exist precisely in the context of airports must be given meaning.

3.2 Pleased, Aroused, or Dominant?

The environment and underlying context in which our experiences take place, play a crucial role on our emotional synthesis and subsequent behavior. The illuminated importance of environment and the emotions it evokes led to the emergence of a dedicated subfield of psychology named environmental psychology. As a term, environmental psychology was effectively curated in the 70s by Proshanky, Ittelson and Rivlin [32] and Mehrabian and Russell [33] aiming at exploring which emotions are evoked by different environmental stimuli and consequently what types of behavioral responses are engaged. Mehrabian and Russell [33] proposed, and empirically tested, a now prominent procedural framework that identified environmental Stimuli to influence the Organism's internal evaluation and emotions thus triggering an array of behavioral Responses. This is known as the SOR model (Stimulus, Organism, Response).

As predecessors of responses, emotions have great effects on decision making and underlying behavior. To review this let's use an example. Imagine that you need to catch a flight and at the airport's terminal you stop for a quick meal at a newly opened restaurant. At the entrance you are met with a waiter that escorts you through your experience with noticeable rudeness, thus evoking feelings of sadness, anger and disappointment that hardly remain dormant or internally resolved. A possible (yet not desirable) behavioral response would be to return the rudeness with more rudeness, yet a more prominent (and arguably wiser) one would be to speak with the manager. If no resolution is achieved, writing a negative review, and limiting your revisiting intentions for the foreseeable future are highly likely options, both of which can have detrimental effects to the restaurant's success.

Using SOR, in this example the Stimulus was the waiter's rudeness evoking certain emotions to the Organism (customer) ultimately triggering a respective behavior Response of making a complaint (note that the opposite is also true – a well-mannered waiter can evoke feelings of pleasure leading to more tipping and a better experience overall). Perhaps it is not surprising that organizations, including airports, who provide a platform for the timely communication of dissatisfying experiences, can repair customer relationships for the reduction of negative WOM and the preservation of loyalty and revisit [34]. Most importantly the latter example accentuates the impact of human factors (the waiter) on customer experiences other than atmospheric stimuli.

Focusing on and defining emotions, the Mehrabian-Russell model proposes three emotional responses to environmental stimuli, namely, *Pleasure, Arousal and Dominance*. Follow-up re-testing and re-measurements were undertaken since its introduction in 1974 [35] with the model's popularity and application in marketing being propelled by the timely addition of Kotler's [15] proposition of Atmospherics (deliberate environmental designs for stimulating purchasing behavior) and Bitner's [16] work which brought attention to the impact of employee responses in airport environments. The three emotional responses of the Mehrabian-Russell model are analyzed next.

Pleasure encompasses one's hedonic qualities and encapsulates the emotional items of happiness, satisfaction, hopefulness, pleasure, relaxation, and contentment. When examining the interplay between visual stimuli and evoked pleasure, research identified the pleasure-maximizing colors of light to be blue, purple, green, purple-blue and blue-green, with yellow colors yielding less pleasure [36]. Aforementioned, relationships were also tested between different ethnic groups bringing forward different pleasure maximizing results pertaining to colour between Caucasians and Asians [37]. Most importantly, when examining evoked pleasure in airport environments, Moon et al. [38] identified pleasure to serve as a mediator in the relationship between airport environment and customer satisfaction.

Arousal is linked to the level of excitement one experiences and was originally identified to be ranging from sleep to frantic excitement [39]. Arousal, as a construct, is comprised by the elements of stimulation, excitement, frenzy, awakensness, arousal and jitteriness. As with other emotional responses, arousal levels are found to be stimulated by sound. Associating arousal with pupil dilation, Nunnally et al. [40] identified an increase in dilation by increasing the decibel levels of sounds, while music that was rated as exciting, increased respiration rate and thus arousal [41]. Of equal interest is the fact that pleasant odors can arouse individuals something that is also true to very unpleasant ones [42], albeit the latter can have negative effects on pleasure.

Dominance reflects the level of the organism's autonomy and freedom to act in a variety of ways within the environment, with the opposite end interested in the restriction of such freedoms. Dominance, as an amalgam term, is based on the sense of control, influence, feeling of being cared-for, importance, dominance and autonomy that the environment attributes to the individual. The environment's openness is found to influence one's sense of freedom and feeling of dominance [43] while deliberate choice restrictions through environmental designs reduce its valence.

Emotions encapsulated by Pleasure, Arousal and Dominance (PAD for short) consequently impact behavioral responses of what Mehrabian and Russell label as Approach or Avoidance. The mediating examination of emotions within airport settings produces valuable results on precisely what behavioral responses it facilitates. For example, high levels of pleasure positively impact customer satisfaction [38] while positive emotions influence behavioral intentions like positive word of mouth and willingness to pay more within a given airport setting [44]. Moon et al. [38], focused on arousal and pleasure excluding dominance from their investigation. Building upon their work, the proposed framework seeks to examine the impact of all three PAD elements on airport satisfaction and extend further our understating on how satisfaction impacts the behavioral intentions of WOM and airport revisit.

4 Navigating the Path of Action

4.1 Visitors Vs. Regulars

The impact of overall experience assessments on behavioral intentions is widely studied and empirically tested. Behavioral intention is described as the motivating component of behavior that involves a “conscious plan to perform or (deliberately) not perform some specified future behavior” [45, p. 581]. The field of revisit intentions is seen as a long-standing phenomenon and a continuation of satisfaction. Individuals are classified as first-timers or repeaters when they visit a store or place [29]. In an airport context, they are designated as either first-time or frequent travelers. The behavioral intention of returning back greatly relies on satisfaction levels, and is widely considered as the primary antecedents of revisit behavior.

Prior investigations reference the generic notion of intention as an extension of satisfaction [30]. The evaluations of the experience have been proven to have a significant impact on future behaviors. Evidently, airports of all sizes throughout the world demonstrated that their passengers were planning on returning as a result of their favorable assessments [18], [46]. The intention of visiting again is a measure of loyalty, and repeat travelers are one of the primary goals of travel destinations and tourism marketers. In accordance with findings from the marketing literature, the whole experience evaluation is an essential facilitator that has a large influence on intentional revisits. One of the important findings was that the higher the level of satisfaction with the airport's services, the more likely travelers will return to it. In a similar vein, there are significant links between overall airport assessments, including signage, service availability, cleanliness, and willingness to revisit an airport. Nonetheless, despite the fact that behaviors such as revisit intentions have been extensively studied, there is still a need for understanding the antecedents of revisit intentions [47].

4.2 The Importance of WOM

Word-Of-Mouth (WOM) plays an influential and powerful role in consumption decisions [48], [49]. WOM is defined as information exchanged with others on the use and/or experience of a product or service. The increased use of digital media, and thus digital marketing, had a substantial impact on increased WOM [50], [51]. The use of digital media to communicate their offline experiences allows for a wider dissemination of personal opinions. The ease of exchanging information and images online via personal devices increased the importance of WOM in decision-making and, among several other factors, is considered a powerful predictor of actual behavior [52].

From a practitioner's standpoint, encouraging customers to share their experiences with their firm can only benefit the company's growth. Accepting WOM's beneficial

significance, research has begun investigating the motivators that shape a positive WOM. Experiences and stimulating emotions are major antecedents of WOM. Especially when dealing with services rather than products, word-of-mouth is supported to be a key aim for businesses as it plays a significant role for attracting new customers [48], [53]. Given this, negative WOM stands out among potential consumer responses to service failures and deserves special consideration due to its long-term and far-reaching negative influence on business performance [53]. Numerous empirical attempts have been made with success to support the powerful role of WOM in services. To serve as an example, museums, restaurants, hotels, and airports are examples of influential linkages on WOM. Given the importance of WOM, the current study investigates WOM as it is affected by airport environment evaluations, since little is known about the environmental effect on such behavior in the existing literature.

5 Unlocking Hidden Effects: Sense of Place and Environmental Responsiveness

There have been several occasions when travelers have used the expression "a typical airport" when referring to a previous encounter. Airports are often portrayed as white boxes with curving ceilings and white walls. Researchers, nonetheless, were inspired to investigate certain traits in airports which contribute to the formation of an identity. Identity is described as a reflection of a country's character and culture and is often referred to as "sense of place" [7]. The term refers to the portrayal of a location, country, or history in a service experience which provides a "local structure of feeling" [54, p. 6]. Places can have an identity based on the country's history and heritage, which can be creatively disseminated through symbols, pictures, and artworks.

Today, it is believed that there is a need to reflect local values, symbols and culture. There is ambiguity in the airport environment about its impact on visitors' emotions, yet its influencing function is supposed to be unclear and complicated. On the one hand, sculptures, costumes, ceremonies, cultural artefacts, historical artworks, nature representations, and distinctive designs are just a few of the elements that contribute to an intense sense of place. Designing locations and places based on local culture may enhance visitors' authentic experience within airports [20]. When cultural connotations are utilized as a means to obtain distinctiveness, the traveler's journey within an airport is enhanced [55]. As such, they have to be the archetypes of a place in the modern era [56]. Therefore, using symbols that communicate *sense of place* at airports becomes a major driver for people's experiences as they become more excited and engaged. On the other hand, research has demonstrated that people tend to be unaware whether an airport environment reflects its national identity, and if so, there are insignificant effects

on their overall experience [57]. In light of the preceding arguments, research in the field suggests that incorporating cultural representation into an environment considerably enriches experiences, yet conflicting studies demonstrate a limited benefit, recommending additional research.

However, is it enough? Diverse scholars have explored the airport environment from different angles. Some focused on environmental variables, others on traveler satisfaction, and others examined the relationship between intentions and actual behavior. Nonetheless, the *environmental responsiveness* of travelers has not been explored in this area. Environmental responsiveness can be defined as the extent to which people respond to and are favorably impacted by environmental stimuli [58]. Earlier, it was found that atmospheric responsiveness influenced the link between an environment and positive feelings [59]. Although the importance of such relevance was emphasized, to the best of the authors' knowledge, only one research has examined its impact. *Can environmental responsiveness be employed in an airport setting?*

6 A New Framework Proposition

Imagine yourself going to an airport where colorful hues decorate the walls and distinctive artworks generate an atmosphere of excitement and surprise. As you make your way through the airport, you are met by friendly airport staff ready to assist you. The combination of tangible and intangible components, from the visually appealing surroundings, will undoubtedly make a lasting impression. *How would you react in such a situation? Would you be surprised or pleased?* These favorable emotions may be accompanied by feelings of warmth and ease. Unsurprisingly, such an interaction frequently results in positive word-of-mouth evaluations, and perhaps in a desire to return to that airport, ready to recreate this joyous experience. This brief storyline and journey can be illustrated as shown in the figure below (Fig. 1):

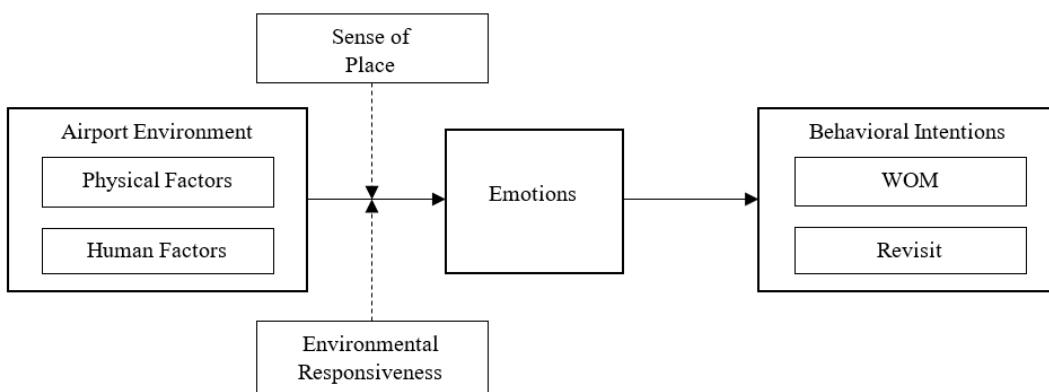


Fig. 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework

The challenges for providing and developing places that adapt to technological innovations, evolving settings, and environmental changes are the ultimate objective of individual well-being. Airports are among the places that have been strongly impacted by technological developments and unexpected economic and political shocks, from pandemics to wars. The overview and reference to what has been said in the context of airports encompasses various avenues for future research, which adds to the development and extension of the subject in discussion. Multiple scholars analyze the airport environment from different angles using various environmental components. Some concentrate on the physical components in terms of layout, seats, and amenities. Others, albeit less frequently, focus on social components and human related factors including security and check-in staff. This chapter attempts to provide a comprehending review of the development in each of the two categories – physical- and human-related factors, for a more thorough analysis of the environmental component as a whole. The more the airport's environmental features are examined, the clearer our understand will be of their influence on travelers and how they judge them.

This chapter has further demonstrated the importance of feelings regarding service environments. In numerous circumstances, the environment was found to have a profound impact on emotions. The investigation of emotions has taken three paths: a) looking at the PAD scale, b) categorizing emotions as positive or negative, and c) focusing on individual emotions like pleasure. Regardless of separation, the importance of the consequences has been emphasized. An atmosphere and its features of ambience, layout, design, and human interactions were major drivers in eliciting favorable emotions such as pleasure and excitement in restaurant settings [60], [61]. A comparable research study was conducted in an opera setting, where the physical and social dimensions of the servicescape impacted feelings of happiness and anger depending on the type of the experience [62]. There has been little research on emotions serving as a mediator in airport settings. Attempts have showed that sentiments such as delight may be both a significant environmental influence and an essential mediator of satisfaction levels [20]. Similar empirical studies investigated airport attributes such as layout, cleanliness, and function on pleasure and arousal, suggesting that the effect on a particular type of feeling changes depending on the attribute [38].

“Were you satisfied with us today? Please rate us” is one of the messages travelers often comes across in feedback surveys while walking in the airport lounges. From the 'Inner Echoes' section, satisfaction may be either a result or a process in a behavioral journey [29] that can serve as a collection of assessments and the primary incentive for behavioral intents [31]. Relevant research in the airport setting have revealed that the environment has a direct impact on satisfaction [17], [63], [64], while in other circumstances, satisfaction served as a result of evoked emotions [59], [65]. In the airport industry, satisfaction is an important indicator for both behavioral intention and actual behavior. Airport revisit and positive WOM intentions are two of the most thoroughly researched aims since they constitute key goals for tourism marketers from different travel destinations. According to airport study findings, the higher the level of satisfaction the greater the likelihood of revisiting an airport [17], [46]. Conversely, satisfaction

showed a considerable direct influence on positive WOM intention [18], [64]. As an interviewee stated while describing his experience in Nadi Airport in Fiji Islands:

“As soon as I had my feet in the airport, I really felt I am in Fiji Islands. Some Fijians were standing there waiting for us, and started playing their cultural music... I was so impressed...I will never forget such an experience and if I can ever go back, I would definitely choose this airport”.

Present research emphasises the relevance of the psychological realm of individuals, as well as travelers. There is a lack of research in the airport literature on this issue since few studies examined travelers' behavior and intentions as defined by emotions. Indeed, there are studies that focus on particular emotions, such as delight, while overlooking others [20]. Further investigation into emotions may address a research vacuum on the impact of internal responses in overall airport evaluations. Considerable connections between airport revisit intention and favourable WOM intention may therefore be identified. Meanwhile, the uncertainty of research findings on the sense of place in consumer emotions was an issue requiring additional exploration. *How would you rate an airport environment with various cultural representations compared to a placelessness airport environment?* Such a question has been underscored in the academic literature more than 20 years ago and still remains vague [7]. Along with that, the impact of environmental responsiveness on travelers' emotions, which is drawn from the field of psychology, may elucidate crucial relationships as well as indicate the present expectations of travelers. *“How much do travelers consciously care about the airports' layout, decoration or its people?”.*

7 Conclusions

This chapter provides a new roadmap for examining previously underexplored areas within the airport servicescape. By examining current literature, it uncovers research gaps and proposes new avenues of study that go beyond the standard bounds of investigation. The authors acknowledge the critical role of passenger emotions in mediating the link between the airport environment and satisfaction while examining the moderating roles of sense of place and environmental responsiveness. We aimed at providing a better understanding of travelers' expectations, experiences, and emotional responses by investigating the interplay between physical and human-related dimensions. The framework's components and flow of effects (graphically illustrated in fig. 1) are further explained in Yerimou and Themistocleous [66].

Through the physical features that comprise the airport environment to human related factors encapsulating travelers' experiences with airport employees, the framework provides an expanded review of what constitutes an airport environment transcending the widely used unidimensional approach of just physical, atmospheric environment.

For travelers' emotional response measurements, the PAD (Pleasure, Arousal, Dominance) scale was used followed by behavioral intentions including positive word-of-mouth and future airport revisit. Identifying and incorporating key moderating aspects such as environmental responsiveness and sense of place the framework invites future research to empirically investigate these dynamic interconnections between environmental stimuli and passengers' affective states.

The portrayal of the airport's metamorphosis from simple transit hubs to dynamic settings is comprised by an interplay of physical and social stimuli. Interacting with such places reveals a wide range of emotions woven within travelers' cognitive and emotional reactions. The hidden impacts that the suggested conceptual model brings forward considers individuals' personality traits and evoked emotional dimensions that can allow us to decipher traveler behavior on airport grounds as well as post-travel intentions. Afterall, we have to remember, in an airport we not only catch flights but also feelings.

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