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Alexis Tymkiw

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# Emotions Involved in Shopping at the Airport

**Alexis Tymkiw**

*The University of Southern Mississippi*

**Jamye Foster**

*The University of Southern Mississippi*

## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the emotional motivations that drive consumers to shop at airport retailers. The number of passengers served by airports increases each year, while more and more security measures are being implemented (Travel & Tourism Market Research Handbook, 2013). Travelers are required to arrive for flights earlier, thus spend much more time in the airport environment than ever before. In addition, airport retailing is a rapidly growing segment that has seen a great deal of change over the last couple of decades (Airport Council International, 2012). With expanded retail areas, many airports are beginning to resemble shopping centers. However, with higher prices and consumers experiencing time and space constraints, the airport is a uniquely different shopping environment. Therefore it is important to consider the impact of the current airport-shopping environment on consumer behavior.

The proposed study considers two unique emotional motivations for shopping at airports: (1) to escape the stress of travel and (2) to eliminate boredom. Air travel has become extremely stressful over the past few decades, especially considering all the added security measures. Lengthy waits are becoming standard. Some travelers could be looking to escape this stress and 'get out' of the airport environment by spending time in airport retail shops. Browsing retail shops may also serve as a cure for boredom.

In-depth interviews with recent air travelers will be used to gain insight into these emotional drivers, as well as identify other possible emotional drivers of airport shopping. Results would provide some initial direction for considering the impact of the current airport shopping environment on consumers. Through follow up studies, this research could eventually be used to provide specific recommendations for marketers looking to increase airport shopping by creating a more emotionally rewarding experience for customers.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Alexis Tymkiw is a senior marketing student in the honors program at The University of Southern Mississippi. Upon graduation in May 2016, she plans to pursue a graduate degree.

Jamye Foster earned her PhD from Louisiana State University and is currently an Associate Professor of Marketing at the University of Southern Mississippi. Her research interests are primarily in the areas of brand communications, relationship marketing, and retailing.