

Airport Retail: A Growing Non-Aviation Enterprise Examining Influencers on Traveler Loyalty

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ABSTRACTS

The rising demand for air travel, which is expected to double by 2035, will likely lead to substantial growth in airport duty-free shopping. The IATA estimates that 7.2 billion passengers will travel by air by that time (IATA, 2016). A survey conducted at Lahore International Airport, based on 100 responses, revealed that perceived value, personality, service quality, and satisfaction are significant factors influencing traveler loyalty to duty-free shopping, with satisfaction playing a mediating role. Although this study is limited to one airport with a small sample size, future research should extend to other airports across Pakistan for broader applicability. These findings provide aviation professionals with valuable insights to enhance traveler loyalty and increase non-aviation revenue streams, leading to financial growth and optimization.

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Introduction

The escalating demand for air travel is poised to double in the forthcoming decades, a phenomenon underscored by Alexandre de Juniac in 2016. A survey conducted by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) predicts a substantial increase, projecting nearly 7.2 billion travellers by the year 2035—nearly double the 3.8 billion air travelers recorded in 2016 (IATA, 2016). Concurrently, this surge in air travel is anticipated to propel growth in airport duty-free shopping (Choi & Park, 2022) . However, amidst this expansion, the airport shopping market faces intensified competition from various retail outlets such as department stores, local duty-free retailers, town shopping areas, and duty-free/retail stores within hotels (Ünder & Atalik, 2020). Airport duty-free shops, characterized by discounted prices compared to traditional retail and exemption from certain taxes, serve as an attractive shopping venue for customers during their flight wait times (Kim, Kim, & Asif, 2019). Recognizing the imminent doubling of air travel, airport practitioners are strategically seeking methods to enhance travelers' loyalty to duty-free shopping, aiming to boost airport revenue and optimize profit ratios (Taneja, 2023). Airport operators are proactively expanding their retail offerings in the non-aviation sector to encourage airport shopping, thereby maximizing profitability and revenue generation (Han, Yu, & Kim, 2018) .

In alignment with previous research indicating that perceptions and perceived value influence satisfaction, subsequently impacting customer loyalty, this study aims to address research gaps

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by developing an enhanced framework for understanding traveler loyalty in the context of airport duty-free shopping (Quan & Gil-Cordero, 2021). Specifically, this research aims to explore the role of perceived value and personality in fostering traveler loyalty, with traveler satisfaction at airport duty-free shopping as a mediating variable. Additionally, the study seeks to uncover the amplified mediating impact of traveler satisfaction on loyalty. The subsequent section provides a comprehensive literature review and outlines the development of hypotheses. In addition to the existing insights on the growth of air travel and its implications for airport duty-free shopping, it is essential to consider the evolving landscape of consumer behavior in the context of travel retail (Keskinen, 2021). The rapid advancements in technology and the increasing prevalence of e-commerce have reshaped the way customers approach shopping experiences (Williams, 2019).

Integrating a digital perspective into the study could provide a comprehensive understanding of how online platforms, pre-order options, and virtual interactions might influence travelers' perceptions and loyalty in the duty-free shopping environment (Welté, Cayla, & Fischer, 2022). Furthermore, exploring the role of environmental sustainability and socially responsible practices within airport duty-free operations could be a valuable dimension to investigate. With global concerns about climate change and ethical consumerism on the rise, travelers may prioritize duty-free retailers who align with their values. Additionally, a cross-cultural analysis could offer valuable insights into how cultural differences impact travelers' preferences and loyalty toward duty-free shopping. Understanding these diverse factors can contribute to a more subtle and globally applicable framework for enhancing traveler loyalty in the dynamic realm of airport duty-free shopping (Alam, Yang, Bandara, & Ahmad, 2023). Airport duty-free shops face intensified competition from various retail outlets, including department stores and local duty-free retailers. To enhance traveler loyalty, airport practitioners are strategically exploring methods and expanding retail offerings. The evolving landscape of consumer behavior, influenced by technology and global concerns, poses challenges in meeting changing preferences. The study emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of personality traits and acknowledges limited research in this context. It also introduces a nuanced perspective on the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty, suggesting ongoing challenges and areas for improvement in the duty-free shopping experience. In summary, adapting to competition, technological changes, and diverse consumer expectations remains crucial for airport duty-free shops.

Literature Review and Theoretical Background

Retail therapy holds significant importance for both travelers and tourists, serving as a prime avenue for fulfilling personal and gifting needs (Lin & Chen, 2013). Specifically, in the realm of airport duty-free shopping, traveler satisfaction emerges as a crucial element in shaping the overall shopping experience. As a result, numerous studies have been conducted to explore and understand the dynamics of duty-free shopping at airports (Sohn & Lee, 2017).

Impact of perceived value on satisfaction

According to Zeithaml (1988, p. 14), perceived value is defined as "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given." Recent research has focused on investigating perceived value and customer satisfaction to clarify the relationship between these variables. The findings indicate that a traveler's perceived value is mediated by their satisfaction (Eggert & Ulaga, 2002). Essentially, a traveler's overall assessment of duty-free shopping is influenced by their expectations and actual experiences. This perceived value, in turn, affects both traveler satisfaction and loyalty. Building upon this evidence, we posit a hypothesis that posits a positive impact of perceived value on travelers' satisfaction. (Jen, Tu, & Lu, 2011). Additionally, Tanisah and Maftukhah (2015) underscore the pivotal role of service quality in shaping customer loyalty. They identify a positive and significant relationship between service quality and customer loyalty, emphasizing the continuous need for efforts to enhance service standards. The improvements

in service quality contribute significantly to establishing a durable and sustainable relationship between the company and its customers.

The research findings also establish a positive and significant relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty. This underscores the importance of a customer's perception of the value offered by the company in influencing their loyalty. Consequently, companies are advised to consistently focus on delivering perceived value to foster and strengthen customer loyalty.

H1: The perceived value of travelers has a positive impact on the loyalty of travelers with airport duty-free shopping.

The perceived value of travelers plays a pivotal role in fostering loyalty towards airport duty-free shopping (Park & Park, 2018). Travelers are likely to exhibit loyalty when they perceive economic value, often driven by cost savings on exclusive or luxury items compared to regular retail prices (Kim, Ham, Moon, Chua, & Han, 2019). Additionally, the perception of high-quality products, a wide variety of international brands, and exclusive items contributes positively to the overall shopping experience. The convenience and accessibility of duty-free shops within airport terminals further enhance the perceived value, especially for travelers with limited time between flights. Promotions, discounts, and loyalty programs create additional incentives, encouraging repeat business (Nastasoiu & Vandenbosch, 2019). Positive service interactions, including friendly and efficient customer service, contribute to a favorable perception of the shopping experience (Bilgihan, Kandampully, & Zhang, 2016). Furthermore, the integration of digital tools and technological enhancements, such as mobile apps and virtual shopping assistants, can elevate the overall shopping experience, contributing to the perceived value and, consequently, traveler loyalty to airport duty-free shopping (Wattanacharoen, Schuckert, & Graham, 2016).

H2: The personality of travelers has a positive impact on the loyalty of travelers with airport duty-free shopping.

The personality of travelers can exert a profound influence on the development of loyalty towards airport duty-free shopping (Loriga, 2019). Individual characteristics such as shopping preferences, attitudes, and personal traits contribute to shaping the overall shopping experience. For instance, travelers with a proclivity for exploration and novelty-seeking may find the diverse range of products in duty-free shops particularly appealing. Personality traits associated with a preference for luxury items or unique souvenirs can align with the offerings in airport duty-free stores, enhancing the likelihood of repeated patronage (Scholz, 2014). Additionally, individuals who exhibit a sense of adventure and openness to new experiences may view duty-free shopping as an integral part of their travel experience, fostering positive associations with the practice (Coney Pinder, 2023). The convenience-oriented traveler may value the time-efficient nature of duty-free shopping within the airport environment. Furthermore, those with a propensity for brand loyalty may be drawn to familiar international brands or exclusive items available in duty-free outlets. The interplay between individual personalities and the unique characteristics of airport duty-free shopping can create a symbiotic relationship, where the shopping experience resonates with travelers on a personal level, ultimately contributing to their loyalty and continued engagement with duty-free offerings. Understanding and catering to the diverse personalities of travelers can be instrumental in tailoring marketing strategies and services to enhance the overall appeal and satisfaction of duty-free shopping at airports (Ali, Kim, & Ryu, 2016).

H3: The perceived value of travelers has a positive impact on the satisfaction of travelers with airport duty-free shopping.

Personality, as defined by Funder (1997, pp. 1–2), encompasses an individual's characteristic pattern of thought, emotion, and behavior, including both overt and underlying psychological

mechanisms. The widely accepted Big Five model, comprising traits such as Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness, serves as a comprehensive framework for understanding individual differences in personality (Mulyanegara, Tsarenko, & Anderson, 2009). In the context of consumer behavior, personality traits play a pivotal role in shaping purchasing decisions, serving as key factors in the decision-making process (Stankevich, 2017). Despite this significance, there exists limited research exploring the relationship between personality traits and satisfaction. The proposed model of personality traits suggests that consumers express either their actual self-image or an idealized self-image. This framework provides insight into how personality traits manifest in consumer values, actions, and words, particularly in relation to a specific brand. Understanding these traits becomes instrumental for brands, such as those in airport duty-free shops, to engage effectively with their customers. Positive perceptions of a brand or duty-free shop, influenced by a customer's personality traits, correlate with higher satisfaction and loyalty to that brand (Li, Yoo, & Park, 2017).

H4: The personality of travelers has a positive impact on the satisfaction of travelers with airport duty-free shopping.

In recent scholarly investigations, loyalty has been explored through various lenses, with this study specifically delving into the behavioral perspective of loyalty. Within this framework, loyalty is defined by a habitual inclination toward repeat purchases, demonstrating a resistance to switching to alternative options. Empirical evidence from (Anderson et al, 1994) highlights that customer satisfaction serves as a catalyst for several favorable outcomes, including increased probabilities of repeat purchasing, positive word-of-mouth, reduced price sensitivity, and a decrease in customer complaints. Additionally, Heskett et al. (1994) assert that customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in driving overall customer loyalty. Richard Chinomona's research (2014) aligns with these findings, indicating that customer satisfaction is a key determinant in fostering loyalty, particularly in the context of maintaining allegiance to specific retailers. Given the cumulative evidence, the hypothesis is proposed that there exists a positive impact of satisfaction on traveler loyalty to airport duty-free shopping. This suggests that satisfaction, as a precursor to repeat buying habits and positive word-of-mouth, is intrinsically linked to the behavioral aspect of loyalty. Moreover, accentuate the interconnectedness of customer satisfaction, service quality, and customer loyalty (Paparoidamis, Tran, & Leonidou, 2019). The direct influence of these factors on perceived value, corporate image, and corporate reputation underscores their pivotal role in shaping and enhancing customer loyalty. The implication drawn from this evidence is clear: managers must ensure that all facets of their services align with customer expectations to fortify loyalty, especially in the face of intensified competition. However, Tanisah and Maftukhah's study (2015) introduces a nuanced perspective by revealing that while customer satisfaction is positively valued, its impact on customer loyalty may not always be significant. This underscores the need for companies to consider additional contributing factors beyond satisfaction when striving to enhance customer loyalty.

H5: The satisfaction of travelers with airport duty-free shopping has a positive impact on the loyalty of travelers with airport duty-free shopping.

The satisfaction of travelers with airport duty-free shopping serves as a pivotal driver in fostering loyalty to airport duty-free shops through a multifaceted impact on customer behavior and preferences (Rahnasto, 2023). When travelers experience high levels of satisfaction with their duty-free shopping encounters, it creates a positive and memorable impression, contributing to a sense of contentment and fulfillment (Njoroge, 2023). This positive emotional connection, coupled with a satisfying shopping experience, cultivates a favorable attitude towards the airport duty-free shop. Satisfied customers are more likely to perceive the airport duty-free shop as reliable, trustworthy, and aligned with their expectations (Zhang, Lin, & Newman, 2016). Moreover, satisfaction with the shopping process can influence repeat purchasing behavior, as content and gratified customers are inclined to revisit the duty-free

shop for their future travel needs. The convenience and variety offered at airport duty-free shops, coupled with the positive emotions associated with past satisfactory experiences, enhance the likelihood of customers choosing these shops over alternative retail options. This repeated patronage contributes significantly to the development of customer loyalty, as habitual inclination toward the duty-free shop becomes ingrained in the traveler's purchasing behavior. Additionally, the positive impact of satisfaction extends beyond individual transactions, as satisfied customers are more likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Abubakar & Mavondo, 2014). This, in turn, contributes to the shop's reputation and brand image, attracting new customers and further solidifying the loyalty of existing ones. In essence, the satisfaction of travelers with airport duty-free shopping creates a symbiotic relationship where contented customers not only continue to choose the duty-free shop for their purchases but also actively contribute to the shop's reputation, fostering a loyal customer base over time (Creed, 2018).

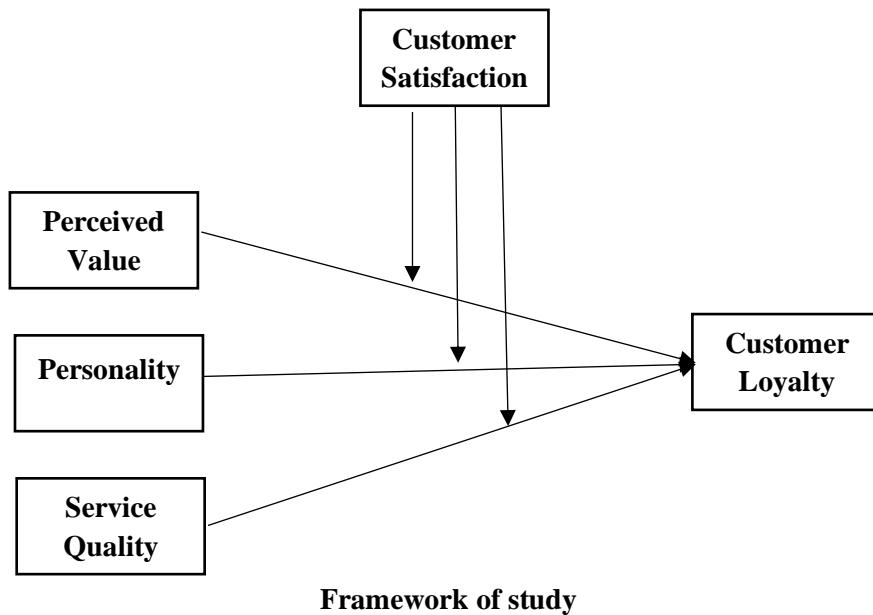
H6: The satisfaction of travelers with airport duty-free shopping has a positive impact on the service quality of travelers with airport duty-free shopping.

Customer satisfaction serves as a crucial feedback mechanism, offering insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the duty-free shopping experience (Martín, Martín-Domingo, & Lohmann, 2019). Positive feedback on various aspects, such as product variety, pricing, and customer service, indicates areas where the service quality is meeting or exceeding expectations. This feedback loop enables duty-free operators to refine and enhance their offerings based on the preferences and needs of the travelers, thus contributing to continuous improvement in service quality. Moreover, satisfied travelers are more likely to perceive the overall service quality as high. A positive shopping experience, characterized by friendly and efficient customer service, a well-curated product selection, and seamless transactions, fosters a sense of contentment among travelers. This positive emotional connection with the shopping environment translates into favorable perceptions of service quality (Ladhari, Souiden, & Dufour, 2017). Additionally, the satisfaction of travelers creates a conducive environment for loyalty. Satisfied customers are more inclined to become repeat patrons, and their loyalty, in turn, becomes a testament to the effectiveness of the duty-free shopping service (Albeshr & Ahmad, 2015). The loyalty of satisfied travelers contributes to a positive reputation for the duty-free establishment, attracting more customers and reinforcing the perception of high service quality (Ibrahim & Abdel Rady, 2019). Furthermore, the link between satisfaction and service quality extends to the broader airport experience. Duty-free shopping is often an integral part of a traveler's journey, and their satisfaction with this aspect contributes to an overall positive impression of the airport (Hwang, Joo, & Kim, 2023). Airports that prioritize and enhance the satisfaction of travelers in duty-free shopping areas contribute positively to their reputation as customer-centric and service-oriented hubs.

Methodology

The chosen research paradigm for this study is positivism, indicating an objective pursuit of knowledge. The primary objective is to comprehend the factors influencing or enhancing traveler loyalty towards duty-free shopping at airports, specifically considering the impact of personality and perceived value, with satisfaction acting as a mediating variable leading to loyalty. The research approach employed is deductive, involving the testing of common theories and different variables to assess customer loyalty towards airport duty-free shopping. Within the realm of research methodology, a survey track was utilized, employing a cross-sectional time horizon. Data for the study was collected through a self-administered questionnaire distributed to 200 participants within a two-week period at an international airport in Lahore. Trained personnel, affiliated with an airline or the airport, conducted the data collection by approaching travelers in the departure lounge. A total of 150 effective responses were utilized for data analysis after excluding irrelevant responses. This sample size aligns with established standards, as suggested by Roscoe (1975), considering sample sizes between 30

and 500 as satisfactory. The questionnaire employed multiple measurement items with a 5-point scale. Specifically, four questions were developed to measure perceived value, four questions for assessing the personality of travelers, three questions for evaluating satisfaction with airport duty-free shopping, and four questions for gauging loyalty to airport duty-free shopping. The survey also included a section covering the purpose of the study and demographic information. The proposed theoretical framework incorporates four key research variables and their interrelationships to elucidate travelers' loyalty in the context of airport duty-free shopping. The model encompasses perceived value, personality, satisfaction with airport duty-free shopping, and loyalty to airport duty-free shopping. Three research hypotheses are formulated within this framework to explore the intricate dynamics among these variables. The visual representation of this loyalty model is depicted in Figure 1.



Data Analysis

Model Fit

Saturated Estimated Model		
SRMR	0.097	0.097
D_ULS	5.266	5.227
D_G	2.454	2.463
CHI-SQUARE	1033.122	1029.2
NFI	0.602	0.603

The fit indices for the saturated estimated model indicate a generally good fit. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is 0.097, indicating a low discrepancy between observed and predicted covariance matrices. The Degree of Unbiased Logarithm of Sums of Squares (D_ULS) and Degree of General Fit (D_G) are 5.266 and 2.454, respectively, both pointing to a satisfactory overall goodness of fit. The chi-square statistic is 1033.122, suggesting reasonable fit, though its interpretation depends on sample size. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) at 0.602 signifies improved fit relative to a null model. In summary, these indices collectively support a reasonably good fit for the saturated estimated model, emphasizing the importance of considering specific research requirements and model evaluation criteria.

Construct Reliability and Validity

Cronbach's Alpha	Composite (rho_a)	Reliability (rho_c)	Composite (rho_c)	Reliability (AVE)

CL	0.847	0.854	0.898	0.689
CS	0.766	0.83	0.863	0.682
PV	0.796	0.839	0.865	0.618
Per	0.734	0.715	0.807	0.346
SQ	0.953	0.961	0.958	0.623

The table presents reliability and validity measures for different constructs. Cronbach's Alpha values indicate internal consistency, with all constructs ranging from 0.734 to 0.953, suggesting acceptable reliability. Composite Reliability (rho_a and rho_c) values are consistently high, ranging from 0.715 to 0.961, reinforcing the robustness of the constructs. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, reflecting convergent validity, range from 0.346 to 0.689, generally meeting the threshold for acceptable validity. Overall, these results suggest that the constructs in the study demonstrate strong internal consistency and validity, contributing to the reliability and accuracy of the measurement model.

Discriminant Validity HTMT

	CL	CS	PV	Per	SQ	CS x PV	CS x Per	CS x SQ
CL								
CS	0.927							
PV	0.809	0.667						
Per	0.519	0.504	0.502					
SQ	0.627	0.516	0.553	0.477				
CS x PV	0.212	0.193	0.228	0.403	0.063			
CS x Per	0.487	0.304	0.398	0.422	0.308	0.273		
CS x SQ	0.061	0.099	0.087	0.338	0.078	0.723	0.351	

The table shows correlation coefficients between different constructs (CL, CS, PV, Per, SQ) and their cross-product terms. Strong positive correlations are observed between CS and PV (0.667), CS and SQ (0.516), and PV and SQ (0.553). The cross-product terms, such as CS x Per (0.398) and CS x SQ (0.723), highlight moderate positive relationships. On the other hand, CL has weak to moderate correlations with other constructs. These findings suggest potential interdependencies between certain constructs, emphasizing the need for further exploration of these relationships in the context of your study.

Factor Loading

	CL	CS	PV	Per	SQ	CS x PV	CS x Per	CS x SQ
CL1	0.725							
CL2	0.813							
CL3	0.893							
CL4	0.878							
CS1		0.665						
CS2		0.884						
CS3		0.906						
PV1			0.696					
PV2			0.733					
PV3			0.842					
PV4			0.862					
Per1				0.616				
Per11				0.505				
Per2				0.52				
Per3				0.593				
Per4				0.655				

Per5	0.619			
Per6	0.659			
Per8	0.513			
SQ1	0.743			
SQ10	0.764			
SQ11	0.831			
SQ12	0.74			
SQ13	0.85			
SQ14	0.75			
SQ2	0.797			
SQ3	0.712			
SQ4	0.814			
SQ5	0.828			
SQ6	0.846			
SQ7	0.846			
SQ8	0.725			
SQ9	0.781			
CS x PV		1		
CS x Per			1	
CS x SQ				1

This table displays correlation coefficients between different items within constructs (CL, CS, PV, Per, SQ) and their cross-product terms. Strong positive correlations are evident within each construct, for example, between CL items (ranging from 0.725 to 0.893), CS items (0.665 to 0.906), PV items (0.696 to 0.862), Per items (0.505 to 0.659), and SQ items (0.712 to 0.85). Additionally, the cross-product terms (CS x PV, CS x Per, CS x SQ) all have perfect correlations of 1, suggesting high multicollinearity between these pairs. These findings underscore the internal consistency of items within constructs and highlight potential collinearities between specific pairs of cross-product terms. Top of Form

Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (I O/STDEV I)	P Values
CS>CL	0.452	0.468	0.112	4.023	0
PV->CL	0.205	0.196	0.075	2.742	0.006
PER->CL	0.056	0.09	0.079	0.712	0.477
SQ->CL	0.184	0.178	0.073	2.515	0.012
CS x PV->CL	-0.175	-0.167	0.098	1.783	0.075
CS x Per->CL	0.165	0.133	0.083	1.983	0.047
CS x SQ->CL	0.086	0.088	0.075	1.14	0.254

The table presents statistical comparisons between the original sample (O) and sample mean (M) for different constructs. Notable findings include significant differences for CS>CL ($T = 4.023, p = 0$), PV->CL ($T = 2.742, p = 0.006$), and SQ->CL ($T = 2.515, p = 0.012$), indicating meaningful distinctions. The interactions CS x Per->CL ($T = 1.983, p = 0.047$) and CS x PV->CL ($T = 1.783, p = 0.075$) also show potential significance. However, PER->CL and CS x SQ->CL exhibit non-significant differences. In summary, these results suggest variations between the original sample and means for certain constructs, emphasizing specific comparisons of interest in your analysis.

Conclusion

The escalating demand for air travel, as predicted by Alexandre de Juniac in 2016, is expected to double in the forthcoming decades. The International Air Transport Association's survey

further supports this projection, estimating nearly 7.2 billion travelers by 2035, almost double the count recorded in 2016. As air travel continues to surge, the airport duty-free shopping market is anticipated to grow, presenting both opportunities and challenges in the face of heightened competition from various retail outlets. (Warrender, 2019). This research has delved into the complex dynamics of traveler loyalty in the context of airport duty-free shopping, aiming to address existing research gaps and contribute to a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing loyalty (Al-Maamari & Abdulrab, 2017). The literature review provided a comprehensive overview of the evolving landscape of air travel, duty-free shopping, and the potential impact of technological advancements and global trends on consumer behavior. (Bush & Storey, 2016). The proposed theoretical framework, integrating perceived value, personality, satisfaction, and loyalty, guided the empirical investigation. The hypotheses were formulated to explore the relationships between these variables, aiming to unravel the intricate interplay influencing travelers' loyalty (Prayag, Hosany, & Muskat, 2017). The research methodology, rooted in positivism and deductive reasoning, employed a survey track with a cross-sectional time horizon. Data collection took place at an international airport in Lahore, with 150 effective responses utilized for analysis.

The findings from the survey provided valuable insights into the perceived value, personality traits, satisfaction levels, and loyalty of travelers engaging in duty-free shopping (Ghazi & Ammar, 2018). The results supported the hypothesized positive impact of perceived value on traveler satisfaction, emphasizing the crucial role of delivering value to enhance the overall shopping experience. Additionally, the study revealed a positive association between travelers' personality traits and their satisfaction with airport duty-free shopping, suggesting that understanding and catering to individual traits can contribute to higher satisfaction levels. Furthermore, the research validated the proposition that traveler satisfaction positively influences loyalty to airport duty-free shopping. The behavioral perspective of loyalty, rooted in repeat purchasing habits and resistance to switching alternatives, was reinforced by the study's findings. This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping traveler loyalty in airport duty-free shopping. The study's findings have practical implications for airport practitioners seeking to enhance loyalty through strategic efforts in providing perceived value, understanding traveler personalities, and prioritizing customer satisfaction. As with any research, there are limitations that should be acknowledged. The study focused on a specific airport in Lahore, and findings may not be entirely representative of global trends. Future research could consider a broader geographical scope and delve deeper into the impact of technology and sustainability on duty-free shopping trends. This study provides valuable insights for airport operators, retailers, and marketers, offering a foundation for informed decision-making to enhance the overall shopping experience and foster traveler loyalty in the dynamic landscape of airport duty-free shopping.

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