The Contemporary Role of Personal Selling in Airport Airside Retailing Environment under the Digital Age
(Venue: Dublin Airport)

Master of Business Administration

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18,902 words
Declaration Statement

I, Miss Li Bai, the author, hereby declare that; this thesis is my original research work, and it has not been submitted anywhere for any award. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

Signature:  Li Bai ______________________

Student No.: 10039441 _________________

Date: 22 May 2015 _____________________
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................. 6  
Abstract .................................................................................................................................... 7  
1. Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 9  

2. Literature Review ...................................................................................................................... 14  
2.1 Review of Initial Model on Personal Selling Process ............................................................. 15  
   2.1.1 Background Information....................................................................................................... 15  
   2.1.2 Dubinsky’s Personal Selling Process .................................................................................... 16  
   2.1.3 Initial Appearance of Technology in Personal Selling Process ........................................... 18  
   2.1.4 Hard-sell towards Relational Selling .................................................................................. 19  
2.2 Review of Recent Model on Personal Selling Process ............................................................ 20  
   2.2.1 Introduction of Evolved Selling Process .............................................................................. 21  
   2.2.2 General Review of the Evolved Selling Process ................................................................. 34  
2.3 Review of Digitalized Selling and Impact .............................................................................. 35  
   2.3.1 The Intervening Period ........................................................................................................ 35  
   2.3.2 Digital Technology in Retailing ........................................................................................... 39  
   2.3.3 Current Functions of Personal Selling within Airport Retailing ........................................ 45  

3. Research methodology and Methods ....................................................................................... 49  
3.1 Methodology Introduction ...................................................................................................... 49  
   3.1.1 Epistemology ...................................................................................................................... 50  
   3.1.2 Positivism ........................................................................................................................ 50  
   3.1.3 Inductive Approach ........................................................................................................... 50  
   3.1.4 Research Question ............................................................................................................. 51  
   3.1.5 Primary Research Objectives ............................................................................................. 51  
3.2 Research Strategy .................................................................................................................... 52  
   3.2.1 Survey ............................................................................................................................... 52  
   3.2.2 Descriptive Research ......................................................................................................... 52  
   3.2.3 Mono-method Quantitative ............................................................................................... 53  
   3.2.4 Structured Questionnaire ................................................................................................. 53
3.3 Research Sampling

3.3.1 Non-probability Sampling Method

3.3.2 Self-selection Sample

3.3.3 Pilot Testing

3.4 Research Limitations

3.4.1 Gaining Traditional Access

3.4.2 Validity and Reliability

3.5 Time Horizon

3.5.1 Cross-sectional Study

3.6 Research Ethics

3.6.1 Ethical Issue Related to the Organization

3.6.2 Ethical Issue with Individual Respondents

4. Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Overall Statistical Information

4.1.1 Comparison between Highest and Lowest Value

4.1.2 Comparing Proportions of Value

4.2 Response Rate

4.3 Demographic Information

4.4 Findings on Consumer Acceptance of Social Media within Airport Retailing (Venue: Dublin Airport)

4.4.1 Credible Information Advisor

4.4.2 Reasons of Consumer Approach Salespeople in Store

4.4.3 Consumer Concerns towards Airport Shopping

4.4.4 Consumer Acceptance of Online Purchasing and Personal Selling

5. Discussion

5.1 The Current Function of Personal Selling in Airport Retailing

5.2 The Influence of Social Media Has on Personal Selling in Airport Retailing

5.3 The Evaluation of Consumer Acceptance of Social Media in Airport Retailing

5.4 Awareness of the Limitations of the Research

5.4.1 Limitations of the Choice Criteria

5.4.2 Evaluation of the Research
List of Figures

Figure 1. Dubinsky’s Personal Selling Process (PSP) .................................................. 17
Figure 2. The Evolution of the Seven Steps of Selling ................................................. 21
Figure 3. Average Direct and Digital Marketing Return on Investment ......................... 31
Figure 4. “Demystify Social Media: Four Primary Functions” ................................... 37
Figure 5. Number of Social Network Users Worldwide 2010-2018 ............................... 39
Figure 6. Personal Selling Effectiveness .................................................................... 40
Figure 7. Two-way Information Flow ........................................................................ 46
Figure 8. Purpose of Visit ......................................................................................... 67
Figure 9. Age Group .................................................................................................. 67
Figure 10. Travel Destinations ................................................................................... 68
Figure 11. Consumer Acceptance of In-Store Salespeople and Social Media .............. 69
Figure 12. Average User Tendency with Confidence .................................................... 69
Figure 13. Proportions of Using Social Media to Follow Airport Information ............... 70
Figure 14. Proportions of Using Social Media to Follow Retail Offer ............................ 70
Figure 15. User Tendency of Social Media and In-Store Salespeople ......................... 71
Figure 16. Reasons Approaching Salespeople In-store .................................................. 71
Figure 17. Highest and Lowest Values for Approaching Salespeople ............................ 72
Figure 18. Concerns When Shopping at Airport .......................................................... 72
Figure 19. The Most Concerned and Least Concerned Factor ..................................... 73
Figure 20. Consumer Acceptance of Online Purchase and Personal Selling ............. 73
Figure 21. Consumer Preference VS. Repellence of Online Purchasing & Personal Selling ..................................................................................................................... 74
Figure 22. Consumer Acceptance of Salespeople ....................................................... 76
Figure 23. Consumer Acceptance of Social Media ...................................................... 76
Figure 24. Comparison of Average Acceptance ............................................................ 77
Figure 25. Influence of Social Media on Personal selling ............................................. 79
Figure 26. Time Spend at Airport Stores .................................................................... 80
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Abstract

Personal selling as part of marketing communication at airport retailing has always been playing a vital role in the interactive selling process. While with the consumer adaptation of social media and the pervasive trend of adopting digital media in the retailing industry, in-store salespeople are confronting new challenges that have been generated under such environment. This paper focuses on finding opportunities and challenges that are encountered by the salespeople at airport retail stores by reviewing relevant theories and concepts on both the traditional and evolved selling processes. Combining consumer acceptance of social media with factors that would be concerning for making purchases; and with structured interviews that take place in real time at the venue of Dublin airport lay the foundation in understanding the rationale behind consumer acceptance of social media and salespeople. In turn, it is uncovering the role of personal selling in between the two domains refined from theories; including revenue generation and relationship building at the airport. Understanding the concurrent role of personal selling based on consumer needs is essential bilaterally for both the seller and buyer. Although this study defines the role of personal selling as more tangible in terms of revenue generation, however relationship building could be regarded as in a form of consumer initiatives, when salespeople are being approached by consumer as problem solvers.
Introduction
1. Introduction

Previous research studies on personal selling have mainly engaged in the business-to-business perspectives, including a focus on buyer behaviour and decision making (Bhargave and Rachel, 2012; Cicala et al. 2012; Rutherford and Brian 2012). Some studies have addressed retailer perspectives within the business-to-consumer sector; and have focused on the selling techniques and process of the sales force. Although there were some recognitions had been given to the role of personal selling within retail industry, and some literatures have had discovered the influences that technologies have had on personal selling; especially with the adoption of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and the development of direct marketing. However very little research have attempted to address the airport retailing sector in regard to its adaptive use of adopting social media, digital communications and the contemporary influence of technology have had on the role of personal selling from consumer perspective.

Airport retailing is getting more popular with the increasing frequency of travel, and as a main source of non-aeronautical revenue for airports. It in general has some price advantage in duty free shopping especially to accommodate those who fly internationally; therefore by strategically converting those passengers into buyers is essential in revenue generation for both the retailers and airports. Hence, it is worth to look at the importance of personal selling in this environment; and being a tool in marketing communication, personal selling executes face-to-face interactivity and personalised communication with consumer. Particularly under the digital age, the level of technology advancement has been developed significantly. It has enabled a new breed of virtual business, such as a shift from brick and mortar to web-based business. Within this study, the researcher will be looking at retail business entities that are located after the security check and on the airside of international airports. The venue of the primary research data will be collected at Dublin Airport.
Inevitably the physical barrier that segregates the airport sales people from consumers would have a significant influence on the way of communications to consumer. Alternately, taking leverage in virtual communication such as using digital media has been effectively exploited by airport retailers to interact with customers. In turn digital media has also provided more power to consumer; at the same time has stimulated intensive business-to-consumer engagement and consumer-to-consumer engagement. However, according to Egan (2015, p.278) it is most effective to use personal selling as an action-driving tool near the point of sale and it is vital to utilize personal selling in situations where other communication tools are weak, particularly in areas where “instant response and complex explanations are needed.” (2015, p.278) In associate with shopping at airport, consumer has also been informed with custom and airline restrictions at the point of sale; it is suitable to delivery customised information in person by the salespeople for specific and individualistic customer request.

A lack of knowledge on the terms and conditions of airport shopping could occur to prevent passengers from purchasing; such as the need for knowing custom and airline regulations due to the unique shopping location. As Stasiulevicuis (2012, p.219) has suggested “Less frequent flyers, who account for over half of all travelers through airports globally, are unsure of security restrictions and duty-free allowance, which can also prohibit their shopping.” Apart from being a tool of revenue generation and source of marketing information, salespeople at the airport can also act as problem solvers and advisors for customers; as the selling process is perceived having exceeded the norm of traditional trading but rather a communication process to satisfy customer needs and wants.

Meanwhile more and more customers are empowered by technology and the prevalence of digital media in particular; they are more knowledgeable about the product and service than the salespeople does. Crittenden and Peterson et al. (2010, p.4) have mentioned the threat of increasingly use of digital media has advanced beyond one-way and two-way communication exchanges; and as a trend in digital
communication, salespeople have to respond to consumer utilising the same media in communication channels.

When the security checks have segregated salespeople from customers in reality, digitalized communications has reasonably crossed the physical boundary to extend the communications. It leads to a dilemma that personal selling becomes more challenging as sales presentation is losing control over the fact that customers are gaining more information on the products and services than ever. However, whether it is the case within airport retailing is yet to be further explored; especially when external conditions like custom and airline regulations would become matters of concern that may lead to a redefinition of the role of personal selling.

The main objective of this paper is to present an up-to-date image on the function of current personal selling at airport stores and how it is challenged with the increasing customer use of digital media and whether other external factors such as custom and airline regulations would have an impact on the role. Secondary research approach is utilized by critically reviewing academic articles on personal selling in the business-to-consumer sector including its evolvement influenced by transformative factors such as technological elements in the retail industry. A followed-on primary research will explore consumer acceptance of social media and personal selling at the venue of Dublin Airport. And subsequent data analysis will conclude the specific role of personal selling under the influence of social media at airport stores.

In this study, due to the primary identity of airport travellers; the criterion setting between research variables is limited to the most concerned area of consumer emotions, in terms of evaluating their acceptance of social media and personal selling. However, area of consumer behaviour with a specific focus on the influence of why many airport customers do not prefer pre-purchasing online for a time efficiency purpose is not covered. Therefore further research on such area of study with criterion of factors within ease of shopping at the airport is recommended.
The research question of this study is:

**What's the role of personal selling in airport airside retailing environment under the digital age?**

In response to the research question, the following objectives will be fulfilled:

- To understand the current function of personal selling in airport airside retailing environment by reviewing the traditional selling process and the evolved selling process, and refine the role of personal selling between revenue generation and relationship building from consumer perspective.

- To find out the influence of social media has on personal selling in airport retailing by investigating consumer acceptance and user frequency on social media and salespeople; using the criterion of credibility and time cautiousness when travel and shop at airports. (venue: Dublin Airport)

- To compare theories related to personal selling from both sales-oriented and relational-driven perspectives; with influence from social media as a marketing communication tool.
Literature Review
2. Literature Review

Although many of the previous research have looked into the area of personal selling and sales management as well as customer service within a marketing perspective; such as David and Geoff (2003), Adrian (2014) and Charley (1999) etc. However, a number of those literatures focused on the techniques of personal selling within a business-to-business realm and most of the interest in sales-related technology has also been in the business-to-business context; little study have been carried out addressing the role of personal selling within an airport retailing environment and how it has been influenced by digital media.

Consumer selling is becoming increasingly complicated and difficult because of the changes in the channel structure of the marketplace, which are partially driven by technological revolution incorporating digital media shifts from physical to digital. Crittenden et al. (2010) have carried out a technology-focused research in the business-to-consumer sector; describing the role of technology. And the authors have defined technology is being ubiquitous that could be anything that solves a problem.

Although in this study, it is yet to be evaluated; undoubtedly, business has been changed significantly with the adaption of technological ways of communication and is experiencing an advanced mechanical execution on operations. However, consumer selling has long been activated between and among people for information sharing, merchandising exchange and most importantly, revenue generation; problems have been solved relying on traditional face-to-face interaction. And with the adaption of technology based social media, it helps increasing sales productivity. As suggested by Hunter and Perreault (2006, cited in Linda et al. 2010, p.157), the role of technology could be regarded as a reinvention of a sales role that has been around for decades. Therefore it implies the evolution has not only taken place in information sharing, but also has come beyond in facilitating transaction.
This chapter will investigate into the origin of personal selling and the earlier conceptions formed on personal selling process, it will trace the initial appearance of technology within the selling process and track down to its evolvement throughout the period since 1977 till present. Concurrently, the role of personal selling will be reviewed with a focus on airport retail within the business-to-consumer sector.

2.1 Review of Initial Model on Personal Selling Process

2.1.1 Background Information
Historically within the business-to-consumer retailing sector, personal selling excels mainly during the presentation phase, when salespeople can successfully demonstrate the product to customers in order to meet their wants and satisfy their needs. Selling practice at the time was more about human interaction and face-to-face communication dominated by the salespeople, who are placed in a critical position guided by a sequential selling process, and acting as an initiator with a mission to influence the purchasing decision and close the sale.

The role of personal selling has become more significant after Second World War (the beginning period of marketing orientation) in contrast to the production-oriented period, it since has been developed through several stages, including: consultative selling, strategic selling, and relationship selling according to Bubnjević (2011, cited in Egan, 2015, p.284).

Viewing personal selling process as a form of organizational communication rather than a series of sales firm-directed steps; Shannahan et al. (2013) have reviewed the extent of personal selling process conceptualizations from two different timelines: the early conceptualization (1997-1982) and the recent conceptualization (1995-Present).And within the study, the authors have suggested that, in order to maximize potential opportunities and minimize cost; organizational members seek to gather information for interpretation. The early conceptions on personal selling were summarized by reviewing the "focal people” from Spiro et al. (1977), the “five social
and economic exchange” from Bonoma and Johnston (1978), the “ISTEA” model from Weitz (1978) and till Dubinsky’s “seven steps” (1980). Although the authors also recognized Spiro et al.’s (1977) achievement as the very first attempt in synthesising the salesperson-customer interaction; still they argued the early conceptualizations are sales-oriented.

In order to gain more insight into the early conceptions, this research will take the most widely accepted model of Dubinsky’s seven steps on personal selling process as a standing point to commence exploring the role of personal selling and looking for related technological connections throughout the timeline.

2.1.2 Dubinsky’s Personal Selling Process (PSP)
The seven steps of selling process introduced by Dubinsky (1980) have concluded a seven-step structure for salespeople to administrate, as shown below:

Step 1 to identify potential prospects;
Step 2 to collect prospect;
Step 3 to approach a prospect;
Step 4 to make sales presentations;
Step 5 to overcome a prospect’s objection;
Step 6 to close a sale;
Step 7 to attend to post-sale activities.
It is evident that the PSP is a systematic process with a variable of salesperson-dependent, which could be perceived as sales-skill driven. However it has neglected consumer initiatives - the participatory of buyer involvement; therefore customer interaction can be perceived passive within the personal selling process, as
well as other correlative elements such as personal technology (i.e. telephone, fax and email) are also less concerned in the model.

2.1.3 Initial Appearance of Technology in PSP

Within the personal selling process, the initial step and the final step could also be delivered through personal technology in business-to-consumer retailing, as Egan (2015, p.278) has mentioned “personal sales are significant in business-to-consumer sector in retailing and in the scale of products or services direct to the consumer, frequently in their own homes or through personal technology (e.g. internet, telephony) medium.” By refereeing the techniques within Dubinsky’s PSP and the external sources in prospecting, in most cases they are print media dependent, such as yellow books and newspapers in early 80’s; however at present, information is mostly available on internet and social media sites. In the follow-up phase; customer service activities in the early times were more physical, including mailing service, cold-call visits and telephony; and in contrast, the contemporary customer service particularly in post-sale activities, are mainly computer based with dominance in email interactions and telephony.

Evidently as a tool to support personal selling, technology has long been involved in the personal selling process with its evolved form, although little attention has been given by scholars at the time. Initially in the business-to-business model, there was heavy use of telephone and mail interaction for customer queries in most cases. However, nothing stands still in marketing communication, inevitability technology has developed nowadays and it provides more channels for communications. Regardless to the fact that, in the earlier selling process; technology was in its blindness, when salespeople conducting a series of sequential selling steps was prevailing. Sales-oriented perspective was driving the role of personal selling and influencing customer choice was essential over taking the customer as an equal participant in the selling process.
2.1.4 Hard-sell towards Relational Selling

An examination was carried out by Marshall et al. (1999) tracking the daily activities of salespeople and compared to records of 1981 by Moncrief (1986). “The results show that the majority of 1981 activities were still being performed. However, they also found 59 new sales activities, many of which revolve around new philosophies of selling (consultative selling, adaptive selling, value-added selling, relationship selling, etc.)” As concluded, sales job has been enlarged due to increasing job activities that are required to support successful selling performance (Moncrief and Marshall, 2005). With the compelling evidence showing that the selling industry has experienced a significant change over the last twenty years, and was mainly manifested in the selling methods rather than the selling process. The trend evolves from hard-sell techniques towards more relationship-based selling. As Egan has commented that: “In the past, this level of relationship might have been with the local shopkeeper or bank manager. Today, many of these transactions have been replaced by digital technology although some conspicuous relationships may remain with a financial adviser, sales assistant (of your favourite store) or personal shopper. What they have in common is relationship” (2015, p. 278). At the same time, the role of salesperson could be perceived slightly different than it used to be; as relational selling stands for long-term selling trait with mutual benefit described as win-win partnerships between customers and salespeople (Shannahan et al. 2013, p.261) therefore, salespeople could adopt more flexible and soft approach to customers rather than following the rigid selling systems. “In today’s relationship selling environment, salespeople’s individual skills, while necessary, are not necessarily sufficient to single-handedly drive the personal selling process or sales performance.” (Colletti and Fiss, 2006) This argument further approves that buyer and seller could be equal participants in communication process, or at least the role of a salesperson is less dominated within the process than it used to be. Therefore, presumably, the power has either shifted to the other side of the process – the customers; or it has been alleviated by the involvement of technology.
Shannahan et al. (2013, p.260) advised that within relational selling, customers can be viewed as being actively involved communication partner and salespeople provide the product information not only for the purpose of presentation but also for the purpose of uncertainty reduction. Within the relational selling, personal selling performs a role of gathering and disseminating information in order to establish a friendly relationship; hence to complete the transaction and this step could be considered a procedure throughout the personal selling process. However, unlike the traditional personal selling process, more participating from the customer side has been involved.

2.2 Review of Recent Model on Personal Selling Process

According to Shannahan et al. (2013); the recent conceptualization of personal selling process begins with Brooksbank’s three phase of selling (1995), which suggests that consumer needs should be attended because personal selling is a part of the marketing process and should also share a customer-oriented philosophy and methodology. Subsequent to Brooksbank; Moncrief and Marshall (2005) introduced the ESP - evolved selling process, it is customer focused and demonstrates a flow of traditional seven steps of selling been transformed into ESP as shown below:
The evolution of the seven steps of selling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional seven steps of selling</th>
<th>Transformative factors</th>
<th>Evolved selling process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Prospecting</td>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>(1) Customer retention and deletion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet selling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prospecting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Preapproach</td>
<td>Laptop account data</td>
<td>(2) Database and knowledge management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Approach</td>
<td>Build a foundation</td>
<td>(3) Nurturing the relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(relationship selling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Presentation</td>
<td>PowerPoint/</td>
<td>(4) Marketing the product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>multimedia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team selling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple calls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value-added</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buying centers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Overcoming objections</td>
<td>Predetermining needs</td>
<td>(5) Problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Close</td>
<td>Identifying mutual</td>
<td>(6) Adding value/satisfying needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Follow-up</td>
<td>Increased effectiveness</td>
<td>(7) Customer relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of communication</td>
<td>maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>through technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. The Evolution of the Seven Steps of Selling

2.2.1 Introduction of Evolved Selling Process (ESP)
This section focuses on the Evolved Selling Process (ESP), it is considered a transformation of traditional Personal Selling Process (PSP) mainly catalysed by the advanced technology, with two major technological approaches have been identified by Ferrell and Gonzales-Padron (2010, p.161), the first approach is to apply technology as 'sales aids' in order to assist the salesmanship as well as building customer relationship; for example in the sense of database and knowledge
management, where companies adapt software like Sales Force Automation (SFA) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM). The second approach is used as ‘order placement portal’, which assume to be online purchasing and could increase sales efficiency and decrease labor-cost in favor of the retailers. Meanwhile, it might be a preferable way to release the stress of buying for consumers especially to avoid any potential hard-sell scenario.

Moncrief and Marshall (2005) have pointed out some deficiency against traditional PSP. They argued that by over-relying on traditional PSP could possibly generate counter-productivity, because it was considered lack of customer orientation. The PSP was also perceived containing potential danger of being deceptively seductive, which could cause disservice. Consequently, the authors have presented the evolved steps to replace the traditional personal selling process, shown below:

Step 1: Customer retention and deletion

This step could be perceived salespeople-driven, in contrast to the prospecting phase of PSP, it’s rather to retain or remove the customer base than to locate and target potential customers. According to “Pareto Analysis” that around 80% of orders are generated by the 20% of customer base, Egan (2015, p.280) has also suggested “the importance of individual customer may determine how this customer management strategy is implemented” it implies salespeople could filter and make a deletion on customers whom may seem less dedicated in purchasing rather than thrust with hard-selling.

Step 2: Database and knowledge management

This step is conceived technology-driven; notably in the business-to-consumer retailing business, it is most likely being conducted by office administrators rather than assigning to salespeople in-store, according to Moncrief and Marshall (2005, p.6) that “these evolved steps have emerged to support that broadened role…, the sales role in many firms is now a shared role between salespeople and other firm members.”
In many cases, technologies such as Sales Force Automation (SFA) or Customer Relationship Management (CRM) would be utilized to accomplish such task.

Step3: Nurturing the relationship (relational selling)

This step is reformed from the initial concept of building a foundation, which aimed for a short term action to complete a transaction; however the evolved process reinforces the importance of long-term relationship.

Building a long-term relationship with customer is essential for both the salespeople and retailers, due to the fact that alongside the development of selling process, customer is also changing. Suggested by Nigel (2009, p.48) that traditional marketing has consistently underestimated the intelligence and street wisdom of the customer, an image of ‘new customer’ is described as “have evolved from being conformist and deferential and prepared to trust mass advertising, into free-thinking, highly individualistic people, who are skeptical of figures of authority. They are short on time, attention and trust.” Sophisticated customers are becoming increasingly cynical and hostile towards business and marketing in particular. Egan (2015, p.285) has agreed that, customers are already highly skeptical of the messages they receive from organizations and have less trust towards advertisement. According to Nielsen’s Global Trust in Advertising and Brand Messages (April 2012), contributed by over 28,000 respondents from 56 countries. Egan has classified the media, and it is shown nearly half of consumers globally indicated their trust towards media as below: (2015, p.176)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Decrease Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Apart from advertising, personal selling has encountered similar difficulties, especially when associated with the “hard sell” technique, David and Geoff (2003, p.118) mentioned that “sales person with inappropriate use of high pressure selling targets and techniques could incur consumer annoyance and antagonism” where such selling is perceived hustling and salesperson is recognized as mistrusted.

Customers are mostly empowered by social media, to the fact of massive information with exposure about brands, retailer, product, price and services to the public and interaction among customers is thrilling. Within the new internet-dominated environment, sellers can no longer take over the communication channels.

However, retailers need to deal with the phenomenon and in order to nurture the relationship; the role of salespeople is signified with more strategic orientation linked to customer retention; which can be enhanced through in-store shopping experience. A TORA (The Theory of Reasoned Action) model was introduced by Wayne and Deborah (2008) analysing consumer attitudes against product and service offering (like or dislike); including the behaviour whether to engage or to resist, and other possible influential targets. The authors have suggested five different strategies for salespeople to change consumer attitudes as following:

- To change beliefs.
- To strengthen the positive and lessen the negative consequences.
- To change evaluations and add new beliefs.
- To encourage attitude formation based on imaged experience.
- To target normative beliefs.

The TORA model should work more effective when it is conducted physically in a face-to-face interaction rather than online placement, where customers could receive a dedicated and personalized service, because the levels of engagement from both
parties are more genuine. Nevertheless, in both ways being online or offline, communication always plays a significant role to achieve such goals. Meanwhile as mentioned by Egan(2015, p.284) that as an adaptive persuasion attempt in real life, personal selling does not only close a sale for generating temporary turnover but can also satisfy customer needs with salespeople’s candour approach to disarm consumer’s natural defences; in comparison, digital media has less advantage to offer.

Step 4: marketing the product

Presentation has been optimized by utilizing various transformative factors, especially in brand awareness as response to a long-term perspective; personal selling is provided with brand-building tools, such as advertising, public relations, online and in-store promotions; those complementary technologies contribute significantly with physical appearance throughout the process, for instance the presence of digital media on TV, radio and contemporarily the debut of concept stores; such as retail stores launched by Apple, Samsung and the most recent Google store.

With the opening of Google’s first “Shop-in-shop” retail store in UK 2015, it allows people to see and experience Google’s virtual offering in real life. By moving towards being a physical retailer, Google’s UK marketing director James Elias described this movement as an approach “to offer people a place where they can play, experiment and lean about all of what Google has to offer.” (CNET, 2015) Evidently, this could be assumed as an enlargement of presentation with a focus on customer experience.

The airport retail stores target consumer beyond the boundaries of the store environment. Stasiulevicuis (2012, p.218) has suggested that “the key to win in retail lies in who best understand the shopper”, which indicates the importance of knowing who the customers are and what they are looking for, and to achieve this, the presentation is expected to be more personalized, entertaining and attractive.
Salesperson would require more sophisticated inspirations to facilitate the presentation, such as in-store digital media; audio or video displays and innovations that can enhance the customer experience and stimulate their purchasing decision.

Step 5: Problem solving (consultative selling or solution selling)

Through an empirical research among 215 sales managers within different industries studied by Moncrief and Marshall (2005), it is shown that from predetermining needs to problem solving; listening skill and skills of asking questions have been identified as key capabilities of a salesperson. Through the research, the finding has proven that the listening skill is the single most important attribute sought in new sales recruits (Marshall et al. 2003). It could be considered an area with an exception of technology dominance. Particularly in situations where instant feedback is required, such as purchasing at the airport stores, where customer priority is to board the airplane, thus shopping and carrying convenience would be the major concerns; and customers seek information from the salespeople to facilitate their buying decision.

This has been further proven by Stasiulevicuis (2012, p.218) on a base of a global airport research carried out by Counter Intelligence Retail adapting a new technology for the world of ‘shopper insight’, which enabled consumer research projects to evolve from a limited data reviewing capacity to handle up to 15,000 shoppers each project. Stasiulevicuis has summarized one of the recent projects in airport retailing industry around the world with samples collected over 150,000 (2012, p.219). Findings shown that “Carriage of goods can be unappealing to certain nationalities, almost 50% of American passengers who had not shopped in European airports cited this as a main factor in not shopping, certainly influenced by the current liquids, aerosols and gels restrictions. Globally, carriage is an issue that affects just 7% of passengers.” To solve this problem, airport retailers have come up with a compromised solution to support salesperson being more persuasive – as a result, “shop and collect” and “click and collect” are launched. These seller initiatives allow customers to collect their online or in-store purchase at the airport arrivals when they
return from their trip. As reported by Telegraph, “it is a terrible industry buzz word … and “click and collect” holds the secret to the future of the high street” (Harry, 2013)

Savvy retailers have had to invest spending in order to develop new channels to compete with the online entrants. (‘The impact of online shopping on retail property’, 2013) With a logistic extension, it releases constraints in terms of the retailing location, for instance, the retail stores at the airside of airport have overcome the distribution obstacles lies in between the salespeople and customers.

Step 6: Adding value or satisfying needs

A sublimation over order completion, Moncrief and Marshall (2005) introduced customer return on investment (ROI) as a user’s lifetime value, and it must be mutually beneficial between retailers and customers. The airport airside retailing has a downside due to its isolated location where the ‘place’ is not accessible to all audience but only to passengers, therefore causes a negative impact on distribution. However as mentioned previously, the airport retailers (so does the retailer at Dublin Airport) have made an effort to solve the problem by launching “Shop and Collect” and “Click and Collect”. The approach indeed has generated more sales, but most importantly it has built more salesperson confidence and enhanced customer experience. However confined by the custom regulations within the EU, the shortage of this ‘value-added’ service is only entitled to passengers travelling within EU countries and passengers who travel outside of EU are not privileged to this complimentary service. (Please kindly refer to Appendix 3 for reference.) Take the passenger demographics into account; according to the official report by Dublin Airport: “transatlantic traffic increased 14% as more than 2.1 million people travelled on flights between Dublin and North America during 2014, while passenger traffic to other international destinations – mainly the Middle East and North Africa – increased by 19% to a record of 643,000”. Among 21.7 million annual passengers in 2014, an approximately 10% of them are non-EU passengers; apart from the potential loss in retail profit, retailers also fail to serve such group of consumers with their service innovation; therefore less chance to satisfy customer needs for those travel out of EU.
This is a beyond known area that has to be communicated clearly by the retailers, in most cases it is expected to be explained by salespeople in store, when such a particular request rises upon the ‘generic’ offering (when customer requests to use “shop and collect” service at the airport stores for their value-added purpose; as it resolves the burdens on carrying). Therefore, it is obvious that salespeople at the point-of-sale also have the responsibility to advice and remind customer of relevant regulations in terms of custom and airline restrictions as a precaution to prevent relevant purchase been confiscated. For security reasons, airports have standard procedures about the sealing of airport shopping bags on certain product categories; such as liquid, gel and paste purchases. Apart from public communications available on social media, salespeople are the key messenger. In this scenario, the role of salesperson within the airport retailing can be regarded as an information advisor. (Please kindly refer to Appendix 4 for a reference on EU Regulations & Shopping.)

According to David and Geoff (2003, p.127) as part of guarantees subject to company policy; the following three aspects could build salesperson confidence, support selling claims and lessen buyer’s costs in response to the buyer concept of ‘value for money’, they are:

• Product-reliability

The appearance of brand ambassador and field-marketing activities permitted and elaborated by airport retailer and brand suppliers, would hence, present an evidence of brand authority as the commodities are genuine.

As Egan (2015, p.280) advised, “the best salespeople believe in the value of their product/service and are able to transmit this belief to the customer” hence, in order to convey a share of heart to build a trusting relationship, salesperson should deliver a share of mind to reach a cognitive level of mutual-understanding.
• After-sales service

Although Egan (2015, p.284) has mentioned most of business-to-consumer sector now converting traditional person-to-person contact between seller and buyers into generic call centers, utilizing customer relationship management technology (CRM), however it is generally disliked by the customers. After-sale service would reinforce customer confidence towards the products and services with instant feedback when problems arise, such as handing complaints. According to David and Geoff (2006), it is crucial in meeting organization’s goal of creating customer satisfaction in order to generating profit, Nevertheless, the sympathy and willingness to respond the post-selling issues that salespeople and customer service people can provide will be helpful to foster a long-term relationship.

• Deliveries

This sector has always been a concern within business-to-business retailing and it is thrilling with the emergence of E-commerce and online placement; logistics that support the delivery service plays a vital role throughout the selling process. Such as the online retailer Amazon has its own Fulfillment Center allowing a global network to operate the supply chain. However due to the nature of merchandise sold in airport retail stores and its critical location; deliveries are restricted and limited; with the replacement of pre-purchase online or purchase in the store and collect upon departure or on the way back, has somehow supplemented the shortfall. In order to satisfy customer within airport retailing, for instance the availability of pre-purchase online and the in-house logistics in terms of supporting collection on arrivals, have further approved that solutions and tools have been utilized with the essence of technology.

Notably, these solutions are in areas that are considered less advantage. With an optimal communication on post-selling and distribution, it boosts salespersons’ confidence and also accommodates them for being more efficient; taking into account
that the role of selling in airport retail store is also more complex than ordinary retailing. Therefore, according to Moncrief and Marshall’s suggestion (2005, p.267) the existence of the essential transformative factors are indeed have identified mutual goals, however consumer needs are satisfied only when corresponding approaches have been taken to address the goals.

Step 7: Customer relational maintenance

With the evolved selling process focusing on relationship selling, the final step of maintaining relationships can be perceived as an on-going process from the moment when a prospect has become a customer.

According to Xinwu’s (2012, p.4) new algorithm calculating the operational cost on customer creation and retention, he has identified; “The cost for enterprise to develop a new customer is 5 times than that for maintaining an old customer, and the cost for persuading an unfaithful customer is 10 times that for maintaining an old customer; the profit will increase 25%-85% if the customer retention rate increases 5%.” as a financial perspective on the importance of maintaining customer base.

Taking the cost front into account with the usability of organisation approach to customer retention, Egan (2015, p.269) has claimed the following two ways for customer retention:

- Non-Sales Communication

This approach includes sending emails, e-newsletters and vouchers, etc. Apparently, the advancement of technology is playing a key role within the communication, especially with the popular use of “direct marketing, telemarketing, email, text message or interactive media (including internet site-based and search engine
advertising) to stimulate a response.” However, with the increasingly infamous spam emails and regularly sent email promotions, customer could only resist inherently.

Although companies and customers are all going online, direct mailing (by post) is still a well-acceptable communication medium with a wider capture of audience. John Townshend, creative partner at advertising agency Now, has commented that the reason behind using direct mailing to keep contact with customers: “the truth is, the mail still works. As the culmination of a marketing campaign, a piece of material in hand that allows you to digest information in your own time is still effective” (Benady, 2012, cited in Egan, 2015, p.259). A figure below shows the various marketing communications, including direct and digital and their returns on investment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For every $1.00 invested in</th>
<th>Total ROI forecast 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail (catalogue)</td>
<td>$ 7.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail (non-catalogue)</td>
<td>$ 15.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insert media</td>
<td>$ 11.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet display</td>
<td>$ 22.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet search</td>
<td>$ 19.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>$ 12.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial media</td>
<td>$ 39.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>$ 8.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone marketing</td>
<td>$ 11.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Average Direct and Digital Marketing Return on Investment (ROI)
Source: Direct Marketing Association (USA), The Power of Direct Marketing 2011/2
(Cited in Egan, 2015, p.260)

According to the figure above, with the exception of mass media (such as commercials and internet display), relatively the digital bilateral-communication tools such as social media and mobile phone marketing have a high return on investment respectively. It is also doubtful, however, many companies find it’s difficult to measure and justify the financial impact of social media, particularly regarding the brand
awareness generated by social media. Marketing practitioners have recommended some vanity metrics such as “likes”, “comments” and “retweets”; with a use of Facebook and Twitter to evaluate the returns for this matter. In addition, the following metrics could also be taken into account in terms of measuring the returns on social media. (Evan, 2014)

- Reach
- Site traffic
- Leads generated
- Sign-ups and conversations
- Revenue generated

From an economic point of view, using the digital bilateral-communication tools such as social media, are relatively at lower cost and eco-friendly. Egan (2015, p.260) has commented that: “According to www.ecofuture.org, the direct mail industry uses 100 million trees annually”. And this has a counter-affect on the sustainability of direct mailing.

- Sales Communication

This approach works productively by generating sales and maintaining customer engagement at the same time. However, it may not provide sufficient time within the airport retailing for establishing an emotional bond apart from completing a transaction. As in most cases, customers tend to behave with a certain level of impatience for catching their flight in this scenario.

In comparison to non-sales communication approach, the internal cost on personal selling is also considerable. David and Geoff (2012) have summarized a list of weakness within personal selling, among which cost is the outstanding factor; it is more expensive compare to other communications media. Similarly, Egan (2015, p.280) has shortlisted the downside of personal selling as following:
As presented, cost has been a major factor in the overall criteria to evaluate personal selling performance. In order to minimize the cost on personal selling and maximize the efficiency on point-of-sale; back-office administrators (non-sales communications) would be assigned to supplement the function of maintaining customer relationship as well as in the prospecting stage of selling, whereas salespeople can be more engaged and focused on nurturing relationship, marketing products, solve customer problems and meeting customer needs. Meanwhile, obtaining accurate purchasing information about customer needs is required and should be informed to salespeople to access customer and solve their problems.

Primarily retailers use digital media such as TV commercial and radio advertisement to create and remind the public awareness; social media such as Facebook and Twitter have been used to reinforce the brand awareness and share specific information in terms of getting feedbacks and comment etc. Simply because customers are becoming the contributors in profit generation and at the same time they use such social networking to create, share and exchange information among themselves.

Salespeople are not only able to interact instantly with the customers for relationship maintenance, meanwhile they can leverage the attention and use as free brand ambassador. However, as a double-edged sword, the ease of using these virtual platforms also enables ‘bad-mouth’ and it is uncontrollable by organizations, as ‘bad-news’ travels fast. “Consumers weigh negative word-of-mouth more heavily than they do positive comments.” According to a study by the White House Office of Consumer Affairs, 90% of unhappy customer would not make repeated business with a company and every one of these unhappy customer is likely to spread their
grievance to at least 9 others, and 13% of these unsatisfied customer tell over 30 people about the unpleasant experience. (Michael, 2013)

2.2.2 General Review of the Evolved Selling Process
Following the framework, it is evident that technological factors are the main content of the transformation throughout the process. In this paper, the technological factors referred are information technologies, such as social media and online selling could facilitate and enable the performance of sales force in terms of building customer relationship and generate financial returns.

One of the major achievements of the evolved selling process is perceived as the development of communication channels; multiple channels are set in place, including direct and digital media for sending and sharing information. Personal selling has been enhanced in terms of its productivity, the average time spend on completing transactions is shortened due to the increasing level of well-informed customers, which could enable salespeople to spare more time in prospecting and targeting new customers.

However, competitiveness has also occurred; salespeople also compete with customers; because the technology advancement in retail has been availed by both salespeople and customer. As advised by Crittenden et al. (2010, P.103); “salespeople act as boundary spanners among the sales force, organization and customers” meanwhile, the use of digital technology, especially social media has crossed the boundary and allowing customers to interact with retailers. It is acting as ‘sales aids’ in the virtual space without the presence of real salespeople and from a customer perspective, the use of social media for information query have increased the convenience by breaking down the barriers of time and location, and in particular, with the increasing use of hand-held devices and wireless communications, such as smart phone with 3G or 4G network. However, the fact in lacking of security and confidence, such as potential fraud and user identity getting stolen are concerns
against social media and online selling; in terms of transactions made anonymously, initial trust was not built and the payment method is mechanical. (Sun, 2009)

Although Bhargava (2012, p.345) has argued that “prior research suggests that providing information to consumer (i.e. allowing them to become better informed) enhances the certainty of consumer valuations” this should be the case only if technology is being exerted within the informational communication stage, and mainly used as tools for both retailer and customer to gain knowledge about each other’s offering, commitments and needs and wants. Therefore, keeping a controlled balance on the use of technology would presumably reduce the potential salesperson insecurity and boost their confidence in return to profit generation and customer experience.

2.3 Review of Digitalized Selling and Its Impact

2.3.1 The Intervening Period

Following the timeline from 1989 when the World Wide Web was first proposed by Tim Berners-Lee, as summarized by Egan that in 1991 the first web page was created and till the second-generation web (web 2.0) been introduced in 2004 with the debut of ‘social media’; the subsequent technology have sprung up with the launch of Facebook in 2005, Twitter in 2006 and smart phones in 2007 (2015, p.250). These social media sites and networking (later become available on smart phones) have been used as marketing tools and platforms for data collection and transmission. They are described as “the effect of digital technology on marketing communications in general and on advertising in particular has been particularly significant” (Egan, 2015, p.375) and the last quarter of century is seen as an ‘intervening period’.

Egan has commented social media “blurring the traditional boundaries between media and audience” (2015, p.263) with the evidence of that “More than two thirds of the world’s internet population visits social media site, spending nearly 10% of their time in virtual communities. Social networking site usage has exceeded web-based
email traffic in the year 2009 and that trend continues” according to Moore et al. (2015, p.6) Furthermore, customers spend 25% of their internet time on social media, rise from 15% in 2009. (Nielsen 2010) One of the major salience of social media is within the user demographics; most of the users are young audiences and are difficult to reach via traditional media (for example, TV) and circulated by Brad Adgate on Forbes following a Nielsen report that “television viewing dropped by 3% among adults 19-49 in the third quarter, when compared to the previous year, while digital viewing, albeit significantly smaller, grew by 53%.” (Brad, 2014) Social media users of age 35-49 and 50-64 are identified the most rapidly increasing groups and “younger people are described as innovators and are further down the adoption curve with prospect to the heaviest users” (Nielsen, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012, cited in Rapp et al. 2013, p. 2).

Considering the massive use of social medium platform, “After all, if Facebook users constituted a country, it would be the world’s third largest after China and India.” This was how social media been commented according to the leading management consulting firm McKinsey’s report on demystifying social media, McKinsey has summarized four primary functions of social media, they are:

- To monitor
- To respond
- To amplify
- To lead

As shown below in Figure 4, the most potentate ability among the four is to amplify word-of-mouth effects. As advised by Philip (2008, p.256), unlike traditional offline where customer who could be targeted passively; in the internet exchange process, customer initiates and controls the contact, they are more active and there are risks for companies trying to manipulate a medium where the individuals generate or distribute most of the content. As Philip described “Social media may help companies
bond with customers in exciting new ways, but they won’t help them control the relationship.” (2008, p.260)

Hence, while companies leveraging social media to engage in positive connections, there is potential risk of facilitating negative opinions and comments about the product, service or the company itself, yet consumer remains in control over social media. Furthermore, with the use of social media accommodates the communication process long before point-of-sale; a free flow of information sharing such as bad-mouth could be opposed to certain products and services, and reduce the chances of physical transactions in-store long before the salespeople-customer interaction, which causes a direct impact on profit.

Figure 4. “Demystify Social Media: Four Primary Functions”
Source: McKinsey Quarterly/Article
In airport retailing, the potential customers among passengers would presume to be more dependent on authentic and concrete information regarding their shopping plans; such as the location of their favorite brand, the opening time of the shops, and more specifically, the availability of the particular item they want. In associate with product and service information, customers may also want to find out custom regulations that are relevant to the purchase, which would as well influence their purchasing decision. For instance, some customers may want to find out whether their purchase could go through the immigration control and etc. Therefore, in order to plan their trip properly, customers would search such information prior travelling as passengers find ease of dining, shopping and entertaining nowadays in more and more international airports. At the meantime, it implies a level of sales force ethics required to satisfy the customer query on carrying convenience, meeting immigration policies in situations. A scenario could be the salesperson is aware of the risk of customer purchasing an item that could be confiscated at the destination airport by the immigration or other scenarios of salesperson taking risks to sell duty-free items such as tobacco and cigarettes to customer who are not entitled to purchase duty-free under the intra-EU reform (Please kindly refer to Appendix 5 for reference). Situations like this fit in David’s (2006, p.215) description of ethic issues in personal selling; where deception, the hard sell, bribery and reciprocal buying are classified under the four ethical issues. As salespeople faces the choice of telling the customer of the whole truth and risk losing a sale, or misleading the customer to clinch it.

With the growing number of social media users, as shown below in Figure 5, it has shown an increasing trend with an estimation of over 2 billion users by 2016 (Statista, 2015) and The Irish Independent has also reported that the number of adult user on social media including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are 61%, 29% and 24% respectively in 2014. (Adrian, 2014) With the evidence of the metrics, advertisers and business operators respond promptly in order to maximize their reach. Retailers and brands build up their own platforms on Facebook and Twitter, and connect the networks to their official website. A survey research in 2011 has shown that 88.2% of firms in Europe and US had begun their social media initiatives and 42.1% of these firms had fully integrated social media into their business strategies. (Insites
Consulting 2011, cited in Rapp et al. 2013) To a more specific and practical front, the usage of social media would assist retailers in marketing; including branding, positioning, advertising and conducting market research; as well as functioning HR activities; such as internal training and development, corporate communications and external recruitment.

![Figure 5. Number of Social Network Users Worldwide 2010-2018 (Billions)](image)

Source: Social Media & User-Generated Content, the Statistics Portal

2.3.2 Digital Technology in Retailing

The intervening of social media can be regarded as a catalyst in the form of technology within the evolvement of personal selling process in retail sector, and it has been acting as both a facilitator and a saboteur to personal selling.

Notably, one of the advantages by using social media would better satisfy customer demands due to the fact that, airport airside retailing can’t be accessed until the departure time; therefore it is ideal for the customers to use social media such as the website for their navigation purposes and, use Facebook and Twitter for their personalized observational purposes.
In contrast, traditional offline customers go to the salespeople for queries and would make purchasing decisions based on the selling experts’ advice. According to the figure 6 below by Egan (2015, p.279): the contemporary personal selling is most effective at the purchasing point, presumably customer awareness, interest and desire phase could be stimulated and influenced by mass media like TV commercials, magazines and online coupons or other above the line adverts.

![Diagram of Personal Selling Effectiveness](image)

**Figure 6. Personal Selling Effectiveness**

Source: “Marketing Communications” (Egan, 2015, p.279)

However the physical selling process is also influenced by personality, presence and the product in most scenarios. In addition, at the airport retailing environment, the terms and conditions regarding custom and airline regulations would also been taken into account in order to make purchasing decisions. As “Scholars have long agreed that the salesperson is not the only one affecting sales performance.” (Shannahan et al.2013, p.3, originated from Riordan et al. 1977) Therefore the in-store salesperson-customer interaction could be collapsed when some of the conditions failed to meet the purchasing and selling demands. Because salespeople are the ‘part-time marketers’, how do they behave could affect customer satisfaction and
extend to relationship building and retaining. Most importantly, the difference between online selling and in-store selling could be reflected at this 'moment of truth', when salesperson and customer come into physical contact.

Ellonen and Kosonen (2010, cited in Moore et al. 2015) have identified two modes of social media interactions between customer and seller.

The first mode is: Instrumental

The instrumental social media is salesperson- centric and facilitated with a transactional nature, controlled and initiated by seller because it is one-way communication in terms of circulating information and promoting products. Avoiding negative reactions, marketers may gain an excellent return on investment by increasing the reach of a marketing message to a targeted group that is much larger than the audience originally covered. (Patrick et al. 2007, p.504) This mode is similar to the early conceptions of personal selling model, and customer are conceived passive; however it is modified from physical to virtual, as suggested by Patrick et al. (2007, p.504) E-commerce has a salience of cost-free and it is possible for each individual to contact hundreds of more without much effort or cost. Although selling via digital channels such as customer browsing retailer’s official website and purchase online; as mentioned earlier – the technological approach of ‘order placement portals’ may alleviate the negative side of personal influence from physical communication, as buying process online is objective and regulative. However, subsequent logistical process involved in online purchase is complex and costly for retailers. Particularly in relation to a time requirement of 24/7 operation online, which more or less transfers the in-store bustling into more demands sales-support logistics.

The second mode is: Relationship-oriented modes
The relationship oriented mode is reciprocal and bilateral communication; suggests for collaboration and it has been classified as a dual-acceptance innovation. It is a shared technology between salesperson and customer, and used primarily for relational selling with a focus on providing visibility and credibility to browsers and potential users. (Ahearne and Rapp 2010; Agnihotri et al. 2012; Dwyer et al. 1987, cited in Moore et al. 2015) By adopting this mode, companies can manage customer relations, facilitate internal collaboration, provide sales aid, improve media relations and test new idea for products and services. (Singh et al. 2008, cited in Ferrel et al. 2010, p.3) As introduced by Patricks et al. (2007, p.515) the GM vice-chairman Robert Lutz achieved a celebrity status with his blog (fastlane.gmblogs.com), which focuses on new designs and GM cars. As a blog is considered effective and low-cost in achieving the following:

- Influence a public conversation about the brand or the company, by providing latest accurate information.

- Improve brand visibility and credibility, by providing the company a more human voice but containing higher rankings in search engines at the same time.

- Improve customer relations and receive quick feedback, suggestions or complaints.

By adopting such as a reciprocal two-way communication, social media enables companies to be more grounded to know and realise what’s being said among the audiences and can necessarily react upon corrective information. Although as a matter of fact that the consumers in airport retailing is fragmented; however social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and a company’s website are about creating one-to-one relationships for marketers and strengthen the bond between consumers and retailers beyond the physical boundary. (Patrick et al, 2007, p.516) In order to develop customer feelings of closeness, openness and contrast to the traditional service sector; including competition with downtown retailers, airport retailing is presumed to deliver a synergy of the intangible pre-approach to customers.
utilising social media to enhance loyalty. Airport retailers could symbolize virtual communications by providing what have been learnt about customers’ needs and wants through pre-approach of in-store selling and ultimately utilizing personal selling services at airport retail stores.

David (2006, p.355) has suggested companies to focus on the two-way communication, which can be perceived to enhance consumer confidence towards retailing offering.

Taking a two-way consideration, consumer participation on social media could be perceived as follow: (David, 2007)

- The product offering is more personalized by using optimal searching engines, guidelines and following some celebrity endorsements. This applies to the ‘sales aids’ approach, where social media platforms acting as virtual salespeople.

- The price offering is transparent and dynamic especially with the use of digital devices, such as smart phones enable consumers to have quick price check and comparison on social media platforms. According to Stephanie (2014, p.313) in her industry report on “Capitalising on Mobile Devices to Enhance the Traveller Experience and to Maximise Retail Opportunities at the Airport” an estimate made by Deloitte has indicated that by 2020, 50% of a shopping trip will be influenced by mobile devices, both pre-shopping and while in store. This is particularly relevant to luxury goods, with 43% of luxury shoppers making price comparison online to look for offers while in store. The shopping behaviour driven by mobile device could be assuming as customers talking to several virtual salespeople simultaneously, consequently the best offer prevails. The availability and feasibility of virtual participation have undisputedly empowered consumers’ bargaining power, and equally weakened sellers’ advantage.
• The promotions are interactive; however it is instantaneous and needs instant engagement. It in turn has sharpened the retailers’ competitive edge by utilizing viral marketing (the electronic version of word-of-mouth) and online order placement portals. Hence, retailers can lead the chase and influence the virtual interactions on social media platforms. However, if the promotions were solely available online; it could have a negative impact on the in-store salesperson’s performance.

• The shopping place is boundary-free and global when it comes to ‘clicks and mortar’. It is fostered by advanced technology and supported by a well-structured logistic chain. On one hand, it enables salespeople to change the role of being an active intermediary into a sales-initiator and from a product specialist become into a consumer specialist (Crittenden et al. 2010, p.108). On the other hand, it put salespeople in a precarious situation when retailing is becoming more and more digitalized, and when consumers tend to prefer shopping on-line. Meanwhile, it could generate a sense of job insecurity among in-store sales force, which could further impact the salesperson’s performance.

Notably, a physical sense of ‘customer experience’ is missing in David’s argument (2007); as the description is based on the 4P’s (product, price, promotion and place) - the tangible offerings of retailing business, but lack of physical people involvement and its human touch. Especially with regard to the fact that, the advancement in technology has led to more sophisticated products like electronics and digital devices, which require specific demonstrations, a possible trial and the follow-up maintenance provided by human. Although the virtual communication via social media is neither physical nor face-to-face interaction; still the element of ‘people’ shall not be neglected. Especially the way retailers manage relationships on social media platforms; as increasing number of their current customers are ‘friends’ or ‘followers’ on Facebook and Twitter. Therefore, as suggested by Ferrell et al. (2012, p. 278) that, companies should encourage sales force and other workforce to become comfortable with the possibilities that social networks provide. In return, it could as well generate
positive impact on salesperson performance by adopting a friendlier and open attitude towards digital media.

2.3.3 Current Functions of Personal Selling within Airport Retailing

Although as evident in the academic reviews; being the major transforming factor, technology has reversed the traditional retailing of salesperson-driven mode to the contemporary customer-centric mode. Companies in general seek to gain more relational bond with the customers due to the fact that customers are empowered by the digital communications and with the introduction of social media in particular.

Based on a survey of 395 samples among professional salespeople across industries within business-to-business and business-to-consumer markets; exploring selling approach using relationship-oriented social media; Moore et al. (2015, p.3) have reported that “Relationship-oriented mode emphasizes reciprocal and bilateral communication and collaboration, it is classified as a dual-acceptance innovation, it is a salesperson-customer shared technology, and it is used primarily for relational selling” (Ahearne and Rapp 2010; Agnihotri et al. 2012; Dwyer and Schurr, 1987, cited in Moore et al. 2015, P.3). However, David (2007) has argued that not all customers are worthy of relationship building, fundamentally due to the reason of the cost serving those customers outweigh the benefits. In the dynamic airport retailing environment; particularly at the venue of Dublin Airport, as one of the main hubs for Trans-Atlantic flights from Europe to North America; the market segmentation is fragmented due to the passenger demographics, which makes it more difficult for salesperson to build relationships with customers.

The performance of personal selling at the airport stores have to be functional both in the tangible contribution of generating retail profit and in the intangible dedication of building customer relations; however it’s perceived challenging in terms of two critical factors:
• The restricted retailing area- located at the airside of the airport, with limited access and distribution flexibility.

• The dynamic consumer target- Many of the customers could be once-off buyers transferring through the airport. Within the subsequent field research, details on passenger demographic will be collected and relevant data analysis will be conducted in terms of the number of transferring customers.

Under the digital age, technology in retailing is exposed to all public; salespeople, customers, competitors and government regulators, all the stakeholders have access to the same information. The word-of-mouth has become word-of-digital exchange and as a consequence it has created an everlasting information world. (Crittenden et al. 2010) Crittenden et al. (2010) have constructed the following figure to indicate a conceptual framework reflecting the free flow of technology among main stakeholders; each flow is a two-way interactive interface. This framework was introduced to assess companies’ technological capabilities and to identify potential opportunities for sales force within the business-to-consumer sector. The same flow could apply to airport retailing.

Based on findings through literature review, the current role of personal selling within airport retailing could be defined into two domains as follow:
First domain – Revenue Generation

- To perform for revenue generation as tangible return and by addressing the transactional-driven nature, it has a synchronised reflection of the instrumental mode of social media.

Second domain – Relationship Building

- To perform for relationship building as intangible return, which requires mutual collaboration; and the interactions would take place prior physical contact via social media.

The following section of primary research will adopt this framework to find out the consumer acceptance of social media and personal selling when they travel at the airport, and will also compare their preference and user frequency of the in-store personal selling service deliver by salespeople to the virtual communication of social media; including Facebook, Twitter and the airport retail website, and online selling within airport retailing. Furthermore, the study will identify the role of personal selling by taking the influence from social media on the functionality of personal selling at airport stores; the assessment criteria of consumer acceptance towards the two variables will be credibility and time concern that consumer carry internally, another external criteria of custom and airline regulations will also be addressed.
Research Methodology and Methods
3 Research Methodology and Methods

3.1 Methodology Introduction

According to Brown’s definition (2006), methodology is a philosophical framework within a research that is conducted or as a foundation upon the research is based. In this study, the methodology will be associated with a corresponding set of paradigmatic assumptions to conduct the research.

To ensure this piece of research will be in good quality and contains some originality; it will follow a structure of "the three characteristics of a good research" identified by Philip et al. (2008, p.340), they are:

- The research is based on an open system of thought.
- The research examines data critically.
- The research generalizes and specifies the limits on the generalities.

The follow-on primary research will be inherent to the philosophy of Epistemology and hold a positivistic perspective to find answers to the research question. The study employs an inductive approach to descriptively explore the role of personal selling under the influence of social media; therefore a quantitative face-to-face survey strategy will be in place. And by utilizing mono-method with non-probability sampling; a convenient type sampling will be adopted.

To avoid potential bias from respondents, the field survey will be open to passengers of different demographical background on the departure level at Dublin Airport, it will be employing self-selection sampling and respondents will be interviewed voluntarily. All respondents will be informed that the data collected will be used solely for the academic purpose and they would remain anonymous and confidential. The data collection will be structured interviews using questionnaire on an electronic tablet for
querying and data input, as the survey uses *The Google Forms* to design, record and analysing data. There will be ten questions and a form of demographic information in the questionnaire.

### 3.1.1 Epistemology

In the secondary research of this study, an overall review on the current function of personal selling at airport retailing and the intervening of social media have been addressed. The literature review has followed a time line of two different periods. By revisiting the conceptions on personal selling process in general, interrelations between the evolvement of personal selling and the involvement of technology within airport retailing have been addressed. The philosophy of this study hence follows the value perception of Epistemology in terms of seeking for constitutions of acceptable knowledge within the research area.

### 3.1.2 Positivism

Based on the secondary research in this study earlier on, two domains of the current function of personal selling have been identified within airport retailing. And by conducting a primary research, it will lead to a creation of further development of theories in order to define the contemporary role of personal selling at airport. As suggested by Gill et al. (2010, cited in Mark et al. 2012, p.134) research studies “*to collect about an observable reality and search for regulations and causal relationships in the research data to create law-like generalisations like those produced by scientists.*” Therefore, this research reflects the philosophy of Positivism.

### 3.1.3 Inductive Approach

As commented by Solomon (1992, p.77), “*to achieve a methodological approach that is consonant with one’s own values and concerns; it typically involves the longest struggle in research work and the deepest kinds of engagement.*” By comparing potential findings on consumer perceptions with theories upon the collection of data; as well as further defining the role of personal selling; this research is open to discoveries that might go beyond the current conceptions on the function of personal
selling with airport retailing. Babbie has mentioned that “scientific inquiry in practice typically involves alternating between deduction and induction. Both methods involve interplay of logic and observation. And both are routes to the construction of social theories.” (Babbie, 2010, p.53) Accordingly an assumption of adopting deductive approach is not appropriate for this study, as argued by Mark et al. (2009) that, “the testing theory has a tendency to construct a rigid methodology that does not permit alternative explanations of what is going on.” Therefore, this study will develop a research agenda to formulate theories following field data collection and relevant data analysis by adapting inductive approach.

3.1.4 Research Question

Focusing on the purpose of this study, as discussed in the literature review section; the role of personal selling has become more challengeable in the contemporary airport retailing in terms of the two functional domains addressed:

- Revenue generation
- Relationship building

Consequently the research question is formed as below:

What’s the role of personal selling in airport airside retailing environment under the digital age?

3.1.5 Primary Research Objectives

In order to gain further evidence, the following objectives will be met by conducting the field survey:

- To understand the current function of personal selling in airport airside retailing environment by reviewing the traditional selling process and the evolved selling
process, and refine the role of personal selling between revenue generation and relationship building from consumer perspective..

- To find out the influence of social media has on personal selling in airport retailing by investigating consumer acceptance and user frequency on social media and salespeople using criterion of credibility and time cautiousness when travel and shopping at airport. (venue: Dublin Airport)

- To compare theories related to personal selling from both sales-oriented and relational-driven perspectives with influence from social media as a marketing communication tool.

3.2 Research Strategy

3.2.1 Survey
According to Mark et al. (2012, p.173) “the key to the choice of research strategy or strategies will enable the researchers to answer the particular research questions and meet the objectives.” As a plan of action to answer the research question and meet the research objectives listed above, a survey strategy will be adapted. In particular, in order to explore the interrelationships between social media and personal selling within this study and ultimately produce theories that can define the role of contemporary personal selling within airport retailing.

3.2.2 Descriptive Research
According to Allan et al. (2005), a research that usually involves surveys and studies aiming to identify the facts, or to deal with the state of affairs as it is at present could be consider a description and therefore it is a descriptive type of research. In consequence, the purpose of this research is descriptive; as in adherent to the description of “to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations” (Robson 2002, p.59, cited in Mark et al. 2009, p.140). Notably, in the literature review chapter of this study, the current role of personal selling in airport retailing has been
addressed and followed by a conclusion of two functional domains with the influence of social media. As Mark et al. (2009, p.140) have suggested, a descriptive research is an extension of a clear picture on which needs to be further explored by collecting data prior to the collection of the data.

3.2.3 Mono-method Quantitative
In order to investigate the relationships between the two variables – social media and personal selling; and to adopt a numerical measure of quantitative research, subsequent statistical analysing will be conducted. As summarized by Peter and Cathy (2012, p.36), the use of methodology is to show “how research questions are articulated with questions asked in the field; its effect is a claim about significance.” This research will adopt a mono-research method of quantitative survey questionnaire. Further analytical procedure will be using a range of statistical techniques, for instance the Google Forms will be used for data collection. Detailed data analysis and reporting will be delivered by Microsoft Excel.

3.2.4 Structured Questionnaire
Following a suggestion made by Mark et al. (2012) on selecting research methods and according to the nature of this study; as it is intend to investigate customer attitudes and opinions to identify and describe the influence of social media has on personal selling. In order to collect quantifiable answers as predetermined, this research will adopt a structured interview using standardized questionnaires. (Please kindly refer to Appendix 6 for reference.) The semi-structured interview and unstructured interview methods are non-standardised and could cause bias as well as time consuming, especially for passengers at the departure level of the airport. Assuming the time concerns that passengers carrying may end up with an inadequate response from the respondent. Therefore by conducting a face-to-face structured interview with a defined schedule of questions, interviewer and respondents could stay on track time-wise and keep the topic to the record.
3.3 Research Sampling

3.3.1 Non-probability Sampling Method
The population is among passengers travel out of Dublin Airport, they are also perceived the potential customers in the airport retail stores. A non-probability sampling method will be adopted to provide the study with a convenience type of sampling, mainly to accommodate the time concerns that the respondents possibly have. According to Mark et al. (2009), within business research such as market surveys, it is might not be possible to have the samples chosen statistically at random as in situations where the samples would not be appropriate to answer the research questions. In addition, as a matter of fact that the annual passenger volume is over 20 million in Dublin Airport (Dublin Airport Report, 2015), it is inadequate neither to adapt census nor to collect data from probability sampling.

3.3.2 Self-selection Sample
As Mark et al. (2009) have suggested that the sample size is ambiguous for non-probability sampling; however they also advised it is more important to focus on the logical relationship between the sample selection technique and the purpose of the research. Therefore, in terms of sampling size and avoiding a high level of bias; this research will take the self-selection sampling to allow individuals to take part in the research by informing and inviting population in-person at the airport departure level.

3.3.3 Pilot Testing
Mark et al. (2009, p.394) have suggested that, in order to refine the questionnaire so that the respondents will have no problems in answering the questions and so as recoding the data. A pilot testing on 10 participants was undertaken prior to the data collection at the airport per Fink’s recommendation (Fink, 2003b, cited in Mark et al. 2009, p.394). Through the pilot testing, it is shown the survey takes approximately 5 minutes to complete. The pilot testing was conducted face-to-face on 3 participants primarily as to gain profound comment and to check the suitability of the questions.
The questionnaire also has been sent out by email to 7 other participants and followed up by calling them upon the completion of the questionnaire; in terms of checking whether the participants they had any questions or difficulty to follow the layout of the questionnaire.

The subsequent feedback from the face-to-face interview was informative due to the nature of the structured interview survey; participants were eager to share thoughts on their experiences within the research area and had provided comments on the questionnaire. In comparison, the feedback from the online version is less vivid, with a general view responding that the survey layout was easy to follow and answers provided were reasonable enough. However among 7 of them, there were 2 participants raised concern about the flow of the questionnaire, as Question 5 and Question 10 was not ranked in a logical sequence. As a consequence, some revision has been made to the questionnaire per the feedback given by the participants, additionally based on the researcher’s observation experience throughout the interview; few changes have been made to revise the questionnaire.

• The most controversial argument was around Question 9 in the questionnaire (please kindly note below), particularly on the initial wording of “poor salesmanship”, as one of options provided for not shopping in the airport store. It seemed being negatively influential and easy to generate bias among participants. Assuming some of the potential respondents may happen to possess the profession of being a ‘salesperson’, to some extent it could be regarded being misleading. As suggested by Mark (2009, p.383) that question working is vital and need careful consideration to ensure the responses are valid, which is to measure what the research meant to do. Therefore, it has been rephrased into ‘over-friendly salespeople’ as it is more accurate to indicate the reality within this scenario and is also more appropriate following the rationale on this question.

  ➢ Original form

9. What are the reasons that would stop you from shopping at the airport?
• Custom and airline restriction
• Not enough room in my luggage
• Not enough time before boarding
• Poor salesmanship

➢ Revised form

9. What are the reasons that would stop you from shopping at the airport?
• Custom and airline restriction
• Not enough room in my luggage
• Not enough time before boarding
• Over-friendly salesperson
• Others

• As shown above, apart from the change of the last option into ‘over-friendly salespeople’, the rest of the options were only concerned with objective conditions. Other important metrics were missing from the retailing realm; such as the “price” and “quality” etc. However, being refined by the research objectives, the intention within this area of study is less concerned with the tangible offer such as “price” and “quality”. By all means, a compromising solution was to add another option onto the answers; therefore, “Others” has been complemented in order to meet other conditions under this question.

• In regard to the sequential issue about Question 5 and Question 10, corresponding amendments have been made to reverse the two questions; therefore it makes more logical sense. The entire questionnaire would thereby follow a lead of a discussion from ‘information query’ to ‘action on the spot’, hence meeting the requirement of a questionnaire’s validity.

• Another improvement to be made after the pilot testing is to make sure the respondents would be able to read the questionnaire at the same time when they were asked. As noticed during the interview, respondents were not fully engaged
in answering when a question is provide with more than “Yes” or “No” answers, they were either distracted or could not remember all the answers by only relying on listening. Therefore, realize seeing is believing, the questionnaire will also be physically presented to the participants, so they can read themselves at the mean time.

On the basis of lessons gained from the pilot testing, the filed interview will begin with a brief introduction on the project and the respondents will be informed with a clear statement on the confidentiality and the time duration to complete the survey. They will be presented with the questionnaire while interviewed by the interviewer. At the end of the interview, they will be invited to sign or initial their names on the Informed Consent Form. (Please kindly refer to Appendix 7.)

3.4 Research Limitations

3.4.1 Gaining Traditional Access
The primarily conceived limitation of this research is the access. It is confined to a particular designated location – the airport departure level at Dublin Airport, as a course of predetermination due to the nature of the research topic. The retail stores being addressed in this paper are on the airside of the airport after the security check and on the same level of departures.

According to Mark et al. (2012), the face-to-face interaction with structured interview is traditional and physical. Firstly, organizations, groups or individuals may not be prepared to engage; especially in the case of travelling. Objectively, to gain permission from the airport authority to pass through security check within the airport is strictly restricted for non-passengers. Furthermore, according to Mark et al. (2012), one of the reasons when permission has been rejected is due to a lack of perceived value in relation to the work of the organization, where in this case, the role of personal selling is rather a retail concept than the nature of the airport operations. Practically, passing through the security check in Dublin Airport is going beyond the
immigrations. Therefore, the chance of getting a refusal access is likely to happen for security and safety concerns and the assumption is that the access could become a limitation. However, the data could be collected from the same set of population while still at the airport, which would be before the security check on the landside of the departure level. And further negotiations will be managed on gaining permission from the airport to support the implementation of the face-to-face survey.

3.4.2 Validity and Reliability

Apart from the issue of gaining access to the air-side of the airport terminal, another concern would be the issue of validity and reliability on the research findings. Although with acknowledgement of the fact that validity and reliability could not be eliminated thoroughly, still efforts would be made to minimise the level of these threats from the researcher’s part.

As mentioned by Babbie (2010, p.158) that “reliability is a concern every time a single observer is the source of data, because we have no certain guard against the impact of that observer’s subjectivity”. Although the survey will be conducted face-to-face in the form of a structured interview, however the respondents are also capable of providing extra information in addition to respond to the questionnaire. The interviewer can benefit from gaining the extra information only if such subjectivity is not adopted towards the study; otherwise as Wilson (2010) has argued, the level of reliability of the work is going to be compromised.

In terms of a validity guarantee, this study has referred Cohen et al. (2007) on the forms of research validity; such as content validity, criterion-related validity, construct validity, internal validity, external validity, concurrent validity and face validity. Among those, this research is adherent to the following metrics:

- Appropriate time scale;
- Appropriate methodology;
- Suitable sample method;
· The respondents must not be pressurised.

The researcher considers the points above not only for their validation nature but also with ethical awareness. Particularly at the stage of conducting the survey, where an integrated skill set of communication, neutrality, self-discipline and respectful mindset are required throughout the work schedule.

3.5 Time Horizon

3.5.1 Cross-sectional Study
Regarding to the time horizon, this research will employ a cross-sectional study due to the constrained time period within the academic course; however it’s mainly because the survey will be conducted at a particular phase of passengers’ itinerary on their departing journey. Therefore the research is limited to a particularly defined situation -airport departure; furthermore the action of passengers passing through airports are temporary, and the time they spend in a duty-free shop is constrained; therefore the role of personal selling and its related performance is perceived captive. Additionally, Mark (2012, p.190) has also advised that cross-sectional studies are often employed by the survey strategy.

3.6 Research Ethics
The ethical issues have been taken into account throughout the research project, from the selection and formation of the topic to both secondary and primary research; and it will be continually considered till the conclusion section at the end of the study. In adherent to what Mark et al. (2009, p.160) have suggested, the general ethical issue is that the research study would not subject those who are being researched to any level of embarrassment, harm or any other material disadvantage. Particularly, ethical consideration will extend to the research population and main stakeholders within the area of study, such as the airport authority, the retailers and the survey respondents.
This study adopts mono-method face-to-face interviews using survey questionnaire at
the airport, therefore effort will be made; endure to gain further approval from the
airport as the holder of the premises as well as from individuals to collect data.

Acknowledging the access and ethics are critical aspects for the success of any
research project. Especially under this topic and at the venue of airport, the study is
highly engaged with human participants. As an independent research project, it is
difficult to gain access both from an organizational and an individual front.

3.6.1 Ethical Issue Related to the Organization
The most concerned ethical issue in terms of conducting the research at the airport
would be the airport authority is unaware of the fact that the passengers are the
subject of the research. However the interview is at the venue of the airport, therefore
in addition to gain consent from participants among passengers, it is also ethical to
make sure that the airport is being informed and is acknowledgeable of the research
activity being conducted. Although the survey will be taking place in the public area of
the airport; such as in the check-in and public lounge hall, where all individuals have
free access to. However, being aware of the nature of the topic is related to the retail
facilities in the airport and could potentially contain some level of sensitivity; therefore
in order to be reassured and having no doubts collecting data on the premises of the
airport, the research project will be in compliance with ethical codes and request for a
security clearance from the airport authority. (Please kindly refer to Appendix 7.)

3.6.2 Ethical Issue with Individual Respondents
In addition, a number of key ethical issues have specifically come across during the
stage of forming research strategy as advised by Mark et al. (2009, p.185), in terms of
collecting data from the individuals.

• Privacy of possible and actual participants;
• Voluntary nature of participants and the rights to withdraw partially or completely
  from the process;
• Consent and possible deception of participants.

In avoidance of these conditions above, the design of survey questionnaire has followed the suggestions below; based on Mark et al. (2009, p.186) s’ checklist:

• Construct and present the research questions neutrally.

• Avoid generating any potential risks for participants during the course of research.

• Explain the rationale of the research to participants and stakeholders, which is a pure academic study with an exploratory purpose to investigate and further describe the role of personal selling under the influence of social media. The data collected from individuals will be integrated and analysed into a statistical form to support theories and conceptions generated by academic research.

• The entire primary research will remain confidential and anonymous. Respondents’ signature is required in the consent form as a confirmation and proof of the voluntary participation by the Examination Board. However, as a compromise to meet the request of the Examination Board and to provide the anonymity and confidentiality to participants; the researcher will only request for initials from the respondents on a voluntary base. (Please kindly refer to Appendix 7.)
Data Analysis and Findings
4. Data Analysis and Findings

The primary data have been collected and processed, and will be presented in this chapter to meet the research objectives of the study. Based on the concurrent function of personal selling discussed in the secondary research and comparing consumer acceptance on social media and personal selling to a certain extent. The findings will be demonstrated following Tukey’s (1977) ‘exploratory data analysis (EDA)’ approach, with the use of diagrams to descriptively explore and present the data. As Mark et al. (2012, p. 486) have suggested, using EDA could make the data understandable and can also lead to reasonable choices of analysis techniques. Therefore, in addition to the initial use of Google Forms for data recording, the research has also applied Microsoft Excel for data analysing, includes entering data, decoding, proportionate of statistics; and other key aspects such as specific values, highest and lowest values, and frequencies. Raw data and relevant tables including the statistics analysed using the cross-tabulations, bar charts and pie charts will be presented in the following paragraphs, and all statistics can be traced via a link available in Appendix 8.

4.1 Overall Statistical Information

In order to reflect the research question and objectives, and to specifically compare variables, cross-tabulation method has been utilised as recommended by Mark et al. (2012, p.498) in terms of looking for interdependence between the variables. The analysed statistics will be covering two sections, include comparing the highest and lowest values as well as comparing proportions. (Please kindly refer to Appendix 8.)

4.1.1 Comparison between Highest and Lowest Value

- To compare highest and lowest values
The variables are presented by using a multiple bar chart, as suggested by Mark et al. (2012, p.499) researchers are likely to find it easy to compare value between adjacent bars; which have been used to compare the following variables:

- The credibility of the information advisor, comparing consumer acceptance between salespeople and social media. Please kindly refer to Figure 11 in the following paragraphs.

- The reasons consumer would approach salespeople in store, descriptively exploring the rationale behind such behaviour at the airport stores. Please kindly refer to Figure 16 in the following paragraphs.

- Consumer concerns towards shopping at the airport, comparing external and internal factors; for instance the matter of time and other issues on price and quality. Please kindly refer to Figure 18 in the following paragraphs.

### 4.1.2 Comparing Proportions of Value

- To compare proportions

In order to provide more straightforward visuals, percentage component bar charts are used for presenting data contains over four values in the report. According to recommendation from Mark et al. (2012, p.499), adjacent bars were also used for comparisons, with the aim to address the following:

- Consumer acceptance and corresponding user tendency towards the credibility of communication tools between social media and in-store salespeople on average. Please kindly refer to Figure 12 in the following paragraphs.
Consumer preference of information inquiry tools about the airport and airport retailing between the use of social media and the non-use of social media. Please kindly refer to Figure 13 and 14 in the following paragraphs.

Consumer rationale of approaching salespeople in store; the proportions of each pre-described factors with comparison of the highest and the lowest values. Please kindly refer to Figure 16 and 17 in the following paragraphs.

Comparison of consumer acceptance of online purchase and personal selling service in store. Values of respondents’ preferences on two variables as well as their repellence for the two variables have been presented in contrast. Please kindly refer to Figure 20 and 21 in the following paragraphs.

In addition to the screening process, filtering on price and durability at the purchasing evaluation stage; this study has also taken into account some potential issues that would stop customers from buying when they are at the airport. Four extra factors in regard to time, custom and airline restrictions, luggage space and salespeople were asked during interviews, and a comparison between the highest and the lowest values will be presented. Please kindly refer to Figure 16 and 17 in the following paragraphs.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of sixty-five structured face-to-face interviews using survey questionnaire were conducted on the departure level at the venue of Dublin Airport throughout a two-week period of time to ensure a spread of sample. Among 65 respondents, 9 responses from 4 respondents have failed to fit any categories provided in the answer sheet, therefore these were considered as incomplete response. With such a configuration, an average valid response rate of 98% has been reached. (Please kindly refer to statistics via the hyperlink in Appendix 8.)
Of the 10 questions asked during interviews, 5 of those reached 100% response rate, 2 have reached 98.46% response rate; another 2 have reached 93.85% of response rate at and 1 question has reached 95.38% of response rate.

4.3 Demographic Information

Apart from the 10 questions within the survey, there were 5 pieces of information queries on general demographics, inquiring information on respondents’ gender, age group, the destination of travel, purpose of visit and country of residence. As advised by David (2007, p.116) that “an in-depth knowledge of customers is a prerequisite of the successful marketing – it influences the choice of target market and the nature of the marketing mix developed to serve it. Indeed, understanding consumers is the concern stone upon which the marketing concept is built.” The collection of additional information on demographics was also to further support the variation of samples, and to reflect a more appropriate proportion in terms of generalization.

The proportions of consumer demographics are shown with pie charts, notably; in order to obtain an easier interpretation of the statistics as recommended by Mark et al. (2012, p.495) the segments remained no more than six in each section.

The residential section was divided into residence of Ireland and abroad, and the proportion is halved of 32% on each category. It is to cater for the probability of user familiarity with the airport and tendency of pre-purchase online.

The purpose of visit section was dominated by leisure visit with 51% overall. It is a vital factor in terms of relationship building for personal selling at the airport; when half of the respondents are tourists about to leave the country, thus it could be challenging for establishing potential relational selling.
The section of age group is to cater for a reasonable division of the overall samples. In particular, to avoid potential bias that may occur within respondents, and might be against social media or traditional personal selling. As shown in the pie chart below, respondents are allocated unevenly with an outstanding cluster of 45% around age 19 to 28.

The section of travel destination is objectively subject to the existing air routes that are available from Dublin airport. (Please kindly refer to Appendix 9.) Majority of respondents were travelling to continent of Europe, a reach of 60% in Figure 10 below; including those who have connecting flight afterwards. Considerations in regard to custom and airline restrictions have been taken into account in terms of
composing this section. Further details will be discussed in the following paragraphs to address the impact of custom and airline restrictions have had on consumer buying and personal selling.

**Figure 10. Travel Destinations**

4.4 Findings on Consumer Acceptance of Social Media within Airport Retailing (Venue: Dublin Airport)

4.4.1 Credible Information Advisor
The questionnaire was designed following the psychological order of consumer decision-making process focusing on their choice over communication tools for information query and their preferred interactive mediums between the physical and virtual communications for airport purchasing. It has applied one of the marketing dimensions of ‘how do consumers buy’ (David, 2007, p. 117).

Statistics of consumer acceptance of in-store salespeople and social media as information advisor have been compared; by using criteria of credibility when consumers approach two of the communication tools, as shown in Figure 11 and 12.
By comparing the value of average user tendency between Facebook and Twitter and in-store salespeople, as shown in Figure 12, consumers much prefer in-store salespeople in terms of its credibility over Facebook and Twitter and the discrepancy between the two is quite significant.

There are 4 questions within the questionnaire addressing consumer ‘information search’, which illustrate user tendency of the two variables in detail; they are questions 1, 2, 3, and 5 respectively.

- As shown below in Figure 13 in questions number 1, 60% of respondents would look for information online about the airport before they travel, that include general information on leisure facilities, dinning, shopping and terminal layout etc.; whereas other 40% do not check information online prior their trip to the airport.
As shown below in Figure 14 and 15, question number 2 and 3 are designed for consumer internal search. Within a 100% response rate, 74% of respondents would not use social media sites to follow retail offers at the airport in question 2. Four options have been provided in questions number 3 to reveal consumer preference on current communication tools available at the airport for information query. Among 100% response rate, there are 54% of respondents who prefer to ask salesperson physically at the airport and it is the highest value against digital media. Furthermore, 5% of respondents prefer to use Facebook and Twitter, which is the lowest value.
4.4.2 Reasons of Consumer Approach Salespeople in Store

According to Bill (2007, p.24) “theories of selling which fail to incorporate the needs of the buyer are thus incomplete”; further to the secondary research, the primary research descriptively looked at the reasons of consumer approaching salespeople in store. Four factors have been addressed, they are related to inquiries on products, promotions, custom and airline restrictions and regular buyer looking for new value-adds. Among them, 46% of respondents would approach salespeople when they want to know more about the product, which is the highest value among the four. In contrast, as the lowest value, 9% of respondents would do so if they want to find out more about promotions. Notably, 25% of respondents would ask salespeople about relevant custom and airline regulations to determine the purchase decision.
4.4.3 Consumer Concerns towards Airport Shopping

There are five options provided to respondents to find out their concerns towards shopping at the airport; as mentioned in the chapter earlier on, in addition to price and quality; another four factors in regard to time, custom and airline restrictions, luggage space and salespeople and their proportion are shown below:

Among the five factors, consumers’ time concern stays ahead as the dominate matter of over 50%, and the common sense to price and quality prescribed in ‘others’ is the least concerned as of 2% when shopping at the airport. (Figure 19.)
4.4.4 Consumer Acceptance of Online Purchasing and Personal Selling

In order to identify the gap between consumer acceptance of social media and personal selling and descriptively explore an efficient and effective manner of personal selling in store; the findings shown that majority of respondents are in favour with the physical interaction of selling at the airport. Per the charts below, 68% would prefer to use personal selling rather than to purchase online; and 69% would not likely to do pre-purchase online if they were to do some shopping at the airport. This is important for measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of personal selling; as mentioned earlier in the secondary study of the research, personal selling being the most costly unit of all marketing communication; its performance perceived just as efficient according to consumer point of view.
Figure 21. Consumer Preference VS. Repellence of Online Purchasing and Personal Selling at the Airport
Discussion
5. Discussion

5.1 The Current Function of Personal Selling in Airport Retailing

The research question of this study is:

What’s the role of personal selling in airport airside retailing environment under the digital age?

According to statistics and analysed data of the primary research, Figure 22 and 23 would facilitate in answering the question following consumer decision-making process; including information search, point of purchase and general evaluation of the communication tools between personal selling and social media.

![Figure 22. Consumer Acceptance of Salespeople](image1)

![Figure 23. Consumer Acceptance of Social Media](image2)
As one of the variables, personal selling has been compared with the other variable – social media. From the consumer based perspective, salespeople in general receives higher acceptance of over 53% from consumers than social media does as shown below in Figure 24.

Therefore, in adherent to the research objectives and based on statistics and the analysis of data; the role of personal selling is concluded as a creditable information provider at the point of purchase in store for consumer need of the product knowledge-based expertise and custom and airline regulations related retail query.

5.2 The Influence of Social Media Has on Personal Selling in Airport Retailing

The researcher would conclude that consumers prefer to have physical contacts in terms of information query for shopping at the airport rather than using social media. Further findings have uncovered the influence of social media has on personal selling at the airport. A comparison of digital media and physical interaction as shown below in Figure 25 has revealed that salesperson with the value of 54% is far ahead of the rest of communication tools in airport retailing. The conclusion has further enhanced the argument of personal selling is more interactive and adaptive as recommended by David (2012, p.5). Meanwhile, it is in contrast to the framework advised by Zoltner
et al. (2004, cited in Bill, 2007, p.176) in regard to the scale of efficiency and effectiveness of various channel strategy, where personal selling has been placed the least efficient tool. (Please kindly refer to Appendix 10.) Despite the fact that personal selling is dearer for organizations, however the findings show it is more efficient at airport retailing. In the findings, salespeople are the first choice for communication tools; and consumers would wait to ask salespeople until they are at the airport store.

Although customers are empowered by digital devices with easy access to social media sites, notably, 35% of respondents would check the official retail website; David (2010, p.113) has also mentioned that “information search by consumers is facilitated by the growth of internet usage and companies that provide search facilities…. consumers are increasingly using the internet to gather information before buying a product.” However the restricted boundary at the airport does make a difference on the sales territories, where consumer would still prefer the traditional way of physical interaction; as per the statistics shown, consumer perceive more credibility from the salespeople. This is a positive sign for the sales force, even though it is difficult to build long-term relational selling with customers at the airport store, as per the demographic data collect; that over half of the respondents leaving the country were returning to their home as they were here for leisure purpose. Still at the same time, with over 70% of respondents prefer to approach salespeople in store, it boosts more opportunities for salespeople with exposure to the consumer; thus generate revenue by meeting consumer needs and solving their problems. As a conclusion, personal selling at the airport is constructively influenced by social media.
5.3 The Evaluation of Consumer Acceptance of Social Media and Personal Selling in Airport Retailing

Further to the decision-making process, after information search consumer considerations set to the evaluation process in terms of inquiring detailed information about products they are interested in; and inquire the external information about custom and airline regulations that are related to purchase at the airport store. Based on the earlier analysis of consumer preference on communication tools, a rate of 89% claimed they feel more confident to interact with salespeople rather than using social media, such a choice criteria is emotional and can be important in decision-making according to David (2010, p.119). Further findings on consumer acceptance of pre-purchase online and personal selling at the airport have shown similar results; where 68% claimed prefer to purchase using personal selling. Unlike downtown retailing, consumer allocates much of the decision-making process on the spot when they are at the airport store. As shown in the findings, only 26% claimed have used social media to follow the retail offer at airport, and 54% claimed themselves as users who would ask in-store salespeople for queries.

However, in terms of looking for determinants of not buying at the airport, the majority have claimed time pressure. Over 50% respondents would give up buying because they don’t have enough time; and 75% respondents claimed time cautious when
shopping at the airport. According to industrial report on airport retailing (MoodieReport, 2014); “in 2012 and 2013 the amount of time passengers spent at the airport remained constant at 95 minutes on average; however the amount of time they spent shopping dropped in 2013.’ (Sarah, 2014) As shown in Figure 26 below, the average amount of time consumer spend in airport retail stores (include ‘Retail’ and ‘Duty Free’) in 2013 is 17.5 minutes by calculation. Such amount of time is very tight for a customer to proceed 3 stages of decision-making before achieving transaction stage. Notably, the reality further supports the findings on time pressure and its influence on personal selling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time spent in retail and F&amp;B (minutes)</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F&amp;B</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty Free</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 26. Time Spend at Airport Stores  
(Source: Sarah, 2014, DKMA Survey)

Therefore the conclusion is that, with the time pressure being another choice criterion in consumer behaviour at the airport retailing, it is challengeable for salespeople to perform a relational-oriented selling process. As recommended by David (2010, p.122) that “time pressure inhibits within extended problem-solving where decision needs to be made quickly.” With a curtailed interacting time period between consumer and salespeople, it is difficult to attempt building relationships.

Regardless of the time pressure encountered at the airport; consumer still have higher acceptance of in-store personal selling at the airport over making pre-purchase online. It is quite inconsistent that 50.5% of respondents would give up shopping due to short of time, and furthermore 69% claimed that they would not consider pre-purchase online and pick up at the airport for times-saving purpose. Notably, such a large discrepancy leads to the relative importance of consumer need recognition, whereas the need of buying is not activating the decision-making due to
an inhibited fear of running out of time. Secondly, the need of buying remains passive due to a lack of confidence towards pre-purchase online. This applies to David et al. (2013, p.120), the theory that need inhibitors potentially stop a purchase. Therefore, salespeople obtain an advantage of gaining more trust from customers at the airport stores where social media is perceived delivering less sense of confidence to the audience. Although social media and social networking have been considered pervasive and proving to be of great interest to marketers as powerful communication and sales channel, however the commercial functionality of social media within airport retailing has not yet reached the strategic phase; where objectives associated with increasing sales or reducing costs are limited. In turn, personal selling possesses a greater chance of sales exposure under such an influence from social media; and prevalingly caters for the purpose of revenue generation. In comparison, due to the primary choice criteria of time pressure, salespeople endeavour is required to establish relationship selling at the airport stores.

5.4 Awareness of the Limitations of the Research

5.4.1 Limitations on the Choice Criteria

In this study, credibility has been used as choice criteria in addition to the time concern. However, in order to descriptively explore and define the role of personal selling; the criteria setting is limited to the most concerned area of consumer emotion. The primary choice criteria is adherent to the identity of the consumer; they are airport passengers who travel on schedule and dwelling at a restricted area. The criteria was set to accommodate the level of confidence consumer acquires towards the virtual and physical way of communications. Additionally, the study has also addressed consumer concerns on custom and airline regulations that are related to their purchase, which account for 25% claims through findings; and it is the second biggest proportionate factor of the reasons why consumer would approach salesperson in store.
5.4.2 Evaluation of the Research
The statistics through findings have revealed the rationale of consumer preference towards in-store personal selling, which are for the purposes of information search and point of purchase. Conclusions have drawn on how social media has influenced personal selling at the airport store as well as the outcome of subsequent opportunities; such as more exposure of personal selling for revenue generation based on the higher credibility. The challenges that salespeople encounter under such circumstances have also been discussed, for instance the difficulty in building relationship selling due to customers’ internal time cautiousness. However, the study didn’t cover consumer behaviour specifically on the influential factors of why many airport customers do not prefer pre-purchasing online for a time efficiency purpose, as well as potential motives for fostering an ease of shopping. Therefore further research on such areas of study is recommended.
Conclusions and Recommendations
6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter is a supplement to the previous ‘Discussion’ section of the study. In order to clarify the two domains formed in the literature review section of the study with suggestions for a pursuit of further research. Detailed understanding on the role of personal selling at the airport retail stores will be added with general conclusions and recommendations through data analysis.

6.1 Conclusions on the First Domain: Revenue Generation

The first domain defined in the literature review section is tangibly related to financial returns; which in adherent to the traditional personal selling process (PSP), although it was transaction-oriented; the fact finding through this study has shown that the salespeople at airport stores have obtained a higher level of recognition by consumer in oppose to the virtual communication tool of social media. The data collection and finding analysis on consumer preference have followed the decision-making process, where the preferred acquisition has started at the stage of information search till the end of purchase. Due to a lack of confidence with social media, only 5% claims as being confident using social media; consumer would approach salespeople in store for information query about the products and custom and airline regulations related to their purchase. Such finding is contradicting to the definition of technology being ubiquitous that could be anything that solves a problem according to Crittenden et al. and (2010). At the same time, personal selling is also subject to the evolved selling process (ESP), as in addition to sales-driven, it is also to solve customer problems. Findings also present a disagreement with Hunter and Perreault’s recommendation of the role of technology could be regarded as a reinvention of a sales role (2006). Therefore, with a high level of consumer repellence of social media, averages claim of 57%. More opportunities can be raised for personal selling; which applies to Moncrief and Marshall’s theories (2005), that sales job has been enlarged to increasing job activities required to support successful selling performance.
Undoubtedly, salespeople can perform more effectively in revenue generation with higher level of credibility perceived by consumers and more exposure received as a diversion from social media. The influence of social media has on personal selling at airport stores is therefore constructive; as a consequence, Wayne and Deborah’s TORA model (2008) as mentioned earlier is compatible to consumer acceptance of marketing communication and selling process at the airport; due to the level of dedicated engagement involved from both parties. However, as mentioned, consumer also pays much concern on the custom and airline regulations at the point of purchase. Therefore salespeople are expected to be knowledgeable of such policies to be capable of solving consumer problems, which applies to Egan (2015)’s argument that personal selling can also satisfy consumer’s needs with salespeople’s candour approach and disarm consumer’s natural defences. Within the literature review it is mentioned that the salesperson ethics are vital in such an environment. Being perceived creditable and reliable by consumer; the researcher would strongly recommend that salespeople at airport stores should keep performing at their best form in the area of their expertise with a focus on product knowledge; as well as keep themselves updated of the knowledge area containing relevant custom and airline regulations.

6.2 Conclusions on the Second Domain: Relationship Building

The second domain is related to relationship building as an intangible return, which requires mutual collaboration from both parties. As per findings shown, consumers not only have lower tendencies using social media for information query but also have less motivation to make online purchases, which is generally out of a credibility concern that consumer holds against social media communication within airport retailing. Such results apply with Egan’s agreement (2015) as discussed in the literature review; that customers are highly sceptical of messages from organizations and have less trust towards advertisement; and as Nigel (2009, p.48) mentioned, the consumers are short on time, attention and trust.
Alternatively, consumers would prefer wait till they are in the store at the airport; however, time concern prevails when consumers are at the airport stores. In turn, the occurrence of consumer time cautiousness makes it difficult for salespeople to attempt to establish a bond with customers. Furthermore, per the demographic information; it is unlikely to generate repeated purchase from those who travel for leisure purposes temporarily and were returning back to their country. Moreover, take the dwell time factor into account, when consumers on average have less than 20 minutes to spend at the airport store; it is barely sufficient for salespeople and buyers to deliberately proceed the decision-making process step by step; never to mention extend the transaction into a relational bond.

Further to the comparison of the two domains have been addressed in the literature review and refined in the primary research; a general conclusion will be presented in the following paragraph.

6.3 General Conclusion and Recommendation

The contemporary role of personal selling at airport airside retailing environment under the digital age has been predominated with the function of revenue generation rather than building sales-oriented relationship. It is supported with theories reviewed through secondary research and by analysing primary data collected addressing consumer acceptance of social media and personal selling at the venue of Dublin Airport. Social media has influenced the role of personal selling in both constructive and promotive ways as a communication tool. The effects are generated by a high level of consumer repellence of social media within airport retailing; which was assessed with choice criteria of consumer confidence, time cautiousness and consumer concerns on custom and airline regulations when shopping at the airport.
Corresponding implication suggests that although social media and social networking are pervasive and ubiquitous; especially within the retail industry, traditional retailers are going to brick and mortar to enhance the consumer needs of virtual shopping experience and more importantly to increase sales and lower the costs. However, consumer acceptance of social media at the airport retailing is less passionate. The function of social media therefore can be considered has not yet reached its strategic phase to associate with the objectives of increasing sales or saving cost. It is recommended that he airport retailers may need to pay more attention on fostering consumer awareness to corresponding social media in order to build the social commerce; including consumer shopping experience through referrals, ratings, reviews and sharing opinions of levels of service as recommended by David et al. (2013, p.691). After all, as part of the social communities, retailers should seek to educate the followers or potential buyers about their offers and relevant information that matters to trigger the decision-making, such as the custom and airline regulations on social media platforms.

In the findings, social media has diverted consumer attention to the salespeople and the physical interaction of personal selling in store. Notably, in order to meet the consumer needs and wants; salespeople should continually providing authentic information about the retail products and relevant information on custom and aviation policies. Therefore, from the retailer’s end; it is recommended that up-to-date trainings on such knowledge area should be provide to the salespeople on regular basis to keep the sales force informed and ultimately keep the customers satisfied. And for further research purposes, it is recommended to take different assessment criterion such as factors that facilitate an ease of shopping for consumers in airport retailing, and motives to accommodate consumer decision-making with preference on online purchasing within airport retailing.
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Academy Of Marketing Science, 41 (5), pp. 547-566, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, viewed 15 April 2015


Appendices
8. Appendices

Appendix 1. Reflection

The researcher reflection is rather an ongoing progression during the dissertation process, and it mainly engaged with the feelings and thoughts alongside the composition of this study. Following the framework of the research, much thought have been put into the secondary and primary research phases; in regard to some specific skills that were required to allow this research process to be continued.

The positive role of the dissertation supervisor needs to be highlighted, Miss Eva Perez, who has professionally offered valuable and practical advice to handle issues have arisen at different stages of the research, particularly at the stage of polishing the research objectives. The process of the research study has undergone a quite smooth pace with guidelines provided by Miss Eva Perez as well as the encouraging and friendliness charisma that emanates from her.

Skills Required for Secondary Research

During the literature review stage, being capable of selecting and prioritising relevant resource and data are of advantage to increase the work efficiency. However, relevant skills have only been fostered by following important criteria such as to look for authoritative and credentials of influential authors and publishers; as well as paying attention to the date of publications in terms of keeping the freshness of the materials.

To critically review the literatures and generate effective data is vital. Although, this skill has been developed since the very early stage of the academic course, it still plays a significant role in performing and delivering the research outcome. To further extend the critical mindset towards secondary research in terms of looking for contrast, shortcomings and arguments within similar area of study was exciting in general, but was also tiring after some time; because of much effort and time are
required to look for associated evidence which could be used to support corresponding arguments.

**Skills Required for Primary Research**

Carrying out a primary research in an individual manner of such a scale is the first-time experience for the researcher; especially when it involves conducting over 60 face-to-face interview surveys at a bustling international airport. With a demand on physical presence at the airport, the researcher had spend a considerable amount of time travelling to the airport throughout a two-week period, including some late nights and early mornings in terms of chasing the passenger tides; which wasn’t a real obstacle but quite time consuming especially at times when the city bus companies happen to be on a strike for two days.

Only during the data collection phase, did the researcher realize how fortunate she has been, when the supervisor had long-before advised her to take the mono-method quantitative research survey regarding the level of complicity and effort required if she was to take multiple methods. Moreover, the researcher has gained a practical experience of conducting structured interviews with strangers in a public area. Meanwhile it was a great goal-driven practice for communication skills, as the researcher interviewed people at different age of different nationalities; therefore the art of the conversation they have had apart from administrating the questionnaire was literally multicultural and interesting.

The engagement in primary data analysis has also made the research process rather learning-based as the findings were informative; detailed data analysing and theory comparison were required to draw conclusions. Therefore, the researcher has kept the work consistency in-progress and committed to the study by intensively engaged into literature reviewing, making notes and associated the academic research with relevant industry reports in order to keep the research outcome contemporary.
**Improvements for Time Management Skill**

Apart from the nature of an extensive preparation and planning work required to complete the dissertation. A self-disciplined manner with good time-management skill is necessary to make sure the entire research process proceed smoothly as well as manageable. The researcher has benefited a great deal from the research experience by improving her time-management skills in terms of applying and allocating her thorough thought, planning and reasonable arrangements to each stage of the study as a researcher. Although a work schedule was created prior the commencement of the research, still it was easy to fall behind the time perspectives a few times throughout the time being; due to various reasons such as stuck on one section of the research for too long, for instance at a time when coming back and forth revising the literature reviews. Or spend a significant amount of time preparing and negotiating the permit to gain access for interview surveys at the airport. The time issue have been dealt with re-adjusting the time-plan for the study and increase the efficiency.

In order to stay focused during the research process, the researcher sometimes felt like isolating herself from all unnecessary social activities. However, daily routines were not entirely set into pure research; the researcher would still work-out and jog in the evenings to keep a healthy record of the physical condition, thus to avoid being pressurised and burnout, which in turn would have a negative impact on the study.

**Improvements for Assertiveness and Enthusiasm**

As a result of achieving this research; levels of assertiveness and self-confidence of the researcher have increased both personally and professionally. As mentioned earlier, most of it has to do with the conduction of the primary research; where the
researcher has to be convincing and deliver an honesty performance to the population to carry out the survey.

As being commonly accepted that for salespeople to sell, they have to sell themselves first. Even though, some rejections were encountered, when some people were not bothered to talk or give opinions to a stranger by taking a survey. There was even one case, when a passenger was approached with a polite request whether she would like to participate a survey that would take less than 5 minutes of her time with 10 questions under anonymous and confidential terms; however, the passenger has just burst into fury without a sign and rejected the approach brutally. It was a frustrating experience, however it's all part of learning; and only with this sort of interlude would make the research experience more challenging.

The main reason to conduct a face-to-face survey is to enhance the research as a whole with human touch and some grounded interactions; to gain more insight and integrate the very basic opinion that each respondent hold individually and dissolve them into the dissertation as a trace of freshener to the rigid theoretical frameworks. A high level of sincere attitude and a sense of assurance have always been put into place throughout the research process; especially during the prior preparation and communication to roll-out the primary research. There is no doubt, the study would not have come into one piece without the support and assistance received from the college, Dublin Airport, the participants at the pilot testing stage and all respondents from all over the world.

Form this practice; the researcher has gained more information than it was required from the questionnaire. As the saying goes, ‘No pain, no gain’. One of the respondents happened to be a marketing scholar from Denmark; he has not only shown interest to the research rationale but also provided some reference addressing this area of study. In a nutshell, towards the end of the primary research it turned to be a great experience for the researcher personally and professionally. It has greatly
enhanced the researcher’s interpersonal skills; where the value of hard work was acquired by working hard.

**General Reflection**

Perfection is not attainable, but if one chases it one can catch excellence. It is without exaggeration to say this part of life experience of being a researcher is truly intellective and reflective. Although it is an individual project, however it requires more output than a single force would deliver.

A strong willed mindset would be an indispensable gear to take on board throughout the journey, as well as, to keep making effort and remaining positive. The hardest thing is to take less when one can take more, the researcher perceive this process a multi-task driven practice, as it is expected to have a master control over time, resource and quality; and a good level of mastery skill values just as much in a corporate organization when it comes into practice at workplace in the near future. Therefore, all the work being engaged with the study has contributed to leadership skills overall and will benefit the researcher on a long term base in the future.

It is with much gratitude and honour to complete this Master Programmes Dissertation, the author would like to thank all stakeholders who have participated in the research study and particularly Miss. Eva Perez who has been a great mentor and supervisor throughout the study.
### Appendix 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Historical Significance</th>
<th>Key Concept(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiro, Perreault, and Reynolds</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>IMM</td>
<td>First attempt at a comprehensive synthesis of the major factors in the salesperson-customer interaction.</td>
<td>Personal selling consists of sequential steps; exchange occurs if salesperson-customer strategies are compatible; salespeople and customers are “local people” in the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banoma and Johnston</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>IMM</td>
<td>Propose an exchange model emphasizing five social and economic exchanges.</td>
<td>Salesperson perception of the purchasing firm influences the selling approach used while purchasing agent perception of the selling firm influences the buying approach used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weitz</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>JMR</td>
<td>Offers ISTEA—a sales process model.</td>
<td>ISTEA depicts a sequence of salesperson activities that center on developing impressions that influence a customer’s choice decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prinik and Dempsey</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>IMM</td>
<td>Propose a multistage, two-dimension, communication-oriented selling model for organizational selling.</td>
<td>Describes what the salesperson should do; provides a basic framework for the training of salespeople; model is admittedly normative and salesperson focused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubinsky</td>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>IMM</td>
<td>First empirical attempt to describe the selling techniques salespeople use. Presents the personal selling process (PSP) as a useful structure for understanding the sales process and the various salesperson techniques.</td>
<td>PSP is made up of seven basic steps. Personal selling is a systematic process; techniques are salesperson skills, implying the PSP is salesperson dependent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weitz</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>JM</td>
<td>Presents a contingency-based model of sales interactions.</td>
<td>Suggests salesperson resources and behaviors, customer buying task, and salesperson-customer relationships have a moderating effect on the selling behavior-effectiveness relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubinsky and Staples</td>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>J/SSM</td>
<td>Clarifies the PSP.</td>
<td>Although the seven steps are presented as steps a salesperson may pass through, the authors discuss the importance of success at prior steps in driving the sale.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Shannahan et al. 2013, p.263)
Appendix 3

Shop & Collect Service Available in Dublin Airport

Appendix 4

EU Regulations on Shopping Categories

(Source: Dublin Airport Official Website

Available at:
http://www.dublinairport.com/gns/shops-restaurants/eu-regulations-shopping.aspx)
Appendix 5
Intra-EU Reform: Duty-free Sales and the Facts
Memo/97/82
Brussels, 24 September 1997

Why do we have to get rid of duty-free shops?
Duty-free sales to travellers inside the European Union make no sense now that we have the Single Market. Travelling within the Single Market is now like travelling within a single country and notions of exporting and importing have disappeared. For example, there are no longer any restrictions on what you can purchase for your own personal use in another EU country. People buying goods for their own personal use no longer have to "export" goods from one EU country and "import" them into another - they just go shopping.

You cannot buy duty-free goods if you are travelling by plane from Paris to Marseilles or London to Glasgow. Now the Single Market exists, there is no good reason why you should be able to buy duty-free goods if you are travelling by plane from Paris to Glasgow or London to Marseilles, especially as you cannot buy duty-free goods if you take a train or drive between the same places.

The Council of Ministers decided unanimously back in 1991 to abolish duty-free sales for travelers within the EU, as part of the taxation and excise measures to make the Single Market a reality. A seven and a half year transitional period (up to 30 June 1999) was granted so as to allow duty-free shop operators and suppliers to explore alternative ways of carrying on business so as to avoid job losses (such as converting duty-free facilities to tax-paid retail outlets to take advantage of 'captive' customers). Compared with the transitional periods allowed for other EU decisions with far-reaching effects on particular sectors, seven and a half years is an exceptionally long time.
Despite this long transition period, much money and effort appear to have been spent so far on trying to persuade the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission to revise the 1991 decision rather than preparing for actually ending duty-free sales to travelers within the EU. On the contrary, the turnover of intra-EU duty-free sales is growing fast - it increased from ECU 3.6 billion in 1991 to ECU 5.4 billion in 1995.

The duty-free sales operators' have decided not to use the transitional period for the purpose intended, and it is they who will be responsible for the consequences of failing to reorganize in good time.

The 1991 decision was adapted by the Council for sound reasons - namely that duty-free sales are an anomaly within the Single Market and give rise to a number of distortions of competition and other negative effects. These reasons remain sound, and Commission has no intention of proposing any extension of duty-free sales to travelers within the Single Market.

But we are told people enjoy duty-free shops, so why get rid of them?
Duty-free shop operators and suppliers of tobacco and alcohol goods to duty-free outlets repeat frequently that travelers within the EU would resent losing the right to purchase goods duty free. In fact it is only travelers using air and sea transport and the Channel Tunnel shuttle service who currently have the right to duty-free purchases, whereas those using trains, buses or cars do not.

Moreover, many of the goods sold in "duty-free shops" in fact carry tax already. As the personal allowance for travelers within the EU for goods bought in duty-free shops is 90 ECUs, if a good is priced at more than 90 ECUs it is subject to value-added tax (VAT) on the full value of the good. In other words, purchases of luxury goods priced at more than 90 ECUs include some VAT in their price even if sold in a "duty-free shop". This can be misleading for travelers who believe that everything they buy in a duty-free shop is free of tax.
Indeed, duty-free shop prices are not always advantageous for the consumer. A survey by European consumers' umbrella organization BEUC has shown that an important number of items can be bought more cheaply in normal shops.

It is true that tobacco and alcohol products sold in duty-free shops are indeed free of excise duties. They account for 50% of duty free shops' turnover and an even greater proportion of their profits. However, duty-free sales are an artificial inducement to buy tobacco and alcoholic products which is in direct contradiction with EU and Member States' policies to reduce consumption of these products on health grounds.

Duty-free shop operators and suppliers of tobacco and alcohol goods to duty-free outlets fail to point out that people also enjoy the Single Market. People enjoy being able to literally fill up their car or baggage with goods bought in other EU countries that are cheaper or not available in their country of residence. Being able to buy a single one-liter bottle of spirits and a single box of 200 cigarettes in a duty-free shop if you happen to travel by air, sea or the Channel Tunnel shuttle pales in comparison with the new opportunities to shop in other EU countries.

Since 1 January 1993, everyone can buy goods without limit in the Member State of their choice, as long as they are for people's own personal use and not for trading. They no longer face systematic border checks on goods bought. As a result, millions of people every year now buy many millions of Ecu worth of goods in other EU countries to take advantage of lower prices and different ranges of goods on offer.

**How can a Single Market exist if there is no harmonization of VAT and excise rates between Member States?**

Easily. No one would pretend that there is no single market within the United States, and yet there is no harmonization there. Individual States' sales taxes vary considerably but there are no duty free shops for travelers within the US. For people travelling within the EU, it is clear that the Single Market exists since 1 January 1993. Since then, travelers have been able to purchase as much as they like
for their own personal use in another Member State without having to formally "export" the goods from one country and "import" them into another. Shopping in another EU country is now as easy as shopping in one's own local shops. With the introduction of the euro, cross-border shopping will be even easier. The fact that VAT and excise duty rates still vary from one EU country to another cannot be cited as a justification for duty-free shops to be maintained. The rates are due to move closer together as a result of harmonization efforts. The reason why this didn't happen up to now is because of the unanimity requirement which, in the case of the decision to put an end to duty-free, was indeed reached. But in the meantime, the Single Market most certainly exists and duty-free sales to travelers within the EU are an anomaly.

**Will ending duty-free sales make some ferries, airlines and airports unviable?**
Not necessarily. There seems little doubt that the enormous profit margins currently enjoyed by duty-free sales will be reduced. These profit margins are particularly high on tobacco and alcohol items sold duty-free because a very large proportion of the retail price in normal shops is accounted for by excise duties.

It is understandable that duty-free shop operators wish to maintain these enormous profit margins and those suppliers of tobacco and alcohol products wish to maintain sales generated by the artificially lower prices in duty-free shops. However, claims that fares would have to rise substantially and that some routes would become unviable require close scrutiny. For example, the extent to which profits from sales to passengers fall will depend substantially on the extent to which operators choose to convert duty-free facilities to tax-paid shops.

Ferries, airlines and airports will still benefit from 'captive' customers (waiting for flights, travelling on aircraft and ferry boats) who are likely to carry on buying many goods irrespective of whether the sales are called "duty-free". Airports in the US, for example, have very large shopping facilities where goods are sold with sales taxes included. Indeed, some of these US airport tax-paid shopping facilities are run by EU-based companies such as BAA and Aer Rianta.
In fact, as already explained above, many goods sold in duty-free shops in the EU already carry tax and so the 30 June 1999 deadline will make no difference at all. In other words, operators will still be able to make a profit from sales to passengers, but the profit margins are likely to be more in line with those of normal retailers rather than subsidized by artificial tax advantages.

Even if profits from sales to passengers do fall, fares or airport charges would be liable to rise only if this fall was not offset by growth in traffic generated inter alia by the Single Market and/or if there was an absence of stiff competition from other operators. With regard to competition, ferry operators on the Channel are facing growing competition from the Tunnel shuttle, while EU airlines are facing increasing competition from high speed trains and, as a result of EU liberalization measures, each other.

Travel within the EU for business and pleasure is in fact continuing to grow rapidly as a direct result of the Single Market. Many people now travel regularly simply to go shopping in another EU country. Business links between regions are going from strength to strength. It is not therefore credible to maintain that many ferry and air links would be unviable without duty-free sales.

In individual cases where routes were at risk, it would be more efficient and more transparent to offer direct state subsidies than hidden subsidies through duty-free sales. For example, subsidies could be channeled specifically to routes and airports in peripheral regions, whereas the profits from duty-free shops currently give most benefit to large, central airports and the most frequently used air and sea routes. Under certain circumstances, such subsidies may be compatible with EU competition rules.

**How much subsidy do duty-free sales within the EU currently enjoy?**

Duty-free sales within the EU enjoy an annual subsidy of some ECU 2 billion in terms of excise duty and value added tax (VAT) that would normally be paid. On average,
some 35% of a duty-free sales operation's annual turnover is accounted for by this artificial tax advantage.

The ECU 2 billion subsidies, which amounts to state aids for ferries, airlines and airports, is money that governments could otherwise spend on other areas or save by reducing taxation. It is ironic that the average taxpayer is subsidizing travel by ferry and air irrespective of whether he or she ever uses these forms of transport. Even people who travel once or twice per year by air or sea (for example, on their holidays) are subsidizing those who travel regularly (such as businessmen). In other words, offering subsidies to air and sea travel through duty-free sales is regressive from the point of view of taxation, because it brings disproportionate benefits to people who travel regularly by air and sea and who are normally richer than the average taxpayer.

Why should ferries, airlines and airports not be subsidized through duty-free sales?
The ECU 2 billion subsidy from duty-free sales to travelers within the EU distorts competition. First, within the travel industry, the subsidy from duty-free sales favors international air and sea travel over international road and rail travel. The subsidy also favors international air and sea travel operators over operators on domestic routes. Profits from duty-free sales to passengers may also be used to offer lower fares for cargo transport, thereby distorting competition in relation to companies carrying just cargo. The Court of Justice is currently considering several cases based on this distortion of competition.

Second, within the retail industry, the subsidy for duty-free sales adversely affects normal retailers who do not benefit from the duty-free status. The European retailers' organization EUROCOMMERCE has stressed that its members currently suffer unfair competition from duty-free sales.

As mentioned above, it is more efficient and more transparent to subsidies unviable air or ferry routes directly, rather than through duty-free sales. Under certain circumstances, such subsidies may be compatible with EU competition rules.
**Will ending duty-free sales within the EU result in job losses?**

Duty-free shop operators and suppliers of tobacco and alcohol suppliers have put forward dramatic figures for the number of people who stand to lose their jobs when duty-free shop sales end. In fact, it is difficult to predict the effect on employment with any accuracy because there are so many variables involved. The net effect on employment will depend on such factors as:

- the extent to which operators choose to convert duty-free facilities to tax-paid retail outlets to take advantage of 'captive' customers
- the extent to which conventional retail outlets, who currently employ fewer people because of the existence of duty-free shops, benefit from a shift of demand, notably for tobacco and alcohol products, away from duty-free sales outlets
- the extent to which demand for air and sea travel continues to grow
- How do governments choose to spend the extra tax revenue (reduced employers’ social security contributions, for example, would benefit employment considerably).

The Council of Ministers decided in November 1996 not to request the Commission to carry out studies of the economic and social implications of the abolition of duty-free sales. The Commission does not intend to carry out such studies on its own initiative because the sector has been given a seven and a half year transition period to allow it to reduce any adverse effects to a minimum, for example by converting to conventional tax-paid sales operations. Duty-free shop operators may have chosen not to use this transition period for the purpose it was intended - that decision rests squarely with them.

**Are controls by duty-free vendors on purchases by intra-EU travelers effective?**
No. The Commission's July 1996 report into the subject (see IP/96/713) found that even where the vendors did actually try to control purchases (e.g. by checking the person's boarding card), travelers can often buy from more than one duty-free shop and, in the case of air travel, can for example buy both at the airport and on the aircraft. In practice, travelers can therefore easily exceed their allowance of one liter of spirits and 200 cigarettes, so that the distortion of competition is even greater.

Vendor control can never work as well as frontier controls by customs officials, and the Commission is most certainly not going to propose the reintroduction of frontier controls within the EU!

**Will all duty-free sales have to end by 30 June 1999?**
No, only duty-free sales to travelers within the EU. Travelers to destinations outside the EU will still be able to make duty-free purchases (worth some ECU 2.7 billion in 1995).
Appendix 6 Face-to-Face Survey Questionnaire

1. Do you look for information online about the airport before travelling?
   - Yes
   - No

2. Do you use Facebook, Twitter or website to follow retail offers in the airport?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Which of the following tools would you use for query when you plan to shop in the airport?
   - Facebook and Twitter
   - Check the official retailing website
   - Call the customer service line
   - Wait to ask salesperson when I’m in the airport

4. Do you ask for help from salespeople when you shop at the airport stores?
   - Yes
   - No

5. Which of the information source would make you feel confident to shop at the airport?
   - Facebook and Twitter
   - In-store salespeople
6. Are you time cautious when shopping at the airport stores?
   - Yes
   - No

7. Would you purchase online before travelling to the airport and collect the product when you are at the airport?
   - Yes
   - No

8. Are you concerned about custom and airline luggage restriction when you shop at the airport?
   - Yes
   - No

9. What are the reasons that would stop you from shopping at the airport?
   - Custom and airline restriction
   - Not enough room in my luggage
   - Not enough time before boarding
   - Over-friendly salesperson
   - Other

10. In which of the following cases would you ask for assistance from salespeople at the airport stores?
    - I want to know more about the product.
    - I want to know more about the store promotions.
    - I want to find out relevant custom and airline regulations.
    - I’m a regular customer and looking for more value-added offers.
Appendix 7 Information for Participants

Project Title:
The Contemporary Role of Personal Selling in Airport Airside Retailing Environment under the Digital Age

Introduction:
You will be invited to kindly take an approximately 5 minute-long academic survey voluntarily. It is a study on social media and its usage within airport retailing. This survey is for an academic research purpose and answers will be anonymous and remain confidential.

This research aims to explore the influence of social media has on personal selling at airport retail stores by compare theories related to personal selling and social media; and evaluate customer acceptance of social media within the environment.

The researcher of this project, Miss Li Bai, is a master student at Dublin Business School undertaking her Business Administration course. Miss Eva Perez, a lecturer in International Marketing at Dublin Business School is supervising the research. It is a pure academic project and has been approved by Dublin Business School and the Research Ethics Committee.

Procedures:
In this study, the researcher will be honoured to ask you 10 questions in regard to your perceptions and acceptance on social media of your experience, when travelling and possibly shopping at the airport.

Time Commitment:
The study typically takes approximately 5 minutes to complete.
Participants’ Rights:
You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation required from you. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn or destroyed.

You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study’s outcome. A full de-briefing will be given after the study). If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

Confidentiality:
The data collected form you are also attributed into a demographical perspective, as the following will be asked:

- The age group you belong to;
The reason why your age is inquired is because users of social media vary, and it is not clear the age group of passengers who use social media to communicational purposes.

- The purpose of your visit to Ireland;
As people travel with different purpose to Ireland may have different wants and needs towards airport facilities and they may prefer different ways of communications when travelling through airport.

- Your destination county;
This reflects on the level of passenger attention paid to relevant custom and airline regulations. Therefore, it could be addressed using different pre-approach of communications vary on individuals.

- Your country of residence.
This can reflect your confidence towards the airport environment. A sense of familiarity and the corresponding approach to communications could be varied.

The findings on the research will be used solely in the academic report in a form of statistic analysis to support the theoretical conceptions and arguments.

**For Further Information:**
Myself, the researcher and Miss Eva Perez, my supervisor will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact my supervisor via her Email address: eva.perez@ncirl.ie and reach her via Dublin Business School landline: +353 (0) 1 4177500.

Thank you for your kind participation and valuable time, your cooperation is much appreciated!

Best regards,
Li Bai
Informed Consent Form

Project Title:
The Contemporary Role of Personal Selling in Airport Airside Retailing Environment under the Digital Age

Project Summary:
Based on an academic review on the current function of personal selling in the airport retailing and the intervening of social media; the relationships between the two variables - social media and personal selling have been identified. A numerical measure of quantitative research with subsequent statistical analysis will be conducted by collecting data from voluntary respondents among passengers in the airport before the security check. The findings from the field survey will be summarized into statistical forms to support the theoretical conceptions and arguments.

The participants and answers to the questions will remain confidential and anonymous; all data will be used for academic purposes solely.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- You have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.
- Questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily.
- You are aware of the potential risks (if any).
- You are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

Participant’s signature

Li Bai

Student Name (Printed)

Date

May 1, 2015
### Appendix 8 Data Analysis: Cross-tabulation

#### Consumer Acceptance on Communication Tools

| Respondents Choose between the Two Variables, Social Media VS. In-store Salespeople |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Q3 & Q5                         | Facebook and Twitter | In-store Salespeople |
| User-tendency                   | 5%               | 54%             |
| Rate of Confidence              | 5%               | 89%             |
| **Average**                     | **23.33%**       | **71.50%**      |

| Respondents Acceptance on Social Media, General Airport Info. VS. Retail Info. |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Q1 & Q2                     | Use Social Media Sites | Non-use of Social Media Sites |
| Follow Airport Info.        | 60%             | 40%             |
| Follow Retail Offer         | 26%             | 74%             |
| **Average**                 | **43.00%**      | **57.00%**      |

| Respondents Acceptance on In-store Salespeople |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Q3 & Q4 & Q5                                  | In-store Salespeople |
| Info. Query when Plan to shop                 | 54%             |
| Service Request During Shopping               | 68%             |
| Credibility as Info. Provider                 | 89% Highest     |
| **Average**                                  | **70.33%**      |

| Respondents Acceptance on Social Media Sites |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Q2 & Q3 & Q5                                | Rationale       |
| Follow Retail Offer                         | 26%             |
| Info. Query Pre-shopping                    | 20%             |
| Credibility as Info. Provider               | 5% Lowest       |
| **Average**                                 | **17.00%**      |

#### Reasons Approaching Salespeople in Store

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q5</th>
<th>Approaching Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product-Wise</td>
<td>86% Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Promotions</td>
<td>9% Lowest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Query on Custom &amp; Airline Regulation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Buyer, Query on New Value</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>23.50%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Consumer Concerns over Shopping at Airport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q6 &amp; Q8 &amp; Q9 &amp; Q10</th>
<th>Frequency of Matters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Concerns</td>
<td>50.50% Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom &amp; Airline Regulation Concerns</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luggage Space</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-friendly salespeople</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others (Price &amp; Quality)</td>
<td>2% Lowest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>26.23%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Consumer Acceptance over Online Purchase VS. Personal Selling Service in store |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Q4 & Q7                         | Online Purchasing | Personal Selling |
| Would Prefer                    | 31%             | 68%             |
| Would Rather Not                | 69%             | 31%             |
| **Comparison of Online & Personal Selling** | 37%             |
Appendix 9 Existing Air Routes from Dublin Airport

Hyperlink to an interactive map of the routes operated from Dublin Airport:

http://dub.fltmaps.com/en
Appendix 10   Scale of Efficiency and Effectiveness on Channel Strategy