

**Consumer behaviour in Milano Malpensa airport  
environment: How do delayed flights affect consumer  
spending?**

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'I declare that this dissertation that I have submitted to Dublin Business School for the award of Master of Science in Marketing-Digital Media is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated, where it is clearly acknowledged by references. Furthermore, this work has not been submitted for any other degree.'

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**Abstract:**

The aim of the research is to investigate passengers' money spending and behaviour when a delayed flight is announced at Milano Malpensa Airport.

The literature review contextualizes the airport environment and helps draw seven Hypothesis.

This study is carried out following a positivism philosophy and a deductive approach.

A quantitative survey strategy is adopted. The study is cross-sectional and carried out on July 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. A structural interview is conducted with a sample of 100 individuals.

Data are analysed with the software R. The findings appear in diagrams and chart and results include Descriptive and Inferential statistics.

It can be stated that a delayed flight affects consumers' behaviour, generating anger, frustration and need to complain. Money spending is influenced as well, since it increases when the delay occurs.

Not only strengths of the study are mentioned but also weaknesses, important to draw future recommendations and to discuss implications obtained.

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## 1.Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

The research aims to investigate consumer's buying behaviour in the airport environment, focusing in particular on Milano Malpensa Airport, Italy.

A few decades ago, Air travel was considered a rare experience for the few who were lucky enough to afford it. (Tymkiw, 2017, p.5).

Nowadays, on the contrary, it is rapidly increasing due to different factors: the need to experience foreign travel, the necessity to learn different cultures and languages, the rise of declined ticket costs by low cost companies, the growth of international trades and the develop of countries' economies. (Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.87/88).

Nowadays, more and more passengers, as mentioned previously, experience air travel at least once in their life. Thus, understanding consumers' feelings, reactions and buying behaviour in this specific environment, is considered to be worth discussing.

### 1.2 Background to the research problem:

Airports, nowadays, are said to be "places where various values can be offered" and not only a utility for transportation. Air travel is no longer reserved to the privileged few and it offers more than just flights. (Wattanacharoensil, Schuckert and Graham,2015, p.318).

In the airports, both business and leisure travellers fly to their destination with psychological and sociological attitudes which affect their cognitive and affective perceptions. (Wattanacharoensil, Schuckert and Graham,2015, p.319). Indeed, consumers at the airport experience feelings of anxiety, stress, excitement and boredom which make them react in unusual ways. (Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.86) . Moreover, air travellers feel they are out of their daily routine and experience an increase in the level of diversion and excitement. (Bohl 2014, p.13).

Over the last two decades, stricter security regulations and carry-on regulations occurred, creating a more stressful environment when travelling. (Tymkiw, 2017, p.5). In addition to that, airports are becoming larger and boarding and check-in are expanding, creating large distance between them, which leads to anxiety and frustration among passengers who need to go straight to departure gate. (Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.86). For this reason passengers feel lack of time and this situation may provoke anxiety; on the contrary, having “free” unexpected time before the trip may cause feelings of satisfaction. (Bohl, 2014 p.18).

Related to extra free time before the trip, Bohl states that a longer dwell time in the retail area will lead to a positive effect in the consumer spending because passengers will have more time to browse, more options available and so their willingness to buy products will increase. ( Bohl, 2014, p.18) . Dwell time, however, can be either managed by the passengers who decide to arrive earlier at the airport or might also be caused by a delayed flight. (Tymkiw, 2017,p.7).

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, because of stricter control regulations, travellers have been instructed to arrive at airports earlier; usually they decide to arrive from one to three hours before (Tymkiw, 2017, p.5). Therefore, the dwell time arising from this situation may change depending on the single passenger's decision and ability to manage their time.

A completely different situation occurs when dwell time derives from a delayed flight. In this case passengers may react in different ways.

First of all, it is going to be discussed whether passengers will receive compensations or not for a delay. Court held in 2004, Regulation (EC) No 261/2004, declared "that passengers whose flight has been delayed for three hours or more are entitled to compensation. The regulation provides that airlines compensate with 250 - 600 euros depending on the distance of the scheduled flight. Furthermore, airlines are under obligations to provide assistance to the passengers." (Curia.europa.eu, 2019)

However, only passengers with a delay that exceeds the three hours can be compensated. Flightradar24 is a global flight tracking service that provides real-time information about thousands of aircrafts around the world. (Flightradar24, 2019).

Taking into consideration departures at Milano Malpensa, checking on a random basis on Friday 21th of June, flight tradar24 states that 77% of departures were delayed with an average of 28 minutes delay, which cannot be compensated by the airline but on the other side may cause discomfort to the passenger. (Flightradar24, 2019).

Milano Malpensa Airport is an international airport with Domestic, European and Intercontinental destinations. (Milanomalpensa-airport.com, 2019). According to the annual

report 2018 of the Sea Group, Milan Malpensa Airport served a total of 24,561.7 million passengers, of which Domestic flights have 4.1 million passengers, European traffic was 14.3 million and Intercontinental registered 6.3 million passengers served. (Seamilano.eu, p.35, 2019).

If considered, again on a random basis, that 77% departures are delayed and taken into consideration the 24 million of passengers listed in the 2018 SEA reports, an extremely high number of passengers are damaged by a delay at Milano Malpensa Airport.

Milan Malpensa is the largest airport in Milan, and it provides a comprehensive luxury shopping experience for passengers. The airport has got an extensive and diverse range of shops and services for passengers while they are waiting. (Milanomalpensa-airport.com, 2019).

Nonetheless, even if the airport is big enough for passengers to spend their time while waiting, different factors may be considered when dealing with the reaction a delayed flight causes to them.

When a flight is delayed, passengers may attribute the delay to bad weather conditions, breakdowns, air traffics, poor management practices or to the airlines. When they perceive the delay is controlled by the airline, they feel angry, do not want to fly the airline again and want to complain about it. (Folkes, Koletsky, Graham, 1987, p. 534). Anger increases when the passenger attributes particular value to the punctuality of their flight. (Folkes, Koletsky, Graham, 1987, p. 536).

In this research, anger is going to be explained taking into account Weiner's theory of Attribution. (Weiner,1972). The Attribution theory attempts to explain and to determine the cause of an event or behaviour (why people do what they do and interpret causes of an event or behaviour).

It investigates the perception of causality and the judgment of why a particular incident occurs. (Weiner, 1972, p.203). As Funches states related to the attribution theory, causality plays a major role in the anger experience. (Funches, p.32,2016).

The theory studies how the responsibility of an incident that manifestly guides subsequent behaviours is allocated. (Weiner, 1972, p.203)

According to Weiner's theory, anger may play a mediating role between attributions and some behavioural responses of consumer to failure. The attributions influence anger and anger influence willingness of repurchasing. (Folkes, Koletsky, Graham, 1987, p. 535). Diaz and Ruiz, in 2002, examined the relationships between attributions, anger, satisfaction and behavioural intentions in the airline setting. They found that the more controllable consumers deemed the experience, the angrier they became and the less likely they were to repatronize the firm. (Funches, p.33,2016). In fact, the belief that the airline may control the reason for a delay and may help shorter it, increases passenger's anger towards the airline and this may have an indirect influence on willingness to repurchase the firm's product. (Folkes, Koletsky, Graham, 1987, p. 535).

However, so far, only the reaction towards the airline and the willingness of repurchasing airline tickets have been mentioned. Little has been said about the way consumers spend their money in the airport while waiting with anger.

Bennett states that, in case of anger and complaints, 82% of consumers continue to buy the products and some even increase purchasing levels. (Bennett,1997,p.156).

Konttinen also affirms that retailing improves customer experience in the airport environment and air travellers expect to have the opportunity to buy exciting and exclusive products with value. (Konttinen,p.236,2017). Indeed, retail is a crucial element for the airports because it creates hedonic experience and excitement for the passenger.

(Ballantine, Jack, & Parsons, 2010, p.643).

As stated by Kirk in 2010, passengers spend an average 20% of the dwell time undertaking necessary activities and 80% in the retail stores to mitigate travel-related stress. (cited in Wattanacharoensil, Schuckert and Graham,2015, p.329).

From this previous statement, it is inferred that longer dwell time will increase time spent in the retail stores.

But, Tymkiw, on the contrary, believes that consumers tend to purchase more items when they experience positive moods rather than anger. (Tymkiw, p.9,2017)

### 1.3 Research Question and Sub Questions:

Although in the previous section of the research, consumer's behaviour in the airport environment, delayed flights and the anger effect towards the airline have been widely discussed, little has been said about the consequences of a delayed flight on a consumer's spending.

A gap in the literature is present when dealing with delayed flights; thus, the research question aims to investigate **how delayed flights affect consumer's buying behaviour.**

Sub Questions arising from this statement are three and analysed below:

1) Does consumer buying behaviour differ when dealing with Low Cost or Full Service Flights?

The researcher aims to investigate whether air travellers react differently to a delay if they have purchased a low cost or full-service carrier.

2) Do the reasons attributed to the flight, the type of travellers they are and their choice of class affect the importance a passenger gives to complaining about the delay?

The findings want to be helpful to understand if the reason of the journey, the class and the type of passengers they are may create different reactions towards delays.

3) Which is the value a delayed flight has on money spending in the airport shops?

The research wants to determine whether a delayed flight is directly proportional to the spending at the airport shops.

#### 1.4 Rationale of the research:

The research has been carried out with the intention to acquire knowledge about consumers' behaviour when dealing with delayed flights in Milano Malpensa airport.

The gap in the literature, as mentioned above, gives a valuable reason for conducting this study. Indeed, as previously affirmed, not enough knowledge is evident on how consumer's spending in the airport shops is altered after a delay.

In addition to it, the result will help tackle problems related to discontent, anger and passenger's frustration when facing an unexpected delay.

The findings will not only serve in searching solutions to decrease stress and disappointment of consumers but will also help in influencing retailers to address specific marketing campaigns to air travellers in order to increase engagement and sales and distract from anger, anxiety and frustration.

As Crawford and Melewar state, retailers tend to rely only on suppliers for promotions and advertising even if suppliers adopt a general campaign that may not match the airport environment and does not take care of passengers' needs and wants. (Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.92)

The results this research will acquire, will indicate to retailers which strategy is best to adopt to fulfil consumer's demands.

The airlines, as well, will be facilitated by this study; if retailers and passengers exploit the delay in a profitable way, no one will blame the flight company for the inconvenience caused.

If no complaints are addressed to the airline, consumers will not hesitate to engage with the company and repurchase future air tickets.

### 1.5 Aim and Objectives of the study:

The aim of the research is to evaluate the reaction of consumers and their buying

behaviour when a flight is delayed.

Followings are the objectives that are drawn by the researcher in order to complete successfully the study and come up to useful and realistic findings:

1)To investigate the ratio between delayed flights and passengers's money spending in the shops.

2)To critically evaluate consumers' behaviours in relation to the flight they have to undertake (Low cost or full-service flight and Economy and Business Class).

3)To have a critical knowledge of how the reasons of flying and the type of traveller may influence consumer's behaviour.

#### 1.6 Research Structure:

In order to carry out the research, a well define structure must be built.

The introduction is going to be the first section of the study, highlighting the overview of the research, with aim and objectives, rationale, research question and background of the study. Literature review is going to investigate previous secondary research and theories to support the topic. Research Methodology will discuss the procedures of how to carry out the research, followed by Data Findings and Analysis and Interpretation of Data.

The final section of the study is dedicated to Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations for future studies.

#### 2. Literature Review:

## 2.1 Overview:

In the Introduction, the researcher has brought the topic of delayed flights to light. The investigation wants to find out the reactions to a delay in the airport environment. In this regard, the literature review wants to framework how airports work: which kind of flights are available, how passengers behave, which their reasons of the journey are and how they perceive the differences between economy and business classes and low cost and full-service carriers.

The researcher believes that understanding these themes is relevant for conducting the study. The framework is supported by the attribution theory of Weiner, as mentioned in the introduction.

The theory investigates how a particular incident occurs. The allocation of responsibility manifestly guides different behaviours. Behaviours change according to the attribution the customer may give to an incident. A three-stage process underlies an attribution:

- 1) Behaviour must be observed/perceived.
- 2) Behaviour must be determined to be intentional.
- 3) Behaviour is attributed to internal or external causes. (Weiner,1972)

The researcher believes that a passenger's reaction to a delay is strongly related to the attribution theory: when the airline announces the delay, the passenger immediately

perceives if the act is intentional, if it is determined by internal or external causes and if the traveller is in control of it.

Nevertheless, these factors are not the only ones creating an attitude when the incident occurs. The research aims not only to investigate the reactions to the delays, but also the relationships between delays and money spending.

The allocation of responsibility guides to different behaviours such as anger, frustration or carelessness that may lead to shopping behaviours.

Together with these factors, many others must be taken into account because any individual may act differently.

In the literature review, passengers' choices, needs, wants, expectations and buying behaviours are analysed, because the researcher believes these considerations play an important value in consumer's perception of delay and attribution of responsibility.

## 2.2 Passengers' perception of low costs and full- service carriers:

The researcher aims to investigate the perception passengers have of low costs and full- service carriers and the reasons why a customer may choose to purchase a low-cost ticket rather than a full service one.

US and European full-service airlines have lost a significant proportion of their passengers because of low costs carriers. (O'Connell and Williams, 2005, p. 259).

LLC (low-costs carriers) have entered the market by penetrating significant parts of it and this situation leads to dramatic changes in the competitive landscape. (Teichert, Shehu, Wartburg, 2008, p. 227)

In the US, low-cost strategies have been established since the early 1970s, meanwhile in Europe it is a more recent phenomenon of the 1990s, which is a result of the deregulation and privatization of the aviation market. (Pantazis and Liefner, 2006, p.266).

As Mason explains, low cost airlines can afford to offer key low fares thanks to the adoption of low-cost strategies. They mainly operate using only one aircraft type to reduce maintenance costs and maximize crew flexibility. (Mason, 2000, p.108).

Also, low cost airlines tend to operate on short haul routes, generally less than 1500 Km, without on-board catering and saving costs by using electronic ticketing and selling directly to their customer without travel agents. (Mason, 2000, p.108).

These carriers have pursued simplicity, efficiency, productivity and low fares, (O'Connell and Williams, 2005, p.259).

The most popular low-cost airlines serving short haul point to point routes are Easyjet, Ryanair, Virgin Express, WizzAir and GO, (Mason, 2000, p.107).

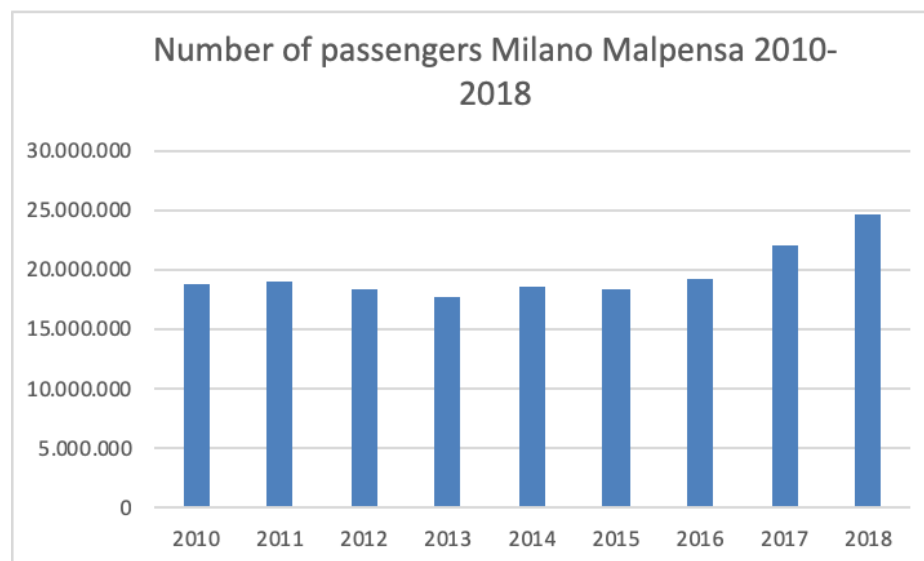
In Europe, in 2005, 14% of seats have been provided by low cost airlines with the largest players Ryanair and Easyjet accounting for nearly 9%. (O'Connell and Williams, 2005, p. 259).

According to Statista, the number of passengers traveling through Milano Malpensa from 2010 to 2018 have increased from 18 million to 24 million, as shown in figure 1. ([statista.com](https://www.statista.com), 2019). Given that passengers of Malpensa increased of 6 million in only eight years, it is relevant to analyse how many of these customers have been served by low costs

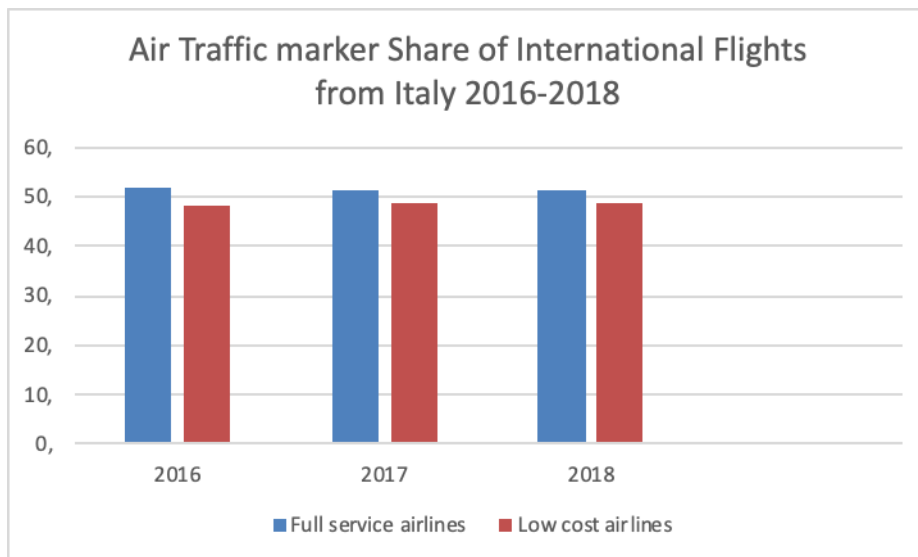
and how many by full-service flights. According to Statista, air traffic market share of International Flight from Italy 2016-2018 shows balance between low costs and full-service airlines, as underlined in figure 2. From 2016 to 2018, 51% of the market share belonged to full-service airlines and 48% to low costs. These findings make sense since low costs only serve short haul routes and cannot be sold for international long hauls.

Differences appear when dealing with Domestic flights: The air traffic market share for low cost, as shown in figure 3, is higher than for full services: in 2016 51% the market share belonged to low cost, with an increase of 5% in 2018.(56%). ([statista.com](http://statista.com),2019).

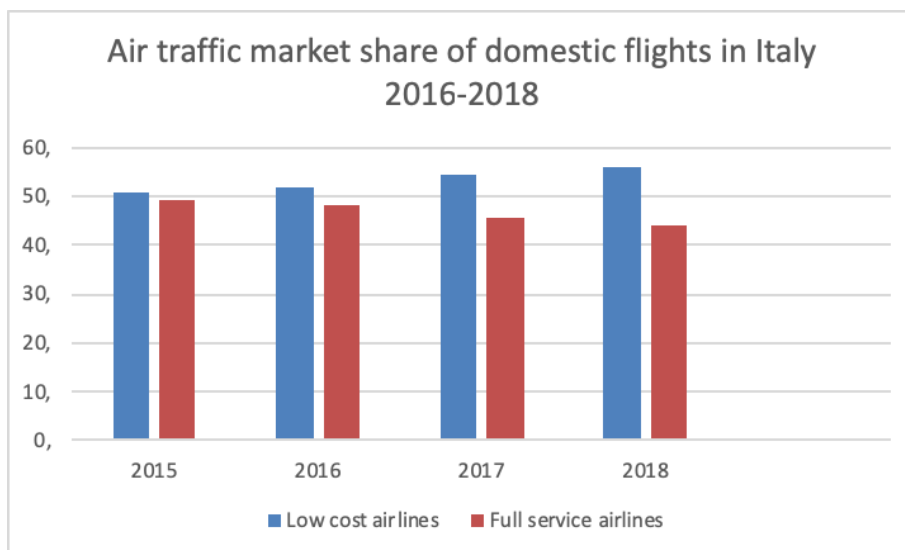
These data, as the graphs show, are a significant sign that low cost airlines are increasing over the last years for what concerns short haul routes.



*Figure 1: Number of passengers in Milano Malpensa 2010-2018*



*Figure 2: Air Traffic market Share of International Flights from Italy 2016-2018*



*Figure 3: Air Traffic market Share of Domestic Flights from Italy 2016-2018*

Taking into account Milano Malpensa airport, according to the annual report of the Sea Group of 2018, Domestic flights have been served by Ryanair, Air Italy, Alitalia and Easyjet, meanwhile European mostly by the low-cost carriers Ryanair and Easyjet.

(Seamilano.eu, p.35, 2019). There is also evidence that Terminal 2 of Milano Malpensa is only dedicated to EasyJet flights. (Milanomalpensa-airport.com, 2019).

The already mentioned data, deliver extra value to low cost flights departing from Milano Malpensa.

The most important target audience for LLC is the price sensitive leisure traveller. (Mason, 2000, p. 110). Among these travellers, the higher peak is reached by under 24-year-old passengers who travel for non-business purposes such as visiting friends and family or for education trips. However, not all the passengers actually prefer low costs: older passengers, especially over 60 years old, tend to opt for the full-service carriers with more comfort and extra benefits. (O'Connell and Williams, 2005, p. 263).

It has been previously mentioned that low cost carriers are mostly exploited by leisure travellers. This statement is true, but, not in full. Mason, states that short haul business travellers are also using such LLC services. (Mason, 2000, p. 110).

To better understand this statement, business travellers are classified into two categories: employees of smaller companies who are more price sensitive and the ones of very large companies with more than 100 employees. The first segment prefers low cost carriers whereas the second one purchases in-flight services. (Mason, 2000, p. 110/115).

As O'Connell and Williams state fewer wealthy consumers are more price-conscious. (O'Connell and Williams, 2005, p. 269).

Passengers travelling on low cost carriers place great importance on price and appear to arrange their itineraries using the least expensive carriers. Full-service air travellers are concerned about price but can tolerate a higher fare to gain advantage through product offered by full-service carriers. (O'Connell and Williams, 2005, p. 271).

This statement, thus, does not assume that low costs are mostly used by the less wealthy consumers, also because the wealthiest customers prefer low cost carriers because of similar airport location and total traveling time. (O'Connell and Williams, 2005, p. 270).

To conclude, low cost carriers are dominating mostly the leisure market and are starting targeting the business segment. (O'Connell and Williams, 2005, p. 271).

So far, positive connotations have been given to low cost carriers which lead to the assumption that most of the passengers may prefer to pay less in order to have a service similar to the one of the standard carriers.

However, over the last few years, several customers' complaints to low cost companies, lead to some changes in the behaviour of passengers.

Let's consider one of the leaders in the LCC market: Ryanair.

According to Ryanair bag policy update, from November 2018, only priority boarding passengers will be permitted to take one small bag and a large cabin bag into the cabin being free of charge. (Corporate.ryanair.com, 2019).

Priority boarding must be paid separately from the airline ticket; moreover if the passengers want to choose the seat next to their children, family or friends, must pay extra.([Ryanair.com](https://www.ryanair.com),2019). By adding to these extra costs, most of the times, flying with full-

service carriers and with LLC is similar. For instance, checking flight fares from Milano Malpensa to Dublin with the low cost airline Ryanair and with the full service Airlingus, selecting carry-on luggage choices and pre-decided seats, the final price ends up to be similar; ([Airlingus.ie](http://Airlingus.ie), 2019 and [Ryanair.com](http://Ryanair.com),2019)

Furthermore, the airline industry has been heavily influenced by the performance of low-cost carriers and this phenomenon creates a challenge to full-service carriers who have been forced to take steps to become more cost competitive. (Bitzan and Peoples, 2016, p. 21)

In fact, as Bitzan and Peoples suggest, the LLC cost advantage over FSCs has eroded somewhat over this period, making the prices more similar between the two airlines and decreasing the advantages a low-cost flight has over FSCs. (Bitzan and Peoples, 2016, p.1).

Since the price is stated to be similar, considerations must be given to the service quality. Baker states that the service quality of low-cost airlines is generally found to be higher than that of traditional legacy airlines. (Baker, 2013, p.77)

Nevertheless, Baker explains that “consumer dissatisfaction is a function of the difference between expected and perceived service.” (Baker, 2013,p.77). The more perceived service exceeds expected service, the higher the consumer’s satisfaction will be. Conversely, the more perceived service falls short of expected service, the higher the consumer’s dissatisfaction will be. (Baker, 2013, p.77).

This justifies Baker’s statement because low costs passengers already expect a lower service, thus they are less disappointed if the service level perceived is not high.

Meanwhile, when buying a full-service airline ticket, one expects additional advantages and benefits.

To sum up, with the rise of Low-Cost flights, the market share of full-service flights has been greatly changed. LLC offer lower price flights with a lower service. In this session, those who prefer to fly with LLC have been analysed: young travellers, leisure passengers and business travellers who are more worried about the price.

However, it has also been highlighted that in recent years, prices are more competitive and flying with full-service carriers starts to be also convenient.

The researcher came to the conclusion that consumers choose the flight that costs less but that also meets their needs, wants and comfort standards; but the carrier they choose does not define their wealth.

### 2.3 Journey Purpose and type of passengers:

In this part of the literature, travel classes, purpose of journeys and types of passengers are going to be investigated.

It is emphasized by the researcher that these considerations may affect consumer's behaviour to a delay.

First of all, customers have to decide whether to purchase coach or first-class seats.

When dealing with the purchase of seats, air travellers value the preference of a first class because of overall spaciousness, overall seating comfort, drink price and attention

given by the hostess. On the contrary the decision of flying in coach class is given by the price of the tickets. (Makens and Marquardt,1977, p.20)

Again, Makens and Marquardt, states that the users of first class perceive a significantly greater difference between first class and coach services than those who travel by coach. (Makens and Marquardt,1977, p.22).

Traditionally, airlines segmented their customers into business (or first class) and economy passengers and aligned their product strategy with flexibility for business passengers and price for economy passengers. Over the last ten years, this mix of economy, business and first-class passengers has modified. (Teichert, Shehu and Wartburg, 2008, p. 228).

The most obvious consideration one can make is that the economy passengers are more price-sensitive but less sensitive to schedule, punctuality and flexibility. But this is not fully correct because economy passengers and business passengers both place major emphasis on punctuality. (Teichert et al.,2008,p.231).

Regarding these preferences, Teichert et al. have segmented the customers into five classes characterized by different needs and wants.

1) The first segment is defined by "Efficiency and Punctuality" where customers are heavy flyers who visit the airports several times per week and are mostly males. Due to business

reasons they are forced to value efficiency and punctuality no matter what the price is. (Teichert et al.,2008,p.232).

2) The second one is characterized by “Comfort”. Price sensitivity is the lowest in this segment and it consists of elderly customers who are working in high ranking positions. (Teichert et al.,2008,p.232).

3) Segment three represents the most price-sensitive customers, even if they still count on punctuality, they are defined mostly by “price”. They are the lower and middle class who travel 2 to 4 times a year. (Teichert et al., 2008, p.234).

4) The fourth segment is made by “Price/Performance” where flexibility is the most important value together with punctuality. In case of longer delays, airlines should strive for high flight frequency. They are usually business travellers but entrepreneurs who have to pay the flights themselves and so are more price-sensitive. (Teichert et al., 2008, p.236).

5) This last segment is defined by “Cath All/ Flexibility”, whose preferences are balanced across product features. It is characterized by managers in important positions that fly several times a month and are very concerned about schedule, flexibility and punctuality. (Teichert et al., 2008, p.238).

Taking into consideration the five classes of customers, punctuality is a priority for three groups out of five and relatively important for the other two classes, which leads to the assumption that delays play relevant importance for most passengers.

It is fundamental to analyse also the reasons for air travel. Customers travel for leisure, for business or education. In addition to that, business travellers usually tend to travel singularly and leisure travellers in groups. Students Travel is usually singularly, paid by the parents but chosen by the single students. (O'Connell and Williams, 2005, p. 264-265).

Moreover, as Teichert et al. point out in 2008, when considering travel reasons, sub-segments of business and economy classes will arise: business class passengers may travel for business or leisure reasons and economy class customers for leisure or business reasons. (Teichert et al.,2008,p.239).

Business class travelling for business reasons belongs to the ones who are less price-sensitive and more concerned with comfort rather than when travelling for leisure. The passengers travelling in economy for business reasons are the ones concerning with price and are younger entrepreneurs and lower-middle managers. (Teichert et al. ,2008, p.239). Furthermore, customers flying business class for leisure are wealthier and concerned mostly with comfort. Meanwhile the ones traveling in economy seats come from different classes. (Teichert et al.,2008,p.239).

Business class fares are more expensive, but travellers who decide to purchase these seats, value comfort, time advantages and productivity higher.

As Brons et al. suggest, business travellers are more likely to pay for a higher quality services and other facilities. Moreover, economy class passengers' time valuation is different:

business class travellers do not want to waste time and they are concerned with maximizing productivity while travelling. (Brons et al.,2002, p.168)

Moreover, the high fare price for business class is related to the concept of price elasticity of the demand for a good: “consumer good is directly related to the possibilities of substitution for that good. A relatively large number of substitutes will imply a high price elasticity, whereas a lack of substitutes will likely force demand to become more rigid so that the demand for this commodity may become inelastic”. (Brons et al.,2002, p.165)  
That is why business class passengers generally have less substitutes than leisure passengers because of their high standard needs and wants.(Brons et al.,2002, p.173)

However, this is not always true: As Lu and Peeta argue, most of the time business class passengers who travel for business reasons (this does not occur for leisure purposes) have substitutes. (Lu and Peeta, 2009, p.271)

Video conferencing is used as a substitute for business air travel, which leads to a decrease in air traffic. Meeting contexts that do not require face-to-face interaction tend to increase video conferencing usage. (Lu and Peeta, 2009, p.271).

Passengers can be also classified into Departing (outbound) and Returning (inbound) passengers.

Departing passengers are the ones leaving for a destination, where the airport is the first representative of it, meanwhile returning passengers are the ones coming back home

and airport becomes the last representative of the trip. (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2015,319).

Passengers travel at the destination with psychological and sociological attitudes that relate them to the destination and passengers experience feelings of anxiety when departing. (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2015,319/323).

In addition to that, air traveller's experience starts when the passenger arrives at the terminal and interact at departure with check-in, security, departure hall, waiting area and boarding the aircraft. However, a passenger is unlikely to go to the airport with a desire to check-in and frustration and anxiety arise from this situation. (Wattanacharoensil et al., 2015,328).

Outbound and Inbound passengers not only have different feelings at the airport (anxiety and excitement of departing and sadness of returning) but may value the time of departing differently: outbound passengers prefer to depart in the morning and inbound prefer to depart in the afternoon. (Koppelman et al., 2008, p.267).

These parameters indicate that in general mid-morning and late-afternoon are the itineraries most preferred. Early-morning and late-evening itineraries are not selected. (Koppelman et al., 2008, p.267)

This statement leads to the conclusion that a delay in the late afternoon that causes a departure in the evening is less favourable.

Regarding delays, Popovic et al. argue that if the reasons for the delay is resolved and the problem is managed, the passenger, being informed of this situation, may alter their expectation and allow to match it with the experience. Therefore, the passenger can still be satisfied, even if the waiting is longer than expected. (Popovic et al.,2010,p.3). In other words, Popovic et al. are positive that not in every situation a delay causes anger and disappointment.

To sum up, first class and coach class decisions depend on various considerations consumer makes before buying a flight ticket.

Passengers have different needs, some are more price sensitive, others prefer flexibility, punctuality and comfort. But everyone establishes punctuality very important; despite it, a correctly managed delay does not necessarily cause discontent.

Besides the reasons for the journey, consumers' behaviours change. Nevertheless, if consumers are inbound or outbound, their feelings are different and therefore their attitude in the airport changes too.

In conclusion not necessarily rich travellers prefer business class and those with an average-low income the economy one. But the researcher still believes that their expectations at the airport and therefore their reactions to a change like a delay are different.

#### 2.4 Shopping behaviours in the airport environment:

In this section of the literature review, consumer shopping behaviour in the airport is taken into consideration focusing on impulse shopping.

Thomas (1997) points out two different emotional anomalies in the airport: the first one is that passengers feel they are out of their daily routine and the second one is an increase in the level of anticipation and excitement. (cited in Bohl,2014,p.13).

Security screening, passport controls, gates and punctual departure can lead to a psychological perspective of anxiety for not being able to accomplish the objectives. But the passengers also experience excitement for an upcoming holiday or a joy of returning home after a long time. (Bohl, 2014, p.13).

After getting to the airport and receiving boarding pass, the stress level is reduced while the excitement level remains high. This moment is called the “happy hour” and consumers are willing to shop more during this period of excitement. (Thomas 1997, cited in Crawford and Melewar,2003, p. 90).

Once at the airport, the target customers are a captive but also demanding audience, with nowhere to go as they are waiting for their flight and with little to do for diversion except shopping. (Omar and Kent, 2001, p.226).

However, as Newman and Lloyd- Jones state, 50 per cent of airport users will not visit a shop on any one particular journey. Out of the 50 per cent who enter a shop, a large number of this group, about 30 per cent, are browsers with almost no intention of making a purchase. (cited in Omar and Kent, 2001, p.227).

In addition to that, women's individual spending is higher, but they make up a smaller percentage of airport users than men and also business travellers overall are very unlikely to shop extravagantly when travelling with a colleague. (Omar and Kent, 2001, p.227)

From this point of view, shopping in the airport could be interpreted to be a rare situation to occur. However, this is not always true: when dealing with different feelings in the airport environment, passengers may react showing an impulse purchasing behaviour. (Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.85).

From the research conducted by Dolby Consulting, 27 per cent of airport purchasing are made on impulse each day, much more than in shopping malls or high streets. (Topping, 2010, p.208)

Cobb and Hoyer, back in 1986, defined this impulse behaviour as the action of having no intent to buy a specific brand or item prior in entering the store, but later on, anyhow, to purchase it. (Taken from Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.87).

Omar and Kent in 2001 reported an explanation of impulsive behaviour provided by Rook and Hoch in 1985 that linked the behaviour with "being bad" and invoking negative consequences in the areas of personal finance, post-purchase satisfaction, social reactions, and overall self-esteem. (Omar and Kent, 2001, p.227)

However, these old connotations may be revised: impulse shopping may be viewed as positively sanctioned behaviour. An airport traveller who, for example, spontaneously buys a gift for a friend overseas or simply takes advantage of duty-free offers are impulse

buying instances that may respectively represent kind and practical activities. (Omar and Kent, 2001, p.227).

Nevertheless, there are some impulse purchasing stimuli that passengers experience when behaving in the travel environment that are not always considered “bad behaviours”. These stimuli are: Value driven, Holidays syndrome, Gift giving, Guilt feelings, Rewards, Forgotten items, Exclusivity products, Confusion, Special occasional driven, Disposal of extra foreign currency. (Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.92).

To better understand the importance of these stimuli in term of sales and profit, they are analysed one by one:

1) Value Driven: It occurs when consumers think they are saving money and that purchasing is rational. (Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.93).

In fact, as Topping suggests, most travel retail offers in airports are priced well below high street pricing. (Topping, 2010, p.209).

2) Holidays: passengers have higher disposable income when they feel under the “holiday syndrome” (Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.93).

3) Gift Giving: bringing back gifts to family and friends from a journey is part of many cultures. (Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.93).

4) Guilt: business travellers buy gifts to family and children when they feel guilty for not spending enough time at home. (Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.93).

5) Reward: it is related to self-indulgence. (Crawford and Melewar, 2003, p.93).

6) Occasion Driven: this impulse occurs during Easter, Christmas, Mother’s and Father’s day, Valentine’s Day and special birthdays (Crawford and Melewar 2003 p. 93).

7) Forgotten Items: when passengers forget to pack day-to-day items and need to re-purchase them. (Crawford and Melewar 2003 p.93).

8) Confusion: Information over load in the airport environment can lead to an impulse purchasing behaviour (Crawford and Melewar 2003 p.93).

9) Exclusivity: many products are sold exclusively at the airport shops. (Crawford and Melewar 2003 p.93).

10) Disposal of Foreign currency: extra foreign currency to finish at the airports. This phenomenon, however, lost effectiveness in Europe after the introduction of Euro. (Crawford and Melewar 2003 p.93).

To sum up, consumers experience different emotional anomalies in the airport that leads to different buying behaviours. Once at the airport, they have nowhere to go but to shop. However, Omar and Kent state that the majority of passengers are just browsing with no intention of purchasing any items (Omar and Kent, 2001, p.227).

Crawford and Melewar answer back explaining impulse shopping, as a positive behaviour, driven by several stimuli arising in the airport environment.

The researcher concludes claiming that it depends on the behaviour of the individual passengers. Some may be influenced by various stimuli and result in compulsive shopping, while others only continue to browse, without any intention of purchasing items, even when an incident like a delay occurs.

## 2.5 Summary

The literature review wants to explain the reasons behind consumers' choice between low cost and full-service flights. This is important because needs and expectations are different. It has been said that LLC passenger expects a lower service than the FSC ones. So, this assumption can lead to the consideration that when an LLC flight is delayed, passengers complain less and get distracted by buying in stores as they have extra money left for having paid less the fare.

The choice between economy and business class is also considered, which leads to the assumption that business class travellers are very wealthy but also very demanding, especially if they travel for work, and therefore they are not necessarily those who buy more in airports, as anger from high expectations may lead to a refusal to do so. Travelers can also be inbound or outbound and they attribute the delay differently since when leaving for holiday, feelings are different from coming back home. This leads to the consideration that when leaving, items needed for the trip may be purchased because of enthusiasm and when getting back souvenirs may be bought to remember the good moments of the holiday.

The concept of impulse shopping behaviour is also mentioned in the literature. It must be kept in mind when analysing a consumer in an airport, since a longer wait at the gate might lead to the purchase of items that no one would have the intention of buying before.

### 3. Hypotheses:

The assumptions arising from the literature review lead the researcher to assume the following hypothesis:

- 1) H1: It is predicted that a delayed flight increases passengers' money spending.
- 2) H2: It is predicted that LCC passengers are less angry and frustrated about delays than FSC ones.
- 3) H3: It is predicted outbound passengers complain about the delay more than inbound passengers.
- 4) H4: It is predicted business class passengers complain more than economy class ones.
- 5) H5: It is predicted that female passengers purchase more than the male segment.
- 6) H6: It is predicted that the items bought when delay occurs are not necessary to be bought.
- 7) H7: it is predicted passengers travelling with friends and family purchase more than with colleagues or alone.

### 4. Methodology:

#### 4.1 Research Onion:

The Research Onion, developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, helps the process of choosing the right approach needed for the research.

Saunders et al. (2015) suggest adopting the process of "peeling the onion", starting from the decision of the right research philosophy, followed by research approach, strategies,

choices and time horizon, to finally reach the final techniques needed to collect and analyse data. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.108).

In the onion's figure reported here, the researcher underlines the main choices made to conduct the study.

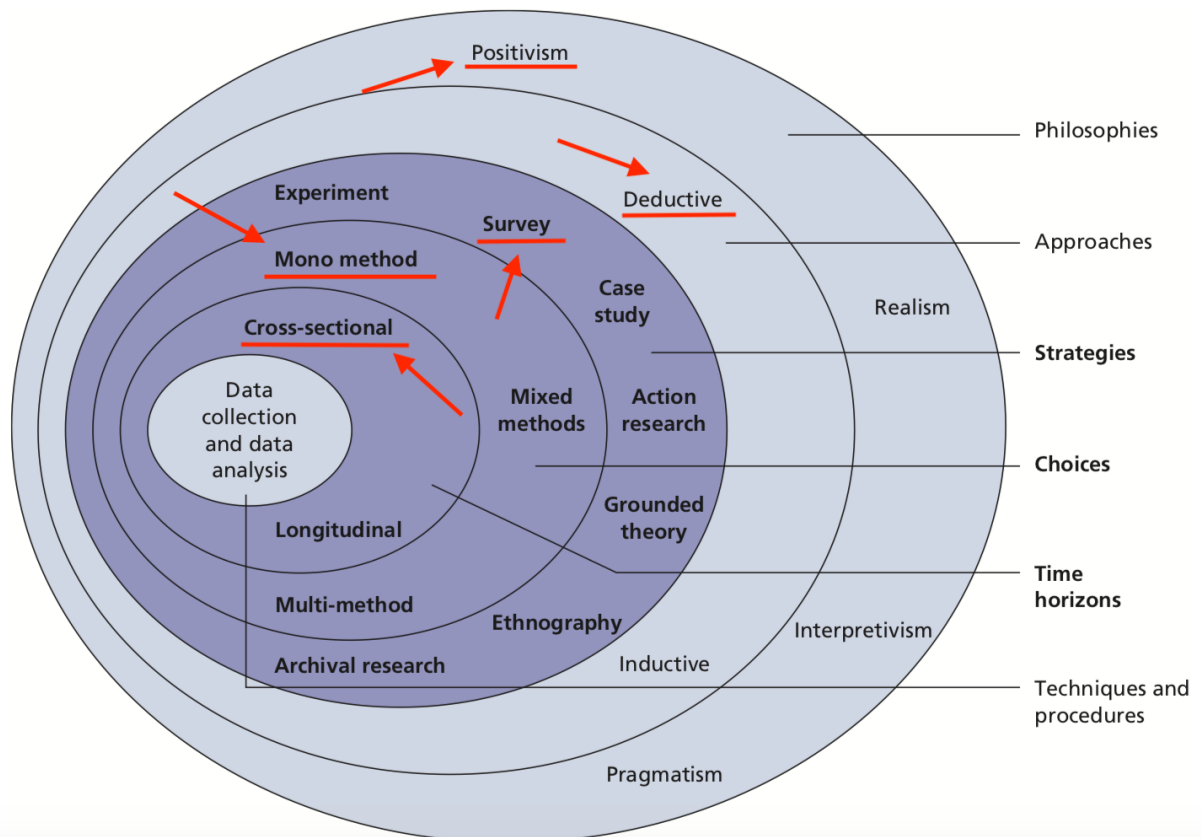


Figure 4: The research 'onion' (Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill, 2009)

The term Research Philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about development of knowledge in a specific field and it will influence the strategy and the methods used for interpretation of findings. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p.124).

The philosophy the researcher adopts contains important assumption of how the world is viewed. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.108.)

The researcher adopts a Positivist philosophy which is the ability to work with observable social reality that creates credible data and produce law-like generalizations. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p.135).

A positivist philosophy means that “The researcher would claim to be external to the process of data collection in the sense that there is little that can be done to alter the substance of the data collected. The assumption is that ‘the researcher is independent and neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research’”. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.114.) Indeed, in this study, the researcher is independent, external and unable to alter the substance of the data when collected.

The research is usually carried out using two approaches: the former is named “deductive approach”, in which hypothesis are developed and a research strategy is designed to test the hypothesis; the latter is called “inductive approach”, in which data are collected and a theory is developed as a result of data analysis. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.123).

This research project follows a deductive approach, moving from theory to data, collecting quantitative data with a highly structured approach and with the necessity to select samples of sufficient size in order to generalize conclusions. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.127).

The research strategy is a general plan of how the research questions are going to be answered (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.137).

Among the different research strategies, the researcher decides to implement a survey strategy. The choice will be quantitative and mono-method.

The survey strategy is usually associated with the deductive approach. It is a popular and common strategy in business and management research and it is most frequently used to answer who, what, where, how much and how many questions. Surveys are usually carried out by using a questionnaire administered to a sample, whose data are standardised, allowing easy comparison. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.144).

For what concerns the time-horizon, when the researcher prefers a 'snapshot' time horizon is what it is named "cross-sectional study", meanwhile the 'diary' perspective is named longitudinal. The research project is a cross sectional study that occurs at a particular time. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009,p.155 ). Indeed, the project occurs on July 6th and 7th of 2019 and for this reason it cannot be a diary.

Whatever the type of research questions and objectives considered, it is almost impossible to collect and analyse data from every possible group member; when this happens though, it is termed a census. However, for many research questions and objectives, sampling techniques is used, providing a range of methods that enable you to reduce the amount of data you need to collect, by considering only data from a sub-group, rather than all possible cases or elements. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009,p.155 ).

The study is made with a sampling technique, a probability sample of 100 passengers who have experienced or are going to experience a delay. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009,p.211 ).

With probability samples the chance, or probability, of each case being selected from the population is known and is usually equal for all cases and it is possible to estimate statistically the characteristic of the population. Indeed, probability sampling is often associated with survey. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009,p.213 ).

Data are collected with a structural interview conducted at Milano Malpensa Airport. The researcher decides for a structural interview because the set of questions are standardized, usually with a pre-coded answer needed to collect quantifiable data. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.320).

Data are analysed on excel and moved to the statistical software called "R".

R is a statistical software than can be substituted to SPSS software. "R is a programming software environment for statistical computing and graphics supported by the R Foundation for Statistical Computing", designed by Ross Ihaka and Robert Gentleman. (R-project.org, 2019)

#### 4.2 Method adopted:

To testify the hypothesis, a questionnaire is made. The researcher carries out a face-to-face structured interview at the Airport of Milano Malpensa on two days in July (6th and 7th of July) in both Terminal 1 and 2. The researcher conducts the interview using the Google Form format on an Ipad.

The target audience of the analysis is made up of passengers in Milano Malpensa Airport who have experienced or are experiencing a flight delay. Men and women aged between 20 and 80 years are surveyed.

This choice is justified by the following reasons:

- 1) For the purchase of an airline ticket, a cash outlay is required, which is why air traveller under the age of 20 have been excluded, who are unlikely to have adequate financial resources to make personal decisions about purchases at the airport.
- 2) Passengers over 80 years old may travel with special needs and wants.
- 3) The research wants to investigate those who face a delay in the airport, since it is what the research question and sub-questions aim. This is why only if a delay has been recently experienced or it is experienced at the moment of the interview, the survey can be undertaken. No surveys from travellers who have not experienced the delay are taken into consideration.

#### 4.3 Participants:

Our sample is composed of 100 elements randomly extracted from the target of passengers at the airport, taking into consideration the variable of "delay". The questionnaire was administered to subjects belonging to the target audience via face-to-face interviews on a tablet brought by the researcher at the gate of Milano Malpensa Airport.

The questions are in English only and are undertaken between July 6-7 in Malpensa at Terminal 1 and Terminal 2.

The sample is formed by passengers of any nationality and of both genders, male and females. The researcher does not interview a specific number of males and females but will randomly consider the two genders among the passengers that are willing to participate. However, a balance between the genders is trying to be kept.

The interview is composed of 16 questions, 14 close structured questions and two open questions.

The sampling is a Probability Sampling since it makes it more representative: everyone has equal chance to be selected for the interview. Probability sampling has been selected also because it is often associated with survey and it is a random selection from a targeted demographic. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.213).

The respondents participate in the interview under the following circumstances: the interviewer randomly selects respondents waiting at the airport gates and respects their willingness to answer or not the questions. It is a voluntary choice of the respondents to take part in the interview, no compensation or reward is given to them.

#### 4.4 Rejected methodology:

The researcher in this section would like to list some of the rejected methodologies previously taken into consideration and justify why these could not be applied at the end.

The researcher initially thought to carry out an online survey. From this survey it would have been possible to collect responses from a larger sample, as this type of method is less time-consuming than a face-to-face interview. However, this method could not be used: as the researcher is investigating the passengers who are experiencing or have recently experienced a delay, with an online survey it would not have been possible to filter the right passengers and the risk would have been that many answers would not be truthful and coherent with the questions.

The researcher thought to interview a larger sample than the one actually used. Since Milan Malpensa Airport served about 24,000 million passengers in 2018 (Seamilano.eu, p.35, 2019), a wider sample would have made more sense. But the researcher also had to calculate how many people in reality would be interviewed in two days, since the student had the opportunity to enter the airport gate for only two entire days. Thus, the researcher thought that a sample of 100 air travellers would be the best solution.

The researcher considered to adopt a longitudinal study, collecting a diary and appearing in an airport for a whole year. In this way it would have been possible to analyse consumer's behaviour at different times of the year. However, this method would have been time-consuming, and the researcher did not have an entire year for this study, so a cross-sectional study was adopted instead.

#### 4.5 Design and Materials:

The questionnaire is formed by dependent and independent variables.

A dependent variable change in response to changes in other variables, while an independent variable causes changes in a dependent variable; (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.367). The independent variables such as age, gender, occupation, carrier chosen, and class chosen are needed in order to correlate them with the dependent variables the researcher is investigating.

Variables are both categorical, which are descriptive variables that cannot be defined numerically and continuous, whose values are measured numerically as quantities. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.418).

Also, data can be collected through the questionnaire according to three categories: opinion, behavioural and attribute variables.

Opinion variables record how respondents feel about something or what they believe is true or false. Behavioural variables contain data on what people did in the past, do now or will do in the future. The last category is formed by attribute variables, which contain data about the respondents' characteristics. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.368).

The questions are 16 and are mostly multiple choices, dichotomous (with only two categories) and ranked questions. Two short open questions are present.

Each question is analysed in the table below where the nature of variables, the type of variables, the details of how the data are collected, the objectives and the correlations between variables are explained.

Quantitative research is most often about quantifying relationship between or among variables. Quantitative research is classified as non-experimental or experimental design. This study adopts a non-experimental design which describes, differentiates, examines associations between or among variables. The most common non-experimental designs are descriptive or correlational studies. (Sousa, Driessnack and Mendes, 2007, p.503).

The project adopts descriptive designs to describe what actually exists, to determine the frequency with which it occurs, and to categorize the information. Meanwhile a correlational design is used in the study when the researcher investigates the nature of relationships or associations between and among variables. This Correlational designs are cross-sectional, as mentioned before in the methodology paragraph, because they occur at a predefined time. This design is used to examine if changes in one or more variable are related to changes in another variable and it determines whether an increase or decrease of one variable leads to an increase or decrease of the others. (Sousa, Driessnack and Mendes, 2007, p.504).

Questions of the Interview:

The table explains the single 16 questions of the interview:

INVESTIGATIVE QUESTION	VARIABLES REQUIRED	DETAIL IN WHICH DATA ARE MEASURED	OBJECTIVES	CORRELATIONS
How old are you?	<b>AGE</b>  INDEPENDENT, ATTRIBUTE AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE	20-30,31-40,41-50,51-60,61-80	Investigate the independent variable of age to correlate it with other dependent variables.	To correlate with amount of money spent after the delay occurs.
Which Gender do you belong to?	<b>GENDER</b>  INDEPENDENT, ATTRIBUTE AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE	Male, Female	Investigate the independent variable of gender to correlate it with other dependent variables.	To correlate with the amount of money spent after the delay occurs.
Which is your occupation?	<b>OCCUPATION</b>  INDEPENDENT, ATTRIBUTE AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE	Entrepreneur, director, employee, student, others	Investigate the independent variable of occupation to correlate it with other dependent variables.	To correlate with the amount of money spent after the delay occurs.
Which are the reasons of the journey?	<b>REASONS OF JOURNEY</b>  INDEPENDENT, ATTRIBUTE AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE	leisure, education, work, other	Investigate the independent variable of reasons of the journey to correlate it with other dependent variables.	To correlate with willingness to complain

Are you outbound or inbound traveller?	<b>TYPE OF TRAVELLER: OUTBOUND VS INBOUND</b>  INDEPENDENT, ATTRIBUTE AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE	outbound, inbound	Investigate the independent variable of type of traveller to correlate it with other dependent variables.	To correlate to willingness to complain
Which class do you fly with?	<b>CLASS</b>  INDEPENDENT, BEHAVIOURAL AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE	Economy, Business class	Determine who between passengers of economy or business class are the ones who complain more at the airport.	To correlate with willingness to complain
Which carrier do you fly with?	<b>CARRIER</b>  INDEPENDENT, BEHAVIOURAL AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE	FSC, LCC	Determine who between FSC and LLC is angrier and more frustrated when a delay occurs and also to investigate who is willing to buy more at the airport shops between the two categories.	-To correlate with opinion of anger and frustration -To correlate with opinion of spending money for the delay
How much do you rate important punctuality?	<b>OPINION ABOUT PUNCTUALITY</b>  DEPENDENT, OPINION	1 to 10 from less important to more important	Determine how much the passengers rate punctuality.	To correlate with the amount of anger and frustration felt by the passengers.

	AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE			
How long is the delay?	<b>DURATION OF THE DELAY</b>  DEPENDENT, BEHAVIOURAL AND NUMERICAL VARIABLE	open question	The open question wants to investigate the time passengers wait for the delay	-to correlate with amount of money spent at the airport.
How much do you feel frustrated and angry when the delay occurs?	<b>OPINION ABOUT ANGRY AND FRUSTRATION CAUSED BY A DELAY</b>  DEPENDENT, OPINION AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE	1 to 10 from less important to more important	Investigate the amount of anger and frustration felt by each customer	-To correlate with opinion about punctuality -To correlate with LCC and FSC choices
How much do you rate important complaining for a delay?	<b>OPINION ABOUT COMPLAINING</b>  DEPENDENT, OPINION AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE	1 to 10 from less important to more important	Investigate how much a customer is willing to complain about a delay.	-To correlate with economy or business class choice -To correlate with reasons of travel -To correlate with type of passengers

Are you usually a heavy spender at the airport?	<b>NUMBER OF HEAVY SPENDERS</b>  INDEPENDENT, BEHAVIOURAL AND NUMERICAL VARIABLE	Yes or No	To investigate whether passengers are already heavy spender at the airport before the delay.	The question will be investigated alone
Do you spend more at the airport if the flight is delayed?	<b>IF MONEY ARE SPENT FOR A DELAY</b>  DEPENDENT, BEHAVIOURAL AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE	Yes or No	To investigate whether or not passengers are willing to spend more in case of a delay.	-to correlate with type of carrier. -to correlate with heavy spenders -to correlate with who passengers travel with
How much have you spent at the airport while waiting at the gate?	<b>AMOUNT OF MONEY SPENT WHEN A DELAY OCCURS</b>  DEPENDENT, BEHAVIOURAL AND NUMERICAL VARIABLE	Open Question	To investigate the amount of money passengers, spend after the delay.	-To correlate with duration of delay -To correlate with age, gender and occupation.
Are purchases made after the announcement of a delayed flight necessary to buy?	<b>OPINION ABOUT PURCHASES MADE AFTER THE DELAY</b>  INDEPENDENT AND	Yes or No	To investigate whether or not the items purchases are needed or only bought because of the delay.	The question will be investigated alone

	CATEGORICAL VARIABLE			
Who are you traveling with?	<b>PASSENGERS TRAVELLING WITH WHO</b>  DEPENDENT AND CATEGORICAL VARIABLE	Family, Friends, Colleagues, Alone Others	To investigate who passengers are traveling with and to determine if they are buying more or not with other passengers influencing them.	-to correlate with money spending for a delay

#### 4.6 Written instruction given to participants:

Participants are orally informed about the researcher's intention to collect information at the airport for the interview. The interviewer explains the reasons for the interview, mentioning that it is needed for a master dissertation.

The participants receive a written information sheet where it is mentioned about the project title, what it is going to happen, the time commitment, the participant's rights and the anonymity of the questionnaire. Information about the school and the supervisor are also provided. (Information sheet in the **Appendix**).

After reading the information sheet, the participants decide whether or not to participate in the survey. If they voluntarily agree, a written consent form has to be signed. By signing, the

participants agree to have understood the information sheet and to voluntarily take part in the questionnaire. (Consent form in the [Appendix](#)).

The questionnaire appears on an iPad in the GoogleForm format ([google.com](https://www.google.com),2019).

The interview contains 16 written questions, the title and the summary of the study and a N.B. (note well) advice that “the survey assumes that interviewees have recently been delayed at Malpensa or are undertaking a delay when the researcher is interviewing them. The questions are specifically related to the trip whose flight has been delayed” (Questionnaire in the [Appendix](#)).

#### 4.7 Reliability and Validity:

Testing reliability occurs when the questionnaire produces consistent findings under different conditions. Some techniques are used to check reliability. As Mitchell in 1996 states, three common approaches are useful to assess reliability: A test-re-test, internal consistency and alternative form. (taken from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.373).

A test-re-test occurs when it is administered twice to the respondents. Internal consistency involves correlating the responses to each question in the questionnaire with those to other questions in the questionnaire.

The final approach is the alternative approach where responses to alternative forms of same questions are compared to check if they are coherent to each other. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.374).

The first method is effective but may create difficulties: passengers cannot be persuaded to answer the questions twice. The final approach is not adopted, and no similar questions are made to double check the reliability of the study.

Finally, the second method has been chosen: Internal consistency is effective, since the researcher correlates the responses of the questions with other questions in the questionnaire. For instance: "How long is the delay?", then "Do you spend more if the flight is delayed?", "How much have you spent at the airport while waiting at the gate for the delay?", "were purchases necessary to make?". These questions give reliability because they are correlated between them.

Internal Validity of the Questionnaire is reached because the researcher measures with the questions what the research question investigates. The researcher is concerned that the questionnaire represents the reality of the measurement. Since internal considerations alone do not define the validity of the study, a content validity is checked: the questions arise from a discussion held in the secondary research.

Criterion-related validity is also tested, which is related to the ability of the questions to make accurate predictions. The questions mainly want to predict customer's buying behaviours in case of a delay at the airport, thus a test of these questions related validity will be the extend to which they actually predict consumers' buying behaviours. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.373).

#### 4.8 Procedure of the study:

This is a description of the study from the moment the participants began the process of being involved in the interview to the moment they finished it.

The procedure is discussed here in a chronological account:

1) Passengers are told that the researcher is conducting a university study on consumer's behaviour in the airport environment for their dissertation and kindly would like to ask if the flight they are about to take is delayed or if they recently had a delayed departure from Malpensa.

2) If the passengers answer "no", the researcher thanks and leaves, if they answer "yes",

The researcher continues to provide information

3) The researcher, at this point provides an oral summary of the study and gently asks the passengers if they want to be part of the interview.)If the passengers answer "no", the researcher thanks and leaves, if they answer "yes", The researcher continues to provide oral and written information.

4) The researcher explains that it takes from 10 to 15 minutes for the questionnaire, it is a face-to-face interview and provides an information sheet to the participants.

5) The participants read the information sheet and the researcher gently asks to sign a consent form.

6) The participants read the consent form and decide to sign it, the researcher, at this point, signs the consent form as well.

7) The researcher tells the respondents they can withdraw the interview at any time.

8) The researcher starts the interview by reading out loud 16 questions, one by one and waiting for the respondents to reply.

9)The researcher submits the interview, thanks the respondents for their participation and leaves.

It takes from 15 to 25 minutes for the study, depending on the speed of the respondents to answer the questions, to read the information sheet and to sign the consent form.

#### 5. Ethical considerations:

Research ethic relates to the formulation and clarification of a research topic, design research, get access to data, collect, process, store and analyse the data in a moral and responsible way following the social norms. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.184).

While conducting this research project, some ethical issues may arise, such as the importance of the participants' privacy, the consent of the passengers to be interviewed and the maintenance of confidentiality of the data provided by individuals. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.186).

When the interview takes place the researcher provides the respondents with an information sheet that summarizes the research project and the nature and purpose of the interview.

It is explicitly underlined that the passengers are not obliged to undertake the interview, but if they wish for it, they must sign the consent form that the interviewer will give them.

The following ethical norms are going to be respected while conducting the interview:

1)The researcher respects data sharing policies: data is anonymized and confidentially

maintained, data is not shared, and it is personally stored. After dissertation data will be destroyed.

2)The researcher respects passengers' privacy and does not share private information about the participants.

3)The researcher does not modify the data previously collected and will destroy them once the dissertation is completed and graded.

4)The researcher respects human dignity and the passengers' wishes. It is made clear to the passengers that the study is voluntary and in case the interviewee refuses to answer the questionnaire, the interviewer does not insist and no discrimination will occur.

5)The researcher will not interview under 18 passengers.

6)The participants have the right to withdraw the questionnaire at anytime.

7)The questionnaire is anonymous.

## 6. Preliminary Findings:

In this section, the researcher presents the preliminary findings of the investigation before analysis is conducted. Figures are shown here below taken from Google Form. Every figure is then discussed by the researcher in the following paragraph.

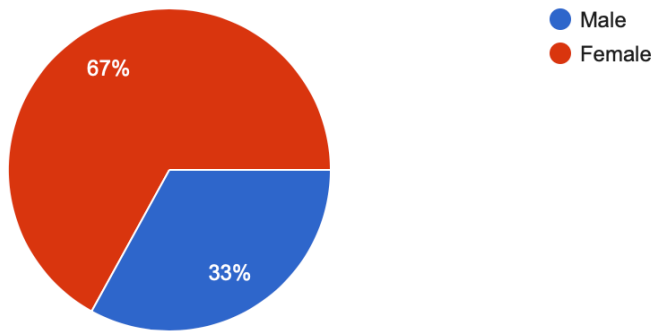
**GENDER OF RESPONDENTS**

Figure 5: Gender of Respondents

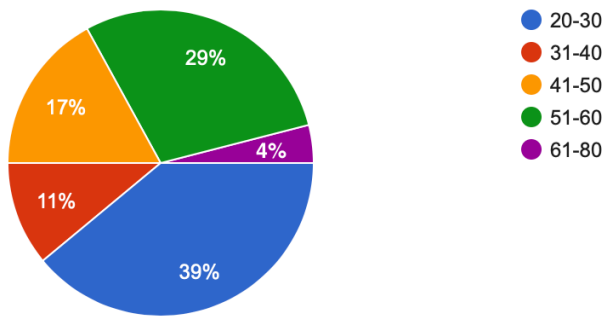
**AGE OF RESPONDENTS**

Figure 6: Age of Respondents

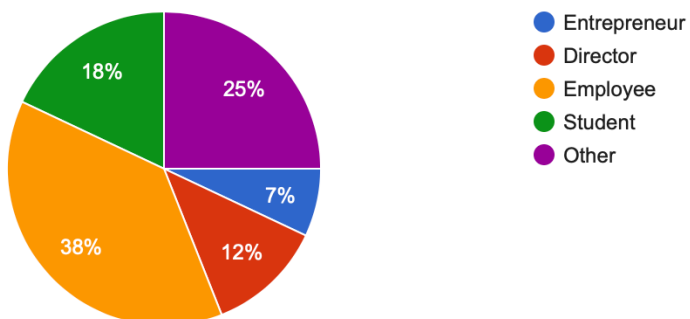
**OCCUPATION OF PASSENGERS**

Figure 7: Occupation of Passengers

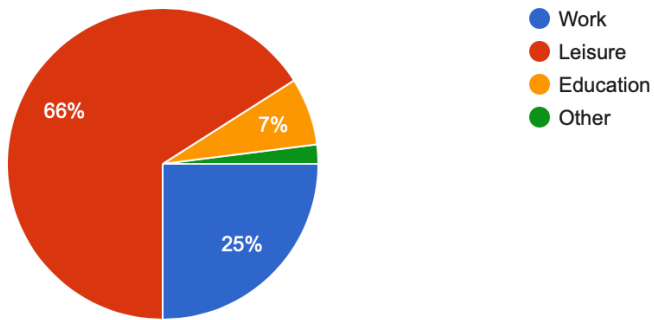
**PURPOSE OF THE JOURNEY**

Figure 8: Purpose of the Journey

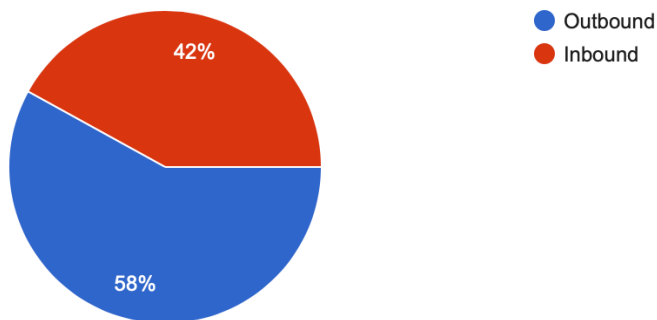
**TYPE OF PASSENGER**

Figure 9: Type of Passenger

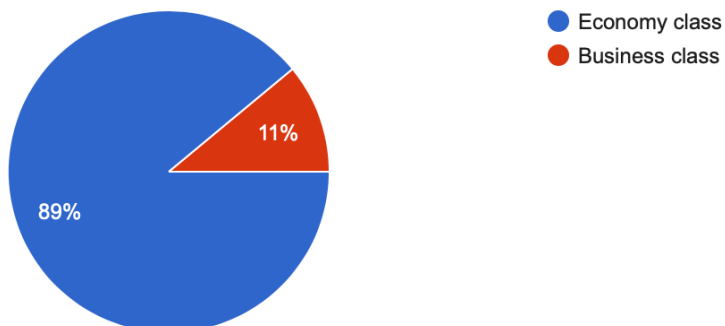
**CLASS OF PASSENGER**

Figure 10: Class of Passenger

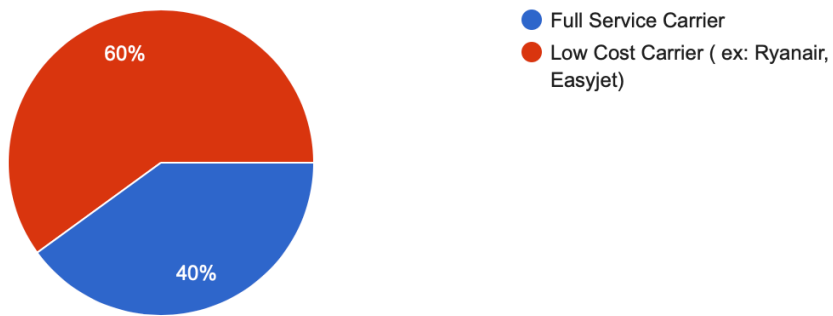
**CARRIER OF PASSENGERS**

Figure 11: Carrier of Passengers

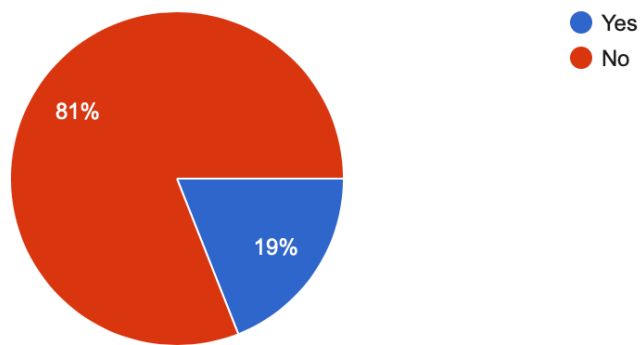
**HEAVY SPENDERS AT THE AIRPORT**

Figure 12: Heavy Spenders at the Airport

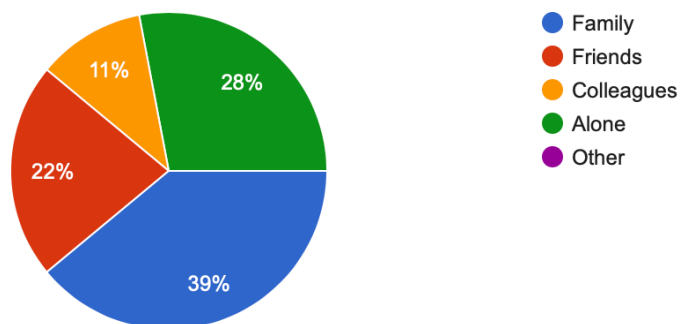
**PASSENGERS TRAVELLING WITH:**

Figure 13: Passengers Travelling with

**SPEND MORE IF FLIGHT IS DELAYED**

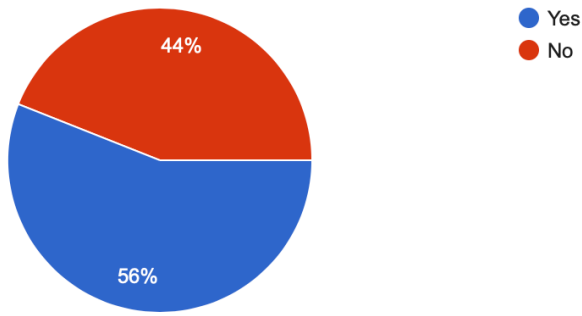


Figure 14: Spend more if flight is delayed

**PURCHASES MADE AFTER DELAY NECESSARY TO BUY**

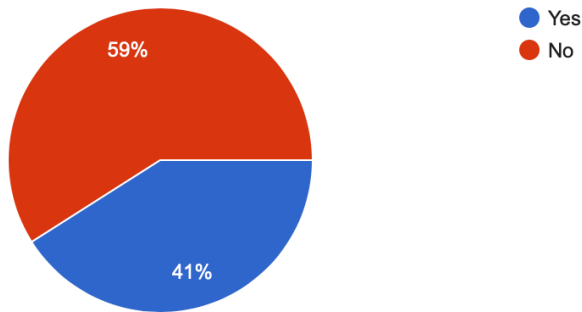


Figure 15: Purchases made after the delay are necessary to buy or not

**Anger and Frustration for delay from 1 to 10**

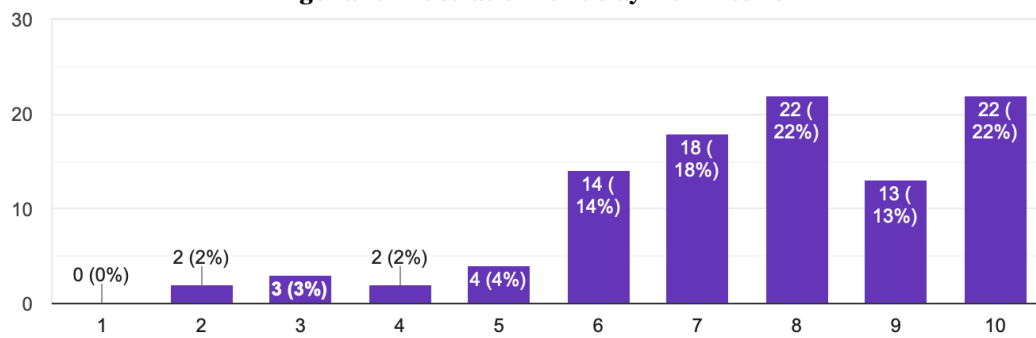


Figure 16: Anger and Frustration for delay from 1 to 10

The researcher interviews 100 passengers at the Airport gates.

The gender category, as well as the age one (age restricted between 20 and 80 years old), is randomly selected between air travellers waiting at the gate.

However, as shown in the figure 5, 67% of respondents are Female and only 33% Are Male.

For what concerns the age of the interviewees, as the figure 6 represents, 39% of them are between 20 and 30 years old. A high number of respondents (respectively 29%) belong to the age group 51-60. 17% of Passengers are between 41 and 50 years old. Not many travellers from the age group of 31-40 years old are interviewed (only 11% of the total), and very few answers come from respondents for 61 to 80 years old.

In figure number 7, Occupation of passengers is shown: most of the respondents are employees, respectably 38% of the total number. 18% are students, 12% are directors and 7% entrepreneurs. The researcher aims to investigate only these categories of jobs to correlate them with other variables. However the category "other" is one of the options of the multiple-choice answers not to put the interviewee in the condition of not knowing what to answer. The "other" category reaches the 25% of the total.

In figure 8, the purpose of the passenger's journey is highlighted. 66% of the interviewees travel for leisure, while 25% for Work and 7% for Education. There is a small percentage of respondents who travel for other personal reasons.

In figure 9, the type of passenger is shown: the travellers can be outbound or inbound. 58% of respondents declare to belong to the outbound category and 42% to the inbound one.

Figure 10 highlights who travels in Economy and who in Business class. 89% of the respondents are economy class travellers and only 11% travel in business class.

For what concerns the carrier that passengers may choose, figure 11 reports the answer for this specific question. 60% of the interviewees confirm to travel with low cost carriers and 40% by Full-service ones.

The questionnaire investigates also who, between the respondents, is usually a heavy spender in the airport. It is shown in figure 12 that 81% of the interviewees declare not to be heavy spenders, while 19% confirm to belong to this category.

The researcher considers relevant for preliminary findings, the following variable: "passengers travelling with who". From the chart of the figure 13, 39% of the respondents say to travel with family, 28% Alone, 22% with Friends and 11% with Colleagues. None of the respondents selects the option "other" related to this question. Mostly of the respondents, to sum up, travel with family.

The variable "spend more if flight is delayed" is taken into account. As shown in the figure 14, 56% of the passengers say to spend more in case of a flight delayed.

The question "if purchases made after the delay are necessary to buy or not" is investigated and, as shown in the figure 15, 59% of passengers declare that what they bought is not necessary.

The last consideration belongs to amount of anger and frustration for a delay felt by the passengers from a scale of 1 to 10. 57% of the passengers declare to be very angry and frustration when a delay occurs (8-9-10 in the scale).

To summarize, the preliminary findings show that mainly women answer the questions and most of answers come from passengers in the age group of 20-30 and 51-60 years old.

The main occupations of the respondents are employees and students. The interviewees travel mostly for leisure and for work and few for education. Most of the passengers involved travel in economy class and 60% with low cost carrier compared to the 40% who travel with full-service carriers. The majority of the air travellers responding to the questionnaire declare not to be heavy spenders in the airport, but 56% affirm to spend more if a flight is delayed and 59% say that what they bought was not a necessary purchase. Most of respondents state to travel with family and a great number also alone or with friends. Few of them, however, travel with colleagues. Most of the travellers state to be angry and frustrated when the delay occurs.

## 7. Results:

After presenting the preliminary findings, the researcher provides the reader with an overview of results, which are raw data that have been processed and analysed.

The results of the study include descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive Statistics refers to the analysis of data that helps describe, show or summarize data in a meaningful way, however, descriptive statistics do not make conclusions beyond the data analysed or reach conclusions regarding any hypothesis. They are a way to describe data. (Statistics.laerd.com, 2019). Descriptive statistics use measures of central tendency, i.e. mean, median, mode and the measures of dispersion i.e. range, standard deviation, quartile deviation and variance (Statistics.laerd.com, 2019).



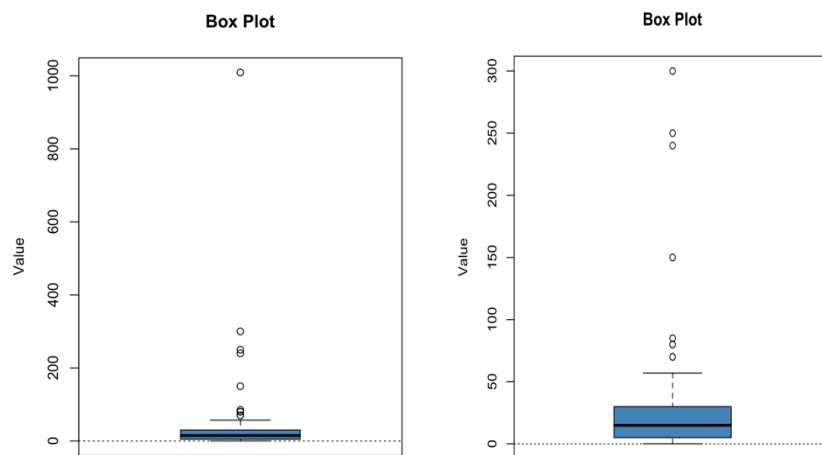


Figure 17: Box Plots of Money Spent after the delay, before and after excluding the outlier

As for the money spent, as shown in the Table 1, it can be said that the distribution is hypernormal ( $\beta > 3$ ), since the Kurtosis index is equal to 59.949274. There is also a positive asymmetry since the Skewness index is equal to 7.286877 ( $\gamma > 0$ ).

Through the analysis of this variable, it is investigated what the Money Spent is. It can be stated that the **Mean cost is € 38.4, the Median is € 15, and finally the Mode is € 20.**

Through the first box plot shown in the figure 17, it is possible to detect the presence of outlier values above € 400. However, the researcher decides to exclude only the value corresponding to € 1009, since it exceeds the value of  $[Q3 + 1.5 * \text{interquartile range}]$ . As for the other outliers that have emerged, it is decided to keep them, because they do not significantly alter the analysis. Looking at the interquartile range (Q3-Q1) it appears that 50% of respondents spend € 25. Comparing the results obtained before and after the exclusion of the outlier (€ 1009), it can be seen that the median does not vary, the mean decreases (from 38.4 to 28.595960), the distribution remains hypernormal ( $\beta > 3$ ). There is also a positive asymmetry since the Skewness index is 3.750661 ( $\gamma > 0$ ).

Recalling the results obtained excluding the outlier, the coefficient of variation (calculated from the ratio SD/Mean) decreased from 2.844497% to 1.69258%. Through the box plot it is noted that outlier values are still present above €150, although not so many. However, it is decided to keep them, because they do not significantly alter the analysis. Looking at the interquartile range (Q3-Q1) it appears that **50% of subjects spend around € 25.**

It can be stated that including or not the outlier values does not alter the analysis because the median remains the same.

#### Inferential Statistics:

The two variables analysed in the ANOVA below are quantitative and qualitative. It is assumed  $H_0$  as the null hypothesis, that is independence between the variables and  $H_1$  as an alternative hypothesis, or dependence between them.  $\alpha = 0.05$  is set as a significance level. "ANOVA analyses the variance, that is, the spread of data values, within and between groups of data by comparing means. The F statistic represents these differences. If the likelihood of any difference between groups occurring by chance alone is low, this will be represented by a large F ratio with a probability of less than 0.05." (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.458).

## 2) MONEY SPENT, AGE

*Table 2: ANOVA Table displaying the relationship between money spent by the passengers and their age.*

Variable	dfs	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F	p
Age	4	53,102	13,276	1.118	0.353
Residuals	95	1,128,058	11,874		
Total	99	1,181,160	25,150		

As shown in the ANOVA table 2, the relationship between money spent by the passengers and their age is highlighted. From the analysis of the F- test  $p = 0.353 > 0.05$ , for which it is accepted the hypothesis  $H_0$ . It cannot be rejected the null hypothesis according to which the mean of money spent is the same for each age.

Thus, there are no significant differences in the money spent of different age groups, in other words, **the money spent by the passengers when a delay occurs are not defined by their age.**

### 3) MONEY SPENT, GENDER

*Table 3: ANOVA Table displaying the relationship between money spent by the passengers and their Gender*

Variable	dfs	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F	p
Gender	1	8868	8868	0.741	0.391
Residuals	98	1172292	11962		
Total	99	1,181,160	20,830		

As shown in the figure 3, from the analysis of the F- test,  $p = 0.391 > 0.05$ , for which it is accepted the hypothesis  $H_0$ . This leads to confirm the independence between the variables. **As shown from the results there is no difference between male and female category in money spent for the delay.**

### 4) MONEY SPENT, OCCUPATION

*Table 4: ANOVA Table displaying the relationship between money spent by the passengers and their Occupation*

Variable	dfs	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F	p
Occupation	4	169000	42250	3.966	0.00509
Residuals	95	1012160	10654		
Total	99	1,181,160	52904		

*Table 5: ANOVA Table displaying the Mean of money spent by different occupations*

Occupation	Mean	Percentage
Director	31.25	12
Employee	32.08	38
Entrepreneur	187	7
Student	18.09	25
Other	24.48	18

Table 4 shows the relationship between Occupation and Money Spent. From the analysis of the F-test it emerges that the  $p = 0.00509 < 0.05$  and it is represented by a large F ratio of 3.966. Then the hypothesis  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted. So, there is dependence between the two variables. Therefore, it can be said that **there is a significant difference in the money spent after the delay between the different classes of individuals.** In particular, analysing table 5, it emerges how the category "**Entrepreneur**" (which, however, is represented in the sample by only 7 individuals) has a substantially higher level of expenditure than the other classes (mean of 187).

## 5) MONEY SPENT, TRAVEL WITH

*Table 6: ANOVA Table displaying the relationship between money spent by the passengers and Who they travel with.*

Variable	dfs	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F	p
Travel with	3	132858	44286	4.056	0.0925
Residuals	96	1048302	10920		
Total	99	1,181,160	55206		

*Table 7: ANOVA Table displaying the Mean of money spent by passengers travelling with different individuals.*

Travel with	Mean	Percentage
Alone	16.79	28
Colleagues	140.7	11
Family	31.08	39
Friends	27.73	22

As shown in table 6, from the analysis of the F test it emerges that  $p = 0.00925 < 0.05$  and it is represented by a large F ration of 4.056. Thus, the hypothesis H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. So, there is dependence between the two variables.

Therefore, it can be said that **there is a significant difference in the money spent after the delay between the different individuals**. In particular, from table 7, it emerges how the passengers travelling with colleagues tend to spend slightly more than the other categories (mean of 140.7), but the category is represented by only 11 individuals.

## 6) CARRIER, ANGER DELAY

*Table 8: ANOVA Table displaying the relationship between the choice of carrier and the amount of anger and frustration felt by passengers for the delay.*

Variable	dfs	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F	p
Carrier	1	1.2	1.215	0.317	0.575
Residuals	98	375.8	3.835		
Total	99	377	5.05		

The "anger for the delay" variable should be qualitative on an ordinal scale. However, in this case the variable (with scale from 1 to 10) is treated as quantitative in order to perform the ANOVA test. The Anova test is then performed to test the hypothesis of equality between the means of the "anger for delay" variable in the classes defined by the "carrier" variable. As shown in table 8, from the test result ( $p = 0.575 > 0.05$ ). The hypothesis of equality between the means cannot be rejected, **so it is stated that there is no significant difference in the level of anger between the two categories (FSC and LCC).**

## 7) IMPORTANCE OF COMPLAINING, CLASS

*Table 9: ANOVA Table displaying the relationship between the rate of importance of complaining and the choice of class.*

Variable	dfs	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F	p
Class	1	65.7	65.69	9.086	0.00328
Residuals	98	708.5	7.23		
Total	99	774.2	72.92		

*Table 10: ANOVA Table displaying the Mean of the the rating of importance of complaining shown by passengers of different classes.*

Class	Mean	Percentage
Business	8.545	11
Economy	5.955	89

The "complaining" variable should be qualitative on an ordinal scale.

However, in this case the variable (with scale from 1 to 10) is treated as quantitative in order to perform the ANOVA test. As shown in table 9, from the result of the test, the  $p = 0.00328 < 0.05$  and it is represented by a large F ration of 9.086. Then the hypothesis  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted. So, there is dependence between the two variables; **From the result, it can be stated that the passengers in Business class tend to complain more than the ones in Economy class**, as visible in table 10 where the mean is 8.545.

### 8) IMPORTANCE OF COMPLAINING, REASON

*Table 11: ANOVA Table displaying the relationship between the rate of importance of complaining and the reasons of the journey.*

Variable	dfs	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F	p
Reason	3	22.6	7.534	0.962	0.414
Residuals	96	751.6	7.830		
Total	99	774.2	15.364		

The “complaining” variable is treated as quantitative to perform the ANOVA test. As shown in table 11, from the result of the test, it is evident that there is no significant dependence between the means since the  $p = 0.414 > 0.05$  for which the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. **Thus, it cannot be stated that the reason of a journey affects the degree of Complaining about a delay of a passengers.**

### 9) IMPORTANCE OF COMPLAINING, TYPE OF PASSENGER

*Table 12: ANOVA Table displaying the relationship between the rate of importance of complaining and the Type of Passenger.*

Variable	dfs	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F	p
Type of Passenger	1	0.0	0.048	0.006	0.938

Residuals	98	774.2	7.900
Total	99	774.2	7.900,048

The “complaining” variable is treated as quantitative to perform the ANOVA test. As shown in the table 12, from the result of the test, it is evident that there is no significant dependence between the means since the  $p = 0.938 > 0.05$  for which the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. **Therefore, it cannot be stated that the type of passenger, outbound or inbound, rate the importance of complaining about a delay differently.**

#### 10) DELAY TIME- MONEY SPENT

*Table 13: Correlation Table displaying the relationship between delay time and money spent*

Variable	p	corr	t	dft
Correlation of				
delay time and	0.6088	-0.0517945	-051343	98
money spent				

The two variables analysed are both quantitative and therefore it is carried out the functions “cor.test and plot”. It is assumed  $H_0$  as the null hypothesis, that is a linear independence between the variables and  $H_1$  as an alternative hypothesis, or dependence between them. It is set  $\alpha = 0.05$  as a significance level. As shown in the table 13, from the result of the test t it emerges that  $p = 0.6088 > 0.05$  so  $H_0$  is accepted and the hypothesis  $H_1$  is rejected. Also, there is no linear correlation between them since the Pearson correlation coefficient is negative and equal to  $0.0517945 < 0.2$ .

Consequently, for the purposes of the analysis, it can be stated that the money spent does not increase significantly with the increase of delay because the correlation is negative and because H1 is rejected.

### 11) PUNCTUALITY, ANGER DELAY

*Table 14: Correlation Table displaying the relationship between punctuality and the anger for the delay.*

Variable	p	corr	t	dft
Correlation of punctuality and anger delay	0.0002898	0.3550088	3.7593	98

Here both variables should be qualitative on an ordinal scale. However, both are treated as quantitative in order to perform the correlation coefficient test.

The test wants to verify the null hypothesis according to which there is no correlation between the two variables. As shown in the table 14, from the test result,  $p = 0.0002898 < 0.005$  and H1 is then accepted. It can be concluded that there is a degree of correlation (positive) different from zero between the two variables. The correlation coefficient is 0.3550088 and so it is positive. Intuitively it could be said **that the more individuals consider flight punctuality important, the more they show anger and frustration in case of delay.**

## 12) CARRIER, SPENDING DELAY

Table 15: Chi Square Table displaying the relationship between Carrier and the passengers' willingness of spending when a delay occurs.

Variable	Chi-Square	df	p
Carrier-Willingness of Spending	0.974026	1	0.324

The Chi-square independence test is performed to test the null hypothesis of statistical independence between the variables. As shown in table 15, from the test result  $p = 0.324 > 0.05$ , then the hypothesis that there is independence between the two variables cannot be rejected. This result could already be deduced from the calculation of the normalized Chi square index (Cramer's V) which is equal to 0.974026. **Therefore, from the result, it is not evident that the two carriers spend differently in the airport when a flight is delayed.**

Discussion of the results:

In the introduction section, the researcher highlights the aim of the research which is relevant to be considered at this point of the study. Thus, here it is reintroduced: "to evaluate the reaction of consumers and their buying behaviours when a flight is delayed". Having the aim of the research in mind, a general summary of the results of the study is here reported.

From the findings, when a delay occurs, more than half of the passengers say to be very angry and frustrated, especially when they rate punctuality very important. They state to spend more at the airport shops, even if, in general, they declare not to be heavy spenders and they evaluate the purchases not necessary and so driven by impulse because of the situation they are forced to face. Recalling the findings, the buying behaviour of passengers is affected by the delay. More than half of the interviewees spend approximately 25 euros but if the delay increases in time, the money spending does not increase as well.

The interviewees are different in gender, age, occupation, type of passengers they are, individuals they travel with, carrier and class they decide to use and reasons of their journey. However, most of these factors do not affect their buying behaviour in the airport shops and their reaction towards the delay. But It can be stated from the results that the entrepreneurs and the passengers travelling with colleagues spend more if a delay occurs. In addition to that, business class passengers value the complaining for the delay more important than individuals travelling in economy class.

The researcher, after results and findings have been discussed, can confirm or reject the hypothesis and can answer to the research questions and sub questions.

Hypothesis:

The hypothesis the researcher has previously highlighted, are here discussed:

H1: "It is predicted that a delayed flight increases passengers' money spending".

This hypothesis is confirmed: the preliminary findings show that 56% of the passengers purchase more in the flight is delayed. Moreover 59% of them declare that the items bought

are not necessary, so purchased only because the flight was delayed. From the results, it appears that 50% of the respondents spend on average 25 euros. Thus, if a flight is delayed, passengers' money spending increases.

H2: "It is predicted that LCC passengers are less angry and frustrated about delays than FSC ones".

This hypothesis is disconfirmed. In fact, from the results, not evident differences occur between the anger felt by the LCC passengers and the FSC ones. Both classes feel angry and frustrated when the delay occurs.

H3: "It is predicted outbound passengers complain about the delay more than inbound passengers".

This hypothesis is disconfirmed. In fact, from the results, not relevant data show different level of complaining about inbound or outbound passengers.

H4: "It is predicted business class passengers complain more than economy class ones".

This hypothesis is confirmed. Indeed, from the results, it is shown that business class passengers rate complaining about the delay more important than the economy class ones.

H5: "It is predicted that female passengers purchase more than the male segment."

This hypothesis is disconfirmed. In fact, from the results, it is stated that there is not a significant difference between female and male passengers when purchasing at the airport.

H6: "It is predicted that the items bought when delay occurs are not necessary to be bought."

As mentioned in H1, this hypothesis is confirmed. 59% of the respondents buy items not necessary for them. Thus, the items purchased when a delay occurs are not necessary to buy.

H7: "it is predicted passengers travelling with friends and family purchase more than with colleagues or alone".

This hypothesis is disconfirmed. From the results previously analysed it is evident that the passengers traveling with colleagues are the one purchasing more at the airport. Thus, passengers travelling with colleagues purchase more than the ones travelling with friends, family or alone.

Research question: how do delayed flights affect consumer's buying behaviour?

Consumer behaviour in general is affected by a delay. In fact, as shown in the findings, the majority of the respondents declare to be very angry and frustrated when the delay occurs. Moreover, the more the individuals consider flight punctuality important, the more they show anger and frustration in case of delay. While their consumer behaviour in general is altered, also their buying behaviour does so.

The interviewees declare not to be usually heavy spenders in the airport; but when a delay occurs, they admit to buy more at the airport shops.

As said previously their buying behaviour is affected by the situation. The items purchased are said not to be necessary, so the individuals would not have bought them in a different situation. This consideration leads to assume that the passengers react with an impulse shopping behaviour.

The passengers are different in many aspects but in general they are angry and frustrated, rate punctuality high and buy more if the flight is delayed. The Entrepreneur category buys more than the others and same for the ones traveling with colleagues. But as a general assumption, as stated before, all passengers' buying behaviour is affected by the delay, but not by the specific duration of the delay: in other words, if the delay timing increases, consumer's buying behaviour does not change: it does not increase or decrease for this reason.

Sub Questions:

1) Does consumer buying behaviour differ when dealing with Low Cost or FullService Flights?

As stated before, consumer buying behaviour in general is altered by the delay. However, from the results, it is evident that there is no significant difference between the two carriers. The money spent at the airport by the passengers does not depend on the type of carrier an individual decides to fly with.

Moreover, the researcher's hypothesis that LLC individuals are less angry and frustrated for a delay than FSC ones, is not confirmed. Thus, consumer behaviour in general is

stated not to be altered by the decision of the carrier.

2) Do the reasons attributed to the flight, the type of travellers they are and their choice of the class affect the importance a passenger gives to complaining about the delay. From the results, it can be stated that if a passenger is an outbound or inbound, the degree of importance attributed to complaining does not change. The same situation occurs for the purpose of the journey: reasons such as leisure, education or work, do not influence the importance a passenger gives to complain about the delay. However, when a passenger travels in business class, tend to consider more important complaining about the delay than an individual in economy class.

3) Which is the value a delayed flight has on money spending in the airport shops? A delayed flight has a valuable impact on money spending. Even if 81% of the passengers declare not to be heavy spender at the airport, 56% of them affirm to spend more if a flight is delayed. The average of money spent is of 25 euros. However, from the results, it is evident that if the delay increases, the money spending does not increase as well. There is not a positive correlation between these two variables, but, in the end, it can be stated that a delayed flight of any duration has an impact on money spending at the airport.

Results and Literature Review:

In this paragraph the researcher aims to discuss whether the results fit into the literature review or not.

The hypothesis drawn previously in the study, are made after statements and consideration of the literature review believed to be applicable to the study as well. However not all the hypothesis have been confirmed and not all the considerations of the literature review match the results of the study.

The literature review has dealt with three main themes: passengers' perception of low costs and full-service carriers, the journey purpose and type of passenger and finally shopping behaviours in the airport environment. The researcher believes framing these factors is relevant in order to analyse passengers in the airport.

First of all, a distinction between Low-Cost and Full-service Carrier has been made. It has been also considered how the LLC have changed the market share over the last few years. This consideration is supported by the study; indeed, the results show that the majority of the respondents actually fly with an LLC (respectively 60% of the passengers).

It has been also said that the LLC is mostly chosen by young travellers, leisure passengers and business travellers more worried about the price. From this statement, the researcher concludes that the travellers flying with LLC are more concerned about prices than comfort and thus, may tolerate a lower service and accept a delay more positively than the passengers traveling with FSC. However, this consideration is not supported by the results: the hypothesis that LLC passengers are less angry for the delay than FSC ones is rejected.

No difference has been found between the two carriers. Thus, it cannot be stated, as it had been declared in the literature review, that the anger experienced for a delay is less for LLC individuals or that their purchasing behaviour is different.

The second theme discussed in the literature review belongs to the purpose of the journey and the type of passengers.

Passengers are said to have different needs and wants, some are more price sensitive, some prefer comfort, punctuality and flexibility. Usually business class travellers are more concerned with comfort and punctuality and complain more if what they paid for does not match their expectations.

This consideration is supported by the results. When asked to the interviewees if they can say from 1 to 10 how important they rate complaining for a delay, most of the passengers traveling in economy class, value it low, meanwhile the ones in business class rate it very high.

It has been also discussed how passengers are classified into outbound or inbound ones. It is said that when a passenger is departing their attitude is different from when coming back home. When a delay occurs usually outbound passengers who are reaching a destination are angrier, more frustrated and want to complain more than the ones coming back home. However, respondents of the questionnaire cannot support this consideration since no differences of attitude are shown between inbound or outbound passengers.

The literature review also underlines that when individuals travel for work with colleagues or alone are less willing to purchase items at the shops. The researcher came with the hypothesis the passengers traveling for leisure with friends or family purchase more if a delay occurs. This hypothesis has been rejected and cannot support the literature. Furthermore, from the results it is clear the inconsistency of the consideration: actually, the passengers travelling with colleagues are the ones spending more if a delay occurs.

The last theme of the literature review deals with the different shopping behaviours in the airport environment. It is stated that, once in the airport, the passengers have nowhere to go but to shop, but in general the majority of passengers just browse with no intention to buy (Omar and Kent, 2001, p.227). The consideration is in fact supported by the results, as the majority of the respondents state not to be heavy spenders at the airport shops. But when a delay occurs, different stimuli arise and the buying behaviour of the passengers may be altered. As an addition to the literature already discussed, the results show that even if the majority of the individuals consider themselves not heavy spenders, they spend more if the flight is delayed and the purchases are made of impulse and are not necessary for them. The average expenses made of passengers at Milano Malpensa when a delay occurs is of 25 euros, amount of money that the individuals would have saved if the delay had not occurred.

## 8. Limitations, Future Research and Conclusions

### 8.1 Limitations and Weaknesses

A limitation of a study design or instrument is the systematic bias that the researcher does not or cannot control and which may inappropriately affect the results. (Price and Murnan, 2004, p.66). The limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or methodology that impacted or influenced the interpretation of the findings from the research. (Price and Murnan, 2004, p.67)

The research already conducted does have weaknesses and limitations in methodology, design and instruments. First of all, the sample is limited in size: the participants are no more than 100; this factor limits the investigations because for more generalizable results, a sample in bigger size should have been taken into account. A larger sample would have certainly led to more reliable results.

Moreover, passengers are interviewed only on two days of July, which creates weaknesses and limitations.

In the month of July tourists travel more for leisure and thus, airports become busier than in other months of the year; passengers may be more emotional because of the incoming holidays, end of schools and college, graduations and excitement to visit home after several months, thus several specific stimuli arise. In fact, in another period of the year, the answers of participants might be different, and several other stimuli may influence the passengers when dealing with delays and shopping in the airport. This consideration leads to weaknesses for the research because only two specific days of summer are analysed, but,

may also create strengths and opportunities for the study that can analyse the passenger in a very important moment of the year in the airport environment.

Furthermore, another weakness of the study arises when dealing with passengers at the gate who are stressed and in a hurry, but decide to take part in the interview for incapacity of denying it. However, their answers could be randomly undertaken, not coherent or with no sense. The respondents, in this case, deliberately create wrong answers that could influence the analysis.

The questionnaire has been undertaken mostly by female passengers and by individuals travelling in economy class, factors that create imbalances for the results. Also, a mono-method has been used and only quantitative data have been collected. This could be a limit because no qualitative data have been taken into account to have a more balanced analysis.

Finally, the study is conducted in English only at Milano Malpensa Airport, thus, the results cannot be applied to every traveller whose flight is delayed all over the world; further researches need to be conducted in other airports and at least in another language to be more relevant and generalizable. So far, only the weaknesses of the study have been highlighted. But, the study has also many strengths.

As already mentioned, the research was conducted in July, one of the busiest months of the year for the airports, with many passengers in transit and many delays accumulated due to saturation of departures. Moreover, July is a month of holidays for

many travellers and their disposition to the purchases in the airport increases because they receive different stimuli when on vacation.

Although having conducted the research in only one language may be considered a limitation, at the same time it may be observed as a strength. English is an international language understood by many, especially in airport environments where, if individuals travel outside their country, they are more likely to know other languages. Thus, by using English, the researcher has been able to extend the questionnaire to passengers of all nationalities and not only Italians.

## 8.2 Future researches and Implications:

Having mentioned the limitations of the study, the researcher would like to also give directions for future researches.

First of all, the research was conducted only in an airport. In the future, to have more reliable results, it would be necessary to conduct a study on at least three airports and compare the results; a larger airport with more shops may lead to different results than a smaller one with few retail points.

Moreover, a larger sample of at least 400 respondents should be carried out, trying to balance the genders.

Furthermore, the study should take place at least during three periods of the year: a session overcrowded during summer time, a medium busy period of the year and an off-season moment when not many individuals travel. This way, individuals may be taken into consideration under different stimuli and emotions.

Finally, the study should be carried out with a quantitative questionnaire but also a qualitative focus group with a small group of individuals to create a deeper discussion about several delay issues which cannot be investigated by a structural questionnaire.

The questionnaire should be formed by half close-questions and half open-questions to include more feedback, feelings and information of the passengers.

The aim of the study was mainly to evaluate the reactions of consumers and their buying behaviours when a flight is delayed. It has been done so by conducting a primary research where reactions of complain, anger and frustrations and also passengers' money spending in the shops after the delay have been analysed and discussed.

For what concerns real-life research implications, the first practical contribution of the present research is that it provides information about the reactions of passengers which may help airline companies to better face the delay issues. A second important implication of the study derives from the findings of an increase of spending in the airport shops when the delay occurs, which may help airport retailers to address specific marketing campaigns and increase revenues when delays are announced.

### 8.3 Conclusion:

To conclude, with proven results, confirmed and rejected hypothesis and answers to the main research questions and sub-questions, it can be stated that consumer behaviour in Milano Malpensa is affected by a delay. Passengers are angry and frustrated and especially the ones travelling in business class feel the need to complain about this situation of discomfort they need to face. A delayed flight not only alter the attitudes and behaviours of

travellers, but also affect their spending. As shown and discussed in the results section, passengers' money spending increases when the delay occurs, even when the individuals state not to be heavy spenders at the airport, they end up buying items that most of the time are not necessary and only purchased with impulse. However, if the delay increases in time, passengers' money spending remains the same and on average it is of 25 euros.

Overall, there are categories that spend more than the others, such as the Entrepreneur ones and the individuals travelling with colleagues rather than with friends and family. From the study, no differences in money spending arise between gender, age, class and carrier. The research focuses only on Milano Malpensa Airport, terminal one and two of the month of July.

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## 10. Appendices:

### **INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS**

#### **PROJECT TITLE**

*The study of consumer behavior in Malpensa airport environment : How do delayed flights affect consumer buying behavior?*

You are being asked to take part in a research study on the investigation about consumers behaviour in Milano Malpensa Airport and their reaction to delayed flights in relation to purchasing behaviours.

I am a Italian student at Dublin Business school who is working on her dissertation, supervised by a school lecturer and with a project approved by the Research ethics committee.

#### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN**

In this study, you will be asked to answer to some semi-structural questions such as ranking questions, multiple choice questions, rating and category questions and open questions about your behaviour in the airport, your frustration and your attitude toward a delay in your flight. You will be asked about your gender, age rank, occupation, reason of traveling, the class you are travelling with, the carrier you have decided to purchase and the amount of delay and of money you have spent in the airport because of the delay.

#### **TIME COMMITMENT**

The study typically takes 15 minutes and it is only one session study.

#### **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 / 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/ANONYMITY

The data I collect does not contain any personal information about you except your gender and your reactions and emotions to a delayed flights. The data will be analysed in order to write a master dissertation.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Sara Marolli and Michael Maguire will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact my supervisor at [Michael.maguire@dbs.ie](mailto:Michael.maguire@dbs.ie)

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

### PROJECT TITLE:

*The study of consumer behaviour in Malpensa airport environment : how can delayed flights affect consumer buying behaviour?*

### PROJECT SUMMARY:

The project aims to investigate the consumer behaviour in the airport environment of Milano Malpensa and in particular wants to analyse whether a passenger will purchase more in the airport shops when a flight is delayed or not.

This research will study and analyse the collected data in order to give an answer to this already mention hypothesis.

The research results are helpful for retailers in the airport environment to target the right segment of clients and to conduct future strategic marketing campaigns.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

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Participant's signature

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Participant's Name (Printed)

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Student Name (Printed)

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Student Name signature

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Date

## **CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN MILANO MALPENSA AIRPORT WHEN A FLIGHT IS DELAYED**

The survey helps the researcher investigate the consumer behaviour at Milano Malpensa airport and the relationship between delayed flight and consumer's money spending in the airport shops.

**NB: The survey assumes that the interviewees have recently been delayed at Malpensa or are undertaking a delay right when the researcher is interviewing them.**

**The questions are specifically related to the trip whose flight has been delayed.**

### **1) How old are you?**

- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61-80

### **2) Which Gender do you belong to?**

- Male
- Female

### **3) Which is your Occupation? (max 1 answer)**

- Entrepreneur
- Director
- Employee
- Student
- Other

### **4) Which is the reason of the journey? (max 1 answer)**

- Work
- Leisure
- Education
- Other

**5) Are you an outbound ( traveling to destination) or inbound (coming back home from the trip) traveller?**

- Outbound
- Inbound

**6) Which class do you travel with?**

- Economy Class
- Business Class

**7) Which carrier do you fly with ?**

- Full Service Carrier
- Low Cost Carrier ( ex: Ryanair, Easyjet)

**8) How much do you rate important punctuality?: (1= Not important at all ; 10= very important)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1
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**9) How long is the delay? (in minutes)**

..... time

**10) How much do you feel frustrated and angry when they delay occurs? (1=not at all; 10= very much)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1
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**11) How much do you rate important complaining for the delay? (1= not important at all ; 10= very important)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1
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**12) Are you usually a heavy spender at the airport?**

- yes
- no

**13) Do you spend more at the airport if the flight is delayed?**

- yes
- no

**14) How much have you spent at the airport while waiting at the gate for the delay?**

..... euros

**15) Are purchases made after the announcement of a delayed flight necessary to buy?**

- yes
- no

**16) Who are you travelling with? (max 1 answer)**

- Family
- Friends
- Colleagues
- Alone
- Other