

Exploring the Relationship between Booth Design and Exhibitor Behavior, Performance, and Satisfaction in Tradeshows

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Introduction

Exhibitions industry contributes over \$97 billion to the U.S. gross domestic product annually according to Exhibitions Mean Business (2019). A marketing spend decision report by Center for Exhibition Industry Research (2018) shows that B2B exhibition attendees are decision-makers or have influence on decision making, thus, exhibiting at a tradeshow is an excellent way to find long-standing value for brand marketers to support and drive their business objectives. However, simply choosing an industry event and showing up does not ensure an exhibitor's success because there are many decision-making factors for exhibitors when determining participation of a tradeshow.

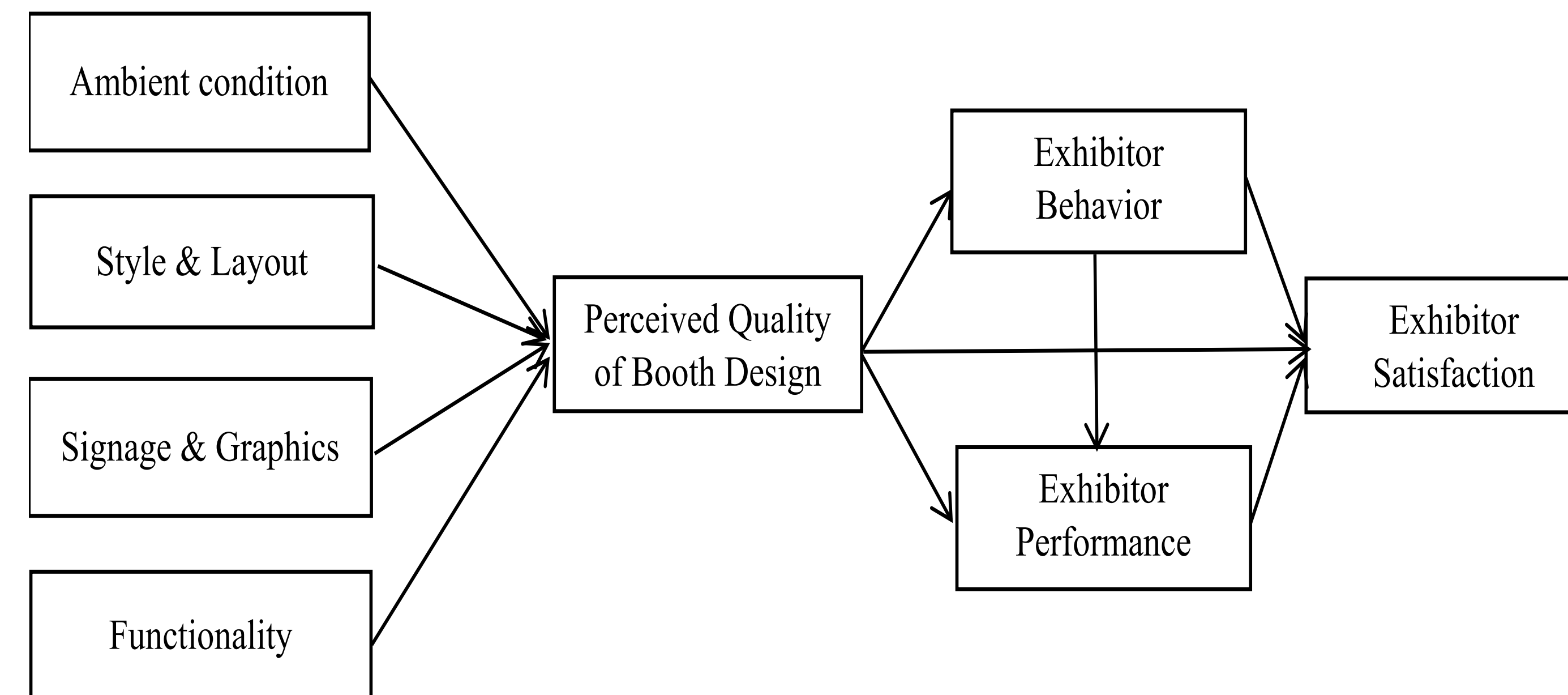
In line with Bitner (1992) study that suggests employees' approach behaviors such as affiliation, exploration, staying longer, expression of commitment, carrying out the purpose for being in the organization can be affected by physical environment, the study will be investigating the relationship between booth design and exhibitor behaviors in a tradeshow context. The purpose of the study is to assess exhibitors' perception on elements of booth design, and its relationship with exhibitor behavior, performance, and satisfaction.

Literature Review

Previous research discovered that a Servicescape plays an important role in influencing individual emotions, satisfaction, and behaviors (Siu et al., 2012; Kim & Moon; 2009). Servicescape is defined as the physical surroundings where the customers interact with service providers and also as the place where the service is performed, delivered, and consumed simultaneously, combined with tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communication of the service (Booms & Bitner, 1982).

According to Bitner's framework for understanding environment-user relationships in service organizations (1992), physical environmental dimensions of the Servicescape including both exterior and interior are divided into ambient conditions, space/function, and signs, symbols and artifacts. Extending the physical environmental dimensions of the Servicescape to the tradeshow environment, this study hypothesizes that perceived quality of the Servicescape would have impact on exhibitors' behavior, performance and their satisfaction about the tradeshow. Figure 1 shows the proposed model with variables that will be measured in this study.

Proposed Model



Measurement

Construct	Sample Measurement Items
Perceived Booth Design (Bitner, 1992) - Ambient Condition - Style and Layout - Signage and Graphics - Functionality	Lighting, background music, odor Booth layout made it easy for the exhibitor to interact with attendees. The quality of graphics of the signage met your expectation. Carpet was installed adequately, furniture quality, A/V, technology
Exhibitor Behavior (Mehrabian & Russel, 1974)	Working in the booth made me feel more affiliated with my company. Overall design of the booth made me want to stay longer in the booth Working in the booth made me effectively carry out the purpose of my company exhibiting at this tradeshow.
Exhibitor Performance (Huang, 2016)	This trade show helped my company achieve the objective of... - promoting new and existing products. - contacting new customers. - increasing sales orders. - getting a competitive edge over other exhibitors.
Exhibitor Satisfaction	Overall, I am satisfied with the overall booth design. Overall, I am satisfied with my experience at this tradeshow.

Methods

Survey

- Survey Items: Interview with managers from nationally recognized official service contractors Literature on retail and hospitality Servicescape
- Fresh Memory: Exhibitors who have exhibited between September 2019- Septembers 2020
- 5-point Likert-scale including N/A option: e.g. The lighting in the booth was adequate

Data Collection

- IAEE Memberlink Open Forum
- Tradeshow Marketing Firm Exhibitor Database
approx. 2,000 exhibitor contacts across various industries (technologies, healthcare, manufacturing, etc.)

Data Analysis

- Item Response Theory (IRT)
- Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)
- Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Implications

Theoretical Implications

- Extending the Servicescape theory in the context of exhibitor behavior
- Complement existing studies focused on attendees perspective

Practical Implications

- Justify ROI on exhibitors spending
- Provide show organizers, OSCs, and facilities with insights on how to guide exhibitors on designing their booth space

Selected References

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