Causal Factors Influencing Service Quality of Trade Shows towards Trade Show Service Performance of Thailand

by

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Abstract

The research on causal factors influencing service quality of tradeshows towards tradeshow service performance of Thailand was aimed to (1) study the factors in term of knowledge of tradeshows, tradeshow service, and space management influencing service quality of tradeshows towards tradeshow service performance of Thailand; (2) study the influences of knowledge of tradeshows, tradeshow service, and space management influencing service quality of tradeshows towards tradeshow service performance of Thailand; (3) and to apply the research results for creating a model influencing service quality of tradeshows towards tradeshow service performance of Thailand. This research was a mixed-method research. Questionnaires were used for data collection. The population in this research included 450 entrepreneurs and executives of tradeshow agencies in Thailand. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied for data analysis. The results revealed that most samples were male; age between 31-20 years; graduated with bachelor's degrees; had conducted businesses 10 years up, mostly domestic ones; and had 1 to 3-year experiences in tradeshows. According to hypothesis testing, it was found that the factor in term of knowledge of tradeshows, tradeshow service, and space management had direct positive influences towards service quality of tradeshows and tradeshow service performance. It was also found that the factor in term of service quality of tradeshows had positive influences towards tradeshow service performance, which was an effect size with the statistical significance of .01.
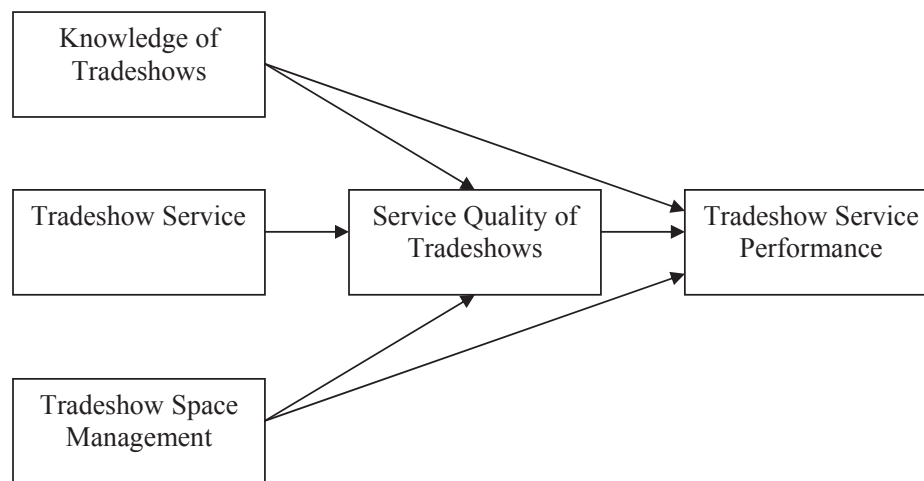
Keywords: Knowledge of Tradeshows, Tradeshow Service, Tradeshow Space Management, Service Quality of Tradeshows, Tradeshow Service Performance

1. Introduction

A tradeshow is an essential marketing activity that brings manufacturers, distributors, and involved parties that cooperate with the organizer from the tradeshow industrial sector for the same objectives. It includes planning, a place for that tradeshow of products and/or services (Y. Lin, Kerstetter, & Hickerson, 2015a). Being organizers of tradeshows, therefore, is regarded a quality service to participants, expected by organizers. Information must be provided for viewers and guests (Herbig, O'Hara, & Palumbo, 1998). Various and modern products must be displayed, along with the application of new innovations and more attractive graphic design like professional, e.g., tradeshows visited by viewers with high purchasing power (Rosson & Seringhaus, 1995). Besides, motivations for purchase decision is also required with wise, skills, and reliability that finally lead to successful purchase decision (Godar & O'Connor, 2001).

Tradeshow entrepreneurs with efficient management must pay attention to good relationships with traders (K Hansen, 2004). Management must be cooperated to understand the other party clearly. Participants expect service quality of tradeshows, of which 5 aspects must be considered by organizers, i.e., service reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991; Parasuraman, V.A, & Berry, 1988). Besides, building relationships with suppliers is also crucial for tradeshow management. That is because manufacturers are indispensable to send products to tradeshows (Trade Show Bureau, 1988b). Entrepreneurs or organizers must have knowledge, skills, and understanding of tradeshows so as to logically lead planning and setting objectives on the same direction of traders and market demands. Building viewer connection networks, relationships with traders, and relationships with manufacturers and distributors indicates understanding of products transferred through relevant activities (T. M. Smith, Hama, & Smith, 2003). This influences tradeshow management.

For these reasons, the researcher was interested in studying on causal factors influencing service quality of tradeshows towards tradeshow service performance of Thailand in order to build understanding and to be able to apply to tradeshow organization agencies in Thailand with more efficiency as well as effectiveness. See the designed conceptual framework in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

2. Research Objectives

1. To study the factor in term of knowledge of tradeshows, tradeshow service, and space management influencing service quality of tradeshows towards tradeshow service performance of Thailand.

2. To study the influences of knowledge of tradeshows, tradeshow service, and space management influencing service quality of tradeshows towards tradeshow service performance of Thailand.

3. To apply the research results for creating a model influencing service quality of tradeshows towards tradeshow service performance of Thailand

3. Research Methods

In this research, the researcher explored relevant concepts, theories; and reviewed literatures from secondary sources, i.e., books, textbooks, journals, research papers, and electronic documents; both national and international, in order to obtain knowledge of basic research. Then, the conceptual framework of the research was developed and set. Literature review was focused on to find relevant variables from the online database of Sripatum University. Questionnaires were used for data collection. The population in this research included 450 entrepreneurs and executives of tradeshow agencies in Thailand. They were obtained by multi-stage sampling. Next, purposive sampling was used. This is a mixed method research between qualitative and quantitative research. Structural equation modeling (SEM), technique for was brought for causal relationship test in order to meet the objectives. The researcher also set proper statistics in line with statistical data to meet the objectives, too. The statistics used for data analysis consisted of 3 parts, i.e., descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and SEM analysis.

4. Research Results

The results revealed that 340 samples or most of them (75.56%) used to participate in tradeshows. 273 of them (80.30%) participated over 3 times. Most or 236 of them (52.44%) were male. 197 of them (43.78%) were between 31 – 50 years old. 359 of them (79.78) graduated with bachelor's degrees. 177 of them (39.33%) had conducted businesses over 10 years. 338 of them (75.11%) conducted businesses in Thailand. 198 of them (44.00%) had 1 to 3-year experiences in participating in tradeshows from.

1) In term of knowledge of tradeshows, it was high overall ($\overline{X}$ = 4.08), especially regulations and rules ($\overline{X}$ = 4.15); followed by tradeshow management ($\overline{X}$ = 4.07), and cost management ($\overline{X}$ = 4.03), respectively.

2) In term of tradeshow service, it was high overall ($\overline{X}$ = 3.93) especially relationships with trader ($\overline{X}$ = 4.03); followed by the ability to build viewer connection networks ($\overline{X}$ = 4.01), experts and specialists ($\overline{X}$ = 3.86), and relationships with manufacturers ($\overline{X}$ = 3.83), respectively.

3) In term of space management, it was high overall ($\overline{X}$ = 4.00), especially place and decoration ($\overline{X}$ = 4.10); followed by layout planning ($\overline{X}$ = 3.98), and facilities as well as security ($\overline{X}$ = 3.91), respectively.

4) In term of the levels of expectation, perception, and satisfaction towards service quality of tradeshow, the overall expectation towards service quality of tradeshows was higher than perception,

resulting in minus score in the blank provided ($\overline{X}$ = -0.05) To clarify, the aspect of tangibles was as equal as perception level ($\overline{X}$ = 0.00); followed by responsiveness ($\overline{X}$ = -0.04), reliability ($\overline{X}$ = -0.06) assurance ($\overline{X}$ = -0.08), and empathy ($\overline{X}$ = -0.08), respectively.

5) In term of tradeshow service performance, it was high overall ($\overline{X}$ = 4.00), especially trader satisfaction ($\overline{X}$ = 4.07) and tradeshow image ($\overline{X}$ = 4.07); followed by sales volume ($\overline{X}$ = 3.96 S.D. = 0.80) and competitive advantage ($\overline{X}$ = 3.91 S.D. = 0.76), respectively.

When considering overall AGFI of the model, it was found that the model was congruent with the empirical data. The total 6 indexes that passed the acceptance criteria were χ^2/df = 1.203, CFI = 1.00, GFI = 0.97, AGFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.021, and SRMR = 0.042. Thus, it can be concluded that the SEM model was proper and congruent with the empirical data, described as follows.

1) χ^2/df = 1.203, representing that the model was congruent with the empirical data, because the value was below 2.00.

2) Comparative fit index (CFI) = 1.00, representing that the model was with comparative fit, because CFI ≥ 0.95.

3) The 2 indexes of absolute fit index were considered, i.e., GFI = 0.97 and AGFI = 0.95. This represented that the model was congruent with the empirical data, because GFI and AGFI were between 0-1; and the acceptable GFI and AGFI were over 0.90.

4) Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.021, representing that the model was pretty congruent with the empirical data, because RMSEA was below 0.05 or 0.05-0.08.

5) GFI in the form of error that was used for standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.042, representing that the model was congruent with the empirical data, because the value was below 0.05.

5. Research Discussion

1) The knowledge of tradeshow influenced service quality of tradeshows. This was in accordance with the study of Reychav (2009), who found that knowledge of tradeshow organization agencies was limited in term if knowledge management, which introduced systematic learning of tradeshows to organizers. As a result, tradeshow service performance came out as expected. Knowledge sharing played a key role in building understanding to work teams that worked systematically from learning. It was also in accordance with   Trade Show Bureau (1994), Kotler (2002), Parasuraman, Zeithaml, L, & Berry (1990), Sashi & Perretty (1992), P. Smith (2014), and Kirtis & Karahan (2011).

2) Tradeshow service influenced service quality of tradeshows. This was in accordance with the research of Manfred Kirchgeorg Christiane Springer Evelyn Kästner (2009), Rodríguez, Reina, & Rufín (2015). They found that the quality of relationships between tradeshow participants and organizers was the factor influencing quality of tradeshow development. Likewise, Ling-yee (2007), Robinson, Faris, & Wind (1967) found that traders, as participants, had to undergo various forms of sales process and higher competitions (Gopalakrishna & Lilien, 1995; Ling-yee, 2007).

3) Space management influenced service quality of tradeshows. This was in accordance with the study of Santos & Mendonça (2014), who found that place management and decoration for traders could create trader satisfaction towards the service quality. Similarly, Biz Tradeshows (2011), T. M. Smith et al. (2003), U. Gottlieb et al. (2014), Armstrong (2015), Business Strategies Group (BSG) (2012), Skyline, Sevilla, J., & Townsend C. (2016), Tsao, et. al. (2014) stated that a layout of structure that could respond demands and budget of tradeshow participants must affect profit increase and the excellent tradeshow, along with the high volume of the viewers and their satisfaction.

4) Service quality of tradeshows influenced tradeshow service performance. This was in accordance with the research of Berne & Garcı´a-Uceda (2008), Biz Tradeshows (2011), and U. Gottlieb et al. (2014). Also, Kotler & Keller (2009) found that service quality referred to service perfection and specific physical attributes for tangible perception to customers (Pena et al., 2013; Munuera & Ruiz, 1999; Crosby, 1995; Skyline, 2016).

5) Knowledge of tradeshows influenced tradeshow service performance directly. This was in accordance with the research of Skolnik (1987), Siskind (1994), M. Smith (1994), Geigenmüller & Bettis-Outland (2012). Successful tradeshow organizers reflected worthiness of what tradeshows helped make it through in term of sale volumes. Tradeshows engendered perception and awareness of product quality, finally leading to purchase decision (Geigenmüller & Bettis-Outland, 2012; Ling-yee, 2010; Geigenmüller & Bettis-Outland, 2012; C. Grönroos, 2000; Rinallo, Bathelt, & Golfetto, 2017; Lin, Kerstetter, & Hickerson, 2015b).

6) Tradeshow service influenced tradeshow service performance directly. This was in accordance with the study of Y. Lin, Jiang, & Kerstetter (2015), who found that the evaluation of trade fairs consisted of 3 elements about performance of participants and viewers. Relationships among key interested parties were mainly considered. The result in this point was also in accordance with the study of Han & Verma (2014).

7) Space management influenced tradeshow service performance directly. This was in accordance with the research of Tsao et al. (2014), who found that space management for tradeshow organization agencies could connect with participants. Exhibition agencies of tradeshows could bring huge success to your exhibitions (Tanner, Chonko, & Ponzurick, 2001; Arnett & Wittmann, 2014; Tsao et al., 2014; Park, 2009).

6. Research Suggestions

6.1 Research suggestions for applying the results to management

1) Tradeshow managers must concentrate on the factor in term of knowledge of tradeshows, tradeshow service, and space management. That is because these 3 factors influence service quality of tradeshows and tradeshow service performance. Tradeshow managers should study relevant

data/information and analyze these factors that influence customers, i.e., service quality of tradeshows, service reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness.

2) Tradeshow managers must concentrate on service quality of tradeshows, i.e., reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. They should relevant data/information and analyze these factors that influence customer behavior and satisfaction, measured by expectations of what they get from tradeshows. Thus, quality service must be performed regularly and continually.

3) Tradeshow managers must concentrate on factors influencing tradeshow service performance, i.e., sales volumes, tradeshow image, and competitive advantages. The data is used for designing long-term and short-term implementation plans in order to create higher efficiency as well as effectiveness of tradeshow service performance.

6.2 Suggestions for future research

1) Causal factors influencing service quality of tradeshows towards tradeshow service performance of Thailand, i.e., knowledge of tradeshows, tradeshow service, space management, service quality of tradeshows, and tradeshow service performance should be brought for further research in other educational institutions to check whether or not the model is congruent with empirical data.

2) Other factors must also be explored, e.g., economy, politics, social trends, etc.

3) There should be comparative studies of customer satisfaction towards other tradeshows in Thailand, held by both the public and private sectors.

4) Future research may rely on EDFR (ethnographic delphi futures research) in order to develop a model regarding knowledge of tradeshows, tradeshow service, and tradeshow space management influencing service quality of tradeshows towards tradeshow service performance in the country later on.

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