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Research paper

Effect of service-related resources on employee and customer outcomes in trade shows

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ABSTRACT

Despite widespread recognition of trade shows as a vehicle to provide services to visitors by exhibitors, there is a paucity of research in this area of special interest. Drawing on the resource-based view, we develop a research framework to examine the effects of service-related resources on exhibitor's personnel attitudes and visitor responses. We collected on-site data from 151 exhibitor's personnel and 366 visitors during a trade show. These responses were matched at the exhibitor level to test the research framework. We found a positive effect of service leadership and service technology in developing a customer-oriented service strategy with satisfied employees. Additionally, we demonstrate that service leadership positively moderates the effect of service technology on customer orientation. In contrast, service leadership negatively moderates the effect of empowerment on customer orientation. This suggests that similar firm resources do not complement each other perhaps because they are substitutable. Finally, we show that service-related resources not only affect customer orientation but also influence job satisfaction of exhibitor personnel and visitors responses such as interaction quality, satisfaction, and word-of-mouth intentions.

1. Introduction

Trade shows are an important marketing vehicle for business-to-business organizations. Exhibitor's personnel perform several functions at a trade show such as conducting market research, identifying prospects, and strengthening relationships with existing customers (Geigenmüller & Bettis-Outland, 2012; Gottlieb, Brown, & Ferrier, 2014; Munuera & Ruiz, 1999). Additionally, trade shows facilitate the exchange of information about each exhibitor's products and innovations between their personnel and visitors (Kim & Mazumdar, 2016). Thus, exhibitors' personnel perform a crucial role in improving visitor reactions through service interactions when engaging with visitors at trade shows (Baron, Harris, & Harris, 2001). Providing resources to exhibitor's personnel is particularly important because resources enable them to offer value-added services by facilitating interactions and fostering close relationships with the visitors (Rinallo, Bathelt, & Golfetto, 2017; Sarmiento & Simões, 2018).

The trade show literature has argued that firm resources are likely

to enhance trade show performance (Ling-Yee, 2007a). Organizations generally provide tangible and intangible resources to employees to enhance firm performances (Lee & Grewal, 2004). Because personnel-visitor interaction episodes at trade shows play a crucial role in determining trade show performance (Rinallo et al., 2017), this study considered firm resources relevant to personnel attitudes and engagement with visitors and in implementing trade show strategy. We focus on service leadership and employee empowerment as intangible resources and service technology as a tangible resource. Thus, we examine the impact of both tangible and intangible resources on exhibitor's personnel's ability to develop customer orientation in a trade show context. Service leaders nurture a customer service culture that enables exhibitor's personnel to deliver high-quality services, which increases their job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Grönfeldt & Strother, 2006; Wong, Liu, & Tjosvold, 2015; Yavas, Jha, & Babakus, 2015). Similarly, empowerment enhances the customer-oriented behavior of exhibitor's personnel (Martin & Bush, 2006; Peccei & Rosenthal, 2001) and allows for autonomy in customization of

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communication (Gazzoli, Hancer, & Park, 2012) based on the needs of each visitor. On the other hand, access to technology leads to positive employee outcomes as it enables them to access market information, resulting in a superior assessment of visitors' needs and better rapport (Rapp, Beitelspacher, Schillewaert, & Baker, 2012; Trainor, Rapp, Beitelspacher, & Schillewaert, 2011). Although firm resources are relevant to trade show performance, prior studies indicate that high levels of resources may not guarantee superior outcomes (Li, Evans, Chen, & Wood, 2011). Because converting firm resources into effective trade show results is important, the first aim of this research is to examine the main and interactive effects of firms' service-related resources (i.e., service leadership, empowerment, and service technology) on customer orientation of exhibitor's personnel in a trade show context.

Customer-oriented personnel are an important asset as they can attract potential visitors and even turn around offended visitors into satisfied ones through personalized interactions that are meaningful and sensitive to specific visitor needs. Thus, the customer-orientation behavior of exhibitor's personnel is central for determining visitors' interaction quality, which subsequently influences their satisfaction and word-of-mouth intentions (Lee & Kim, 2008). While prior studies have found that firm resources are crucial for successful trade show outcomes, few studies have explored the underlying values of the exhibitor's personnel's customer relationship skills through which the resources of the firms represented can affect trade show performance (Ling-Yee, 2007b). Thus, the second aim of this study is to examine the relationship between firm resources, exhibitor's personnel outcomes, and visitor responses. Specifically, we examine the intervening role of personnel customer orientation and job satisfaction in determining visitor responses of perceived interaction quality, satisfaction, and word-of-mouth intentions at a trade show. To accomplish our two research objectives, we collected data in a trade show from two sources: exhibitor's personnel and visitors who visit and show an interest in the exhibitor's booth. Furthermore, we collected data about the exhibitor's booth characteristics from the trade show organizer.

Overall, this study makes at least three contributions to trade show and service management literature. First, while past research in B2B (business-to-business marketing) and specifically in trade shows have discussed the role of several market-based resources in trade show performance, the present study proposes and empirically examines the role of service-related resources that enable exhibitor's personnel to offer high-quality interaction with visitors at a trade show. Specifically, we show that service-related resources such as service leadership, service technology, and empowerment influence exhibitor's personnel's attitude towards meeting visitor needs and expectations at a trade show. Second, this paper demonstrates that service leadership positively moderates the effect of service technology on customer orientation. However, service leadership negatively moderates the effect of empowerment on customer orientation. This suggests that when resources are substitutable, they are less likely to shape customer orientation. Third and finally, this paper shows the intervening mechanism by which firm resources influence key exhibitor's personnel and visitor outcomes in a trade show context.

In the next section, we provide a theoretical background on the resource-based view, which guides the development of our hypotheses. We then present the methodology of the study and results. We conclude by presenting the theoretical and managerial implications for our study along with its limitations and future research directions.

2. Conceptual framework and development of hypotheses

2.1. Resource based view

We use the resource-based view (RBV) to understand the role of a firm's service-related resources in determining exhibitor's personnel and visitor outcomes in a trade show context. RBV suggests that firms possess and control different types of resources that can generate a

competitive advantage and superior performance (Barney, 1991, 2014; Bharadwaj, 2000). Barney and Arikan (2001) identified two types of resources, namely tangible and intangible resources that firms draw upon to implement their strategies and accomplish their goals. Tangible resources include financial and physical resources, such as financial capabilities, technology infrastructure, plant, equipment, and other physical facilities (Galbreath, 2005; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). The intangible resources include organizational, human, informational, relational, and marketing resources that are hard to copy and hard to accumulate (Lavie, 2006). Intangible resources are less flexible and difficult to transfer because their value is hard to describe and measure (Haanes & Fjeldstad, 2000).

Indeed, some past studies in B2B context seem to support the assertion that tangible and intangible resources are likely to influence firm performance. For instance, using RBV, Gregory, Ngo, and Karavdic (2017) have conceptualized e-commerce resources as comprised of both tangible (i.e., communication infrastructure, high-tech software, and hardware) and intangible (i.e., knowledge and expertise) resources which affect commercial performance. Furthermore, Nath, Nachiappan, and Ramanathan (2010) have shown that firms use tangible and intangible resources to understand complex consumer needs, to achieve product differentiation, and to enhance brand equity in the competitive market. However, firm resources may not always have a positive effect on its sales performance. For instance, Hult, Ketchen Jr, and Chabowski (2007) reported that transactional leadership negatively affects the relationship between the buying center and supply chain performance. According to Auh and Menguc (2009), the fit between the marketing resources and context in which these resources are deployed affects firm performance. They have demonstrated that the positive effect of transformational leadership on firm performance diminishes if the leaders are from a marketing background. Overall, these studies argue that the effectiveness of these resources depends on the compatibility and substitutability of the firm resources.

With the backdrop of the resource-based view (RBV) and its emphasis on managing tangible and intangible resources towards a sustainable competitive advantage (Carmeli & Tishler, 2004; Galbreath & Galvin, 2008), we examined service technology as one tangible resource and service leadership and empowerment as two different levels of intangible service-related resources in the trade show context. Leadership has been identified in the past literature as a potentially unique firm resource (Braun & Nieberle, 2017) that promotes a professional culture in the organization and helps employees realize their potential. Similarly, technology as a firm resource can create a sustained competitive advantage for the firm (Wu, Yenyurt, Kim, & Cavusgil, 2006). Empowerment is viewed as a crucial resource that helps firms make a quicker response to the environment (Kmieciak, Michna, & Meczynska, 2012; Yin, Wang, & Lu, 2018).

We next present the conceptual framework mapping the key relationships among the resources in Fig. 1. The service-related resources of leadership, technology, and empowerment affect the exhibitor's personnel's attitude towards customer orientation and their satisfaction with the job, which in turn has an impact on visitor-level outcomes of interaction quality and satisfaction with the exhibitor and their ensuing word-of-mouth (WOM) tendencies. Previous B2B research has shown that satisfied customers engage in favorable behavioral outcomes such as word-of-mouth. For instance, Wangenheim and Bayón (2007) found that customer satisfaction is positively related to word-of-mouth communication. As customer satisfaction is related to the disconfirmation between pre-purchase customer expectations and post-purchase perceived performance, Ferguson and Johnston (2011) suggested that a dissatisfied customer engages in negative word-of-mouth to make the dissatisfactory experience satisfactory. More recently, Anaza and Rutherford (2014) found that satisfaction with the selling firm drove customers to engage in positive word-of-mouth communication. Therefore, given the strong theoretical and empirical support for some of the direct linkages in our model, we do not advance a specific

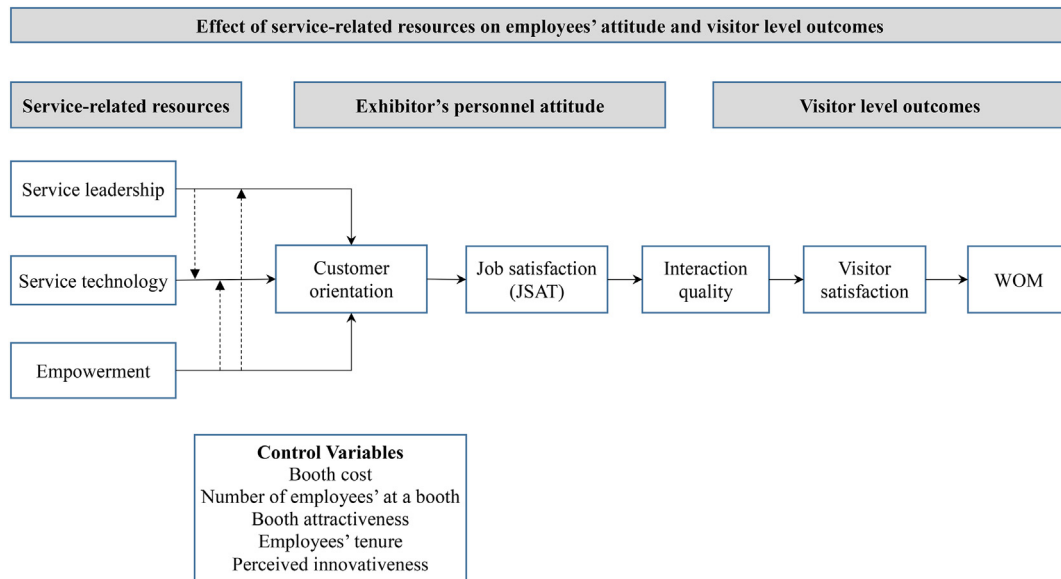


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework.

hypothesis for those direct linkages. Instead, we provide a test of the model as an overall default hypothesis. Model test results are then used as a platform for testing the proposed hypotheses.

2.1.1. Role of service leadership

Service leadership is an intangible resource that refers to the extent to which the top management of the exhibitor is committed to delivering a high-quality service (Benlian, 2014). The top management role has been emphasized through budgeting and selection of trade shows (Tanner, 2002). A service leader goes beyond these roles and works closely with employees in developing the process, approach, systems, and an overall supportive service culture (Schneider, Ehrhart, Mayer, Saltz, & Niles-Jolly, 2005; Yavas et al., 2015). One-to-one communication by service leaders establishes a genuine relationship with the employees (Testa & Sipe, 2012), sets high service standards, and provides opportunities for employees to realize their potential (Bowen & Schneider, 2014). Given that an onsite engagement is also an avenue where “new personal and professional relationships” are maintained, service leadership acts as an important driver in an employee's role performance (Borghini, Golfetto, & Rinallo, 2006, p. 1155). Service leaders are more transformational than transactional in orientation; therefore, the organizational culture they nurture encourages employees to carefully listen to, respond, and thus, better serve customer needs (Grönfeldt & Strother, 2006). Service leaders offer implementable insights on how to handle a difficult complaint or a client concern (Chan & Wan, 2012). They curtail reactive approaches in favor of offering genuine solutions to their customers (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2009), which improves the overall customer orientation (Benlian, 2014; Wong et al., 2015). Therefore, in the trade show context:

H₁. : Service leadership positively affects customer orientation of exhibitor's personnel.

2.1.2. Role of service technology

Service technology is a tangible resource that refers to the set of tools, techniques, and technology-based systems that are needed for developing and providing better customer services (Rapp, Trainor, & Agnihotri, 2010; Ray, Barney, & Muhanna, 2004). Technology is a major tangible firm resource that offers a dual competitive advantage of reducing costs as well as building and maintaining relationships with visitors (Bharadwaj, 2000; Strohmeier, 2013). Increasing consumer heterogeneity, competition, and penetration of social and digital media

have changed the profile of trade show visitors (Chongwatpol, 2015). Service technology is particularly adept at preparing employees to deal with such challenges, even before the actual encounter with the visitors (through the website, email, and other forms of communication). Ling-Yee (2010) suggests that technology systems such as sales force automation and real-time lead management can enhance trade show outcomes. It also enables employees to minimize job efforts and role ambiguity thereby increasing job satisfaction. In sum, service technology facilitates exhibitor's personnel to improve their focus on visitors through better access to visitor and market information, enabling a better understanding of visitor needs, and efficiently building a rapport with them (Nakata & Zhu, 2006; Rapp et al., 2012; Trainor et al., 2011). Therefore, in the trade show context:

H₂. : Service technology positively affects customer orientation of exhibitor's personnel.

2.1.3. Role of empowerment

The RBV considers empowerment as a firm-related resource (Barney, 1991) since it is driven by the actions taken by a firm to share the power, resources, and decision-making process with employees to allow smooth customer-employee interactions (Martin & Bush, 2006; Sok & O'Cass, 2015). Empowered employees are the core of high-contact marketing environments such as trade shows, which are less amenable to standardization and focus on a high level of flexibility for responsive decision making by the employee. Empowerment makes employees self-efficacious and results in a positive attitude and behavior towards the customers (Chebat & Kollias, 2000; Gazzoli et al., 2012). Such employees are open to setting high-service performance standards by initiating actions in response to customer needs and requests (Chan & Lam, 2011).

Empowerment makes exhibitor's personnel more responsive and capable of delivering high-quality service to trade show visitors. Recent studies posit that employee empowerment will enable customized decisions and generate pro-social behaviors (Gazzoli et al., 2012; Martin & Bush, 2006; Peccei & Rosenthal, 2001), which in turn, increases job satisfaction with their job (Dewettinck & van Ameijde, 2011; Meng & Han, 2014; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1998). Choi and Jeon (2012) showed that personnel empowerment has a positive impact on trade show on-site activities and performance. Empowered personnel feel more satisfied, which acts as an intrinsic reward, motivating them to make greater efforts to fulfill visitor needs (Ugboro & Obeng, 2000). Therefore, in the

trade show context:

H₃ : Empowerment positively affects customer orientation of exhibitor's personnel.

2.1.4. Mediating role of customer orientation

Customer orientation is the predisposition to put a visitor's interest first and meet his or her needs to develop a profitable long-term relationship (Donavan, Brown, & Mowen, 2004; Saxe & Weitz, 1982). Customer orientation encompasses excellence in service performance, market and customer knowledge, and close cooperation and communication with stakeholders (Jaiswal, 2008; Tuominen, Rajala, & Möller, 2004). Customer orientation also adds to an overall favorable service climate, which in turn delivers a greater firm performance (Bowen & Schneider, 2014). One of the strongest attractions of trade shows is the visitors' desire to "see particular products and companies" (Rosson & Seringhaus, 1995, p. 83). Because trade shows place greater importance on meeting the visitors' interests and providing customized services (Jin, Weber, & Bauer, 2012), customer-oriented exhibitor's personnel are likely to meet visitor needs and offer better service performance. This will be because visitors favorably rate those exhibitors who offer the greatest customer service and quality interaction, and customer-oriented exhibitor's personnel can do both (Berne & Garcia-Uceda, 2008; Gottlieb, Brown, & Drennan, 2011). Customer orientation also reduces exhibitor's personnel's stress and positively affects their job engagement (Zablah, Franke, Brown, & Bartholomew, 2012) improving their job satisfaction, which is considered a valuable outcome (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez, & Trespalacios, 2012). Therefore, customer orientation of exhibitor's personnel would mediate the influence of service-related resources of service leadership, service technology, and empowerment on job satisfaction. Therefore, in the trade show context:

H₄ : Customer orientation mediates the effects of service leadership, service technology and empowerment on job satisfaction.

2.1.5. Interaction effects of service leadership and service technology on customer orientation

While service leadership impacts the attitude of exhibitor's personnel during their interaction with visitors, technology can affect observable goals such as information generation and dissemination. Both aspects are important determinants of customer orientation and trade show success (Hansen, 2004; Lee & Kim, 2008). The RBV suggests that effective implementation of a firm's strategy involves the integration of various firm resources, and such integration has a positive bearing on exhibitor's personnel's attitudes and behaviors (Jeng & Pak, 2016; Vloeberghs & Berghman, 2003). Therefore, the integrated effect of service leadership and service technology will enhance customer orientation skills and efforts of exhibitor's personnel, resulting in profitable long-term relationships with the visitors (Blocker, Flint, Myers, & Slater, 2011; Hennig-Thurau, 2004).

This study puts a spotlight on the integration of technological resources with other complementary resources as the gateway to unique advantages. Service leadership is a strong complement to service technology because it motivates the employees to learn, experiment, and adopt a technology to deliver superior customer-oriented services (Barney, Wright, & Ketchen, 2001; Testa & Sipe, 2012). Within a trade show context, exhibitor's personnel can offer high-quality visitor service because service leadership nurtures a positive service culture of collaboration and a willingness to take initiatives. Service leadership also maintains respect for visitors (Bowen & Schneider, 2014; Liao & Subramony, 2008). Service technologies complement such effort by freeing up exhibitor's personnel from routine and mundane tasks and provide them with more time to deal with visitor needs and requests. Additionally, service leaders can generate role complexity, in which case, technology acts as a stress reliever and allows exhibitor's personnel to channel their efforts towards more rewarding aspects of their

work and thereby deliver superior service quality to visitors (Sengupta, Yavas, & Babakus, 2015). Therefore, in the trade show context:

H₅ : Service leadership moderates the effects of service technology on customer orientation of exhibitor's personnel such that the positive effects of service leadership will be stronger (weaker) at higher (lower) levels of service technology.

2.1.6. Interaction effects of service technology and empowerment on customer orientation

The interaction effect of technological capabilities and empowerment on customer orientation is less understood (Chebat & Kollias, 2000; Gazzoli et al., 2012). We extend two lines of arguments in support of such interaction. First, due to the wider range of tasks that need to be performed, trade show exposes the exhibitor's personnel to role uncertainty and role ambiguity. Therefore, while empowered exhibitor's personnel engage in self-directed learning, they also involve in exploratory and exploitative service innovation (Sok & O'Casey, 2015), which is better served by technological support (Fleming, Artis, & Hawes, 2014). Second, the RBV suggests a synergistic effect of resource complementarity. For instance, Khatri, Baveja, Agrawal, and Brown (2010) propose that human resources and information technology capabilities complement each other resulting in above average firm performance. Similarly, Kmiecik et al. (2012) demonstrate that IT capability interacts with innovativeness resulting from employee empowerment to positively influence firm performance. We suggest that when exhibitors deploy service technology capabilities in trade shows, it offers exhibitor's personnel greater access to information about visitor needs and requests (Setia, Venkatesh, & Joglekar, 2013). This allows them to conduct positive and rich interactions with the visitors, albeit when they are empowered by service technology. The empowered exhibitor's personnel are responsive, can offer customized solutions (Plakoyiannaki, Tzokas, Dimitratos, & Saren, 2008), and can coordinate and collaborate with visitors to deliver superior service. We, therefore, argue that the integration of service technology and empowerment will enable the exhibitor's personnel to better understand and serve trade show visitors. Therefore, in the trade show context:

H₆ : Empowerment moderates the effect of service technology on customer orientation such that the positive effects of service technology will be stronger (weaker) at higher (lower) levels of empowerment.

2.1.7. Interaction effects of service leadership and empowerment on customer orientation

The RBV suggests that when two substitute resources are at play, there will be a non-synergistic effect on the outcomes of the available resources (Barney & Arian, 2001). For instance, employee empowerment and leadership initiatives are two resources that are substitutable. We argue that when exhibitors adopt service leadership, exhibitor's personnel feel less empowered as they feel they are locked into a regimen. This might reduce confidence in the exhibitor's personnel to make a difference in their interaction with visitors, but once the exhibitor's personnel are empowered, the leadership drive is not effective anymore as exhibitor's personnel are already confident and have the required resource to interact with visitors freely and enthusiastically (Lam & Mayer, 2014). Empowerment enables the exhibitor's personnel to take control of interaction decisions, which in turn, positively affects the delivery of high-quality service (Walsh, Yang, Dose, & Hille, 2015). Empowered exhibitor's personnel in a trade show may seek less support from leaders to carry out their respective tasks (e.g., demonstrate high interaction quality). Therefore, we expect that the positive effect of leadership is stronger when the exhibitor's personnel are less empowered compared to highly empowered exhibitor's personnel. Therefore, in the trade show context:

H₇ : Empowerment moderates the effect of service leadership on

customer orientation such that the positive effects of service leadership will be stronger (weaker) at lower (higher) levels of empowerment.

3. Method

3.1. Sample and procedure

The data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire during an annual, two-day packaging, processing, and supply chain trade show in India, where 250 exhibitors launched 50 new products and 100 new machines in the presence of 7734 B2B visitors from across the country. The questionnaire (in English), was pretested with 30 visitors and 15 exhibitors' personnel on the first day to ensure face validity, clarity, and proper sequencing and organization. The revised instrument was administered to visitors and exhibitor's personnel on the second day of the show. Furthermore, independent sample *t*-tests indicated that responses between the pretest and actual questionnaire across two different days were the same on average where $p > .05$.

Graduate students (10 on the first day, and 110 on the second day), from a major university in a metropolitan city of India, and with prior data collection training, collected data for this study at the site of the trade show. Students approached all the exhibitors excluding those already contacted on the first day. Data collection was done by student pairs. Each pair was randomly assigned three exhibitors and asked to approach three visitors at each booth immediately after the interaction between the visitor and the employees (i.e., the exhibitor's personnel) concluded. We decided to choose three visitors per booth based on the dyadic data collection approach suggested by [Martin and Bush \(2006\)](#). The exhibitors and visitors were informed that the survey was part of an academic project, were assured of complete confidentiality, and only after informed consent, was the survey executed. Booth-level data such as booth size, number of employees, and attractiveness of each booth was also collected from the organizers and the exhibitors. No incentives were provided either to respondents or graduate students.

We obtained 366 complete questionnaires from visitors and 151 from exhibitors' personnel. The visitors were 95% men and 5% women, with a median age of 35 years; moreover, 85% had more than ten years of experience with their firms. The exhibitors' personnel were 96% men and the remaining were women; the median age was 32 years, and 90% had > 10 years of experience in their respective industry; 70% had been working in the firm they represented for the last 10 years; 70% of the exhibitors had an average sales revenue of INR 100 million (calculated for the last three years).

3.2. Measures

All constructs except one (i.e., visitor satisfaction) were measured using multiple items on a seven-point Likert scale (see [Table 1](#)), with seven being the highest and one the lowest of each construct. While designing the questionnaire, the items pertaining to a particular construct were separated and intermixed to reduce the single-source method bias ([Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003](#)). Different response formats further mitigated the threat of common method bias by creating psychological breaks that triggered respondents to think more cognitively, thereby dampening the automatic processing of scale items. We measured the constructs of central relevance to this study from the exhibitor's personnel and visitors. Furthermore, we collected the exhibitor's booth data from the trade show organizer.

Service leadership, service technology, empowerment, customer orientation and job satisfaction were the constructs directed towards the exhibitors' booth personnel. The tenure of personnel and the number of exhibitor's personnel deployed at each exhibitor's booth were measured as a control variable. Interaction quality, satisfaction, and word-of-mouth intentions were the constructs directed towards the visitors to the exhibitor. We also measured the visitor's perception of

exhibitor innovativeness and booth attractiveness, which were used as control variables. Booth attractiveness was measured using nine dichotomous questions such as "To gain attention, eye-catchers are used in this area; YES/NO," which were combined to create an index that ranged from 0 to 1 and indicated the proportion of 'Yes.' As visitors interacted with multiple employees at different booths, they were intercepted and requested to evaluate only the immediate employee they interacted with at the specific booth. Finally, the trade show organizer provided information about each exhibitor's (i) booth size and (ii) booth cost.

3.3. Data analysis and results

In a confirmatory factor analysis, conducted for the exhibitor's personnel measures, we tested a five-factor measurement model ($\chi^2_{408} = 595.40$, $p = .00$, RMSEA = 0.055, CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, IFI = 0.94), followed by a single factor measurement model ($\chi^2_{418} = 770.36$, $p = .00$, RMSEA = 0.075, CFI = 0.87, TLI = 0.86, IFI = 0.88). The results of the χ^2 difference test ($\Delta\chi^2_{10} = 174.96$, $p < .01$) ruled out any serious common method bias concern ([Boyer & Hult, 2005](#)). Secondly, to provide the stringent test of examining the common method bias, we incorporated a common method factor into our measurement model along with the five factors of substantive interest to our study. The overall fit statistics indicate small differences between the measurement models with and without the common method factor. Furthermore, as the path coefficient between the items and the latent construct did not change much with the inclusion of the common method factor, we concluded that the common method bias is not a cause for concern in the exhibitor's personnel sample ([Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012](#)).

We repeated the same analysis for visitors' variables. We first tested a four-factor measurement model with interaction quality, satisfaction, perceived innovativeness, and word-of-mouth intentions ($\chi^2_{277} = 536.68$, $p = .00$, RMSEA = 0.051, TLI = 0.95, IFI = 0.96, CFI = 0.97), followed by a single factor measurement model ($\chi^2_{299} = 2940.50$, $p = .00$, RMSEA = 0.156, CFI = 0.60, IFI = 0.60, TLI = 0.57). The results of the χ^2 difference test ($\Delta\chi^2_{22} = 2403.82$, $p < .01$) indicated that the common method bias does not pose a problem. Then, we incorporated a common method factor into our measurement model along with the three factors of substantive interest to our study. Since the inclusion of this variable did not alter the overall results, we concluded that common method bias is not a concern in the visitor sample ([Podsakoff et al., 2012](#)).

We examined the hypothesized linkages between exhibitor's personnel and visitors' responses using an aggregate exhibitor booth-level data to avoid the issue of single source bias. All responses from the exhibitor's personnel and visitors were averaged at the exhibitor booth level. This approach is consistent with the other studies for testing the hypotheses using dyadic and triadic datasets ([Homburg & Stock, 2004](#); [Jha, Balaji, Yavas, & Babakus, 2017](#); [Wangenheim & Bayón, 2007](#)). The average within-booth inter-rater reliability values, $\text{rwg}(j)$ for interaction quality (IQ), visitor satisfaction (SAT) and word-of-mouth intentions (WOM) were 0.91, 0.90 and 0.92, respectively. These values were higher than the accepted criterion of 0.7 ([James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984](#)). The intra-class correlation, ICC(1) values were 0.42, 0.56 and 0.61 for IQ, SAT and WOM, respectively, which were higher than the cut-off value of 0.12 ([James et al., 1984](#)). The ICC(2) values were 0.60, 0.72 and 0.70 for IQ, SAT and WOM.

The results of $\text{rwg}(j)$, ICC(1) and ICC(2) justify aggregation of exhibitor's personnel and visitor data at the exhibitor's booth level. Therefore, we matched the data at the exhibitor level and utilized the exhibitor booth level as a unit of analysis. While matching the dyadic data set coming from the exhibitor's personnel and visitors and booth level data from the organizer, we dropped some responses because of incomplete data and straight-lining issues. This resulted in a usable sample size of 98 matched data. We tested the differences between

Table 1
Scale items for construct measurement.

Stand personnel confirmatory factor analysis of items and measurement properties of the scales		
Scale items	Standardize loadings	t-value
Service leadership (SL), Lytle, Hom, and Mokwa (1998) ($\alpha = 0.87$; AVE = 0.88)		
SL1: Management constantly communicates the importance of service quality	0.77	F
SL2: Management regularly spends time “in the field” or “on the floor” with customers and frontline employees	0.82	13.58
SL3: Management is constantly measuring service quality	0.75	9.52
SL4: Managers give personal input and leadership into creating quality service	0.62	7.08
SL5: Management provides resources, not just “lip service,” to enhance our ability to provide excellent service	0.80	10.28
SL6: Management shows they care about service by constantly giving of themselves	0.82	10.65
Service technology (ST), Johnson (1996) ($\alpha = 0.80$; AVE = 0.78)		
ST1: We have ‘state of art’ technology to enhance our service quality	0.72	F
ST2: Sufficient money is allocated for technology to support my efforts to deliver better services	0.87	7.95
ST3: I have necessary technology support to serve my customers better	0.75	7.95
ST4: Management works hard to make our systems and processes more customer friendly	0.60	7.08
Empowerment (EP), Yavas and Babakus (2010) ($r = 0.68$)		
EP1: I often make important customer decisions without seeking management approval	0.95	F
EP2: I have the freedom to act independently in order to provide excellent service	0.69	7.52
Customer orientation (CO), Donavan et al. (2004) ($\alpha = 0.88$; AVE = 0.82)		
CO1: I enjoy nurturing my customers	0.53	F
CO2: I take pleasure in making every customer feel like he/she is the only customer	0.58	5.53
CO3: Every customer problem is important to me	0.50	5.00
CO4: I thrive on giving individual attention to each customer	0.67	6.73
CO5: I naturally read the customer to identify his/her needs	0.62	5.79
CO6: I generally know what customers want even before they ask	0.74	7.09
CO7: I enjoy anticipating the needs of customers	0.61	5.70
CO8: I am inclined to read the customer's body language to determine how much to interact	0.72	6.31
CO9: I enjoy delivering the intended service on time	0.80	6.67
CO10: I find a great deal of satisfaction in completing tasks precisely for customers	0.66	5.56
CO11: I enjoy having the confidence to provide good service	0.84	6.82
CO12: I enjoy remembering my customers' names	0.70	6.18
CO13: I enjoy getting to know my customers personally	0.65	5.95
Job satisfaction (JS), Babin and Boles (1998) ($\alpha = 0.72$, AVE = 0.77)		
JS1: My job is very pleasant	0.75	F
JS2: I am highly satisfied with my job	0.69	8.40
JS3: I am enthusiastic about my work	0.73	8.89
JS4: I find real enjoyment in my work	0.66	7.94
JS5: I definitely dislike my job	0.80	9.76
JS6: My job is very worthwhile	0.58	6.90
Model-fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 595.40$, $p = .00$, RMSEA = 0.055, TLI = 0.92, CFI = 0.93, IFI = 0.94.		
NOTE: All the loadings were significant at the 0.01 level.		
F - Loadings were initially fixed to 1.0.		

Customer confirmatory factor analysis of items and measurement properties of the scales

Interaction quality (IQ), Cronin, Brady, and Hult (2000) ($\alpha = 0.93$, AVE = 0.56)		
Please rate the exhibitor's personnel who interacted with you. They are:		
IQ1: Approachable	0.70	F
IQ2: Dependable	0.69	13.85
IQ3: Willing to go the extra mile to meet my needs	0.76	13.74
IQ4: Competent	0.76	13.64
IQ5: Knowledgeable	0.71	12.86
IQ6: Courteous, polite and respectful	0.74	13.25
IQ7: Trustworthy, believable and honest	0.77	13.75
IQ8: Always ready to listen to me carefully	0.78	13.99
IQ9: Always ready to make the effort to understand my needs	0.80	14.32
IQ10: Easy to relate	0.78	14.11
IQ11: Flexible in dealing with customers	0.75	13.54
IQ12: Reliable	0.78	13.48
Visitor satisfaction (SAT), Brady and Cronin Jr (2001) and Jha, Deitz, Babakus, and Yavas (2013) ($\alpha = 0.92$, AVE = 0.69)		
Please rate your feelings about your interactions with this exhibitor's personnel (10-point scale)		
SAT1: Unhappy (1) - Happy (10)	0.78	F
SAT2: Displeased (1) - Pleased (10)	0.89	20.51
SAT3: Terrible (1) - Delighted (10)	0.85	17.10
SAT4: Negative (1) - Positive (10)	0.79	15.31
SAT5: Dissatisfied (1) - Satisfied (10)	0.84	16.85
Word of mouth (WOM), Brady and Cronin Jr (2001) ($\alpha = 0.87$, AVE = 0.70)		
What is the likelihood that you (1 = very unlikely, 7 = 1 to very likely)		
WOM1: Would encourage your company to do business with this exhibitor?	0.80	F
WOM2: Would recommend this exhibitor to other businesses?	0.88	18.06
WOM3: Would say positive things about this exhibitor to buyers and decision-makers in your company?	0.81	16.58
Perceived Innovativeness (INN), Kunz, Schmitt, and Meyer (2011) ($\alpha = 0.88$, AVE = 0.54)		
Based on your experience with this exhibitor, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 7)		

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Customer confirmatory factor analysis of items and measurement properties of the scales		
INN1: The exhibitor constantly generates new ideas	0.74	F
INN2: The exhibitor has changed the market with its offers.	0.73	13.09
INN3: The exhibitor is a pioneer in its category	0.76	13.65
INN4: The exhibitor is an advanced forward-looking firm	0.75	13.23
INN5: The exhibitor is dynamic	0.72	12.94
INN6: The exhibitor launches new products and creates market	0.72	12.88
Model-fit Statistics: $\chi^2_{277} = 536.68$, $p = .00$, RMSEA = 0.051, TLI = 0.95, IFI = 0.96 CFI = 0.97		
NOTE: All the loadings were significant at the 0.01 level.		
F - Loadings were initially fixed to 1.0.		

Table 2

correlations, internal consistency, means and standard deviations of composite scale score.

Variables	SL	ST	EM	CO	JS	IQ	SAT	WOM	INN	X1	X2	X3	X4
Service leadership (SL)	1.00												
Service technology (ST)	0.758	1.00											
Empowerment (EM)	0.389	0.445	1.00										
Customer orientation (CO)	0.688	0.709	0.494	1.00									
Job satisfaction (JS)	0.550	0.543	0.444	0.693	1.00								
Interaction quality (IQ)	0.103	0.056	0.006	0.104	0.256	1.00							
Visitor satisfaction (SAT)	0.297	0.140	0.036	0.234	0.234	0.479	1.00						
Word of mouth (WOM)	0.178	0.058	0.004	0.145	0.165	0.385	0.763	1.00					
Perceived innovativeness (INN)	0.137	0.089	0.022	0.054	0.057	0.135	0.494	0.606	1.00				
Booth Cost (X1)	0.018	0.117	0.036	0.056	0.061	0.093	0.079	0.078	0.112	1.00			
Number of exhibitor's personnel in each booth (X2)	-0.065	-0.025	-0.318	-0.252	0.247	0.079	0.025	-0.084	0.154	0.176	1.00		
Booth attractiveness (X3)	0.016	-0.039	0.078	0.085	0.009	-0.069	-0.088	0.038	0.114	0.109	-0.053	1.00	
Employee tenure (X4)	-0.059	-0.103	-0.174	-0.047	-0.151	0.103	0.114	0.077	-0.017	-0.067	0.082	0.068	1.00
Cronbach Alpha (α)	0.89	0.82	0.55	0.89	0.75	0.94	0.90	0.86	0.88	-	-	-	-
Mean	5.97	5.94	5.14	5.87	5.93	5.31	7.61	5.04	4.80	149,935.7	3.71	0.66	7.06
SD	0.96	0.92	1.25	0.78	0.93	1.01	1.35	0.89	0.81	272,157.9	2.92	0.14	5.71

Notes: Composite scale scores for each construct were calculated by averaging respective item scores. A higher score indicates a more favorable response. SL, ST, EM, CO, JS, IQ, INN and WOM were measured using a 7-point scale. SAT was measured using a 10-point scale. Correlations that are $< |0.18|$ are significant at the 0.05 level.

dropped samples and used samples based on independent sample *t*-tests and did not find any significant differences across the constructs and demographic profiles. Since our measures exhibited strong psychometric properties, we created composite scores (average of items representing each construct) to represent model constructs at a molar level of abstraction (Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1994) and used the composite scores in testing the research model. Table 2 provides correlations, means, and standard deviations of the study constructs as well as the internal consistency (coefficient alpha) of the measures.

3.4. Hypotheses test results

We used SmartPLS 3.0 (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015) to estimate our model. Exhibitor's personnel tenure, number of exhibitor's personnel in the booth, booth cost, booth attractiveness, and perceived innovativeness of the exhibitor were used as control variables (Tafesse & Skallerud, 2017). The main effects and interaction effects were estimated using the path weighting scheme and 5000 sub-sample bootstraps with a no-sign option. The variance explained for customer orientation ($R^2 = 69\%$), job satisfaction ($R^2 = 51\%$), interaction quality ($R^2 = 0.07\%$), visitor satisfaction ($R^2 = 42\%$), and word-of-mouth intentions ($R^2 = 0.65\%$) indicating that the model has predictive validity. In addition, the positive values of the Stone-Geisser Q^2 statistics (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012) for customer orientation (0.61), job satisfaction (0.45), interaction quality (0.05), visitor satisfaction (0.36), and word-of-mouth (0.62) indicate that the model has predictive relevance.

As shown in Table 3, the relationship between service leadership and customer orientation is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.45$, $t = 3.80$, $p < .01$), which supports H_1 . In addition, service technology has a

positive and direct effect on employees' customer orientation ($\beta = 0.44$, $t = 3.74$, $p < .01$), giving support for H_2 . Empowerment did not show a positive significant direct effect on customer orientation ($\beta = 0.07$, $t = 1.18$, $p = .24$), and this does not lend support to H_3 .

H_4 states that customer orientation will mediate the effect of service leadership, service technology, and empowerment on job satisfaction. We used Hayes (2013) SPSS macro MEDIANE to test the full mediation model. The overall mediation model was supported. Employees' customer orientation showed a significant mediation for all three independent variables (service leadership, service technology, and empowerment) on job satisfaction ($CO \rightarrow JS$: $\beta = 0.53$, $p < .01$; $SL \rightarrow CO$: $\beta = 0.33$, $p < .01$; $ST \rightarrow CO$: $\beta = 0.37$, $p < .01$; $EN \rightarrow CO$: $\beta = 0.20$, $p < .01$; Indirect SL: $\beta = 0.18$, LCI = 0.08; UCI = 0.29; ST: $\beta = 0.20$, LCI = 0.09, UCI = 0.33; EN: $\beta = 0.11$, LCI = 0.04; UCI = 0.19). Higher service leadership, higher service technology, and higher empowerment are associated with high customer orientation, and consequently higher job satisfaction.

A product indicator moderation test was used to assess H_{5-7} . The interaction term was created using the products of SL and ST (H_5), ST and EM (H_6) and SL and EM (H_7). The interaction effect of SL*ST (see Fig. 2A), had a significant positive impact ($\beta = 0.16$, $t = 2.05$, $p < .05$), but SL*EM had a significant negative effect ($\beta = -0.26$, $t = -2.03$, $p < .05$) on customer orientation (see Fig. 2B). However, the effect of ST * EM on customer orientation failed to achieve significance ($\beta = 0.13$, $t = 1.28$, $p = .20$). Thus, the data provide support for H_5 and H_7 , but no support for H_6 .

Furthermore, extant literature suggests that exhibitor's personnel's satisfaction is likely to enhance the interaction quality perceived by visitors, which in turn, will affect visitor satisfaction and WOM intentions (Hogreve, Iseke, Derfuss, & Eller, 2017). Therefore, we do not

Table 3
Tests of structural model and research hypotheses

	Standardized estimate	t-value	R ²	Test results
<i>Hypothesized relationships</i>				
H ₁ : SL → CO	0.45	3.80		Supported
H ₂ : ST → CO	0.44	3.74		Supported
H ₃ : EM → CO	0.07	1.18		Not supported
H ₅ : SL*ST → CO	0.16	2.05		Supported
H ₆ : ST*EM → CO	0.13	1.28		Not supported
H ₇ : SL*EM → CO	−0.26	−2.03	0.69	Supported
<i>Control variables</i>				
Employee tenure → CO	0.03	0.75		
Employee tenure → JS	−0.12	1.64		
Booth cost → CO	−0.08	1.93		
Booth cost → JS	0.10	2.56		
# employees in the booth → CO	−0.14	2.20		
Booth attractiveness → JS	−0.07	1.16		
Booth attractiveness → IQ	−0.07	1.07		
Perceived innovativeness → SAT	0.44	4.36		
Perceived innovativeness → WOM	0.30	4.16		
Mediation hypothesis (H ₄)	B	S.E.	CI	
<i>Indirect effect on JS through CO</i>				
SL	0.18	0.07	[0.10, 0.32]	Supported
ST	0.20	0.07	[0.09, 0.30]	
EN	0.11	0.05	[0.04, 0.19]	
<i>Indirect effect on IQ through JS</i>				
CO	0.24	0.10	[0.06, 0.45]	Supported
<i>Indirect effect on SAT through IQ</i>				
JS	0.11	0.07	[0.02, 0.31]	Supported
<i>Indirect effect on WOM through SAT</i>				
IQ	0.36	0.16	[0.14, 0.75]	Supported

Notes: Results are presented based on composite scale scores. All linkages with t values > [1.96] are significant at the 0.05 level. Test statistic values for the indirect effects are based on Hayes (2013) Mediate analysis. No control variables were found significant in model testing.

advance a specific hypothesis for the tested direct linkages in our model. Instead, we provide a test of the model as an overall default hypothesis in a trade show context (see Fig. 1). We found that employee job satisfaction significantly mediated the effect of customer orientation on interaction quality (direct effect CO → IQ: $\beta = -0.14$, $p = .31$; indirect effect: CO → JS → IQ $\beta = 0.24$, LCI = 0.06, UCI = 0.45). The findings also show that interaction quality significantly mediates the effect of exhibitor's personnel job satisfaction on visitor satisfaction (direct effect: JS → SAT $\beta = 0.12$, $p = .21$; indirect effect: JS → IQ → SAT $\beta = 0.11$, LCI = 0.02, UCI = 0.31). Additionally, we find that visitor satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between the interaction quality and word-of-mouth (direct effect: IQ → WOM $\beta = 0.02$, $p = .74$; indirect effect: IQ → SAT → WOM $\beta = 0.36$, $p < .01$). Overall, these downstream relationships offer empirical generalization, and at the same time assure that resource deployment by the firm is used to create a customer-oriented and an enabled exhibitor's personnel ecosystem that has substantive benefits for trade show exhibitors.

4. Discussion

This study examines the key upstream and downstream relationships around the focal construct of customer orientation in a trade show context. On the upstream, we find that service leadership positively moderates the effect of service technology on customer orientation. Additionally, service leadership negatively interacts with empowerment to affect customer orientation. On the downstream, the main effects of service leadership, service technology, and empowerment on job satisfaction are mediated by customer orientation. For that reason, we extended the relevance of service-related resources in trade show management and research beyond the exploration of market-based resources such as attractive market offers, market information, etc.

(Srivastava, Fahey, & Christensen, 2001), and instead, presented an alternative view of resource application. This research shows that through the application of service resources, a trade show acts similar to an effective service provision tool that results in satisfied visitors who spread positive word-of-mouth for the exhibitor (an empirically tested proxy of trade show performance as per Tafesse, 2014). Additionally, given that the on-site stage is critical to trade show performance (Tanner, 2002), we empirically show the role of tangible and intangible resources which enable exhibitor's personnel to offer high-quality interactions with visitors, thereby, enhancing trade show performance. We now detail some of the key theoretical and managerial implications of our research.

4.1. Theoretical implications

Recent review on trade show studies highlights that the majority of trade show research tends to focus either on the exhibitors' perspective or the visitors' viewpoint (Sarmiento & Simões, 2018; Tafesse & Skallerud, 2017). Ours is one of the few studies which take into consideration both the participants. As a result, we contribute to the tradeshow literature in three ways. First, the majority of the trade show studies do not offer generalizable theoretical insights (Tafesse & Skallerud, 2017). We use the RBV as a theoretical underpinning to show that service-related resources such as service leadership, service technology, and empowerment enhance the customer orientation of exhibitor's personnel in a trade show context. However, this happens only if the resources are complementing each other but not when they are substitutable. For instance, an intangible resource (i.e., service leadership) can complement the effectiveness of a tangible resource (i.e., service technology) but is substitutable in the presence of another intangible resource (i.e., empowerment). We contribute to the RBV theory by empirically demonstrating the complementarity and

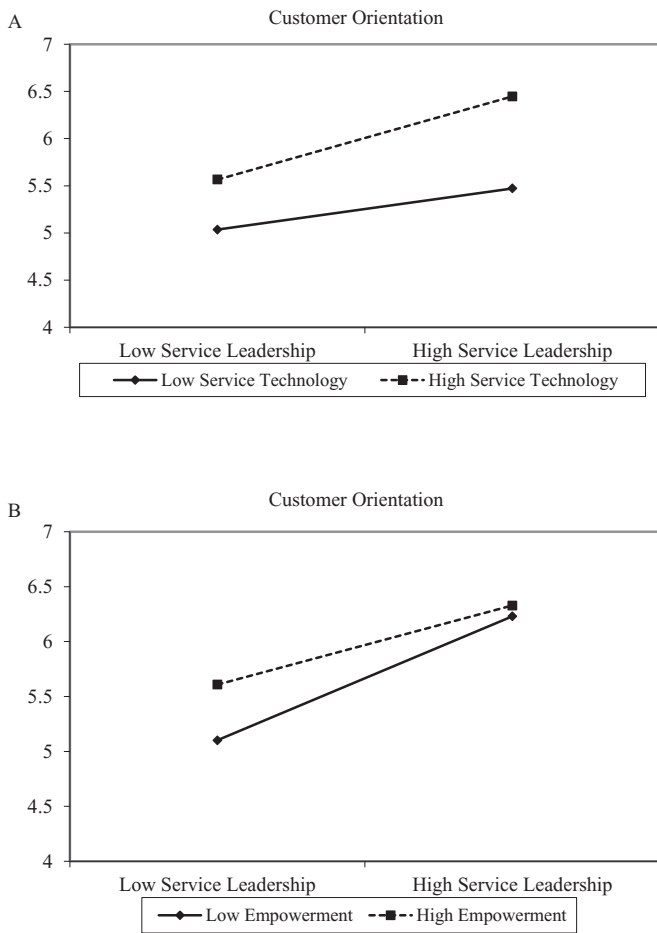


Fig. 2. Visual representation of interaction effect.

substitutability of select tangible and intangible resources, which improve trade show performance.

Second, while some of the direct linkages shown in Fig. 1 have been independently tested by earlier researchers, our integrated model allows us to capture the dyadic perspectives of exhibitors and visitors in a tradeshow context. Additionally, we were able to show the role of intervening variables such as customer orientations, job satisfaction, interaction quality, and visitor satisfaction between the service-related resources and word-of-mouth intentions. Such integration contributes to the trade show and service literature by providing a holistic perspective around the focal construct of customer orientation and interaction quality (MacInnis, 2011), accounting duly for any key alternate explanation to our hypotheses.

Third, despite the rapid growth of trade shows in emerging countries, empirical research focusing on trade show performance in these markets remains scarce (Bathelt, Golfetto, & Rinaldo, 2014; Rinaldo et al., 2017). We show word-of-mouth as a proxy of trade show performance in Indian context which validates the claim of Rinaldo et al. (2017) that trade show performance should be examined in the context of geographic differences. Additionally, the findings of our study are likely to be different in more mature markets such as in North America and Europe because of a more individualistic culture where technology is replacing the need of interpersonal face-to-face interactions. Such differences open up our research findings to subsequent testing in future research across different trade show contexts for stronger empirical generalization.

4.2. Managerial implications

Given the significance of trade shows in B2B and the need to optimize firm resources, we now detail a few insights for managers, which we organized for three different levels of interventions, namely, (a) the resource allocation, (b) the dyadic service attribute of interaction quality, and (c) the visitor-level outcome of satisfaction and word-of-mouth.

- Resource allocation.** Employees play a crucial role in the implementation of trade show strategy and meeting several non-selling goals (Wang, Moyle, Whitford, & Wynn-Moylan, 2014). The results collectively suggest that employee performance in a trade show should be viewed within the larger context of firm resources with an interactive role of tangible (technology) and intangible (leadership and empowerment) resources. Performance management systems would be incomplete if they are only based on short-term objective evaluations and do not appreciate the subjective complexities. On a more specific note, as Cohen and Olsen (2013) suggest that realizing value from technology investment design, development, and deployment of intangible resources into a comprehensive resource system is critical for positive outcomes. Managers can rely on technology and empowerment as organizational support systems for the success of trade shows (Pomirleanu and John Mariadoss, 2015). Trade show success depends on attracting visitors to an exhibitor's booth, and by offering insights into the driver of word-of-mouth advertising, we indicate to managers the basis of a good trade show design. From a technological viewpoint, social media and IT has emerged as a powerful alternative for information communication in sales and marketing (Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu, & Krush, 2016). While this portends a possible threat to the relevance of trade shows, our study indicates how technology can be leveraged by trade show managers rather than seen as a threat. Our results also indicate that empowered employees are less likely to need leadership support, implying the need for more independent and less hierarchical workforce structure, and would do better when supported with technology. At a firm level, this study offers directions for resource planning and employee allocation decisions that could help firms achieve their trade show objectives.
- Dyadic service attribute of interaction quality.** The understanding of service interaction quality in the trade show context is important because the visitors encountered at a trade show are demanding, highly-prepared, and intensive and special purpose users (Rosson & Seringhaus, 1995). While service research emphasizes the role of individual grooming and training and imposes the onus on frontline employees, our perspective on service interaction quality shows that interaction quality is also shaped by service leadership (an intangible resource) and service technology (a tangible resource), which have been heretofore an ignored set of drivers. Service leadership can develop capabilities to connect trade show employees with visitors at an emotional level, while technology can improve effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, investment in technology can be a good short-term intervention by trade show managers looking for enhanced trade show outcomes.
- Visitor-level outcome of satisfaction and word-of-mouth.** We also underscore the importance of service interaction quality in facilitating visitor satisfaction which elicits positive word-of-mouth advertising and referrals, critical in determining whether exhibitors, especially inexperienced and new exhibitors, return to the trade show or not. Many firms, especially SMEs participate in trade shows to gather information (Measson & Campbell-Hunt, 2015), whereas, business buyers visit trade shows to get reassured about the quality and capability of the suppliers (Rinaldo, Borghini, & Golfetto, 2010). Evidently, in such a situation, service (not sales) is the key goal of organizing and participating in a trade show. Buying the product or sales objective was the least common reason for attending trade

shows among the visitors (Sarmiento, Simões, & Farhangmehr, 2015). Therefore, given the strength of trade show as a communication vehicle, managers can critically think of integrating trade show as an important element in the communication portfolio as they design their integrated marketing communication.

4.3. Limitations and future research avenues

This study opened several new avenues for future research. First, the model that currently utilizes cross-sectional data, and therefore, the directionality of relationships must be treated with caution. Longitudinal data or field experiments will improve confidence in causality. Second, our choice of a single trade show established control to counteract the confounding effects originating from inter-industry differences, albeit at the cost of generalization (Singh, Goolsby, & Rhoads, 1994). The model can be tested in other trade show contexts and with different types of industrial buyers. Third, we used service leadership and empowerment as intangible resources and service technology as a tangible resource to understand their main and interactive effects on employee and customer responses. It will be worthwhile to use different kinds of tangible and intangible resources to test the current framework. This will have the potential to inform theory and practice in greater detail.

Fourth, we have measured empowerment with two items which showed poor inter-correlation ($r = 0.55$). While the low correlation can be because we used only two items, it also opens future studies to seek for more reliable measures of empowerment. Fifth, we have used 98 matched sample units to test the hypothesized linkages. While testing each hypothesis, we were not able to control for the measurement error associated with each item for the construct. We encourage the researchers to test the model with larger samples size that would allow them to use SEM instead of PLS to control the measurement issues in the model. Sixth, although we have measured word-of-mouth intentions to manifest the true nature of a trade show in India, we recognize the limitations of relying on word-of-mouth intentions instead of purchase intentions. Additionally, future research with a more elaborate data collection approach at the downstream of customer responses (i.e., purchase intention and behavior) can mitigate this limitation. Seventh and finally, interaction quality refers to the customers' evaluation of the service delivery process and encompasses attitude, behavior, and expertise of the service employee in rendering the service to the customer (Grönroos, 1984). In the present study, we only considered job satisfaction to influence interaction quality. This could be the reason for the low explained variance in our model. Therefore, we call for future research to consider exhibitor personnel's expertise and knowledge in product and market, their personality traits, and job commitment to better explain interaction quality.

Thus, we culminate with a call for additional research on tradeshow in a different geography and hope that our study will inspire other researchers to pursue these and other relevant issues in the future. Such research, on the one hand, can further contribute to the generalizability of findings and theory building, and, on the other hand, can facilitate managerial decisions.

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