

Institute of Marketing



University of St.Gallen

Exhibitor satisfaction in b2b-trade shows - Understanding performance patterns from Vavra's Importance Grid perspective

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Photo: BEA bern expo AG

Introduction

Exhibitor satisfaction in business-to-business trade shows

- **Tradeshows are an essential instrument in the marketing of goods and services. The fair and tradeshow business has become a multi-billion dollar industry.**
- **To increase service quality on trade shows, trade fair organizers strive for achieving a high level of exhibitor satisfaction.** Despite its major importance for the fair and tradeshow industry, current measures of trade show performance do not adequately capture dimensions important to exhibitors (Hansen 2004).
- **This presentation contributes to the field of trade show research by:**
 - (1) exploring relevant issues of exhibitor satisfaction**
 - (2) developing a measurement approach**
 - (3) comparing results upon the Vavra's importance grid**
 - (4) collecting and comparing data from a number of 362 exhibitors in b2b- trade shows and 404 exhibitors in b2c- fairs.**

Source: Hansen 1996/1999/2004, Parasuraman et. al. 1988, Keaveney 1995, Gronroos 1998



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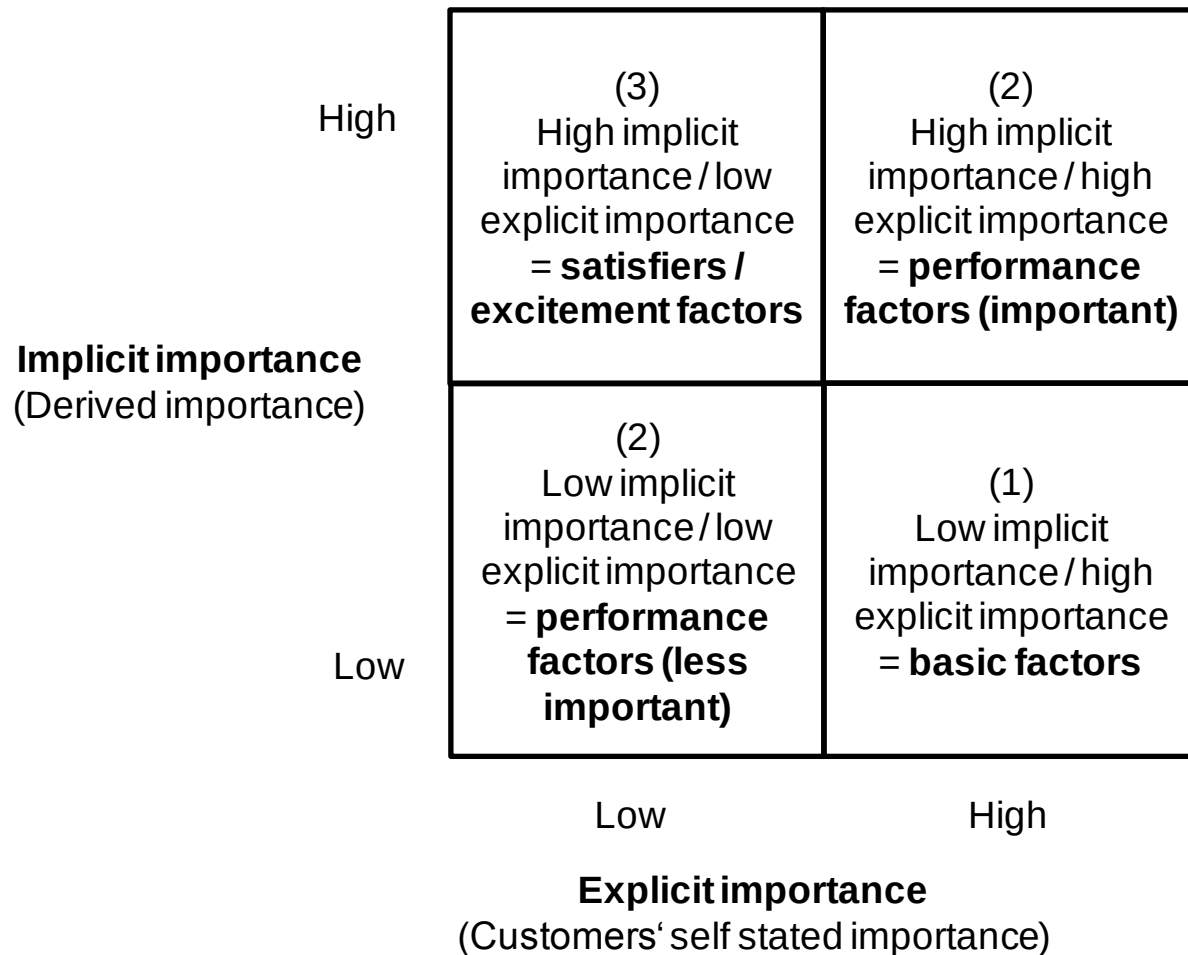
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Vavra's Importance Grid

Graph



Source: Vavra 1997

Vavra's Importance Grid

Basic model assumptions and their practical handling

- **Model assumptions:**

- (1) **Explicit and implicit importance** of product or service attributes may be **identified**.
- (2) If asked about the importance of service attributes, customers rank basic factors most, performance factors second, and satisfiers least important.
- (3) **Implicit importance is derived from correlating or regressing specific service items' stated performance scores with the overall satisfaction score.**

- **Handling of the assumptions:**

- (a) distinguish implicit and explicit importance in order to **correct for the overvaluation** of basic factors and the **undervaluation** of satisfiers, using a non-linear model.
- (b) Usually the identification of implicit importance using coefficients for multiple regression analysis are distorted by multicollinearity within independent variables. This deficit is circumvented in this work by using partial correlation coefficients .

Source: Matzler et al. 2002, Deng et. al 2008, Hair 1998

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Sample Structure

Data collection – Measurement

- **The data** was collected at 8 different Swiss fair locations with a standardized questionnaire covering 16 different shows. The questionnaires were sent out to all exhibitors of 8 different B2B trade shows ($\Sigma=2306$) and to 8 different B2C trade fairs ($\Sigma=3776$). The rate of returned useable questionnaires was $N_1=362$ from tradeshow and $N_2=404$ from public trade fairs.
- A list of 28 service items was adapted from Shipley (1993) and from a number of 10 field interviews among marketing managers of industrial firms exhibiting at trade shows. The item list includes key factors for the decision to attend a fair, covering four categories: **event values** (the fair as such), **management values**, **service values**, and **location values**. The items were rated in terms of service items' importance and performance on a five-point Likert-scale.

Source: Shipley 1993, Deng et. al 2008, Hair 1998

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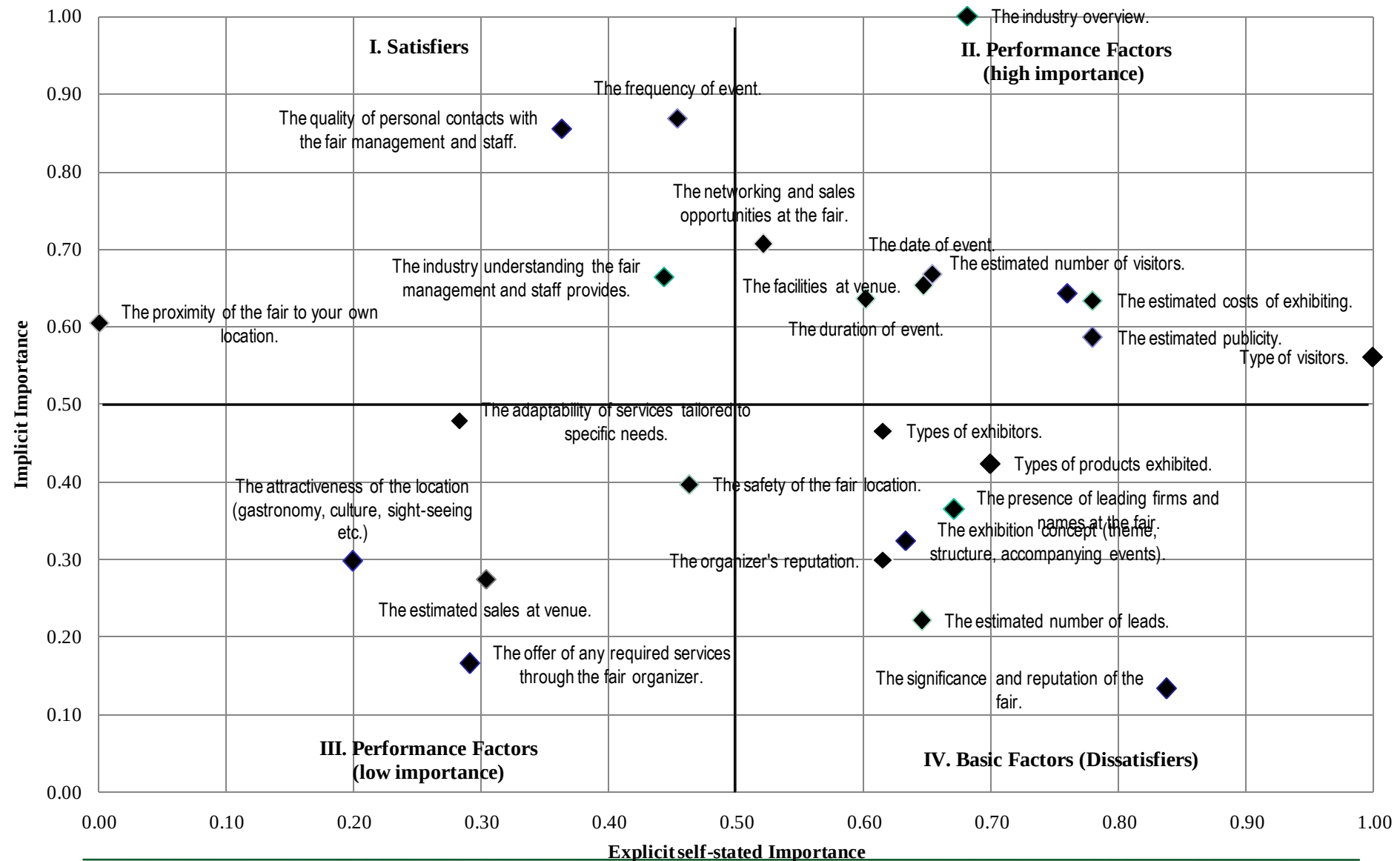
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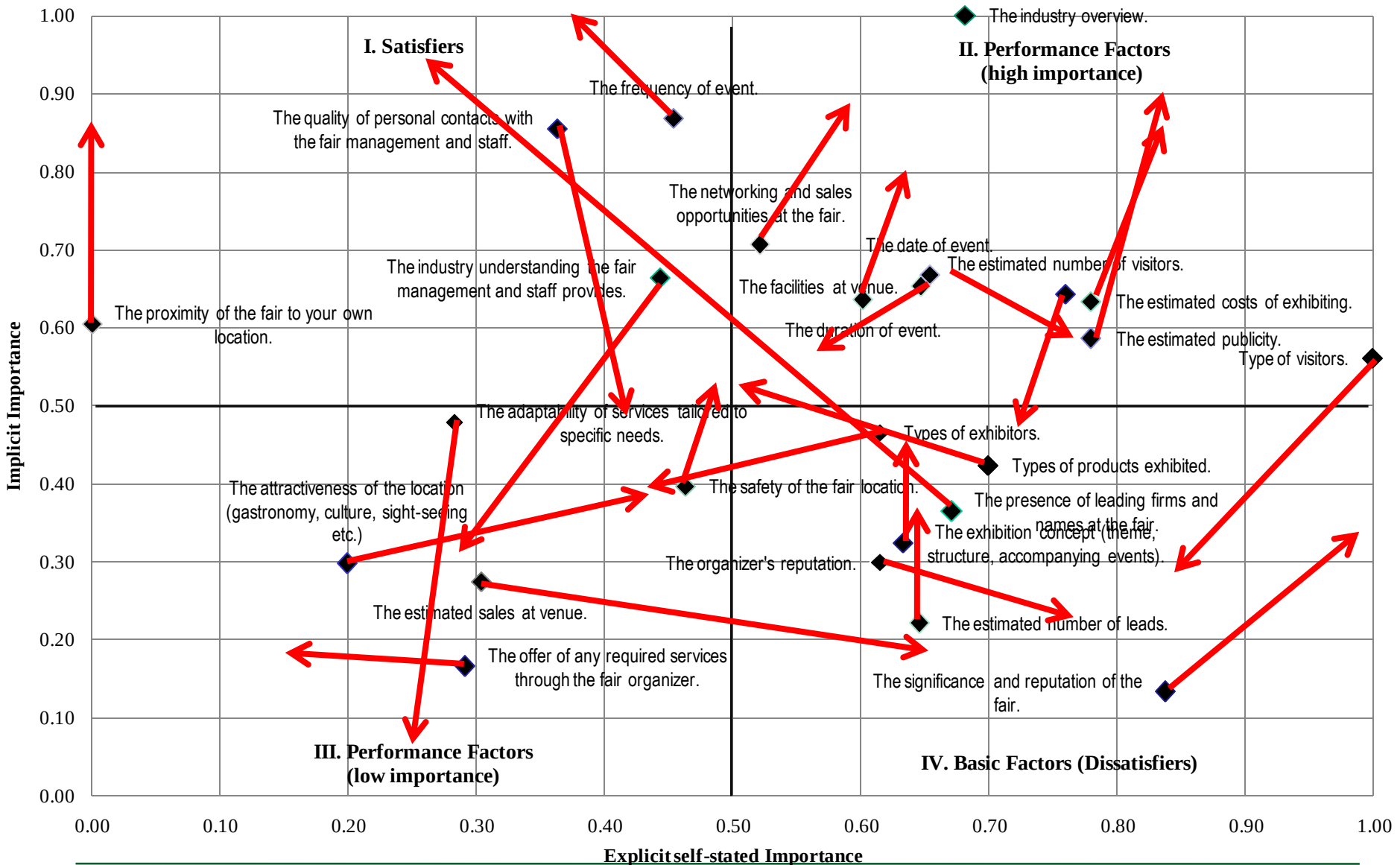
Results (1)

Importance Grid B2B-Trade Shows



Results (2)

Importance Grid B2B-Trade Shows



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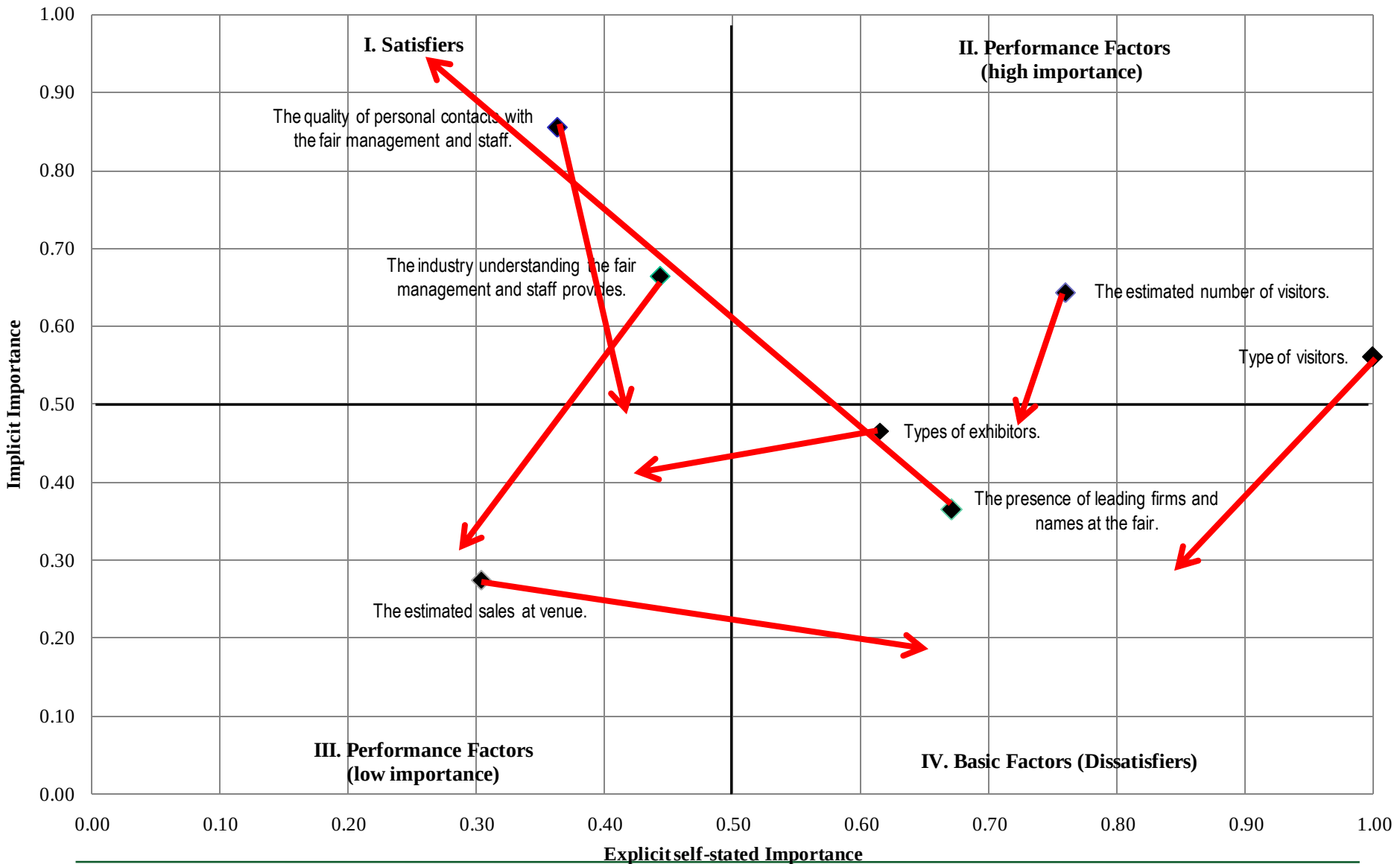
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Exhibitor satisfaction in business-to-business trade shows

Migration trade shows to public fairs

Results (2)

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Conclusion and Limitations

- **Conclusion:** Vavra's importance grid is a useful method to compare perceived requirements and satisfaction items of the exhibitors at tradeshow and public exhibitions. Clear differences between the two categories of shows can be used as a **managerial guideline for fair organizers in the design of questionnaires about exhibitors' satisfaction**, depending upon which market they serve (industrial or consumer).
- **Limitations:**
 - (1) the study focuses on the Swiss market.
 - (2) the visitors' influence on the performance of exhibitions was not included.
 - (3) the calculation of implicit importance includes the use of natural logarithms of the score of the individual items in order to yield a desired non-linear relationship. This methodology is not backed by any theory.
 - (4) for both types of exhibitions the number of satisfiers in quadrant I is deceptively low, which reflects the shortcoming of this method compared to Kano's.

Thank you for your attention!



Trade Shows and Public Fairs

Terminology used in this presentation

- Under the term "**trade show**" we subsume **exhibitions or shows for industrial goods and services**, independent of regional, national or international focus and addressing multi-industries or single industries which are sold to companies and institutional customers.
- In the following the term "**public trade fair**" subsumizes **shows or exhibitions for consumer goods**, irrespective of their breadth of goods and services displayed (broad and general or narrow, or focused on a single branch, like sports) that are addressed to private customers.

Vavra's Importance Grid

Framework

- Vavra's model is a framework to determine the **importance of different service attributes for customer satisfaction.**
- It identifies basic, performance and excitement factors **comparing explicit importance scores** for specific services **with** corresponding **implicit importance measures.**

Source: Vavra 1997

Vavra's Importance Grid

Explanation for basic and performance factors, and satisfiers

- **Basic factors** score high on explicit but low on implicit importance. If not offered or not delivered at or above the expected service level, they cause dissatisfaction. Overachievement does not advance customer satisfaction.
- **Performance factors** score either high or low on both importance dimensions. The relationship between service-item performance-score and the contribution to overall satisfaction is linear. Thus, the higher the delivered service level, the more satisfied the customers are and vice versa.
- **Satisfiers (excitement factors) score** low on explicit but high on implicit importance. If offered, they considerably advance overall satisfaction but satisfiers do not necessarily avoid dissatisfaction. Customers do not expect satisfiers to be part of the offered service, which is why they strongly contribute to wow and to retain customers.

Source: Vavra 1997

Methods

Analysis

- The large size of samples allowed using the **partial correlation model** to derive implicit performance for the 28 service items, thus controlling for multicollinearity. However, due to limitations in the survey, **overall customer satisfaction (OCS)**, had to be **inferred** for each respondent **from the average explicit performance** of service items.
- The use of the partial correlation model requires sample sizes > 200 in order to obtain significant (at $\alpha = 0.05$ level) coefficients for a high percentage of attributes, and therefore comparison of individual fairs was not possible.
- Comparing the results of B2B tradeshowes with B2C public fairs can be done only by **mean** and not by relative **service attributes**.