

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF FACTORS THAT EXHIBITION ORGANIZERS LOOK FOR WHEN SELECTING CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTERS

ABSTRACT

This study examines the dimensions of convention and exhibition (C&E) center selection attributes from the perspective of exhibition organizers, who have the authority to decide on an exhibition venue. The combined qualitative and quantitative method generates 33 items under a nine-factor structure, including five center-specific and four destination-specific factors: (F1) quality of C&E center staff members and service contractors; (F2) extra-exhibition opportunities; (F3) image of C&E center; (F4) industrial environment of C&E center site; (F5) center facilities; (F6) center accessibility; (F7) C&E center site environment; (F8) exhibition hall cost; and (F9) hotel accommodation. The results of this study enhance the insights of concerned C&E center management and stakeholders, with regard to which factors should be considered when conducting a feasibility study before constructing a center, as well as in determining effective ways to manage an operating center that aims to focus on hosting exhibitions.

KEYWORDS. Convention and exhibition center, center-specific factors, destination-specific factors, exhibition, exhibition organizers.

INTRODUCTION

The meeting, incentive, convention, and exhibition (MICE) industry continues to grow as it becomes widely recognized as a high value-added industry worldwide. For example, according to an economic effect study by the Association of Korea Exhibition Industry (AKEI, 2015), the Korea exhibition industry contributes US \$2.715 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP) of

Korea, generating value-added inducement of US \$1.071 billion and 17,007 full-time equivalent jobs in 2014. The beneficiaries of the exhibition industry do not only include industry practitioners, such as exhibition organizers, service contractors, and venues, but also the hospitality industry, given that hotel accommodation, food, and beverages account for 29% of exhibition visitors' total spending (AKEI, 2015).

Appreciating the significant economic effect of the convention and exhibition industry, Europe, North America, and Asia are vying for the opportunity to host conventions and exhibitions, with the aim of boosting local tourism and trade businesses. Along with the development of the Asian economy, the exhibition industry in Asia since the 1960s has grown stronger compared with other parts of the world (UFI, 2014). This development has naturally led to a proliferation of world-class C&E centers in Asia, as the valuable economic benefits of the exhibition industry cannot be realized without C&E centers in which to host exhibitions. At present, 13 C&E centers across Korea are providing space for MICE. According to UFI (2014), Korea (324,368 m²) ranks third in Asia in terms of C&E center capacity, behind Japan (355,658 m²) and China (4,845,192 m²).

C&E centers have expanded because they are believed to serve as economic catalysts. A C&E center is a major venue for conventions and exhibitions, which creates an economic multiplier effect. Therefore, many civic leaders are increasingly turning to C&E centers to revitalize downtown business districts (McNeill & Evans, 2004). However, despite the growing importance of such centers, C&E centers are insufficiently studied in the MICE literature, while the number of exhibition studies is growing in the areas of exhibition service quality (e.g., Bauer et al., 2008; Jung, 2005), exhibition selection (e.g., Breiter & Milman, 2006; Berne & Garcia-Uceda, 2008), trade show performance (e.g., Dekimpe et al., 1997; Gopalakrishna & Lilien, 1995;

Hansen, 2004), exhibitor-visitor interrelationship (e.g., Blythe, 2002; Borghini, Golfetto, & Rinallo, 2006; Godar & O'Connor, 2001), and visitor behaviors and motives (e.g., Smith et al., 2003; Tanner, Chonko, & Ponzurick, 2001). Initial studies of C&E centers have investigated issues such as their feasibility, their pros and cons, the rationale behind their development, and their management and financing (Clark, 2004; Fenich, 1992). Subsequent empirical research has included the contribution of C&E centers to hotel accommodation booking (Boo & Kim, 2010) and the important attributes of C&E centers from the perspective of center visitors (Breiter & Milman, 2006; Wu & Weber, 2005). Considering the observed role of C&E centers in boosting both the local economy and MICE tourism, further examining aspects and issues of C&E centers is worthwhile.

This study aims to identify and validate the attributes and factors of C&E centers resulting in their selection and to measure the relative importance of the selection factors from the perspective of exhibition organizers, based on the following arguments. First, exhibitions are more profitable revenue sources for C&E centers than conventions because exhibitions are generally organized in the same C&E center every year, whereas major conventions and meetings tend to change venues periodically. Moreover, exhibitions naturally require a substantial amount of space for product demonstration and display, which generates more revenue for centers than meetings. Therefore, C&E center management tends to prioritize exhibitions over meetings; an examination of C&E center attributes is compelling because the center's attributes are considered critical in a center's ability to attract exhibitions. Second, previous studies have explored the quality attributes of C&E centers from the perspective of convention attendees or exhibition visitors (Breiter & Milman, 2006; Wu & Weber, 2005). The findings of these studies are useful in understanding the attributes that C&E center attendees are

most concerned about, thereby enabling C&E centers to cater to their needs. However, in terms of attracting exhibitions to C&E centers, exploring center attributes from the perspective of exhibition organizers is more valid than the point of view of attendees, as organizers make the final decisions in selecting exhibition venues. The results of this study allow center operators to effectively manage facilities in a manner that appeals to exhibition organizers. Third, previous studies have only examined center-specific attributes. Although exhibition organizers carefully consider these internal attributes during venue selection, external attributes (i.e., destination-specific attributes) are also crucial elements that organizers assess when selecting C&E centers. This study examines internal and external attributes in order to identify comprehensive center selection attributes from the perspective of exhibition organizers. In sum, this study is designed to address the following research questions: (1) What factors do exhibition organizer consider when selecting a C&E center? (2) What attributes underlie the factors? (3) What are the relative importance of the factors from the perspective of exhibition organizers? The findings of this study are expected to fill in research gaps and contribute to the body of the literature on C&E centers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Development of C&E Centers

According to 2012 economic significance study by the Convention Industry Council (2014), 1.83 million meetings were held in the US in 2012, attracting 225 million attendees. The 1.83 million meetings can be broken down into 1.3 million corporate meetings, 273,700 conventions, 10,900 trade shows, and 67,700 incentive events. These events contributed USD115 billion to GDP and created 1.8 million jobs. During the 2012 calendar year, the US MICE

industry generated the direct spending of USD280 billion and contributed USD28 billion to federal, state, and local taxes, while the MICE attendees spent USD164 billion (Clark, 2014). The aforementioned figures reflect the staggering economic value of the MICE.

In particular, the exhibition industry is rapidly growing as destinations acknowledge its contribution to their local economy and competitiveness (Jin & Weber, 2013; Kim, 2007). Exhibitions are largely divided into trade shows (B2B), consumer shows (B2C), and hybrid of trade and consumer shows or mixed shows (B2B2C), depending on the types of visitors (Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012). Trade shows are literally open to qualified trade buyers and suppliers, while consumer shows are made available to the general public. Mixed shows are open to both trade buyers and public although opening schedules vary with the types of visitors. Rittichainuwat and Mair (2012) argue that despite the different types of visitors, exhibition visitor motivations are quite similar across trade and consumer shows. Visitor motivations are classified into buying (the purchase of goods or services) and non-buying (networking, education, information search) activities (Borghini, Golfertto, & Rinallo, 2006; Tanner, Chonko, & Ponzurick, 2001). Based on the nature of visitor motivations, Tanner et al. (2001) categorize visitors into 'total visitors', 'shoppers', 'self-developers', and 'browsers'. Total visitors engage in both buying and non-buying activities, whereas shoppers are mainly interested in purchase. Self-developers are those who take advantage of exhibitions to develop network and gain knowledge through seminars. Browsers attend exhibitions to search for information on new products and development trend.

As the value of the exhibition industry is highly recognized, many countries competitively build C&E centers to promote MICE tourism and, consequently, the local economy (Baloglu & Love, 2005; Davidson, 2003; Eisinger, 2000). The same concept applies to

C&E center development in Korea (Table 1). National and regional governments substantially invest in MICE infrastructure to promote Korea as a MICE destination. The first C&E center (COEX) in Korea opened in Seoul in 1979, and 13 C&E centers are currently holding exhibitions in Korea. According to AKEI (2014), C&E centers supplied an exhibition space of 4,016,093 m² for 569 exhibitions held in Korea in 2013, with an average size per fair of 7,058 m². The number of exhibitions that took place in 2013 was 4.3 times as many as the number (132) held in 2000. As manufacture-based exhibits move to China, popular themes in the Korean exhibition industry are education/publication, culture/art/broadcast, food and beverage, and government/public-related items (AKEI, 2014). For a buyer-seller integration into a marketing platform, Korean exhibition organizers actively capitalize on internet/social media to offer e-commerce platforms all year round, wherein buyers and sellers discuss and explore business opportunities. On-site exhibitions thus play a key role in actualizing the business opportunities discussed online between buyers and sellers while disseminating trendy and informative information to exhibitors and visitors. Moreover, exhibition organizing firms in Korea are largely categorized into association PEO, independent PEO, and C&E center PEO. Association PEOs, who belong to their associations, organize association shows and events. Major independent PEOs organize their own shows, while small-sized PEOs tend to work on their clients' shows. Many of the independent PEOs in Korea are small-sized PEOs, who are not usually authorized to select C&E centers. 75 PEOs are presently registered with the Korea Exhibition Organizers Association (KEOA). In addition, labor unions in the US exhibition industry are quite influential; shows cannot be staged when the unions are on strike. However, although labor unions exist in the Korean exhibition industry, the unions do not generally affect exhibitions as they are considered small-scale entities in the industry. Many exhibitions in Korea are domestic trade fairs. To

maintain the well-balanced number of domestic and international exhibitions, Korea hosted the 80th UFI Congress in 2013 and plans to develop policies that will generate more international visitors and exhibitors (UFI, 2014). The role of C&E centers will become further significant when more exhibitions are internationalized in Korea.

Insert Table 1

In North America, C&E centers do not employ nor control service contractors, thus exhibition organizers select and work together with their preferred General Service Contractors without restrictions. However, C&E centers in Korea maintain their own listed service contractors that have a contractual relationship with the centers to provide service. C&E centers require exhibitions organizers to use their listed service contractors. If organizers want to hire unlisted service contractors, they need to pay extra fee for the unlisted contractors. Exhibition organizers in Korea therefore carefully review the experience and reputation of C&E center service contractors before selecting a center. It is very important for exhibition organizer to work together with the qualified service contractors, who can create a great synergy and lower exhibition organizing costs. Furthermore, centers in Korea rigorously control the similarity of exhibitions held in their exhibit halls. No matter how reputable shows are, the centers do not accept the shows, whose theme is similar to that of an exhibition already held in centers during the first (latter) half of the year. C&E centers in Korea generally adopt the way C&E centers are managed in Germany. For instance, the centers in Korea have their own PEO team to maximize the utilization of their exhibition space by organizing shows while some center PEOs stage exhibitions in other centers. Centers in Korea are funded by regional governments and/or semi-government bodies and collaborate with local CVBs to vitalize local economy and promote small and medium-sized businesses.

Given that constructing C&E centers requires the substantial investment of public funds, early literature (Fenich, 1992) has explored critical issues regarding the benefits and disadvantages of C&E centers. Fenich (1992) clarifies the pros and cons of C&E center development through conceptual research. The pros are well-reflected by the economic effects of C&E centers. MICE events in C&E centers bring MICE visitors to the community. These visitors spend money on hotel accommodation, dining, and retail. Such spendings contribute to the local economy through both the multiplier effect and job creation. Thus, local governments use a C&E center as an urban renewal scheme in order to boost a sluggish local economy and revitalize a city. However, the overall costs of C&E centers are of great concern. Aside from construction costs, operating costs are huge due to the centers' immense structures. Such high cost-involving projects make breaking even or generating surplus difficult for C&E centers. Moreover, the way in which money that could have been used to benefit the public (e.g., through health care and public housing) is instead spent on C&E centers is of concern to those involved in public investment. These concerns create skepticism about the value of C&E center development and investment (Hovinen, 2002; Laslo & Judd, 2004).

Furthermore, Clark (2004) presents important points that should be considered during a feasibility study of C&E center projects. He argues that concerned stakeholders should carefully review the following areas when planning a C&E center: (1) key indicators for a successful C&E center; (2) justification, finance, and public support for the construction of a C&E center; (3) location, marketing, and management of a C&E center; and (4) booking policies, layout, and services of a C&E center. In particular, Clark (2004) emphasizes that a community should verify the justification and rationale behind the development of a C&E center, which involves a substantial amount of public funds. He asserts that the success of a C&E center can be measured

in terms of hotel room nights, tax, number of events, building occupancy, and economic effect. C&E centers also provide function spaces for community events; thus, the necessity of such centers can be appraised in terms of the capacity of civic centers (Clark, 2004).

Boo and Kim (2010) review the economic effect of C&E centers by examining the measurements for C&E center performance and the validity of such measurements. A popular measurement method considers the numbers of events hosted, attendees, hotel room nights, and function space (Clark, 2004; Fenich, 1994; Tay, 2006). Another important consideration for C&E center economic performance is the duration of events hosted in C&E centers (Whitfield, 2007); the longer attendees stay, the more they spend in the local hospitality and retail industries. The average length of attendee stay highly determines the number of hotel room nights generated by C&E center events. Given that hotel spending is a major expenditure of visitors compared with other spending categories, the number of hotel room nights is also a key indicator of the economic contribution of a center. Moreover, C&E centers heavily rely on hotel tax revenues to operate (Fenich, 1998; Opperman, 1996); thus, increased availability of hotel room nights benefits center management. However, prior literature (Isler, 2008) has suggested that a growing number of attendees does not necessarily indicate that more hotel room nights have been sold. This disproportionate relationship is attributed to local attendees living near C&E centers and the high accessibility of various transportation modes, which reduces the requirement for overnight accommodation. Therefore, the need to distinguish between local and non-local attendees in analyzing the economic effect of C&E centers is justified. Another way of assessing the economic performance of a C&E center is by determining how much attendees spend within the community and how the community is affected in terms of urban renewal, job creation, upgraded destination image, and fiscal effects. The aforementioned performance indicators help key

community stakeholders improve their understanding of the direct and indirect benefits of C&E centers, and the role of such centers in a community is thereby acknowledged (Fenich, 1992, 1994; Nelson, 1999; Sanders, 1998).

The economic contribution of C&E centers is widely recognized; however, substantial public funding is required to construct and operate such centers. Therefore, researchers have focused on important center attributes in order to determine ways of successfully designing and managing a C&E center. Wu and Weber (2005) examine C&E center attributes from the perspective of convention attendees and identify 23 attributes under five domains: accessibility, food and beverage (F&B), convention facilities and services, public facilities and services, and service quality. In their study, ventilation, audiovisual equipment, seating comfort, restrooms, and staff helpfulness are identified as important attributes of centers. Meanwhile, interior decoration, venue design, and adequacy of public telephones are deemed as less important features. Similarly, Breiter and Milman (2006) investigate the perceptions of exhibition visitors regarding these center attributes and identify items in terms of facility services and features. Attendees perceive the following facility service attributes as critical: cleanliness, well-maintained facilities, and staff helpfulness. Meanwhile, directional signage, decent quality of nearby hotels, restrooms, and excellent mobile phone reception are viewed as significant facility feature attributes. These previous studies help further an understanding of the factors that are highly considered by attendees and thereby allow centers to cater to the needs of center visitors. However, these studies do not capture the perspective of event organizers, who are the key decision-makers in venue selection.

Factors for Selecting C&E Centers from the Perspective of Exhibition Organizers

Previous convention literature has examined and identified significant site selection factors for conventions and meetings. However, no research has yet explored the factors that exhibition organizers carefully consider when selecting a C&E center, although a few studies have examined center factors that visitors deem important. Based on an extensive literature review and in-depth interviews with exhibition organizers, the current study presents critical C&E center selection attributes, which are then divided into C&E center-specific and destination-specific attributes.

C&E Center-Specific Attributes

The prior literature on C&E centers (Breiter & Milman, 2006; Wu & Weber, 2005) commonly identifies the qualities of facilities and staff members as important attributes that can affect exhibitor satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Jin & Weber, 2013). Given that the extant literature is based on the viewpoint of convention and exhibition attendees, previously identified attributes are concerned with the service attitude of the general staff and facilities, including directional signage, restrooms, meeting rooms, in-house F&B outlets, and public Internet access. However, the exhibition organizers interviewed in the current study have specifically indicated attributes that are more unique to exhibitions. For example, exhibition organizers regard the quality of service contractors and the staff of contract and operating departments as critical to exhibitions. Other attributes of center facilities, such as cleanliness and the layout of exhibition halls, the variety of hall sizes, loading docks, the availability of a registration system using bar code and quick response code, Internet accessibility through WiFi, and facilities and systems for exhibition visitor promotion, are also considered when exhibition organizers evaluate a C&E center. Furthermore, the reliability of safety and security system protocols exercised by a center is also taken into account by organizers. In addition, the cost of facility usage (e.g., hall rental,

electricity bill, water bill, and garbage collection fee) also concerns organizers when evaluating a C&E center.

Accessibility is deemed as a significant factor when selecting a convention venue (Lee & Back, 2008; Yoo & Chon, 2008). Similarly, accessibility or center location is also a crucial dimension in evaluating and selecting a center for exhibition. Air and ground accessibility is important for both convention and exhibition venues. An accessibility feature that is unique to an exhibition venue is related to logistics for exhibit items, given that most exhibit materials are shipped to a C&E center. Thus, exhibition organizers assess the location of a C&E center in terms of ground and air transportation as well as exhibit material shipping.

Exhibition organizers also consider the image of a C&E center in selecting a venue. The significance of image is evident in the hospitality and tourism literature. Sanders (2004) states that a positive image of tourist and meeting destinations attracts more attendees and boosts the average ratio of hotel room nights to the number of attendees. Similarly, organizers assess a center in terms of how its image can help attract visitors and exhibitors and promote exhibition branding. A center image that is cultivated over time through the past experiences of organizers and the testimonials of other organizers is central to the selection process of a C&E center.

Destination-Specific Attributes

Destination-specific attributes for centers are consistent with those identified as convention destination attributes, such as extra-convention opportunities and site environment. In the convention literature (e.g., Lee & Min, 2013; Yoo & Chon, 2008; Opperman, 1998), safety, destination stimuli, health status, accommodation, and accessibility are regarded as site-specific attributes. Attendees carefully assess these attributes before deciding to participate. Attendees tend to reconsider visiting destinations that offer minimal cultural opportunities and commercial

attractions and those with a low level of safety and security. Therefore, destination-specific attributes are highly considered in feasibility studies on constructing a C&E center (Kock, et al., 2008). Similar to convention attendees, exhibitors and exhibition visitors are concerned about the local environment and its attractiveness. Jin, Weber, and Bauer (2012) identify destination attractiveness attributes from the perspective of exhibitors and categorize these attributes into six factors: destination leisure environment, cluster 1 (leadership of the host city in the industry), cluster 2 (host city as an exhibitor source), venue facilities, accessibility, and destination economic environment. The leisure environment of a destination that concerns the local environment (safety, weather, and language) and extra-exhibition opportunities (tourist attractions and night life) accounts for the most variance explained (32.52%) among the six dimensions, which suggests that it is a critical factor from the viewpoint of exhibitors.

Destination-specific attributes that are unique to exhibitions and are not examined in the convention literature are industrial features within a C&E center destination. Unlike in conventions, selecting an exhibition venue is highly affected by industry themes and the environment of a destination (Boo & Kim, 2010; Jin et al., 2012; Sanders, 1997). Boo and Kim (2010) state that medical and high-tech exhibitions are frequently held in Boston, where medical and high-tech industries are concentrated and well developed. A particular industrial cluster is advantageous for a destination to host related tradeshow. Jin et al. (2012) empirically investigate the link between an exhibition destination and regional industrial infrastructure. They also support the view that industry features and clusters, including manufacturing and distribution bases, suppliers, and industrial associations, enable a destination to attract exhibitions from relevant industries, as evidenced by clusters 1 and 2 being the underlying dimensions of exhibition destination attractiveness. The exhibition organizers who have

participated in in-depth interviews in the current study also argue that local industrial clusters and themes are important considerations in selecting a C&E center and in promoting relevant exhibitions to exhibitors and visitors.

METHODOLOGY

Development of Measures and Data Collection

Qualitative and quantitative methods were adopted to develop a survey questionnaire. Based on the extensive literature review, this study heavily relied on the feedback of industry professionals in order to develop questionnaire items, given that the current study aimed to identify attributes for selecting a C&E center from the perspective of exhibition organizers. In the qualitative stage, the two authors of the current study, who used to engage in the convention and exhibition industry for more than 8 years, contacted potential interviewees via email and telephone. After an interview appointment was confirmed with nine interviewees, the authors visited exhibition organizing firms and interviewed nine exhibition organizers in Korea during the period of June, 2015. Each semi-structured interview took at least one hour to at most one and a half hours. For the verbatim transcripts of interviews, a recording device was used to transcribe the interviews with a pre-approval of each interviewee.

All of the interviewees are senior management (director or above) with at least 10 years of work experience in organizing exhibitions. To minimize bias unique to organizational culture, all of the in-depth interview participants were selected from different companies. Three of the nine participants were from an exhibition organizing department of different C&E centers, thus these participants were knowledgeable about exhibitions and C&E centers. The remaining industry professionals belonged to major exhibition organizing firms. Most items for center-

specific attributes derived from these in-depth interviews. Some items, such as center staff service, center accessibility, and exhibition facility, were discussed in the prior literature (e.g., Breiter & Milman, 2006; Wu & Weber, 2005). However, the items used in the present study differed from those used in previous studies because the current measures were more unique to exhibitions from the perspective of exhibition organizers. The new domains identified in this study through in-depth interviews were the quality of service contractors and staff members of the contract and operating departments and center image and cost, which were regarded by exhibition organizers as critical to selecting a C&E center.

“The quality of service contractors and the staff of contract and operating departments of a C&E center is critical. What I meant by the quality is not how kindly they are but how timely and reliably they provide a service for me to serve exhibitors and visitors to their satisfaction.” (Female exhibition organizer and director with 12 years of experience).

“A center selection is a crucial decision made by exhibition organizers, given that, once the decision is made, it is not easy to change a center. However, if you believe that a center image/brand is not compatible with your exhibition marketing, you’d better consider changing the center for the sake of exhibition promotion to visitors and exhibitors. I strongly believe that a center image significantly affects exhibition branding.” (Male exhibition organizer and director with 10 years of experience).

For destination-specific attributes, extra-exhibition opportunities, the industrial environment of a center site, the environment of a center site, and hotel accommodation were mostly adapted from previous studies (e.g., Boo & Kim, 2010; Jin et al., 2012; Lu & Cai, 2011) and later confirmed and refined via in-depth interviews. In particular, the scales for the industrial environment of a center site were significantly revised by the interviewees because prior measures focused only on exhibitions, without considering C&E centers.

“Exhibitors want to enhance their branding and sales by meeting the right buyers through exhibitions. If the related industry does not exist in a center site, exhibition organizers may have to invite buyers from somewhere else for the success of their exhibitions, which is quite costly. When the corresponding industry is located around a center with local government support for the industry, it is much easier to find exhibitors and buyers for my exhibition. For me, the local industrial environment is a major consideration in center selection.” (Male exhibition organizer and director with 19 years of experience).

In sum, initial measures were generated based on an extensive literature review and in-depth interviews with exhibition organizers. In August, 2015, the authors of this study arranged an expert panel review in a VIP meeting room of COEX (the major C&E center in Korea). The generated items were reviewed by an expert panel (two event scholars and three senior exhibition organizers), who commented on the clarity, wording, conciseness, and relevance of the items. They also shared their concerns and suggestions regarding the item pool to ensure translation validity, including face and content validities. After three hours of the panel review, 46 items were identified, which was later reduced to 33 measures upon exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The sources of the items were summarized in Table 2.

Insert Table 2

In the quantitative stage of validating items, EFA was first performed to determine the underlying dimensions of center selection attributes. Afterwards, Cronbach’s alpha and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to test the reliability and construct validity, respectively. Additionally, a one-factor test was conducted, based on factor analysis, in order to check common method bias, while non-response bias was examined via a *t*-test. Finally, a paired-samples *t*-test was performed to check statistically significant differences between two factors.

Each item was operationalized on a five-point Likert scale, in which “1” indicates “not important at all” and “5” denotes “very important.”

Field researchers visited Korean exhibition organizing firms/PEOs and distributed survey questionnaires to enhance the response rate. This study initially targeted 75 PEOs, who are registered with the Korea Exhibition Organizers Association (KEOA) and are authorized to select a C&E center for their own exhibitions. As many of the registered PEOs, who have fewer than five staff members and organize small-scale consumer shows (e.g., community and regional government events) for their clients, are not authorized to choose a C&E center (their clients usually select a venue.), many PEOs are not considered as a target sample for the present study. Consequently, the field researchers selected 21 active exhibition organizing firms in the exhibition industry that are independent PEOs, association PEOs, or C&E center PEOs. Those firms are located in Seoul, Busan, Daegu, and Gyunggi-do, Korea, employing more than 20 personnel and organizing at least five exhibitions annually.

To ensure that all survey respondents possessed reliable experience in staging exhibitions, field researchers only contacted exhibition organizing staff with at least three years of experience in organizing exhibitions. In Korea, organizing staff with three or more years of experience are usually in a position to coordinate trade fairs as general managers, thus serving as either final decision-makers or significant influencers in the selection of a C&E center. To minimize bias unique to destination environment (i.e., Korea) and the types and themes of shows, qualified survey participants were asked to respond to a survey questionnaire by imagining that they are about to select a C&E center as a venue for their exhibitions without considering any specific cities/countries and show types/themes.

170 data were initially collected, but the number of valid samples for data analysis was reduced to 166, due to four incomplete questionnaires. The president of the Korea Exhibition Organizers Association, who was interviewed in the current study, stated that *“Exhibition organizing firms in Korea suffer from high employee turnover because of unstable work schedules. Therefore, maintaining experienced staff members is very difficult for the firms. Statistics on the number of exhibition organizing staff members with at least three years of work experience are unavailable, but I estimate that approximately 200 to 240 staff members are currently organizing exhibitions in Korea for more than two years.”* Hence, the study population was inherently limited because of the nature of the target sample. Considering that the sample population was 240, according to the previous comment, the sample size of this study included approximately 70% of the target population.

All of the respondents organize exhibitions in Korean C&E centers, while some also had experience of organizing trade fairs in C&E centers in China, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The respondents organize exhibitions in a variety of sizes and industrial sectors; they stage exhibitions as small as 2,000 m² and as big as 100,000 m² under various exhibition themes, such as: automobile, software, machine tools, automated equipment, animation, coffee, food, and weddings. More than half of the respondents (58%) organized mixed exhibitions (B2B2C), while 27% and 15 % staged trade shows (B2B) and consumer shows (B2C), respectively. According to AKEI (2015), almost half of exhibitions held in Korea for 2014 is consumer shows (48.6%), followed by mixed exhibitions (30.5%) and trade shows (20.9%). However, most of consumer shows in Korea are small-scale community events, as evidenced by average exhibition space for consumer shows (6,332 m²), trade shows (12,239 m²), and mixed shows (10,069 m²) in 2014

(AKEI, 2015). These statistics suggest that the survey respondents belong to major exhibition firms that organize more mixed shows and trade shows than consumer shows.

The demographical information of the respondents was also provided. The gender ratio of the participants was 78% male and 22% female. Unlike convention organizers, exhibition organizers were mostly males because of the nature of the work involved. The education levels of the survey participants were as follows: high school diploma (4.2%); bachelor's degree (63.3%); master's degree (30.7%); and doctorate degree (1.8%). The work experience of the participants ranged from 3–5 years (11.4%) and 6–10 years (39.2%), to 11–15 years (34.9%) and over 15 years (14.5%). The age groups of the participants were as follows: 20–29 years old (12.5%); 30–39 years old (73.1%); 40–49 years old (10.4%); and over 50 years old (4%).

EFA and CFA

In exploratory research (i.e., a scale development study), EFA is conducted to identify underlying dimensions that explain common variance in the sample (Hair et al., 1998), followed by CFA to confirm the dimensionality of the measures and to suggest potential model respecification (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). The normality of variables was assessed with skew and kurtosis before EFA and CFA. Five variables that were initially found not to meet normality were transformed using square root or logarithms, after which normality was satisfied across the variables. As data heteroscedasticity results from the nonnormality of variable, normality ensures data homoscedasticity (Hair et al., 1988). EFA was conducted via principal axis factoring and oblique rotation in order to identify the underlying factors and attributes. Items with factor loadings below 0.3 and communalities of less than 0.5 were deleted. Factors with eigenvalues of less than one were not selected. Hence, 13 items were removed. The scale reduction resulted in 33 items under a nine-factor solution (Table 3). The Bartlett test of sphericity was statistically

significant ($p < .001$), and KMO (0.83) was suggestive of a high level of sampling adequacy. The two indices were supportive of the appropriateness of factor analysis (Hair et al., 1988).

Explaining 61.75% of data variance, all the dimensions showed an acceptable reliability level (Nunnally, 1978) and were labeled as follows: (F1) quality of C&E center staff members and service contractors; (F2) extra-exhibition opportunities; (F3) C&E center image; (F4) industrial environment of C&E center site; (F5) center facilities; (F6) C&E center accessibility; (F7) C&E center site environment; (F8) cost of exhibition hall; and (F9) hotel accommodation.

CFA was conducted to confirm the underlying dimensions and the extracted items and to guide model respecification (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). The 9-factor solution with 33 items was confirmed with all significant factor loadings (Table 4). The goodness-of-fit indices [chi-squared (χ^2): 1,119.40 ($df = 459$), RMSEA: 0.07, CFI: 0.92, NNFI = 0.92] indicated that the proposed measurement model fit the data well (Bollen, 1989; Hair et al., 1998, 2010).

Insert Tables 3 and 4 here

Scale Validation: Construct Validity

Convergent validity was indicated by AVE values of over 0.5 in Table 5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Additionally, the AVE for each construct was higher than the squared correlation coefficients (i.e., the shared variance between the construct and each of the other constructs) under corresponding inter-constructs, which supported discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Insert Table 5 here

The perceptions of early survey respondents (the first 10% of the questionnaires received) were compared with those of the late respondents (the last 10% of the questionnaires received), to check statistically different mean values for each attribute based on the completed survey date

for the assessment of non-response bias (Armstrong & Overton, 1977). The results of the statistical test showed a non-significant difference at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level, which supported the notion that non-response bias was negligible in this study.

Common Method Bias

According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), common method bias/variance, resulting from the measurement method rather than the constructs operationalized as the measurement, is a potential bias behavioral research should consider. Bagozzi and Yi (1990) state that common method bias may be expected when a common method is used to assess relationships in a conceptual model. Common method bias that triggers systematic measurement error threatens the validity of findings about relationships (Bagozzi & Yi, 1990). Following the procedures of Podsakoff et al. (2003) and Schriesheim (1979), a one-factor test was conducted as a post hoc test for the common method bias. This test was performed by subjecting all data to principal component analysis with varimax rotation. Common method variance existed when a single factor was confirmed in the factor analysis or when one factor explained over 50% of the variance (Lings & Greenley, 2005). The one-factor analysis in this study generated a 14-factor structure, with the first factor accounting for 12.35% of the variance. The finding of the one-factor analysis did not guarantee the absence of a common method variance. However, this finding, combined with control for non-response bias, supported the idea that the threat of a common method variance was minimal.

Paired-Samples t-Test

A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to assess the relative importance of C&E center selection factors from the perspective of exhibition organizers. A nine-factor structure was

divided into center-specific and destination-specific factors, with the following mean value in parentheses:

- Center-specific factors: F6: C&E center accessibility (4.23), F3: C&E center image (4.21), F8: cost of exhibition hall (4.15), F1: quality of C&E center staff members and service contractors (3.93), and F5: center facilities (3.76).
- Destination-specific factors: F4: industrial environment of C&E center site (4.37); F9: hotel accommodation (4.20), F7: C&E center site environment (3.88), and F2: extra-exhibition opportunities (3.40).

F6 was the most important center-specific dimension based on the mean scores, followed by F3, F8, F1, and F5. Meanwhile, F4 was the most critical factor for destination-specific factors, followed by F9, F7, and F2. A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to check the statistically significant difference among the factors. As indicated in Table 6, the mean differences in the center-specific factors are not statistically significant among F6, F3, and F8, whereas these three factors significantly differ from F1 and F5 (F1 and F5 are also significantly different from each other). This finding suggested that C&E center accessibility, C&E center image, and cost of exhibition hall were the most important dimensions, followed by quality of C&E center staff members and service contractors, and then center facilities. All destination-specific factors significantly differed from one another, which confirmed that the industrial environment of a C&E center site was the most critical factor, followed by hotel accommodation, C&E center site environment, and extra-exhibition opportunities.

Insert Table 6 here

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study aims to identify and validate C&E center selection attributes and dimensions from the perspective of exhibition organizers. The prior literature on C&E centers relies only on the perceptions of attendees to assess important center attributes. By contrast, the current study examines the dimensions of center selection attributes from the perspective of exhibition organizers, who are influential in deciding on an exhibition venue. Additionally, this study offers extended views and insights regarding conducting feasibility studies on and managing C&E centers, which consequently contributes to the literature on C&E centers.

Testing the validity, reliability, and method biases establishes the validity and reliability of the identified center selection attributes. The resulting attributes have 33 items under a nine-factor structure, including five center-specific factors and four destination-specific factors, namely: (F1) quality of C&E center staff members and service contractors; (F2) extra-exhibition opportunities; (F3) C&E center image; (F4) industrial environment of C&E center site; (F5) center facilities; (F6) accessibility of C&E center; (F7) C&E center site environment; (F8) cost of exhibition hall; and (F9) hotel accommodation. These findings present implications for event researchers and C&E center operators.

Theoretical Implications

The empirical results indicate that exhibition organizers consider center-specific factors, such as center accessibility, center image, the cost of using an exhibition hall, the quality of center staff members and service contractors, and center facilities, when selecting a C&E center. In particular, organizers value accessibility, image, and cost more than human resource quality and facilities, when assessing center selection factors. Exhibitions are designed for a business platform between buyers (visitors) and sellers (exhibitors). Attracting as many buyers and sellers as possible to an exhibition is imperative. Therefore, the number of visitors and exhibitors serves

as a reliable indicator of a successful exhibition. The accessibility of a center is highly critical in promoting exhibitions to visitors and exhibitors. This study operationalizes center accessibility as ground and air accessibility and the logistics for exhibit materials. Poor air and ground accessibility discourages visitors and exhibitors from participating in exhibitions. Furthermore, logistics is another crucial accessibility component, given that the exhibit materials of many exhibitors are shipped to C&E centers. Exhibition organizers also carefully consider center image in terms of exhibitor and visitor marketing, as well as in promoting exhibition branding, before selecting a C&E center. Center image affects the manner in which exhibitors and visitors view exhibitions through the tendency to identify center image with exhibition image. This effect is proven, as major exhibitions are mostly held in internationally renowned C&E centers, in order to boost exhibition image and branding by being associated with the center image. Thus, a reputable C&E center image is instrumental in promoting an exhibition to visitors and exhibitors. Additionally, an exhibition is a purely profit-oriented commercial event; thus, organizers closely monitor expenditures and income. Exhibition hall rental, including utility and miscellaneous costs incurred in a C&E center, considerably accounts for exhibition expenditures; thus, organizers cautiously compare and check costs among different C&E centers when selecting a center.

Although exhibition organizers consider the quality of C&E center staff members and service contractors to be less important than center accessibility, center image, and the cost of using an exhibition hall, this factor is still considered critical according to its mean score (3.93). This study is more specific about center staff members, including the staff members of contract and operating departments, while simultaneously assessing the quality of service contractors. Furthermore, the results of the paired-samples *t*-test suggest that exhibition organizers perceive

the quality of the operating department staff members (3.96) and service contractors (3.98) as more significant than that of contract department staff members (3.83). This finding is construed from the practice that contract department staff members only provide services to exhibition organizers and do not interact with exhibitors. However, operating staff members (or hall managers) and service contractors do not only collaborate closely with exhibition organizers during the planning, management, and on-site operation of exhibitions, but also cater to the requirements of exhibitors, thus substantially affecting the quality of exhibitions. This study supports the viewpoint that exhibition organizers regard the quality of contract department and operating department staff members, as well as service contractors, as a significant center selection factor.

The least important center selection dimension among center-specific factors is center facilities. A plausible explanation for this finding is that most C&E centers in Korea were built in the 1990s and the 2000s; thus, these centers maintain relatively excellent facility quality, including various exhibition hall sizes, user-friendly layouts for exhibitions, and meeting facilities for conferences or seminars relevant to the exhibitions. Therefore, the quality of center facilities is not a major issue among exhibition organizers when assessing C&E centers in Korea. Another noteworthy feature of center facilities is visitor promotion facilities and systems. Exhibition organizers are keen to attract as many visitors as possible, in order to have successful exhibitions. Centers help concerned organizers with visitor promotion through various means, such as advertising exhibitions outdoors (e.g., billboards), within the center, and in shopping mall spaces that belong to the center. Furthermore, some centers utilize affiliated social networking sites (SNSs) and credit card companies, in order to promote the exhibitions of their

clients. The demand for centers to be equipped with a visitor promotion assistance program is increasing and is deemed as a center-selection attribute.

For destination-specific factors, the industrial environment of a C&E center site emerges as the most important factor, followed by hotel accommodation, C&E center site environment, and extra-exhibition opportunities. This finding suggests that, when exhibition organizers review C&E centers, they carefully consider synergy and cohesion between the industrial environment of a destination and the exhibition themes, in addition to regional government support for the exhibitions. An exhibition is a highly business-oriented event. The support of relevant industry associations and government bodies is essential in attracting more exhibitors and visitors to the exhibition area. Hence, organizers solicit testimonials from related associations and government agencies and include these groups in the official list of sponsors. If the industrial environment of a center site matches well with the exhibitions to create synergy for visitor and exhibitor promotion, then a center will likely appeal to organizers. Hotel accommodation is perceived as more important than C&E center site environment (e.g., local language and security) and extra-exhibition opportunities (e.g., shopping, dining, and local attractions). A nearby hotel environment is an infrastructure that is critical to C&E centers, given that many exhibitors and visitors require a place to stay overnight. Given that hotel accommodation accounts for a high proportion of visitor and exhibitor expenditures, exhibition organizers consider an excellent assortment (three- to five-star hotels) and quality of hotels when selecting a C&E center. The least critical dimension among destination-specific factors is extra-exhibition opportunities. Considering that generating business opportunities is the primary motivation of visitors and exhibitors participating in exhibitions, extra-exhibition opportunities are relatively less important to exhibition organizers.

To the best of our knowledge, two empirical studies (Breiter & Milman, 2006; Wu & Weber, 2005) look into the attributes of a C&E center in the MICE literature. Given that the previous studies assess the attributes from the perspective of visitors/attendees, their findings are significantly different from those of the current study. For staff service, the prior research mainly examines the service quality of staff, who interact with visitors rather than exhibitors, while the present study identifies the service quality of operating staff and service contractors. In the area of center facility, the prior research deals with the attributes that more concern visitors, such as cleanliness, directional signage, restrooms, internet access, interior design, ventilation, seating comfort, and others. This study, however, focuses on center facility related to exhibition hall and visitor promotion. Moreover, the previous studies do not investigate center image, industrial environment of C&E center region, exhibition hall cost, and center site environment. The common factors explored between the previous and current research are hotels, restaurants, and accessibility (although the prior research does not look at the accessibility of exhibit items.). The distinction between the prior and present research is well anticipated as the perspectives are derived from the different stakeholders (visitors vs. exhibition organizers) of a C&E center.

The current findings exhibit how differently exhibition organizers and visitors perceive center attributes, thereby offering expanded view on the quality attributes and factors of a C&E center to the stakeholders involved in the management of C&E centers. To our knowledge, this is the first research that empirically identifies and validates the attributes and dimensions of C&E centers from the perspective of exhibition organizers. The empirically validated quality attributes can make a step forward in advancing the body of C&E center literature, given that the validated scales act as measurements for subsequent research to adopt in exploring research phenomenon associated with C&E centers. In particular, quality attributes are conceptually intertwined with

consumer behavior and experience while serving as an antecedent of post-consumption evaluation (value, satisfaction, behavioral intentions, etc.). The validated quality attributes thus provide a stepping stone for future research to develop more empirical studies that examine research issues in C&E centers, consequently contributing to the MICE literature.

Practical Implications

The results of this study provide an insight for C&E center management and stakeholders into factors to consider during a feasibility study before constructing a center, and in managing an already operating center that focuses on exhibitions. A highly optimistic and inappropriate feasibility study of a C&E center may lead to a huge loss in the public funds used to build the center. Such a loss would slow down the local economy and tarnish the destination image. Consequently, the local government would be unable to enjoy the expected benefits from a C&E center. Occasionally, the plans to build a C&E center are politically abused by local policy makers without careful consideration of the local environment, with the belief that a C&E center can effectively boast about the achievements of the local government. During a feasibility study, concerned stakeholders should cautiously review and assess the local environment, particularly in terms of accessibility, industrial environment, and hotel accommodation. The aforementioned three factors are highly determined by the local infrastructure that C&E center management has minimal control over once a center has been constructed. Therefore, when stakeholders assess a proposed center location during a feasibility study, stakeholders should rigorously evaluate local factors. For example, accessibility is measured in terms of air and ground transportation as well as exhibit material shipping. Stakeholders review local industrial features to determine if the industrial environment promotes and supports particular exhibition themes for a C&E center. The hotel industry is also evaluated with respect to the number of three- to five-star hotels

available, as well as hotel quality and price. Given that only a few visitors can afford five-star hotels, a balanced number of hotels should exist across three- to five-stars. If a feasibility study indicates that the three areas do not support a C&E center, then stakeholders should reconsider the C&E center project.

The findings of this study also enable C&E center management to view and manage important attributes in order to strategically boost revenues from exhibitions. A C&E center competes with other centers for exhibitions. Center operators should continuously monitor and manage a center in order to remain competitive in the market. This study shows that exhibition organizers consider center image and facilities, the cost of using an exhibition hall, and the quality of center staff members and service contractors when choosing a C&E center. This result guides center management to identify, monitor, manage, and prioritize attributes within these domains. For example, given that exhibition organizers work together with center staff members and service contractors, the quality of these factors significantly affects the experience of organizers in a center. Center management should monitor the quality of staff members and service contractors through a regular survey, in order to maintain and enhance organizer satisfaction. Many centers also maintain the comparable quality of exhibition halls; thus, creating competitive advantages by only relying on hall facilities is difficult. This study identifies facilities and systems for visitor promotion (e.g., indoor and outdoor ads, and SNS ads) as important attributes in the area of center facilities. If everything is equal in center facilities, then these attributes can serve as value-added services and help differentiate a center from other centers when organizers enjoy great benefits from this attribute. Center image is also regarded as a highly important dimension in terms of visitor and exhibitor marketing and exhibition branding. This implies that exhibition organizers seriously review which centers are recognized and

reputable from the perspective of visitors and exhibitors. A reputable center image is not earned instantly. This image is cultivated over time, based on the management of various center attributes, and does not only rely on several attributes. This idea suggests to center operators that constantly implementing the strategic management of center attributes is essential, thereby establishing a favorable image from the perspective of visitors and exhibitors.

The industrial environment of a C&E center site is greatly considered when selecting a center. Local industrial features are represented in this study not only through the synergy and cohesion between the local industry and the exhibition theme but also through the support of the local government for a local industry-backed exhibition. An exhibition that is closely associated with a particular industry cannot be promoted by organizers alone. An affiliated industry and an industry-supporting government agency are important stakeholders in the promotion of the local exhibition industry. Local policymakers, along with industry stakeholders, organizers, and center operators, formulate and implement policies and provide assistance to further develop the local exhibition industry and maximize the economic effects of C&E centers through exhibitions.

Future Research and Limitations

This study identified C&E center selection factors from the perspective of exhibition organizers in Korea. Another important client of C&E centers is the convention organizer. The viewpoint of a convention organizer may differ from that of an exhibition organizer in selecting a center. Future research is recommended to explore C&E center selection factors from the perspective of convention organizers in order to discuss differentiating factors between convention and exhibition organizers.

This study relies on exhibition organizers in Korea for the survey; thus, the findings may not be generalized to other countries. Moreover, the sample size is limited because of the nature

of the target sample. This limitation does not allow this study to split the sample into two subsamples for EFA and CFA, as suggested by DeVellis (1991). Hair et al. (1988) suggest a five-to-one or ten-to-one ratio as a subject-to-variable ratio for the sample size required for factor analysis. Alpha, effect size, and statistical power are all intertwined with one another to determine the sample size (Hair et al., 1988). Cohen (1977) advocates that research should be developed at the alpha level of at least 0.5 with the statistical power of 80%. BMDP statistical software (1991) indicates that with a small effect size (0.2) at alpha level of 0.05, a sample size should be more than 200 to reach the statistical power of 80%. A ten-to-one ratio for the sample size of the current study is thus recommended to maintain the statistical power of 80%. Additionally, social desirability bias, which results from the tendency of survey participants to present themselves favorably regardless of their actual opinions (Podsakoff et al., 2003), is not examined in this study. Social desirability bias may be present in the scale; thus, future research on scale validation is strongly advised, in order to test social desirability using the scale designed by Reynolds (1982).

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TABLE 1. C&E Centers in Korea

No.	C&E Center	City	Gross Indoor Size (m ²)	No. of Halls
1	Busan Exhibition & Convention Center (BEXCO)	Busan	46,500	3
2	Changwon Exhibition & Convention Center (CECO)	Changwon	7,827	1
3	Daegu Exhibition & Convention Center (EXCO Daegu)	Daegu	22,159	5
4	Korea Trade Exhibition Center (KOTREX)	Daejeon	4,200	1
5	Kimdaejung Convention Center	Gwangju-si	9,072	1
6	New Songdo City	Incheon	41,770	11
7	Songdo Convention Center	Incheon	15,000	
8	International Convention Center (ICC)	Jeju	2,394	1
9	Korea international Exhibition Center (KINTEX)	Seoul	108,049	10
10	COEX World Trade Center	Seoul	36,027	4
11	Seoul Trade Exhibition Center (SETEC)	Seoul	7,948	3
12	Ago-Trade and Exhibition Center (aTCenter)	Seoul	7,422	2
13	Seoul Station Convention Center	Seoul	16,000	
		Total	324,368	

Source: UFI (2014)

TABLE 2. The Sources of Measurements

Items	The Sources of Items
<p>F1: Quality of C&E center staff members and service contractors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professionalism of contract department staff in C&E center 2. Professionalism of operating department staff (e.g., hall manager) in C&E center 3. Service attitude of contract department staff in C&E center 4. Service attitude of service contractors (e.g. construction, electricity, registration) in C&E center 5. Service attitude of operating department staff (e.g., hall manager) in C&E center 6. Professionalism of service contractors (e.g. construction, electricity, registration) in C&E center 	<p>In-depth interviews significantly developed these items, based on the studies of Lu and Cai (2011), Breiter and Milman (2006), Wu and Weber (2005), Kim et al. (2008), DiPietro et al. (2008), and Tay (2006)</p>
<p>F2: Extra-exhibition opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Variety of retail shops 2. Business hours of retail shops 3. Business hours of F&B outlets 4. Tourist attractions 5. Variety of F&B outlets 6. Entertainment attractions 	<p>Adapted from the studies of Jin and Weber (2013), Zhang et al. (2010), Breiter and Milman (2006), Wu and Weber (2005), Kim et al. (2008), Jin et al. (2010), Lu and Cai (2011), DiPietro et al. (2008), Tay (2006), and Boo and Kim (2010)</p>
<p>F3: C&E center image</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C&E center image helpful to visitor marketing 2. C&E center image helpful to exhibitor marketing 3. C&E center image that promotes exhibition branding 	<p>In-depth interviews</p>
<p>F4: Industrial feature of C&E center site</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Synergy between the major industry in C&E center site and the industry theme of your exhibition 2. Support of regional government in C&E center site for local industry-backed exhibitions 3. Cohesion between the major industry in C&E center site and the industry theme of your exhibition 	<p>In-depth interviews significantly developed these items, based on the studies of Jin et al. (2012), Jin et al. (2010), and Boo and Kim (2010)</p>
<p>F5: Center facility</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Space availability for events pertaining to an exhibition (workshops, conferences, etc.) 2. Facility and equipment for visitor promotion 3. Cleanliness of exhibition halls 4. Exhibition-friendly layout of exhibition halls 	<p>Adapted from the studies of Siu et al. (2012), Zhang et al. (2010), Jin and Weber (2013), Chen and Ho (2012), Jin et al. (2012), Jin et al. (2010), Lu and Cai (2011),</p>

<p>5. Variety of exhibition hall sizes</p> <p>F6: Accessibility of C&E center</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Logistics for exhibit items 2. Ground accessibility 3. Air accessibility <p>F7: C&E center site environment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political instability 2. Local security 3. Local language <p>F8: Cost of exhibition hall</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reasonable extra cost (for electricity, garbage, water, etc.) 2. Reasonable exhibition hall rental <p>F9: Hotel accommodation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Variety of hotel classes 2. Service quality of hotels 	<p>Adapted from the studies of Zhang et al. (2010), Jin and Weber (2013), Chen and Ho (2012), Breiter and Milman (2006), Jin et al. (2012), Kim et al. (2008), Jin et al. (2010), and Lu and Cai (2011)</p> <p>Adapted from the studies of Zhang et al. (2010), Jin et al. (2012), Kim et al. (2008), Jin et al. (2010), Lu and Cai (2011), and DiPietro et al. (2008)</p> <p>In-depth interviews</p> <p>Adapted from Breiter and Milman (2006), Zhang et al. (2010), Kim et al. (2008), Jin et al. (2010), DiPietro et al. (2008)</p>
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Note: Based on the extensive literature review, all of the items are developed and refined by in-depth interviews and panel reviews.

TABLE 3. Results of EFA

Factors	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
F1: Quality of C&E center staff members and service contractors (eigenvalue: 10.06; % of variance: 22.86)		0.92
1. Professionalism of contract department staff in C&E center	0.81	
2. Professionalism of operating department staff (e.g., hall manager) in C&E center	0.75	
3. Service attitude of contract department staff in C&E center	0.74	
4. Service attitude of service contractors (e.g., construction, electricity, registration) in C&E center	0.73	
5. Service attitude of operating department staff (e.g., hall manager) in C&E center	0.72	
6. Professionalism of service contractors (e.g., construction, electricity, registration) in C&E center	0.70	
F2: Extra-exhibition opportunities (eigenvalue: 4.30; % of variance: 9.77)		0.89
1. Variety of retail shops	-0.86	
2. Business hours of retail shops	-0.83	
3. Business hours of F&B outlets	-0.78	
4. Tourist attractions	-0.75	
5. Variety of F&B outlets	-0.73	
6. Entertainment attractions	-0.72	
F3: C&E center image (eigenvalue: 2.84; % of variance: 6.46)		0.89
1. C&E center image helpful to visitor marketing	0.97	
2. C&E center image helpful to exhibitor marketing	0.84	
3. C&E center image that promotes exhibition branding	0.83	
F4: Industrial environment of C&E center site (eigenvalue: 2.57; % of variance: 5.85)		0.77
1. Synergy between the major industry in C&E center site and the industry theme of exhibition	0.78	
2. Support of regional government in C&E center site for local industry-backed exhibitions	0.77	
3. Cohesion between the major industry in C&E center site and the industry theme of exhibition	0.75	
F5: Center facility (eigenvalue: 1.89; % of variance: 4.29)		0.75
1. Space availability for events pertaining to an exhibition (workshops, conferences, etc.)	0.79	
2. Facilities and systems for visitor promotion	0.77	

3. Cleanliness of exhibition halls	0.75	
4. Exhibition-friendly layout of exhibition halls	0.73	
5. Variety of exhibition hall sizes	0.69	
F6: Accessibility of C&E center (eigenvalue: 1.83; % of variance: 4.17)		0.72
1. Logistics for exhibit items	0.75	
2. Ground accessibility	0.73	
3. Air accessibility	0.70	
F7: C&E center site environment (eigenvalue: 1.48; % of variance: 3.36)		0.83
1. Political instability	-0.86	
2. Local security	-0.80	
3. Local language	-0.73	
F8: Cost of exhibition hall (eigenvalue: 1.15; % of variance: 2.61)		0.71
1. Reasonable extra cost (for electricity, garbage collection, water, etc.)	-0.75	
2. Reasonable exhibition hall rental	-0.70	
F9: Hotel accommodation (eigenvalue: 1.05; % of variance: 2.39)		0.85
1. Variety of hotel classes	-0.87	
2. Service quality of hotels	-0.84	

Note: Total variance explained = 61.75, Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.83, Bartlett’s test of sphericity = $p < 0.001$

TABLE 4. Results of CFA

Factors	Factor Loading	<i>t</i> -value
F1: Quality of C&E center staff members and service contractors		
1. Professionalism of contract department staff in C&E center	0.77	NA
2. Professionalism of operating department staff (e.g., hall manager) in C&E center	0.85	11.83
3. Service attitude of contract department staff in C&E center	0.81	11.11
4. Service attitude of service contractors (e.g. construction, electricity, registration) in C&E center	0.82	11.38
5. Service attitude of operating department staff (e.g., hall manager) in C&E center	0.85	11.89
6. Professionalism of service contractors (e.g. construction, electricity, registration) in C&E center	0.76	10.39
F2: Extra-exhibition opportunities		
1. Variety of retail shops	0.86	9.49
2. Business hours of retail shops	0.84	9.36
3. Business hours of F&B outlets	0.73	8.31
4. Tourist attractions	0.82	9.15
5. Variety of F&B outlets	0.67	NA
6. Entertainment attractions	0.70	7.96
F3: C&E center image		
1. C&E center image helpful to visitor marketing	0.91	12.87
2. C&E center image helpful to exhibitor marketing	0.89	12.73
3. C&E center image that promotes exhibition branding	0.79	NA
F4: Industrial feature of C&E center site		
1. Synergy between the major industry in C&E center site and the industry theme of your exhibition	0.75	7.65
2. Support of regional government in C&E center site for local industry-backed exhibitions	0.70	7.36
3. Cohesion between the major industry in C&E center site and the industry theme of your exhibition	0.76	NA
F5: Center facility		
1. Space availability for events pertaining to an exhibition (workshops, conferences, etc.)	0.86	10.43
2. Facility and equipment for visitor promotion	0.89	NA
3. Cleanliness of exhibition halls	0.79	9.35
4. Exhibition-friendly layout of exhibition halls	0.76	8.89
5. Variety of exhibition hall sizes	0.70	8.15

F6: Accessibility of C&E center		
1. Logistics for exhibit items	0.78	8.35
2. Ground accessibility	0.75	7.93
3. Air accessibility	0.72	NA
F7: C&E center site environment		
1. Political instability	0.86	8.57
2. Local security	0.93	8.61
3. Local language	0.62	NA
F8: Cost of exhibition hall		
1. Reasonable extra cost (for electricity, garbage, water, etc.)	0.69	5.23
2. Reasonable exhibition hall rental	0.88	NA
F9: Hotel accommodation		
1. Variety of hotel classes	0.85	NA
2. Service quality of hotels	0.86	9.16

Note: All factor loadings are significant at $p < 0.000$. Parameters are fixed at 1.0 for maximum-likelihood estimation. Thus, t -values were not obtained (NA) for parameters fixed at 1.0 for identification purposes.

TABLE 5. Correlations (Squared Correlations), AVE, and Mean

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9
F1	0.81								
F2	0.25 (.06)	0.77							
F3	0.10 (0.01)	0.18 (0.03)	0.87						
F4	0.02 (0.00)	0.15 (0.02)	0.24 (0.06)	0.73					
F5	0.36 (0.13)	0.31 (0.10)	0.09 (0.00)	0.08 (0.00)	0.80				
F6	0.15 (0.02)	0.16 (0.03)	0.03 (0.00)	0.10 (0.01)	0.18 (0.03)	0.75			
F7	0.39 (0.15)	0.15 (0.03)	0.12 (0.01)	0.13 (0.02)	0.25 (0.06)	0.05 (0.00)	0.81		
F8	0.30 (0.09)	0.08 (0.00)	0.27 (0.07)	0.18 (0.03)	0.18 (0.03)	0.18 (0.03)	0.20 (0.04)	0.79	
F9	0.33 (0.11)	0.40 (0.16)	0.01 (0.00)	0.16 (0.03)	0.25 (0.06)	0.06 (0.00)	0.29 (0.08)	0.17 (0.03)	0.85
AVE	0.66	0.60	0.75	0.54	0.64	0.56	0.66	0.63	0.73
CR	0.92	0.90	0.90	0.78	0.90	0.79	0.85	0.77	0.84
Mean	3.93	3.40	4.21	4.37	3.76	4.23	3.88	4.15	4.20
Std. Dev.	0.67	0.73	0.67	0.51	0.61	0.60	0.76	0.70	0.64

Note: The square root of AVE in diagonal line. CR = Composite Reliability. Mean values are based on five-point scales.

TABLE 6. Paired-Samples *t*-Test

C&E center-specific factors	Destination-specific factors
F6 → F3 (<i>0.16</i> , 0.86)	F4 → F9 (2.99, 0.00)
F6 → F8 (<i>1.20</i> , 0.23)	F4 → F7 (7.29, 0.00)
F6 → F1 (4.59, 0.00)	F4 → F2 (13.09, 0.00)
F6 → F5 (7.67, 0.00)	F9 → F7 (4.80, 0.00)
F3 → F8 (<i>1.03</i> , 0.30)	F9 → F2 (13.54, 0.00)
F3 → F1 (4.06, 0.00)	F7 → F2 (6.38, 0.00)
F3 → F5 (6.69, 0.00)	
F8 → F1 (3.44, 0.00)	
F8 → F5 (5.84, 0.00)	
F1 → F5 (2.96, 0.00)	

Note: Bold letters indicate a significant difference between factors. (*t*-value, sig.)

