

A TOOL FOR THE DESIGN OF EXPERIENCE-CENTERED EXHIBITS IN SCIENCE CENTERS

BACKGROUND

- Most of the conceptual and practical contributions of the visitor experience have used an **under-articulated and underdeveloped** conceptualization (McCarthy & Ciolfi, 2008).
- The **fragmentation** across diverse knowledge domains has slowed the consolidation of both theory and practice (Roberts, 2014).
- Exhibit designers are **limited to make informed decisions** that might enhance exhibit experiences (Falk, et al., 2004).

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This research aims to **derive a theoretical foundation on exhibit experience design based on a systematic empirical and theoretical research on the topic**. To do so, we first reviewed and analyzed previous related research. Next, we conducted a **card sorting technique** to sixteen expert exhibit designers to investigate how they understand and relate to the visitor experience by analyzing their **mental models**. We concluded developing a structured framework for the design of experience-centered exhibits (DEX).

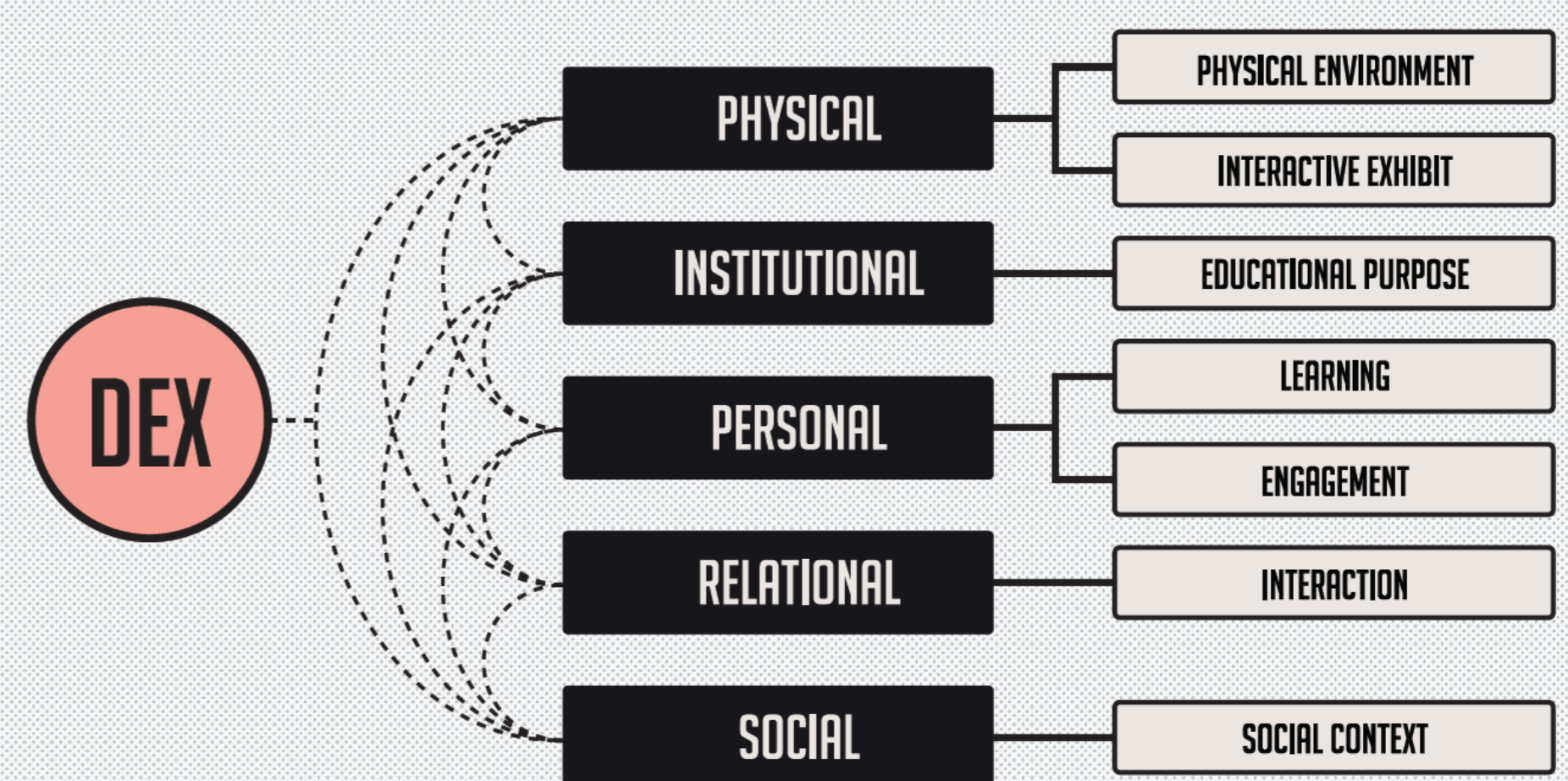
FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

The outcome of this exploratory research was the identification of five building blocks (**physical, social, relational, personal, and institutional**) along with seven interconnected elements (**the physical environment, the interactive exhibit, the educational purpose, learning, engagement, interaction, and the social context**) related to the visitor experience.

While the five building blocks are a broad categorization, the seven elements are the core of the **DEX framework**.

DEX FRAMEWORK

- P** The **physical building block** integrates the characteristics of the designed setting, including the interactive exhibit as well as the physical environment.
- I** The **institutional building block** incorporates exhibit content and purpose as well as the theoretical and epistemological assumptions about learning in institutions of informal science education.
- V** The **personal building block** includes visitor's personal characteristics and capabilities, as well as learning and engagement.
- R** The **relational building block** corresponds to the visitor interaction with the exhibit emphasizing on interactivity.
- S** The **social building block** indicates the social conditions that influence the visitor interaction and engagement with exhibits.



FRAMEWORK ELEMENTS

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	INTERACTIVE EXHIBIT	EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE	LEARNING	ENGAGEMENT	INTERACTION	SOCIAL CONTEXT
Learning always occurs when interacting with the physical environment (Falk & Storksdieck, 2005).	An interactive exhibit is a learning device (Witcomb, 2006) placed within a museum environment that integrates information, media, and technology into an interactive experience.	The educational function is widely acknowledged as a core objective of any SMSC by providing learning experiences for visitors (Achiam & Sathyanarayana, 2002; Falk & Norman, 2002).	Learning is best conceived as a multidimensional and continuous process that requires engagement (Hein, 2006; Falk, et al., 2006).	Engagement is defined as the visitor affective and behavioral responses that occur when interacting with interactive exhibits.	The visitor experience is a constructed and ephemeral relationship that exclusively occurs each time a visitor interacts with a museum. This relationship is unique to each visitor.	Recognizing the relevance of the social interaction component allows us to make better sense of variations in the visitor behavior (Falk & Storksdieck, 2005).

Full PDF and more information about the research at:

<https://www.researchgate.net/project/Design-for-the-visitor-experience>