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The Impact of Buyer Needs on Perceived Trade Show Effectiveness

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The Impact of Buyer Needs on Perceived Trade Show Effectiveness and Post-Show Purchase Intention in the Steel Industry

By

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Abstract

The personal needs of professionals within the steel industry have the potential to influence sales and marketing activities. In a business-to-business setting, trade shows stand out as industry-accepted sales and marketing activities. While previous research has explored trade show strategies by examining various aspects of operational functions, a gap exists in the literature surrounding the attendees and their needs. Using three of Maslow's needs classifications, this study seeks to explore the relationship between trade show attendees' needs and their perceptions of trade show effectiveness and post-show purchase intention.

Keywords: Trade shows, professional needs, Maslow's hierarchy, steel industry

Dedication Page

I dedicate this dissertation to God, who has given me strength, inspiration, and wisdom during this journey. I dedicate this to my wife Laura and children, Raymond and Emma. Their love and encouragement have made sure I reached the finish line. I pray that my children understand that the journey of learning never ends. I dedicate this to my parents Ray and Peggy Fryan. I would not be here without their counsel, love, and support. I also dedicate this to my sister Brigitte Fontes and her husband, Chris, who listened and provided encouragement during this long journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Research Problem

With a history dating back thousands of years, the modern version of trade shows began in Europe in the 1850s (Kallman, 1988). Trade shows in various forms are events that focus on invigorating market activity (Gopalakrishna & Lilien, 2012). Within the field of Industrial marketing, a high value is placed on trade shows due to their ability to gather various stakeholders such as suppliers, buyers, distributors, regulators, and manufacturers at a single event (Rosson & Seringhaus, 1995). Studies as recent as 2020 have cited Rosson & Seringhaus (1995) and have discussed the value created by gathering industry stakeholders together (Fang & Din, 2020). Additionally, leaders within industrial firms place a high value on relationship marketing activities that are facilitated during trade shows (Brown, Mohan, & Boyd, 2017). Scholars have concluded that the development of networks at trade shows results in positive firm performance (Gerschewski et al., 2020).

The effectiveness of trade shows is a topic of great interest to both academics and practitioners. In North America, the trade show industry generates over $11 billion in revenue annually (CEIR, 2013). This revenue comes from a combination of the more than 1.5 million exhibitors and 60 million attendees. Many organizations in the steel industry rely on trade shows as primary marketing activities with the assumption that these activities drive sales revenue within the business-to-business environment. Although scholars have researched various aspects of trade show management and strategy, opportunities remain to learn more about these critical events.

Perceived trade show effectiveness can be examined from multiple perspectives due to the wide variety of stakeholders who attend trade shows and the motivating factors behind the show itself. One lens through which perceived trade show effectiveness has not yet been explored is the influence of the buyer's personal needs. Initially defined by Maslow (1943,

1987), an individual's needs fall into five primary strata: physiological, safety-security, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Individuals who attend trade shows present varied levels of needs satisfaction based on factors that may or may not be within the influence of organizers and exhibitors.

The gap that currently exists in the literature is an understanding of the relationship between attendees' needs and their perception of trade show effectiveness and post-show purchase intention. Exploring this gap may present opportunities for multiple industries. Understanding the relationship between these contributing factors within a single sector allows for a better understanding of each variable. The steel industry's cultural practices, along with external market factors, may create states of need previously unknown to marketing professionals who participate in trade shows through various activities, including exhibit design, organization of personnel, or planning of social events.

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between buyers' needs and their perceptions of trade show effectiveness and post-show purchase intentions. The study was designed to focus on trade shows that were related to respondents' professional function. By using several variables across industries, this study examined the influence that buyers' personal needs have on their perceptions of trade show effectiveness and their post-show purchase intentions.

Significance of the Study

This study produced results that create a foundation for future research within the steel industry. Many organizations within the industry place a high level of importance on trade shows as part of an organization's sales and marketing strategy. Yet previous metrics for determining trade show effectiveness have overlooked the important information that attendees carry about what makes a trade show effective. In this study, attendees had the opportunity to express their perceptions of the show's effectiveness. This study focused specifically on attendees' needs at trade shows.

While this study focused on attendee needs during trade shows, its findings have the potential to create value for organizers, exhibitors, and attendees. The development of an understanding of attendees' intentions and needs with regard to trade show attendance can provide useful insight for organizers and exhibitors regarding proper resource allocation at trade shows. The findings of this study also provide information that could allow organizers to focus on events during each show that increase the satisfaction of attendees' needs while aligning attendees' expectations with offerings at the show. Based on the findings on attendees' post-show effectiveness scores, exhibitors might better choose where to spend their resources. Independent of findings associated with needs profiles, exhibitors might use the results to develop a better understanding of aspects of a trade show that attendees find most effective. Finally, developing a better appreciation of how organizers and exhibitors view trade show effectiveness can present attendees with an understanding of how these participation modes view value creation during trade shows. Each group within the steel industry can explore the value creation associated with various needs profiles, including community, esteem, and security. This will allow individuals from each group to better direct resources and strategies to best align with specific goals.

Definition of Terms

Trade shows are defined as "market events of a specific duration, held at regular intervals, at which a large number of companies present the main product range of one or more industry sectors"(Kirchgeorg, Springer, & Kastner, 2010, p. 63).

Trade show effectiveness is the evaluation of an event against the marketing objectives established for said event. Objectives influence the exhibit design and type of show selected. Examples of objectives include acquisition of new prospects or leads, new product demonstrations, branding or market presence, public relations, networking, and taking orders. (Bellizzi & Lipps, 1984).

Perceived effectiveness of exhibitors is defined across four areas. The first area explores the exhibitors' beliefs about whether or not the group or team's overall performance achieved the desired expectations. The second area explores whether or not the exhibitor is satisfied with the experience. The third area examines whether or not the exhibitor felt positive about the experience. Finally, the fourth area addresses whether or not the exhibitor would be willing to work in a similar environment in the future. (Lemieux-Charles & McGuire, 2006; Lemieux-Charles et al., 2002; Cramm, Strating, Bal, & Nieboer, 2013).

Perceived effectiveness of attendees is defined across three areas including satisfaction of social interactions, ability to learn, and buying activities (Gopalakrishna, Malthouse, & Lawrence, 2019).

Purchase intention is the likelihood that a buyer plans to purchase a product (Dodd & Supa, 2011).

Post-show purchase is a short-term objective focused on converting a trade show attendee into a customer. The sale cycle includes interactions between sales and marketing professionals at the show, buyers attending the event, and sales professionals who follow up after the show itself (Sridhar, Voorhees, & Gopalakrishna, 2015).

Needs are defined as the lack of a specific item or element which is critical to a person's physical state or well-being (Taormina & Gao, 2013). Needs are not the things that are required for survival; they instead describe the lack of things that are needed for survival. As an example, a lack of water creates needs within a person. Water itself is not the need; it is the lack of water that represents the need.

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to explore how buyers' needs influence their perceptions of trade show effectiveness and their post-show purchase intention. To further understand the relationship between these attributes, the following research hypotheses guided the study:

H1: The more satisfied buyers are in their needs for safety and security, the more likely they are to demonstrate higher post-show purchase intentions.

H2: The more satisfied buyers are in their needs for safety and security, the higher their rating of the effectiveness of trade shows.

H3: The more satisfied buyers are in their needs for belonging, the more likely they are to demonstrate higher post-show purchase intentions.

H4: The more satisfied buyers are in their needs for belonging, the higher their rating of the effectiveness of trade shows.

H5: The more satisfied buyers are in their needs for esteem, the more likely they are to demonstrate higher post-show purchase intentions.

H6: The more satisfied buyers are in their needs for esteem, the higher their rating of the effectiveness of trade shows.

Delimitations

This study was limited to a convenience sample of buying professionals within the author's network of professional connections that focus on the steel industry. The sample includes professionals who work in the United States at companies that fall under the following classification codes within the US Bureau of Labor Statistics: primary metals and fabricated metal products manufacturing, machinery manufacturing, and transportation manufacturing. This study did not use a purchased or acquired list from any association, which prohibited a sample of a discrete population from being defined. This study instructed buyers to focus on an industrial trade show, not a trade show focused on personal or consumer purchasing goals. The research focused on professional needs, not personal needs.

The author of this study chose to limit the study's scope to include only respondents from the steel industry. The decision to limit research to one sector is inherent to the design of

the study. In the future, additional studies could be conducted on other industries to explore the similarities and differences.

Limitations

This study contains several limitations that affected the analysis of the results. One of the primary limitations is the number of respondents. Throughout the data collection process, several organizations from the steel industry turned down the opportunity to support this research for varied reasons. Many organizations did not want to know their attendees' responses to questions about post-show purchase intention and trade show attendance goals. This led to the use of a convenience sampling method, which limits the ability to extrapolate the findings of this study to a larger population. A secondary and expected limitation is due to the fact that potential respondents who possess a wealth of knowledge were in some cases too busy to participate in the survey.

An additional limitation is the low number of respondents from the steel industry. Anecdotal evidence from several respondents indicated that, due to COVID-19, several industry trade shows in 2020 were canceled. Trade shows tend to be held in alternating years. Thus, the cancelation of shows in 2020 limited the author's focus to trade show attendance within the previous year.

A final limitation is the number of potential respondents who indicated that their employers do not pay for supply chains or buying professionals to attend trade shows. This is an exciting finding as the hosts of many trade shows advertise the high buyer attendance level. All limitations listed require further research to discover the underlying drivers present within the steel industry.

Study Population

The steel industry consists of several classifications within the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, including primary metals and fabricated metal products manufacturing, machinery manufacturing, and transportation equipment manufacturing. These sectors of the US labor

force include 5,504,000 individuals, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019). The author of this study used a convenience sampling method to explore the variables discussed; as a nonprobability sampling method, this study does not allow for inferences to be made on the larger population.

Researcher's Perspective

The author of this study currently works within the steel industry and has experience in primary steel production, open and closed die forging, coil processing, and fabrication. He began to notice differences in strategy and execution of trade show campaigns through his personal experience working at various companies. Although many exhibitors focus on presenting new products or facilitating sales activities, it does not appear that marketing and sales professionals consider the motivational needs of the buyer outside of institutional needs. From booth layouts to staffing decisions, the determination of trade show effectiveness has been measured from the perspective of the exhibitors, not the buyers. This is because the funding model for most shows comes primarily from exhibitors renting space.

Sales and marketing professionals within industrial organizations increasingly face more sophisticated buyers and supply chain systems with a focus on real-time analytics, multiple stakeholders, and a desire to share risk surrounding innovation (Handfield, 2019). These challenges create barriers that have the potential to limit the productive nature of trade shows themselves. Discussions of trade shows can often revolve around costs and perceptions of not being present instead of focusing on the customer. These observations drove much of the author's interest in conducting this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview of Trade Shows

Trade shows represent a critical aspect of a firm's marketing strategy (Kerin & Cron, 1987). These events offer organizations an opportunity to present specific messages to buyers and prospects within an environment that provides for demonstrations, in-depth customer interactions, and exploration of the product itself (Cavanaugh, 1976; Konikow, 1983). Trade shows are often divided into two general categories, vertical and horizontal (Tafesse & Skalleurd, 2017; Wu, Lilien, & Dasgupta, 2008). A vertical show will dive deep into a single service or product segment, whereas a horizontal show will encompass a wide range of product or service categories. Shows can then be classified based on the profile of their visitors. Consumer shows target individual consumers while industrial shows focus on larger organizations, their professional buyers, and support staff (Tafesse, 2014). Some mixed shows also exist, targeting both industrial buyers and consumers. The benefits of trade shows have been explored by various scholars across both general categories of shows and visitor profiles (Rinallo, Bathelt, Golfetto, 2016; Sridhar, Voorhees, & Gopalakrishna, 2015). The benefits of trade shows have been demonstrated in various forms, yet there are still some gaps within the research.

Participation Mode

Trade shows consist of various groups of individuals, each with a specific participation mode. A participation mode is defined by the role and the individual's goals and objectives. Individuals can take on various participation modes while visiting the show, each with its own set of motivational factors (Tafesse & Skallerud, 2015; Rosson & Seringhaus, 1995). While an individual is in the exhibiting mode, the focus is on setting up their event space and interacting with prospects and customers (Gopalakrishna & Lilien, 1995). Individuals in the visiting mode will explore and consider various suppliers, research market conditions, and network with sales

professionals (Godar & O'Connor, 2001). Individuals who manage the event itself will fall into the organizing mode (Dawson, Young, Tu, & Chongyi, 2014). This mode focuses on the management of the show itself, including activities such as event planning and overall logistical organization.

Much of the research on trade show participation focuses on the exhibiting mode. This creates an opportunity to explore further how the participation mode influences show performance (Tafesse & Skalleurd, 2017). Scholars' focus on the exhibiting mode can be linked to various marketing management theories, including the marketing mix, relationship marketing, and market orientation. Research on visitors is a more recent topic within the literature, leaving much to be explored. Much of the research on visitors focuses on engagement and the buyer's behavior after specific interactions (Gopalakrishna, Malthouse & Lawrence, 2019). Visitor engagement crosses multiple activity stages within the context of a trade show.

Activity Stages

The activity of a trade show can be separated into three stages, pre-show, at-show, and post-show (Tafesse & Skalleurd, 2017). The pre-show stage consists of planning, the at-show stage focuses on execution of the plan, and the post-show stage contains debriefing activities (Gopalakrishna, Lilien, Williams & Sequeria, 1995). Research on pre-show activities includes trade show objectives, budgeting, staffing, and promotional decisions (Tafesse & Skalleurd, 2017). At-show research represents the largest single-stage of scholarly research on trade shows. Topics include staffing behaviors, booth layouts, product demonstrations, and information searches. Little research has been done solely on the post-show stage; some studies have explored a combination of stages. Tafesse & Skalleurd (2017) have identified a gap within the literature in the exploration of pre-show and post-show stages.

Show Performance and Metrics

An organization's performance measurement for exhibiting at a show is based on the pre-show objectives (Hansen, 2004). These objectives are divided into sales- or behavior-

related metrics. Sales-related metrics focus on selling or sales-related activities such as lead efficiency (Gopalkrishna & Williams, 1992). Behavior-related metrics can include such items as relationship building, information on the market or organizations, and branding activities (Hansen, 2004; Kerin & Cron, 1987).

Sales-related metrics focus on outcome-based measurements. These systems focus on variables such as the number of visitors, leads, cost per visitor, or cost per lead (Cavanaugh, 1976). Sophisticated tools developed by Gopalakrishna and Williams (1992) and Williams et al. (1993) explore various outcome metrics such as lead generation efficiency as it relates to trade show performance. These require extensive data collection to present relevant data for scholars and professionals.

Exhibitor Performance

Sales-related activities can be defined as follows: testing new product concepts, developing a new product or market segments, developing new contacts, evaluating the reactions to new products, and sales to new customers completed during a show (Hansen, 2004). Information-gathering activities include collecting information about competitors, general market conditions, searching for information on any market relevant organization, and conducting pre-show research. Relationship-building focuses activities on existing customers, namely maintenance and development of relationships with existing customers, increased pace of the decision process with existing customers, and customer management. Trade shows can be used for image-building tactics such as benchmarking against competitors, market communications, public relations, and share of mind activities. They can be used to address motivations for the sales staff as well as customers.

While scholars have explored various aspects of show performance, Tafesse & Skallerud (2017) have identified a gap in perspectives on how trade show performance is understood. Much of the literature focuses on the exhibiting mode and its relation to post-show

performance. Developing a better understanding of the visitor's perspective and its relationship to post-show metrics presents relevant information to both practitioners and scholars.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Buyers, as individuals, contain an internal set of motivations that influence the industrial buying process. To better understand the individual needs of a buyer, one could explore Maslow's (1943, 1987) theory of human motivation. This hierarchy of needs presents a theoretical framework around an individual's needs. Maslow's (1943, 1987) classification of needs is broken down into five levels: physiological, safety-security, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Physiological needs refer to items such as hunger and thirst (Maslow, 1943, 1987). As scholars' understanding of the human body has evolved, physiological needs have grown to include environmental factors such as ambient temperature as well (Tormina & Gao, 2013). These foundational needs must be met in order for the individual to survive. If these needs are not able to be met, the individual faces death.

Safety-security needs (Maslow, 1943) address variables such as freedom from criminal assault, disease, social stability, and economic security. As an individual addresses each level of needs within the hierarchy, they will attempt to reach up and address the next category (McLeod, 2007; Poston, 2009). In viewing Maslow's hierarchy of needs from a consumer behavior lens, research has identified that the satiation boundaries of particular needs can be partially satisfied before moving up the needs hierarchy (Seeley, 1992).

The third level of needs is belongingness, which focuses on an individual's desire to have interpersonal attachments and belongingness with others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Needs associated with belonging are found across various societies, and not satisfying these needs leads to negative results among individuals. As with Maslow's (1943) original findings, individuals who do not satisfy these needs cannot move to the next level.

The fourth level focuses on esteem needs. Esteem needs are separated into two categories, respect for oneself and the approval one receives from others (Maslow, 1943).

Respect for oneself can be viewed as how one feels about their value within society (Tormina & Gao, 2013). Esteem from others is understood to be how an individual receives information about their worthiness from another. The final level of needs is self-actualization. The concept of self-actualization focuses on a person becoming their authentic self. The definition of this classification of needs presents a challenge for scholars and practitioners due to the subjective nature of self-fulfillment.

The evolution of Maslow's hierarchy of needs over time has also involved the development of competing needs theories. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory and Alderfer's ERG (existence, relatedness, and growth) theory are grouped with Maslow as competing theories of motivation within the workplace. Herzberg's theory of job satisfaction postulates there are aspects of the job itself and the environment which lead to satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1959; Herzberg, 1966). In this theory, satisfaction comes from within the job itself, while job dissatisfaction comes from the working environment.

The theory of existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) was developed over several years by Alderfer (1989) and grew out of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Caulton, 2012). The evolution of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to ERG can be seen in the grouping of needs categories. Existence needs include safety, physiological, and material needs (Yang, Hwang, Chen, 2011). Relatedness needs include security, belonging, and respect. Growth needs include characteristics such as self-esteem and self-actualization.

While Maslow's hierarchy of needs stands as a foundational theory for many scholarly research areas, criticism of it exists. The critiques of Maslow's theory generally fall into three major categories. The first focuses on the limited data to support Maslow's conclusions; the second is the assumption that when measuring employees, everyone is the same; and the third is that needs fall into a one-size-fits-all model (Graham & Messner, 1998). Scholars have also noted that Maslow's needs theory is limited by unidimensional linearity and cross-cultural validity (Yang, 2003). The primary criticism surrounding cross-cultural expression comes from

the need for individuals to express needs cross-culturally. There are differences when measuring Maslow's needs across individualist and collectivist cultures.

It is necessary to note critiques associated with Maslow's hierarchy of needs when operating within a professional space. Maslow's needs cannot be used if comparing individuals from various cultures. Graham and Messner (1998) and Yang (2003) both indicated that while studies of needs do not do well across different cultures, they can highlight interesting findings within one culture. My research addressed individuals' needs in an attempt to minimize the issues raised in Graham & Messner's (1998) work. Since this study focused only on North American shows and contacts, the concerns should be minimized. By focusing on North American buyers, this study addressed Yang's (2003) critique of Maslow's cross-cultural limitations as many of the respondents come from western cultures.

The hierarchical framework of Maslow's needs theory has also been challenged within the field of consumer behavior. Research has found that individuals will reach beyond their current needs level to satisfy higher-level needs such as self-esteem through purchases of various branded items (Asamoah, Chovancová, De Alwis, Samarakoon, & Guo, 2011). Additionally, scholars have noted that the needs levels as originally defined by Maslow can change based on the individual (Seeley, 1992).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been leveraged by marketing professionals in various ways, particularly in attempts to better communicate the benefits of a product or service. In Finland, scholars explored the benefits of classifying marketing campaigns in alignment with Maslow's hierarchy (Tikkanen, 2007). Marketing campaigns for food safety conferences should focus on satisfying needs based on safety. In contrast, campaigns for vineyards could focus on the satisfaction of social needs. Maslow's hierarchy has also been applied to the study of consumer behavior across several industries. In reviewing consumer behavior within the confines of banking, scholars have identified a relationship that exists between an individual's psychological needs and savings decisions (Lee & Hanna, 2015). In a more closely related field

of study, scholars have explored Maslow's hierarchy of needs as it relates to consumer behavior within malls (Dennis, Newman, & Marshland, 2005). In this qualitative study, the authors found a hierarchy similar to that of Maslow's, with similar needs focusing on the highest and lowest levels. Much of the link to Maslow within the context of industrial organizations focuses on organizational behavior and employee motivation. No research has been found linking Maslow's hierarchy of needs to business-to-business consumer behavior.

Industrial Buying Process

There are two general categories of purchases, utilitarian and hedonic (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994). Utilitarian purchases focus on functional or useful actions, while hedonic purchases are for pleasure. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) demonstrate that hedonic activities possess a more personal experience compared to utilitarian task completion. Utilitarian consumer behavior presents a set of motivational characteristics that are similar to business-to-business transactions due to the motivational factors behind the purchase. The consumer mindset places utilitarian purchases under the umbrella of task-related or rational behaviors (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Sherry, 1990). In a business-to-business environment, procedural frameworks create a series of tasks surrounding the transaction. This appears to place buyers under the utilitarian decision-making categories.

While utilitarian motivations for purchases contain motivational factors that mirror those within the business-to-business environment, this utilitarian framework also contains individual motivating factors that must be taken into account. Scholarly understanding of the customer journey has evolved over time through studies that have explored motivating factors and various aspects of the customer experience. Early on, scholars focused on examining interactions between buyers and sellers as transactional events. As scholars developed a better understanding of the consumer's mindset, the buying process evolved to be seen as a journey across multiple stages and touchpoints (Steward, Narus, Roehm, & Ritz, 2019).

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Several models exist to define the customer journey. Sheth (1973) created the original model of industrial buyer behavior, which is shown in Figure 1. In this model, we find a complex system highlighting factors that can influence a B2B purchase. Three inputs influence the industrial buying process within this model. The first input is the expectations of various stakeholders such as the purchase agents, engineers, end-users, or other various individuals influenced by the product. The second input consists of product-specific factors that include time pressure, perceived risk, and type of purchase. The third input comes from company-specific factors, including organizational orientation, organizational size, and the degree of centralization.

Figure 1

Sheth's (1973) integrative model of industrial buyer behavior

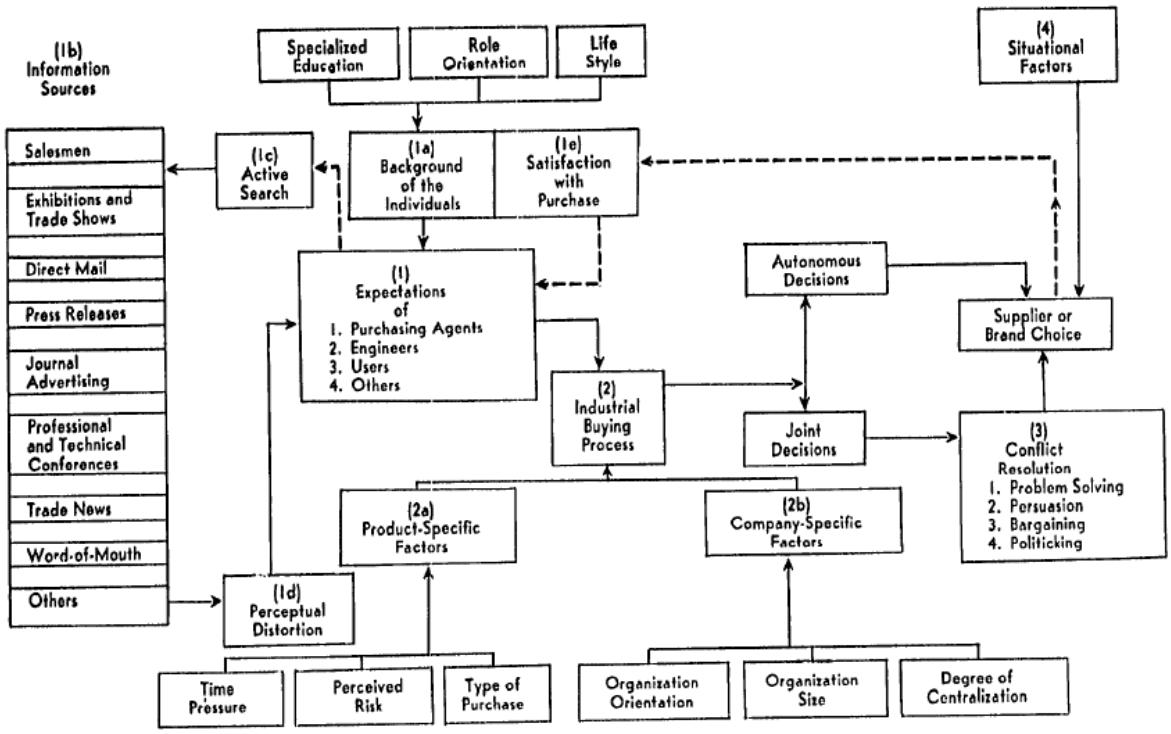


FIGURE 1. An integrative model of industrial buyer behavior.

Note: Sheth, J. (1973). A model of industrial buyer behavior. *Journal of Marketing.* 37. 10.2307/1250358

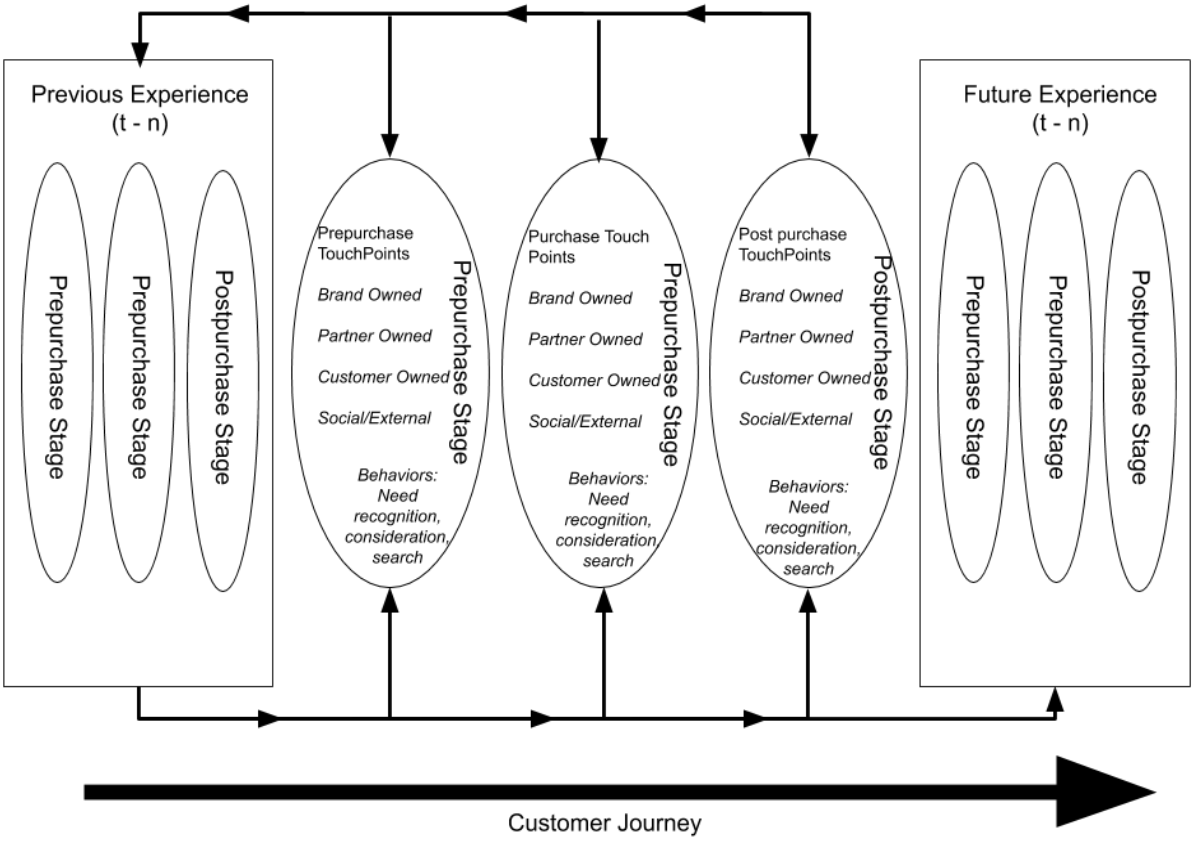
One of the critical factors within the industrial buying process revolves around expectations of the purchasing agent; these expectations include their own set of variables and influences (Sheth, 1973). Experiences such as specialized education, role orientation as defined by the organization, and the individual's lifestyle play a role in the purchasing agents' expectations and actions. During the industrial buying process, a purchasing agent may take action to engage in an active search for information regarding purchase. Information sources such as trade shows, advertising, and even word-of-mouth can be processed by the buyer and fed back into their expectation of the product. This feedback loop creates an opportunity for a perceptual distortion within the buyer's frame of reference

Business-to-business literature offers relevant scholarship for understanding influences on buyer expectations and behaviors that are based on characteristics of active search and their perceptual distortion. In these models, influencing factors derived from a company, such as organizational orientation or degrees of centralization, are not considered based on the structure of the interaction.

Lemon & Verhoef's (2016) customer journey, shown in Figure 2, focused on touchpoints and buyer behaviors demonstrated during the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages. Each stage contains various touchpoints owned by the brand, multiple partners, the customer, and social elements. These touchpoints influence the customer journey through the experience and include behaviors such as need recognition, consideration, and search.. The presentation of specific buyer behaviors during each phase allows practitioners to segment buyers during onboarding activities more accurately. A more precise assignment of a buyer's position within the buying process offers marketing professionals the ability to leverage appropriate touchpoints by understanding their influence on each stage.

Figure 2

Lemon & Verhoef's (2016) Current customer experience



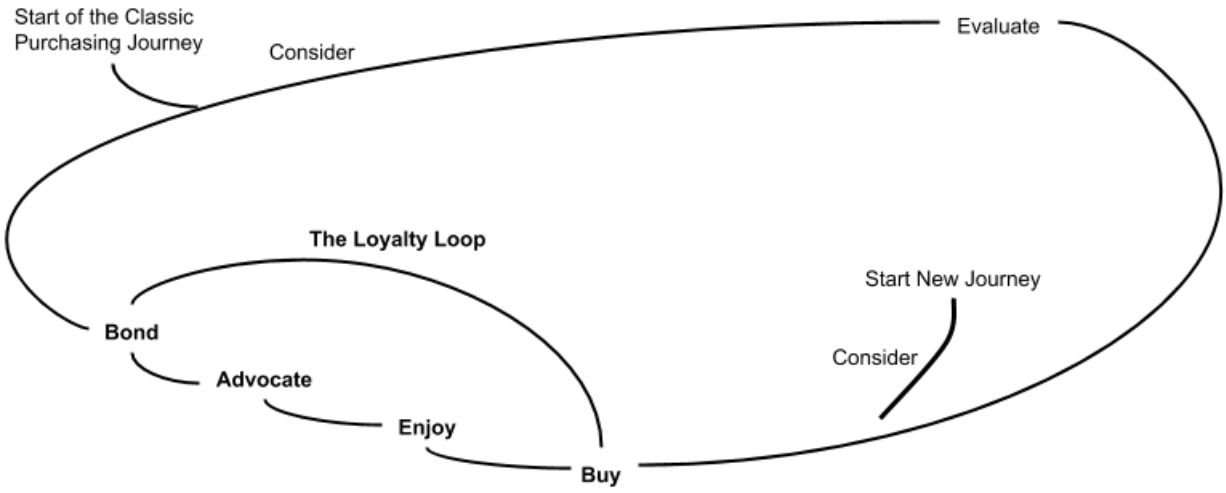
Note: Lemon, K.N. & Verhoef, P.C. (2016), Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey. Journal of Marketing, *808 (6), 69-96.*

These two models present relevant perspectives on how buyers behave. Trade shows are often used during the pre-purchase process to consider and evaluate various aspects of a product or service. As a way to understand the expectations of the individual buyer, Edelman and Singer's (2015) business-to-consumer models presented a potential link between the industrial buying process and the consumer behavior literature. Edleman and Singer (2015) presented a model that discusses how loyalty can influence the buyer's behavior. They discussed a varied description of the pre-purchase process, which includes five stages. These stages, shown in Figure 3, include consider, evaluate, buy, the loyalty loop, and a new journey.

As scholars have further refined the loyalty loop, it has been understood to include the stages of enjoy, advocate, and bond. This loop provides brands with a shortcut around certain buyer decision stages, such as consider and evaluate. The addition of the loyalty loop offers scholars and practitioners an understanding of how buyers will minimize their evaluation stage of the buying process. In demonstrating where a buyer's loyalty is represented within the buying process, Edleman & Singer (2015) provided actionable information for marketing campaigns.

Figure 3

Edelman and Singer(2015): The Loyalty Loop



Note: In the classic journey, consumers engage in a long consideration and evaluation phase before the loyalty loop. The new journey compresses the consider step and may entirely remove the evaluate step due to the loyalty factor.

These models from Sheth (1973), Lemon & Verhoef (2016), and Edleman & Singer (2015) present practitioners and scholars with an overview of the buying process as it is understood through different perspectives. The strengths of each model are in their clear delineation of the process. Presenting scholars and practitioners with a linear model creates a

foundation for research within various stages of the buyer's process. The weakness of these models, however, is in their simplicity. Sheth (1973) presents a more complete view of influences on industrial buyers, including company-specific factors such as organizational orientation and the level of centralization.

An active search by an individual buyer within a business-to-business setting follows a pattern similar to that which has been proposed by scholars in the consumer field. The post-purchase behaviors also link back to Sheth's (1973) work, which highlighted the influencing factor of satisfaction with previous purchases. As Lemon and Verhoef (2016) demonstrated, the post-purchase stage of the customer experience feeds back into the pre-purchase stage when products are purchased again. Buyer activities such as individual engagement with the product after the purchase can influence future behaviors, including search and needs recognition.

Edleman and Singer’s (2015) loyalty loop may align with Lemon and Verhoef’s (2016) feedback process. In Lemon and Verhoef’s (2016) model, feedback is viewed through various lenses of customer satisfaction. Edleman and Singer (2015) suggested improving satisfaction as a method for making the customer journey more efficient. Both models also include activities in which the customer is seeking information and reviewing options. In these facets, it is possible to embed Edleman and Singer’s (2015) model into Lemon and Verhoef’s (2016) process.

Each model presents a picture of buyers and the internal and external factors which influence the decision-making process. Sheth (1973) highlighted the path of the industrial buyer which includes an active search component. During this phase, activities such as trade shows are leveraged to establish the expectations of buyers. This active search process follows a similar path when compared to Edleman and Singer (2015) and Lemon and Verhoef’s (2016) models. The path of each model presents a framework to understand the steps buyers will take during the process.

The literature has not yet explored the relationship between an industrial buyer's needs and their post-show purchase intention or their perceptions of the show's effectiveness. Research within the individual consumer behavior field has offered some understanding of how Maslow's needs satisfaction influences an individual's purchasing decisions. Yet, within the context of industrial buying, scholars must develop an understanding of whether or not an individual's needs motivations present any relationship to their post-show purchase intention or their perceptions of trade show effectiveness. Once that relationship is better understood, scholars and practitioners will have the opportunity to explore how these needs can be satisfied within the context of a trade show.

Maslow's Needs and Their Influence on Buyers

In the context of consumer behavior, needs satisfaction is an influence on the decision-making process (Seeley, 1992). Research on individual consumers has found links between savings patterns and Maslow's hierarchy of needs in personal financial decisions (Lee & Hanna, 2015). In that study, scholars identified that individuals who focused on self-actualization as a goal demonstrated higher rates of savings. While Maslow's original theory does not directly account for economic behavior, links are found concerning internal motivations that are driven by individual needs. In the business-to-consumer realm, scholars have identified that buyers at the bottom of the pyramid (BoP) can reach above the level of their needs when making purchasing decisions (Pitta, Subrahmanyan, Gomez-Arias, 2008). The consumer's ability to reach above their current needs allows marketing professionals to focus products and services based on specific needs, instead of modifying the product or service for each needs level. Cell phone plans that include prepaid options provide an example of a service that can satisfy a need at various levels with modification in price, not in terms of service. A consumer currently operating at a low level within Maslow's hierarchy of needs can satisfy higher-order needs for various reasons, including cultural or social capital.

The consumer decision-making process contains several factors, each of which influences the buyer. Given the similarities between the industrial buying process and the consumer decision-making process, one can assume that these influences would translate between both spaces. Factors can be divided into internal and external influences, similar to Sheth's (1973) outline of the industrial buying process. The motivation to satisfy needs falls into the category of internal factors, which include personal and psychological variables (Svatosová, 2013). An individual's motivation to fill specific needs is an aspect of what it means to be human (Seeley, 1992). The satisfaction of needs within the context of consumer behavior can be accomplished in some manner through purchases and other consumer activities. Consumer research on needs satisfaction highlights how individuals will satisfy lower-level needs before moving up the hierarchy based on the availability of resources (Trigg, 2004). In contrast, a gap currently exists in the literature around understanding how needs satisfaction influences buyer behavior in an industrial or business-to-business environment.

Chapter 3: Methodology

To better understand the impact of buyers' needs satisfaction on their perceptions of trade show effectiveness and post-show purchase intention, a convenience sample was taken from individuals within the author of this study's professional network.

Research Design

The primary analysis involved individuals who attended a trade show in the past year. A qualifying question within the survey allowed the respondent to identify industry-relevant trade shows. The goal in collecting data through a convenience sample method was to explore the relationship between buyers' safety and security needs, belonging needs, esteem needs, and their post-show purchasing intention and perception of trade show effectiveness. The sampling unit for this survey was individual attendees, not individual firms.

Survey Design

The survey tool used in this study was modeled after three separate instruments. The first tool was developed by Taormina and Gao to measure the satisfaction of needs based on Maslow's motivation hierarchy (Taormina & Gao, 2013). Scholars previously tested the tool and reported out Cronbach's alpha reliability scores for each section. Cronbach's alpha tests the reliability coefficient where scores above .70 are considered good (Santos, 1999). Physiological needs scored .81, safety-security resulted in .87, belongingness scored .90, esteem needs had an overall score of .91, and self-actualization demonstrated a reliability score of .89. The trade show effectiveness tool was developed by Gottlieb, Brown, and Drennan (2011). This tool's alpha tests ranged in reliability from .71 to .96. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each construct was more than .5, which demonstrates that the tool can accurately capture the information (Zait & Bertea, 2011). The tool focusing on purchase intention was developed by Barber, Kuo, Bishop and Goodman (2012). This tool's alpha tests ranged in reliability from .71

to .89. The full factor analysis came in at .81, which demonstrates that the tool can accurately capture the information.

Each tool was modified to focus on the needs of industrial buyers, their place of employment, and trade shows. The modifications include changes to statements with a focus on testing the personal needs of individuals in a professional setting. Individual needs such as belonging within the confines of a romantic relationship or family have been removed as they do not relate to the research question. In an effort to test the validity of this instrument, first, a panel of five scholars and practitioners reviewed the tool to identify any errors such as confusing or leading questions. After these experts signed off on the tool, ten individuals completed a pilot test of the survey. At the conclusion of each section, an additional question was added asking for any comments or concerns about the questions. This allowed for varied perspectives on the questions to be collected.

Data Collection

Data collection for the survey began in August 2020. On August 18th, a small test survey went out to a test group of 155 professionals within the steel industry from a personal contact list. The purpose of this test was to gain insight into the open and completion rates expected from a full email blast. The result of reaching out to 155 professionals in the steel industry was that only one individual completed the survey. Contact was made with several individuals who, according to Survey Monkey, received the emails but did not respond. These individuals reported that they never received the email. Several rounds of investigation identified that emails coming from .edu addresses containing links were flagged by several spam filters, which reduced the email blast's effectiveness.

A second email blast was sent out using a .com email address extension. This email blast went out on August 25th to 1,433 individuals and resulted in 0 completed responses. Follow-up conversations with several professionals on the list revealed that several companies'

spam filters caught this email. Both email blasts used the subject line, Survey Request on Trade Show Effectiveness.

At the end of August, three additional channels began collecting responses. The first was a LinkedIn post created on August 24th. The original LinkedIn post was viewed 1,367 times and reshared 17 times. To date, this collector has gathered 67 completed responses. A second channel was via an email distributed through ASM International, which collected 43 responses. Several individuals within my professional network, including colleagues at Finkl Steel, also spread the survey to their contacts, which resulted in an additional 29 responses. During September 2020, a contact at the organization Heat Treat Today posted and distributed a unique collector to his industry professionals network. This collector only produced one response.

A final email blast was sent out to 1,711 individuals on September 18th, which resulted in 28 responses. Reminder emails were sent again on September 24th and on September 29th. These reminder emails included a change to the subject line such that it read "Dissertation Survey Request;" this appears to have decreased flags created by spam filters, thereby resulting in a higher open and response rate than the initial emails with the original subject line. The dissertation survey request email was also forwarded to known industry contacts who had not responded. The data collection efforts resulted in 171 responses, 143 of which were completed as of September 9, 2020. Of the 143 completed responses, 108 respondents are classified as part of manufacturing or related industries. The LinkedIn posts and dissertation survey requests reached individuals from various industry sectors outside the research scope, including healthcare, legal, and advertising.

During the data collection period, many potential respondents reached out through LinkedIn and emails. These individuals provided feedback regarding their trade show attendance frequency. Many stated that because they are supply chain or buying professionals, their company does not allow them to attend trade shows. While these statements' statistical

validity may be difficult to prove at this point, a trend in the data is that many respondents have roles outside the supply chain, purchasing, or buyer functions. The data also show that only 17 individuals visited a trade show with the goal of purchasing a product or service. Of these 17 individuals, only 3 listed this as their only goal in attending the show.

If future data collection were to occur, there is no expectation that the results would change to reflect any new needs profiles or attendee intentions. Themes of responses focusing on non-purchasing activities associated with trade show attendance remain consistent, and the pattern of needs responses has also remained stable throughout the data collection process. Data collection was concluded on September 9, 2020.

The original goal of 400 respondents represented a number that was too high, based on the nature of the steel industry’s staffing structure. One of the primary drivers for the need to reduce the convenience sample size was the anecdotal evidence that organizations do not send purchasing or supply chain professionals to trade shows. A secondary driver is the split between respondents identifying as sales and marketing professionals compared with supply chain or buying professionals.

According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2020), .53% of the steel industry's labor force falls within a sales or marketing function scope. At the same time, purchasing agents and purchasing managers also represent .53% of the labor force. At the close of data collection, 42% of respondents identified as sales and marketing professionals, and only 7% identify as supply chain or purchasing professionals. This disparity creates a significant challenge when inferring the responses of a larger population. Future research should focus on a smaller subset of the overall market to explore a more representative sample.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the survey results focused on testing each hypothesis by using the following statistical analysis:

H1: Examine questions associated with safety and security needs and how they impacted the results of questions from the post-show purchase intention section. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 questions from section four of the survey and running a Pearson correlation test with the average of all 3 questions from section three of the survey.

H2: Examine questions associated with safety and security needs and how they impacted the results of questions from the effectiveness of the trade show section. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 questions from section four of the survey and running a Pearson correlation with the average of all 11 questions from section two of the survey.

H3: Examine questions associated with belonging needs and how they impacted the results of questions from the post-show purchase intention section. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 questions from section five of the survey and running a Pearson correlation with the average of all 3 questions from section two of the survey.

H4: Examine questions associated with belonging needs and how they impacted the results of questions from the effectiveness of the trade show section. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 questions from section five of the survey and running a Pearson correlation test with the average of all 11 questions from section two of the survey.

H5: Examine questions associated with esteem needs and how they impacted the results of questions from the post-show purchase intention section. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 questions from section six of the survey and running a Pearson correlation test with the average of all 3 questions from section two of the survey.

H6: Examine questions associated with esteem needs and how they impacted the results of questions from the effectiveness of the trade show section. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 questions from section six of the survey and running a Pearson correlation test with the average of all 11 questions from section two of the survey.

Each Pearson's correlation was evaluated based upon Dancey & Reidy's (2007) scale. In this scale +/- 0.0 to .3 indicated a weak correlation, while +/- .4 to .6 is moderate. Correlations above +/- .7 are considered strong and +/- 1.0 correlations are perfect.

Ethical Concerns

The survey tool designed for this study was reviewed by George Fox University's Institutional Review Board to confirm that it would not inflict any harm on the participants. Based on the design of the survey, there was no significant risk to the participants. All participants could choose whether or not to participate, and the introductory email and LinkedIn posts informed individuals that there are no consequences for non-participation and that this is an entirely voluntary opportunity. Each participant was told that the goal of the survey is to understand how individual motivational needs will influence show effectiveness and post-show purchase intention. Respondent anonymity was a primary ethical concern as these results could theoretically have been used for unrelated or unethical commercial tactics.

Survey Monkey was used to distribute the tool to potential respondents. Respondent data was collected based on a unique identifier that used the customer's email. The data was secure; only the author of this study has access to the randomized list with the corresponding identification code. The customer-specific answers have not been made public, and the results have only been discussed in an aggregate form. The data, including the initial customer email list, was protected using a password-secured document management system. Survey Monkey uses secure data centers that keep information encrypted & secured behind firewalls (Survey Monkey, 2018).

The author of this study is currently an employee within the steel industry and made every effort to interpret the data collected in a manner free from bias. Due to the quantitative nature of the study, all data has been reported out to provide readers a holistic understanding of the results.

Chapter 4: Results

Hypothesis Summary

H1: Post-Show Purchase Intention vs. Safety Needs

H1 examined questions associated with safety and security needs and how they correlate with items from the post-show purchase intention section. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 questions from the survey's safety and security section and running a Pearson correlation test with the average of all four items from the section on post-show purchase intention. A listwise analysis was conducted on the survey data due to incomplete responses within the data set.

The average respondent reported a post-show purchase intention of 3.0122 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with a standard deviation of .70730. This demonstrates that an even number of respondents show positive and negative post-show purchase intentions.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics: Safety and Security Needs Compared to Post-Show Purchase Intention

					Skewness	
	Mean	*Std. deviation*	*n*	*n statistic*	*Statistic*	*Std. error*
Average Safety and Security Needs Score	*3.9741*	*.62253*	*108*	*108*	*-.552*	*.230*
Average Post-Show Purchase Intention Score	*3.0122*	*.70730*	*108*	*108*	*.077*	*.233*
Valid n				*108*		

H1 was tested by running a Pearson's correlation test to compare the correlation between the average respondent's post-show purchase intention to the average respondent's safety and security needs score. As shown in Table 2, the results indicate a correlation value of .052 without significant support based on a two-tailed analysis. This demonstrates a weak positive relationship. Given the lack of significance and weak positive correlation, this analysis

indicates no support for hypothesis 1. As the attendee's safety and security need satisfaction levels increase, there is a weak correlation to the post-show purchase intention. Due to the lack of significance in the results of the Pearson correlation test for H1, the correlation may be due to random variation.

Table 2

Correlation between Safety and Security Needs and Post-Show Purchase Intention

		Average Post-Show Purchase Intention Score	*Average Safety and Security Needs Score*
Average Safety and Security Needs Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*1*	*.052*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		*.595*
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*53.529*	*2.437*
	Covariance	*.500*	*.023*
Average Post-Show Purchase Intention Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*.052*	*1*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*.595*	
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*2.437*	*41.467*
	Covariance	*.023*	*.388*

H2: Perceived Trade Show Effectiveness vs. Safety Needs

H2 examined the association between safety and security needs and how they correlate to the trade show effectiveness section's average score. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 questions from the survey's safety and security section and running a Pearson correlation test with the average of all 11 items from the section of trade show effectiveness. A listwise analysis was conducted on the survey data due to incomplete responses within the data set.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics: Safety and Security Needs Compared to Trade Show Effectiveness

					Skewness	
	Mean	*Std. deviation*	*n*	*n statistic*	*Statistic*	*Std. error*
Average Safety and Security Needs Score	*3.9741*	*.62253*	*108*	*108*	*-.552*	*.230*
Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score	*3.6293*	*.48229*	*108*	*108*	*-.305*	*.233*
Valid n				*108*		

As shown in Table 3, the average respondent’s safety and security need score was 3.9741, with a standard deviation of .62253. Roughly 53 individuals reported needs satisfaction scores that ranged from 3.9427 to 5. The interesting finding within this descriptive statistic set is that approximately 3 individuals had scores of roughly 2.1065. So while the average respondent demonstrated a high level of needs satisfaction, there is a subset of the data that indicates their safety and security needs are not met.The average respondent reported a trade show effectiveness score of 3.6293 with a standard deviation of .48229. This indicates that 103 out of 108 respondents reported trade show effectiveness to be within the range of 2.66472 and 4.59388.

H2 was tested by running a Pearson's correlation test to compare the correlation between the average respondent's results of section two to the average respondent's results of section four. The results, as shown in Table 4, indicate a correlation value of .128 with no significance reported. This analysis suggests no support for hypothesis two: the attendee's safety and security need satisfaction correlation is weak and no significance level is reported. The variation ranges highlight the result that the average response data reached across the spectrum, including support and disagreement regarding a trade show's effectiveness.

Table 4

Correlation$_a$ between Safety and Security Needs Score and Trade Show Effectiveness

		Trade Show Effectiveness Score	*Average Safety and Security Needs Score*
Average Safety and Security Needs Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*1*	*.128*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		*.188*
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*41.467*	*4.101*
	Covariance	*.388*	*.038*
Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*.128*	*1*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*.188*	
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*4.101*	*24.889*
	Covariance	*.038*	*.233*

a. Listwise N= 108

H3: Post-Show Purchase Intention vs. Belonging Needs

H3 explored questions associated with belonging needs and how they correlate to the post-show purchase intention section. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 items from the survey's belonging section and running a Pearson correlation test with the average of all four questions from the section on post-show purchase intention. A listwise analysis was conducted on the survey data due to incomplete responses within the data set.

The descriptive statistics regarding average post-show purchase intention and belonging needs, shown in Table 5, led to two interesting observations regarding the respondents. First, the average post-show purchase intention score was 3.0122. This indicates a neutral position when it comes to respondents' post-show purchase intention. The large standard deviation of .70730 also suggests that some individuals have strong feelings about their post-show purchase intentions outside two standard deviations. Second, the average respondent reported a belonging needs score of 3.8759. Given the standard deviation of .65878, 88 respondents out of 108 reported scores above 3 (neutral), which indicates that their belonging needs were satisfied. This needs category appears to be satisfied when respondents think of their trade show experience.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics: Belonging Needs Compared to Post-Show Purchase Intention

					Skewness	
	Mean	*Std. deviation*	*n*	*n statistic*	*Statistic*	*Std. error*
Average Belonging Needs Score	*3.9741*	*.62253*	*108*	*108*	*-.552*	*.230*
Average Post-Show Purchase Intention Score	*3.0122*	*.70730*	*108*	*108*	*.077*	*.233*
Valid n				*108*		

H3 was tested by running a Pearson correlation test to compare the average belonging needs to average post-show purchase intention. As shown in Table 6, the results indicate a correlation value of .082 with no significance, demonstrating a weak positive relationship. The analysis suggests no support for H3. The weak correlation score and lack of significance may be the result of random variation.

Table 6

Correlation between Belonging Needs and Post-Show Purchase Intention

		Average Post-Show Purchase Intention Score	*Average Belonging Needs Score*
Average Belonging Needs Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*1*	*.082*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		*.401*
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*53.529*	*4.069*
	Covariance	*.500*	*.038*
Average Post-Show Purchase Intention Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*.082*	*1*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*.401*	
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*4.069*	*46.437*
	Covariance	*.038*	*.434*

a. Listwise N= 108

H4: Perceived Trade Show Effectiveness vs. Belonging Needs

H4 examined questions associated with belonging needs and how they correlate to the effectiveness of the trade show average score. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 questions from the survey's safety and security section and running a Pearson correlation test with the average of all 11 items from the section of trade show effectiveness. A listwise analysis was conducted on the survey data due to incomplete responses within the data set.

The descriptive statistics regarding average post-trade show effectiveness and belonging needs as shown in Table 7 demonstrate that both the average belonging needs score and trade show effectiveness score are above 3 (neutral).

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics: Belonging Needs Compared to Trade Show Effectiveness

					Skewness	
	Mean	*Std. deviation*	*n*	*n statistic*	*Statistic*	*Std. error*
Average Belonging Needs Score	*3.8759*	*.65878*	*108*	*108*	*-.273*	*.230*
Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score	*3.6293*	*.48229*	*108*	*108*	*-.305*	*.233*
Valid n				*108*		

H3 was tested by running a Pearson's correlation test to compare the correlation between the average respondent's belonging needs and their trade show effectiveness results. The results, shown in Table 8, indicated a correlation value of .265 with significance at .01 level. This shows a weak positive relationship. The Cohen's effect size of this correlation is .5496. Cohen (1988, 1992) states that the effect size is considered low if the value of r is less than .1. An effect size is considered medium if the r value is near .3 and large if greater than .5. This analysis suggests partial support for hypothesis four; as the attendee's belonging needs satisfaction levels increase, there is a weak correlation to the average trade show effectiveness.

Table 8

Correlation[b] between Belonging Needs and Trade Show Effectiveness

		Average Belonging Needs Score	*Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score*
Average Belonging Needs Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*1*	*.265***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		*.006*
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*49.437*	*9.005*
	Covariance	*.434*	*.084*
Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*.265***	*1*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*.006*	
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*9.005*	*24.889*
	Covariance	*.084*	*.233*

*** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

b. Listwise N= 108

Given the weak correlation and significance level of belonging needs and trade show effectiveness, the author concluded that satisfying belonging needs may result in a higher trade show effectiveness score.

H5: Post-Show Purchase Intention vs. Esteem Needs

H5 explored questions associated with belonging needs and how they relate to the post-show purchase intention section. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 items from the esteem section of the survey and running a Pearson correlation with the average of all four questions from the section on post-show purchase intention. A listwise analysis was conducted on the survey data due to incomplete responses within the data set.

As shown in Table 9, the descriptive statistics regarding esteem needs demonstrate that many respondents have their esteem needs satisfied, given the mean of 3.8688 and a small standard deviation of .58213.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics: Esteem Needs and Average Post-Show Purchase Intention

					Skewness	
	Mean	*Std. deviation*	*n*	*n statistic*	*Statistic*	*Std. error*
Average Esteem Needs Score	*3.8688*	*.58213*	*108*	*108*	*-.366*	*.230*
Average Post-Show Purchase Intention Score	*3.0122*	*.70730*	*108*	*108*	*.077*	*.233*
Valid n				*108*		

H5 was tested by running a Pearson's correlation test to compare the correlation between the average post-show purchase intention and average esteem needs scores. The results, shown in Table 10, indicate a correlation value of .004 with no significance. This shows a weak relationship. This analysis indicates no support for hypothesis five. As the attendee's esteem needs satisfaction levels increased, there was a weak correlation to the attendee's post-show purchase intention with no significance.

Table 10

Correlation[a] between Post-Show Purchase Intention and Esteem Needs Score

		Average Esteem Needs Score	*Average Post-Show Purchase Intention Score*
Average Esteem Needs Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*1*	*.004*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		*.964*
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*36.260*	*.196*
	Covariance	*.339*	*.002*
Average Post-Show Purchase Intention Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*.004*	*1*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*.964*	
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*.196*	*53.529*
	Covariance	*.002*	*.500*

a. Listwise N= 108

H6: Perceived Trade Show Effectiveness vs. Esteem Needs

H6 examined questions associated with respondents' esteem needs and the trade show section's effectiveness. This was measured by taking the average response rate of all 10 questions from the esteem section of the survey and running a Pearson correlation test with the average of all 11 items from the section of trade show effectiveness. A listwise analysis was conducted on the survey data due to incomplete responses within the data set.

The descriptive statistics regarding average post-trade show effectiveness and esteem needs, seen in Table 11, demonstrate that both the average esteem needs and trade show effectiveness scores were above 3 (neutral). Given the standard deviations for both variables, most respondents fell above the 3 in their responses.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics: Esteem Needs and Trade Show Effectiveness

					Skewness	
	Mean	*Std. deviation*	*n*	*n statistic*	*Statistic*	*Std. error*
Average Esteem Needs Score	*3.8688*	*.58213*	*108*	*108*	*-.366*	*.230*
Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score	*3.6293*	*.48229*	*108*	*108*	*-.305*	*.233*
Valid n				*108*		

H6 was tested by running a Pearson's correlation test to compare the correlation between the average esteem needs and trade show effectiveness results. The results, shown in Table 11, indicate a correlation value of .168 with no significance. As the attendee's esteem needs satisfaction levels to increase, there is a weak positive correlation with no significance to the average trade show effectiveness. This analysis suggests no support for hypothesis 6 due to a lack of significance and weak correlation value.

Table 12

Correlation[b] Between Esteem Needs and Trade Show Effectiveness

		Average Esteem Needs Score	*Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score*
Average Esteem Needs Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*1*	*.168*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		*.083*
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*36.260*	*5.042*
	Covariance	*.339*	*.047*
Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*.168*	*1*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*.083*	
	Sum of squares and cross-products	*5.042*	*24.889*
	Covariance	*.047*	*.233*

a. Listwise N= 108

Additional Observations

Attendee Goals

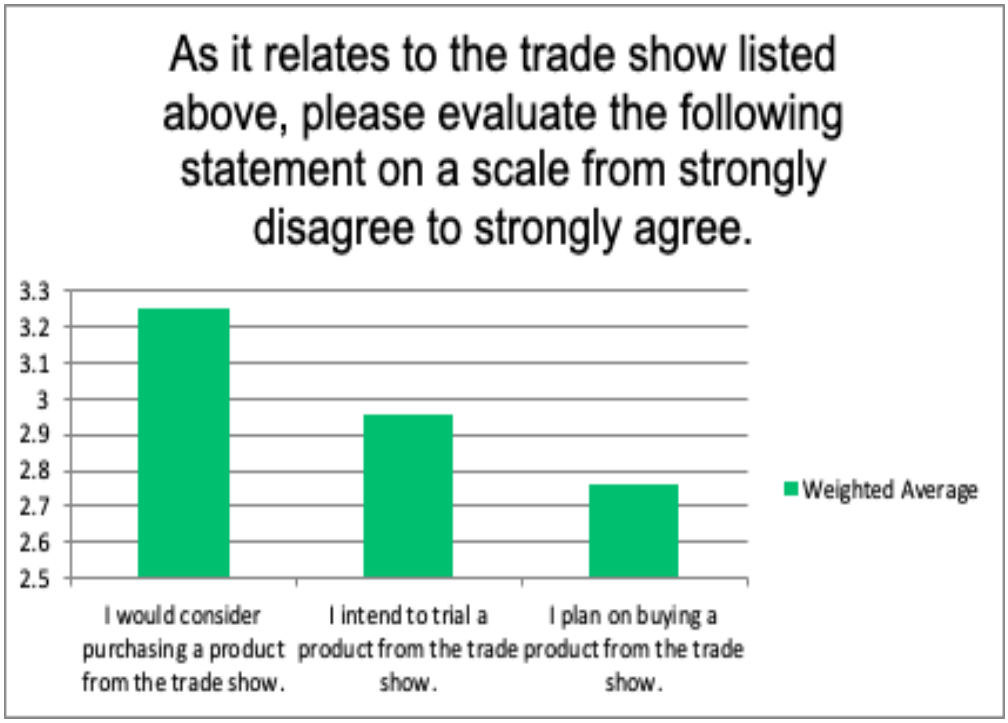
Individual attendee goals present a different picture from the initial expectations held by the author of this study. Respondents had the option to select multiple goals associated with trade show attendance. These included the ability to learn, to interact socially with others, to purchase, or other. The results highlight some unexpected results. More than half of respondents selected to learn (63%) and interact socially with others (66%). The surprising result was that only 10% of individuals who responded to the survey identified purchasing products or services as a goal in their trade show attendance.

Post-Show Purchase Intention

While only a small percentage of individuals reported that they had the goal of purchasing a product or service, the post-show purchase intention data highlight a different result. As Figure 4 shows, 35% of individuals indicated that they would consider purchasing a product from the show, 21% of respondents indicated that they intend to try a product from the trade show, and 12% of respondents indicated that they planned to buy a product from the show.

Figure 4

Trade Show Attendees' Post-Show Intentions



The potential disconnect between goals and outcomes presents additional opportunities to understand if any specific needs profiles change individual respondents' positions during the show. A second potential finding, outside the original hypotheses, is the weak but significant correlation between individuals who reported interacting socially as a trade show attendance goal and their perceived effectiveness of the show, as shown in Table 13. This analysis resulted in a Pearson correlation of .323 and a significance at .01.

Table 13

Correlation between Social Interaction Goals and Trade Show Effectiveness Scores

		Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score	*Trade Show Goal: To Interact Socially*
Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*1*	*.323***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		*.001*
Trade Show Goal: To Interact Socially	*Pearson Correlation*	*.323***	*1*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*.001*	

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*
Listwise N= 108

The trade show attendance goals of learning and purchasing reveal less significant correlations to trade show effectiveness scores. A cursory analysis of individuals who reported learning as a goal of attending a trade show only resulted in a Pearson correlation of .235 with a significance level of .05. Individuals who listed purchasing as a goal of attending the trade show demonstrated a correlation of .139 with no significance level.

Summary of Findings

This study aimed to establish a link between needs profiles of individual attendees at trade shows and post-show purchase intentions and perceived trade show effectiveness. One link has been discovered based on this study. The research was able to find weak support between attendees' belonging needs and their perceptions of trade show effectiveness.

Chapter 5: Discussion

A diverse marketing strategy should include trade shows as they represent a critical channel of marketing activities (Kerin & Cron, 1987). This study explored the relationship between attendees' needs and potential trade show outcomes such as post-show purchase intention and perceived trade show effectiveness. The focus on attendees' needs and their correlation to various trade show outcomes was an attempt to expand the understanding of value creation that could occur at trade shows to represent different participation modes. The exploration of trade shows was conducted from the point of view of the exhibiting or organizing participatory modes. In the exhibiting mode, an individual's focus is on setting up their event space and interacting with prospects and customers (Gopalakrishna & Lilien, 1995). Individuals who manage the event fall into the organizing mode (Dawson, Young, Tu, & Chongyi, 2014). This mode focuses on managing the show itself, including activities such as event planning and overall logistical organization. In exploring this research study's findings, opportunities for future research appear, notably, how we can better understand the attendee's perspective on value creation within trade show activities.

Summary of Findings

In exploring the primary variables, a correlation was expected between the three needs states of safety and security, belonginess, and esteem and measures of trade show effectiveness. Each hypothesis investigated one of the specific need states and compared the individual's level of satisfaction with variables that could be seen as valuable for the other participation modes at a trade show.

Post-Show Purchase Intention Findings

Three hypotheses focused on how needs influenced post-show purchase intentions. H1 examined post-show purchase intention and its relationship with an individual’s safety and security needs satisfaction. The expectation before the study was that individuals with low needs satisfaction scores would have correspondingly low post-show purchase intention scores.

This assumption was driven in part by scholars who have noted the influence that needs satisfaction has in the consumer behavior decision making process (Seeley, 1992). After analyzing the data, the author of this study found that there is a small correlation between these two variables. This indicates that much of the variation between these two variables is driven by factors not addressed in this study. This finding presents an interesting opportunity for trade show organizers. Given that safety and security does not impact post-show purchase intention, organizers may be able to shift resources to other aspects of the show itself.

H3 examined Maslow's need for belonging and explored the relationship between belonging needs satisfaction and the individual's post-show purchase intention score. Belonging focuses on the needs surrounding quality of relationships, feelings of togetherness, and welcoming. It important to note that 88 out of the 108 respondents reported a score above 3 (neutral), which indicates that most of the respondents have positive belonging needs satisfaction levels. Here the data shows little or no correlation between belonging needs satisfaction and the individual's post-show purchase intention score. The lack of support for H3 can be used by both organizers and exhibitors since both participation modes can direct resources to satisfying belonging needs in the context of a trade show. Based on the finding that there is no correlation between this and post-show purchase intention, organizers and exhibitors can better understand how activities that promote belonging will be viewed by the attendee. As an example, an event designed to create a feeling of closeness does not appear to influence post show purchase intention.

In H5, the author of this study sought to compare an individual's esteem needs with post-show purchase intention. As with the previous hypotheses, the data shows little to no correlation. With this final hypothesis to explore post-show purchase intention, a theme appears. Needs satisfaction appears to have no correlation to an individual's intention to purchase products or services after the show. This finding and theme provides exhibitors and organizers

with the understanding that the influence on post-show purchasing activities falls outside of an individual's needs satisfaction.

Perceived Trade Show Effectiveness Findings

This study explored perceived trade show effectiveness across three separate hypotheses. The research surrounding H2 focused on safety and security but shifted to focus on the correlation between safety and security and perceived trade show effectiveness as defined by the attendee. In this instance, the data showed a small correlation between attendees' reported feelings of safety and security and their perceptions of trade show effectiveness, which reinforces the potential for trade show exhibitors to focus resources away from safety and security toward areas of the show that increase trade show effectiveness. Scholars have previously identified a buyer's ability to reach above the bottom of the pyramid (BoP) needs when making purchasing decisions (Pitta, Subrahmanyan, Gomex-Arias, 2008). The findings from H2 confirm that attendees will reach above safety and security needs to pursue higher level needs. This provides exhibitors and organizers with the ability to shift resources toward activities such as testing-new product concepts or developing new contacts (Hansen, 2004).

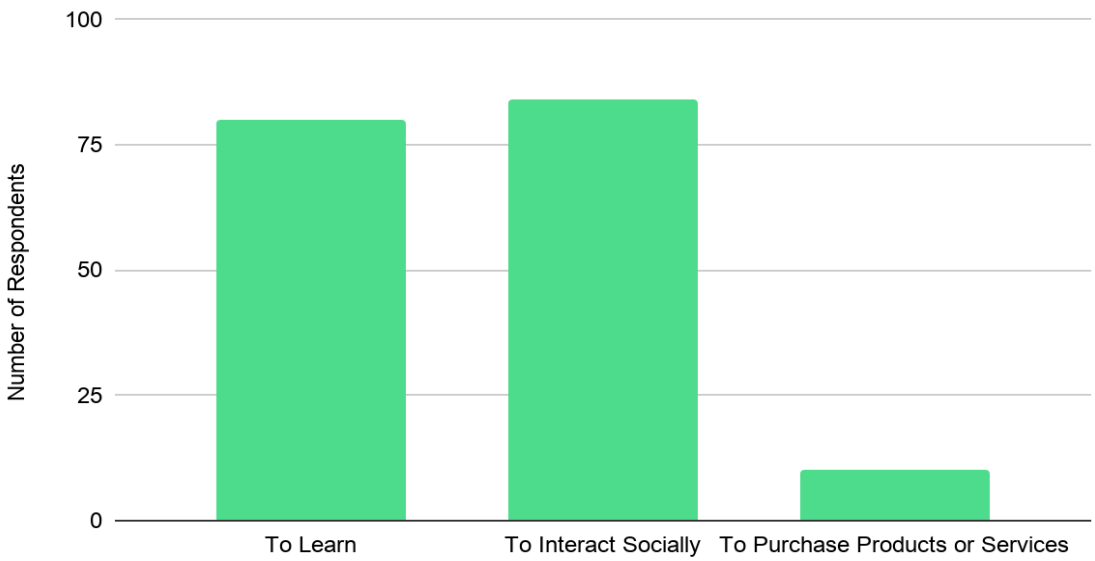
H4 examined how an individual's needs satisfaction levels relate to the perceptions of trade show effectiveness. In the analysis of this hypothesis, the comparison between belonging needs satisfaction and perceived trade show effectiveness resulted in a weak but significant correlation, which indicates that while additional factors may affect an individual's perceptions of trade show effectiveness, some of the variation can be explained by the individual's belonging needs satisfaction. Exhibitors and organizers can benefit from this finding by understanding that both participation modes may need to change how they evaluate the success of the show itself. As demonstrated in H3, post-show purchase intention has little to no correlation with the belonging needs satisfaction. On the other hand, perceived trade show effectiveness does have a significant but weak correlation to belonging needs satisfaction.

H6 explored the correlation between buyers' esteem needs and perceived trade show effectiveness. Esteem needs focus on an individual's level of self-respect, feelings of recognition, and confidence. Here the data showed a weak correlation that was not significant. Given the lack of significance of the correlation between respondents' esteem needs and perceived trade show effectiveness, organizers and exhibitors can shift resources away from events and activities designed to increase these feelings, as they do not increase the attendees perception of the trade shows effectiveness.

The additional findings that focused on attendee goals and post-show purchase intention present some of the most exciting aspects of this research. Respondents identified learning and interacting socially with others as their primary goals of attending a trade show. Given the small percentage of respondents who identified purchasing a product or service as a goal, exhibitors and organizers may choose to redirect resources to satisfy better attendees' desire to learn and socialize while at the show.

Figure 5

Trade Show Attendance Goals



The weak but significant correlation between perceived trade show effectiveness and attendees who had the goal of interacting socially (as shown in Table 13) also presents organizers and exhibitors with guidance on where best to allocate resources. Given the percentage of respondents who identified socializing as a goal in attending the trade show and the correlation to perceived trade show effectiveness, organizers and exhibitors should focus resources on social events. These opportunities should increase the attendees' trade show effectiveness scores.

Table 13

Attendees' Trade Show Goals and Trade Show Effectiveness Scores

		Goal: To Learn	*Goal: To Socially Interact*	*Goal: To Purchase Products or Services*	*Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score*
Trade Show Goal: To Learn	*Pearson Correlation*	*1*	*.126*	*.009*	*.235**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		*.188*	*.926*	*.014*
	N	*110*	*110*	*110*	*108*
Trade Show Goal: To Socially Interact	*Pearson Correlation*	*.126*	*1*	*.083*	*.323***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*.188*		*.391*	*.001*
	N	*110*	*110*	*110*	*108*
Trade Show Goal: To Purchase Products or Services	*Pearson Correlation*	*.009*	*.083*	*1*	*.139*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*.926*	*.391*		*.151*
	N	*110*	*110*	*110*	*108*
Average Trade Show Effectiveness Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*.235**	*.323***	*.139*	*1*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*.014*	*.001*	*.151*	
	N	*108*	*108*	*108*	*108*

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how individuals' needs surrounding safety and security, esteem, and belongingness impacted perceived trade show effectiveness and post-show purchase intention. The study found that safety and security needs, belongingness, and esteem all had low correlations with post-show purchase intention scores. Additionally, this study found that the goals of attendees are not primarily focused on purchasing products. More attendees listed trade show goals of learning and socializing instead of purchasing activities. The following chapter will discuss the significance of these findings and opportunities for future research.

Implications

Previous research on trade shows has focused on determining the show's effectiveness based on pre-show objectives set forth by the exhibiting organization (Hansen, 2004). These sales- and behavior-related metrics are centered on sales-related activities such as lead efficiency (Gopalkrishna & Williams, 1992). This study is one of the first to explore how, within the steel industry, individuals' needs relate to their perception of a show's effectiveness and their post-show purchase intention. By exploring the implications of this study's findings, we can develop a better understanding of how attendees view trade shows. The average post-show purchase intention demonstrated a mean score of 3.0122, while the trade show effectiveness presented a mean score of 3.6293. This finding is significant because it challenges the perception that a show's success or failure can only be measured by pre-show objectives set forth by exhibiting organizations. Using leads or visitors to booths as a measurement of trade show effectiveness fails to consider attendees’ perspectives.

In shifting the measurement of show effectiveness away from exhibitor defined metrics to attendee perceptions, all relevant participation modes are considered, which can create a more valuable experience for the attendee. In the data regarding attendees' perceptions of trade

show effectiveness, three questions with interesting findings stand out. The first question focused on the attendee's ability to gather products/service information, which resulted in a 4.18 out of 5 scores and a standard deviation of .828. This indicates that most trade show attendees focus on gathering information at trade shows and that they appear to place a high level of importance on gathering information. Research must now explore where this fits within the industrial buying cycle so that sales and marketing practices can better align with attendees' goals. Aspects of the exhibitors' strategy may change if the primary focus shifts to helping attendees gather product and service information. Giveaways or contests to encourage foot traffic to a booth may be replaced with educational breakout sessions focusing on technical discussions.

The question that focused on identifying new suppliers resulted in a score of 2.78 out of 5, with a standard deviation of .765. This is the only question regarding the attendees' perception of trade show effectiveness that was less than 3, which indicates that most attendees do not attend shows in an attempt to find new suppliers. This finding may be explored further in more extensive studies as it, too, could change trade show exhibition strategy. If attendees are not visiting the show to find new suppliers, booth design, booth flow, and booth location strategies may need to be varied. This finding also creates an opportunity to segment prospective customers into before-, during-, and after-show groupings within the sales and marketing process. In the case of new customers who are not searching out exhibitors, trade shows may be an opportune time to satisfy the current customers' needs instead of focusing on developing new customers.

The third finding of interest focuses on the question of whether or not the attendee was able to solve problems. This resulted in a 4.15 out of 5 with a standard deviation of .783. A focus on problem-solving within the context of a trade show presents exhibitors and organizers with an opportunity for future research. If most attendees surveyed in this study focused on problem-solving while at the event, this might translate to a larger population. Exhibitors have an

opportunity to concentrate on helping attendees to solve problems through booth design. They can also staff booths with a group of sales and marketing professionals and technical professionals as well as other appropriate problem-solving resources. A mixed staffing paradigm provides attendees with more problem-solving resources on site. Training before shows could focus on current issues within the industry and how the current product offering can solve these problems for attendees.

The current study is one of the first to explore needs satisfaction within the confines of a business-to-business consumer behavior context. The exploration of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as it relates to consumer behavior has occurred in other industries, including banking, food safety, and malls (Dennis, Newman, & Marshland, 2005; Tikkanen, 2007; Lee & Hanna, 2015). These studies found various links between needs satisfaction and consumer behavior within the business-to-consumer context. Sheth (1973) described the system that industrial buyers must use in decision making, including the active search phase, which would include attending trade shows to learn more about products and services. Seeley (1992) identified needs satisfaction as an influence on a buyer’s decision-making process.

This study explored three of the categories from Maslow's hierarchy of needs in an attempt to find a link in a business-to-business context. In the context of needs satisfaction, the author of this study found that the respondents have an average belonging score of 3.87, average esteem needs a score of 3.86, and an average safety and security score of 3.96. In exploring these average scores across multiple groups, no significant findings arose which indicates that needs scores do not present significant variation across gender, education level, managerial responsibility, age, or years of experience. This is important because in the business-to-consumer realm, scholars have identified that buyers at the bottom of the pyramid (BoP) can reach above the level of their needs when making purchasing decisions (Pitta, Subrahmanyan, Gomez-Arias, 2008).

Future Research

This study created a tool for business-to-business industries that they can use to explore several aspects of their trade show's effectiveness from all attendee profile perspectives. Across the exploration of each hypothesis, the understanding of trade show effectiveness presented itself as the most exciting theme for future research, not only with attendees but with all participation modes.

Expand the understanding of perceived trade show effectiveness

This study explored several vital aspects of trade show effectiveness previously unexplored in the steel industry. The results of this study show that respondents identify gathering information on products or services, solving problems, and special events as the most important aspects of the trade show's perceived effectiveness. This can provide scholars and trade show organizers with a focus for future research, namely, on which attributes create the highest value levels across the trade shows and which participation modes will be most valuable to exhibitors and organizers. Developing a better understanding of where problem solving fits within the industrial buying process can also provide sales and marketing professionals with tools for creating value. Qualitative research should be conducted on attendees who identify as buyers or supply chain professionals to better understand how they define problem solving within the industrial buying context. This would allow organizers to tailor trade shows to attendees' preferences. Exhibitors would find value in this information as it may change the strategy in how they exhibit. This could lead to discovering which attributes are most important to specific customer segments.

Trade show effectiveness and future attendance

Additional research is required on trade show effectiveness in order to understand how the findings will relate to future trade show attendance. Trade show attendance heavily influences exhibitor attendance and the financial success of the show. Scholars and practitioners need to explore how attendees' trade show effectiveness scores relate to their

future attendance intentions. Do higher scores directly correlate to intentions to attend future trade shows, or do other outside variables have a more significant influence? Do trade show attendees encourage peers who have not attended in the past to participate in future shows? Scholars should also explore factors such as trade show location to gain a better understanding of how or if the venue's location impacts attendees' perceptions of effectiveness. Researchers should explore how to increase trade show effectiveness scores in a manner that also increases future attendance.

Trade show effectiveness from the perspective of exhibitors and organizers

Exhibitors and organizers have their unique take on what constitutes the effectiveness of a trade show. Exhibitors staff shows with various professionals who all bring their own goals. If exhibitors do not feel the show is effective, they may choose to direct resources to another show or marketing activity. If organizers think the show is not effective, they may design future shows to support their goals instead of the goals of individuals in other participation modes. Exhibitors may have different plans compared to attendees and organizers. Scholars should conduct research exploring the differences between each participation mode at trade shows to improve the overall effectiveness of the show.

Explore larger populations and needs profiles

The small survey size associated with this study limits the ability to develop a deep understanding of whether needs profiles impact trade show effectiveness and post-show purchase intention in a larger population. Future research might explore specific trade shows and their attendee lists. Trade show organizer interest in these questions may help create a more valuable experience for attendees and provide a larger return on exhibitors' investment.

Post-Show Purchase Intention

During the analysis of post-show purchase intention variables, no statistically relevant findings appeared. The lack of results calls into question the use of post-show purchase intention as a useful metric. Scholars should explore post-show purchase intention in business

trade shows to understand if this measurement is relevant. A low percentage of respondents listed purchasing or buying activities as a goal in attending trade shows. Additional research needs to be completed to understand how to capitalize on the small percentage of attendees focused on buying activities without misallocating resources away from attendees' who focus on socialization and learning.

Conclusion

There is an established link in some business-to-consumer markets between needs profiles and consumer behavior. In this study, the only correlation between needs and consumer behavior arose when comparing trade show attendees' needs and their perceived effectiveness in the steel industry. Needs surrounding safety and security or personal esteem proved not to impact attendees’ perception of trade show effectiveness or post-show purchase intention. The limited number of respondents in this study may, in part, be driven by COVID-19 and the lack of relevant trade shows. COVID-19 may have also limited the overall findings of this study. The results surrounding perceived trade show effectiveness and the attributes that ranked highly create a foundation for looking at a trade show's success in a new light.

The opportunity for future research within the variable of trade show effectiveness is the most meaningful finding of this research. Measuring trade shows success based on exhibitors' goals does not consider the other participation modes and their value in attending a show. Trade show effectiveness explores how value is created at the show across all participation modes, including organizers, exhibitors, and attendees. The discovery that few individuals attend shows to find new suppliers should call trade show exhibitors to look upon their strategy with fresh eyes. The strategy of trade shows will undoubtedly change with the advent of COVID-19 and future health and safety guidelines. Future research within the context of trade show effectiveness will provide organizers and exhibitors with a sound strategy for the future.

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Appendix A

Trade Show Identification

1. List a trade show you have attended in the last year. (Limit one trade show per respondent. Use this show to respond to the following questions).

2. List the month and year of the trade show identified above. (Month/Year)

3. As it relates to the trade show listed above, please evaluate the following statement using a 5 point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I was able to gather product/service information	○	○	○	○	○
I was able to browse through a great range of exhibits	○	○	○	○	○
I perceive the special events/presentations as useful	○	○	○	○	○
I was able to gather industry intelligence	○	○	○	○	○
I was able to identify future trends	○	○	○	○	○
I was able to test and see products/service features	○	○	○	○	○
I was able to identify new suppliers/customers	○	○	○	○	○
The trade show helped me to finalize my purchasing decision	○	○	○	○	○
I was able to solve problems with suppliers/customers	○	○	○	○	○
While at the show I was able to get in contact with suppliers/customers	○	○	○	○	○
The entertainment provided at the trade show is enjoyable	○	○	○	○	○

5. Evaluate the following statement using a 5 point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree.

I am completely satisfied with...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The quality of the office space I am working in	○	○	○	○	○
How secure I am in my current role	○	○	○	○	○
How safe I am from being injured on the job	○	○	○	○	○
How safe I am from catching any diseases	○	○	○	○	○
The safety of my commute	○	○	○	○	○
How protected I am from dangers in the workplace	○	○	○	○	○
The protection that human resources provides me	○	○	○	○	○
The protection that the company policies provide me	○	○	○	○	○
My financial compensation	○	○	○	○	○
The money I am able to reserve for a retirement	○	○	○	○	○

6. Evaluate the following statement using a 5 point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree.

I am completely satisfied with...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The amount of rapport I share with my coworkers	○	○	○	○	○
The quality of the relationships I have with my coworkers	○	○	○	○	○
The camaraderie I share with my colleagues	○	○	○	○	○
How much I am welcomed in my employer's community	○	○	○	○	○
The emotional support I receive from my colleagues	○	○	○	○	○
The feelings of togetherness I have with my colleagues	○	○	○	○	○
The happiness I share with my work companions	○	○	○	○	○
The sympathy I receive from my work confidants	○	○	○	○	○
The enjoyment I share with associates at my employer	○	○	○	○	○
The closeness I feel with my associates at my employer	○	○	○	○	○

7. Evaluate the following statement using a 5 point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree.

I am completely satisfied with...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The admiration given to me by others at my employer's	○	○	○	○	○
How much colleagues respect me as a person	○	○	○	○	○
All the good qualities I have as a person while at my employer	○	○	○	○	○
How highly colleagues think of me	○	○	○	○	○
How sure I am of myself at my employer	○	○	○	○	○
How sure I am of myself at my employer	○	○	○	○	○
How much I like the person that I am at my employer	○	○	○	○	○
How much respect I have for myself at my employer	○	○	○	○	○
My sense of self-worth at my employer	○	○	○	○	○
How positive I feel about myself as a person while at my employer	○	○	○	○	○

8. Please select your age range listed below.

- ◯ 18-19
- ◯ 20-29
- ◯ 30-39
- ◯ 40-49
- ◯ 50-59
- ◯ 60-69
- ◯ 70+

9. Please select your highest level of education.

- ◯ High School Graduate
- ◯ Some College
- ◯ Associates Degree
- ◯ Bachelors Degree
- ◯ Masters Degree
- ◯ Doctorate

10. Gender

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Other (please specify)

11. Which of the following best describes the principal industry of your organization?

12. Professional Role/Area of Responsibility (Please select the description that most describes your professional function)

- ◯ Supply Chain Professional/Buyer/Planner
- ◯ Accounting/Finance
- ◯ Sales/Marketing
- ◯ Engineering/Technical/Quality
- ◯ Operations
- ◯ Research and Development
- ◯ Other (please specify)

13. Managerial vs. Non-Managerial responsibility (Please select the description that most accurately describes your professional function. Managers have direct reports while non-managers do not.)

- ◯ Manager
- ◯ Non-Manager (Individual contributor)

14. Years of experience with the current organization (Round down to the closest whole year).

15. Select the level of purchasing value you have authority over.

- ◯ Less than $99k
- ◯ $100k to 499k
- ◯ $500k to $999k
- ◯ $1M+

Appendix B

As an introduction to the survey the following email will be sent explaining the purpose of the research and informing potential respondents of the steps being taken to minimize the risk of personal data being shared.

Subject Line: Survey Request on Trade Show Effectiveness

Dear [Name],

2020 has been a year of challenges for our industry and the manufacturing sector as a whole. The influences of the global pandemic have not only changed how we work but also how we travel and learn about the future of our industry. Before the worldwide pandemic started, I began research for my doctoral dissertation to discover more about how trade shows bring value to exhibiting organizations and buyers alike. While this plan has changed due to recent events, the overarching question remains, how can we as an industry encourage innovation through marketing activities including trade shows?

I developed the following survey to better understand the relationship between buyers and their perception of trade shows. This survey is being conducted independently to improve general understanding of sales and marketing. You are invited to participate in this study that explores variables related to trade shows and professional needs. If you could spare approximately 10 minutes to complete this web-based survey, I would appreciate it.

This study is part of my doctoral dissertation and, therefore, a voluntary survey. A lack of participation will have no impact on your personal relationship with the researcher. The survey will be run through Survey Monkey. The information collected will be used in an aggregate form; no individual survey responses will be identified. The survey will close on the 60th day.

Please Click Here [Insert HTML Link] to participate in our survey.

I value and appreciate your time in completing this study. Contact me if you have any questions about your participation.

Thank you,

RJ Fryan

Researcher - George Fox University

Several follow ups will occur after the introduction email containing additional prompts and links to the survey. The following messages will be sent seven days after the initial email is sent out.

Dear [Name]

One week ago I sent you an email containing a request to complete a survey to develop a better understanding of the relationship between buyers and their perception of trade shows. Based on my records, you have not yet completed this survey. This survey is being conducted independently to improve understanding of topics in sales and marketing.

I am reaching out again to ask that you take less than 10 minutes to complete the survey using the link below. The more responses I receive, the more valuable the reporting of trends and information will be to help improve sales and marketing.

Please click the link below and complete the survey. Your responses are voluntary and will be kept confidential. The information collected will be used in an aggregate form; no individual survey responses will be identified.

Click Here [Insert HTML Link] to participate in our survey.

I value your time participating in this study.

Thank you,

RJ Fryan

The following messages will be sent fourteen days after the initial email is sent out.

Dear [Name],

Over the past few weeks, I have reached out to have you complete a survey as part of my dissertation research. Based on my records, you have not yet completed this survey. I am reaching out again to ask that you take less than 10 minutes to complete the survey using the link below.

I developed survey as part of my doctoral dissertation to obtain a deeper understanding of buyers' relationships and their perception of trade shows. This survey is being conducted independently to improve general understanding of sales and marketing. You are invited to participate in this study that explores variables related to trade shows and professional needs. The goal of this research is to understand the latest trends and developments in our industry. If you could spare approximately 10 minutes to complete this web-based survey, I would appreciate it.

Please click the link below and complete the survey. Your responses are voluntary and will be kept confidential. The information collected will be used in an aggregate form; no individual survey responses will be identified.

Click Here [Insert HTML Link] to participate in our survey.

I value your time participating in this study.

Thank you,

RJ Fryan

The following messages will be three days before the survey is closed.

Dear [Name],

Over the past month, I have reached out to you to learn more about how you view trade shows and their effectiveness. Based on my records, you have not yet completed this survey. I plan to start compiling and examining the data from this survey in very soon. If you could spare 10 minutes, please take the time to complete the survey below.

You can provide valuable insight into how the current landscape views trade shows and their effectiveness. The advent of COVID-19 and travel restrictions have placed a great deal of hardship on the trade show industry. Many organizations use these events as the primary means of communicating their message to prospective customers. I am reaching out again to ask that you take less than 10 minutes to complete the survey link below.

Please click the link below and complete the survey. Your responses are voluntary and will be kept confidential. The information collected will be used in an aggregate form; no individual survey responses will be identified.

Click Here [Insert HTML Link] to participate in our survey.

I value your time participating in this study.

Thank you,

RJ Fryan