



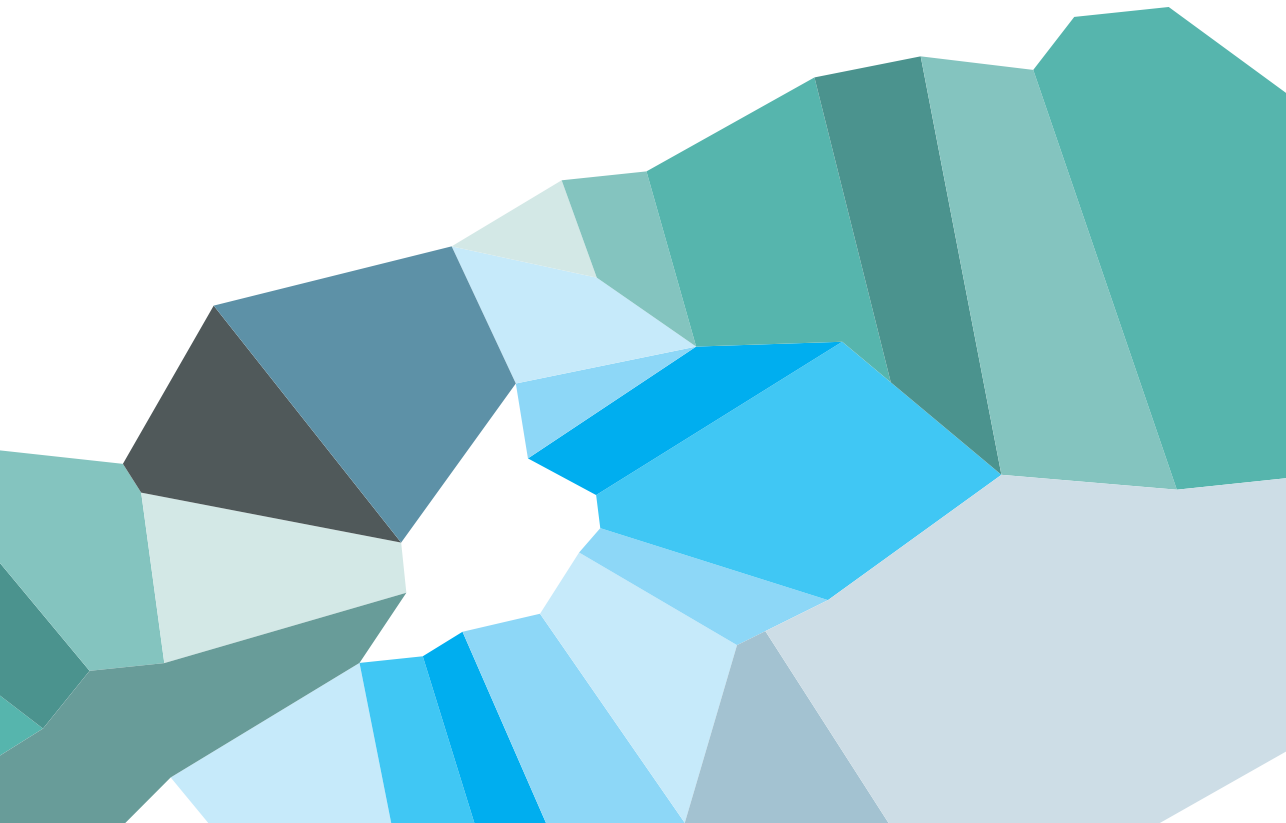
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BODØ GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

HANDELSHØGSKOLEN I BODØ • HHB

Wondwesen Tafesse

The Marketing Functions of the Trade Show System



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Wondwesen Tafesse

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Wondwesen Tafesse
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To MAR & NEBYE

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ABSTRACT

Trade shows have a long history that goes back to at least the early Middle Ages. In those times, trade shows played significant trading roles by facilitating bartered exchanges of textile goods, leather goods, spices and precious metals among long haul merchants. Trade shows have undergone significant changes since then and the contemporary trade show system supports far flung commercial activities. Today, trade shows facilitate purposeful interactions and collaborations among diverse market players, foster the formation of industrial and consumer markets, create substantial economic incentives to various economic actors and contribute to regional development.

The purpose of this dissertation is to gain deeper understanding about the marketing functions of the contemporary trade show system. The dissertation takes, as its point of departure, the idea that the complexity of the functions of the trade show system can be best understood through analyzing the behavior and activities of the individual actors involved. To this effect, the dissertation singled out trade show exhibitors, trade show visitors and trade show organizers—the three most important actors of the trade show system—and investigated different aspects of their behavior and activities. This was accomplished by designing and conducting a series of empirical studies, which generated several valuable and interesting insights about the marketing functions of the trade show system and the behavior and activities of the main actors inside it.

The dissertation makes two substantive strands of theoretical contribution to the trade show literature. The first strand of contributions comes in the form of an integrative conceptual synthesis of three theoretical perspectives: the exhibitor perspective, the visitor perspective and the organizer perspective. The synthesis is based on an exhaustive review and synthesis of the trade show literature around

three core themes consisting of profile, motivation and effectiveness. The second strand of contributions comes in the form of a series of detailed empirical studies which are published in different scientific journals. The purpose of the empirical studies was addressing the main research questions posed in the dissertation and shedding some useful light on different aspects of the behavior and activities of trade show exhibitors, trade show visitors and trade show organizers.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Historical Background and Context

The historical origins of modern day trade shows can be traced to the ancient marketplaces of Europe which sprang up along frequently travelled trade routes (Rodekamp, 2005; Schoop, 2005). According to trade show historians, during the 12th and the 13th centuries, numerous sites of trade shows emerged in Western Europe with patterns resembling modern trade show systems (Rodekamp, 2005; Schoop, 2005). Most of these trade shows were concentrated along the north-south and the east-west European trading routes connecting Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Poland and Russia, among others. The primary purpose of these trade shows was to facilitate trade by convening long haul merchants of textile goods, leather goods, spices and precious metals at a specific place for a certain period of time (Rodekamp, 2005). Nevertheless, early trade shows were dominated by barter exchanges where one type of good is traded for another type of good (Rodekamp, 2005; Schoop, 2005).

Starting from the late Middle Ages, trade shows evolved into places where merchants sell and buy physical goods for money (Rodekamp, 2005). This model, which attached prices to traded goods and emphasized the use of money as a primary exchange medium, remained predominant well into the 19th century (Schoop, 2005). Since then, aided by the nascent industrialization of national economies, improved infrastructures and the reduction of custom barriers, trade shows have undergone significant changes (Schoop, 2005). Their location has become decentralized, their product focus has become specialized and their target groups have shifted from long haul merchants to specialized manufacturers, industrial buyers and professionals (Bathelt and Schuldt, 2008; Rinallo and Golfetto,

2011; Schoop, 2005). These changes significantly transformed the commercial functions of modern trade show systems (Bathelt and Schuldt, 2008; Rinallo and Golfetto, 2011; Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995).

Modern trade shows serve extensive commercial purposes which can be seen along four broad categories consisting of interactions, market formations, economic incentives and regional development. The first of these functions –interaction – entails a purposeful conversation and dialogue among various market actors on issues of common interest. In this respect, trade shows serve as important mechanisms of interaction for market players (Rice, 1992; Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995; Smith et al., 2003). At trade shows, suppliers, buyers, regulators and peripheral market actors like associations and government departments exchange ideas, information and knowledge (Rinallo and Golfetto, 2011; Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995). These interactions can culminate into intra and inter-actor collaborations and networks that facilitate knowledge diffusion and innovation at the firm level (Evers and Knight, 2008; Rinallo and Golfetto, 2011). The interaction and information exchange function of trade shows is often singled out as the most important one as other, alternative marketing platforms do not facilitate the same level of interaction among diverse market players (Sharland and Balogn, 1996).

The second function of trade shows is market formation. Trade shows provide impetus to the formation and development of industrial and consumer markets by bringing relevant market actors under one roof for a limited period of time and providing them convenient venues to transact business with each other (Aspers and Darr, 2011; Goehrmann, 2005; Rinallo and Golfetto, 2011). On the supply side, trade shows convene exhibiting firms eager to showcase and supply their products and services to the trade show public (Gopalakrishna et al., 1995; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995). On the demand side, trade shows convene buyers, consumers, and customers who are eager to search, evaluate and buy from potential suppliers

(Berne and Gracia-Uceda, 2008; Godar and O'Connor, 2001; Smith et al., 2003). Trade shows also convene peripheral market actors that play crucial supporting roles in the smooth functioning of markets such as regulators, government agencies and associations (Goehrmann, 2005). By convening all these market actors at regular intervals and facilitating the exchange of goods, services, ideas, information and knowledge among them, trade shows foster the formation and development of markets (Aspers and Darr, 2011; AUMA, 2011b).

The third function of trade shows involves creating economic incentives (Busche, 2005; Kirchgeorg et al., 2010). Collectively, trade show activities create significant macro economic impacts. For instance, the trade show industry contributed \$108 billion worth of output to the US economy in 2009 alone (Convention Industry Council, 2011). Figures from 2011 indicate that the production effects of the trade show industry on the German economy amounted to €23.5 billion (AUMA, 2011a). These huge economic impacts often reach various sections of the national economy and the actors involved in the trade show system receive direct incentives. For instance, trade show exhibitors benefit financially from trade show participations as they can solicit sales leads, sign sales contracts and accept purchase orders at the fairground (Dekimpe et al., 1997; Gopalakrishna et al., 1995; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Gopalakrishna and Williams, 1992). Trade show organizers also receive economic incentives from trade show activities. They make significant sums of money from exhibitors' registration, visitors' admission, space rentals and selling advertising and sponsorship rights (Busche, 2005; Kresse, 2005). In addition, service suppliers that operate in the vicinity of fairgrounds benefit from trade show activities. They make money from supplying services to exhibitors and visitors such as accommodation, transportation, booth construction and freight handling (Busche, 2005; Munuera and Ruiz, 1999). Local governments too benefit from trade show activities by collecting customs and tax revenues (Busche, 2005). The US trade

show industry, for instance, created tax revenues to the tune of \$64 billion and \$46 billion at the federal and local level, respectively (Convention Industry Council, 2011).

The fourth function of trade shows has to do with speeding up regional development by stimulating external investment and establishing market linkages. (Goehrmann, 2005; Busche, 2005). Trade shows create opportunities for regional development by showcasing regional investment potentials to trade show participants (Goehrmann, 2005; Busche, 2005). Given their simultaneous emphasis on commerce and politics, trade shows are useful mechanisms for attracting external investments. Similarly, trade shows contribute to the achievement of long term regional development goals by opening up market access to regional suppliers (Busche, 2005; Kresse, 2005). Regional suppliers can gain wider market access in distant regions and countries by establishing commercial partnerships with buyers met at trade shows, (AUMA, 2011a; 2011b).

In summary, trade shows are transient, yet important, market systems that stimulate and support extensive commercial activities. They facilitate interactions and collaborations among diverse market players, foster the formation and development of industrial and consumer markets, create substantial macro economic incentives and contribute to regional development.

1.2. Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this dissertation is to gain broader understanding about the marketing functions of the trade show system. The dissertation takes, as its point of departure, the idea that the complexity of the roles and functions of the trade show system can be best understood through analyzing the activities and behavior of the individual actors involved. Actors operating within the trade show system have distinct interests that define their roles within the boundaries of the trade show

system. It is well established in the academic literature that the three most important actors of the trade show system are trade show exhibitors, trade show visitors and trade show organizers (see, for example, Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012).

Accordingly, the dissertation singled out these three important actors and investigated different aspects of their activities in a series of empirical studies. Some of the key issues covered in the dissertation include: exhibitors' effectiveness evaluation approaches; the planning and implementation of trade show campaigns from the exhibitors' perspective; buying behavior from the visitors' perspective; and resource deployment strategies from the organizers' perspective. But before explaining how the dissertation would go about addressing these issues, it is important to present a brief account of the three trade show actors that constitutes the focus of this dissertation.

Trade show organizers are the institutions responsible for planning and implementing trade show events (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012; Stevens, 2005). Trade show organizers are the linchpin of the trade show system, and in this role, they invest considerable efforts and resources to create and sustain trade shows. They interface with a variety of market actors to coordinate their diverse interests into a productive market force (Rinallo and Golfetto, 2011; Stevens, 2005). Without the interfacing works of trade show organizers, it is hard to think how the various market actors can come together, let alone work in tandem within an integrated market system. The primary interest of trade show organizers can, thus, be considered as keeping their trade shows going by satisfying the needs of the various market actors convened around the trade show (Rinallo and Golfetto, 2011; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012).

Trade show exhibitors constitute the supply side of the market that trade show organizers seek to serve. For this reason, trade show exhibitors form an important customer base for trade shows (Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995). Exhibitors feature at trade shows for a variety of reasons including, among others, generating sales leads, contacting customers, collecting market information and building company image (Hansen, 2004; Kerin and Cron, 1987; Tafesse and Korneliussen, 2011). The primary interest of trade show exhibitors is to achieve their trade show attendance goals as effectively as possible (Gopalakrishna et al., 1995; Hansen, 2004). Because the vast majority of trade show exhibitors are commercial firms, they have to justify their trade show investment with acceptable return levels (Gopalakrishna et al., 1995). Because of this, trade show exhibitors are worried about the effectiveness of their efforts.

Trade show visitors constitute the demand side of the market that trade show organizers seek to serve (Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995). Along with exhibitors, visitors constitute a core customer base for trade shows. Visitors attend trade shows for a variety of reasons including, among others, supplier evaluation, making purchases, gathering information, commercial networking and experience seeking (Berne and Gracia-Uceda, 2008; Borghini et al., 2006; Godar and O'Connor, 2001; Smith et al., 2003; Rinallo et al., 2010). Like trade show exhibitors, trade show visitors are interested in accomplishing their trade show visiting goals as effectively as possible. But, because visiting trade shows costs far less than exhibiting at trade shows, trade show visitors may not be as cost conscious as are trade show exhibitors (Godar and O'Connor, 2001; Gopalakrishna et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2003).

Now that the three important actors of the trade show system and their primary trade show interests are briefly introduced, we can return our attention to the purpose of the dissertation. As indicated above, the purpose of this dissertation, is

to examine, through a series of empirical studies, the behavior and activities of the three most important actors of the trade show system, and in the process, gain deeper insights about the marketing functions of the trade show system. This is accomplished by formulating specific research questions and conducting studies that can answer them. In this regard, the major research questions that motivated this dissertation are the following:

1. How can exhibitors measure and benchmark their trade show efforts?
2. How can exhibitors manage their trade show campaigns effectively?
3. What factors influence the buying behavior of visitors at retail trade shows?
And,
4. How do resource deployment strategies influence the attendance levels of trade show organizers?

The first two research questions concern themselves with the activities of trade show exhibitors, while the last two research questions deal with the behavior and activities of trade show visitors and trade show organizers, respectively. The four research questions are addressed through a series of empirical studies which are reported on in this dissertation.

1.3. Theoretical Contributions

This dissertation is hoped to provide useful insights regarding the marketing functions of the trade show system by examining different aspects of the behavior and activities of the three most important actors of the trade show system. Overall, the present dissertation makes two strands of theoretical contributions to the trade show literature.

The first strand of contributions comes in the form of an integrative conceptual synthesis of three theoretical perspectives: the exhibitor perspective, the visitor

perspective and the organizer perspective. The synthesis is based on an exhaustive review of the literature on different aspects of trade shows. The review work is integrated around three core themes consisting of profile, motivation and effectiveness. The choice of these three themes was a deliberate one due to their theoretical values. The profile of trade show actors influences on the nature of their trade show motivations. Trade show motivations, in turn, influence on the effectiveness of trade show actors by shaping their strategic choices and actions.

Discussions on the “profile” theme shed light on the distinguishing, actor level characteristics that define the three trade show actors. Discussions on the “motivation” theme deal with the motivations and interests of the three trade show actors within the boundaries of the trade show system. Discussions on the “effectiveness” theme focus on the strategic decisions and actions that contribute to the effectiveness of the three trade show actors. This way, the dissertation unifies fragmented discussions in the trade show literature into a body of interrelated discussions.

In addition, the dissertation contributes to the literature by synthesizing conceptual discussions tying the strategic decisions and actions of the three trade show actors with different effectiveness measures relevant to trade show efforts. In so doing, it is hoped that the dissertation will stimulate further research into different aspects of exhibitors, visitors and organizers behavior and activities. For instance, the synthesized conceptual discussions can be used to formulate testable propositions relating specific aspects of exhibitors, visitors and organizers actions with different trade show effectiveness measures.

The second strand of contributions comes in the form of a series of detailed empirical studies which are published in different scientific journals. The purpose of the empirical studies, as mentioned in passing earlier, was to address the four major

research questions of the dissertation. The empirical studies independently explored different aspects of the behavior and activities of exhibitors, visitors and organizers. The studies drew on different marketing and management theories to shed light on the research questions that they aim to address. The studies made several specific contributions by shedding light on areas that were not properly understood and by bridging existing gaps in the different bodies of literature that they will eventually become part of.

For example, study 1 proposed a highly useful tool to evaluate and benchmark exhibitors' effectiveness. The proposed tool juxtaposed exhibitors' pre-show expectations with their post-show effectiveness assessments to evaluate exhibitors overall effectiveness. Because existing effectiveness evaluation approaches rely only on post-show effectiveness assessments (see, for example, Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Kerin and Cron, 1987; Hansen, 2004), study 1 can be considered as adding an extra dimension to the evaluation and benchmarking of exhibitors overall effectiveness. Study 2 examined how managerial responsibilities for important trade show campaign tasks like objective setting, trade show selection and booth management influence exhibitors effectiveness. The study contributed to the exhibitor perspective by clarifying the hitherto poorly understood relationship between trade show campaign tasks, managerial responsibilities and trade show effectiveness.

Study 3 examined how consumer visitors respond to different exhibit booth stimuli variables deployed at retail trade shows like product assortment, sales staff services and booth atmospheric. In so doing, study 3 extended the retailing literature to understand consumer behavior in a potentially useful, yet insufficiently researched, retailing environment. Study 4 examined how tradeshow organizers resource deployment strategies influence exhibitor and visitor attendance levels. Study 4 contributed to the literature by explaining organizers performance effectiveness

directly from the organizers perspective and not from the exhibitor and the visitor perspectives as is customary in the extant literature.

In summary, the breadth of both streams of theoretical contributions means that this dissertation can offer several interesting insights about the marketing functions of the trade show system and the behavior of the main actors operating within its boundaries.

1.4. Outline of the Dissertation

The remainder of this dissertation is structured along four chapters. Chapter two lays the ground work for the empirical studies by presenting an integrative conceptual synthesis of three theoretical perspectives: the exhibitor perspective, the visitor perspective and the organizer perspective. The synthesis is based on an exhaustive review and integration of the trade show literature around three core themes: profile, motivation and effectiveness. Chapter two is presented in four subchapters. The first three subchapters discuss the exhibitor, the visitor and the organizers perspectives, respectively. The fourth subchapter introduces a schematic conceptual framework that establishes connections among the three theoretical perspectives and places the four empirical studies within these perspectives.

Chapter three gives an account of major philosophical assumptions and methodological approaches followed toward the successful completion of the four empirical studies. These discussions are presented in three subchapters. The first subchapter elaborates on the ontological and epistemological nature of scientific research and justifies the empirical studies' choices of ontological and epistemological positions. The second subchapter introduces competing perspectives on theory of science, i.e., falsification and normal science, and positions the empirical studies against these perspectives. The third subchapter

discusses the methodology of the four empirical studies focusing on sampling decisions, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

Chapter four directly reports on the four empirical studies which are published, or are accepted for publication, in different scientific journals. Study 1 is published in *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*. Study 2 is published in *Journal of Promotion Management*. Study 3 is published in *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. Study 4 is accepted for publication in a forthcoming issue in *European Journal of Marketing*. The purpose of chapter four is thus to directly report the published versions of the four empirical studies.

The final chapter, chapter five, wraps up the dissertation by discussing the theoretical and managerial implications of the dissertation and by suggesting several interesting ideas for future research purposes. Chapter five is presented in four subchapters. The first subchapter summarizes the extensive theoretical discussions presented across different parts of the dissertation in a more accessible way. The second and the third subchapters discuss the theoretical and managerial implications of the dissertation, respectively. The fourth subchapter synthesizes several directions for future research.

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CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Different academic disciplines have studied the trade show system from the focal disciplines' dominant paradigm viewpoints and approaches. For instance, the trade show system has attracted the attention of scholars who primarily work within marketing (Bello and Lohtia, 1993; Gopalakrishna et al., 1995; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Hansen, 1996; Hansen, 2004; Godar and O'Connor, 2001; Rice, 1992; Rosson and Serignhaus, 1995; Sharland and Balogh, 1996; Smith et al., 2003), tourism management (Breiter and Milman, 2006; Hultsman, 2001; Jin et al., 2010; Whitfield and Webber, 2011), economic geography (Bathelt and Schuldt, 2008; Bathelt and Spigel, 2012; Power and Jansson, 2008; Rinallo and Golfetto, 2011) and sociology (Aspers and Darr, 2011; Skov, 2006).

This demonstrates that the trade show system is an interesting phenomenon and can be, and indeed is, studied from different disciplinary approaches, thereby offering a common ground of interest among various branches of social sciences. Despite the apparent ability of the trade show system to garner the attention of major academic disciplines in the social sciences (see, for example, Aspers and Darr, Bathelt and Schuldt, 2008; Power and Jansson, 2008; Sharland and Balogh, 1996), it is still difficult to locate an integrated theoretical theme around which the different disciplines coalesce in their conception of the trade show system. As the trade show system continues to attract the attention of more and more academic disciplines, the diversity of the theoretical lenses through which it is being studied increased proportionally. Every discipline studies the trade show system based on its established paradigmatic and disciplinary predispositions. As a result, it is impossible to locate an integrated theoretical theme which transcends the various academic disciplines.

In this dissertation, the trade show system is approached primarily from a marketing point of view. For this reason, the dissertation's theoretical discussions will be dominated with theoretical ideas located mainly within marketing. However, even within marketing, trade shows have been studied from different theoretical approaches including the marketing mix concept (Dekimpe et al., 1997; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Tanner, 2002; Tafesse and Korneliusen, 2013), industrial buying (Bello, 1992; Bello and Lohtia, 1993; Borgihini et al., 2006; Godar and O'Connor, 2001; Gopalakrishna et al., 2010), strategic marketing (Hansen, 2004; Kerin and Kron, 1987; Sharland and Balogn, 1996; Smith et al., 2003; Tafesse and Korneliusen, 2011) and networks and interaction (Evers and Knight, 2008; Hansen, 1996; Rice, 1992; Rosson and Serignhaus, 1995).

In an effort to weave the diverse marketing literature on trade shows into a coherent discussion, this dissertation develops an integrative theoretical synthesis around three perspectives: the exhibitor perspective, the visitor perspective and the organizer perspective. The synthesis is based on an exhaustive review and integration of the trade show literature around three core themes: profile, motivation and effectiveness. The choice of these three themes is a deliberate one, stemming from their potential interestingness from a theoretical point of view. That is, the profile of trade show actors influences on their trade show motivations. Trade show motivations, in turn, influence on the effectiveness of trade show actors by shaping the strategic decisions and actions that they will take.

Discussions on the "profile" theme shed light on the distinguishing, actor level characteristics of the three important trade show actors. Discussions on the "motivation" theme addresses the interests of the three trade show actors within the boundaries of the trade show system. Discussions on the "effectiveness" theme highlight strategic decisions and actions that contribute toward the effectiveness of the three trade show actors. The remainder of this chapter is presented in four

subchapters. The first, second and third subchapters discuss the exhibitor, the visitor and the organizer perspectives, respectively. The fourth subchapter introduces a schematic conceptual framework aimed at establishing connections among the three theoretical perspectives and placing the four empirical studies within the three theoretical perspectives.

2.1. The Exhibitor Perspective

2.1.1. Profile of Trade Show Exhibitors

Commercial organizations constitute much of the exhibiting base of trade shows (Hultsman, 2001; Kerin and Cron, 1987). Profit seeking organizations with varied organizational profiles in terms of size, industry category, international market experience, etc participate at trade shows (Dekimpe et al., 1997; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995). Organizations with non-commercial interests are also represented at trade shows, although they tend to be in the minority. These organizations include, among others, regulators, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and industry/trade associations (Kirchgoerg et al., 2005; Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995). However, owing to the fact that commercial organizations constitute much of the exhibiting base for trade shows, the subsequent discussion focuses on this group of exhibitors.

Although the general understanding in the literature is all sorts of commercial firms participate at trade shows, some studies deeply explored the profile of exhibiting firms to draw some generalizable conclusions about frequent trade show exhibitors. In an early study aimed at identifying differences between exhibiting and non-exhibiting firms, Herbig et al. (1997) reported that firms with complex, technically sophisticated and high priced products are significantly more likely to exhibit at trade shows than firms with simple, technically less sophisticated and low priced products. They also noted that exhibiting firms tend to be older, internationally

oriented, serve large customer numbers and run more product lines while the non-exhibitors stand to the contrary: smaller, domestically focused and service dominated. In a follow up study, Herbig et al. (1998) observed that larger firms and firms with more product lines (i.e., firms that market more products) attend trade shows with greater regularity. In addition, they observed that firms with greater than 20 percent market share attend nearly twice as many shows per year as those with less than 5 percent market share.

On the contrary, other group of studies noted that small and medium sized firms constitute the majority of the trade show exhibiting base. Some went as far as to say that trade shows are major marketing tools for small firms. For instance, Munuera and Ruiz (1999) noted that “many small and medium-sized industrial companies invest little or no money in advertising, promotion, market research, new product development, or other marketing activities, but most attend trade fairs” (p. 18). Along this line, Rice and Almosawi (2002), after surveying trade show exhibitors, concluded that small and medium-sized enterprises are the more avid users of trade shows. Consistent with this later group of studies, reports authored by industry authorities indicate that small and medium sized companies are more devoted users of trade shows. For instance, AUMA (Association of the German Trade Show Industry), in a report released in 2011, provided a rich description of German exhibitors profile. The report indicates that around 59 thousand German companies are active exhibitors in the b2b trade show segment alone.

Of these active trade show exhibitors, 51% are involved in manufacturing, 24% in services and 20% in merchandizing businesses. With respect to firm size, small and medium sized firms dominate. The share of exhibiting firms with less than 50 employees is 52%, those with 50 to 499 employees account for 32%. Sales wise too, small and medium sized firms account for a large share of the German exhibiting base. Slightly less than 40% of the exhibiting firms report annual sales under 2.3

million euro. In sum, it is hard to draw conclusive perspective from the forgoing discussion about firm level attributes characterizing frequent trade show exhibitors. But if the variety of trade shows offered in the market is anything to go by, it can easily be concluded that commercial organizations with diverse profiles in terms of size, industry category, technology orientation, geographic coverage and international experience feature at trade shows.

2.1.2. Motivations of Trade Show Exhibitors

The motivation of trade show exhibitors is one of the most researched dimension of exhibitors' behaviour. Several works cover exhibitors motivations either from conceptual or empirical stand point (e.g., Bonoma, 1983; Kijewski et al., 1993; Rice and Almosawi, 2002; Shoham, 1992; Tanner, 2002; Tafesse and Korneliusen, 2011). An extensive review of the literature produce a recurring theme suggesting that exhibitors attend trade shows for both selling and non-selling reasons. In a pioneering work, Bonoma (1983) suggested a dichotomous motivation model for exhibiting firms with selling and non-selling dimensions. The selling motivation include such activities as developing new markets, accessing key decision makers, disseminating professional product information, making onsite sales and providing customer services. The non-selling motivations include building company image, doing competitive intelligence, gathering market information and boosting employee morale. Bonoma's (1983) model of trade show exhibitors' motivation has found overwhelming support and extensions in later works.

For instance, Shoham (1992), based on discussions with exhibit managers, classified the motivation of trade show exhibitors into selling and non-selling. The selling motivation includes a variety of selling activities targeting current and new customers. The non-selling motivation likewise includes a variety of activities like intelligence gathering, boosting employee morale, enhancing company image, generating new product ideas, managing relationship with suppliers and forming

strategic alliances. Kijewski et al. (1993) discussed the motivation of trade show exhibitors across different show types. They observe that exhibitors prefer horizontal shows if they are motivated to develop new customer markets and recruit new distributors. On the other hand, exhibitors find vertical shows more befitting when they are motivated to develop new product markets and counter competitors' presence. In terms of geographic coverage, exhibitors prioritize regional shows when their attendance motivation is sales and competition driven and national and international shows when their motivation is directed toward developing new markets.

In a study aimed at isolating the success factor of small exhibiting firms, Tanner (2002) drew a distinction between promotional and selling motivations. The promotional motivations relate to such non-selling activities as introducing new products, entering new markets, educating consumers, gaining publicity and gathering competitive intelligence. The selling motivation, on the other hand, relate to such non-selling activities as establishing face to face contacts with customers, identifying new customers, generating sales leads and taking sales orders. In an empirical work that drew on a survey of trade show exhibitors from the Gulf countries, Rice and Almosawi (2002) proposed a three dimensional model of trade show exhibitors motivation consisting of informational, market development and selling. In another empirical effort, Hansen (2004) proposed a five dimensional model of trade show exhibitors motivation. According to Hansen (2004), exhibitors attend trade shows to achieve multiple marketing goals which can be clustered into sales related, information gathering, corporate image building, relationship building and employee morale boosting.

In a much recent work, Tafesse and Korneluissen (2011) noted that the vast majority of existing classifications of the motivation of trade show exhibitors are proposed with cases of exhibiting firms drawn from industrialized economies. Questioning

how far these classifications can be applied to emerging market exhibitors, they propose a four dimensional model of exhibitors motivation. The four dimensions are competitive intelligence, market scanning, image building and relational-selling. This model of trade show exhibitors' motivation is later replicated by Shi et al. (2012). Based on a survey exhibiting firms from a large textile trade show in China, they proposed a model of trade show exhibitors motivation comprising of sales-relational, psychological-related, market-exploring and competitive-intelligence dimensions. In summary, the motivations of trade show exhibitors are thoroughly investigated under different circumstances and contexts. Taken together, the findings indicate that the motivations of trade show exhibitors encompass both selling (e.g., generating leads, receiving sales orders, on site sales) and non-selling (e.g., intelligence gathering, market development, image building) dimensions.

2.1.3. Drivers of Trade Show Exhibitors Effectiveness

Another line of enquiry that has garnered substantial interest in the literature is identifying drivers of trade show exhibitors' effectiveness (Dekimpe et al., 1997; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Kerin and Cron, 1987; Lee and Kim, 2008; Li, 2008; Shi et al., 2012; Tanner, 2002). The overwhelming consensus in this body of research is that proper planning coupled with the deployment of carefully selected firm resources is a recipe for trade show effectiveness. Nevertheless, what constitute proper planning, firm resources and trade show effectiveness from the exhibitors' perspective are all open for interpretations. There are two distinct empirical research streams that investigate the drivers of trade show exhibitors effectiveness in the academic literature.

The first stream focuses on the drivers of trade show exhibitors effectiveness by defining effectiveness in terms of either volume of visitors attracted to exhibitors booths or amount of sales leads generated at trade shows (e.g., Dekimpe et al., 1997; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1992; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Gopalakrishna

et al., 1995). This research stream rests on the assumption that trade shows are one element of the business marketing communication mix and as such their effectiveness should be ultimately judged by the amount of sales opportunities they confer to exhibiting firms. A strong point of this research stream is that it defines effectiveness in a way that can be quantified objectively. This makes the resulting findings more generalizable across different show contexts. An obvious drawback of this research stream is its narrow focus on selling efforts while the non-selling efforts of exhibiting firms are virtually ignored.

In one such study, Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1992) measured the effectiveness of exhibiting firms in terms of volume of sales lead they solicited at trade shows. They modeled various variables to predict volume of sales leads solicited at trade shows. Factors related to higher marketing expenditures per visitor, booth staff training, featuring at vertical and national trade shows (as opposed to horizontal and regional trade shows) were found to increase volume of sales leads. Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1995) proposed a more sophisticated measure of exhibitors' effectiveness based on attraction efficiency (proportion of visitors attracted into exhibitors booth from the total targeted pool), contact efficiency (proportion of visitors contacted by booth staff from the total attracted pool) and conversion efficiency (proportion of sales leads obtained from the total contacted pool of visitors). They found that deploying larger exhibit booths and more attention getting tactics like sampling and giveaways contributed positively to visitors attraction efficiency. But successes in visitors contact and conversion efficiency boils down to the size and competence of the booth staff.

Dekimpe et al. (1997) attempted to generalize about the drivers of exhibitors effectiveness based on an empirical study of exhibiting firms in the USA and the UK. They measured the effectiveness of exhibiting firms in terms of attraction efficiency which was quantified as the proportion of visitors attracted into exhibitors booths

out of the total targeted pool. Bigger pre-show promotion expenditures, spacious exhibit booths and featuring at high technology and vertical trade shows were associated with higher visitor attraction efficiency in both samples. Staff density, which measures the number of booth staff per square meter of booth space, was found to significantly contribute to visitor attraction efficiency among the US sample only while it failed to create the same effect among the UK sample.

The second stream aims to identify drivers of exhibitors effectiveness by defining effectiveness in terms of respondents self reported assessment of effectiveness on a variety of trade show activities (e.g., Kerin and Cron, 1987; Lee and Kim, 2008; Li, 2008; Tanner, 2002). Contrary to the first stream of research, this stream rests on the assumption that trade shows are more than a communication tool through which several important strategic marketing activities are pursued (see, Sharland and Balogh, 1996). A strong aspect of this research stream is its tendency to measure exhibitors' effectiveness on both selling and non-selling efforts. But the subjectivity involved in self rating one's own effectiveness can introduce biases which may undermine the validity of the reported findings.

In an early, but seminal, work, Kerin and Cron (1987) set out to identify firm level (e.g., annual sales volume, number of customers, and number of products) and strategy level (developing written objectives, selecting between horizontal vs. vertical trade shows) correlates of exhibitors' effectiveness. Measuring performance effectiveness through managers self rated effectiveness on multiple selling and non-selling activities, they found that exhibiting firms were more likely to be effective when they show case more products, serve larger customer base, develop written objectives and feature at vertical trade shows. The sales volume variable failed to discriminate between high and low performing exhibiting firms.

In a related work, Tanner (2002) compared successful and less successful exhibiting firms on a range of planning, promotion and measurement strategies. The reported findings indicate that successful trade show exhibitors are more likely, than less successful trade show exhibitors, to set greater number of goals for their trade show program, to develop more integrated marketing communication campaigns and to utilize more lead and sales tracking tools. Drawing on Chinese exhibiting firms, Li (2008) tested for the effect of deploying tangible (i.e., exhibit and booth personnel resources) and intangible firm resources (customer linking, managerial and partnering capabilities) on the effectiveness of exhibiting firms. The findings indicate that many of the proposed resource variables contribute to the achievement of selling and non-selling goals through enhancing one or more of exhibitors pre-show promotion, at-show selling and post-show follow up activities.

In a contemporary empirical research based on exhibiting firms in Korea, Lee and Kim (2008) jointly modeled trade show planning efforts (i.e., quantifying objectives, pre-show promotion and staff training) with tangible firm resources (i.e., booth size, booth location, booth staff density) to identify sources of exhibitors effectiveness. Exhibitors effectiveness was measured based on managers self rated effectiveness on image building, selling, information gathering and relationship improvement activities. The findings indicate that variables related to booth size, on site promotion and post-show performance evaluation failed to enhance the effectiveness of all the performance dimensions. The rest of the planning and resource variables, however, contributed positively to the effectiveness of at least one of the four performance dimensions.

Li et al. (2011) surveyed trade show exhibitors at the Suzhou Circuitex show in China regarding their degree of marketing orientation, resource commitment behavior and trade show effectiveness. Exhibitors' effectiveness was measured based on managers self rated effectiveness on several activities grouped along selling,

information gathering, relationship building, image building and motivational dimensions. The resource commitment behavior of exhibiting firms was divided into planning commitment, budget commitment and personnel commitment. They found that higher market orientation leads to higher resource commitment behavior by exhibiting firms. They also found that higher personnel commitment contributes positively to all dimensions of trade show effectiveness. But higher budget and planning commitment by exhibiting firms contribute only to the effectiveness of the selling and the motivational dimensions.

Tafesse and Korneluisen (2013) examined how the application of multiple media tools during the pre-show, at-show and post-show stages of a trade show campaign influence the effectiveness of exhibiting firms. The effectiveness of exhibiting firms was measured based on managers self rated effectiveness on multiple selling and promotional activities. The results indicate that the deployment of multiple media tools across the three stages of the trade show campaign contributed positively to the effectiveness of trade show efforts. Recently, Shi et al. (2012) examined correlates of trade show effectiveness at the largest furniture trade show in China. They investigated the performance effects of multiple trade show variables including visitor attraction techniques, number of exhibited products, the size and training of the booth staff and follow up contacts. They found that exhibitors effectiveness on sales-relational and psychological-related activities are enhanced with the deployment of more visitor attraction techniques, spacious exhibit booths, greater staff number and follow up contacts. On the other hand, the number and training of booth staff emerged as significant driver of exhibitors effectiveness in market-exploration and competitive intelligence activities.

In summary, several important points can be synthesized from the empirical evidences on the drivers of exhibitors' effectiveness presented in the forgoing section. There seems to exist an overwhelming consensus among scholars over the

idea that exhibiting firms should manage their trade show participation through a model of pre-show, at-show and post-show stages. By adapting a three stage model of trade show management, exhibiting firms are able to focus on key elements of the trade show management task at a time. During the pre-show stage, exhibiting firms need to focus on setting clearly defined goals, selecting a fitting trade show and planning and promoting their trade show participation. It is repeatedly reported that assigning a team of capable and experienced people to take care of these activities greatly enhances exhibitors' effectiveness.

During the at-show stage, exhibiting firms need to focus on properly presenting their company to the trade show public and executing important marketing activities like generating sales leads, establishing contacts with customers, collecting market information and gathering competitive intelligence. The degree to which exhibiting firms are able to accomplish these activities are influenced by the type of trade show selected; the quantity and competence of the booth staff deployed; and the location, size and display of the exhibit booth utilized. Finally, during the post-show stage, exhibiting firms need to focus on following upon visitors met at the trade show. Contacts established with visitors at the trade show have to be followed through. Exhibiting firms should also disseminate the information solicited at trade shows to internal user groups to improve decisions.

2.2. The Visitor Perspective

2.2.1. Profile of Trade Show Visitors

Trade show visitors are mainly of two types. The first type of visitors involves those who attend trade shows in an individual capacity. This type of trade show visitors is commonly referred in the literature as consumer visitors (Borghini et al., 2006). Consumer visitors are hedonically motivated in that their primary interest lies in seeking and engaging with the multisensory experiences facilitated by the trade

show environment (Borghini et al., 2006). This happens through acts of viewing and testing products, following live product demonstrations, interacting with booth personnel and making onsite purchases (Borghini et al., 2006; Gottlieb et al., 2011). In many ways, therefore, the hedonic behavior of consumer visitors mirrors the hedonic behavior of everyday consumers at a more regular shopping environment.

The second type of visitors involve those who attend trade shows on behalf of institutions (Berne and Gracia-Uceda, 2008; Gopalakrishna et al., 2010; Whitfield and Webber, 2011). Institutions are commonly represented at trade shows by a select team of employees. The institutions represented at trade shows range everything from private enterprises to government agencies to industry/trade associations. Relative to consumer visitors, institutional visitors have greater professional, industry and commercial ties with the trade shows that they visit (Godar and O'Connor, 2001). They tend to feature at trade shows for more utilitarian than hedonic purposes such as evaluating potential suppliers, establishing professional and commercial networks, seeking solutions for organizational problems and keeping abreast of new professional and industry developments, just to mention a few of them (Berne and Gracia-Uceda, 2008; Godar and O'Connor, 2001; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012).

The proportion of consumer to institutional visitors is mostly determined by the visitor orientation of trade shows (Kirchgeorg, 2005; Wu et al., 2008). B2b trade shows exclusively attract business and professional visitors while they deny access to the general public (Kirchgeorg, 2005; Rice and Almossawi, 2002). This ensures that the visitor base of b2b trade shows is composed mostly of institutional visitors. On the other end of the spectrum lies consumer or retail trade shows. These trade shows position themselves as big retail venues, and as a result, they encourage the exchange of goods and services at the fairground. Institutional visitors have little appetite for retail trade shows as they often take a hyper market atmosphere.

Consequently, consumer visitors make up the entire visitor base of retail trade shows (Kirchgeorg, 2005; Rice and Almossawi, 2002).

Somewhere between the purely b2b and retail trade shows, one finds mixed trade shows (Kirchgeorg, 2005; Rice and Almossawi, 2002). Mixed trade shows attempt to cater to both institutional and consumer visitors. To this end, mixed trade shows typically divide their schedules such that on certain exhibition days and hours, they will be open to one group of visitors, and on other exhibition days and hours they will be open to the second group of visitors. In summary, trade show visitors can be either consumer visitors who attend trade shows in an individual capacity and mostly for hedonic reasons or institutional visitors who attend trade shows on behalf of organizational units and mostly for professional reasons. The visitor orientation of trade shows determines whether they will predominantly feature institutional visitors, consumer visitors or a mixture of both.

2.2.2. Motivations of Trade Show Visitors

Trade show visitors attend trade shows for several reasons (Godar and O'Connor, 2001; Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995; Smith et al., 2003). Perhaps more than any other dimension of trade show visitors behavior, their motivations have garnered considerable attention in the academic literature. In one study, Rosson and Seringhaus (1995) collated the findings of prior works and proposed a model of trade show visitors motivation based on two main categories: product related (i.e., seeing new products, seeing new suppliers) and information-related (gathering technical, purchase and industry information). These dimensions have found some support and have seen numerous extensions in later works. For instance, Munuera and Ruiz (1999), based on a survey of small and medium-sized institutional visitors in Spain, observed that motives related to discovering new product lines, contacting potential suppliers and conducting market research top trade show visitors agenda.

Hansen (1996) argued that prior studies failed to distinguish between ITS participation modes (i.e., exhibiting versus visiting) and ITS participation motives (i.e., selling and buying). Based on a study of participants at sea food ITSs, he showed that exhibitors and visitors have dual motives of selling and buying at ITSs. He further noted that exhibitors and visitors “play the role of buyers and sellers depending on who they interact with” (Hansen, 1996, p. 48). Godar and O’Connor (2001) adapted needs based approach to explicate visitors’ motivation. They studied visitors who are members of buying centers and grouped them into current, potential and non-buyers depending on whether they are in a re-buy, a new-buy, or a non-buy situation. They identified both tactical and strategic motives for each visitor group. Tactically, current buyers, potential buyers and non-buyers attend trade shows to reduce the cognitive dissonance associated with recent purchases, to gather information that will facilitate educated buying decisions and to enhance morale, respectively. Strategically, current buyers, potential buyers and non-buyers attend trade shows to maintain contacts with suppliers, to establish long term contacts with suppliers, and to support their industry, respectively.

Smith et al. (2003) undertook a cross-country analysis of trade show visitors’ motivation. They studied trade show visitors drawn from US and Japanese trade shows targeting the home building industry. In both countries, they found trade show visitors putting great emphasis to motivations related to viewing new products, learning industry trends, assessing product features and gathering purchase information. Borghini et al. (2006) carried out an ethnographic analysis of trade show visitors actual and self reported behavior at several Italian textile trade shows. Reflecting the experiential nature of the trade shows that the authors explored, trade show visitors were found to be motivated by both commercial and experiential reasons. In particular, the study identified the following motivations as being important for visitors: making purchases, acquiring information, building

knowledge, supplier assurance, seeking solutions, establishing relationships, professional networking, immersing in experiences and gaining inspirations.

Drawing on a survey of Spanish visitors, Berne and Gracia-Uceda (2008) proposed a marketing driven model of visitors motivation. The proposed model constitutes motivational factors related to customers (i.e., activities targeted toward acquiring new customers and retaining existing customers), distribution (i.e., activities targeted toward accessing distributors), products (i.e., activities targeted toward gathering product information) and marketing research (i.e., activities geared toward intelligence and information gathering). In a recent work, Whitfield and Webber (2011) set out to determine the level of importance trade show visitors place on a variety of trade show attendance motivations. They found that trade show visitors place greater importance to such motivations as gaining product information, meeting specialists and finding solutions to technical problems.

Gopalakrishna et al. (2010) tracked the activities of trade show visitors in a major US computer fair with the goal of revealing major shopping patterns characterizing institutional visitors. Using such dimensions of shopping patterns as commitment to prior agenda, type of information sought, preference for product variety, etc as clustering variables, they grouped trade show visitors into basic, enthusiasts, niche, brand and apathetic. After juxtaposing their typology with others suggested in the retailing literature, they observed striking similarities between the behavior of trade show shoppers and retail consumer shoppers. This is an interesting finding as it seems to go against the notion that institutional visitors are purely utilitarian while consumer visitors are purely hedonic. In summary, the review of published works dealing with the motivations of trade show visitors indicate that visitors attend trade shows for a variety of reasons which can concisely be clustered into buying, information search, commercial networking and experience seeking.

2.2.3. Drivers of Trade Show Visitors Effectiveness

As much as drivers of exhibitors' effectiveness received substantial scholarly attention, the same cannot be said about drivers of visitors' effectiveness (Gopalakrishna et al., 2010; Gottlieb et al., 2011). It is hard to tell why drivers of visitors' effectiveness have not captured the imagination of the industrial trade show literature. However, some probable causes can be suggested based on a careful analysis of differences between trade show visitors and trade show exhibitors.

The first reason why drivers of visitors' effectiveness, unlike drivers of exhibitors' effectiveness, have not been the subject of academic research may have to do with the difficulty involved in measuring effectiveness from trade show visitors' perspective. To start with, trade show visitors do not always have clearly articulated trade show attendance goals (Borghini et al., 2006). The measurement issue is further compounded by the difficulty involved in quantifying trade show visitors' goals. In a situation where little information is available about trade show visitors' goals, and when available most of it is unquantifiable, measuring effectiveness can indeed become a daunting task.

Another reason may have to do with the difficulty involved in locating appropriate trade show visitors willing to serve as informants. Because trade show visitors, unlike trade show exhibitors, remain at the fairground only for a short period of time (Godar and O'Connor, 2001) and because they continuously move from one booth to the other to make the most of their visiting time (Gopalakrishna et al., 2010), researchers may find it difficult to locate appropriate trade show visitors at the fairground. Even more difficult will be convincing them to take a moment from their busy schedule and talk about their trade show experience.

For the forgoing reasons, and perhaps more, there is very little research done on the strategic decisions and actions that drive visitors' effectiveness. The subsequent section integrates the fragmented knowledge in the literature to synthesize a discussion on the drivers of visitors' effectiveness. The discussion is structured around key decisions and actions impinge on visitors' effectiveness.

One potentially crucial driver of visitors' effectiveness is trade show selection. Visitors must select a trade show that can properly serve their specific interests (Berne and Gracia-Uceda, 2008; Borghini et al., 2006). Based on their overriding trade show attendance goals and budget provisions, trade show visitors can assess various potentially viable trade shows and select the one that best serves their interests. Important attributes that trade show visitors look at while assessing trade shows include the trade show concept (Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995), the composition and size of companies expected to feature at trade show (Borghini et al., 2006; Godar and O'Connor, 2001), type of products exhibited (Gopalakrishna et al., 2010) and the geographic coverage and location of the show (Berne and Gracia-Uceda, 2008).

If the primary goal of trade show visitors is, for instance, closely tied to gaining a feel of upcoming industry trends, as is common in the fashion industry, this goal will be best served by selecting a trade show known for showcasing upcoming industry trends (Borghini et al., 2006). If the primary goal of trade show visitors, on the other hand, involves making immediate purchases, this goal will be best served by selecting a trade show that attracts large group of suppliers and facilitates onsite transactions (Rice and Almosawi, 2002). On the other hand, going to a mega retail trade show event while the primary outcome expectation is to meet decision makers will have disastrous consequences both in terms unmet expectations and resources that would go to waste. In short, trade show visitors have to select trade

shows that are aligned to their overriding trade show attendance goals and budget provisions.

A second potential driver of trade show visitors effectiveness, and one that is especially relevant to institutional visitors, is visiting delegate (Bello, 1992; Bello and Lohtia, 1993). Because most of the activities that trade show visitors seek to accomplish at trade shows require human presences, assembling an appropriate visiting delegate is indeed a critical decision (Bello, 1992; Bello and Lohtia, 1993). Guided by their core agenda for attending trade shows, visitors have to carefully workout the visiting delegate's composition, size and social skills. Composition refers to the level of representation of diverse managerial positions and functional specialties in the visiting delegate (Bello, 1992). For better performance effectiveness, the visiting delegate's composition should reflect the audience profile of the targeted trade show. For instance, a visiting delegate dispatched to a trade show reputed for convening senior decision makers should naturally include senior managers (Godar and O'Connor, 2001). Including senior managers will enhance the delegate's chances of fitting to the show's audience profile and establish a strong position for the company in a network of trade show interactions (Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995). On the other hand, while visiting a technical trade show predominantly focused on, say, product technology, it is appropriate to dispatch technical people to the show.

Size is another delegate attribute with crucial implications for visitors' effectiveness (Bello, 1992; Bello and Lohtia, 1993). The main consideration regarding size should be that the visiting delegate has to be proportional to the size of the trade show to be attended. For instance, upon visiting a large trade show attracting thousands of exhibitors and visitors, developing an attendance strategy around a one or two men delegate may not be optimal as a small delegate cannot cover a large trade show properly. Likewise, sending a team of several people to a small regional trade show,

when a team of few personnel can do the job, can turn out to be a costly strategy. In sum, the size of the delegate should be proportional to the size of the targeted trade show.

Beyond delegate composition and size, delegate social skills should also be taken into consideration (Rinallo et al., 2010). Trade shows are as much formal commercial venues as they are informal social events (Borghini et al., 2006; Rinallo et al., 2010). Visiting delegates' social skills can easily impinge on visitors effectiveness by influencing how well and how fast they can adapt to the highly socialized atmosphere of trade shows. For instance, it is reasonable to expect that people with superior social skills can quickly adapt to the trade show atmosphere and properly accomplish their assigned tasks. On the contrary, socially apathetic people can easily be overwhelmed by the hyper socialized nature of trade shows, preventing them from effectively discharging their assigned tasks. In short, trade show visitors have to thoroughly consider visiting delegates' composition, size and social skills as these dimensions can easily impinge on trade show effectiveness.

A third potential driver of visitors effectiveness has to do with how well the information and knowledge gathered from the trade show is disseminated inside the organization to improve decisions (Bettis-Outland et al., 2010; Godar and O'Connor, 2001). The visiting delegate might have done a great job of collecting essential market and intelligence information, or might have established an important initial contact with a highly valued partner, but unless this information is communicated to appropriate organizational units and is used to inform subsequent strategic decisions, the visiting delegate's excellent work would go to waste. In recognition of the managerial value of trade show information, research recently has started to explore the issue of trade show information use and its effect on the success of trade show visitors (e.g., Bettis-Outland et al., 2010; Geigenmüller and

Bettis-Outland, 2012). This line of research is already returning interesting insights and is summarized in a model called return on trade show information (RTSI).

The RTSI model is based on the application of the marketing orientation framework to the trade show context. RTSI model recognizes the importance of the acquisition, dissemination and managerial use of trade show information for improving organizational performance (Bettis-Outland et al., 2010). Empirical evidences supporting the RTSI model are emerging which reinforce the notion that the acquisition, dissemination and utilization of trade show information engender greater organizational benefits (Bettis-Outland et al., 2012). Core managerial implications of the RTSI model include (a) trade show visitors need to actively engage in the acquisition of relevant information, (b) trade show visitors should internally disseminate the information acquired from the fairground to concerned organizational units and (c) the organizational units at the receiving end should use the information toward updating and improving their business plans and strategies.

In summary, some important points can be highlighted from the discussion presented in the forging section on the strategic decisions and actions that potentially drive visitors' effectiveness. First, trade show visitors need to focus on clearly outlining what their trade show attendance goals are and selecting an appropriate trade show that is well aligned with their trade show attendance goals. In addition, trade show visitors should assemble a competent visiting delegate paying particular attention to the delegate's composition, size and social skills. Assembling a competent visiting delegate is key to effectively accomplish trade show attendance goals. Trade show visitors should also timely disseminate the information and knowledge solicited from the fairground to potential user groups in the organization. The newly acquired information should subsequently be applied to improve organizational decisions.

2.3. The Organizer Perspective

2.3.1. Profile of Trade Show Organizers

Trade organizers are the institutions responsible for creating, managing and sustaining trade shows (Kay 2005; 2007; Stevens, 2005). Because the formation, management and sustenance of trade shows are complex and resource intensive operations, institutional organizers dominate the trade show organization business (Kay, 2007; Jin et al., 2010). The institutions organizing trade shows can be private enterprises, professional organizations, industry associations or government agencies (Jin et al., 2010; Kay, 2007; Kresse, 2005; Stevens, 2005). At the heart of the trade show organization task is balancing the interests of various actors having stakes in the trade show including exhibitors, visitors, regulators, associations, external service suppliers and government agencies. In order to balance the diverse interests of these actors and successfully implement trade show programs, organizers must maintain multiple interfaces (AUMA, 2011a; 2011b).

There are two specific structural attributes that can shed light on the profile of trade show organizers: degree of specialization and ownership structure. Degree of specialization is an important attribute that can provide valuable insights about the profile of trade show organizers. Based on their degree of specialization, organizers can be conveniently classified into specialized and generic. Specialized organizers espouse as their primary business model, the management of trade show events (AUMA, 2011a; 2011b; Kresse, 2005). Specialized trade show organizers manage multiple trade shows across various industries and all year round. Trade shows take center stage in the overall business model of specialized trade show organizers. Some of the specialized trade show organizers have global presences and operate across multiple countries (AUMA, 2011a; 2011b; Kresse, 2005).

On the contrary, generic trade show organizers operate a broad business model in which trade shows constitute only one part of their overall operation (Stevens, 2005; Stoeck and Schraudy, 2005). These organizers operate diverse business portfolios including organizing other forms of business events, providing media services, offering consultancy works, etc (Stoeck and Schraudy, 2005). Generic trade show organizers have far flung business interests and are not solely focused on managing trade shows. These types of organizers tend to confine their presences to regional and national levels with minimal international undertakings (Busche, 2005; Stevens, 2005).

Ownership structure is another attribute that can give additional insights about the profile of trade show organizers. The ownership structure of trade show organizers can be distinguished along three main categories: privately owned, association owned and state owned (Jin et al., 2010; Kay, 2007; Kresse, 2005; Stevens, 2005). The first common form of ownership structure features private enterprises as organizers of trade shows (Kay, 2007; Kresse, 2005). Privately owned trade show organizers are structured in more or less the same way as are other competitive enterprises (AUMA, 2011a; 2011b; Stevens, 2005). Privately owned trade show organizers are driven primarily by the motive to make profit and try to fulfill this motive by enhancing their market competitiveness (AUMA, 2011a; 2011b). Because privately owned trade show organizers are profit driven, they keep operating trade shows only to the extent that they are financially attractive. These types of organizers are common both in industrialized as well as emerging economies (AUMA, 2011a; 2011b; Kay, 2007; Stevens, 2005).

Another popular arrangement in the trade show industry features trade and industry associations as organizers of trade shows (Jin et al., 2010; Kresse, 2005; Stevens, 2005). The purpose behind the existence of trade and industry associations is to initiate, promote and advocate for programs advancing the commercial,

professional and political interests of the business communities that they represent. Consistent with this goal, association owned trade shows are keen on creating growth and market opportunities by conceiving events with appeals to the needs of association members (AUMA 2011a; 2011b; Stevens, 2005). Depending on their capability, associations may take full charge of the trade show management task or outsource part of the show organization task to external suppliers (Kresse, 2005). Trade shows ran by associations have a combination of profit, industry and professional goals (Jin et al., 2010). Industry and trade associations are ideally placed to exploit their insider perspectives and strong industry ties and create trade show concepts with considerable industry appeal (AUMA 2011a; 2011b; Jin et al., 2010; Stevens, 2005).

Although perhaps not so widely in use, the third ownership structure features state agencies as full or quasi organizers of trade shows (Busche, 2005; Jin et al., 2010; Kay, 2007). State agencies may either manage trade shows entirely by themselves or may opt for outsourcing part of their operation to outside suppliers while maintaining discretion on key strategic issues (Busche, 2005; Jin et al., 2010; Kay, 2005). With growing recognition of trade shows as political-economic instruments, governments are increasingly seizing trade shows to advance their policy agendas (Busche, 2005; Goehrmann, 2005). Governments do this by encouraging the involvement of state agencies in the formation and management of trade shows (Kay, 2005; 2007). State controlled trade shows are driven by a combination of policy and profit motives. This means state owned organizers may keep running financially unattractive trade shows so long as the trade shows enjoy political support (Busche, 2005; Kay, 2005). It is repeatedly mentioned in the trade press that state owned organizers are prevalent in emerging countries, perhaps a legacy of the socialist market structure that pervaded these countries for long time. In several important emerging economies like China, Russia, the Gulf states and many African

countries, government agencies play significant roles in the formation and management of trade shows.

To summarize our discussion thus far, trade show organizers are the institutions responsible for creating and managing trade shows. Structurally, trade show organizers can be either specialized or generic and can operate under the ownership of three main entities: private enterprises, industry/trade associations and government agencies.

2.3.2. Motivations of Trade Show Organizers

Trade show organizers can have several motivations for creating and managing trade show events. Some of these motivations are more closely identifiable with certain types of ownership structures, while other motivations transcend specific ownership structures and drive the activities of organizers across multiple ownership structures (Kay, 2005; 2007; Jin et al., 2010; Stevens, 2005). A good example of the latter type is the profit motive (Busche, 2005; Jin et al., 2010). The motivation to make money is a potent force behind the business models of several trade show organizers. Although the degree may vary, organizers of all shapes and sizes pursue profit maximization strategies.

Trade show organizers attempt to increase their profit either by increasing their revenue streams or by reducing their costs or both (Bartizan Connects, 2010; Maya, 2008). Some of the strategy options for increasing revenue streams include expanding the exhibitor and visitor base, introducing innovative services around the core offer, asking higher prices for premium services, etc (Bartizan Connects, 2010). Similarly, trade show organizers take different steps to keep their costs at bay such as lowering operating costs, out sourcing less efficient operations to low cost providers, partnering with service suppliers, applying technology systems, etc (Bartizan Connects, 2010; Maya, 2010).

Another motivation which bridges multiple ownership structures is the motivation to form and develop markets (Aspers and Darr, 2011). In fact, developing markets is an inherent function of trade shows. It is inherent because trade shows bring key market actors together and provide them convenient venues to do business with each other (AUMA, 2011a; 2011b; Goehrmann, 2005). On the supply side, they convene exhibiting firms eager to showcase and supply their products and services. On the demand side, they convene buyers, consumers, and customers eager to search, evaluate and purchase products and services. Trade shows also convene secondary market actors that play crucial supporting roles in the smooth functioning of markets like regulators, government agencies and industry associations (Goehrmann, 2005). By facilitating the exchange of goods, services, ideas, information and knowledge among these actors through their trade show events, organizers facilitate the formation and development of product/service markets (Aspers and Darr, 2011; AUMA, 2011b).

A third factor which especially drives association owned trade show organizers is supporting industries (AUMA, 2011b; Jin et al., 2010). Although perhaps with less intensity, the motivation to support industries can also drive state and privately owned trade show organizers. Organizers attempt to accomplish this motive by building trade shows around appealing concepts for targeted industry players (AUMA, 2011b; Jin et al., 2010). The trade show concept encapsulates the theme of the trade show defining everything from the show's industry focus to its audience profile and activities. Trade show organizers also support industries by directing attention to the challenges faced by industries and by helping in the search for solutions (AUMA, 2011b; Jin et al., 2010). They do this by setting an agenda for convened industry players (i.e., suppliers, customers, regulators, associations and government agencies) which are able to collectively map out solutions (AUMA, 2011b). Trade show organizers also foster the development of industries by

contributing to participants' professional advancement through the facilitations of professional advancement programs like conferences, seminars and networking sessions (AUMA, 2011b).

A fourth motivation especially pursued by state owned trade show organizers is regional development (Goehrmann, 2005; Busche, 2005). Albeit perhaps with lesser intensity, regional development can also be an agenda for private and association owned trade shows. Trade shows support regional development with both long term and short term economic spillovers (Busche, 2005). With respect to long term spillovers, trade shows create opportunities for regional development by showcasing regional investment potentials for trade show participants from outside regions (Goehrmann, 2005; Busche, 2005). Given their simultaneous emphasis on commerce and politics, trade shows are ideal mechanisms for attracting external investments. Similarly, trade shows facilitate long term regional development by opening up market access to regional suppliers (Busche, 2005; Kresse, 2005). By establishing long term commercial ties with buyers met at trade shows, regional suppliers can gain access to bigger markets situated in other regions and countries (AUMA, 2011a; 2011b).

With respect to short term spillovers, trade shows create immediate financial benefits for service providers and governments based in the trade show region (Busche, 2005). As trade show organizers rely on external suppliers for the delivery of services involving travel, accommodation, exhibit supply, etc trade show activities create financial incentives to local service suppliers (Munuera and Ruiz, 1999; Whitfield and Webber, 2011). Trade show activities also create additional revenue streams to local governments in the form of customs and taxes (Busche, 2005). In doing so, trade shows contribute their share to regional development. In summary, one can distinguish trade show organizers motivations along four broad categories: profit, market formation, industry support and regional development. While some

of these motivations are more closely aligned with certain ownership structures (e.g., industry support with industry association owned trade show organizers, regional development with government owned trade show organizers), others transcend ownership structures (e.g., profit motive, market formation).

2.3.3. Drivers of Trade Show Organizers Effectiveness

With the exception of few industry reports, the academic literature dealing with the organizers perspective is scant. No less authority on this matter than S. Gopalakrishna and G. L. Lilien remarked recently that “research from the trade show management perspective is almost non-existent” (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012, p. 239). Due to lack of proper research, available insights about the strategic decisions and actions that drives organizers effectiveness are not properly studied. This dissertation synthesizes the fragmented knowledge available in the literature and presents a discussion about the strategic decisions and actions that drives trade show organizers effectiveness. This discussion starts with the assumption that satisfying the needs of exhibitors, visitors and other stakeholders before, during and after the trade show is critical to the effectiveness of trade show organizers. The discussion then draws on the needs of exhibitors, visitors and other stakeholders to isolate strategic decisions and actions that trade show organizers have to pursue before, during and after the trade show.

It has been repeatedly mentioned that the satisfaction of exhibitors and visitors needs before, during and after the trade show is critical to the effectiveness of trade show organizers. Satisfied exhibitors and visitors are not only likely to return to future trade show editions but also bring in new exhibitors and visitors through positive word of mouth and referrals (Gottlieb et al., 2011; Whitfield and Webber, 2011). On the contrary, unsatisfied exhibitors and visitors neither return to future trade show editions nor offer positive testimonies which could strengthen the reputation of the trade show (Gopalakrishna et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2003). Given

this, trade show organizers should make the satisfaction of exhibitors and visitors needs before, during and after the trade show their primary pre-occupation.

If agreement can be reached on the importance of satisfying exhibitor and visitor needs, the next logical question to ask is: what can trade show organizers do toward this effect? Because exhibitors and visitors needs vary considerably along the three stages of their trade show participation, satisfying these differential needs requires putting in place different set of priorities for each stage. adapting a three stage model of trade show organization will serve to align the strategic priorities of trade show organizers with the needs of exhibitors and visitors. This way, the three stage model provides a theoretically grounded starting point toward explaining drivers of organizers effectiveness. The subsequent section will look at the three stage model of trade show management at length.

2.3.3.1. The Pre-show Stage

From the trade show organizers perspective, the pre-show stage covers the planning and preparation period prior to the start of the trade show. The pre-show stage is where several strategic decisions and actions are taken (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012). During this stage, exhibitors and visitors require vast amount of information to select trade shows and make plans for their individual trade show participations. For example, both exhibitors and visitors need information regarding the theme, industry focus, timing and location of trade shows. Information about applicable rates, registrations, accommodation and exhibit services are likewise necessary for trade show selection and planning purposes. In order to satisfy these diverse information needs, organizers have to take several decisions and actions which can be summarized into three priorities: concept development, event planning and event promotion (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012).

Developing a trade show concept involves defining everything from the focus of the trade show to its audience profile (Ingold, 2005; Peters and Scharrer, 2005; Sasserath et al., 2005). More broadly, the concept development task requires answering the following questions:

- What sort of purposes and goals should the trade show fulfill?
- What sort of industries, markets and geographic areas should the trade show serve?
- What type of exhibitors, visitors and secondary market actors should the trade show serve?
- What sorts of exhibitors and visitors activities should be encouraged at the fairground?
- What sort of supportive services and fringe programs should be offered at the fairground?

Inferring from the nature of the above questions, it is easy to see that concept development is particularly important either during the launch of a new trade show event or during substantial repositioning of an already existing one (Ingold, 2005). Concept development has limited application for established trade shows which are being served by existing concepts. For greater impact, trade show organizers should view the concept development task as a strategic branding exercise through which they give their trade shows unique identities (Ingold, 2005; Peters and Scharrer, 2005; Sasserath et al., 2005). But creating a unique trade show identity requires differentiating the focal trade show from other potentially competitive trade shows. This is where recognizing the structure and characteristics of competitive trade shows come into play (Ingold, 2005; Sasserath et al., 2005). The concept development task must, therefore, start with an assessment of competing trade shows and the differentiation can proceed from there.

Promotion is the second strategic priority of the pre-show stage. Promotion is basically about selling the trade show concept to targeted exhibitors, visitors, and other relevant market actors (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012; Stoeck and Schraudy, 2005). Because of this, the trade show concept serves as a vital strategic input to the promotional activity. Beyond its marketing dimension, promotion is one of the mainstream mechanisms of supplying tailored trade show information to prospective exhibitors and visitors. Trade show organizers apply both traditional and internet enabled promotional tools to get their messages across to the target audience (Stoeck and Schraudy, 2005). For instance, organizers make use of traditional promotional tools such as advertising in the trade press, direct mail, and mass advertising. Similarly, they leverage institutional word of mouth through industry associations, trade associations and government agencies to promote their trade shows to specific audience segments (Jin et al., 2010; Stevens, 2005).

In addition, trade show organizers utilize a variety of internet enabled tools such as online advertising, emails and social media activities for promotional purposes (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012; Stevens, 2005). Most organizers own websites dedicated for promoting their show (Lee et al., 2008). Trade show websites are often the place to go to acquire complete show related information about the trade show concept, schedule, venue details and applicable rates. Trade show websites, especially those fitted with appropriate applications, are also used for more strategic purposes. For instance, some trade show organizers utilize websites to handle registrations, booking booth stands and other exhibit services and processing payments (Davidson et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2008).

Event planning is an action filled priority which is concerned about figuring out show timing, show location, registration, facilities, accommodation and logistics of the show (Kirchgeorg et al., 2005). Once again, the trade show concept serves as a blue print to the event planning activity. The strategic decisions and actions that fall

under the umbrella of event planning, generate lots of information that should be communicated to exhibitors and visitors to aid their show selection and planning decisions. While the timing decision determines when and for how long the trade show will have to run, the location decision sorts out a variety of important details about the location, space and facilities of the fairground. For better outcome, both the timing and venue decisions should reflect the needs of exhibitors and visitors.

Exhibitors and visitors also register their attendance, book booth stands and make payments during the pre-show stage. Streamlining the registration, payment and booking procedures by employing supporting technologies and personnel is important to create efficiency for target exhibitors and visitors (Stevens, 2005). In addition, trade show organizers have to supervise exhibitors booth set up activities during this stage. As exhibitors report myriad of difficulties setting up their booths, close supervisions of exhibitors activities can considerably ease some of their difficulties associated with setting up booth stands (Maya, 2008). Travel and accommodation along with the booth set up activity are identified as core value creating areas in a recent practitioner report (see, Bartizan Connects, 2010). Trade show organizers have to work in these fronts so that exhibitors and visitors are able to find proper and affordable travel and accommodation services. Partnering with concerned service providers can prove useful in this regard (Bartizan Connects, 2010; Maya, 2010).

In summary, the planning stage deals with several strategic decisions and actions. These decisions and actions have enormous implications for the successful conduct of trade shows. For this reason, the pre-show stage is critically important, requiring huge amount of planning, promotion and interfacing works. Competencies in areas of planning, interactive interface and media use are instrumental in the pre-show stage (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012).

2.3.3.2. The At-show Stage

Temporally speaking, the at-show stage runs from the opening date of the trade show through to its closing date. By definition, therefore, both exhibitors and visitors are physically present at the fairground during the at-show stage. Not only are exhibitors and visitors physically present at the trade show ground, they are also engaged in a flurry of activities such as transacting, interacting, networking, relationship building, information gathering, etc (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012; Stevens, 2005). To successfully implement these activities, exhibitors and visitors rely on reliable provisions of a variety of essential services. The main strategic priority of organizers during this stage should thus be ensuring the smooth progression of the trade show by streamlining service provisions (Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995; Smith et al., 2003). To this effect, trade show organizers can focus on two areas.

First, trade show organizers can ensure the smooth progression of the show by enhancing the quality of services provided to exhibitors and visitors in all areas of service provisions (Gottlieb et al., 2011). Although the notion of providing high quality services should not be confined to the at-show stage, it resonates much strongly during this stage. It is not because exhibitors and visitors report a disproportionately large amount of service complaints during the at-show stage, it is because the service failures occurring during this stage are fatal, potentially disrupting the smooth functioning of exhibitors and visitors (GES, 2011; Maya, 2008). There is, thus, need for trade show organizers to streamline their service provisions so that exhibitors and visitors are able to pursue their respective trade show activities without disruptions. As the quality of services exhibitors and visitors receive from trade show organizers is an important predictor of satisfaction and repeat attendance behavior (Gottlieb et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2003; Whitfield and

Webber, 2011), ensuring high service quality during the at-show stage should be made a key strategic priority.

The second strategy of ensuring successful implementations of trade shows, but one closely related to the notion of service quality, is close monitoring of exhibitors and visitors activities to detect and solve problems as promptly as possible. To this end, trade show organizers may have to station competent personnel at the fairground tasked with supervising the activities of exhibitors and visitors. Assigning people at the fairground allows organizers to recognize exhibitors and visitors evolving service needs quickly and address them as they arise. This is important as it is more usual than not for exhibitors and visitors to encounter service, technical, logistical and even security failures at fairgrounds (AUMA 2011a; 2011b). Close supervisions, based on open interactions with exhibitors and visitors, will equip trade show organizers with the ability to circumvent potential service failures before they occur and correct them quickly once they occurred.

2.3.3.3. The post-show stage

The idea of thinking the trade show organization process beyond the at-show stage is important as exhibitors and visitors trade show activities often extend into the post-show stage. In the post-show stage, trade show organizers deal with two important follow-up priorities. The first priority is performance evaluation. Trade show organizers have to wait until the post-show stage to make a realistic assessment of their trade show efforts as the full facts needed to evaluate trade show efforts will be available only after the show is concluded (AUMA, 2011b). Trade show organizers often evaluate their efforts using various metrics such as attendance volume, attendance growth, exhibitor and visitor satisfaction, revenue growth, profitability, etc (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012). Some of these metrics are readily available from existing databases and records. Other metrics such as exhibitor and visitor satisfaction levels have to be compiled by polling appropriate

respondents. Post-show performance evaluation is a critical follow up priority for trade show organizers as it allows them to identify points of strength and weakness and learn from them.

Recent practitioner reports abound with revelations of exhibitors and visitors becoming increasingly demanding of aggregated show statistics from trade show organizers (AUMA 2011a; AUMA 2011b; GES, 2011). This, of course, should not come as a surprise as exhibitors and visitors rely on aggregated show statistics to benchmark their performance and make future trade show attendance decisions (Kay, 2007; Stevens, 2005). Aggregated show statistics is a comprehensive dataset that exhibitors and visitors lack the means to compile by themselves (GES, 2011; Stevens, 2005). The second post-show priority should, thus, be supplying aggregate show statistics to exhibitors and visitors. Compiling and supplying trade show statistics to exhibitors and visitors should be made an integral undertaking of the post-show stage. It can be argued that supplying post show statistics and other sorts of information to exhibitors and visitors can be an important source of competitive advantage for trade show organizers because, despite the apparent demand, not so many organizers appear to be doing it with a sense of regularity (GES, 2011).

During the post-show stage, it is customary for trade show organizers to thank exhibitors, visitors and other market actors who participated at the latest edition of their trade shows. This is usually done through impersonal forms of communication like emails, direct mails, press releases and print ads (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012). From the perspective of the trade show organizer, such simple, courtesy communications can help project a friendly image. The goal is to build a strong trade show brand by continuing to promote the trade show long after it is closed. Some might view this practice as superficial, nevertheless it is hard to deny that simple yet courteous communication can form the basis for establishing strong brands and long term relationships with customers (Geigenmuller and Bettis-Outland, 2012).

Trade show organizers can take this practice a step farther by accompanying courtesy communications with summary statistics from the latest edition. This, on the one hand, displays courtesy on the part of the organizer, and on the other, creates informative content for the target audience to digest. Integrating such practices into standard post-show routines can help organizers create a solid brand image which will contribute to future successes (Geigenmuller and Bettis-Outland, 2012).

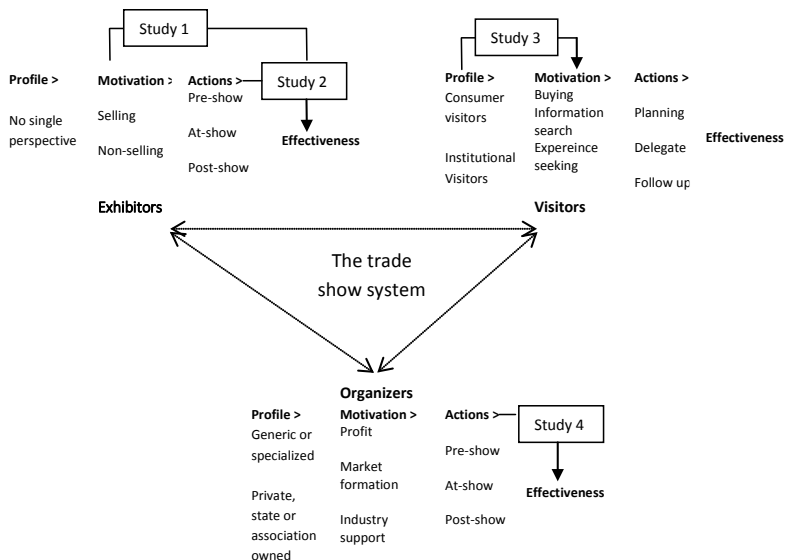
To summarize the extensive discussion on the trade show organizers perspective, the dissertation presented a three stage model of trade show management consisting of pre-show, at-show and post-show stages. The rationale for the three stage model stems from the fact that exhibitors and visitors have differential needs before, during and after the trade show; and these differential needs can be best satisfied by applying a multi stage model where different strategic priorities are set during each stage. During the pre-show stage, trade show organizers should develop plans covering everything from the timing and location of the trade show to its booking procedures. In order to satisfy exhibitors and visitors massive information needs at this stage, trade show organizers have to develop effective communication and media plans.

During the at-show stage, exhibitors and visitors expect smooth service deliveries and quick service recoveries when failures occur. To this effect, organizers have to monitor the quality of their service provisions through close supervisions of the activities of exhibitors and visitors at the fairground. During the post-show stage, exhibitors and visitors need aggregated show statistics. Trade show organizers have to compile and distribute aggregated show statistics to exhibitors, visitors and other parties. Courtesy communication is another strategic priority that can contribute to future trade show successes.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

In the forgoing section, the trade show literature was synthesized around three perspectives. This subsection attempts to establish connection between these perspectives and locate the four empirical studies within these perspectives. For this purpose, a conceptual framework is introduced. The conceptual framework, depicted in figure 1, is based on a schematic summary of the discussions in the exhibitor, the visitor and the organizer perspectives.

Figure1. A conceptual framework locating the empirical studies within the three theoretical perspectives



The conceptual framework is made up of three interrelated elements. The first element provides an overview of the four interrelated themes introduced earlier in the chapter: profile, motivation, actions and effectiveness. This element establishes connections between these themes across the three trade show actors. The profile of trade show actors influences the nature of their motivations. Motivations, in turn,

shape the strategic decisions and actions that trade show actors take. It is these strategic decisions and actions that ultimately impinge on trade show effectiveness.

The second element of the conceptual framework depicts the trade show system in terms of the three main trade show actors and highlights the dyadic relationships between them. These dyadic relationships, represented by the two way arrows connecting the three trade show actors, are characterized by two way exchanges of goods, services and information. The dyadic relationship between exhibitors and visitors is centered on exchanges spanning product information, transactional information, social relationships and long term partnerships (Rice, 1992; Rinallo et al., 2010; Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995). The dyadic relationship between organizers and exhibitors is centered on the exchange of information and services before, during and after the trade show (Rinallo and Golfetto, 2011; Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995). Similarly, the dyadic relationship between organizers and visitors is characterized by the exchange of information and services before, during and after the trade show (Gottlieb et al., 2011; Rinallo and Golfetto, 2011).

The third element places the four empirical studies within the conceptual framework to show their relationship with the three theoretical perspectives. For instance, study 1 is located between the motivation-effectiveness nexus in the exhibitor perspective. Because study 1 is interested, as we will discover shortly, in juxtaposing exhibitors' pre-show expectations (i.e., motivations) with their post-show effectiveness assessments (effectiveness) so as to evaluate their overall efforts, this positioning makes sense. Study 2 is located between the actions-effectiveness nexus in the exhibitor perspective. Given that study 2 investigates how managerial responsibilities for key trade show campaign tasks constituting objective setting, trade show selection and booth management (actions) influence exhibitors' effectiveness, the positioning of study 2 is valid. Study 3 is located between the profile-motivation nexus in the visitor perspective. To the extent that study 3 is, as

will be apparent shortly, interested in understanding consumer visitors' (profile) buying behavior at retail trade shows (motivation), this positioning is logically consistent. Finally, study 4 is located between the actions-effectiveness nexus in the organizer perspective. Because study 4 examines how organizers resource deployment strategies in relation to reputational, customer linking and physical resource classes (actions) influence organizers' exhibitor and visitor attendance levels (effectiveness), this positioning is reasonable. Importantly, all four empirical studies are well connected to the three theoretical perspectives. That the empirical studies are well placed within the three theoretical perspectives means that their potential contributions to the literature will be useful from a theoretical point of view.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the philosophical assumptions and methodological approaches underlying the four empirical studies reported on in this dissertation. These discussions are presented in three subchapters. The first subchapter elaborates on the ontological and epistemological nature of scientific research and justifies the studies' choices of ontological and epistemological positions. The second subchapter introduces two competing perspectives on theory of science: falsification and normal science. These two perspectives, although contradictory in their approach, address the question of how empirical enquiries should advance scientific knowledge. The second subchapter uses these two competing perspectives to position the empirical studies. The third subchapter provides a detailed account of the various research design decisions and procedures that were followed to complete the four empirical studies. These discussions focus on such issues as sampling decisions, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

3.1. Epistemological Roots of Scientific Research

The term epistemology comes from the Greek word episteme which means knowledge (Krauss, 2005). Epistemology, in simple terms, is the philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know and it has intimate connections with both ontology (the philosophy of reality) and methodology (Krauss, 2005). When applied in the context of scientific research, epistemology refers to a system of philosophical beliefs and worldviews that leads and governs scientific investigations (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The epistemological roots of a research work thus governs the entire research process and provides valuable directions concerning specific choices of

methods and techniques for conducting productive works (Deshpande, 1983; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

There are two leading epistemological positions strongly embedded in scientific research traditions (Blaikie, 1993; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Hussey and Hussey, 1997). A variety of terms are coined, however, to describe these two positions such as positivism versus constructivism, objectivism versus subjectivism, quantitative versus qualitative, just to mention few of the well known ones. Subsequent discussions will consistently employ the terms positivism and constructivism to describe the two leading epistemological positions.

The positivist epistemology reflects a realistic ontological assumption that there is an external reality independent of human observation or knowledge of it (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Holden and Lynch 2004). The ontological assumption underpinning positivism holds that reality is external to individuals – it continues to exist regardless of human consciousness and whether or not humans assign labels and attempt to perceive and interpret its existence. The realist ontology believes that the world will still exist as an external empirical entity made up of hard, tangible and relatively immutable structures, independent of the cognitive efforts of individuals (Holden and Lynch, 2004). Taking the realist ontology as its point of departure, the positivist epistemology attempts to explain the external world in an empirically objective way, with as little subjective involvement as possible (Guba and Lincoln, 2000).

Positivism subscribes to the notion of scientific objectivity by arguing that reality can be detached and analyzed in an objective way (Blaikie, 1993; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Cavana, et al., 2000). Positivism is of the position that reality can be best approached through the utilization of methods that prevent “human contamination of its apprehension or comprehension” (Guba and Lincoln, 2000, p. 176). Positivism

holds that the foundations of scientific knowledge about natural and social realities are laid down through the application of the principle of objectivism which is as much devoid of human bias and misperception. For researchers who belong to the positivist research traditions, the principle of objectivism often entails quantitative methods which are used to specify and test cause and effect structures (Blaikie 1993).

Constructivist epistemology, on the contrary, is based on a relativist ontology which posits that there is no objective reality independent of the cognition and experience of humans (Creswell, 2003; Guba and Lincoln, 2000). The ontological assumption underpinning the constructivist epistemology contends that human knowledge of reality is socially constructed and that these socially constructed realities are not seen as stable or ever present structures (Creswell, 2003; Guba and Lincoln, 2000). In constructivist epistemology, reality is seen as context specific. Therefore, researchers adhering to constructivist epistemology seek to understand values, beliefs, and meanings of realities in their own contexts and attempt to acquire subjective and sympathetic understanding of social realities (Smith and Heshusius, 1986). In the constructivist epistemological position, knowledge is seen to be comprised of multiple sets of interpretations that are part of the social and cultural context in which it occurs (Ticehurst and Veal, 2000).

Constructivist researchers advocate that there should be openness to the understanding of the social and cultural context of research and subjectivity in the way researchers hold or apply their conceptions on their research settings (e.g., humans, organizations, cultures, and societies) (Creswell, 2003). The very contextual and subjective nature of constructivist research works limit their findings to the specific cultural, societal and organizational settings from which the findings were originally derived (Guba and Lincoln, 2000). But this should not be mistaken to mean

that researchers operating under constructivist epistemology primarily seek to discover findings that are replicable to a wide range of social settings.

Ultimately, those engaged in scientific enquiries will be confronted with a choice of epistemological position between – although not always confined to – positivism and constructivism (Creswell, 2003). The choice of epistemological position fundamentally shapes the course of any research process as it influences everything from the type of research questions to be proposed to the type of methodological designs to be employed towards addressing the research questions. There are no fast and hard rules which can guide the choice of researchers' epistemological position, however. Several factors come into play in shaping the choice of researchers' epistemological position including the nature of the phenomenon of research interest, disciplinary traditions and researchers' personal interests and formal training (Patton, 1990; Morgan and Smircich, 1980).

The four empirical studies reported on this dissertation drew on the positivist epistemological position for three fundamental reasons. First, the research questions addressed in the empirical studies concern themselves with cause and effect structures within the trade show system. There is enough evidence in the research philosophy literature to suggest that discerning cause and effect structures is best accomplished by subscribing to realistic ontological and positivistic epistemological positions (e.g., Holden and Lynch, 2004; Krauss, 2005; Guba and Lincoln, 2000). For this reason, the empirical studies took the realist ontological and the positivist epistemological assumptions as their points of departure.

Second, the activities and behaviour of trade show actors have largely been studied using quantitative research designs rooted in realist ontology and positivist epistemology (see, for example, Dekimpe et al., 1997; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Kerin and Cron, 1987). The ultimate objective of this dissertation is to

contribute new knowledge to the trade show literature. To facilitate the rapid assimilation of the knowledge generated from this dissertation, it is important to choose established philosophical positions in the trade show literature. Owing to the fact that the realist ontology and the positivist epistemology are already well received in the trade show literature, it makes sense to take similar philosophical positions in the current dissertation. Therefore, the temptation to gain acceptance in the trade show literature, is the second reason why the empirical studies drew on the realist ontology and the positivist epistemology.

The final reason has to do with personal academic experiences and associations. My formal training in graduate school and academic associations that I have took part, were strongly embedded in the positivist research tradition. The master's thesis and other pre-PhD texts I have authored drew largely on assumptions of realist ontology and positivist epistemology. These early academic experiences and associations inadvertently pushed my ontological and epistemological positions in the direction of realism and positivism, respectively. These early experiences also instilled in me the value of scientific objectivism. By scientific objectivism I am referring to the well established notion that scientific enquiries should be as devoid of the subjective interpretations and perceptions of human agents as possible. The decision to take the realistic ontological and the positivist epistemological position in this dissertation is, therefore, a result of a conflation of factors that have to do with the nature of the proposed research questions as well as personal experiences and associations.

3.2. Theory of Science

Researchers endeavouring to contribute to scientific knowledge should familiarize themselves with theory of science. An understanding of theory of science –or more precisely –the mechanisms through which science contributes to knowledge is

essential if legitimate contributions to scientific knowledge are to be made. The manner in which scientific knowledge advances has been and still is a matter of debate among philosophers of science (Kirge, 1978; Rowbottom, 2011). Although there are multiple philosophical positions attempting to explain the advance of science, two perspectives stand out in terms of impact: criticism/falsification (Popper, 1959) and dogmatism/normal science (Kuhn, 1970).

Popper (1959) proposed falsification and critical attitude as key criteria to demarcate empirical science from pseudo science. The notion of falsification is to arrive at empirical observations which are inconsistent with a set of well established propositions (hypothetical statements) underlying a particular theory. The falsification criterion forces theories to be denoted by systems of hypothetical statements which easily lend themselves to empirical testing. The strength of Popper's notion of falsification as a criterion of demarcation lies in the logic that falsifying hypothetical statements proves much easier than verifying them (Krige, 1978). The following quotation brings his notion of falsification to the fore:

The criterion of demarcation inherent in inductive logic –that is, the positivistic dogma of meaning –is equivalent to the requirement that all statements of empirical science (or all 'meaningful' statements) must be capable of being finally decided, with respect to their truth and falsity; we shall say that they must be '*conclusively decidable*'. This means that their form must be such that *to verify them and to falsify them* must both be logically possible (Popper, 1959 p. 17 emphases in the original).

The second criterion of demarcation has to do with critical attitude. Popper pushed the idea that critical attitudes and critical methods are at the heart of empirical science. As such Popper encourages scientists to adopt critical attitude towards established theories by questioning their very foundations and by rejecting

dogmatism. For Popper, science is essentially critical and the absence of critical attitude marks at best applied science and at worst non-science. The following excerpt sheds light on his sense of critical attitude as demarcation criterion:

I am quite ready to admit that there is a need for a purely logical analysis of theories, for an analysis which takes no account of how they change and develop. But this kind of analysis does not elucidate those aspects of the empirical sciences which I, for one, so highly prize. A system such as classical mechanics may be 'scientific' to any degree you like; but those who uphold it dogmatically –believing, perhaps, that it is their business to defend such a successful system against criticism as long as it is not conclusively disproved –are adopting a very reverse of critical attitude which in my view is the proper one for the scientist (Popper, 1959 p. 28)

Popper thus views the progress of knowledge as the replacement of an existing theory with a better theory through the falsification of the former using critical method. He believes that critical method is essential to submit theories to the test of falsification. In Popper's analysis, what distinguishes the critical empirical method of science is "its manner of exposing to falsification, in every conceivable way, the system to be tested. Its aim is not to save the lives of untenable systems but, on the contrary, to select the one which is by comparison the fittest, by exposing them all to the fiercest struggle for survival" (Popper, 1959, p. 20).

In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, hailed by many as path breaking, Kuhn (1970) emphasized dogmatism as central to the process of scientific progress. He argued that scientific knowledge advances largely through adherence to the establishment and a steady transition from pre-paradigm to paradigm (normal science), crisis and revolutionary research phases. Kuhn (1970) painstakingly explains the characteristics of these phases of scientific evolution. Pre-paradigmatic research is characterized by the prevalence of disorganized scientific activities and

diverse perspectives due to lack of a well accepted paradigm theory. Kuhn draws on the chaotic beginnings of various subfields of research in physics to illustrate the nature of pre-paradigm science:

The history of electrical research in the first half of the eighteenth century provides a more concrete and better known example of the way a science develops before it acquires its first universally received paradigm. During that period there were almost as many views about the nature of electricity as there were important electrical experimenters...Yet though all the experiments were electrical and though most of the experimenters read each other's works, their theories had no more than a family resemblance (Kuhn, 1970 p. 14).

Paradigmatic research, on the other hand, is characterized by the existence of universally accepted paradigm theory which governs scientific activities. The paradigm theory is defined in terms of explicitly stated fundamental assumptions, principles and systems of interrelated methods applicable for scientific enquiry. Practitioners accept the fundamental assumptions of the dominant paradigm theory as factual and do not seriously question them. With an established paradigm theory in place, scientists engage in cumulative problem (puzzle) solving exercises. The problems tackled by scientists can be theoretical and/or empirical nature. Nevertheless, solutions to problems that do not bode well for the paradigm theory are often discouraged. In sum, paradigmatic research is marked by consensus and orderly accumulation of empirical evidences in support of its underlying theory. Paradigmatic research is, in Kuhn's words, "a highly cumulative enterprise, eminently successful in its aim, the steady extension of the scope and precision of scientific knowledge" (Kuhn, 1970 p. 52).

Kuhn (1970) went on to suggest that the consensual paradigmatic research phase will eventually give way to the tumultuous crisis phase. This happens with the

discovery of serious anomalies in the existing paradigm theory. Particularly, when these anomalies are considered substantial enough to call into question the core principles of the paradigm theory and when the anomalies become accepted by the wider scientific community, they herald the onset of crisis. Following a chorus of discontent against the reigning paradigm theory, efforts will be initiated to amend the anomalies. "Discovery commences", Kuhn wrote,

with the awareness of anomaly, i.e., with the recognition that nature has somehow violated the paradigm-induced expectations that govern normal science. It then continues with a more or less extended exploration of the area of anomaly. And it closes only when the paradigm theory has been adjusted so that the anomalous has become the expected" (Kuhn, 1970 p.54).

By juxtaposing the theoretical and empirical approaches and contributions of the four empirical studies reported on this dissertation with the two competing perspectives on theory of science, it can be concluded that the empirical studies operate within a normal science tradition. That is, the empirical studies were influenced more by Kuhn's notion of normal science than Popper's notion of falsification. The empirical studies were situated within specific bodies of literature and took these bodies of literature and their core assumptions as given and formulated and addressed specific research questions. The empirical studies did not attempt to falsify established theories as called for by Popper (1959). Instead, the empirical studies operated within the boundaries of their chosen bodies of literature and attempted to enrich them by shedding light on poorly understood issues.

In summary, the four empirical studies reported on this dissertation took the realist ontological and the positivist epistemological assumptions as their points of departure. In addition, they aligned themselves with normal science by accepting the core assumptions of the different bodies of literature that they are situated in.

3.3. Research Design

Research design is a plan of enquiry that puts ontological and epistemological choices of a researcher into motion by providing precise guidances about how to proceed in acquiring a systematic understanding of a research phenomena (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The purpose of the research design is to provide an appropriate mode of enquiry capable of producing valid answers to proposed research questions (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005; Hair et al., 2006). More specifically, “a research design is the framework or plan for a study used as a guide to collect and analyze data (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005, p. 74). The remainder of this chapter presents discussions on the theories behind major design issues such as sampling, data collection and data analysis followed by detailed accounts of the specific design approaches taken to complete the four empirical studies. These discussions are presented in three sections: sampling decisions, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

3.3.1. Sampling Decisions

The notion of sampling is an essential element of research design as it is often impossible or unreasonable to conduct a census of the population of interest to a specific research work (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005; Hair et al., 2006; Proctor, 2003). Sampling is a cheaper and less time consuming substitute for census. Because nearly all populations of interest to organizational research tend to be far too large to work with directly, sampling procedures are applied to acquire a representative sample from the target population (Proctor, 2003). The goal of sampling procedure is to arrive at a representative sample so that the results can either predict or estimate, with a higher degree of confidence, what the true population parameters are (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005; Hair et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2011).

There are three important sampling decisions that researchers have to grapple with: which subjects/objects should be surveyed, how large should sample sizes be and how should individual subjects/objects be chosen (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005). These decisions have to be carefully considered if an appropriate sample that can lead to valid conclusions is to be drawn. The decision regarding which subjects/objects should be surveyed defines the target population and sample frames of the research, whereas the decision regarding sample sizes determines the number of individual subjects/objects that will serve as a source of data. The decision regarding how subjects/objects should be chosen determines the type of sampling methods that will be applied to select specific subjects/objects from the sampling frame (e.g., probability sampling, non-probability sampling).

The four empirical studies approached the three sampling decisions varyingly. For study 1 and study 2, exhibitors that attended the 2008 edition of the Addis Chamber International Trade Fair (ACITF) served as the target population. The ACITF was selected as the target population for two reasons. First, the researcher had a reasonably ample access to the 2008 ACITF which made the data collection effort relatively easier. Second, the ACITF is probably the largest and best known international trade show hosted in Ethiopia. The 2008 edition which was hosted in the month of February attracted 150 domestic and 150 international exhibiting companies. But it was only the domestically based exhibiting companies that study 1 and study 2 used as their sampling frame. The international exhibiting companies were excluded from the sampling frame due to accessibility issues. Because 150 is a manageable number, all the domestic exhibiting companies were sampled, making the originally planned sample size for study 1 and study 2 150. However, lower response rates (43%) pushed the actual sample size for both studies down to 59.

Study 3 used consumer visitors to a large retail trade show as its target population. The retail trade show in question took place at the Addis Ababa Exhibition Center in

2010. The consumer visitors to this retail trade show were selected as the target population for two reasons. The first reason was that the retail trade show is a large scale retailing event attracting vast number of consumers (the organizers reported that the retailing event was visited by more than 262,000 consumers). This made the task of finding appropriate respondents easier. The second reason was related to timing. The retail trade show took place between August 27 and September 10, 2010. This time period marks the two weeks prior to the Ethiopian New Year, one of the busiest shopping periods in the country. It was those consumer visitors who made purchases at the retail trade show who served as the sampling frame for study 3. There is, however, no specific figure about how many consumer visitors shopped in total at the retail trade show, making it impossible to estimate how big the sampling frame was for study 3. Study 3 employed probability sampling and randomly picked 95 consumer visitors as its sample.

Theoretically, the population of interest to study 4 was virtually all commercial trade shows that exist in the market. But since such an extended definition of target population is unpractical, a narrowly defined sampling frame had to be figured out. To this effect, an online database compiled by the leading trade show website biztradeshows.com served as the sampling frame for study 4. The database of biztradeshow.com was selected as a sampling frame because it was a comprehensive database storing information on more than twenty thousand trade shows. But because the quantity of trade shows available in the database is too large to allow an efficient random sampling procedure, study 4 utilized non-probability sampling and conveniently selected 100 representative trade shows as its sample.

3.3.2. Data Collection Procedures

Once important decisions regarding sampling are made, the researcher needs to subsequently develop plans regarding how to systematically collect data from the

sampled subjects/objects (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005; Hair et al., 2006). A number of data collection procedures are available for researchers to choose from. Providing an exhaustive list of available data collection procedures is not within the scope of the present discussion, but some of the most widely used data collection procedures include surveys, interviews, focus group research, experiments, direct observation of behavior and references to secondary data sources (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005; Hair et al., 2006; Proctor, 2003).

Many variants for the aforementioned data collection procedures exist and some of them involve direct communication between the researcher and respondents while others rely on real time observation of the behavior of respondents. Still other procedures rely on perusing secondary data sources to gather relevant information (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005). Regardless of the specific type of procedure employed, the data collection process needs a mechanism for systematically coding and recording respondents' responses or their observed behaviors. A confluence of factors spanning the type of information needed, the amount of money and time allocated for the data collection activity and desired number of sample size collude to determine researchers' choices of data collection procedures (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005).

The four empirical studies reported on the present dissertation relied on questionnaires to gather relevant information. The justifications for the use of questionnaires were twofold. First, the empirical studies were interested in understanding complex relationships underlying multiple trade show variables, leaving the studies with vast information needs. In such cases, survey based data collection procedures such as questionnaires are deemed most appropriate due to their versatility –the ability to acquire large quantity information from respondents (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005). Second, survey based data collection procedures offer the benefit of achieving high response rates with relatively low cost (Churchill

and Iacobucci, 2005; Proctor, 2003). Because the budget allocated for the data collection work for all the four studies was tight, the use of questionnaire was an ideal choice. By deciding to apply questionnaire as the primary data gathering procedure, the need for gathering large amount of data was balanced with the need to complete the data collection work on a tight budget.

For study 1 and study 2, a multi-page, comprehensive questionnaire was prepared. The questionnaire had multiple sections, each targeting different aspects of exhibitors' activities. Major areas on which information was gathered from exhibiting companies included, among others, company profile, attendance motivations, assessment of effectiveness on a pre-defined set of trade show activities, managerial responsibilities for key trade show tasks and level of use of promotion tools before, during and after the trade show. The questionnaire was hand delivered to appropriate informants inside the exhibiting companies. These informants were intimately involved in the planning and implementation of the 2008 ACITF trade show campaign and held senior management positions (e.g., marketing manager, sales manager, general manager) at the time of completing the questionnaire. The actual data collection work lasted four weeks from February to March, 2008.

For study 3, a two-sectioned, relatively simple, questionnaire was prepared to gather information from consumer visitors. The first section asked respondents general questions about their gender, age, income, education level, type of products purchased and amount of purchases made at the retail trade show. The second section asked respondents attitudinal questions about how they perceived different aspects of exhibitors' booth environment such as product assortment, sales staff services and exhibit booth atmosphere. In this section, respondents were also asked about their impulse buying tendency and how time pressed they were coming to the retail event. The questionnaire was administered using the exit interview technique

which involves asking respondents as they exit retail establishments. Cooperative visitors were provided with a copy of the questionnaire and were asked to fill it right away. The data collection work lasted about two weeks from August to September, 2010.

For study 4, a data coding and recording instrument akin to a questionnaire was prepared, although the instrument had a relatively simple structure. The instrument had entries dedicated for coding and recording relevant details about the latest editions of the sample trade shows such as the shows' industry coverage, their visitor orientation, applicable fees, exhibitor and visitor attendance figures, number of past editions, number of exhibition days, amount of exhibition hours per each exhibition day, square meter of floor space, type of interactivity tools available on their webpages and name of supporting industry associations. The aforementioned details regarding the latest editions of the sample trade shows were gathered by searching a variety of online information sources including, among others, TS webpages, organizer webpages, trade and industry association webpages and government department webpages. These details were carefully coded and recorded in the data gathering instrument prepared for this purpose. The data collection, coding and recording tasks took four week to complete from November to December, 2011.

3.3.3. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is a term broadly applied to refer to processes aimed at inspecting, editing, sorting, transforming and modeling empirical data, the purpose being understanding a particular phenomena, improving decisions or suggesting conclusions (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005; Hair et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2010). Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques in different research traditions and paradigms. For instance, data analysis procedures applied over qualitative data sets are markedly different from those applied over

quantitative data sets (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005; Hair et al., 2006). Because this dissertation reports on empirical studies that applied quantitative data sets, the subsequent discussion will be focused on methods that are strictly relevant for analyzing quantitative data sets. For a comprehensive survey of methods relevant for analyzing qualitative data sets, the reader is advised to consult Denzin and Lincoln (2000).

The most popular analyses techniques for analyzing quantitative data sets are called multivariate analysis. Hair et al. (2010) offered the following definition of multivariate analysis: “multivariate analysis refers to all statistical techniques that simultaneously analyze multiple measurements on individuals or objects under investigation (p. 4). According to this definition, any simultaneous analysis of more than two measurement variables can be loosely considered multivariate analysis. Hair et al. (2010) further noted that many multivariate techniques are extensions of univariate and bivariate analyses. Univariate analysis is a technique used to analyze single-variable distributions while bivariate analysis is a technique used to analyze the relationship between two measurement variables such as cross-classification, correlation and t-tests (Hair et al., 2010).

Johnson and Wichern (2007) identified five functions of multivariate analysis in their application for scientific enquiries. The first function is data reduction and structural specification which basically suggests representing the phenomenon being studied in simple structures without losing valuable information. The second function is sorting and grouping which entails creating groups of similar objects or variables according to certain classification rules. The third function is investigating dependence among measurement variables. For this function, it is the nature of the relationships among the variables that is of paramount importance. The fourth function is prediction which involves determining the values of one or more variables on the basis of observations on other variables. The fifth and final function

is hypothesis testing which means testing hypotheses using the parameters of multivariate populations.

Hair et al. (2010) grouped multivariate techniques broadly into dependence and interdependence. A dependent technique is defined as “one in which a variable or set of variables is identified as the dependent variable to be predicted or explained by other variables known as independent variables” (p. 14). Examples of a dependence technique include multiple regression analysis, multivariate analysis of variance and multiple discriminant analysis. In contrast, an interdependence technique is defined as “one in which no single variable or group of variables is defined as being independent or dependent...the procedure involves the simultaneous analysis of all variables in the set” (p. 14). Examples of an interdependence technique include factor analysis, cluster analysis and correspondence analysis.

The four empirical studies that are reported on in this dissertation employed both dependent and interdependent techniques. For example, study 1 applied paired sample t-test which is an example of an interdependent technique. Paired sample t-test is normally used to test for differences between two measurement variables in the same sample (see, Hair et al., 2006). Study 1 applied paired sample t-test to examine whether exhibitors’ pre-show performance expectations were significantly different from their post-show effectiveness assessments on the same set of trade show activities. These two measurement variables (i.e., expectation and performance) were then plotted on importance-performance maps to generate further insights about exhibitors’ effectiveness on various trade show activities.

On the other hand, study 2 applied a combination of interdependent and dependent techniques. Factor analysis, which is an interdependent technique, was applied to reduce the large performance measurement items into more manageable structures

(see, Fabrigar et al., 1999). More specifically, factor analysis was applied to systematically reduce eleven performance items into a structure of four first order and one second order factors. In addition to factor analysis, ANCOVA, which is a dependence technique, was applied to test proposed hypotheses. ANCOVA, an extension of the widely used ANOVA technique, is usually used to examine group differences in means after controlling for the effect of extraneous variables (see, Wildt and Ahtola, 1978). ANCOVA was applied in study 2 to examine differences in performance among exhibiting firms based on how they assigned managerial responsibilities for key trade show tasks, after controlling for the effects of exhibitors' pre-show, at-show and post-show promotional activities.

Study 3 applied PLS path modeling as a principal data analysis technique which is, according to Hair et al. (2010) classification scheme, a dependent technique. PLS path modeling is "aimed at maximizing the explained variance of the dependent latent constructs" (Hair et al., 2011, p. 139). PLS path modeling is a prediction oriented structural equation modeling technique which performs well when sample sizes are small and distributional assumptions are hardly met (Chin and Newsted, 1999; Henseler, 2010; Tenenhaus et al. 2005). Evaluations of PLS structural models are done by assessing predictive power (i.e., R^2 , which measures the percentage of variance explained in the dependent variable by the independent variables) and predictive relevance (i.e., Q^2 , which measures how well observed values are reconstructed by the parameter estimates). Study 3 applied PLS path modeling to generate parameter estimates showing the effect of exhibit booth- and consumer-related variables on consumers purchasing behavior at retail trade shows.

Finally, study 4 applied a non-linear multiple regression analysis technique which is, according to Hair et al. (2010) classification scheme, a dependent technique. The specific technique that study 4 applied is the double-log model. The double-log model is particularly attractive for modeling production and demand functions due

to its multiplicative property (Hill et al., 2011). However, the double-log model has also been applied in a variety of data analysis situations in the marketing literature. For instance, Gielens and Dekimpe (2001) used the double-log model to investigate the effect of strategic market entry variables on the long-run performance of retailers foreign operations. The double-log model has also been fruitfully applied in the trade show literature to determine the effect of several trade show factors on exhibitors' sales effectiveness (Gopalakrishna and Williams, 1992). Study 4 applied the double-log model to generate parameter estimates showing the effect of a selected assortment of market based resources on trade show attendance levels.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE EMPIRICAL STUDIES

This chapter reports on the four empirical studies carried out to address the four major research questions of the dissertation. Informed by the specific research questions that they addressed, the empirical studies employed distinct theoretical and methodological designs and drew on insights from different marketing and management theories. Nevertheless, the four empirical studies are interrelated to each other to the extent that all can be placed, as described in chapter two, within the three perspectives of the trade show literature. Their interrelatedness is further reflected in the fact that the empirical setting of all the four studies is firmly anchored in the trade show system. The four studies are published, or are accepted for publication, in different scientific journals. The four studies are summarized beneath:

Study 1: Importance-performance analysis as exhibitors effectiveness evaluation tool. This study is published in *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*, Volume 12, Number 4, page 314-328.

Study 2: Managing trade show campaigns: why managerial responsibilities matter? This study is published in *Journal of Promotion Management*, Volume 18, Number 2, page 236-253.

Study 3: Factors affecting consumer visitors buying behavior at retail trade shows. This study is published in *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Volume 19, Number 4, page 438-444.

Study 4: Understanding how trade show organizers' resource deployment strategies influence attendance levels. This study is accepted for publication in *European Journal of Marketing*.

CHARTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The overarching purpose of this dissertation was to gain deeper understanding about the marketing functions of the trade show system. The dissertation took, as its point of departure, the idea that the complexity of the trade show system can be best understood through analyzing the behavior and activities of the individual actors involved. To this effect, the dissertation singled out trade show exhibitors, trade show visitors and trade show organizers—the three most important actors of the trade show system—and investigated different aspects of their behavior and activities. The investigation was guided by the following four research questions:

1. How can exhibitors measure and benchmark their trade show efforts?
2. How can exhibitors manage their trade show campaigns effectively?
3. What factors influence the buying behavior of visitors at retail trade shows?
And,
4. How do resource deployment strategies influence the attendance level of trade show organizers?

To answer these research questions, four empirical studies with distinct theoretical and methodological designs were undertaken. The theoretical and methodological choices of the four empirical studies were informed by the nature of the research questions that they attempted to answer. In this regard, study 1 and study 2 answered the first and the second research questions by conducting a survey of exhibitors sampled from a large international trade show. Study 3 answered the third research question by administering a survey on a sample of consumer visitors in a large retail trade show. Study 4 answered the fourth research question by designing an online data gathering instrument and collecting data from international trade shows based in various countries.

Another issue worth noting about the four empirical studies is their relationship with the three theoretical perspectives of the trade show literature: the exhibitor perspective, the visitor perspective and the organizer perspective. As could be recalled from earlier discussions, these three theoretical perspectives were synthesized based on an exhaustive review and integration of the trade show literature around three core themes: profile, motivation and effectiveness. The choice of these three themes was a deliberate one arising from their potential interestingness from a theoretical point of view. That is, the profile of trade show actors influences on their motivations. Motivations, in turn, influence on the effectiveness of trade show actors by shaping their strategic decisions and actions.

All the four empirical studies are firmly placed within the three theoretical perspectives. For instance, study 1 and study 2 are located inside the exhibitor perspective: study 1 between the motivation-effectiveness nexus, study 2 between the actions-effectiveness nexus. Study 3 is located between the profile-motivation nexus of the visitor perspective. Study 4 is located between the actions-effectiveness nexus of the organizer perspective. By locating all the four empirical studies along important nexuses of the three theoretical perspectives, the dissertation established a strong linkage between the theoretical and empirical plains of the trade show literature. The fact that the empirical studies are well placed with the three theoretical perspectives also means that their potential contributions to the trade show literature will likely to be significant.

The remainder of this chapter will conclude the dissertation by discussing its theoretical, managerial and research implications. The first subchapter summarizes the extensive theoretical discussions presented across different parts of the dissertation in a more accessible way. The second subchapter highlights the theoretical implications of each of the four empirical studies. The third subchapter discusses the managerial implications of each of the four empirical studies. The

fourth, and final subchapter, suggests directions for future research based on the exhaustive review of the trade show literature introduced earlier in the dissertation.

5.1. Summary of Theoretical Discussions

The current dissertation presented about four interrelated bodies of theoretical discussions across different parts of the dissertation. The first substantive body of theoretical discussion traced the evolution of trade show functions from ancient times to the modern era. The second body of theoretical discussion synthesized the profile, motivations and effectiveness of trade show exhibitors which was summarized under the exhibitor perspective. The third and fourth substantive bodies of theoretical discussions synthesized the profile, motivations and effectiveness of trade show visitors and trade show organizers which were summarized under the visitor and the organizer perspectives, respectively. This subchapter will revisit these theoretical discussions and present them in a more accessible way.

The first substantive area of theoretical discussion was centered on the marketing functions of trade shows. Drawing on existing texts on the history of trade shows, this discussion traced the historical evolution of trade shows from the simple markets of the Middle Ages where different goods were bartered among long haul merchants to the complex market system of the modern era which serves wide ranging commercial functions (Rodekamp, 2005; Schoop, 2005). The dissertation identified four important functions of contemporary trade shows. The first function is facilitating interaction, a purposeful dialogue among core market actors on issues of common interest. The second function is the formation of industrial and consumer markets by bringing suppliers and buyers at a specific place where they transact business with each other. The third function involves creating economic incentives. Collectively, trade shows generate enormous economic impacts reaching different parts of national economies. The fourth function of trade shows is

speeding up regional development by stimulating external investments and facilitating market linkages.

The second substantive body of theoretical discussion was centered on the exhibitor perspective. Sharp divisions exist in the exhibitor perspective about firm level attributes characterizing frequent exhibitors. While some research portrayed frequent exhibitors as old, internationally oriented and running numerous product lines (Herbig et al., 1997; 1998), other research portrayed frequent exhibitors as young, inexperienced and domestically oriented (Munuera and Ruiz, 1999; Rice and Almosawi, 2002). There is thus little conclusive idea about firm level attributes characterizing frequent exhibitors except perhaps the broad suggestion that all kinds of commercial firms attend trade shows. Exhibitors' trade show attendance motivation is a thoroughly researched theme in the exhibitor perspective and several studies proposed a multitude of factors explaining the attendance motivations of exhibitors (e.g., Kerin and Cron, 1987; Hansen, 2004). The dissertation summarized these motivations into two broad dimensions: selling (e.g., generating leads, receiving sales orders,) and non-selling (e.g., intelligence gathering, market development, image building).

Two distinct research streams exist in the exhibitor perspective describing the drivers of exhibitors' effectiveness. The first stream defined exhibitors' effectiveness narrowly in terms sales effectiveness and isolated a variety of strategic decisions and actions as important drivers of effectiveness (Dekimpe et al., 1997; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Gopalakrishna and Williams 1992). Some of these drivers include higher marketing expenditure, sales staff training, spacious exhibit booths and attending vertical trade shows. The second stream defined exhibitors' effectiveness more broadly in terms of exhibit managers self reported assessment of effectiveness on a variety of trade show activities (Kerin and Cron, 1987; Lee and Kim, 2008; Li et al., 2011). Some of the strategic decisions and actions highlighted as

important drivers of exhibitors' effectiveness include: goal setting, trade show selection, pre-show and at-show promotions, sales staff competence and follow up activities.

The third substantive body of theoretical discussion was centered on the visitor perspective. Trade show visitors are seen as two types: consumer visitors and institutional visitors. Consumer visitors attend trade shows in an individual capacity and are hedonically motivated with their goals dominated by the desire to engage with the multisensory experiences of the trade show environment mainly through product viewing, buying and partaking in experiential events (Borghini et al., 2006; Rice and Almosawi, 2002). Institutional visitors, on the other hand, attend trade shows on behalf of institutions (Berne and Gracia-Uceda, 2008; Godar and O' Connor, 2001). The motivations of institutional visitors are dominated by utilitarian reasoning like information search, evaluating potential suppliers, establishing professional and commercial networks and keeping abreast of new industry developments. More generally, visitors' reasons to attend trade shows have garnered considerable attention in the academic literature and several attendance motivations are proposed.

The dissertation found little research addressing drivers of visitors' effectiveness. It is hard to tell why drivers of visitors' effectiveness have not captured the imagination of researchers. But two probable causes were identified: difficulty involved in measuring participation effectiveness from the visitors perspective and difficulty involved in locating appropriate visitors willing to serve as informants at the fairground. Due to the limited insights reported in the literature regarding drivers of visitors' effectiveness, the dissertation synthesized existing knowledge to present a comprehensive theoretical discussion explicating drivers of visitors' effectiveness. Some of the strategic decisions and actions identified in the discussion as potentially potent drivers of visitors' effectiveness include trade show

attendance goals, trade show selection, visiting delegate and information dissemination.

The fourth substantive body of theoretical discussion was centered on the organizers perspective. To shed light on the profile of trade show organizers two structural attributes were introduced: degree of specialization and ownership structure. Based on degree of specialization, trade show organizers were classified into two: specialized and generic. Specialized trade show organizers operate a business model at the center of which is creating and managing trade shows (AUMA, 2011a; 2011b; Kresse, 2005). On the contrary, generic trade show organizers operate a broad business model in which trade shows constitute only one part of their overall operation (AUMA, 2011a; 2011b; Kresse, 2005). Ownership structure is another attribute introduced to shed further light on the profile of trade show organizers. Drawing on related works (e.g., Jin et al., 2010; Kay, 2007; Kresse, 2005), trade show organizers were classified into three: privately owned, association owned and state owned.

With respect to motivations, four broad dimensions were identified: profit motive; market formation, industry support and regional development. The academic literature dealing with drivers of organizers effectiveness is extremely sparse (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012). The dissertation integrated the fragmented knowledge found in both the academic and practitioner literature to introduce a comprehensive discussion on organizers effectiveness. Some of the strategic actions identified in this discussion as potentially potent drivers of organizers' effectiveness include the trade show concept, event planning, pre-show promotion, service quality, fairground monitoring and follow up activities like courtesy communication and disseminating aggregate show statistics.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

The dissertation reported on four detailed empirical studies investigating different aspects of exhibitors, visitors and organizers behavior and activities. These studies generated several interesting insights that are relevant from a theoretical point of view. This section highlights some of the key theoretical approaches and contributions of the four empirical studies.

The issue of evaluating exhibitors' effectiveness, the primary topic of enquiry for study 1, has always been an important research agenda in the exhibitor perspective (Dekimpe et al., 1997; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Kerin and Cron, 1987; Hansen, 2004). This should perhaps come as no surprise as exhibitors are keen to know the return on their trade show investments. Two approaches are frequently employed in the literature to evaluate exhibitors' effectiveness. The first approach measures effectiveness using managers self-rated assessment of effectiveness on several trade show activities (e.g., Hansen, 2004; Kerin and Cron, 1987; Lee and Kim, 2008). The second approach emphasizes selling effectiveness and utilizes such quantifiable indicators as volume of sales leads, proportion of visitors attracted and number of sales literature distributed (Bellizzi and Lipps, 1984; Dekimpe et al., 1997; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995).

Unfortunately, both these approaches ignore exhibitors' pre-show performance expectations in their evaluation of exhibitors' overall effectiveness. This is a serious limitation that drew complaints from marketing executives (Kerin and Cron, 1987). Study 1 was directly aimed at addressing this pre-show expectation-post-show effectiveness relationship that is ignored in current effectiveness evaluation approaches. Study 1 accomplished this by proposing importance-performance analysis as a trade show evaluation and benchmarking tool. Importance-performance analysis compares exhibitors' pre-show performance expectations with their post-show effectiveness assessments on a selected set of activities to

evaluate and benchmark exhibitors efforts. In so doing, study 1 contributed to the exhibitor perspective by proposing a tool that corrects for the limitation of existing effectiveness evaluation approaches by incorporating exhibitors' pre-show performance expectations into the evaluation of exhibitors' overall effectiveness.

Developing a successful trade show campaign from the exhibitors' perspective, the primary topic of enquiry for study 2, is a complex process involving a variety of tasks (Kijewski et al., 1993; Tanner and Chonko, 1995). Some of the key tasks involved in staging successful trade show campaigns include objective setting, trade show selection and booth management (Kijewski et al., 1993; Shoham, 1992). Because of the complexity of trade show campaigns, inputs from various people in the organization are needed for successfully planning and implementing them (Tanner, 2002; Tanner and Chonko, 1995). Accordingly, exhibiting companies assign people with different functional specialties and management levels to plan and execute trade show campaigns. This is a well documented practice in the academic literature (e.g., Kijewski et al., 1993; Shoham, 1992; Tanner and Chonko, 1995).

Despite this, the question of how managerial responsibilities for trade show campaign tasks influence exhibitors' effectiveness is significantly overlooked in the literature. This goes against the call for studying "who should be responsible for and participate in developing the trade show program" (Kerin and Cron, 1987, p. 93). In an attempt to respond to this call, study 2 tested how managerial responsibilities for key trade show campaign tasks consisting of objective setting, trade show selection and booth management, affected exhibitors effectiveness. In so doing, study 2 contributed to the exhibitor perspective by clarifying and testing the trade show task-managerial responsibility-effectiveness linkage. Consistent with both organizational role theory (Dierdorff et al., 2009) and the functionalist view of managerial roles (Floyd and Lane, 2000) –the two theoretical domains that study 2 drew heavily on –study 2 found that exhibitors effectiveness was enhanced when

strong fits existed between managers role behavior and the role requirements of trade show tasks.

Generating onsite sales is an overriding goal for exhibitors attending retail trade shows, the prime empirical context of study 3. What is in the back of many exhibit managers mind when they decide to attend retail trade shows is closing as many sales transactions as possible (Gopalakrishna et al., 1995; Tanner, 2002). To achieve this goal, however, it is of paramount importance for retail managers to understand how consumer visitors respond to the different stimuli variables deployed at retail trade shows like product assortment, trade show atmospheric and staff services. Understanding the interplay between exhibit booth stimuli variables and consumer visitors' response patterns helps retailers to devise effective strategies at retail trade shows. Despite the importance of understanding consumer visitors response patterns to different stimuli variables deployed at retail trade shows, research has not been forthcoming.

Study 3 was an attempt to fill this gap in the visitor perspective by examining consumer visitors shopping behavior at retail trade shows. Study 3 analyzed a sample of consumer visitors to a large retail trade show event in order to isolate key factors affecting their buying behavior. In so doing, study 3 contributed to the literature by extending the retailing literature to examine consumer buying behavior in a potentially useful, yet insufficiently researched, retailing environment. In addition, study 3 contributed to the store atmospheric literature (e.g., Baker et al., 2002; Bitner, 1992) by producing novel insights into how store configurations influence buying behavior in the retail trade show context, something that has rarely been attempted before.

Trade show organizers, the primary subject of enquiry for study 4, are mostly profit seeking entities keen to make money by increasing exhibitor and visitor attendance

levels (Busche, 2005; Kresse, 2005). Increasing exhibitor and visitor attendance levels is a number one priority for most trade show organizers as attendance is where organizers earn most of their revenues from (Busche, 2005; Kresse, 2005). Nevertheless, to increase exhibitor and visitor attendance levels, organizers have to firstly create supportive trade show environments for exhibitors and visitors (Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995). Trade show organizers deploy a combination of resources in their effort to configure supportive trade show environments for exhibitors and visitors (Hultsman, 2001; Wu et al., 2008). In a way, resources are the primary means through which organizers configure supportive trade show environments for exhibitors and visitors (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012).

When framed this way, it is easy to see how resource deployment strategies can affect organizers attendance levels. Despite this, however, research exploring how market based resources affect trade show attendance levels is almost non-existent (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012). Study 4 was designed to help fill this gap. The primary contribution of study 4 to the organizer perspective has to do with how it shifted the unit of analysis from exhibitor and visitor opinions to trade show organizers resource deployment strategies. This shift in focus led to the detection of several value producing resources in the trade show industry which could have remained masked had the focus remained on analyzing exhibitors and visitors opinions. That study 4 used objective data sourced directly from trade show organizers actual activities, in lieu of exhibitors and visitors opinions, means that the study can produce findings that can be generalized to trade shows beyond those constituting its immediate sample.

5.3. Managerial Implications

The four empirical studies reported on this dissertation generated several interesting insights that are relevant for managerial purposes. This section highlights some of these managerial insights.

Study 1 showed that importance-performance analysis is a useful tool that can be applied for managerial purposes. Importance-performance analysis is particularly suited for evaluating and benchmarking exhibitors' trade show effectiveness. When used to evaluate trade show effectiveness, importance-performance analysis yields useful managerial insights about where to focus improvement initiatives. What is interesting about importance-performance analysis is that it does not prescribe improvements on all trade show activities. Instead, it directs improvement efforts toward important activities only. Importance-performance analysis can, therefore, be seen as a prioritising mechanism. Importance-performance analysis is also a useful tool to benchmark the performance of a focal exhibitor with the performance of other exhibitors. Particularly when data is readily available on the performance of other exhibitors, importance-performance analysis can be used to see how an exhibitor is fairing in comparison with other exhibitors on a set of trade show activities.

Study 2 demonstrated that managerial responsibilities impinge on exhibitors' effectiveness. That is, the management level of people assigned to execute key trade show tasks like objective setting, trade show selection and booth management had significant influence on exhibitors' effectiveness. In this regard, exhibitors that assigned middle managers for the objective setting task were significantly more effective in their trade show efforts than those exhibitors that assigned top and lower managers. The managerial implication is middle managers are best suited for the objective setting task. Pertaining to trade show selection,

exhibitors that assigned lower and middle managers were more effective in their trade show efforts than those exhibitors that assigned top managers. The managerial implication is middle and lower managers are more appropriate for the trade show selection decision. Finally, exhibitors that assigned lower and middle managers to the booth management task performed significantly better than those that assigned top managers. The managerial implication is lower managers, and to a lesser degree middle managers, are most suited for the booth management task.

Study 3 showed that retail trade shows are important retailing channels which can be exploited to boost retail sales in the short term and strengthen regular retailing operations in the long term. Study 3 found that the response patterns of retail trade show shoppers and mortar and brick shoppers overlap substantially. This overlap in response patterns suggests that retail trade shows can be employed to compliment mortar and brick retailing activities. The only caveat is retail trade shows are transient and hence they can only be considered as supplementary retailing channels. Because of their transiency, the immediate sales and promotion effects of retail trade shows tend to be short term as well. When employed recurrently, however, retail trade shows can engender strategic outcomes by feeding primary retailing channels with carry over effects. These carry over effects can take different forms like store awareness, product interest and sales leads. In sum, retail trade shows support various forms of retailing practices which are normally associated with mortar and brick stores such as selling, product promotion, advertising, in store services and even experiential events.

Study 4 demonstrated that market based resources have strong impact on how well trade shows are attended by exhibitors and visitors. Drawing on the market based resources literature, study 4 theorized that market based resources will influence trade show attendance levels by determining the degree to which trade show organizers are able to configure supportive trade show environments for

exhibitors and visitors. The empirical evidences support this argument by demonstrating that market based resources constituting trade show longevity, trade show webpage interactivity, industry association support, exhibition duration and exhibition area are critical for configuring supportive trade show environments for exhibitors and visitors. The managerial implication is that the careful deployment of these resources leads to higher attendance levels. Trade show organizers are, therefore, advised to apply these resources. But these resources are characterized by diminishing returns. This suggests that deploying more market based resources promotes trade show attendance levels but do so at a decreasing rate.

5.4. Research Implications

One of the benefits of performing an exhaustive review of a specific body of literature is that it bestows a unique opportunity to observe how the literature evolved over time and where it stands currently. In this respect, the exhaustive review of the trade show literature carried out in this dissertation proved extremely helpful by generating useful insights into how the trade show literature evolved and where it stands at the moment. The result of this exhaustive review painted a picture of an unbalanced pattern of development in the trade show literature. While the exhibitor perspective managed to garner substantial conceptual and empirical research over time, the same cannot be said about the visitor and the organizer perspectives.

An influx of a constant stream of new academic research put the exhibitor perspective on a steady path toward maturity. However, lack of a similar level of constant research attention to the visitor and the organizer perspectives meant that these perspectives remained a far cry from the steadily maturing exhibitor perspective. These unbalanced patterns of development suggest that there are

more spaces for substantive contributions in the visitor and the organizer perspectives than in the exhibitor perspective, the implication being that future research efforts should prioritize the less developed parts of the trade show literature. It is interesting to note that Gopalakrishna and Lilien (2012) also reached the same conclusion after conducting a review of the exhibitor, the visitor and the organizer perspectives.

In the remaining part of this subchapter, several areas for future research will be suggested. The directions that will subsequently be proposed for future research purposes are broadly defined and cut across the specific research directions proposed within the four empirical studies. Rather than reproducing the specific research directions proposed within the individual studies, this subchapter broadened the discussion to highlight important theoretical issues involving the conceptual extension and refinement of the effectiveness models introduced in relation to the exhibitor, the visitor and the organizer perspectives. What will be suggested subsequently may, therefore, be seen as roadmaps for the development of the trade show literature into a mature body of knowledge within the much broader marketing discipline.

In the exhibitor perspective, it was established that exhibiting firms manage their trade show participation through a model of pre-show, at-show and post-show stages. Several strategic decisions and actions are identified as part of the three stage model including, among others, trade show goals, trade show selection, pre-show promotion (pre-show stage); staff competence and training, booth size and location and promotions at the fairground (at-show stage); and a variety of follow up activities (post-show stage). This effectiveness model is, however, a conceptual one which requires empirical corroborations. Therefore, the first obvious direction for future research is to empirically test this three stage conceptual model. Since

the model is a comprehensive one covering several variables and relationships, it is possible to break it into smaller parts and test them separately.

A related issue that needs further attention is the conceptual refinement and enrichment of the exhibitor model. This can be achieved by, for example, adding new decisions and actions into the model and suggesting new interrelationships among existing decisions and actions. The works of Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1995) and Lee and Kim (2008) can be taken as points of departure for research into this area. Another potentially useful area of future research in the exhibitor perspective is addressing the question of whether trade shows are appropriate for all types of commercial firms or whether they demonstrate a better fit to the business model of certain types of firms. The extant literature is inconclusive on this issue, and research on this area will be highly desirable in terms of informing marketers' decisions about the suitability of trade shows to their firms' overarching marketing goals. The works of Herbig et al. (1997; 1998) and Rice and Almosawi (2002) are relevant starting points for future research into this area.

There are apparently more unanswered questions about the activities of trade show visitors than about the activities of trade show exhibitors, a result of the nascent stage of development of the visitor perspective. Although we are fairly well informed about the profile and motivations of trade show visitors, we do not know much about the processes involved in planning and implementing trade show participations as a visitor. In an attempt to bridge this void, a theoretical discussion explicating trade show visitors' decisions and actions was presented in chapter 2. The discussion identified several strategic decisions and actions that trade show visitors have to consider before, during and after the trade show to manage a successful trade show participation. Some of these variables include: setting clear goals, selecting appropriate trade shows (planning); assembling a competent

visiting delegate (delegate); and disseminating trade show information for managerial use (follow up).

The discussion argued that properly addressing the aforementioned decision variables will significantly contribute to the success of trade show participations as a visitor. An obvious direction for future research will, thus, be to subject the ideas raised in this discussion into rigorous empirical testing. The conceptual model can be tested either in part or fully. As also suggested for the exhibitor perspective, conceptually enriching the visitor effectiveness model is a highly desirable research endeavor. Such conceptual enrichments can be achieved by, for example, adding new decisions and actions, identifying new interdependencies between existing decisions and actions and relating existing decisions and actions to newly developed outcome variables. Such conceptual efforts will constitute significant theoretical contributions to the visitor perspective. The works of Berne and Gracia-Uceda (2008), Gopalakrishna et al. (2010) and Rinallo et al. (2010) can be used as a stepping stone for future research into these areas.

With the exception of few industry reports, the literature dealing with the organizers perspective is extremely sparse. Affirming the lack of research on the organizers perspective, no less authority on this matter than Sirinath Gopalakrishna and Gary Lilien remarked recently that “research from the trade show management perspective is almost non-existent” (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012, p. 239). Due to lack of proper research, insights about drivers of organizers effectiveness are few and fragmented. Chapter 2 collates available knowledge in both the academic and practitioner literature to present a comprehensive discussion about the drivers of trade show organizers effectiveness. The conceptual discussion isolated several strategic decisions and actions before, during and after the show, that should be considered to organize successful trade shows.

Some of the isolated decisions and actions include the trade show concept, event planning, integrated media plan (pre-show stage); service quality and monitoring (at-show stage); and disseminating aggregate show statistics and courtesy communications (post-show stage). An obvious direction for future research will be to subject this effectiveness model to rigorous empirical testing. It is possible to break the model into smaller parts and test them separately. As suggested for the exhibitor and visitor perspectives, conceptually enriching the organizer effectiveness model will be highly welcome. Such conceptual enrichments can be achieved by, for example, adding new decisions and actions, envisioning new interdependencies between existing decisions and actions and relating existing decisions and actions to newly developed outcome variables. Such conceptual works will constitute valuable theoretical additions to the organizer perspective. Several chapters of the book *"Trade Show Management"* including that of Busche (2005), Kirchgeorge et al. (2005), Kresse (2005) and Stoeck (2005) can serve as a good starting point for future research into the organizer perspective.

There are also additional issues that deserve further research attention in the organizer perspective. The first is the processes used by organizers to match the profile of exhibitors with the profile of visitors. One way of thinking about the role of trade show organizers is matchmaking (Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995). The better organizers are in matching the profile of exhibitors with the profile of visitors, the higher will be their chances of organizing successful trade shows. By studying the match making process used by highly successful trade show organizers, researchers can uncover various effective matchmaking strategies that less successful organizers can emulate. Additional research is also needed toward investigating the well established business functions of marketing, logistics and strategy from the organizers point of view. Because the trade show industry have its own peculiarities, it is highly likely that these functions will be customized and

adapted to these peculiarities. Such customizations may give rise to several interesting research cases worth investigating.

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The Marketing Functions of the Trade Show System



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Trade shows have a long history that goes back to at least the early Middle Ages. In those times, trade shows played significant trading roles by facilitating bartered exchanges of textile goods, leather goods, spices and precious metals among long haul merchants. Trade shows have undergone significant changes since then and the contemporary trade show system supports far flung commercial activities. Today, trade shows facilitate purposeful interactions and collaborations among diverse market players, foster the formation of industrial and consumer markets, create substantial economic incentives to various economic actors and contribute to regional development.

The purpose of this dissertation is to gain deeper understanding about the marketing functions of the contemporary trade show system. The dissertation takes, as its point of departure, the idea that the complexity of the functions of the trade show system can be best understood through analyzing the behavior and activities of the individual actors involved. To this effect, the dissertation singled out trade show exhibitors, trade show visitors and trade show organizers—the three most important actors of the trade show system—and investigated different aspects of their behavior and activities. This was accomplished by designing and conducting a series of empirical studies, which generated several valuable and interesting insights about the marketing functions of the trade show system and the behavior and activities of the main actors inside it.

The dissertation makes two substantive strands of theoretical contribution to the trade show literature. The first strand of contributions comes in the form of an integrative conceptual synthesis of three theoretical perspectives: the exhibitor perspective, the visitor perspective and the organizer perspective. The synthesis is based on an exhaustive review and synthesis of the trade show literature around three core themes consisting of profile, motivation and effectiveness. The second strand of contributions comes in the form of a series of detailed empirical studies which are published in different scientific journals. The purpose of the empirical studies was addressing the main research questions posed in the dissertation and shedding some useful light on different aspects of the behavior and activities of trade show exhibitors, trade show visitors and trade show organizers.

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