



SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Trade Show Effectiveness and Post-Show Purchase Intention in an
Emerging Market

Trade Show Effectiveness and Post-Show Purchase Intention in an Emerging
Market: The Effect of Buyer Needs in Zambia's Food Processing Industry.

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ADMINISTRATION

THE DECLARATION PAGE

I hereby declare that the work reported in this thesis is my own except where due reference has been made to the work of others. This thesis has been prepared in accordance with the regulations of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree at the University of Lusaka. It has not been submitted for a degree, diploma or other qualification at any other institution or considered as part of this or any other institution's degree. I have read the University's latest research ethics guidelines, and I take responsibility for the conduct of the procedures in compliance with the University's Committee on the Use of Human & Animal Subjects in Teaching and Research (HASC). I have tried to identify all the risks associated with this research, obtain the necessary ethical and/or safety approvals (where applicable), and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

Date: 01/06/2026

Signature:  _____

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated in loving memory of my late aunt, **Nelly Gabrielle Daka**.

Her steadfast support, generosity, and encouragement were an inspiration to me for the duration of my academic career. She inspired me, she held me accountable, and she believed in the power of education and excellence. While she is no longer with us, her spirit continues to guide me, and this work is a testament to the values she instilled in me: hard work, perseverance, and dedication.

May the departed soul rest in peace forever

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Table of Content

THE DECLARATION PAGE.....	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	1
Chapter 1: Introduction	2
1.0 Chapter Overview	2
1.1 Research Background.....	2
1.2 Statement of the Problem	7
1.3 Research Objectives	9
1.3.1 Main Objective	9
1.3.2 Specific Objectives	9
1.4 Research Questions	9
1.5 Significance of the Research	11
1.6 Limitations of the Research.....	13
1.7 Delimitations of the Research	16
1.8 Definitions of Key Terms.....	18
Chapter 2: Literature Review	20
2.0 Chapter Overview	20
2.1 Theoretical Review	21
2.1.1 Overview of Trade Shows (TSs)	21
2.1.2 Participation Mode	23
2.1.3 Activity Stages.....	24
2.1.4 Effectiveness of Trade Shows	25
2.1.5 Implemented Trade Show Effectiveness Framework.....	27
2.1.6 Audience and Exhibit Performance Metrics for Assessing TS Effectiveness.....	30
2.1.7 Exhibitor Performance.....	34
2.1.8 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.....	35
2.1.9 Hypotheses Development.....	41
2.1.10 Alderfer's ERG Theory of Motivation.....	44
2.1.11 Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory	48
2.1.12 Industrial Buying Process	50
2.2 Empirical Review	52
2.2.1 Empirical Review of Higher-Order Needs in Event Contexts	52
2.2.2 Empirical review of TS effectiveness literature	53

2.2.3 Empirical Examination of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory	59
2.2.4 Empirical Examination of Alderfer's ERG Theory	65
2.2.5 Empirical Examination of Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory	69
2.3 Theoretical Frameworks	75
2.3.1 Sheth's (1973) integrated model of industrial buyer behaviour	75
2.3.2 Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) Customer Experience Model	82
2.3.3 Edelman and Singer (2015): The Loyalty Loop	85
2.4 Conceptual Framework	88
2.5 Buyer-centred Framework for Evaluating TS Effectiveness	91
2.6 Summary	93
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology	95
3.0 Chapter Overview	95
3.1 Research Design	95
3.2 Philosophical Underpinning	98
3.3 Research Context /Research Site	100
3.4 Research Population	102
3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques	103
3.5.1 Sampling Techniques	103
3.5.2 Sample	106
3.5.3 Sample Size	108
3.5.4 Estimating the desired size of the oversample	109
3.6 Research Instruments	111
3.6.1 Need Satisfaction Assessment Tool	111
3.6.2 Trade Show Effectiveness Tool	112
3.6.3 Instrument for Assessing Purchase Intention	112
3.7 Validity and Reliability	113
3.7.1 Validity	113
3.7.2 Reliability	115
3.8 Data Collection Procedures	117
3.9 Data Analysis Procedures	118
3.9.1 Hypothesis One (H1):	120
3.9.2 Hypothesis Two (H2):	120
3.9.3 Hypothesis Three (H3):	120
3.9.4 Hypothesis Four (H4):	121
3.9.5 Hypothesis Five (H5):	121

3.9.6 Hypothesis Six (H6):	121
3.10 Ethical Considerations.....	121
3.11 Summary	123
Chapter 4: Analysis and Interpretation of Results	124
4.0 Chapter Overview	124
4.1 Demographics of Respondents: Descriptive Analysis	125
4.1.1 TS Attended in the Last 1 Year	125
4.1.2 Respondents' Type of Business Activity	126
4.1.3 Respondents' Age Range	127
4.1.4 Respondents' Highest Level of Education	128
4.1.5 Respondents' Gender Distribution	129
4.1.6 Professional Role/area of Responsibility	129
4.1.7 Managerial vs. Non-Managerial Responsibility	130
4.1.8 Work Experience with Current Organisation	131
4.1.9 Level of Purchasing Value you have Authority Over	132
4.2 Descriptive Analysis of LikertScale Responses	133
4.2.1 Dependantvariable: TS effectiveness (E)	133
4.2.2 Dependant Variable Post Show Purchase Intension (PI).....	136
4.2.3 Independent Variable Safety and Security (SS)	138
4.2.4 Independent Variable Sense of Belonging (B)	141
4.2.5 Independent Variable Self-Esteem (SE).....	143
4.3 Test for Reliability	145
4.4 Validity Assessment.....	146
4.5 Test for Normality	148
4.6 Inferential StatisticalAnalysis	151
4.6.1 Correlation Analysis	151
4.6.2 Correlation Analysis Using SpearmanRank	152
Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings	163
5.0 Chapter Overview	163
5.1 Results Discussion and Interpretation	163
5.1.1 Trade Show (TS) Effectiveness	164
5.1.2 Post-Show (PS) Purchase Intention	167
5.1.3 Safety and Security	169
5.1.4 Sense of Belonging.....	171
5.1.5 Self-Esteem.....	174

5.2 Implications for Literature and Data	176
5.2.1 Contribution to Buyer Needs and Motivation Literature.....	177
5.2.2 Special Insights on TS Effectiveness.....	183
5.2.3 Extending the Research on Purchase Intention	185
5.2.4 Relevance to Emerging Markets.....	186
5.2.5 Practical Implications for TS Planning.....	188
5.2.6 Implications for Digital and Hybrid TSs	189
5.2.7 Implications for Data Collection and Methodology	191
5.3 Research Boundaries	194
5.3.1 Cultural Context and External Validity	194
5.3.2 Possible influence of unmeasured variables	195
5.3.3 Boundary of Buyer Need Constructs.....	197
5.3.4 Effects of Industry-Specific Factors	198
5.3.5 Environmental Context.....	200
5.4 Summary	201
Chapter 6: Conclusion	203
6.0 Chapter Overview	203
6.1 Achieving Research Objectives	204
6.1.1 Testing Safety and Security Needs and TS Effectiveness.....	204
6.1.2 Understanding the Role of Belonging Needs in Shaping TS Effectiveness.....	205
6.1.3 Assessing the Influence of Esteem Needs on Perceived TS Effectiveness	206
6.1.4 Investigate the influence of safety and security needs on PS purchase intentions.	207
6.1.5 The Effect of Belonging Needs on PS Purchase Intention.....	208
6.1.6 Effect of esteem needs on PS Purchase Intention.....	208
6.2 Overall Findings and Contributions to Theory	208
6.2.1 Research Outputs.....	209
6.2.2 Solving the Research Problem.....	210
6.2.3 Filling the Gaps in Existing Research	210
6.2.4 Contributions to Theory.....	211
6.3 Contributions to Practice.....	213
6.3.1 Improving Safety and Security Measures.....	214
6.3.2 Creating a Sense of Belonging	215
6.3.3 Enhancing Esteem through Recognition and Customisation.	216
6.3.4 Customising Engagement Based on Hierarchical Needs	217

6.3.5 Facilitating Long-Term Relationships with Brands	217
6.3.6 Taking Advantage of Cultural Sensitivity	218
6.3.7 Using strategies to measure and improve TS Experiences.....	218
6.3.8 Applications in Wider Contexts	218
6.4 Limitations of the Research.....	219
6.4.1 Sample size and representativeness	219
6.4.2 Reliance on Self-Reported Data	221
6.4.3 Limitations of Quantitative Measures	222
6.4.4 Limitations of Time and Event-Specific Constraints	223
6.4.5 Limitations of Spearman's Correlation Method.....	224
6.5 Recommendations for Future Research	225
6.5.1 A Cross-Cultural Examination of Buyer Needs at TSs	225
6.5.2 Longitudinal Analysis of TS Effects on Buyer Behaviour.....	226
6.5.3 Exploring the role of technology and digital TS platforms.	227
6.5.4 Investigating industry-specific variations in buyers' needs	227
6.5.5 TS Design Elements versus Buyer Needs	228
6.5.6 Investigating the Psychological Aspect of TS Incentives	228
6.5.7 Understanding the Influence of Cultural Identity on Belonging Needs	229
6.6 Summary	229
REFERENCES	232
Appendix A: Research questionnaire	263
Appendix B: Description of the Food Processing Industry.....	277
Appendix C: Literature Map	279

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Frequencies for respondents TS attended in the last 1 year	125
Table 2. Frequencies for respondents' Type of business activity	126
Table 3. Frequencies for respondents Age range	127
Table 4. Frequencies for Respondent's Highest level of education	128
Table 5. Frequencies for respondents Gender Distribution.....	129
Table 6. Frequencies for respondents Professional Role/area of responsibility	129
Table 7. Frequencies for respondents Managerial vs. Non-Managerial Responsibility	130
Table 8. Frequencies for respondents Work experience with current organisation	131
Table 9. Frequencies for Level of purchasing value respondents may authorise	132
Table 10. TS effectiveness (E): frequency distribution.....	133
Table 11. TS effectiveness (E): Descriptive.....	134
Table 12. PS purchase intension (PI): frequency Distribution.....	136
Table 13. PS purchase intension (PI): Descriptive.....	136
Table 14. Safety and security (SS): frequency distribution	138
Table 15. Safety and security (SS): Descriptive	139
Table 16. Sense of Belonging (B): frequency distribution.....	141
Table 17. Sense of Belonging (B): Descriptive.....	142
Table 18. Self-esteem (SE): frequency distribution	143
Table 19. Self-esteem (SE): Descriptive	144
Table 20. Test for reliability.....	146
Table 21. Exploratory Factor Analysis Results.....	146
Table 22. Summary of the Extracted Factors	147
Table 23. Test for normality: Descriptive	148
Table 24. Test for normality.....	150
Table 25. <i>Safety and Security vs. TS Effectiveness: Descriptive</i>	153
Table 26. Safety and Security vs. TS Effectiveness: Correlation	154
Table 27. <i>Safety and Security vs. Purchase Intention: Descriptive</i>	155
Table 28. Safety and Security vs. Purchase Intention: Correlation.....	155
Table 29. Sense of Belonging vs. TS Effectiveness: Correlation	157
Table 30. <i>Sense of Belonging vs. Purchase Intention: Descriptive</i>	157
Table 31. Sense of Belonging vs. Purchase Intention: Correlation.....	158
Table 32. Esteem vs. TS Effectiveness: Descriptive Statistics	158

Table 33. Esteem vs. TS Effectiveness: Correlation	159
Table 34. Esteem vs. Purchase Intention: Descriptive	160
Table 35. Esteem vs. Purchase Intention: Correlation	161

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Sheth's (1973) integrative model of industrial buyer behaviour	76
Figure 2. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) Current customer experience	83
Figure 3. Edelman and Singer (2015): The Loyalty Loop	85
Figure 4. Conceptual Framework.....	90

ABSTRACT

Trade Shows (TSs) serve as strategic marketing platforms that allow companies to market products, engage potential buyers, and strengthen industrial networks. Traditionally, researchers have assessed TS effectiveness from the exhibitor's perspective by focusing on sales-related measures such as on-site sales, lead generation, and return on investment (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017). However, this research adopts an attendee-focused perspective by examining how buyer needs influence perceptions of TS effectiveness and post-show (PS) purchasing intentions. The research focuses on the food-processing sector in an emerging-market context, where TSs contribute significantly to business development and market expansion.

Drawing on Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, and Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory, this research examined how buyer needs related to safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem influence evaluations of TS effectiveness and subsequent purchasing behaviour. The research adopted a cross-sectional quantitative research design to identify patterns and associations while reflecting a deterministic view of social phenomena. The researcher used structured online questionnaires to collect data from TS attendees within Zambia's food-processing sector. Spearman's correlation analysis examined the relationships between buyer needs, perceived TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention.

The findings indicated significant relationships between buyer needs, perceived TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention. Buyers with stronger safety and security needs showed a greater preference for reliable, established exhibitors, while those with stronger belonging needs placed greater importance on networking opportunities. Buyers associated with self-esteem needs responded more positively to exclusive product offers and exhibitor reputation. The research concluded that exhibitor strategies aligned with buyer needs influence perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. The research recommends personalised marketing approaches, trust-building initiatives, and interactive engagement strategies to address varying buyer needs.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter establishes a comprehensive foundation for the research by presenting several key components that guide the investigation and develop the research framework. The background to the research reviews the context and rationale of the investigation while highlighting the relevance and significance of the topic within the current academic and professional environment. This section establishes a framework for understanding both the research's specific subject matter and the broader issues surrounding it.

The statement of the problem clearly identifies the central research issue and explains why the topic deserves academic attention. The research objectives define the specific aims of the research and guide the research process. In addition, the section on research questions and hypotheses guides data collection and analysis by presenting focused research questions and testable hypotheses.

The chapter also explains the research's significance by highlighting the potential contributions of the findings to theory, practice, and policy. This section demonstrates how the research advances knowledge and supports practical applications within the field. The chapter further discusses the research's limitations and challenges, including methodological constraints, sample-related concerns, and external factors that may influence the investigation.

At the same time, the delimitations define clear boundaries for the research's scope, time frame, and selected variables, maintaining focus and ensuring feasibility. The chapter concludes with definitions of key terms and concepts used throughout the research to promote clarity and consistency. Overall, this chapter introduces the purpose, scope, objectives, and guiding principles of the research while establishing a strong foundation for the chapters that follow.

1.1 Research Background

Trade shows (TSs), often synonymous with fairs and exhibitions, represent some of the most traditional and resilient forms of structured market transactions, having originated several centuries ago and having become institutionalised in Europe during the mid-nineteenth century (Kallman, 1988; Morrow, 2002; Kirchgeorg, 2005). Despite differences in size, organisational structure, and industrial focus, TSs share a common purpose: stimulating market activity by

creating interactive environments that engage multiple stakeholders (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 2012). These stakeholders typically include manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, government agencies, and consumers whose interactions facilitate information exchange, relationship building, and business transactions (Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2022). In industrial marketing, firms view TSs as important events that strengthen relationships among companies and support sustainable competitive advantage (Brown *et al.*, 2017). Recent studies have further emphasised the role of TSs as mechanisms for networking, consolidation, and innovation within industrial sectors, thereby contributing to industrial competitiveness and knowledge exchange (Fang and Ding, 2020; Gerschewski *et al.*, 2020).

The global exhibition industry continues to grow, reflecting the increasing importance of TSs in modern market systems. Between 2018 and 2019, the number of TS visitors worldwide increased from 303 million to 353 million, while exhibitor participation rose from 4.5 million to 4.8 million across more than 180 countries (UFI, 2019, 2022). The industry also generates a significant economic impact, with global spending increasing from 136 billion US dollars in 2018 to 140 billion US dollars in 2019, and employment rising from 1.3 million to 1.4 million during the same period. In addition, TSs contribute substantially to global GDP, increasing from 81.1 billion US dollars in 2018 to 82.3 billion US dollars in 2019 (UFI, 2019, 2022). However, Africa still accounts for a relatively low share of participation in the global exhibition industry, representing only 0.6 per cent of visitors and 0.9 per cent of exhibitors.

In Zambia, TSs contribute significantly to national economic development and support implementation of the Eighth National Development Plan for 2022–2026 (GRZ, 2022b). The plan prioritises economic diversification, industrialisation, and employment creation, and TSs support these goals by promoting enterprise development, innovation, and market access, particularly within agriculture and agro-processing. Zambia's food-processing sector remains particularly important because of contributions to employment generation, value addition, and food security. TSs also generate multiplier effects across political, social, cultural, and economic dimensions, thereby extending relevance beyond direct commercial transactions (Ivkov *et al.*, 2015).

The importance of TSs is even more evident in the context of MSMEs, which continue to be major drivers of economic development, innovation, and employment creation (Wymenga *et al.*, 2011). Government policies and programmes in Zambia recognise TSs as important

instruments for supporting MSME growth, market penetration, product quality improvement, and sales expansion (GRZ, 2008, 2022b). Through participation in TSs, MSMEs gain direct access to customers, new markets, and industry information (Harris and Wheeler, 2005; Measson and Campbell-Hunt, 2015). Participation also allows businesses to compare products with competitors, identify emerging technologies, and develop innovative business strategies (Adams *et al.*, 2017; Bettis-Outland and Guillory, 2018). In addition, TSs provide access to market intelligence and research data that support understanding of customer preferences and evaluation of business ideas (Zielinski and Leszczynski, 2011; Maskell, 2014).

TSs also function as important drivers of innovation and knowledge transfer. These events provide firms with opportunities to promote innovative products, interact with customers, and observe competitors. Such interactions stimulate idea generation, technological development, and organisational innovation (Caber *et al.*, 2016; Sarmiento and Simões, 2019). Networking activities involving suppliers, distributors, and other industry stakeholders further encourage partnerships and collaborative innovation (Bathelt *et al.*, 2014; Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2017). TSs also enable firms to gather insights regarding customer needs and market challenges, thereby supporting product improvement and new product development processes (Hlee *et al.*, 2017; Magnotti and De Martino, 2018).

Despite these benefits, research has commonly assessed TS effectiveness from exhibitor-centred perspectives that emphasise organisational outcomes rather than attendee experiences. Early studies primarily focused on sales-oriented indicators such as lead generation, on-site sales, and return on investment (Cavanaugh, 1976; Gopalakrishna and Williams, 1992). Later studies broadened the assessment criteria by incorporating behavioural dimensions such as relationship building, organisational learning, and brand awareness (Kerin and Cron, 1987; Hansen, 2004). Although these approaches provide valuable insight into exhibitor performance, such approaches offer only a partial understanding of TS effectiveness because the perspectives and experiences of visitors and buyers remain overlooked.

A systematic review by Tafesse and Skallerud (2017) revealed a significant imbalance in TS research. Approximately 66 per cent of studies focus on exhibition mode, 16 per cent examine visiting mode, and only 4 per cent explore organisational mode. Furthermore, most studies concentrate on activities during the at-show stage, while post-show activities receive minimal attention. This imbalance creates a fragmented understanding of TS processes and behavioural

outcomes such as purchase intention. Sarmento and Simões (2018) and Vitali *et al.* (2022) reinforce these observations by demonstrating continued neglect of visitor behaviour and post-show dynamics within TS research.

Purchase intention remains a central concept in buyer behaviour because this construct strongly predicts purchasing decisions (Goyal, 2014). In TS environments, experiential elements such as product demonstrations, interpersonal communication, and marketing stimulation significantly influence purchase intention (Fang and Ding, 2020). Unlike traditional retail settings, TSs provide highly interactive experiences in which participants form perceptions through direct engagement with products, exhibitors, and services. Despite extensive literature on purchase intention in conventional marketing contexts, limited research examines buyer motivation and post-show behaviour in TS environments.

The post-show (PS) stage is particularly important because TS participation often produces long-term effects that extend beyond immediate transactions (Sarmento and Simões, 2018). Although traditional assessments focus mainly on short-term sales outcomes, TSs increasingly adopt relationship-oriented approaches that emphasise long-term interaction and customer engagement (Geigenmuller, 2010; Sarmento, Farhangmehr, *et al.*, 2015). Activities during the at-show stage, including networking, information exchange, and product demonstrations, shape buyer perceptions and preferences that later influence PS purchase intention (Blythe, 1999b; Gottlieb *et al.*, 2011).

Consumer behaviour theories provide an important framework for understanding these relationships, especially theories centred on human motivation and needs. Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs identified motivational factors such as physiological needs, safety and security needs, sense of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualisation as key drivers of human behaviour. Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory grouped these motivations into existence, relatedness, and growth categories, while Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory distinguished between hygiene factors and motivational factors. Applying these theories within TS environments suggests that fulfilment of buyer needs influences perceptions, experiences, and purchasing behaviour.

For example, safety and security needs may shape preferences for reputable and trustworthy exhibitors, while Belonging needs may encourage participation in networking and social

interaction activities (Cialdini, 2007; Park and Kim, 2008). Social influence and social comparison processes further affect behaviour because individuals often evaluate products and make purchasing decisions based on others' opinions and behaviour (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004). Self-esteem needs may also influence responses to exclusivity, recognition, and brand reputation, thereby affecting purchase behaviour and perceptions of value (Zhu and Chen, 2015). These motivational theories therefore highlight the importance of considering buyer needs when evaluating TS effectiveness, particularly in social and interactive business environments.

The Zambian food-processing industry provides an appropriate context for examining these relationships, given the sector's growing economic importance and development potential. The sector is expected to experience significant growth driven by rising demand for processed foods and investments in value-added activities (ADB, 2017; Statista, 2023). TSs play an important role in supporting this growth by facilitating market access, innovation, and information exchange among industry participants. Furthermore, TSs contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by supporting poverty reduction, food security, gender equality, and environmental sustainability (Kaulich, 2012; Sadiku *et al.*, 2019; Djekic *et al.*, 2022). By promoting sustainable agriculture and climate-smart technologies, TSs also support socio-economic development and environmental preservation (Vermeulen and Campbell, 2012).

Despite these benefits, limited empirical research has examined TS effectiveness from the perspective of buyers in the food-processing industry in an emerging economy. Most existing studies continue to prioritise exhibitor outcomes while overlooking buyer needs and motivations that shape perceptions and behaviour. This gap creates a limited understanding of how buyer experiences influence evaluations of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention within emerging market settings.

To address this gap, the present research examines buyer needs as determinants of perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. The research specifically focuses on needs related to safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, drawing on established motivational theories. By adopting a demand-side perspective, the research seeks to provide a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of TS effectiveness while addressing limitations associated with exhibitor-centred approaches.

The research proposes that buyers play a significant role in shaping perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention, and that integrating motivational variables into evaluation frameworks can provide both theoretical and practical value. The research contributes to the marketing literature by incorporating motivational theory into TS research, developing a framework for evaluating TS effectiveness, and providing empirical evidence from an under-researched context. The findings also offer practical insights for exhibitors, organisers, and policymakers seeking to design TS strategies that address buyer needs and encourage stronger engagement and purchasing behaviour.

This research, therefore, tests the following hypotheses: safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem needs positively correlate with perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Among food processing companies operating in Zambia, TSs represent important avenues for product marketing, networking, and obtaining industry insights (Mora Cortez *et al.*, 2025). TSs enable companies to exhibit innovations, connect with prospective buyers, and stay informed about prevailing industry trends (Mora Cortez and Dastidar, 2022). Although TSs are strategically valuable, research has been biased toward evaluating TS effectiveness through an exhibitor-centred framework that focuses on exhibitor outcomes such as lead generation, conversions, efficiency, and return on investment (ROI) (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017). Although these indicators are relevant, such measures provide only partial insights into TS effectiveness because the buyer's perspective remains overlooked. Indeed, recent studies, including Sarmento and Simões (2018) and Vitali *et al.* (2022), have continued to document a bias toward researching TSs from the exhibitors' perspective, while giving limited consideration to visitor behaviour.

The above-stated shortcoming is especially important in emerging markets such as Zambia, where TSs are gaining traction as instruments of economic growth, the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and market penetration within national plans such as the Eighth National Development Plan (GRZ, 2022b). Although participation in TSs in Zambia is increasing (Kenneth, 2023; Mwansa, 2023), research has indicated that the transition from participation to actual sales is not reliable. Data from the African agro-processing industry have

shown that although businesses collect numerous leads during TSs, only 30% or less of leads convert into sales (International Trade Centre, 2021; African Development Bank, 2022).

A very important yet overlooked element in this context is buyer needs, which shape perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. Consumer behaviour theories, particularly Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, stress that human behaviour is motivated by basic needs such as security, belonging, and esteem (Maslow, 1943, 1987). These needs are expected to influence buyer behaviour in TS contexts, given the interactive nature of such environments. However, exhibiting companies often overlook buyer needs by focusing more on product display, branding, and logistics (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017).

The inherent diversity among TS participants in occupational profile, risk perception, and decision-making capabilities further intensifies this challenge. Traditional marketing approaches that emphasise organisational selling goals often fail to stimulate buyer interest or drive conversions. Research has shown that relational aspects and buyer experience, such as trust, value perception, and social interaction, play a significant role in purchase decisions, sometimes even more than transactional benefits (Gefen *et al.*, 2003; Sarmento and Simões, 2019). Nevertheless, inclusion of buyer-oriented constructs in TS assessment models remains limited.

Furthermore, the post-show phase, where actual purchasing decisions occur, receives limited attention in prior literature (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017). Recent literature has indicated that fewer than 10% of TS studies address post-show effects, despite these effects being significant in evaluating marketing return on investment (Vitali *et al.*, 2022). Most studies have focused on at-show activities, even though evidence has shown that post-show interactions drive sales and shape customer relationships (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017; Sarmento and Simões, 2018; Vitali *et al.*, 2022). In light of challenges facing firms in Zambia's food processing industry regarding market access and resources, understanding PS purchase intention is crucial.

To address existing gaps, this research examines how buyer needs influence perceptions of TS effectiveness and intentions to purchase following exhibition visits. By adopting a buyer perspective, this research aims to develop a broader understanding of TS effectiveness and to contribute to knowledge in the field of TS research.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research examines the relationship between buyer needs and perceived TS effectiveness. The research examines whether the customer's needs influence the intention to make a purchase after attending the TS. Additionally, this research focuses on TSs relevant to the respondents' occupational roles in the food processing industry.

1.3.1 Main Objective

This research aims to evaluate the effect of buyer needs on perceptions of TS effectiveness and subsequent post-show purchase intention within the Zambian food processing industry. Furthermore, the research seeks to develop a buyer-centred framework for assessing TS effectiveness and to provide guidance for organisers, exhibitors, marketers, and policymakers in emerging markets. The framework is grounded in motivational theory and aligned with the experiential dynamics of TS participation.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. Determine whether a buyer's need for safety and security affects how well the respective buyer perceives the effectiveness of TS in Zambia's Food processing industry.
2. Evaluate whether buyer needs for security and safety influence buyer's PS purchase intentions.
3. Evaluate whether a buyer's need for belonging affects perceptions of TS effectiveness in Zambia's food processing industry.
4. Assess whether a buyer's need for belonging affects buyer's PS purchase intentions.
5. Determine whether a buyer's need for self-esteem affects how effectively a buyer perceives TS in Zambia's Food Processing Industry.
6. Assess whether a buyer's need for self-esteem and confidence affects the buyer's PS purchasing intentions.

1.4 Research Questions

Research projects often begin with research questions, which serve as the primary foundation for guiding the investigation (Mertler and Vannatta, 2001). Roberts (2004) states that research questions direct the inquiry and frequently provide a framework for presenting research

findings. Researchers use research questions to address specific issues related to the topic under investigation (Creswell, 2005). Maxwell (2005) explains that research questions define the objectives for discovery. Ellis and Levy (2008) further argue that research gains significance when a clear relationship exists between the research questions and the topic driving the investigation. In addition, the quality of the literature relevant to the subject under investigation strongly shapes the formulation of research questions (Berg, 1998). Researchers must therefore formulate research questions with precision because clarity and relevance significantly influence the selection of an appropriate research methodology (Mertler and Vannatta, 2001).

According to Maxwell (2005), research questions differ from research hypotheses because the former focus on the intended exploration, whereas the latter provide explicit, testable predictions grounded in theory. A hypothesis represents a logical assumption, plausible estimation, or informed conjecture that guides inquiry and forms the basis for developing testable predictions related to a specific aspect of daily life (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). In academic research, however, hypotheses extend beyond educated assumptions. Creswell (2005) defines a research hypothesis as a prediction about the relationship between variables that offers a preliminary explanation for empirical testing. Quantitative research commonly formulates hypotheses in null form, suggesting the absence of a relationship between variables under investigation. Not all studies require hypotheses, as qualitative research often explores concepts and meanings, whereas quantitative research primarily tests hypotheses (Maxwell, 2005). Chapter Two will discuss hypothesis development in detail.

Quantitative research employs three major categories of variables: dependent, independent, and extraneous variables. Dependent variables measure outcomes or responses that change in response to other factors. Independent variables are factors that researchers manipulate or examine to determine how these variables influence dependent variables. Extraneous variables, however, interfere with or obscure the relationship between independent and dependent variables (White and Millar, 2014). Effective quantitative research depends on clear variable definition and the use of numerical data to evaluate objective relationships between variables (Polit and Hungler, 2013).

The following research questions guided this research in examining the relationships among these variables:

To what extent do buyer needs affect how well buyers perceive the effectiveness/performance of TS at a food industry exhibition in Zambia? There are three research questions associated with this central question.

1. To what extent is buyer's satisfaction with safety and security needs related to buyer's perceived effectiveness in Zambia's food processing industry?
2. To what extent is buyer's fulfilment of Belonging needs related to buyer's perceived effectiveness of trade shows in Zambia's food processing industry?
3. To what extent is buyer's satisfaction with self-esteem and confidence needs related to buyer's perceived effectiveness of trade shows in Zambia's food processing industry?

To what extent do buyer needs affect buyer's plans to make a purchase after a TS in Zambia's food industry? There are three research questions associated with this central question.

4. To what extent is buyer's satisfaction with safety and security needs related to buyer's post-show purchase intention in Zambia's food processing industry?
5. To what extent is buyer's fulfilment of Belonging needs related to buyer's post-show purchase intention in Zambia's food processing industry?
6. To what extent is buyer's satisfaction with self-esteem and confidence needs related to buyer's post-show purchase intention in Zambia's food processing industry?

1.5 Significance of the Research

This research provides a foundation for understanding the complex role of TSs in Zambia's food processing sector, an area that has received limited empirical attention. Industry stakeholders increasingly recognise TSs as important components of integrated marketing and sales strategies (Mora Cortez *et al.*, 2022). However, traditional evaluation criteria remain largely exhibitor-centric and often exclude attendee perspectives, particularly buyer needs and influence on perceived effectiveness (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017). By focusing on buyers within Zambia's food processing sector, this research develops a buyer-centred framework for assessing TS effectiveness and directly addresses this gap in the literature.

The findings offer practical value for organisers and exhibitors by identifying buyer expectations that shape engagement and perceived value. Aligning event features such as

exhibition layout, staffing, and networking opportunities with buyer expectations improves resource allocation and enhances attendee experience. Event marketing studies indicate that buyer-oriented engagement strategies improve satisfaction and conversion outcomes (Sarmiento and Simões, 2019). This buyer-focused approach also provides a transferable framework that organisers, exhibitors, and marketers can use across sectors to improve the evaluation and design of TSs.

The relatively small size of the Zambian market, estimated at 19.6 million people (GRZ, 2022a), highlights the importance of international market access for sustained growth. Major events such as the Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show (ZACS) and the Zambia International Trade Fair (ZITF), which host over 2,000 exhibitors, serve as important platforms for domestic and cross-border trade engagement (Kenneth, 2023; Mwansa, 2023). By strengthening linkages between local producers and international markets, TSs support firm internationalisation strategies associated with improved competitiveness and risk diversification (Knight, 2001; International Trade Centre, 2021).

At the regional level, exhibitions such as CAMINEX, the Lusaka Business Expo, and district agricultural shows contribute to SME development and local value chains by promoting product visibility and facilitating market access (LBE, 2022; GRZ, 2024). This research contributes to improved TS performance in such contexts by identifying how buyer needs shape engagement and outcomes, thereby supporting more effective and inclusive growth strategies across different market levels.

The research also advances theoretical understanding by extending buyer behaviour research into event-based marketing environments, an area that has remained underexplored compared to retail and digital contexts (Gottlieb *et al.*, 2011). By examining how safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem needs influence perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention, the research refines existing decision-making models to account for experiential, social, and real-time interactions (Sarmiento and Simões, 2018, 2019). This approach strengthens theoretical integration between motivation theories and event marketing literature by showing how psychological needs translate into observable behavioural intentions within TS environments.

For practitioners in the food processing sector, the research provides actionable insights for improving TS strategies. Exhibitors can prioritise interactive displays, personalised engagement, and trust-building activities that align with buyer motivations, thereby increasing satisfaction and strengthening the likelihood of post-event purchases (Kumar and Pansari, 2016; Masłowska *et al.*, 2016). Such targeted approaches support more efficient resource allocation by focusing on high-impact aspects of TS participation (S Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2019). In addition, exhibitors should recognise that different buyer groups respond differently to safety assurances, networking opportunities, and recognition-based incentives.

The policy relevance of this research is equally significant. The findings can inform government and industry initiatives that strengthen TS effectiveness as a tool for industrial development and trade promotion. Policymakers can use these insights to design exhibitor training programmes, improve event standards, and prioritise buyer engagement in TS planning, thereby enhancing the contribution of TSs to economic growth (Korsakienė and Tvaronavičienė, 2012; Dunn, 2017). These interventions also support national development objectives by better linking SMEs to domestic and international markets.

Overall, this research contributes to understanding how buyer needs influence TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. By integrating theoretical development with practical application, the research supports improved event design, stronger buyer engagement, and enhanced economic outcomes. The research also demonstrates that TS effectiveness depends not only on exhibitor performance metrics but also on how well events satisfy attendees' psychological and social needs. In doing so, this research contributes to developing a more balanced and inclusive TS ecosystem that supports sustainable growth in Zambia's food processing sector.

1.6 Limitations of the Research

Limitations describe possible shortcomings or constraints that researchers identify in a research study. Such constraints may threaten internal validity (Creswell, 2005; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Chapter 3 examines internal validity in greater detail and explains how the research design enhances the credibility of the findings. Clearly defining the research boundaries enables future researchers to replicate or extend the study. Clearly specifying the study's constraints also allows other researchers to assess the applicability of the findings across different populations and contexts (Creswell, 2005).

Research limitations may include potential weaknesses in the research design and statistical models, funding constraints, and other external factors (Locke *et al.*, 2013). Theofanidis and Fountouki (2019) described a limitation as a constraint that affects the design, results, and conclusions of a research project. Therefore, researchers clearly state such limits in manuscript submissions.

Several potential deficiencies influence data analysis in this research. Non-response errors, including unit non-response, present a key challenge. Khare and Srivastava (1993, 1995) and Witt and Rao (2015) explained that some sampling units provide no information. Non-response occurs when respondents fail to participate or refuse participation. Hansen and Hurwitz (1946) first addressed non-response bias and developed a method to reduce bias arising from the assumption that respondents and non-respondents represented the same population. Respondent behaviour presents a major limitation in this research. Some firms and individuals in the food processing sector declined to participate in data collection for unspecified reasons. Some firms and individuals showed limited interest in buyer perceptions of TSs and PS purchasing behaviour. In addition, the researcher could not contact several respondents using registered details because telephone numbers had changed or email accounts had been deactivated. The email delivery rate was 98.99 per cent, the open rate was 63.66 per cent, and the unsubscribe rate was 0.77 per cent.

Researchers apply several strategies to minimise non-response and reduce bias in data. For example, the researcher contacts sampled participants before sending email or WhatsApp messages containing survey links. This process explains the purpose and importance of the research and improves understanding of participation. Hansen and Hurwitz (1946) and Hudson *et al.* (2004) reported that telephone pre-notification reduces non-response in online surveys. Dillman (1978) noted that follow-up telephone calls to non-respondents provide unbiased estimates. The researcher assured participants that the collected information will remain confidential. Bozman and Stem (2005) reported that reminder messages (emails and SMS) improve response rates.

Online surveys offered flexibility during data collection because surveys do not require fixed-time interviews. Participants responded at convenient times across the week and accommodate busy schedules. The researcher applied oversampling to categories with expected lower response rates. Oversampling can reduce bias when funding allows (Hansen and Hurwitz,

1946). Khare and Srivastava (1993, 1995) reported that oversampling increases the representation of low-response groups.

Research implications arise from response errors. Respondents may provide incorrect answers due to fear of status loss, concerns about competence, or sensitivity of questions. Hansen and Hurwitz (1946) reported that respondents may misinterpret questions or provide careless responses because of lack of effort or memory limitations.

Reducing respondent error remains essential for valid and reliable results. The researcher ensured anonymity to reduce fear and concerns about sensitive questions. Neutral and non-judgmental wording reduced social desirability bias. The researcher avoided leading or loaded questions to encourage honest responses. The research used validated measurement scales to reduce bias in sensitive topics and improve response accuracy. The researcher conducted a pilot study with a small representative sample to identify misunderstandings. Findings from the pilot study improved the questionnaire design. The researcher kept the survey concise and engaging to reduce fatigue. Randomisation of question order reduced response patterns and improved response quality. Respondents received sufficient time to reflect, especially for recall-based questions.

Online data collection has limitations because questionnaires must remain shorter than those in paper-based formats (Sue and Ritter, 2007). Long surveys increase the risk of dropout due to fatigue. Many eligible respondents lack the time to complete surveys. Self-administered surveys limit the researcher's control over clarification and monitoring. Missing data from incomplete responses remains a major limitation (Aday and Cornelius, 2006; Chang and Krosnick, 2010).

The researcher applied several strategies to reduce fatigue, dropout rates, and missing data. The survey prioritised key questions aligned with research objectives. The researcher divided the questionnaire into sections that participants completed at their own convenience. A progress bar showed completion status and encouraged participants to continue. The researcher sent polite reminders to respondents who have not completed answering the questionnaire. The survey included all essential variables to ensure complete data capture.

Self-reported questionnaires introduce limitations because researchers depend on respondent honesty (Robins *et al.*, 2007). Some respondents withhold truthful answers. Some respondents

provide socially acceptable responses rather than true beliefs (Affleck *et al.*, 2013). Variation in respondent engagement levels may distort results.

The researcher mitigated these limitations by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Indirect questioning and neutral wording reduced social desirability bias. Future research may apply mixed-method approaches to improve validity through qualitative insights.

The COVID-19 pandemic introduces additional limitations for TS data collection. Many TS events shift to virtual platforms, which complicates participation tracking and contact accuracy. Virtual environments increase participant fatigue due to excessive digital exposure (Sue and Ritter, 2007). Awareness of these constraints guided the survey design and data interpretation.

The researcher optimised the survey by keeping the questionnaire short and engaging. Clear communication about the importance of the research, together with follow-up reminders, increased participation. The researcher used a user-friendly platform, such as Google Forms, to reduce technical barriers. The researcher distributed survey links through WhatsApp, SMS, and other accessible digital channels.

Reliance on self-reported data introduces common-method bias. Podsakoff and Organ (1986) noted that self-report methods may inflate observed relationships. Researchers apply Harman's single-factor test to detect such bias. Likert-scale response patterns also pose limitations because respondents often select moderate categories rather than extreme options. Jamieson (2004) and Ogden and Lo (2012) reported that this behaviour weakens the accuracy of attitude measurement.

1.7 Delimitations of the Research

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), Anthonisz and Perry (2015) , and Theofanidis and Fountouki (2019), delimitations define the limits that a researcher establishes to narrow the scope of a study and ensure the achievement of research goals and objectives. In this research, delimitations specified the variables, populations, contexts, and time period included and excluded, and these choices shaped the external validity of the findings.

This investigation covers a one-year period from February 2024 to January 2025. The researcher used this timeframe to examine several TSs within Zambia's food processing

industry. The research also considered seasonal variations in buyer behaviour, since these variations influenced attendance patterns, engagement levels, and purchasing decisions across different TS cycles.

The geographic scope of the research covered Zambia and included thirty-five (35) districts across all ten (10) provinces. The researcher included major commercial cities such as Lusaka, Kitwe, and Ndola because these locations hosted a large share of TS events within the food processing industry. This geographic coverage captured national market conditions, institutional environments, and buyer characteristics that shaped TS participation and outcomes in Zambia.

The research targeted participants involved in TSs within the food processing industry, especially industrial buyers in B2B settings. Specifically, the research included wholesale and retail firms that make purchasing decisions. The research excluded final consumers and non-industrial attendees to ensure that the collected data reflects organisational buying behaviour. The research included only registered businesses operating in Zambia, identified through records from regulatory bodies such as the Patents and Companies Registration Agency (GRZ, 2021). These firms fall within the food processing industry category under the ISIC classification system (UN, 2008).

Consistent with the research objectives, the research focused only on the food processing industry and excluded other industrial sectors. The food processing industry includes activities related to food and beverage processing, preservation, and distribution, including meat, milk, cereal, oil, and animal feed products (UN, 2008). This sector-specific focus improved precision and ensured contextually relevant findings while avoiding distortions that arise from cross-sector comparisons (Leedy and Ormrod, 2016).

The research also excluded international trade exhibitions held outside Zambia to maintain contextual relevance. In addition, the research excluded individuals without economic authority or purchasing influence, including casual visitors, consumers, and students without decision-making roles in trade environments. This exclusion aligned with the focus on professional buying behaviour in B2B contexts (Ellis and Levy, 2009). The research, therefore, treated each business entity as the sampling unit rather than individual attendees.

From a theoretical perspective, the research focused on three categories within Maslow's hierarchy of needs: safety and security, Belonging, and self-esteem. The researcher selected these categories because they applied strongly to professional and relational exchange environments typical of TS settings. The research examined how TSs satisfied these needs and how need fulfilment influenced buyer satisfaction and post-show purchase intention. The research operationalised TS effectiveness across three dimensions, while PS purchase intention captures the likelihood of post-event purchasing.

Methodologically, the research used an online survey as the main data collection tool. This approach enabled efficient access to participants across multiple districts within a limited timeframe. The online survey also improved feasibility in terms of cost, reach, and coverage of the target population while aligning with the research's time frame, population, and variables under investigation (Simon, 2011).

1.8 Definitions of Key Terms

Trade Shows (TS): A TS is a market event that lasts a set period and is scheduled regularly, during which a large number of enterprises display the primary product lines of one or more industrial sectors (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010). This research used the terms TS and exhibition interchangeably.

Trade Show Effectiveness: This paper adopts Kottmann's (2002) broad definition of effectiveness, which is the degree to which a predefined objective matches an achieved objective, regardless of the input. When a predefined objective is achieved, the outcome is deemed effective, indicating a successful result. The term TS Effectiveness was used interchangeably with the term TS Performance in this research.

Perceived effectiveness of exhibitors: Four criteria define the perceived effectiveness of exhibitors. The first section investigates the exhibitors' perceptions of whether the group or team's overall performance met the required objectives. The second section examines the exhibitor's satisfaction with the experience. The third element looks at the exhibitor's satisfaction with the experience. The fourth area asks the exhibitor to be amenable to working in a comparable environment later on (Lemieux-Charles *et al.*, 2002; Lemieux-Charles and McGuire, 2006; Cramm *et al.*, 2013).

Perceived effectiveness of attendees: Gopalakrishna, Malthouse and Lawrence (2019) measure the perceived effectiveness of attendance across three categories: the ability to learn and engage in purchasing activities, and the feeling of exuberance from social connections.

Purchase intention: the likelihood that a customer will purchase a product. (Dodd and Supa, 2011).

Post Show (PS) purchase: The short-term objective of a PS buy is to convert a TS attendee into a client or customer. Contacts between sales and marketing professionals at the event, with attendees, and with follow-up sales representatives are part of the selling cycle (Sridhar *et al.*, 2015).

Needs: According to Taormina and Gao (2013), the absence of a vital good or element for someone's health or welfare constitutes a need. Needs do not refer to items that are necessary for living; rather, needs indicate the absence of such things. For instance, a person develops a need for water when that person does not have enough water. The need does not lie in water but arises from the lack of water.

Buyers: In this research, buyers are individuals who attend TSs and expositions with the intention of purchasing products from exhibitors for resale. When necessary, the term attendee is used to refer to the TS buyer.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a thorough examination of trade shows (TSs), covering all aspects to understand the usefulness and impact of TSs. This section begins with an overview of TSs, which describes in detail the characteristics, roles, and importance of TSs across many sectors. The section on participation methods analyses various ways to participate in TSs. The TS activity stages provide a comprehensive overview of the logistical and strategic arrangements necessary for success by identifying the three stages of TS participation.

Emphasis is placed on TS effectiveness, including the criteria and tools used to assess TS success. The Exhibitor Performance section assesses each exhibitor's performance at a TS, including factors such as booth design, staff efficiency, and marketing strategy. This in-depth review provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of TSs and the relevance of TSs to company strategy and marketing. This chapter also provides a detailed overview of the conceptual and theoretical bases underpinning the research. Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs is analysed at the beginning, showing how individual needs progress from basic physiological needs to self-actualisation. The ERG theory of motivation proposed by Alderfer (1969) is further analysed. This theory condenses Maslow's (1987) five stages down to three basic needs: existence, relatedness, and growth. This chapter also explores Herzberg's (1959) motivation-hygiene theory, which distinguishes between factors that contribute to job satisfaction and those that prevent job dissatisfaction. The industrial buying process is then detailed, including the stages companies go through when purchasing goods and services. The empirical review section summarises the findings of previous research on these concepts, highlighting knowledge gaps and potential areas for further investigation. The Theoretical frameworks section integrates previously described theories and offers a structured perspective on the research topic. The conceptual framework provides a visual representation of the interrelationships among the key concepts and variables, facilitating the formulation of the research hypotheses and guiding the research approach.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This section analyses current theories and conceptual frameworks relevant to the research topic. This section carefully reviews relevant literature to provide a basis for the research, identify gaps in existing knowledge, and support the theoretical framework.

2.1.1 Overview of Trade Shows (TSs)

TSs trace their origins to biblical times, when traders gathered at fairs and bazaars to exchange goods and services (Ezekiel 27:12–24). However, modern trade exhibitions underwent a major transformation during and after the Industrial Revolution. The Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace in 1851 marked the first officially recognised world fair and highlighted technological advancement while promoting international trade (Davis, 1999). Since then, TSs have continued to evolve into highly specialised events that attract participants from around the world and focus on specific industries and market sectors.

TSs contribute significantly to organisational marketing strategy (Kerin and Cron, 1987). These events allow organisations to engage both existing and potential customers more effectively. Through direct interaction with buyers, organisations gather valuable market information and identify emerging customer needs. This process supports product and service design within the broader innovation and business development cycle. As a result, TSs create an environment that encourages product testing, customer participation, and stronger business relationships (Cavanaugh, 1976; Konikow, 1983).

Researchers classify TSs into two major categories: vertical and horizontal TSs (Wu *et al.*, 2008; Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017). Horizontal TSs cover multiple product or service categories, while vertical TSs concentrate on a single industry or product category. Visitor profiles also influence TS classification. Consumer TSs target individual buyers and end users, whereas industrial TSs focus on corporations, professional buyers, and technical personnel (Tafesse, 2014). Industrial TSs often specialise in sectors such as food processing, automotive, healthcare, and technology, attracting exhibitors and attendees with shared industrial interests. Consumer TSs, in contrast, target the public and allow firms to display products directly to prospective customers. Examples include automobile exhibitions, home and garden shows, and technology expos. Nevertheless, many TSs operate as mixed-use events because these events attract both industrial buyers and final consumers simultaneously (Tafesse, 2014).

Numerous researchers have examined the benefits of TSs from the perspectives of exhibitors, attendees, and event categories (Sridhar *et al.*, 2015; Rinallo *et al.*, 2017). Existing studies have identified several advantages associated with TS participation, although important knowledge gaps remain (See Appendix C). TSs provide exhibitors with opportunities to generate high-quality sales leads through direct interaction with potential buyers. Many firms secure business partnerships and future acquisitions from contacts developed during exhibitions. TSs also enhance brand visibility and recognition by enabling firms to showcase products and services to targeted audiences. Organisers and exhibitors gain insight into customer preferences, market trends, and competitor activities. In addition, TSs create opportunities for collaboration, partnerships, and knowledge exchange through interaction among industry professionals. Many organisations also use TSs as platforms for launching new products because such events attract substantial audience attention and media coverage.

Despite these advantages, TS participation also presents several challenges. Companies often incur high costs related to booth rental, transportation, accommodation, staffing, and promotional materials. Successful participation requires substantial financial investment, detailed planning, and effective implementation strategies. The highly competitive environment within TSs further increases pressure on exhibitors to differentiate products and attract visitor attention amid numerous competitors (Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 1995).

Several core elements contribute to the success and effectiveness of TSs. Exhibitors represent organisations that participate in TSs to display products, services, and innovations. To attract attendees, firms invest heavily in stand design, promotional materials, multimedia displays, and interactive demonstrations (S Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2019). Attendees include buyers, company representatives, media personnel, and other stakeholders who participate to explore products, build networks, and monitor market developments. Booths and exhibition spaces provide designated areas where exhibitors interact with visitors and display products through visually engaging, interactive formats.

Many TSs also organise seminars, workshops, and training sessions in which industry experts discuss relevant issues and emerging trends. These sessions support professional development and knowledge sharing among participants. Networking remains another critical component of TSs, ranging from informal discussions at exhibition stands to structured business meetings and formal networking events. Through these combined activities, TSs continue to serve as

important business platforms that integrate marketing, education, networking, and relationship-building opportunities (Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 1995).

Although TS participation demands considerable time, effort, and financial resources, TSs remain essential tools for organisations seeking business growth and competitive advantage. The potential benefits of lead generation, market intelligence, networking, innovation, and brand development continue to make TSs valuable assets across industries and sectors.

2.1.2 Participation Mode

TSs bring together different groups of participants within a particular industry, and each group contributes a unique level of involvement and engagement. The specific roles participants assume, along with individual goals and motivations, shape the mode of participation at the event. Researchers have identified several participant categories within TSs, each associated with distinct objectives and expectations (Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995; Tafesse and Skallerud, 2015). When firms or organisations participate as exhibitors, the primary objective is to create attractive exhibition spaces, promote products and services, and develop relationships with potential customers (Vaníčková and Szczepańska-Woszczyna, 2020). Through direct interaction at exhibition stands, exhibitors strengthen visibility and establish stronger business connections.

Visitors also play a significant role during TS participation. During visits, attendees compare suppliers, evaluate market conditions, examine new products, and interact with sales representatives to gather relevant information for decision-making (Godar and O'Connor, 2001). Organisers represent another important component of TS participation, as TS Organisers manage programme coordination, event administration, scheduling, and logistical activities to ensure smooth event operations (Dawson *et al.*, 2014).

The exhibition mode remains a critical aspect of TS analysis because this mode allows researchers to examine how participation influences TS performance and outcomes (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017). Several marketing concepts, including marketing mix, relationship marketing, and market orientation, frequently guide studies that focus on exhibition mode. Although visitor-focused studies continue to expand, important knowledge gaps remain. Gopalakrishna, Malthouse and Lawrence (2019) noted that much of the existing visitor

research concentrates mainly on exhibitor engagement and buyer behaviour following specific interactions during TS participation.

2.1.3 Activity Stages

TS activities occur in three major phases: pre-show, at-show, and post-show stages (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017). Each phase contributes significantly to the overall effectiveness and success of TS participation. Tafesse and Skallerud (2017) explained that pre-show activities include establishing exhibition objectives, preparing budgets, assigning staff, assessing personnel requirements, and conducting staff orientation and training. This phase also includes promotional planning and communication strategies designed to attract target audiences before the event begins. Although researchers have widely examined at-show activities, the existing literature gives less attention to the pre-show and post-show stages, creating important gaps in TS research (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017).

Pre-show planning lays the foundation for successful TS participation, as organisations develop strategies and allocate resources before the event. Companies define clear objectives, design visually appealing booths, and develop strategies to engage potential buyers. Effective pre-show marketing campaigns, including email communication and social media promotion, increase booth traffic and encourage meaningful business interactions during the event (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017). In addition, firms train staff members to respond to enquiries, communicate professionally, and represent organisational products and services effectively.

The at-show phase represents the most visible and interactive stage of TS participation. During this stage, organisations implement strategies developed during pre-show preparation. Exhibitors use live product demonstrations, multimedia displays, and engaging presentations to attract visitors and maintain audience attention. Staff members actively interact with attendees by initiating conversations, answering questions, collecting contact details, and identifying potential leads (S Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2019). Booth design and location also play critical roles during this phase, as attractive, strategically positioned booths improve visibility and increase visitor traffic (Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2017). Many exhibitors further enhance the visitor experience through technologies such as digital brochures, touchscreens, and interactive displays, which improve communication and information sharing.

The post-show phase remains essential because organisations convert generated leads into actual business opportunities during this stage. Companies maintain communication with prospective clients through follow-up meetings, personalised emails, and telephone calls. Firms also evaluate TS performance by comparing outcomes against previously established objectives, enabling identification of successes and areas requiring improvement (Bloch *et al.*, 2017). Organisations assess lead quality, review activation strategies, and monitor conversion potential after the event. Continuous communication with prospects throughout the sales process strengthens relationships and increases the likelihood of future purchases and long-term partnerships (S Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2019).

Despite the structured nature of these stages, several challenges may reduce TS effectiveness. High participation costs, intense competition among exhibitors, and logistical difficulties often create barriers to successful participation. To address these challenges, organisations must allocate resources strategically and manage exhibition activities effectively throughout all stages of participation (Kapoor and Mohan Joshi, 2024). Overall, organisations that implement comprehensive strategies across pre-show preparation, at-show engagement, and post-show follow-up significantly improve TS effectiveness and maximise return on investment.

2.1.4 Effectiveness of Trade Shows

TS effectiveness focuses on evaluating the success of exhibition activities and determining the financial and strategic benefits generated through participation (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017). Hansen (2004) defined TS effectiveness as the ability of organisations to achieve intended TS objectives and desired performance outcomes. Assessing TS effectiveness, therefore, requires quantitative indicators that clearly connect exhibition objectives with measurable management outcomes (Hansen, 2004). Historically, organisations primarily viewed TSs as communication platforms for promoting products and strengthening corporate image through advertising and presentation activities. Over time, however, organisations began to recognise TSs as broader commercial platforms that support product sales, contract negotiations, and business agreements. During the 1980s, firms adopted a more comprehensive perspective on TS participation and pursued objectives beyond simple communication and sales functions (Hansen, 2004).

Scholars such as Greipl and Singer (1980), Bonoma (1983), and Groth (1983) argued that TSs perform multiple organisational and marketing functions simultaneously, making effectiveness

assessment complex and multidimensional. As a result, researchers define TS success differently and apply varying approaches to effectiveness evaluation (Bonoma, 1983). This diversity in interpretation contributes to the development of several assessment frameworks and measurement approaches in the TS literature.

Kerin and Cron (1987) provided some of the earliest empirical evidence on the multidimensional nature of TS effectiveness by applying principal component analysis (PCA) to different marketing activities. The findings showed that TS effectiveness includes both sales-related and non-sales-related dimensions. Hansen (2004) expanded this perspective further by identifying five major dimensions of TS effectiveness: relationship building, image enhancement, information gathering, sales-related activities, and motivation. Later, Lee and Kim (2008) supported Hansen's (2004) framework and strengthen the framework's relevance within TS research. The present research adopts Hansen's (2004) framework because this framework captures several important dimensions relevant to both exhibitors and attendees while maintaining consistency between theoretical concepts and observable outcomes.

A review conducted by Tafesse and Skallerud (2017) indicated that most TS effectiveness studies concentrate primarily on the exhibitor perspective, especially booth-related elements such as stand design, visitor attraction, and exhibitor interaction strategies (Kindt, 1993; Spruss, 1998). Researchers have also operationalised TS effectiveness differently across studies. For example, Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1995) and Gopalakrishna *et al.* (1995) employed proxy indicators such as audience quality, booth attractiveness, engagement levels, contact efficiency, and conversion rates to assess TS outcomes from exhibitor and organiser perspectives. Hansen (2004) and Shoham (1999) evaluated effectiveness according to whether exhibitors and organisers achieve predetermined objectives. Similarly, Bloch *et al.* (2017) examined how booth design and target-setting influence TS success.

Recent TS studies have increasingly emphasised goal-oriented, outcome-based, and behaviour-focused measures when evaluating exhibition performance and self-reported success (Hansen, 2004). Despite these developments, researchers have still identified a shortage of comprehensive empirical studies that integrate multiple theoretical perspectives into the evaluation of TS effectiveness. This research seeks to address that limitation by incorporating buyer needs and behavioural dimensions into the analysis of TS effectiveness.

Although most TS effectiveness research centres on exhibitors and organisers, a smaller body of literature investigates visitor perspectives and attendee experiences. Smith, Hama and Smith (2003) examined the relationship between attendance performance and audience interest in future participation. Godar and O'Connor (2001) investigated industrial buyer motivations for attending TSs using a segmentation approach based on purchasing centres. Blythe (2002) explored exhibitor and visitor expectations regarding relationship development during TS participation. (Berne and García-Uceda, 2008) analysed the factors that influence participant decisions when selecting TSs to attend. More recently, Vitali *et al.* (2022) examined the influence of emerging technologies on TS performance and visitor behaviour.

Despite these contributions, limited research has examined buyer needs as determinants of TS effectiveness. Existing studies continue to place greater emphasis on exhibitor performance and organisational outcomes than on the motivations, perceptions, and behavioural responses of buyers attending TSs.

2.1.5 Implemented Trade Show Effectiveness Framework

Hansen (2004) examined TS activities through the lens of outcome-based and behaviour-based control systems drawn from marketing literature. A control system refers to the mechanisms organisations use to supervise, guide, and evaluate personnel performance (Hansen, 2004). Researchers have identified two major control systems: systems that assess results and systems that evaluate activities and processes.

Outcome-Oriented Control System

Outcome-based control systems primarily rely on objective indicators, such as sales performance, to evaluate effectiveness. Researchers have widely applied this method in sales assessment because the method focuses on measurable performance indicators such as sales volume, lead generation, and conversion rates (Churchill *et al.*, 1993; Hansen, 2004). Cavanaugh (1976) focused on indicators such as booth visits, lead generation, and cost efficiency. In contrast, Gopalakrishna and Williams (1992), together with Williams, Gopalakrishna and Cox (1993), used lead-generation efficiency and booth contact as measures of success.

Outcome-Based Activities

Sales Activities:

This dimension includes all activities associated with on-site sales and immediate post-show sales. Early TS effectiveness models mainly emphasised sales-related activities. Carman, (1968) and Bonoma (1983) identified direct sales and new product introductions as essential TS activities. Cavanaugh (1976) outlined several sales-related responsibilities linked to TS participation. Kerin and Cron (1987) emphasised selling activities such as product introductions, event sales, and product testing, all of which represent the sales dimension. Additional activities identified in the literature include order processing, lead acquisition, prospect development, and mailing-list construction (Bonoma, 1983; Lilien, 1983; Bellizzi and Lipps, 1984). Researchers have also identified comparative analysis, enquiries, and negotiations as important sales-related activities (Cavanaugh, 1976; Morris, 1988). These findings show that researchers apply multiple outcomes when evaluating TS effectiveness. Consequently, scholars have increasingly recommended integrating behavioural dimensions alongside outcome-based measures to assess TS effectiveness (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017).

Behavioural Control System

Behaviour-based control systems employ subjective, more complex approaches to evaluate sales-force performance (Hansen, 2004). Kerin and Cron (1987) argued that traditional sales indicators alone do not adequately assess TS success. Instead, behaviour-based systems emphasise the actions and interactions individuals perform during events (Hansen, 2004). Researchers have evaluated booth staff performance based on activities directly under personnel's control, including attendee interaction, communication, and networking (Anderson and Oliver, 1987).

Hansen (2004) conducted a comprehensive review of TS literature to identify objectives and activities suitable for inclusion within outcome-based and behaviour-based control systems. Based on this review, Hansen (2004) conceptualised TS effectiveness as a multidimensional construct consisting of one outcome-oriented dimension and four behaviour-oriented dimensions.

Behavioural Activities

Information-Gathering Activities:

Hansen (2004) identified information gathering as a central component of TS effectiveness. This dimension includes efforts to collect information about competitors, customers, industry

trends, and new products within TS environments. TS literature has consistently recognised market research and information acquisition as key objectives for exhibitors (Cavanaugh, 1976; Bellizzi and Lipps, 1984; Kerin and Cron, 1987; Makens, 1988). Information-gathering activities also include monitoring competitors' strategies and market behaviour. Sharland and Balogh (1996) proposed using a transaction cost analysis (TCA) framework to support strategic decisions across marketing, finance, and production.

Activities for Image Enhancement:

The image-enhancement dimension includes activities aimed at strengthening organisational image and reputation during TS participation. Bonoma (1983) argues that maintaining corporate reputation among competitors, customers, and the broader industry represents a fundamental marketing communication objective. Barczyk *et al.* (1989) identified three major motivations for TS participation related to image enhancement: competitive pressure, customer expectations, and image development. Competitive pressure encourages firms to respond to rivals, whereas customer expectations motivate firms to satisfy customer demands and reduce negative perceptions. Firms also use TSs to establish or reinforce market presence and reputation. Consequently, image-enhancement activities represent an important behaviour-oriented dimension of TS effectiveness.

Motivational Activities:

Hansen (2004) proposed motivation as another behaviour-related dimension. This dimension includes activities designed to strengthen and sustain employee and buyer motivation. Hansen (1996) found that morale reinforcement in international TSs is of moderate importance, despite limited attention in earlier TS literature. Carman (1968) observed that TS participation improves the morale of local sales associates, especially when manufacturers' representatives participate. Barczyk *et al.* (1989) identified sales personnel morale as a contributor to sales performance, whereas Witt and Rao (1989), Shoham (1992), and Shipley *et al.* (1993) suggested that TSs function as tools for training and motivating sales teams. However, these studies did not specifically examine the use of TSs to motivate buyers.

Relationship-Building Activities:

The relationship-building dimension includes activities to establish and maintain relationships with existing customers and to build new relationships with prospective buyers. Witt and Rao

(1989) called for additional research into the importance of TSs in strengthening buyer–seller relationships, while IMP (1982) emphasised the role of social exchange in overcoming spatial and cultural barriers between buyers and sellers, particularly in international TSs. Tesar (1988) noted that several European TSs include conference rooms and lounges that support lengthy meetings between exhibitors and buyers. Smith's (1998) research also identified relationship development as a major indicator of exhibitor success. Common relationship-building activities in TS literature include maintaining relationships with existing customers (Carman, 1968; Bonoma, 1983; Kerin and Cron, 1987; Rosson and Seringhaus, 1995), developing relationships with prospective customers (Shipley *et al.*, 1993; Herbig *et al.*, 1994), engaging principal decision-makers (Shust, 1981; Witt and Rao, 1989), and cultivating personal relationships with clients (Lilien, 1983; Morris, 1988).

Sheth (1973), through the integrated model of industrial buyer behaviour, explained that buyer–seller interaction in industrial markets often develops gradually over time rather than within the limited duration of a TS. Rice (1992) therefore argued that relationship-building activities remain difficult to measure within conventional management-control frameworks because interactions continue beyond the event itself. Rothchild (1987) further noted that the outcomes of relationship-building efforts usually emerge gradually rather than immediately. Despite these challenges, relationship-building remains essential for evaluating TS effectiveness because strong buyer–seller relationships contribute significantly to long-term TS success (Sarmiento and Simões, 2018). Nevertheless, most outcome-based and behaviour-based dimensions continue to emphasise exhibitor perspectives, except for motivational activities, which researchers can evaluate from both exhibitor and visitor perspectives (Hansen, 2004).

2.1.6 Audience and Exhibit Performance Metrics for Assessing TS Effectiveness

Mora Cortez, Clarke and Freytag (2025) state that exhibitors participate in the TS for several reasons, including generating high-quality leads, enhancing the company's image, and building relationships with current and future customers. The research highlighted that assessing TS effectiveness is complicated because exhibitors often pursue multiple objectives simultaneously. Given this diversity of objectives, Tafesse and Skallerud (2017), Sarmiento and Simões (2018). and Vitali *et al.* (2022) note that many marketers rely on proxy performance metrics such as audience engagement, audience quality, target audience penetration, number of visitors to the event, number of contacts and number of leads generated. The section below

presents a summary of selected audience and performance indicators from the exhibitor perspective.

Prospective Audience:

Prospective audience refers to the proportion of TS participants who are genuinely interested in a firm's offerings. While widely recognised as a critical precondition for TS success, the practical utility of the prospective audience depends heavily on how accurately firms can identify and attract such an audience. Herbig, O'Hafa and Palumbo (1994) emphasised the importance of pre-show targeting; however, this assumes that firms possess reliable market intelligence, which is not always the case in emerging markets. Although Dekimpe *et al.* (1997) demonstrated that increased investment in pre-show promotion improves audience targeting, this relationship may reflect resource advantages rather than strategic effectiveness. Similarly, Bellizzi and Lipps (1984) argued for integrated pre- and post-show engagement, yet this imposes additional costs on firms without guaranteeing proportional returns. Beland and Chacon (2010) further contended that the presence of decision-makers determines the effectiveness of TS. However, this view overlooks the complexity of organisational buying processes, where influence often diffuses across multiple actors. Although Weisgal (2009) reported that 93% of attendees are decision-makers or influencers, aggregate figures may overstate the actual purchasing authority, thereby limiting the predictive value of decision-makers.

Attraction Efficiency:

Attraction efficiency, defined as the proportion of the target market drawn to a firm's booth (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995), is often treated as a direct indicator of exhibitor performance. However, this metric assumes that booth visitation equates to meaningful engagement, which is not necessarily valid. Williams, Gopalakrishna and Cox (1993) highlighted strategies such as booth design and positioning, yet these may prioritise visibility over relevance, potentially attracting non-target visitors. Furthermore, the distinction between genuinely interested attendees and casual visitors is often blurred, raising concerns about the validity of measurement. While pre-show marketing and live demonstrations may enhance attraction, these elements also introduce confounding variables that make isolating the true impact on performance outcomes difficult.

Contact Efficiency:

Contact efficiency evaluates the proportion of booth visitors who engage with staff (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995). Although this measure captures interaction, Contact efficiency does not account for interaction quality or depth. Resnick (1991) noted that interactions were often brief, suggesting that high contact rates may not translate into meaningful exchanges. Moreover, the emphasis on staff performance, as highlighted by Williams, Gopalakrishna and Cox (1993), risks oversimplifying the interaction process by attributing outcomes primarily to personnel while neglecting contextual factors such as visitor intent or time constraints. The ability of staff to distinguish between casual visitors and serious buyers is also highly subjective, which may introduce bias into performance assessments.

Conversion Efficiency:

Conversion efficiency focuses on transforming contacts into leads (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995), yet multiple external factors beyond exhibitor control influence this metric. Brand reputation, competitive positioning, and buyer readiness shape outcomes and complicate attribution. While researchers commonly use leads as proxies for future sales, lead quality varies significantly, and high volumes do not necessarily translate into higher conversion rates. This pattern raises concerns about overreliance on lead-based metrics as indicators of TS success, particularly when follow-up processes remain inconsistent or poorly managed.

Number of Leads Generated:

The number of leads generated is a convenient and widely used performance indicator; however, this simplicity masks important limitations. As Herbig, O'Hara and Palumbo (1997) suggested, lead quantity does not capture lead quality or conversion potential. Moreover, the emphasis on lead generation may encourage short-term, sales-oriented behaviours at the expense of long-term relationship building. Although TSs serve multiple objectives (including branding and market intelligence), the number of leads generated reduces effectiveness to a single dimension, thereby oversimplifying the evaluation process.

Employee Performance:

Researchers frequently cite employee performance as a critical determinant of TS effectiveness (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995). While increasing staff numbers may enhance engagement

(Dekimpe *et al.*, 1997), this approach assumes diminishing returns do not apply. Skyline Exhibits (2009) highlighted the importance of sales personnel, yet this perspective may undervalue non-sales roles such as technical experts or relationship managers. Furthermore, performance metrics such as sales per representative may favour short-term outcomes, reinforcing outcome-based control systems at the expense of behavioural development (Anderson and Oliver, 1987).

Return on Investment (ROI):

ROI remains a dominant metric for evaluating TS effectiveness (Lorimer, 2005), but application is methodologically challenging. Calculating ROI requires assumptions about attribution, time lags, and conversion rates, which may differ across firms and industries. CEIR (2023) indicated that there was a difference in the definition of ROI among firms, with some focusing on immediate sales and others on post-show outcomes, highlighting a lack of standardisation. While ROI provides financial clarity, intangible benefits, such as brand equity and relationship development, may be undervalued, leading to an incomplete assessment of TS performance.

Return on Objectives (ROO):

ROO addresses some limitations of ROI by focusing on achieving predefined objectives (Cavanaugh, 1976; Bellizzi and Lipps, 1984; Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995). However, the effectiveness of ROO depends on the clarity and measurability of these objectives. CEIR (2023) noted that many firms prioritise branding, yet such outcomes are inherently difficult to quantify. Consequently, ROO may introduce subjectivity into performance evaluation, particularly when objectives are broad or poorly operationalised.

Cost of Trade Shows:

The rising cost of TS participation has intensified scrutiny of the value of TSs (Skyline Exhibits, 2009). While Browning and Adams (1988) and CEIR (2023) suggested that TSs could be more cost-effective than traditional sales methods, these comparisons often rely on aggregated data that may not reflect firm-specific realities. Cost reductions during economic downturns may also affect the quality of participation, potentially undermining effectiveness. Thus, exhibitors must interpret cost metrics alongside performance outcomes rather than in isolation.

Cost per Visitor:

Exhibitors frequently use cost per visitor (CVR) to assess efficiency, yet this measure assumes that all visitors contribute equally to value creation. Herbig *et al.* (1997) proposed cost per lead as a more precise measure, but even this fails to account for lead quality or long-term conversion rates. As a result, cost-based metrics may provide a distorted view of effectiveness if not complemented by qualitative assessments.

Exhibit Efficiency and Product Interest:

Exhibit efficiency and product interest offer insights into engagement levels, but measurement often relies on subjective assessments by booth staff (Herbig *et al.*, 1997). The reported average engagement of 60% may lack contextual relevance, as the analysis does not account for industry differences or event characteristics. Similarly, product interest does not necessarily translate into purchase intention, limiting predictive validity.

Memorability:

Memorability is an important yet underexplored dimension of TS effectiveness. While Herbig, O'Hara and Palumbo (1997) reported relatively high recall rates, the factors influencing memorability (such as branding, follow-up, and staff performance) are difficult to isolate. Moreover, high recall does not guarantee positive perception or behavioural outcomes, suggesting that memorability should be interpreted cautiously within a broader evaluative framework.

2.1.7 Exhibitor Performance

Evaluating prospective product concepts, creating new products/services or market segments, establishing new partnerships, enhancing existing products/services, innovating to satisfy market needs, assessing customer responses to recent offerings, and finalising agreements with new clients at an exhibition are examples of sales-related activities (Hansen, 2004). Actions include information collection, including competition analysis and general market factors, investigating pertinent market institutions, and conducting pre-show investigations. The objective of relationship-building activities is to maintain and enhance connections with current clients, expedite decision-making, and oversee accounts. Furthermore, TSs use image enhancement tactics such as mind-sharing exercises, market communications, competitive benchmarking, and public relations. Both consumers and vendors may use these strategies to

address motives. While scientists have explored several aspects of TS effectiveness, Tafesse and Skallerud (2017) identified deficiencies in understanding perceptions of TS performance. The literature emphasises the relationship between exhibition and PS performance as a major issue. Practitioners and researchers can gain a deeper understanding of a visitor's perspective and existing relationship to post-exposure analytics.

2.1.8 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's motivation theory, first published in 1943 and later expanded (Maslow, 1968, 1970), remains a widely recognised psychological framework used in business and organisational settings. The theory explains human motivation through a hierarchy of five fundamental needs: physiological needs, safety and security, love and Belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1970). Maslow (1970) argues that individuals seek to satisfy lower-level needs before progressing to higher-level needs, with self-actualisation representing the highest level of personal development. Despite the theory's popularity, empirical evidence supporting Maslow's assumptions remains limited, particularly in industrial and organisational environments. Wahba and Bridwell (1976) and Rojas, Méndez and Fassler, Karen (2023) note that researchers have not rigorously examined the assumption that employees satisfy these needs through employment, leaving uncertainty regarding the distinction between workplace motivation and broader human motivation.

Buyers have a range of internal needs and factors that influence industrial purchasing behaviour. Maslow's (1968, 1970) theory of human motivation provides a useful framework for understanding buyer needs and behaviour within industrial markets. Physiological needs, such as hunger and thirst, represent the most basic level of the hierarchy (Maslow, 1968, 1970). Advances in understanding human behaviour have extended the concept of physiological needs to include environmental conditions such as temperature and physical comfort (Taormina and Gao, 2013). Mudie and Pirrie (2006) argue that personal needs strongly influence customer expectations and purchasing behaviour.

Maslow (1943) defined safety and security needs as protection from illness, danger, crime, instability, and financial uncertainty. Individuals generally seek to progress to higher levels of need satisfaction after fulfilling lower-level requirements (McLeod, 2007; Poston, 2009). Research within consumer behaviour suggests that Maslow's theory helps explain barriers that prevent individuals from progressing through the hierarchy of needs (Seeley, 1992). In

industrial purchasing environments, safety and security needs often influence buyer confidence, perceptions of reliability, and trust in exhibitors and suppliers.

The third level of the hierarchy focuses on Belonging and social connection. George and Selimos (2019) explained that individuals seek interpersonal relationships, social acceptance, and community involvement. Communities often develop strong belonging needs, and failure to satisfy such needs negatively affects social interaction and personal wellbeing. Maslow (1943) categorised physiological and safety needs as basic needs, while Belonging and esteem constitute psychological needs. Industrial buyers may therefore value networking opportunities, collaboration, and relationship-building activities within TS environments.

The fourth level addresses esteem needs, which include self-respect and recognition from others (Maslow, 1943). Taormina and Gao (2013) explain that self-esteem reflects perceptions of personal value and competence, whereas external esteem relates to recognition, respect, and approval from society. Buyers often associate esteem with status, professional recognition, confidence, and acknowledgement within industrial markets. Self-actualisation occupies the highest level of the hierarchy and represents personal growth, fulfilment, and self-awareness. The subjective nature of personal fulfilment often creates challenges for researchers and practitioners attempting to classify or measure self-actualisation. This research, therefore, uses Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a conceptual framework for examining buyer motivation in TS environments.

Applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the Context of TS

Conforti (1972) argued that buyers possess emotional, spiritual, and social needs similar to those of all human beings. Buyers make decisions and engage in behaviours that satisfy these needs. Conforti (1972) applied aspects of Maslow's theory within industrial nursing and medicine to emphasise the importance of fulfilling buyer needs in service and product delivery.

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs provides a useful framework for understanding human motivation within industrial environments, including TS settings. The model identifies physiological, safety, Belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation needs as key motivational drivers. This discussion applies Conforti's (1972) interpretation of Maslow's theory to examine how fulfilment of buyer needs can improve TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention.

Before buyers fully engage in TS experiences, exhibitors and organisers must satisfy several preconditions identified by Conforti (1972). These preconditions include freedom of expression, fairness, integrity, justice, and respect. Within TS environments, these conditions ensure that attendees feel respected, empowered, and valued. For example, exhibitors should create environments that encourage buyers to ask questions and seek product information openly without fear of embarrassment or criticism. Fair treatment through equal access to promotional offers and opportunities strengthens trust among attendees. Transparent pricing structures and organised product demonstrations also strengthen perceptions of professionalism and reliability. Failure to satisfy these preconditions may cause buyers to focus on lower-level needs rather than higher-order needs such as esteem and self-actualisation.

Physiological and Safety Needs: The Fundamentals of Engagement

Physiological and safety needs form the foundation of engagement within TS environments. Attendees require comfortable venues, refreshments, and visible safety procedures, including crowd management systems, emergency exits, and trained security personnel (Iskandar, 2016; Nurwati and Achmad, 2021). Hybrid TS environments also increase the importance of digital security. Secure registration systems and transparent data protection policies help reduce concerns about privacy breaches and misuse of personal information (Berger and Torres, 2024). Buyers also prioritise product assurance during purchasing decisions. Exhibitors can strengthen feelings of security by emphasising product warranties, certifications, reliability, and durability (Ginting, 2019; Space goats, 2024). By satisfying these foundational needs, exhibitors establish trust and create conditions that encourage deeper buyer engagement throughout the TS experience.

Belonging needs: Cultivating Relationships and Community.

Belonging needs represent the third level of Maslow's hierarchy and emphasise social interaction and community participation. TSs function as highly social environments that encourage relationship development and professional interaction. Conforti (1972) highlighted the importance of human relationships in improving productivity and engagement, underscoring the relevance of belonging in TS settings. Buyers often value opportunities to network with industry professionals and develop business relationships. Organisers can satisfy these needs by facilitating networking events, collaborative discussions, and partnership

opportunities (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Syam and Achmad, 2022). Interactive activities such as panel discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and live product demonstrations encourage collaborative learning and strengthen social interaction among attendees (Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 1995; Blue Atlas, 2024). Buyers also seek emotional alignment with brands that reflect shared values and social identity. Exhibitors can strengthen emotional connections by emphasising common goals such as sustainability, innovation, and community development (Narciso, 2024). When exhibitors satisfy Belonging needs, buyers are more likely to develop positive relationships with brands, thereby improving perceptions of TS effectiveness and strengthening PS loyalty and purchase intention.

Esteem Needs: Acknowledgement and Worth

Esteem needs play a crucial role in both employee and buyer behaviour because these needs involve self-respect, recognition, and appreciation from others. Conforti (1972) provided practical approaches for addressing esteem needs in industrial environments and TS settings. Exhibitors can acknowledge buyers' professional status and organisational influence through customised invitations, personalised greetings, and tailored product recommendations (Nurwati and Achmad, 2021). Such practices strengthen buyers' perceptions of importance and encourage stronger engagement during TS interactions. Knowledge-sharing opportunities also strengthen esteem needs. Activities such as attendee-led panels, expert discussions, and professional meet-ups allow buyers to demonstrate expertise and professional competence. Recognition of buyers' contributions strengthens positive self-image and encourages continued interaction with participating brands (Setiawan *et al.*, 2022). Exhibitors can further strengthen esteem needs by providing clear, comprehensive, and accurate product information that enables informed decision-making and reinforces buyers' confidence and competence (Thomson, 1972). In addition, exhibitors can emphasise product uniqueness, innovation, and industry leadership to enhance prestige and identity among buyers associated with the brand (Cinelli and LeBoeuf, 2019). By satisfying self-esteem needs, exhibitors increase perceived TS effectiveness and encourage buyers to support the organisation after the event, thereby strengthening loyalty and PS purchase intentions.

Self-actualisation: realising potential

Self-actualisation occupies the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy and represents the pursuit of personal growth, achievement, and fulfilment of potential. Conforti (1972) identified this level as the most productive stage for both organisations and individuals. In the TS environment, exhibitors can appeal to buyers' aspirations for growth and professional advancement through educational seminars, expert consultations, and product demonstrations. These activities position the organisation as a partner in the buyer's professional development and long-term success (Achmad and Yulianah, 2022). Innovation and collaboration also support self-actualisation needs. Exhibitors can create opportunities for attendees to exchange ideas, participate in product customisation, and contribute suggestions regarding product development. Interactive booths and collaborative demonstrations encourage creativity and increase buyers' sense of ownership and involvement (Blue Atlas, 2024). Furthermore, exhibitors can support autonomy and independence by allowing buyers to explore products at a preferred pace and access digital resources for independent evaluation and learning (Plekhanov *et al.*, 2023). Buyers who perceive TS participation as an opportunity for growth and achievement are more likely to engage actively, evaluate the event positively, and demonstrate stronger PS purchase intentions.

The application of Maslow's theory to TS effectiveness underscores the importance of comprehensively addressing buyer requirements. Each level of the hierarchy contributes to perceived value, beginning with physiological and safety needs and extending to higher-order needs such as Belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation. Exhibitors who address these needs through carefully designed TS experiences create environments in which buyers feel respected, informed, confident, and empowered. Such experiences strengthen initial perceptions of TS effectiveness while also encouraging long-term loyalty and future purchasing behaviour. For example, buyers who perceive fulfilment of social and esteem needs during a TS are more likely to recommend the brand within affiliated organisations, which aligns with Edelman and Singer's (2015) Loyalty Loop model. Similarly, experiences that support self-actualisation encourage repeated participation because buyers perceive the TS as a valuable platform for professional advancement, consistent with Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) customer experience framework.

Conforti's (1972) interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy within industrial settings provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and satisfying buyer needs in B2B TS

environments. By establishing conditions of liberty, fairness, integrity, and professionalism, exhibitors can create meaningful experiences that improve perceived TS effectiveness and strengthen enduring buyer loyalty and PS purchase intention. The framework also demonstrates how emotional, social, and psychological factors shape buyer behaviour in industrial markets.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs continues to influence numerous academic fields, including psychology, organisational behaviour, healthcare, human resource management, and consumer marketing. Despite the theory's influence, researchers continue to criticise the theory on several grounds. Graham and Messner (1998) identified three major criticisms: the limited empirical evidence supporting Maslow's assumptions, the tendency to evaluate all individuals uniformly, and the attempt to categorise all human needs within a single hierarchical structure. Yang (2003) further argued that Maslow's framework inadequately addresses cultural differences because cultures interpret and express needs differently. Individualistic societies often prioritise self-oriented achievement and independence, whereas collectivistic societies place greater emphasis on social relationships and group identity. Consequently, researchers must acknowledge cultural differences when applying Maslow's hierarchy in professional and organisational contexts. Nevertheless, studies conducted in similar cultural environments continue to yield valuable insights into human needs and motivation.

Consumer behaviour research also challenges the strict hierarchical arrangement proposed by Maslow. Studies indicate that consumers frequently purchase branded products to satisfy higher-order needs such as esteem, identity, and social recognition even when lower-level needs remain partially unmet (Asamoah *et al.*, 2011). Researchers also demonstrate that the importance of different needs varies considerably among individuals (Seeley, 1992). Marketing scholars and practitioners therefore use Maslow's hierarchy flexibly to analyse buyer motivations and design marketing strategies. Tikkanen (2007), for example, examined how marketing activities align with different categories of needs. Marketing campaigns for food safety and security conferences often emphasise safety-related concerns, whereas vineyard promotions frequently emphasise Belonging, prestige, and social interaction. Dennis (2005) similarly identified motivational patterns in shopping mall behaviour that resemble Maslow's hierarchy, with consumers displaying both lower-order and higher-order motivations during purchasing decisions. Within industrial organisations, Maslow's framework continues to make a significant contribution to studies of employee motivation and organisational behaviour.

However, the existing literature does not adequately connect B2B buyer behaviour at TSs with Maslow's hierarchy of needs in emerging-market contexts. This gap highlights the relevance of the present research.

2.1.9 Hypotheses Development

Motivational theory, particularly Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, grounds this research and posits that the desire to satisfy progressively higher-order needs, such as safety and security, a sense of belonging, and self-esteem, drives human behaviour (Maslow, 1943). In the context of business-to-business (B2B) TSs within Zambia's food processing industry, these needs shape how buyers evaluate experiences and translate insights into behavioural intentions. TSs are not merely transactional platforms but experiential environments where psychological need fulfilment influences both perceived effectiveness and post-show purchase decisions (Sarmiento and Simões, 2018, 2019).

Buyer Needs and Perceived Trade Show (TS) Effectiveness

Perceived TS effectiveness reflects the extent to which buyers believe the exhibition meets expectations of information acquisition, networking, and value creation. Drawing from experiential marketing and relationship marketing perspectives (Sarmiento and Simões, 2019), the satisfaction of buyer needs during the event plays a central role in shaping these evaluations.

Satisfaction of safety and security needs plays a critical role in shaping buyers' perceptions of TS effectiveness. In industrial markets, perceived risk and uncertainty can hinder engagement, making assurance mechanisms such as product quality guarantees, credible information, and secure environments essential (Blythe, 2002; Hansen, 2004). When buyers feel safe and secure, greater interaction with exhibitors becomes more likely, along with more effective information processing and a more positive event evaluation. This assumption aligns with relationship marketing theory, which emphasises trust and risk reduction as key drivers of positive evaluations (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

- **H1:** There is a positive relationship between buyer's satisfaction with safety and security needs and buyer's perceived trade show effectiveness at a food industry exhibition.

- **H0₁:** There is no significant relationship between satisfaction of safety and security needs and the buyer's perceived trade show effectiveness.

Belonging needs, which encompass social interaction and a sense of inclusion, also influence how buyers perceive TS effectiveness. TSs serve as networking platforms where participants initiate and strengthen relationships, facilitating knowledge exchange and partnership development (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017; Sarmiento and Simões, 2019). When buyers feel a sense of connection with exhibitors and peers, buyers are more likely to perceive the event as engaging and valuable. This assumption reflects the principles of experiential marketing, where social and relational experiences enhance perceived value (Sarmiento and Simões, 2018, 2019).

- **H2:** There is a positive relationship between buyer's fulfilment of Belonging needs and buyer's perceived trade show effectiveness at a food industry exhibition.
- **H0₂:** There is no significant relationship between fulfilment of Belonging needs and buyer's perceived trade show effectiveness.

Esteem and confidence needs further contribute to buyer's evaluations of TS effectiveness. Opportunities for professional recognition, learning, and competence development (such as product demonstrations and expert interactions) enhance buyer's confidence in decision-making abilities (Mudie and Pirrie, 2006; Lee and Kim, 2008). When buyers feel confident and competent, buyers are more likely to perceive the event as beneficial and effective. This assumption is consistent with motivational theory, which suggests that higher-order need satisfaction leads to more favourable evaluations of experiences (Maslow, 1954).

- **H3:** There is a positive relationship between buyer's satisfaction with self-esteem and confidence needs and buyer's perceived trade show effectiveness at a food industry exhibition.
- **H0₃:** There is no significant relationship between satisfaction of esteem and confidence needs and buyer's perceived trade show effectiveness.

Buyer Needs and Post-Show (PS) Purchase Intentions

PS purchase intention refers to the likelihood that buyers will engage in purchasing behaviour after participating in a TS. Behavioural intention models and organisational buying theory

show that cognitive evaluations and emotional experiences during the event shape intentions (Essien and Udo-Imeh, 2013).

Safety and security needs also influence the buyer's purchase intention. In B2B settings, purchase decisions are often associated with high levels of risk, making trust and assurance critical determinants (Godar and O'Connor, 2001; Brown *et al.*, 2011). When buyers perceive that TSs meet safety needs, confidence and trust in exhibitors are more likely to develop, which, in turn, leads to post-event purchase decisions. This assumption supports the view that risk reduction enhances behavioural intentions (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

- **H4:** There is a positive relationship between buyer's satisfaction with safety and security needs and buyer's post-show purchase intention at a food industry exhibition.
- **H0a:** There is no significant relationship between satisfaction of safety and security needs and the buyer's post-show purchase intention.

Belonging needs contribute to post-show purchase intentions through relationship-building and trust development (Quero and Ventura, 2015). Strong interpersonal interactions and networking opportunities at TSs foster long-term relationships and promote customer loyalty, both of which are central to B2B marketing (Kapoor and Mohan Joshi, 2024). When buyers feel socially connected and valued within the TS environment, buyers are more likely to engage in future transactions with exhibitors.

- **H5:** There is a positive relationship between buyer's fulfilment of Belonging needs and buyer's post-show purchase intention at a food industry exhibition.
- **H0s:** There is no significant relationship between fulfilment of Belonging needs and buyer's post-show purchase intention.

Finally, self-esteem and confidence influence the likelihood of PS purchases by enhancing perceived competence and decision-making confidence (Razmus and Laguna, 2024). Buyers who feel knowledgeable, respected, and professionally validated during the TS are more inclined to act on evaluations and commit to purchasing (Bandura, 1997). This assumption reflects the role of self-efficacy in shaping behavioural intentions, where increased confidence leads to stronger purchase commitment.

- **H6:** There is a positive relationship between buyer's satisfaction with self-esteem and confidence needs and buyer's post-show purchase intention at a food industry exhibition.
- **H0:** There is no significant relationship between satisfaction of esteem and confidence needs and buyer's post-show purchase intention.

Overall, the hypotheses suggest that the fulfilment of safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem needs significantly influence both perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention, reinforcing the applicability of motivational theory in explaining buyer behaviour within Zambia's food industry TS context. Maslow's (1943) needs theory also stimulates the development of alternative motivational frameworks. Herzberg's (1959) hygiene-motivation theory and Alderfer's (1969) Existence, Relatedness, and Growth (ERG) theory emerge as competing perspectives that challenge and refine Maslow's original hierarchy while maintaining emphasis on human needs and motivation within organisational settings.

2.1.10 Alderfer's ERG Theory of Motivation

Alderfer (1969) developed the ERG (Existence, Relatedness, and Growth) theory over several years by extending Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Caulton, 2012). The theory treats human motivation as a flexible continuum rather than a rigid sequence. Unlike traditional hierarchical models that assume individuals satisfy lower needs before higher ones, ERG theory recognises that people pursue multiple needs simultaneously, depending on context and personal priorities. Managers, therefore, cannot motivate individuals by focusing on a single need category, since motivation often reflects overlapping and shifting demands.

The Need Types Group illustrates how researchers reshape Maslow's five-level hierarchy into Alderfer's three broader categories. Existence, Relatedness, and Growth replace physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation needs (Maharjan, 2018). While Maslow's theory relies heavily on observational insight and clinical interpretation, empirical research offers limited consistent support for the theory's rigid structure. In contrast, scholars often describe ERG theory as more adaptable and empirically practical in organisational and behavioural studies (Says *et al.*, 2016; University of Michigan, 2017). Alderfer (1969) therefore strengthens motivational theory by simplifying categories while increasing flexibility.

Alderfer (1969) links existence needs to Maslow's (1943) physiological and safety needs, relatedness needs to belonging and aspects of esteem, and growth needs to self-esteem and self-actualisation. However, unlike Maslow's sequential model, ERG theory allows individuals to move between needs in any order. People may pursue growth while still working to satisfy basic survival or relational needs. This simultaneous operation of needs provides a more realistic explanation of human behaviour in dynamic environments such as workplaces and trade interactions. Both Maslow (1943) and Alderfer (1969) agree that need satisfaction influences motivation, but Alderfer (1969) removes the assumption of strict progression.

A key component of ERG theory involves frustration–regression. When individuals fail to satisfy higher-level needs, the individuals often return focus to lower-level needs to reduce frustration (English, 2019). This mechanism explains why individuals may abandon higher aspirations temporarily when obstacles arise. Instead of progressing in a linear direction, motivation shifts in response to satisfaction and barriers. Mukhtar (2010) further argues that individuals prioritise needs based on urgency and environmental conditions rather than a fixed hierarchy. This flexibility strengthens ERG theory as a practical tool for understanding real-world motivation.

Alderfer (1969) therefore refines Maslow's hierarchy into a more fluid framework consisting of existence, relatedness, and growth needs (Klan, 2014). Individuals do not follow a predetermined order; instead, individuals shift between needs depending on circumstances. This adaptability makes ERG theory particularly useful in organisational, marketing, and consumer behaviour contexts, where individuals often face competing motivations simultaneously. Organisations apply ERG theory to understand employee behaviour, improve satisfaction, and enhance performance outcomes.

Caulton (2012) explains that organisations use ERG theory to interpret job satisfaction, analyse motivation, and improve interpersonal relationships in the workplace. The model helps managers understand how different needs influence behaviour and how unmet needs affect performance. ERG theory, therefore, improves organisational effectiveness by recognising that motivation depends on a combination of psychological, social, and environmental influences rather than a single linear progression.

Existence needs include fundamental physiological and safety requirements such as food, shelter, rest, clothing, comfort, and protection from physical or psychological harm (Yang *et al.*, 2011). In TS environments, existence needs shape how exhibitors design physical and informational settings. Exhibitors must provide clear product information, including specifications, pricing, and benefits, so that buyers make informed decisions (Ahani *et al.*, 2013). Comfort also plays an essential role. Organisers and exhibitors can improve engagement by providing seating areas, refreshments, accessible booth layouts, and safe movement spaces within the exhibition environment (Sugandhi, 2003). These features ensure that attendees focus on engagement rather than discomfort or confusion.

Relatedness needs involve social interaction, belonging, trust, and emotional connection. These needs include relationships with colleagues, professional networks, and broader social groups (Yang *et al.*, 2011). In TS environments, relatedness becomes central because exhibitions function as interactive social platforms rather than passive display spaces. Exhibitors strengthen relatedness by training staff to communicate effectively, engage politely, and build rapport with visitors. Active engagement encourages meaningful interaction between buyers and exhibitors, which often influences purchasing decisions. Buyers frequently seek a personal connection and trust before committing to a transaction (Sugandhi, 2003).

Networking activities such as seminars, workshops, and structured meetings further support relatedness needs by creating opportunities for collaboration and information exchange (Mudie and Pirrie, 2006). TS organisers also design social spaces that encourage informal conversations among participants. These interactions build trust, strengthen professional relationships, and enhance the overall experience. When exhibitors successfully meet relatedness needs, the exhibitors increase buyer engagement, improve satisfaction, and strengthen long-term loyalty toward brands.

Growth needs represent the highest level of ERG theory and include self-development, creativity, achievement, and self-actualisation. These needs reflect an individual's desire to improve skills, achieve personal goals, and contribute meaningfully to professional or organisational outcomes. In TS contexts, exhibitors address growth needs through educational and developmental activities. These include seminars, technical demonstrations, expert discussions, and interactive learning sessions that expand buyer knowledge (Achmad and

Yulianah, 2022). Such activities position TSs not only as commercial platforms but also as learning environments.

Exhibitors also support growth needs by demonstrating how products or services contribute to innovation, efficiency, or business expansion. Buyers engage more deeply when buyers see opportunities for improvement or transformation within the organisations. Interactive booths, product customisation opportunities, and collaborative idea-sharing platforms further enhance growth experiences (Blue Atlas, 2024). These features encourage creativity and allow buyers to participate actively in shaping solutions rather than simply observing.

Alderfer (1989) emphasises that all three need categories can operate simultaneously. Individuals often seek to satisfy existence, relatedness, and growth needs simultaneously. For example, a TS attendee may seek comfort (existence), build professional relationships (relatedness), and acquire knowledge (growth) within the same event. This simultaneous interaction of needs makes ERG theory highly relevant for understanding complex environments such as trade exhibitions. This theory allows exhibitors to develop strategies that address multiple motivational drivers simultaneously, thereby improving engagement and satisfaction.

Aligning TS strategies with ERG theory enables exhibitors to create more holistic experiences. When exhibitors address informational needs, social interaction, and personal development together, the exhibitors improve overall buyer experience. This integrated approach strengthens engagement, increases perceived value, and enhances the likelihood of post-show purchasing behaviour. ERG theory, therefore, provides a practical framework for improving TS effectiveness by addressing layered human motivations.

McClelland's Theory of Needs complements ERG theory by focusing on achievement, affiliation, and power as key motivators (Klan, 2014). Both theories enhance understanding of workplace motivation and organisational behaviour. However, ERG theory offers greater flexibility by recognising that needs can coexist and change dynamically over time. Researchers apply both theories across sociology, psychology, and business studies to explain motivation in diverse contexts. Klan (2014) notes that organisational structures, incentives, and workplace culture influence how individuals respond to needs. Job satisfaction emerges as an

emotional response to these conditions, and these emotions directly shape behaviour and performance.

Overall, ERG theory provides a more adaptable and realistic explanation of human motivation compared to rigid hierarchical models. In TS environments, the theory helps explain how buyers and exhibitors interact through overlapping needs that involve survival, social connection, and personal development. By addressing these needs simultaneously, organisations improve engagement, strengthen relationships, and increase the effectiveness of TS participation.

2.1.11 Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory

In 1959, Frederick Herzberg developed the Two-Factor Theory, which separates workplace influences into two categories: intrinsic motivation factors and extrinsic hygiene factors. Herzberg (1959) based his findings on responses from 200 engineers and accountants in the United States, identifying patterns linking job satisfaction and dissatisfaction to distinct sets of conditions. Motivation factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, personal growth, advancement, and the nature of work drive job satisfaction. In contrast, hygiene factors such as salary, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, and organisational policies mainly prevent dissatisfaction rather than create satisfaction (Robbins, 2009).

Herzberg (1959) argues that improving hygiene factors alone does not increase satisfaction or performance. Instead, organisations must strengthen motivation factors to improve productivity and engagement. Herzberg's theory of work satisfaction explains how both job content and job context influence employee attitudes (Herzberg, 1959, 1966). Herzberg (1959) distinguishes between the workplace environment, which influences dissatisfaction, and the job itself, which generates satisfaction. Vroom (1964) defines motivation as a drive derived from the Latin *movere*, meaning "to move," and explains motivation as an internal force that pushes individuals toward goal achievement. Schulze and Steyn (2003) emphasise that managers must understand employee motivation to improve productivity and performance in organisational settings.

Robbins (2001) argues that when organisations satisfy individual needs, employees increase effort toward organisational goals. Motivation theories, therefore, help explain employee behaviour and workplace attitudes. These theories include content theories, which propose that

human needs drive behaviour (Weaver, 1988; Rowley, 1996). Within this category, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory aligns closely with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, particularly in distinguishing between lower-level hygiene factors and higher-level motivational factors.

Maslow's (1943) theory connects to Herzberg's (1959) framework because both models distinguish between basic and higher-order needs. Herzberg (1959) extends this idea by arguing that hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction but do not generate motivation or improved performance. Only motivation factors such as meaningful work, achievement, and recognition drive satisfaction and long-term productivity. Therefore, organisations that improve only external conditions may reduce dissatisfaction without necessarily generating higher levels of motivation.

Herzberg's (1959) model hypothesises that a comfortable working environment improves employee satisfaction only up to a point. However, comfort does not generate higher motivation or increased effort. When organisations fail to meet hygiene factors, employees experience dissatisfaction. When organisations satisfy these factors, employees only reach a neutral state rather than satisfaction. Motivation arises only when organisations fulfil intrinsic psychological needs related to achievement, growth, and recognition (Robbins, 2001).

Herzberg's (1959) theory also highlights the independence of the two factors. Hygiene factors and motivation factors do not operate on a single continuum. Instead, hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction, while motivation factors create satisfaction. In the absence of motivation factors, employees do not necessarily feel dissatisfied, but employees do not feel motivated either. Conversely, motivation factors alone cannot compensate for poor hygiene conditions. This dual structure explains why organisations must address both sets of factors to achieve optimal performance outcomes.

Practical Applications in TS Effectiveness and Buyer Perceptions

Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory provides a useful lens for understanding TS effectiveness, particularly in relation to buyer motivation and engagement. In TS environments, hygiene factors and motivation factors influence how buyers perceive the overall experience and evaluate participation. Conforti (1972) and Mudie and Pirrie (2006) argue that recognition and positive interpersonal treatment enhance participants' appreciation of events. In TS

contexts, exhibitors who acknowledge buyers, offer respectful engagement, and create meaningful interactions improve perceived event quality.

Motivation factors such as learning opportunities, professional development, and recognition also influence buyer satisfaction. Workshops, product demonstrations, keynote sessions, and interactive discussions provide attendees with knowledge and skills. These experiences increase engagement and improve perceptions of value. Herzberg's model suggests that these factors strengthen positive attitudes toward TS participation by addressing intrinsic psychological needs, such as achievement and growth.

Hygiene factors also play a critical role in TS effectiveness. Ahani, Gilaninia and Shirsavar (2013) highlight that environmental conditions such as venue quality, staff behaviour, scheduling reliability, and logistical organisation influence visitor satisfaction. In TS settings, these hygiene factors include accessible venues, clear signage, adequate seating, safety measures, and professional staff behaviour. When exhibitors fail to meet these basic expectations, attendees experience dissatisfaction, regardless of the quality of exhibits or presentations.

However, hygiene factors alone do not increase engagement or motivation. Instead, hygiene factors prevent negative experiences that could reduce participation. For example, poor organisation or uncomfortable conditions discourage attendance, but excellent organisation alone does not guarantee strong engagement or purchase intention. Motivation factors must complement hygiene conditions to create a meaningful and productive experience for buyers.

Herzberg's (1959) theory, therefore, explains why TS effectiveness depends on a balance between environmental quality and experiential value. Hygiene factors create a stable foundation for participation, while motivation factors drive deeper engagement, satisfaction, and behavioural outcomes such as post-show purchase intention. Exhibitors who combine both elements improve overall TS performance and increase the likelihood of long-term buyer relationships.

2.1.12 Industrial Buying Process

Hedonistic and utilitarian shopping represent distinct shopping experiences (Babin *et al.*, 1994). Pleasure drives hedonistic purchasing, while practicality and utility drive utilitarian buying. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) argue that hedonic experiences remain more

individualised compared to the execution of pragmatic purchasing activities. In contrast, utilitarian behaviour reflects structured goal achievement rather than emotional gratification. The consumer mind-set model holds that rational, task-oriented behaviour guides pragmatic purchase decisions (Batra and Ahtola, 1990). In B2B settings, procedural frameworks structure transaction processes and position buyers as primarily pragmatic decision-makers.

However, the B2B ecosystem also contains human motivations that influence decision-making. Buyers do not rely solely on rational evaluation; personal drivers also shape behaviour. Risk mitigation is a key motivator, as buyers avoid decisions that may damage professional reputation or organisational outcomes. This motivation links directly to safety and security needs, which Maslow (1943) classifies as the second level of his hierarchy. Problem-solving also motivates buyers, as individuals often seek satisfaction from resolving complex industrial or organisational challenges. This process reflects personal achievement and cognitive engagement in purchasing decisions.

Professional recognition further influences buyer behaviour. Successful purchasing outcomes generate respect and esteem within professional networks, encouraging individuals to pursue high-performance decisions. This motivator aligns with Maslow's fourth level of self-esteem needs, which includes both internal confidence and external recognition. In addition, alignment with organisational goals also motivates buyers. Individuals often pursue purchase decisions that support broader strategic objectives within the organisation. This alignment strengthens a sense of belonging and reflects Maslow's third level, which emphasises social integration and organisational connection (Lippke and Plotnikoff, 2009).

Research on buyer behaviour and customer experience continues to evolve the understanding of the buyer journey. Early studies focused on transactional interactions between buyers and sellers and treated purchasing as a single event. However, more recent research recognises purchasing as a multi-stage process that involves multiple touchpoints, interactions, and decision influences over time (Steward *et al.*, 2019). As understanding of buyer mind-sets improves, researchers increasingly acknowledge that both rational evaluation and psychological needs shape purchasing behaviour in B2B contexts.

2.2 Empirical Review

This section examines the literature on TS effectiveness and basic motivation theories, including Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory, and Herzberg (1959) Two-Factor Theory. Each paradigm offers distinct viewpoints on the factors influencing human and organisational motivations, ranging from hierarchical needs to the adaptability of concurrent need satisfaction and from internal vs extrinsic motivators. The section examines empirical research across many industries, emphasising how these ideas influence perceptions of TS effectiveness, work satisfaction, and employee engagement. Theories reveal the dynamic interplay of motivational elements, offering essential insight for improving engagement and happiness in TSs and broader organisational settings.

2.2.1 Empirical Review of Higher-Order Needs in Event Contexts

Several studies provide empirical support for the relevance of Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs (safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem) in event settings. Walters *et al.* (2017) examine the influence of fandom on Olympic tourists' risk perceptions and attendance intentions. The findings show that strong psychological attachment to the Olympic Games reduces perceived risks, such as terrorism and civil unrest, and increases willingness to attend. Similarly, Mbaze-Eboka *et al.* (2025) demonstrate that safety significantly influences attendees' satisfaction at events in Cross River State, Nigeria. The authors emphasise the importance of risk assessment, crowd management, emergency preparedness, and security measures in enhancing attendee experiences. Together, these studies show that perceptions of safety play a critical role in shaping event evaluations, satisfaction, and participation decisions.

Woojin and Haeyoon (2021) find that socialisation motivation positively influences festival attendees' experiences and satisfaction, suggesting that opportunities for social interaction and connection contribute to favourable event evaluations. Likewise, Ahmed, Eshwekh and Emarzugi (2020) identify networking as an important conference attribute that influences attendee satisfaction, highlighting the significance of interpersonal relationships and belongingness in event participation. These findings indicate that event participants seek opportunities to establish and strengthen social connections, thereby satisfying participants' sense of belonging needs.

Studies also support the importance of self-esteem needs in event contexts. Tsai-fa (2020) demonstrates that perceived value and event satisfaction enhance event attachment and revisit intentions. The study suggests that participation in cultural events fulfils attendees' desires for recognition, personal enrichment, and achievement. Similarly, Walters *et al.* (2017) show that strong identification with the Olympic Games influences attendance intentions despite perceived risks, indicating that attachment to prestigious events reinforces self-image and personal esteem. Collectively, these studies suggest that belongingness and self-esteem needs significantly shape event satisfaction, attachment, loyalty, and behavioural intentions.

2.2.2 Empirical review of TS effectiveness literature

A review of research on TS effectiveness reveals established empirical findings and clear gaps that warrant further investigation, particularly from the buyer's perspective. Historically, scholars viewed TSs as integrated marketing tools that combined advertising, personal selling, and direct marketing functions (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995; Blythe, 1999b; Smith *et al.*, 2004). However, more recent research increasingly recognises that TSs function as complex service environments where attendee satisfaction, interaction quality, and perceived effectiveness determine overall success (Schneider, 1980; Munuera and Ruiz, 1999). This section evaluates empirical studies on TS effectiveness measurement, exhibitor and visitor participation, and evolving assessment criteria, while highlighting theoretical inconsistencies and underexplored areas.

Evaluation of Empirical Research

Researchers conduct extensive TS studies, but most investigations focus on exhibitors' objectives and performance outcomes. Scholars consistently examine booth design, branding strategies, interaction techniques, product displays, and staff performance as key drivers of exhibitor effectiveness (Kindt, 1993; Spruss, 1998). These elements show strong relationships with exhibitor satisfaction and perceived return on investment, especially when firms define clear objectives before participation (Kerin and Cron, 1987; Sharland and Balogh, 1996). Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1995), together with Smith, Hama and Smith (2003), demonstrate that exhibitors who set clear goals before attending TSs achieve stronger performance outcomes and higher returns. However, this exhibitor-centric focus limits understanding of how buyers experience TSs and how buyers' perceptions influence effectiveness.

Blythe (1999a, 2002) and Hansen (2004) extend TS research by examining attendee behaviour and show that exhibitors and visitors often enter TSs without clearly defined objectives. This lack of goal-setting creates misalignment between exhibitor offerings and buyer expectations, which reduces overall effectiveness. In addition, traditional TS research prioritises performance indicators such as lead generation, booth traffic, and conversion efficiency. While these indicators capture exhibitor outcomes, the same indicators do not fully reflect buyer satisfaction, motivation, or experiential value.

Godar and O'Connor (2001) address this limitation by applying a shopping mall segmentation model to TS environments. Godar and O'Connor's (2001) approach demonstrates that understanding visitor motivation improves targeting strategies and enhances both exhibitor and organiser performance. Reinhold, Reinhold and Schmitz (2010) examine exhibitor satisfaction in B2B TS contexts and identify key service attributes that shape satisfaction levels. The researchers' findings help organisers refine service delivery and strengthen long-term relationships with exhibitors.

Kirchgeorg, Springer and Kastner (2010) also focus on the exhibitor perspective and examine how firms define participation objectives in TSs. Kirchgeorg, Springer and Kastner's (2010) research shows that aligning objectives with measurable outcomes improves efficiency and resource allocation. Gottlieb, Brown and Drennan (2011) investigate the relationship between perceived TS service quality and post-show purchase intention. Gottlieb, Brown and Drennan's (2011) findings confirm that TSs function not only as promotional platforms but also as strategic investments that influence future purchasing behaviour.

Çobanoglu and Turaeva (2014) examine TS effectiveness across pre-show, at-show, and post-show phases. The research demonstrates that TS outcomes depend on coordinated activities across all participation stages. This temporal approach strengthens understanding of TS effectiveness by showing that success depends on continuous engagement rather than isolated event performance. Firms that integrate planning, execution, and follow-up activities achieve stronger overall outcomes.

Hlee *et al.* (2017) explore visitor perceptions of intelligent information systems in modern TS environments. The research applies information system acceptance theory and shows that digital technologies enhance visitor engagement and improve perceived event effectiveness.

Lin, Jiang and Kerstetter (2018) propose a comprehensive VEO framework that simultaneously evaluates TS performance from exhibitors, visitors, and organisers. This model strengthens TS evaluation by integrating multiple stakeholder perspectives and linking satisfaction across all groups.

Guerrero, Burgos and Fernandez (2020) examine the organiser perspective and identify service quality gaps that affect exhibitor satisfaction. The findings help organisers improve operational efficiency and increase participation rates. Vitali *et al.* (2022) analyse the role of technology in TS environments and show that digital transformation enhances visitor experience and improves performance measurement. The research identifies three key dimensions: technological integration, enhanced visitor experience, and improved performance metrics. The results demonstrate that technology plays a central role in modern TS effectiveness.

Deficiencies in Research

Despite extensive TS research, a significant gap remains in understanding the buyer perspective, particularly in B2B contexts in an emerging market (Tafesse and Korneliussen, 2011; Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017; Sarmiento and Simões, 2018). Most studies concentrate on exhibitors and organisers, while buyer motivations, expectations, and satisfaction receive limited attention. This imbalance restricts a full understanding of TS effectiveness as a co-created outcome between exhibitors and buyers.

Many studies examine booth design, branding, staffing, and interaction quality, but these studies rarely connect these factors to buyer psychology or purchase intention. As a result, existing research explains exhibitor success more effectively than the research explains buyer decision-making processes (Blythe, 2002). This limitation creates a gap between operational performance measures and actual buyer experiences.

In addition, very few studies apply motivation theories to TS research. Tafesse and Skallerud (2017) review 45 TS effectiveness related studies published between 1980 and 2014 and find that none use motivation theory as a guiding framework. This absence limits understanding of how psychological factors such as belonging, esteem, and safety influence buyer behaviour in TS environments. The gap becomes more significant in emerging markets, where buyer behaviour differs from that in developed economies due to economic, cultural, and institutional variations.

Furthermore, TS research rarely integrates multi-theoretical perspectives to explain buyer behaviour. Most studies rely on marketing or service quality frameworks while ignoring psychological motivation models that explain internal decision-making processes. This narrow theoretical focus limits the development of a holistic understanding of TS effectiveness, especially in contexts where buyers participate for both rational and emotional reasons.

Another limitation concerns methodological focus. Many studies rely on exhibitor-reported data rather than direct buyer insights, introducing bias into effectiveness evaluations. This approach prioritises organisational outcomes while overlooking experiential dimensions such as trust, satisfaction, and perceived value. As a result, the measurement of TS effectiveness remains incomplete.

Finally, limited research examines the effectiveness of TSs in emerging markets. Most existing studies focus on developed economies where market structures, buyer behaviour, and institutional frameworks differ significantly. This gap restricts generalisability and limits understanding of how TSs function in contexts such as Zambia's food processing industry, where buyers face unique economic and informational constraints.

Across the literature, researchers consistently identify TSs as important marketing platforms, yet rarely integrate buyer needs, psychological motivations, and contextual variation into a unified framework. This omission restricts theoretical development and limits practical insights for improving TS design and effectiveness.

Discrepancies and Inconsistencies in the Literature

Empirical research reveals discrepancies in the perceived goals and effectiveness of TSs between B2B and B2C contexts. Berne and García-Uceda (2008) show that B2B TSs frequently prioritise objectives such as relationship building, information exchange, and product promotion. In contrast, B2C TSs primarily emphasise customer interaction and retail transactions, creating a more accessible, consumer-oriented atmosphere. Despite these differences, Blythe (1999a) argues that consumers who attend B2C TSs rarely participate with explicit objectives or direct purchase intentions. This finding contradicts the traditional exhibitor expectation that TS participation should immediately generate sales. The mismatch suggests that exhibitors' expectations do not always align with attendees' actual motivations

and experiences, especially in environments where professional and personal motives simultaneously shape consumer behaviour.

Research also identifies inconsistencies in the criteria used to evaluate TS effectiveness. Gopalakrishna and Lilien (1995), together with Hansen (2004), focus on behavioural and outcome-based performance measures such as lead generation, booth traffic, and post-event sales. Although these measures provide valuable operational insights, the same measures do not adequately capture buyer satisfaction or emotional responses to the TS environment. Factors such as safety and security, sense of belonging, recognition, and self-esteem influence attendees' experiences and shape perceptions of effectiveness. Schneider (1980) and Severt (2002) emphasise the importance of customer experience within service-oriented environments. Mills (1990) and Munuera and Ruiz (1999) reinforce this perspective by arguing that TS environments function similarly to service environments in which attendee interaction strongly influences perceived success.

This perspective characterises TSs as experiential rather than purely transactional events and challenges the dominance of traditional sales-oriented metrics. Scholars increasingly advocate broader evaluation frameworks that incorporate buyer-centred indicators such as satisfaction, engagement, and relationship quality. Sarmiento, Simões and Farhangmehr (2015) support this position by arguing that transactional approaches no longer adequately reflect contemporary business environments. The research identifies a shift from transactional marketing toward relationship marketing, where long-term interaction and engagement become central to TS success. This transition encourages exhibitors and organisers to focus not only on immediate sales outcomes but also on trust building, networking opportunities, and customer loyalty development.

Alternative Viewpoints on TS Effectiveness

Several researchers highlight the experiential and service-oriented nature of TSs and propose alternative frameworks for assessing effectiveness. Munuera and Ruiz (1999) argue that TSs resemble service industries because success depends on effective organisation and high-quality interaction between attendees and the event environment. Schneider (1980) and Severt (2002) also emphasise customer experience as a critical determinant of perceived TS effectiveness. The researchers argue that both visitors and employees in service settings share similar

expectations regarding service quality, responsiveness, and interaction. Positive experiences, therefore, contribute significantly to favourable evaluations of TS participation.

This perspective encourages scholars such as Smith, Hama and Smith (2003) to investigate how attendance objectives influence visitors' intentions to revisit TSs. The findings strengthen the argument that factors beyond immediate sales outcomes shape TS performance. Repeat attendance, relationship development, information acquisition, and positive event experiences increasingly represent important measures of effectiveness. Sarmiento and Simões (2019) further argue that researchers should evaluate TS effectiveness by considering attendees' personal experiences, direct participation, and satisfaction with event offerings. Sarmiento and Simões (2019) perspective broadens the assessment framework beyond sales performance and operational efficiency. A comprehensive evaluation approach should therefore integrate both exhibitor and buyer viewpoints.

This broader perspective becomes particularly important in industries such as food processing, where buyers attend TSs not only to make purchases but also to identify reliable suppliers, gather market information, compare products, and establish long-term business relationships. Buyers in these contexts frequently seek assurance regarding product quality, consistency, and organisational credibility before making purchasing decisions. Consequently, exhibitors who create engaging and informative experiences may achieve stronger long-term outcomes than exhibitors who focus solely on immediate sales generation.

Implications for Future Investigation

The literature review identifies several implications for future research on TS effectiveness, particularly regarding buyer needs and purchase intentions. One major deficiency is the limited use of motivation theories, such as Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, and Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory, in TS research. Researchers rarely apply these theories to examine how psychological and emotional needs influence buyer behaviour during TS participation. Understanding how buyers' individual needs shape perceptions of TS effectiveness may provide important insights into the experiences that influence PS purchase intention.

Future studies should also investigate differences between B2B and B2C TSs from a buyer-centred perspective. Professional buyers and retail consumers often possess different

expectations, motivations, and decision-making processes. Examining these differences may improve understanding of how various attendee groups evaluate satisfaction and effectiveness. Furthermore, Zambia's food processing sector provides a distinctive context for examining TS effectiveness, as this sector combines local economic constraints with increasing demand for regional and international trade opportunities. Research conducted in Zambia and similar emerging markets may therefore provide contextual insights into how regional buyer needs and exhibitor objectives shape perceptions of effectiveness.

2.2.3 Empirical Examination of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Empirical investigations of Maslow's (1943) motivation theory in industrial settings offer a comprehensive yet disjointed perspective on the theory's relevance. Despite widespread recognition of Maslow's hierarchy, research has struggled to validate the theory's applicability in work environments. In contrast, the theory's universality across cultures and job functions remains a topic of discussion. This empirical review rigorously assesses studies examining Maslow's hierarchy within industrial contexts, emphasising research deficiencies, inconsistencies, and methodological challenges. Furthermore, various frameworks, such as Alderfer's (1969) ERG model, offer contrasting insights into the organisation and progression of human needs, especially across varied employment settings.

Comprehensive Evaluation of Empirical Research

Early Industrial Applications and Hierarchy Validation

Huizinga (1970) and Hall and Nougaim (1968) provide a fundamental basis for evaluating Maslow's hierarchy in occupational environments. Hall and Nougaim (1968) conducted one of the earliest empirical evaluations of Maslow's theory within an industrial framework, using longitudinal research to determine whether employees' needs progress in accordance with Maslow's proposed hierarchy. Nevertheless, the findings were ambiguous, revealing limited relationships between need fulfilment and need strength. The research introduced an alternative "career stages" model, positing that needs develop in accordance with job advancement rather than rigidly following Maslow's hierarchy. This model asserts that safety and security needs prevail during the initial career stages. However, esteem and self-actualisation gain prominence as employees progress through their careers, challenging the strict linear progression of Maslow's hierarchy.

Huizinga (1970) analyses Maslow's hierarchy within workplace contexts and finds that lower-order needs (e.g., physiological and safety needs) are more critical for employees in subordinate jobs, while higher-order needs (e.g., self-actualisation) are less important in management positions. Huizinga's research indicates that job positions and occupational levels significantly influence employees' priorities, suggesting that Maslow's hierarchy may not be universally applicable across organisational frameworks. These findings offer essential insights but do not completely disprove Maslow's paradigm, underscoring the need for further research into the effects of the workplace environment on motivational requirements.

Challenges to Self-actualisation in Industrial Settings

Some researchers have challenged the validity of self-actualisation as a workplace motivator. Parke and Tausky (1975) suggest that self-actualisation may be of limited relevance in industrial settings, arguing that including the concept simplifies organisational analysis without offering meaningful practical benefits. Wofford's (1971) findings align with this perspective, suggesting that higher-order requirements (such as self-esteem and a sense of belonging) can lead to work satisfaction even when lower-order needs are not fully satisfied. This flexibility suggests that workplace motivation may not adhere to Maslow's rigid hierarchy, since satisfaction and drive might arise from unfulfilled lower-level needs. Wofford's findings suggest a complementary link among various forms of needs, rather than a purely hierarchical one.

Conversely, Trexler and Schuh (1971) found partial validation of Maslow's hierarchy by examining the effects of deprivation on individuals who had previously experienced satisfaction. Trexler and Schuh's (1971) research indicates that when employees experience deprivation, the employees often regress to fundamental needs, lending credibility to Maslow's framework. Nonetheless, methodological constraints, such as the repeated use of analogous questionnaires and insufficient data reliability, undermine the research's conclusiveness. The discrepancies across studies highlight the necessity for methodologically robust studies to address enquiries regarding the hierarchy's rigidity and relevance to workplace environments.

Alternative Frameworks and Methodological Evaluations

Alderfer (1969) introduced the ERG (Existence, Relatedness, Growth) hypothesis as a substitute for Maslow's five-tier hierarchy. Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory simplifies Maslow's

model into three main needs and challenges the strict order of those needs. ERG theory suggests that employees can still pursue higher needs even when lower needs remain unmet. Alderfer's (1969) concept is especially pertinent in industrial settings; for instance, this framework addresses the fluctuating and diverse motives that employees may encounter, particularly in circumstances with drastically varying job duties and activities. Roberts, Walter and Miles (1971) conduct a further analysis of the structure of needs and identify esteem and autonomy as components; however, the research determines that autonomy falls outside Maslow's initial framework, complicating the standardisation of Maslow's categories in workplace research. Lawler and Suttle (1972) provide methodological insights, criticising Hall and Nougaim's (1968) work for challenges such as a small sample size and insufficient coding reliability, and contend that cross-sectional research is inadequate for testing Maslow's dynamic theory, which necessitates longitudinal data to observe motivational changes over time. Lawler and Suttle (1972) point out a major problem in research about Maslow's theory: there are not enough strong studies that can track how employees' motivations change over time. This tracking is important for truly confirming or challenging Maslow's ideas.

Kopsov (2019) challenges Maslow's pyramid for being overly rigid and failing to reflect the changing and fluid nature of human needs. He proposes the Ring Model, which represents needs as concentric circles rather than hierarchical levels. This configuration allows for flexibility, acknowledging that the prominence of specific needs can shift based on individual circumstances and cultural contexts. The Ring Model emphasises the interconnectedness of needs, suggesting that individuals can pursue multiple needs simultaneously and that the importance of these needs may vary over time. This approach addresses the cultural bias inherent in Maslow's model by accommodating diverse value systems and social structures.

Ghaleb (2024) offers a critical analysis of Maslow's hierarchy, highlighting the theory's oversimplification of human motivation and the absence of strong empirical support. The scholar argues that various factors, including socio-cultural and economic contexts, influence human needs rather than a universal sequence. Ghaleb (2024) proposes a dynamic model that views human needs as fluid and interdependent, challenging the fixed progression suggested by Maslow. This model emphasises the variability of needs across different individuals and situations and suggests that individuals prioritise and experience needs in diverse orders. Ghaleb's (2024) critique aligns with other scholars who have questioned the universality of

Maslow's hierarchy and challenged the relevance of the framework across diverse cultural contexts.

Cross-Cultural Analyses in Industrial Settings

Evaluating the Universality of Maslow's Theory

Maslow asserts that his hierarchy of needs is universal; however, cross-cultural studies reveal considerable variation in the prioritisation of needs across societies. Sanford (1970) examines Maslow's theory in Latin America and finds that families, rather than employment, frequently fulfil psychological and social needs. This finding suggests that work-related self-actualisation holds less relevance in this context. Sanford further argues that individuals in cultures with strong social support systems often pursue self-actualisation through spiritual, intellectual, or communal activities rather than through employment. Nevertheless, Sanford's (1970) research lacks strong empirical rigour because this research relies primarily on literature reviews rather than original field data. In addition, the broad "Latin American" classification limits the applicability of the findings across specific countries and cultural groups.

Barling (1976) investigates South African mineworkers and finds that lower-order needs, particularly physiological needs, dominate worker motivation. Similarly, Backer's (1973) research on urban Xhosa workers shows minimal emphasis on self-actualisation, with nearly 70% of respondents prioritising physiological needs. These findings directly challenge Maslow's hierarchical progression of needs. The studies demonstrate that individuals who struggle to satisfy basic survival needs often place little importance on higher-order needs such as esteem and self-actualisation. These results suggest that Maslow's framework does not fully apply in contexts where economic insecurity and survival concerns remain dominant.

Ghaleb (2024) further argues that cultural and social environments strongly shape perceptions and the prioritisation of needs. In collectivist societies, individuals often prioritise social belonging, community welfare, and interpersonal relationships above individual physiological or safety concerns. Kopsov's (2019) Ring Model addresses these cross-cultural limitations by allowing individuals to pursue multiple needs simultaneously rather than sequentially. The model captures the complex interplay among personal experiences, cultural expectations, and social values. Consequently, the Ring Model offers a more flexible interpretation of human motivation than Maslow's rigid hierarchy.

Divergent Outcomes in Cross-Cultural Research

Conflicting findings across cultures continue to challenge Maslow's claim of universality. Blunt (1973) finds that South African managers express greater dissatisfaction with unmet needs than Western managers. In contrast, Howell, Strauss and Sorensen (1975) report that although cultures differ in levels of need satisfaction, the general hierarchy of needs remains relatively stable. Slocum's (1971) research of Mexican workers further indicates that cultural norms strongly influence perceptions of need fulfilment, with Mexican workers placing greater emphasis on satisfying personal and social needs than American workers. These conflicting findings demonstrate that cultural context significantly influences how individuals prioritise and satisfy needs. Consequently, researchers may need to adapt Maslow's hierarchy to improve the theory's relevance and applicability across diverse cultural environments.

Methodological Challenges and Research Gaps

Challenges with Measurement Instruments

Researchers use several tools to examine Maslow's hierarchy in workplace settings, including unstructured interviews and questionnaires such as Porter's Need Satisfaction Questionnaire (NSQ). However, these instruments present important methodological weaknesses. Huizinga (1970) highlights the subjectivity involved in coding and interpreting unstructured interviews, which can lead to inconsistencies in findings across studies. Lawler and Suttle (1972) also criticise these approaches because researchers rarely provide sufficient reliability data, thereby limiting confidence in the generalisability of conclusions derived from subjective methods.

Although instruments such as the NSQ provide a more standardised approach to measuring motivational needs, researchers continue to question the instrument's effectiveness. Wahba and Bridwell (1976) argue that the NSQ lacks predictive validity because the instrument frequently measures work dissatisfaction rather than actual need fulfilment. Consequently, researchers may misinterpret dissatisfaction as evidence supporting Maslow's hierarchy. Wahba and Bridwell (1976) further criticise the widespread use of factor analysis in Maslow-related studies. The scholars argue that researchers often interpret factor structures subjectively, thereby weakening consistency and reducing confidence in empirical support for the hierarchy. These methodological limitations create uncertainty about the accuracy and reliability of findings from Maslow's theory in organisational settings.

Need for Longitudinal Research and Cultural Adaptations

Another major limitation in motivation research involves the absence of longitudinal investigations across diverse industrial environments. Most existing studies adopt cross-sectional designs that examine motivation at a single point in time. Such approaches fail to capture the dynamic nature of human motivation and therefore limit understanding of how needs evolve. Longitudinal research could provide stronger insights into how employees shift priorities as organisational, economic, and personal conditions change.

Cross-cultural studies also highlight the need for culturally sensitive motivational frameworks. Researchers increasingly recognise that Maslow's original hierarchy does not apply uniformly across all societies and industries. Cultural norms, economic realities, and social structures significantly influence how individuals prioritise and satisfy needs. Future research should therefore adapt motivational theories to fit specific cultural and industrial contexts rather than assuming universal applicability. Researchers should also develop more reliable and culturally responsive assessment instruments that accurately measure motivational differences across societies.

Discrepancies and Inconsistencies

Empirical evidence supporting Maslow's hierarchy in industrial contexts remains inconsistent, as different studies yield conflicting findings. Hall and Nougaim (1968), together with Huizinga (1970), find limited support for the hierarchical structure of needs in workplace environments. In contrast, Trexler and Schuh (1971) observe that deprivation often causes individuals to regress to lower-level needs, which supports Maslow's original assumptions.

Cross-cultural research also reveals contradictory outcomes. Sanford's (1970) findings regarding Latin American values differ substantially from Blunt's (1973) results among South African managers. These inconsistencies suggest that motivation operates in more complex ways than Maslow's hierarchy proposes. Cultural conditions, environmental pressures, and methodological differences all influence how individuals express and prioritise needs in organisational settings.

Overall, empirical research on Maslow's hierarchy in industrial environments provides important insights into workplace motivation, but methodological weaknesses, cultural diversity, and inconsistent findings limit the ability to draw definitive conclusions. Although

Maslow's framework remains influential, alternative theories such as Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, Kopsov's (2019) Ring Model, and Ghaleb's (2024) cultural perspective offer valuable directions for future research. Understanding motivation in industrial settings, therefore, requires more rigorous longitudinal studies together with motivational frameworks that account for cultural and organisational diversity.

2.2.4 Empirical Examination of Alderfer's ERG Theory

Alderfer's (1969) Existence, Relatedness, and Growth (ERG) theory offers a versatile alternative to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, accommodating individual differences and incorporating cultural, societal, and personal factors. Although ERG theory offers a paradigm that more effectively addresses the variety of human motives across many contexts, researchers continue to examine and empirically validate the framework. This empirical review analyses the theoretical and practical advantages and disadvantages of ERG theory, drawing on extensive research across various industrial and organisational settings.

Cultural significance and personal variations in motivation

Alderfer's (1989) ERG theory departs notably from Maslow's framework by incorporating cultural influences and individual differences in the understanding of human motivation. Snehajm (2021) emphasises that, unlike Maslow's universal hierarchy, ERG theory acknowledges that the significance of needs varies across cultural and individual contexts. Research comparing Spain and Japan found that individuals in both nations frequently prioritise social (relatedness) needs over physiological (existence) needs, suggesting that cultural environments significantly shape the hierarchy of needs individuals emphasise. This discovery aligns with ERG theory's adaptable method of need satisfaction and underscores a possible limitation in Maslow's framework, which presumes a fixed, linear hierarchy.

Research by Egbuta and Omojola (2022) in Lagos State's healthcare industry highlights the influence of satisfying ERG needs on staff engagement. The study indicates that satisfying existence, relatedness, and growth needs markedly enhances employee engagement levels. Nonetheless, the prioritisation of these needs differed across employees, highlighting the need for a non-hierarchical paradigm that acknowledges concurrent, context-dependent need satisfaction. The research included descriptive statistics and correlation techniques to evaluate

involvement, utilising metrics such as vigour, devotion, and absorption, which showed a positive link between the fulfilment of existence and relatedness needs.

Flexibility and Need Fulfilment in ERG Theory

Alderfer's ERG theory posits that individuals can pursue and fulfil many needs concurrently, in contrast to Maslow's perspective, which states that individuals must address lower-order needs before pursuing higher-order needs. Miller (2022) conducts research at Nestlé, the world's largest food and beverage manufacturing corporation, and utilises ERG theory to enhance employee motivation and retention. Nestlé implements targeted initiatives aligned with ERG categories: health programs for existence needs, on boarding assistance for relatedness needs, and innovation platforms for growth needs. Nestlé demonstrates a significant rise in employee happiness and engagement by concurrently addressing many needs, thus affirming the relevance of ERG theory in extensive, heterogeneous organisations. The company's comprehensive strategy reveals that employees can find happiness at many levels, irrespective of Maslow's rigid hierarchy, as evidenced by elevated engagement and inventive contributions within the workforce.

Empirical Evidence Affirming and Contesting ERG Theory

Arnolds and Boshoff's (2002) research offers inconclusive empirical evidence for the ERG theory. Arnolds and Boshoff's (2002) research on the motivating factors of senior managers and frontline employees revealed that growth needs, such as creativity, autonomy, and self-actualisation, primarily drive senior managers and directly influence job performance. In contrast, frontline personnel exhibit greater motivation driven by relatedness and existential needs, with social contacts and financial remuneration as crucial factors. This duality highlights the effectiveness of ERG theory in explaining changes in motivation within organisational hierarchies, but also suggests the need for a more precise method to predict the prioritisation of specific needs in specific contexts.

In contrast, Shanmugapriya (2021) investigates the ERG needs of medical students in rural India, whose motivation revolved primarily around satisfying fundamental existence needs due to environmental constraints, such as limited access to ICT resources, unsafe working conditions, and job security. The students' relatedness needs were essential, as these needs esteemed collaboration and social support in the job. This research supports ERG's assertion

that unfulfilled needs in one domain may intensify attention on other needs without following a predetermined sequence, as students did not consistently progress from lower-order to higher-order requirements, contrary to Maslow's model.

Nonetheless, despite the strengths of ERG theory, various critics highlight certain limitations, particularly the absence of clear guidelines for predicting behaviour. Shanmugapriya (2021) asserts that while ERG theory acknowledges the dynamic evolution of individual needs, the theory does not provide a clear framework for anticipating these changes. For example, identifying which needs hold priority in a given context can be difficult, particularly in diverse cultural contexts where desires such as dignity and respect may take precedence over basic physiological needs.

Comparative Analysis with Maslow's Theory

A fundamental critique of Maslow's hierarchy is the presumption of a fixed, sequential advancement of needs. Conversely, ERG theory holds that humans may simultaneously feel needs at multiple levels and regress to lower-level needs when higher-order needs remain unfulfilled. Egbuta and Omojola (2022) support this argument through research involving healthcare employees in Lagos. The findings show that employees who experience unmet existential needs still pursue growth needs, suggesting that motivational priorities can shift even when individuals only partially satisfy lower-level needs.

ERG theory also differs from Maslow's framework by incorporating the concept of frustration–regression. Alderfer (1969) proposes that failure to satisfy higher-order needs intensifies efforts to fulfil lower-level needs. This principle offers a more flexible and realistic explanation of workplace motivation than Maslow's rigid hierarchy. Egbuta and Omojola's (2022) findings reinforce this perspective, as healthcare professionals in Lagos place greater emphasis on job security and social relationships during periods of economic and organisational uncertainty. These responses demonstrate how employees adapt motivational priorities according to environmental pressures and workplace realities.

Criticisms of ERG Theory and Methodological Considerations

Despite these strengths, researchers continue to identify methodological and conceptual limitations within ERG theory. One major concern involves the lack of standardised measurement instruments. Unlike Maslow's hierarchy, which frequently relies on established

tools such as Porter's Needs Satisfaction Questionnaire (NSQ), ERG theory lacks widely accepted and validated instruments for measuring existence, relatedness, and growth needs. Researchers often rely on subjective self-report measures, which may introduce bias and inconsistencies in findings. Egbuta and Omojola (2022), for example, utilise self-report questionnaires that remain vulnerable to social desirability bias and recall errors. These methodological weaknesses reduce consistency across studies and limit confidence in empirical findings. Researchers, therefore, need to develop more reliable and cross-culturally valid instruments to strengthen future investigations of ERG theory.

Researchers also criticise ERG theory because the theory's flexibility creates difficulties in practical application. The theory's non-linear structure allows multiple interpretations of motivational behaviour, thereby reducing the ability to draw broad, generalisable conclusions. Although flexibility improves realism, flexibility may also weaken predictive precision in organisational settings. Some scholars, therefore, recommend combining ERG theory with other motivational frameworks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of employee behaviour across different organisational and cultural environments.

Summary

Nevertheless, ERG theory represents a significant advancement beyond Maslow's hierarchy because ERG theory offers a more adaptable explanation of human motivation. By recognising cultural variation, individual differences, and the simultaneous fulfilment of needs, ERG theory addresses several criticisms of Maslow's rigid hierarchy. Applications within organisations such as Nestlé and healthcare institutions in Lagos demonstrate the theory's practical value in improving employee engagement, motivation, and workplace satisfaction.

As organisations increasingly operate in multicultural, dynamic environments, ERG theory provides managers with a useful framework for understanding employee motivation. The theory's emphasis on concurrent need fulfilment and frustration–regression allows organisations to respond more effectively to changing employee priorities. However, researchers must continue refining the theory through longitudinal research and improved measurement tools to strengthen the theory's empirical foundation and practical relevance in organisational settings.

2.2.5 Empirical Examination of Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, also known as the Two-Factor Theory, remains an influential framework for understanding job satisfaction and employee motivation in organisational psychology. The theory argues that motivators such as achievement, recognition, advancement, responsibility, and personal growth create job satisfaction, while hygiene factors such as salary, working conditions, supervision, and organisational policies prevent dissatisfaction without necessarily creating satisfaction (Herzberg, 1959, 1966). Researchers continue to apply the theory across industries because this theory provides a practical explanation of how intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence workplace attitudes. Nevertheless, empirical research increasingly reveals mixed findings regarding the theory's universality, especially across cultures and professional settings where employees value external rewards differently.

Application in Diverse Sectors

Research in the hospitality education sector supports several assumptions of Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory while also revealing contextual variations. Lixel and Lantican (2021) investigated relationships among workload, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work stress, and turnover intentions among hospitality educators. The findings showed that excessive workload increases work stress and turnover intentions, whereas strong organisational commitment reduces negative outcomes. These results support Herzberg's (1959) argument that poor hygiene factors, such as workload and working conditions, increase dissatisfaction, while motivational factors, such as recognition and commitment, improve satisfaction and retention (Lixel and Lantican, 2021). The research further demonstrated that organisations improve employee morale when the organisations combine supportive work environments with opportunities for achievement and professional growth.

Similarly, Holston-Okae and Mushi (2018) examined employee turnover within the hospitality industry and found that participation in decision-making, communication regarding work tasks, and strong interpersonal relationships strengthen employee satisfaction and organisational commitment. These findings align with Herzberg's emphasis on intrinsic motivators because employees value recognition, involvement, and responsibility in the workplace. In another hospitality-related research, Mehrad (2020) evaluated job satisfaction among academic staff in Malaysian universities and identified recognition, advancement opportunities, and professional

achievement as important sources of satisfaction. The research also showed that inadequate hygiene factors, such as poor organisational support and insufficient working conditions, directly contribute to dissatisfaction (Mehrad, 2020). These findings reinforce Herzberg's distinction between motivators and hygiene factors and illustrate the theory's continuing relevance in educational environments.

However, other empirical studies challenge Herzberg's (1959) strict separation between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Edward and Teoh (2009), in a study of two institutions in Kuala Lumpur, found that organisational policies and administrative practices strongly influence lecturers' job satisfaction. The findings indicated that the absence of intrinsic motivators created demotivation rather than neutrality, contradicting Herzberg's (1959) claim that dissatisfaction and satisfaction operate independently. The research suggested that employees interpreted both intrinsic and extrinsic factors together rather than as isolated categories. Institutional culture, leadership style, and work expectations shape how employees evaluate satisfaction, thereby limiting the universal applicability of Herzberg's two-factor distinction (Edward and Teoh, 2009).

Research in the retail sector further challenges Herzberg's (1959) original assumptions regarding extrinsic rewards. Stringer, Didham and Theivananthampillai (2011) reported that compensation and financial rewards significantly influenced job satisfaction among retail employees in Australasia. Likewise, Rafikul and Ahmad (2008) and Ibrahim and Boerhaneoddin (2010) demonstrated that salary strongly motivated Malaysian employees and directly contributes to higher levels of satisfaction. These findings contradict Herzberg's (1959) argument that salary merely prevents dissatisfaction. Instead, the studies indicated that employees in some economic and cultural environments treated compensation as both a hygiene factor and a motivational factor. Economic pressures, living standards, and career expectations influence how workers perceive financial rewards, particularly in developing economies where income security remains essential.

Research within library science also demonstrates the adaptability of Herzberg's (1959) theory across professional contexts. Alston (2017) investigated satisfaction and dissatisfaction among resident librarians through a mixed-methods approach and found that hygiene factors such as salary, supervision quality, and organisational support prevent dissatisfaction, while motivators such as professional development opportunities and career advancement enhance job

satisfaction. The research supported Herzberg's (1959) central proposition that intrinsic opportunities for growth improve workplace morale and engagement. At the same time, the findings revealed that employees required both supportive work environments and meaningful professional opportunities to sustain long-term satisfaction (Alston, 2017).

Further complexity emerges in studies examining individual differences in employee motivation. Tan and Waheed (2011) investigated the mediating role of "love of money" in the Malaysian retail sector and discovered that personal attitudes toward financial rewards influence how employees interpret job satisfaction. The research showed that salary and financial incentives carry both emotional and motivational significance for some employees. This finding complicated Herzberg's (1959) original framework by showing that personal values and individual differences shape how workers perceive hygiene factors. Employees who highly value financial success may derive genuine satisfaction from extrinsic rewards rather than viewing extrinsic rewards merely as dissatisfaction preventers (Tan and Waheed, 2011).

Cross-Cultural Research and the Influence of Extrinsic Factors

Cross-cultural studies further challenge Herzberg's (1959) theory by demonstrating that cultural and generational contexts significantly shape employee motivation. Wan Fauziah and Tan (2013) examined employees in Malaysian electronics firms and identified strong interactions between intrinsic and extrinsic factors in determining job satisfaction. The research revealed that younger employees prioritised salary, incentives, and external rewards, whereas older employees placed greater emphasis on intrinsic motivators such as achievement and personal growth. These findings suggested that motivational preferences evolved across career stages and demographic groups, thereby limiting Herzberg's (1959) assumption of universal motivational patterns (Wan Fauziah and Tan, 2013).

Similarly, Yang (2011) investigated employee motivation in China and identified a strong preference for financial incentives and job security. Employees in collectivist cultures frequently prioritised economic stability and family responsibilities, which elevates the importance of extrinsic rewards. These findings contradict Herzberg's (1959) argument that intrinsic factors dominate workplace satisfaction. Instead, the research demonstrated that cultural norms and economic conditions shaped how employees rank motivational priorities. Spector (1997) also argues that positive employee attitudes toward work contribute

significantly to organisational success, employee loyalty, reduced absenteeism, and lower turnover rates. Yousef (2000) and Levy (2003) similarly emphasise that organisations achieve better performance when employees perceive both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards positively.

Overall, empirical research demonstrates that Herzberg's (1959) Motivation-Hygiene Theory continues to provide valuable insights into workplace motivation and satisfaction across multiple industries. However, contemporary studies increasingly show that intrinsic and extrinsic factors interact more dynamically than Herzberg (1959) originally proposed. Cultural differences, generational expectations, economic realities, and individual values influence how employees interpret motivators and hygiene factors. Consequently, organisations seeking to improve employee satisfaction and organisational commitment should adopt flexible motivational strategies that integrate both intrinsic growth opportunities and meaningful extrinsic rewards.

The Effect of Social and Economic Dynamics on Job Satisfaction.

Numerous studies have investigated the influence of workplace relationships, including colleague support and leadership, on job satisfaction. Lin and Lin (2011) examined international hotels and found that colleague interactions enhance job satisfaction, supporting the findings of Ducharme and Martin (2000), who emphasise that positive workgroup dynamics promote satisfaction in service industries. In Malaysian SMEs, Asri *et al.* (2007) found that colleague support strengthened organisational commitment, highlighting the importance of social interactions as motivators and contributors to job satisfaction. These studies indicate that supportive workplace relationships foster stronger emotional attachment to organisations and improve employee morale.

Supervision also plays a major role in shaping employee satisfaction. Edwards and Rothbard (1999) argued that strong social relationships with supervisors increase job satisfaction, supporting Herzberg's (1959) category of motivators. Lin and Lin (2011) reinforced this position by showing that positive leader-member relationships improve employee satisfaction in hospitality organisations. Similarly, Asri *et al.* (2007) reported that effective supervision in Malaysian SMEs strengthened work satisfaction and organisational commitment. These findings suggest that employees value supportive leadership because this type of leadership enhances recognition, trust, and communication within the workplace.

Le (2014) conducted an industry-level analysis of employee satisfaction in the United States following the 2008 Great Recession using Herzberg's (1959) framework. The research showed that during economic crises, hygiene factors such as job security become essential in reducing dissatisfaction. However, long-term satisfaction still depends on motivators such as achievement, recognition, and advancement opportunities. These findings demonstrated that Herzberg's theory remains relevant even during economic instability, as employees continue to value intrinsic rewards despite financial uncertainty.

Job Security and Working Conditions in Enhancing Motivation

Job security and working conditions consistently emerge as important extrinsic factors that influence employee satisfaction across industries and cultures. Rafikul and Ahmad (2008) in Malaysia and Saraswathi (2011) in India supported Danish and Usman's (2010) findings that job security strongly influences work satisfaction among Pakistani employees. These studies highlight the importance of stable employment in sustaining employee morale and motivation. The findings also challenge Herzberg's (1959) assertion that hygiene factors merely prevent dissatisfaction because employees often perceive job stability as a direct source of motivation and psychological comfort.

Working conditions also contribute significantly to employee motivation and satisfaction. Hong and Waheed (2011) identified working conditions as strong motivators in Malaysia's retail industry. Rafikul and Ahmad (2008) similarly reported a positive relationship between favourable working environments and employee motivation, especially among workers with diverse educational backgrounds. Jaafar, Ramayah and Zainal (2006) further demonstrated that working conditions significantly influence job satisfaction among Malaysian employees. These findings suggest that organisations should not treat hygiene factors solely as preventive mechanisms because employees often associate supportive environments with wellbeing and motivation.

Work-life Balance as an Emerging Motivational Element

Work-life balance represents another motivational factor that Herzberg's (1959) original theory does not fully address. Casper and Harris (2008) argued that balanced working hours improved organisational commitment and reduce turnover intentions. Saraswathi (2011) reported similar findings among non-IT employees in India, showing that flexible work arrangements increased

employee satisfaction and motivation. These studies challenge Herzberg's (1959) argument that only motivators create satisfaction because employees increasingly regard work-life balance as an important source of wellbeing and fulfilment. As organisations continue to adopt flexible work practices, work-life balance becomes a central motivational factor in contemporary workplaces.

Theoretical Re-examination and Contemporary Relevance

Recent scholars have re-evaluated Herzberg's (1959) theory in modern organisational contexts. Sachau (2007) revisited Herzberg's (1959) framework through the lens of positive psychology and argued that Herzberg's (1959) emphasis on achievement, recognition, and growth aligned closely with modern organisational approaches that focused on strengths and employee wellbeing. This perspective suggests that Herzberg's (1959) distinction between motivators and hygiene factors continues to inform employee engagement strategies and organisational development practices. Stello (2011) conducted an integrative literature review of Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory and identified both supporting and contradictory findings across industries. The review concluded that, although the theory had limitations, particularly regarding the rigid separation of job factors, Herzberg's (1959) framework still offered valuable insights into the complexity of job satisfaction.

Mitsakis and Galanakis (2022) further examined Herzberg's theory in the contemporary workplace and concluded that the framework remained relevant in improving employee motivation, wellbeing, positivity, and retention. The findings indicated that organisations continued to rely on both motivators and hygiene factors to strengthen employee satisfaction and reduce turnover. These studies demonstrate that Herzberg's theory continues to make significant contributions to organisational psychology despite ongoing criticism.

Critiques of Herzberg's Methodology and Dichotomy

Nevertheless, Herzberg's (1959) theory faces several methodological and conceptual criticisms. Nave (1968) criticised Herzberg's reliance on retrospective self-reports because employees might attribute positive experiences to intrinsic factors while blaming dissatisfaction on external conditions. Scholars also criticise the theory's strict distinction between motivators and hygiene factors because employees often interpret the same factor differently depending on personal preferences and workplace conditions. Nave (1968) argued

that motivation depended heavily on situational factors, a claim that Herzberg's (1959) rigid two-category structure failed to capture adequately.

Furthermore, Herzberg's (1959) framework does not fully account for cultural, environmental, and individual differences that influence employee motivation. Employees across cultures and generations often prioritise factors differently, making motivation more dynamic and context-dependent than Herzberg's (1959) originally proposed. As organisations operate increasingly in multicultural, globalised environments, scholars continue to advocate for more flexible motivational models that integrate both intrinsic and extrinsic influences. These critiques suggest that Herzberg's (1959) theory provides a valuable foundation for understanding workplace motivation. However, organisations must adapt the framework to reflect changing employee expectations, cultural diversity, and evolving organisational realities.

2.3 Theoretical Frameworks

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory serves as the theoretical underpinning for this research. This image illustrates the continued relevance of this principle in all sectors of organisations today. Solomon (1995) defines buyer behaviour as the process by which individuals or groups select, purchase, utilise, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences that fulfil needs and desires. Numerous factors, including social, cultural, psychological, and personal dimensions, affect customer decisions (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2010), although the majority of influencers remain beyond the exhibitor's comprehensive control.

2.3.1 Sheth's (1973) integrated model of industrial buyer behaviour

Sheth's (1973) integrative model of industrial buyer behaviour provides a foundational framework for understanding business-to-business (B2B) purchasing decisions. The model examines the complex factors that influence industrial purchasing by considering internal organisational characteristics alongside external stakeholder expectations. Sheth (1973) explains how psychological, social, and organisational variables shape buyer decisions within industrial markets. Although the model offers a comprehensive explanation of B2B purchasing behaviour, contemporary developments in marketing, such as digital engagement, relationship marketing, and experiential marketing, reveal limitations that extend beyond the model's original scope.

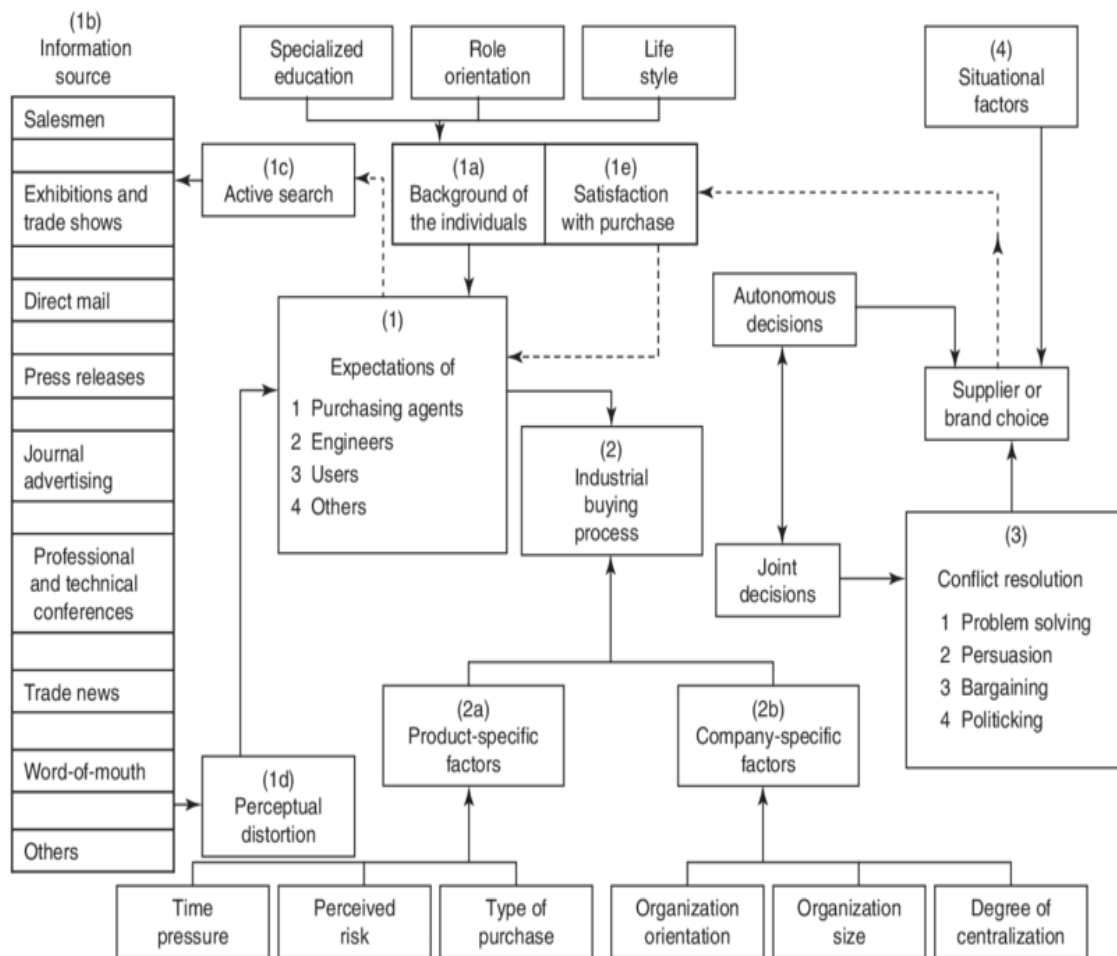


Figure 1. Sheth's (1973) integrative model of industrial buyer behaviour

Understanding the Core Components of Sheth's (1973) Model

Sheth's (1973) model of industrial buyer behaviour provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex dynamics of organisational purchasing decisions. The model focuses on three major categories: the psychological world of individuals involved in the buying process, the factors that influence joint or autonomous decisions, and the process through which individuals make joint decisions. These components shape how organisations evaluate, negotiate, and finalise industrial purchases.

The first aspect of Sheth's (1973) model emphasises the psychological dimension of industrial buyer behaviour by focusing on the roles of purchasing agents, engineers, and users. These individuals bring different expectations and perspectives to the purchasing process, as five major factors shape these individuals' decision-making behaviour. The most important factor is each decision-maker's background. Job orientation, personal lifestyle, experience, and

specialised education shape professional values and goals, which influence how individuals evaluate suppliers and products. An engineer may prioritise technical reliability and operational efficiency, while a purchasing agent may focus on price and supplier flexibility.

Information sources also influence buyer expectations and perceptions. Decision-makers rely on press releases, sales representatives, TSs, exhibitions, and word of mouth when gathering information about suppliers and products. Different information sources create different interpretations of supplier value and performance. In addition, individuals vary in the extent of active information search. Some stakeholders conduct extensive investigations before making recommendations, whereas others rely on previous knowledge and routine purchasing practices. For instance, engineers often conduct detailed technical evaluations, while purchasing officers compare pricing structures and delivery schedules.

Perceptual distortion further shapes industrial buying behaviour. Individuals interpret information based on prior experiences, assumptions, and organisational expectations. As a result, different stakeholders may evaluate the same supplier differently. A user who previously experienced operational problems with a supplier may reject that supplier despite improvements in product quality. Satisfaction with previous purchases also strongly influences future decisions. Suppliers that consistently provide reliable products and services often receive favourable evaluations from users and engineers. These psychological elements, namely background, information sources, active information search, perceptual distortion, and satisfaction, explain why individuals within the same organisation often develop different opinions regarding suppliers and products (Sheth, 1973).

The second component of Sheth's (1973) model concerns the determinants of joint versus autonomous decision-making. Sheth (1973) groups these determinants into product-specific and company-specific variables. Product-related variables significantly influence the structure of purchasing decisions. Perceived risk represents one of the most important variables. Organisations prefer collective decision-making when purchasing decisions involve substantial financial, operational, or strategic consequences. Complex industrial equipment, for example, often requires input from engineers, users, and purchasing specialists to minimise errors and uncertainty.

The nature of the purchase also influences decision-making patterns. Routine purchases generally require minimal consultation because organisations already possess experience with suppliers and products. However, infrequent and high-value acquisitions require greater collaboration and evaluation among stakeholders. Time pressure further shapes organisational purchasing behaviour. When organisations face tight deadlines or urgent operational demands, managers often delegate purchasing authority to specific individuals to expedite decision-making. In contrast, organisations encourage broader consultation when sufficient time exists for detailed analysis and discussion.

Company-specific variables also influence industrial purchasing decisions. Organisational orientation determines which departments exercise greater influence over purchasing activities. Technology-oriented firms often allow engineers and technical experts to dominate purchasing decisions, while production-focused organisations may prioritise cost efficiency and procurement considerations. Company size also affects decision-making structures. Larger organisations typically involve multiple departments and specialised personnel in purchasing decisions because multilateral decisions are more complex and involve greater resources. Smaller firms often rely on fewer individuals and more centralised purchasing systems.

The degree of organisational centralisation further influences purchasing behaviour. Centralised organisations concentrate purchasing authority among senior managers or procurement departments, which encourages autonomous decision-making. Decentralised organisations distribute authority across departments and encourage collaborative decision-making among users, engineers, and purchasing officers (Sheth, 1973). These organisational variables demonstrate that industrial purchasing decisions depend not only on product characteristics but also on organisational structures and managerial systems.

The final component of Sheth's (1973) model addresses the joint decision-making process. This process involves integrating diverse viewpoints, expectations, and information from different stakeholders within the organisation. Conflict frequently arises because purchasing agents, engineers, and users often prioritise different goals. Sheth (1973) identifies both rational and non-rational approaches to resolving these conflicts.

Rational approaches include problem-solving and persuasion. Problem-solving involves collecting additional information and analysing alternatives to reduce disagreements among

stakeholders. Persuasion encourages individuals to align personal preferences with broader organisational objectives. These methods promote cooperation and consensus-building within the buying centre. In contrast, non-rational approaches include bargaining and politicking. Bargaining allows one stakeholder to dominate a decision in exchange for future concessions, while politicking involves informal influence, personality conflicts, and strategic manoeuvring. Although these approaches may temporarily resolve disagreements, these approaches often undermine long-term organisational effectiveness and cooperation.

Constraints and Deficiencies in the Model

Despite the model's major contributions, Sheth's (1973) model contains several limitations, particularly when applied to contemporary industrial marketing environments and TS settings. The model does not adequately address technological advancements that have transformed industrial marketing since the 1970s. Modern TSs incorporate virtual platforms, digital engagement systems, data analytics, and interactive communication tools that allow exhibitors to monitor buyer behaviour and personalise interactions in real time. These developments significantly influence buyer perceptions and purchasing decisions, yet Sheth's original framework does not fully account for digital interaction and technology-driven engagement.

Furthermore, the model strongly emphasises cognitive and organisational elements while giving limited attention to emotional and experiential influences in industrial buying behaviour. Contemporary B2B marketing increasingly emphasises relationship-building, trust-building, networking opportunities, and experiential engagement. Buyers attending TSs frequently seek meaningful interactions, live product demonstrations, and opportunities to establish long-term supplier relationships. These experiential elements shape purchase intentions and supplier evaluations beyond Sheth's (1973) cognitive decision-making perspective. Consequently, although Sheth's (1973) model remains an influential framework for understanding industrial buyer behaviour, contemporary marketing practices require broader perspectives that incorporate emotional engagement, relationship marketing, and digital interaction within organisational purchasing processes.

Applying Sheth's (1973) Model to Trade Show Marketing Strategies

Despite several limitations, Sheth's (1973) model remains highly relevant for informing TS marketing strategies. The model helps exhibitors align presentations with the specific

requirements and expectations of industrial buyers. Companies can design exhibits that address safety concerns surrounding new equipment, demonstrate production efficiency, and highlight time-saving operational benefits. These strategies reflect Sheth's (1973) emphasis on stakeholder expectations and organisational buying behaviour. In addition, marketers who understand the stage at which buyers are in the decision-making process can develop more targeted follow-up strategies after the event. This alignment increases buyer involvement and improves the likelihood of favourable evaluations and future purchasing intentions.

Sheth's (1973) model also highlights the importance of evaluating acquired products and services, which closely relates to the PS assessment process in industrial markets. Industrial buyers carefully assess supplier reliability, product value, operational performance, and long-term benefits before making purchasing decisions. The model further recognises the influence of interpersonal communication and buyer perceptions during organisational purchasing. Organisations can therefore use Sheth's (1973) insights to cultivate strong networks of industry influencers and satisfied buyers that foster positive word-of-mouth. Positive recommendations strengthen supplier credibility and attract additional prospects within industrial markets.

Exhibitors at TSs can also apply Sheth's (1973) insights regarding satisfaction with previous purchasing experiences. Different stakeholders evaluate suppliers according to different performance indicators. Purchasing agents frequently prioritise cost-effectiveness and pricing strategies; engineers emphasise technical quality and reliability; and production personnel focus on delivery efficiency and operational continuity. Exhibitors should therefore tailor presentations, discussions, and promotional materials to address the specific priorities of each stakeholder group.

For example, exhibitors can provide purchasing agents with pricing models, cost-reduction data, and return-on-investment projections. Engineers may require technical specifications, quality certifications, and product performance demonstrations. Production managers and operational staff may value information concerning maintenance support, delivery reliability, and production efficiency. Tailored communication enhances buyer confidence by ensuring each stakeholder receives information relevant to professional responsibilities and organisational goals.

Furthermore, exhibitors should proactively address previous concerns or negative experiences that buyers may associate with suppliers or products. By acknowledging past shortcomings and presenting evidence of improvement, exhibitors demonstrate accountability, professionalism, and commitment to long-term relationships. This approach positively shapes future expectations and strengthens buyer trust. Tailoring the booth experience according to stakeholder priorities and past experiences increases credibility and improves the likelihood of influencing final purchasing decisions.

Integrating the model with modern practices

Integrating Sheth's (1973) model with modern marketing practices can further improve TS effectiveness. Contemporary TS strategies increasingly incorporate digital engagement systems, personalised communication, and data-driven interaction tools (Baldwin, 2021). Organisations can combine these modern features with Sheth's (1973) framework to gain a more comprehensive understanding of industrial buyer behaviour. Modern analytics tools allow exhibitors to monitor visitor engagement, evaluate buyer responses to presentations, and collect real-time feedback during TS events (Mashhadi *et al.*, 2016). Exhibitors can then immediately modify presentations and communication strategies based on visitor interests and engagement patterns.

Experiential marketing strategies also complement Sheth's (1973) emphasis on satisfying buyer expectations. Interactive product demonstrations, immersive displays, networking activities, and personalised engagement create stronger emotional connections between buyers and suppliers. These experiences strengthen buyer trust, increase involvement, and improve perceptions of supplier value. Incorporating emotional and experiential dimensions into TS marketing extends Sheth's (1973) original framework and reflects the evolving nature of contemporary B2B marketing environments.

Summary

Overall, Sheth's (1973) Integrative Model of Industrial Buyer Behaviour remains an important framework for understanding organisational purchasing decisions within B2B markets. Although the model does not fully address digital interaction and experiential marketing, exhibitors and TS organisers can adapt the framework to contemporary marketing environments. Integrating Sheth's (1973) insights with modern engagement strategies enables

organisations to better align with industrial buyer expectations, improve TS effectiveness, and strengthen PS purchasing intentions in evolving B2B markets.

2.3.2 Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) Customer Experience Model

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) present a customer experience model that offers a comprehensive explanation of customer interactions across the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages. The model highlights the importance of customer touchpoints and interactions throughout the buying journey (Neslin *et al.*, 2006; Pucinelli *et al.*, 2009). By incorporating behaviours such as need recognition, information search, purchase evaluation, and post-purchase assessment, the framework explains how experiences shape customer satisfaction and brand perceptions (Baxendale *et al.*, 2015). The model addresses important weaknesses in traditional marketing frameworks by emphasising the continuity of customer experiences across multiple stages. However, the model faces limitations in dynamic environments such as TSs, where interactions occur briefly, vary considerably among attendees, and depend heavily on the event atmosphere and immediate engagement experiences.

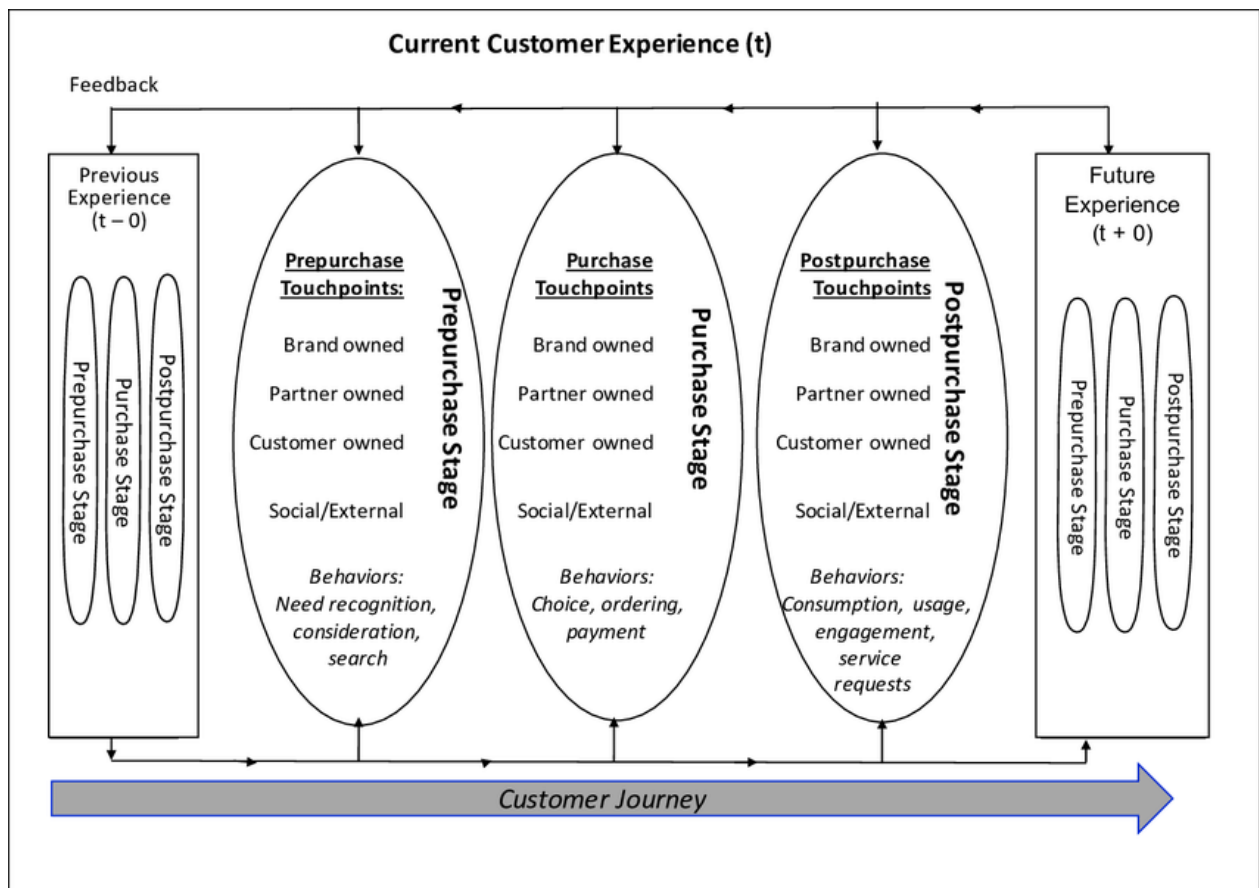


Figure 2. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) Current customer experience

Key Contributions of Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) Model

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) argue that each phase of the customer journey contains distinct touchpoints and behavioural indicators that help firms shape buyer behaviour and improve targeting accuracy. This perspective benefits marketers by emphasising the importance of understanding and addressing customer needs at every stage of the journey. Pre-purchase activities, such as need recognition and information search, respond strongly to carefully designed marketing communication, while post-purchase evaluations influence future interactions and long-term customer relationships (Howard and Sheth, 1969).

Within TS settings, the model's emphasis on touchpoints helps exhibitors improve customer experiences throughout the audience engagement process. Marketers who understand pre-show expectations can align booth presentations, product displays, and promotional materials with buyer needs and interests. During the event, exhibitors can strengthen customer satisfaction by

delivering smooth interactions, immediate responses, and engaging demonstrations. These strategies enhance TS effectiveness and strengthen the understanding of PS purchasing intentions.

Deficiencies in the Model

Despite these advantages, the Lemon and Verhoef (2016) model presents limitations when applied to TS environments. Researchers note that TSs involve strict time constraints, unpredictable visitor behaviour, and intense competition for attention, all of which reduce opportunities for fully immersive customer experiences (Verhoef and Doorn, 2008; Rego *et al.*, 2013). The model does not adequately address spontaneous interactions and rapidly changing visitor behaviour, even though these factors strongly influence attendee experiences and purchasing intentions during TS events.

In addition, the model strongly emphasises the integration of post-purchase feedback, yet TS environments rarely support long-term engagement with attendees after the event concludes (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). Limited post-event interaction may reduce the quantity and quality of feedback available to exhibitors and organisers. Consequently, TS applications require more flexible follow-up strategies that prioritise immediate and targeted communication after the event.

The Lemon and Verhoef (2016) framework remains valuable for evaluating TS effectiveness when organisations adapt the model to fit the unique characteristics of TS environments. During the pre-show stage, organisations can align promotional communication with buyer expectations to improve initial engagement. During the event, exhibitors can prioritise responsive communication, efficient service delivery, and interactive experiences that foster positive customer perceptions. In the post-show stage, organisations can strengthen conversion opportunities by tailoring follow-up communication to visitor engagement and expressed interests.

Overall, although the Lemon and Verhoef (2016) model provides a structured framework for understanding customer experience, organisations must adapt the touchpoint-oriented approach to accommodate the dynamic and fast-paced nature of TS environments. Tailored interactions before, during, and after the event can improve attendee engagement, customer satisfaction, and PS purchasing intentions.

2.3.3 Edelman and Singer (2015): The Loyalty Loop

The Loyalty Loop model by Edelman and Singer (2015) provides a contemporary framework for understanding consumer loyalty and behaviour, offering significant insights into how loyalty can transform the conventional buyer's journey. In contrast to linear models that guide buyers through pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages, the Loyalty Loop framework accelerates decision-making by minimising the need for an extensive contemplation period, particularly when existing loyalty already exists. This paradigm is especially pertinent for TS marketing, as exhibitors need to engage visitors swiftly and effectively, fostering a lasting brand image that enhances PS purchase intentions.

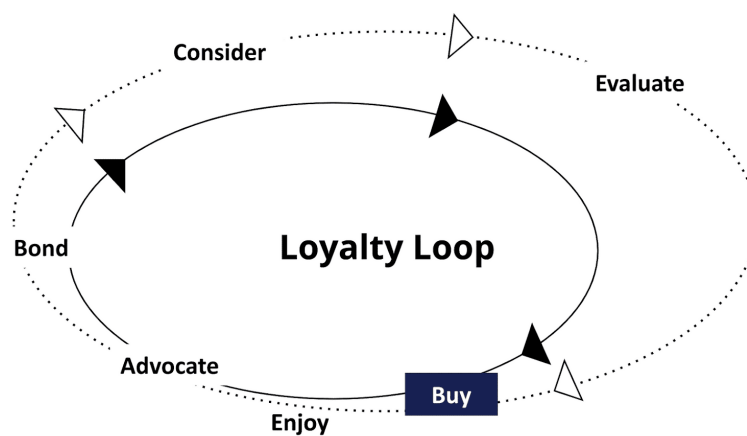


Figure 3. *Edelman and Singer (2015): The Loyalty Loop*

Key Components of the Loyalty Loop Model

The model by Edelman and Singer (2015) delineates five fundamental components in the purchasing process: Consider, Evaluate, Buy, Loyalty Loop, and New Journey. This model presents the Loyalty Loop, a phase that arises post-purchase and reduces the need for consumers to reassess available choices during the purchasing process. Loyal buyers are inclined to skip the evaluation phase, given favourable prior experiences with the brand. Edelman and Singer emphasise the importance of loyalty in accelerating buying decisions, providing marketers with a strategy to sustain customer relationships without the need for constant reengagement in each purchasing cycle.

Within the framework of TSs, the Loyalty Loop provides a blueprint for enhancing engagement initiatives prior to, during, and after the event. By delivering value and removing obstacles to participation, exhibitors may increase the likelihood of fostering favourable brand connections. Pre-show marketing tactics can build anticipation and kick off the "Consider" phase. Exhibitors should prioritise crafting a memorable, loyalty-oriented experience during the TS that circumvents prolonged assessments and therefore facilitates a swift transition to the purchasing phase.

Constraints in the Loyalty Loop Model

Aside from notable advantages, the Loyalty Loop model exhibits numerous constraints, especially in complex decision-making scenarios such as industrial purchasing at TSs. Sometimes, industrial purchasers operate within organisational frameworks that involve multiple stakeholders (Sheth, 1973), which complicates simplifying the decision-making process into a simple, loyalty-driven cycle. Product assessments, organisational requirements, and endorsements from several departments typically influence these purchasers' buying selections, suggesting that even devoted clients may reassess alternatives with each new acquisition.

Furthermore, the model's focus on loyalty as a catalyst for repeat purchases may not fully apply to TS settings, where attendees often seek to explore alternatives before making decisions (Jia and Wan, 2022). However, loyalty can influence PS purchasing intention; the TS structure, characterised by a high concentration of competing exhibitors, forces even loyal clients to consider alternative options. This results in a more intricate decision-making process that may circumvent the loyalty loop.

Practical Applications of the Loyalty Loop Model in Trade Show Settings

Notwithstanding these constraints, the Loyalty Loop model may still offer value to TS marketers by helping develop robust pre-show, during-show, and PS plans. This model outlines the practical application of the concept to enhance TS effectiveness and elevate purchase intentions:

Pre-Show Engagement: Prior to the TS, organisations may leverage the Loyalty Loop concept to engage potential attendees via customised marketing initiatives (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017). Generating anticipation and cultivating a brand connection before the event enables

marketers to steer attendees into the Consider phase. Digital ads, tailored invites, and previews of booth attractions can increase visitors' likelihood of visiting the brand's booth (Williams *et al.*, 1993; Srinath Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2019).

Establishing a Loyalty Loop Throughout the Event: Exhibitors should emphasise outstanding client experiences throughout the TS to create a loyalty loop. This initiative entails meeting the needs of attendees and removing obstacles in engaging with the brand (Cavanaugh, 1976; Konikow, 1983). Exhibitors may foster a favourable image and cultivate loyalty by providing educational presentations, attentive staff, and interesting booth activities (Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 1995).

PS Follow-Up: Following the event, cultivating a relationship with attendees to sustain the loyalty loop is crucial. Tailored messages that answer visitors' particular enquiries or issues can strengthen brand loyalty. Companies may dispatch follow-up emails, exclusive offers, or product information that addresses the needs articulated during the TS (Bloch *et al.*, 2017). By maintaining brand awareness after the event, firms can leverage the momentum generated during the event.

Loyalty Formation: According to Edelman and Singer's model, loyalty can expedite purchasing decisions by bypassing initial stages of deliberation. By evaluating PS purchasing intentions, firms may gauge the robustness of loyalty cultivated during the TS (Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 1995). This measure allows for identifying the most effective elements of an engagement strategy and leveraging this knowledge to establish a sustainable loyalty loop.

Continuous Improvement: The Loyalty Loop concept facilitates a perpetual enhancement cycle for brand experience and engagement. Insights derived from attendee comments and post-event data may guide future TS tactics (Srinath Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2019), facilitating ongoing improvements to the customer experience. Analysing the interactions that most effectively fostered loyalty might inform exhibitors about what to prioritise at future events.

Collaboration with Additional Models: Integrating Loyalty with Customer Experience

When combined with complementary frameworks, such as the Lemon and Verhoef (2016) customer experience model, the Loyalty Loop model becomes even more significant. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) feedback-driven method highlights customer touchpoints along the journey, which is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of customer loyalty. By

integrating the Loyalty Loop's emphasis on loyalty with the customer experience touchpoints defined by Lemon and Verhoef (2016), TS marketers can more effectively customise tactics to meet consumer expectations and deliver memorable experiences that cultivate loyalty. Utilising feedback to enhance the pre-show phase can help marketers more effectively target attendees, ensuring the attendees are ready for brand interaction when entering the event.

Summary

The Loyalty Loop Model by Edelman and Singer (2015) is a contemporary, loyalty-focused framework for understanding customer journeys and optimising the impact of purchasing decisions. Although the model offers valuable insights, particularly for firms with an established consumer base, application in complex industrial contexts like TSs requires adjustments to account for specific dynamics. By overcoming obstacles and incorporating complementary frameworks, TS marketers can leverage the Loyalty Loop model to cultivate loyalty, enhance the overall attendee experience, and stimulate PS purchasing intent. Nonetheless, understanding the timing and methodology for effectively using this model, particularly in multi-stakeholder decision-making contexts, is crucial for TS marketers aiming to optimise brand influence and foster enduring loyalty.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Constructing a comprehensive conceptual framework for this research is vital, incorporating ideas from Sheth's (1973) integrative model of industrial buyer behaviour, Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) customer experience framework, Edelman and Singer's (2015) loyalty loop, and Maslow's (1943) need hierarchy. The four theories provide a basis for understanding customer motivations, the decision-making process, and the effect of consumer needs on TS effectiveness and PS purchasing intentions in Zambia's food processing sector. Accordingly, the framework incorporates the concepts of perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention, specifically tailored to the industrial B2B and TS environment of Zambia.

In a B2B scenario, Maslow's hierarchy of needs serves as an effective framework for categorising buyer motives. Maslow's framework classifies needs into fundamental needs: safety and security, Belonging, and self-esteem needs (Maslow, 1943). This segmentation is crucial for TS exhibitors, enabling the customisation of marketing and presentations to

correspond with varying buyer motives, hence potentially improving the perceived effectiveness of the TS by effectively addressing these nuanced needs.

The buyer serves as the central element in this framework, shaping perceptions of TS effectiveness and guiding the customer's journey from early consideration to PS involvement. Maslow's hierarchy elucidates both fundamental and advanced needs that drive consumer motivation, thereby affecting the assessment and experience of TS encounters. For instance, fulfilling a company's safety needs by offering reliable, cost-effective products enhances credibility, while highlighting innovation might resonate with buyers' higher-order aspirations, such as advancement and self-actualisation.

Sheth's (1973) Integrative Model of Industrial Buyer Behaviour clarifies the complex decision-making processes in B2B organisations, where a variety of stakeholders and diverse organisational expectations shape purchasing choices (Sheth, 1973). Within this paradigm, perceived TS effectiveness depends on the extent to which the TS fulfils certain buying needs and stakeholder expectations, including information sourcing.

Utilising Sheth's (1973) methodology to assess TS effectiveness involves analysing how product-specific variables, including cost, innovation, and dependability, along with stakeholder expectations from engineers, buyers, and end users, shape perceptions of TS effectiveness and influence future purchasing decisions. This approach highlights the necessity for exhibitors in Zambia's food processing sector to cater to the distinct requirements of each stakeholder group to improve the general perception of TS value and effectiveness.

The Customer Experience Framework by Lemon and Verhoef (2016) categorises the buyer experience into three phases: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase, highlighting the importance of controlling touchpoints that influence consumer perceptions. In a TS setting, this paradigm encompasses pre-show interactions (such as marketing and invites), during-show experiences (including product demos and engagement), and PS follow-ups (comprising personalised emails and reminders).

By optimising touchpoints throughout these phases, exhibitors can cultivate a unified experience that enhances the perceived value of the TS and elevates purchase intentions. For example, efficient pre-show involvement establishes expectations, whereas compelling presentations at the event address customers' current needs. PS follow-ups are essential for

maintaining brand engagement and enhancing the TS experience; hence, TSs promote customer loyalty and encourage favourable purchase intentions.

Edelman and Singer's Loyalty Loop illustrates that post-purchase conversations and follow-ups strengthen brand loyalty and promote repeat purchasing behaviour, thereby circumventing prolonged deliberation stages for loyal customers (Edelman and Singer, 2015). Within the framework of TSs, the Loyalty Loop posits that favourable PS interactions can expedite purchasing choices for returning attendees, establishing a loop of loyalty.

This framework examines PS purchase intention and highlights the significance of PS follow-up activities in enhancing brand loyalty. Personalised PS communications that cater to purchasers' individual interests can enhance satisfaction and expedite purchasing choices, thereby completing the loyalty loop. By utilising this strategy, exhibitors in Zambia's food processing industry can establish loyalty loops that drive rapid PS purchases and cultivate lasting customer engagement.

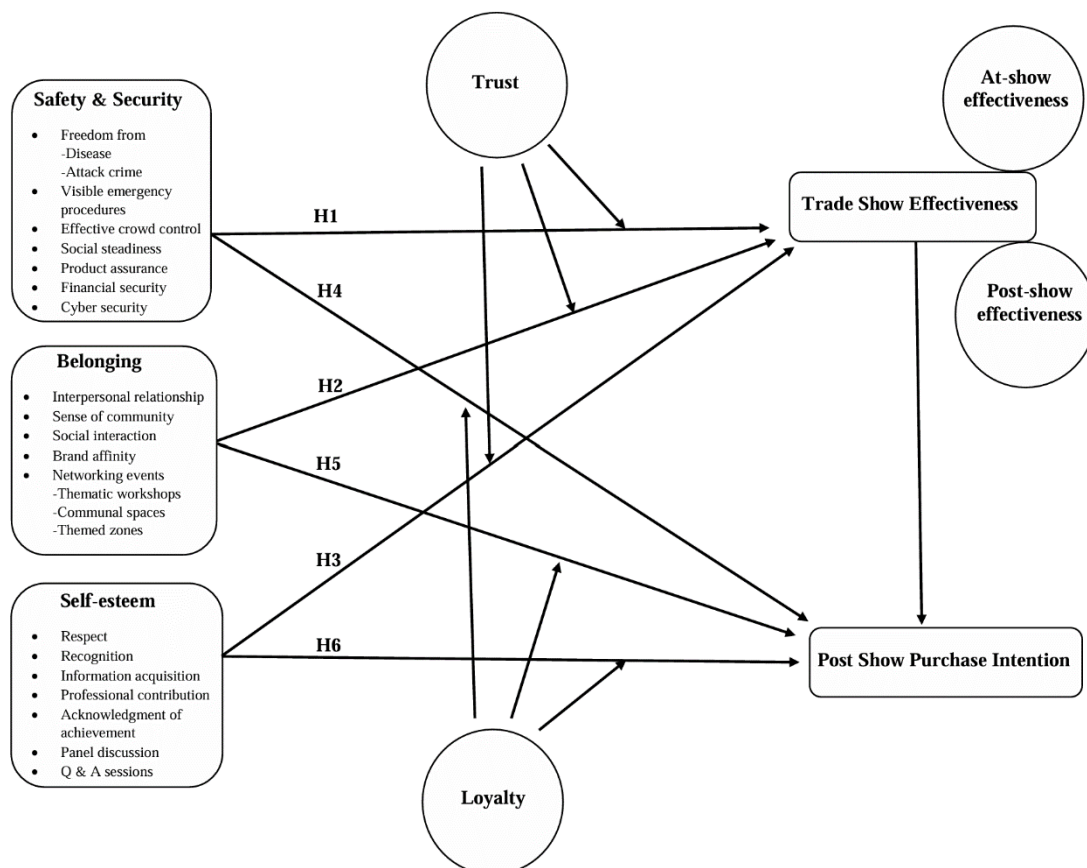


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework

2.5 Buyer-centred Framework for Evaluating TS Effectiveness

A buyer-centred framework for evaluating TS effectiveness explicitly links buyer needs to observable TS activities and outcomes. Within this framework, buyer needs grounded in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy (Maslow, 1943, 1954) serve as the primary drivers shaping buyer perceptions and behaviour. Specifically, safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem needs influence how buyers experience and evaluate TS participation. The framework conceptualises TS effectiveness across two temporal dimensions: at-show effectiveness, which reflects experiences during the event, and post-show effectiveness, which reflects evaluations and outcomes after the event. Together, these dimensions influence PS purchase intention. Trust and loyalty also function as moderating variables that influence the strength and direction of the relationships between buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and post-show purchase intention.

At the at-show stage, exhibitors operationalise buyer needs through concrete TS activities. Exhibitors address safety and security needs by providing transparent product demonstrations, verifiable product information, certifications, quality assurances, clear pricing structures, and professional booth staff conduct (Ginting, 2019; Space goats, 2024). The wider TS environment also strengthens perceptions of security and comfort through organised venues, refreshments, visible safety procedures, crowd management systems, and trained security personnel (Schütte *et al.*, 2024; Madani and Choudhry, 2025). In digital and hybrid TS environments, exhibitors and organisers further reinforce trust by implementing secure registration systems and transparent data usage policies (Berger and Torres, 2024). These activities reduce uncertainty, strengthen buyer confidence, and build trust within B2B decision-making processes.

Exhibitors operationalise belonging needs through relationship-oriented activities such as personalised communication, networking opportunities, collaborative discussions, and inclusive booth environments that encourage interaction and engagement (Yarborough and Wilson, 2025). TSs inherently function as social platforms where professionals establish and strengthen business relationships (Kourkouridis and Salepaki, 2025). Structured networking sessions, panel discussions, question-and-answer forums, product demonstrations, and collaborative learning activities encourage interaction and community building (Syam and

Achmad, 2022; Blue Atlas, 2024). Exhibitors also strengthen emotional connection and brand affinity when the exhibitors align organisational values with buyer interests such as sustainability, innovation, or community impact (Narciso, 2024). These activities reinforce social connectedness and improve perceived TS value.

Exhibitors address self-esteem needs through recognition-oriented and value-enhancing activities. These activities include acknowledging buyer expertise, offering customised solutions, providing exclusive information, and respecting buyers' professional authority and decision-making roles (Nurwati and Achmad, 2021). Knowledge-sharing opportunities, such as expert forums, attendee-led discussions, and technical presentations, allow buyers to demonstrate competence and reinforce professional identity (Setiawan *et al.*, 2022). Transparent and comprehensive information further supports confident decision-making and strengthens buyers' perceptions of competence and professional capability (Mohan *et al.*, 2020). Exhibitors can also emphasise product uniqueness, prestige, and industry leadership during presentations to strengthen buyers' sense of status and association with respected brands (Cinelli and LeBoeuf, 2019). These activities enhance buyers' perceptions of importance, competence, and professional recognition within the TS environment.

These at-show experiences directly influence effectiveness because buyers continuously evaluate, in real time, the extent to which TS activities satisfy buyers' needs. At-show effectiveness subsequently influences post-show effectiveness because the same needs continue to shape buyer perceptions after the event concludes. Safety and security needs continue through reliable communication, dependable delivery performance, and consistent fulfilment of organisational commitments (Lonsdale, 2025). Exhibitors reinforce belonging needs through sustained relationship management, continued interaction, and personalised follow-up engagement (Kazinik, 2025; Rehr-Davis, 2026). Similarly, exhibitors maintain self-esteem through customer recognition, customised offers, responsiveness to feedback, and continued professional engagement (Chhabria *et al.*, 2023; Razmus and Laguna, 2024). Buyers ultimately translate these experiences into procurement decisions and PS purchase intentions.

The framework, therefore, establishes a clear sequence: buyer needs influence at-show activities, at-show activities shape at-show effectiveness, at-show effectiveness influences post-show effectiveness, and post-show effectiveness determines PS purchase intention. This

structure aligns with hypotheses H1–H6 by illustrating both direct and mediated relationships between motivational factors and behavioural outcomes.

Practically, the framework provides actionable guidance for exhibitors, organisers, and policymakers. Exhibitors should develop booth strategies that deliberately address safety, belonging, and self-esteem needs through trust-building, relationship-oriented, and recognition-based activities. Marketers should integrate pre-show, at-show, and post-show engagement strategies to ensure continuity in meeting buyer needs. Organisers and policymakers should also create TS environments that encourage meaningful interaction, transparency, collaboration, and professional recognition, rather than focusing exclusively on logistical efficiency or sales performance.

Conclusion

The integration of these ideas offers a comprehensive view of the buyer journey, highlighting the importance of understanding buyer needs and managing customer experience touchpoints throughout the TS process. This understanding enables exhibitors to create meaningful, loyalty-boosting experiences that can drive enduring purchase behaviour and enhance TS success in Zambia's expanding food processing industry.

2.6 Summary

This chapter examines textual elements pertinent to TS, along with ideas such as Herzberg's Motivation Theory, ERG Theory, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. These theories offer valuable insights into human motivation, enhancing comprehension of TS performance and buyers' purchase intentions following the show. Maslow's theory delineates a hierarchical framework of human wants, encompassing self-actualisation, self-esteem, safety and security, sense of belonging, and physiological needs. In the context of TSs, understanding these needs can help exhibitors tailor offers to attendees' preferences. For instance, creating a pleasant setting (fulfilling physiological and safety needs), enabling networking (satisfying social needs), and displaying new products or services (catering to self-actualisation and esteem needs) can improve the effectiveness of TS booths and presentations. Alderfer's ERG theory condenses the hierarchy of needs theory into three essential categories: existence, relatedness, and growth. In TS contexts, exhibitors must evaluate how products or services address attendee needs. For instance, illustrating how a product enhances an attendee's life (existence),

showcasing facilitation of interpersonal connections (relatedness), or emphasising the inventive potential of a good or service (growth) can make TS encounters more impactful. Herzberg posits that job content (motivators) and hygiene factors (job context) are distinct entities. The appearance, aesthetics, and staff interactions at the exhibition booth function as hygiene factors within a TS environment that must fulfil the basic expectations of visitors. The motivators are the unique and captivating elements that set a show apart in the buyer's perception. Aspects such as showcasing innovative goods and services, conducting instructional seminars, or facilitating interactive demos significantly enhance the overall experience. Understanding these aspects can enhance the overall appeal of a TS presentation.

These factors influence buyer decision-making during the decision-making process. The implication is that similarities in consumer decision-making and industrial buying facilitate the transfer of these effects between the two sectors. Similar to Sheth's (1973) industrial purchasing process, both internal and external factors exert influence. The categorisation of internal influences, personal and psychological factors, encompasses the desire to fulfil needs (Svatosová, 2013). One facet of human existence is the impetus to fulfil certain aspirations (Seeley, 1992). Purchases and other consuming activities can partially fulfil needs within the framework of consumer behaviour. According to consumer research on need fulfilment (Trigg, 2004), individuals generally satisfy a lower-level need based on resource availability before progressing up the need hierarchy. Conversely, a research gap remains regarding the effect of needs compliance on buyer behaviour in commercial or business-to-business contexts.

This research's conceptual framework integrates Maslow's motivational theories, Sheth's (1973) industrial buyer model, Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) customer experience framework, and Edelman and Singer's loyalty loop. This multi-theoretical framework offers a systematic technique to evaluate the influence of customer needs on TS effectiveness and subsequent purchase intentions in Zambia's food processing sector. The approach elucidates the relationship between perceived TS value and long-term purchasing behaviour by operationalising buyer needs, customer experience phases, and loyalty development. This strategy aims to provide practical insights for exhibitors to cultivate meaningful TS engagements, address buyer needs, and build lasting loyalty and purchase intent.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

3.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter describes the research methodology and details the systematic approach to ensure the reliability and robustness of the research. The section on research design describes a methodological strategy that employs quantitative procedures to provide a detailed understanding of the research problem. Pragmatism reinforces the research design by supporting practical inquiry and the logical application of methods to address the research problem. The research context or research site contextualises the research activities and serve as the research background. The research population section defines the size and demographic characteristics of the research population, and the section on sample and sampling techniques explains the methods used to select the population sample. Research tools define the equipment and procedures used for data collection and ensure the collection of relevant information. The sections on validity and reliability provide information on the measures taken to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the research's results. The data collection procedures outline the processes, while the data analysis procedures include methods for interpreting the collected data. In view of this, the final section, Ethical Considerations, outlines the standards and procedures for ensuring the integrity and ethical soundness of the research.

3.1 Research Design

Asenahabi (2019) argues that research design is a primary methodological component of a research, providing a clear, structured approach aligned with the research problem. This research adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational survey design because such a design was best suited to addressing the research questions and hypotheses examining the relationships among buyer needs (safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem), perceived TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention. The need to collect standardised data from a relatively large number of entities within Zambia's food processing industry, together with the availability of prior literature and measurable constructs relevant to the research, informed the choice of a survey methodology (Ellis and Levy, 2009). As noted by Bayramova and Edwards (2026), research objectives play a decisive role in determining the methodological approach; in this case, the objective of statistically assessing relationships necessitated a quantitative design.

A correlational research design was particularly appropriate because the research did not seek to manipulate variables or establish causal relationships but rather to determine the strength and direction of associations between constructs (Ellis and Levy, 2009; Devi *et al.*, 2023). Correlational studies are a form of descriptive research that measure variables in a natural state without experimental intervention, making these studies suitable for examining real-world phenomena such as buyer perceptions and behavioural intentions in TS contexts. This approach aligned with the research hypotheses (H1–H6), which explicitly frame relationships among the research variables. Although the research distinguished between independent (buyer needs) and dependent variables (TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention) for analytical purposes, this research did not infer causality, consistent with the principles of correlational research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

The cross-sectional nature of the design further strengthened the design's suitability, as data were collected at a single point in time from TS participants. This approach was appropriate given that perceptions of TS effectiveness and purchase intention are time-bound and context-specific. As Burns and Grove (2001) emphasise, greater control over the research process enhances validity; the use of structured questionnaires ensured consistency in measurement across respondents. Key design considerations, including the unit of analysis, the time dimension, and the research focus, were carefully addressed (Stone *et al.*, 2026). Although the research samples at the business-entity level (e.g., wholesalers and retailers), individual buyers or company representatives served as the unit of analysis for responses, aligning with the constructs of perception and intention.

The research design followed a systematic framework encompassing: the definition of the research model, the development of the research instrument, the sampling design, data collection, statistical analysis, and the interpretation of findings (Polit and Beck, 2004; Ellis and Levy, 2009). As Cheek and Øby (2024) note, a research design functions as a strategic plan that guides the entire research process, while Polit and Beck (2004) and Lobiondo-Wood and Haber (2014) emphasise that the most appropriate design is one that directly addresses the research problem. In this research, the problem (examining the extent to which buyer needs influence perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention) necessitated a design capable of measuring multiple variables and analysing interrelationships quantitatively.

The research was grounded in a well-defined research problem supported by existing literature, which provided both theoretical and empirical justification (Ellis and Levy, 2009). Foundational theories, such as Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs, alongside related frameworks, including Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory and Herzberg's (1959) motivation-hygiene theory, informed the conceptual model and the measurement of constructs. Prior research also guided the selection of survey-based methods and validated instruments, ensuring methodological consistency and enhancing validity (Levy and Ellis, 2006). By identifying gaps, particularly the limited focus on buyer perspectives in TS research, the research was positioned within the broader academic discourse while contributing new empirical insights.

Furthermore, the research employed a descriptive-correlational design, which allowed for the identification of patterns and relationships within the population without manipulating variables (Walker, 2005; Loeb *et al.*, 2017). Descriptive research facilitates the organisation, summarisation, and presentation of empirical data (Best and Kahn, 2007; Manjunatha, 2019), while the survey method enables the collection of data on perceptions, attitudes, and intended behaviours from multiple respondents (Polit and Beck, 2004). The use of Likert-scale instruments allows for the quantification of subjective constructs, enabling statistical analysis of relationships.

This research aligned more appropriately with a pragmatic paradigm, which prioritised methods that best addressed the research problem (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Bryman, 2012). While positivism emphasises objectivity and hypothesis testing (Popper, 2005), pragmatism allows for methodological flexibility and focuses on producing actionable insights. In this context, the use of quantitative correlational analysis was justified not only by theoretical alignment but also by practical utility in informing TS strategies and buyer engagement in Zambia's food processing industry.

Finally, the availability of structured quantitative data supported the adoption of correlation analysis as the primary analytical technique. While qualitative methods such as thematic or content analysis may be appropriate for exploratory inquiries, the presence of measurable variables and predefined hypotheses necessitated a quantitative, correlational approach. Thus, the chosen quantitative, cross-sectional correlational survey design ensured coherence between the research problem, objectives, hypotheses, data collection methods, and analytical techniques, thereby enhancing the overall rigour, validity, and applicability of the research.

3.2 Philosophical Underpinning

Creswell and Poth (2018) argue that researchers inevitably bring certain ideologies and preoccupations into studies, often unconsciously. These philosophical assumptions shape the literature's search for problem-solving and underlie the evaluation of research. Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasise the need to understand these assumptions in relation to the research's focus. Scholars choose approaches to the subject, formulate research questions, design studies, and select methods for data collection and analysis. The four philosophical prerequisites discussed are axiology, methodology, epistemology, and ontology.

Ontology refers to the nature of reality and the assumptions researchers make about what exists (Yilmaz, 2013; Creswell and Poth, 2018). Ontology shapes the conceptualisation of research problems and guides the interpretation of findings (Scotland, 2012; Jantzen *et al.*, 2015). Traditional ontological positions range from realism, which assumes a single objective reality, to constructivism, which views reality as socially constructed through interaction (Slevitch, 2011; Yilmaz, 2013; Creswell and Poth, 2018). This research views reality as both observable and perceptual; measurable constructs such as TS effectiveness and purchase intention emerge through subjective buyer experiences. This dual recognition reflects the applied nature of the research context.

Epistemology concerns the nature and acquisition of knowledge (Slevitch, 2011; Creswell and Poth, 2018). Positivist epistemology assumes that knowledge is objective, measurable, and independent of the researcher (Slevitch, 2011; Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017), whereas interpretivist approaches emphasise subjective meaning and interaction. In this research, knowledge is generated through structured quantitative instruments while acknowledging that variables such as perceptions and intentions originate from individual interpretation. Thus, knowledge is treated as both empirically measurable and contextually grounded, supporting the research's aim of examining relationships while maintaining relevance to practice.

Methodology refers to the strategies guiding data collection and analysis (Yilmaz, 2013). Quantitative methodologies typically emphasise hypothesis testing, statistical analysis, and objectivity (Oranga and Matere, 2025). In this research, a structured survey design, correlational analysis, and probabilistic sampling are employed to examine relationships between buyer needs and outcome variables. Reliability and validity testing are incorporated

to ensure measurement accuracy and consistency (Yilmaz, 2013), while the use of hypotheses and research questions reflects a structured yet flexible approach to inquiry. This methodological orientation enables both statistical rigour and practical interpretation of findings.

Axiology examines the role of values in research (Taber, 2013). While quantitative traditions often prioritise objectivity and value neutrality, qualitative perspectives acknowledge the influence of the researcher and contextual values (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This research maintains objectivity through standardised measurement and statistical analysis; however, the selection of research focus (TS effectiveness and buyer outcomes) reflects a value-driven commitment to producing practically relevant insights. Thus, the research recognises that values shape research priorities while striving for credible and reliable findings.

A pragmatic philosophy is particularly suited to this research because the research prioritises practical problem-solving over strict adherence to a single philosophical tradition (Elgeddawy and Abouraia, 2024). Unlike positivism, which assumes a fully objective reality and emphasises causal explanation, pragmatism allows integration of multiple perspectives and methods based on usefulness in addressing the research problem (Prasad, 2021). This approach is especially relevant given that the research employs both hypotheses and research questions, combining confirmatory and exploratory elements within a single design.

Critically, pragmatism acknowledges that while quantitative methods such as structured questionnaires and correlational analysis provide measurable and generalisable findings, these methods do not fully eliminate the subjective nature of constructs such as perceptions and intentions. Rather than viewing this as a limitation, pragmatism incorporates this aspect into the research process, recognising that knowledge is both constructed and empirically tested (Morgan, 2014). This flexibility enhances the research's ability to capture the complexity of buyer behaviour in TS environments.

Furthermore, adopting a pragmatic philosophy directly influences methodological choices. The use of a cross-sectional survey design enables efficient data collection at a single point in time, while probabilistic sampling supports generalisability and practical relevance. Correlational analysis aligns with the research's aim of examining relationships rather than establishing causality, reinforcing the consistency between philosophical stance and analytical approach.

Importantly, pragmatism strengthens the research's contribution to practice. By focusing on actionable outcomes (such as improving TS effectiveness and enhancing buyer engagement), the research moves beyond theoretical explanations to provide insights directly applicable to industry stakeholders. This initiative aligns with the pragmatic emphasis on producing knowledge that is useful, contextually relevant, and decision-informing.

In summary, pragmatism provides a coherent and flexible philosophical foundation for this research, enabling the integration of quantitative rigour with practical relevance. Pragmatism ensures alignment between the research problem, methods, and intended outcomes, thereby enhancing both the academic and applied value of the research.

3.3 Research Context /Research Site

Based on insights from the TS literature and experiential observations as a TS visitor, the author identifies notable inconsistencies in how TSs are designed and evaluated, particularly in how researchers assess buyer-focused outcomes. In many cases, exhibitors' marketing strategies prioritise organisational objectives, such as product launches and business expansion (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017), over the fulfilment of buyer needs. Similarly, exhibition organisers largely determine the structure and perceived success of TSs through decisions on layout, exhibitor participation, and operational logistics, often driven by revenue considerations, such as space rental (Tafesse, 2014). Consequently, exhibitors give limited attention to the experiential and psychological needs of visitors (buyers) (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017; Sarmiento and Simões, 2018), potentially undermining both perceived effectiveness and PS purchase intention. This observation directly informs the research's central objective of examining how buyer needs (specifically safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem) relate to perceived TS effectiveness and behavioural outcomes in an emerging market.

The increasing complexity of industrial marketing and supply chain interactions further reinforces the relevance of this research context. As Handfield (2019) notes, industrial firms engage in more sophisticated customer interactions and multi-layered supply chain systems, which can introduce constraints that limit effective engagement at TSs. These complexities may create barriers to meaningful buyer–seller interaction, thereby affecting how buyers perceive value and whether such perceptions translate into purchase intention. Within this context, the research's research questions and hypotheses seek to address a critical gap by

focusing on the buyer perspective, which is often underemphasised in TS planning and evaluation.

This research situates itself within Zambia's food processing sector, a key component of the national economy that encompasses activities such as producing, preparing, and preserving agricultural products, including fruit, vegetables, meat, seafood, oils, dairy products, starch-based goods, and beverages (UN, 2008). This sector provides an appropriate setting for the research, given the sector's active participation in TSs and reliance on both wholesale and retail distribution channels. Buyer behaviour within this sector is particularly relevant, as purchasing decisions are influenced not only by product attributes but also by relational and experiential factors encountered during TSs.

To ensure that the research captures diverse buyer experiences and enhances the generalisability of findings, a stratified sampling approach is employed. The Zambian Statistical Agency's geographical framework divides Zambia into provinces, which serve as strata based on population distribution, while cluster definitions follow urban and rural classifications. This approach is consistent with the research's objective of examining relationships across different buyer contexts, as perceptions of TS effectiveness and purchase intention may vary between urban and rural participants. A sample of buyers actively engaged in the food processing sector (specifically wholesalers and retailers) is selected, as these actors represent key decision-makers whose perceptions and intentions are central to the research's hypotheses.

The sampling strategy enhances both representativeness and analytical relevance by combining stratified and cluster sampling techniques. The division of the population into provincial strata ensures proportional geographic coverage, while the inclusion of urban and rural clusters captures contextual variations in buyer behaviour and market access. This aspect is particularly important, as perceptions of TS effectiveness and TS purchase intention may differ across regions due to disparities in infrastructure, exhibition exposure, and business sophistication. By focusing on wholesalers and retailers (who are primary decision-makers and active participants in TSs), the sample directly reflects the population most relevant to the research variables. Furthermore, a probabilistic approach supports generalisability and allows researchers to extend the relationships between buyer needs and outcome variables meaningfully to the broader food processing sector in Zambia.

The contextual observations of TS practices (particularly the emphasis on exhibitor-driven objectives and limited attention to buyer experience) provide a clear foundation for the research's conceptual framework and hypotheses (H1–H6). The apparent neglect of buyer-centred factors such as safety, social interaction, and professional recognition aligns with the constructs derived from Abraham Maslow's theory. Specifically, the lack of attention to safety and trust mechanisms informs H1 and H4, the limited facilitation of networking and inclusion underpins H2 and H5, and the insufficient emphasis on buyer recognition and confidence-building relates to H3 and H6. Thus, the observed disconnect between TS design and buyer needs not only justifies the research problem but also reinforces the theoretical logic linking need fulfilment to perceived effectiveness and PS purchase intention.

The researcher derives the sampling frame from the Patents and Companies Registration Authority (PACRA) database, which reports that Zambia's food processing sector comprises 14,534 registered entities, including 784 producers, 6,252 wholesalers, and 7,498 retailers. The inclusion of wholesalers and retailers is particularly justified, as these groups are primary participants in TSs and are directly involved in post-show purchasing decisions. By focusing on this population, the research aligns the research context with the core objective of analysing the relationship between buyer needs, perceived TS effectiveness, and post-show purchase intention, thereby ensuring coherence between the research site, research objectives, and hypothesised relationships.

3.4 Research Population

According to Polit and Hungler (1999), a population is the sum of all objects and subjects that satisfy certain conditions. The population in this survey comprises a variety of professionals in the Zambian labour force working in the food processing sector who are likely to participate in a TS. The research includes potential respondents who are professionals working in the formal food processing sector in Zambia. To identify respondents, the research treats a business entity registered in the food processing sector (whether retail or wholesale) as the sampling unit rather than an individual. However, since the researcher sends the online questionnaire through company email addresses, each organisation selects the most suitable employee (buyer) who has attended a TS within the last 12 months to respond. The population, therefore, includes all existing businesses (retailers and wholesalers) registered with PACRA within the food

processing sector. The PACRA database classifies the population concerned in Sections C (Classes 4630 and 4690) and 47 (Classes 4711–4723) of the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC). PACRA data estimates the research population at 13,750 business entities.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Consider a scenario in which the aim is to determine the unemployment rate among the people of Zambia at a given point in time. There are two methods for obtaining this information. This approach involves assessing the unemployment rate for each individual in the population and establishing a general average. Conversely, the second method uses a sample of the population to estimate the unemployment rate, then calculates the sample average to represent the entire population. The former is called the census, while the latter is called a random sample survey. Mouton (1996) defines a sample as a selection of elements that provides insight into the entire population from which the sample is drawn. Sampling is the technique of selecting a subset of a population to represent that population (Polit and Hungler, 1999). Sampling helps to estimate population characteristics and to identify subgroups likely to have different characteristics related to the research theme (Sekaran, 2003).

Although the census is expensive, the results often accurately reflect the expected outcomes. Sampling is significantly more cost-effective, regardless of the potential difference between the sample estimate and the actual population. Selecting the best demographic sampling method is crucial for this survey. Compared to the census, sampling provides more accurate estimates by using qualified interviewers, significantly reduces costs, takes less time, allows faster access to demographic data, and, in some cases, is the only practical way to collect data on the target population. (Kim, 2024).

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

This research employs an integrated probabilistic sampling strategy to ensure alignment with research objectives, questions, and hypotheses that examine the relationships among buyer needs (safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem), perceived TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention. The sampling process begins with the identification of appropriate sampling units, defined as elements that collectively represent the population without overlap (Groves *et al.*, 2009). In this research, although business entities (wholesalers and retailers)

form the primary sampling frame, the unit of analysis is the individual buyer within these entities. This distinction ensures that the data collected directly reflects buyer perceptions and behavioural intentions, which are central to the research variables. The researcher constructs the sampling frame from registered food processing enterprises. At the same time, knowledgeable individuals (e.g., owners, managers, or procurement officers) actively involved in TS participation and purchasing decision-making serve as respondents.

The research adopts a stratified sampling approach to enhance representativeness and ensure adequate capture of key subgroups relevant to the research context. The researcher divides the population into non-overlapping strata based on Zambia's provinces, ensuring that the strata remain mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive (Neyman, 1934; Cochran, 1946; Fuller, 2009). Stratification improves estimation efficiency and reduces sampling error by grouping relatively homogeneous units (Krewski and Rao, 1981; Groves *et al.*, 2009). This approach is particularly important given that buyer perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention may vary across geographic and socio-economic contexts. By ensuring representation across strata, the design supports the research's objective of examining relationships that are generalisable across the food processing sector.

To complement stratification, a two-stage cluster sampling technique is implemented to improve feasibility and operational efficiency. In the first stage, the research selects clusters (districts) as primary sampling units (PSUs), and in the second stage, the research selects individual enterprises as secondary sampling units (SSUs) (Kish, 1987; Fuller, 2009). This approach is consistent with two-stage sampling principles, in which selection at each stage is conducted independently (Sarndal *et al.*, 1992). The use of clusters is particularly appropriate given the target population's geographical dispersion, enabling efficient data collection while maintaining representativeness.

Within the selected clusters, the research uses systematic sampling to select districts, ensuring a structured, unbiased selection process (Cochran, 1946; Wolter, 1984). This step is followed by the application of simple random sampling without replacement to select individual enterprises, giving each unit an equal probability of inclusion (Tillé, 2020). The combination of these techniques reduces selection bias in the sample and ensures that each eligible entity in the population has a known, non-zero probability of selection. Importantly, although

enterprises provide the sampling base, individual buyers within these organisations serve as respondents, thereby ensuring that collected data directly address research variables: buyer needs, perceptions, and intentions.

The integration of stratified and cluster sampling reflects the researcher's need to balance statistical rigour with practical feasibility. The research uses stratification to ensure adequate representation of relevant subgroups (such as urban and rural buyers) in the sample. At the same time, clustering reduces logistical challenges associated with data collection across a geographically dispersed population. Additionally, the use of probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling in the first stage ensures that larger clusters have a higher chance of selection, while the second-stage sampling equalises probabilities across individual entities (Greener, 2008). This design improves representativeness and reduces sampling variance (Sumner, 1968), thereby strengthening the reliability of findings related to the hypothesised relationships (H1–H6).

Crucially, the sampling strategy employed in this research directly links to the research conceptual framework and hypotheses. By selecting active buyers within wholesalers and retailers, the design ensures that respondents have relevant experience with TSs, enabling valid measurement of safety, Belonging, and esteem needs, as well as perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. The probabilistic nature of the sampling approach supports the generalisation of findings, allowing the research to draw meaningful conclusions about the relationships between these variables across the broader population.

Finally, the adoption of a probabilistic sampling strategy aligns with the research's pragmatic philosophical orientation, which emphasises the generation of actionable and generalisable insights. By employing structured quantitative methods and statistically grounded sampling techniques, the research ensures that data collection is both efficient and robust, supporting the practical testing of hypotheses and answering of research questions. This alignment between philosophy, methodology, and sampling design enhances the research's ability to produce findings that are not only academically rigorous but also directly applicable to improving TS effectiveness and buyer outcomes in Zambia's food processing industry.

3.5.2 Sample

There is always a risk that the sample survey will not accurately reflect the full population, as the sample will only cover part of the population. A sample represents the population when the sample characteristics and diversity accurately reflect those of the population as a whole (Kruskal and Mosteller, 1979). A well-represented sample can effectively and affordably capture most of a population's characteristics. When inferring population characteristics from a sample, the sample estimate may not reflect the true population parameters (Hájek, 1981). Sampling error is the difference between an estimate and a parameter. Two basic methods can reduce this error: adopting a sound sampling approach and ensuring the sample size is adequate (Lahiri, 1951). For an estimator, the literature states the sampling error as follows:

$$\hat{\theta} - \theta = \{\hat{\theta} - E(\hat{\theta})\} + \{E(\hat{\theta}) - \theta\}$$

The variation of $\hat{\theta}$, is represented by the first term, $\hat{\theta} - E(\hat{\theta})$, and the bias of $\hat{\theta}$ is represented by the second component, $E(\hat{\theta}) - \theta$. (Fuller, 2009). Raising the sample size lowers the variance, while choosing an unbiased sampling strategy equalises the bias term to zero (Tukey, 1958). Usually, researchers measure an estimator's accuracy using the mean squared error (MSE), which may be found by:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{MSE}(\hat{\theta}) &\equiv E\{(\hat{\theta} - \theta)^2\} \\ &= \{\text{Bias}(\hat{\theta})\}^2 + V(\hat{\theta}). \end{aligned}$$

Researchers can eliminate bias by employing a probability sampling approach, while on the other hand, researchers can diminish variance by augmenting the sample size (Tukey, 1958; Fuller, 2009). Probability sampling includes methods where the probability of selecting each element in a population is known to be greater than zero. In a basic random sample, each member of the population has the same probability of being selected. This reality guarantees the impartiality of sampling and eliminates the possibility of human bias (Lahiri, 1951). Researchers may obtain probability samples by several methods, determined by the objectives of the research, the data available in the sampling frame, and cost factors. This research adopts design-based sampling because this design is independent of model assumptions, which are

often difficult to verify. This method reduces the likelihood of biased sampling, which is a major problem in research statistics (Fuller, 2009). The purpose of sampling surveys is to collect data from a sample of the population to create a database for descriptive or analytical purposes. Selecting an appropriate sampling frame is a crucial aspect of survey design because the sampling frame defines the survey population, which may differ from the target population.

The research begins by defining target groups using a sampling frame, i.e., a list of potential participants. The research's target population comprises all companies active in the food processing sector in Zambia. An accurate definition of the business units was crucial to maintain the focus on the target demographic. The target population is the group from which the survey intends to obtain information, while the population surveyed is referred to as the survey population (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The sample frame is the actual enumeration of the population targeted by the survey. In the present case, the target group consisted of all enterprises (retail and wholesale) active in the food processing sector in Zambia from a specific reference date. However, the survey excludes an unspecified number of companies due to a lack of registration with PACRA.

To ensure representativeness, a probability sample is selected from a sampling frame (Kruskal and Mosteller, 1979). A probabilistic approach aligns with a pragmatic research philosophy by enabling the use of statistical inference to generate findings that are generalisable and applicable to real-world decision-making. By estimating the likelihood and strength of relationships between variables, the approach provides evidence-based, actionable insights directly relevant to improving TS effectiveness and buyer outcomes in practice. There are many strategies for selecting a probabilistic sample, and the choice of sampling design depends on a number of factors, including survey costs, the variability of the variables used, the availability of the sampling framework, and the required level of accuracy (Taherdoost, 2016). Selecting the appropriate design and sample size facilitates an optimal balance among sampling error, cost, and timeliness for the population in question. Moreover, the use of additional demographic data increases the effectiveness of the estimation process. This research uses a sample structure derived from the 2021 Zambia Labour Force Survey. The database provides information on wards, constituencies, districts and provinces (GRZ, 2021). The Framework does not specify the number of entities (companies) involved in the food processing sector; however, the research obtains this information from the competent authorities (PACRA). The

research designates the district as an enumeration area (EA) for the survey. The EA serves as the principal sampling unit (PSU) for the survey. The research sample frame identifies 116 EAs based on the number of characteristics used as scale measures, and the researcher selects 35 via systematic random sampling for the survey.

3.5.3 Sample Size

The most difficult aspect of population sampling is determining the appropriate sample size. Standard practice requires the use of a formula to determine the appropriate sample size. Although other methods exist to determine sample size, most require knowledge of population parameters, such as the mean. When researchers do not know the population size, researchers use the Slovin formula (Ryan, 2013). Researchers apply the Slovin method to achieve the required level of accuracy in population sampling (Stephanie, 2013). The formula calculates the minimum required sample size n as 389 entities.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where

n = sample size

N = total population

e = error tolerance

Kothari (2005) suggests a 95 per cent confidence interval to evaluate the level of precision. This fact indicates that there is a 95 per cent probability that the sample findings accurately reflect the population, with only a 5 per cent chance of deviation (Stephanie, 2013). The weighting of the sample is necessary to ensure accurate representation at the national and sub-national levels, given the uneven distribution across different strata, e.g., provinces. The weights assigned to each entity in the dataset are the product of the inverse probabilities of the EAs selected at the initial stage and those selected at subsequent stages. The researcher uses the following formula to determine the probability of selecting an EA (GRZ, 2021).

$$Y_T = \sum_{i=1}^{10} Y_{eT}$$

Where:

Y_T = the national total estimate K

K = 1 to 10 is the total number of strata (10 provinces)

The research uses the cumulative total method to select clusters by systematic random sampling. In the first stage, thirty-five (35) clusters are selected based on probability proportional to the estimated size, using the number of business entities (wholesalers and retailers) as the measure of size. The first sample (n) of 420 individual companies is then selected in a second stage using a simple random sample, with each cluster containing the same number of entities (12). The researcher notes that certain subgroups remain underrepresented in the total population. In Zambia, 95 of 116 districts are classified as rural, representing 82 per cent of the total (GRZ, 2021). Rural districts account for 32 per cent of the total population, while urban districts account for 68 per cent. Other subgroups identified within the population include retail and wholesale entities in both urban and rural areas. The screening process shows that retail entities in urban areas account for 36 per cent of the population, while wholesale traders account for 34 per cent. In addition, retail and wholesale traders in rural areas represent 19 per cent and 11 per cent of the total population, respectively. To ensure adequate representation of wholesale operators in rural areas within the Regulation's scope, a two-phase oversampling approach is applied in the second stage (Waite, 1993). The research calculates an oversample estimate (n_2^*) of 105 entities, resulting in a total sample size of 525 ($n + n_2^* = 420 + 105$), with each selected cluster containing 15 entities. This topic is examined thoroughly in the subsequent subsection.

3.5.4 Estimating the desired size of the oversample

Survey research uses multiple sampling to adequately represent specific subgroups within a population in a sample (Waite, 1993). This method is particularly important when there are small or under-representative subsets of the larger population, which would result in insufficient data for meaningful analysis (Cohen *et al.*, 1987). Researchers can improve the quality and accuracy of survey data by sampling specific subsets to obtain more reliable estimates (Singh *et al.*, 1994). Screening is typically necessary when subgroup IDs are lacking from the sample frame. This survey uses a simple screening approach, selecting a large initial sample to identify relevant subgroups (Deming, 1977; Elliott *et al.*, 2008). The basic

requirement for providing a sufficient sample size for each subgroup is the initial-phase sample size. First, determine the necessary sample size for each subgroup, then include all members of that subgroup in the second-stage sample to establish the minimum second-stage sample size (Deming, 1977; Kalton, 2009).

The need to estimate the underrepresented sub-groups in the population has increased over the last few decades, which is a major advance in survey research (Kalton, 2009). This survey focuses mainly on rural areas, including subgroups of rural businesses, such as retail trade. Numerous surveys have examined subgroups such as national, provincial, district, racial and ethnic minorities, low-income families, new-born persons, elderly persons, recent immigrants, homosexuals, substance abusers and disabled persons (Mohadjer and Curtin, 2008). When subgroups, commonly referred to as 'uncommon populations,' are under-represented, achieving a sufficient sample size for subgroup analysis is a major challenge in sample design (Kalton, 2009).

The size of the subgroup is a critical factor. Kish (1987) introduced a classification system of subgroups: large subgroups, which represent 10 per cent or more of the total population and for which a generic sample would normally provide accurate estimates; and small subgroups, which usually amount to 0.1 to 1 per cent and also require statistical models. Survey methods usually fail to detect uncommon types, which account for less than 0.01 per cent of the population. Many surveys focus on estimating large subgroups, some smaller subgroups, and even mini-groups. In general, a survey of a particular question cannot yield many mini-subgroup estimates with acceptable accuracy, even with the largest possible sample size. However, the need for mini-subgroup data at the local level is growing among policymakers. Statistical modelling techniques provide model-dependent, indirect, small-area estimates to address this requirement (Kalton, 2009). Srinath (1971) calculates the dispersion of estimates when sampling in excess and assumes that both the initial and excess samples have the same sampling probability. The variance of the estimator for predicting the population total under simple random sampling, necessitating oversampling, is determined (Park and Lee, 2004).

Let N represent the population size. A subset within the population, N_1 , is designated for oversampling. When sampling commercial entities, an oversample of wholesale enterprises located in rural regions is selected. The subsequent procedure involves sampling: initially, the researcher selects n entities using simple random sampling. Let n_1 represent the number of

entities in this sample that are not part of the subgroup, whereas n_2 denotes the number of entities that are part of the subgroup of interest. n_1 plus n_2 equals n is the equation. The researcher extracts a sample of n^* entities from the residual population ($N - n$), refines the sample, and subsequently selects another sample of entities from the subpopulation. The researcher then calculates the overall population estimate of entities with pertinent features using the formula below (Srinath, 1971).

$$n_2^* = n^* \frac{N_2 - n_2}{N - n}$$

this is the desired size of the oversample.

3.6 Research Instruments

The researcher collects quantitative data from the responses to the TS visitor questionnaire, which includes demographic and visitor profile questions. All items use a five-point Likert scale, where five points (5) indicate strong agreement and one point (1) indicates strong disagreement. The researcher disseminates the online questionnaire via e-mail, WhatsApp, and SMS and uses these platforms to share a link to the questionnaire in Google Forms format. All survey questions are closed-ended, with no open-ended questions to facilitate complex answers. Closed questions offer predefined options, while open questions require participants to formulate personal responses (White, 2025). This research uses closed-ended questions because such questions simplify administration and analysis. Moreover, closed-ended questions are more effective than open-ended ones, as closed-ended questions allow respondents to complete more tasks in a shorter time frame (Taherdoost, 2021). The research uses a research tool comprising three unique tools: The Need Assessment Tool, the TS Effectiveness Tool, and the Purchase Intent Tool. Scholars evaluated these instruments in prior research and assigned reliability ratings for each component based on Cronbach's alpha. Scholars assess reliability using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.70 indicating acceptable reliability (Alip *et al.*, 2025).

3.6.1 Need Satisfaction Assessment Tool

Taormina and Gao (2013) developed a method that assesses the extent to which different life domains satisfy individuals' basic needs. The measure assesses four main dimensions: needs for self-esteem, safety and security, belonging, and physiological needs. The questionnaire

employs a structured framework and Likert-scale items to assess satisfaction in these areas. Empirical studies have confirmed the robust reliability and construct validity. Organisational and psychological research typically uses this tool to assess the effectiveness of the response and to identify areas for intervention. Taormina and Gao developed an initial tool for assessing the satisfaction of needs, which aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Taormina and Gao, 2013). The reliability scores are: physiological need, 0.81; safety need, 0.87; feeling of belonging, 0.90; self-worth, 0.91; self-esteem, 0.89.

3.6.2 Trade Show Effectiveness Tool

Gottlieb, Brown and Drennan (2011) developed the Effectiveness Tool for the TS. Alpha tests of this instrument demonstrate reliability ranging from 0.71 to 0.96. The average extracted variance (AVE) for each structure is greater than 0.5, indicating that the method effectively collects high-quality data (Zaiř and Berteau, 2011). The objective of this tool is to assess the effectiveness of TS participation, including outcomes such as lead generation, networking opportunities, brand recognition, and return on investment. The tool monitors several factors, including lead generation, networking opportunities, brand recognition and return on investment. This tool collects data from exhibitors and attendees using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, such as surveys and interviews. Extensive field testing has demonstrated the construct validity and reliability of the structure. This tool allows companies to assess performance in TS, identify strengths and weaknesses and take informed decisions to improve participation and future performance.

3.6.3 Instrument for Assessing Purchase Intention

Barber *et al.* (2012) developed an instrument to highlight purchase intent. Alpha tests of this instrument yield a reliability coefficient of 0.71-0.89. A factor analysis yielded a result of 0.81, indicating that the instrument has a reliable capability to collect data. The purpose of this technique is to estimate the probability that a buyer will purchase a product or service. The researcher uses a structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items to assess factors that influence purchasing intentions, such as perceived value, brand trust, and product quality. Empirical research has confirmed the high reliability and construct validity. Marketing and consumer behaviour research typically uses this approach to anticipate buyer behaviour, assess marketing strategies and identify factors that increase purchasing intent. This tool enables

organisations to improve the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, thereby boosting consumer satisfaction and sales.

The researcher modifies each instrument to meet the needs of TS buyers. The revisions include changes to the statements assessing individuals' workplace needs (Burns and Grove, 1993). Personal claims, such as a sense of family or a romantic relationship, are excluded because these aspects are not relevant to the research subject. Construct validity and reliability, as demonstrated in previous studies, support the usefulness of these tools for research. The higher Cronbach's alpha values for the Need Satisfaction Indicator (0.81-0.91) demonstrate the reliability of measuring satisfaction across different needs, which is relevant for understanding buyer needs in TS contexts. This research validates the TS Effectiveness and Purchase Intention tools for measuring relevant outcomes and ensuring accurate assessment of TS effectiveness and purchase intent. In addition, due to changes in the original instruments, the researcher conducts independent reliability tests. The following subsection describes the results of these tests.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability form important components of the research tool and ensure that researchers measure the proposed construct correctly and consistently. Every research study must account for risks of invalidity and unreliability (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Scholars originally used validity and reliability concepts in quantitative research, but researchers now apply these concepts in mixed-method and qualitative research (Berg, 1998; Maxwell, 2005). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), the validity and reliability of the instrumentation used in a research influence both the amount of information learned about the research subject and the accuracy of the conclusions drawn from the data.

3.7.1 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument and resulting conclusions accurately reflect intended constructs (Creswell, 2005; Leedy and Ormrod, 2016). While scholars often discuss validity conceptually (Maxwell, 2005), this research operationalises validity through specific procedures linked to core constructs: buyer needs (safety and security, belonging, self-esteem), perceived TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention.

Internal validity requires researchers to control confounding factors that might influence observed relationships between variables (Leedy and Ormrod, 2016). This research achieves internal validity through (i) the use of established measurement instruments aligned with research constructs, (ii) a structured questionnaire design that standardises responses across participants, and (iii) probabilistic sampling that minimises selection bias. In addition, clear variable definitions and multi-item Likert scales reduce ambiguity and enhance response consistency. The use of correlational analysis, rather than causal inference, further maintains consistency with the research design and prevents over interpretation of relationships (Hung *et al.*, 2017).

Researchers establish face validity during the instrument development stage through expert review (Ellis and Levy, 2009). Specifically, academic researchers and industry practitioners with experience in TSs and marketing evaluate the questionnaire (comprising the Need Satisfaction Assessment Tool, TS Effectiveness Tool, and Purchase Intention Tool). These experts assess whether items measure the intended constructs (buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intentions) and provide feedback on clarity, relevance, and contextual appropriateness. The research team revises the instrument to ensure alignment with the research questions and hypotheses.

Researchers ensure content validity by systematically aligning questionnaire items with the theoretical constructs underpinning the research (Adiyo *et al.*, 2023). The instrument combines three established tools to ensure comprehensive coverage of all relevant dimensions: safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem (buyer needs), as well as TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. Multiple items derived from prior studies represent each construct, ensuring that no critical dimension remains omitted. Field experts further review the content to confirm that the instrument captures the full scope of research variables within the Zambian food processing context.

Construct validity relies on measurement scales that are empirically validated in prior research (Clark and Watson, 2019). The research grounds the constructs of safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem in established motivational theory and operationalises these constructs using validated survey items. To confirm that items measure intended constructs, the research examines construct validity through exploratory factor analysis, supported by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Criterion-related validity is supported by instruments used in previous studies in similar contexts (Murphy, 2013), such as consumer behaviour, TS evaluation, and organisational decision-making. This research justifies the relevance of these tools to the Zambian food processing sector based on similarities in buyer–seller interactions, TS environments, and purchasing behaviour. This alignment ensures that the instruments capture relationships between buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention.

Statistical conclusion validity relies on appropriate statistical techniques that test relationships among variables (García-Pérez, 2012). This research uses correlation analysis to examine associations between constructs and bases conclusions on observed covariance rather than chance. Adequate sample size and probabilistic sampling further strengthen the reliability of statistical inferences.

External validity refers to the extent to which findings generalise beyond the research sample (King and He, 2005; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). This research enhances external validity through a stratified cluster sampling design that ensures representation across provinces and between urban and rural buyers. Additionally, the research includes wholesalers and retailers (key participants in TSs) to ensure findings apply to the broader food processing sector in Zambia. The use of established instruments also improves comparability with other studies and strengthens generalisability across similar contexts.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a measurement instrument (Revelle and Condon, 2019). In this research, the researcher primarily assesses reliability through internal consistency, as this method best suits multi-item Likert-scale instruments measuring latent constructs such as buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and purchase intention (Ellis and Levy, 2009).

Researchers evaluate internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha, which measures the degree of correlation among items within a construct (Ellis and Levy, 2009; Donnon *et al.*, 2013). The results show high reliability across most constructs: TS effectiveness ($\alpha = 0.960$), safety and security ($\alpha = 0.940$), sense of belonging ($\alpha = 0.962$), and self-esteem ($\alpha = 0.959$), all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 1998; George and Mallery, 2003). Post-show purchase intention ($\alpha = 0.671$) falls slightly below the threshold. Although the

Cronbach's alpha value for post-show purchase intention ($\alpha = 0.671$) falls marginally below the conventional threshold of 0.70, it is considered acceptable because the construct comprises only three items. Short scales frequently produce lower alpha coefficients while still demonstrating acceptable internal consistency (Hair *et al.*, 2019). These results confirm that the instrument consistently measures the intended variables within this research context.

The researcher justifies the use of Cronbach's alpha in relation to the research objectives and design, as the research adopts a quantitative, correlational survey design to examine relationships among latent constructs such as buyer needs, perceived effectiveness, and behavioural intentions. Reliable measurement becomes essential before correlation analysis because unreliable measures weaken the validity of observed relationships.

From a philosophical standpoint, the research aligns this reliability test with a pragmatic orientation. While pragmatism allows methodological flexibility, this approach also emphasises the use of robust, practical tools to generate credible, actionable findings. Cronbach's alpha provides an empirical assessment of measurement quality. This technique ensures that constructs used in hypothesis testing remain stable and meaningful within the real-world context of TS participation in Zambia's food processing industry.

The researcher considers other forms of reliability (equivalency, stability, and inter-rater reliability) but finds these less appropriate for this research design. Equivalency reliability, which involves comparing multiple instruments measuring the same construct, becomes unnecessary because the research employs previously validated tools (Carmines and Zeller, 1991; Ellis and Levy, 2009). Stability reliability (test–retest) is not appropriate for the cross-sectional design, which captures perceptions at a single point in time and does not assume temporal stability (Chandolias *et al.*, 2021). Inter-rater reliability also does not apply, because the research relies on self-reported questionnaire responses rather than ratings from multiple observers.

Overall, validity and reliability in this research function not as abstract concepts but as systematically embedded elements of the research design and implementation. The use of validated instruments, expert review, structured measurement, and statistical testing ensures accurate and consistent measurement of buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and PS purchase

intention. This approach strengthens confidence in the findings and supports hypothesis testing (H1–H6) and research questions within a robust and credible methodological framework.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Data refer to factual information collected and analysed to answer research questions or test hypotheses. Researchers divide research data into quantitative and qualitative forms (Hox and Boeijs, 2005).

Qualitative data describe non-numeric information and typically address "how" and "why" questions through methods such as interviews, observations, and focus groups (Creswell and Creswell, 2017; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Taherdoost, 2021). While qualitative approaches help uncover attitudes, emotions, and unexpected insights (Kabir, 2018), this research limits the use of qualitative data due to subjectivity, time intensity, and limited generalisability. Because this research examines measurable relationships between buyer needs (safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem) and outcomes such as TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention, a purely qualitative approach does not support hypothesis testing or statistical generalisation across the population. Furthermore, qualitative findings often remain context-specific and provide limited support for broader inferences required for industry decision-making (Slevitch, 2011).

In contrast, quantitative data emerge from mathematical and statistical processes that allow objective measurement and hypothesis testing (Kabir, 2018). Quantitative methods address "what" questions and examine relationships between variables using structured instruments and systematic sampling techniques (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). This research adopts a cross-sectional survey design, which enables data collection from a large sample of TS participants at a single point in time. This design captures buyer perceptions, need fulfilment, and behavioural intentions immediately after TS experiences and aligns with the research objectives and hypotheses. Standardised measurement scales (such as Likert-type scales) facilitate the quantification of constructs and enable correlation analysis to test proposed relationships (Taherdoost, 2021).

The research primarily relies on quantitative primary data collected directly from wholesalers and retailers attending TSs in Zambia's food processing sector. Primary data provide greater relevance and contextual specificity because researchers collect primary data first-hand and

design the collection specifically for the research objectives (Kabir, 2016; Taherdoost, 2021). Researchers collect data through online surveys, reflecting the growing use of digital tools in research for efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and ability to reach geographically dispersed respondents (Miller, 2001; Ray *et al.*, 2001). Online surveys reduce data collection costs, speed up response times, and automate data processing (Bachinann *et al.*, 2000; Ilieva *et al.*, 2002), which proves particularly relevant in a research involving multiple provinces and a diverse respondent base.

To strengthen the data collection process, the researcher conducted a pilot study involving 10 industry experts to evaluate questionnaire clarity, completion time, and response patterns before administering the main survey. This step refined the instrument before full deployment. Although online surveys may face response rate challenges, previous studies show that multiple follow-up reminders increase response rates significantly (Schaefer and Dillman, 1998), with average rates of approximately 44.1% considered acceptable (Wu *et al.*, 2022). To address non-response bias, the research applies strategies that maximise participation and reduce sampling error, as recommended by Bozman and Stem (2005).

Overall, the adoption of a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design aligns with the research objectives, research questions, and hypotheses. This approach enables systematic measurement of buyer needs and behavioural outcomes, supports statistical testing of relationships, and produces generalisable findings that directly inform improvements in TS effectiveness and marketing strategies within Zambia's food processing industry.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

By collecting quantitative data and applying statistical methods, quantitative research seeks to elucidate phenomena (Asamoah, 2014). Researchers use descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, means, and standard deviations) to summarise respondent characteristics and key research variables, while inferential analysis examines relationships outlined in the research questions and hypotheses. These techniques fit the quantitative, cross-sectional correlational design and the ordinal nature of Likert-scale data, and the techniques also align with the research's pragmatic orientation and address the research questions focused on relationships.

Researchers conduct normality tests to determine whether the distribution of research variables approximates normality (Ghasemi and Zahediasl, 2012). This step proves essential because the

choice of statistical techniques depends on data distribution. Parametric tests require normally distributed data, whereas nonparametric alternatives are suitable when this assumption does not hold (Rao *et al.*, 2024). Normality testing, therefore, ensures that selected analytical methods remain statistically appropriate and strengthens the validity, reliability of the statistical conclusions and the appropriateness of the selected analytical techniques.

Correlation analysis, first advanced by Francis Galton and later formalised by Karl Pearson, remains a widely used technique for examining relationships between variables (Shiina, 2016). Anderson and Arsenault (1998) identify positive, negative, and non-significant relationships as core outcomes of correlation analysis, and this research follows the same perspective by applying correlation analysis to examine these relationships in line with data characteristics and research objectives.

Since the research uses Likert-scale survey instruments to measure buyer needs (safety and security, belonging, self-esteem), perceived TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention, the data remain ordinal and may not satisfy normality assumptions required for parametric tests (Bishop and Herron, 2015). Normality testing indicates that the variables do not follow a normal distribution, violating the assumptions of parametric tests and justifying nonparametric alternatives (Field, 2018). The research, therefore, selects the Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient as the most appropriate statistical technique. Spearman's correlation is appropriate for monotonic relationships between ordinal variables and does not require normality, making the technique suitable for survey-based behavioural and marketing research (Ary *et al.*, 2010). Before analysis, the researcher screens the data for missing values, outliers, and monotonic relationships to ensure compliance with the assumptions of Spearman's correlation.

Before testing hypotheses (H1–H6), the research evaluates the measurement model to ensure that the constructs accurately represent the underlying theoretical concepts. The researcher assesses internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and most constructs meet or exceed acceptable thresholds (Hair *et al.*, 1998), confirming that the measurement items consistently capture buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention. In addition, construct validity was supported by previously validated instruments and by the alignment of measurement items with established theoretical constructs, including Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Expert review ensures content validity, while factor structures established in prior studies further support the measurement model's appropriateness.

After validating the measurement model, the research conducted Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis to examine the strength and direction of the relationships between buyer needs and the dependent variables. This approach enables empirical testing of hypotheses by determining whether statistically significant associations exist between safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem needs and (i) perceived TS effectiveness and (ii) PS purchase intention. Correlation analysis, therefore, aligns directly with the research questions, which focus on associative rather than causal relationships, and ensures coherence between research design, measurement strategy, and analytical procedures.

Normality test results indicate that all key variables deviate significantly from normality, and data transformation procedures did not adequately correct these deviations. This limitation restricts the use of parametric statistical techniques that assume normality. Accordingly, the researcher adopted nonparametric methods, specifically Spearman's rank-order correlation, which handle ordinal data robustly and do not require normal distribution. This decision aligns with the nature of the Likert-scale data used in the research and ensures that the analysis remains valid and reliable despite violations of normality assumptions.

3.9.1 Hypothesis One (H1):

Examines the relationship between safety and security needs and perceived trade show effectiveness. The analysis involves averaging responses to the ten (10) items in Section 4 of the questionnaire and correlating these scores with the eleven (11) items measuring trade show effectiveness in Section 2 using Spearman's rank-order correlation.

3.9.2 Hypothesis Two (H2):

Examines the relationship between belonging needs and perceived trade show effectiveness. This analysis is based on the average of the ten (10) survey questions in Section 5, followed by a Spearman correlation analysis between this average and the eleven (11) survey questions in Section 2.

3.9.3 Hypothesis Three (H3):

Examines the relationship between self-esteem needs and perceived trade show effectiveness. The analysis involves averaging the answers to the ten (10) questions in section 6 of the survey, then applying this average to the eleven (11) questions in section 2 to perform a Spearman correlation analysis.

3.9.4 Hypothesis Four (H4):

Examines the relationship between safety and security needs and post-show purchase intention. The analysis is based on averaging the answers to the ten (10) questions in section 4 and then using Spearman correlation analysis to see the relationship between this average and the answers to the three (3) questions in section 3.

3.9.5 Hypothesis Five (H5):

Examines the relationship between belonging needs and post-show purchase intention. This analysis involves a Spearman correlation between the average response rates for the ten (10) questions in section 5 of the survey and the average response rates for the three (3) questions in section 3.

3.9.6 Hypothesis Six (H6):

Examines the relationship between self-esteem needs and post-show purchase intention. The research compares the average response rates for the three (3) questions in the third section of the research with those for the ten (10) items in the sixth section of the research using Spearman's rank-order correlation.

The researcher used the Dancey and Reidy (2007) scale to evaluate each Spearman's correlation. Values ranging from ± 0.0 to ± 0.3 indicate weak connectivity, while correlations of ± 0.7 or higher indicate strong relationships, with ± 1.0 representing a perfect correlation.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethics concerns the determination of morally appropriate behaviour and the mitigation of potential harm arising from research activities (Lillemoen and Pedersen, 2013). Within a pragmatic research philosophy, ethical practice involves not only adherence to abstract principles but also ensuring that research processes and outcomes produce practical, responsible, and contextually relevant benefits while minimising harm. This assertion aligns with the applied nature of the present research, which investigates buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intentions within a real-world industry setting. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) note, ethical research requires researchers to follow professional codes and standards that guide interactions between researchers and participants, ensuring integrity, transparency, and accountability throughout the research process. In this research, structured

survey instruments and procedures operationalise these principles by prioritising participant welfare, data integrity, and the responsible use of findings.

Consistent with the principle of non-maleficence, the researcher ensures that participation poses minimal risk and that the research does not cause physical, psychological, or professional harm (Berg and Howard, 2012). Respondents receive explicit information that participation remains voluntary and that withdrawal at any stage carries no negative consequences. In line with Lubbe (2003), the researcher assures participants that the data will not be used for personal gain, fraud, or collusion by the researcher or any other individual. The pragmatic orientation also emphasises the ethical use of findings, as insights into buyer motivation and behaviour influence business practices; therefore, the researcher applies strict measures to ensure responsible reporting and to prevent the misuse of results that could disadvantage participants or stakeholders.

Institutional oversight and procedural safeguards strengthen ethical rigour. The researcher submitted the survey instrument for peer review and obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Lusaka and the research supervisor, ensuring compliance with established ethical standards before data collection begins. The researcher obtained informed consent by clearly communicating the research purpose (to examine relationships among buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention) and explaining how the data would be used. The research maintains anonymity and confidentiality throughout, recognising that participants operate within competitive business environments where disclosure of opinions can create commercial risks. This approach reflects a pragmatic commitment to protecting participants while enabling the collection of valid and actionable data.

Finally, the research upholds ethical integrity in data handling and reporting, which remains central to both quantitative research and pragmatic inquiry. The researcher applies objective data analysis and reports all findings transparently, avoiding selective presentation or manipulation of results. Given the quantitative design, the researcher reports all relevant data to provide a complete and accurate representation of relationships among variables. This approach strengthens the credibility and usefulness of the research and aligns with the pragmatic goal of producing reliable, evidence-based insights that inform decision-making in Zambia's food processing and TS sectors.

3.11 Summary

Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive overview of the research methods, emphasising the use of quantitative and descriptive approaches to investigate how buyer needs affect PS purchasing decisions and how buyers perceive the performance of the TS. This chapter presents the research methodology used to investigate the impact of buyer needs on the effectiveness of TSs and PS purchase intention in the food processing sector in Zambia. This chapter describes the research methodology, sampling methods, data collection techniques and procedures for analysing the data used in the research. The research uses a descriptive method, drawing on quantitative data to provide a thorough understanding of the subject matter. This method facilitates a comprehensive examination of the research questions, leveraging the strengths of both quantitative data and qualitative contextual information. The target groups for the survey are retailers and wholesalers in Zambia's food processing sector. Stratified sampling ensures a representative sample by selecting participants from different population subgroups, including categories of attendees or buyers such as rural and urban demographics, income levels, social class, purchasing behaviour, values and beliefs, as well as cultural and ethnic factors. This approach increases the reliability and universality of results. Data collection includes distributing an online survey to participants to collect quantitative data on experience and perceptions of TSs. The research uses statistical methods to analyse data and collect quantitative information. A statistical method, such as correlation, is used to establish relationships among buyer needs, perceived TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention. The chapter ends with a discussion of ethical considerations, which includes obtaining informed consent, protecting the confidentiality of participants and adhering to established research guidelines.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Interpretation of Results

4.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the results of the analysis and interpretation of data collected from respondents through questionnaires. The chapter provides a detailed understanding of respondents' profiles and responses to the key variables examined in the survey. The analysis uses descriptive and inferential statistics to examine the relationships among trade show (TS) effectiveness, post-show (PS) purchase intention, and the independent variables of safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem.

The first section of the chapter presents respondents' demographic and professional profiles. This section analyses respondents who attended TSs during the last 12 months, the nature of the business activities, and the age categories. The chapter also examines respondents' highest academic qualifications, gender, area of specialisation, and current involvement in management. Understanding these characteristics provides important background information that may influence respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours toward TSs. In addition, the chapter discusses respondents' length of service within the current organisations, since work experience may shape perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intentions.

The next section analyses responses to the Likert-scale items associated with both dependent and independent variables. The dependent variables include TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention, while the independent variables include safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem. The analysis uses descriptive statistics such as the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and range to summarise respondents' perceptions of these variables. This descriptive analysis identifies key trends, distribution patterns, and common areas of concern regarding buyer perceptions of TSs across different contexts. Through these statistical measures and trend analyses, the chapter provides useful insight into buyers' experiences, perceptions, and likely behavioural responses following TS participation.

The chapter also examines data normality using statistical tests to determine the suitability of subsequent analytical procedures. Assessing normality helps determine whether to use parametric or nonparametric statistical methods for hypothesis testing. Establishing this

foundation ensures that the selected analytical techniques align appropriately with the characteristics of the collected data. However, before assessing normality, the research first assesses internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha.

Finally, the chapter presents the results of the nonparametric correlation analysis using Spearman's correlation coefficient. This analysis investigates relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Specifically, the chapter examines how safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem relate to TS effectiveness and PS purchase intentions. Through this systematic examination, the chapter highlights the complexity and nuances of respondents' experiences, perceptions, and beliefs regarding TS participation and related purchasing behaviour.

4.1 Demographics of Respondents: Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics summarise and organise data in order to highlight important aspects of a research. This branch of statistics describes data sets through numerical measures such as the mean, median, mode, and range (Weiss, 1999). These measures include indicators of central tendency, measures of data variation (represented by the range or standard deviation), and additional characteristics such as skewness and kurtosis. Agresti and Finlay (1997) explain that descriptive statistical analysis commonly uses techniques such as frequency distributions, standard deviation tests, and measures of central tendency and dispersion, including standard error and variance. In this research, the survey includes demographic questions that capture respondents' characteristics, and the following section presents the frequencies of these responses.

4.1.1 TS Attended in the Last 1 Year

Table 1. *Frequencies for respondents TS attended in the last 1 year*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
District Agriculture show	35	10.6	10.6	10.6
None	25	7.6	7.6	18.2
other	15	4.6	4.6	22.8
Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show (ACSZ)	189	57.4	57.4	80.2

Zambia International Trade Fair (ZITF)	65	19.8	19.8	100.0
Total	329	100.0	100.0	

The findings summarise respondents' attendance at TSs during the previous 12 months across five categories: District Agriculture Shows, the Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show (ACSZ), the Zambia International Trade Fair (ZITF), other TSs, and non-attendance. The results show that 35 respondents (10.6%) attended District Agriculture Shows. This relatively small proportion suggests that these events attract participants who engage mainly in district-level agricultural activities and local business interactions.

A total of 187 respondents (57.4%) reported attending the Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show (ACSZ), making ACSZ the most attended TS in the sample. This high participation level may reflect the event's national visibility, broader industry representation, and greater appeal to stakeholders in the food processing and agricultural sectors. In comparison, 65 respondents (19.8%) attended the Zambia International Trade Fair (ZITF), indicating a moderate participation rate that may relate to the event's stronger focus on trade, commerce, and industrial exchange.

Only 15 respondents (4.6%) attended other TSs, suggesting limited participation in smaller or more specialised events. Furthermore, 25 respondents (7.6%) reported no attendance at any TS during the past year. This pattern may reflect barriers such as limited accessibility, financial constraints, lack of awareness, or perceived irrelevance of TS activities. Overall, these findings provide a descriptive overview of respondents' attendance patterns, although the analysis does not directly examine the specific reasons underlying these participation trends.

4.1.2 Respondents' Type of Business Activity

Table 2. *Frequencies for respondents' Type of business activity*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Retail	260	79.0	79.0	79.0
wholesale	69	21.0	21.0	100.0

Total	329	100.0	100.0
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The results on business activities show that 69 respondents (21%) engaged in wholesale operations. This finding suggests that a smaller proportion of the sample focuses on bulk distribution and sales to other businesses rather than direct interaction with final consumers. Wholesale businesses often concentrate on supply chain relationships, inventory movement, and business-to-business transactions.

In contrast, 260 respondents (79%) engaged in retail activities, making retail the dominant business activity within the sample. This result indicates that most respondents focus on selling goods and services directly to consumers. The strong representation of retail businesses is important for understanding respondents' interactions with TSSs, especially regarding marketing activities, customer engagement, product promotion, and sales strategies.

Overall, the findings show that the sample remains predominantly retail-oriented, while wholesale businesses account for a smaller proportion of respondents. These results provide a descriptive overview of business activity patterns, but the analysis does not directly investigate the factors that influence this distribution.

4.1.3 Respondents' Age Range

Table 3. *Frequencies for respondents Age range*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-29	75	22.8	22.8	22.8
30-39	130	39.5	39.5	62.3
40-49	81	24.6	24.6	86.9
50-59	34	10.3	10.3	97.3
60-69	7	2.1	2.1	99.4
70+	2	.6	.6	100.0
Total	329	100.0	100.0	

The data provide a summary of the age distribution within the sample population. Respondents aged 20–29 years account for 75 individuals (22.8%), indicating a strong presence of younger participants and suggesting early-career involvement within the sector.

The largest proportion of respondents falls in the 30–39 age category, with 130 individuals (39.5%). This result suggests that most participants are in their prime working and business years. The 40–49 age group includes 81 individuals (24.6%), representing another significant segment of experienced and mid-career participants.

Older age groups are less represented in the sample. Respondents aged 50–59 years account for 34 individuals (10.3%), while those aged 60–69 years include 7 individuals (2.1%). Participants aged 70 years and above represent the smallest category, with only 2 individuals (0.6%).

Overall, the findings show that the sample is concentrated in younger and middle-aged groups, while representation declines progressively across older age categories. These findings provide a descriptive overview of age patterns among respondents, although the research does not directly examine the factors influencing this distribution.

4.1.4 Respondents' Highest Level of Education

Table 4. *Frequencies for Respondent's Highest level of education*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelor's Degree	106	32.2	32.2	32.2
College diploma	122	37.1	37.1	69.3
Doctorate	3	.9	.9	70.2
Master's Degree	55	16.7	16.7	86.9
Secondary school Graduate	43	13.1	13.1	100.0
Total	329	100.0	100.0	

The distribution of respondents by the highest level of education attained shows varying levels of formal educational qualifications within the sample. The largest category consists of individuals with a college diploma, representing 122 respondents (37.1%). Respondents

holding a Bachelor's degree account for 106 individuals (32.2%), indicating a strong presence of participants with undergraduate-level education.

In addition, 55 respondents (16.7%) possess a Master's degree, reflecting the presence of advanced academic and professional qualifications within the sample. By comparison, 43 respondents (13.1%) reported secondary school as their highest level of education, suggesting that a smaller proportion does not progress to tertiary education.

Doctoral qualifications remain underrepresented, with only 3 respondents (less than 1%) reporting a PhD or equivalent. This pattern aligns with the relatively low prevalence of doctoral education within the broader population.

Overall, the findings show that the sample consists largely of respondents with post-secondary education, particularly at diploma and undergraduate levels. These results provide a descriptive overview of respondents' educational attainment, although the research does not directly investigate the factors influencing these patterns.

4.1.5 Respondents' Gender Distribution

Table 5. Frequencies for respondents Gender Distribution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	77	23.4	23.4	23.4
Male	252	76.6	76.6	100.0
Total	329	100.0	100.0	

The gender distribution of the sample shows that 77 respondents (23.4%) are female, while 252 respondents (76.6%) are male. These findings indicate a clear gender imbalance within the sample, with males representing the majority of participants.

The results suggest that male respondents constitute the majority of the sample. However, the findings remain descriptive and require cautious interpretation, as the research does not directly investigate the social, cultural, or industry factors that may contribute to this gender distribution.

4.1.6 Professional Role/area of Responsibility

Table 6. Frequencies for respondents Professional Role/area of responsibility

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Accounting/Finance	40	12.2	12.2	12.2
other	52	15.8	15.8	28.0
Sale/Marketing	132	40.1	40.1	68.1
Supply Chain Professional/Buyer/Planner	105	31.9	31.9	100.0
Total	329	100.0	100.0	

The distribution of respondents according to professional role or area of responsibility shows variation across functional categories. The largest category consists of individuals working in sales and marketing, with 132 respondents (40.1%). This result highlights the strong presence of customer-facing and revenue-oriented roles within the sample.

Supply chain professionals, including buyers and planners, account for 31.9% of respondents, indicating substantial representation of procurement, logistics, and operational functions. Accounting and finance professionals account for 40 respondents (12.2%), representing a smaller but important segment involved in financial management and organisational oversight.

In addition, 52 respondents (15.8%) fall within the "other" category, suggesting the presence of professional roles that do not fit within the predefined classifications used in the research.

Overall, the findings show that the sample consists mainly of respondents in sales, marketing, and supply chain functions, while finance and other professional roles account for smaller proportions. These results provide a descriptive overview of respondents' areas of specialisation, although the research does not further examine the specific occupations included within the "other" category.

4.1.7 Managerial vs. Non-Managerial Responsibility

Table 7. *Frequencies for respondents Managerial vs. Non-Managerial Responsibility*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Manager	268	81.5	81.5	81.5
Non-Manager	61	18.5	18.5	100.0

Total	329	100.0	100.0
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The distribution of respondents by organisational position shows that 268 participants (81.5%) hold managerial roles, while 61 participants (18.5%) hold non-managerial roles. These findings indicate that the sample consists predominantly of individuals with managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

The lower proportion of non-managerial respondents suggests limited representation of operational and support-level staff within the research. Overall, the findings provide a descriptive overview of respondents' organisational positions. However, the results should be interpreted with caution because the research does not examine the specific duties, authority levels, or responsibilities associated with managerial and non-managerial roles.

4.1.8 Work Experience with Current Organisation

Table 8. *Frequencies for respondents Work experience with current organisation*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
below 4	193	58.7	58.7	58.7
5-10	94	28.6	28.6	87.2
11-15	21	6.4	6.4	93.6
16-20	10	3.0	3.0	96.7
21+	11	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	329	100.0	100.0	

The distribution of respondents by tenure within the current organisation shows that 193 individuals (58.7%) have less than four years of experience. This result indicates that most of the sample consists of relatively newer employees within the organisations.

A further 94 individuals (28.6%) have between five and ten years of experience, representing a substantial group with moderate organisational tenure. Respondents with 11 to 15 years of experience account for 21 individuals (6.4%), while those with 16 to 20 years of experience account for 10 individuals (3.0%). The smallest group consists of 11 individuals (3.3%) with more than 21 years of experience.

Overall, the findings show that the sample mainly includes individuals with shorter organisational tenure, while participation decreases steadily in higher experience categories. These results provide a descriptive overview of tenure patterns among respondents, although the research does not directly examine the factors influencing this distribution.

4.1.9 Level of Purchasing Value you have Authority Over

Table 9. *Frequencies for Level of purchasing value respondents may authorise*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
K100, 000 to K499, 000	85	25.8	25.8	25.8
K1M +	35	10.6	10.6	36.5
K500, 000 to K999, 000	22	6.7	6.7	43.2
Less than K99, 000	187	56.8	56.8	100.0
Total	329	100.0	100.0	

The distribution of purchasing authority among participants shows that 187 individuals (56.8%) manage procurement values below K99,000. This group represents the largest share of the sample and indicates that many participants handle lower-value purchasing decisions.

A further 85 individuals (25.8%) report purchasing authority between K100,000 and K499,000, reflecting moderate financial responsibility. In addition, 22 individuals (6.7%) control purchases ranging from K500,000 to K999,000, representing a smaller group with higher-value procurement roles.

Meanwhile, 35 individuals (10.6%) hold authority over purchases exceeding K1 million, forming the smallest group but representing the highest level of financial decision-making responsibility.

Overall, the findings show that most respondents operate within lower to moderate purchasing authority levels, while fewer participants manage high-value procurement decisions. These results provide a descriptive overview and require cautious interpretation, as the research does not directly examine factors that shape purchasing authority levels.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Likert Scale Responses

This section analyses and interprets 43 Likert-scale items covering the independent variables (safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem) and the dependent variables (TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention). The analysis focuses on respondents who attended TSs during the previous 12 months, in line with the research delimitations, and excludes 25 respondents who did not meet this criterion. As a result, the sample size is reduced from 329 to 304 respondents.

4.2.1 Dependant variable: TS effectiveness (E)

This section presents and analyses the data collected from the survey measuring trade show (TS) effectiveness using 11 items (E1–E11) rated on a five-point ordinal Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 10. *TS effectiveness (E): frequency distribution*

		strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
E1 –[I was able to gather product/service information]	Count	52	41	56	103	52
	Row N %	17.1	13.5	18.4	33.9	17.1
E2 – [I was able to browse through a great range of exhibits]	Count	42	51	41	111	59
	Row N %	13.8	16.8	13.5	36.5	19.4
E3 –[I perceived the special events/presentations on products/services as useful]	Count	56	37	48	88	75
	Row N %	18.4	12.2	15.8	28.9	24.7
E4 – [I was able to gather industry intelligence]	Count	45	60	64	86	49
	Row N %	14.8	19.7	21.1	28.3	16.1
E5 – [I was able to identify future trends]	Count	49	50	67	75	63
	Row N %	16.1	16.4	22.0	24.7	20.7
E6 –[I was able to test and see products/service features]	Count	47	60	56	79	62
	Row N %	15.5	19.7	18.4	26.0	20.4
E7 –[I was able to identify new suppliers/customers]	Count	40	46	44	87	87
	Row N %	13.2	15.1	14.5	28.6	28.6
E8 –[The TS helped me to finalise my purchasing decision(s)]	Count	58	51	57	90	48
	Row N %	19.1	16.8	18.8	29.6	15.8

E9 -[I was able to solve problems identified from suppliers/customers]	Count	55	58	67	88	36
	Row N %	18.1	19.1	22.0	28.9	11.8
E10 -[While at the show I was able to network contact with suppliers/customers]	Count	45	52	33	96	78
	Row N %	14.8	17.1	10.9	31.6	25.7
E11 -[The entertainment provided at the TS was enjoyable]	Count	51	48	47	87	71
	Row N %	16.8	15.8	15.5	28.6	23.4

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Table 11. *TS effectiveness (E): Descriptive*

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11
N Valid	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.20	3.31	3.29	3.11	3.17	3.16	3.44	3.06	2.97	3.36	3.26
Median	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	4	4	4	4	4	4	4 ^a	4	4	4	4
Std. Dev	1.344	1.331	1.434	1.308	1.364	1.368	1.385	1.364	1.297	1.407	1.410
Range	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

Overall, descriptive statistics are calculated for each item, including mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and range. The means for the 11 items range from 2.97 to 3.44, with most items clustering between 3.0 and 3.44. This result indicates that respondents show mild agreement with the statements and report moderate satisfaction with TS effectiveness.

Item E7 records the highest mean (3.44), which shows stronger agreement and higher perceived effectiveness for that aspect. In contrast, item E9 records the lowest mean (2.97), indicating weaker agreement and an area where TS effectiveness requires improvement.

Most items show medians of 3.00 or 4.00, indicating that responses cluster around the neutral-to-agree end of the scale. Items E1, E2, E3, and E7 have a median of 4.00, indicating that most respondents agree with these statements and express general satisfaction with TS effectiveness.

Items E4, E5, and E6 show a median of 3.00, indicating more neutral views and divided opinions among respondents.

All items record a mode of 4, indicating that "agree" is the most frequent response across the scale. This pattern indicates a generally positive perception of TS effectiveness, even though the mean values show variation across items.

Standard deviations range from 1.297 (E9) to 1.434 (E3), which shows moderate variation in responses. These results indicate that respondents generally cluster around agreement, but differences still exist in evaluations of TS effectiveness. Item E3 shows the highest dispersion, which indicates wider variation in opinions, while item E9 shows the lowest dispersion, which indicates more consistent responses.

The response range spans 1 to 5 for all items, yielding a full range of 4. This outcome confirms that respondents use the entire Likert scale, from strong disagreement to strong agreement, and that participants' experiences are diverse.

Overall, respondents generally agree with statements regarding TS effectiveness, as shown by the consistent mode of 4 across all items. However, the mean scores (2.97–3.44) indicate only moderate satisfaction, while the standard deviation indicates differences in individual experiences. Item E7 stands out as a strength area, while E9 highlights a weakness that requires improvement. These patterns suggest that respondents do not uniformly experience TS effectiveness, and targeted improvements can help create a more consistent and effective TS experience for all participants.

4.2.2 Dependant Variable Post Show Purchase Intension (PI)

Table 12. *PS purchase intension (PI): frequency Distribution*

		strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	Agree	strongly agree
PI1- [I intend to continue using this TS for purchasing a product or service in future]	Count	32	33	74	106	59
	Row N	10.5	10.9	24.3	34.9	19.4
	%					
PI2- [I would strongly recommend others to visit this TS]	Count	31	21	51	92	109
	Row N	10.2	6.9	16.8	30.3	35.9
	%					
PI3- [I shall not transact with my TS exhibitor(s) shortly]	Count	84	68	95	37	20
	Row N	27.6	22.4	31.3	12.2	6.6
	%					

Table 13. *PS purchase intension (PI): Descriptive*

		PI1	PI2	PI3
N	Valid	304	304	304
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		3.42	3.75	2.48
Median		4.00	4.00	2.50
Mode		4	5	3
Std. Deviation		1.219	1.289	1.202
Range		4	4	4

This section presents data from a questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) on post-show (PS) purchase intention (PI) across three items: PI1, PI2, and PI3. The analysis uses descriptive statistics, including mean, median, and mode, to describe response patterns.

The means indicate different levels of PS purchase intention across the three items. PI2 records the highest mean (3.75), indicating that respondents generally lean towards agreement and demonstrate stronger purchase intention after the TS. PI1 records a mean of 3.42, indicating a moderate tendency toward agreement and suggesting fairly positive post-show purchase

intention. In contrast, PI3 records a lower mean (2.48), which indicates that respondents tend to disagree or remain neutral on this item. However, this result does not indicate weak purchase intention because 50% of respondents disagree with the negatively phrased statement "I shall not transact with my TS exhibitor(s) shortly," which instead signals an intention to transact soon after the TS.

The median values reinforce these patterns. PI1 and PI2 both record a median of 4.00, indicating that most responses fall in the agree category and confirming a generally positive purchase intention for these items. PI3 records a median of 2.50, which places the central tendency closer to disagreement or neutrality. This outcome aligns with the lower mean, although the negative wording of PI3 requires careful interpretation when assessing intent.

The mode values further clarify the response patterns. PI1 records a mode of 4, indicating that "agree" is the most frequent response and suggesting positive purchase intention. PI2 records a mode of 5, indicating that "strongly agree" is the most frequent response and reflects the highest level of purchase intention among the three items. PI3 records a mode of 3, indicating neutral responses and a more divided opinion.

Overall, the analysis shows that respondents express positive PS purchase intentions for PI1 and PI2, with PI2 demonstrating the strongest intent (mean = 3.75, mode = 5). PI3 records lower statistical values (mean = 2.48, median = 2.50). However, the negative wording of PI3 explains this pattern, as many respondents actually disagree with the negative wording and therefore indicate an intention to transact with exhibitors shortly after the TS.

4.2.3 Independent Variable Safety and Security (SS)

Table 14. *Safety and security (SS): frequency distribution*

I am completely satisfied with ...

		strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
SS1 -[The quality of the exhibition space(s) I visited]	Count	31	42	83	95	53
	Row N %	10.2	13.8	27.3	31.3	17.4
SS2 - [How secure I am in my role as a visitor]	Count	28	44	88	94	50
	Row N %	9.2	14.5	28.9	30.9	16.4
SS3 -[How safe I am from being injured at the TS]	Count	36	56	102	70	40
	Row N %	11.8	18.4	33.6	23.0	13.2
SS4 -[How safe I am from catching any disease at the TS]	Count	48	87	87	52	30
	Row N %	15.8	28.6	28.6	17.1	9.9
SS5 -[The safety of my commute to the TS]	Count	42	69	73	80	40
	Row N %	13.8	22.7	24.0	26.3	13.2
SS6 -[How protected I am from danger at the TS]	Count	33	62	95	78	36
	Row N %	10.9	20.4	31.3	25.7	11.8
SS7 -[The protection exhibition staff provided me at the TS]	Count	37	54	87	88	38
	Row N %	12.2	17.8	28.6	28.9	12.5
SS8 -[The protection that the exhibitors' online data policy provides]	Count	32	58	98	83	33
	Row N %	10.5	19.1	32.2	27.3	10.9
SS9 -[How secure my data is when using TS online registration]	Count	31	54	95	90	34
	Row N %	10.2	17.8	31.3	29.6	11.2
SS10 -[The financial security available to my company at the TS]	Count	46	50	81	89	38
	Row N %	15.1	16.4	26.6	29.3	12.5

Table 15. Safety and security (SS): Descriptive

	SS1	SS2	SS3	SS4	SS5	SS6	SS7	SS8	SS9	SS10
N Valid	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.32	3.31	3.07	2.77	3.02	3.07	3.12	3.09	3.14	3.08
Median	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Mode	4	4	3	2 ^a	4	3	4	3	3	4
Std. Dev	1.208	1.179	1.189	1.197	1.254	1.169	1.202	1.147	1.146	1.250
Range	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The analysis includes descriptive statistics for 10 items measuring the independent variable, safety and security (SS). Respondents answered these items using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represents strongly disagree, and 5 represents strongly agree. The analysis presents the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and range for all items (SS1-SS10).

The mean values for the ten items range from 2.77 to 3.32. SS1 records the highest mean (3.32), indicating general agreement and suggesting that respondents perceive relatively higher safety and security in this regard. In contrast, SS4 records the lowest mean (2.77). The statement "People make sure that other people in the dorm are safe" receives lower agreement, with respondents mostly disagreeing or remaining neutral. This result signals weaker perceptions of safety in this area. The remaining items cluster around a mean of approximately 3.0, which shows that respondents neither strongly agree nor strongly disagree with most safety and security statements.

The median values for all 10 items remain at 3.00, indicating a central tendency toward neutrality. This pattern shows that respondents generally express mixed or moderate views about safety and security across the items rather than strong agreement or disagreement.

The mode values vary across items. SS1, SS2, SS5, SS7, and SS10 all record a mode of 4, indicating that "agree" is the most frequent response for these statements. SS3, SS6, SS8, and SS9 record a mode of 3, indicating that neutral responses are the most common choice. SS4

records a mode of 2, indicating that most respondents disagree with this statement, which aligns with SS4's low mean value.

The standard deviations range from 1.146 to 1.254, indicating moderate variability in responses across all items. SS5 and SS10 show higher standard deviations (1.254 and 1.250), reflecting greater variation in respondents' perceptions and suggesting that opinions differ more widely for these items. SS9 records the lowest standard deviation (1.146), which indicates more consistent responses clustered around the mean for this item.

The range across all items is 4, confirming that respondents use the full Likert scale from 1 to 5. This pattern shows that perceptions of safety and security range from strong disagreement to strong agreement, reflecting diverse experiences among participants.

Overall, the descriptive statistics indicate that respondents generally express neutral to mildly positive perceptions of safety and security, with the means and medians clustering around 3.0. SS4 stands out with a lower mean (2.77) and mode (2), which shows stronger disagreement compared to other items and suggests weaker perceptions of safety in that aspect. In contrast, SS1 and SS2 show higher means and modes, which indicate stronger agreement and more positive perceptions.

The combination of mean values and standard deviations shows that SS5 and SS10 generate more diverse responses, reflecting variation in respondents' experiences. Although overall perceptions remain moderate, the full range of responses from strong disagreement to strong agreement highlights differences in how respondents evaluate safety and security across TS-related experiences.

4.2.4 Independent Variable Sense of Belonging (B)

Table 16. Sense of Belonging (B): frequency distribution

I am completely satisfied with ...

		strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
B1 -[Amount of rapport I share with the TS staff]	Count	31	35	92	97	49
	Row N %	10.2	11.5	30.3	31.9	16.1
B2 -[The quality of the relationship I have with the TS staff]	Count	30	37	92	100	45
	Row N %	9.9	12.2	30.3	32.9	14.8
B3 -[The friendship I share with my TS exhibitors]	Count	32	32	81	108	51
	Row N %	10.5	10.5	26.6	35.5	16.8
B4 -[How well I am welcomed at the exhibitor's booth]	Count	28	25	68	112	71
	Row N %	9.2	8.2	22.4	36.8	23.4
B5 -[The emotional support I received from the exhibition staff]	Count	28	40	76	105	55
	Row N %	9.2	13.2	25.0	34.5	18.1
B6 -[The feeling of belonging I share with other buyers]	Count	29	33	63	107	72
	Row N %	9.5	10.9	20.7	35.2	23.7
B7 -[The happiness I share with other TS attendees]	Count	26	30	70	102	76
	Row N %	8.6	9.9	23.0	33.6	25.0
B8 -[The empathy I receive from the TS exhibition staff]	Count	33	45	75	89	62
	Row N %	10.9	14.8	24.7	29.3	20.4
B9 -[The fulfilment I share with associates at the TS]	Count	25	33	76	113	57
	Row N %	8.2	10.9	25.0	37.2	18.8
B10 -[The unity I feel with associates at the TS]	Count	31	33	66	106	68
	Row N %	10.2	10.9	21.7	34.9	22.4

Table 17. *Sense of Belonging (B): Descriptive*

		B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10
N	Valid	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.32	3.31	3.38	3.57	3.39	3.53	3.57	3.34	3.47	3.48
Median		3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00
Mode		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Std. Deviation		1.178	1.161	1.190	1.198	1.192	1.232	1.209	1.258	1.157	1.237
Range		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

The researcher analyses responses to 10 items on a 5-point Likert scale regarding the independent variable, sense of belonging (B). The analysis reports descriptive statistics for each item (B1-B10), including mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and range. The mean values across all items range from 3.31 to 3.57. Items B4 and B7 record the highest mean (3.57), indicating that respondents generally agree with the statements linked to these items. Most other items cluster around mean values between 3.30 and 3.50, which indicate a general tendency toward agreement or neutrality regarding sense of belonging. Overall, respondents generally express a positive sense of belonging, as most mean scores lean toward agreement.

The median values reinforce this pattern. Most items (B3, B4, B5, B6, B7, B9, and B10) record a median of 4.00, indicating agreement as the central response. Items B1, B2, and B8 have a median of 3.00, indicating neutrality on these aspects. The higher median values across most items suggest that many respondents experience a sense of belonging, consistent with the mean values that indicate agreement.

The mode for all items is 4, indicating that agreement is the most frequent response across all 10 statements. This consistency indicates that most respondents select "agree" when evaluating sense of belonging across different dimensions.

Standard deviations range from 1.157 to 1.258, which indicates moderate variation in responses. Item B8 records the highest standard deviation (1.258), suggesting more diverse

opinions on that statement. Items B9 and B2 record lower standard deviations, showing more consistent responses and closer clustering around the central tendency.

The range remains constant at 4 for all items, confirming that respondents use the full Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This widespread variation shows that perceptions differ, even though central tendencies lean toward agreement.

Overall, the findings show that respondents generally agree that a sense of belonging exists within TS experiences. Mean, median, and mode values consistently indicate agreement across most items, while moderate standard deviations reflect differences in individual experiences. Items B4 and B7 show the strongest agreement, while B1 and B2 show slightly weaker, yet still positive, evaluations. Overall, respondents report a generally positive sense of belonging, although individual perceptions vary across the sample.

4.2.5 Independent Variable Self-Esteem (SE)

Table 18. *Self-esteem (SE): frequency distribution*

I am completely satisfied with ...

		strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
SE1 -[The admiration given to me by others at the TS]	Count	25	41	87	100	51
	Row N %	8.2	13.5	28.6	32.9	16.8
SE2 -[How many colleagues respect me as a person at the show]	Count	25	26	81	113	59
	Row N %	8.2	8.6	26.6	37.2	19.4
SE3 -[All the good qualities I exhibit as an individual while at the TS]	Count	22	31	61	122	68
	Row N %	7.2	10.2	20.1	40.1	22.4
SE4 -[How highly colleagues think of me at the TS]	Count	28	36	91	101	48
	Row N %	9.2	11.8	29.9	33.2	15.8
SE5 -[How confident I am of myself at the TS]	Count	27	12	58	110	97
	Row N %	8.9	3.9	19.1	36.2	31.9
SE6 -[How much I like the person that I am at the TS]	Count	25	19	60	104	96
	Row N %	8.2	6.3	19.7	34.2	31.6

SE7 -[How much respect I have for myself while at the TS]	Count	22	16	59	97	110
	Row N %	7.2	5.3	19.4	31.9	36.2
SE8 -[My sense of self-worth at the TS]	Count	24	17	47	109	107
	Row N %	7.9	5.6	15.5	35.9	35.2
SE9 - [How positive I feel about myself as a person while at the TS]	Count	24	13	52	93	122
	Row N %	7.9	4.3	17.1	30.6	40.1

Table 19. *Self-esteem (SE): Descriptive*

		SE1	SE2	SE3	SE4	SE5	SE6	SE7	SE8	SE9
N	Valid	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304	304
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.37	3.51	3.60	3.35	3.78	3.75	3.85	3.85	3.91
Median		3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mode		4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	5
Std. Deviation		1.155	1.143	1.153	1.156	1.194	1.202	1.183	1.193	1.204
Range		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

This section presents the results for nine items measuring the independent variable, self-esteem (SE), on a 5-point Likert scale. The analysis calculates descriptive statistics for each item (SE1-SE9), including mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and range.

The mean values for the self-esteem items range from 3.35 to 3.91. Item SE9 records the highest mean (3.91), while SE7 and SE8 follow closely with means of 3.85. These scores indicate strong agreement among respondents regarding these aspects of self-esteem. In contrast, SE1 (3.37) and SE4 (3.35) record comparatively lower means, suggesting more neutral responses, although agreement still exceeds disagreement on these items. Overall, the findings indicate moderately high levels of self-esteem, with respondents generally agreeing with most statements.

Most items record a median of 4.00, indicating that agreement is the central response category for the majority of self-esteem items. However, SE1 and SE4 record a median of 3.00,

indicating that respondents neither strongly agree nor strongly disagree with these statements. The predominance of a median value of 4.00 across most items suggests that respondents generally express positive perceptions of self-esteem.

The mode equals 4 for most items, confirming that "agree" represents the most frequently selected response. However, SE7 and SE9 record a mode of 5, indicating that "strongly agree" is the most frequently selected response for these items. These results indicate particularly strong positive perceptions of the self-esteem dimensions represented by SE7 and SE9. The consistent mode values across the remaining items further reinforce the overall tendency toward agreement.

Standard deviations range from 1.143 to 1.204, indicating moderate variability in responses. These values show that although many respondents agree with the self-esteem statements, some participants express neutral or opposing views. SE9 records the highest standard deviation (1.204), suggesting greater variation in perceptions for that item, while SE2 records the lowest standard deviation (1.143), indicating stronger consistency in responses.

The range remains constant at 4 for all items, showing that respondents use the entire response scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This pattern demonstrates diversity in respondents' opinions, although the central tendency consistently leans toward agreement.

Overall, the findings indicate that respondents generally report positive levels of self-esteem. Mean values remain relatively high, particularly for SE7, SE8, and SE9, while median and mode values consistently indicate agreement. Moderate standard deviations reflect variation in experiences and perceptions, but the overall pattern suggests that respondents evaluate self-esteem positively across most items.

4.3 Test for Reliability

This research assessed the reliability of the measurement instruments using Cronbach's alpha, a widely accepted statistical technique for evaluating internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha determines the extent to which items within each construct correlate with one another and collectively measure the same underlying concept. This approach suited the present research because the questionnaire uses Likert-scale items to capture respondents' perceptions and

attitudes. Higher Cronbach's alpha values indicate stronger internal consistency among the items and suggest that the measurement instrument reliably captures the intended constructs.

Table 20. *Test for reliability*

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
TS Effectiveness	.960	11
PS Purchase intention	.671	3
Safety & security	.940	10
Sense of belonging	.962	10
Self-esteem	.959	9

The results show excellent internal consistency for most constructs, including TS effectiveness ($\alpha = 0.960$), safety and security ($\alpha = 0.940$), sense of belonging ($\alpha = 0.962$), and self-esteem ($\alpha = 0.959$). These values exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 and indicate that the items within each scale consistently measure buyer needs and perceptions of TS effectiveness.

The post-show purchase intention construct shows moderate reliability ($\alpha = 0.671$). Although this value falls slightly below the preferred threshold, the result remains acceptable for exploratory and behavioural research, particularly given the construct's smaller number of items.

Overall, the reliability analysis demonstrates that the measurement instruments provide adequate consistency and reliability for further inferential analysis and hypothesis testing. However, interpretation of the PS purchase intention construct requires some caution due to the construct's comparatively lower reliability.

4.4 Validity Assessment

The validity of the measurement scales was assessed prior to correlation analysis. Construct validity was examined through exploratory factor analysis, supported by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Table 21. *Exploratory Factor Analysis Results*

Measure	Result	Recommended Value	Interpretation
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) Measure	.967	> .60	Excellent sampling adequacy
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$\chi^2(903) = 14131.83$	$p < .05$	Correlation matrix suitable for factor analysis
Extraction Method	Principal Component Analysis	— —	
Rotation Method	Varimax with Kaiser Normalization	— —	
Number of Factors Extracted	5	Eigenvalue > 1	Five-factor solution retained
Total Variance Explained	73.50%	> 60%	Excellent explanatory power

Note. KMO = Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. Bartlett's test was statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the correlation matrix was factorable.

Table 22. Summary of the Extracted Factors

Factor	Construct	Number of Items	Loading Range	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)
1	Trade Show Effectiveness	13	.620–.804	23.689	22.11
2	Self-Esteem Needs	9	.596–.805	3.012	17.24
3	Sense of Belonging Needs	10	.585–.713	2.381	16.57
4	Safety and Security Needs	9	.547–.831	1.410	13.83
5	Purchase Intention	3	.725*	1.112	3.74

Note. Only factor loadings $\geq .50$ are reported. The three purchase intention items loaded on a single factor. One loading (.725) is displayed in the SPSS output, while the remaining two items also loaded on the fifth factor but were omitted from the visible output because of the suppression settings.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation to examine the underlying factor structure of the measurement scales. Prior to extraction, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .967, indicating excellent sampling adequacy according to Hair *et al.* (2010). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant, $\chi^2(903) = 14,131.83$, $p < .001$, confirming that the correlation matrix is appropriate for factor analysis.

Using the Kaiser criterion (eigenvalues greater than one), five factors were extracted. Together, these factors explained 73.50% of the total variance, exceeding the minimum threshold of 60% commonly recommended for behavioural research. Following Varimax rotation, the factor structure was clear and theoretically meaningful. Communality values ranged from .584 to .869, indicating that each item shared a substantial proportion of variance with the extracted factors. All retained items exceeded the recommended minimum communality of .50, suggesting that the measurement items adequately represent respective constructs. Overall, the results provided strong evidence of the construct validity of the measurement instrument and supported the use of the five latent constructs in subsequent analyses.

4.5 Test for Normality

Researchers frequently misuse statistics in scientific papers, and studies estimate that up to 50% of published research contains at least one statistical error (Curran-Everett and Benos, 2004). Many important statistical techniques, including t-tests, regression analysis, and analysis of variance, rely on the assumption of normality (Driscoll *et al.*, 2000; Field, 2009). Researchers also assume normality when developing reference intervals for variables (Royston, 1991). Violations of this assumption reduce the accuracy and reliability of statistical conclusions and may lead to misleading interpretations of results (Oztuna *et al.*, 2006; Field, 2009). Therefore, researchers need to assess data normality before selecting statistical procedures to ensure the use of appropriate analytical techniques and improve the validity of the findings.

Table 23. *Test for normality: Descriptive*

			Statistic	Std. Error
TS effectiveness	Mean		3.2141	.06626
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.0837	
		Upper Bound	3.3445	
	Skewness		-.531	.140
	Kurtosis		-.951	.279
PS Purchase intension	Mean		3.2138	.05509
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.1054	
		Upper Bound	3.3222	
	Skewness		-.532	.140
	Kurtosis		-.167	.279

Safety and security	Mean		3.0984	.05514
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	2.9898	
	for Mean	Upper Bound	3.2069	
	Skewness		-.278	.140
	Kurtosis		-.575	.279
Sense of Belonging	Mean		3.4349	.05951
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	3.3178	
	for Mean	Upper Bound	3.5520	
	Skewness		-.635	.140
	Kurtosis		-.226	.279
Self-esteem	Mean		3.6615	.05859
	95% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	3.5463	
	for Mean	Upper Bound	3.7768	
	Interquartile Range		1.33	
	Skewness		-1.007	.140
	Kurtosis		.482	.279

The results present the tests of normality for both dependent and independent variables using skewness, kurtosis, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K-S) test, and the Shapiro–Wilk (S-W) test. These measures help determine whether the data follows a normal distribution.

TS effectiveness, the first dependent variable, shows skewness of -0.531, indicating moderate negative skewness and a slight leftward tilt in the distribution. Since values closer to zero indicate normality, this result suggests mild non-normality. The kurtosis value of -0.951 indicates a platykurtic distribution with lighter tails than a normal distribution.

Post-show (PS) purchase intention also shows a skewness value of -0.532, indicating slight negative skewness, similar to TS effectiveness. The kurtosis value of -0.167 remains close to zero, suggesting a mesokurtic distribution with tails similar to a normal distribution. However, the significant p-values in both the K-S and S-W tests indicate deviation from normality.

The independent variable, safety and security, has a skewness value of -0.278, indicating only slight negative skewness and a distribution relatively close to symmetry. The kurtosis value of -0.575 suggests a mildly platykurtic distribution. Although the K-S test yields a p-value of

0.004, the smaller test statistic indicates less deviation from normality than the other variables. The S-W test also indicates non-normality.

The sense of belonging records a skewness value of -0.635, indicating moderate negative skewness. The construct's kurtosis of -0.226 remains close to zero, suggesting a mesokurtic distribution. Significant p-values in both the K-S and S-W tests confirm deviation from normality.

Self-esteem records the strongest negative skewness (-1.007), indicating a substantially left-skewed distribution. The kurtosis value of 0.482 indicates a leptokurtic distribution with heavier tails than a normal distribution. Significant p-values from both the K-S and S-W tests further confirm non-normality. Therefore, the results of the normality tests indicate that the variables do not follow a normal distribution.

Table 24. *Test for normality*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
TS effectiveness	.140	304	.000	.920	304	.000
Purchase intention	.138	304	.000	.953	304	.000
Safety & security	.064	304	.004	.980	304	.000
Sense of belonging	.117	304	.000	.949	304	.000
Self-esteem	.131	304	.000	.909	304	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The research conducts a test of normality using skewness and kurtosis, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, and the Shapiro–Wilk test. The results show that most response variables exhibit asymptotic p-values below 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), indicating deviation from normality. The transactional response variables display negative skewness, suggesting that most respondents provide higher ratings. This pattern confirms that the distributions are left-skewed, with responses concentrated toward the upper end of the scale.

Most skewness values remain moderate, except for self-esteem, which records stronger asymmetry. Kurtosis values for most variables remain close to zero and slightly negative,

indicating platykurtic distributions with lighter tails or distributions close to normality. However, self-esteem records positive kurtosis, indicating heavier tails.

The Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests produce significant results ($p < 0.05$) for all variables, confirming that the data do not follow a normal distribution. Although some skewness and kurtosis values remain relatively mild, the results from both tests strongly indicate non-normality across the dataset. Consequently, the assumptions required for parametric testing are not satisfied. The research, therefore, approaches parametric analysis with caution and adopts appropriate nonparametric statistical techniques where necessary.

The research also applied three transformation methods, namely square root ($y^{1/2}$), inverse ($1/y$), and logarithmic transformation ($\log_{10}$), in an attempt to normalise the data. However, none of these techniques successfully improves normality.

4.6 Inferential Statistical Analysis

Inferential statistics focuses on analysing sample data and drawing conclusions about a broader population. Agresti and Finlay (1997) define a sample as a subset of individuals selected from a larger population, and sample parameters are used in surveys to estimate population characteristics. Researchers use sample data to make generalisations, predictions, and conclusions about the wider population under investigation. Inferential statistics, therefore, determines whether characteristics observed within a sample accurately represent the larger population (Krewski and Rao, 1981). This process applies mathematical and logical techniques to generate valid conclusions and quantify how accurately the sample reflects the target population (Kalton, 2009).

4.6.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables without establishing causation. The most commonly used correlation coefficients include Spearman's rho and Pearson's product-moment correlation (O'Brien and Scott, 2012). Spearman's correlation is appropriate for ordinal data, whereas Pearson's correlation is appropriate for interval or ratio data. Ott (1993) explains that correlation identifies the strength and direction of association between variables but does not establish cause-and-effect

relationships or generate predictions. Instead, correlation shows how variables vary together within a specific context.

Pearson correlation remains one of the most widely applied measures of association for linearly related variables (Gogtay *et al.*, 2017). However, Pearson's correlation assumes that variables follow a normal distribution and satisfy the linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions, meaning that observations are evenly distributed around the regression line. In contrast, Spearman's rank correlation provides a nonparametric alternative that identifies associations between variables without assuming normality (Gogtay *et al.*, 2017). Spearman's correlation is appropriate for ordinal data and for situations where the relationships between variables remain monotonic or violate Pearson's assumptions.

The previous section demonstrates that the dataset does not satisfy the assumptions required for parametric testing. Consequently, this research uses Spearman's rank correlation rather than Pearson's correlation to analyse relationships among variables.

4.6.2 Correlation Analysis Using Spearman Rank

The normality test results indicate that the research variables deviate significantly from a normal distribution, and data transformation procedures do not adequately correct this. Consequently, the research employs Spearman's rank correlation as a nonparametric alternative because this method does not assume normality and effectively analyses monotonic relationships between variables (Field, 2018). Although this approach strengthens the validity of the statistical analysis, Spearman's rank correlation also creates important implications for the generalisability of the findings.

Reliance on nonparametric methods limits the precision of population estimates, as these methods are generally less statistically stable than parametric alternatives (Shukla *et al.*, 2025). In addition, the inability to normalise the dataset restricts the use of more robust parametric analyses that provide stronger predictive and inferential capabilities (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2022). As a result, the findings require cautious interpretation, particularly when extending conclusions beyond the sample to the broader population of buyers within Zambia's food processing industry.

Nevertheless, within the context of this research's quantitative, correlational design and pragmatic philosophical orientation, Spearman's correlation remains appropriate. This method enables a meaningful examination of the relationships among buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention in real-world data (Shukla *et al.*, 2025). Acknowledging this methodological limitation enhances transparency and provides direction for future studies to adopt designs that achieve improved data normality and stronger generalisability.

Spearman's rank correlation is a nonparametric measure of rank correlation that assesses the strength and direction of association between two variables (Field, 2018). The analysis presents correlation coefficients between the independent variables (safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem) and the dependent variables (TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention). Before conducting the analysis, the researcher transformed each variable by calculating mean scores and subsequently tested the data for normality. Correlation coefficients marked with ** indicate statistical significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Relationship between Safety and Security and Dependent Variables

Table 25. Safety and Security vs. TS Effectiveness: Descriptive

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Safety and security	304	3.0984	.96145	-.278	.140
TS effectiveness	304	3.2141	1.15536	-.531	.140
Valid N (list wise)	304				

The results show that respondents rate safety and security, and TS effectiveness, at moderate levels, with mean scores of 3.0984 and 3.2141, respectively, on a 5-point Likert scale. Standard deviations indicate moderate variation in responses: safety and security records a standard deviation of 0.96145, while TS effectiveness shows higher variability at 1.15536. The standard errors for both variables are 0.140, indicating that the sample means provide reasonably stable estimates of the population mean. Overall, the findings show generally consistent but slightly varied views on the importance of safety and security and TS effectiveness.

Hypothesis One

For H1, the analysis tests whether safety and security needs influence perceived TS effectiveness and whether higher ratings of safety and security align with stronger evaluations of TS outcomes. This comparison examines whether safety and security needs play a central role in shaping attendees' perceptions of TS effectiveness. The researcher calculated the mean of the 10 safety and security items and compared this mean with the mean of the 11 TS effectiveness items. The researcher then applied Spearman's rank-order correlation to assess the relationship between the two constructs and determine the direction and strength of the association.

Table 26. *Safety and Security vs. TS Effectiveness: Correlation*

		Safety and security	TS effectiveness
Safety and security	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.689**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	304	304
TS effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.689**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	304	304

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

The positive correlation of 0.689 shows a strong, significant relationship between safety and security and TS effectiveness. This result supports the alternative hypothesis (H1), indicating that greater fulfilment of safety and security needs is associated with improved perceptions of TS effectiveness. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that this relationship is not due to chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0), which proposed that no significant relationship existed between buyers' ratings of TS effectiveness and the fulfilment of safety and security needs at a food industry exhibition, was rejected.

Table 27. Safety and Security vs. Purchase Intention: Descriptive

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Safety and security	304	3.0984	.96145	-.278	.140
Purchase intention	304	3.2138	.96052	-.532	.140
Valid N (list wise)	304				

The results show that respondents rate both safety and security (M = 3.0984) and PS purchase intention (M = 3.2138) at moderate levels on a 5-point Likert scale. Safety and security (0.96145) and purchase intention (0.96052) display similar standard deviations, indicating that responses cluster around the mean with comparable dispersion across both variables. The mean difference of 0.225, combined with a standard error of 0.140, indicates a relatively precise estimate of the population means. Overall, respondents demonstrate moderate but consistent agreement on the importance of safety and security, and this perception appears to influence purchase intention after attending the TS.

Hypothesis Four

H4 examines the relationship between safety and security needs and PS purchase intention. The researcher calculated the mean score for the 10 safety and security items and compared this mean with the mean score of the three PS purchase intention items. The researcher then applied Spearman's rank-order correlation to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between these two constructs.

Table 28. Safety and Security vs. Purchase Intention: Correlation

		Safety and security	PS purchase intention
Safety and security	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.672**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	304	304
PS purchase intention	Correlation Coefficient	.672**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.

N	304	304
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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A strong, positive correlation ($p = 0.672$) exists between safety and security and purchase intention. When attendees feel safe and secure at a TS, attendees are more likely to make post-show purchases. This result supports the alternative hypothesis (H4). The p-value of 0.000 confirms that this relationship is not due to chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0), which states that there is no significant relationship between buyers' post-show purchase intention and the fulfilment of safety and security needs at a food industry exhibition, was rejected.

Relationship between Sense of Belonging and Dependent Variables

Table 26. *Sense of Belonging vs. TS Effectiveness: Descriptive*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Sense of belonging	304	3.4349	1.03756	-.635	.140
TS effectiveness	304	3.2141	1.15536	-.531	.140
Valid N (list wise)	304				

On a 5-point Likert scale, the results show that sense of belonging records a slightly higher mean ($M = 3.43491$) than TS effectiveness ($M = 3.2141$). Both variables display moderate variation in responses, with sense of belonging showing a standard deviation of 1.03756 and TS effectiveness showing a higher standard deviation of 1.15536. This outcome indicates greater variability in perceptions of TS effectiveness than in the sense of belonging. The standard error of 0.140 for both variables indicates a similar level of precision in estimating the population means. Overall, respondents rate the sense of belonging slightly higher, although both constructs show some variation in perceptions.

Hypothesis Two

H2 examines the relationship between belonging needs and TS effectiveness. The researcher calculated the mean score for the 10 items on sense of belonging and compared this mean with the mean score for the 11 items on TS effectiveness. The researcher then applied Spearman's

rank-order correlation to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between sense of belonging and TS effectiveness.

Table 29. *Sense of Belonging vs. TS Effectiveness: Correlation*

		Sense of belonging	TS effectiveness
Sense of belonging	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.689**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	304	304
TS effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.689**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	304	304

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

Sense of belonging and TS effectiveness showed a correlation coefficient of 0.689, indicating a strong positive relationship. When participants feel a strong sense of belonging, participants perceive the TS as more effective. This result supports the alternative hypothesis (H2). The p-value ($p < 0.001$) indicates that the observed relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0), which states that there is no significant relationship between buyers' ratings of TS effectiveness and the fulfilment of belonging needs at a food industry exhibition, was rejected.

Table 30. *Sense of Belonging vs. Purchase Intention: Descriptive*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Sense of belonging	304	3.4349	1.03756	-.635	.140
PS purchase intention	304	3.2138	.96052	-.532	.140
Valid N (list wise)	304				

Respondents reported a slightly higher mean for sense of belonging ($M = 3.4349$) than for PS purchase intention ($M = 3.2138$). Both scores indicate moderately positive responses on the 5-point Likert scale. Sense of belonging showed a standard deviation of 1.03756, while purchase intention recorded 0.96052, indicating greater variation in responses for sense of belonging.

Both variables had the same standard error of 0.140, indicating similar precision in estimating the means. Overall, sense of belonging demonstrated a higher mean score than purchase intention, although both variables exhibited some variation in responses.

Hypothesis Five

H5 examines the influence of sense of belonging on post-show purchase intention. The researcher calculated the mean score for the 10 items on sense of belonging and compared this mean with the mean score for the three PS purchase intention items. The researcher then applied Spearman's correlation test to assess the relationship between sense of belonging and PS purchase intention.

Table 31. Sense of Belonging vs. Purchase Intention: Correlation

		Sense of belonging	PS purchase intention
Sense of belonging	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.618**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	304	304
PS purchase intention	Correlation Coefficient	.618**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	304	304

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

The correlation coefficient of 0.618 showed a moderate positive relationship between sense of belonging and PS purchase intention. Participants who experienced a stronger sense of belonging at a TS exhibition reported higher post-show purchase intentions. This result supports the alternative hypothesis (H5). The p-value ($p < 0.001$) indicates that the relationship is statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0), which states that there is no significant relationship between buyers' post-show purchase intention and the fulfilment of belonging needs, was rejected.

Relationship between Esteem and Dependent Variables

Table 32. Esteem vs. TS Effectiveness: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
			158	

	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Self-esteem	304	3.6615	1.02149	-1.007	.140
TS effectiveness	304	3.2141	1.15536	-.531	.140
Valid N (list wise)	304				

The results showed that participants' self-esteem needs ($M = 3.6615$) exceeded their perceptions of TS effectiveness ($M = 3.2141$). This finding suggests that self-worth and recognition needs were more strongly expressed than perceptions of benefits derived from attending TSs. The difference in means highlights a gap between internal motivational drivers and external evaluations of event effectiveness. Self-esteem needs recorded a standard deviation of 1.02149, while TS effectiveness showed a standard deviation of 1.15536, indicating lower variability in responses for esteem and greater dispersion for TS effectiveness. Both variables had a standard error of 0.140, indicating similar precision in estimating the means. Overall, respondents reported higher esteem levels than perceptions of TS effectiveness, although both measures displayed some variation.

Hypothesis Three

H3 examines the relationship between esteem needs and TS effectiveness. The researcher calculated the mean score of the 10 esteem items and compared this mean with the mean score of the 11 TS effectiveness items. The researcher then applied Spearman's correlation test to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between esteem needs and TS effectiveness.

Table 33. Esteem vs. TS Effectiveness: Correlation

		esteem	TS effectiveness
\self-esteem	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.602**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	304	304
TS effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.602**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.

N	304	304
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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between self-esteem and TS effectiveness showed a moderately strong positive correlation of 0.602. Respondents with higher levels of self-esteem tended to perceive the TS as more effective. This finding supports the alternative hypothesis (H3). The p-value ($p < 0.001$) indicates that the relationship is statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0), which states that there is no significant correlation between buyers' ratings of TS effectiveness and the fulfilment of self-esteem needs at a food industry exhibition, was rejected.

Table 34. *Esteem vs. Purchase Intention: Descriptive*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Self-esteem	304	3.6615	1.02149	-1.007	.140
PS purchase intention	304	3.2138	.96052	-.532	.140
Valid N (list wise)	304				

The results showed that participants reported higher levels of esteem needs ($M = 3.6615$) than in PS purchase intention ($M = 3.2138$). Both measures indicate moderately positive responses on a 5-point scale, though self-esteem received a slightly higher rating. Self-esteem recorded a standard deviation of 1.02149, which exceeded that of PS purchase intention (0.96052), indicating greater variability in esteem responses. Both variables had a standard error of 0.140, indicating similar precision in estimating the means. Overall, respondents reported higher esteem needs than post-show purchase intention, although responses for esteem needs showed greater variability.

Hypothesis Six

H6 examines the relationship between esteem needs and PS purchase intention. The researcher calculated the mean score of the 10 esteem items and compared this mean with the mean score

of the three PS purchase intention items. The researcher then applied Spearman's correlation test to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between esteem needs and PS purchase intention.

Table 35. *Esteem vs. Purchase Intention: Correlation*

		esteem	PS purchase intention
esteem	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.565**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	304	304
PS purchase intention	Correlation Coefficient	.565**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	304	304

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

A positive correlation of 0.565 between esteem needs and PS purchase intention showed a moderately strong relationship, suggesting that participants who reported greater fulfilment of esteem needs tended to report stronger PS purchase intentions. This outcome suggests that enhancing recognition or self-worth at TSs positively influences buying decisions. This outcome supports the alternative hypothesis H6. The p-value ($p < 0.001$) indicates that the correlation is statistically significant. The null hypothesis H0, which states that "there is no relationship between buyers' intent to buy after the show and the fulfilment of the need for improved self-esteem and confidence (feeling of exuberance) at a food industry exhibition," was rejected.

Summary

TS effectiveness and purchase intention showed strong positive relationships with safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem. Safety and security, and TS effectiveness, show the strongest correlation (0.689), suggesting that fulfilment of safety needs is strongly associated with participants' evaluations of TS effectiveness. This result highlights that respondents who reported higher levels of safety and security needs fulfilment also reported more positive perceptions of TS performance.

For organisations that organise TSs, these findings suggest that strategies aimed at improving safety and security, strengthening belonging, and enhancing esteem are associated with higher perceived event effectiveness and purchase intention among attendees. Among the three independent variables, sense of belonging and safety and security showed slightly stronger correlations with both dependent variables than esteem. This pattern suggests that creating a safe, inclusive, and socially engaging environment is central to driving TS success.

All relationships were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the observed associations were unlikely to have occurred by chance. This development strengthens confidence in the observed relationships between buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention, and supports the robustness of the research's findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

5.0 Chapter Overview

Chapter 5 examines the complex findings of this survey and explores how various buyer needs, such as safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, influence perceptions of trade show (TS) effectiveness and post-show (PS) purchase intentions within Zambia's evolving food processing sector. Since TSs represent a critical battleground for businesses competing for attention, understanding how buyer experiences influence engagement and subsequent purchasing behaviour remains both timely and important. This research fills a major gap in existing literature by examining relationships between buyer needs and TS effectiveness.

Previous chapters examined the research through descriptive and comparative analyses. The research identifies important relationships between independent variables (safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem) and dependent variables (TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention). The results show significant relationships and highlight the importance of buyer needs in shaping perceptions of TS experiences and influencing subsequent purchasing behaviour.

This chapter examines established theories of buyer behaviour and psychological theories. The chapter also applies an extensional approach to interpret the findings and assess whether these findings align with or challenge the theoretical constructs. By situating the results within the broader academic literature, the chapter highlights both theoretical and practical implications. The chapter also addresses research limitations by identifying key considerations for interpreting the findings and proposing directions for future research.

The chapter further provides practical suggestions for TS organisers, exhibitors, and industry participants to develop TS events that address attendees' primary needs, strengthen engagement, and encourage PS purchasing, thereby increasing buyer acceptance of TSs. These insights improve understanding of how organisations can tailor TS experiences to core buyer needs and leverage such experiences to enhance TS success in competitive markets.

5.1 Results Discussion and Interpretation

The survey findings show how basic buyer needs (safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem) shape perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention among buyers in

Zambia's food processing industry. This section discusses these findings and explores relationships between independent variables (safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem) and dependent variables (TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention). Beyond generating academic interest, this analysis helps explain buyer behaviour and intentions. The analysis also highlights important considerations for industry stakeholders seeking to increase TS value. Before conducting the survey, the researcher expected that individuals who reported lower satisfaction with the fulfilment of attendee needs also report lower perceptions of TS effectiveness and weaker PS purchase intentions. Previous research supports this expectation by emphasising the role of need satisfaction in consumer decision-making (Seeley, 1992).

5.1.1 Trade Show (TS) Effectiveness

The research shows a strong positive correlation between the fulfilment of buyer needs and perceptions of TS effectiveness. Meeting safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem needs increases the value and quality of attendee experiences, indicating that exhibitors and organisers must address these needs to create impactful TS events. This relationship closely aligns with Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which suggests that fulfilment of these needs strongly influences behaviour, motivation, and perception in professional settings (Maslow, 1943). When exhibitors address buyer needs effectively, attendees participate more actively in networking, PS discussions, and information sharing, thereby increasing the overall value of the experience.

This research tests three hypotheses related to perceptions of TS effectiveness. **H1** examines the relationship between buyer perceptions of safety and security and perceptions of TS effectiveness. Safety and security emerge as particularly important factors influencing beliefs about TS effectiveness. Attendees who feel physically and emotionally secure are more receptive to the event's objectives, so organisers must create safe environments that encourage engagement, communication, and positive experiences. For example, visible safety measures, clear emergency protocols, and attentive event personnel help create a sense of security. These measures prevent participants from becoming concerned about potential risks and allow participants to focus fully on networking and exploring new business opportunities. Events with large numbers of participants require a strong emphasis on safety, as crowded environments often create stress that reduces engagement. This emotional security not only

increases openness to new ideas and people but also positions the TS as a supportive environment that promotes professional development without fear of rejection or judgment.

H1 findings align with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ERG theory, and Herzberg's two-factor theory. Maslow argues that individuals first satisfy security needs before pursuing higher-order needs. This principle becomes particularly important in TS contexts because secure environments increase attendee participation and improve overall event experiences, thereby strengthening perceptions of effectiveness. ERG theory similarly argues that individuals first satisfy existence needs, such as security, before pursuing relatedness and growth needs (Maslow, 1943; Alderfer, 1969). Herzberg's theory also emphasises that organisations must satisfy hygiene factors, such as safety needs, to prevent dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1959). These findings, therefore, highlight the importance of addressing basic needs to improve attendee experiences.

H2 examines the relationship between buyers' need for belonging and perceptions of TS effectiveness. Belonging needs also emerge as an important factor shaping perceptions of TS effectiveness. These findings suggest that attendees value TSs that foster a sense of community. In professional contexts, where individuals often seek to expand professional networks and connect with like-minded professionals, TSs that foster belonging are especially effective. Structured networking opportunities, such as group discussions and networking sessions, help satisfy belonging needs and improve overall event experiences. Through meaningful interaction, TS organisers create stronger connections among participants and increase the perceived value of the TS. Fulfilment of belonging needs promotes inclusion and solidarity, which in turn contribute to positive perceptions of the event at both personal and professional levels. As a result, TSs that promote belonging function not only as business events but also as community-building experiences that strengthen shared objectives and trust between exhibitors and buyers.

H2 findings also align with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ERG theory, and Herzberg's two-factor theory. Some findings suggest that fulfilling belonging needs empowers participants in contexts similar to those of TSs. Meaningful social interaction encourages attendees to experience the event more positively. ERG theory supports this interpretation by classifying relatedness needs as critical for wellbeing and engagement (Maslow, 1943; Alderfer, 1969). Similarly, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory identifies social opportunities as motivators that

improve participant experiences (Herzberg, 1959). H2 therefore emphasises the importance of addressing psychological needs to optimise buyer experiences and perceptions of TS effectiveness.

Finally, **H3** examines the relationship between buyers' self-esteem needs and perceptions of TS effectiveness. Self-esteem needs relate to self-worth, recognition, and confidence. The findings shows that fulfilment of self-esteem needs significantly influences perceptions of TS effectiveness. When attendees feel respected, appreciated, and valued, attendees become more likely to perceive the event as successful and meaningful. Environments that recognise and validate the professional status and contributions of buyers increase trust and encourage full engagement with event objectives. Within TS environments, organisers can address self-esteem needs by creating opportunities for attendees to teach others, share expertise, or learn new skills. For example, workshops that allow attendees to share knowledge create a sense of achievement by validating contributor expertise and satisfying self-esteem needs. As a result, attendees become more willing to embrace event offerings and perceive the experience as empowering, professionally rewarding, and supportive of career advancement.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ERG theory, and Herzberg's two-factor theory collectively reinforce the findings of H3. According to Maslow, fulfilment of esteem needs (self-respect, recognition, and confidence) leads to greater satisfaction, which aligns with findings showing that participants perceive events more positively when organisers address esteem needs. ERG theory further reinforces this interpretation by linking esteem to personal growth and development (Maslow, 1943; Alderfer, 1969). Similarly, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory identifies esteem-related factors as motivators that generate positive emotional states and improve wellbeing (Herzberg, 1959). Together, these theoretical frameworks underline the importance of fulfilling esteem needs to enhance TS effectiveness.

Summary

For TS exhibitors, these findings indicate that successful TSs should not only showcase products and services but should also create environments that satisfy buyers' emotional and psychological needs. When exhibitors apply this approach during event planning, the exhibitors increase engagement, satisfaction, and positive perceptions of the brands, services, and products associated with the event beyond the TS itself. By proactively addressing buyer

needs, TSs evolve beyond transactional interactions into experiences that shape professional and personal outcomes for buyers. This approach demonstrates how comprehensive event management strategies contribute to TS success. By responding to buyers' needs for safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem, TSs become holistic, multidimensional experiences that leave lasting impressions. Through this strategy, TSs fulfil the intended role as intermediaries between buyers and sellers, strengthen brand loyalty, and nurture dynamic professional networks within the sector.

5.1.2 Post-Show (PS) Purchase Intention

The results show that PS purchase intention strongly indicates TS effectiveness and highlights the likelihood that TSs influence purchasing decisions. PS purchase intention reflects not only the attractiveness of displayed products or services but also the extent to which the overall event environment shapes buyer motivation and attitudes. Safety and security needs, belonging needs, and self-esteem needs strongly correlate with PS purchase intention, which underlines the important role of need fulfilment in driving purchasing behaviour. When organisers and exhibitors satisfy these needs, attendees become more likely to indicate intention to purchase after the show, thereby linking event experiences to concrete business outcomes.

The research examined the influence of buyer needs on PS purchase intention through three hypotheses. **H4** examined the relationship between buyer safety and security needs and PS purchase intention. Safety and security emerge as highly significant factors, underscoring the importance of secure, comfortable environments for commercial activities to succeed. Attendees who feel safe during the TS become significantly more willing to explore and purchase products or services presented at the event. This relationship highlights how environments free from physical and emotional concerns promote trust and encourage full engagement with exhibitors. TS organisers, therefore, need to implement strong security measures, ensure clear emergency exits, and implement data protection policies that safeguard privacy and personal information. These measures help build trust and allow attendees to focus on business activities rather than concerns about personal safety or data misuse. These findings highlight the importance of investing in robust security measures not only for protection but also to create environments that encourage stronger business engagement and commercial opportunities.

H5 examined the relationship between fulfilment of belonging needs and PS purchase intention. Belonging needs also emerge as important motivators of PS purchasing intention. Social integration and interpersonal connections during the event positively influence purchasing behaviour after the event. Shared experiences, networking opportunities, and group activities strengthen trust and rapport among participants and help create a sense of community. When TS organisers provide structured social settings such as informal networking events, group discussions, and seminars, participants feel more included and connected to brands. These experiences reduce buyer anxiety, strengthen brand loyalty, and increase purchase confidence. Positive social interaction, especially between exhibitors and attendees, helps buyers develop trust and a sense of connection with brands, thereby increasing confidence in future purchasing decisions. For example, attendees who engage in meaningful conversations with brand representatives often form more positive impressions of the brands and are more likely to consider purchases after the TS.

H6 examined the relationship between self-esteem needs and PS purchase intention. Fulfilment of self-esteem needs also predicts PS purchase intention. Attendees who leave the TS feeling valued, respected, and professionally recognised become significantly more likely to make purchases. When individuals receive professional recognition and appreciation, individuals often develop a stronger attraction to brands and products that reinforce personal value and professional identity. These findings highlight the importance of exhibitor interactions that recognise buyer expertise and contributions. Personalised interactions, such as addressing buyers by name, demonstrating interest in buyers' professional backgrounds, and tailoring product demonstrations to specific buyer concerns, significantly improve the buyer experience and strengthen the brand image. For example, when sales representatives listen carefully to attendees and provide customised solutions, attendees develop stronger professional connections with exhibitors and products. This thoughtful, personalised approach builds trust and increases the likelihood that attendees will support brands through future purchases after the TS.

H4, H5, and H6 findings align with key principles from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ERG theory, and Herzberg's two-factor theory. **H4**, which examines safety needs and PS purchase intention, aligns with all three theories because each framework identifies safety as a fundamental need that influences behaviour. Lower satisfaction with safety and security

reduces PS purchase intention because individuals prioritise the fulfilment of basic needs before pursuing higher-order motivations (Maslow, 1943; Alderfer, 1969). **H5**, which focuses on belonging needs, also aligns with these frameworks by emphasising social connection as a motivator that strengthens engagement when fulfilled. Finally, **H6**, which examines esteem needs, supports both Maslow's and Herzberg's arguments that recognition promotes satisfaction and increases purchase intention when individuals feel valued (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg, 1959; Alderfer, 1969).

Summary

Overall, the research highlights how understanding and responding to buyer needs provides a powerful strategy for strengthening PS purchase intention. When TS organisers and exhibitors design environments that satisfy safety and security needs, belonging needs, and self-esteem needs, organisers and exhibitors increase the likelihood that attendees convert positive event experiences into future purchases. These findings carry important practical implications. TS organisers and exhibitors can emphasise strong security protocols, create opportunities for meaningful social interaction, and encourage exhibitors to engage with attendees in respectful, authentic ways. Together, these practices create positive buyer experiences that satisfy buyer needs while establishing strong foundations for future business relationships and sustainable interactions. A strong understanding of these needs, combined with effective strategies to address the needs, not only increases TS effectiveness but also strengthens the long-term value of TS events for both attendees and exhibitors.

5.1.3 Safety and Security

The findings show a strong correlation between buyers' safety and security concerns and both TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention, which further highlights the importance of providing a safe physical, emotional, and digital environment for attendees. When organisers and exhibitors satisfy these basic needs, attendees interact more freely with the environment, experience fewer anxieties and distractions, and become more receptive to event offerings. Within TS environments, feelings of safety positively influence perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention because attendees engage more actively with exhibitors, show greater interest in products, and consider future purchases more seriously.

This result aligns with Walters *et al.* (2017), who demonstrated that strong psychological attachment to the Olympic Games reduces perceived risks such as terrorism and civil unrest and increases attendance intentions. Similarly, Mbaze-Ebock *et al.* (2025) found that safety significantly enhances attendee satisfaction in event contexts, particularly through effective risk assessment, crowd management, and emergency preparedness. Consistent with these studies, the current results confirm that perceptions of safety and security significantly shape attendees' evaluations and reinforce attendees' willingness to engage in TSs, highlighting safety as a fundamental determinant of positive event experiences.

Timely and effective preventive security measures improve buyer perceptions and increase engagement. Effective crowd management practices minimise overcrowding and reduce physical discomfort and stress. Clear, visible emergency protocols help attendees feel informed and prepared, reducing the fear of unexpected situations. TS staff and attendees also feel reassured when organisers establish contingency and disaster-response plans. In addition, visible security personnel positioned strategically throughout the venue reassure attendees, reduce concerns about personal safety, and allow participants to focus on networking, product discovery, and business discussions without unnecessary distractions.

Safety and security, therefore, form fundamental components of successful attendee participation. Once organisers satisfy these needs, participants engage more actively with event activities and become more receptive to networking opportunities, presentations, and exhibitor displays. For example, attendees who feel confident about the safety of personal belongings spend more time exploring exhibition spaces, thereby increasing meaningful interaction with exhibitors. These interactions strengthen positive perceptions of the event and increase the likelihood of PS patronage. Safe environments also build attendee confidence, strengthen brand loyalty, and enhance TS credibility.

TS organisers and exhibitors can implement several specific measures to enhance attendees' perceptions of safety. For example, TSs can adopt digital technologies, such as social media integrations and mobile event applications, to provide event navigation and real-time safety updates. These technologies supply important information about venue locations, emergency exits, and evolving situations, thereby creating informed and prepared environments. Some events also use customised applications that allow attendees to report security concerns or request immediate assistance. Such features strengthen perceptions of responsible and safety-

conscious management. In post-pandemic contexts, organisers and exhibitors can further strengthen perceptions of wellbeing by providing health and hygiene measures such as hand sanitisation stations, regular cleaning protocols, and health-monitoring stations. These measures reduce concerns about cleanliness and crowd density and contribute to smoother attendee experiences.

The positive relationship between security measures and PS purchase intention also shows that exhibitors benefit from environments where visitors feel safe and comfortable. A sense of safety encourages attendees to approach exhibitors and seek additional information about products and services. For example, at a food processing TS, exhibitors presenting large-scale production equipment may notice that attendees feel more comfortable asking detailed questions about operational functionality and practical applications. Comfortable environments also increase the likelihood that participants make informed purchasing decisions and seriously consider future purchases. In addition, exhibitors can strengthen feelings of security through respectful and transparent communication that builds buyer trust and comfort during interactions.

Summary

In conclusion, the research findings show that safety and security measures extend beyond logistical concerns and function as strategic elements that strongly influence TS effectiveness. Organisers and exhibitors should therefore treat these measures as essential components for creating supportive and trustworthy environments where attendees feel protected and valued. Such environments increase engagement and lay the foundation for long-term business outcomes. Events with strong security measures do more than protect participants; the events also strengthen the credibility of event offerings and encourage attendees to view participation as a worthwhile investment. This approach transforms security from a simple precaution into a cornerstone of TS success, creating experiences that remain both protective and enriching for attendees while generating benefits for exhibitors.

5.1.4 Sense of Belonging

The findings show a strong positive correlation between buyers' need for belonging and both perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. Individuals who experience social connection and community during TSs become more likely to evaluate the event positively and

consider purchasing after the TS. The concept of belonging, rooted in Social identity theory, suggests that individuals derive a sense of identity and belonging from membership in social groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Within TS contexts, a strong sense of belonging strengthens attendee loyalty, commitment, and engagement with industries and brands, which ultimately increases the perceived value of the TS experience.

This result aligns with Woojin and Haeyoon (2021), who found that socialisation motivation enhances festival attendees' experiences and satisfaction through opportunities for interaction and connection. Similarly, Ahmed, Eshwekh and Emarzugi (2020) found that networking functioned as a key driver of conference satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of interpersonal relationships in shaping attendee experiences. The current findings confirm that when attendees experience social connection and inclusion within TSs, attendees develop stronger positive evaluations, thereby reinforcing the role of belonging as a critical motivational driver in event participation.

Understanding the importance of belonging also benefits TS exhibitors who create environments that encourage social interaction and connection. For example, exhibitors can organise networking events that provide platforms for attendees to build relationships with industry experts, exhibitors, and industry representatives. Exhibitors can also create specialised activities within the food processing sector that connect attendees with like-minded professionals, facilitate networking, and encourage long-term professional relationships beyond immediate business transactions. At food processing TSs, organisers may introduce attendees to potential business partners, helping strengthen professional networks. Through these connections, TSs foster positive perceptions among attendees, who feel part of a supportive industry ecosystem.

Similarly, exhibitors can facilitate discussions and group panels that strengthen affinity and foster a sense of belonging through shared learning experiences. Industry-led panels encourage interaction, discussion, and knowledge exchange, which generate shared experiences that promote social inclusion. When participants explore industry trends and exchange ideas, participants develop stronger interpersonal bonds and deeper connections with the TS experience. These group dynamics strengthen buyer perceptions of TS effectiveness and increase the likelihood of continued engagement and PS purchases. By supporting interactive

formats, organisers and exhibitors create inclusive social environments, strengthen long-term relationships, and encourage purchasing intentions.

Exhibitors can also strengthen a sense of belonging by creating booth environments that encourage informal, comfortable interaction. For example, open seating arrangements support relaxed conversations between attendees and brand representatives, fostering more natural dialogue rather than purely transactional exchanges. These settings encourage attendees to connect with others who share similar interests. Within the food processing sector, exhibitors can set up coffee lounges in the booths where attendees can interact, discuss product features with staff, and network with other visitors and exhibitors. Through these arrangements, exhibitors create welcoming atmospheres that foster personal connections, improve brand perceptions, and increase the likelihood of future purchases.

TS organisers and exhibitors can further strengthen a sense of belonging by promoting inclusion beyond the TS itself. For example, organisers and exhibitors can establish virtual forums or follow-up events that allow attendees to continue discussions and interactions after the TS concludes. Exhibitors can also create dedicated social media groups or online communities that allow attendees to remain connected with exhibitors and fellow participants, thereby sustaining engagement beyond the event. These extended interactions reinforce a sense of belonging within a broader professional community, strengthen loyalty toward brands, and increase purchase intention for PS. Through open and inclusive communities, TSs encourage continuous dialogue and engagement, strengthen buyer loyalty, and promote long-term relationships with brands.

Summary

Supporting belonging within TS communities plays an important role in strengthening TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. Through networking opportunities, discussion panels, inclusive booth designs, and community-building initiatives, TS organisers and exhibitors create environments that extend beyond the event itself. These efforts enrich participants' experiences and lay the foundation for long-term professional relationships and lasting professional networks. As a result, TSs become strong industry focal points that encourage sustained engagement with exhibitors and brands long after the event concludes. This approach to belonging creates inviting and inclusive environments that participants perceive as

meaningful and impactful, thereby strengthening positive associations and long-term brand loyalty after the event.

5.1.5 Self-Esteem

The results showed a strong positive relationship between buyers' self-esteem needs and both TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. These findings suggest that attendees who perceive greater respect, appreciation, and professional recognition tend to develop more positive perceptions of the TS and stronger post-show purchase intentions. Self-esteem, as a higher-order psychological need, plays an important role in shaping motivation and behaviour (Maslow, 1943). These findings, therefore, highlight the importance of TS environments that reinforce buyer self-worth and foster long-term, positive emotional experiences with exhibitors.

This finding aligns with Tsai-fa (2020), who demonstrated that perceived value and satisfaction enhanced event attachment and revisit intentions by fulfilling attendees' needs for recognition, achievement, and personal enrichment. In addition, Walters *et al.* (2017) showed that strong identification with prestigious events strengthened self-image and increased attendance intentions despite perceived risks. Consistent with these studies, the current results indicate that TSs contribute to attendees' self-esteem by enhancing attendees' sense of value, identity, and accomplishment, which in turn strengthens satisfaction, attachment, and behavioural intentions.

TS events contribute to perceptions of self-worth, which are associated with more favourable evaluations of TS effectiveness. When organisers and exhibitors actively acknowledge attendee expertise and professional knowledge, organisers and exhibitors strengthen attendees' professional recognition within the industry. Exhibitors can leverage this by creating personalised interactions. For example, exhibitors can tailor product demonstrations to attendees' professional roles and interests, thereby showing respect for professional expertise and encouraging meaningful engagement throughout the event. Exhibitors at food processing TSs can also organise expert panels that address specialised industry issues. Recognition of attendees as professionals not only increases perceived value but also strengthens receptiveness to exhibitor educational strategies, which further reinforces perceptions of the TS as valuable and impactful.

Exhibitors can also strengthen self-esteem through structured recognition initiatives such as awards, certificates, and public acknowledgement of attendee achievements. These activities can enhance confidence and may contribute to stronger purchasing intention. For example, recognising attendee contributions to innovation, sustainability, or industrial development creates memorable experiences that strengthen attendee confidence in both the event and participating exhibitors. Such recognition can foster pride and encourage attendees to become more receptive to exhibitor offerings after the TS. By prioritising professional recognition, exhibitors position TSs as more than showcases for products and services; exhibitors transform events into platforms that celebrate and validate professional contributions within the industry.

Encouraging attendee participation in discussions, networking sessions, and knowledge-sharing activities can strengthen self-esteem by demonstrating that attendee insights and perspectives are respected and appreciated. Exhibitors can support this by organising networking events, interactive panels, and question-and-answer sessions that allow attendees to openly discuss industry issues and trends. For example, exhibitors can host food processing panel sessions that incorporate participatory discussions and audience contributions, thereby giving attendees opportunities to share industry experiences and professional insights. This inclusive participation strengthens mutual respect and deepens emotional connections among attendees, exhibitors, and industry stakeholders.

These findings align with broader theories of buyer behaviour that emphasise the importance of satisfying psychological needs in strengthening buyer satisfaction and loyalty. When organisers and exhibitors understand and address self-esteem needs effectively, organisers and exhibitors can enhance buyer perceptions of TSs and future engagement with exhibitors. Attendees who receive professional recognition and respect during TSs become more likely to revisit events, develop stronger associations with participating brands, and consider future business relationships. Feelings of professional validation, therefore, create loyalty and increase openness to future purchases.

By reinforcing self-worth during TSs, organisers and exhibitors create deeper relationships with attendees that extend beyond the event itself. For example, attendees who feel recognised and appreciated often return to future exhibitions, recommend events to colleagues, and maintain long-term contact with exhibitors. These ongoing relationships can create important benefits for exhibitors through repeat business, referrals, and stronger brand loyalty. Self-

esteem-based engagement, therefore, strengthens attendee attachment to both TSs and exhibitors and contributes to positive brand impressions that continue long after the event concludes.

To maximise the benefits of self-esteem enhancement, TS exhibitors can incorporate recognition strategies such as personalised invitations, one-on-one consultations, and awards that acknowledge attendee contributions and expertise. Through these initiatives, TSs improve interaction quality, strengthen professional belonging, and foster stronger relationships between attendees and exhibitors. This strategy aligns with the findings of the present research, which demonstrate that strategically addressing self-esteem needs can strengthen attendee engagement and increase PS purchase intention.

Summary

Developing self-esteem within TS environments plays an important role in enhancing perceived TS effectiveness and strengthening PS purchase intention. TSs provide unique opportunities for professional recognition, and interactions that communicate appreciation and respect create environments that positively shape attendee perceptions and encourage continued engagement with exhibitors during and after the event. This deeper understanding helps organisers and exhibitors optimise TS environments and align exhibitor strategies with attendee psychological needs, thereby supporting the long-term success of TSs as platforms for meaningful and professionally validating experiences.

5.2 Implications for Literature and Data

The results of this research add to existing knowledge on the relationships among buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and buyers' PS purchase intention, particularly in Zambia's food processing sector. This research examines how buyers' feelings of safety, security, and other psychological needs influence perceptions of TS effectiveness and intentions to purchase after the show. The findings demonstrate how these needs shape marketing effectiveness and buyer behaviour in an emerging market. Applying these theories to TSs and buyer behaviour in less-explored markets strengthens understanding of three key theoretical frameworks in this field: Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, and Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory.

5.2.1 Contribution to Buyer Needs and Motivation Literature

The research highlights the importance of Maslow's hierarchy of needs within TS contexts, where buyer motivations remain complex and closely connected to broader buyer behaviour. Although scholars widely accept Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, limited research has examined the theory within event marketing contexts. By focusing on core needs such as safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem, this research demonstrates how these motivations significantly influence buyer perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. These findings align with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs and also connect strongly with Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory and Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory. Together, these frameworks provide a multidimensional understanding of attendee expectations and perceptions within TS environments.

Safety and Security: Building Blocks of Engagement

Safety and security, which occupy foundational levels within Maslow's hierarchy, strongly predict perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. Once organisers and exhibitors satisfy buyers' security needs, buyers engage more actively with TS activities and transactions. These findings support the argument that environments satisfying basic needs encourage stronger participation and engagement. This perspective also aligns with Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, which condenses Maslow's (1943) hierarchy into three overlapping categories: existence, relatedness, and growth. Within this framework, safety and security fall under the existence needs, which lay the foundation for deeper involvement. These findings are particularly important in emerging markets such as Zambia, where infrastructure quality and safety standards may differ from those in developed economies.

Exhibitors operating in developing-country TS environments can therefore benefit by prioritising safe and secure event environments. For example, exhibitors can strengthen security measures through visible emergency procedures and effective crowd-control systems that not only protect attendees but also create favourable conditions for networking and business engagement. These measures build trust and confidence, allowing attendees to focus on professional connections and evaluating exhibited products without unnecessary distractions. At food processing TSs, exhibitors can also demonstrate food safety and security systems that reassure attendees while exploring new products, machinery, and supplies. Such

environments strengthen positive perceptions of TS effectiveness and increase PS purchase intention, as attendees feel that organisers and exhibitors meet essential security needs.

Sense of Belonging and Social Connection: Building Community

Beyond basic needs, the research identifies a strong relationship between belonging needs, perceived TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intention. According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy, individuals seek connection and companionship after satisfying safety needs. These findings also align with Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory, particularly the theory's emphasis on motivational factors that increase satisfaction and engagement through social interaction. Similarly, Alderfer's (1969) relatedness dimension highlights the importance of interpersonal relationships in motivation and satisfaction.

Exhibitors can strengthen belonging by offering networking opportunities and community-building activities that enhance attendee perceptions of value and inclusion. Research on brand communities supports this argument by showing that social bonds strengthen loyalty and engagement (McAlexander *et al.*, 2002). For example, food processing TS exhibitors can organise networking sessions that connect attendees with industry peers and experts, thereby strengthening shared purpose and professional identity. Exhibitors can further extend these interactions through virtual follow-up groups and post-show discussions that sustain relationships developed during the TS. Integration into professional communities, therefore, strengthens positive event perceptions and increases the likelihood of PS purchasing decisions.

Self-Esteem and Professional Recognition: Enhancing Engagement

The research also highlights the importance of satisfying self-esteem needs in shaping perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. Within Maslow's (1943) hierarchy, esteem needs include recognition, respect, and acknowledgement of professional contribution. Herzberg's (1959) theory complements this perspective because esteem functions as a motivational factor that increases satisfaction when fulfilled. Exhibitors can satisfy esteem needs by creating opportunities for attendees to share knowledge, participate in discussions, and receive recognition for achievements. For example, exhibitors can provide participation certificates, industry awards, and educational seminars that strengthen attendee confidence and trust in the TS experience.

Within Zambia's food processing TS environment, exhibitors can organise interactive sessions that encourage attendees to share sector-specific knowledge and professional insights. These activities strengthen professional recognition, increase engagement with the event, and reinforce relationships between buyers and exhibitors, which may subsequently influence PS purchase intention. When exhibitors recognise and value attendee expertise and contributions, attendees are more likely to perceive the TS as impactful and to develop stronger purchase intention after the event.

Integrating Buyer Motivation Theories for a Holistic Understanding

Overall, the research findings demonstrate that Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs remains applicable within TS environments. The results also indicate that Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory and Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory further explain attendee motivations and expectations within TS settings. Strengthening safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem creates supportive, engaging, and rewarding TS experiences that increase the likelihood of PS purchasing behaviour. These insights extend understanding of buyer behaviour by showing that psychological need fulfilment strongly influences buyer engagement, brand commitment, and purchase intention within TS contexts.

The findings also encourage future researchers to examine whether these motivational models remain consistent across different cultural and economic settings. Within Zambia's TS environment, for example, self-esteem needs emerge as particularly significant. Examining the interaction among safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem across varying contexts may support the development of more integrated approaches to optimising TS environments. Such approaches can better align exhibitor strategies with buyer motivations and strengthen the long-term impact of TS experiences. Overall, this research expands understanding of how TS organisers and exhibitors can address common motivational factors to create meaningful attendee experiences that encourage long-term engagement.

Maslow's Hierarchy and Industrial Contexts

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy demonstrates how personal identity, social environments, and individual behaviour interact dynamically. Researchers have extensively tested the framework in industrial settings, where Maslow's (1943) hierarchy informs practices such as recruitment and training. The present research contributes additional insight into buyer needs and the

influence on TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention within Zambia's food processing sector. Comparison of these findings with previous studies reveals important similarities and differences among theories such as Maslow's (1943) hierarchy, Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, and culturally adapted motivational models.

One area where this research aligns closely with earlier Maslow-based literature concerns the importance of lower-level, or existential, needs in TS contexts. For example, Huizinga (1970) found that lower-level occupational roles often prioritised physiological and safety needs. Similarly, the present research shows that buyers prioritise product information, comfort, and security during TS participation. These findings reinforce the continued importance of lower-level needs, as buyers require basic comfort, safety, and information before engaging effectively with exhibitors.

In contrast, Hall and Nougaim (1968) criticised Maslow's (1943) rigid hierarchy, arguing that needs evolve and become more closely linked to career development than to personal development. Career-cycle theory, therefore, challenges the fixed progression proposed in Maslow's framework and instead proposes more dynamic, individualised motivational patterns. Although the present research does not focus directly on career stages, the findings indicate that comfort, safety, and security strongly influence perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. Even experienced buyers therefore prioritise existential needs within TS environments, which supports the argument that motivation in industrial settings remains flexible rather than fixed.

Challenging Maslow's Rigid Structure: ERG Theory and Buyer Needs

Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory also provides important insight because the ERG theory offers a more flexible framework than Maslow's hierarchy. The theory proposes that individuals pursue existence, relatedness, and growth needs simultaneously rather than sequentially. This flexible framework closely aligns with the present research's focus on addressing current buyer needs in TS environments. Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory suggests that individuals may pursue growth opportunities and self-development even when lower-level needs remain partially unsatisfied.

For example, Arnolds and Boshoff (2002) found that top managers prioritised growth needs, whereas frontline workers emphasised existence and relatedness needs. These findings support

Alderfer's (1969) argument that needs evolve over time and across contexts. Similarly, the present research shows that buyers value comfort, access to information, and reputable venues during TS participation. These findings align with Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory because existence and relatedness needs appear simultaneously within buyer motivations. Other studies, such as Egbuta and Omojola's (2022) research, also demonstrated that satisfying existence, relatedness, and growth needs increases engagement. This assertion supports the present research's findings that fulfilment of basic buyer needs strengthens engagement and increases PS purchase intention.

Cross-Cultural Implications: TS Needs in Zambia

Cross-cultural studies applying Maslow's (1943) and Alderfer's (1969) theories provide important insight into the applicability of motivational frameworks across different societies. Research increasingly demonstrates that needs and satisfactions remain strongly influenced by cultural context. For example, Sanford (1970) found that Latin American workers prioritised dignity over work ethic, while Blunt (1973) reported that South African managers expressed dissatisfaction and needs differently from American managers. These findings align with the present research's emphasis on the specific buyer context within Zambia's food processing sector, where cultural values strongly shape buyer expectations and motivations.

This research demonstrates that comfort, access to information, and relatedness strongly influence both TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. Such differences may reflect cultural, industrial, or contextual factors, as studies across different groups often reveal distinct motivational priorities. In Zambia's food processing industry, fulfilment of basic needs and a sense of belonging strongly influence buyer engagement and purchase intention. These findings align with Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, which argues that contextual conditions shape the importance of specific needs. The findings, therefore, illustrate how TS buyer motivations remain highly contextual and closely linked to cultural values and practical concerns.

This research also builds on cross-cultural critiques of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy by showing that fulfilling basic needs, such as access to information, comfort, and convenience, significantly strengthens TS engagement. Within many African contexts, community-oriented and social needs may sometimes outweigh individualistic growth needs (Backer, 1973). These

findings challenge assumptions about universal hierarchical ordering of needs and instead support Alderfer's (1969) more flexible ERG framework, which explains how individuals prioritise needs differently across varying cultural environments.

Buyer Motivation: The Role of Existence and Relatedness Needs in TSs

The research's findings show that existence needs, as reflected in product knowledge and booth comfort, strongly influence perceptions of TS effectiveness. These findings indirectly support Herzberg's (1959) distinction between hygiene factors and motivators within buyer-centred contexts. Product information and booth design function similarly to hygiene factors because they do not necessarily motivate buyers directly but instead create essential conditions for engagement and satisfaction.

The relationship between basic needs and buyer satisfaction aligns with findings by Ahani, Gilaninia and Shirsavar (2013), who demonstrated that access to product information improved buyer decision-making capacity. Similarly, comfort and convenience within TS environments align with workplace-satisfaction findings such as those reported by Wan Fauziah and Tan (2013) within Malaysian electronics firms. Buyers, like employees, require both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic factors, such as relevant products and social interaction, to achieve positive experiences. These findings therefore demonstrate that Herzberg's (1959) theory applies effectively across different contexts.

TS Effectiveness and Post-Show Purchase Intention: Growth Opportunities for Buyers

The research also demonstrates that growth-related needs, including exploration of new products and learning about innovative solutions, influence TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. Maslow's (1943) theory does not always fully explain situations where individuals pursue growth needs despite incomplete fulfilment of lower-level needs. These findings, therefore, align more closely with the flexibility of Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, which allows individuals to pursue both existence and growth needs simultaneously.

Research by Miller (2022) similarly concluded that ERG theory explained motivation more effectively within large organisations characterised by multiple and overlapping consumer needs. The present research, therefore, supports and extends earlier research suggesting that Alderfer's (1969) flexible ERG framework explains buyer motivation and TS effectiveness

more effectively than Maslow's rigid hierarchy. Buyers respond simultaneously to survival-related concerns, social interaction, and growth opportunities, which indicates that engagement and PS purchase intention involve multiple interconnected motivational layers.

This interaction between existence and growth strongly supports Alderfer's (1969) argument that needs do not follow a fixed linear progression and highlights the importance of developing culturally contextualised models of buyer behaviour. The research's findings, therefore, align with cross-cultural critiques suggesting that Maslow's (1943) hierarchy may not apply universally, especially within TS environments in Zambia's food processing industry. Future TS strategies should therefore address diverse buyer motivations by integrating fulfilment of basic information and security needs with opportunities for growth, learning, and social connection.

5.2.2 Special Insights on TS Effectiveness

Previous research on TS performance has shown that attendee perceptions depend not only on exhibition structures such as booth layouts and displays, but also on how effectively TS exhibitions satisfy key buyer needs. Although researchers generally link TS performance metrics to logistical factors (Gopalakrishna and Lilien, 1995), this research highlights the importance of satisfying buyer needs for safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem which are associated with stronger engagement and purchasing intention. These findings show that TS effectiveness depends not only on the physical design of the exhibition space, but also on the extent to which the show satisfies attendee needs, thereby shaping customer satisfaction and perceived value.

Enhancing TS Effectiveness through Fulfilment of Buyer Needs

To create a TS experience with meaningful impact, organisers and exhibitors can adopt a more holistic and experience-oriented approach that addresses both functional and psychological dimensions. For example, meeting safety and security needs allows attendees to engage without concerns about personal welfare, enabling participants to focus on event activities and networking opportunities. Attendees explore exhibits and engage in conversations more freely when the environment feels secure (Mbaze-Ebock *et al.*, 2025). Exhibitors can implement practical measures such as visible signage, security personnel, and organised crowd management to strengthen perceptions of safety and security. In addition, Exhibitors can also

integrate technologies such as radio-frequency identification (RFID)-based tracking badges to help organisers monitor crowd density in real time and adjust attendee flow. Such practices not only address safety requirements but also reinforce event professionalism and attendee confidence.

Fostering Sense of Belonging for Deeper Engagement

The findings demonstrated the importance of belonging, as buyers perceive greater TS value when the environment promotes inclusion. Networking and industry engagement activities encourage social interaction and strengthen a sense of community, which significantly improves attendee experiences. Organisers and exhibitors can design TS environments to support these interactions through one-to-one meetings, sector-focused workshops, networking events, and shared lounge spaces for social engagement. For example, exhibitors in the food processing sector can create themed areas for sub-sectors such as packaging or supply chain management, enabling delegates to connect with stakeholders who share similar interests. This structured social interaction satisfies buyers' desire for community and reinforces a sense of belonging, thereby potentially strengthening post-show purchase intentions and future business engagement.

Addressing Self-Esteem to Elevate Event Effectiveness

The findings also showed that self-esteem needs were significantly associated with buyers' perceptions of TS effectiveness. Recognition and validation of attendees' professional identities foster respect, increase event satisfaction, and strengthen future participation intentions. Exhibitors can satisfy these needs by displaying professional titles on badges, creating expert forums, or inviting attendees to participate in panel discussions and question-and-answer sessions. For example, exhibitors at a technology-focused TS can invite industry specialists to facilitate workshops that showcase expertise and enhance the event's reputation. Recognition during the TS can strengthen perceptions of professional value and may contribute to greater attendee loyalty, increasing the likelihood that attendees return to future events.

Suggestions for TS Evaluation and New Formats

The findings support a broader perspective on the effectiveness of TS. Traditional metrics, such as foot traffic and direct sales, may provide only a partial view of event performance and often overlook attendees' psychological experiences. Incorporating psychological dimensions into

evaluation criteria provides organisers and exhibitors with deeper insights into what creates meaningful event experiences, encouraging both immediate engagement and future participation. This broader evaluation approach becomes increasingly important as TS formats continue to evolve. Virtual and hybrid TS formats introduce new challenges in meeting needs for safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem, because these formats often lack physical presence and face-to-face interaction, which traditionally support social connection and professional validation. For example, virtual environments can use features such as digital breakout rooms, interactive chat spaces, and recognition badges to encourage interaction and acknowledgement. Future research can examine how these digital formats influence buyer needs and satisfaction, thereby helping exhibitors structure more effective offerings within an evolving event landscape. Overall, by addressing both the psychological and logistical needs of buyers, TSs can create experiences that resonate more deeply, increasing both immediate satisfaction and long-term engagement.

5.2.3 Extending the Research on Purchase Intention

This research shows how buyer needs significantly influence PS purchasing intentions and highlights that TSs extend beyond mere product displays by fostering environments that generate positive emotional responses, strengthen social networks, and reinforce professional value. These findings reaffirm the importance of conducting marketing and branding activities that emphasise emotions and social relationships rather than focusing only on product features, services, and price. The findings also demonstrate the importance of safety and security, contradicting perspectives in the TS literature that attribute TS effectiveness primarily to product display or marketing techniques. Buyers are more willing to consider purchases when the environment feels safe, as this sense of security reduces decision-making anxiety and strengthens confidence in the purchasing process. Similarly, a sense of belonging creates emotional connections between participants and brands, suggesting that buyers prefer brands that foster inclusion and community. In addition, the relationship between self-esteem and purchasing intention highlights the importance of personal validation in decision-making. Exhibitors who acknowledge and reassure buyers strengthen confidence in the products and services on display. This process strengthens buyer–brand relationships and subsequently increases PS purchase intentions. Overall, the research highlights the complexity of purchasing

behaviour and calls for deeper examination of the emotional and psychological factors that influence buyer behaviour within TS contexts.

5.2.4 Relevance to Emerging Markets

This research adds valuable insights to the ongoing debate on the usefulness of TSs in developing countries (Tafesse and Korneliussen, 2011), particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. This region remains under-represented in scientific literature. A considerable gap exists in the literature on how TSs function, especially in emerging economies, where most studies focus on developed countries and well-established industries and infrastructure. More importantly, this work contributes to existing knowledge by examining the food processing sector in Zambia rather than focusing solely on theoretical debates that have dominated previous studies. This research suggests that multiple interrelated factors influence TS functioning in such contexts and shape both behavioural and perceptual outcomes among buyers.

In emerging economies like Zambia, where infrastructure and public safety standards often differ significantly from those in developed nations, safety and security are important concerns for TS attendees. The results of this survey show that safety and security are important concerns of TS attendees in Zambia when attending TS events, particularly regarding attendees' willingness to engage with exhibitors and explore offerings. This expectation stems from specific risks associated with public gatherings, including challenges with crowd control, weak emergency response systems, and logistical difficulties at event venues, all of which influence attendee confidence. These results contrast with those of Fryan (2020), whose findings suggest that buyer needs do not significantly influence perceived value and behavioural outcomes at TSs. This contrast suggests that in developed markets, factors such as product quality, pricing, innovation, and business relevance play a stronger role in shaping attendee evaluations and purchasing decisions. Attendees in such contexts may assume that basic psychological and safety needs are already satisfied due to stronger infrastructure, higher expectations, and frequent exposure to professional events. As a result, emotional and relational factors may play a weaker role in shaping perceived value and behavioural outcomes compared to emerging markets.

To leverage this situation, organisers and exhibitors in emerging markets should ensure the authenticity and visibility of security and safety measures. In Zambia, effective TS organisation should involve close collaboration with local authorities to secure venues, the deployment of

visible security personnel, and the implementation of structured crowd control strategies that directly address participant concerns. Organisers can also benefit from clearly communicated emergency procedures and accessible information points that help attendees navigate the event environment with confidence. Furthermore, transparent communication of safety protocols can strengthen buyers' perception of security measures and creates an environment that supports business interaction, trust building, and transaction readiness. These practices not only reduce perceived risk but also enhance the event's credibility and increase willingness to engage with exhibitors.

Moreover, this research highlights the dual role of TSs in emerging markets, serving as both commercial platforms and environments that shape professional identity and foster social cohesion in emerging industrial contexts. In the evolving food processing industry in Zambia, TSs offer key opportunities for professionals to express identity, build networks, and engage with peers, thereby strengthening both individual and collective industrial identity. Unlike TSs in developed economies, where established industries rely on multiple engagement channels, TSs in Zambia can function as important venues for networking, knowledge exchange, skills sharing, and community building. In Zambian food processing TSs, participants not only explore product and service offerings but may also seek legitimacy, recognition, and professional status as relatively new entrants into the professional community. This phenomenon is consistent with social identity theory, which proposes that individuals derive self-esteem from membership in professional groups and collective identification (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

Based on these results, this research recommends that TS exhibitors allocate more time and resources to tailored meetings and sector-specific exchanges that address the needs of different buyer segments. This approach can strengthen perceived value and social connection, which represent essential elements of TS effectiveness in emerging markets. Exhibitors may also benefit from designing engagement strategies that combine product demonstrations with structured interaction opportunities that encourage dialogue and trust building. Such context-specific strategies highlight the complex interaction between socio-economic and cultural factors and demonstrate that TS planning cannot follow a uniform model across diverse global environments. Instead, organisers should adapt the TS design to local expectations, infrastructural realities, and psychological buyer needs. This research contributes to the broader

literature on TS effectiveness and buyer behaviour in a rapidly evolving global market. This research provides a foundation for future studies exploring how contextual factors shape buyer decision-making across different economies.

5.2.5 Practical Implications for TS Planning

Bloch *et al.* (2017) focused on exhibitors' booth designs and highlighted important implications for TS organisers and exhibitors and showed that positive psychological experiences play a central role in creating activities that engage and reward attendees sufficiently for attendees to invest time and effort. This process begins with providing a safe and secure environment, which is a necessary condition for authentic attendee involvement. When attendees feel safe and secure, attendees engage more deeply with event content, resulting in more productive networking, greater exploration of products and services, and a more positive perception of the event overall. In many markets, particularly emerging economies, exhibitors and organisers strengthen this sense of security through visible security personnel, clear emergency procedures, and effective crowd management strategies. These measures help participants enjoy the full TS experience and increase overall satisfaction.

Beyond safety and security, these findings suggest that exhibitors can improve customer engagement by creating welcoming and inclusive environments. Spaces that encourage social interaction strengthen the perception that the TS provides a place where participants belong. This assertion becomes particularly important in sectors such as food processing, where professional relationships often create opportunities for future partnerships and long-term collaboration. In response, exhibitors can designate breakout areas, networking lounges, or discussion spaces to encourage conversation and relationship-building among attendees. Such initiatives not only strengthen attendees' sense of value and inclusion but also may increase the likelihood of PS purchasing intention.

At the same time, exhibitors influence attendee experiences through the quality of interpersonal interactions during the TS. Meaningful engagement may depend partly on exhibitor staff's ability to build genuine connections with attendees. When exhibitors treat attendees with respect and acknowledge professional expertise, attendees develop stronger positive associations with the exhibitor's brand. Exhibitors can strengthen these interactions by training TS staff in active listening techniques and adaptive communication skills. These abilities can enable staff members to tailor responses and follow-up questions to each attendee's interests,

concerns, and professional circumstances. Such interactions create a more personalised experience and help attendees feel recognised rather than treated as anonymous participants within a crowded event environment.

In addition, personalised post-event communication based on prior conversations can further strengthen buyers' sense of importance and increase the likelihood of continued engagement. Follow-up emails, tailored product recommendations, and invitations to future networking opportunities reinforce the relationship between attendees and exhibitors beyond the TS itself. In this way, organisers and exhibitors can create environments where attendees feel safe, welcome, respected, and appreciated. These elements can contribute not only to the immediate success of the event but also to long-term brand loyalty and increased PS purchasing intention. Overall, these findings demonstrate that TS effectiveness depends on addressing both logistical and psychological needs, thereby creating a more holistic, engaging, and impactful event experience. In an increasingly competitive TS environment, prioritising attendee needs is no longer optional; prioritising attendee needs is essential for achieving sustainable, long-term success.

5.2.6 Implications for Digital and Hybrid TSs

As the TS industry moves increasingly towards digital and hybrid age (Baldwin, 2021), the need to address buyer needs, especially safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, becomes increasingly important. Digital events, in current form, present several challenges because these platforms rarely replicate the multisensory and interpersonal experiences associated with traditional physical TSs. When organisers and exhibitors fail to address these psychological dimensions, attendees may struggle to engage fully with the event or derive meaningful value from the experience. As a result, attendees may perceive the event as less impactful and less rewarding than expected.

In digital TSs, safety and security primarily relate to data protection, privacy, and user rights. Attendees need assurance that organisers and exhibitors handle personal information securely and protect interactions within virtual platforms. To address these concerns, organisers and exhibitors can adopt stronger security measures, such as secure login systems, encrypted data transmission, and transparent privacy policies, to build trust and confidence among participants. These measures encourage attendees to network online, share contact information with exhibitors, and participate in post-event follow-ups because attendees feel reassured that

organisers will not misuse personal data or use the data without consent. Exhibitors may also offer platforms with real-time technical support for privacy support or password-protected meeting rooms, as these features reduce buyer anxiety and allow attendees to focus on event content rather than concerns about security. In this way, digital safety measures contribute directly to stronger engagement and increased participation throughout the event experience.

Organisers and exhibitors must also carefully design digital TSs to promote a sense of belonging. Unlike physical TSs, where physical proximity and shared activities naturally encourage networking and interaction, virtual TSs require deliberate strategies to facilitate comparable experiences. Exhibitors can introduce virtual breakout rooms to support smaller-group discussions and encourage more personal interaction among attendees. In addition, organisers can create digital lounges or discussion forums centred on specific industry interests, thereby replicating the informal networking spaces commonly found at physical conventions. These environments help attendees feel included in professional discussions and encourage stronger social interaction. Advanced networking features that facilitate personalised introductions or spontaneous virtual meetings can further recreate the spontaneous encounters that often occur at physical TSs. Such features reduce the sense of isolation that some attendees may experience during virtual events and encourage stronger emotional connections with exhibitors, brands, and industry peers.

Digital TSs also require deliberate efforts to strengthen attendees' self-esteem and professional recognition. Organisers and exhibitors can recognise attendee participation and expertise through digital certificates, achievement badges, or other participation-based recognition. These strategies encourage a sense of accomplishment and professional validation among attendees. Exhibitors may also invite attendees to participate in virtual panel discussions, contribute to industry conversations, or submit questions during live Q&A sessions. When organisers and exhibitors value attendees' knowledge and contributions, attendees may be more likely to view the event as meaningful, engaging, and professionally rewarding. Even relatively simple actions, such as personalised welcome messages or public acknowledgement during sessions, can strengthen attendees' sense of recognition and appreciation. These gestures create positive emotional experiences and help attendees establish stronger connections with exhibitors and brands.

As TSs continue to shift towards digital and hybrid formats, organisers and exhibitors will increasingly need to address the psychological needs of safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem to ensure that virtual events remain both engaging and commercially effective. Meeting these needs encourages greater participation, strengthens professional relationships, and creates more positive attitudes toward exhibitors and brands. These outcomes may ultimately enhance the long-term effectiveness of TSs in digital environments. As the industry evolves, human interaction remains central to successful engagement strategies, even within technology-driven platforms. Consequently, organisers and exhibitors who prioritise psychological and emotional needs can create more meaningful experiences that encourage continued engagement, strengthen buyer relationships, and support stronger PS purchasing intentions in the evolving digital TS landscape.

5.2.7 Implications for Data Collection and Methodology

The findings of this research suggest that mixed-method approaches may provide a more comprehensive assessment of TS effectiveness than quantitative approach alone. While quantitative metrics provide valuable insights into measurable outcomes, these metrics may overlook deeper dimensions of buyers' emotions, perceptions, and motivations. Integrating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, allows researchers to explore the psychological drivers of attendee behaviour that may help explain TS effectiveness. For example, a quantitative survey may show that 80% of attendees rate a TS as "satisfactory" or higher; however, this result does not explain why attendees feel satisfied or dissatisfied. Follow-up qualitative interviews may reveal that attendees enjoy the event overall but feel disappointed by limited networking opportunities or overwhelmed by overcrowded exhibition spaces. These qualitative insights provide practical guidance for TS exhibitors by identifying specific areas for improvement, such as designing networking sessions that address buyers' sense of belonging needs.

Furthermore, incorporating innovative feedback tools, such as live polls or instant surveys, during the event helps researchers capture changing attendee sentiment throughout the exhibition. This responsive data collection strategy can identify key moments that shape buyer satisfaction and purchasing behaviour. For example, if organisers conduct real-time polls after keynote presentations and identify an immediate decline in engagement or interest, organisers and exhibitors can adjust the event agenda, redesign presentations, or improve interaction

strategies. This adaptability may improve the overall buyer experience and may increase PS purchase intentions over time.

The research also highlights the importance of considering cultural influences when investigating buyer behaviour in TS contexts. Responses from attendees in Zambia's food processing sector may reflect local cultural norms and economic conditions that differ significantly from those in developed markets. For example, The emphasis on safety and security among Zambian attendees may reflect contextual concerns that differ from those in more stable Western economies. By recognising these cultural differences, researchers can improve understanding of how different settings shape buyer needs and motivations. Mixed-method approaches provide additional value because researchers can use interviews, focus groups, and observational methods to explore how safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem operate across cultural environments.

For instance, the need for belonging may be more salient in collectivist societies, whereas self-esteem may receive greater emphasis in more individualistic cultures. TS exhibitors in Japan, a collectivist society that values group cohesion, may prioritise community-building spaces and collaborative networking activities. In contrast, TS exhibitors in the United States, where individual achievement often receives greater emphasis, may focus on opportunities that allow attendees to showcase valuable expertise, accomplishments, and innovations. Comparative research across different cultural settings may help determine whether buyer needs are universally important or whether contextual differences shape the relative importance of each need.

Integrating mixed methods alongside cultural considerations adds depth and nuance to TS research by improving understanding of both measurable outcomes and contextual influences. This broader framework strengthens analysis and enables organisers and exhibitors to tailor TS strategies to specific cultural and economic environments. By combining quantitative and qualitative insights, researchers can provide organisers with practical knowledge that supports the creation of more engaging, culturally sensitive, and psychologically meaningful TS experiences.

Summary

The findings of this analysis contribute to the literature on TS effectiveness, buyer motivation, and the application of buyer needs within marketing strategies. By focusing on safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, this research deepens understanding of the psychological factors that influence buyers' perceptions and behaviours at TSs. The research demonstrates that buyers do not evaluate TSs solely on the basis of products, services, or logistical arrangements. Instead, buyers evaluate TS experiences through a broader psychological lens that includes emotional comfort, social connection, professional recognition, and personal value.

The findings also show that these psychological dimensions become especially important in emerging markets, where contextual conditions may heighten the influence of basic buyer needs. In environments characterised by infrastructural challenges, economic uncertainty, or evolving industrial systems, attendees place stronger emphasis on security, trust, belonging, and recognition. These findings therefore extend existing theories of buyer motivation by demonstrating how contextual realities shape buyer expectations and behaviours in TS settings.

For practitioners, the research highlights the need for a more holistic approach to TS planning. Organisers and exhibitors should move beyond logistical concerns and focus on creating experiences that fulfil buyers' psychological and emotional needs. Safety and security measures, opportunities for networking and community building, and strategies that recognise attendees' professional identity may contribute to stronger engagement, higher satisfaction, and increased PS purchase intentions. These elements may strengthen not only the immediate effectiveness of the TS but also long-term brand loyalty and relationship development.

The research also carries important implications for the future evolution of the TS industry, particularly as digital and hybrid formats continue to expand. Virtual environments often struggle to reproduce the interpersonal interaction, emotional connection, and multisensory experiences associated with physical TSs. As a result, organisers and exhibitors should develop new strategies that address buyers' psychological needs within digital settings. Features such as secure online platforms, interactive networking tools, virtual discussion rooms, personalised communication, and recognition mechanisms may help strengthen engagement and participation in virtual TS environments.

Future research should continue to explore how TS effectiveness varies across cultural and economic contexts and should investigate innovative methods for satisfying buyer needs in both physical and virtual environments. Researchers may also examine additional psychological dimensions, such as trust, emotional attachment, or professional identity, to expand understanding of buyer behaviour in TS settings.

Overall, this research provides a strong foundation for future scholarship and offers practical insights for organisers and exhibitors seeking to enhance attendee experiences and strengthen business relationships in an evolving TS environment. By aligning TS strategies with buyers' needs for safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, organisers and exhibitors can create more relevant, engaging, and impactful experiences that encourage satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term participation.

5.3 Research Boundaries

This research examined the complex, interactive role of buyer needs (safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem) in perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention in the Zambian food processing sector. Although these findings provide valuable insights into these relationships, several boundaries deserve attention because boundaries have substantial implications for the generalisability, accuracy, and applicability of the findings. These limitations are important for interpreting the findings and clarifying the reliability and relevance of the research conclusions.

5.3.1 Cultural Context and External Validity

This study examined the food processing industry in Zambia and highlight how regional and cultural characteristics may limit the generalisability of the findings to other countries or industries. Attendees in Zambia may place greater importance on safety and security at TSs possibly because economic challenges, infrastructure limitations, and security concerns may be more salient than in some more stable environments. In countries with well-developed public infrastructure and advanced event safety systems, attendees may place less emphasis on safety and instead focus more strongly on content quality, networking opportunities, innovation, and strategic business relationships. Regional perceptions of safety may therefore play an important role in understanding TS effectiveness within specific contexts.

Cultural orientation also shapes the importance of belonging and self-esteem needs. In collectivist societies, where group relationships and social cohesion are generally emphasised, attendees may place greater value on social interaction, inclusion, and relationship-building more strongly. As a result, attendees at TSs in such environments may seek networking opportunities, collaborative discussions, and community-centred experiences that strengthen feelings of belonging. In contrast, attendees in more individualistic cultures may place greater emphasis on self-esteem, personal recognition, and individual achievement, which can influence buyer motivation and perceptions of the event differently. For example, attendees from collectivist cultural contexts may place greater value on group activities and social interaction throughout the TS experience. In contrast, attendees from more individualistic cultural contexts may place greater emphasis on opportunities for personal growth, professional recognition, and individual accomplishment.

In addition, the structure and scale of TSs within Zambia's food processing sector may differ from those found in larger or more developed industries. Factors such as event size, professional networking systems, industry maturity, and sector-specific expectations shape attendee experiences differently across markets. As a result, findings related to safety, security, belonging, and self-esteem may not readily generalise to larger and more formalised TS environments. In mature markets with advanced TS infrastructure, attendees may place less emphasis on these psychological needs and focus more heavily on emerging trends, product innovation, technological advancement, and competitive positioning.

These cultural, economic, and structural differences highlight the growing importance of understanding how attendees in different countries perceive TS effectiveness. Researchers, organisers, and exhibitors should therefore recognise these contextual differences when developing TS strategies. Context-specific approaches enable organisers and exhibitors to design culturally relevant and economically appropriate TS experiences that better align with the expectations, motivations, and priorities of attendees across diverse global markets.

5.3.2 Possible influence of unmeasured variables

This research demonstrates that buyer needs, such as safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, are associated with perceived TS effectiveness. However, readers should recognise that other variables not measured in this research may also significantly affect perceived TS effectiveness and buyers' PS purchase intention. These additional variables

broaden our understanding of how attendees engage with TSs and what motivates purchasing behaviour after the event.

One important variable involves brand familiarity. Attendees who already identify strongly with a brand before attending the TS may feel more connected to the brand's products, representatives, and community during the event. This familiarity may strengthen attendee's sense of belonging and emotional attachment to the exhibitor. At the same time, strong brand loyalty may create a favourable bias in evaluations of the event, as attendees may evaluate the TS more positively based on prior brand experiences rather than the event's actual quality.

Another important factor relates to the level of decision-making authority attendees possess within organisations. Senior executives attending a TS may focus primarily on strategic partnerships, long-term investments, and high-level networking opportunities. In contrast, middle-level employees or technical personnel may focus more on discovering new products, comparing services, and exploring current market trends. These differences in professional objectives may shape the way attendees interact with exhibitors and evaluate the event experience. As a result, attendees' goals and organisational roles may influence both the perceived value of the TS and the likelihood of PS purchasing behaviour. Understanding these differences could enable organisers and exhibitors to design experiences that better align with attendee expectations and professional priorities.

Individual personality traits may also influence engagement at TSs. Extroverted attendees may be more comfortable in networking environments and may experience a stronger sense of belonging, interaction, and satisfaction during the event. In contrast, attendees with higher levels of anxiety or more introverted personality traits may feel overwhelmed by crowded exhibition spaces, intense social interaction, or high-pressure networking situations. These reactions may reduce engagement and negatively affect satisfaction with the TS experience.

Event-specific characteristics may also shape attendee perceptions and purchase intentions. Factors such as presentation quality, product demonstrations, information accessibility, booth design, and the overall event environment may either strengthen or weaken buyer engagement. For example, a well-organised TS with informative sessions, engaging demonstrations, and clear communication may reduce the salience of minor safety concerns because the overall experience remains positive and rewarding. Conversely, poorly organised events may increase

attendee frustration and draw greater attention to safety concerns, logistical problems, or dissatisfaction, which may reduce both engagement and PS purchase intentions.

In conclusion, although this research highlights the importance of buyers' psychological needs, the possibility of additional unmeasured variables highlights the complexity of the TS experience. Future research examining these variables may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention. Such research may also help organisers and exhibitors design environments that better respond to the diverse professional, cultural, and individual expectations of attendees.

5.3.3 Boundary of Buyer Need Constructs

Drawing on well-established frameworks for understanding TS attendee experiences, this research conceptualises buyer needs through the dimensions of safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem. These constructs align with existing theoretical approaches and provide a foundation for analysing buyer behaviour within TS environments. However, these dimensions may not fully capture the complex factors that shape attendee experiences in TS contexts.

For example, discussions of safety and security traditionally focus on personal safety, physical protection, crowd control, emergency procedures, and venue security. However, TS environments also expose attendees to financial and reputational risks that influence perceptions of safety. In developing and emerging markets such as Zambia, attendees may also consider the financial burden associated with attending TSs, including travel expenses, accommodation costs, and participation fees. Attendees may also be concerned about reputational risks associated with unsuccessful networking, poor business decisions, or unproductive investments. These concerns may create feelings of insecurity even when physical safety measures are adequate. A broader conceptualisation of safety and security in TS settings should therefore include financial confidence, reputational protection, and trust in professional interactions alongside traditional dimensions of physical security.

The concept of belonging also requires greater nuance in TS research. A sense of belonging at a TS extends beyond simple social interaction or networking opportunities. Attendees may seek connections with professional communities, industry groups, and brands that reflect shared values, interests, or commercial goals. Brand loyalty may therefore contribute to attendees'

sense of belonging when buyers identify emotionally or professionally with exhibitors and products showcased during the event. In addition, digital interaction after the TS, such as peer recognition on social media platforms or continued online engagement with exhibitors, can reinforce feelings of inclusion, value, and professional connection. These forms of belonging may influence attendee satisfaction and engagement in ways that traditional survey measures do not fully capture.

Self-esteem may also take on distinct characteristics within professional TS settings. Traditional concepts of self-esteem often focus on personal confidence and individual validation. In TS environments, however, attendees may derive self-esteem from career recognition, professional visibility, successful networking, and industry status. Valuable business connections, recognition from peers, and positive interactions with industry leaders may strengthen attendees' professional identities and increase confidence within the marketplace. These experiences may provide professional validation that extends beyond personal satisfaction and may influence perceptions of TS effectiveness and future purchase intentions.

Future research should therefore expand these constructs by incorporating dimensions such as financial security, reputational confidence, brand loyalty, professional recognition, and digital engagement. Such refinements may enhance understanding of the complex psychological factors that shape attendee motivation, TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intentions. A broader conceptual framework may also help researchers and practitioners better understand attendee behaviour within increasingly dynamic and competitive TS environments.

5.3.4 Effects of Industry-Specific Factors

Because this research focuses on the food processing industry in Zambia, the findings reflect sector-specific characteristics that may not readily generalise to other industries or regions. Contextual factors such as market structure, buyer expectations, purchasing behaviour, and TS dynamics within Zambia's food processing sector may differ substantially from those found in other sectors, limiting the broader applicability of the findings. Industry-specific conditions within food processing, particularly concerns about food safety and product security, may increase the salience of safety-related needs at TSs. Buyers within this industry may prioritise safety, reliability, transparency, and regulatory compliance because health and safety standards may influence purchasing decisions and business credibility.

In contrast, industries such as technology or consumer electronics may place greater emphasis on innovation, creativity, and product novelty when evaluating TS effectiveness. Buyers in these industries may place less emphasis on safety-related needs and more on technological advancement, competitive differentiation, and market disruption. As a result, the relative salience of safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem may vary across industries.

In addition, expectations and decision-making processes within Zambia's food processing sector may differ from those found in industries characterised by different purchasing cycles, operational structures, and buyer priorities. For example, industries such as pharmaceuticals or automotive manufacturing often require extensive product testing, technical evaluation, and strict regulatory compliance. Buyers attending TSs in these sectors may therefore place greater emphasis on credibility, certification, technical information, and compliance standards than on community-building or networking experiences. These differences suggest that the psychological constructs explored in this research may operate differently across industrial contexts. While safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem represent relevant dimensions, each construct may take on unique meanings in different industry environments.

Furthermore, Zambia's food processing market has distinctive characteristics shaped by regulatory demands, local market conditions, and supply chain challenges. These conditions may influence how attendees evaluate TS experiences and determine purchasing priorities. Strict regulatory requirements may encourage buyers to place greater emphasis on exhibitors that demonstrate transparency, compliance, and product safety. At the same time, market pressures and supply chain uncertainties may encourage attendees to place greater emphasis on networking opportunities and relationship-building with suppliers and distributors. In other industries, however, buyers may place greater emphasis on product innovation, prestige, branding, or technological advancement over networking or security concerns.

These limitations highlight the importance of conducting further cross-industry and cross-country research to strengthen understanding of how buyer needs interact with TS effectiveness across different environments. Comparative studies involving industries with varying buyer expectations, operational systems, and purchasing cycles may provide greater insight into the contextual factors that shape buyer behaviour and PS purchase intention. Such knowledge could assist TS organisers, exhibitors, and researchers across multiple industries rather than being limited to Zambia's food processing sector.

5.3.5 Environmental Context

This evidence, grounded in Zambia's culture, legal systems, infrastructure, and economic conditions, provides a deeper understanding of the complex role TSs play within the country's food and agricultural production chain. In developing economies such as Zambia, TSs extend beyond traditional role as promotional events and serve as critical platforms for networking, industry development, and knowledge exchange. These gatherings create valuable opportunities for industry stakeholders to build partnerships, exchange expertise, and support collective progress within the sector.

In contrast, TSs in developed economies operate within more mature commercial environments and often serve narrower strategic purposes. Buyers and exhibitors in such markets frequently focus on competitive positioning, technological advancement, innovation, and product differentiation rather than community formation or industry cohesion. Consequently, motivational factors such as safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, which strongly influenced attendees in this research, may carry different meanings in markets with more advanced TS infrastructure and stronger institutional systems.

Within the Zambian context, TSs can strengthen industry resilience, professional collaboration, and social cohesion, particularly in sectors such as food processing, where businesses rely heavily on relationship-building and shared industry knowledge. Attendees may view TSs as spaces for trust development, professional recognition, and long-term business networking. By contrast, participants in more developed markets may perceive TSs primarily as venues for innovation showcases, trend forecasting, and strategic competition.

Therefore, although this research identified key motivational drivers within the Zambian TS environment, the findings may not apply directly to other socio-economic or industrial settings. Cultural expectations, market maturity, infrastructure quality, and professional norms shape attendee behaviour differently across countries and industries. Future research across diverse regional and industrial contexts could provide broader insights into how TSs function globally and how buyer motivations influence perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention in different environments.

5.4 Summary

These findings provide critical insights into the relationship between buyer needs and TS outcomes in Zambia's food processing sector. By emphasising the importance of safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, this analysis encourages organisers and exhibitors to adopt a more holistic approach to TS planning and management. To improve immediate event outcomes, organisers and exhibitors should create environments that minimise physical and psychological threats while promoting comfort and trust among attendees. Clear emergency access points, visible security personnel, and transparent communication about safety procedures help reduce attendee anxiety and strengthen confidence throughout the event. These strategies not only improve immediate interactions but also encourage positive PS engagement and long-term buyer loyalty.

A sense of belonging also plays an important role in shaping attendees' perceptions of TS effectiveness. Organisers and exhibitors can strengthen this sense of connection by creating opportunities for networking, collaboration, and interactive engagement. Structured networking sessions, discussion groups, and social activities encourage attendees to connect with peers and exhibitors in meaningful ways. These interactions help attendees feel included within the professional community and strengthen relationships with participating brands. As a result, attendees may become more likely to return to future TS events and recommend the events to colleagues and business partners.

Addressing buyers' self-esteem during TS participation further shapes the overall event experience. Exhibitors can strengthen buyers' confidence and professional identity by recognising expertise, acknowledging contributions, and encouraging active participation during the event. Awards, recognition sessions, personalised interactions, and opportunities to contribute during discussions reinforce feelings of professional value and respect. These experiences encourage stronger emotional attachment to exhibitors and increase continued engagement with brands after the event.

Beyond the research's practical implications for TS stakeholders, this research also contributes to understanding how buyer needs operate across different cultural and commercial settings. As the TS industry continues to evolve, organisers, exhibitors, and researchers need to consider how buyer motivations differ across industries, regions, and economic contexts. These insights

contribute to a more integrated understanding of buyer behaviour and event marketing. Ultimately, this knowledge can enable practitioners and researchers to design TS experiences that foster meaningful relationships, strengthen attendee satisfaction, and support long-term engagement in increasingly competitive markets.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter summarises the findings of the research on how buyer needs, particularly safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, relate to perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intentions in Zambia's food processing industry. The research shifts attention from traditional exhibitor-centred performance measures to buyers' psychological perspectives when understanding TS effectiveness. In doing so, the research addresses an important gap in existing literature.

This section revisits the research objectives and explains how the research examines the relationships among buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intentions. The findings show that safety and security are strongly associated with buyers' perceptions of TS effectiveness and intentions to purchase after the show. The results also show that sense of belonging and self-esteem are significantly associated with buyers' perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural intentions. The research interprets these findings using Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, and Herzberg's (1959) Two-factor theory, all of which provide important insights into buyer motivation and behaviour in TS and PS contexts. The results support existing theoretical perspectives while also identifying areas where buyer behaviour diverges from traditional theoretical assumptions, thereby enriching debates on human motivation and buyer behaviour.

This research also presents important practical implications for TS organisers and exhibitors. Exhibitors can enhance attendee satisfaction and encourage PS purchasing behaviour by prioritising comprehensive safety and security measures, encouraging networking opportunities that foster belonging, and recognising buyers in ways that strengthen self-esteem. These strategies help create more meaningful and engaging TS experiences that extend beyond the event itself. The chapter further acknowledges the limitations of the research, including the focus on a single industry and the possibility of response bias. In addition, the chapter recommends future studies that examine these relationships across different industries, cultures, and time periods. Overall, this research contributes significantly to theory and practice by demonstrating how understanding buyer needs can help organisers and exhibitors optimise TS strategies and develop more effective relationship-based marketing approaches.

6.1 Achieving Research Objectives

The objective of this research was to investigate how differences in buyer needs relating to safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem were associated with perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention in Zambia's food processing sector. To support the structured analysis of six hypotheses, the research applied three major motivational theories: Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, and Herzberg's (1959) Two-factor theory. Each objective combined theoretical and practical perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing TS dynamics. The following subsections explain how the research achieved each objective.

6.1.1 Testing Safety and Security Needs and TS Effectiveness

The first objective examined whether the fulfilment of buyers' safety and security needs was associated with perceptions of TS effectiveness. The findings show that safety and security are strongly associated with positive perceptions of the TS experience. According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, individuals must satisfy safety and security needs before focusing on higher-order needs such as belonging and self-esteem. The findings supported this framework by showing that buyers reported more positive perceptions of TS effectiveness when safety and security needs were more strongly fulfilled. These measures include visible security personnel, emergency procedures, crowd management systems, and transparent communication regarding attendee safety.

From a practical perspective, this finding carries major implications for TS organisers and exhibitors. Organisers and exhibitors need to prioritise safety and security throughout the event experience. Visible security personnel, clear crowd-control systems, cybersecurity measures for digital platforms, and frequent safety announcements help buyers and attendees feel protected and comfortable. These measures can allow attendees to participate more fully in networking activities, product demonstrations, and professional discussions without distraction or anxiety. As a result, attendees may perceive the TS as more effective and professionally organised.

Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory provides additional insight by suggesting that individuals pursue multiple needs simultaneously rather than sequentially. Even when buyers feel safe and secure, buyers continue to seek social interaction, recognition, and growth opportunities. This

finding supports the ERG perspective that people simultaneously attempt to satisfy several needs. Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory also strengthens this interpretation. Safety and security function as hygiene factors because the absence of this need creates dissatisfaction, while the presence of this need establishes a stable environment for engagement. Organisers and exhibitors, therefore, need to maintain strong safety standards to create the baseline conditions necessary for positive TS experiences.

Overall, meeting safety and security needs can create a stable foundation that encourages buyers to engage more actively with exhibitors and take advantage of networking opportunities. By prioritising safety and security, organisers create environments where buyers feel confident enough to focus on meaningful professional interactions, thereby potentially improving perceived TS effectiveness.

6.1.2 Understanding the Role of Belonging Needs in Shaping TS Effectiveness

The second objective examined how the fulfilment of belonging needs was associated with buyers' perceptions of TS effectiveness. Maslow (1943) identifies belonging as the human need for connection, inclusion, and meaningful social interaction. The findings supported this perspective by showing that stronger fulfilment of belonging needs was associated with more positive perceptions of TS effectiveness.

This finding carries important practical implications. Organisers and exhibitors can enhance perceived TS effectiveness by creating environments that encourage interpersonal interaction and relationship-building. Networking lounges, breakout sessions, collaborative workshops, and industry discussion forums create opportunities for buyers and attendees to connect with peers, exhibitors, and industry professionals. These activities can transform TSs from simple commercial gatherings into community-building experiences that encourage stronger emotional involvement.

Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory classifies belonging as a relatedness need and argues that human motivation depends heavily on interpersonal relationships. The findings strongly supported this perspective, as buyers who reported greater fulfilment of belonging needs also reported more positive perceptions of TS effectiveness. Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory adds another dimension by identifying belonging needs as motivators rather than hygiene factors. Social

connection, therefore, does more than prevent dissatisfaction; Social connection can also enhance engagement, satisfaction, and emotional attachment to the event experience.

The findings suggest that organisers and exhibitors should develop strategies to foster community and social interaction. Buyers who experience a stronger sense of belonging during a TS may be more likely to value the event, return to future exhibitions, and strengthen relationships with participating brands. This assertion highlights the importance of balancing commercial objectives with relational experiences that support meaningful interaction and long-term engagement.

6.1.3 Assessing the Influence of Esteem Needs on Perceived TS Effectiveness

The third objective examined how the fulfilment of self-esteem needs influences buyers' and attendees' perceptions of TS effectiveness. Maslow (1943) defines self-esteem as the need for recognition, self-respect, achievement, and professional value. The findings showed that stronger fulfilment of self-esteem needs was associated with more positive perceptions of TS effectiveness. This result aligns closely with Maslow's theory, which identifies esteem as a major source of motivation and engagement.

From a practical perspective, exhibitors can implement several strategies to strengthen buyers' self-esteem during TS participation. Public recognition, personalised greetings, industry awards, opportunities to participate in panel discussions, and invitations to contribute professional insights all reinforce buyers' sense of importance and professional identity. Exhibitors can also create VIP experiences or specialised networking opportunities for experienced participants and returning attendees. These strategies can encourage stronger engagement and may enhance perceptions of TS effectiveness.

Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory classifies esteem as a growth need that focuses on achievement, personal development, and professional advancement. The findings supported this perspective because stronger fulfilment of self-esteem needs was associated with more positive perceptions of TS effectiveness and greater openness to interaction with exhibitors. Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory further reinforces this interpretation by identifying esteem as a motivator that increases satisfaction and active participation. Recognition and validation, therefore, may strengthen buyer engagement during TS events.

The findings suggest that acknowledgement and participation can transform TS experiences from transactional exchanges into more meaningful professional experiences. When organisers and exhibitors recognise attendees' contributions and expertise, buyers may develop stronger emotional connections with brands and industry professionals. Esteem-building activities can encourage buyers to maintain long-term relationships with exhibitors and remain engaged with future TS events.

Overall, the findings show that safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem each play a significant role in shaping perceptions of TS effectiveness. Together, these needs are associated with how buyers evaluate TS experiences, interact with exhibitors, and develop intentions to engage with brands after the event. By strategically addressing these psychological needs, organisers and exhibitors can create more engaging, meaningful, and professionally rewarding TS experiences within Zambia's food processing industry.

6.1.4 Investigate the influence of safety and security needs on PS purchase intentions.

The fourth objective examined how the fulfilment of safety and security needs was associated with PS purchase intention. The hypothesis proposed that buyers who experienced greater fulfilment of safety and security needs during a TS would report stronger PS purchase intention. The findings supported this hypothesis and highlighted the important role of trust in buyer behaviour and purchasing intentions. According to Maslow (1943) hierarchy of needs, individuals who feel safe and secure can focus on higher-order needs and activities, such as evaluating products and building relationships. These findings, therefore, highlight the importance of safety and security in understanding buyer behaviour in TS environments.

The findings also align with Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, showing that buyers who feel safe and secure continue to pursue both relatedness and growth needs simultaneously. Buyers and attendees who experience greater fulfilment of safety and security needs may be more willing to network, interact with exhibitors, and explore opportunities for future business engagement. Herzberg's (1959) Two-factor theory further supports this interpretation by identifying safety as a hygiene factor that supports satisfaction and trust. Although safety alone may not directly motivate purchasing behaviour, the absence of safety creates dissatisfaction and weakens confidence in exhibitors and the TS environment. Organisers and exhibitors, therefore, should create secure environments that can encourage buyers to engage confidently in PS purchasing activities.

6.1.5 The Effect of Belonging Needs on PS Purchase Intention

The fifth objective examined how the fulfilment of belonging needs was associated with PS purchase intention. The findings revealed a significant relationship between belonging needs and buyers' PS purchase intention. Buyers who experience greater fulfilment of belonging needs may be more likely to report stronger PS purchase intention. Maslow's (1943) theory supports this interpretation by explaining the importance of social fulfilment in human motivation and behaviour. Buyers who experience greater fulfilment of belonging needs may be more open to interacting with exhibitors and considering future purchases.

Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory also supports these findings by emphasising relatedness as a central element of long-term commitment and engagement. TS experiences that encourage networking, collaboration, and social interaction can strengthen loyalty toward exhibitors and brands. Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory further identifies recognition and interpersonal factors as contributors to satisfaction and positive behavioural outcomes. Organisers and exhibitors can therefore create community-driven environments that may encourage meaningful interaction and potentially strengthen PS purchase intentions.

6.1.6 Effect of esteem needs on PS Purchase Intention

The sixth objective examined how the fulfilment of self-esteem needs was associated with PS purchase intention. The findings showed that stronger fulfilment of self-esteem needs was associated with stronger PS purchase intention. These findings align closely with Maslow's (1943) emphasis on esteem as a major source of motivation and engagement. The results also support Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory, which classifies growth as a need associated with personal development, achievement, and advancement. Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory further emphasises recognition and achievement as motivators that contribute to satisfaction and engagement. Overall, the findings suggest that organisers and exhibitors can strengthen TS experiences by addressing the psychological and practical needs of buyers, which may contribute to stronger PS purchase intentions.

6.2 Overall Findings and Contributions to Theory

This research provides useful information on how buyer needs, particularly safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, influence perceived TS effectiveness and the likelihood of PS purchase in Zambia's food processing sector. The findings expand the literature on event

marketing and buyer behaviour and broaden the theoretical scope of existing motivational frameworks. The following sections discuss these findings and demonstrate how the results reinforce existing theories and offer practical guidance for TS practitioners.

6.2.1 Research Outputs

The research generates several important findings that demonstrate how buyer and attendee needs shape TS effectiveness and PS purchase intentions in Zambia's food processing industry. The hypotheses address different dimensions of buyer and attendee behaviour, and together these findings reveal the complex relationship between psychological needs and TS outcomes.

H1 and H4: These hypotheses demonstrate that buyers' and attendees' safety and security needs are significantly associated with both perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intentions. Buyers interact more positively with exhibitors when the environment promotes safety and security through visible protocols, effective communication, and organised event management. Attendees who feel protected and secure engage more confidently with exhibitors, participate more actively in networking, and show a stronger willingness to consider future purchases. The findings therefore confirm that safety and security form a critical foundation for positive TS experiences and behavioural outcomes.

H2 and H5: The research confirms that belonging needs are strongly associated with perceived TS effectiveness and buyers' intentions to purchase PS. Social connections, networking opportunities, and community-building activities significantly shape attendees' experiences and evaluations of TS events. Buyers who establish meaningful professional relationships and experience inclusion within the TS environment develop stronger emotional connections with exhibitors and brands. These results support motivational theories that identify social fulfilment as a major driver of engagement, loyalty, and long-term participation. The findings further indicate that TS organisers and exhibitors who foster collaborative and interactive environments create stronger buyer commitment and more favourable post-show intentions.

H3 and H6: The research also identifies esteem needs as significantly associated with perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intentions. Buyers and attendees respond positively to personalised experiences, public recognition, professional acknowledgement, and esteem-enhancing activities. Participants who feel respected and valued perceive the event as more meaningful and are more likely to maintain relationships with exhibitors after the TS. These

findings demonstrate the importance of professional validation in shaping buyer behaviour and long-term brand engagement.

Collectively, these findings provide empirical evidence of the importance of buyer and attendee needs within TS settings. The results, therefore, provide valuable insights for both academic research and professional TS practice.

6.2.2 Solving the Research Problem

This research addresses an important gap within TS literature. Previous studies have largely focused on the exhibitor perspective, examining booth design, product launches, promotional activities, and staff strategies (Tafesse and Skallerud, 2017). In contrast, this research centres on buyers and attendees by examining how the fulfilment of both basic and higher-order needs influences perceptions and behaviour at TSs within an emerging market context.

The research integrates Abraham Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, Clayton Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory, and Frederick Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory to create a broader framework for understanding TS effectiveness. This integrated perspective demonstrates that buyer needs, including both psychological and practical dimensions, play a central role in determining TS outcomes. The findings suggest that organisers and exhibitors may not maximise TS effectiveness without addressing buyers' concerns about safety and security, social belonging, and professional esteem.

The research further shows that organisers and exhibitors can improve TS outcomes by implementing strategies that promote physical and emotional security, facilitate meaningful networking, and recognise buyers' professional contributions. These approaches are associated with stronger engagement, greater satisfaction, and stronger PS purchase intention.

As a result, this research advances understanding of TS dynamics by demonstrating that buyer and attendee experiences lie at the centre of event success. The findings encourage a shift away from purely sales-oriented approaches towards strategies grounded in human behaviour, motivation, and psychological engagement. This contribution strengthens the relevance of buyer-centred approaches within TS literature and practice.

6.2.3 Filling the Gaps in Existing Research

This research addresses a significant gap in the existing literature by examining how specific buyer and attendee needs relate to perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention.

Previous studies have predominantly examined TSs from the perspective of exhibitors, while limited research has explored the psychological experiences of buyers and attendees, particularly within emerging economies such as Zambia.

TSs within Zambia's food processing sector involve diverse participants and strategic objectives, as discussed in Chapter One. Drawing from both the literature and practical observations, the researcher identifies inconsistencies in TS implementation, particularly where organisers and marketing professionals overlook buyer and attendee motivations beyond institutional or commercial goals. This research addresses these shortcomings by investigating how personal needs, including safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, influence TS experiences and behavioural outcomes.

For instance, previous studies often discuss safety and security mainly in terms of logistical management and venue protection. This research broadens the concept by including financial and cybersecurity concerns, thereby recognising the wider range of factors that may shape buyer trust, confidence, and engagement at TSs. The findings, therefore, provide a more comprehensive understanding of how buyers and attendees experience safety and security in professional event settings.

Similarly, the research demonstrates how professional recognition, community participation, and social interaction satisfy belonging and esteem needs during TS events. Buyers who feel included, respected, and professionally acknowledged develop stronger emotional connections with exhibitors and perceive greater value in the TS experience. These positive perceptions are associated with greater satisfaction, continued engagement, and stronger PS purchase intention.

The research, therefore, establishes an important foundation for future scholarship while also providing practical guidance for improving TS effectiveness in Zambia and other emerging markets. By highlighting the importance of psychological needs in TS environments, the research contributes to a more balanced, human-centred understanding of event marketing and buyer behaviour.

6.2.4 Contributions to Theory

This research contributes to the understanding of motivational theories by empirically examining how basic and psychological needs influence complex behaviour within TS contexts. By integrating Abraham Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, Clayton Alderfer's

(1969) ERG Theory, and Frederick Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory, the research develops a multi-dimensional framework that enhances understanding of buyer and attendee behaviour at TSs.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The findings support Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which proposes that human motivation follows a hierarchical structure in which lower-order needs, such as safety and security, are fulfilled before higher-order needs, such as a sense of belonging and self-esteem, become significant (Maslow, 1943). The research highlights the importance of safety and security as foundational needs because buyers who feel safe and secure report more favourable perceptions of TS effectiveness and stronger PS purchase intentions after the event.

However, the findings also indicate that higher-level needs, including a sense of belonging and self-esteem, operate simultaneously with basic needs rather than emerging only after complete fulfilment of safety and security concerns. Buyers and attendees continue to seek social interaction, recognition, and emotional fulfilment even when safety concerns remain relevant. This pattern suggests a more dynamic relationship among needs than Maslow originally proposed. Although Maslow's (1943) hierarchy remains highly influential, applying the framework in modern, complex TS environments requires a more flexible interpretation that recognises overlapping motivational processes.

Alderfer's ERG Theory

Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory provides a more flexible framework for interpreting the research findings. Unlike Maslow's strict hierarchy, ERG Theory proposes that individuals pursue existence needs (safety and security), relatedness needs (sense of belonging), and growth needs (self-esteem) simultaneously (Alderfer, 1969). The findings strongly support this perspective, as buyers and attendees consistently seek to satisfy multiple needs simultaneously.

For example, even after satisfying safety and security concerns, buyers and attendees continue to pursue networking opportunities, social relationships, and esteem-enhancing experiences. These findings are consistent with Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory, which proposes that individuals may progress or regress among needs depending on environmental conditions and personal experiences. The research therefore strengthens the practical relevance of ERG

Theory in TS settings by demonstrating how environmental stimuli, professional interactions, and social networks influence shifts in motivational states among buyers and attendees.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

The research also confirms the relevance of Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivators. The findings identify safety and security as hygiene factors because the presence of this need does not necessarily create high motivation, but the absence of this need generates dissatisfaction and reduces engagement (Herzberg, 1959). Buyers and attendees expect adequate safety and security measures as a basic requirement for participation.

In contrast, a sense of belonging and self-esteem function as strong motivators, significantly enhancing perceptions of TS effectiveness and increasing PS purchase intentions. Buyers and attendees respond positively to networking opportunities, professional recognition, personalised interactions, and esteem-building activities. These experiences strengthen satisfaction, engagement, and willingness to maintain relationships with exhibitors after the event.

This distinction carries important implications for TS organisers and exhibitors. Although safety and security lay a necessary foundation, strategies that foster social interaction and professional recognition drive deeper engagement and stronger economic outcomes. By validating Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory within TS environments, the research highlights the dual role of hygiene factors and motivators in shaping attendee satisfaction and behavioural intentions.

6.3 Contributions to Practice

The research provides important practical implications for TS organisers, exhibitors, and marketers, particularly within Zambia's food processing industry and related sectors. The findings show how stakeholders can strategically improve TS effectiveness and PS purchase intention by addressing buyers' and attendees' needs for safety and security, a sense of belonging, and self-esteem.

6.3.1 Improving Safety and Security Measures

One of the most significant findings of this research concerns the central role of safety and security in shaping buyers' and attendees' perceptions and post-show purchasing behaviour. Buyers and attendees who feel safe and secure during a TS experience are more likely to evaluate the event positively and to demonstrate stronger purchase intentions afterwards. In TS environments, safety and security are core components of the overall attendee experience.

To address this need, TS organisers and exhibitors may develop visible and comprehensive safety and security systems that promote trust and reassurance among attendees. Personal and physical safety remain especially important. Exhibitors may implement clearly marked emergency exits, visible crowd-control systems, well-communicated safety procedures, and trained security personnel throughout the venue. These measures not only enhance physical security but also improve psychological comfort, enabling attendees to engage confidently in networking, product exploration, and professional discussions.

In addition, organisers may improve event communication by providing safety instructions before and during the event. Pre-event emails, venue maps, digital notifications, and public announcements can reassure participants and reduce uncertainty. Attendees who clearly understand security arrangements often feel more relaxed and more willing to participate actively throughout the TS experience.

The growing shift toward hybrid and digital TS formats also increases the importance of digital security. Organisers and exhibitors may therefore implement encrypted communication systems, secure registration platforms, password-protected meeting rooms, and transparent privacy policies. Buyers and attendees require assurance that organisers protect personal data and online interactions from misuse or unauthorised access. Secure systems increase confidence in digital engagement and encourage attendees to share information, network online, and interact more freely with exhibitors.

Organisers may further reinforce these initiatives through visible communication strategies such as signage, help desks, digital support services, and dedicated staff who respond quickly to security concerns. These measures reduce anxiety and allow participants to focus fully on the event experience, thereby improving perceptions of TS effectiveness and strengthening PS purchase intentions.

6.3.2 Creating a Sense of Belonging

The findings also demonstrate the importance of fostering a sense of belonging within TS environments. TSs naturally serve as social spaces where professional interactions shape buyers' perceptions and experiences. Buyers and attendees who experience social inclusion and meaningful interaction often perceive the event more positively and develop stronger emotional connections with exhibitors and brands.

To foster a sense of belonging, organisers and exhibitors may create networking opportunities that encourage genuine interaction among participants. Structured breakout sessions, themed networking meetings, and industry-focused discussion groups can help attendees connect through shared professional interests and goals. These activities strengthen camaraderie and create a stronger sense of community among participants.

Exhibitors may also create dedicated networking spaces, such as lounges, discussion areas, and collaborative work areas, where attendees can interact informally. Comfortable social environments encourage spontaneous conversations, relationship building, and knowledge exchange. Within Zambia's food processing industry, such spaces can help participants discuss market challenges, regulatory concerns, innovation opportunities, and supply-chain issues while strengthening professional relationships.

Interactive event formats also play a major role in strengthening social inclusion. Panel discussions, question-and-answer sessions, workshops, live demonstrations, and collaborative activities encourage active participation rather than passive observation. These interactions create shared experiences that reinforce emotional attachment to both the TS and participating brands.

In addition, organisers and exhibitors may extend community-building efforts beyond the event itself. Online forums, social media groups, follow-up webinars, and post-show networking activities can maintain professional relationships after the TS concludes. Buyers and attendees who continue interacting with exhibitors and peers after the event often develop stronger loyalty and long-term engagement.

When attendees feel connected to a wider professional community, attendees often perceive the TS as more valuable and meaningful. This sense of belonging transforms the TS from a

simple promotional event into a collaborative professional network that strengthens engagement, loyalty, and PS purchase intentions.

6.3.3 Enhancing Esteem through Recognition and Customisation.

Esteem needs also play an important role in shaping TS effectiveness and buyer behaviour. Buyers and attendees who feel respected, recognised, and professionally valued tend to develop more positive perceptions of the event and stronger intentions to maintain relationships with exhibitors after the TS.

To address esteem needs effectively, organisers and exhibitors may implement recognition and personalisation strategies throughout the event experience. Personalised greetings during registration, exclusive sessions for returning participants, VIP networking opportunities, and public acknowledgement of professional contributions can strengthen attendees' feelings of importance and respect. These gestures reinforce buyers' professional identity and deepen emotional connections with the event and participating brands.

Exhibitors may also provide opportunities for attendees to contribute expertise and share knowledge. Attendee-led discussions, expert panels, mentoring sessions, and collaborative workshops allow participants to demonstrate professional competence and industry insight. Recognition of attendee contributions enhances self-esteem while simultaneously strengthening engagement with exhibitors and industry networks.

Customisation further strengthens these experiences. Exhibitors who tailor discussions, demonstrations, or product presentations to attendees' professional interests often create more meaningful interactions. Buyers and attendees respond positively when exhibitors acknowledge specific business needs, industry challenges, or professional achievements during conversations.

Post-event engagement also remains important in reinforcing esteem needs. Exhibitors may establish feedback systems that encourage attendees to share opinions, recommendations, and reflections after the event. Follow-up communications that reference attendee feedback demonstrate respect for participants' contributions and reinforce a sense of professional value.

Overall, these recommendations provide a practical framework for TS organisers and exhibitors that prioritises safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem. By addressing these psychological needs, organisers and exhibitors can create richer and more

engaging TS environments that strengthen buyer satisfaction, encourage long-term loyalty, and increase PS purchase intentions across industries and cultural settings. As the TS industry continues to evolve, understanding and responding to the psychological drivers of attendee behaviour will remain essential for creating meaningful and effective event experiences.

6.3.4 Customising Engagement Based on Hierarchical Needs

Theoretical frameworks such as Abraham Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, Clayton Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory, and Frederick Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory help explain buyers' motivations and support the development of more targeted engagement strategies. Understanding that buyers and attendees possess different primary motivations allows exhibitors to create diverse experiences that address multiple needs simultaneously. For example, attendees who prioritise safety and security often prefer structured environments with visible protection measures and clear organisational systems. Organisers and exhibitors can strengthen a sense of belonging by promoting inclusion, collaboration, and social interaction throughout the TS experience. This personalised approach helps events appeal to a broader audience, increasing overall satisfaction and perceived value.

6.3.5 Facilitating Long-Term Relationships with Brands

Meeting buyers' and attendees' needs influences not only the immediate event experience but also buyers' and attendees' pre-event and post-event relationships with brands. Effective fulfilment of these needs strengthens trust, credibility, and long-term loyalty. For exhibitors, TSs represent more than just opportunities for immediate sales; TSs also provide opportunities to establish sustainable professional relationships with potential clients.

Exhibitors may strengthen these relationships through consistent post-show engagement strategies such as personalised follow-up emails, exclusive offers, invitations to future events, and customised product recommendations. These strategies maintain communication and reinforce emotional connections after the event concludes. In addition, exhibitors may use social media platforms to interact with attendees, recognise valuable contributions, and encourage ongoing participation in industry discussions. Such interactions strengthen both self-esteem and sense of belonging while keeping the brand visible in buyers' minds (Hansen, 2004).

6.3.6 Taking Advantage of Cultural Sensitivity

Although this research focuses on Zambia's food processing industry, cultural sensitivity remains important for broader practical application. TS organisers and exhibitors need to understand the cultural norms, practices, and expectations that shape attendee behaviour. Incorporating local traditions, cuisine, language preferences, and culturally familiar elements into event activities can create stronger feelings of inclusion and respect among buyers and attendees.

Organisers and exhibitors may also improve engagement by aligning presentations, demonstrations, and promotional strategies with local business practices and regulatory expectations. Familiarity with local market conditions helps exhibitors deliver more relevant and relatable experiences. In Zambia's food processing sector, for example, attendees may value relationship-building and community interaction more strongly than highly transactional approaches. Recognising these cultural priorities can improve trust, participation, and loyalty.

6.3.7 Using strategies to measure and improve TS Experiences

Implementing these practical strategies requires continuous evaluation and improvement. Organisers and exhibitors may collect feedback regularly to assess the effectiveness of safety and security initiatives, networking opportunities, and esteem-enhancing activities. Surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, and post-event analytics can help identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.

Real-time feedback tools may also help organisers respond quickly to attendee concerns during the event itself. Continuous assessment supports gradual improvement and ensures that TSs remain responsive to the evolving needs of buyers and attendees. This process allows organisers and exhibitors to refine event experiences over time and maintain high levels of engagement and satisfaction.

6.3.8 Applications in Wider Contexts

Although this research draws on Zambia's food processing industry, the findings may be relevant across industries and geographic regions. Safety and security, a sense of belonging, and self-esteem represent fundamental human needs that may influence buyer and attendee behaviour across many TS environments. Organisers and exhibitors across sectors may benefit from integrating these concepts into TS planning and management strategies.

However, successful implementation requires adaptation to industry-specific conditions, cultural differences, and regional market trends. Different sectors may prioritise these needs differently depending on buyer expectations, professional norms, and competitive environments.

Summary

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of adopting a holistic and needs-based approach to TS planning. By addressing safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, organisers and exhibitors may create more meaningful experiences that are associated with stronger immediate engagement, long-term loyalty, and the overall effectiveness of TSs.

6.4 Limitations of the Research

Despite the valuable contribution this research makes toward understanding buyer needs in TS environments, several limitations require recognition. These limitations influence the generalisability, interpretation, and broader application of the findings. This section outlines the main limitations that may influence the results and overall applicability of the research. First, the sample size and representativeness of Zambia's food processing industry limit the generalisability of the findings. Second, reliance on self-reported data introduces possible biases such as social desirability bias and subjective interpretation. Third, although the quantitative approach provides systematic analysis, this approach does not capture the deeper emotional and psychological dimensions of attendee experiences. In addition, the time-sensitive and event-specific nature of TSs may not fully reflect changing buyer perceptions over time. Finally, although Spearman's correlation effectively identifies relationships between variables, this technique does not establish causality, thereby limiting the research's ability to fully explain the dynamics among buyer needs, TS effectiveness, and PS purchase intentions.

6.4.1 Sample size and representativeness

One major limitation is the sample's limited ability to represent the diversity of Zambia's food processing industry. Buyers and attendees at TSs include decision-makers, suppliers, sales representatives, technical specialists, distributors, and new entrants into the industry. However, if the sample over represents one category of participants, such as senior executives or sales personnel, the responses may not accurately reflect the experiences of the broader TS

population. Different job roles often influence how attendees experience networking, product evaluation, information sharing, and purchasing behaviour during the event.

The sampling strategy and sample size also restrict the ability to generalise the findings beyond Zambia's food processing sector. Although Zambia shares certain economic and industrial similarities with other emerging markets, each country possesses distinct cultural, social, and economic characteristics that shape attendees' expectations and perceptions of TS effectiveness. For example, the importance attached to safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem may differ considerably in countries with more advanced TS infrastructure or stronger institutional trust.

In environments where security systems and event management practices already operate effectively, attendees may place less emphasis on safety and security than in Zambia, where contextual realities heighten sensitivity to such issues. Similarly, networking expectations and professional recognition may vary significantly across regions and industries. These contextual differences influence how attendees interpret and prioritise psychological needs within TS settings.

Cultural values also complicate the interpretation and transferability of the findings. In collectivist cultures, individuals often prioritise group harmony, cooperation, and social relationships over personal recognition and individual achievement. Under such conditions, attendees may value a sense of belonging more strongly than self-esteem. In contrast, attendees from individualistic cultures may prioritise professional recognition, independence, and personal accomplishment more heavily. These cultural differences influence buyer motivations and shape perceptions of TS effectiveness differently across societies.

Consequently, the findings of this research may not apply directly to other industries, countries, or cultural environments without additional investigation. Future research should therefore incorporate larger and more diverse samples across industries, geographic regions, and cultural settings. Broader comparative studies could strengthen the external validity of TS research and deepen understanding of how different environmental conditions influence buyer behaviour and perceptions of TS effectiveness.

6.4.2 Reliance on Self-Reported Data

Another important limitation involves reliance on self-reported survey data. Although surveys provide efficient access to participant opinions and perceptions, self-reported responses remain vulnerable to several forms of bias that may influence the accuracy of the findings.

One common issue concerns social desirability bias. Participants sometimes adjust responses to align with socially acceptable expectations or professional norms rather than reporting completely authentic experiences. Buyers and attendees may therefore overstate feelings of safety, security, belonging, or satisfaction in order to appear more engaged, cooperative, or professionally positive. Such behaviour may inflate perceptions of TS effectiveness and distort the representation of actual attendee experiences.

Recall bias also presents a challenge. Participants completed surveys after attending the TS, meaning responses depended heavily on memory and retrospective interpretation. Human memory changes over time, and participants may unintentionally exaggerate positive experiences or minimise negative encounters after the event concludes. For example, an attendee who initially experiences discomfort or isolation during the event may later remember mainly positive networking interactions, thereby producing a less accurate account of the experience.

In addition, individual interpretation affects the consistency of self-reported responses. Concepts such as "safe environment," "sense of belonging," or "professional recognition" carry subjective meanings that differ among participants. An attendee from a highly regulated environment with strict security expectations may interpret safety differently from someone accustomed to more informal settings. Similarly, attendees may define professional recognition differently depending on cultural background, personality, or occupational role.

Although the survey attempts to standardise questions and response categories, personal interpretation may introduce variation into the data. This variation may reduce consistency across responses and limit the ability to generalise the findings confidently across broader populations. For this reason, interpreting the results requires caution, especially when applying the conclusions to other industries or cultural settings.

Future research could address these limitations by combining survey methods with direct observation, behavioural tracking, interviews, or focus group discussions. Multiple forms of

data collection would help researchers compare participant statements with observable behaviours and deepen understanding of how attendees genuinely experience TS environments.

6.4.3 Limitations of Quantitative Measures

Although quantitative analysis provides valuable insight into buyer behaviour, quantitative measures alone cannot fully capture the complexity of psychological and social experiences in TS environments. Human needs and motivations evolve continuously throughout an event, and numerical measures may oversimplify these dynamic experiences.

For example, a buyer's sense of belonging may fluctuate significantly during different stages of a TS. Positive networking opportunities, responsive exhibitors, engaging presentations, or professional recognition may strengthen feelings of inclusion and satisfaction. Conversely, crowded environments, limited interaction, or unsuccessful networking attempts may generate frustration or social isolation. Quantitative survey responses cannot always capture these changing emotional experiences with sufficient depth and context.

Similarly, the quantitative design of this research identifies relationships between variables but does not establish direct causality. Although strong correlations exist between buyer needs and TS effectiveness, the findings do not conclusively show that fulfilling specific needs directly causes improved TS effectiveness or stronger PS purchase intentions. Many additional variables may simultaneously influence attendee perceptions and behaviours.

Factors such as prior brand loyalty, pre-event marketing campaigns, product quality, exhibitors' reputations, personal business objectives, and the general event atmosphere may all shape attendee evaluations independently of the psychological needs measured in this research. Some buyers may attend TSs primarily to strengthen existing supplier relationships, while others may prioritise industry knowledge, networking opportunities, or long-term strategic partnerships. These motivations may influence perceptions of TS effectiveness more strongly than individual psychological needs alone.

Brand-related bias may also complicate the interpretation of the findings. Attendees often enter TS environments with existing opinions about particular brands or exhibitors. Strong loyalty toward a recognised brand may improve perceptions of the TS, regardless of whether attendees adequately address specific psychological needs. Conversely, negative brand perceptions may

reduce evaluations of TS effectiveness even when organisers successfully address safety, belonging, or esteem-related needs.

These complexities demonstrate the limitations of relying exclusively on quantitative analysis when researching buyer experiences in TS settings. While statistical relationships provide important insight, qualitative approaches can provide additional insight into the deeper emotional, cultural, and contextual dynamics that shape attendee behaviour. Future research should therefore integrate qualitative methods alongside quantitative analysis to produce a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of TS effectiveness and buyer motivations.

6.4.4 Limitations of Time and Event-Specific Constraints

The timing of this research's data collection, which focuses heavily on post-TS data collection, presents several considerations that may influence respondents' answers. Post-event surveys, particularly those conducted immediately after an event, often create a "recency effect," in which buyers' and attendees' perceptions depend heavily on immediate experiences. For example, a positive interaction with an exhibitor or an engaging presentation can enhance buyers' evaluations of the overall event experience. Such recent encounters may distort perceptions of safety and security, a sense of belonging, and self-esteem, leading to more favourable ratings than participants might provide after reflection over time.

Collecting data long after the event also creates challenges, particularly recall bias. Buyers and attendees often remember only the strongest positive or negative moments, such as an outstanding keynote presentation or a frustrating registration process. As details fade over time, memories of the TS experience can shift or become selective. For instance, an attendee who initially values networking opportunities may later focus only on discomfort caused by overcrowding, poor seating arrangements, or excessive heat, leading to a less accurate evaluation of the event's effectiveness. These memory distortions may influence how participants interpret experiences and may reduce the reliability of responses gathered long after the TS concludes.

Furthermore, focusing on only one TS event during a specific period may limit the broader applicability of the findings. External conditions surrounding TSs vary depending on timing and context, and these conditions shape attendees' perceptions and behaviours. Seasonal factors may influence attendance levels and resource availability, while economic conditions can

affect exhibitor budgets and attendee spending power. Competing or overlapping events may also reduce attendance or lower the perceived value of an individual TS, further complicating participant experiences and evaluations.

Concentrating on a single TS event narrows the scope of the research, as broader contextual influences remain outside the analysis. Factors such as venue quality, exhibitor attractiveness, event promotion, accessibility, and organisational efficiency can strongly shape attendees' experiences and perceptions. Because the research excludes these broader dynamics, the conclusions about buyer needs may not fully reflect the broader TS environment. Future research may strengthen these findings by examining multiple TS events across different industries, contexts, and time periods. Such an approach can provide deeper insight into the many influences shaping attendee behaviour, satisfaction, and purchase intentions in TS settings.

6.4.5 Limitations of Spearman's Correlation Method

Using Spearman's correlation to examine the relationship between buyer needs and TS outcomes provides useful insights and suits the complexity of human behaviour and attitudes. Unlike Pearson's correlation, which assumes linear relationships, Spearman's correlation uses a nonparametric approach that evaluates the strength and direction of monotonic relationships between ranked variables. This method suits the research context because Spearman's correlation identifies associations without imposing strict linear assumptions. As a result, the method allows for a more flexible understanding of how buyer needs, such as safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, influence perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intentions.

Buyer and attendee needs may influence TS outcomes differently depending on context and individual circumstances. Spearman's correlation can capture these associations without requiring a linear relationship. For example, attendees with a moderate sense of belonging may experience stronger feelings of safety and security, thereby improving overall perceptions of the TS. In other situations, concerns about safety and security may outweigh social needs, thereby reducing perceptions of event effectiveness. Spearman's correlation, therefore, helps researchers examine monotonic associations without imposing a linear relationship.

Despite these strengths, Spearman's correlation coefficient does not fully account for the complex interactions among buyer needs. The method does not account for potential interactions among variables, such as whether higher levels of safety and security strengthen or weaken the influence of belonging or self-esteem on TS perceptions. Consequently, the method cannot determine how multiple psychological needs operate together to shape attendee behaviour and purchasing intentions.

To address these limitations, future studies may use more advanced analytical approaches such as structural equation modelling (SEM) or hierarchical regression analysis. These techniques can allow researchers to examine interaction effects and evaluate the combined influence of several variables simultaneously. For example, a suitably specified SEM model could examine whether safety and security moderate the relationship between sense of belonging and self-esteem, providing a more integrated understanding of attendee motivations and behaviours. By applying these advanced methods, future research may move beyond simple associations and provide a richer explanation of how buyer needs collectively relate to perceptions of TS effectiveness and PS purchase intentions. Such analysis can deepen theoretical understanding while also offering practical guidance for improving TS experiences across different industries, cultural contexts, and economic settings.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

This research establishes a foundation for understanding how buyer needs influence TS effectiveness and PS purchase intentions in Zambia's food processing industry. However, several areas remain unexplored or require further clarification to strengthen the theoretical and practical understanding of TS dynamics. The following recommendations outline possible directions for future research based on the findings of this thesis.

6.5.1 A Cross-Cultural Examination of Buyer Needs at TSs

Future research may examine cross-cultural differences in buyer needs and their implications for TS effectiveness. Although this research focuses on the food processing sector in Zambia, cultural variations in the prioritisation of buyer needs may produce different findings across contexts. Societies with different values, norms, and social expectations may interpret safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem differently. Collectivist cultures may place

stronger emphasis on belonging needs, whereas individualistic cultures may prioritise self-esteem and personal achievement.

Cross-cultural studies may compare TSs across several cultural environments to determine how the importance of safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem change across societies. Such studies may help researchers determine whether the findings from this research reflect universal motivational patterns or culture-specific dynamics. Future scholars may adopt mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews across different cultural contexts. This approach may reveal the subtle ways in which cultural influences shape buyer and attendee needs, perceptions, and behaviours during TS experiences. Such findings may contribute to a broader understanding of global TS dynamics while helping organisers develop culturally responsive engagement strategies.

6.5.2 Longitudinal Analysis of TS Effects on Buyer Behaviour

Another important direction for future research is to examine the long-term effects of TS participation on buyer and attendee behaviour, including brand loyalty and retention. This research primarily focuses on the short-term effects of fulfilling safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem needs. However, limited knowledge exists about the long-term behavioural outcomes of these experiences.

Longitudinal studies may track TS participants for months or years after an event to evaluate the lasting impact of TS experiences. Researchers may examine repeat purchases, brand advocacy, customer retention, and social media engagement to determine how TS experiences influence buyer behaviour over time. Such temporal approaches may help scholars understand how TS influence develops, strengthens, or declines after the event concludes.

Researchers may use periodic follow-up surveys or digital analytics tools to monitor buyer engagement with exhibitors and brands after the event. This strategy can provide practical insight into the sustainability of TS influence and help organisers create stronger long-term relationship strategies. Understanding these extended outcomes may also help exhibitors improve return on investment while strengthening trust and loyalty among buyers and attendees.

6.5.3 Exploring the role of technology and digital TS platforms.

As TSs increasingly integrate digital and hybrid elements, understanding how technology shapes buyer needs and event effectiveness becomes essential. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the growth of virtual and hybrid TS formats, and this trend continues to influence the industry. Despite this shift, limited research has examined how digital platforms satisfy evolving buyer and attendee needs.

Future research may investigate whether digital TS platforms adequately fulfil safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem needs. For example, researchers may explore whether virtual networking tools create the same sense of community and social connection that physical interactions provide during traditional TSs. Researchers may also examine how cybersecurity and data privacy practices influence perceptions of safety and security in digital environments.

Experimental research designs may compare physical, virtual, and hybrid TS experiences in order to identify differences in engagement, satisfaction, and purchasing intentions. Qualitative interviews and focus groups may further explore buyers' subjective experiences within digital environments and clarify how technology transforms psychological engagement during TS participation.

6.5.4 Investigating industry-specific variations in buyers' needs

While this research focused on the food processing industry, different sectors may have unique buyer needs that influence TS effectiveness. For instance, industries with higher safety risks, such as manufacturing or construction, might place greater emphasis on physical security. In contrast, industries focused on innovation and creativity, such as technology or fashion, might place greater emphasis on esteem needs.

Comparative studies across different industries could reveal variations in how safety and security, belonging, and self-esteem needs impact TS experiences and outcomes. This would enable a more tailored approach to TS management, catering to the specific needs of different sectors. Industry-specific case studies, combined with sector-wide surveys, could provide a detailed understanding of these variations. Using industry reports and collaborating with trade associations could also enrich the research, ensuring it remains relevant and actionable for practitioners.

6.5.5 TS Design Elements versus Buyer Needs

TS design elements, such as booth layout, lighting, space arrangement, signage, and networking areas, strongly influence buyer experiences. However, limited research explains precisely how these design factors shape perceptions of safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem.

Future research may investigate how different TS design configurations affect buyer and attendee satisfaction. For example, open and welcoming layouts may strengthen social interaction and enhance a sense of belonging, while premium booth aesthetics and visual branding may influence perceptions of professionalism and esteem.

Experimental studies may manipulate specific design variables and evaluate the effects on attendee experiences and behavioural intentions. Researchers may also use virtual reality (VR) technology to simulate alternative TS environments and examine participant responses within controlled settings. Surveys, interviews, and physiological measurements, such as eye-tracking or heart-rate monitoring, may provide additional insight into attendees' reactions to specific environmental features.

6.5.6 Investigating the Psychological Aspect of TS Incentives

Incentives such as giveaways, exclusive access opportunities, recognition awards, and promotional offers can shape perceptions of TS value. However, limited research systematically examines the psychological influence of these incentives on safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem needs.

Future research may explore how different incentive types influence buyers' emotional responses and subsequent behaviour. Recognition-based incentives, such as public acknowledgement or awards, may fulfil esteem needs more effectively than material rewards. Similarly, community-oriented incentives may strengthen participants' sense of belonging.

Field experiments conducted during real TS events may help researchers evaluate how attendees respond to various incentive strategies. Surveys may measure satisfaction with incentives and determine how these experiences influence perceptions of TS effectiveness and purchase intentions. Qualitative interviews may also provide insight into the emotional and psychological significance buyers attach to different forms of incentives.

6.5.7 Understanding the Influence of Cultural Identity on Belonging Needs

Belonging needs are often strongly connected with cultural and social identity. Understanding how cultural identity shapes attendees' sense of belonging during TS participation may provide valuable insights for organisers seeking to create inclusive event environments.

Future studies may examine whether attendees from minority or underrepresented groups experience weaker social connections during industry events and identify strategies that strengthen inclusivity. Researchers may use qualitative approaches such as interviews, participant observation, and attendee profiling to understand how cultural identity shapes TS experiences.

Quantitative research may also examine relationships among cultural identity, belonging-need satisfaction, and perceived TS effectiveness. Collaboration with scholars in cultural studies and sociology may further strengthen theoretical grounding and enrich understanding of diversity and inclusion within TS environments.

Summary

Although this research provides valuable insight into how buyer and attendee needs influence TS effectiveness and PS purchase intentions, numerous opportunities remain for future investigation. Scholars may expand this body of knowledge through cross-cultural comparisons, longitudinal studies, technological analysis, and industry-specific investigations. Additional research on TS design, psychological incentives, and cultural identity may deepen theoretical understanding while also offering practical guidance for TS organisers and exhibitors.

6.6 Summary

This section summarises the principal findings of the research and discusses the implications for policy and practice. The research examines how buyer needs fulfilment, specifically safety and security, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, influences perceived TS effectiveness and PS purchase intentions within Zambia's food processing sector. Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory, and Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory provide the theoretical foundation for the research and offer valuable insight into TS dynamics within an emerging market context.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) posits that safety and security needs shape perceived TS effectiveness. The findings show that buyers and attendees engage more positively with TS events when buyers feel safe and secure. This outcome aligns with Maslow's (1943) emphasis on safety as a fundamental human need and with Alderfer's (1969) ERG Theory's classification of safety and security as existence needs.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) demonstrates that belonging needs also significantly influence TS effectiveness. TSs that encourage networking, interaction, and community-building generate more positive attendee perceptions. These findings align with Maslow's (1943) concept of belonging and Alderfer's (1969) relatedness dimension, both of which emphasise the importance of social interaction and interpersonal connection.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) confirms that meeting esteem needs enhances perceptions of TS effectiveness. Recognition, acknowledgement, and opportunities for achievement increase attendee satisfaction and engagement. Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory also supports this finding by identifying recognition and respect as powerful motivators.

Hypothesis 4 (H4) investigates the influence of safety and security needs on PS purchase intentions. The findings show that buyers and attendees feel more comfortable engaging in purchasing behaviour when buyers perceive the TS environment as safe and secure. This assertion reinforces the critical role trust plays in shaping economic behaviour and post-event engagement.

Hypothesis 5 (H5) examines the relationship between belonging needs and PS purchase intention. The results indicate that networking opportunities and community-building activities strengthen social connections and increase willingness to engage with exhibitors and brands after the event.

Hypothesis 6 (H6) analyses the relationship between self-esteem needs and PS purchase intentions. The findings reveal that recognition, acknowledgement of expertise, and esteem-enhancing activities significantly strengthen purchase intentions. Buyers who feel valued and respected develop more favourable associations with exhibitors and brands, increasing the likelihood of future transactions.

Overall, the research highlights the importance of addressing multiple psychological needs simultaneously in order to maximise TS effectiveness and improve PS buyer behaviour. The

chapter concludes by recognising the contribution this research makes to motivational theory and TS management practice. The findings emphasise the importance of designing TS experiences that comprehensively satisfy psychological needs, thereby strengthening buyer engagement, satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term purchasing behaviour.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research questionnaire

Section 1 of 7

Dear Respondent This research tool intends to evaluate The Effect of Buyer Needs on Perceived Trade Show Effectiveness and Post-Show Purchase Intention in Zambia's Food Processing Industry

B *I* U [↔](#) [✕](#)

- this survey will take you about 6-8 minutes to complete
- **all** information provided will be for research purposes **only**
- **all** information given will be treated as **confidential**

This form is automatically collecting emails from all respondents. [Change settings](#)

After section 1 Continue to next section ▼

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION



Please respond to all the questions in this section

Select a trade show you have attended in the last 1 year (limit one trade show per respondent. Use this show to respond to the follow up questions) *

- ☐ Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show (ACSZ)
- ☐ Zambia International Trade Fair (ZITF)
- ☐ Other...

Select your type of business activity *

- ☐ Retail
- ☐ wholesale



Please select your age range listed below *

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

Please select your highest level of education *

- ☐ Secondary school Graduate
- ☐ College diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctorate

Gender *

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other...

Professional Role/area of responsibility (please select the description that most describe your function) *

- ☐ Supply Chain Professional/Buyer/Planner
- ☐ Sale/Marketing
- ☐ Accounting/Finance
- ☐ Other...

Managerial vs. Non-Managerial Responsibility (please select the description that most accurately describes your professional function. *

- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Non-Manager

Years of experience with the current organization (round down to the closest whole year) *

Short answer text

Select the level of purchasing value you have authority over *

- ☐ Less than K99, 000
- ☐ K100, 000 to K499, 000
- ☐ K500, 000 to K999, 000
- ☐ K1M +

After section 2 Continue to next section

Section 3 of 7

As it relates to the trade show listed above, please evaluate the following statement using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3-Neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree and 5 representing strongly agree (if you are using a phone put in landscape orientation for better viewing)

Description (optional)

As it relates to the trade show listed above, please evaluate the following statement using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- Neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree and 5 representing strongly agree (if you are using a phone put in landscape orientation for better viewing)

*

	1	2	3	4	5
I was able to gather product/service information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was able to browse through a great range of exhibits	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I perceived the special events/presentations on products/services as useful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was able to gather industry intelligence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was able to identify future trends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was able to test and see products/service features	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was able to identify new suppliers/customers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The trade show helped me to finalise my purchasing decision(s)

☐☐☐☐☐

I was able to solve problems identified from suppliers/customers

☐☐☐☐☐

While at the show I was able to network contact with suppliers/customers

☐☐☐☐☐

The entertainment provided at the trade show was enjoyable

☐☐☐☐☐

Back

Next

Page 3 of 7

Clear form

Section 4 of 7

As it relates to the trade show listed above, please evaluate the following statement using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-Neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree and 5 representing strongly agree. (if you are using a phone put in landscape orientation for better viewing)



Description (optional)

As it relates to the trade show listed above, please evaluate the following statement using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3- Neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree and 5 representing strongly agree. (if you are using a phone put in landscape orientation for better viewing)

*

1

2

3

4

5

I intend to
continue using
this trade show
for purchasing
a product or
service in
future

☐☐☐☐☐

I would
strongly
recommend
others to visit
this trade show

☐☐☐☐☐

I shall not
transact with
my trade show
exhibitor(s)
shortly

☐☐☐☐☐

Back

Next

Page 4 of 7

Clear form

Section 5 of 7

Evaluate the following statement using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-Neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree and 5 representing strongly agree. (if you are using a phone put in landscape orientation for better viewing)



Description (optional)

Evaluate the following statement using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-Neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree and 5 representing strongly agree. (if you are using a phone put in landscape orientation for better viewing)

I am completely satisfied with ... *

	1	2	3	4	5
The quality of the exhibition space(s) I visited	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How secure I am in my role as a visitor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How safe I am from being injured at the trade show	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How safe I am from catching any disease at the trade show	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The safety of my commute to the trade show	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How protected I am from danger at the trade show	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The protection exhibition staff provided me at the trade show	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The protection that the exhibitors' online data policy provides	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How secure my data is when using TS online registration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The financial security available to my company at the trade show	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

[Back](#)
[Next](#)

Page 5 of 7

[Clear form](#)

Section 6 of 7

Evaluate the following statement using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3- Neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree and 5 representing strongly agree. (if you are using a phone put in landscape orientation for better viewing)

Description (optional)

Evaluate the following statement using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3- Neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree and 5 representing strongly agree. (if you are using a phone put in landscape orientation for better viewing)

I am completely satisfied with ... *

	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of rapport I share with the trade show staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The quality of the relationship I have with the trade show staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The friendship I share with my trade show exhibitors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How well I am welcomed at the exhibitor's booth	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The emotional support I received from the exhibition staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The feeling of
belonging I
share with
other buyers

☐☐☐☐☐

The happiness
I share with
other trade
show
attendees

☐☐☐☐☐

The empathy I
receive from
the trade show
exhibition staff

☐☐☐☐☐

The fulfilment I
share with
associates at
the trade show

☐☐☐☐☐

The unity I feel
with
associates at
the trade show

☐☐☐☐☐

[Back](#)

[Next](#)

Page 6 of 7

[Clear form](#)

Section 7 of 7

Evaluate the following statement using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-Neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree and 5 representing strongly agree. (if you are using a phone put in landscape orientation for better viewing)



Description (optional)

Evaluate the following statement using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-Neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree and 5 representing strongly agree. (if you are using a phone put in landscape orientation for better viewing)

I am completely satisfied with ... *

	1	2	3	4	5
The admiration given to me by others at the trade show	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How many colleagues respect me as a person at the show	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
All the good qualities I exhibit as an individual while at the trade show	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How highly colleagues think of me at the trade show	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How confident I am of myself at the trade show	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How much I
like the person
that I am at
the trade show

☐☐☐☐☐

How much
respect I have
for myself
while at the
trade show

☐☐☐☐☐

My sense of
self-worth at
the trade show

☐☐☐☐☐

How positive I
feel about
myself as a
person while
at the trade
show

☐☐☐☐☐

[Back](#)

[Submit](#)

Page 7 of 7

[Clear form](#)

Appendix B: Description of the Food Processing Industry

Industry Classification Code List

Section C

Division	Group	Class	Description
Division 10			Manufacture of food products
	101	1010	Processing and preserving of meat
	102	1020	Processing and preserving of fish, crustaceans and molluscs
	103	1030	Processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables
	104	1040	Manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats
	105	1050	Manufacture of dairy products
	106		Manufacture of grain mill products, starches and starch products
		1061	Manufacture of grain mill products
		1062	Manufacture of starches and starch products
	107		Manufacture of other food products
		1071	Manufacture of bakery products
		1072	Manufacture of sugar
		1073	Manufacture of cocoa, chocolate and sugar confectionery
		1074	Manufacture of macaroni, noodles, couscous and similar farinaceous products
		1075	Manufacture of prepared meals and dishes
		1079	Manufacture of other food products n.e.c.
	108	1080	Manufacture of prepared animal feeds
Division 11			Manufacture of beverages
		1101	Distilling, rectifying and blending of spirits
		1102	Manufacture of wines
		1103	Manufacture of malt liquors and malt
		1104	Manufacture of soft drinks; production of mineral waters and other bottled waters
Division 12			Manufacture of tobacco products
	120	1200	Manufacture of tobacco products

Section G

Division 46

463	4630	Wholesale of food, beverages and tobacco
469	4690	Non-specialized wholesale trade
Division 47		Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles
471		Retail sale in non-specialized stores
	4711	Retail sale in non-specialized stores with food, beverages or tobacco predominating
	4719	Other retail sale in non-specialized stores
472		Retail sale of food, beverages and tobacco in specialized stores
	4721	Retail sale of food in specialized stores
	4722	Retail sale of beverages in specialized stores
	4723	Retail sale of tobacco products in specialized stores

Appendix C: Literature Map

