

A Study of Exhibitor Firms at a Tourism Trade Show

Shobha Menon* and Manoj Edward**

ABSTRACT

Purpose- Trade fairs are fastly becoming a very popular marketing communication tool. Participating in trade shows is an increasingly important marketing activity for many companies in the tourism industry. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the usefulness of trade shows and the special nature of travel trade shows and to highlight the different objectives for firms to exhibit

Design/Methodology/Approach - The 7th edition of the Kerala Travel Mart (KTM), Cochin, the first destination specific tourism trade show in India, provided a focus for a study of exhibit objectives in an emerging market. A survey was conducted among exhibitors to KTM12 in September 2012 and the results analyzed and compared with findings of similar studies in other countries.

Findings- Non-selling objectives predominate the objectives of the exhibitors. However, the results do not fully validate similar studies done in other parts of the world.

Practical implications - This exploratory study gives very useful insights for trade show organizers to attract the appropriate customers to the show.

Originality/Value – Though trade shows are acknowledged as an increasingly popular communication tool, this paper is the first in India to study the extant of its use in a specific industry and to explore the objectives of firms.

Keywords: Travel Trade shows/exhibitions, Objectives, Motivations, Exhibitors, Kerala

INTRODUCTION

Trade fairs usually bring manufacturers, suppliers, and distributors from a particular industry or related industries to a single location to exhibit products and services and to provide information to potential buyers (American Marketing Association). Trade fairs are not usually open to the public except on the last day. Trade fair activities include a combination of communication instruments, ranging from advertising and public relations to direct selling.

Trade shows traditionally are classified as vertical or horizontal on the basis of their market coverage. The former have a fairly narrow focus and attract a specific type of visitor (e.g. Trade fair on the IT industry). Horizontal shows feature a variety of products and hence attract a much wider audience, therefore, less focused. The latest trend is towards virtual trade shows which are web based

platforms where all stakeholders get together at any time and from any place.

The importance of trade fairs as a marketing tool in B2B business is increasingly acknowledged and also well documented in developed countries like USA and UK. The growth of the trade fair industry has been impressive which underlines its importance in the marketing mix. Surprisingly, in spite of the growing importance of trade fairs, there is very little market research on this subject. The purpose of this paper is to first highlight the various facets of trade fairs and its increasing importance in the promotion mix for the travel industry. Secondly, the paper attempts to understand the objectives and motivations to participate in travel trade fairs. This is important as exhibitors are, along with visitors, the main players in the exhibition.

* Research Scholar, Cochin University of Science and Technology & Assistant Professor, Adi Sankara Institute of Engineering and Technology, Cochin, India. Email-id: shobharesearch@gmail.com

** Assistant Professor, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Cochin, India. Email-id: manojedw@cusat.ac.in

Importance of Trade Fair as a Marketing Tool

Trade shows are an integral part of the marketing strategy for many products and services, especially in industrial/organizational markets. Since 2009, trade shows and exhibitions have outperformed traditional B2B magazines for marketing spend. Spending on trade shows was forecasted to increase by 21 % in 2014, compared to 2011. The importance of trade shows in the promotion mix is increasing (Kerin & Cron). Among the promotional tools used by industrial marketing firms, trade shows rank second behind personal selling and ahead of print advertising and direct mail, in terms of influencing the purchase decision process of industrial buyers.

Herbig et al (1998) cites research studies to stress the importance of trade fairs. "A total of 85 percent of attendees of a trade show have buying influence. The cost per visitor is one-third of a personal sales call (Trade Show Bureau, 1986a). It takes approximately 0.8 sales calls on average to close a sale initiated by a trade show lead while most estimates place the number required by a field salesperson to be five. The differential is about 3.5:1 in favour of trade shows. Trade shows provide the opportunity to affect multiple phases of the industrial buying process in one location; they can create awareness in new prospects, reinforce existing customer relationships, provide product demonstrations for evaluation, establish relationships between vendors and prospects, and allow sales of products on the spot. Trade shows significantly influence the industrial buying process during the need recognition and vendor evaluation stages of the purchase process". In a global online survey of 2,300 *HBR* subscribers, 79% said that face-to-face meetings are the most effective way to "meet new clients to sell business." Trade fairs are the most effective tool for face-to-face meetings.

Multidimensional Role of Trade Shows

Various marketing scholars have highlighted the multidimensional role of trade shows. The vital role of trade shows has been highlighted in relationship value creation (Geigenmuller, 2010), key account management (Blythe, 2002), as a communication tool (Blythe, 2010), a promotional tool (Browning, Adams, 1988), internationalization process of small firms (Evers, Knight, 2008), as an information source in the industrial buying process (Moriarty, Spekman, 1984), a complement to

personal selling process (Smith et al, 20 03; O'Hara, Herbig,1993), a strategic role (Fayos Sola et al, 1994), etc.

Importance of tourism/Travel Trade Shows

Tourism provides 6-7 percent of the world's total jobs directly and millions more indirectly through the multiplier effect as per the UN's World Tourism Organization. In India, tourism's contributions to GDP and employment in 2007-2008 were estimated at 5.92 and 9.24 percent respectively as per Tourist Satellite Account Data. FTAs (Foreign tourist arrivals) in India during 2011 posted a growth of 8.9% percent, much higher than the growth of 6.5 percent for the world in 2010. FEEs (Foreign Exchange earnings) from tourism in rupee terms during 2011 had a growth rate of 19.6 percent, despite the slowdown and recessionary trends in the economies of Europe and America. In the case of outbound tourism, the number of Indian nationals' departures from India during 2010 showed a growth of 17.4 percent for the year. Domestic tourist visits during 2010 indicated a growth of 10.7 percent.

Travel trade shows are different from other trade shows as the products are intangible in nature, heterogeneous and perishable. These characteristics make them high in experience and credence qualities. The customer evaluation process is very different from a products trade show.

Yuksel and Voola (2010) highlight the difficulties associated with planning for a travel trade fair They state that the exhibitors have to be more qualified than in fairs for physical products, must ensure consistency in the delivery of quality image and mandates the top managers to exhibit ownership and decision making power. All these underline the complexity of travel trade shows which has an impact on the motivations of exhibitors and visitors to the travel trade shows.

Kerala Travel Mart

In India, there are many well known travel trade shows like SATTE, India International Travel Marts and Travel Trade Shows held in different places in India. These trade shows showcase products from many states. The first destination specific trade show, showcasing only one

state, Kerala, is the Kerala Travel Mart (KTM). Kerala, situated in the southwestern tip of India, has successfully marketed itself as a quality brand to the rest of the world. Some of the key aspects of this brand building are the successful brand slogan 'God's own country', top quality promotional materials, focused advertising in key source markets, participation in international fairs and holding several road-shows at hitherto unexplored markets. One major initiative is the trade show, Kerala Travel Mart (KTM). Formed as a non-profit charitable society in 2000, the KTM is a biennial event where 'buyers' (international tour operators and the media) and sellers (resort owners, tour operators and the state - all members of KTM) directly interact to do business. Besides, seminars, pre/post mart FAM (familiarisation) tours, and cultural evenings, it gives the participants a first-hand experience of the destination.

In 2002, Kerala was able to augment its tourism earnings to Rs. 705.6 crore as against Rs. 535 crore in 2001, representing an increase of 31.8 percent. In 2003, it recorded India's highest growth in international arrivals at 26.8 percent. In 2011, foreign tourist arrivals to Kerala showed an increase of 11.8% over 2010, which is better than UNWTO's projected growth rate of 4% to 5% for the world during the same period. The total earnings from tourist arrivals in 2011 showed an increase of 9.74% over previous year. This shows that Kerala has been significantly successful in its tourism efforts, in creating a key tourism platform for the state and positioning itself competitively in the international tourist market. Kerala Travel Mart has been one of the main instruments for this growth.

KTM Society today has 623 members but the total number of exhibitors who participated in the latest KTM 2012 was only 312, just 50% of the members. It is necessary to know the reasons why tourism firms exhibit in KTM to fully understand the success of KTM as a showcase for Kerala.

IMPORTANCE OF OBJECTIVES IN TRADE FAIRS

The exorbitant cost of exhibiting has forced today's management to set objectives and to evaluate the effectiveness of their objectives. Measuring effectiveness of trade fair participation depends heavily on what the

visitors and exhibitors are hoping to achieve through trade show participation. The importance of well-defined objectives in the planning process cannot be over-emphasized.

Cavanaugh (1976) has spelt out the six areas which the management needs to examine to set objectives: viz. Company's purpose in exhibiting, target audience, advantages to regional/ national/ local exhibiting, efficiency/effectiveness balance, competition, and cost ratio per sales lead obtained. Bonoma (1983) was one of the earliest writers who classified exhibitors' objectives as selling and non-selling. Kerin & Cron (1987) has stated that for a successful trade show programme, written objectives for the overall trade show program should be prepared. Objectives would not only aid in defining the role of trade shows in the firms' marketing programs, but also lead to more thoughtful construction of appropriate evaluation procedures and measures. They empirically demonstrated the selling and non selling functions of trade show. However, their study showed that marketing executives' higher overall ratings for non-selling functions do not support Bonoma's perform contention that marketing executives have a limited perspective on the role trade shows can.

Rosson and Seringhaus (1996) did a case study of Canadian participation in a major fair in Germany. Their study finds that "Trade Fairs are seen to play a universal role in permitting business contacts to be made and information/intelligence gathered. Beyond these basic functions, the leading objectives of companies vary and it is speculated that the stage of internationalization, in part, explains this situation."

Blythe's (2001) survey of exhibitors of two UK exhibitions found that, in most cases, exhibitors were able to ascribe important scores to the reasons for exhibiting given in the questionnaire even when they did not set formal objectives for the exhibition. Exhibitors cited meeting new customers, launching new products and taking sales orders as the three most important reasons for exhibiting. The study also showed that medium-frequent exhibitors (three to six times a year) placed greater importance on launching new products and meeting new exhibitors and frequent exhibitors (more than six times in a year) accorded more importance to meeting existing distributors. However, the study also showed that the number of times a firm exhibits has very little influence

on the attitudes of the management regarding reasons for exhibiting.

Rice et al's (2002) study of firms at an Arabian Gulf Trade show indicates there is not much difference between exhibitors of American and Canadian firms and Arabian firms with respect to objectives. Enhancing image and identifying sales prospects were identified as the most important exhibit goals.

Kozak (2005) reveals the differences among dimensions regarding the exhibit objectives of a travel fair in Turkey. Factor analysis obtained four groupings - 'strategic benefit related activities', 'selling related activities', 'promotion related activities' and 'research related activities'

Tafesse and Korneliussen (2006) investigated the underlying dimensions of trade show performance in an emerging market context. The findings suggest that emerging market exhibitors utilize trade shows as multidimensional marketing and promotional tools. They found four main dimensions representing the competitive-intelligence, the market-scanning, the image building and the relational-sales aspects of the trade show performance.

The purposes for exhibiting are as diverse as the companies exhibiting. Yuksel and Voola (2010) arrived at a set of participants broad goals in participating in international trade fairs by adopting a multiple methodology approach. The results indicate that the most important motivations are to improve relationship with customers to influence demand through communication and to maintain company image. The least important were learning about new suppliers, making direct sales at the fair and conducting research /contacts for business associations).

METHODOLOGY

The Trade Show : KTM 2012

The Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) lasts three days and is held in September every two years at Cochin in the state of Kerala, India. It is strictly a B2B event with the public allowed only on the afternoon of the last day. KTM 2012 had 312 exhibitors and 1198 visitors, both domestic and international. This study was done on the exhibitors who exhibited in KTM 2012 from Sept 28 to 30, 2012.

Data Collection and Analysis

A questionnaire was designed by the researcher based on existing literature. The respondents were asked to rate a list of objectives which were measured on a 5 point scale, ranking from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree". The selection of the questions were compiled, based on a review of the relevant empirical and conceptual studies, and, in particular Kozak (2005), Kijewski et al (1993), Rice (1992), Rosson and Seringhaus (1989,1991,1996), Hansen(1996), Blythe (1999) and Yuksel and Voola (2010). The main objective of the questionnaire was to document and describe the behavior of tourism exhibitors in Kerala, India and to compare the results with similar studies done elsewhere in the world.

Questions about general exhibition behavior related to the frequency of exhibiting in KTM, and other major domestic and international shows of the tourism industry. There was also a section at the end of the research instrument seeking information about the firm's primary business (hotel/resort, tour operator, houseboat operator etc.), the size of the firm in terms of employee strength, nature of ownership of the firm and the respondent's position in the company.

The sampling population of the study consisted of the exhibitors who participated in the Kerala Travel Mart 2012. Using the drop-off method, common for survey research in trade shows, the questionnaires were distributed to the exhibitors, at every alternate stand (systematic sampling) at the beginning of the show and then collected prior to the end of the show. 57 usable responses were obtained, providing a response rate of 37 % which is a good rate for a survey of this kind.

Kaiser -Meyer- Olkin (KMO) measure was calculated to check the adequacy of the sample size. A value of 0.756 was obtained which is considered good. To check the reliability of the scale, Cronbach alpha is calculated which is 0.877, a good value of overall reliability.

Profile of The Exhibitors

There were respondents from each of the participating categories. Hotels/Resorts had the highest percentage of exhibitors (53 %) and the highest percentage of the survey respondents (59.6%).

25 % of the exhibitors and 28.1% of the survey respondents were tour operators. However, in the other categories the percentage of survey respondents was less than the percentage of exhibitors in that category. Survey respondents among Ayurveda specialists were 3.5% (against 5.4% of the exhibitors), Homestays 3.5% (against 7%) and miscellaneous (like hospitals, consultants, media etc.) were 1.8% (against 6%).

The size of the firm has been calculated based on the employee strength. It was found that 36 % of the exhibitors had employee strength more than 100. This may be explained by the fact that majority of the exhibitors (more than half) are from the hotels/resorts industry which, by the very nature of the operations, require more employee strength, than, say, tour operators. 23 % of the firms have employee strength of 11 to 30 employees (medium sized firms), 16% have 51 to 100 employees (fairly large). Only 12.5% were small players with employee strength of less than 10%.

Exhibiting Frequency

74 % of the exhibitors are repeat exhibitors at KTM. This shows the popularity of KTM among the exhibitors which is not surprising as this trade show is a destination specific

trade show. All the exhibitors have Kerala specific tourism products. Hence, exhibiting in Kerala Travel Mart is seen as a must as all the visitors /buyers who come to this trade show come to buy/experience Kerala products.

Since its inception in 2000, KTM has been held seven times, including the latest being studied. Of the repeat exhibitors, 10 % have exhibited in KTM since the inception of the trade show in 2000 i.e. seven times. 23 % of the exhibitors have exhibited twice, 17 % have exhibited four times, and 11.5 % have exhibited three times. Only less than 2 % have exhibited only once. This shows the increasing loyalty of the exhibitors to the show, probably because of the perceived benefits from exhibiting in the show.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the survey results are given in Table 1.

Table 1 shows participant firms' broad goals in participating in Kerala Travel Mart. The results indicate that the most important motivations are giving information about company's products and services, developing and maintaining relationships with existing customers and creating and/or maintaining company image and goodwill.

Table 1: Ranking of Exhibit Objectives

<i>Firms' main goals in participating in KTM</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>SWD</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>SWA</i>		<i>SA</i>	
		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Develop and maintain relationships	4.30	0		1	1.9	9	16.7	17	31.5	27	50
Give information about company's products & services	4.58	0		0		5	9.4	12	22.6	36	67.9
Find potential customers	4.08	1	1.9	3	5.8	10	19.2	15	28.8	23	44.2
Maintain company image & goodwill	4.21	0		2	3.8	10	19.2	15	28.8	25	48
Keep up with competition	3.83	2	3.8	2	3.8	18	34.6	11	21.2	19	36.5
Introduce new products/services	4.08	1	1.9	1	1.9	9	17.3	23	44.2	18	34.6
New distribution channels	4.08	1	1.9	3	5.8	10	19.2	15	28.8	23	44.2
Do market research	3.42	5	9.6	2	3.8	20	38.5	16	30.8	9	17.3
Collect information on competitors	3.46	4	7.7	4	7.7	18	34.6	16	30.8	10	19.2
Actual sales	3.23	4	7.7	9	17.3	20	38.5	9	17.3	10	19.2
Increase morale	3.02	8	15.4	7	13.5	18	34.6	14	26.9	5	9.6
Explore opportunities	3.98	1	1.9	2	3.8	14	26.9	15	28.8	20	38.5
Learn about new suppliers, service providers	3.98	0		2	3.8	16	30.8	15	28.8	19	36.5
Network with senior industry leaders	3.62	3	5.8	3	5.8	17	32.7	17	32.7	12	23.1

Abbreviations : SD – Strongly Disagree, SWD – Somewhat disagree, N-Neutral, SWA – Somewhat agree, Strongly Agree, F – Frequencies

Table 2: Ranking of Exhibit Objectives by Nature of Operations

<i>Firms' main goals in participating in KTM</i>	<i>Nature of Operations</i>				<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>Hotel/Resort</i>		<i>Tour Operator</i>		
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>n</i>	
Give info about company's products & services	4.58	32	4.75	16	.048
Develop and maintain relationships	4.31	31	4.38	16	.059
Maintain company image & goodwill	4.27	30	4.19	16	.587
Find potential customers	4.13	30	4.06	16	.951
New distribution channels	4.07	30	4.00	16	.545
Explore opportunities	4.03	30	4.06	16	.427
Introduce new products/services	4.00	30	4.13	16	.335
Keep up with competition	3.97	30	3.75	16	.883
Learn new suppliers, service providers	3.93	30	4.13	16	.927
Collect information on competitors	3.73	30	3.13	16	.848
Do market research	3.67	30	3.06	16	.383
Network with senior industry leaders	3.63	30	3.63	16	.197
Actual sales	3.43	30	3.00	16	.600
Profile/quality of visitors	3.40	30	3.25	16	.683
Increase morale	2.93	30	3.13	16	.629
Cost of exhibiting is less	2.90	30	3.00	16	.614

The next set of motivations, equal in importance, are finding potential customers, introducing and promoting new products/services, and finding new distribution channels (contacts such as agents, sellers, retailers etc.). Also seen important are exploring market/business opportunities in new regions/segments and learning more on new suppliers, service providers and attractions in Kerala.

The less important motivations are keeping up with the competition, networking with senior industry leaders / top government officials/business associations and the least important are making actual sales at the fair and increasing the morale of the company employees. The frequencies are also indicated in the Table 1.

The above results do not fully confirm the studies of Yuksel and Voola (2010) which had found improving relationships with existing customers as the most important objective and Blythe (1999) which found meeting new customers as the main objective. However, the results that making actual sales at the fair and increasing morale of employees are of least importance, confirm the studies of Yuksel and Voola (2010) and, Blythe (1999).

There is not much difference between objectives based on nature of operations, as determined by an independent sample t test (Table 2).

For both hotels/resorts and tour operators, giving information about products and services, developing and maintaining relationships and maintaining company image and goodwill are the most important objectives. Increasing morale is the least important objective to attend KTM for both categories. These results are diametrically opposite to a study conducted in a tourism show held in Turkey (Kozak, 2005) where the most important objective for the hospitality industry was enhancing morale of company personnel and for tour operators it was comparing with competition. There is no significant effect of the nature of operations on the objectives (as determined by an independent samples t test) except giving information about company's products and services where tour operators indicate significantly higher means than hoteliers/resort owners. (Table 2).

The results obtained when analysis is done based on nature of ownership are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Ranking of Exhibit Objectives By Nature of Ownership

<i>Firms' main goals in participating in KTM</i>	<i>Nature of Ownership</i>				<i>sig</i>
	<i>Single Owner</i>		<i>Private Ltd. Company</i>		
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>n</i>	
Give information about company's products & services	4.68	19	4.48	23	.351
Develop and maintain relationships	4.45	20	3.96	23	.057
Maintain company image & goodwill	4.44	18	3.87	23	.047
Find potential customers	4.28	18	3.78	23	.144
Learn new suppliers, service providers	4.28	18	3.78	23	.098
Introduce new products/services	4.22	18	3.96	23	.372
Explore Opportunities	4.22	18	3.65	23	.075
New distribution channels	4.17	18	3.91	23	.433
Keep up with competition	4.17	18	3.43	23	.024
Do market research	3.61	18	3.09	23	.134
Network with senior industry leaders	3.67	18	3.43	23	.526
Collect information on competitors	3.56	18	3.35	23	.545
Actual sales	3.22	18	2.91	23	.404
Increase morale	3.22	18	2.74	23	.190

Giving information about company's products and services is the most important objective. However, introducing new products and services is ranked second along with developing and maintaining relationships for private limited companies, whereas developing and maintaining relationships is the second most important objective for single owners. Increasing morale and making sales are of least importance for both categories as found earlier. The nature of ownership has no significant effect on the objectives except for "maintaining company image and goodwill" and "keep up with competition" which is of greater importance to single owners. This is based on an independent samples t test.

An interesting trend noticed is that as the firm's experience increases, giving information about company's products and services is the most important objective. (Table 4)

However, for a new firm, with less than 5 years experience, developing and maintaining relationships is the most important objective. Firms with 10 to 20 years experience give finding new distribution channels as their next important objective which is a natural corollary from the primary objective. For firms with more than 20 years experience, maintaining company image and goodwill is the next most important objective whereas for firms with less than 5 years experience, giving information on

company's products and services is the next important objective. This is complete contrast with the results obtained from the Turkish event, (Kozak 2005) where taking sales orders (>20 years experience), collecting information about competitors (10 to 20 years) and enhancing morale of employees (for firms less than 10 years old) are the main objectives. There is no significant effect of the number of years in business on the objectives, as determined by one way ANOVA where for each objective, $p > 0.5$.

CONCLUSION

The various objectives brought out by the various research studies shows the multidimensional aspect of trade fairs and its growing importance as a communication and a marketing tool. The main purpose of this research was to investigate trade fair participation objectives of exhibitors by a sample of tourism firms in an emerging market. Many writers have highlighted the differences between exhibitions in the USA and Europe, for example (Dekimpe et al, 1997). Therefore, it was expected that there might be differences in the way firms in India would behave. However, not much difference is found in the sense that non-selling objectives predominate the objectives of the firms. The findings do not match the findings on

Table 4: Ranking of Exhibitors' Objectives by Years in Tourism Business

<i>Firms' main goals in participating in KTM</i>	<i>< 5 years</i>		<i>5 - 10 years</i>		<i>10 - 20 years</i>		<i>>than 20 years</i>		<i>One way ANOVA</i>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>sig</i>
Develop and maintain relationships	4.44	1	4.10	5	4.20	4	4.36	3	.422	.738
Give information about company's products & services	4.38	2	4.44	1	4.73	1	4.73	1	1.057	.376
Find potential customers	3.81	7	4.22	3	4.07	5	4.36	3	.674	.572
Maintain company image & goodwill	4.19	4	4.00	6	4.07	6	4.55	2	.798	.501
Keep up with competition	3.75	8	3.56	10	4.00	7	4.18	14	.750	.528
Introduce new products/services	3.75	8	4.11	4	4.27	3	4.36	3	1.392	.257
New distribution channels	3.69	11	4.33	2	4.47	2	4.00	8	1.773	.165
Do market research	3.44	12	3.22	12	3.40	10	3.82	11	.546	.653
Collect information on competitors	3.75	8	2.89	14	3.33	11	3.91	10	1.988	.129
Actual sales	3.06	14	3.22	11	3.20	12	3.73	12	.766	.519
Increase morale	3.31	13	3.00	13	2.40	14	3.36	13	2.074	.116
Explore opportunities	4.31	3	3.67	8	3.93	8	4.09	6	1.054	.378
Learn new suppliers, service providers	4.00	5	4.00	6	3.87	9	4.09	6	.124	.945
Network with senior industry leaders	3.94	6	3.67	8	3.13	13	4.00	8	2.236	.096
df = 3,47										

Arabian firms (Rice et al, 2002) for whom the opportunity to gain publicity was important. Giving information on products and services are of greater importance among firms in Kerala, India. The results vary considerably with the results from another study in the tourism industry in Turkey, also an emerging economy (Kozak, 2005). Though the study was limited to a specific trade show in the tourism industry in India, the results validate partially the findings of many studies done in Western countries but do not validate the findings in emerging markets.

Limitations

This study has concentrated only on a destination specific trade show in one country. The results have to be validated with travel trade shows of a more general nature.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study attempted to explore a hitherto unexplored area in marketing communication in tourism industry in an emerging economy. The findings hence need to be treated cautiously. It is possible that objectives may differ across industries. A robust theory also needs to be developed for the trade show participation.

Managerial Implications

It may be noted that this may be the first time such a study has been conducted in India. There are several managerial implications for the travel industry especially the trade fair organizers. Giving information being the main objective of all the exhibitors, it is essential that new buyers/visitors are added to the list. For that the trade show must possess qualities that will attract new buyers/visitors from newer regions each time.

Acknowledgements

Authors gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of Kerala Travel Mart Society in conducting the survey during the Mart.

REFERENCES

- Blythe, J. (2002). Using trade fairs in key account management. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 31(7), 627-635
- Cavanaugh, S. (1976).
- Bonoma, T. V. (1983). Get more out of your trade shows. *Harvard Business Review*, January-February, 1(1), 75-83.

- Browning, J.M., & Ronald, J.A. (1988). Trade shows: An effective promotional tool for the small industrial business. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 10, 31-36.
- Dekimpe M. G., Frangois P., Gopalakrishna S., Lilien G. L. & Bulte C. V. D. (1997). Generalizing About Trade Show. *Journal of Marketing*, October, 61(4), 55-64.
- Evers, N., & Knight, J. (2008). Role international trade show in small firms internationalization: A network perspective. *International Marketing Review*, 25(5), 544-562.
- Geigenmuller, A. (2010). The role of virtual trade fairs in relationship value creation. *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 25(4), 284-292.
- Harvard Business Review Analytic Services Report - Managing across distance in today's economic climate: The value of face-to-face communication.
- Herbig, P., O'Hara, B. & Palumbo, F. A. (1998). Tradeshow: Who, what, why. *Journal of Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 16(7), 425-435.
- Kerin, R. A. & Cron, W. L. (1987). Assessing trade show functions and performance: An exploratory study. *The Journal of Marketing*, 51(3), 87-94.
- Kozak, N. (2008). The expectations of exhibitors in tourism, hospitality, and the travel industry : A case study on East Mediterranean tourism and travel exhibition. *Journal of Convention and Event Tourism*, 10(2), 37-41. doi:10.1300/J452v07n03
- Moriarty Jr., R.T., & Spekman, R.E. (1984). An empirical investigation of the information sources used during the industrial buying process. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 21 (2), 137- 147.
- Rice, G. & Almosawi, M. (2011). A study of exhibitor firms at an Arabian Gulf trade show, *Journal of Global Marketing*, 15(3), 149-172.
- Rosson, P. J. & Seringhaus, R. F. H. (1996). Trade fairs as international marketing venues. A Case Study - Proceedings, 12th IMP Conference. Karlsruhe, Germany.
- Setting objectives and evaluating the effectiveness of trade show exhibits. *Journal of Marketing*, 40(4), 100-103.
- Shoham, A. (1999). Performance in trade shows and exhibitions. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 12(3), 41-57.
- Tafesse, W. & Korneliusson, T. (2006). The dimensionality of trade show performance in an emerging market. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 6(1), 38-49.
- Union Budget. Services Sector. Retrieved from <http://indiabudget.nic.in>. (accessed on November 18, 2012).
- Yuksel, U. & Voola, R. (2010). Travel trade shows: Exploratory study of exhibitors' perceptions. *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 25(4), 293-300.