

THE IMPACT OF THE SALES PROCESS WITHIN THE B2B TRADE SHOW ON THE VISITORS PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: The study aims at showing the role of sale by the booth staff at the B2B trade show and its impact on visitors' purchasing behavior to make the decision to buy.

The study has been applied on the third Jordan Food Fair 2017 and on Food, Nutrition and Diet Exhibition 2017 in Amman, the capital of Jordan. The easy sample method, which included 241 visitors from owners and managers of retail stores, hotels, restaurants, sports halls, cafes, etc. Was adopted. The questionnaires that have been analyzed were (200). The most important findings of the study are:

Most visitors were senior management staff and from procurement management, where the majority of them visited the B2B trade show to purchase. 65% of visitors decided to purchase the offered product whether the deal took place in the exhibition or it will be completed after the B2B trade show. On the other hand, only 8% of visitors had the intention to purchase.

The sales process within the B2B trade show on the Visitors purchasing behavior was partially supported in this study.

The booth staff at the B2B trade show had the role that made visitors pay attention and razing their interest in the product in order to create the desire and preference in them, which prepared the ground for the final outcome, that is the achievement of sale with regard to the rest of marketing effects in the booth at the B2B trade show.

Key words: sales process, B2B trade show, visitors' purchasing behavior, booth staff.

1. INTRODUCTION

Companies invest a lot of money from their marketing budget at trade show, reaching more than 20% (Sridhar *et al.*, 2015).

This because they attract a very large number of visitors who are considered as a target market for the company (Herbig *et al.*, 1997; Shipley *et al.*, 1993). In addition to the visitors invited by the exhibitor there is a big number of visitors invited by competitor companies, or those individuals attending the trade show by their own. All of them constitute targeted marketing opportunities (Godar & Connor, 2001), who are present in one place (Blythe, 2010), which is not available in any other marketing element.

B2B trade show gives visitors the opportunity to experience that other means of marketing do not give , where visitors have the opportunity to try the product, meet with the staff personally and interact with them in one location in a neutral atmosphere(Godar & Connor, 2001; Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010), thus providing positive impact on visitors purchasing behavior. So, it is one of the important elements of the marketing mix of companies B2B (Sridhar *et al.*, 2015), providing the opportunity for effective impact in all the phases of the purchasing process (Sashi & Perretty, 1992).

The trade show is also characterized by lower costs of access to potential customers (physical) compared to other marketing methods (Smith *et al.*, 2003). Visiting

trade show is an effective way for visitors to access rich information about the product at a low cost as well. (Sharland & Balgoh, 1996)

Research also suggest that B2B trade show is one of the three most important factors influencing the consumers' decision to buy (Kijewski *et al.*, 1993). Other researche consider that exhibitions come in the second place in achieving sales (Duncan, 2001). In fact, B2B trade show may not achieve all sales during the show (Smith *et al.*, 2004), but ultimately they affect sales in the short and long term after the trade show (Mei-Chin Chu & Sui-Ming Chiu, 2013).

Despite the importance of trade show to all parties involved, research on trade show are rare. (Blythe, 1999; Hansen, 2004), and according to researchers, research on sales at trade show is almost absent. We have not found any studies that links the effect of sale in the booth with the purchasing behavior of visitors and the visitor's point of view. The researcher's knowledge indicates that research in Arabic on expiations is very rare, especially in Jordan despite the importance of B2B trade show as a low-cost promotional source due to the large number of visitors attending the trade show. We have focused on food industries because it has a relative advantage in agricultural activity in Jordan, so these exhibitions constitute basis for increase of sales of these companies in the domestic market, which later leads to increase competitiveness of Jordan's exports of food industry products to the countries in the world, especially to the Gulf countries that are near Jordan.

However ,many companies experience some sales failures in the B2B trade show (Bello & Lohtia, 1993) All efforts and activities carried out before and during and the B2B trade show, and their cost in the trade show, as well as the sales and non-sales objectives might be lost if the staff at the booth in the trade show ca not translate these goals into reality, represented in sales in the exhibition and forming the intention to buy immediately after the exhibition or in the medium or long term. This is confirmed by many researches, including that by (Smith *et al.*, 1999), who assert that any non-selling goal will be meaningless objective if not paving the ground for sale later. Out of this, we come up with to the study problem by raising the following question:

What is the impact of the sales process of the booth staff on the Visitors purchasing behavior?

We have tried to shed light on a very important topic, about which specialized studies are absent as researchers believe, despite the significant role and influence of personal communication in the booth on the success or failure of all efforts of the trade show.

At the same time, most of previous studies have focused on analyzing the effectiveness of exhibitions from the point of view of exhibitors, but from the point of view of visitors they almost do not exist (Udo *et al.*, 2011; Rinallo *et al.*, 2010; Smith *et al.*, 2003).

We also worked on proposing a sale process model in the trade show similar to the traditional sale, but each stage of which differs in the way and method of implementation because of the specificity and difficulties of selling in the trade show compared to the traditional sale.

Also, we proposed a model to measure the effectiveness of the booth staff in each stage of the sale process.

Finally, we presented a set of suggestions and recommendations that help to develop and improve sales skills of the booth employees and thus achieve participation objectives of the trade show with the highest efficiency and effectiveness.

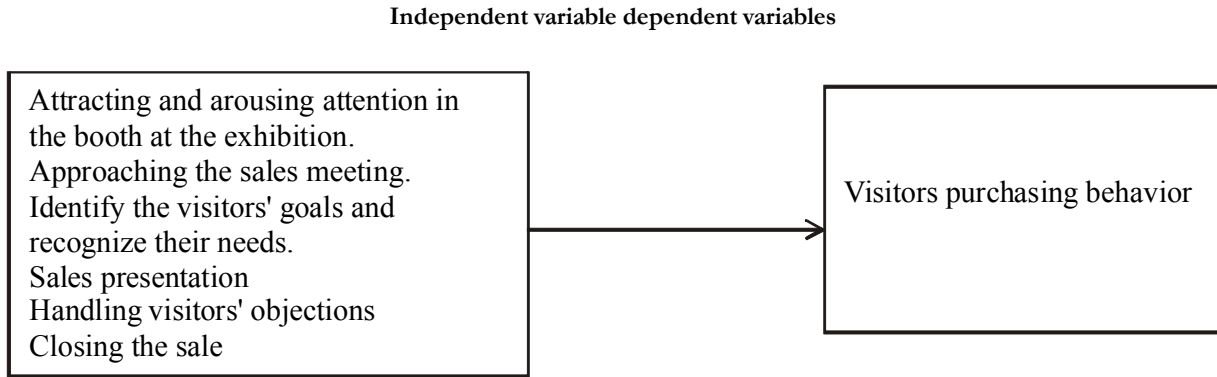
The main objective of this study is to study the impact of the sale process within the B2B trade fair on the Visitors purchasing behavior. . Specifically, to show the impact of sale role by booth staff at the exhibition on the progressive effect of visitors' purchasing behavior to make a purchase decision

The sub- objectives of the research are represented by the evaluation of each stage of the sales process in the B2B trade show from visitors' perspective, evaluation of the visitors' purchasing behavior, and underlying the impact of sales process of the booth staff at the B2B trade show on the visitors' purchasing behavior, and ultimately showing the relative impact of each stage of sales process on the Visitors purchasing behavior.

2. STUDY MODEL

The model of the study shows the independent variables and their effect on the dependent variable as shown below:

Table 1
The impact of independent variables on the dependent variable



The special features and uniqueness of the above model stems from the following points:

First, we could not find any research that examined the effect of the sales process in the booth of the exhibition on the visitor's behavior. Therefore, we could not find any model similar to the above model to measure the effectiveness of the sales process in the booth of the exhibition in related research.

Second, we relied on the stages of the traditional sales process phases models and applied it on the sales process in the booth of the exhibition, since the essence of the for the completion of sales transactions is, to a great extent, similar in the number of its basic phases , regardless the location and conditions of the sale process of any commodity, particularly for the stages related to the Sales presentation and the Handling visitors' objections and closing the sale, for example. Based on that, we worked to introduce some amendments to some stages and we moved the functions of some stages to subsequent stages. Moreover, we clarified that that the method and approach of implementation of each stage must be relatively different because of the fundamental difference in the circumstances surrounding the work of the sales staff in the exhibition are different from the environment and conditions of the traditional sale. This is clearly reflected in the questions of the questionnaire as follows:

1. The first stage of the completion of the sale process in the exhibition is completely different; as attracting and arousing attention in the booth at the exhibition does not exist in They are not present in the traditional sales process. This is evident in the part of the questionnaires regarding this phase.
2. The first stage of the traditional sales process, part of which is related to the market survey and study aiming to reach potential customers after collecting information about them ... etc. , does not exist in the first phase of the process of selling at the exhibition, where the task of these phases are moved to the subsequent stages and implemented in a different manner.
3. The second stage of sale in the exhibition called "approaching the sales meeting" is different from that in the traditional sale, where sales representatives try to fix a date for the potential customer's visit. However, in the exhibition, this task is accomplished in the first stage and in a completely different way of implementation. The rest of activities are similar, but also relatively different in the implementation method due to reasons related to special circumstances and difficulties of working at the exhibition. This is reflected in some questions questionnaire.

4. Phase 3 is related to Identification of visitors' goals and recognizing their needs. They are also different from that in the traditional sales. In traditional sales, sales representatives can skip the task of identifying more customers and collect information about them in order, for example, to see their eligibility to buy. A great part of this task has been achieved in the first stage of traditional sales. On the other hand, at the exhibition, many visitors to the exhibition are either completely new customers, or customers of the competing companies participating in the exhibition, or they might be sent to the exhibition for purposes other than purchase. Therefore, the importance of completing the task mentioned above in the exhibition. In addition, it will be implemented in a different manner based on the circumstances and difficulties of selling at the exhibition. All of this aims to diversify our sale offer in the next phase, and reduce the effort and time required to be accomplished with each visitor because of their different objectives, capacities and needs ... etc. The rest of activities of this stage are similar, but also with different implementation method. This obviously reflected in the questionnaire regarding the three stages that are completed in the exhibition.

Phase 4 (Sales presentation), phase 5 (Handling visitors' objections) and phase 6 (closing the sale) are very similar to the traditional sales process in many topics, but there are differences in the method and manner of implementation for the following reasons:

- In the exhibition, there is lack of full implementation of stages preceding these three stages with the same efficiency and conditions available to traditional sales representatives. This increases the difficulty of implementation of these successive stages on the staff at the exhibition.
- The impact of difficulties and conditions of work at the exhibition forms an additional compressing factor on their efficiency of completion the tasks of these successive. The

most important of these factors are the short time available to deal with each visitor, tiredness of visitors and staff at the booth, the presence of a number of competitors in the same space, the presence of more than one visitor at the same time in the booth of the exhibition and lack of prior knowledge on goals and information of visitors ... etc., which increases the difficulties of accomplishing these tasks with the required efficiency.

Therefore, we have tried through the questionnaire to ask some questions that show the effectiveness of the completion of the sale process at the exhibition at the lowest possible time and the highest effectiveness under the environment and difficult conditions of .work at the exhibition, which means that it reflects the success of sales staff to overcome the difficulty of selling at the exhibition, which signifies the degree of skills staff should possess , that certainly must increase or differ from the skills required for sales representatives working in traditional sales.

What is new in our study model is that we have made the dependent variable, which is visitors' behavior, is linked to their questions and related to the sequence of the influence of visitors' purchasing behavior , starting from drawing the attention, creating interest and the desire and finally creating the preference, which end in the decision to buy the product offered. At the same time, the model shows the gradual effect of the stages of the sale process, in which each stage adds value to the subsequent stage, reaching the purchase decision. However, most of previous studies focus on the impact of performance of the exhibition on the volume of sales or the intention to purchase, or the extent of awareness regarding products of the offering company...etc. We could not find any study that deals with the variable in the way we have already mentioned.

The importance of the proposed model and the questions of the questionnaire along with the practical application on sale conditions in the booth at the exhibition have been set up to meet evaluate the effectiveness of selling in the nutrition exhibitions in Jordan, where the main objective of businessmen from regular exhibition is selling. However, researches that

measure the effectiveness of sales process not only in these exhibitions of nutrition, but also in all exhibitions in general. Further, our goal is to indicate that it is wrong to utilize traditional sales representatives in the exhibition.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sales process in the B2B trade show

The phases of sales process inside the B2B trade show was built and designed

By relying on the traditional personal sales like the models of (Cant & van Heerden, 2008)

(Prospecting, Planning the sales call, Sales presentation, objections, closing the sale

Follow –up), the model adopted by (Altrjman, 2017) (Preparation for the sale meeting, The Approach, Problem Recognition, The Presentation, Objections Handling, Closing the sales , Follow –up), and many models that differ slightly in form but similar in contents.

Similarly, sales phases inside the exhibition are slightly different in form, but they are significantly very similar, one of which, for example, is that of (O'Hara. &Herbig, 1993).

Trade show personnel, must initiate contact, open the sales call, qualify, identify needs, present, close the sales call, and record results.

However, the model we proposed depends on making the sales process phases exclusive to the B2B trade show into five phases as follows:

Attracting and arousing attention in the booth exhibition, approaching the sales meeting, identify the visitors' goals and recognize their needs, Sales presentation, handling visitors' objections, closing the sale.

The stages of the sales process in the booth are largely similar to traditional sales, but each stage of which differs in the style and manner of its implementation (Bello & Lohtia, 1993). This is due to a combination of complex factors and conditions prevailing in the exhibition, that force the booth staff to adapt their efforts (Spiro & Weltz, 1990), the most important of which is the limited time available to sales meeting , the fatigue of

the booth staff , the presence of more than one visitor to the booth at the same time, and the increase in the number of visitors at the peak time, as well as the presence of a group of competitors within narrow geographic space (Dwyer *et al.*, 2000) Differing visitor goals, nature and career status(Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2010; Blythe, 2002) the presence of more than one booth staff in the same place, the presence of non-personal effects in the place of display and the existence of interaction between visitors themselves in the place of sale, and the impact of the halo of the B2B trade show and the prevailing atmosphere ... etc.

Therefore, regular booth staff who are not qualified to sell at the show will fail to take advantage of the sale in the B2B trade show.

So, the staff should have the knowledge and skills needed to successfully complete each stage of the sales process so as not only to end the sale, but also to achieve the objectives of the sales and that of the non-sales as a significant proportion of sales will be achieved after the trade show

Stage 1: Attracting and arousing attention in the booth at the B2B trade show: A large proportion of visitors to the B2B trade show are new to the exhibitor, so there is a great opportunity to win new customers.

However, a large proportion of them had already planned to visit certain exhibitors, and at the same time they do not have enough time and are tired. All of this forms an additional challenge for the booth staff, and also because of the large numbers of visitors passing through the walkway, so the booth staff have very little time, just seconds, to attract them to the booth.

The issue may become more difficult due to the physical environment and promotion methods in the booth. Moreover, the task of the booth staff is certainly difficult and requires the exertion of great efforts to attract visitors to the booth.

Stage2: Approaching the sales meeting:

Whatever the objective of the visitors visiting the B2B trade show is, it is necessary to attract their attention and interest in the sale offer. By the end of this stage, mutual trust must be built with them to prepare the

message that meets their objectives from the visit (Blythe, 2009). The aim is not always to end the sale in every meeting. This stage is considered the cause of transformation to start establishing lasting relationships with customers and turning visitors from focusing on the product to exhibitors (Berne & García-Uceda, 2008).

Stage 3: Identify the visitors' goals and recognize their needs:

The few seconds of this stage are important for sorting out visitors and setting goals (Ling-Yee, 2006), their needs and marketing problems, as well as career status and the ability of decision-making (Blythe, 2002).

This is to direct the Sales presentation effectively and in accordance with the limited time available and stressed visitors ... etc. Therefore, the decisive factor for successful participation in exhibitions is to understand the visitor's goal and ability to achieve it efficiently (Godar & Connor, 2001).

The real success of the trade show is eventually made by achieving the objectives of visitors, exhibitors and organizers of the trade show (Gopalakrishna et al., 2010)

Stage 4: Sales presentation:

Due to lack of time and exhaustion of the visitors who have been overfed by a great deal of information, the Sales presentation should focus on specific characteristics of the product and the benefit they give to the visitors in particular, providing proofs of the validity of his claims, while the employee in charge maintains the attention of the visitor to his Sales presentation and ensuring that they understand what he has offered them.

On the other hand, the direct goal of some visitors may not be to buy (Blythe, 1999). This means that the sales message and information should be directed to intersect with the nature of visitors and their objectives from visiting the trade show (Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2010).

When the goal of the visitor is not purchase and a sale message designed to achieve the goal of sale only was directed to him, he will ignore the message and will not achieve any purpose (Blythe, 1999).

This requires the non-standardization of their communication messages with visitors as all visitors are

important regardless their different nature and positions or goals, But with different rate of importance. All visitors can have a relative impact on sales outside the fair and over a different time period (Blythe, 2009). Therefore, moving through all stages of the sales process in order to end the sale should be directed to customers who have the decision making power only.

Stage 5: Handling visitors' objections:

The objection is nothing more than a negative comment on the product and it is the means of the visitor to inform you that he has a need the product does not meet. The professionals of the booth staff usually look for these objections to take advantage of them. The correct handling of these objections will reflect positively in sales achievement. Perhaps, what makes it difficult to respond to objections of visitors is the great number of visitors, their presence in the same place and the limited time available.

Stage 6: Closing the sale:

The booth staff has a number of strategies at this stage, where the ones used are those that match the nature of needs of each visitor individually, and any error in successfully progressing towards the end of the sale or inability of the staff member to feel the right moment to stop talking and call for end of sale will destroy all efforts in the previous stages of sale. The process of termination at the B2B trade show requires special skills and tactics from the booth staff due to the fatigue and lack of time of visitors and other factors and difficulties of selling at the B2B trade show.

It is not a requirement that all sales meetings should result in end of sales (O'Hara, 1993) since there are many transactions will be completed after the B2B trade show through the follow-up process (Lee & Kim, 2008).

(Smith *et al.*, 2004) emphasizes the need to focus on the follow-up efforts after the end of trade show because of insufficient efforts at the B2B trade show sometimes do not end the sale.

Visitors' purchase behavior: The impact on the Visitors' purchase behavior begins with attracting and arousing the visitors' interest in the product offered and then forming the desire, preferring to buy and then buy.

4. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT AND SUGGESTED MODEL

B2B trade show activities and role of personal contact in the booth:

Other than personal contact in the booth before, during, and after the B2B trade show, there is a range of activities that play an important role in supporting booth staff in achieving sales (Smitha *et al.*, 2004; Sridhar *et al.*, 2015), or to discourage their ability to do so (Blythe, 2009), including activities prior to the B2B trade show like choosing the appropriate B2B trade show and planning for it including decisions to hire, and specify the number of staff in the B2B trade show and train them (Ling-ye L, 2007; Lee & Kim, 2008), and invitations to visitors (Gopalakrishna & Lilien, 1995), as well as the design of the booth and its location in the trade show etc. (Lee & Kim, 2008),

Non-personal communication activities at the trade show are those included in the booth...etc. and after the trade show, they include the follow up of visitors, measuring and evaluating the performance of the trade show (Lee & Kim, 2008).

In spite of the positive or negative impact of these activities, the booth staff play an important role in mitigating the negative effects of activities that should have a negative impact on the success of their interaction with visitors, such as the decrease or increase of the number of visitors to the booth beyond the booth staff energy... etc.), through their skill, experience and efficient performance, as well as their ability to invest the quality of these positive activities to achieve greater results.

In order for the sales process to succeed in influencing the Visitors purchasing behavior, it must first be successful in attracting their attention to the booth and raise their interest to follow-up sales offer in the booth. With the move from stage to stage parallel with the achievement of the objectives of each stage of the sales process, the gradual impact on the visitor's purchase behavior begins and moving him gradually from the stage of attracting attention and raising interest in the product offered ... etc. to eventually reach the achievement of purchase achieved through the successful completion of the sale, that is the final stage of the sale.

Several studies have confirmed that there is an impact for the exhibition's activities, including the performance of the employees within the booth of the exhibition on visitors' purchasing behavior, which is represented by end of the purchase or purchase intention.

The results shown in (Smitha *et al.*, 2004) indicate that sales and post-exhibition buying levels were greater for the group of visitors attending the exhibition than those who did not attend.

Some studies have argued that the effectiveness of the trade show does not always appear directly, so I studied the trade show's effectiveness by measuring the intentions of buying from it (Smith *et al.*, 2003; Hightower *et al.*, 2002).

It is true that all non-personal and personal trade show activities play an influential role in the visitors purchasing behavior (Sridhar *et al.*, 2015). However, the major and crucial role is related to personal contact in the booth through the sale process, where sales are generated directly during the trade show or buying intentions are created (Smith *et al.*, 1999) The shift of purchase intentions into sales shows the importance of follow-up after the trade show (Lee & Kim, 2008).

In his study, (Sridhar *et al.*, 2015) also concluded that the impact of the workers in the booth on the new customers' intentions of buying exists, while the impact of communications after the trade show on the procurement was higher amongst existing customers.

(Gilliam, 2015) showed that the impact of the booth in the **exhibition** on the performance and behavior of both attendees and booth staff of the exhibition is represented by their performance, which is eventually reflected in the achievement of exhibition objectives, including sales.

As for a study by) Farhangmehr & Simões 2015), it has shown the importance of personal communication in the exhibition, which is a basis for building trust and establishing long-term relationships with visitors, and to encourage social interactions between buyers and sellers.

As for the research by (Sarmiento *et al.*, 2015), it stressed the importance of understanding the objectives of both visitors and exhibitors, and that the workers in

the wing must imitate the objectives of visitors, which must be reflected positively on the performance of the trade show, including sale.

(Çobanoğlu & Turaevab, 2014) has shown that the efficiency of the booth staff is a function of a range of factors related to the extent of their work experience in the trade show and the quality of selecting and training them and their important impact on the performance of the company exhibiting at the trade show.

As for (Mei-Chin Chu & Sui-Ming Chiu, 2013) either between the role and importance of follow-up after the trade show, and the professionalism of the booth staff and their deep knowledge about the product and trade and its impact on visitors' decisions in the trade show and after.

As regards the quality of service role, (Udo *et al.*, 2011), stated that booth staff when they provide a good communication service, it must be reflected positively on the intention to buy. (Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2010), indicated that the heterogeneity in the behavior and actions of visitors must require different behaviors by the staff of the booth in the trade show in communicating with them, which eventually must be reflected positively on the performance and results of their work in the exhibition. (Blythe, 2009) also confirmed that the booth staff should not only focus their sales message on potential buyers at the exhibition, but on the achievement of non-selling objectives, which should give their results in the formation of the intention to buy.

(Lee & Kim, 2008) at the same time showed the importance of the impact of raising the quality of the performance of the booth staff through training them and the determination of their numbers in a deliberate manner, as well as the impact of follow-up activities after the trade show to raise sales performance.

(Smith *et al.*, 2004) As for the role of the trade show, including the efforts of the staff in the booth in preparing for the sale outside the exhibition should be considered as not all the efforts of the trade show will always pay off directly in the trade show.

(Godar & O'Connor, 2001) found out that Determination of the nature of visitors and their different goals in advance must lead to the increase of effectiveness

of sales meeting, thus achieving the objectives of the trade show.

(Blythe, 1999) stressed that the message provided by the booth staff should be in line with the visitors' goals during the meeting in the booth, in order to reflect positively on their sales performance.

(Smith *et al.*, 1999) finally confirmed that the impact of the trade show, including those working in the booth, enhances the effectiveness of personal selling. The researcher concluded that the participation in the trade show significantly reduces the cost of sales and follow-up efforts until the closing of the sale, and that the trade show generates positive effects on customers' buying intentions.

It is noted that all of the previous studies mentioned above examined the effect of all or some of the trade show activities, including personal contact of the booth workers on the sale or intention to purchase. Nevertheless, but we did not find any study that analyzed the impact of each stage of the sales process on the Visitors purchasing behavior, which is expressed in our hypotheses, as follows:

4.1. Hypotheses

The first hypothesis: The sales process of the booth staff affects the Visitors purchasing behavior Sub- hypotheses:

First sub-hypothesis: The stage of Attracting and arousing attention in the booth at the B2B trade show affects the Visitors purchasing behavior.

Second hypothesis: The Approaching the sales meeting affects the Visitors purchasing behavior

Sub-hypothesis 3: The stage of identify the visitors' goals and recognize their needs affects the Visitors purchasing behavior.

Sub-hypothesis 4: The stage of the Sales presentation affects the Visitors purchasing behavior.

Sub-hypothesis 5: The stage of handling visitors' objections affects the Visitors purchasing behavior.

Sub-hypothesis 6: The stage of closing the sale affects the Visitors purchasing behavior.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the analytical descriptive method and collection of data by means of the questionnaire. The data were analyzed and statistically analyzed to test hypotheses validity.

5.1. Data collection

Study population

The study population consists of all specialized B2B trade show of food industries held in Amman in the year 2017, which accounted to (4) B2B trade show.

The study sample

The sample of the study was chosen by adopting the personal judgment method of the researcher because of the great similarity among exhibitors in exhibitions specializing in food stuff. Two B2B trade show were chosen from the study sample: The first one is the third Jordan Food of 2017, and the Nutrition and Regimens exhibition of 2017 which was held in Amman the capital of Jordan. The two B2B trade show aimed at business men of owners and managers working in retail stores , hotels, restaurants, sports halls, cafes, etc.,. Which were the aim of our study. As for the total number of visitors of the first B2B trade show, it was 432, whereas the visitors of the second B2B trade show were 217 according to the date obtained from the two exhibition administration. The easy sample method was chosen. The sample of visitors chosen was the sample of the study of the first B2B trade show, which accounted to 164 (37.96% of visitors), whereas the number of visitors of the second B2B trade show was 77(35.48% of visitors). This was done by covering almost the most of the time of the B2B trade show. This was done by cooperation with the team work and the female employees of the two B2B trade show, who were in charge of registering the visitors of the exhibition. The aim and nature of the study was explained to them, as well as the details of the questions in the questionnaire, and the way of attracting visitors to answer the questions. I personally used to be there particularly at the rush periods in order to follow up and evaluate the distribution of the questionnaire. 41 questionnaire were not considered since they were invalid

for analysis, and only 200 questionnaires were analyzed (82.98%)

5.2. Study tool

The study tool is the questionnaire that consisted of (5) paragraphs, and divided into three main sections:

- A Section I: It is concerns with the career status and visitors' goal of visiting the exhibition, and the number of visitors who decided to purchase in the exhibition or they had the intention to urchase.it It comprises (5) paragraphs.
- B Section II: It relates to the stages of the sale process and consists of six main paragraphs.
 - 1. Attracting and arousing attention in the booth at the B2B trade show It contains (7) paragraphs.
 - 2. The Approaching the sales meeting. It contains (5) paragraphs.
 - 3. Identify the visitors' goals and recognize their needs. It contains (7) paragraphs.
 - 4. Sales presentation. It contains (11) paragraphs.
 - 5. Handling visitors' objections. It contains (6) paragraphs.
 - 6. Closing the sale. It contains (8) paragraphs.
- C Section III: It relates to Visitors purchasing behavior. It includes (5) paragraphs.

6. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In order to test the study validity of study measures, Content validity and construct validity were used, Based on extensive literature review and interviews with the academic experts in the field content validity was supported.

Construct validity measures whether a scale is an appropriate operational definition of a construct (Flynn *et al.*, 1990). Construct validity was done by A principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation after collecting data (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Tables 1 and 2. All items loaded strongly (.0.5) on their appropriate factors which supported their dimensionality (Hair *et al.*, 1998).

Reliability was operationalized using internal consistency method value for attract and stimulate

attention in the booth exhibition equal .883, approaching the sales meeting equal .841, identify the visitors' goals and recognize their needs equal .867, sales presentation equal .855, respond to visitor objection equal .765, closing the sale equal .859 and visitors purchasing behavior equal .777 . Generally, these values are exceed recommended minimum 0.7 (Nunnally (1978), and this result establishes the reliability of all the theoretical constructs.

Table 2
Factor analysis: independent variable constructs

<i>Attracting and arousing attention in the booth exhibition</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>Reliability</i>
6	The vitality and effectiveness of the booth staff who attracted you to enter their booth.	.698	.883
7	The success of booth staff in using their body language (their looks and facial expressions) to connect you with you, resulting in attracting you and raising your attention to enter their booth.	.753	
8	The success of booth staff in starting their conversation with you (for example, asking questions to make you pay attention), which attracted you and raised your interest to enter their booth.	.800	
9	The success of booth staff in expressing their interest and respect of visitors, which attracted you and raised your attention to enter their booth.	.660 .849	
10	The hospitality shown by the booth staff to visitors that attracted you and raised your attention to enter their booth.		
11	The staff were not busy and they were very pleased to attract you and raise your attention to enter their booth.	.831	
12	The willingness of booth staff to offer any services requested by visitors, which attracted you and raised your attention to enter their booth.	.759	
<i>Approaching the sales meeting</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>Reliability</i>
13	The success of booth staff in attracting you for their Sales presentation.	.777	.841
14	Booth staff were successful in attracting your interest to hear and see your Sales presentation.	.826	
15	Booth staff responded quickly to your way and style of verbal and physical communication.	.729	
16	Booth staff were successful in creating a friendly and harmonious relationship with you.	.840	
17	Booth staff were successful in creating a mutual atmosphere with you shortly.	.740	
<i>Identify the visitors' goals and recognize their needs</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>Reliability</i>
18	Booth staff sought meeting you to try discover the nature of your purpose of visiting the exhibition.	.740	.867
19	When they discover your goal of purchasing, the booth staff made sure that you had the power of purchasing or whether you are influential in purchasing.	.795	

The Impact of the Sales Process within the B2B Trade Show on the Visitors Purchasing Behavior

20	When discovering that you have the power of purchasing or that your role is effective in purchasing, the employee made sure that you had the power of purchasing	.671	
21	The booth staff stimulated you to talk about your problems or unmet needed.	.814	
22	Booth staff alerted you to your problems and needs regarding the aspects that you had never felt about before.	.776	
23	Booth staff were highly provisional in discovering your problems and needs Booth staff needed not long time to	.640	
24	discover your problems and needs.	.780	
<i>Sales presentation</i>			
	<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>Reliability</i>
25	Booth staff presented /offered a brief sale offer, focusing specifically on your needs.	.745	.855
26	Booth staff presented their sale offer in logical sequence, trying to explain and simulate that the product benefits directly match your needs.	.773	
27	Booth staff, relatively. Gave more time and effort to clarify the features which are most important to you. Booth staff translated product features into benefits appealing to you.	.602	
28	Booth staff answers to your inquiries were professional and accurate.	.613	
29	The booth staff answered your questions briefly, adequately and satisfactorily.	.701	
30	Both staff provided you with all required and necessary information to make a purchase decision at the trade show or in the future.	.561	
31	Booth staff made sure that you understood each piece of information provided before moving on to another piece of information.	.500	
32	Booth staff kept your attention throughout the selling offer	.540	
33	Booth staff presented convincing proofs that corroborated the information they were marketing about the product	.501	
34	Booth staff made sure of your satisfaction regarding proofs presented to you.	.757	
35		.712	
<i>Handling visitors' objections</i>			
	<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>Reliability</i>
36	Booth staff encountered your objections to the product quietly in trust and self-confidence.	.734	.765
37	Booth staff responded to your objections with professionalism and in a convincing manner.	.851	
38	Booth staff inquired about any other objection you had before they started responding to your objection.	.731	
39	Booth staff, in many cases, made the objection an opportunity to convince you that the product is specifically suitable to your needs.	.644	

40	When submitting your objection during the sales offer, booth staff convinced you to defer the objection until they finish the sale offer.	.527	
41	Booth staff persuaded you to answer your objections after the exhibition when answering them require a lot of details.	.549	
<i>Closing the sale</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>Reliability</i>
42	The Booth staff prepared to finish the sale with a quick review of the benefits and proofs they gave in their sale offer.	.582	.859
43	Booth staff have adopted the appropriate and convincing method for you to finish the sale.	.651	
44	The Booth staff did not hesitate to end the sale at the time of the first signal that indicates your conviction of the offer.	.697	
45	Booth staff did not require much time to finish the sale.	.775	
46	Booth staff had successfully provided convincing solutions when you refused to complete the sale.	.807	
47	Booth staff did not do an unjustified pressure to finish the sale.	.753	
48	Booth staff did not rush to end the sale before their offer was completed.	.793	
49	Booth staff withdraw at the right moment when you insist that you do not want to complete the sale.	.606	

Table 3
Factor analysis: dependent variable constructs

<i>Visitors purchasing behavior</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>Reliability</i>
50	Booth staff sought to attract your attention to the product displayed.	.770	.777
51	Booth staff sought to raise your interest in the product offered.	.821	
52	Booth staff worked to create a desire towards your product	.699	
53	Booth staff worked to create your preference for the product displayed.	.655	
54	Booth staff worked to stimulate you to make a decision to buy the product offered.	.701	

7. ANALYSIS

7.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 4
Job status, the objective of visiting the B2B trade show and the visitors' responses

54% senior management, 32% procurement department, 7% marketing, 7% other divisions	1- Department of your work
39% general manger, 15% deputy general manager, 39% head of department, 7% other divisions	2- Your position in the company

No	Yes	3- You visited the exhibition to	
27%	73%		To purchase directly from the exhibition regardless whether you purchased or had the intention to purchase.
8%	19%	a-	To collect information and compare in order to make a purchase decision in the future regardless whether you purchased or had the intention to purchase or not.
No	Yes	4- You have visited the exhibition to:	
7%	1%		Not to buy from the B2B trade show, but your visit encouraged you to purchase.
2%	5%	a-	Not to buy directly but your visit to the B2B trade show encouraged you to have the intention to purchase.
2%	0%	b-	Not to collect information and compare in order to purchase in the future, but your visit encouraged you to purchase.
0%	2%	c-	Not to collect information and compare in order to purchase in the future, but your visit made you have the intension to purchase.
No	Yes	5-was made by you in the exhibition	
44%	56%	a-	Make the decision to purchase whether the deal was made in the B2B trade show or after.
36%	8%	b-	Just making the intension to purchase in the future.

Table (4) above shows that the highest percentage of visitors, which is 54%, are senior management individuals. This simply explains that most of the companies visiting the B2B trade show, are small, medium and family owned companies, in which decision-making authority is concentrated mainly in the senior management. This is confirmed in a study by (Bello, 1992) who argues that B2B trade show attracts owners and managers of small businesses who usually have the main opinion in the decision-making process.

This percentage is followed by 32% of visitors who were from the procurement department. This eventually is in line with the result mentioned in the table above that is the main aim of 73% of visitors was to purchase directly from the B2B trade show.

If we look at the total number of visitors shown in the table above, we find that 54% of visitors were senior management individuals, 32% from the procurement department, 7% marketing. We find that they were the decision makers or have the influence over the purchase. This corresponds to the study by (Swandby et al., 1990) who said that the percentage of visitors who have the influence over the decision of purchase of their companies accounted for 80%. Also this corresponds with the study by (Rosson & Seringhaus, 1995), who found that the percentage of influent people over the decision among the attendees are between 79% to 93%, including

the final decision makers to purchase who were between 22% and 51% of the attendees. Moreover, this also is close to the research by (Bello, 1992), which found that 78% of the attendees share one decision or more.

As shown in table (4) 73% of people mainly visited the B2B trade show in order to purchase, and this might be against some studies. This can be explained in our study as it is related to the specification of the product which is the food stuff exhibited.

The following important note from the above table is that the percentage of those who came to the B2B trade show aiming not to buy accounted to 27%, which is in line with the results of previous research, including (Blythe, 1999; Hansen, 1996), whereas the goal of 19% of visitors was to gather information for a decision in the future.

The most important note is that out of the 8% of those who did not intend to buy or collect information and compare in order to make a purchase decision in the future, 1% purchased and 7% had the intention to do so in the future. The explanation of this is that we refused to accept the answer to the questionnaire. In addition, we think that they fell under the influence of discounts and sales activation tools. Perhaps, they felt they should not be deprived from the opportunity where competitors benefited from visitor and the efficiency of sales staff.

Finally, it is shown in Table (56) that 56% of visitors to the B2B trade show decided to buy the product, whether or not the deal took place in the B2B trade show. This 56% is a high percentage out of 73% of visitors whose goal was to buy from the B2B trade show. This close to the study by (Blythe, 2002) who argues that trade B2B trade show have been widely viewed as a way of making sales. Exhibitors usually rank selling objectives high on the list of importance. He found that 40% of the visitors had no role in the purchase that is 60% had a role in the purchase. This concept is far from the survey of Tanner (1997), who found that 26% of visitors had just signed the purchase orders at the B2B trade show. The explanation of this is again due to many reasons relating to the nature of food commodities, the fact that

the exhibitions in Jordan are adopted as a means of selling and the use of tools to stimulate sales and high sales efficiency of the booth staff.

The same table shows that only 8% of visitors had an intention to purchase the product in the future. Our explanation for the low percentage of those who had the intention to buy came within the explanation of the reasons that led to a greater percentage of sale in the B2B trade show, the most important of which the nature of similar food uncomplicated commodities...etc.

Table 5 shows the means, standard deviations and inter-correlations of the sales process in the B2B trade show and the Visitors purchasing behavior

Table 5
Correlations, means and standard deviations

Variable	Mean	Std.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attracting and arousing attention	4.16	.677							
Approaching	4.13	.639	.609*						
Identify goals and needs	4.05	.637	.445*	.776*					
Sales presentation	4.08	.531	.547*	.666*	.703*				
Handling visitors' objections	4.06	.565	.562*	.469*	.618*	.653*			
Closing the sale	3.85	.549	.744*	.563*	.534*	.575*	.668*		
Visitors purchasing behavior	4.01	.595	.570*	.342*	.207*	.545*	.402*	.575*	

*Sig<.05

7.2. Hypothesis testing

Table 6
Result of interaction regression

Variables	Model 1		
	B	t-value	Sig
Attracting and arousing attention	.222	2.686	.008
Approaching	.001	.009	.993
Identify goals and needs	.450	4.757	.000
Sales presentation	.572	7.182	.000
Handling visitors' objections	.060	.754	.452
Closing the sale	.529		
R ²			
F	36.125*		

* Sig<.05

Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the sales process within the B2B trade show on the Visitors purchasing behavior. A summed scale of six independent variable dimensions and dependent variable was created for regression analysis.

Regression models were analyzed for the dependent variables as shown in Table (6). Results indicated that study models were statistically significant, and explained approximately 52.9 percent of the variance in Visitors purchasing behavior. The regression model was found to be significant ($R^2 = 0.529$; $F = 36.125$) at the $p = 0.01$ statistical level.

Results showed attracting and arousing attention ($\beta = .222$, $t = 2.686$, $P < .05$) are positively related to Visitors purchasing behavior, so H_{11} was accepted. Identify goals and needs ($\beta = .450$, $t = 4.757$, $P < .05$) to be positively related to purchasing behavior of visitors so H_{13} was accepted. Sales presentation ($\beta = .572$, $t = 7.182$, $P < .05$) to be positively related to Visitors purchasing behavior so H_{14} was accepted. Closing the sale ($\beta = .362$, $t = 4.316$, $P < .05$) to be positively related to Visitors purchasing behavior so H_{16} was accepted. However, the effects of Approaching and Handling visitors' objections were not found to be significant, So H_{12} and H_{15} were not accepted. Thus, the sales process within the B2B trade show on the Visitors purchasing behavior was partially supported in this study ($H1$).

8. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

It was found that the majority of visitors to the B2B trade show are from the top management, followed by the heads of the purchasing departments. This is in line with the result, indicating that most of the visitors had the goal of buying. At the same time, however, there was a great percentage of visitors who did not intend to visit the B2B trade show to buy.

Most of the visitors to the B2B trade show are decision-makers. On the other hand, a small percentage, that should not be neglected, came to the B2B trade show not for the purpose of buying or collecting information and making comparison make a purchase decision in the future. The study showed that 56% of the visitors to the B2B trade show decided to buy the product, whether the

deal was made at the B2B trade show or later. Those who had only the intention to buy in the future reached 8%.

The study also showed that there is a relationship between the independent variables (stages of the sales process) and this is in line of the theoretical principles that is each stage leads to the next one. The relative effect regarding the importance of each phase of the sale process (independent variable) on the Visitors purchasing behavior is as follows:

Sales presentation

Identify goals and needs

Closing the sale

Attracting and arousing attention

In our opinion, the most important influence of the sale proposal on visitors' purchasing behavior is the logical result due to homogeneity of food commodities that requires and shows the distinctive capabilities of the booth staff in persuading visitors to distinguish their sale offer from that of competitors. Likewise, discovering the problems and needs of visitors is also important and necessary to increase the efficiency of the sale offer of booth staff. The ability to finish the sale is also an important stage in the sale in the exhibition due to the need for efficiency by taking advantage of time and effort of both visitors and booth staff.

However, the effects of Approaching and Handling visitors' objections were not found to be significant- Our interpretation here is related to the reliance on B2B trade show as an essential tool in the sale of food commodities to businessmen, which led to the emergence of knowledge and close relationship with many visitors. This weakened the role of the introductory stage of the sale meeting. So, it had no significant impact on the visitors' purchasing behavior. As for the stage of responding to objections, our interpretation is related to the simplicity of the product that is food commodities, resemblance of prices, quality levels of the competing goods, which led to just few objections from visitors, so they did not have a significant impact on the visitors' purchasing behavior.

The sales process within the B2B trade show on the visitors' purchasing behavior was partially supported in this study ($H1$).

At the same time, it was found that the sale role of booth staff was important in attracting the attention of visitors and raising their interest in the product displayed to create their desire and preference to the product. This paved the way for the final result that is the sale, due to the rest of the marketing effects in the booth at the B2B trade show.

The good results of booth staff ability to achieve the sale can be explained by the fact that food commodities sold are not complex. Moreover, in Jordan there is reliance on B2B trade show to sell such products mainly to businessmen. This led to the acquisition of knowledge and getting work experience by booth staff in the B2B trade show environment, resulting in a good relationship with visitors.

9. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Increasing the efficiency of booth staff to achieve sale operations in the B2B trade show and reaching the stage of ending the sale since most visitors are decision-makers of the purchase. At the same time, there is a need to increase the efficiency of booth staff to diversify their messages and sales tactics, stemming from two reasons. The first one is to correspond with visitors who came to the B2B trade show with no intention to purchase, and they are not decision-makers in the purchase. This is to create a desire and preference in them for the product displayed in the B2B trade show and not to focus much and waste time and exercise pressure to end the sale in the B2B trade show. The second reason is to correspond with different types of customers because of their different job status along with their different objectives of visiting the B2B trade show and perhaps their personalities, so as to increase the effectiveness of their sale meetings as there is a need to save time and efforts of both staff so as to meet greater numbers of visitors, especially at time peak..... etc.:

It is necessary to develop the efficiency of booth staff at the stage of ending the sale to deal more efficiently with visitors who did not come to the B2B trade show to buy or gather information to make decision in the future. But they might be the decision-makers of purchasing or influential in the purchasing decision. This is to stimulate them to make a decision to buy in the B2B trade show or

later on, on the condition that they should work professionally, know the limit at which they should stop, not to waste more time without result, not to put pressure on visitors, or overuse of sales stimulation tools and stimulate them to make an irrational purchasing decision.

At the same time, the B2B trade show staff should not focus only on ending the sale, but rather on preparing the ground at the B2B trade show to establish lasting relationships and creating loyalty in the visitor towards the exhibitor and also following the visitors after the B2B trade show. There is also the need to increase the efficiency of the booth staff to follow up the sales process after the B2B trade show as long as there is a proportion of visitors who formed the intention to buy only while visiting the B2B trade show. This requires effective follow up after the B2B trade show, so as not to miss the opportunity to achieve the sale.

Due to the homogeneity and simplicity of food commodities, the efforts of sales staff should be developed, especially in the stage of discovering visitors' objectives and needs and the Sales presentation as their role in these stages is very important since it has influence on the purchasing behavior of visitors and creating preference for the product of the exhibiting company, preparing the ground for making the purchasing decision by visitors. This the demand to increase their skills to end the sale and also because of the failure of many sales due to weak efficiency of the booth staff to complete this stage successfully. Therefore, participants in the B2B trade show must show great interest in continuing to develop sales skills of the booth staff, especially in the following stages:

- Attracting and arousing attention.
- Identify goals and needs.
- Sales presentation.
- Closing the sale.

These have positive impact on the visitors' purchasing behavior of the exhibition.

All visitors should be dealt with. However, staff should distinguish different visitors and give the greatest attention to those who have the goals of buying and the power of decision-making to purchase, and the volume

of their purchases are expected to be bigger, where visitors to the B2B trade show ranged from large tourist facilities to small supermarkets. Of course, this does not mean to neglect other visitors, but the weight of the effort and time will be in their favor, due to lack of the time available in the B2B trade show.

Finally, because of sale difficulties in the B2B trade show represented by time constraints, high effort on staff and visitors alike ... etc., in addition to the large opportunities for sale in specialized food B2B trade show and the opportunities to win new customers, all of which at low cost compared to traditional sale outside the B2B trade show. (Bello and Barksdale, 1986; Kerin and Cron, 1987) Hence, more attention should be paid to booth staff management in terms of selection, appointment, training, and motivation as they have a significant effective role over the visitors' purchasing behavior in relation to other marketing elements in the booth in the B2B trade show.

10. THE LIMITS OF THE STUDY

Our study focused only on the sales process within the booth, but we did not discuss the pre- B2B trade show stage as it overlaps with non-personal contact. Likewise, follow-up of customers is not included here as it also overlaps with traditional sale outside the B2B trade show.

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The Impact of the Sales Process within the B2B Trade Show on the Visitors Purchasing Behavior

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