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Conceptual Paper

Trade Fair and Innovation: A Systematic Literature Review.

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present a systematic literature review (SLR) developed to analyse studies on these two research topics: Trade Fair (TF) and Innovation. We aim to understand how TF literature relates to innovation literature. The central contribution of this study is to show state-of-the-art research about the interception of TF and innovation research, and how it can be related to potential avenues for future research in this area. Results indicate an increase in articles for the two fields: TF literature shows a moderate increase, and innovation literature presents an exponential increase over the years. By bridging the two concepts, we conclude that the main research fields bringing together the two concepts are (1) TF as a catalyst for innovation and (2) TF innovation (studies exploring how a TF innovates itself). We then propose further research about these research streams. Furthermore, our work demonstrates that research bridging these two areas is scarce, which is an opportunity to develop the literature.

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Keywords: Trade Fair; Trade Show; Exhibitions; Innovation; Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

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1. INTRODUCTION

TF are essential events for businesses to showcase products, build relationships, and gather information, being an important place for networking (Bettis-Outland et al., 2021; Sarmento & Simões, 2018). TF serves as a platform for learning, relationship building, and collective marketing, particularly for international firms. Further, TF is also valuable for new product development, offering opportunities for idea generation, screening, and testing (Bello & Barczak, 1990) and being a relevant event for promoting product innovations (Dawson et al., 2014; Silva et al., 2022).

Innovation is crucial for business success and competitiveness in today's global economy. Innovation is broadly defined as the development and implementation of new ideas that create value (van de Ven & Rogers, 1988; Varadarajan, 2024; Ven, 1986). Innovation plays a fundamental role in firms' competitiveness, allowing an important competitive advantage in international contexts (Silva et al., 2022).

Although trade fairs (TF) have been widely examined in marketing and export literature, their intersection with innovation remains insufficiently addressed (Sarmento & Simões, 2019; Silva et al., 2022). As noted by Silva et al. (2023), innovation is still a stagnant theme within TF research, highlighting the need for a comprehensive review that consolidates current findings and outlines future research opportunities. Moreover, trade fair literature has historically emphasised performance and relationship metrics but neglected innovation-oriented outcomes (Tafesse & Skallerud, 2017). In fact, despite the clear importance of TF in business, academic research on the interception of TF and innovation remains underexplored. Within this context, our study aims to contribute to the discussion on the interception of TF and innovation research. At present, a limited body of research explores the two concepts. Therefore, this paper aims to develop a systematic literature review (SLR) to understand how TF and innovation are studied and the main avenues to develop research about the relationship between TF and innovation.

The SLR will answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How is the relationship between TF and innovation being studied in the literature?

RQ2: What are the gaps in current research on the interception of TF and innovation?

RQ3: What are the main avenues for developing research about the relationship between TF and innovation?

To answer our research questions, we conducted a systematic literature review examining the intersection of trade fair and innovation concepts, analysing 31 peer-reviewed articles. Through rigorous thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006) framework, we systematically examined how TF and innovation concepts integrate in current research. We identified that the main researched fields bringing together the two concepts are: (1) works focused on TF as a catalyst for innovation, and (2) works focused on TF innovation (studies exploring how a TF innovates itself).

In fact, despite their significance, TF has received limited academic attention, giving rise to the need for further research in this area (Sarmento & Simões, 2019; Silva et al., 2023).

The paper is organised as follows. Firstly, a theoretical background of the two concepts is presented. Secondly, the research methodology is presented and described. Then, the research results are presented and discussed. Finally, the findings and implications for future research are presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Trade Fair

"TF are (...) microcosms of the industries they represent (...)"(Rosson & Seringhaus, 1995, p. 87)

TF are planned commercial events that bring businesses together with customers and industry stakeholders (Kourkouridis & Frangopoulos, 2022; Sarmento & Simões, 2018). These events, which can be local, regional, national, or international, typically last 3-5 days and allow companies to showcase products, provide information, and promote services (Kourkouridis & Frangopoulos, 2022). TF serves multiple functions, including facilitating transactions, information exchange, social interactions, and cultural exchanges (Tafesse & Skallerud, 2015, 2017). TF offers opportunities for new product development, particularly in idea generation, screening, and testing (Bello & Barczak, 1990). Moreover, TFs are a desired event for firms to present their product in different stages of development (Kim & Mazumdar, 2016). They serve both selling and non-selling

functions, with various factors affecting performance (Kerin & Cron, 1987). Research on TF has evolved from focusing on individual stakeholder perspectives to more holistic approaches, including relationship building, learning processes, and economic geography (Sarmento & Simões, 2018). Furthermore, TFs are recognised as promotional instruments where firms in industrial markets can reinforce their brands and forge and maintain relationships with current and potential business partners (Rinallo et al., 2017). In fact, TFs are an important platform for promotion and networking in the international market (Geldres-Weiss et al., 2022; Locatelli et al., 2019; Sarmento & Simões, 2018; Silva et al., 2022). Previous research has focused on TF as networking (Bettis-Outland et al., 2021), where different actors such as businesspeople, sellers, buyers, suppliers, distributors, and intermediaries can meet in place and time.

Innovation is one of the objectives for firm participation on TF, mainly regarding new product development and adoption (Bello & Barczak, 1990; Kim & Mazumdar, 2016). In fact, TFs are a relevant event for promoting product innovations (Dawson et al., 2014; Silva et al., 2022). According to the results of the recent study by Silva et al. (2022), SMEs (primarily industrial SMEs) can take advantage of TFs: show product innovations, generate networking, and improve export performance. TF plays a significant role in industrial innovation and knowledge generation processes, serving as a platform for presenting innovations, acquiring information about market changes, and gathering insights about competitor innovations (Bathelt, 2017a). TF is also associated with strong integration in innovation knowledge networks, as participating firms tend to be more R&D intensive and have closer co-patenting linkages than non-participants (Zhu et al., 2020).

The literature identifies three actors at TFs: 1) organisers, 2) exhibitors, and 3) visitors (Lin et al., 2015; Sarmento & Simões, 2018). 1) Organisers are the service providers who organise the event and target the matching between exhibitors and visitors through marketing strategies (Jiménez-Guerrero et al., 2020; Jung, 2005). 2) Concerning exhibitors, their participation in a TF mainly aims at the promotion and sale of products/services, achieving new business and new markets, and assessing the performance of the products/services exposed at the TF (Chu & Chiu, 2013; Silva et al., 2021). In addition, further research presents other than commercial purposes to exhibit at a TF, such as building brand image, stimulating existing relationships and beginning new relationships, and identifying market opportunities (Sarmento et al., 2015; Silva et al., 2021). 3) Regarding visitors, TF provides a platform to meet professionals, experts, and peers from the industry.

Visitors can connect with suppliers, potential clients, and partners to access information about products and industry trends (Bello, 1992; Bettis-Outland et al., 2012; Rinallo et al., 2010; Tafesse & Skallerud, 2015), to be informed about technical and specialised information (Rinallo et al., 2010) and establish relationships in a specific network (Rinallo et al., 2010; Sarmento et al., 2014; Tafesse & Skallerud, 2015).

TFs are undergoing significant changes with the integration of digital and physical channels. This hybrid approach is reshaping how businesses, exhibitors, and visitors interact. In fact, the integration of digital and physical channels in TF may intensify the fruitfulness of international marketing activities, providing a diverse platform for interaction with clients and partners (Ncube et al., 2024; Silva et al., 2023).

Even though the importance of TFs is recognised, existing research in the area seems to be limited (Sarmento & Simões, 2018). According to Sarmento and Simões (2018), further research may focus on multiple participants and their interests to capture the reality from the different stakeholders' perspectives and relationships among them. In this line of thought, and to maximise TF outcomes, exhibitors need to consider TFs strategically rather than merely as venues for soliciting short-term sales orders (Haon et al., 2020; Vitali et al., 2022). Overall, TF remains a significant and multifaceted marketing tool for businesses across industries.

2.2 Innovation

"Innovation is everywhere today."(Kahn, 2018, p. 453)

Innovation has been receiving a strong focus in research across various fields and continues to be a central topic of study. Innovation is broadly defined as the development and implementation of new ideas, products, processes, or organisational changes. It encompasses scientific, technological, financial, and commercial activities necessary to create and market novel or improved offerings (Mehta, 2016). Innovation is a complex concept that has evolved. It is generally defined as a process of creativity leading to something novel and highly useful (Lewis & Wright, 2012). The innovation process involves developing and selecting ideas and then transforming them into practical applications (Mehta, 2016). Innovation encompasses scientific, technological, organisational, financial, and commercial activities necessary to create and implement new or improved products or processes (Mehta, 2016). According to Tabas et al. (2011), innovation can be defined as a change that leads to economic profit for individuals, businesses, or society.

The evolution of innovation research has seen significant shifts over the past few decades. Early studies focused on product innovation, but the field has expanded to encompass a multidimensional view of service innovation (Carlborg et al., 2014). Service innovation has emerged as a critical area of research and practice in the increasingly service-dominated global economy. It encompasses intangible processes and dynamic interactions that lead to organisational change in services (Randhawa & Scerri, 2018).

The concept has evolved beyond traditional product-centric views to emphasise collaboration in actor-to-actor networks, resource integration, and value co-creation (Lusch & Nambisan, 2015). Varadarajan (2024) proposes defining innovation based on idea, outcome, and value creation.

Researchers have called for a move from stage-based models to dynamic, continuous conceptions of the innovation process (van de Ven & Rogers, 1988). A comprehensive framework linking innovation processes and outcomes has been proposed to consolidate various research perspectives (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). According to Damanpour and Aravind (2012), the expansive research on innovation in organisations first followed a technological focus, suggesting that organisations organise their innovation efforts through research and development (R&D) activities. The author defends the importance of studying managerial innovation as a set of new approaches to devise strategy and structure of tasks and units, modify the organisation's management processes and administrative systems, motivate and reward organisational members, and enable organisational adaptation and change (Damanpour & Aravind, 2012).

Regarding innovation in the domain of business activities, various perspectives have arisen. Pavitt (1984) argues that innovation within companies is mainly driven by suppliers or other actors upwards in the value chain (supplier-dominated industries). Moreover, Teece (1986) highlights that the success of an innovator also depends on access to complementary resources that are available through inter-organisational relationships with other actors, such as suppliers and customers. In fact, in the domain of managerial literature, the relationship between customers and suppliers in innovation is extensively recognised. The literature deals extensively with product-related innovation, that is, the generation of a new type of product with new features and applications. Dominidiato et al. (2023) argue that innovation can be successfully achieved through the collaboration of actors linked by continuous exchanges. In fact, the literature on innovation from a network perspective has widely investigated the innovation process, looking for the drivers

behind it and the activities that enable innovation implementation (Dahlquist, 2021; Lee & Qualls, 2010).

Within this context, innovation ecosystem (IE) has emerged as a popular concept in recent years, evolving from the innovation system approach (Lei, 2013). They are defined as a set of actors, activities, artifacts, and institutions that are crucial for innovative performance, including both complementary and substitute relations that are important for the innovative performance of an actor or a population of actors. (Granstrand & Holgersson, 2020). These ecosystems enable collaborative value creation that individual firms cannot achieve alone (Adner, 2006). IE focuses on value creation, interdependence, the relation between actors, and the development of innovation as a primary goal (Adner & Kapoor, 2016; de Vasconcelos Gomes et al., 2018; Steinbruch et al., 2021).

Overall, innovation plays a central role in improving the competitiveness of firms in global markets. The field has progressed from examining individual-level factors to exploring team, organisational, and multilevel aspects of innovation (Anderson et al., 2014). This evolution reflects a growing recognition of innovation's complexity and its critical role in organisational success. Studies suggest that innovation, combined with a strong network of contacts and partners, can provide a significant competitive advantage in international contexts (Silva et al., 2022).

3. METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions, this study uses a systematic review approach. SLR allow planning, pursuing transparent data selection procedures, and combining statistical analysis with thematic analysis (Briner & Denyer, 2012; Denyer & Tranfield, 2009). The SLR is organised into three stages as represented in Figure 1: data search, data analysis, and report (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009).

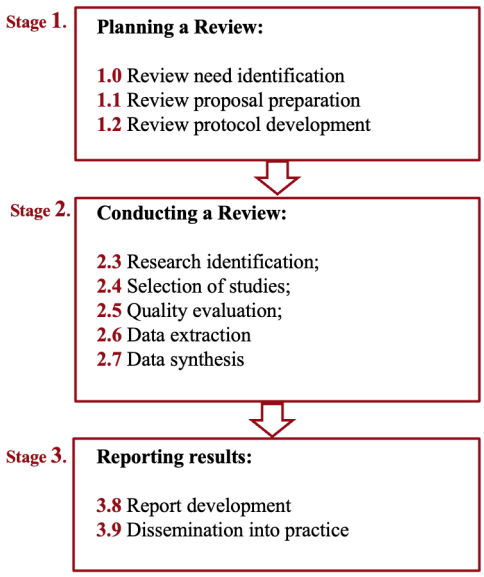

Figure 1. Systematic review stages
Source: adapted from Tranfiled et al. (2003)

Applying this method, originally developed in medical science, according to a positivistic origin, we aim to serve both academic and practitioner communities (Tranfield et al., 2003). SLR enables theory development and identifies areas where research is needed (Webster & Watson, 2002). We aim to review all available relevant research to answer our study research questions. In conducting an SLR, it is possible to summarise the evidence about a subject, identify gaps in the existing research, and suggest further investigation, providing a deep understanding of a new phenomenon (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). Therefore, these reasons are in concordance with the aim of our study. The purpose of this paper is to understand how TF and innovation are being studied in the literature. Therefore, we aim to identify the main streams bringing together the existing literature on TF and innovation.

3.1 Database selection and search process

The Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection was selected as our main bibliographic source because of its internationally acknowledged credibility and prominence in academic research (Kraus et al., 2022; Pranckutė, 2021). As noted by Pranckutė (2021) the WoS Core Collection brings together top-tier journals from various academic fields, systematically arranged into indexes that reflect both the nature of the content and the subject area it covers. Moreover, “WoS core collection may be more suitable for searching and analysing Open Access resources at the publication level" (Pranckutė, 2021, p. 48). To ensure the retrieval of relevant studies addressing the convergence of

TF and innovation concepts, we developed a comprehensive search string combining primary terms and variations:

"trade fair" OR "trade show" OR "exhibition*" AND

"innovation" OR "innovat*"

First, to understand the evolution of both concepts, we searched the terms "trade fair" OR "trade show" OR "exhibition*" and "innovation" OR "innovat*" separately. A search made by "topic" (searches title, abstract, author keywords, and keywords plus) for the keyword "trade fair" OR "trade show" OR "exhibition*" in the WoS, registers 983 works (20th September 2024 cut off). A search made by "topic" (searches title, abstract, author keywords, and keywords plus) for the keyword "innovation" OR "innovat* in the WoS, registers 856.662 works (20th September 2024 cut off). We format the search filter to search for the keywords in the topic field. The symbol asterisk (*) was used as a wildcard symbol to make sure that word variations of the exhibition (such as exhibitions) and word variations of innovation (such as as innovative, innovativeness) were included in the search. When searching the terms "trade fair" OR "trade show" OR "exhibition*" AND " innovation" OR "innovat*" IN the topic, WoS core collection database, we obtained 88 results.

As initial criteria, no data restriction was used; all categories and all works were considered, permitting extended results. Therefore, the search included works such as articles, proceedings papers, reviews, early access, and editorial material. Data collection took place on 20th September 2024. The search for keywords was run twice to increase the reliability of the study. Table 1 synthesises the initial inclusion criteria considered. As a result, we obtained 88 works.

Criteria	Inclusion Criteria	Justification
Data Base	Web of Science Core Collection	worldwide scientific recognized database among academia
Time	all works considered	Permits extended results
Categories	all works considered	Permits extended results
Keywords	"trade fair" OR "trade show" OR "exhibition*" and "innovation" OR "innovat*"	Fits the purpuse of understanding how trade fairs and innovation are being studied
Access	Ful-Text	Guarantees a more accurate interpretation of an article
Language	Study manuscript written in English	Guarantees comprehension and correct representation of the articles
Document Types	all works considered	Permits extended results

Table 1. Search inclusion criteria

3.2. Study Selection Process

Moreover, all results were simultaneously exported to an excel document, where we conducted the first analysis. First, we analysed the abstract and then the paper content to assess the relevance of the document for the study. All records were independently screened by both reviewers at the title/abstract and full-text stages using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. To promote consistency and reduce interpretive variability, a calibration exercise was conducted prior to screening using a random sample of 5 works. This step helped align understanding of inclusion/exclusion boundaries and ensured a shared interpretation of the criteria (Chandler et al., 2019). Intercoder reliability was reinforced through regular meetings to discuss and resolve discrepancies until full consensus was achieved. This dual-reviewer protocol was implemented to mitigate potential sources of bias, such as confirmation bias, selection bias, and reviewer fatigue, by ensuring balanced perspectives, reducing individual subjectivity, and maintaining screening consistency, in line with best practices for systematic review methodology (Page et al., 2020).

We use 4 exclusion criteria:

1. Studies considering TF as the field for data collection. Although these papers collected data at TF, the TF itself was not the conceptual or analytical focus of the study. These works did not investigate the TF role in fostering innovation, knowledge exchange, or inter-organisational collaboration**,** which are core to the scope of this review (N=5);
2. Descriptive accounts of specific TFs, including TF reports, focusing on operational details, event organisation, or participant statistics. These works lacked a theoretical framework or conceptual analysis and did not contribute analytically to understanding the trade fair's role in enabling or shaping innovation**,** and thus fell outside the intended scope of this review (N=15);
3. Works that, despite understanding the keywords, did not fit the intended topic. Indeed, some works, despite including the keywords of our research, did not align with the conceptual scope of our review. Were excluded works that primarily addressed TFs as export tools, firm-level performance metrics, marketing outcomes, or sales strategies without examining how TFs contribute to innovation dynamics. We also excluded works focused on historical, architectural, or sector-specific dimensions that fell outside our analytical scope. These exclusions were essential to maintain the analytical precision and thematic coherence of our review, ensuring that included studies directly contributed to our core objective: understanding

how the relationship between TFs and innovation is conceptualised and explored in the academic literature (N= 27);

4. No full text available (N=11)

As a result of our exclusion criteria, we excluded 58 works.

The papers that provided a direct link between the TF and Innovation research were considered for the review (N=30). Moreover, we examined the content and the bibliographical references of the included papers to check the validity of the inquiry and to avoid any potential omissions. We found 1 work consistent with our research question and inclusion criteria (N=31). The entire process is described in the research protocol (Figure 2).

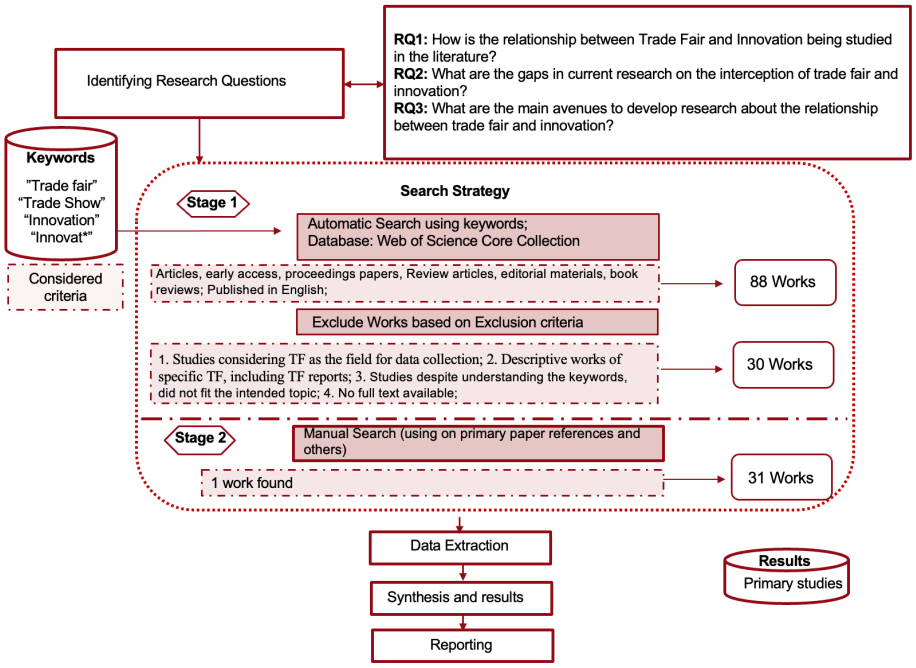

Figure 2. Search Protocol

After the conclusion of the search protocol, from the selected 31 works, we perform a content analysis to identify the main subjects discussed, the key journals, authors, and methodologies, and the critical research questions for future research.

3.3 Data extraction and analysis

Following the procedures outlined in our search protocol (Figure 2), we conducted a thematic analysis of the 31 selected studies. To ensure a systematic comparison and thematic grouping, we organised the extracted data into a structured Excel file. This approach allowed us to explore how the concepts of TF and innovation have been addressed across the literature and to identify central

themes within their intersection. Our thematic analysis was guided by the five-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which involves: becoming familiar with the data, developing initial codes, identifying potential themes, reviewing these themes, and assigning clear names to each theme. To ensure consistency and methodological transparency, we developed a standardised data extraction form, including fields such as research method, empirical context, theoretical foundations, key findings and theoretical contributions. This form was piloted on a sample of five articles and refined through team discussion. The finalised template was then applied systematically across all 31 included studies. We documented all decisions and extracted data to allow for replicability. A second researcher cross-checked a subset of the data to minimise the risk of individual bias and ensure accuracy (Chandler et al., 2019).

To enhance the methodological integrity and trustworthiness of our systematic review, we employed a range of rigour-enhancing procedures aligned with established guidelines. Screening, data extraction, and coding were independently carried out by each researcher to reduce subjectivity and guard against researcher bias (Tranfield et al., 2003). Any divergences in interpretation were resolved through collaborative discussions, fostering alignment and coherence in the analytical approach. Furthermore, we ensured full procedural transparency by systematically recording every methodological step, thereby enabling future replication and verification of our review process.

Our search was conducted in two moments. First, to identify the research evolution, we conducted two distinct searches, one for the keyword “trade fair” OR “trade show” OR “exhibition*” and another for the keyword “innovation” OR “innovat*”. This separate search enabled a deeper understanding of both researched themes' origins, development, and maturity levels. A search for the keyword “trade fair” OR “trade show” OR “exhibition*” in the WoS core collection (20th September 2024 cut-off) registers 983 documents. Search made by “topic” (searches title, abstract, author keywords, and more). When analysing work distribution over the years, 846 papers were published between 1991 and 2024, representing 86% of the total. Figure 3 shows the distribution of works through the years.

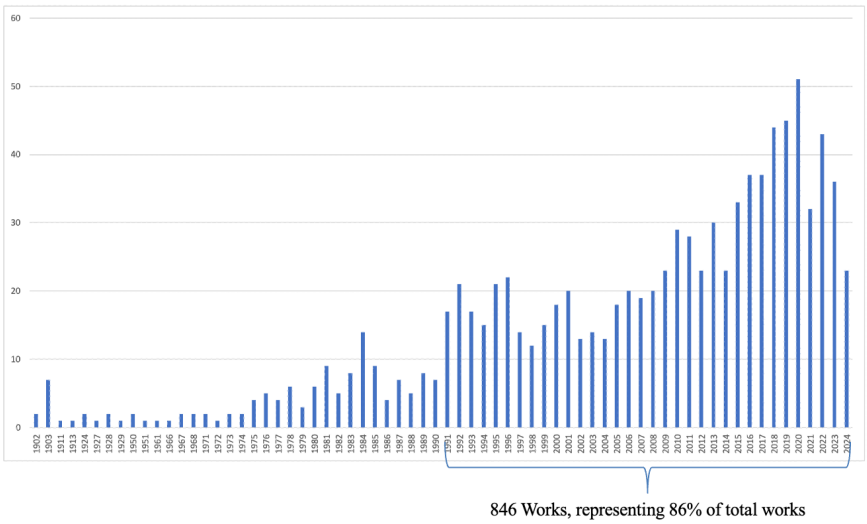

Figure 3. “trade fair” OR “trade show” OR “exhibition*” in the WoS core collection (20th September 2024 cut-off)

Important to verify that, even being “trade fair” OR “trade show” OR “exhibition*” present in the literature for more than 120 years, a sharper growth occurred in 1991. Moreover, we notice that it is still an underestimated theme.

A search for the keyword “innovation” OR “innovat*” in the WoS registers 856.662 documents (20th September 2024 cut-off). Search made by “topic”. When analysing work distribution over the years, 599.685 papers were published between 2015 and 2025, representing 70% of total works. Figure 4 shows the distribution of works through the years.

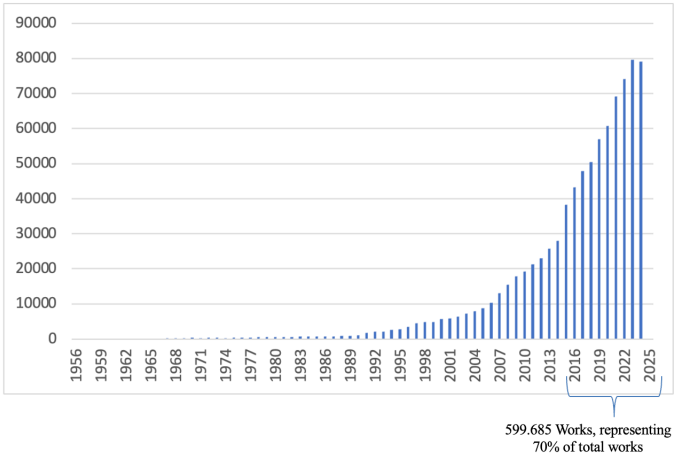

Figure 4 .“innovation" OR "innovat*” distribution across time (20th September 2024 cut-off)

It is interesting to notice a higher and increasing interest in the innovation concept in the last 10 years. While innovation represents a broad, cross-disciplinary construct embedded across various domains of business and management, TFs constitute a more specialised phenomenon primarily situated within marketing and internationalisation studies. From searching the terms “trade fair” OR “trade show” OR “exhibition*” AND "innovation” OR “innovat*” separately, we aimed to contextualise the developmental trajectories of each field to meaningfully explore their intersection.

When searching the terms “trade fair” OR “trade show” OR “exhibition*” AND "innovation” OR “innovat*” IN the topic, WoS core collection database, we obtained 88 results.

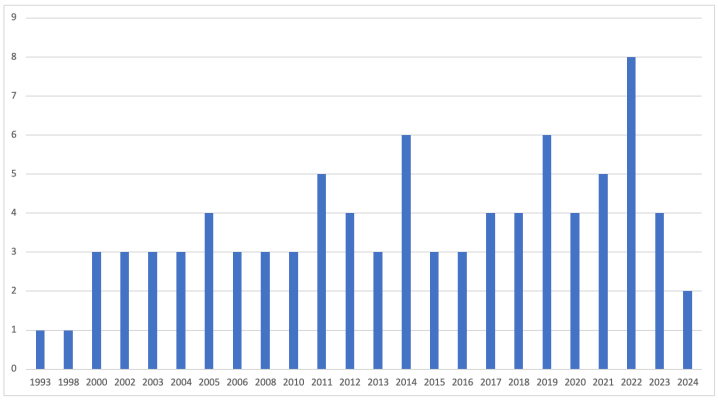

Figure 5. “trade fair” OR “trade show” AND “innovation” OR “innovat*”distribution across time (20th September 2024 cut off)

Nonetheless, after careful reading and the application of the exclusion and inclusion criteria, as presented in the search protocol (Figure 2), we obtained 31 works. Important to mention that all the 31 works were published over the past 22 years (see figure 6).

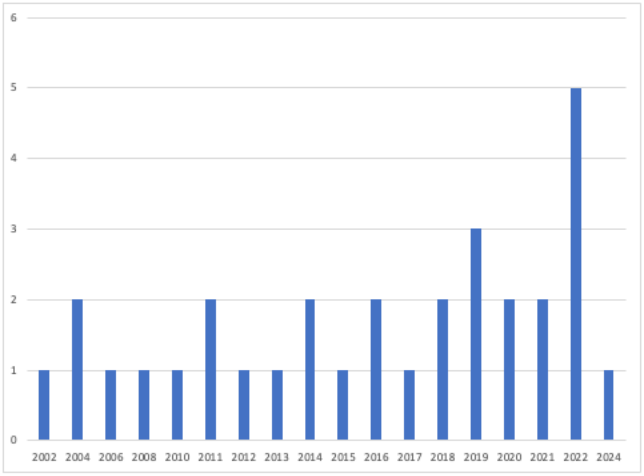

Figure 6. Selected studies (31 works) distributed across time
Source: own elaboration

Journals that serve as outlets for publications vary. An analysis of publication outlets reveals that journals focusing on business-to-business (B2B) marketing play a central role in shaping the discourse on TFs and innovation. The *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* emerges as the leading outlet (six articles). It is followed by *Industrial Marketing Management*, which accounts for two additional publications. Together, these two journals contribute approximately one-quarter of the total studies included in this review. This distribution highlights the prominence of TF related innovation topics within the B2B marketing domain. It also reflects a growing scholarly recognition of TFs as strategic arenas for relationship building, innovation exchange, and knowledge transfer in industrial markets. The presence of such studies in these journals underscores the relevance of this research stream for practitioners and academics interested in how innovation practices unfold in complex interorganizational settings such as TFs. Then, we have the remaining 23 publication sources with one work each, as presented in Figure 7.

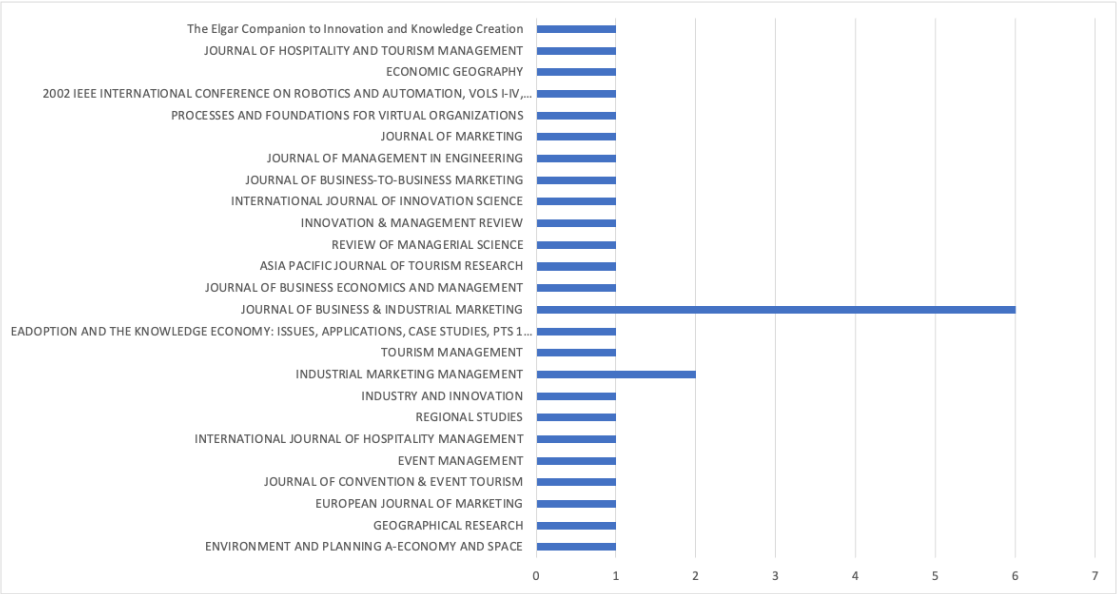

Figure 7. Selected studies (31 works) distribution of the results among the publication source
Source: own elaboration

To ensure methodological transparency and rigour, we followed the PRISMA guidelines (Moher et al., 2009), which provided a structured framework for reporting and documenting the review

process. A detailed coding scheme was developed to systematically extract and categorise relevant data across multiple dimensions: publication metadata (authors, year, journal), methodology, empirical context, theoretical foundations, key findings and theoretical contribution. This comprehensive approach facilitated the identification of recurring patterns and the generation of meaningful conceptual syntheses.

As a result of our collaborative thematic analysis, we identified two core thematic domains that emerged organically from the coded data, reflecting the primary contexts in which the relationship between TF and innovation has been most prominently explored: 1) TF as a catalyst for innovation (N=20): studies exploring how TFs serve as dynamic platforms for firms to drive innovation and 2) TF Innovation (N=11), focusing on how TF organisers innovate their services to enhance stakeholder value. The thematic categories were inductively derived from the data during the analysis process, reflecting the central focus of our review on the intersection between TF and innovation. Our analysis emphasised innovation emergence through interactive processes within the TF context, highlighting how innovation is collaboratively generated and disseminated across interconnected actors in these dynamic settings.

4 RESULTS

To address our research questions and better understand how TFs and innovation intersect in academic literature, we conducted an inductive thematic analysis of the 31 selected studies. This process revealed two primary research streams that reflect distinct yet complementary perspectives on the role of TFs in innovation dynamics. The first stream, *TF as a catalyst for innovation*, explores how firms leverage TFs to stimulate innovation, enhance knowledge flows, and improve market performance. The second stream, *TF Innovation*, focuses on how TF organisers themselves innovate through service design, technological integration, and engagement strategies to enhance the value delivered to participants. Together, these thematic streams provide a comprehensive picture of how innovation is both facilitated at TFs and within their organisational models. Each stream is detailed in the following subsections.

4.1 Research stream 1: TF as a catalyst for innovation

Among the 31 analysed studies, we found 20 studies that directly or indirectly focus on TF as a catalyst for finnovation (presented in Appendix A). TF play a significant role in driving innovation across industries, serving as a platform for companies to present new products, gather information

about market trends, and acquire knowledge about competitor innovations. Research indicates that TF participation is positively associated with export growth and innovation processes (Kalafsky & Gress, 2013; Silva et al., 2022). TF functions as a short-term agglomeration of industry activity, facilitating producer-user interactions crucial for innovation (Kalafsky & Gress, 2013). Surveys consistently rank TFs among important information sources for product and process innovation, highlighting their crucial role in industrial innovation and knowledge generation processes (Bathelt, 2017a). Sarmento et al. (2015) present a model demonstrating that product innovation is still an important aspect of TFs. Moreover, the model also portrays the importance of TFs in presenting and generating solutions to problems. In fact, different studies show that TF positively affects market performance (Kim et al., 2020; Shih & Yang, 2019; Silva et al., 2022). Exhibitors' participation in TF can lead to improved domestic and international export performance, with effects varying over time after the event (Kim et al., 2020). Firms attending TFs tend to be more R&D intensive and exhibit more robust integration in local innovation knowledge networks, as evidenced by co-patenting linkages (Zhu et al., 2020). Moreover, according to Silva et al. (2021), TF can help SMEs, especially industrial SMEs, improve export performance by leveraging innovation and networking. Wu et al. (2022) research indicates that knowledge spillover at TF can affect a firm's innovation. Overall, and within this line of thought, TF promotes a dynamic environment crucial for product innovation and knowledge exchange, improving firms' performance.

4.2 Research stream 2: TF Innovation

TFs organisers implement new service development processes to create innovations, considering demand-related factors, partnership models, and revenue components (Bauer & Borodako, 2019). According to the authors, TFs are designed as business services where organisers use diverse partnership models for concept development and consider space-related revenue and value-added services in business analysis (Bauer & Borodako, 2019). Bettis-Outland et al. (2010) investigated the return on TF information index, describing both tangible and intangible benefits that accrue to the organisation as a result of information acquired at TF. This work presents an innovative perspective for estimating the value of new information acquired at TF, demonstrating the need for future research in the area of TF information value. Moreover, Geigenmüller and Bettis-Outland (2012), research suggests that the value attendees derive from using TF services is strongly related to the support they receive in establishing and nurturing customer relationships or

in engaging in market and competitor analysis. Therefore, TF organisations should develop innovative concepts for TF that accommodate their client's needs, including an appropriate physical environment, customer-oriented service processes, and high-quality interactions between service employees and customers. TFs combine physical and virtual touchpoints, with physical fairs fostering face-to-face interactions and virtual platforms enhancing connectivity before and after the event (Sarmento & Simões, 2019). Sarmento and Simões (2019) worked on TF as an engagement platform and studied the interaction between physical and virtual TF, contributing to the discussion on customer engagement and the service ecosystems in the TF. Vitali et al. (2022) studied TF visitors and key technological trends, explaining how technology may influence visitor behaviour and TF performance. Vitali et al. (2022, p. 161) defend that TF organisers "should boost the interplay between exhibitors and visitors". Overall, TFs are evolving to deliver more value for their stakeholders. The modernisation of TF is driven by the need to adapt to a digital and data-driven world where stakeholder engagement and networking are crucial (studies presented in Appendix B).

5 DISCUSSION

From the analysed results, we identified two prominent research streams: 1) TF as a catalyst for innovation, and 2) TF innovation. These streams reflect thematic patterns in the literature that may stimulate future research. In the following section, we further discuss and explore future research opportunities.

5.1 TF as a catalyst for innovation (explored as a potential temporary innovation ecosystem)

TF provides a unique environment for firms to showcase innovations, gather market intelligence, and foster collaborations, contributing to their overall innovation and internationalisation strategies (Bathelt, 2017a, 2017b; Silva et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2020). Beyond their traditional marketing function, TF acts as a temporary clusters that enable the creation and diffusion of knowledge across geographical distances (Bathelt et al., 2014).

Participation in TFs is associated with stronger integration in local innovation knowledge networks and increased research and development intensity (Zhu et al., 2020), facilitating knowledge spillovers and positively impacting firms' innovation intentions and capabilities (Wu et al., 2022). Building on this, we explore the potential to view TFs as temporary IE, bringing together several actors needed for the innovation process. According to Granstrand and Holgersson (2020), IE is

defined by a set of actors, activities, artefacts, and institutions that are crucial for innovative performance, including both complementary and substitute relations that are important for the innovative performance of an actor or a population of actors. In fact, TF promotes a dynamic environment where diverse actors from various industries converge to exchange knowledge, showcase new technologies, and explore collaborative opportunities. In this vein, further studies may explore the concept of TF as a temporary IE. Future studies may deeply research the following: How does TF drive the establishment of business networks and partnerships that drive innovation? How do informal interactions at TF contribute to innovation capability development? How does TF facilitate cross-industry collaboration, and how does this impact firm innovation? How does the exposure to competitors' innovations at TF impact a firm's innovation strategy?; What are the main challenges firms face in leveraging TF as platforms for innovation, and how can these be addressed? What role do TFs play in fostering sustainability-related innovation? Future studies may also explore how findings on TF can inform policymakers and industry stakeholders about best practices for fostering an IE. Specifically, research may investigate how regional and national innovation policies can strategically position TFs as platforms for innovation diffusion, cross-sectoral knowledge exchange, and cluster development. Additionally, what governance models and public-private partnership arrangements are most effective in supporting the transformation of TFs into dynamic and sustainable innovation ecosystems?

5.2 TF innovation (through the lens of Service Ecosystem)

The second stream concerns how TF organisers themselves innovate in service design, technology, and participant engagement. From this perspective, TFs may be seen as an emerging service ecosystem**,** where value co-creation occurs through technological and interpersonal interactions between exhibitors and attendees (Zhang et al., 2023). TFs play a crucial role in fostering business relationships, generating learning experiences, and promoting customer engagement. While physical TF are essential for face-to-face interactions, virtual platforms enhance connectivity before and after the event (Sarmento & Simões, 2019). It is important to further understand how a TF can innovate to generate better performance for its stakeholders (Sarmento & Simões, 2019; Vitali et al., 2022). Therefore, TF innovation underlies the notion of the development of a service ecosystem (SE). This perspective offers a dynamic approach to studying value co-creation and system (re)formation (Vargo & Akaka, 2012). SE is facing challenging times as consumers rapidly change their demands, and technology develops fast, sometimes creating a disruptive environment.

TF evolved, adapting, and modernising in response to the digital revolution and the need for enhanced engagement and networking. These innovations have not only improved the experience for attendees but also provided exhibitors with better tools to track, analyse, and act on TF, creating mutual benefits for all stakeholders involved.

Future research may investigate questions such as: How does digitalisation reshape the SE of TF, particularly through hybrid or virtual models? What influence do evolving market trends (e.g., sustainability, digital transformation) have on the strategic direction of TF SE? How can TF organisers leverage data analytics and AI to personalise attendee experiences and enhance service co-creation within the TF ecosystem? What roles do ecosystem actors (e.g., exhibitors, platform providers, policy institutions) play in co-shaping innovation at TF, and how can their interactions be optimised to improve ecosystem resilience and adaptability?. Moreover, what role can government incentives or co-financing programs play in encouraging TF organisers to adopt sustainable, inclusive, and technology-enabled service ecosystem models? This research stream can provide valuable insights for firms, TF organisers, industry stakeholders, and academics interested in the evolving role of TF as an SE.

From the analysed results, we propose these research streams for further research, as a heuristic lens. As both streams evolve, we call for further empirical studies to validate these propositions. In fact, the connection between the two research streams is *conceptual and iterative,* and its dynamics *are* consistent with calls in the literature for TFs to evolve in order to better foster innovation (Sarmento & Simões, 2019; Vitali et al., 2022).

5.3 Implications for theory

Our work contributes to theoretical advancement by clarifying and consolidating the role of TF within innovation literature. First, it extends current understandings of TFs by framing them as promotional events and potential temporary innovation ecosystems, where knowledge spillovers, cross-industry collaboration, and R&D-intensified interactions may occur. While exploratory, this lens opens new theoretical avenues aligned with ecosystem theory (Granstrand & Holgersson, 2020), calling for empirical testing of the necessary ecosystemic features (e.g., actor complementarity, institutional depth, and systemic interdependence). Second, the study proposes viewing TF through the lens of service ecosystems, where innovation is not only facilitated at the event but emerges from the evolving design and orchestration of the TF itself. This perspective aligns with contemporary service-dominant logic (Vargo & Akaka, 2012), suggesting that TFs

function as co-creative platforms rather than static B2B formats. Together, these contributions offer scholars a dual conceptual lens for future research: TF as context for innovation, and TF as subject of innovation.

5.4 Implications for practice

Our findings offer several actionable insights. For firms**,** the strategic use of TFs can enhance innovation capability. Engaging in TFs with a knowledge-acquisition and collaboration-oriented mindset can yield long-term innovation benefits. For TF organisers**,** the results highlight the importance of continuously innovating the TF format. Organisers are encouraged to adopt hybrid and digital tools that improve participant interaction, personalise user experiences, and enhance value co-creation across all touchpoints. Embracing technological and service innovation strengthens the competitiveness and relevance of TFs in a rapidly evolving business landscape.

For policymakers**,** this study suggests TF should be recognised as a potential instrument of innovation policy. Supporting TF through public-private partnerships or regional cluster strategies could amplify their impact on industrial upgrading and knowledge diffusion.

Together, these implications underline the importance of strategically managing and studying TFs not only as commercial events but also as evolving platforms that foster innovation and shape ecosystems.

6 CONCLUSION

Despite its implications for firms and stakeholders, research on the intersection of TF and innovation literature is scarce. This study aimed to systematically review the existing research on these fields and propose some potential areas for further research. We adopted both a descriptive and a thematic analysis of the selected studies. The descriptive analysis supported an understanding of the time frame and evolution of research in this field. Thematic analysis permitted the identification of the existing research fields. By bridging the two concepts, we conclude that the main research fields bringing together the two concepts are (1) TF as a catalyst for innovation and (2) TF innovation. Theoretically, this work contributes to the TF literature by positioning TFs not only as temporary sites for knowledge exchange and collaboration but also as evolving platforms capable of service innovation and digital transformation. Conceptually, we introduce the idea of TF as a temporary innovation ecosystem (IE) and as part of an emergent service ecosystem (SE), offering heuristic lenses for future research. Our work also contributes to practice. The

insights generated are valuable for firms seeking to leverage TFs for innovation, for organisers aiming to enhance value co-creation, and for policymakers looking to integrate TFs into regional and national innovation strategies.

There are some limitations to our study. A conceptual paper on SLR necessarily has its limitations. First, we used the Web of Science database. Other research can enlarge our database, namely by using other databases. Moreover, his work analysed and discussed a limited number of articles. Therefore, future studies should extend the literature. We recognise the trade-off inherent in our focused Boolean search strategy and acknowledge that it may not capture all potentially relevant literature. Future reviews are encouraged to adopt broader and more inclusive terminological frameworks to triangulate and extend our findings. In fact, other keyword searches may enhance the discussion about the interception of TF and Innovation.

Future research should aim to empirically validate the propositions outlined in this review. May explore the concept of TF as a temporary IE, promoting a deeper understanding of the effect of a TF on a firm's innovation strategy. Moreover, how can TF organisers enhance their role as innovation facilitators, and how can governments and institutions support TF to act as effective IE. Further, TF innovation, underlying the notion of the development of a SE, offers a rich avenue for further research to understand what new tools (e.g., AI, data analytics, and virtual reality) are emerging to facilitate innovation in digital or hybrid TF. Comparative and longitudinal studies across industries and regions would also be valuable in tracing the evolution and impact of TF-related innovation over time.

In summary, our research reinforces that theoretical and empirical research relating to TF and innovation is needed in order to understand this topic better and, therefore, maximise the TF outcomes for stakeholders.

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Appendix A – Research stream 1: TF as a catalyst for innovation

Article Title	Authors	Journal	Year	Methodology	Empirical Context	Theorethical Foundations	Key Findings and Theoretical Contributions
The development of trade fair ecologies in China: case studies from Chengdu and Shanghai	Bathelt, H; Zeng, G	ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING A-ECONOMY AND SPACE	2014	Qualitative	Trade fairs in China, specifically in Chengdu and Shanghai.	Knowledge exchange in temporary clusters; Trade fairs as platforms for innovation and industrial upgrading;	Chinese trade fairs are evolving from simple transactional events into knowledge-exchange platforms; Firms use trade fairs not just to sell/buy but to build networks and learn; Proposes a framework for understanding "trade fair ecologies" in emerging economies like China; Suggests that trade fairs can act as temporary knowledge clusters, relevant for both economic geography and innovation studies
Trade Fairs as an Export Marketing and Research Strategy: Results from a Study of Korean Advanced Machinery Firms	Kalafsky, RV; Gress, DR	GEOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH	2013	mixed-method	Korean advanced machinery firms	Internationalization theory; Agglomeration and innovation literature, framing trade fairs as short-term industry clusters; Emphasizes the role of producer-user interfaces in fostering innovation;	Firms participating in trade fairs as part of their innovation strategies exhibit higher export intensity; Adds empirical support to the view that trade fairs are not only marketing tools, but also innovation and internationalization platforms
A relationship marketing perspective to trade fairs: insights from participants	Sarmento, ML; Farhangmehr, M; Simoes, C	JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL MARKETING	2015	Qualitative	Business-to-business (B2B) interactions at trade fairs	Relationship marketing theory; Conceptualizes trade fairs as interaction arenas where information exchange, social engagement, and collaborative problem-solving unfold among a diverse array of stakeholders	Trade fairs enable multi-party relationship development through structured and unstructured interactions; Importance of non-transactional elements; Extends relationship marketing literature by embedding the spatial and temporal dynamics of trade fairs into relationship development theory; Highlights the shift from transactional to collaborative and integrative roles of trade fairs in B2B marketing strategies;

Knowledge Spillover at trade shows and exhibitor innovation	Wu, LF; Yu, LRY; Wang, SS	EVENT MANAGEMENT	2022	Quantitative	Trade Fair in Chine in cultural and creative industries	Innovation capability theory; Knowledge spillover literature; Concept of field-configuring events (FCEs) as temporary knowledge environments;	Trade Fair strategy has a direct positive effect on firms' innovation capability; Trade Fairs serve not only for marketing and sales, but also as platforms for knowledge acquisition from competitors; Reinforces the view of trade shows as strategic knowledge ecosystems; Introduces an innovation capability model integrating trade show strategy, knowledge spillover, and innovation intention
Knowledge diffusion at business events: A case study	Luo, QJ; Zhong, DX	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT	2016	Qualitative	Business event	Industrial cluster theory; Social Network Analysis (SNA); Temporary cluster framework;	Trade fairs are particularly effective in spreading market-strategic knowledge; Demonstrates that trade fairs act as temporary but structured knowledge networks; Provides insights for understanding how business events facilitate innovation-related knowledge flows;
Are trade fairs relevant for local innovation knowledge networks? Evidence from Shanghai equipment manufacturing	Zhu, YW; Bathelt, H; Zeng, G	REGIONAL STUDIES	2020	Quantitative	Shanghai's advanced machinery manufacturing sector	Innovation systems theory; Cluster theory and the role of temporary agglomerations; Network theory in relation to knowledge generation and diffusion;	Provides empirical evidence that flagship trade fairs enhance local innovation networks; Suggests that trade fair participation is also about structural embeddedness in regional innovation ecosystems;

Extraordinary LED installations: events for user-innovation interaction	Schulte-Römer, N	INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION	2018	Qualitative	Lighting industry (Lighting trade fairs and Light festivals)	Innovation diffusion theory; Social-constructivist perspectives; Event studies as multi-level socio-material spaces for knowledge interaction and technology shaping;	Events (trade fairs and festivals) served as platforms for hands-on experimentation with new technologies; Trade fairs focused on adoption-oriented displays, while festivals allowed creative adaptation and user customization; Extends innovation diffusion theory by introducing a socio-material lens to understand how users engage with technologies; Proposes a multi-level conceptual framework for analyzing events as sites of innovation interaction;
Innovation in the tourism industry: The case of Tourism@	Aldebert, B; Dang, RJ; Longhi, C	TOURISM MANAGEMENT	2011	Quantitative	Tourism@: a major European trade fair	Sectoral System of Innovation and Production (SSIP) framework; Considers trade fairs as platforms for innovation competition and sectoral knowledge dissemination;	Tourism@ is a critical venue for revealing innovation trends in the tourism industry; Demonstrates how trade fairs act as innovation observatories and facilitate knowledge diffusion; Reinforces the value of trade fairs as strategic arenas for innovation mapping, especially in rapidly evolving industries like tourism;
Trade fairs as an intelligence process: the perspective of companies/exhibitors	Silva, PM; Vale, VT; Moutinho, VF	JOURNAL OF CONVENTION & EVENT TOURISM	2021	Quantitative	Portugal, companies that regularly exhibit at trade fairs	Market Intelligence Process; Trade Fairs as Learning Arenas; Customer Orientation & Strategic Adaptation;	Trade fair intelligence enhances firm competitiveness by enriching internal information systems and supporting strategic marketing; Proposes a validated model that integrates intelligence processes into trade fair performance evaluation; Connects market orientation theory with event marketing and business network literature;

Generating Intangible Resource and International Performance : Insights into enterprises organizational behavior and capability at trade shows.	Shih, TY; Yang, CC	JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT	2019	Quantitative	Firms involved in trade shows	Resource-Based View (RBV); Strategic Management Theory; Knowledge Absorption Theory; Trade Show Effectiveness Literature;	Commitment to learning and high absorptive capacity are critical drivers of innovation and international success; Trade shows contribute to Capability-building, Knowledge integration and Intangible resource accumulation.
Effects of Exhibitors' Trade Show Participation on market performance : longitudinal research	Kim, BS; Kim, KB; Park, C; Lee, J	ASIA PACIFIC JOURNAL OF TOURISM RESEARCH	2020	Quantitative	Exhibitors participating in trade shows	Resource-Based Theory; Trade shows function as external resource-leveraging mechanisms;	Trade shows function as external resource-leveraging mechanisms; Exhibitor resources have a partial effect on trade show output and market performance; introduces a temporal lens to trade show research, showing that performance outcomes can vary long after the event concludes
What is the value of entrepreneurial orientation on the network and performance ? An examination in trade fairs context	Silva, P; Vale, VTT; Moutinho, VF	INNOVATION & MANAGEMENT REVIEW	2022	Quantitative	Exhibitors at trade fairs (Portugal)	Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO); Network capability; Performance measuremet theory (sales performance and non-sales performance); model integration	EO Dimensions positively affect overall EO; EO positively influences Network Capability; Network Capability positively influences Non-Sales Performance; Non-Sales Performance positively influences Sales Performance; xpanded the understanding of EO's multidimensionality; Enriched the theory of network capability by placing it as a mediator between EO and performance;

Influence of inbound and outbound open innovation practices on performance of firms: an evidence from Indian product SMEs	Sriram, KV; Hungund, S	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATION SCIENCE	2022	Quantitative	small and medium-sized software product firms in India	Grounded in open innovation theory: Inbound and outbound innovation	Demonstrates that trade shows support inbound innovation, enhancing product development capabilities; Clarifies the role of event-based inbound innovation) in emerging market contexts; Advances understanding of open innovation mechanisms specific to SMEs in the software industry
A new approach of innovation and network on export in trade fair context: evidence from Portuguese SMEs	Silva, PM; Moutinho, VF; Vale, VT	JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL MARKETING	2022	Quantitative	Portuguese SMEs in the context of international trade fairs; SMEs that are exporters and trade fair exhibitors	Innovation (as a strategic determinant of export success); Network Capability (built on resource-based and network theories); Export performance; Trade Fairs (both as marketplaces and knowledge arenas for innovation and network development)	Innovation significantly improves network capability; Network capability positively influences export performance; Introduces an integrated model connecting innovation and networking to export performance within the trade fair context; Extends the role of trade fairs from transactional to relational and strategic platforms for innovation and export development;
Trade show networks, trust and organizational learning: the effect of network ties	Bettis-Outland, H; Cortez, RM; Johnston, WJ	JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL MARKETING	2021	Conceptual/theoretical paper	-	Social Exchange Theory; Trust and Knowledge Transfer Models; Network theory;	Trust is a mediating variable between networks and organizational learning; Trade show participation can lead to adaptive learning, generative learning and transformative learning; Proposes a network-based conceptual framework for understanding trade shows as learning environments

Dissemination Practices of Construction Sites' Technology Vendors in Technology Exhibitions	Sepasgozar, SME; Davis, SR; Loosemore, M	JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT IN ENGINEERING	2018	Quantitative	Construction site technology (robotics, drones, driverless excavators), in two technology exhibitions in Australia	Innovation dissemination theory; Construction innovation literature;	Advocates for recognizing customer-vendor relationships as essential to the innovation diffusion process; Bridges the gap between construction innovation and broader innovation dissemination research;
Product Concept Demonstrations in Trade Shows and Firm Value	Kim, T; Mazumdar, T	JOURNAL OF MARKETING	2016	Quantitative	Auto shows used as trade show context	Signaling theory; market reaction theory; firm value literature on product introductions	Trade shows are used strategically to present product concepts. Inverted U-shaped effect of development stage on firm value: late-stage concepts show the strongest impact, followed by early-stage debuts, then market-ready products. Home country trade shows enhance the value of early-stage debuts
Exploring the Knowledge Strategies of Temporary Cluster Organizers: A Longitudinal Study of the EU Fabric Industry Trade Shows (1986-2006)	Rinallo, D; Golfetto, F	ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY	2011	Qualitative	EU fabric industry trade shows	Spatial interaction theory; temporary clusters; relational space and interactive learning	knowledge flows are socially and politically scaled, from local to global; demonstrated that organizers influence vertical relationships (e.g., exhibitor–buyer), while other knowledge flows may be hindered. Contributes to understanding how space and power shape innovation and interaction in trade shows.

Trade fairs and innovation	Bathelt, H.	The Elgar Companion to Innovation and Knowledge Creation, Chapter 31	2017	Qualitative	Various trade fairs across industrial sectors; multinational scope	Innovation studies; knowledge generation in industrial settings; interactive learning	Trade Fairs are crucial platforms for innovation diffusion and knowledge acquisition; exhibitors use trade fairs to present innovations, understand customer needs, gather competitive intelligence, and identify technological trends. Highlights the dual role of trade fairs in communication and discovery, contributing to the broader literature on innovation ecosystems;
Representing markets: The shaping of fashion trends by French and Italian fabric companies	Rinallo, D; Golfetto, F	INDUSTRIAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT	2006	Qualitative	Première Vision trade show, Paris;	Market representation; postmodern marketing.	trade fairs may be considered as collective marketing instruments, thus highlighting the importance of organizers' value creation strategies

Appendix B – Research stream 2: TF Innovation

Article Title	**Authors**	**Journal**	**Year**	**Methodology**	**Empirical Context**	**Theorethical Foundations**	**Key Findings and Theoretical Contributions**
Trade fairs as engagement platforms: the interplay between physical and virtual touch points	Sarmento, M; Simoes, C	EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF MARKETING	2019	Qualitative	International trade fair; physical and virtual settings;	Engagement platforms; service ecosystems theory.	Highlights trade fairs as engagement platforms. Shows how physical and virtual touchpoints differ in fostering customer interaction, learning, and relationship development

Trade show innovations - Organizers implementation of the new service development process	Bauer, T; Borodako, K	JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT	2019	Qualitative	Germany and Poland; 34 trade show	New Service Development (NSD) process; trade show innovation theory.	Identifies innovation stages in trade show development. Reveals demand-driven innovation is key for new service development in exhibitions.
The FairsNet system in the European trade fair market	Barbini, F; Contenti, M; D'Atri, A; Strignano, O	EADOPTION AND THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY: ISSUES, APPLICATIONS, CASE STUDIES, PTS 1 AND 2	2004	Quantitative	Italy; survey of SMEs and trade fair operators	e-Adoption; digital transformation in SMEs.	FairsNet system supports SME participation in real and virtual trade fairs by automating organizational processes and improving efficiency.
Brand equity in B2B services and consequences for the trade show industry	Geigenmüller, A; Bettis-Outland, H	JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL MARKETING	2012	Conceptual	Trade show industry;	Service brand equity; customer relationship management.	Proposes service brand equity framework for B2B trade shows. Emphasizes importance of service environment and employee interaction.

The impact of social changes on MICE tourism management in the age of digitalization : a bibliometric review	Martín-Rojo, I; Gaspar-González, AI	REVIEW OF MANAGERIAL SCIENCE	2024	Mixed-method approach (qualitative surveys with quantitative bibliometric analysis)	MICE sector in Spain	MICE tourism; digital transformation	COVID-19 transformed MICE sector with digitization and new management strategies. Proposes innovation and digital transition as future directions.
Blacky, an interactive mobile robot at a trade fair	Rodriguez-Losada, D; Matia, F; Galan, R; Jimenez, A	2002 IEEE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ROBOTICS AND AUTOMATION, VOLS I-IV, PROCEEDINGS	2002	Quantitative	Trade fair robotics experiment using 'Blacky'	Robotics and AI in physical interaction contexts.	Demonstrated feasibility of autonomous guide robots in trade fairs using perceptual navigation and speech systems.
An Exploratory Study of Trade Show Formation and Diversity	Wu, JN; Lilien, GL; Dasgupta, A	JOURNAL OF BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING	2008	Quantitative	Large-scale trade show; industry-wide	Trade show diversity; participation motivation theory	Vertical shows linked to buying/selling goals; horizontal shows to innovation exposure. First empirical classification of show types based on participant objectives.

Innovative trade fairs for incubating virtual enterprises	Barbini, FM	PROCESSES AND FOUNDATIONS FOR VIRTUAL ORGANIZATIONS	2004	Conceptual	FairsNet virtual fair platform vision	Virtual organization theory.	Conceptualized online fairs as incubators for virtual enterprises. Suggests technology bridges trust and communication gaps in temporary alliances.
Trade show visitors and key technological trends: from a literature review to a conceptual framework	Vitali, V; Bazzani, C; Gimigliano, A; Cristani, M; Begalli, D; Menegaz, G	JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL MARKETING	2022	Conceptual	Trade show behavior post-pandemic;	Technological trends; visitor behavior theory; trade show performance.	Proposes model linking tech innovations to visitor satisfaction and loyalty across trade show phases. Highlights role of emerging technologies in show effectiveness.
Co-innovation in networks of resources - A case study in the Chinese exhibition industry	Dawson, BK; Young, L; Tu, CL; Chongyi, F	INDUSTRIAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT	2014	Qualitative	Chinese exhibition industry	Co-innovation theory; Resource interaction perspective; Strategic network collaboration models;	Co-innovation was realized via targeted integration of partner resources, fostering sustained collaboration; Highlights co-innovation as a strategic mechanism in the context of event organization; Offers a relational-resource framework showing how innovation arises from partner collaboration;

The return on trade show information (RTSI): a conceptual analysis	Bettis-Outland, H; Cromartie, JS; Johnston, WJ; Borders, AL	JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL MARKETING	2010	Conceptual/theoretical paper	-	Market Orientation Framework; strategic decision-making Information value and quality frameworks;	The study introduces the Return on Trade Show Information (RTSI) index, which measures the impact of information gathered at trade shows on long-term strategic decision-making within firms; novel conceptual framework for understanding how firms acquire, disseminate, and utilize information from trade shows;

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