

# Lifting The Veil Of Dichotomy in Business Functional Areas - A Review of Marketing and Purchasing Practices in the Supply Chain Management of Different Organizations In Nigeria

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**Abstract:-** Industries and firms globally have started the adoption of integrated strategic approach to purchasing and logistics management known as Supply Chain management. The advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century organizational restructuring brought with it the supply chain management concept as an indispensable strategic tool for companies and organizations to more than ever embrace “value addition in quality, customer service delivery, products fit for purpose etc.”. This paper titled “Lifting the Veil of Dichotomy in Business Functional Areas –A case of Marketing and Purchasing Practices in Supply Chain Management” was designed to examine and address areas of inter-functional dichotomies existent particularly in the discharge of roles, functions or duties by professionals occupying the Marketing and Purchasing positions of various businesses and organizations at one time or the other and hitherto establish the gains tenable from maintaining a systematic and synergized work relationship. The methodologies adopted include the review of related literatures, works and views of renowned authors in the field of Marketing and Purchasing areas of Supply Chain Management and use of other secondary sources. The study shows that there still exists some element of reductionist traditional management as opposed to the modern system’s approach and concludes that the thesis of this paper remained to re-enact this seemingly abandoned team spirit to foster at different points of their work relationships. The paper therefore called for a reshape in academic research works in the area of SCM to align with the new normal. A major recommendation of the study was that Organizations should revisit their operational policies with a view to removing all blocks of pride and lackluster influences existent amongst functional units. This is to inject an air of competence through sharing from a common bank of ideas.

**Keywords:-** Functional dichotomy, Marketing, Purchasing, Supply Chain Management, Organization.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Centuries past, a handful of Scholars paid dearly, investing time and resources tracking and unearthing diverse areas of knowledge ranging from History, Arts and Crafts, Religion, Culture and later of course Science amongst lots other opinionated areas. All these played out as mannequin benchmarks that hosted our early scholar’s curiosity in their

voyage of discovering nature as it relates to man. This was the beginning point of knowledge harvesting as thereafter modern scholars furthered the search to consolidate on these founding ideologies. They evolved other generation of thoughts still in a bid to align with realities. For instance, Anthropology, Philosophy, Sociology, geology, Modern Science, theology, pathology etc were knowledge based areas that has given birth to a lot more decomposition of knowledge fields as Business and Management sciences, Humanities and Social sciences, Environmental sciences, Engineering Technology, Industrial and Applied sciences etc. Today, more fragments of knowledge based areas have emerged with the following streams of study mainly from Business and Management confederacy and these include; Business Administration, Marketing, Public Administration, Purchasing and Supply, Accountancy, Finance, Cooperative Economics, etc with all emanating from a common descent, Business being ‘Business and Management Sciences.

From the foregoing, man as a psychogenic being has continued to be proactively creative and is this same inclination that drives his insatiate culture of transforming his known obscure ambience to more egalitarian and responsible one. Essentially therefore, since knowledge of a given set does not exist in isolation, the underlying principle holds ware in the affirmation that all business related courses including Marketing and Purchasing share a lot in common especially in the area of idea interchangeability and application. Given therefore the foregoing background, this paper is an attempt to identify valuable points of interaction that should exist between Marketing and Purchasing as belonging to the family of Supply Chain Management (SCM) and to appreciate the values embedded therein which beyond the immediate operational constituencies can offer the entire organization economies of varying degrees.

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is no longer news, the collapse of old and newly established industries and companies all over the world. Reasons for this abound and ranges from conducting improper feasibility survey, naïve managerial principles and abilities, information asymmetry and reductionism approach in management culminating to functional polarities as the case under review. These and more have remained core areas of concern and in effect the reason very well

subscribed companies fail to achieve targeted objectives. This as we all know spell very serious doom to national and global industrialization for instances resulting to increased rates of unemployment, poverty thereby setting families apart. Therefore, worried about this raging trend, the researcher took a resolve to investigate the phenomenon from the perspective of prevailing dichotomies and non-synchronization of business operations particularly the Marketing and Purchasing \contributions with a view to synthesize and harmonize their operational relationships.

### III. STUDY OBJECTIVES

- Broad Objectives

To investigate the dichotomy in business functional areas of marketing and purchasing practices in the supply chain management of different organizations in Nigeria

- Specific Objectives

- To identify areas between operations of various businesses
- To ascertain the gains tenable from maintaining a systematic and synergized work relationship between the Marketing and Purchasing functions.

- Scope Of the Study

The study was scoped to review cognate areas of interaction amongst Purchasing and Marketing professionals in a production business setting. To this effect, it looked at the activities of professionals in the core Purchasing and Marketing management areas of a production organization. Both functional areas share interactions at one point or the other such as new product design, product development, value analysis, materials handling and despatch, product research, information logistics, etc. The study therefore does not cover other business areas of concern but scoped to closely look at the services and functions of these two on which bases extrapolations can be made to apply in the rest production business functions.

### IV. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### A. Conceptual Definition Of The Terms Marketing, Purchasing And Supply Chain Management

Quite often, we hear people say that “marketing is a plan to achieve sales “. This definition as simple as it may sound does not capture the properties as much as we envisage under the prevailing context. The reason is simple hence “Marketing” as a total concept should be seen as a ‘process’ meaning that the word ‘plan’ as given in the definition is just the first step in the array of processes that gives a throughput definition.

According to Heidi Cohen’s 72 definition of marketing compilation; Marketing is the ability to communicate a message to your audience and soliciting a response from them. This response can take the form of a positive impression of your company brand, an urge to purchase an item, to reach out to your company for more information or

even spread your message to others. And no matter what the desired response is, marketing should always return it back to your overall business objectives.

This definition explains marketing from the perspective of communicating to the audience not the physical product but information. The element of ‘marketing’ in the information is the ‘invitation to treat’ snag being communicated. At this point we can appreciate that although no physical product was shown but a whole lot of products can be sold thereafter. No wonder the Igbo adage that a “woman’s bright face is the best invitation to ask her for a launch break”. Same goes for marketing company services as in banking drive for customers. This definition expresses the reason why scholars prefer to separate ‘Marketing’ from ‘Sales’. The argument is clear if we understand Marketing to end with information communication while Sales ends with physical product transfer in exchange of cash or agreed consideration, simply therefore put that while Marketing is ‘Information’ driven, Sales is ‘Physical Product’ driven.

The responsibility to communicate information rests on the shoulders of the marketing teams with predominant role at the beginning of a potential sale. For example, a marketing team may develop a new ‘shoe deal’ to create awareness about its launch, the sales team takes over to finalize the deal by communicating directly with leads (customers) who parts with the physical product.

From the above definitions of marketing, it is imperative to say that the core objective of the marketing function is the adoption of systematic approach in its role to ensure that the organization’s product is properly packaged and brought to the knowledge of the public at the ‘right time’ using the ‘right advertising strategy’ while sales takes over to sell at the right price and deliver to the ‘right buyer’ and place using the ‘right transportation modes or distribution channels. In view of the foregoing, those who are to carry out these tasks must be of proven professional and academic background.

Conversely; Purchasing according to Lyson (2006) is defined as the act of buying materials of the right quality and quantity from the right source at the right time and price and delivered to the right place for either of operational or production purposes. This definition just as that of marketing suggests that purchasing is an arm of Supply Chain Management.

On the phenomenon ‘Supply Chain’ the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (2015) states that “Supply chain management encompasses the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all logistics management activities. Importantly, it also includes coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third party service providers, and customers. In essence, Supply Chain Management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies. This definition identifies the unique roles of Purchasing, Transportation, Stores, Inbound distribution, Production,

Warehousing, Packaging, Marketing, Sales, Outbound distribution in a new or existing product development until the final consumer is satisfied. What this means is that Supply Chain Management is a compound concept for all the above mentioned activities for the purpose of acquiring the right raw material such that after the inter functional activities of conversion, the desired finished products are made known and available to the public.

Again, as earlier stated, there is this strong synergistic bond in the two functions, no wonder in some institutions of higher learning in the past, there was this belief that led to having them together as a Department however, realizing the increasing role and contribution of each in corporate organizational development, it became so imperative to separate them to make room for advancement and specialization. Be this as it may, scholars in the field of Business Management still uphold the fact that the proximate goal of any objective is to achieve success.

Alluding to this statement, Ford (2002) posits that the relationship between marketing and purchasing activities is not just important in terms of synchronization of the operational activities – i.e. the implementation of the so-called transfer ability, the capacity to transfer the product or service in the way that meet the objectives and constraints of the customers. The relationship between marketing and purchasing, in terms of communication processes, information exchanges, interaction, is more and more significant also in relation to the improvement of the company's problem-solving ability, the capacity to fully satisfy customer's needs, to solve users' problems, to improve their performances.

As it were, purchasing might seem to enjoy a largesse of appearing at different points of a product life development that does not in anyway negate what in this study we, chose to tag the Marketing Intervention Function (MIF) which sees Marketing actively engaged at the research and design stages of a product life cycle. comes in intermittently product development stage and takes up the tunnel end to handle, promote and despatching to final consumer.

This analogy critically explains the underlying thesis of this paper and as such, our focus remains to discuss the interactive roles of Purchasing and Marketing as fragmented concepts in the Supply Chain larger family it

#### *B. Relevance Of Marketing As A Component Of Total Supply Chain Strategy*

Given the understanding from the foregoing discussion about the position of Marketing as an integral part of the Supply Chain family, it is imperative to further underscore its veritable relevance in the Supply Chain strategy which lately has been assumed a core pillar role to business successes. This is true as effective market coverage and availability of products at locations that are key to organizations revenue centre depends upon the effectiveness of the Supply Chain Strategy applied. For instance, when a product is introduced in the market through adverts and promotions, the global market need to have the product

where the customer can buy them and take delivery. Any glitch therefore making the product not being available at the right time can result to loss of effective clients and other attendant costs.

According to Jüttner, Christopher & Baker (2007). Marketers need to strategize within the Supply Chain Management (SCM) purview to improve their organizational operational boundaries. Similarly, Flint (2004) posits that effective marketing strategy execution needs Supply Chain Management since it embeds the distribution and supply intelligence of a marketing strategy. In this perspective, processes are regarded as a component of the organizational context that directly influences the extent of customer value enhancement (Srivastava, Shervani & Fahey, 1999). In other words, any action of non-compliance and or alliance to the integrated concept of SCM automatically jeopardizes every effort towards achieving the corporate firm's objective.

Mentzer, DeWitt, Keebler, Min, Nix, Smith, and Zacharia (2001) said that marketing perform significant roles in many of the core components of SCM and as such asserts the confederacy of Supply Chain Management as encompassing those material related activities as purchasing, stores, production, warehousing, transport and distribution, sales, etc According to Piercy (2002) a marketing strength that is delinked to Supply Chain strength often results in a high- cost base, incoherent and inefficient product delivery. These dilemmas can only be remedied only in extreme cases by organizations that command high image profile else, the mere lack of supplies intelligence would result to loss of credibility and consumerism.

#### *C. The Role Of Marketing And Purchasing In New Product Development*

As integral parts of the Supply Chain philosophy, Marketing and Purchasing occupy very sensitive space in the process of developing a new product. Product development is the beginning point of measuring organization's successes and failures and therefore requires that the best input variables be accommodated to realize profitable and sustainable product launch. It is therefore of paramount importance that organizational leaders understand contemporary marketing and purchasing crucial roles in the product development process.

According to Darrin and Duber-Smith (2005) Modern developments in Research and methods has replaced the traditional definition of 'Product Concept' where Research and development teams created products utilizing technology, intellectual property, and cost models without much analytical insight as to where these products might be marketed and to whom, as well as which particular needs they might address. Today, the story is no longer the same hence, globalization coupled with market complexities and intense competitive environment such practices remain outdated and so compel professionals to drive product development and product life cycle functions within the organization. At least, basic marketing science teaches us that the root of any strategic plan lies in developing a



product that is “need-driven.” The basic tenet of the “market concept” is that market needs and opportunities are assessed first, and then products are developed to address and exploit them and not the other way round.

According to Burt and Joseph, Jr (1979) the role of purchasing in the early stages of product development is very central. When purchasing is not involved in the design process, companies usually face the danger of incurring high unit cost of production which otherwise could have been obviated by applying the competitive or negotiated materials acquisition techniques. Indeed, studies indicate that prices tend to fall by 4% each time one additional qualified supplier submits a price. Thus an item costing #100 when only one bid has been obtained will cost #90 if three bids are available and this reduces company unit cost by #10 and invariably increases profit margin correspondingly.

Furthermore, Burt et al, maintained that the right purchase description can also have a great impact on product costs and availability. A San Diego manufacturer has long used its own design specifications to buy components for which suitable commercial substitutes were available. Not only have the costs of such special items averaged 10% more than those of their commercial substitutes; specification of unique items has also brought longer lead times, weaker market responsiveness, and a need for maintaining larger inventories. Leenders and Fearon (1997) in support to the above allusion, posit that the SCM often is used to refer to the purchasing department’s efforts to develop better, more responsive suppliers.

Ford (2002) posits that the relationship between marketing and purchasing activities transcends mere synchronization of the operational activities which circles around the material to customer services concept but also cuts across information exchanges and cross functional cooperation necessary to solving very crucial organizational problems. Piercy & Sheth, (2009) investigated the relationship between Marketing and Purchasing and noted that Marketing and Purchasing departments has to become closer for two main reasons, first, that marketers become more information oriented than product focused. Secondly, that there is need to reassess marketing and purchasing direct relationship within the organization. Piercy (2009) continuing said that the relationship between Marketing and Purchasing should align to strategic customer relationship, management and supplier and that this relationship be considered necessary to connect customer needs to complex technical solutions. Accordingly, they affirmed the need to develop strategic internal relationships between the groups responsible for managing customer relationships which include Marketing, Purchasing, Sales, Suppliers and. Accounts payee, etc. It is thus necessary an internal partnering between the boundary-spanning functions that have direct impact on the delivery of value to the customer.

Jüttner, Christopher and Baker (2007) listed the benefits of the integration between marketing and supply chain management highlighting how the companies which effectively link their customer and supply chain operations

gained competitive advantage by differentiating not only customer-needs based products and services, but also the underlying delivery processes. Also, Heikkilä, (2002) maintained that the concept of demand chain management emphasizes the synergies between marketing and purchasing and that such is exceedingly beneficial.

Sheth, Sharma. & Iyer (2009) argued that Supply Chain Management in companies should be responsible for all the processes directed to create and deliver value propositions to customers. According to Kumar, Sheer. & Kotler (2000) Supply Chain Management literature quite extensively emphasize the need for integration with marketing, even if the study of the specific modalities and intra-organizational consequences of such integration are neglected.

Wind (2005) argues that there is a need now to increase cross-functional perspectives in management research and practice. He puts into light how “marketing, at the interface between the organization and the environment, can provide new opportunities for value creation and growth. Marketing provides opportunities by identifying opportunities to serve unmet needs of current customers or new customers for the company’s current and new products and services. A focus on growth requires an integrated approach, cutting across the organizational functions and activities” (Wind, 2005). Moreover, he highlighted that there is a continuing debate about whether the organization needs a marketing department, as a centre of expertise, or the work should be more thoroughly diffused, He however insists that there is an urgent need to apply marketing insights more broadly.

Some degree of attention has been paid in the last years to the organizational issues of the purchasing function. By the late 90’s, greater number of scholars have asserted their views about Purchasing becoming increasingly strategic in company operations (Lamming, & Cox, 1995; Hardt Reinecke, Spiller, (2007). Pearson & Gritmaker (1990) Spekman, Kamauff .& Salmond (1994).

Cox & Hines (1997) opined that Purchasing as a company’s function have emerged from its traditionally held stance as clerical function to a strategic one and as such has been imbued with increasing important roles in organizational businesses

Purchasing department assumed more and more strategic activities, increased critical capabilities of the people involved in line with the high level procurement officers as critical to organizational effectiveness. Trent & Monczka, (1994); Trent (1996) stated that suppliers are an increasingly important resource for manufacturers and provide materials and services that constitute a majority of the cost of many new products; in addition, suppliers may provide innovative products processes and technologies that can overturn a firm's fear to unimaginable fortune .

#### *D. Theoretical Framework*

This study is underpinned to the theory of “Systems Theory” hence continued industrial experience has thought

us to appreciate it as the best strategy for achieving expected results. In other words, team work at its best results in a synergy that can be very productive. The Cambridge dictionary defined Synergy as “the combined power of a group” which of course achieves better than applying a singular or individual strength. According to Von Bertalanffy (1968) the term ‘System’ implies a set of elements standing in interactions.

One area of an organization that utilizes systems theory extensively is during the introduction of a new product or product development. Scholars in this specialization are interested in the interaction of people to see how they create what we know as organizations (Bavelas & Segal; Katz & Kahn). For example, what makes Wal-mart different than Target? It’s not simply their products or prices. Instead, these two mega-retail stores have a certain “personality” and way of functioning that is different from the other. Those who look at communication from a systems perspective believe that it is the interaction of the participants that makes organizations what they are.

One characteristic of the Systems Theory Paradigm is that systems are teleological (Infante, Rancer & Womack), meaning that they seek to achieve a particular goal or outcome. The goal of combining the expertise in a work station is sure to pay off than bringing the largest machines manned by reductionist and selfish operators without social values. The goal of a business is to produce products and profit. Communication researchers examine the interactions of those that make up systems to understand the systems’ goals, as well as how they attempt to achieve goals.

Systems theory within our study's context serves to bring the various complex business functions of an organization such as Purchasing, Marketing, Finance, Design Engineering, logistics, Production, Ware housing, Stores even Human Resource to freely interact in such a manner that eschews functional rivalries and egocentric tendencies.

This theory matches our description as this is the key reason why several organizations today has failed in achieving set objectives. These Organizations instead hold so tenaciously to the old traditional approach of ‘Reductionism’ which asserts, that for better results to be achieved of a given phenomenon, functional parts should see themselves as distinct players. Miller and Rice, (1967) likened this to seeing the human body no longer as a system but consists of parts that are independent of each other.

## V. METHODOLOGY

This paper is opinion based with its design couched in a “review” study structure. In other words, it adopted a documentary research method typology to investigate and categorize business literary views and extracts from secondary sources. Such reviewed materials include books, journals and periodicals chosen to represent a fair view of renowned authors in the field of Marketing, Purchasing and Supply Chain Management. Payne & Payne (2004) described the documentary method as the techniques used to

categorize, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources, mostly common written documents either for the private or public domain.

## VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This paper specifically discusses inter functional relationships between Marketing and purchasing in Supply Chain Management. Supply chain management is a composite phenomenon that houses all materials related functions of an Organization which includes Design Engineering (Product design and development), Purchasing, Logistics (in and outbound transportation and distribution), Stores, Production, Warehousing (Packaging, crating, boxing, branding & labeling, marking, etc) Marketing & Sales etc. Of course, Information Communication Technology (ICT) has not only eased the flow of information transmission but as well reduced by space and dimension every act of global business. This innovation has helped so tremendously in the advancement of the Supply Chain philosophy with all intents and purposes. Branding and labeling

Purchasing and Marketing by our reviews displayed such invaluable traits by distinctively playing very central roles in the realization of the Supply Chain family dreams. Marketing plays an increasingly important role in the process thus providing essential demand information within the building blocks of supply chain operations. In a collaborative relationship, Purchasing, correspondingly contribute to a large extent in building up a high customer service profile and as such positions the organizations product as one among equals. They provide information on products availability, prices, order tracking, customer incentives, marketing campaigns and sales targets through their knowledge of marketing research

These and more help to increase understanding of market demand and marketing initiatives which in turn equips Purchasing on planning and budgeting for materials. Marketing enables the supply chain to strengthen the company's competitive position and support the successful development of new products. Marketing provides an essential balance in supply chain management. It helps companies and their partners become more customer focused than concentrate more on the production process. By improving communications, support and collaboration, Marketing helps increase supply chain efficiency and create a single extended enterprise with a strong competitive edge.

## VII. CRITIQUE OF THE REVIEWS

From the reviews of the relevant literatures, the following gaps were noted:

### A. *Near Synergy Syndrome*

Majority of the reviewed works saw both functions as having made direct positive impacts however, going by the systems theory prescriptions, such impacts could have been more profound if the firms had adopted a systemic approach where team leaders of of both functions meet from time to time to deliberate on greener strategies.

### B. Lack Of Collocation Principle

In all the reviews, there was no mention of staff of these functions, collocating for purposes of idea exchange at least cost. Collocation has been described as a modern approach that allows staff of different units share offices on regular basis for better idea sharing and knowledge exchanges especially when facing a demanding and critical production task. Benefits of this practice abound as it is time and cost effective with a positive impact on organizational productivity and profitability index.

Affirming these critique, Leenders and Fearon (1997) berates Supply Chain for its philosophy to preclude Marketing collaborations and focuses majorly on purchasing department's efforts to develop better and more responsive suppliers.

Mentzer, DeWitt, Keebler, Min, Nix, Smith, & Zacharia, (2001) a Marketing scholar insists that Marketing perform significant roles amongst other components of Supply Chain Management such as purchasing, stores, production, warehousing, transport and distribution, sales etc and so, should not be relegated.

Given the above and as evidenced by majority of the reviewed interdisciplinary literary works, there is a growing need and advocacy for organizations to depart from the traditional "Reductionist" belief in business functional areas to a highly advocated "Systems Approach" which synergizes and integrates organizational functions with a view to achieving set targets. This of course is in line with international and global best practices and therefore justifies the theoretical underpin of the study which according to Von Bertalanffy (1968) implies a set of elements standing in interactions though expressed in different forms.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The study was designed to address dichotomies that are prevalent in our every day functional activities mainly in the "product driven" organizations. Special reference was made of "Marketing and Purchasing functions which rather than see each other as components of the wider Supply Chain family, operate at cross purposes. The study therefore concludes that greater efforts are required for vast number of our production firms to realize the need to invest on intra and inter functional relationship. More so, given the ever growing technological explosion and stiff business competitions, the thesis of this paper is to re-enact this seemingly abandoned team spirit to foster at different points of their work relationships.

The underpin "Systems Theory" was therefore quite apt in showing how best to operate as a unified force rather as individual units. Though, other business areas were not discussed for contextual reasons, this paper has provided the platform for organizations to look inwards and review their operations in line with the precepts of systems theory. The study therefore, places a call on Academics of such related disciplines to reshape their research focus accordingly. This paper highly advocates that organizations quickly invest into

fast synchronization and operational alignments that are standard to meet with every manner of business challenges.

## IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Organizations are enjoined to revisit their operational policies with a view to removing all blocks of pride and lackluster influences existent amongst functional units. This is to inject an air of competence through sharing from a common bank of ideas
- Staff and actors in this new dispensation must come from a standard level of backgrounds both in character and learning. There should be no room for indolence and miscreants else, the dreams might not be realized
- Constant interactions and cross sectional meetings, brainstorming sessions should be observed and most often workshops and seminars held to educate and update workers in business functional areas on current issues.
- Marketing and Purchasing should build strong thrusts and alliances with third parties (Suppliers). at the acquisition front (Purchases for production purposes). This cannot happen where there are issues of discontentment rather under the shield of well streamlined SCM mechanism. Equally, both should learn to integrate logistics plans to meet with customer's demand at all times.
- Since the goal of any product related industry is to achieve customer satisfaction on daily basis, all business functions within the ambience of Supply Chain family should see each other as in relay race business that demands all manner of lucid and astute devotion to make the envisaged mark.

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