AN EMPRICAL ANALYSIS OF ROLE CONCEPTION:

A CASE STUDY OF PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

IN SELECTED CENTRAL OHIO MANUFACTURING FIRMS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Ronald Hugh Goodin, B.B.A., M.B.A.

The Ohio State University
1970

Approved by

William R. Davidson
Advisor
Department of Business Organization
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VITA

June 18, 1942

Born - Rochester, Pennsylvania

1965

B.B.A., University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio

1966

M.B.A., University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio

1966-1967

Teaching Assistant, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1967-1968

Teaching Associate, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1969-1970

Assistant Professor of Marketing and Management, The American University, Washington, D.C.

PUBLICATIONS

"Conflict in Distribution Channels: An Exploration."


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Marketing

Minor Fields: Behavioral Science, Personnel Management, and Economics
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM SETTING

Employee behavior is constrained or guided significantly by the organization—more specifically, by the effects of positionally developed roles on the behavior of personnel. This study examines aspects of these constraints as they affect organizational purchasing behavior.

The organization circumscribes modes of employee behavior in many ways through the development of performance criteria. This project centers upon viewing the purchasing agent's relationship to the purchasing function within the organization—his role. The focus is on similarities and differences in conceptions of purchasing held by both the purchasing agent and by members of various departments or positions with whom he interacts within the organization. Furthermore, the study will examine aggregate consensus levels among purchasing agents and their counterparts in a number of organizations. It is hypothesized that members of like positions will react similarly to role definitions with which they are involved. Likewise, it is hypothesized that certain differences will occur between people in diverse types of jobs. This project, however,
is not directly concerned with discerning the purchasing agent's response to specific stimuli.

Focus

Purchasing agents vary greatly among industries and organizations. This study is concerned with purchasing personnel who are members of manufacturing firms and have primary responsibility for procurement of physical resources which will either be incorporated in a physical product or support the production of the product.

This study examines the activity of individuals rather than the increasingly popular group or committee buying practices. This does not exclude from consideration the impact of other employees upon purchasing behavior. To the contrary, the relationships between different organizational personnel is a central concern of this investigation.

Purchasing agent's responsibilities beyond procurement of physical resources are not considered. The concept of "materials management" encompasses all aspects of material control, including buying, inspecting, storing, and salvage and is entrusted to one individual or department to coordinate. As this concept has been implemented in only a
limited number of organizations, the research involved here foregoes this area of analysis. Moreover, only the purchasing activity of manufacturing organizations is examined.

Framework for Analysis

The purchasing agent and his relationships with other members of the business organization is a predominant concern in this research. An appropriate analytic framework for viewing these members of the firm is a social systems approach.

The business organization has been explicitly assumed by most behavioral scientists to be a social system. A system is basically "a set of objects with relationships between objects and their attributes." The objects may be designated as components of the system. The members of the system (organization), by definition, are caught up in a web of interdependency. The actions or behavior of any one member has consequences for the levels of output, measured in terms of individual or group goals, achieved by any other members.

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Parsons and Smelser view the social system as generated by an interaction process on the social-cultural level, between two or more actors. They observe the interdependency relationship between components of the system:

Social interaction is the process by which the behavior or change of state of members in a social system influences (a) the state of the system and (b) each other's states and relations. Every concrete act thus originates in a unit (member) and has effects on the state of the system and its component units.

Ostensibly, the aggregate systemic behavior will also influence the actions of one of its units.

Study Purpose

The dependency relationships inherent in the systemic nature of the organization compel the organization to have some means for coordination lest the behavior become random and perhaps chaotic. Goal attainment is impeded by such disorganization or discord. Most studies of coordination within the business environment have dealt almost exclusively with economic laws or control through monetary and/or sanctioning power. Utilizing sociological theory impels recognition of other means to achieve coordination.

It is important to know how the organization regulates the behavior of its members (components) within the system. Moreover, top management must know how to predict behavior, for providing as little direct, daily management control as possible, should be an important management goal. Managers should, ideally, concentrate on planning for future activity, rather than be concerned about daily supervision of subordinates' activities. The dependency relationships call for management to have some idea or concept about the interaction of employee behavior. Meaningful insight into the performance of system components can be obtained through an analysis of role and role expectation, norms, positions, goals, and conflicts within the system. These concepts are sociologically oriented and are basic to the field study which was undertaken.

Beyond the natural (functional) problems arising in conjunction with purchasing, additional stress may occur by virtue of structured conditions. Is purchasing and production department antipathy a result of organizational placement? Conscientious, well-trained people cannot be placed into a poorly conceived organizational structure without the creation of stress situations. Structurally generated stress could create conflict situations which obscure the real problems. One study indicated that
when people fail to function adequately in an organization, the areas of stress in the formal organization itself must be examined. In other words, before one identifies certain people as operating inappropriately within the organization, some attention should be focused on the difficulties inherent in the organization itself.\(^3\)

A sociological study of the relationships of organizational units to one another should assist in explaining inherent stress situations caused by organizational positioning of components.

Additionally, the study should suggest to organizations improved ways for utilizing purchasing department services. Purchasing services marketed to other departments (system components), may be inadequate or misused. Identification of the areas of interdepartmental agreement and disagreement about purchasing activities should enable refocusing either the interpretation or the activities of purchasing.

From a marketing viewpoint, another important rationale for this study is to develop an understanding of the impact of organizational constraints upon purchasing agent behavior. The marketer, to serve best the organization to which he is selling, must adapt his sales approach to the organizational needs and demands placed upon his contact or liaison with the potential customer; this contact is commonly the purchasing agent.

Industrial purchasing literature, though significant and massive, is largely concerned with describing and improving procurement technology. Descriptive accounts of contemporary purchasing behavior do not have lasting value because they are situational in nature and cannot reveal lasting trends. A more meaningful approach to studying behavior is the identification of variables and the relationships between them. The need for an analytic framework has been pointed out by Webster.

A conceptual structure (of industrial processes) is lacking to provide direction to research and analysis, and much of the research is, therefore, duplicative. Without an analytical structure it is difficult to identify the critical factors and relationships which need explanation. (parenthesis supplied)

A sociological perspective to the study of purchasing functions within a business organization has historically not been sufficiently utilized; research can be described at best as fragmentary. Many sociological small group studies need to be verified in larger organizations; organizational theories should be tested for applicability. This study couples various sociological

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concepts and empirically tests them within the business environment.

Methodology

An inventory of statements about purchasing behavior was designed to test the respondents' conception of ideal and actual purchasing role behavior. Responses of purchasing agents and other functional managers including top management were tested to determine areas of agreement and disagreement about purchasing activity. The conceptual development of role analysis in Chapter 2 led to the assumptions in Chapter 4 which formed the foundation of the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1.** Incumbents of the same position within different formal organizations (social systems) have consensus on their expectation of the behavior necessary in a specific task or activity.

**Hypothesis 2.** Incumbents of the same position within different formal organizations (social systems) have low consensus with the role expectations of their counter-position with respect to a specific task or activity.

**Hypothesis 3.** Incumbents of the same position
within different formal organizations (social systems) perceive organizational behavior as different from their role expectations for behavior in a specific task or activity.

Hypothesis 4. In specifying the division of responsibility between a focal position and counter position in a formal organization (social system), incumbents of each of these positions will perceive more responsibility within their own position in the performance of some task or activity than incumbents of the other position will assign to it.

Hypothesis 5. Incumbents of the same position in different formal organizations who identify with members or are themselves members of different external systems will interpret the organizational goal differently, will express expectations for incumbents of their position within the formal organization different from incumbents of the same position who do not have these external alliances.

The systems approach utilized for this research calls for an analysis of the components of the system. Within the business firm the individual people employed
might be presumed to be the system components. In a
social systems framework, however, another approach lends
itself to a more analytical study.

Because an organization is fundamentally
a pattern of roles and a blueprint for
their coordination, it exists independently
of particular people and can survive in
spite of 100 per cent turnover of membership.
If the role expectations are recorded either
in documents or in the memories of parents or
teachers, the organization will continue from
generation to generation with new members
fulfilling the roles. In principle, the organi-
ization will only change when the blueprint
itself is changed or when the roles are
redefined by the top authorities or their
occupants.5

Thus, the primary unit of analysis is the component
parts of the system. This conceptualization necessarily
excludes individuals, because a theory of organization
cannot be derived from a mere aggregation of principles
about human behavior. This view is supported by Corwin:

On the contrary, the principles of individual
behavior are assumed to be mediated by and
reflected in principles of organization.
Organizational properties are assumed to rep-
resent an independent form of social life
having a uniquely characteristic logic and
dynamic.6

5 Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Psychology (Englewood

6 Ronald G. Corwin, Staff Conflicts in the Public Schools
(Columbus, Ohio: Department of Sociology and Anthropology,
The Ohio State University, 1966), p. 36.
This view does not purport that individual behavior is not useful in explaining organizational behavior, but merely takes another approach to understanding purchasing behavior.

This approach appears to look at human behavior as organizationally caused, and simultaneously ignores individual behavior. This is not a contradictory approach. Corwin notes that "group properties can be inferred from individual reactions to the group, just as the temperature of the sun can be inferred from the reaction of other objects and human beings to it."  Data can be collected utilizing the proposed social system approach. Scott points out that

Just because an individual is used as a source of data is no reason that the data must describe his own characteristics rather than the characteristics of some external system to which he is...responding.

The social systems approach whereby the employees of the firm are presumed to respond in their capacity as position-holders permits this study to employ the methodology of sociology and organization theory. Structural effects on behavior must be understood before the joint

7Ibid, pp. 115-116.

effects of personality and organization can be examined with sophistication.\footnote{See Corwin, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 17-18.}

\textbf{Organization of the Study}

This chapter has attempted to provide the reader with some background to the problem under analysis, rationale for the study, and an introduction to the conceptual construct of a systems approach to organizational analysis. Chapter 2, "The Sociological Perspective", provides a discussion of the relationships of role and role expectation, norms, positions, goals, and conflicts within the system. The Purchasing Agent in the Organizational Environment is the subject of the third chapter. Here the purchasing agent is viewed in his relationships with other units in the firm. The sociological framework is activated by inclusion of ongoing problem areas concerned with purchasing. Research Design is the subject of Chapter 4 and discussion dwells on the development of hypotheses, an instrument for analysis, sample selection, and statistical methods of analysis. The fifth chapter reveals the findings of the study; results of various tests are indicated for each hypothesis. The last chapter presents a summary of the study, conclusions reached, and recommendations which are indicated by the study results.
CHAPTER 2

THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Seeking to explain the basic determinants of behavior in industrial purchasing requires examination of the various spheres of influence upon the group being studied. With respect to the purchasing agent, three levels of influence can be noted: (1) the cognitive processes and psychological composition of the individual, (2) the influence of external systems (reference groups, social class, family life cycle, etc.), and (3) organizational influences.

It is the organizational influences which are central to this study. Broadly speaking, these influences include the work environment of the firm, budgetary and other controls, and bureaucratic factors such as specialization, centralization, and organization size. This study focuses on the structuring of organizations into various departmental or positional classifications. The relationships and interdependencies between areas are assumed to reveal key problems inherent in organization design.

Whereas the individual is unquestionably of importance to the specific firm, in order to develop broad understandings of purchasing in a number of firms, this factor is relegated a very small role.
The influence of the external environment is also sidestepped for the most part. The purchasing agent is considered, however, as a professional with affiliations throughout his firm and yet possessing necessary contacts with vendors and perhaps professional colleagues in various associations. These influences will be given some consideration.

The Organizational Scope

The analytical tools used in this project include the concepts of position, role and goal. The purchasing agent must be examined with respect to his location (position) in the organization, the relationships he has with other organization members (role) and the direction in which his activity is motivated (goals). The position-role-goal relationship is difficult to understand because each of the terms has a variety of interpretations. Each concept is, therefore, discussed at this point.

Positions. A system is simply a set of related objects; each object is designated as a system component. Analysis of an atom as a system would show the protons and electrons to be components of the system. In analyzing a business organization in a systems perspective, individual employees might be presumed to be designated components. The appropriately titled component of the organizational system is "position" not "person."
When people are subtracted from the components of the system only a network of positions remains, each of these units being related to the others. Thus a social system is a placement of an individual in a group or society in respect to his prescribed contribution to a relationship with one or more other persons who also have placements.¹

Since positions are locations, they can be described only by examining the content of the interrelationships. The occupant of a position "obtains a set of expectations or acquired anticipatory reactions."² The position-holder develops an expectation of certain behaviors from other positions and learns that he has an obligation to make contributions in return.³

Newcomb indicated the extreme importance of the relationships existing between positions when he noted:

Thus the positions, which are the smallest element—the construction blocks—of societies and organized groups, are interrelated and consistent because they are organized to common ends. From one point of view, then, societies and organized groups are organized to reach certain goals.


³ Newcomb, et. al., op.cit., p. 325.
Since every position is a part of an inclusive system of positions, no one position has any meaning apart from the other position to which it is related.  

Role. Behavior within a social system is regulated primarily through "norms" which prescribe correct or acceptable behavior patterns for the system members. Without norms to guide the system components, random or chaotic behavior would result.

A "role" is the term used to indicate the kinship between positions. These roles are norms which define the rights and obligations pertaining to the relationship. 

The relationship builds from norms aggregating to define a role, which in turn unites the occupants of two positions interacting with one another. "The position is the component of the social system and the role is the normatively designated relationship that the position is to have with the other positions in the social system." The role may be thought of as the dynamic or relational aspect of social systems.

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5 Corwin, op. cit., p. 116.
A variety of levels of abstraction may be denoted by the term "role." One level may be personal—the interaction between specific individuals. Organizational situations may give rise to another level of role definition—between official positions in a specific group or formal organization. Finally, a categorical distinction can be made between members of a society—such as men and women.\(^8\)

A problem with segregating various role definitions will occur in trying to view the concept in action. Roles have ingredients of personal, structural, situational, and categorical determination, but a role is never wholly enacted with reference to one level of abstraction.\(^9\)

The term "role" will indicate the way in which a person carries into action the configuration of rights and obligations of a status or structured position he occupies within a group. It includes the way he defines himself and the behavior appropriate to his position and also the way others define them and what his behavior ought to be.\(^10\)

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\(^8\) Ronald G. Corwin, *The Development of an Instrument for Examining Staff Conflicts in the Public Schools*. Mimeograph (Columbus, Ohio: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, The Ohio State University, 1963), p. 93.


Role is a two sided term referring to a group of norms which apply to a unit of interaction or dyad (a focal position and a single counter position or alter in an appropriate counter role). A simple role relationship is indicated in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

DYADIC ROLE RELATIONSHIP, INDICATING A SINGLE ROLE BETWEEN TWO POSITIONS

Haas has found a distinct relationship between norms and roles.

Norms vary in the consistency of their relationship to each other. Those associated with the same activity or related activities and specifying a pattern of conduct for two persons in a specified situation constitutes a role. A role is here considered to be a set of standards and procedures which define the rights and obligations of persons in certain social situations, sanctioned by interacting members and authorized by the larger society.
of particular segments of it.

Roles are enacted through normative interaction among the positions created within a social system. The position occupant's understanding of appropriate norms for particular circumstances may be considered his role conception. The way in which the role is enacted is specified as role performance. 12

The relationships between goals, roles, and positions is intricate, as evidenced by the complexity of the literature. Simply, it can be said that "human behavior (role performance) is in part a function of the positions an individual occupies and the expectation (role conceptions) held for incumbents of these positions." 13

A simplified role system within a business setting may be designated by Figure 2. Here the roles which the purchasing agent enacts within the firm are indicated.

11 J. Eugene Haas, Role Conception and Group Consensus (Columbus, Ohio: Bureau of Business Research, The Ohio State University, 1963), p. 1.

12 Ibid., p. 3.

FIGURE 2
SIMPLE ROLE SYSTEM, INDICATING A NUMBER OF POSITIONS WITH WHICH THE OCCUPANT OF A FOCAL POSITION HAS ROLE RELATIONSHIPS.
A view of the total relationships (roles) between a position occupant and occupants of counter positions in all other relationships, may be called a role set. A physician's role set, for instance, would include beyond his patients, roles with medical personnel such as nurses, other doctors, and hospital administrators. Simultaneously, his position as a doctor within the social system of the community places other responsibilities (norms) upon him to behave (role enactment) in certain ways in cultural, social, and religious settings. This multiple role system or role set can be visualized for the organizational purchasing agent in Figure 3.

The components of the system are:

**Sector 1:**

**Firm System Boundary.** This includes role relationships with other members of the business organization—the primary focus of this study.

**Sector 2:**

**Supplier-System Boundary.** The purchasing agent has relationships with the suppliers

---

FIGURE 3

MULTIPLE ROLE SYSTEM

Firm System Boundary

Supplier System Boundary

Sector 1

V.P.

EDP

Prod. Mgr.

Sector 2

Supplier

A

B

Purchasing

Agent

Sector 3

PA₁

PA₂

PA₃

Professional Colleague Boundary

Sector 4

Other Related Systems

Social-Cultural Boundary
who attempt to sell and service his company. The purchasing agent is considered a "boundary-spanning unit" between purchasing and supplying organizations.15

**Sector 3:**

**Professional Boundary.** A number of purchasing agents utilize other purchasing agents as their reference group. Belonging to a professional organization (such as the National Association of Purchasing Management, Incorporated) may provide the agent with normative prescriptions for behavior---externally imposed roles.

**Sector 4:**

**Social-Cultural Boundary.** Though beyond the scope of this study, nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the purchasing agent has other roles which he enacts outside the business sphere. His social, religious, and cultural activities develop roles which may intrude upon the

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15 In essence, the purchasing agent also spans the boundary between departments—for instance, purchasing and engineering.
performance of other more primary organizationally related roles.

Goals. The individual position occupant within the organization makes decisions which are largely compatible with organizational objectives or desired future state of affairs—goals. When the individual first enters the corporate social system, authority is exercised to impose certain behavior patterns on him. The values imposed gradually become "internalized" and the individual develops a loyalty to the organization which insures the maintenance of the organizational goal. As Simon expresses it:

...through his subjection to organizationally determined goals, and through the gradual absorption of these goals into his own attitudes, the participant in organizations acquires an "organization personality" rather distinct from his personality as an individual. The organization assigns to him a role; it specifies the particular values, facts, and alternatives upon which his decisions in the organization are to be based. 16

As the individual is induced to remain within the organization (for payment, prestige, etc.), he is simultaneously required to make contributions (through required participative behavior) to the organization's goals. 17 The


position occupant desires to maximize his inducements over his contributions for a more favorable balance.

But "joining" means accepting an organizational role, and hence we do not need any additional motivational assumptions beyond those of inducements—contributions theory to explain the ensuing role-enacting behavior. 18

To understand better how the position occupant adapts this behavior to organizational goals and how this remains consistent with the role-set of the position occupant, Simon further notes:

In view of the hierarchical structure that is typical of most formal organizations, it is reasonable use of language to employ organizational goal to refer particularly to the constraint sets and criteria of search that define roles of the upper levels. For high level executives in these organizations will seek out and support actions that advance these goals, and subordinate employees will do the same or will at least tailor their choices to constraints established by the higher echelons with this end in view. 19


The preceding classification of the goal, role, and position concepts permits the examination of organizations and the behavior of its members in a systems perspective. In spite of the limitation of withholding temporary recognition of the organizational member's personality, the desired insight into behavior may be gleaned from this analysis.

Contribution of Behavioral Literature

The conceptual development of the norm-role-position-goal relationship as presented above is indicative of the contribution of the behavioral sciences. A wealth of material available in the sociology and organization theory literature contributed the framework within which this study was conducted. Beyond the theory presented in these areas, a number of behavioral scientists conducted investigations of role-related concepts within formal organizations.

A major concern with role perception and definition in this study is that role clarity may prevent conflict or stress situations in organizations whereas low role consensus may promote tension and related problems in the firm. March and Simon have postulated three conditions necessary for conflict (or stress) to develop between groups (intra- or inter-organizational): (1) the presence of a need for joint-decision making (interdependence), and either (2)
differences in group goals, or (3) differences in group perceptions of reality. Each of these conditions are appropriate variables for consideration in this study as they appear central to the concept of role and also related to the actual functioning of the purchasing agent in manufacturing firms. White's study in the restaurant industry dealt with relationships between positions and found that the drive for departmental autonomy was greatest in those areas where the interrelation of tasks was higher. Hostility was also highest at these points. Gouldner explains that this may be anticipated as the simultaneous pressures toward departmental autonomy, on the one hand, and official interdependence of departments, on the other, represent contradictions.

Corwin's 1963 study recognized that certain characteristics of organizations are associated with conflicts. He observed that conflict or stress pattern and intensity depend upon positional locations, the specificity and

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20 March and Simon, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-129.


23 Corwin, *The Development of an Instrument for Examining Staff Conflict*, *op. cit.*
clarity of roles, the interdependence of functions, and upon role conceptions. The research in this study follows the base developed, in part, by Corwin.

Conflict within organizations is a normal condition (provided it does not reach a destructive level) and this leads various position-occupants to develop objectives which may be at odds with the official organizational goals. This diversity of goals and unplanned cleavages between departments further compromises original goals and maintains the differences between groups. Thus operating goals are partly forged out by the conflict process.\(^{24}\)

Conflict in organizations may appear to make life unpleasant enough that the position-occupant may leave. Corwin explains why this may not happen.

The problem of conflict also has relevance to job commitment and satisfaction, which are likely to be influenced by the frequency of friction within organizations, role conflicts, and their means of resolution. The extent to which an individual receives group support for his point of view, and the general consideration of group cohesiveness, may tend to offset the otherwise negative effects that conflict could have on individuals.\(^{25}\)

\(^{24}\) Ibid, p. 27.

\(^{25}\) Ibid, p. 4.
The idea that the group has an influence on the individual and his attitudes was supported by Sherif's study of the individual's estimate of movement of light in a darkened room where there was no point of reference except other people in the group. He found that personal expectations appear to be a product of group norms. Individuals respond to the group and eventually begin to identify themselves in terms of their social positions. Kuhn and McPartland found a definite tendency for the individual to identify with his position and role pattern.

Very few conflicts between teachers in Corwin's study could be directly attributed to either age or sex roles, but a surprisingly large proportion of them involved at least one teacher in athletics or non-academic programs (including drama, theater, speech, music or art). This observation suggests that positions in formal organizations may be more responsible for producing some conflicts than some latent roles such as age or sex.


This study should point out some areas of low consensus between purchasing agents and other positions within the firm. Locating these areas is important as low consensus tends to produce strain, dissatisfaction, and tension.\textsuperscript{29} A study of work groups in industry investigated consensus on the foreman-steward role. Level of consensus was found to be directly related to reported "ease in inter-personal relations."\textsuperscript{30}

Haas's study of roles within a hospital setting provides further support to the idea that role consensus is of primary importance in the determination of internal corporate conflict.\textsuperscript{31} Interaction within a permanent group between individuals whose role behavior violates the role norms of the other individuals causes annoyance and frustration. This may be expressed by outward disagreement on the points of incongruence, or aggression may be more generally expressed through overall criticism or rejection of the other individual or group with which there is role discensus.


\textsuperscript{31}Haas, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 39.
Often the argument with the "offending" persons has little to do with the real basic differences in role definition. Thus, it is not always easy to pinpoint the conflict and relate it to a specific role discensus. It may be preferable to first examine consensus levels with the idea of then looking at resulting conflict.

Gross, Mason, and McEachern analyzed the consensus levels within and between school board members and their superintendents.\(^{32}\) Their analysis indicated that there were significant differences between the two groups in 63 per cent of the items comprising the role instrument. Their findings give evidence of the variation in consensus on the expectation for members of single positions. Furthermore, they found a direct relationship between the consensus level and the level of evaluation by each group of the other. Thus, the higher the level of consensus, the more favorable the evaluation of role performance.

Each of these studies provides the technique and rationale for conducting a study of consensus levels relating to purchasing activities in manufacturing firms. The conceptual framework for this study was selectively drawn from sociological literature. Less has been said about each of the concepts than may seem appropriate to a sociologist; many of the ideas are presented without refinements and in their broader forms. This has been done

\(^{32}\)Gross, et. al., op. cit.
deliberately so that operational distinctions could be made and so as to avoid the distortions of total understanding which often result from attempting to apply the vast conceptual literature of sociology to a specific industrial situation. It is more important that insight be gained into the practical application of concepts to a management problem.
CHAPTER 3

PURCHASING IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

This chapter examines the purchasing agent as he operates in the business organization. The conceptual framework derived from sociology and organization theory is applied to the actual organization component or position under consideration—the purchasing agent. Recognition of the factors involved in position or role development of the purchasing agent will precede the development and testing of the hypotheses in the next chapter.

The purchasing agent in this study is designated as a member of a business firm who has primary responsibility for procurement of physical resources which will either be incorporated in a physical product or support the product’s production. Though in practice there is a myriad of factors which cause position holders designated as purchasing agents to be different from other so-called purchasing agents in both personality and function, this study attempts to overcome these problems. The personality of the purchasing
agent is subordinated in part by the position he holds and the subsequent role he must enact. The actual operation of the purchasing department will be relatively homogeneous through the selection of a group of firms which provide similarity in positions.

**Purchasing Knowledge Gap**

Little is known about actual decision making operations in the industrial market other than the generalized phenomena discussed in numerous marketing and purchasing textbooks. Most buyer behavior studies have been entirely focused upon the ultimate consumer market rather than the industrial market. Often the industrial or institutional buyer is presumed to behave in a manner bounded by complete economic rationality. Yet the complex environment or organizational and interpersonal relations obscure the underpinnings of behavior.

Recent investigations of industrial purchasing behavior have added to current knowledge, yet these endeavors failed to utilize fully the interdisciplinary knowledge available. They continue to emphasize mainly the rational aspects of the industrial purchasing process. Interdisciplinary studies are needed to decipher the organizational factors which impinge upon the behavior of the purchasing agent and other position occupants.
Low role consensus based upon structural divisions within the organization appeared in one inquiry to be the cause of friction and inefficiency.\textsuperscript{1} Other studies of purchasing agents indicated instances in which the purchasing agent perceived his role expectations to be violated by organizational actions.\textsuperscript{2}

While these and other investigations of the purchasing agent are useful and provocative, they have not done more than comment on incidents observed within several organizations. They have not developed any systematized scheme of examining the organizational variables controlling industrial purchasing behavior; hypotheses were not developed and empirically tested.

Denton and Prien attempted to define the perceived functions of purchasing personnel.\textsuperscript{3} Their research sample consisted of company employees in one firm who utilized purchasing services. The study did not focus on the purchasing agents' conception of his own role (only other


employees were contacted) nor were measures of perceptual differences attempted.

Perceptions of industrial buying responsibility for certain purchasing functions were examined in a study which dealt with the evaluation of two groups (purchasing agents and "other executives") toward purchasing agents' concern with six elements of a product. Group differences were shown as percentages of the group expressing certain degrees of concern. The study indicated a disparity between the perceptions of the groups, but neither hypothesized nor showed any causes for or significance of the discrepancies.

Who is the Purchasing Agent?

Specific differences in organization withstanding, the objectives and responsibilities of procurement executives are largely the same. The fundamental objective of the procurement executive is to contribute to the profitable operation of his firm. More specific goals and procedures which aid in accomplishing this main purpose are described in Table 1. Though not all inclusive, these goals and procedures appear representative of the broad function of purchasing agents in manufacturing firms such as were chosen for analysis.

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TABLE 1
THE PURCHASING FUNCTION
GOALS AND PROCEDURES

Purchasing goals:

1. To have on hand when and where needed, materials, equipment, supplies and services required in support of the firm's operation.

2. To obtain purchases at the lowest ultimate cost consistent with the company's standards of quality and service and with market conditions.

3. To select vendors which can best provide the necessary quality and service at a fair competitive price.

4. To provide an effective integration of the purchasing department with other departments.

5. To enhance the firm's competitive and profit position.

6. To provide management with forecasts of the trends of economic conditions and their probable effect on the available supply of items to be purchased.

7. To provide for economic disposal of surpluses.

Purchasing procedures:

1. Realizing and stating need of purchase.

2. Determining possible sources of supply.

3. Negotiating for sources of supply.


5. Selecting sources of supply.

6. Issuing a purchase order.

7. Follow-up on the order.
TABLE 1 (Cont.)

THE PURCHASING FUNCTION
GOALS AND PROCEDURES

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Receiving and inspecting goods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Checking the invoice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Completing purchase records.</td>
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</table>

The Purchasing Role. The role of the purchasing agent is conceived in general terms by the organization through development of a job description. The job description is not formalized in many firms and even where prepared does not define in any detail the purchasing role. Each department in the firm is, therefore, found to have varied conceptions of the purchasing role. These differences are the first stage in developing role conflict.

A composite job description of purchasing agents developed by an American Management Association study indicates many aspects of the purchasing agent role (see Table 2). Roles define the rights and obligations of a position with respect to other positions and is revealed in the job description. The purchasing agent must, for instance, assume the responsibility of "procurement of certain classes of material." In exchange for the assumption of this obligation, he may expect certain rights with respect to others in the firm. He "recommends... supply and procurement policies and procedures," and in turn anticipates acceptance (at least sincere consideration) of these recommendations by others. The job description further specifies, in part, other positions with which the purchasing agent will be related, e.g., "Manager of Purchases and Stores" or director of "Freight Sales and Service Department."
### TABLE 2

**TYPICAL PURCHASING JOB DESCRIPTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Major Function</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Assumes responsibility for procurement of certain classes of material necessary for efficient operations at the lowest cost consistent with Company requirements as to quality, delivery, and reliability of source.</td>
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<table>
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<th>II. Specific Responsibilities</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Plans and directs activities within his jurisdiction to insure prompt placing of orders for material and supplies in quantity required when and where needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Recommends to the Manager of Purchases and Stores advisability of short-term commitments on certain requirements on price and quantity basis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Reviews all requisitions, as received, for description of material, and screens any large or unusual requisitions which should receive special consideration or be covered by special handling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Consults with representatives of various departments on matters relative to purchasing and development of material and apparatus specifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Directs the maintenance of suitable price records and catalogs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Advises Stores Department as to stock-book descriptions and corrections to conform to results of his product, price, and quantity research and other information pertaining to items purchased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Develops additional or primary sources of supply of materials; and recommends material which can be made available as alternate or substitute in cases of shortages or emergencies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2 (Cont.)

TYPICAL PURCHASING JOB DESCRIPTION

8. Authorizes emergency purchases in accordance with policy of department.

9. Confers with Freight Sales and Service Department as to off-line transportation costs which ultimately affect the cost of material and supplies.

10. Confers with Director of Technical Research for inspection of certain materials that should be checked to keep quality up to Company standards.

11. Signs purchase orders in accordance with established policy.

12. Assumes the responsibility for approval of invoices for prices, quantity, and terms of delivery.

13. Prepares forecast, by calendar months, of vouchers for material and supplies.

14. Maintains liaison with suppliers; and conducts studies to determine their desirability as a source of supply for the Company and to obtain information concerning new and improved materials, supplies, and apparatus.

15. Serves as member of certain committees of Association of American Railroads, as outlined on sheet appended hereto.

16. Keeps informed as to market conditions, availability of products, tax matters that affect the cost of material, and other pertinent information.

TABLE 2 (Cont.)

TYPICAL PURCHASING JOB DESCRIPTION

III. Relationships
1. The purchasing agent is responsible to the Vice-President - Purchase and Stores and the Manager of Purchases and Stores.

2. Directly responsible to the Purchasing Agent are the Assistant Purchasing Agent (where such position exists) and buyers.

Role Conflict

Though the organization designates roles to each of its positions in relation to other positions, these roles are not always perceived with congruence. There are a number of differences in perception which cause role conflict to ensue. This causes position occupants to behave counter to expectations of others, creating stress and conflict. Moreover, the vagueness of the prescribed role definitions in the job description requires the purchasing agent and his counter-positions in the firm to develop further the prescriptions for their mutual relationships.

In organizational terms, the lack of perceptual congruence can result in poor domain consensus. "Domain consensus defines a set of expectations both for members of an organization and for others with whom they interact about what the organization will and will not do." Therefore, the domain of a department, such as purchasing, indicates its jurisdiction within the firm. The problem (role conflict or domain discensus) arises from the perceptual difference in interpreting required normative behavior. The purchasing department, in its capacity as "watchdog" over the organization's interests, determines that it has the right to purchase from a supplier other than the one specified by the production department on its

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requisition if the firm can get "substantially the same product at lower cost." The production department, responsible for the manufacture of the firm's goods, insists that it has been delegated the authority to choose source of supply and that purchasing is a service function only. The domains or roles of each department are mutually exclusive in this instance and a conflict situation exists.6

Role conflict of another variety may emerge when the purchasing agent finds himself caught with a role relationship with one group simultaneously in direct conflict with his role in another group. The purchasing agent cannot perform his role in one area without directly violating the norms comprising his role in another group.

The Multiple Role System presented previously (Figure 3) can reveal areas of role conflict as the purchasing agent attempts to satisfy his role prescription in two different social systems (or sub-systems). The role conflict between departments in the firm system is likely to arise from low domain consensus.

The supplier system boundary, similarly, places the purchasing agent in a potential conflict situation as he is what Thompson calls a "boundary-spanning position,"

one which spans the gap between the primary organization of which he is a member and the supplier firm in the organization's task environment.\textsuperscript{7} The purchasing agent is, theoretically, part of the social system created by both vendor and buyer firms. The closeness of "team work" growing between purchasing agents and their salesmen from vendor firms has been noted in a study by Duncan.\textsuperscript{8}

Within the professional colleague system, the purchasing agent relates to other purchasing personnel, often in formal associations such as the National Association of Purchasing Management, Incorporated. This extra-organization acts as a reference group for the purchasing agent. "Many studies in recent years have shown that the individual's personal goals are affected in no small way by the groups to which he belongs or aspires to belong--in short, by his reference group."\textsuperscript{9} A reference group may exist for purchasing agents as they respond to their "profession." Though they operate within their firm, some

\textsuperscript{7} Thompson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 110-112.


retain their identification with their professional group, are highly committed to their professional skills, and look for social support to professional colleagues outside the organization as well as within. Such involvement in the larger network of professional relations that cuts across organizations may be said to indicate a "professional" orientation.10

Blau and Scott indicate that the concept of reference group influence upon the behavior of employees is not limited to "professionals" in the sense that they must have formal education. Orientation to a group outside of the bureaucracy is appropriate to be considered a reference group.11 Reference groups help delimit the role pattern for the individual and act as a source of the sense of belongingness or the point where support can be obtained and to which there is an obligation to accept the attitudes, values or rules of that group.

In some studies purchasing agents have been found to maintain relatively strong identification with the professional association in which they are active.12 The experience of the National Association of Purchasing Management, Inc., the major association to which the

11 Ibid, p. 67
12 Duncan, op. cit., pp. 10-11.
purchasing agent would likely respond, would tend to refute the idea of the widespread reliance of the purchasing agent on his association. Where there is active participation, though, Duncan notes:

There is no denying of the fact, however, that active participation in association activities yields many benefits to purchasing executives of an indirect or intangible nature. This participation, moreover, influences his behavior in his daily activities. Exchange of ideas and experiences generate more positive thinking and the adoption of methods and procedures not considered previously. Consciously or unconsciously these ideas, impressions and conceptions resulting from such contacts are reflected in purchasing activities. And, it is reasonable to conclude, the motivation and behavior of active association will be different from that of the nonparticipants.¹³

The norms "accepted" by the purchasing agent in the professional group may contradict norms imposed by the employer organization, thereby creating role conflict in another way. The reference group provides the impetus to the purchasing agent to redefine his role in the organization and to promote purchasing goals to other members of the firm, perhaps at the expense of the other department's goals.

Several investigations of purchasing behavior in organizations have made comments about the role conflict

¹³ Ibid, p. 11.
between purchasing and other corporate departments. In many instances the purchasing agent or director is convinced that his authority within the organization is "too limited by technical considerations or specifications to permit him to carry out his responsibilities effectively and efficiently."\textsuperscript{14} There is an indication that an area of conflict arises as the purchasing agent views his function in the firm as larger than viewed by the other department managers. The purchasing agent may feel unduly constrained in his activities while the functional managers resent the intrusion of the purchasing agent into their area. Strauss looked at the manner in which the purchasing agent attempted to achieve his function in the firm. He noted the expanded role conception held by the purchasing agent of his duties:

The ambitious agent feels that placing orders and expediting deliveries are but the bare bones of his responsibilities. He looks upon his most important function as that of keeping management posted about market developments: new materials, new sources of supply, price trends, and so forth. And to make this information more useful, he seeks to be consulted before the requisition is drawn up, while the product is still in the planning stage. He feels that his technical knowledge of the market

\textsuperscript{14} Lindsay and Kinnard, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 46.
should be accorded recognition equal to the technical knowledge of the engineer and accountant.\textsuperscript{15}

Strauss found that the rivalry between the purchasing agent and the functional groups can take many forms.\textsuperscript{16} This arises because each department tends to have a distorted image of the company’s best interest—this image being consistent with the departmental idea of its best interest. He points out that the conflict can be anticipated as a normal part of organizational activity, but also can lead to many problems of rivalry, compromise, and an overburdened management attempting to control the departments below them.

\textsuperscript{15} Strauss, "Tactics of Lateral Relationships," \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 163-164.

\textsuperscript{16} Strauss, "Work-Flow-Frictions," \textit{op. cit.}
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

Application of the theoretical background of role behavior to the purchasing function in manufacturing firms requires specification of objectives and a methodology to be implemented. The preparation and execution of field work is discussed in this chapter.

Objectives

A sociological perspective in attempting to understand business problems is an increasingly fruitful method of analysis, yet few studies have used this focus upon industrial buying behavior. This inquiry undertakes research designed to gather and analyze data concerning organizational constraints upon industrial purchasing behavior, and more specifically, the role relationships perceived by position occupants. The objectives of the study are:

1. To determine what occupants of various positions within the firm perceive to be the proper actions of the purchasing function.
2. To analyze how members of various parts of the organization, by virtue of their affiliation, perceive the actual operation of the firm as it relates to purchasing.

3. To investigate high and low consensus within the organization as they relate to goal and role perceptions of purchasing by different position occupants.

Assumptions

This study concerns degrees of expectational congruence about purchasing tasks in the formal business organization. Before hypotheses can be generated and tested, a number of propositions must be accepted.¹ For the purpose of this study it is assumed that:

A₁ A formal organization is a social system with strong orientation toward specific goal attainment.

A₂ Organizational goal attainment is achieved by formal delegation of tasks (sub-goals) to incumbents of formally established positions.

A₃ Organizational goal achievement is contingent upon task (sub-goal) achievement by position incumbents.

¹ See Gross, op. cit., pp. 122-123, for an example of appropriate assumptions. The following assumptions are largely based upon Gross.
Positional goal achievement requires the managerial position occupant to make decisions or choices among alternative action possibilities.

Any decision made by the managerial position incumbent of the formal organization will affect achievement of the tasks of that position as well as the achievement of tasks designated to other position occupants, and ultimately, affect organizational goal achievement.

The primary orientation of a position incumbent in a formal organization is toward the tasks or goals of his position, not toward the organizational goal.

The position occupant's response to work task situations is motivated by organizationally developed patterns.

Based on these assumptions, a framework was created within which an examination could be made of the role perceptions of various position occupants relating to purchasing tasks.

Hypotheses

Position occupants in various firms are delegated
tasks by their firm ($A_2$) much like the tasks assigned to similar position holders in other firms. The position incumbent develops a strong orientation to his position goals ($A_6$) and responds to situations through specific behavior patterns developed in relation to his position ($A_7$). This rationale leads to the hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1.** Incumbents of the same position within different formal organizations (social systems) have consensus on their expectations of the behavior necessary in a specific task or activity.

Goal assignments by the organization to each of its positions ($A_2$) result in various behavior patterns by each component trying to achieve his goal ($A_4$). The action of any component (purchasing agent) affects and is affected by the actions of other members of the firm ($A_5$). Because the position occupant is oriented by the goals of his position ($A_6$) rather than the goals of others, it is reasonable to assume that:

**Hypothesis 2.** Incumbents of the same position within different formal organizations (social systems) have discensus with the role expectations of their counter-position with respect to a specific task or activity.
The organization assigns goals to its components \( A_2 \) causing them to perceive organizational activity within the reference frame of their own positional goals or objectives. As the actions of others affect their behavior \( A_5 \), it is likely that a perceived discrepancy between desired and actual behavior will result. Thus,

**Hypothesis 3.** Incumbents of the same position within different formal organizations (social systems) perceive organizational behavior as different from their role expectations for behavior in a specific task or activity.

Within a group of different positions in an organization, each member of which was assigned goals \( A_2 \) to which they develop an orientation \( A_6 \), each member perceives himself as more important than the other members in the achievement of group goals.

**Hypothesis 4.** In specifying the division of responsibility between a focal position and counter position in a formal organization (social system), incumbents of each of these positions will perceive more responsibility within their own
position in the performance of some task or activity than incumbents of the other position will assign to it.

As the primary orientation of some position incumbents in formal organization is toward his position ($A_6$), he may develop external organizational alliances with others holding similar positions, and in that manner strengthen his professional or positional beliefs.

**Hypothesis 5.** Incumbents of the same position in different formal organizations who identify with members or are themselves members of different external systems will interpret the organizational goal differently, will express expectations for incumbents of their position within the formal organization as different from incumbents of the same position who do not have these external alliances.

**Data Collection Instruments**

The actual functioning of the purchasing agent in American industry was investigated both through a search of purchasing literature and interviews with purchasing personnel. Members of the Columbus, Ohio chapter of the
National Association of Purchasing Management were contacted. In addition, several days were spent with NAPM executives in their New York headquarters. These discussions enabled better delinition of the areas to be studied, and interviews and literature review provided the basis for questionnaire design.

Each position occupant has an understanding of the general requirements of the roles he performs. These normative specifications which define appropriate role behavior may be referred to as role conception. Each member of the group has a conception of the required activities or appropriate behavior for the roles which are enacted within certain performance situations in the group. Information concerning each variable related to the various hypotheses was gathered in a "role conception inventory." 2 This questionnaire contained a schedule of items concerning the purchasing function in industry. Each respondent was asked to "score" the items on two counts: (1) his willingness to endorse the statement as an ideal, (2) his perception of the actual existence of the practice or belief within his company. 3 The following are examples of the role conception

2 Haas, op. cit., p. 33.
3 See the entire role conception inventory in Appendix.
inventory items.

A. The purchasing agent should determine the most economical methods for shipping.
   a) How do you feel about this?
   b) To what degree are actual company operations carried out in this manner?

B. The purchasing agent should work with the functional department managers to help with specifications to promote standardization.
   a) How do you feel about this?
   b) To what degree are actual company operations carried out in this manner?

The respondents were asked to score the answer on a Likert-type scale. The choices and their interpretations are as follows:

1) Strongly Agree : agree with the statement with no exceptions.

2) Agree : agree with the statement with some exceptions.

3) Undecided : there are an equal number of exceptions in either case.

4) Disagree : disagree with the statement with some exceptions.

5) Strongly Disagree : disagree with the statement without exception.
6) Does Not Apply: statement not relevant to job or firm.

7) No Response: unable or unwilling to indicate any opinion or observation.

Scale Development

Items for the inventory were drawn from (1) purchasing literature, (2) sociological (and related) literature, and (3) discussions with purchasing personnel in corporations or in positions within the professional association. These items were read and critiqued by three purchasing directors in different firms on the basis of relevancy and clarity.

A pre-test was conducted in two firms by first administering the instruments and then privately interviewing each respondent. No attempt was made to pre-test for results in comparison to the hypotheses, but only to insure clarity and relevancy of items to the position-occupants quizzed. A test-retest for reliability was conducted for the instrument by administration to 34 graduate students in business management. A product-moment correlation of +.92 was obtained indicating sufficient reliability.

Sixty items covering various phases and degrees of purchasing activity were chosen for inclusion in a scale. Items of a demographic nature, which were designed to
reveal, in part, professional organization affiliations, were designed for purchasing personnel. Also, scales were developed to gather data based upon each variable in the hypotheses including the:

a) purchasing agent's role conception.

b) purchasing agent's perception of organization expectation.

c) functional manager's perception of purchasing agent's role.

d) functional manager's perception of organization expectations of the purchasing agent's role.

e) top management's perception of purchasing agent's role.

f) top management's perception of organizational expectations of the purchasing agent's role.

g) purchasing agent's relationship to professional associations (NAPM).

h) responsibility items relating to purchasing functions.

The Sample

The sample, which was limited by financial and time constraints, was selected from manufacturing industries in the Columbus, Ohio Metropolitan Area (Franklin, Delaware, and Pickaway Counties). The conceptual framework for the study appeared directly applicable to manufacturing facilities. Therefore, it was decided to draw firms for a case-
study from Standard Industrial Class #35 (manufacturers of machinery, except electrical), which is one of the industries having both the largest number of firms and firms of acceptable size. Moreover, the type of manufacturing operation which is used in this industry is homogeneous to most firms in the classification. Though there were over 100 firms in the class in the geographic area, only 22 employed over 50 people. An organization must have this minimal size in order to be departmentalized so that positions are distinct enough to make the conceptual development of roles and positions apply.

Invitations were sent to the 22 firms requesting their participation (see Appendix A). Four firms which were subsidiaries of other firms not located in the area and did not have purchasing personnel in the local plant, were eliminated from the sample. Three other firms refused to participate in the study at the time it was being conducted. Therefore, 15 firms comprised the case-study. The distribution of firms within the four size categories is shown in Table 3.

Questionnaires were distributed to employees in three sub-groups: purchasing, top management, and functional management. Thirty-one respondents were in purchasing, either as director of purchasing or as buyers. When selection was made, all employees who might be classified as clerks (without
### Table 3
COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE BY FIRM SIZE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Total Firms</th>
<th>Included in the Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1000--3000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>250--999</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>100--249</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50--99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

decision making authority) in the department were excluded from the study. Top management personnel were the position-occupants who had direct line control over the major operating executive within the purchasing department. The actual titles of this group included vice president, assistant to the president, and plant manager. Fifteen respondents were in the top management group. Functional managers were the operative managers who submitted requisitions to purchasing and had a frequent working relationship with them. The thirty members of this group came from plant engineering, production management, production control, or inventory control.

The chief operating officer of each firm was contacted to get his approval and to have him appoint a liaison to coordinate the selection of respondents from the firm. The liaison was interviewed to determine a list of employees who would be positionally suited for inclusion in the study. Appointments were made with the various position-occupants, and during the initial session, the study was explained and the instruments distributed. Another appointment was made to collect the questionnaire and to discuss the topics included therein. This second interview served two purposes. It allowed for clarification of issues presented in the questionnaire and it led to a commitment from the respondent to have his questionnaire completed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Group</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing Management</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Management</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Management</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaire data.
prior to the appointment date. This assured more active participation.

All respondents were guaranteed anonymity and beyond the selection stage had contact only with the researcher. No indication of who completed the questionnaire was made on the instrument until it was picked up by the researcher, who then coded it by firm and position.

**Dimensions of Analysis**

There are several dimensions along which the data can be analyzed. One project concern is the relationship of position-occupants to others within the same position, but at different firms. This investigation is intrapositional and interfirm: the relationship of the perceptions of purchasing agent in firm one ($P_1$) to the purchasing agent in firm two ($P_2$). Central to the study is an analysis of high and low consensus in role conception between occupants of different positions within different organizations. This is an interpositional analysis of purchasing agents ($P$), functional managers ($F$) and top managers ($T$) in a number of firms ($n$). Table 5 indicates the dimensions which could be studied. For purposes of the current analysis only cells 1 and 2 were given concentrated analysis.

Only is a much larger case-study were developed could an intrapositional intrafirm analysis be conducted. Even in the largest firm, the sample of five purchasing agents was not
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Macroscopic</th>
<th>Microscopic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(Pl, P2, ..., Pn)</td>
<td>(Pl, P2, ..., Pn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(T1, T2, ..., Tn)</td>
<td>(Pl, P1b, P1c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(P1a, P1b, P1c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(Pn', Fn)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Pn, Tn)</td>
<td>(Pl, F1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pl, T1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
sufficient for empirical tabulation. A multi-plant firm would be needed for this analysis. Similar problems result in the intrafirm, interpositional cell.

Statistical Analysis

Attitude data collected from the respondents was a series of equal internal Likert-type scales. Responses were recorded on five point scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The use of this procedure for attitude analysis was outlined by Likert.

Each hypothesis presented previously is now examined again with respect to the chosen method of analysis. Each hypothesis has been reformulated in a more descriptive, if less rigorous form, for purposes of analytical exposition. The source of data on the variable under consideration as well as the statistical tools to be utilized are briefly presented.

$H_1$ Purchasing agents (or functional managers or top managers) as a single group have high consensus in their expectations of proper purchasing behavior.

Each group (purchasing agents, etc.) was chosen for testing by the type of work its members perform in each

---

organization rather than by title. This hypothesis was tested for each of the three focal groups.

An analysis of the items in the role conception inventory, part A, provides the necessary information for testing this hypothesis. High or low consensus is determined for each item by the variance score obtained. A high variance indicates low consensus while a low variance indicates high agreement or consensus.

The methods of testing $H_1$ include observation of the consensus levels on each item, notation of the percentage of total schedule items upon which there is agreement or disagreement, and determination of those items having greatest and least consensus.

$H_2$ Purchasing agents' role expectations pertaining to the purchasing function differ significantly from the expectation of top management or functional managers.

Testing this hypothesis entails determination of the degree of similarity the two relevant groups have in their scoring the items on the role conception inventory. The important data here concerns whether the group agreed or disagreed with the items in the inventory. Instead of using the full distribution analysis for distinguishing how the groups differed in intensity with which expectations are held, it was decided to look at differences in the direction of the expectations. Therefore, the analysis will
view the responses on a directional basis of agreement ("strongly agree" and "agree"), neutrality ("undecided"), and disagreement ("disagree" and "strongly disagree").

$H_3$ Position incumbents perceive the expectations or demands of the organization as different from their ideal of role performance.

This hypothesis indicates that position occupants perceive their ideal view as being different from the way in which they perceive the firm reacting to the role of purchasing in the organization. Analysis requires examination of the difference between the response scored by each participant on the "your view" and "actual" columns of the role conception inventory. To determine if differences do exist, a "t" test for paired data will be computed for each item in the inventory and for each sample group.

$H_4$ As purchasing agents and functional managers consider their respective roles in the purchasing function, each position incumbent perceives more responsibility as his, rather than his counter-position's responsibility.

Section II of the questionnaire provides the data for this hypothesis. Testing is achieved by comparison of the score given to the respondent's own group and that of the other group or position. Scores of 1 through 4 were
used for the categories "prime responsibility" through "others administer" respectively. An analysis of the percentage breakdown of each group on the items in the questionnaire comprises the testing of this hypothesis.

H5 The role conception of purchasing agents is related to their degree of affiliation with a professional association (NAPM).

Professional affiliations were measured by a number of questions in the demographic data section of the questionnaire. The purchasing agent sample was split into those respondents who showed high or low professional orientation. The hypothesis will then be tested in the same manner as consensus was computed between the two samples in hypotheses 1 and 4.

Limitations

This investigation of organizational aspects of employee behavior has, for reasons discussed previously, excluded from consideration the respondents' personality variables or attributes. While it is recognized that there are significant differences between individuals, such analysis was beyond the scope of this research. The results of the study, therefore, must be tempered with the realization that further inquiry is necessary to relate personal and organizational variables.
Employee behavior is influenced by the organization through a number of bureaucratic characteristics which this investigation has not been designed to consider. The standardization of activities as influenced by performance programs (standard operating procedure) will also alter the role performance of position occupants. The influence of standardization is recognized only in an indirect sense. Other bureaucratic factors which are not considered as dependent variables are specialization, centralization, and organization size. Results of the proposed study must be viewed with regard to the excluded variables.

The study group poses a selection bias as arbitrary selection was made of the SIC group and only those firms willing to participate were included. Because of selection and size of the study group the results obtained must be considered applicable in a case-study sense and not generally transferable to all other organizations. The findings should, however, indicate areas of prime importance to study in other firms or industries.

Bias inherent in the test instruments was guarded against, yet there are a number of unaccounted for effects such as fatigue in responding, forced choice responses, effect of responding to parts A and B simultaneously, or conscious distortion.
The design of the schedule scatters items of similarity throughout the instrument. An attempt was made to provide items in a form that would not yield a halo effect.

The placement of "your view" and "actual" responses to items in the role conception inventory posed problems. To separate the items would create an appearance of a longer questionnaire, perhaps losing respondents, as well as placing the A and B parts within possibly different frames of reference. Consideration of the "your view" and "actual" items together may have contributed to response sets and falsification, yet in view of the lack of better methods, this placement seems appropriate.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

This study suggests that employee attitude and behavior is related to the position held by the employee in the organization. Further, it is asserted that conflict or stress situations are inherent in the business firm by virtue of the parochial views or perceptions held by occupants of various positions.

The evidence reveals that differences do, in fact, exist between the members of various groups. Though the differences are not wide or present on all role conception items, the results do suggest ways for the organization to recognize and correct the inherent conflict situations.

Consensus Within Positions

The responses of each of the three sample groups on the items of the role conception inventory were examined to determine if the members of the group had high consensus on their expectation of the behavior necessary in a specific task or activity. The degree of consensus within each group was determined by the variance score obtained within each item of the role conception inventory, part A "your view." The square of the standard deviation yielded variance scores
for each of the 60 items. A variance below 1.00 was designated as yielding high consensus. The 1.00 score was felt to provide (on the basis of the five-point scale) an adequately low or conservative dividing point. For example, histograms in figure 4 show (a) an item in which the variance was low and indicated high consensus, (b) an item with a consensus score close to the break between high and low, and (c) an item showing a high variance score and having low consensus within the purchasing agent group.

The purchasing agents had a high agreement on item 43 which stated that the purchasing agent has a responsibility to his firm and to his suppliers. All responses were within two adjacent categories. Item 49, which states that the purchasing department should control all contacts with vendors, received a split reaction from the purchasing personnel responding. Though a high percentage were in agreement with the item, there was enough disagreement to present some doubt as to the level of consensus among the respondents. Having a variance score of 1.0731 places the results of this item in the low consensus category. A high variance (2.2758) indicates significantly low consensus among the respondents for item 11 which specifies that the purchasing department should determine the best timing for the delivery of purchases. As both a substantial number of purchasing agents agreed and disagreed with the item, it was found to have very low
FIGURE 4

HISTOGRAMS DEPICTING HIGH AND LOW VARIANCE SCORES FOR SELECTED ROLE ITEMS: PURCHASING AGENT SAMPLE

\[ \text{Variance: 0.2581} \]

\[ \text{Variance: 1.0730} \]

\[ \text{Variance: 2.2758} \]

Source: Questionnaire data.
consensus.

**Purchasing Agent Group Consensus:** Within the purchasing agent sample, on 72 percent of the items there was a low variance or high consensus. Looking more closely at the individual items in the role conception inventory, it was decided to examine specifically those items having the greatest consensus (in the top quartile) and those having the least consensus (in the bottom quartile). The items in each group can be generally related to the categories of (a) professionalism and (b) staff authority or control.

Highest group consensus in items of a professional nature centered around items indicating that the purchasing agent is a pipeline of information to the organization, contributes profit to the firm, gets best value possible, is concerned with what is right and will defend this position, and recognizes his responsibility to both the firm and the supplier. In an attempt to ensure performance of his job, the purchasing agent sees the need for controlling contact between the firm and its suppliers (which purchasing will select from the alternatives available). He feels that purchasing should also consolidate purchases, suggest specification modifications where appropriate, and buy from the best source(s). Low consensus occurred in the same categories, but on
different items. Purchasing agents are divided as to whether they should forget an idea, if they cannot sell it to management on the first attempt. Similarly, they do not agree on adjusting their professional views to those of others in the firm, by for instance accepting the orders of the functional departments as to where to order the product desired. There was substantial disagreement as to the acceptability of gratuities offered to the purchasing agents by suppliers. Also, purchasing agents did not agree in areas concerning their having control in determining priorities for placement of requisitions, determining methods for shipping or time for delivery, revising tolerances, or in any way making unilateral changes in the specification provided by the functional departments (Table 6 indicates those items having the highest or lowest consensus within the sample).

**Functional Manager Group Consensus:** The functional management group split evenly between high and low consensus on the 60 items. There was considerable divergence within the sample as different departments were included (i.e. production, inventory control, engineering, etc.). The level of consensus within the group is felt sufficient considering the internal heterogeneity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE ITEM</th>
<th>PURCHASING AGENTS</th>
<th>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</th>
<th>TOP MANAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Price negotiations should be handled only by the purchasing department. Other departments should confine their discussions with suppliers to specifications and performance.</td>
<td>h&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The purchasing department should determine the priorities to be assigned for placing requisitions for the various functional departments.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The members of the purchasing department should be able to accept small gratuities from suppliers during the Christmas season provided it is only a bottle of liquor, a pen-and-pencil set, or the like.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The purchasing department should be authorized to cancel an order from a supplier for inadequate performance, provided the functional department concerned is notified of the action promptly.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 6 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE ITEM</th>
<th>PURCHASING AGENTS</th>
<th>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</th>
<th>TOP MANAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. The purchasing agent should determine the most economical methods for shipping items which they have ordered, being consistent with time considerations.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. If the tolerances set by the functional department are closer than necessary according to the purchasing department, purchasing should be able to revise tolerances in requisitions to suppliers if there is a significant enough price savings for the firm.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The final selection of the supplier should be made by the functional department that is requisitioning the material.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. If the purchasing department can't &quot;sell&quot; its idea for a change in procedure or a change in specifications to the functional manager, it should not try to force him to accept the change.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The purchasing department ought to act as an &quot;information pipeline&quot; to the functional departments.</td>
<td>H&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE / ITEM</td>
<td>PURCHASING AGENTS</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</td>
<td>TOP MANAGEMENT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. If necessary to interview salesman regarding special details of their products, functional departments should request such visits through the purchasing department.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The purchasing department should determine the best timing for the delivery of purchases, consistent with needs.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. If a functional manager persist in allowing salesmen to visit him and his assistants directly without regard to the purchasing department's request for prior approval, the purchasing manager should have a right to resent it.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The purchasing department should be considered an important contributor to company profits rather than merely a service-providing mechanism for other departments.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE ITEM</td>
<td>PURCHASING AGENTS</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</td>
<td>TOP MANAGEMENT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. All correspondence with suppliers should be through the purchasing department, except in special cases dealing with technical details. In such cases, the purchasing departments should receive copies of all correspondence.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The purchasing agent should try to live up to what he thinks are the standards of his profession even if the corporate administration does not seem to respect them.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The purchasing department should be in a position to determine if quality may need to be modified because of cost, delivery, or availability consideration.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The purchasing department should help the functional departments write specifications to promote standardization.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE ITEM</td>
<td>PURCHASING AGENTS</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</td>
<td>TOP MANAGEMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Once the &quot;what-to-buy&quot; question is settled, the purchasing department</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ought to determine from whom to buy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The purchasing agent should follow the orders on the purchasing requisition of the functional department, even if some of the procedures conflict with what he has been taught to do by the purchasing manual.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The purchasing department should search out and disseminate ideas and suggestions concerning cost saving or product improvement available from the many sources of supply with whom he deals.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. It should be permissible for the purchasing department to violate the specifications in the purchasing requisition if they are sure that the best interests of the organization will be served in doing so.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. When an important requisition has not been acted upon, the functional manager has a right to reprimand the purchasing agent.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE ITEM</td>
<td>PURCHASING AGENTS</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</td>
<td>TOP MANAGEMENT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. If the purchasing agent observed that the functional manager has been too blunt or rude to the vendor's salesman, he should attempt to improve the situation after the functional manager has gone by giving the salesman his own explanation or in some way &quot;Soothing the ruffled feathers.&quot;</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. The purchasing department should suggest improvements for stock or repeat items in quantity.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. If the purchasing agent knows of some new or better technique or product to be used by the functional department, he should feel free to go ahead and gather information or a sample without first asking the functional manager.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. The purchasing department should adjust its purchasing views to correspond with management's view of good practice.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 6 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE ITEM</th>
<th>PURCHASING AGENTS</th>
<th>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</th>
<th>TOP MANAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27. The purchasing department should &quot;punch up&quot; suppliers as needed to expedite delivery.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. The purchasing department should be better qualified than the functional managers or top managers to judge what is the best buy or supplier for the specified need.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. The purchasing department should negotiate for the purchase but also make certain, within reason, that everything possible has been done to insure best value to the company for the money expended.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. When a functional manager is repeatedly dissatisfied with the work of the purchasing department, even after having tactfully discussed the problems with them, he should report the situation to his immediate superior.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. If a functional manager gives a verbal request to a purchasing agent to order some material, the purchasing agent</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 6 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE ITEM</th>
<th>PURCHASING AGENTS</th>
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<th>TOP MANAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>should have a right to politely ignore the request until it is placed in writing per the standard operating procedure.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. The purchasing department should be consulted on make, buy, or lease decisions as well as for ordering items.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. No purchase commitments should be made except by authorized members of the purchasing department or by approved delegated authority.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Occasionally a purchasing agent will be asked by a functional department manager to perform some task which is urgent and before he can complete it another department manager makes a similar request for some urgent task. When this happens, the purchasing agent should determine which task should have priority and accomplish that task first.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Purchasing agents should be active members of at least one professional association and attend most conferences and meetings of the association.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. The purchasing department should be able to determine the adequacy of corrective action offered by the supplier due to substandard materials or delays in delivery.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. The purchasing department should have the authority to accept a revised delivery schedule proposed by suppliers without prior consultation with functional departments if it feels that the new schedule is reasonable.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. In working with the functional departments, the purchasing agent should constantly be trying to learn about the needed material and its specifications so that some time in the future he will be able to order it himself.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. If it is the considered opinion of the functional manager that not enough is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE ITEM</td>
<td>PURCHASING AGENTS</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being done to expedite a purchase request, he should tell the purchasing department about it at first opportunity.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. The purchasing department ought to request permission of the functional departments for any deviations in specification or other changes in the original request for materials.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. On the occasions when the functional manager feels that he knows the best supplier for a particular item, he should so inform the purchasing department to order directly from the named supplier without searching elsewhere.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. The purchasing agent should be prepared to defend his position with other colleagues (functional departments) even if it means carrying the case to higher management levels.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 6 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE ITEM</th>
<th>PURCHASING AGENTS</th>
<th>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</th>
<th>TOP MANAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43. Just as the purchasing agent has a responsibility to his firm, he also should have a responsibility to insure that his suppliers receive every courtesy and fair treatment.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. The purchasing department should consolidate purchases of like or common items to obtain the maximum economical benefits.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Unless he is satisfied that it is for the best interest of the firm, a purchasing agent should not comply with a requisition from functional management without first attempting to get a change.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. The functional manager should tell the purchasing director what he thinks about the service his department is receiving (i.e., he should point it out when the service is inadequate and compliment when it is good).</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE ITEM</td>
<td>PURCHASING AGENTS</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</td>
<td>TOP MANAGEMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. According to the rules, requisitions over a certain dollar amount are supposed to be signed by the functional department manager—the signature of one of the members of his department is not acceptable. When the manager fails to sign such a request but it has been signed by the assistant manager, the purchasing agent should place the order with the supplier if he is confident that the functional manager will sign the order when he returns to the firm, from a short business trip.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. The purchasing department should represent a judging operation to consider all the factors involved in a purchase, ranging from cost of material and machine capabilities to factors of vendor and administrative relations.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. The purchasing department should control all contacts with vendors.</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE ITEM</td>
<td>PURCHASING AGENTS</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</td>
<td>TOP MANAGEMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Purchasing agents should subscribe to and diligently read the standard professional and technical journals which pertain to his job.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. The purchasing department should expect the functional departments to accept items from a major supplier which are not of usual quality, but nevertheless within the necessary use limits.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. The requisitions may indicate sources to purchasing, but purchasing should have the prerogative of buying from other sources if they can obtain equal merchandise and satisfactory delivery service at lower prices.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. The purchasing department should be prepared to suggest substitute materials and changes in quality, quantity, or specifications which will reduce costs.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. The decision as to whether key suppliers are properly qualified to serve the firm should rest with the purchasing department.</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
55. The purchasing agent should keep top management informed of new and professionally approved purchasing procedures and to insist that such procedures be followed in the absence of overriding contrary consideration.

56. The purchasing department should assist the suppliers in understanding their total obligation to the company.

57. The purchasing department should be completely familiar with the technical specification for commonly ordered products.

58. The purchasing department should have full authority to question the quality or kind of material asked for, in order that the best interests of the company may be served.

59. If the functional manager observes a purchasing agent using some procedure which the manager feels is not for the good of the firm, he should feel free to tactfully mention the situation to the director of purchasing.
60. Frequently the purchasing agent sends out a small order to a supplier for a functional department manager only to discover that he must again complete the paperwork to send another small order to the same firm for the same department. The functional department manager should carefully plan his requisitions in such a way as to insure that the number of purchase orders for the purchasing department is minimized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE ITEM</th>
<th>PURCHASING AGENTS</th>
<th>FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS</th>
<th>TCP MANAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaire data.

a High Consensus (Second Quartile).
b Lowest Consensus (Fourth Quartile).
c Low Consensus (Third Quartile).
d Highest Consensus (First Quartile).
The items revealing most and least consensus were examined for this group as was done with the purchasing agent's sample. Functional managers agreed that the purchasing department was a contributor to company profits and should attempt to get best value for the company. They also concurred that purchasing agents should subscribe to and read professional journals. They further agreed that the purchasing department should be the only one authorized to commit the firm for purchases, that purchasing should consolidate orders where possible, and that the functional department managers should plan to limit the number of purchase orders. Functional department managers also indicated a willingness to accept suggestions from the purchasing department for some improvements, changes in facets of the requisitions, or substitutions.

Generally, low consensus occurred on the issue of the purchasing department accepting gratuities from suppliers and in a number of areas where it might be implied that the purchasing department had "control" over the functional departments. For instance, there was considerable internal disagreement as to whether the purchasing department had the following rights or authorities: (a) to determine priorities on requisitions, (b) unilaterally to cancel orders, (c) to require functional managers to arrange supplier contacts through the purchasing department, (d) to time deliveries, (e) to determine where to buy, (f) to
unilaterally authorize revised delivery schedules, and
(g) generally to control all vendor contacts. Table 6
indicates those items having the highest or lowest con-
sensus within the functional department manager sample.

Top Management Group Consensus: The highest group
consensus was found to occur among the top management
sample on which there was high consensus on 75 percent
of the items. There was very high consensus among top
management that the purchasing department acts as an
information pipeline and a contributor of profits to the
firm. They also agreed that the purchasing department
should obtain and disseminate information to the organiza-
tion and that one manner in which purchasing might obtain
this information is through membership in professional
organizations. Also, top management expects the purchasing
agent to defend his professional position and recognizes
the purchasing department's responsibility to the firm and
the supplier. Top managers feel that organizational control
may be achieved by requiring that the purchasing department
receive copies or handle all correspondence with suppliers
and that purchasing be the only authorized group to make
purchase commitments on behalf of the firm. Furthermore,
top managers agreed that the purchasing department must
obtain permission from the functional managers to make any
changes in requisitions, though purchasing is permitted to
look at firms other than those "suggested" on the requisition.

There was very low consensus on the item referring to purchasing department gratuities. Internal disagreement arose on those items concerning the purchasing department having control in determining requisition priorities, setting tolerances, timing delivery, revising delivery schedules, and unilaterally accepting merchandise below usual quality. Purchasing department control "of all vendor contacts" is disputed within the top management sample. Table 6 summarizes the consensus levels of the top management respondents to the 60 role items.

**Consensus Between Positions**

It was expected that purchasing agents would have low consensus with both functional and top managers on aspects of the purchasing role. In describing the various factors of the purchasing agent's role, a number of items appeared to contain elements which would make them potentially agreeable to both purchasing and functional managers. Other items were felt to contain inherently conflicting elements. All items which appeared relevant to the purchasing role were retained for the final role conception inventory. Therefore, the inventory could not be administered with the expectation that support for the hypotheses would require a low consensus between purchasing and other
groups on a majority of items. Instead, the inventory was designed to reveal those items with which there is both high and low consensus.

With regard to the hypothesis that there is low consensus between the groups on role aspects of purchasing, consideration must be given both to the number of items showing low consensus and the level of disagreement revealed. It is relevant to determine whether the disagreements indicated by analysis represent differences in intensity with which the respective group expectations are held, or differences in the direction of the expectations (i.e. was the difference obtained a result of the intensity of response—"strongly agree" instead of merely "agree"—or more fundamentally because one group agreed while the other disagreed with the statement in the inventory?).

Role item number 4 indicated the usefulness of a "directional" analysis of the data. This item, which states that "the purchasing department should be authorized to cancel an order from a supplier for inadequate performance, provided the functional department concerned is notified of the action promptly," revealed considerable disagreement within and between the two groups when analyzed on a five-point distribution. A further analysis examined this distribution without reference to degree of response, but to direction. Much greater agreement on item 4 was obtained when analysis was applied to its "direction" only
(Figure 5 shows the percentage distributions for the two samples by full and directional distributions).

Because the directional technique retains the meaning of the responses more clearly, it was decided to examine the distribution of responses for each group across three categories: agree, undecided, and disagree. If there was less than 60 percent consensus among both sample groups on any given role conception inventory item, that item was said to exhibit low consensus or disagreement. More than 60 percent of both groups must have had consensus in their response to each item in order for them to be considered high consensus items.* One further breakdown was used to separate those items on which there was extremely high consensus. If over 90 percent of both groups concurred with their response on any particular item, it was determined that this would be significantly high consensus.

**Consensus Between Purchasing and Functional Managers:** Disagreement was noted on 15 items between the purchasing agent—functional manager groups. Thus 25 percent of the items showed discourse. Table 7 indicates the distribution of the 60 items in the role inventory by agreement and disagreement between the groups and also provides a categorization of high or low consensus within each of the two samples according to the variance analysis.
FIGURE 5

FULL AND DIRECTIONAL DISTRIBUTION
ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCES IN CONSENSUS
BETWEEN PURCHASING AND FUNCTIONAL
MANAGERS

(Full Distribution)

100%

0%

(Full Distribution)

100%

0%

Source: Questionnaire data.
TABLE 7

CLASSIFICATION OF ALL (60) ROLE DEFINITION ITEMS ACCORDING TO CONSENSUS WITHIN EACH OF THE SAMPLES AND ACCORDING TO CONSENSUS BETWEEN THE PURCHASING AND FUNCTIONAL MANAGER SAMPLES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consensus</th>
<th>$H_{pa}H_{fm}$</th>
<th>$H_{pa}L_{fm}$</th>
<th>$L_{pa}H_{fm}$</th>
<th>$L_{pa}L_{fm}$</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaire data.
On items on which there is agreement between the two distributions and where there is a low consensus within each sample, it is suggested that the findings can more reasonably be interpreted as indication of a "lack of disagreement" rather than "agreement." For instance, item number 3 of the role conception inventory indicated that "the members of the purchasing department should be able to accept small gratuities from suppliers during the Christmas season provided it is only a bottle of liquor, a pen-and-pencil set, or the like." The distribution within each group varied widely over the possible five responses (Figure 6 indicates the percentage distributions within each of the samples). The analysis did not show a wide difference between the two groups nor any particular agreement except that they both disagreed within themselves as to the role of gratuities for the purchasing agents.

Where items on which both groups had high internal consensus and no disagreement is noted, it would be reasonable to suggest that there is "agreement" between the groups. This was the case with item 4 (see Figure 5).

There were 42 items on which the purchasing agent sample had relatively high internal consensus, but of these, there were only three items on which low consensus was noted between purchasing and functional managers. Of the 30 items on which the functional managers agreed among themselves, there were no items on which they disagreed
FIGURE 6

ROLE ITEM INDICATING A "LACK OF DISAGREEMENT" AND SIMULTANEOUSLY NOT INDICATING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PURCHASING AND FUNCTIONAL MANAGEMENT GROUPS

Source: Questionnaire data.
with the purchasing agent group. The distribution of items in table 7 shows many more agreements between the two groups than disagreements in role definition.

The strongest disagreements arose in areas where functional managers apparently were concerned about the purchasing department gaining control or usurping some degree of "line" authority, but even in these areas there was internal group disagreement. For instance, there was disagreement on items concerning: (a) determination of priorities, (b) determination of delivery time, (c) quality modifications, (d) violation of specifications previously determined, (e) acceptance of revised delivery schedules without previous agreement from the functional departments, (f) acceptance of material below normal quality with expectation that the functional managers accept it, and (g) purchasing learning about activities of functional management so that they might order by themselves in the future without prior consultation with functional management.

The area of highest consensus between the purchasing and functional samples was that the purchasing department is an information pipeline for the company and is more importantly a contributor to profits, rather than merely a service mechanism. It was further agreed that the purchasing department should search for ideas and suggestions, recommend improvements in an attempt to obtain best value for the company, make purchase commitments recognizing
its responsibility to both its own firm and suppliers, and assist suppliers in understanding their obligation to the company.

Even though disagreement on 25 percent of the items might be considered representative of discensus between the two groups (as expected), the disagreement occurred mostly on items about which neither group could reach internal consensus. It would appear that the items upon which low consensus resulted may be important to intergroup conflict, but the lack of intragroup agreement makes it difficult to attribute the conflict to a purely positional situation. Thus, for the purchasing agent--functional manager samples, it cannot be accepted that incumbents of the same position within different organizations have discensus with the role expectations of their counter-position with respect to a specific task or activity.

Consensus Between Purchasing and Top Management: There was general agreement on 77 percent of the 60 role conception inventory items between the purchasing and top management samples. The items which indicated the highest degree of agreement were much the same as those between purchasing and functional management groups. For instance, there was consensus that the purchasing department should act as an information pipeline for the firm, contribute to company profits by searching for new ideas, and suggest improvements
so as to obtain best value for the company. There was also consensus that the purchasing department was authorized to make basic purchase commitments, to consolidate purchases, and to assist suppliers in understanding their obligations to the company. Additionally, there was agreement that purchasing could determine from whom to buy merchandise, that they should request permission from the functional departments prior to deviating from the specifications provided, and that the purchasing department should receive copies of all correspondence between the firm and suppliers (or actually handle this correspondence).

Disagreement was noted in 14 (23 percent) of the 60 role conception inventory items (see Table 8 for the distribution of items). Items upon which purchasing and top management groups disagreed were much the same as those upon which purchasing and functional management groups disagreed. There was disagreement as to whether the purchasing department had the right to determine the priority of requisitions, establish delivery timing, expect functional managers to accept below normal quality merchandise, or modify delivery, quality, or specifications.

Again, though there was disagreement within 23 percent of the role conception inventory, it was found that most of the items showing intergroup disagreement also showed intragroup disagreement. Therefore, for the purchasing agent—top management sample, it cannot be accepted that incumbents
TABLE 8

CLASSIFICATION OF ALL (60) ROLE DEFINITION ITEMS ACCORDING TO CONSENSUS WITHIN EACH OF THE SAMPLES AND ACCORDING TO CONSENSUS BETWEEN THE PURCHASING AND TOP MANAGER SAMPLES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consensus</th>
<th>H_{pa}H_{tm}</th>
<th>H_{pa}L_{tm}</th>
<th>L_{pa}H_{tm}</th>
<th>L_{pa}L_{tm}</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaire data.
of the same position within different organizations have
discensus with the role expectations of their counter-
position with respect to a specific task or activity.

Internal Role Conflict

While role conflict between groups is important,
it is also advisable to look at how each of the position
occupants perceives the role as being enacted ideally and
in practice. Internally felt conflict can cause deviations
in role performance or create an atmosphere of tension
leading to intergroup conflict. It was anticipated that
incumbents of the same position within formal organizations
would perceive organizational behavior as different from
their role expectations for behavior in a specific task or
activity.

Each respondent within the sample was asked, first,
to indicate his own view as to the acceptability of the
purchasing agent role as expressed in the role conception
inventory. He then was asked whether he felt the organiza-
tion actually was operating as described in the questionnaire
items. A t-test was chosen for analysis of the difference
between the means of the paired data. T-tests were computed
at the .05 and .01 levels of significance.
Purchasing Agents: Purchasing agents indicated that in approximately 70 percent of the items at the .05 significance level (65 percent at the .01 level) there was a disagreement between their view of what their role should be as opposed to their actual role within their respective firms. Those items showing significant differences were examined with reference to the degree of internal group consensus observed in Hypothesis 1. Where both significant differences were observed \( H_3 \) and there was high internal group consensus on ideal role expectations \( H_1 \), it was decided that those items were most appropriate for consideration as potential perceived role conflict generators.

The largest disagreement between "actual" and "ideal" occurred on items dealing with the purchasing agent as a member of the organization and his actual work procedures. The purchasing agent perceives the firm as not being aware of his contribution to profits. He also feels that functional managers do not want him to suggest improvements nor to rigidly defend his position. He senses that other members of the firm wish to restrict his authority about choice of suppliers and do not respect his responsibility for control of all salesmen visits to the other functional departments. The firm is also perceived as not consulting him (though he feels they should) on make, buy, or lease decisions.
Functional Managers: Analysis of the responses of the functional managers to the "actual" as contrasted with the "your view" questions in the role conception inventory, revealed that there was disagreement on 60 percent of the items at the .05 significance level (33 percent at the .01 level). Items of greatest disagreement on Hypothesis 3 and simultaneously having a high degree of internal functional group manager consensus in Hypothesis 1 included the purchasing department being considered a contributor to company profits, rather than merely a service function. The functional managers ideally agreed with this item, but saw corporate action as refuting it. The functional managers perceived differences between ideal and actual specifications concerning the purchasing agent's familiarity with professional and technical journals, responsibility to "punch up" suppliers, attempting to insure best value to the company for money expended, maintaining control over the authority to commit the company for purchases, requesting permission of the functional departments for any deviations in specifications or other changes in the original request for materials, or preparedness to suggest substitute materials or changes in quality, quantity, or specifications aimed at reduction of costs.

Top Management: Responses to the role conception inventory items by top management indicated that a discensus
between "ideal" and "actual" situations occurred in 40 percent of the items at the .05 level of significance (only 8 percent at the .01 level). Discensus appeared to occur most strongly in areas concerned with the use of the purchasing department for control purposes. Items with which the top management respondents saw deviations between actual and ideal role behavior included the purchasing department's exclusive conducting of price negotiations, controlling vendor contacts by arranging for supplier visits, and in general, controlling all vendor contacts for the firm. Furthermore, there was disagreement with regard to the purchasing agent's diligent reading of his own professional journals.

Consensus on Group Responsibility

Each of the respondents was asked to indicate his opinion as to the degree of responsibility that both purchasing and functional managers have in a number of procurement activities (part II of questionnaire). It was anticipated that the groups would each rate themselves as having greater responsibility than the other (counter-position) group. When the questionnaires were coded, values from 1 to 4 were assigned to each possible response from "prime responsibility" through "others administer", respectively. Computation for each group and each item indicated whether the members of the sample rated themselves as having greater responsibility, rated the other group as having the greater
responsibility, or indicated that both groups shared responsibility equally. Table 9 shows who each sample group rated as having the greater responsibility on each of the ten items and the percentage of the group responding in this manner. Top management responses were also scored to indicate whether they viewed purchasing or functional departments as having the greater responsibility for each item. Thus, it was possible to determine which group top management saw as having major responsibility and also to see in which instances all three groups might concur on responsibility rankings.

The ten procurement activities were rated on responsibility as follows:

1. **Determine need for purchase**: All three groups indicated that need determination is the prime responsibility of the functional managers. No respondents indicated that purchasing should have greatest responsibility here, though some indicated a degree of equality in responsibility.

2. **Establish specifications**: The functional management departments were overwhelmingly designated by all three groups as having the most significant responsibility in this area.

3. **Obtain technical information**: There was little agreement within each of the groups concerning greatest


**TABLE 9**

RESPONSIBILITY RATINGS FOR PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES AS DESIGNATED BY EACH SAMPLE GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Purchasing Managers</th>
<th>Functional Managers</th>
<th>Top Managers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>FM (65)</td>
<td>FM (80)</td>
<td>FM (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>FM (90)</td>
<td>FM (80)</td>
<td>FM (73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>FM (49)</td>
<td>FM (47)</td>
<td>FM (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>FM (65)</td>
<td>FM (47)</td>
<td>FM (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PA (87)</td>
<td>PA (83)</td>
<td>PA (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>FM (48)</td>
<td>FM (57)</td>
<td>PA (40)/FM(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>PA (65)</td>
<td>PA (80)</td>
<td>PA (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>PA (84)</td>
<td>PA (84)</td>
<td>PA (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>PA (71)</td>
<td>PA (60)</td>
<td>PA (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>PA (58)</td>
<td>PA (50)</td>
<td>Equal (53)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaire data.
responsibility in the area of obtaining technical information. Only 54 percent of the top management sample indicated that the functional manager had the greater responsibility. Forty-nine percent of the purchasing sample and 47 percent of the functional managers rated the functional department as having greater responsibility. The degree of technical information required and the frequency of purchase dictated the responsibility in many cases. This is an area in which functional managers want assistance, yet they are unwilling to concede this as a "responsibility" of the purchasing department.

4. **Determine amount to purchase:** Again there was some disagreement within and between the groups about responsibility. Fifty-five percent of the purchasing department respondents indicated that the functional managers were more responsible in this area, while only 47 percent of the functional managers and 40 percent of top management respondents agreed. Determination of economic order quantities by purchasing agents and the anticipated inventory needs of the functional departments conflict at times. Therefore, each of the respondents, thinking in terms of specific instances, scored the question differently.

5. **Price negotiations:** The area of price negotiations appears as one in which there is high agreement. All top management respondents, 60 percent of the functional
managers in the sample, and 90 percent of the reporting purchasing agents indicated the purchasing department as having the greater responsibility for price negotiations. Consensus was highest in this area of purchasing activity.

6. Schedule delivery time: This is another area in which the groups did not have a strong intragroup or intergroup consensus on responsibility. Top management respondents were widely split on this activity with 47 percent indicating that purchasing has more responsibility and 33 percent seeing the greater responsibility belonging to the functional managers. Forty-eight percent of the purchasing agents conceded the responsibility as belonging to the functional departments, with the other 52 percent widely split between rating themselves as more responsible or indicating an equality in responsibility between themselves and the functional departments. Fifty-seven percent of the functional managers claimed greater responsibility with the remainder widely split between seeing responsibility as shared or belonging to the purchasing department.

7. Specify delivery method and routing: A majority of each sample group indicated that the purchasing department maintains greater responsibility for this procurement activity.

8. Selection of supplier: Approximately 80 percent of each group ranked the purchasing department as having the
greater responsibility for selection of supplier.

9. Adjust and settle complaints: There was consensus among all groups that this is the responsibility of the purchasing department. Functional managers maintained that this was one of the service functions of the purchasing department.

10. Post-purchase appraisal: Though all groups rated the purchasing department as having the major responsibility in this area, there was not any high degree of internal consensus within each of the groups. Only about half of the respondents in each group indicated purchasing as having the greater responsibility (58 percent of purchasing agents, 50 percent of functional managers, and 53 percent of top management respondents). Many members of each group felt that evaluation of product performance is in the realm of the functional department that initiated the order and was using the product.

In this study, the purchasing agents saw greater responsibility for themselves in half of the 10 items relating to procurement activity. In no case was their rating unanimous. Functional managers rated their position as having greater responsibility in only three of the activities. On two other items many functional managers, but not a majority, ranked functional department responsibility as higher. On nine of the procurement activities,
all three groups agreed to some extent on the one group having greater responsibility. This would seem to indicate that the expected higher self-evaluation theory was in error. Though there is not complete uniformity among all groups, there is rationale to believe that the group members do not automatically rate their own group as having greater responsibility. It seems reasonable to assume, on the basis of the data, that the responsibility for major procurement activities is generally well understood by members of the firm.

Professional Orientation and Role Definition

It was expected that purchasing agents who were members of professional groups, such as the National Association of Purchasing Management, Inc., would react to the questionnaire differently than purchasing agents without such affiliations. The purchasing agents in the sample were split into two groups dependent upon their "professional" affiliations. Values were assigned to each response for items 1 through 5 for part III of the questionnaire (see the Appendix). A natural split occurred in scores which allowed the group to be divided into two samples—one of 18 respondents and one of 12 respondents. Three methods were used to determine if the two purchasing groups differed with respect to their responses to the role conception inventory.
1. When viewed with reference to the internal consensus each group indicated on the role conception inventory items, the groups showed little difference. Group A (purchasing agents showing low professional orientation) had high internal consensus (variance scores of less than 1.00) on 71 percent of the inventory. Group B respondents (high professional orientation) had high consensus on 78 percent of the schedule items. There was no noticeable deviation between the consensus levels of the two groups, with one exception. Item 19 indicated that "the purchasing agent should follow the orders on the purchasing requisition of the functional department, even if some of the procedures conflict with what he has been taught to do by the purchasing manual." The less professional group agreed (almost unanimously) with the item, while the more professional group revealed considerable internal disagreement as to the item's acceptability.

2. When the two segments of the purchasing agent group were viewed as to their ratings of the responsibility of both purchasing and functional departments on various procurement activities, no major differences were noted. Table 10 indicates the major responses of each group and the percentage of the sample giving this indication. Though the two groups did not respond identically, there is no indication that professionalism led to the difference in responses.
TABLE 10

RESPONSIBILITY RATINGS FOR PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES AS DESIGNATED BY PURCHASING AGENTS WITH HIGH AND LOW PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>High Professional Affiliation</th>
<th>Low Professional Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>FM (72)</td>
<td>FM (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>FM (100)</td>
<td>FM (75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PA (33) / FM (44)</td>
<td>PA (42) / FM (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>FM (83)</td>
<td>PA (42) / FM (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PA (89)</td>
<td>PA (75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>FM (50)</td>
<td>PA (25) / FM (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>PA (66)</td>
<td>PA (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>PA (94)</td>
<td>PA (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>PA (83)</td>
<td>PA (50) / FM (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>PA (67)</td>
<td>PA (42) / Equal (42)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaire data.
3. Ten items were chosen from the role conception inventory which were felt to be representative of items which might test "professionalism" among the purchasing agents. The two purchasing groups were examined to determine if consensus or discensus existed between them. The analysis following the methodology for consensus between positions, examined items 3, 15, 19, 26, 35, 42, 43, 50, 55, and 58 (see questionnaire in Appendix). Discensus was noted only on item 3 (concerning Christmas gratuities) and item 19 (concerning following the purchasing manual). The "high professional affiliation" purchasing agents opposed the norms expressed in the two items, while the "lower professional affiliation" group was generally in favor of the norm in item 3 and widely split on item 19. While there was little agreement on item 26 (that purchasing should adjust their views to coalign with top management's view), there was a considerable split within each group, making the item best evaluated in terms of lack of consensus, rather than showing discensus.

The study did not reveal any major support to the contention that purchasing agents maintaining "professional" affiliations differ in interpretation of goals or expectations for purchasing from purchasing agents who do not have these affiliations.
Review of Hypotheses

This section summarizes the hypotheses tested in the previous analysis. Each hypothesis is reviewed and indication made of the findings.

1. Incumbents of the same position within different formal organizations (social systems) have consensus on their expectation of behavior necessary in a specific task or activity. (Hypothesis 1-Accepted). There was a high consensus (determined by low variance scores) among the purchasing agents on 72 percent of the items in the role conception inventory. High consensus scores were also observed for functional managers on 50 percent of the items and for top managers for 75 percent of the items.

2. Incumbents of the same position within different formal organizations (social systems) have low consensus with the role expectations of their counter-position with respect to a specific task or activity. (Hypothesis 2-Conditionally Rejected). There was a low consensus on 25 percent of the items between the purchasing agent--functional manager sample and a low consensus on 23 percent of the items in the purchasing agent--top management sample. There was intergroup disagreement which could lead to conflict between the groups, but the level of intragroup disagreement present makes it difficult to attribute the conflict to a purely positional situation.

3. Incumbents of the same position within different
formal organizations (social systems) perceive organizational behavior as different from their role expectations for behavior in a specific task or activity. (Hypothesis 3-Accepted for the purchasing and functional management groups and rejected for the top management group). There was a low consensus between purchasing agent sample respondents on their role expectations for ideal behavior as compared with their perceptions of actual organizational behavior in 70 percent of the items in the role conception inventory. Functional managers had low consensus on 60 percent of the items, while top manager had low consensus on only 40 percent of the items.

4. In specifying the division of responsibility between a focal position and counter position in a formal organization (social system), incumbents of each of these positions will perceive more responsibility within their own position in the performance of some task or activity than incumbents of the other position will assign to it. (Hypothesis 4-Rejected). Neither the purchasing agent nor the functional manager samples rated themselves as having greater responsibility in more than half of the activities. There was general agreement between all three samples in almost every procurement activity that one group or the other had the greater responsibility. In no case did the purchasing agents or functional managers simultaneously claim their group maintained the greater responsibility.
5. Incumbents of the same position in different formal organizations who identify with members or are themselves members of different external systems will interpret the organizational goal differently, will express expectations for incumbents of their position within the formal organization different from incumbents of the same position who do not have these external alliances. (Hypothesis 5-Rejected). Responses of purchasing agents with high professional affiliations and those with low professional affiliations did not differ substantially when analyzed in three different ways. Each group had high internal consensus on the role conception inventory items. No major differences were noted when the two groups rated their responsibility on various procurement activities in relation to the responsibility of functional department managers. Though there was some discourse between the two groups on role items which might be called "professional," differences were noted in only two of the ten items tested. The tests used were insufficient to indicate any differences between purchasing agents on the basis of "professionalism."
CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted as an initial phase in examining potential problems in the relationship between the purchasing department and other departments (designated as functional areas) within the firm. Conflicts existing have been conceptually related to "positions" rather than individuals and the empirical study tested to determine if the differences leading to potential conflict (or stress) situations were, in fact, observed as occurring within and between groups of people in the various departments in manufacturing facilities. Since conflict frequently tends to reduce the efficiency levels within the organization, this study was devised to determine within which areas of the purchasing function there are agreements and disagreements leading to conflict. Thus, this study is a compact version of an empirical analysis of purchasing in manufacturing firms, but is only a provisional synthesis of the numerous crucial factors or variables concerning purchasing activities.

Basic to the study was the determination of the
purchasing agent's role and the similarities and differences in conceptions of purchasing held by members of various departments. Are there inherent problems of conflict due to role perceptions and perhaps caused by organizational design?

Inquiry for purposes of exposition of the hypotheses was carried out with the cooperation of 15 firms in the machinery manufacturing industry located in the Columbus, Ohio metropolitan area. The perceptions and consensus levels of position occupants in purchasing, functional areas of management, and top management were recorded on questionnaires and in oral interviews.

Data collection instruments were developed to determine the normative specifications defining appropriate role behavior of the purchasing agent as interpreted or perceived by members of each position queried. The basic instrument was a role conception inventory containing a schedule of items concerning possible purchasing behavior in manufacturing firms and provided for responses on a Likert-type scale.

Conclusions on Perceptions and Consensus

On the basis of the data analyzed in the previous chapter, the following observations or conclusions were reached concerning consensus levels between and within groups or positions.
1. Responses of the members of each sample group were quite similar (showing consensus) to the responses of other members of their own group. This provides initial rationale, at least, for acceptance of the concept of "positions" being pertinent to the study of employee attitudes concerning tasks and activities relevant to their business functions. Employees of firms are seen as reacting to situations within the firm as "purchasing agents" or "functional managers" rather than solely with regard to individual personality or conception.

2. The data indicated that there were important differences in certain areas between the purchasing agent and the functional department manager views of ideal behavior. Conceptually, this might be anticipated if the previously specified conditions necessary for conflict between groups are observed. There are (1) interdependencies between the functional and purchasing departments as neither is able to handle the entire purchasing function without reliance upon the others, (2) differences in group goals with the purchasing department striving to, in part, save the firm money by following purchasing tenants which conflict with functional department goals of efficiency of a different sort, and (3) differences in perception of reality depending upon the predispositions of each group.

3. Looking at each of the comparisons on the role conception inventory between purchasing and functional
managers, it is apparent that a trend exists which will enable prediction of where there will or will not be significant disagreements. In most instances where there was strong disagreement between groups, there was also present some statement or insinuation that the purchasing department had line authority or a form of "control" over the functional departments. For instance, when schedule items contained phrases indicating that the purchasing department merely "helps," or "suggests," rather than controls, the functional department managers tended to agree with the item. Throughout the entire inventory it is noted that some cause/effect relationship appears to exist between the wording of the item and the level of consensus. Provided there is no means for the functional department to interpret that its power, authority, or rights are being usurped by the purchasing department, there tends to be relative agreement (or at least no strong disagreement) between the two groups.

4. The degree of friction between the two groups noted from analysis of the role conception inventory apparently does not reach the level of highly destructive conflict in most organizations. Discussions with respondents indicated that though somewhat disconcerting and troublesome, the level of friction rarely reaches the point where overt action is taken to undermine the position of the other department. Perhaps this is a result of a
degree of organizational control which is present.

5. There was relative agreement between the groups on the levels of responsibility each group has for various procurement activities. The organization, though not necessarily specifying clear role definitions or job descriptions for the purchasing function, did have sufficient definition or assignment of tasks to the various departments to create a degree of consensus over their respective areas of basic responsibility. It is largely the means by which the departments act to achieve the implementation of these tasks that create lack of consensus leading to conflict situations. Thus, the broad strokes used by the organization to define the roles of its members are sufficient to prevent chaotic behavior, but are inefficient and allow for significant disagreements through differences in interpretation of what forms of discretion are available to each department.

6. A substantial number of facets of purchasing role behavior was seen by the respondents as significantly different from their prescriptions of ideal behavior. This difference poses a strain toward conflict between the groups, none of which are content with perceived actual behavior. This finding is similar to the results of a study of line-staff conflict with respect to the personnel role where it was found that:

There is a consistently expressed normative
expectation by both line management role definers and personnel role incumbents for more decision-making participation by the personnel administrator in the ideal state. But the far stronger desire for more participation on the part of the role incumbent personnel administrator in traditional personnel matters causes his expectations to go beyond those of his management role definers. This results in more felt role conflict on his part and potential conflict between the staff officer and his line role definers.\(^1\)

Top management, being somewhat removed from the daily operations in each area and more concerned with the organizational goals, perceived these conflicts between ideal and actual behavior as somewhat less severe. Thus, this lack of recognition allows perpetuation of the situation.

The complex conflict situation in the organization of alternating peace and conflict is much like that in a hurricane. In the "eye" of the hurricane, there is turmoil, conflict, hostile interaction and clashes of forces (conflict of goals); yet, the hurricane as a pattern of weather moves in an observable and at most times predictable pattern subject to exogenous forces of other weather patterns. Extending this to organizations, we observe that internal role conflict does not necessarily negate the concept of behavioral pattern, although the direction

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of the pattern may not be predictive.

**Implications of Consensus Levels**

No longer can the organization leader or business educator presume that organizational behavior tends toward perfect union of its components. Few situations were noted where organizational design prevented conflicting interpretations of what was best for the firm as perceived through the parochial viewpoints of the departments or positions considered. While it may not be possible to solve or even significantly reduce the conflict situations, the educator should point out the inherent difficulties to the student and his industrial contacts. The impact (functional as well as dysfunctional consequences) of a lack of role consensus should be considered.

Top managers of organizations must look at their goal statements for the organization and try to relate them to the goal and role statements given to each of the departments to see if there is unrecognized incompatibility between the cause/effect relationships given to the departments. So long as there are departmental goals and department interdependency on the allocation of scarce resources, there will necessarily be conflicts at some level. The friction between departments cannot be totally eliminated, nor is there reason to believe that this is
necessary or even a desirable goal, but perhaps it can be
arrested at its present level or even reduced. It is the
job of top management to predict behavior and the results
of this study should help point the manager toward under-
standing the role conceptions of his subordinates.

Purchasing executives should take a marketing view-
point in selling or marketing their services to other
departments in the firm. Purchasing directors should
attempt to learn in which areas the functional managers
perceive purchasing as a threat, rather than a help.
Purchasing must "sell" itself by knowing the prejudices
and misconceptions of the functional departments. Once
understanding the situation (as it has currently not been
clarified), the purchasing director will be in a position
to refocus poor interpretations of purchasing department
behavior expected and observed or to refocus the activities
of the department.

A view of the organization with a systems perspective
such as presented in this analysis should assist functional
managers in gaining insight into the operation of the or-
ganization. They should be able to develop an appreciation
for the purchasing agent's position and further, should be
able to conduct the same type of analysis as suggested for
the purchasing director.

While the results of the study with regard to the
purchasing agents relationship to professional organizations
(such as NAPM) were not conclusive, there did seem to be an insufficient difference in viewpoint between the members and non-members of professional associations to accept the hypothesis that professional associations have certain effects upon their members. Perhaps there are differences in skill levels (this was not examined in this project), but concepts of purchasing were relatively similar. It would be beneficial to professional organizations to compare and contrast differences in viewpoint between their members and non-members. If, as would seem appropriate, they have instilled a "professionalism" in their members, this should show in a study such as has been conducted.

Organizational Theory and Purchasing

The use of organization theory in the development of both the conceptual and empirical segments of this study should point out the contributions which this area of social science may make in the development of knowledge in the business area. Concepts and research designs from organizational behavior are applicable in examining business problems. Perhaps the main contribution comes from analysis with a view toward seeking patterns in variations. Attempting to generalize from one organization to another has been found successful on a trial and error basis only. Comparisons can, however, be made between organizations if there is some basis or pattern existing in each firm which extends
beyond the differences or variations usually observed.
In this study comparisons were made by examination of the
"positions" within the firm. It was felt that behavior
was related to the position of the members of the firm and
that this behavior would reveal much about the operation
of the firm with respect to the purchasing functions. In
looking for other "patterns," firms may be examined with
relation to the environment they face (such as was done
in this study with respect to industry), the technology
employed, the size of the firm, the degree of centralization
of authority, or other factors yielding a homogeneous
grouping of firms.

Continuation of Research Efforts

The theory and the empirical evidence presented here
portray an imperfect union of purchasing and functional
manager modes of viewing the purchasing function in manu-
facturing firms. The emphasis upon this general finding
represents a convergence of several analytical views. The
results of this investigation, however, should provide a
stepping stone to further research into organizational
behavior with reference in particular to the purchasing
function.

Further research is necessary using larger samples,
looking at organizations in different manufacturing classi-
fications, or of more homogeneity in size or some other
variable. It may be possible to obtain a sample more homogeneous than was obtained by selection of an SIC classification in a particular metropolitan area. One suggestion which may yield new insight would be to analyze purchasing behavior in a multi-plant organization. Though this would pose additional constraints, it may yield a new finding with respect to the placement of purchasing activities or tasks within the organization.

The findings of this current study, similar to that encountered in the personnel manager study,

suggest that future researchers examine more intensively the nature of the line-staff conflict as it may be different from or similar to the conflict which exists in other parts of the organization. For instance, while there may be low conflict over "what" is done, there may be high conflict over "how" the agreed-upon role is performed. In addition, the staff's drive to professionalize may create additional potential conflict, or it may so enhance the status of the occupation that it reduces conflict.

One major inclusion necessary in some future investigation is the examination of behavior considering both organizational and individual characteristics. While it is felt that the omission of the individual's personality was conceptually acceptable in this study, it must be recognized that it does play a significant role, and after some further knowledge about positions is gained, the

\[ \text{Ibid, p. 477.} \]
individual's impact upon purchasing behavior must be examined.

This study attempted to view the area of purchasing in manufacturing firms and determine if and where conflict situations were present. Cause and effect relationships are not suggested, but a view of organizational action from a sociological perspective with the reference point of positions is felt to provide a useful tool for further analysis. The task of analyzing purchasing behavior was a complex one and the reader of this investigation cannot be reminded too often that this is a preliminary effort deserving further refinements and approximations. This study was based on the testimony of the individuals chosen for inclusion and willing to participate in the study. Serious students of human conduct should look beyond the testimony of individuals for the final evidence. Final evidence is not claimed in this investigation. Here the only claim is for first approximation.
APPENDIX
The Ohio State University
College of Administrative Science
1795 South College Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

(Addressed to top management official in each firm.)

As my doctoral dissertation research, I have a study underway which seeks to determine what various executives perceive to be the role of the purchasing agent and to relate their perceptions to what the agent himself believes to be his role.

Current knowledge of business practices supplemented by the thinking of purchasing agents and their organizational counterparts can give direction to future management control of the purchasing function. The focus of the study is on organization and, though largely theoretical, it is expected that the findings will have practical implications for business leaders, such as yourself. My plans for a career as a business educator have led me to investigate this problem as part of my doctoral program at the University.

Because of its business, size and location, your firm has been selected as one of the companies to be included. So that the study will be complete and authoritative, I would like your permission to include your firm in this study.

If you agree to participate, the study will involve a visit to your firm sometime during the next two months. At that time, 10-15 minute interviews will be held with three to six members of your firm. They will be asked to complete a questionnaire which will take approximately 30 minutes. The questionnaires are to be collected the following week at which time another 15-minute interview will be conducted.

The responses will remain completely confidential, of course. They will be seen only by the research staff. Your firm and its employees will remain anonymous in all published material.

Your cooperation is essential for the success of the study, and it will be appreciated. A better understanding of purchasing behavior...
should be gained from this study. In hopeful anticipation of your interest and affirmative response to this request, I will contact you by telephone in approximately one week in order to arrange an appointment and to clarify any questions which you may have.

Sincerely yours,

Ronald H. Gorman
Project Director

RHG/JJ
The purchasing activity in a firm such as yours is quite important. This is a survey of purchasing in various firms, and of the viewpoints held by individuals in different parts of the company. Some of the factors I am considering may be unique to only a few firms, but it is my assumption that many of your views are shared by other people in other firms. To test this assumption, I am asking for your opinions on some specific items which relate to the purchasing function in your firm.

This study has the endorsement of your corporate management. However, the study is being conducted solely by researchers at The Ohio State University who assume complete responsibility for the study's design, execution and analysis. The information which you provide will be used solely for the purpose of developing a scientific theory of the purchasing role in organizations. While the study may have some practical implications for your firm, no specific recommendation will be made. As a participant in this study, your questionnaire will be assigned a code number to assure you complete anonymity. No one but a few professional researchers at The Ohio State University will have access to your questionnaire. Your responses will be treated with the strictest confidence at all times. At no time will your name or the name of your company be identified in published reports. In fact, your questionnaire will be destroyed as soon as the data is tabulated.

Therefore, please be completely candid. The accuracy with which you report your opinions and observations is critical to the success of the study and for the conclusions to be made from it.

Although there are several pages in this questionnaire, you should find it possible to finish them in approximately thirty minutes. Please be sure to check one and only one answer for each part of the question unless otherwise requested. Do not spend too long on any one question; record your initial reaction. When you have completed the questionnaire, please put it in the envelope. I will collect it.

Your cooperation in this study will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ronald H. Gorman
Doctoral Student
The Ohio State University
Instructions: Following is a list of statements about purchasing activity. The items simply describe activity; they do not judge whether the activity is desirable or undesirable. You may agree with some statements and disagree with others. There are no right or wrong answers. Each item will have two parts: first, indicate the degree to which your personal view agrees with the statement; next, indicate the degree to which actual company operations are carried out in accordance with the statement.

1. Indicate how you feel about each statement by circling your response:
   SA--strongly agree
   A--agree
   U--undecided
   D--disagree
   SD--strongly disagree

   EXAMPLE: The purchasing department should always be alert for new suppliers.

   | Your View | Actual |
   | SA A U D SD | SA A U D SD |

2. If an item does not apply to your job or firm, circle the number of the item and do not answer.

3. If you cannot answer an item because you have no information, please draw a line across the answer column, e.g.,

   --SA--A--U--D--SD--SA--A--U--D--SD--
1. Price negotiations should be handled only by the purchasing department. Other departments should confine their discussions with suppliers to specifications and performance.

2. The purchasing department should determine the priorities to be assigned for placing requisitions for the various functional departments.

3. The members of the purchasing department should be able to accept small gratuities from suppliers during the Christmas season provided it is only a bottle of liquor, a pen-and-pencil set, or the like.

4. The purchasing department should be authorized to cancel an order from a supplier for inadequate performance, provided the functional department concerned is notified of the action promptly.

5. The purchasing agent should determine the most economical methods for shipping items which they have ordered, being consistent with time considerations.

6. If the tolerances set by the functional department are closer than necessary according to the purchasing department, purchasing should be able to revise tolerances in requisitions to suppliers if there is a significant enough price savings for the firm.

7. The final selection of the supplier should be made by the functional department that is requisitioning the material.

8. If the purchasing department can't "sell" its idea for a change in procedure or a change in specifications to the functional manager, it should not try to force him to accept the change.
9. The purchasing department ought to act as an "information pipeline" to the functional departments.

10. If necessary to interview salesmen regarding special details of their products, functional departments should request such visits through the purchasing department.

11. The purchasing department should determine the best timing for the delivery of purchases, consistent with needs.

12. If a functional manager persists in allowing salesmen to visit him and his assistants directly without regard to the purchasing department’s request for prior approval, the purchasing manager should have a right to resent it.

13. The purchasing department should be considered an important contributor to company profits rather than merely a service-providing mechanism for other departments.

14. All correspondence with suppliers should be through the purchasing department, except in special cases dealing with technical details. In such cases, the purchasing departments should receive copies of all correspondence.

15. The purchasing agent should try to live up to what he thinks are the standards of his profession even if the corporate administration does not seem to respect them.

16. The purchasing department should be in a position to determine if quality may need to be modified because of cost, delivery, or availability consideration.
17. The purchasing department should help the functional departments write specifications to promote standardization.

18. Once the "what-to-buy" question is settled, the purchasing department ought to determine from whom to buy.

19. The purchasing agent should follow the orders on the purchasing requisition of the functional department, even if some of the procedures conflict with what he has been taught to do by the purchasing manual.

20. The purchasing department should search out and disseminate ideas and suggestions concerning cost saving or product improvement available from the many sources of supply with whom he deals.

21. It should be permissible for the purchasing department to violate the specifications in the purchasing requisition if they are sure that the best interests of the organization will be served in doing so.

22. When an important requisition has not been acted upon, the functional manager has a right to reprimand the purchasing agent.

23. If the purchasing agent observed that the functional manager has been too blunt or rude to the vendor's salesman, he should attempt to improve the situation after the functional manager has gone by giving the salesman his own explanation or in some way "Soothing the ruffled feathers."

24. The purchasing department should suggest improvements for stock or repeat items in quantity.

25. If the purchasing agent knows of some new or better technique or product to be used by the functional department, he should feel free to go ahead and gather information or a sample without first asking the functional manager.
26. The purchasing department should adjust its purchasing views to correspond with management's view of good practice.

27. The purchasing department should "punch up" suppliers as needed to expedite delivery.

28. The purchasing department should be better qualified than the functional managers or top managers to judge what is the best buy or supplier for the specified need.

29. The purchasing department should negotiate for the purchase but also make certain, within reason, that everything possible has been done to insure best value to the company for the money expended.

30. When a functional manager is repeatedly dissatisfied with the work of the purchasing department, even after having tactfully discussed the problems with them, he should report the situation to his immediate superior.

31. If a functional manager gives a verbal request to a purchasing agent to order some material, the purchasing agent should have a right to politely ignore the request until it is placed in writing per the standard operating procedure.

32. The purchasing department should be consulted on make, buy, or lease decisions as well as for ordering items.

33. No purchase commitments should be made except by authorized members of the purchasing department or by approved delegated authority.

34. Occasionally a purchasing agent will be asked by a functional department manager to perform some task which is urgent and before he can complete it another department manager makes a similar request for some urgent task. When this happens, the purchasing agent should determine which task should have priority and accomplish that task first.
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35. Purchasing agents should be active members of at least one professional association and attend most conferences and meetings of the association.

36. The purchasing department should be able to determine the adequacy of corrective action offered by the supplier due to substandard materials or delays in delivery.

37. The purchasing department should have the authority to accept a revised delivery schedule proposed by suppliers without prior consultation with functional departments if it feels that the new schedule is reasonable.

38. In working with the functional departments, the purchasing agent should constantly be trying to learn about the needed material and its specifications so that some time in the future he will be able to order it himself.

39. If it is the considered opinion of the functional manager that not enough is being done to expedite a purchase request, he should tell the purchasing department about it at first opportunity.

40. The purchasing department ought to request permission of the functional departments for any deviations in specification or other changes in the original request for materials.

41. On the occasions when the functional manager feels that he knows the best supplier for a particular item, he should so inform the purchasing department to order directly from the named supplier without searching elsewhere.

42. The purchasing agent should be prepared to defend his position with other colleagues (functional departments) even if it means carrying the case to higher management levels.
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<th>YOUR VIEW</th>
<th>ACTUAL</th>
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43. Just as the purchasing agent has a responsibility to his firm, he also should have a responsibility to insure that his suppliers receive every courtesy and fair treatment.  

44. The purchasing department should consolidate purchases of like or common items to obtain the maximum economical benefits.  

45. Unless he is satisfied that it is for the best interest of the firm, a purchasing agent should not comply with a requisition from functional management without first attempting to get a change.  

46. The functional manager should tell the purchasing director what he thinks about the service his department is receiving (i.e., he should point it out when the service is inadequate and compliment when it is good).  

47. According to the rules, requisitions over a certain dollar amount are supposed to be signed by the functional department manager—the signature of one of the members of his department is not acceptable. When the manager fails to sign such a request but it has been signed by the assistant manager, the purchasing agent should place the order with the supplier if he is confident that the functional manager will sign the order when he returns to the firm, from a short business trip.  

48. The purchasing department should represent a judging operation to consider all the factors involved in a purchase, ranging from cost of material and machine capabilities to factors of vendor and administrative relations.  

49. The purchasing department should control all contacts with vendors.  

50. Purchasing agents should subscribe to and diligently read the standard professional and technical journals which pertain to his job.
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<tr>
<th>YOUR VIEW</th>
<th>ACTUAL</th>
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51. The purchasing department should expect the functional departments to accept items from a major supplier which are not of usual quality, but nevertheless within the necessary use limits.

52. The requisitions may indicate sources to purchasing, but purchasing should have the prerogative of buying from other sources if they can obtain equal merchandise and satisfactory delivery service at lower prices.

53. The purchasing department should be prepared to suggest substitute materials and changes in quality, quantity, or specifications which will reduce costs.

54. The decision as to whether key suppliers are properly qualified to serve the firm should rest with the purchasing department.

55. The purchasing agent should keep top management informed of new and professionally approved purchasing procedures and to insist that such procedures be followed in the absence of overriding contrary consideration.

56. The purchasing department should assist the suppliers in understanding their total obligation to the company.

57. The purchasing department should be completely familiar with the technical specification for commonly ordered products.

58. The purchasing department should have full authority to question the quality or kind of material asked for, in order that the best interests of the company may be served.

59. If the functional manager observes a purchasing agent using some procedure which the manager feels is not for the good of the firm, he should feel free to tactfully mention the situation to the director of purchasing.
60. Frequently the purchasing agent sends out a small order to a supplier for a functional department manager only to discover that he must again complete the paperwork to send another small order to the same firm for the same department. The functional department manager should carefully plan his requisitions in such a way as to insure that the number of purchase orders for the purchasing department is minimized.
PART II: DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Instructions: Listed below are a number of activities to be undertaken in purchasing. Please indicate the degree of involvement you feel both the purchasing and functional departments actually have in these areas for the acquisition of a component to be used in production of one of your firm's major products. For each activity, circle the appropriate letter response for each department.

P--prime responsibility
S--share in discussion and decision
A--advisory only
O--others administer, but this department is dependent upon timely and efficient performance and reports.

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<tr>
<th>PROCUREMENT ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PURCHASING</th>
<th>FUNCTIONAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>EXAMPLE: Place order</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Determine need for purchase</td>
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<td>2. Establish specifications</td>
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<td>3. Obtain technical information</td>
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<td>4. Determine amount to purchase</td>
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<td>5. Price negotiations</td>
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<td>6. Schedule delivery time</td>
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<td>7. Specify delivery method and routing</td>
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<td>8. Selection of supplier</td>
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<td>9. Adjust and settle complaints</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Post-purchase appraisal</td>
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<td>P S A O</td>
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PART III: PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Purchasing Personnel Only: Please respond to the following questions as indicated. More than one response may be checked for item 1.

1. Are you a member of the National Association of Purchasing Management, Inc. (Formerly NAPA)?
   YES____ NO____

   If yes, please indicate whether you have:
   _____ held an office nationally
   _____ held an office in your local branch
   _____ been active on committees
   _____ attended conferences regularly
   _____ attended conferences occasionally
   _____ been a dues-paying member only
   _____ been only listed as a member

2. During the past two years, how often have you done any of the following:
   a. Read professional purchasing publications
      _____ Frequently _____ Occasionally _____ Seldom _____ Never
   b. Consulted with colleagues in other firms on problems of mutual interest
      _____ Frequently _____ Occasionally _____ Seldom _____ Never
   c. Participated actively in purchasing association activities
      _____ Frequently _____ Occasionally _____ Seldom _____ Never
   d. Attended professional development classes sponsored by the association
      _____ Frequently _____ Occasionally _____ Seldom _____ Never
   e. Attended seminars and workshops
      _____ Frequently _____ Occasionally _____ Seldom _____ Never
   f. Attended (evening) classes of college or university
      _____ Frequently _____ Occasionally _____ Seldom _____ Never
3. Do you have a personal subscription to any professional journals?
   YES____ NO____  If yes, please list them________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

4. Have you published any articles or delivered any papers for conferences during the last five years?
   YES____ NO____  If yes, how many________________________
   ________________________________

5. If you "had it to do all over again," would you enter the purchasing field?
   _______ Definitely Yes  _______ Probably No
   _______ Probably Yes  _______ Definitely No

6. How applicable is your knowledge and ability on your present job to other firms?
   _______ completely applicable
   _______ very applicable
   _______ somewhat applicable
   _______ slightly applicable
   _______ not at all

7. To what extent is your social life connected to your job?
   _______ very large
   _______ large
   _______ somewhat
   _______ slightly
   _______ not at all

8. To what extent is it likely that you can leave your present job and obtain an equivalent one elsewhere?
   _______ very likely
   _______ likely
   _______ somewhat
   _______ slightly
   _______ not at all
9. How useful is the knowledge you obtain on this job to you if you were to seek employment elsewhere?

___ very useful
___ quite useful
___ somewhat
___ slightly useful
___ not at all

10. What was the highest grade in school you completed?

___ some high school
___ high school degree
___ 1 or more years of college, without a degree
___ bachelors degree or equivalent
___ some graduate work
___ graduate degree

11. How many years have you been employed by your present firm? 

12. How many other firms have you worked (full time) for during the past ten years?

13. Age
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Articles and Periodicals


