# **Bussiness Reasearch method Report**

# **Section 1: Comparing Two Research Methodologies**

## **1.1 Research Problem** Manufacturing firms operate in highly complex environments where efficiency, speed, and cost-effectiveness are critical to maintaining competitiveness. However, these firms frequently encounter operational inefficiencies such as excessive material wastage, frequent equipment breakdowns, and poorly integrated supply chains. These challenges not only inflate production costs but also delay deliveries, diminish customer satisfaction, and reduce overall profitability. Traditionally, such problems fall within the domain of operations or supply chain management. Yet, recent advancements in integrated business processes suggest that marketing operations can play a more strategic and collaborative role in resolving these inefficiencies.

Marketing operations — involving the alignment of data, processes, systems, and human resources that support core marketing functions — have evolved to become a bridge between customer-facing strategies and internal business logistics. Through improved demand forecasting, real-time data sharing, campaign planning, and customer feedback analysis, marketing teams can inform production scheduling, inventory management, and supplier coordination. Despite this potential, the contribution of marketing operations to operational efficiency in manufacturing contexts remains under-researched.

This study aims to explore the intersection of marketing and operational functions by investigating the following research question:  
**"How can marketing operations help reduce material wastage and improve supply chain efficiency in manufacturing firms?"**  
By examining this question, the research seeks to identify strategic opportunities for cross-functional integration that drive both cost savings and performance improvement.

## **1.2 Selected Key Readings**

This research is grounded in interdisciplinary literature that draws from marketing operations, supply chain integration, and lean manufacturing. Key contributions come from authors like Feng et al. (2017), who examine the role of Guanxi and supply chain integration and demonstrate how better internal and external relationships can reduce inefficiencies. Similarly, Yu et al. (2017) explore environmental pressures and performance, showing how sustainable strategies can enhance operational effectiveness. These studies establish a framework to understand how non-traditional functions, like marketing, influence core business operations.  
The work of Massaro et al. (2016) on structured literature reviews provides a methodology to synthesize fragmented knowledge across marketing and supply chain disciplines. Zarantonello et al. (2016) and Newton (2016) further discuss project management and the connection between marketing strategies and organisational outcomes. These authors offer insight into how operational bottlenecks can be addressed by more integrated and responsive marketing functions.  
  
Recent studies such as Yang et al. (2018) and Warren (2018) suggest that companies with robust marketing data systems are better equipped to forecast demand, manage inventory, and reduce wastage — all essential for efficient supply chain performance.

## **1.3 Two Appropriate Research Methods**

#### ****Method 1: Survey Research****

**Application:**  
Survey research is one of the most widely adopted quantitative methods in both marketing and operational management research due to its efficiency and scalability. In the context of this study, structured surveys can be deployed to a broad sample of respondents, such as marketing managers, supply chain coordinators, and operations executives across various manufacturing firms. These respondents are well-positioned to provide data on interdepartmental communication, use of marketing technologies (e.g., CRM, ERP), and the degree of alignment between marketing insights and operational decisions.

Surveys can be administered via online platforms, which further enhance accessibility and data collection speed. They allow for standardisation of responses, which improves comparability across firms and industries. This makes survey research particularly suitable for identifying trends, relationships, and correlations between marketing practices and supply chain performance metrics.

**Theoretical Contribution:**  
Survey data enables researchers to test hypotheses and build empirical models that link specific marketing operations (e.g., customer data analytics, campaign timing) with outcomes like reduced material wastage or improved forecasting accuracy. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), survey research is especially valuable when investigating behavioural variables, decision-making patterns, and perceived interdepartmental effectiveness. This approach allows for broader generalisation and helps identify statistically significant patterns across the manufacturing sector.

**Gaps & Limitations:**  
Despite its strengths, survey research has inherent limitations. The primary concern lies in the **depth and nuance** of the data collected. Responses are typically self-reported and may reflect a biased or incomplete understanding of internal processes, especially when respondents are not fully aware of the broader operational implications. Additionally, surveys often fail to uncover the **causal mechanisms** behind observed relationships. They identify "what" is happening but may fall short in explaining "how" or "why" specific integration between marketing and operations work effectively.

#### ****Method 2: Case Study Research****

**Application:**  
Case study research, a qualitative method, offers a deep, context-rich examination of real-world practices within organizations. In this study, case studies would focus on selected manufacturing firms that have implemented innovative marketing-operations integration strategies to reduce inefficiencies. By observing and analyzing these firms through interviews, document analysis, and observational data, the researcher can gain insights into **practical implementation**, organizational dynamics, and decision-making processes.

Yin (2009) supports the use of **multiple-case designs**, where each case acts as a comparative unit to draw broader theoretical conclusions. The method is particularly valuable when the research seeks to understand complex systems, cross-functional interactions, and the role of organizational culture in enabling or inhibiting integration.

**Theoretical Contribution:**  
Case studies enable researchers to explore **how** marketing teams influence operational efficiency, uncovering best practices, strategic challenges, and informal processes that may not be visible in survey responses. This depth is essential for theory building, especially in relatively under explored areas like the intersection of marketing operations and supply chain performance.

Moreover, case studies can reveal dynamic, evolving relationships between departments, supported by qualitative evidence such as management narratives, project timelines, and internal reports — offering rich, real-life illustrations of theory in action.

**Gaps & Limitations:**  
While insightful, case studies have limited **external validity** — their findings may not be applicable across different industries or firm sizes. The small sample size and context-specific nature of case studies restrict generalisability. In addition, access to sensitive operational and marketing data is often limited, especially in competitive or regulated industries. Gaining trust and in-depth access to internal processes requires time, relationship-building, and sometimes faces resistance from gatekeepers within firms.

**Comparison of Methods:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Survey** | **Case Study** |
| Sample Size | Large | Small (1–3 firms) |
| Data Type | Quantitative | Qualitative |
| Strengths | Scalable, measurable | Contextual depth, practical relevance |
| Weaknesses | Limited depth, possible bias | Contextual depth, practical relevance |
| Best Used When | Testing patterns/relationships | Exploring underlying mechanisms |

#### ****Conclusion****

Together, these two methodologies offer **complementary strengths**. Survey research is ideal for capturing wide-ranging patterns and correlations across firms, while case studies provide the contextual grounding necessary to understand how marketing operations drive real change in supply chains. A **mixed-methods approach** could be highly effective for future studies, combining quantitative breadth with qualitative depth to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

# **Section 2: Instrument and Conclusions**

## **2.1 Instrument Design** **Proposed Instrument: Survey Questionnaire**

The selected instrument for this research is a **survey questionnaire** targeted at **marketing and operations professionals** within manufacturing firms. The goal is to collect quantifiable data on the perceived role and impact of marketing operations on supply chain efficiency and material wastage.

#### **Design Rationale**

The decision to use a survey is based on its ability to reach a larger, diverse pool of respondents across industries, allowing for measurable comparisons. It is particularly suited for exploring **interdepartmental relationships**, where opinions, strategies, and perceived impacts can vary widely.

The survey is designed with **Likert-scale**, **multiple-choice**, and **ranking** questions. These formats will gather data on:

* Current marketing technologies in use (CRM, ERP, automation tools)
* Level of coordination between marketing and supply chain teams
* Frequency and quality of forecasting and communication
* Reported inefficiencies and sources of material wastage
* Respondents’ perceptions of marketing’s contribution to operational efficiency

The questionnaire is structured in four sections:

1. **Demographics**: industry type, company size, respondent’s role
2. **Marketing Operations Practices**: tools, processes, KPIs
3. **Cross-functional Integration**: collaboration frequency, meeting cadence, data sharing
4. **Operational Outcomes**: perceived impact on waste, inventory accuracy, downtime

The **survey instrument** is provided in **Appendix B**.

**2.2 Conclusions**  
The proposed survey instrument is designed to elicit meaningful and actionable insights into the ways in which marketing operations can contribute to mitigating operational inefficiencies — specifically material wastage and poor supply chain coordination — within manufacturing firms. While conventional approaches to addressing these issues tend to fall within the domains of operations management or logistics, this research brings to light the under explored **strategic role of marketing operations** in enhancing internal efficiencies. The survey is a critical tool in this regard, enabling the collection of empirical data to evaluate these relationships at scale.

As established in Section 1, existing literature is heavily oriented toward technical, procedural, and systems-based interventions. These approaches, while important, often overlook the **indirect yet influential role marketing can play**, particularly through functions such as demand forecasting, campaign scheduling, customer data analysis, and market intelligence. Integrating these insights with production and inventory decisions allows firms to align supply with anticipated demand more accurately, reducing instances of overproduction, under utilization of resources, and material wastage.

The survey instrument captures both the **process-oriented dimensions** (e.g., frequency of interdepartmental collaboration, use of CRM/ERP systems, and data integration practices) and **outcome-focused variables** (e.g., levels of reported waste, lead time accuracy, and perceived improvements in coordination). This dual focus not only allows for a nuanced analysis of current practices but also supports the identification of key drivers behind successful integration of marketing and supply chain efforts.

Importantly, the survey's design enables data to be gathered across a **wide spectrum of firms** and industries, making it possible to identify common patterns, assess sector-specific variations, and develop statistically supported conclusions. This scalability gives the instrument a distinct advantage over qualitative approaches, such as case studies, which — although valuable for depth — lack broad generalisability.

Once validated and refined through pilot testing, the survey instrument holds the potential to become a **benchmarking framework** for firms seeking to evaluate their internal alignment and identify areas for strategic improvement. It can also inform the development of best practice guidelines for marketing-operations integration, contributing to both academic knowledge and practical business applications.

In essence, this instrument addresses a crucial research gap by **systematically linking marketing operations with supply chain efficiency and waste reduction** — a perspective that is often fragmented or overlooked. Its implementation paves the way for future exploratory, explanatory, and potentially longitudinal studies that can further illuminate the evolving role of marketing in operational success.

# **Section 3: Research Dissemination**

## **3.1 Relevance and Audience**

The findings of this research are highly relevant to a range of stakeholders within the manufacturing sector, particularly those involved in marketing operations, supply chain management, and strategic decision-making. **Marketing operations managers**, **supply chain directors**, and **executive leadership teams** are at the forefront of navigating complex internal systems that affect both customer-facing activities and core production processes. Their roles require continuous evaluation and improvement of operational workflows to ensure the organization remains competitive, responsive, and efficient.

By uncovering how marketing operations can contribute to reducing material wastage and enhancing supply chain coordination, this research provides valuable insights for **integrating marketing intelligence** into traditionally operational domains. Improved cross-functional collaboration between marketing and supply chain teams can lead to better demand forecasting, streamlined inventory management, and more responsive supplier engagement — all of which have direct implications for reducing inefficiencies and costs. The findings may inform **new internal protocols**, **investment in marketing technologies**, or the **redesign of communication flows** within manufacturing firms.

In addition to corporate practitioners, **consulting firms** that specialise in operational optimisation, digital transformation, and marketing strategy will find this research useful for developing more integrated service offerings for their manufacturing clients.

Beyond the private sector, **public policy organisations**, **industrial development agencies**, and **professional associations** (such as the Chartered Institute of Marketing or the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport) could leverage these findings to promote more holistic approaches to operational excellence. These insights could support **policy recommendations**, **training programmes**, and **best practice guidelines** aimed at fostering cross-disciplinary integration in manufacturing and industrial firms.

## **3.2 Communication of Research**

To ensure that the research findings have meaningful impact beyond academic circles, a **multi-channel and stakeholder-specific dissemination strategy** must be implemented. Effective communication involves not only delivering the findings but doing so in a way that engages different audiences, addresses their specific interests, and supports informed decision-making.

For **internal use within manufacturing firms**, findings can be presented in the form of **executive summaries or dashboard-style reports** that highlight key insights through visual elements such as charts, graphs, and heatmaps. These reports should include actionable recommendations in bullet-point form, designed to support swift decision-making by operations and marketing leaders. Interactive presentations or briefings to cross-functional teams can further help embed the insights into daily business practices.

For the **academic and practitioner community**, formal dissemination should include the publication of research articles in **peer-reviewed journals** focused on marketing, operations management, and business strategy. Presentations at **academic conferences** (e.g., Academy of Marketing, European Operations Management Association) and **industry-specific symposiums** can foster scholarly dialogue and encourage further study.

**Industry white papers**, particularly when co-authored with research institutes or consultancy firms, can translate academic findings into **practical tools** and **frameworks** for implementation. These can be distributed through professional networks, business schools, and corporate training programmes.

To reach **a broader audience**, including policymakers and industry advocates, **digital content formats** such as infographics, animated explainer videos, LinkedIn articles, and email newsletters can distil complex findings into accessible and shareable insights. These formats are especially effective for time-constrained decision-makers and non-academic stakeholders.

Furthermore, establishing partnerships with **professional associations**, **NGOs**, and **public sector entities** focused on sustainable manufacturing and supply chain reform can significantly increase visibility. These partnerships can facilitate broader adoption of the findings and may lead to inclusion in industry guidelines, certification programmes, or public policy frameworks.

Ultimately, clarity, visual appeal, contextual relevance, and audience awareness are essential to ensure that the research outcomes drive **real-world improvements** in marketing-operations integration and supply chain performance.

## **2.3 Bibliography**

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**Appendix A – Visual Literature Map**

Note: Insert a visual literature map here showing the relationships among marketing operations, supply chain efficiency, and material wastage, referencing the key readings mentioned in Section 1.2.

**Appendix B – Survey Questionnaire (Draft Instrument)**

Section 1: Demographics

1. What is your job title?

2. What department are you primarily associated with? ☐ Marketing ☐ Operations ☐ Supply Chain ☐ Other

3. Size of your organization? ☐ Small (1–50) ☐ Medium (51–250) ☐ Large (250+)

Section 2: Marketing Operations

4. What marketing systems do you use? (CRM, ERP, etc.)

5. How often are marketing forecasts shared with operations? ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

6. On a scale of 1–5, how accurate are your marketing forecasts?

Section 3: Collaboration

7. How frequently does your marketing team meet with supply chain/logistics? ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Never

8. Rate the level of coordination between marketing and operations (1–5)

Section 4: Operational Outcomes

9. Have you observed reduced material wastage as a result of marketing-operations collaboration? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

10. What is the main benefit of marketing's involvement in supply chain processes? ☐ Forecasting ☐ Customer feedback ☐ Inventory planning ☐ None