AN EVALUATION OF BUYING INFLUENCES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PRODUCTS IN ZIMBABWE:
THE CASE OF FIRST PACK (PVT) LTD (2009–2012)

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

2012

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
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DECLARATION

I, Knowledge Fodha, do hereby declare that this dissertation is a result of my own investigation and research, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgements, references and comments included in the body of the report, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

Student Signature  Date

Supervisor Signature  Date
DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my wife Pamela and our lovely daughters Amariah and Bernice for their support, patience and resilience during my period of my study.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to Dr Maravanyika who assisted me in compiling this research. I am indebted for the knowledge and direction he imparted to me and not forgetting the study material he offered.

I would also want to thank First Pack Management for allowing me to carry a study on their company and also the participation they undertook in the study. My gratitude also spreads to the University of Zimbabwe Graduate School of Management staff and lecturers who imparted immense knowledge over the two and half years we were together. To my newly found Master in Business Administration (MBA) colleagues - Munya, Charles, Batsirai, Wilson, Welly and Shingiraiyou encouraged me and provided companionship, I appreciate you.
ABSTRACT

The general conclusion of literature is that buying influences of customers is influenced by social, cultural, psychological and personal factors for the consumer market and by environmental, organisational, interpersonal and individual factors for the organisational market. This literature is confined to other parts of the world and not Zimbabwe. This drove the researcher in filling the gap by evaluating these buying influences in Zimbabwe. The findings of this research were aimed at benefiting the IT industry in Zimbabwe. First Pack was used as the case study in this research study.

The data was obtained through questionnaires that were sent to individual customers and organisational customers and from the face-to-face interviews with senior management of First Pack. These managers were the Sales Manager, Business Development Manager – Information Technology Hardware, Business Development Manager – Information Technology Consumables and Business Development Manager – Stationery. The researcher made use of qualitative research philosophy and the data gathered was analysed through data displays in the form of content analytic summary tables.

The study found that traditional buying influences have an impact on the buying of IT products. The prominence of the factors differs in that some factors were found to influence more whilst some did not apply at all. First Pack failed to put policies that influence its customers to buy from it. The research identified limited choice of stock, perennial stock-outs; poor sales support, inflexible payment terms and poor customer relations as some of the inhibitors that are causing First Pack buyers not to buy from it and this have impacted negatively on sales.

In view of these findings this study recommends that the company should take into consideration these buying influences. Areas that need attention include: interpersonal relationships, retail image, accessibility, support services, flexible payment terms, and continuous market research.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**BDM** Business Development Manager

**B2B** Business to Business

**B2C** Business to Consumers

**IT** Information Technology

**HP**. Hewlett Packard

**ICT** Information Communication Technology

**SMM** Sales and Marketing Manager

**PC** Personal Computer
CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The need for knowledge and understanding into both business to consumer (B2C) markets and business to business (B2B) markets is crucial to the continual success of the company (Drucker, 2006). Schiffman (2009) claimed that consumer behaviour is mainly influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. On the other hand (Kotler & Keller, 2012) suggests that for organisational markets, factors such as environmental, interpersonal, organisational and individual are the influencers of organisational buying patterns.

Companies will be able to produce and supply the right products that will satisfy markets only if they understand markets in question (Drucker, 2006). Smeal (2003) asserts that firms will be customer driven if they are able to determine what people want, develop detailed products attributes and features with a benefit and make sure that consumers are satisfied. This can be achieved if the customer is understood that is by analysing buyer motives.

There is no notable research undertaken to understand the buying motives of Information Technology (IT) products in Zimbabwe. This is despite the various moves by both the government through the ministry of Information Communication Technology and the industry at large in advocating for Information Technology usage. It is against this background that this study was undertaken to fill the gap by providing the understanding of the motives behind purchasing decisions with special focus on IT products.

This chapter analyses First Pack’s environment at a macro level, industry level and organisational level. It also contains the problem statement, research questions, research proposition, scope and justification of study. The problem statement is being derived from factors that influence the buying behaviour of First Pack’s Information Technology products for the period 2009 to 2012.
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.2.1 The Macro environment
The firms’ external environment consist of all conditions and forces that affect its strategic options but are typically beyond the firm’s control (Pearce, 2009). Stoner et al. (2005) divided the macro environment into four major categories that are Political, Economical, Social and Technological environment. The IT macro environment is analysed using these factors.

1.2.1.1 Political environment
The political considerations define the legal framework in which the firm will operate (Pearce, 2009). In Zimbabwe the government is structured in a way that there are three major political parties - Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai (MDC –T) and Movement for Democratic Change – Ncube (MDC- N) which are sharing power under the Global Political Agreement banner formed in September 2008. This has seen the recovery of the economy and the coming in of young and vibrant ministers who embrace IT. The Ministry of Information Communication Technology (ICT) has been formed and it is advocating for computerising the nation. Programs such as e-government and e-learning are all promoting IT. This in a way has triggered the use and demand for IT products.

1.2.1.2 Social
The social environment includes factors such as demography, values, beliefs and lifestyle of a society (Dess, Lumpking & Aisner, 2007). As social attitude changes so does the demand of products and services (Pearce, 2009). The social status and educational levels of Zimbabwe favour the use of IT. Zimbabwe literacy levels are very high at 92% (Mbizvo, 2013) hence it embraces the use of IT. More than ten universities, several colleges and schools are all promoting and teaching IT. Social platforms such as facebook and twitter are now very active as people need to link with friends and relatives across the world.
1.2.1.3 Economy
People are willing to start businesses if they feel that the risk of losing money is minimal (Nickels, McHugh, & McHugh, 2012). Dess et al., (2007) portray key economic indicators to include interest rates, employment, consumer index, gross domestic product and net disposable income. The introduction of the US dollar in February 2009 has seen the stability of the economy as inflation rates decreased to single figure digits. The country witnessed overall growth rate of 9.3% to the year 2011, with average growth in employment of 3-5% (Budget, 2012). Currency made sense as there was some value for money. Inflation rates falling to an average of 4.2% (Budget, 2012) created an environment for purchasing IT products. Not only that but the scrapping of import duty on selected IT products such as computers and laptops made IT products competitive locally. Credit lines were opened making the market access technological products. This also saw the industry coming up again. Companies which were once falling started to invest in their IT infrastructure.

On another note, the stabilization of the economy increased competition as foreign companies started to influx the country in search of the open economy. Investors had now gained confidence in the economy.

1.2.1.4 Technology environment
To avoid obsolescence and promote innovation, the firm must be aware of technological changes that influence its industry (Pearce, 2009). The advances in technology in Zimbabwe have continued to accelerate. This has also prompted the need to be abreast with the world’s standards and knowing what is happening around the globe. Nickels et al., (2012) suggest that few developments have managed to have a comprehensive and lasting impact on business like IT. At a school level, access to ICT continues to be an important factor (Laudon & Laudon, 2010) alongside the technical support which makes access realizable. For instance, in the banking sector one can do all transactions without even physically visiting the bank. This is also a major result of the use IT in the economy. Business transaction can all be done electronically hence the need for the IT
gadgets. Organisations which used to be manually based became abreast with technology because that is now the in-thing.

1.2.2 Industry Analysis: IT Retail Sector

Porter (1985) attributes the profitability of any given industry to the underlying forces that shape its competitiveness. These forces differ in dominance according to industries and the IT industry has been analysed its competitiveness using these forces: bargaining power of suppliers, bargaining power of buyers, rivalry, threats of new entrants and threats from substitutes.

![The Five Forces That Shape Industry Competition](image)

*Figure 1.1: Porter’s Five Forces*

*Source: Porter (1985)*

1.2.2.1 Bargaining Power of buyers

Buyers in the IT industry have got more power simply because they have got more choice in where to buy their products. Buyers threaten an industry by forcing prices
down, bargaining for quality, more service and playing competitors against each other (Dess et al., 2007). Most companies in the IT industry sell common brands such as HP, Canon, Dell, Apple and Lenovo. Buyers can get these products easily from several resellers. This has reduced the power of retailers. A buyer is at liberty to either purchase at First Pack or from any of the several players around the industry. Heavy promotion from players around the industry has provided enough knowledge for the buyers to know where to buy at competitive price or quality.

1.2.2.2 Bargaining Power of suppliers
Suppliers are powerful if they are few and their products have high switching cost (Porter, 1976). IT products are many but recognized brands are very few and are mostly channeled through very few suppliers mainly from South Africa and other Asian countries. For instance if a product is an HP, it then has to come only through the four distributors in South Africa and anything else will be considered to be coming from the unauthorized channel and the probability is high that it is fake. This will also mean that the products will not be supported especially with issues of warrant or consumables backup.

1.2.2.3 Threats of entrants
The IT industry have very low capital requirements and exits costs. The brands in question have little differentiation as the dominating brands are just the same such as Hewlett Packard (HP), Canon, Dell and Lenovo. This has seen a lot of new players entering the industry very frequently. Pearce (2009) noted capital requirement, product differentiation, and economies of scale as some of factors that bar new entrants. The Zimbabwe industry shows that it is an open industry as does not meet the barriers criteria as noted above. This has seen the industry being characterised with a lot of players in which most of them are very small and briefcase companies which do not have proper structures. In actual fact, Zimbabwe has no single corporate or listed IT company (these exclude those in telecommunications). Furthermore, it is so easy for one to drive to South Africa and buy ten laptops, printers or cartridges for resell. This is
quite different when we talk of other industries such as mining where millions of dollars are needed for capital outlay.

1.2.2.4 Substitutes
Substitutes limit the potential return of an industry by placing a ceiling on the prices that the industry can profitably charge (Dess et al., 2007). IT substitutes are coming in the form of generic products and me-too products which have infested the country. Products are coming from China and Dubai. Some products appear to be the same as the original brands and have very low prices to the extent that they are easily luring the market away. These products are coming in the form of IT consumables and hardware. Apart from the fake brands circulating there is also an increase in unknown brands and other gadgets which are also having the same functions. For instance the smart phones are becoming more and more complicated than a laptop or desktop. One has to choose between buying a laptop and buying a smart phone.

1.2.2.5 Rivalry
Rivalry is very high in the IT industry. This is one of the industries which are growing at a very fast rate. If one opens a newspaper one will be bombarded by tens of IT adverts. This shows that many players are fighting over the same clients as indicated by Dess et al., (2007) that price competition, advertisement battles and increase service are evident of rivalry. Although the industry have a few prominent players such as First Pack, Omni Africa, Global Horizon, Creative IT and Finmark, the unknown are the ones which are many and dominating the large share of the market. The industry is also smiling at the exit of another prominent player Arkmate, however competition remains intense.

1.2.3 Background to the Case: First Pack Private Limited Company
First Pack is one of the Zimbabwe’s leading suppliers of General stationery, Computer consumables and Computer hardware. The company emerged in I.T and General stationery industry in 1998, since then, the company has grown from strength to
strength. It has done extremely well in terms of market share, capital base, service quality human resource expertise.

Vision
To be the leading and most preferred supplier of stationery and Information, Communication Technology products in the world.

Mission
To provide a first class service in pursuance with our vision.

Branch Network
In the year 2009, First Pack had only two branches – Beverly Court and Samora Machel, however in the period to 2012 the company managed to open six more branches namely Bulawayo IT Distribution Centre, the new Head Office (First Pack Business Park), Samora Machel IT Branch, Chester House Branch, Airport Branch and Kwekwe Branch. The company is aiming to provide as much convenience as possible to its scattered markets.

Clientele base and Product contribution
First Pack supplies stationery and IT products to several corporate organizations in Zimbabwe and the IT consumer markets which vary from college students to professionals and small companies to large corporate organisations. The clientele base ranges from financial sector, manufacturing sector, government organizations, educational sector and many other sectors. The size of its clientele base is due to the quality of products it markets. During the recent years IT has been contributing a larger share than stationery, hence the focus on IT products at the expense of Stationery.
Achievements of First Pack

- HP Gold Partner
- Epson Distributor
- Targus Distributor
- Lasting Impressions Distributor
- Supply Chains- with companies from as far as India, United Kingdom and several Asian countries.
- Quality Assurance-The company has been audited by the HP audit team and proved that it stocks original HP products. This was following an outcry in the market that several players are distributing fake products.

Performance

The growth seems to be stagnant for quite a while now. The human resources which had risen above one hundred have dwindled as several employees left for greener pastures. On the other hand sales are averaging on the same figure of 12 million which
is even showing signs of falling trend. The above information can be represented by the following diagrams of sales flowfigure.1.3.

Fig 1.3: Sales Performance
Source: First Pack Management Accounts (2012)

1.2.4 SWOT Analysis
SWOT analysis is a framework that analyses a firm's internal and external environment (Dess et al, 2007). First Pack business can further be analysed through factors such as its internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats. The company is in control of its strengths and its weaknesses but the opportunities and threats there is no much it can do but to adjust to the forces.

1.2.4.1 Strengths
First Pack enjoys high market share because it is now an acceptable brand. The brand is well known amongst the consumer and industrial markets. This is a strength that the
company is enjoying. Product quality is very high at First Pack. The company has also formed synergies with both local and foreign suppliers of very reputable brands such as HP, Epson, Verbatim, Sahara, Dell and Lenovo. This has caused the market to trust it when it comes to product quality. The quality of its products is also witnessed by it being either a preferred partner or an authorized distributor of the world’s greatest brands.

The competitiveness of prices at First Pack has made the company attract a huge market share. Very few organisations are able to compete with First Pack prices. This has caused the company to be the choice of many.

First Pack has a wide distribution network across the country. Its branch network of eight outlets makes it possible to reach a lot of customers. The country’s coverage involves six branches in Harare, Kwekwe, Mutare and Bulawayo.

1.2.4.2 Weaknesses
The company does not have a structured marketing research program to determine what clients are expecting from it. This has put the company in a position of losing the grip and dominance it used to enjoy. This background has raised the need of detailed structured research to determine customer motives.

The growth of the company has also been mixed with complacency and lack of focus or product specialisation as the company sells to everyone and has no specific target market. Poor customer service is also becoming pronounced. Several reports of complaints have been noted (First Pack Marketing report, 2012)

The company has poor corporate culture and corporate governance. This is also caused by the fact that it is an owner managed organisation. The growth of the company and its size does not provide a good atmosphere for owner management. Some profitable opportunities are not being seized simply because the owner is not seeing the opportunity as any opportunity. This was going to be a different case if the owner is liable to the board which will be questioning some of his decisions.
The lack of adequate capital has caused First Pack not to operate to its full capacity. This has caused the company to put on hold some projects and opportunities which can make the company very profitable. These include the full utilisation of the Epson distribution status, failing to meet demand which has attributed to stock outs.

Stock shortages have also been a major blow to the company. This is irrespective of the company having a stock valuation of more than a million dollars but still having some hot lines such as laptops running out. This is because the company has no deep knowledge of the buying patterns of its consumers hence to have the right product mix.

1.2.4.3 Opportunities
The IT industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world and locally. This has posed the company with great potential and a growing market. Universities and colleges have triggered the use of laptops hence increasing the market for laptops. Laptops and printers have ceased to be luxurious products but basic products. First Pack is trying to seize these opportunities through its promotion dubbed ‘a laptop in every hand’.

1.2.4.4 Threats
The growing rate of the industry has also attracted several players hence stiffening the competition. This means that the rivalry level has increased hence threatening to take First Pack customers and market share. Several names continue to be introduced in the IT industry such as Finmark, Upperwill, ICT technologies, Smacinc, Globetech and many more. Some companies which used to be only wholesalers such as Rank Zimbabwe have also changed their business model hence now going straight to the consumers.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM
The IT industry in Zimbabwe is growing at a very fast rate. This has brought both negative and positive effects to First Pack as a company. There is a growing market and also the intensification of competition which necessitated the increase in customer’s wants and demands. This saw the sales of First Pack being stagnant at around
12million per annum for the past three years (First Pack Management Accounts, 2012). The revenue growth does not commensurate with the increasing demand of IT products. The shrinking in market share shows that there is a gap which First Pack needs to fill in order to grow its market share in line with the industry growth.

This has triggered this study to analyse what is influencing consumers in purchasing IT products. What is pushing them and what are the motives? The researcher believes that the knowledge of these factors and its application will distinguish First Pack from other players who are competing in the same industry.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
Prime objective:
To evaluate the main buying influences of IT products in Zimbabwe with particular focus on First Pack (2009-2012)

Sub objectives:

i. To establish factors that influence the buying of IT products.

ii. To determine whether First Pack has put into consideration factors that influence the buying of IT products

iii. To establish the benefits of positively influencing buying behavior of IT products.

iv. To verify factors that are hindering buyers from purchasing from First Pack.

v. To recommend measures that First Pack should put in place to influence positive buying behavior of IT products.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

i. What are the factors that influence the buying of IT products?

ii. Does First Pack have the appropriate strategies to influence buyer behaviour of IT products?

iii. What are the benefits of positively influencing the buying of IT products?

iv. What factors are hindering both organizations and consumers from buying from First Pack?
1.6 RESEARCH PROPOSITION
First Pack is not fully addressing consumer and organisational buying influences.

1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH
First Pack, as one of the leading IT companies in the country will be able to guard its position as it will be employing strategies that make its retail brand the choice of many. Competition has intensified in this industry hence the results will be used by IT retailers on what factors that influence purchase behaviour in order to remain competitive.

Conducting the study will produce results that will be added into the body of knowledge on consumer and organization’s buying behavior. It will also be beneficial to the researcher as an employee of First Pack to come up with strategies that will make the researcher improve his personal, team and organization’s performance.

1.8 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH
The research will be limited to First Pack operations only. The IT product range will be limited to physical IT gadgets (printers, computers, laptops, cartridges). The research will not look on the stationery category. Concentration will be on Harare branches at the expense of outof Harare branches such as Kwekwe, Mutare and Bulawayo. Relevant information will be gathered from First Pack key corporate clients and walk–in clients to have a diversified view of perception. This study will cover a period stretching from 2009 to 2012.

1.9 Structure of the Dissertation
This study has followed the structure below:

Chapter One: The chapter covers contextual background to the study and its justification.

Chapter Two: The Chapter reviews literature relating to the study of consumer behaviour influences and organisational influences with special focus on IT products.
Chapter Three: It focuses on the methodology and methods used in collecting data and how the data was analysed, processed and interpreted.

Chapter Four: The chapter presents the research findings and analyses.

Chapter Five: It presents the conclusions and recommendations as well as areas of further study.

1.10 CHAPTER CONCLUSION
This Chapter has shown the need to carry out a research on buyer behaviour motives for both consumers and organisations. The chapter introduced the background of First Pack. Areas such as problem statement, research objectives, research questions and justification of study were covered. The Chapter forms a basis for literature review which will be covered in the next chapter.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature review is the synthesis of other researcher’s material relevant to the researcher’s area of study (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). The aim of the literature review is to; broaden knowledge about the area of study, to improve on researcher’s methodology and to assess the gaps in the current body of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2007).

This chapter analyses the buying influences of both the consumer market and the organisational markets. The first section noted factors influencing consumer markets as social, cultural, psychological and personal factors. The second part analyses the organisational buying influences of environmental, organisational, interpersonal, and individual factors. The last section links these buying influences with the marketing mix to see how they can shape the marketing strategy.

2.2 THE NEED TO SATISFY THE CUSTOMER

Assael (2003) postulated that marketers have realised that meeting customers’ needs will influence their profitability and their understanding of factors of consumers’ behaviour and this will help to come up with effective marketing strategies that will meet customer expectations. Therefore, it is important to understand how individuals and organizations select, buy and use products to satisfy their desires (Kotler & Keller, 2012). On the other hand Kumra (2010) postulated that the underlying philosophy is that all firms’ strategic decisions were driven by customer expectations. This raises the need to know and understand the major factors that influence these customers to buy and meet their expectations. Kotler and Keller (2012) shed more light to the subject by claiming that the coming in of marketing and environmental stimuli into the consumers mindleads to buying decisions. Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) pointed these influences as social, cultural, psychological and personal for the consumer market. Gilligan & Wilson (2009) had environmental, organisational, interpersonal, and individual factors as the influencers of organisational buying.
2.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CONSUMER AND ORGANISATIONAL MARKETS

Consumer buying involves the purchasing of goods for consumption Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) whilst organisational buying is whereby the organisations buy goods to use in the production of other goods or services (Kotler & Keller 2012). The organizational consumer includes profit and non-profit businesses, government agencies (local, state, and national), and institutions (schools, hospitals, and prisons), all of which must buy products, equipment, and services in order to run their organizations (Kotler & Keller 2012). The personal consumer buys goods and services for his or her own use, for the use of the household or as a gift for a friend. In each of these contexts, the products are bought for final use by individuals who are referred to as end users or ultimate consumers (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009).

In both instances it was noted by Webster and Wind (1972) that the individual plays a major part in decision making hence marketing strategies should be focused on the ‘person’. In consumer market, it is plain knowledge as the consumer is the person hence his or her culture, personality, society and psychological processes plays a part in influencing him. On the other hand it is again the individual responding to the environment, the organisational policies and in the group (interpersonal relations). Marketing stimuli has to be directed to the individual as he or she plays a major part in buying process hence getting influenced (Nair, 2009).

2.4. CONSUMER BUYING INFLUENCES

Mowen and Miner (2001) noted factors that influences consumer behaviour to include personal, psychological and social factors, Kotler & Keller (2012) added the cultural factors as another independent category. Several other authors such as Shiffman & Kanuk, (2010); Nair, (2010); Kumra, (2010); Solomon, (2010); Jason-Boyd(2010) agree on the above factors as the major influences of buying behaviour. Nair (2010) added on to proclaim that the success of the firm will be determined by how effective it has been in meeting the diverse consumer needs and wants by treating each customer as unique and offering products and services to suit his needs and creating a lifetime value and relationship with him.
2.4.1 Cultural Factors
According to Kotler and Keller (2012) cultural factors include culture, sub-cultures and social class. These factors have been noted to have an influence in buying decision of customers.

2.4.1.1 Culture
Culture is the complex of beliefs of human societies, their roles, their behaviour, their values, customs and traditions (Durmaz, Celik & Oruk, 2011). It is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes a member of one group from another (Hofstede, 1980). Solomon (2010) added on to postulate that culture is the total of the shared purpose of members of society, customs, norms and traditions. It is the most determinant of a person’s wants and behaviour (Kotler & Armstrong, 2009).

The above review shows that culture defines people and influences them in making purchasing decisions in particular ways. Marketers should make sure that the product on offer is congruent to the culture of the target market when consumers are making a decision (Peter & Oslon, 2005). Marketers should consider different cultures existing in different situations before placing strategies (Durmaz et al., 2011).

The above authorities are emphasizing on culture being shared, learned and passed from one generation to another. If a company does not understand the culture of the market in which it operates, it is difficult to develop and market products successfully (Lancaster & Reynolds, 2005). This shows that culture is defining a human being hence the needs of that individual are shaped and influenced by culture. The above key point in culture definitions is explained below:

Learned Culture
People learn their bearings through experience and interaction with other people (Solomon, 2010). This shows that culture can develop over the period according to what a person is exposed to. Marketers can take opportunity of this attribute of culture through advertising or bombarding the clients with a certain message over and over again (Belch, 2008). Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) supported this idea when they said
that repetition of advertising messages creates and reinforces cultural beliefs and values. The influence of culture is therefore, coming from what customers are exposed to and learning. For instance, Etzel, Walker & Stanton (2007) blame the media for promoting western culture as the ultimate goal. This is caused by continuous encouraging disadvantaged customers to go for the western lifestyles that are presented as socially attractive and a way of showing success. These are just examples of how learned culture influences customer behaviour.

**Shared Culture**

Culture is shared so that the behaviour is acceptable in its environment and people generally feel comfortable when they are with people of similar values and behaviour (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009). International marketers believe that customers will continue to act like each other in the terms of what they eat, wear, television programs they watch as they continue to stay together (DeMooij, 2003). The idea of sharing values and beliefs brings what will be termed as the ‘right thing’. Marketers are supposed to tailor-make products into fitting the shared culture or beliefs and norms. This is so because everyone will need to behave in the way that is shared or generally acceptable in one’s environment. IT brands and products that will be accepted within the circles are likely to be the ones that will be successful.

**Passing on of Culture**

This shows that culture is transferred from one generation to another meaning that culture does not easily change but it is congruent (Etzel et al., 2007). However other writers such as Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) argue that culture is dynamic. Durmaz et al. (2011) adds on to postulate that culture is created and can be changed. For instance the increase in the number of working mothers has also changed the purchasing patterns of formula milk because most mothers are spending time at work rather than with their babies (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009). On the other hand the increase in e-learning is likely to cause a lot of people to appreciate IT gadgets as the e-learning culture will be the acceptable culture in schools.
Marketers are supposed to monitor changes taking place in particular cultures in order to know what kind of promotion to embark on (Belch, 2008). This shows how important it is to know the culture of clients in order to satisfy them. Culture provides what can be termed as rules and standards of a certain society hence it cannot be ignored (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009).

The above argument shows that culture influences buying behaviour to a larger extent. Adverts have to match cultures for them to be effective. Positioning of products also requires culture conformance. Therefore culture is a major influence of consumer behaviour.

2.4.1.2. Sub Cultures
Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) defines subculture as a distinct cultural group that exists as an identifiable segment within a large, more complex society. It is a group of people with shared value systems based on common life experiences and situation (Kotler & Armstrong (2009). Geographical regions, race and religions are essential in the formation of subculture (Durmaz et al., 2011).

Marketers promote products that link with segments which are also created by subcultures (Kotler and Keller, 2012). Sun & Wu (2004) postulated that it is important to appreciate the characteristics of subculture in creating a marketing mix, price, brand name identification, promotional activity, and product positioning.

The issue of culture having shared values makes certain behaviours acceptable within certain areas. It becomes the standard of living. Marketers are supposed to understand these subcultures in order to satisfy their markets. Kurtz and Clow (2002) elaborated on the issue of satisfaction that it is determined by how consumers perceive the service they receive compared to what they had expected. Satisfaction is the fundamental issue in marketing hence culture also plays a role as being elaborated above.

Religion

Religion is a very important factor in determining the consumer behaviour. Delener (1990) postulated that in the marketing world ‘religiosity’ is said to represent
people's adherence to their religion's practices and beliefs. (Fam, Waller, & Erdogan, 2004) argued that more devout Muslim consumers appeared to be offended by advertisement of some products perceived to be provocative such as liquor. On the other hand Heiman, Williams (2002) postulated that religious affiliation did not have a significant effect in several areas of buyer behaviours. Lancaster and Reynolds (2005) have shown that laws relating to Sunday trading and the licensing of alcohol consumption in the UK are examples of laws that have been changed to catch up with the liberalising demands of changing attitudes within UK society. This shows that cultures are even trying to change now from the laws that were put in place to confirm the importance of religion.

This reviews how religion is actually determining the consumption behaviour of the market. Religion also has determined the opening days of shops or generally business in different areas such as in the Muslim countries and the Christian dominated countries. Dubai closes business on Fridays and Zimbabwe on Sundays. This automatically shows the consumption determination of religion.

**Geography**

Consumers have different habits depending on where they came from (Belch, 2008). Geography can be used as a segmentation tool (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Han and Shavitt (1994) postulated that advertisements in United States of America are more persuasive if they emphasize on individualism whilst in Korea they become effective if they emphasize on families. The above authors are showing how geography affect or determine buying patterns. Marketers are not supposed to generalize their offerings in different areas but to customize them according to the locations the market is coming from. The consumption of people who reside in Borrowdale is very different from those living in high density suburbs such as Mufakose. On another hand people living in the same area will tend to share a lot of beliefs hence their buying behaviour will become the same according to Hofstede (1980) who found out that location makes a difference in goods and service preferences. Those in big cities account for major sales of perfumes and works of art whilst those in suburbs lead casual life and more interactions is consumed in those areas (Solomon, 2010).
Language

The acceptable language of a society plays a vital role in consumer behaviour. Koslow, Shamdasani and Touchstone (1994) alluded that positive responses to advertisements are evoked in the Hispanic consumers if some portion of the Spanish language are included in the advertisements. Some authors suggest that language influences values, and others propose that cultural values determine the form of languages (Luna and Peracchio, 1999). Most adverts in Zimbabwe are in English whilst other countries such as Malawi prefer their local languages. This is evidence that local language in Malawi influence the purchase of products whilst in Zimbabwe the use of local language may be perceived as an indication of low quality or poor social class products.

Race

The race of an individual has an impact on consumption (Perreault & McCarthy, 2005). Different races approach life differently even if the people live in the same areas it all differs (Heiman et al., 2004). For instance the life of Black Americans and White Americans is different in terms of music, language and lifestyles and thus the same in the lives of Africans and Whites living in Zimbabwe. Racist sentiments of consumers could influence their attitudes towards products of different ethnic origins. A racist-based influence does exist. Marketers should take note that their products are acceptable in the races they are targeting.

The above arguments indicate the importance of culture in influencing consumer behaviour. Culture influence wants (Belch, 2008). If a company does not understand the culture of the market it operates it cannot develop products and market them successfully (Lancaster & Reynolds, 2005). For instance Black Cat peanut butter imported from South Africa failed in the early 2000 because the names ‘black and cat’ are associated with evil and Zimbabweans could not consume such a product. The success of any market is the identification of needs of customers (Kurtz & Clow, 2002). Culture is also another need or determinant of need hence one cannot satisfy the clients without taking it into consideration.
2.4.1.3. Social Class
The behaviour of members of the same social class, education levels, attitudes, beliefs and living styles are normally the same, and these characteristics are usually different from other social class members (Williams, 2002). Allen (2002) agreed that social classes are determined also by such variables like education, income, living area, activities and values. Fam et al (2004) added on to postulate that when traditional indicators of social status such as wealth, occupational prestige are not accessible people tend to resort to the consumption of status product that are easily seen as symbols of higher class. All the above literature shows how consumers’ value their social class hence getting influence from it and the need to maintain it.

2.4.2 Social Factors
People are more likely influenced by the consumption behaviour of the groups they belong to (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). Groups affect or influences buying patterns because it consists of people who have a sense of relatedness as a result of interaction with each other (Dressler & Carns, 1973). This means that customers tend to behave in line with the groups they belong to. We all conform in a variety of ways to numerous groups (Hawkins et al., 2006). Members affect not only consumer knowledge, attitude, values but also the purchase of specific products or brands and also the choice of stores (Peter and Oslon, 2005). Social influences which include family, social roles, status and reference groups are some of buying behaviour determinants (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

2.4.2.1. Reference Groups
Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) defined reference groups as a person or a group that serves as a point of comparison or reference in forming general or specific values, attitude and behaviour. People are influenced by both groups they belong to thus membership groups and also groups they do not belong to which are called the aspirational groups (Kotler & Keller, 2012). This shows that behaviour also comes from indirect reference groups which do not have face to face contact such as movie stars, political leaders and television personalities (Solomon, 2010). In general, people tend to
imitate and seek advice from those closest to them (Lancaster & Reynolds, 2005). Individuals are inclined to create a personal image that is acceptable to their reference groups (Belch, 2008). Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) indicated that the major societal groupings that influence an individual’s consumption behaviour are in order of family, friends, social class, various subcultures, one’s own culture and even other cultures as illustrated in Figure 2.1 (next page).

This means that buying decisions of an individual is affected or influenced by his reference groups. For instance an executive lady will have high heel shoes and suits as part of her wardrobe not because she likes them but that’s what her colleagues expect of her. An executive will also have a laptop not a desktop to show his or her status.
Factors that Affect Reference Groups’ Influence

The influence of reference groups are affected by the level of information and experience of the consumer, the credibility, attractiveness group or power of reference...
groups and thirdly by conspicuousness of the product (Solomon, 2010). A person who has first-hand experience with a product is less likely to be influenced by others. Peter and Olson (2005) added that consumers are likely to be heavily influenced by reference groups if they are more attracted to them for credible approval, products that are more visually conspicuous and if the product is a public product or a luxury.

### 2.4.2.2. Family

The family has been recognized as the most significant decision making and consumption unit (Assael, 2003). Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) defines a family as two or more people related by blood, marriage, adoption who resides together or members of the most basic social group who resides together and interact to satisfy their personal and mutual needs. Marketers are interested on how family influence each other when making a purchase.

The way a child views politics, religion, economics, self-image and ambitions is inherited from parents (Katke, 2007). According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) family plays a role of socialisation which is the process of imparting to children the basic values and modes of behaviour consistent with culture. Family may serve as reference, and your consumption patterns will typically conform to their expectations (Belch, 2008). This shows that the family of an individual influences his or her buying patterns and what he or she prefers. Children attempts to influence family buying decision as soon as they learn new communication skills (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009). Marketers should take heed of the family members’ position thus also influencing their perceptions with advertisement for them to also accept the marketer’s position as they will have influence on the target person.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) came up with four basic functions of the family namely: economic well-being, emotional support lifestyle, suitable family, and socialisation of family members. Peter and Olson (2005) further alluded on socialisation that the family transmit the cultural meaning of society, subculture and social class to their children thereby influencing their children cognitive and behaviour and selection of products. The studies that has been done shows that the influence of children in family decision
making highlights that children have at least some impact on decisions for a wide range of goods and some even report that the young ones have a growing role in family buying decisions (Caruana & Vassallo, 2003). Since children have a habit of influencing the choice of product that is important to them, marketers must appeal to them as much as parents (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, Scabini, 2006).

2.4.2.3. Status and Roles
Roles refer to the actions one is supposed to do and they carry statuses (Kotler & Keller, 2012). A role is a set of conventional rules for suitable behaviours in a given situation (Morgan, Weisz, & Schopler, 2007). A medical doctor has more status than a salesperson and a salesperson has more status than a domestic worker. Therefore, people tend to choose products that communicate their status. Thus, an engineer will likely need a better or high spec laptop compared to a college student.

Many people adopt many roles during their life time (Morgan et al., 2007). Both Assael (2003) and Solomon (2010) pointed other examples of roles in family decision as the influencer, the gatekeeper (the individual controlling the flow of information), the decision maker, the purchasing agent and the consumer. The marketer has to understand different roles and their bearing in influencing how people buy.

2.4.3 Personal factors
These are inner factors that influence consumer behaviour (Lancaster & Reynolds, 2005). Personal factors include factors such as personality, age, economic circumstances, lifestyle and self-concept (Kotler and Armstrong 2009)

2.4.3.1. Personality
Personality is defined as those unique and distinct psychological characteristics that make one person have consistent response to the environment (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Each person has a distinct personality that influences buying behaviour. It refers to the characteristics and distinctive trait of an individual, the stable and shifting pattern of relationship between these traits and the way the traits interact to help hinder the
adjustment of a person to other people and situations (Morgan et al., 2007). It composes of mood, qualities, manners, looks, values, and habit of the person (Rajeev, 2007). Self-confidence, sociability deference, adaptability and dominance are some of the traits that describe personality (Talloo, 2007).

An individual personality has three distinct characteristics (Nair, 2010). It is a reflection of individual preferences and differences, it is stable and lastly personality can change under certain circumstances. Kumra (2010) added on to proclaim that no two individuals are the same that is they are unique. Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) also concurred with others by asserting that personality is congruent or consistent. That is customers will generally maintain their traits and unique characteristics. Solomon (2010) had another view on this matter because personality to him can undergo change. Major events in life such as job, marriage, birth of a child, divorce, death and marriage can change a person’s personality. It can be noted by the above argument that though personality is congruent there are some cases it can be changed.

The above helps marketers to group the common traits in segmenting their market. The understanding of the fact that people are different will usually lead to increased satisfaction of customers.

2.4.3.2. Self-image

People tend to give themselves different identities (Nair, 2010). Identity is the subject concept on how individual sees themselves (Vignoles et al., 2006). The knowledge of who people are allows them to know where they fit in and where they belong to (Jansson-Boyd, 2010). Brewer and Gardner (2001) concurred that a person can have more than one identity. Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) termed it multiple selves. According to Solomon (2010), people see themselves as they imagine others see them and a consumer’s product places him or her on a social role which helps to answer the question ‘who am I or not’. Kotler and Armstrong (2009) termed this whole idea as the self-concept or our complex picture of ourselves. Solomon (2010) refers to self-concept as to the attitude a person holds to him or herself.
Each individual’s self-image will be a unique one based on his or her background and experience and knowledge gained from various persons over a period of time (Nair 2010). Kotler and Keller (2012) came up with the following self-image of people:

- Actual Image refers to what they actually see themselves
- Ideal image is how they would like to see themselves
- Social self-image is how they feel the society see them
- Expected self-image is their expectations of how they see themselves at some specified future time.

This is relevant to a marketer as he is supposed to tailor-make products that will appeal to individuals’ ideal self-image and the expected self-image (Nair, 2010). This is because customers are induced to purchase products that improve their self-images. This is where the use of celebrities comes into play as consumers will assume that if they consume what a celebrity consumes then they will be like him. There is no doubt that individuals make use of goods and services to make sense of those around them, to compare themselves to others and to signal group membership (Jansson-Boyd, 2010).

Certain brands are associated with being used with a certain type of people and this reflects values and traits. Consuming such products is a means by which consumers communicate to others or even to themselves the type of person they are or would like to be (Keller, 2003). More so, consumers are individuals who are engaged in purposeful behaviour to fulfill their goals, (Peter & Olson, 2005). It is generally believed that consumers attempt to preserve or enhance their self-images by selecting products and brands with ‘images’ or ‘personalities’ that they believe are congruent with their own self-image and avoiding products that are not (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009). Keller and Richey(2006) supports the idea in that consumers often choose and use brands that have a brand personality that is consistent with their self-concept, although in some cases the match may be based on consumers’ desired self-image rather than their actual image. Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) goes on to say that this is more true to women than men, that is 77 per cent and 64 per cent respectively feel that brands they select reflect their personality. On the other hand, Solomon (2010) argues that 85 per
cent woman and 75 per cent men are unhappy with at least one aspect of their appearance.

The literature cited above, uncovers the importance of personalities in influencing consumer buying behaviour. Consumers perceive products that have images that are congruent to their self-images or to self-images they would like to be. More so the aspect of perceptual selection shows how different personalities differently selects and perceive stimuli input. This argument is simply trying to show that marketers should market products that match customer’s self-concepts. These are the products that are going to be perceived favourably. By doing so the marketing concept is satisfied.

2.4.3.3. Economic Circumstances
Kotler and Armstrong (2009) postulated that economical circumstances such as income, debts, savings, assets, spending attitude and borrowing power influences the choice of products. (Benito, 2005) agreed that job insecurity forces customers delay use or buying of certain goods such as those which are durables. This notion shows that the available money or economic status will determine how and what to be bought by the individual.

2.4.3.4. Lifestyles
According to Nair (2010) lifestyle is how people live, how they spend their money and how they allocate time. A lifestyle is shown by interests, activities, opinions and the way one interacts with the environment(Kotler & Keller, 2012). Consumers buy products that portray their lifestyles. This means that people might have the same occupation but still live different lifestyles hence these lifestyles will influence what they buy.

2.4.3.5. Age
Age is also a determinant of what can be purchased (Morgan et al., 2007). Age will determine the kind of computer to be purchased for instance the laptops and tablets for the youths and desktops for family people. Belch (2008) highlighted the importance of age in the determination of consumer behaviour. The needs of an individual change as the individual moves through the family lifecycle stages. The traditional family life
cyclestages include the bachelorhood, honeymooners, parenthood, post parenthood and dissolution (Kotler & Armstrong 2009). A young single person may be attempting to satisfy social or self-esteem needs in purchasing a laptop, while a family with children will focus more on educational needs (Belch, 2008).

2.4.3.6. Lifecycle

The consumption of people is also influenced by the stage of life cycle they are in (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009). Hawkins et al. (2006) attributes the issues of lifecycle to segmentation as the marketers will be able to group and target certain attributes of lifecycle stages. Lancaster and Reynolds (2005) identified eight stages of family life cycle to be as follows;

- Unmarried - Young, unmarried consumers tend to be leisure orientated and are opinion leaders in fashion. As such, they constitute a very important market segment

- Newly-married couples – no children: They concentrate expenditure on items considered necessary for setting up a home.

- Young married couples with youngest child under 6 (Full nest I): Expenditure is children-orientated.

- Married couples with youngest child 6 or over (Full nest II) Fashion clothes purchases for children become important and a lot of recreational activity tends to take place away from home.

- Older married couples still with children at home (Full nest III): The amount of disposable income may have been increased.

- Older married couples with no children living with them (Empty nest I): At this stage the family unit has been transformed. Though income is likely to be at a peak such consumers are likely to be conservative in their purchasing patterns.

- Older retired couples (Empty nest II): The family unit has made most major purchases in terms of consumer durables.
The thrust of the family life cycle is to indicate the difference in preferences as one move from one stage to another. This shows how age determines the consumer behaviour patterns.

2.4.4 Psychological Factors
The market is infested with many products with similar functions, hence making it difficult for marketers to differentiate these products and services based on functional attributes only Niazi, Siddiqui, Alishah, & Hunjra., 2012). Kotler and Keller (2012) identified psychological factors to include motivation, perception, learning and memory.

2.4.4.1. Motivation
Motive means the inner driving force that orients human or consumers’ activities towards meeting the needs or accomplishment of the definite goal (Stavkova, Prudilova, Toufarova, & Nagyova., 2007). Motives often work only on the subconscious level (Morgan et al., 2007). The driving force is produced by a state of tension which exists as a result of an unfulfilled need (Nair, 2010). Jansson-Boyd (2010) added that the need are the triggering force, a drive is what makes a person put a certain amount of effort and goals is what one is trying to achieve. Goals are the aim of action (Mowen & Miner, 2001). What makes consumers focus on a particular goal is affected by factors such as internal beliefs, previous experiences, societal norms and values.

According to Kumra (2010), needs cannot be created, they are never fully satisfied, needs emerge as old needs are satisfied, needs come in multiples, needs pre-exist wants and the single need can lead to satisfying multiple goals whilst a single goal can lead to the satisfying of multiple needs. Kotler and Keller (2012) pointed out three schools of thought of motivation by Sigmund Freud, Abraham Maslow, and Frederick Herzberg that affects the crafting of a marketing strategy:

Freud’s theory attributes that people do not only react to stated capabilities of products but to subconscious cues. This means that the marketer is supposed to expose these subconscious cues - shape, size, weight, material, colour, and brand name to the market as they have a bearing in triggering a drive.
Maslow asserts that needs are arranged in a hierarchy of importance. They start with the most basic needs to self-actualisation. According to Maslow needs move from physiological, security, social, self-esteem to self-actualisation. The theory further asserts that when a lower level need is fulfilled a higher level need becomes dominant. This then helps marketers to know how motives fit into plans, goals and lives of consumers.

Herzberg came up with the Two-factor theory namely the satisfiers and dissatisfiers. Marketers are supposed to put into place the satisfier’s cues into place as they are the ones that trigger a need for purchase. He argued that the absence of dissatisfiers (factors that cause dissatisfaction) can still fail to trigger buying decision; therefore satisfiers should be always present.

2.4.4.2. Perception

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) perception refers to how consumers see the world around them. Kotler and Keller (2012) defined it as a process by which individual selects, organises, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. Kumra (2010) added that a stimulus is interpreted based on the individual’s needs, values and expectations. Nair (2010) concurred by contributing that an individual behaviour is often connected to his or her perceptions and may not be based on the ‘actual’ reality but on what he thinks as reality. A well-known cliché says that ‘beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder’.

A stimulus is a sensory cue which comes in the form of nature of the product, physical attributes, size, colour of package, weight, and package design, the brand name, and advertisement and individual stimuli (Kumra, 2010). It should therefore be known how that cue is going to be interpreted or perceived.

Perceptual Selection

Consumers choose what they want to see and hear (Solomon, 2010). For instance different colours mean different things to different people and advertisement messages may mean differently to different individuals (Kumra, 2010). This is so because
sensation is also affected by factors such as previous experiences and learning (Nair, 2010). Although marketers may succeed in gaining maximum attention, perhaps because the consumer has identified a problem and is actively involved in the search process, there is no guarantee that a consumer’s perception of a particular product will be the interpretation that the marketer desires (Lancaster & Reynolds, 2005).

Kotler and Keller (2012) concurred with the above authors by saying that the way people see a similar object can differ because of selective attention, distortion and retention. It can be seen that people are attracted differently, can also interpret the same stimuli differently and decide to retain or keep much of the information that supports their beliefs and attitudes. Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) added that the stronger the need the greater the tendency to ignore all other stimuli in the environment and concentrate on dominating need.

According to Kumra (2010) there are thresholds that need to be reached in order for stimuli to be perceived. Absolute threshold refers to the minimum level of stimuli that is required to get noticed by the receptors of the customers. Differential threshold refers to the minimum change at which individual can detect the difference between stimuli such as a price cut. It is this threshold level that will influence the action from the customer.

2.4.4.3. Learning and Memory

According to Bradley (1977) Memory is an active mental system that receives, stores, organises, alters and recovers information. Memories are individual archives of previous familiarities which can aid us to acquire fresh information and affect how we recognise stimuli (Palmeri & Gauthier, 2004).

According to Jansson–Boyde (2010) purchases taking place today is a result of decisions taken hours, days, weeks or months before. What is important is to make the customer to encode and store and retrieve the information. Customers are engaged in knowledge gathering behaviour such as walking through the store looking at displays and talking to salespersons (Kumra, 2010). Consumers are interested to learn about the products they want to purchase (Solomon, 2010).
For learning to occur the following are supposed to occur: motivation, cues, response and reinforcement (Schiffman, 2009; Kumra, 2010). Motivation acts as a spur to learning. Cues are the stimuli that give direction to learning – pricing, styling, store displays and packaging all serve as cues to help customers fulfil their needs and wants. Responses are how individual react to a drive. Reinforcement is the reward that is given to customer for their response for instance performing to expectations (Kumra, 2010). Marketers can aid consumer memory through the use of repetition and use of pictorial cues (Jansson-Boyd, 2010).

2.5. ORGANISATIONAL BUYER INFLUENCES

According to Webster and Wind (1972) organisational buyer decisions involves a process carried by individuals in communication with other people in the perspective of an official organisation. It is widely accepted that organisational purchasing is the most important function to almost all types of enterprises for a number of good four reasons (Vitale, Giglierano, & Pfoertsch, 2010). Firstly, purchasing drain a larger proportion of income, secondly, if not done satisfactorily a lot of disruption, loss of income and adverse effect on competitiveness will occur, thirdly, purchasing function leads to the design of competitive products and fourthly, governments, as a means to develop local business, promote international trade relations, and influence international policy using public sector procurement. Several authors such as Gilligan and Wilson (2009), Kotler and Keller, (2012), Webster and Wind (1972) concurred on the fact that the organisation buying decisions are influenced by four variables namely individuals, social or interpersonal, organisational and environmental factors.

Uniqueness of Organisational Markets

According to Kotler and Keller (2012), organisational buying refers to entities that acquire products to use in the production of other products to be further sold, supplied to other buyers or rented. This leads us to the fact that the way they buy or influenced to buy are different in consumer markets because of several characteristics they possess.

Business buying involves a deep and thorough analysis (Gilligan and Wilson 2009). This is so because the purchasing departments has to adhere to purchasing standards
that satisfy complex requirements and involves the approval of many people. According to Sandhusen (2000), demand for organisational markets is likely to be more concentrated, more direct and more dependent on other markets and purchases of related products. Price tends to be inelastic when negotiations and contracts are done (Webster and Wind, 1972). Kovalev (2003) asserts that organisational markets are likely to buy directly from suppliers or manufacturers. Fill and McKee (2011) pointed out the importance of relationship in organisational markets. Strategic buyer relationships hold great desirability for purchasers as well as traders because of the ability for both players to build competitive advantage (Tanner, 1999). Through relationships, sellers create value by tailoring their offering and/or lowering costs (Berling, 1993; Kalwani and Naryandas, 1995) to the advantage of both buyer and vendor (Vitale, et al., 2010).

2.5.1. Individual Influences

Only the individual as the individual or a member of a group can define and analyse buying situations, decode and act (Webster & Wind, 1972). The buyer is influenced by personal motivations, perceptions, preferences, job, income, personality, attitude towards risk and culture (Kotler and Keller, 2012).

It should be noted that although the buying decision is governed by organisational policies as attributed above, individual characteristics play a major role in influencing the decision. It is the individual who will relate whether well or badly in the interpersonal influences, with the organisational policies and even respond to the environmental influences. Corporate decision marketers remains human after resuming office (Gilligan & Wilson, 2009) they buy from companies they favour, suppliers who show them respect, and personal concern and who do additional things for them.

Marketers are supposed to react to the age of their buyers. This means that older buyers have got some preferences they need and the way they need to do business. For instance old fashioned buyers still believe in communicating using telephones and faxes whilst the younger buyer needs communication through e-mail and other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. A technical buyer will likely consider technical specification in buying technical products. A computer technician can be the
most influential person when an organisation is purchasing a high tech computer server. Previous experiences will also affect the decisions that the buyer will do (Kumra, 2010). If the buyer had a bad experience with purchasing from a certain supplier he is likely to avoid that supplier (Gilligan & Wilson, 2009). This will go on even on the quality of the product supplied. More so, the experience the buyer might have acquired from another organisation can be used in making decision today.

2.5.2. Social / Interpersonal Influences

It involves the relationship and interaction between members of the buying centres and the outside vendors (Gilligan & Wilson). Webster and Wind (1972) came up with three factors that should be taken into consideration:

i. The various roles in the buying centre must be identified.

The buying centre is characterised by five major players who exert different influences to the purchasing decisions. The following are the buying centre participants according to Lancaster and Reynolds (2005).

- Users - work with, or use, the product and are sometimes involved in product specification.

- Buyers - have authority to sign orders and make the purchase. They might help shape the specification, but their principal role is in supplier negotiation and selection.

- Deciders - make the final buying decision (frequently the decider and the buyer is the same person).

- Influencers - can affect the buying decision in different ways (e.g. technical people may have helped in a major or minor way to develop the product specification).
• Gatekeepers - control the flow of information to and from people who buy (e.g. the chief buyer’s secretary or even the receptionist who might handle initial enquiries).

Furthermore Kotler and Keller (2012) added the initiators as those who initiate the buying process which include users and others and the approvers which are the people who actually approve the purchase decision. It is noted that buying centres are dynamic hence marketers are supposed to be periodically reviewing who is playing what part in the buying decision (Taloo, 2007).

ii. Variables relating to interpersonal (dynamic) interaction.

The interpersonal interaction between persons in the buying centre and vendors should be considered. According to Webster and Wind (1972) it is useful to consider aspects of role performance. This includes role expectations (prescriptions and prohibitions for the behaviour of the person, occupying this role), role behaviour (actual behaviour in the role) and lastly the role relationship (overall relationships among members of the group).

iii. Functioning of the group as a whole

Dimensions of the functioning of the group as a whole must be considered. Kohli (1989) assumes that buying centre members represent different departments, therefore, lines or authority within the buying centre is usually non-existent or unclear. It is therefore essential for the marketer to ascertain the member who is most influential. Buyers will normally try to use different tactics to extend their influence (Webster & Wind, 1972). Marketers are supposed to know who and how to relate to the members of the buying centre.

2.5.3. Organisational Factors

Decision makers or individuals tend to act differently from certain organisation to another or even if they are alone (Webster and Wind, 1972). This is so because
different organisations have got different policies, systems, procedures, organisational, structures and systems Kotler & Keller (2012). The mission, goals, and objectives of an organization determine its attitude towards many assignments and many strategies are created to strengthen those goals and objectives and to have a bearing on the organizational structure (Vitale et al., 2010).

Most purchasers and industrial marketing researchers support the notion that organisational buying activities vary according to the type of product bought. Bradley (1977) found that capital and stock buying goods generally involve more people than do routine buying products. Vitale et al., (2010) added that the type of influence exerted during the purchasing process varies with the individuals involved and may be consultative at the initiation phase, evaluative at the supplier search and selection phases and recommendatory at the completion phase.

However, in recent years, there has been a shift in the source of power to buyers, mainly due to digital technology Fill and McKee (2011). For example, business to business buyers now use online sources much earlier in their buying process. Much of their research process is undertaken independently of external providers, and then contact is often made with other users, via email to advice on likely answers, and only then is interaction made with a supplier’s sales team (Talloo, 2007). This will then mean that buyers will tend to start with the search, proceed to consider industry news/information sites, and only later will then consider supplier websites. Some organization has such policies and systems in place.

Some organisation believes in a production that is more quality and lower cost in less time (Just in Time). This policy will lead the organisation to look for the quality but also supply in the shortest possible time. Long term contract is also a way of purchasing that other corporations are now pursuing (Vitale et al, 2010).

Structure of the organisation and managerial attitude to risk are very important in influencing purchasing decision. Some organisations structures do not allow the buyer to do a lot but only influential on the selection process (Webster and Wind, 1972). Big corporates make most of its purchases going through the tender process. This is
different to small organisations where the buying decision from start is performed by an accountant or clerk.

In a nutshell, these organisational policies are very important and marketers are supposed to play to their tune in order to break through an organisation. Also as alluded above they play a major role in influencing purchasing decisions.

2.5.4. Environmental Factors

Environmental factors influence the buying process by providing information as well as constrains and opportunities (Webster and Wind, 1972). These include political developments, economic circumstances, social and culture, and technological advancements (Kotler and Keller 2012).

According to Wind and Webster (1972), environmental factors influence buying decision in four distinct ways. They define availability of goods and services. They define the general business conditions – rate of economic growth, interest rates and unemployment. Environmental factors also determine values, and norms guiding inter-organisational and interpersonal relationship between buyers and sellers as well as competitors and between organisation and other institutions such as government and trade association. Lastly, they influence the information flow within the organisation. The purchasing decision to be taken will be influenced by these environmental factors.

2.5.4.1. Social

O’Conor (2000) identified some examples of social forces to include baby booms, changes in life expectancy, mortality, number of population, and within population groups, substance of households and local conflicts and national wars. Culture plays a major role in influencing organisational buyer behaviour because different organisation will act according to their culture (Talloo, 2007). Doing business in Zimbabwe is different when doing business in the Asian countries. Cateora and Graham (2005) assert that most Asian countries believe in family hood, therefore they are likely to do business with people or organisation that they have embraced as family. According to
DeMooji (2004) marketers are supposed to consider different cultures existing in different countries before placing marketing strategies.

2.5.4.2. Technological Changes
Technological changes have had a dramatic change on organisational buying (Fill and McKee, 2011). New technologies can create new products and new processes such as the laptops, mp3 players, tablets PCs and high definition televisions. It can be noted that Internet has provided more than just a new medium through which organization can communicate with the public but has actually changed how individuals and organisational do business and even sell and buy from each other (O’Brien & Marakas, 2007). The Internet allows bi-directional marketing and offers richer advertisement content (Karayanni and Baltas, 2003). On another note, the need to abreast with technology will trigger the need to purchase certain products. Technologies changes have given rise to new types of intermediaries and suppliers in the marketing channel, both up and down stream, hence influencing consumption behaviour (Laudon & Laudon, 2010).

2.5.4.3. EconomyEnvironment
Economy changes have an impact on buying behaviour of organisation and will influence the demand of products by other organisations (Fill and McKee, 2011). Interest rates fluctuations, national taxation, raw materials prices, and currency are forces that affect buying decisions (Gilligan & Wilson 2009). For instance higher interest rates may deter investments because it will cost more to borrow. A strong inflation can cause higher wage demand from employee therefore raising cost. On the other hand higher national growth may boost demand for firm’s products. If the economy is growing consumption tend to rise.
2.5.4.4. Political

According to Fill and McKee (2011) political and regulatory influences has the potential to radically influence the nature of products and services that organisations buy. Government behaviours are together with suppliers and customers are part of the business process (Cheverton, 2004). The legal framework also plays a part in politics. For instance consumer laws, competition laws, employment laws and health and safety regulations affect buying patterns and determine products that are acceptable and which ones are not.

2.6 BUYING INFLUENCES IN THE MARKETING STRATEGY

Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders (AMA, 2008). Marketing seeks to achieve the knowledge of the customer to the extent that produced products suits or sell themselves to him (Drucker, 2006). It is the process of creating, distributing, promoting and pricing goods, services, and ideas to facilitate satisfying exchange relationships with consumers and to develop and maintain favourable relationships with shareholders in a dynamic environment (Pride & Ferrel, 2007). Many authors argue that understanding the customer attitude toward the marketing mix or 4Ps (product, price, place and promotion) is important (Barker, 2002). These four P’s have further been described as the strategy and tactics that are used in marketing (Kotler and Keller, 2012).

The four 4 Ps are going to be briefly analyzed on how the buying influences helps to shape and build them as strategies that are used to meet the above definitions of marketing. This is in line with Peter & Donnell (2007) assertion that the marketing mix is influenced by consumer motives. Jack (2006) added that marketing battles take place in the mind of the consumer or prospect; this is where you lose or win.
2.6.1. Product Strategy
According to Baker (2002) a product is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. A product can either be a good or service - any activity or benefit that is intangible (Ferrell and , 2005). The product is the core of the marketing mix strategy in which marketers can offer customer's experimental and symbolic attributes to differentiate offerings from competitors (Munusamy& Hoo, 2011). According to Borden (1984) a product is about quality, design, features, brand name and sizes.

Quality is what customers perceive and moreover, quality is not what is planned in objective measures; instead it is how customers subjectively perceive what is delivered, (Oakland, 2000). It is the customers’ perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service relative to relevant alternatives and with respect to its intended purpose (Keller & Richey, 2006). Kumra (2010) claimed that consumer satisfaction is influenced by the physical factors as well as the psychological factors. It is further argued that in many instances customer do not evaluate the quality of products before, during and after purchase but in many cases specific intrinsic indicators such as the perceived brand value and store image plays part (Keller, 2003).

Brand names are supposed to meet consumer influences expectations. Personality comes into play as attributed by Nair (2010) who claimed people buy products not because of what they can do but for what they can symbolise. Kumra (2010) pointed the issue of culture on branding that the meaning given to a brand name is dependent on the cultural values.

In organisational markets, organizational policies and culture will determine what kind of product to buy or brand to purchase. This is caused by their IT policies on brand uniformity. The advent of dollarisation also saw the improvement on the IT infrastructure in several companies. All these shows how organisational buying influences is affected by the environment, individual characteristics (Talloo,2007), organisational policies and
interpersonal relations in choosing the right product, specific brand, product specifications and quality.

The above argument reviews how product as a strategy should take into cognisance the buying influences. This will help the marketer to shape his or her strategy in line with the buying influences hence leading to high sales. Identified buying influences in product strategy are both in consumer market and also organisational markets as alluded above.

2.6.2. Promotion Strategy
Promotion plays a major role in the marketing transactions that communicates with current and potential customers (Duncan, 2005). Kotler and Keller (2012) asserts that forms of communication are advertising, sales promotions, personal selling and publicity and can influence what consumers think about products, what emotions they experience in purchasing and using them, and what behaviours they perform, including shopping in particular stores and purchasing specific brands. Hakansson and Alexandra (2005), reports that promotion appears as an issue of how to create an optimal mix of marketing communication tools in order to get a product's message and brand from the producer to the consumer. For an organisation to become a market leader it have to invest more in promotional activities(Hussainy, Riaz, Kazi, & Herani, (2008).

Advertising has the biggest impact on buyers mind than all other tools because it has more exposure to these buyers (Katke, 2007) hence this discussion will be biased to buying influences in advertisement. Advertiser’s primary mission is to reach prospective customers and influence their awareness, attitudes and buying behaviour (Kotler and Armstrong 2009).

Niazi et al. (2012) identified that the major goal of advertisingis to influence purchasing behaviour and this influence is affected by memories. Adverts help in learning processes of customers even through associations that are related to brand name in consumer mind, which influence consideration, evaluation, and finally purchases (Romaniuk &
Sharp, 2004). (Goldsmith & Lafferty, 2002) proposed an additional way of effective advertising to be the ability to recall a brand. This is the result of learning and memory. Keller & Richey (2006) added that, the ability of buyers making product related decisions shows the importance of brand recall. Marketers are supposed to bear in mind the process of perceptual selection and retention in coming up with advert messages and tones (Belch, 2008).

The issue of communicating brand associated with either some personality, or emotional aspects is all about buying influencing factors. For instance, introducing, the character of caring mother in ads creates emotion in the mind of consumers (Jalees, 2006). Emotional advertising is considered as the most effective tool which leads consumers to ultimately give emotional response to that product (Brassington & Pettitt, 2001). This will be dealing with attitudes characteristic of customers.

An effective advertisement should appeal to traits such as dominance, self-confidence, and autonomy if the prospects are showing such traits (Kotler and Keller 2012). In this case personally will be playing part. Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) added on the aspect of perception that things like sales promotion (price cuts) should meet the Just Noticeable Difference (JND) to appeal to clients.

The knowledge of buying influences also helps the organisational marketer to be careful of the recipient of the information and what kind of information to send. The person to get the information and also to make sure that the information is in tandem with organisational policies relevant with the legal and technological environment for instance.

On another note, organisational buying influences have shown the great need of relationship building with corporate buyers (individual aspects) and other members of the buying unit, thus the interpersonal buying influences. Gronroos (2001) emphasized on the need of relationship marketing as very essential in selling to organizations. This is a promotional tool that the sales force is supposed to embrace.
### 2.6.3. Pricing Strategy

In any market, price plays a central role in the exchange process. Price can be seen as one of the cues in product quality, besides, physical appearance (Mowen & Miner, 2001). The buyer’s purchase behavior is not only influenced by current price but also the expected price in the future (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009). However, many of today’s value-conscious consumers may buy products more on the basis of price than other attributes (Peter & Donnelly, 2007).

Major literature reviews show that significant attention has been given to consumer perceptions about the price and quality since these factors have been identified as two of the important reasons for purchasing goods (Kotler and Keller 2012; Schiffman and Kanuk 2009; Solomon, 2010). This shows how perception should be in mind when setting a price, since the above authors are arguing that it is not about the price but what is perceived to be associated with it. Solomon (2010) added on to say that marketers should be aware of the price threshold which customers are willing to pay against some established brands.

On the other hand, marketers have adopted the value-based pricing strategies attempting to sell the right product at the right price to better meet consumers’ wishes (Keller, 2003). The way a consumer perceives price to be high, low, or fair has a strong influence on both purchase intentions and purchase satisfaction (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). The other way consumers judge price fairness is through the reference price which is the price customer expect to pay (Solomon, 2010). Price can also speak or portray a self-image in consumers buying high-priced goods as to show social statuses and social classes.

In organisational markets, marketers should be aware of the pricing system. For instance, if contracts are made, there is no more changing of the price. The environmental issues play a part on determining pricing strategy (Kumra, 2010). More so organisational policies should be monitored as they will affect how price are evaluated (Gilligan and Wilson, 2005).
The above literature reviews that pricing should be set in line with buying influences such as perception, motivational cues of quality, self-image, organisational environment and organisational policies. The marketer has to bear those influences in mind when crafting the pricing strategy.

2.6.4. Place / Distribution Strategy

Kotler and Armstrong (2009), define place or distribution as a set of interdependent organizations involved in the process of making a product available for use or consumption by consumers. The dimensions of distribution are channels, coverage, assortment, location, inventory, and transport (Levy & Weitz, 2001). Thus, the above assertions imply that place or distribution considerations play a major role in influencing consumer motives. The impact of retail image and location have been analysed below.

Retail Store Image

Retail stores have images of their own that serve to influence the perceived quality of products they carry and the decision of consumers as to where to shop, (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). Store image is a complex of tangible or functional factors and intangible or psychological factors that a consumer perceives to be present in a store. It is the way in which the store is defined in the consumer’s mind, (Loudon and Bitta, 2003). Retailing is a set of activities that adds value to the product and service sold to consumers for their personal or family use, (Engel et al., 2001).

Retailing according to the above authors, it is not just providing the customers access to the product but it has to add value to the products being served. It should be perceived as having the retail image that has a superior image in the customers’ minds. It also gives an indication of the type of products to be found in the store that is the products’ quality. All these should be done in line with buying influences.

Loudon & Bitta (2003) argues that there are five attributes considered to be important here: quality, selection or assortment, styling or fashion, guarantees and pricing. Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) add that the product that the customer wishes to buy
influences his or her selection of a retail outlet. A consumer wishing to buy an elegant product for a special occasion may go to a store with an elegant, high fashion image. Moreover, the customer is prepared to pay a higher price for a product in that store than the same product in an off-price shop with a low image and the quality of that identical product to be poor.

Location
The above discussed factors give a perception of the store. However it is not perception of quality or goodness that is important only because Loudon and Bitta (2003) argue that, location has an obvious impact on patronage. Generally the closer consumers are to a store, the greater their likelihood to purchase from that store. Customers both consumer and organisational generally choose the nearest shop. Consumers need convenience whilst organizations will also reduce cost because of proximity to raw materials and other supplies.

In a nutshell, the retail image has a lot hidden in it than simply distributing the product. It communicates the quality of the product or service expected. This shows that marketers should endeavor to improve and monitor the type of retailers who are carrying their products before the brand and quality image is affected. The aspect of perception, personality, social class, organisational policies of buying influences are supposed to be in mind in coming out with the right place of distribution. Organisational influences such as government policies can encourage people to buy from local suppliers, organisational policies and even individual factors determine the location and distribution of products

2.7 CONCLUSION
The literature review discussed the major factors that influence the buying behaviour of customers. The first section pointed out consumer market buying influences to be psychological, personal, cultural, and social factors. The second section analyzed the organisational market buying influences which are the individual, interpersonal,
organisational and environmental factors. The final section sought to find out how these buying influences shape the marketing strategy of the 4 P’s.

This literature review searched for various opinions of several authors mainly from disciplines of consumer / organisational buying behaviour and general marketing management. Defining of terms, comparing, contrasting and analysis of different researchers works was carried out. It formed a basis of the research methodology which is discussed in Chapter three to verify literature and what is happening on the ground at First Pack.
CHAPTER THREE

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem through scientifically studying the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic (Dhawan, 2010). This chapter describes research methodology, which was also defined by Easton (1994) as the way in which data are collected for the research project. It covers research design, research philosophy, research strategies, classification of the research purpose, population and data collection methods, instruments and procedures used. The chapter also justifies the choices used by the researcher.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Design is an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in the manner thus to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (Dhawan, 2010). Yin (2008) added that it is the logic that links the data collected and the conclusion to be drawn to the initial question of study. In this research, Phenomenological approach was used to get the qualitative, subjective, humanistic and interpretive analysis in line with Hatch and Cunliffe (2006). Views of First Pack executives and First Pack customers were analysed.

Phenomenological approach was chosen at the expense of positivist approach which seeks to evaluate quantitative, objectivist, scientific, experimentalist and traditionalist views. A single case of First Pack was used. This is in line with Yin (2008) argument that it is rational to use a case if it is typical and representative. A detailed analysis of the two approaches is given in detail in sections 3.3.

3.3 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research paradigm or philosophy refers to the process of scientific practice based on people’s assumptions about the world and the nature of the knowledge (Saunders et al., 2007). Additionally, paradigm reveals how research could be affected and guided by a
certain paradigm as alluded by Peter and Olson’s (2005) that paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished. Phenomenological and Positivist approaches were noted by several authors (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 2002; Hussey and Hussey, 1997; Saunders et al, 2007). In each approach there are different elements and treatments as postulated by Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Positivism and Phenomenological philosophies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic beliefs</th>
<th>Positivist paradigm</th>
<th>Phenomenological Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic beliefs</td>
<td>• The world is external and objective</td>
<td>• The world is socially constructed and subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher should</td>
<td>• Observer is independent</td>
<td>• Observer is part of what observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher should</td>
<td>• Science is value-free</td>
<td>• Science is driven by human interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred methods include</td>
<td>• Focus on facts</td>
<td>• Focus on meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred methods include</td>
<td>• Look for causality and fundamental laws</td>
<td>• Try to understand what is happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred methods include</td>
<td>• Reduce phenomenon to simplest elements</td>
<td>• Look at the totality of each Situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred methods include</td>
<td>• Formulate hypotheses and then test them</td>
<td>• Develop ideas through induction from data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred methods include</td>
<td>• Operationalising concepts so that they can be measured</td>
<td>• Using multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred methods include</td>
<td>• Taking large samples</td>
<td>• Small samples investigated in depth or over time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Easterby-Smith et al. (2002)
3.3.1 Positivist

Positivist is based on rigid rules of logic and measurement, truth, absolute principles and prediction (Yin, 2008). The positivist philosophy argues that genuine knowledge can only be developed through scientific approach (Cohen and Manion, 1987). Therefore, as a consequence, valid research is demonstrated only by the degree of proof that can be corresponded to the phenomena that study results stand for (White 2000). Wilson (2006) added that positivist approach includes scientific, experimental, and traditional approaches.

Positivist has advantages of greater objectivity and reliability because it removes the researcher’s biases through statistical inferences (Snow & Thomas, 1994). Positivist allows for the easy codification, quantification, and graphical presentation of results (Yin, 2008) as shown in chapter 4. It allows the researcher to make statements about causation between variables because of the researcher’s ability to control extraneous factors (Silverman, 2000).

On the other hand, Saunders et al. (2007) noted the criticism of the positivist approach to include the following three points. It is impossible to achieve complete freedom from the researcher’s influence. The notion of value-free presupposes the existence of a particular value position. Lastly, it is not practical to purely adopt a positivist approach without including some elements of qualitative perspective. (Khatori, 2004) added on to say that this approach cannot allow an interaction between theory and evidence because of its special questions that are narrow. The researcher saw Positivist approach unfit for this study.

3.3.2. Phenomenological

Phenomenological approach is more concerned about uncovering knowledge about how people feel and think in the circumstances in which they find themselves, than making judgements about whether those thoughts and feelings are valid (Core, 2006). The focus of the researcher is on understanding the meanings and interpretations of ‘social actors’, to understand their world from their point of view, it is also highly contextual and hence it is not widely generalisable (Saunders, et.al., 2007). Easterby-
Smith et al, (2008) argued that it is essential to know how respondents think and communicate verbally or nonverbally. The qualitative approach may also be essential in unearthing new sights and perspective on problems or events which might not been known (Glesne, 1999)

In this study, qualitative questions were asked to get opinions and in-depth knowledge of the study. It was also used in order to get some hidden knowledge or factors that are influencing buying decisions of IT products. Phenomenological approach was appropriate because the researcher is an observer by virtue of being a member of the organization under study. The researcher has also access to company records as sources of secondary data.

Phenomenological approach was also the best option of this study because of the advantages that are noted below. IT allowed interaction between theory and evidence (Yin, 2008). It produced richer data and more meaningful findings for an insight into decision making. Mark et al, (2005) postulated that phenomenological approach allows more freedom and springiness of conversation between the respondent and the researcher. Another advantage is that the flexibility of the method allows the researcher to dig deeper by posing questions such as ‘how’ and ‘why’. (Mark et al, 2005). This is because the open ended questions gives the responded the chance to provide more detailed information and can also be probed further.

3.3.3 Selecting the suitable approach

Yin (2008) came up with factors to consider in selecting whether to use positivism or phenomenological approach as follows:

- The nature of the research
- The type of information required
- The availability of resources such as time, finance and human capital.
- The context of the study.

This research employed the phenomenological approach because the case study methodology is qualitative in nature. The information was obtained from personal
interviews of First Pack management, organisational customers and individual customers. This allowed an in-depth analysis of the factors that influence buyers into purchasing IT products. This approach also helped the researcher to take note of the respondents sentiments hence tailor make further questions in line with the sentiments of Mark et al.,(2005).

3.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY

Research strategies include experimental, survey, case study and grounded theory (Khatori 2004). In this study, a case study was used. Below is a brief explanation of some of these strategies

3.4.1 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was defined by Glasser (2009) as the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research. It best suit for exploring integral social relationships and the behaviour of groups where there has been little exploration of factors that affect individual lives. It begins by seeing the field of interest and then theory is allowed to come out from what is observed in the data.

3.4.2 Experiments

Khatori (2004) postulated that experiments are carried out in a carefully controlled environment and enable the causal relationship of phenomena to be identified and analysed).Yin (2008) added that an investigator can manipulate behaviour precisely, directly, and systematically. Experiments are conducted in a laboratory or in the field where it is more natural (White, 2000). Experiments seek to find out effects of manipulating independent variables in order to see what happens to the dependent variables(Khatori, 2004). It can be done in a laboratory or in a natural setting. A laboratory setting may compromise the findings as respondents are not in a natural setting; however there is more room to control variables by the researcher, on the other hand natural setting may give realistic responses but there are pitfalls of less control of the variables by the researcher (Yin, 2008).
3.4.3 Survey Strategy
A survey permits the collection of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way (Saunders et al., 2007). Kraemer (1991) identified three distinguishing characteristics of survey research as:

- Quantitatively describing specific aspects of a given population.
- The data required for survey research are collected from people making the data subjective.
- Survey makes use of a part of the population although the results will be generalised to the whole population.

Surveys answer the questions who, what, how much and how many (Saunders et al., 2007). Salant and Dillman (1994) noted that the choice of survey medium is determined by the resources that are available. Bell (1996) observed that biases may occur, either in the lack of response from intended participants or in the nature and accuracy of the responses, intentional misreporting of behaviors by respondents to hide inappropriate behavior and finally, respondents may have difficulty assessing their own behavior or have poor recall of the circumstances surrounding their behavior.

3.4.4 Case study
According to Robson (2002), a case study is a way of carrying a study on a particular variable in a real life context. According to Wilson (1995) a case study is intended to catch the complexity of a single case and the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances.

In consistent with the above literature, the researcher used the case of First Pack IT products. Yin (2008) argued that it is rationale to use a single case when a case is representative or typical. First Pack is one of the leading IT companies in Zimbabwe and as such it is a fairer representative of the IT retail industry. The researcher was able to gain rich understanding on how and why consumers buy IT products, thus analysing
the buying influences in detail. First Pack was also chosen as the case because of its leadership position in the retailing of IT products in Zimbabwe.

The execution of this research project was conducted based on the guidelines supplied by Myers (1997) who suggested that the case study method will involve at least four stages of work which are:

- Determining the current situation: in this study achieved through the semi-structured questionnaires and interviews.

- Gathering information about background to the current situation: in this study achieved through interviews done to First Pack executives and customers and analysis of documentation and other sources available from the case study organisation

- Gathering more specific data.

- Presenting an analysis of findings and recommendations for action: in this study achieved through presenting the final research report with its findings, analysis and recommendation.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

3.5.1 Population

According to Wegner (2007), population comprises every object which possesses data on the research phenomenon under study. It is the total collection of elements which the researcher wishes to make some inference (Cooper and Schindler 2003). The population for this study comprises of First Pack staff of 86 and infinite First Pack buyers who include 2240 organizational buyers and undisclosed walk-in clients. The customers who buy IT products are indeterminable therefore the researcher has to employ sampling techniques to come up with a sample from which data could be obtained.
3.5.2 Sampling

Sampling is the way in which sample elements are to be selected from the entire population to come up with a representative sample (Hill et al., 2003). In qualitative research only a subset of a population is selected for a given study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) there are two sampling techniques namely the probability and the non-probability (Saunders et al., 2007).

**Probability**

In probability sampling the chances of each element to be selected from the population is known or has an equal chance (Wegner, 2007). Probability samplings include Simple random, Cluster and Stratified methods.

**Non probability**

Non probability samples occur when the probability of each element being selected is not known ((Wegner, 2007). The methods include convenience, judgmental, quota and purposive sampling. Considering the qualitative nature of the research nonprobability sampling was chosen.

**Quota sampling**

Quota sampling allows the researcher to focus on subjects or people that the researcher thinks have got the information or characteristics which are essential for the study (Powell, 1997). These characteristics may include age, profession, class and residential places (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). According to Khatori (2004) the researcher decides how many elements to include in the study that have the needed characteristics.

**Convenience sampling**

This is a sampling method that entails choosing a sample on the basis of the convenience it has to the researcher (Wegner, 2009). Participants are selected on the basis of availability with selecting a sample on the basis of convenience to the
researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The pitfall with such a sample is that it may be biased and may not be a true representative of the population.

**Purposive sampling**

Purposive sampling involves grouping participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). In this research purposive sampling method was selected as the most appropriate methods. This is also in line with the argument of Miles and Huberman (1994) who stated that, qualitative samples tend to be purposive rather than random and because the universe is more limited and therefore qualitative research examines a single case. Purposive sampling involved the researcher making a conscious decision about which individuals and which organisation would best provide the desired information (DeVaus, 2002; Burns and Grove, 2007).

The purposive sampling method was the most suitable strategy for this research. It enabled the researcher to his opinions on selecting the respondents who best suit to answer the questions. The management of First Pack were interviewed as they are the people who greatly understand the strategies undertaken by the First Pack. On another note customers who were chosen were taken from the customers’ database purposely choosing the high performing, average and least performers. This was done to get a diverse of opinions.

**Sample selection**

Table 3.2 below illustrates the sample frame as described by Yin (2008) as the unit of analysis for a case study.
Table 3.2: Unit of analysis First Pack and Customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Pack Management</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Buyers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Buyers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.3 Research instruments
Powell (1997:89) stated that research instruments are data collection techniques or instruments, not research methodologies, and they can be used with more than one methodology. These include the use of the questionnaire; interviews (in a variety of formats including unstructured, structured and semi-structured); observation; gathering of documentation and artefacts. Wegner (2007) added focus groups and experimentation. In this study questionnaires and interviews were used.

3.5.3.1 Questionnaires
The researcher used questionnaires which were described by Pinsonneault & Kraemer, (1993) as a list of written questions that can be completed either by asking respondents to complete questions in the presence of the researcher or in the absence of the researcher. At a fundamental level, a good question is one that produces answers that are reliable and valid measures of something we want to describe (Wilson, 2006). The ability of questionnaires to be self-administered has been viewed by the researcher as an advantage as the researcher’s opinions are less likely to affect respondents answers (Saunders et al, 2007). More so a questionnaire was chosen because of its ability to efficiently collect responses from a large sample for analysis (Yin, 2008). Creswell (2009) added that questionnaires’ structured questions enable the researcher to have standardised measurements for analysis. It enabled quantification of responses, use of descriptive statistics and generalisation of sample estimates as illustrated in the next
chapter. Furthermore questionnaire was chosen because it is easy to administer questionnaires as a lot of people are familiar with completing them hence response rate is high (Yin, 2008).

Despite the above-mentioned advantages, the use of questionnaires posed the researcher with the disadvantage of not being able to probe the respondents as eluded by Polit and Hungler (1995). This then caused the researcher to add interviews as another data collection method as illustrated below.

3.5.3.2 Interviews
The qualitative research interview seeks to describe the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects (Kvale, 1996). Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant’s experiences (McNamara, 1999). Boyce and Neale (2006) added that interview is about carrying out in-depth individual questioning and probing of a small number of respondents in qualitative research. Interviews may be useful as a follow-up to certain respondents on questionnaires to further probe their responses (McNamara, 1999).

Interviews were used to First Pack Management to get a deeper analysis of what actually influences buyers to purchase IT products and to check if the organisation is doing according to literature on what was supposed to be done to positively influence buying decisions. This was done in a follow up to the customer responses from the questionnaires.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS
Content analytic tables were used to analyse the gathered data. The data was analysed through checking if all the questions were being answered and common themes, patterns and relationships were established (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The information was corresponded with theory which has been cited in the literature review and appropriate inferences were made.
3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) a good research practice puts responsibility on the researcher to protect the right of participants and strictly adhere to the code of research ethics. The researcher first sought permission from First Pack to use it as a case study. This helped the researcher to easily access some internal company documents. All participants were invited on a voluntary basis. Confidentiality was highly practiced so that participants are eliminated from risk associated with participation in this research.

3.8 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS
This research was limited to First Pack customers only. This makes it difficult to generalise the findings to all other IT companies in Zimbabwe. The researcher did not manage to have a total country representation as other cities and provinces such as Mutare, Kwekwe and Bulawayo were not included. This research was biased to Harare customers only. The results could however still be valid because the organisation used as the case is a true representation of the IT companies in Zimbabwe on factors such as ownership, product lines, customers and management styles.

3.9 CONCLUSION
This chapter looked at the research design, research philosophies, research strategies, data collection methods and instruments. In this chapter ethical and limitations issues of the research were also discussed. The methodology helped the researcher to come up with the results which have been presented in the following chapter. Qualitative data was used in this research as discussed above, it was seen that it was most appropriate in order to get the opinions of First Pack management and customers on IT buying influences. The data gathered was presented in the next chapter which critically analyses the findings of this research.
CHAPTER 4

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter presented the findings from the in-depth interviews and questionnaires. The data was analysed through the use of content analytic tables. The presented results were also followed by a discussion which sought to link the results and the literature. This chapter comprises three sections that summarised the response of individual customers, organisational customers and First Pack Management.

4.2 KEY RESPONDENTS
Table 4.1 shows the respondents that were interviewed and those that responded to questionnaires.

Table 4.1: Key Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Total interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual customers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational customers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Pack management</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher managed to obtain a 100% response rate because the sample size was small and easily accessible. The total number of twelve respondents was ideal as this was a very qualitative research which needed probing and explanation rather than the one word answers.

4.3 PART A: FIRST PACK INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMERS
Questionnaires were sent to individual customers whose information was found in the company’s database. A deliberate choice was used for customers who have bought IT
products such as laptops, printers or cartridges. The questions asked to these respondents were categorised into two sections.

A. Demographic information
B. Factors that influence buying of IT products in consumer markets

4.3.1 Section A: Demographic information
Table 4.2 gives a summary of the demographic information of the respondents who were given the questionnaires.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age of respondent</th>
<th>Numbers of years in knowledge of First Pack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26 – 35</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18- 25</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36 – 45</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46 – 55</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were between the ages of 18 years to 55 years. This managed to give a rich response as all of these were mature respondents who were able to answer questions correctly. The diversity of the age group also gave a well balanced view of different age’s tastes and opinions. These respondents had known First Pack from a short period of two years to as much as ten years. Two to ten years dealing with First Pack helped in achieving various reasons of continuing with First Pack and also joining the First Pack's clientele.
4.3.2 Section B: Factors that influence buying of IT products in consumer markets.

**Question 1:** Respondents were asked to explain the extent to which any or all of the following cultural factors influenced their buying of IT products – religion, language and racial background.

**Table 4.3: Cultural influencers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1          | i. Religion - IT products needed in congregations such as laptops and projectors during services.  
             ii. English written products because it is understandable than the Chinese language |
| 2          | i. Goods and shops that are close to customers’ residence are preferable as we are attached to local shops. |
| 3          | i. Culture has no effect on the choice of products |
| 4          | i. English language drives me into purchasing products |

The respondents have identified culture as a determinant of IT buying behaviour. Closer analysis has shown that only language, geography and religion are really influencing buying of IT products. Respondent 2 could not identify any cultural influence on IT. Aspects such as racial background have been seen as of no influence at all. The respondents are showing that cultural factors have minimal effect on the buying influences of IT products.
Question 2: Respondents were asked in what ways the following social factors influenced their buying of IT products?

Table 4.4: Social factors that influence IT buying decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Buy products that other family members have bought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Social status especially at colleges, one will be viewed as organised because of owning a laptop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>i. The need to communicate with family members and friends through the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>i. Family members give direction to high quality products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Social clubs give recommendations as there is exchange of ideas and experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>i. I value more information from my family in choosing IT products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Brands that are owned by mates come first than unknown brands like Zivo or Nhava.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents echoed the same sentiments that social factors especially the influence of family greatly influence their choice of IT products. This was in line with Assael (2003) who claimed that the family is the most important decision making unit. Respondent 1, 3 and 4 added the social clubs as factors that play a role too. This has indicated that customers buy products that are approved by their reference group as echoed by Schiffman and Kanuk (2009). The respondents showed that it is not about any product but the branding is of importance when it comes to IT products. Nhava and Zivo the local brands have been disregarded.

Question 3: Ways in which personal factors influenced buyers’ choice of IT products?
### Table 4.5: Personal factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1**      | i. Disposable income and affordability influence the choice and ability to buy a product.  
            | ii. Lifestyle – young people favour fashionable products like laptops and tablet PCs and brands such as Apple and HP.  
            | iii. Age – it is embarrassing not to have a laptop if you are young, because you will appear old fashion.  
            | iv. Self-image – products should be acceptable to the social groups I belong to.  
            | v. Products should have warranty if they are genuine |
| **2**      | i. Economical circumstances – will force me to purchase simple products because I do not have much to spend.  
            | ii. Lifestyles – the desire is to own the most expensive brand and products such as an Ipad.  
            | iii. Age group - the 18 - 25 age group is technologically active hence purchasing of more IT products is essential with my age.  
            | iv. Self-image – I need products that give me esteem especially from peers at school.  
            | v. Risk attitude – rather go for a less expensive as the loss of very expensive gadgets will not be bearable and it is difficult for my guardian to buy me another one. |
| **3**      | i. Economical circumstances – my pocket direct me to expensive products because am able to pay for them.  
            | ii. Lifestyle – I need to uphold a lifestyle that is high so that it links with my status at work and society.  
            | iii. Risk attitude – very cautious, but great brands are risk too because they are expensive and everyone wants them, so I just go for them. |
| **4**      | i. Economical circumstances – directs to products that links with the available disposable income.  
            | ii. Lifestyle – need to maintain an IT generation kind of life.  
            | iii. Age – taste changes with age as will be concerned with durability and affordability rather than fashion.  
            | iv. Risk attitude – for IT products am not prepared to take risk so I buy the tried and tested brands. |
The respondents managed to come up with several personal factors that are affecting their buying of IT products. Several factors as eluded by Solomon (2010) which include income; lifestyles, risk attitude and age were noted. For instance income influenced in the sense that it directed on which brand to buy, risk attitude made those who fear risk to go for tried and tested brands, lifestyle pushes them into buying products that maintain a certain lifestyle in which it is noted that they all need an affluent lifestyle though most do not have the resources to support it. The respondent 2 who is college going indicated that he does not have the money to buy so he needs less expensive products. On the other hand respondent 3 indicated that her ability to buy directs her to high valued products.

**Question 4:** Needs that drive or motivate customers into purchasing IT products.

**Table 4.6: Influences that motivate purchase**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1          | i. Quality  
             ii. Compatibility  
             iii. User friendliness |
| 2          | i. Educational needs such as a laptop and a flash which are considered basic at nowadays colleges.  
             ii. Low price |
| 3          | i. Customers services  
             ii. Quality products  
             iii. Warranty availability  
             iv. Profession, as an office person I need somewhere to store and process information. |
| 4          | i. Educational needs especially for my children.  
             ii. Need to keep in touch with friends and family.  
             iii. Laptop, for instance it is the in-thing, everyone owns one. |

The respondents were motivated by different motives into buying products. Respondent 1 and 2 concurred on quality, respondent 2 and 4 shared on educational needs or work needs as the drivers into buying. Other responses were user friendliness of the product,
issues to do with warrant thus for security reasons, and social needs of being in touch with friends and family. Of much interest is that education and work are the major influencers of purchasing IT for most people.

**Question 5:** Respondents were asked to explain the importance of the following into affecting the way they choose IT products? (Product size, brand name, retail image, advertisement, physical attributes, colour of package and any others)

This question sought to find out how consumers select organised and interpreted stimuli into a meaningful picture of their surroundings (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009). Several stimuli were presented for them to comment on how they influence their purchase decisions. Below are the individual responses.

**Table 4.7: Important perceived factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1          | i. Product size – portable gadgets preferred.  
             ii. Brand name – great brands such as HP, Samsung, Lenovo and Apple come first.  
             iii. Advertisement – product with prior information are most favourable |
| 2          | i. Product size – screen size for laptops should be portable but visible enough (15 inches).  
             ii. Brand names - reputable brands such as HP are preferable rather than the Chinese brands.  
             iii. Retail image – the reputable retail shop which offers warranty is good.  
             iv. Advertisement – the product which the buyer has information will be the first to be chosen.  
             v. Country of origin – opt for a foreign assembled at the expense of a locally made such as the failed Nhava laptops. |
| 3          | i. Product size – to be portable especially laptops.  
             ii. Brand name – HP is tried and tested, so it is good.  
             iii. Retail image - The display of the shop should be good and eye-catching. |
| 4          | i. Brand name – brand name comes first such as HP and Apple.  
             ii. Advertisement – this will cause me to look at the products and I will use this information to compare with any other products that will come my way. |
All respondents have concurred on the fact that product size and brand names are essential in choosing IT brands. Branding has been seen as the most important because customers of IT products value the manufacturer because of the price involved in these products. A brand is successful when it is augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant unique added value, which match their needs very closely (Chernatomy, 2000). Notable brands were HP and Apple whilst others also included the likes of Samsung and Lenovo. This also showed that HP is a trusted brand and it is quite dominating the IT industry. Half of the sample also reviewed that advertising is important to them because they need to know what they buy, especially on the issue of specifications. Respondents 2 and 3 also noted that the image of the retail selling the products is essential hence it has to be reputable and well presented. Barker (2002) supported the importance of retailer’s physical aspect by proposing that every aspect of the company that comes into contact with the customer will be used as a measure of the level of the service that can be expected from the organization.

Question 6: Respondents were asked how their memory or learned previous knowledge assists in making a purchase decision.

**Table 4.8: Memory or learning influences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Past experience and knowledge prompts decisions to buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Past knowledge will help in remembering the specifications of the IT gadgets hence approach a retailer with those specifications in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A research is done especially on the internet before a purchase decision is made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Advertisements in the papers especially the Sunday Mail drove me to choose First Pack as a retailer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advertisements proved to be of significant importance because it is part of the memory that customers will use in purchasing. All of the respondents were in consensus that they use past knowledge as what Palmeri and Gauthier (2004) claimed that past
knowledge help to perceive stimuli. This knowledge they acquire it through advertisements or actively searching on the internet. Respondent number 4 added that the First Pack Advertisements she is seeing in the Sunday Mail are the ones that continuously pushes him into buying from First Pack in particular. Jansson-Boyde (2010) was proved right that purchase decisions that we see today are a result of mental decisions that occurred in the past, thus through information or experiences.

**Question 7:** Here are the additional factors that influence the selection of IT products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.9: Other factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1 | i. Accessibility, the more accessible retail shop is, the more purchases I will do in that shop.  
   ii. Favourable buying terms such as lay byes, and credit facilities.  
   iii. Support services such as availability of spare parts. |
| 2 | i. Endorsement by celebrities such as Oliver Mutukudzi. |
| 3 | i. The specifications of the products to meet the required needs. |
| 4 | i. Presentable personnel  
   ii. Knowledgeable sales team who gives detailed information about the products. |

The respondents added some other factors which they thought needed attention. These include accessibility thus closeness to them, buying terms especially credit is needed, endorsement by celebrities and the kind of staff providing the service. The sales team that sells IT products needs to have empathy and assurance as has been attributed by Groroos (2001).

**4.4 PART B: ORGANISATIONAL CUSTOMERS**

Questionnaires were sent to a few carefully selected organisations. These were a diverse of clients such as key performer, least performer old and new clients. This selection was done in order to get a diverse and unbiased view or opinions on what really influence organisations into buying IT products.
The questions given to these organisations were divided into the following:

A. Demographic information.

B. Factors that influence buying of organisations.

### 4.4.1 Section A: Demographic information respondents

**Table 4.10: Demographic information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Number of years knowing First Pack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36 – 45</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36 – 45</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26 – 35</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46- 55</td>
<td>12 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample consists of two female and two male to have a balanced gender opinion. The age group of 26 – 55 shows that the respondents are mature enough to answer on behalf of their organisations. These respondents have at least four years dealing with First Pack to as much as twelve years. These are the people who know First Pack for quite a long time and have rich information about the company.

### 4.4.2. Section B: Factors that influence buying of organisational customers

**Question 1:** Organisational customers were asked to explain in what ways the following individual factors influenced how organizations choose their IT products and vendors? Individual factors (*include buyers’ age, income, education, job position and risk attitude*).
### Table 4.11: Individual Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Learned buyers tend to be very analytical in evaluating IT specifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age and education helps in choosing IT products as the buyer understands products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Young buyers are more interested in IT products hence they play a part influencing their purchase decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education makes the buyer read and understand the IT knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three of the respondents concurred on the issue of education as the individual factor that influence buyers’ choice. This is so because the learned are the ones who can understand or deduce the IT jargon hence can be active in purchasing IT products. Two of the respondents also agreed that age is essential. Young buyers are interested in IT as they are the IT generation hence they can advocate for IT products in their organisations. The findings here back Gilligan and Wilson (2009) who says that corporate decisions are still affected by individual human behaviour. On a larger extent the absence of other factors such as income, position and risk attitude shows that individual factors influence organisational behaviour to a lesser extent.

**Question 2:** Interpersonal factors that make one member of the organisation influence the whole buying decision of the organization into choosing IT products and where to buy them? (State the factor and explain how). Interpersonal factors (*include authority, statuses, empathy, and persuasiveness of members of the buying unit*)
Table 4.12: Interpersonal factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>i. Expertise of the IT officer makes him able to give advice on IT products as he will be the specialist in that area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2          | i. Authority of the most senior person will make him influence all decisions as few individuals will be ready to argue with him because of his authority and seniority.  
|            | ii. IT manager has the expert power in IT purchase decisions. |
| 3          | i. Knowledge of the members is vital in commanding an ear from others in the buying unit. |
| 4          | i. IT personnel will use their expertise in advising hence influence what is to be bought. In actual fact the IT specialist can reject IT products if he or she does not agree with the specifications. |

All the respondents indicated that the organisation utilised the expertise of the members in the buying unit in choosing IT products. This shows that the member with IT expertise is the one who can influence or manipulate the whole IT buying decision. Respondent 2 indicated that authority is vital in influencing the whole team, for the member with authority might give a final say that will be followed. This was in line Webster and Wind (1972) who postulated that individual role performance is essential to note when dealing with organisations.

**Question 3:** Respondents pointed the organisational factors that are considered to be important in buying IT product. Organizational factors (*include organizational objectives, policies, procedures, structure and systems*)
An organisation can be seen as an entity that is governed by policies and procedures in buying IT products (Vitale et al., 2010). Respondents concurred that at least there are some systems that are followed which in turn contribute to the purchase decisions. Some indicated policies are those of having particular brands exclusively such as Lenovo by British American Tobacco and Dell by Standard Chartered Bank. Systems and procedures such as of requesting three quotations cause the vendor with the best price and high quality to win the order of supplying IT products to organisations. This system will also meet the objectives of reducing cost, thus by buying from the least price. Organisations that value accounting systems are also known for investing more in their IT infrastructure as alluded by respondent 3.

### Table 4.13: Organisational factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>i. Objectives of cost saving makes buyers chose from cost effective brands and choose the least quotation on prices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Organisational policies require the use of certain brands exclusively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Product durability, reliability, service levels, backups and brand reputation are some of the organisational policies that influence the choice of products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>i. Policies and procedures are determinants of where, how and what to buy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. IT and Accounting system requires investing more in IT infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>i. Organisational procedures require at least three quotations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>i. Organisational procedures require at least three quotations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Question 4:** The external environmental factors which play the major role in influencing organisational buying of IT products? External environment factors (*include economy, social, political, competition and regulatory*)

**Table 4.14: External factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1          | i. The regulatory arm requires the use of IT for instance accounting systems which are needed for taxation need the support of IT.  
            | ii. Recyclability of products influence the choice of products as organisations are now going green and its becoming a policy  
            | iii. Economical environment contribute a lot in buying of IT, for instance a lot of IT infrastructure was acquired post Zim dollar period.  
            | iv. Price, inflation and employment creation affect the buying of IT products. |
| 2          | i. The more stable the economy the more spending in IT by organisations.  
            | ii. Political instability causes organisations to shelve purchase of IT products especially the expensive equipment like servers.  
            | iii. The need of IT knowledge in the current educational sector have forced organisations to donate IT products to rural schools and universities as part of their corporate social responsibility. |
| 3          | i. Economy boosting increases disposal income for IT products. |
| 4          | i. When a country has peace organisation tends to spend more by investing in IT expenditure.  
            | ii. Economical factors makes the company spend or hold expenditure which includes the IT expenditure. |

The economical environment is seen to be the common environmental influence of IT purchases. Fill and McKee (2011) agreed with the above by attributing that the changes in the economy have an impact in how organisations buy. Respondents indicated that when the economy is stable like at the moment, organisation tends to spend more. Three of the respondents concurred on the influence of the political hand in terms of maintaining peace which is conducive for business and the regulations such as the ones for fiscalisation which requires the purchase of IT gadgets. Social indicators like
the increasing rate of assisting in social activities such as donating to schools are playing a part. Respondent 1 also added the issues of recyclability as something his organisation value hence use in choosing IT products.

**Question 5:** Additional factors that influence organisational selection of IT products?

**Table 4.15: Other factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1. Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Back-up services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1. Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Short lead times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1. Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Warranty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1. Contractual agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Flexible terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Quality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just like in the consumers markets organisational buyers also feel that quality and price are very essential. This was so because all the respondents here concurred with that sentiment. Warrant and back-up services have also been indicated by two respondents. Other factors include flexible terms, short lead times and contractual agreements.

**4.5 PART C: FIRST PACK MANAGEMENT**

Face to face interviews were done to the First Pack management. This management included three Business Development Managers thus Business Development Manager – IT Hardware (BDM - IT Hardware), Business Development Manager – IT Consumables (BDM - IT Consumables) and Business Development Manager – Stationery (BDM – Stationery) and the Sales and Marketing Manager (SMM). All these managers are at the strategic level as they report to the Managing Director / Owner.
These managers were chosen because the biggest part of their responsibility is to deal with customers. For instance the business development is involved in developing products, procuring and pricing them and the sales manager is on heart of the organisation’s marketing activities.

The questions poised to the managers were under the following categories:

A. Demographic information

B. Factors that influence buying of IT products

C. The employment of buying influences by First Pack

D. Benefits of positively influencing buyers

E. Inhibitors of buyers to purchase IT products from First Pack

4.5.1 Section A: Demographic information

Table 4.16: Demographic information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Age group (years)</th>
<th>Professional background</th>
<th>Period employed by First Pack (years)</th>
<th>Period in current Position (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDM IT Hardware</td>
<td>25-35 years</td>
<td>Economist</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM IT – Consumables</td>
<td>25-35 years</td>
<td>Banking and Finance</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM – Stationery</td>
<td>25-35 years</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMM</td>
<td>25-35 years</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the managers of First Pack are between 25 and 35 years. This shows a young and vibrant team that embraces IT. The managers are coming from a diverse of professional background such as economics, banking and Finance, accounting and Marketing. The
diversity in profession shows that the customer is being dealt with from different angles and tastes and it will also give a rich opinion of the research findings. All the managers have at least three years in the organisation to as much as six years. This period indicates that rich information can be extracted from these people. On the other note none of the managers is as old as the company thus 14 years. This shows that all these managers joined the company halfway its life.

4.5.2 Section B: Factors that influence buying of IT products

Question 1 Factors that influence or motivate customers to buy IT products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.17: Factors that motivate customers’ buying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Hardware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Consumables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| BDM – Stationery | i. Need of moving with technology and income levels.  
  ii. Academic requirements. |
| SMM | i. Technological advancements.  
  ii. Social networking with family and friends. |

All the management of First Pack believe that technological advancement is the major driver of IT purchase decisions. The BDM – stationery added academic requirements but it still translate into technological advancements in schools. O’Brien, (2007) shared the same sentiments that technology has more than changed how people communicate but actually how they do their everyday business hence the increase in the demand of information technology products. On top of that the Sales Manager noted social networking as the additional factor.
4.5.3 Section C: The employment of buying influences by First Pack

**Question 1**: Responses on how First Pack products and retail shops are positively influencing the buying decision of IT products in line with the indicated factors

**Table 4.18: Factors influencing buying of consumer goods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BDM – IT Hardware</strong></td>
<td>i. The social class of laptops to all students and everyone working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. The use of IT products such as laptops by family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. IT products are associated with a lifestyle that many people would want to have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BDM – IT Consumables</strong></td>
<td>i. Customers will need to buy or own what others own hence laptops are the product of the moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Disposable income is vital so the products are price competitive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Continuous advertising tell and remind customers of IT products and to shop them at First Pack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BDM – Stationery</strong></td>
<td>i. Meeting the social class which now value the use of laptops and other IT products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Laptops raises one’s ego esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Economic circumstances require cost effective products so our low cost pricing strategy is a crowd puller.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iv. The maintenance of certain affluent lifestyle is achieved by reputable brands sold at First Pack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMM</strong></td>
<td>i. Our advertisements emphasise the need to fit in the social class such as colleges where everyone owns a laptops by sending the message ‘a laptop in every hand’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. IT products encourage family members to keep in touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Price competitiveness makes IT gadgets affordable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iv. First Pack advertises regularly to evoke learning and memory when choosing IT brands and supplier or retail shop.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The management team believes that First Pack products and retail shops are positively influencing the buying decision of IT products. They noted that their ability to market laptops shows that they know the product that is needed at the moment. Socially their customers are well accepted by owning a laptop or a printer as alluded by the BDM – stationery that it raises the esteem of their customers. Dwawan (2010) said that
consumers are influenced by peers. The sales manager added that First Pack prices are price competitive hence understating the economical circumstances surrounding their diverse customers. He added on to note that the advertisements which are sending a message of a ‘laptop in every hand’ make it fashionable and mandatory to own a laptop.

Table 4.19: First Pack buying influences in organisational markets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BDM – IT Hardware | i. Organisational objectives such as of higher specifications are critical in meeting their requirements hence First Pack has introduced servers in its product line.  
ii. Economical factors such as the duties that were scraped on IT products have caused a reduction of prices to the customers. |
| BDM – IT Consumables | i. Stocking and selling the needed gadgets by organisation such as modern laptops.  
ii. Relationship with people with authority in the buying unit.  
iii. Meeting organisational policies such as schools which demand all their students to have laptops and to be computer literate.  
iv. Competitiveness is now being accelerated by ICT hence promoting that message. |
| BDM Stationery | i. Buyers risk attitude causes him / her to buy from reputable suppliers who have after sale service such as warranty.  
ii. Taking note of those with authority in the buying unit.  
iii. Working into the approved list of suppliers as organisational policies requires the purchase from that list only.  
iv. Economical influence on decision of whether to buy local or foreign, thus First Pack competitiveness in international standards and prices. |
| SMM | i. Buyers risk attitude will limit his choice to try competitors because of fear of poor service delivery.  
ii. The company seeks to make relations with those who have authority and high influence on others in making a purchase decisions.  
iii. First Pack seeks contracts with key customers so that organisational customers’ policies are well followed.  
iv. Government policies such as of encouraging companies to buy from local suppliers has also influenced the purchase of IT products from mainly foreign companies. First Pack is now stocking the products commonly needed by these companies. |
On individuals factors the managers in particular the sales manager and the BDM – Stationery noted that the buyers risk attitude will influence him or her on where to buy (Kotler and Keller, 2012). Reputable retailers like First Pack will win and brands such as HP will be chosen as the buyers will not be prepared to take the risk of working with non-performing or new brands or suppliers. On interpersonal factors the managers concurred that First Pack is seeking to build relationship with those in authority. Organisational factors such as following the buying procedures used by customers’ shows that First Pack is doing something on positively influencing organisational buying. This was also shown by the managers concurring on the factors having contracts with the organisation, meeting specifications and supplying brands that are now needed by organisations.

**Question 2:** Management was asked on the notable systems or policies which are in place to positively influence customers’ IT buying patterns?

Table 4.20: Availability of systems that influence buyer decision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Hardware</td>
<td>No notable or specific recognition of these buying influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Consumables</td>
<td>First Pack does not have specific policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM Stationery –</td>
<td>Warranty availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMM</td>
<td>Very faint policies in place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The managers except the BDM stationery could not pick a real system in place to influence buying decisions. This reviews that the above points noted in section 4.4.3 above are happening blindly but in actual fact, the organisation has no real procedures or systems in place. Warranty provision was noted to be there to influence customers buying.
4.5.4. Section D: Benefits of positively influencing buyers

**Question 1:** Below are the benefits that were noted to be enjoyed by organisations that are addressing customers’ buying influences.

**Table 4.21: Benefits of positively influencing buyers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BDM – IT Hardware | i.  Customer loyalty  
                    | ii.  Sales growth                             |
|                  | BDM – IT Consumables   | i.  Increased sales                           
                    |       | ii.  Repeat sales                            
                    |       | iii. Customers satisfaction                   |
|                  | BDM – Stationery       | i.  High sales figures                        
                    |       | ii.  Better remuneration for staff            |
                    |                   | i.  Company growth                            |
|                  | SMM                | i.  Customers satisfaction                     |
                    |                   | ii.  Customer loyalty                         |
                    |                   | iii. Keeping on top of customers’ expectations |
                    |                   | iv.  Sales growth                             |

All the managers indicated that they are aware of the benefits of positively influencing buying of IT products. They noted customer’s satisfaction leading to loyalty and sales growth. On these benefits they concurred. The BDM - stationery added staff remuneration as the benefit that will also be enjoyed by organisation that positively influence buyer behaviour of IT products.
**Question 2:** The benefit to First Pack’s positively influencing buying decisions.

### Table 4.22: Benefits to First Pack

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Hardware</td>
<td>i. Leading supplier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Consumables</td>
<td>i. Letters / certificates of appreciation are coming – HP, Lenovo and Seagate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. By being the leader in the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM Stationery</td>
<td>i. By becoming a major player in the IT industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMM SMM</td>
<td>i. Not much, the company could be better if it has really considered all or most of these influencers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. The sales are stagnant so I cannot say we are doing or benefiting enough.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the managers, thus three of four concurred that First Pack is benefiting in certain way in positively influencing buying decisions of both individual and organisational customers. The BDM - IT Consumables actually noted several benefits such as repeat sales, accreditation by HP and Lenovo, and being the leader in the IT industry. On the issues of being a leader in the industry he is in agreement with the BDM stationery. On another note the Sales manager believes that the company has not really benefited. He said it could be somewhere else if it has carefully followed the factors and implement them, much could have been achieved. This shows that the Sales manager believes that what his colleagues have said are not really things to celebrate about, the company could be better. The above shows that in general the benefits are very minimal.
4.5.5 Section E: Inhibitors of buyers to purchase IT products from First Pack

**Question 1:** Described factors that were seen to be hindering buyers from buying their IT products from First Pack.

**Table 4.23: Factors hindering Buyers to buy from First Pack**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BDM – IT Hardware | i. Limited choice of available products  
|             | ii. Perennial stock-outs  
|             | iii. Prepayments and limited credit facilities.                                              |
| BDM – IT Consumables | i. Stock shortages  
| | ii. Lack of after sale support  
| | iii. Low disposable income  
| | iv. Lack of credit facilities                                                             |
| BDM – Stationery | i. Stock availability  
| | ii. Long lead time  
| | iii. Poor relations with key customers’                                                  |
| SMM | i. Taking long to react to customers’ needs  
| | ii. Stock outs of key products.  
| | iii. Inflexible credit terms.  
| | iv. Poor relations with key personnel in the organisational buying units.          |

All the respondents indicated that First Pack have some inhibitors that are causing buyers to shun First Pack. Shortages of stock proved to be the most commonly noted inhibitor by all the managers, all the managers except the BDM - stationery also noted the inflexible payment terms as other problems. The Sales manager concurred with the BDM-Stationery by admitting that poor relations with key personnel in the organisational buying unit are a cause of concern. On the issue of stock, lead times and limited choice of stock has also been noted.

**Question 2:** Managers pointed the impact of these inhibitors to sales performance as below.
Table 4.24: Inhibitors impact to sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Hardware</td>
<td>The sales have been stagnant for the past three years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Consumables</td>
<td>Stock shortages are contributing to low sales and also making customers opt for competitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM Stationery</td>
<td>Failure to achieve the sales target for the past three years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMM</td>
<td>Low stagnant sales for the past three years when in actual fact the IT market has been expanding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All First Pack managers have seen that the above noted problems have contributed to low sales growth. The sales manager put it clearly that sales are stagnant when in actual fact the IT industry or market is expanding, this means that competitors are getting into their territory. It was specifically noted that it is now three years with stagnant sales. This shows that there is a problem.

Question 3: First Pack’s reaction to these obstacles

Table 4.25: First Pack reaction to obstacles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Hardware</td>
<td>The company is researching on additional varieties of laptops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Consumables</td>
<td>The company is not doing much about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM Stationery</td>
<td>Trying to address stock challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMM</td>
<td>Sending only the sales team to training at the expense of everybody.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The management generally believe that the company is not really doing much to improve the situation. The sending of sales team to training which was noted by the sales manager was seen by the same respondent as not the point but the overhaul of the whole organisation is needed. The BDM-Stationery pointed out that the company is trying to address stock challenges and also the researching on additional varieties of laptops was identified as part of the little that the company is doing to address the obstacles it is facing.

**Question 4:** Respondents gave additional comments as below.

**Table 4.26: Additional recommendations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Hardware</td>
<td>Further research is needed in order to see if these influences are affecting business at a larger scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM – IT Consumables</td>
<td>The company need to improve on corporate governance so that managers will be able to freely act on putting creative new strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDM Stationery</td>
<td>Had no further comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMM</td>
<td>Continuous market research is needed so that proper strategies that positively influence buying influences are addressed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sales manager and the BDM - IT hardware believe that deep further research and implementation of the findings is required to improve the situation. The BDM - IT consumables brought an interesting fact of poor corporate governance as he believes it is limiting the vibrant young managers to implement creative strategies.
4.6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

4.6.1 Consumer buyer influences
Authorities like Schiffman and Kanuk (2009); Solomon (2010) and Dhawan (2010) postulated that individual consumers buying are influenced by factors which include social, cultural, psychological and personal. The research found these factors playing a role in influencing buying decisions. On the cultural side respondents pointed out that language was of importance. The social factors that were picked to be influencing buying decision were family members and social clubs. On personal factors respondents echoed on income, lifestyles, age, self-image and risk attitude. Under psychological factors respondents pointed out quality, profession pricing, knowledge and experience that played a part in determining how they make purchase decisions.

4.6.2 Organisational buying influences
Wind and Webster (1972) postulated that organisational buying is influenced by individual factors, interpersonal factors, organisational factors and environmental factors. Organisational customers who respond to the questionnaire concurred with the above although some factors were more pronounced than others. Individual factors were seen not very significant in determining the buying of IT products. The noted factors were mainly age and the educational background. The organisational factors were noted to be of high influence. Respondents pointed organisational objectives, policies, structure and systems to be important. The respondents also concurred on the fact that environmental factors plays a role in influencing buying patterns of IT products. All the factors were at least picked by one or two of the respondents. These factors include political, social, economic and technological influences.

4.6.3 Responsiveness of the First Pack products to buying influences
The management pointed out that there are some aspects of buying influences in both their products and retail shops. They agreed that factors such as social acceptance are being met by the kind of products on offer. Their price is competitive hence meeting the need of low disposable income and the messages in their advertisements are pointing to the buying influences. On the other note, customers also pointed out that some
factors that they really value include quality, back up services, short lead times, warranty, flexible payment terms and contractual agreements for organisations.

4.6.4 Benefits of positively influencing buyers
Marketeters’ effectiveness in meeting consumer needs influences their profitability and general satisfaction of the customer (Assael, 2003). The management identified that positively influencing buyer have benefits that included customer loyalty, increased sales, profitability, customer satisfaction, better remuneration and company growth. First Pack have benefited in repeat business, market leadership and the right tone of advertisement messages. It can further be noted that benefits are very minimal as one respondent – the Sales manager even said that there is no much to celebrate for, the company could be better.

4.6.5 Inhibitors to buy at First Pack
The respondents pointed out that customers are not buying from First Pack because of factors such as limited choice of stock, perennial stock-out, poor sales support, inflexible payment terms and poor customer relations. These inhibitors have impacted negatively on sales as the company has witnessed a stagnant sales figure for the past three years.

4.6.6 First Pack Response to buying inhibitors
It was noted that First Pack has been slowly responding to these inhibitors through researching on new varieties of laptops, addressing stock challenges and sales training. On the other side the respondents postulated that the company is lagging behind on addressing these inhibitors.

4.7 CONCLUSION
This chapter was mainly concerned with reporting the research findings and discussing these findings, their implications and link to literature. The following chapter covers the conclusions made through this research, recommendations, the study limitations and
areas for further research. The following chapter will now focus on recommendations and conclusion drawn from the findings above.
CHAPTER FIVE

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter, conclusions and recommendations are drawn using the findings which were discussed in Chapter four. Further areas of study will also be pointed out.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

5.2.1 Factors that influence buying of IT products.
Objective One: To establish factors that influences the buying of IT products.

5.2.1.1 Individual customers buying influences
5.2.1.1.1 Social factors
First Pack customers buy products and brands which are also owned by their families and peers. First Pack is stocking these IT products such as laptops, tablets and printers and acceptable brands such as HP and Apple.

5.2.1.1.2 Personal factors
Most IT customers do not have the disposable income needed to purchase IT products they require. First Pack employed a cost leadership strategy to address this problem of low disposable income.

5.2.1.1.3 Psychological factors
IT customers were found to be driven by brand name HP, the perceived retail image and perceived quality. The advertisements from First pack dealt with their memory. Identified areas which were failing to drive buying included retail image, presentation and knowledge of the staff, lack of flexible payment terms, good warranty and support services and lack of different brands in stock.
5.2.1.4 Culture
Culture was found to have a very minimum significance in influencing the buying behaviour of IT products. The only cultural factors noted were geographical influence that people bought in shops close to them and product written in the English language they speak. First Pack has over concentrated in Harare at the expense of other cities.

5.2.1.2 Factors that influence buying of IT products by organisational customers
5.2.1.2.1. Interpersonal factors
First Pack was only focusing on people with authority like senior managers at the expense of the IT officers who have the expert knowledge that influence buying decision.

5.2.1.2.2 Organisational factors
Organisations buy in pursuit of their objectives and policies. First Pack is failing because of lack of several options on brand and varieties. On a good note its competitive prices draw people to it.

5.2.1.2.4 Individual factors
The study showed that individual factors do not affect much in the buying of IT products. Organisational buying is affected by organizational policies and buyers just have to follow those rules than personal feelings.

5.2.2 Lack of policies that seek to influence buyers
Objective Three: To determine whether First Pack has put into consideration factors that influence buying of IT products.

First Pack lacked a system which sought and address these buying influences.

5.2.3 Benefits
Objective four: To establish the benefits of positively influencing buying behavior of IT products.
First Pack did not benefit much in customer’s loyalty, sales growth, repeat sales, customer satisfaction and better remuneration due to failure to address buying influences. On the other hand the researcher reviewed that the company benefited a little in repeat business and becoming a major player in the industry

5.2.4 Inhibitors to buy at First Pack

**Objective Four:** To verify factors that are hindering buyers from purchasing from First Pack.

The company is facing problems of limited products range, perennial stock-outs of key products. The payment plan is not conducive as several competitors have opened up credit facilities hence luring customers. There are also poor relations with customers.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Individual and organisational buying influences

The company need to address the buying influences which it still lacks. Below are some of the areas which need attention:

**Retail image**

The company needs to improve on its retail atmosphere. Improvements are needed to meet the standards being set by competitors such as Goldtech and Finmark which have state of the art shops.

**Support service**

A well-functioning warranty center is needed which quickly respond to technical faults as people will not be happy to go for days or months without their products.

**Interpersonal factors**

First Pack needs to build strong relationships with influential members of the buying unit which are the IT experts. These were found to be the most influential hence they need
to have relations with the company so that they will make decisions in favour of First Pack.

**Accessibility**

More retail branches need to be opened. Not all customers will come to shop in Harare and Bulawayo.

### 5.3.2 Policies that influences buying of IT products

**Research and Implementation**

The management should put a taskforce which works on researching and implementing strategies that influence customers buying.

**Corporate governance**

The researcher recommends that the management should be given authority to come up and implement strategies that boost sales rather than waiting on the owners ideas only.

**Personnel**

IT product selling is a technical job. The sales team has to be trained so that they give the market correct information on which products to buy. Furthermore, presentation of the sales team should be highly appealing enough to attract buyers into trusting them.

### 5.3.3 Inhibitors to buy at First Pack

**Stock Availability**

The company should improve on the product range that it stocks that is to include other varieties such as high end laptops rather than concentrating on entry level laptops. The company should also make sure that it does not run out of hot lines.
Flexible payment plans

First Pack is supposed to have flexible payment terms. Competitors are opening up on credit terms and First Pack should not remain adamant on cash terms because it will cause the organisation to continue losing customers.

5.4 AREAS OF FURTHER STUDY

The research was for a single aspect of consumer behaviour which is the factors that influence buying of IT products. Further areas which can be studied include the studying of the whole facet of consumer behaviour of IT products. This area has not been studied much in Zimbabwe. It is a critical area considering the way IT has diffused into the country. The researcher believes that to fully satisfy the customer, the marketer is supposed to understand that customer first.

On top of that, corporate governance especially in the IT industry has to be studied too. As mentioned before, the industry is expanding but facts on the ground shows that there is not even a single corporate company in the IT retail industry (this exclude the ICT companies like Econet, Telecel and Netone). The industry is characterised by thousands of very small companies and the researcher strongly believe that this is an issue of owner management and poor corporate governance that is also hindering growth of these companies.
REFERENCES


Jack, P.2006). Do we really need brand equity? *The journal of brand management, 4*


Muhamad


127 Masotsha Ndhlovu Way
Corner Seke Road
Hatfield
Harare

02 January 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

Reference: An evaluation of buying influences of IT products: The case of First Pack (Pvt) Ltd.

My name is Knowledge Fodha an MBA student with the University of Zimbabwe. Currently I am studying on factors that influence the buying of IT products with special focus on First Pack Marketing. As part of this I am undertaking a dissertation project on the same topic.

You are one of the few people selected to give your opinions on this topic for the successful completion of this project. Please find the enclosed questionnaire with this letter. Responses will be kept strictly confidential. If you find any difficulties in filling the answers, do not hesitate to let me know.

I appreciate your response for filling this questionnaire.

Yours faithfully,

Knowledge Fodha (0772 979 531)
kfodha@gmail.com
APPENDIX 2
QUESTIONNAIRE - FIRST PACK CUSTOMERS

SECTION A: BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENT

1. Click your gender
   ☐ Female   ☐ Male

2. Please state your age
   ☐ under 25 years   ☐ 26-35 years   ☐ 36-45   ☐ 46-55   ☐ above 55 years

3. For how long have known First Pack? ..................................................

SECTION B: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE BUYING OF IT PRODUCTS IN CONSUMER MARKETS.

1. Please explain the extent to which any or all of the following cultural factors influenced your buying of IT products.
   a. Your Religion

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   b. Geographical area where you live

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c. Your Language
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d. Racial background
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e. Other cultural factors
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2. In what ways have the following social factors influenced your buying of IT products:

a. Family members?
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b. Social Clubs where you are member?

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c. State and explain any other social factors?

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3. In what ways would you say the following personal factors influence buyers’ choice of IT products?

a. Economic circumstances

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b. Lifestyles

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c. Age
d. Income

e. Self-image (how you see or would want others to see you)

f. Risk attitude

4. State and explain the real needs that drive or motivate customers into purchasing IT products.
5. How would you explain the importance of the following into affecting the way you choose IT products?

   a. Product size
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   b. Brand name
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   c. Retail outlet image
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   d. Advertisement
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   e. Physical attributes
f. Colour of package

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g. Weight and package design

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h. Others (state and explain)

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6. How has your memory or learned previous knowledge assisted you in making a purchase decision?

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7. State and explain how other factors apart from the above influence your selection of IT products?

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End of questionnaire

Thank you for your valuable support
APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE - ORGANISATIONAL CUSTOMERS

SECTION A: BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENT

1. Click your gender
   □ Female   □ Male

2. Please state your age
   □ under 25 years   □ 26-35 years   □ 36-45   □ 46-55   □ above 55 years

3. For how long have known First Pack ………………………………………………………………..

SECTION B: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE BUYING OF ORGANISATIONS

Organizations have been identified to have factors such as environmental, organisational, interpersonal and individual that influence how they purchase (Webster & Wind, 1972). Below is a list of questions in line with these influences of organisational buying.

1. Please explain in what ways would you say the following individual factors influenced how organizations choose their IT products and vendors?

   Individual factors (include buyers’ age, income, education, job position and risk attitude)

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2. Which of the following Interpersonal factors make one member of the organisation influence the whole buying decision of the organization into choosing IT products and where to buy them? (state the factor and explain how)

Interpersonal factors (*include authority, statuses, empathy, and persuasiveness of members of the buying unit*)

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3. Describe the organisational factors that are considered to be important in buying IT product?

Organizational factors (*include organizational objectives, policies, procedures, structure and systems*)

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4. State and explain the external environmental factors which play the major role in influencing organisational buying of IT products?

External environment factors (*include economy, social, political, competition and regulatory*)

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5. What are other factors that you think influence your organisational selection of IT products?

End of questionnaire

Thank you for your valuable support
APPENDIX 4

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FIRST PACK MANAGEMENT

SECTION A: BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENT

1. What is your position in the organization?
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2. Please state your age
☐25-35 years ☐ 36-45 years ☐ 46-55 ☐ above 56 years

3. Please state your profession?
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4. How many years have you been employed by the organization?
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5. How long have you been in your current position?
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SECTION B: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE BUYING OF IT PRODUCTS

1. What do you think are factors that influence or motivate customers to buy IT products? (list and explain)
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SECTION C: THE EMPLOYMENT OF BUYING INFLUENCES BY FIRST PACK

1. Below is a list of major groups of factors that influence the buying decision of customers. Please explain to what extent you think First Pack products and retail shops are positively influencing the buying decision of IT products in line with the below indicated factors?

i. Consumer market

   (a) Culture – (subculture- religion, race, ethnicity and etc and social class)

   (b) Social factors – (reference groups, family, statuses and roles)

   (c) Personal factors- (self-image, economic, lifestyles, age and lifecycles)

   (d) Psychological – (Motivation, perception, learning and memory)
ii. Organisational markets

a. Individual factors – (buyers’ age, income, education, job position and risk attitude)

b. Interpersonal factors – (authority, statuses, empathy, and persuasiveness of members in the buying unit).

c. Organizational factors - (organizational objectives, policies, procedures, structure, system)
d. External environmental factors – *(influence of economy, social, political, competition, regulatory and infrastructure)*

2. What notable systems or policies are in place to positively influence customers’ IT buying patterns?

SECTION D: BENEFITS OF POSITIVELY INFLUENCING BUYERS

1. Do you know the benefits that any organisation can enjoy due to addressing customers’ buying influences?
2. To what extent can you say First Pack has benefited in positively influencing buying decisions?

SECTION E: INHIBITORS OF BUYERS TO PURCHASE IT PRODUCTS FROM FIRST PACK.

1. Describe the factors that are hindering buyers from buying their IT products from First Pack

2. What has been the impact of these inhibitors of sales performance?

3. What is First Pack doing about these obstacles situation
4. Do you have any other comments which might assist in this study?

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End of questionnaire

Thank you for your valuable support