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A STUDY OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE EXPORT PERFORMANCE OF THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN ZIMBABWE

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctor of Business Administration Degree of the University of Lusaka.

2019

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I declare that, except where noted and credited, the content of this thesis is my own work. I further declare that this Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) was created in accordance with the guidelines and regulations of the University of Lusaka. I affirm that this thesis has not been submitted to any other educational institution in Zambia or abroad as part of any other academic award.

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I certify that the above named student was under my supervision. I further certify that I have sufficiently supervised him, and that he has fulfilled all the requirements that I set before him as the Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father Champion Munetsi Chitauro Chifuka, and my mother Tabeth ‘Tobasi’ Chifuka, who taught me the value of education and who made sacrifices for us, their children, so that we could have the opportunities they did not have.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION ii

THESIS APPROVAL iii

DEDICATION iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

LIST OF TABLES xv

LIST OF FIGURES xvi

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS xvii

KEY WORDS xviii

ABSTRACT xix

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

1.0 Background to the study 1

1.1. Statement of the Problem 8

1.2. Objectives of the Study 13

1.3. Research Questions 13

1.4. Hypotheses for the research 14

1.4. Justification for the study 15

1.5. Definition of key terms and variables 18

1.6. Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations 25

1.6.1. Assumptions 25

1.6.2. Limitations 25

1.6.3. Delimitations 26

1.7. Focus of the study 27

1.8. Research contribution to knowledge and practice 28
1.9. Organisation of the thesis 32
1.10. Chapter summary 33
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 35
2.0 Introduction 35
2.1. Export performance 35
2.2. Conceptualisation of export performance 41
2.3. Choosing unit of analysis 42
2.4. Measurement of export performance 45
2.4.1. Objective Measures 50
2.4.2. Subjective Measures 50
2.4.3. Summary of export performance measurements 51
2.5. Firm-level factors associated with export performance 57
2.6. Determinants of export performance 59
2.6.1. Internal determinants 59
2.6.2. External determinants 80
2.6.3. Export promotion programmes 84
2.6.4. Other factors affecting export performance 90
2.7. Models of export performance 93
2.7.1. Aaby and Slater – Strategic Export Model 94
2.7.2. Chetty and Hamilton Model 95
2.7.3. Cavusgil and Zou Model 96
2.7.4. Katsikeas, Piercy and Ioannidis Model 97
2.7.5. Zou and Stan Model 97

2.7.6. Lages Model 98
2.7.7. Katsikeas, Leonidou and Morgan Model 99
2.7.8. Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee Model 100
2.7.9. Morgan, Kaleka and Katsikeas Model 102
2.7.10. Summary on models of export performance 102
2.8. Characteristics of Zimbabwe exporting firms 104
2.9. Chapter summary 105
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 106
3.0 Introduction 106
3.1. Theoretical Perspective 107
3.2. Porter's Diamond Theory 109
3.2.1. Factor conditions 111
3.2.2. Demand conditions 112
3.2.3. Related and support industries 112
3.2.4. Firm strategy, structure and rivalry 114
3.2.5. External factors: Chance and Government 114
3.2.6. The diamond as a system 115
3.3. Porter's Diamond Theory and Export Performance 115
3.4 Export development and internationalisation of firms 116
3.4.1. Market drivers 117
3.4.2. Cost globalisation drivers 117
3.4.3. Competitive drivers 118
3.4.4. Government drivers 118
3.5. Related research on export performance 120
3.6. Chapter summary 123

CHAPTER 4: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK 124

4.0 Introduction 124

4.1. Conceptual framework and hypotheses development 124

4.1.1. Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and export performance 127

4.1.2. Export commitment and export marketing mix strategy 131

4.1.3. Export promotion programmes and export marketing mix strategy (4Ps) 132

4.1.4. International experience and export marketing mix strategy 133

4.1.5. Mediation effects 135

4.1.6. Moderating role of foreign market attractiveness 137

4.1.7. Control variables 138

4.1.8. Dependent variable (perceived success) 139

4.2. Unit of analysis 140

4.3. Chapter summary 143

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 144

5.0 Introduction 144

5.1. Research philosophy 144

5.1.1. Research Paradigms 145

5.2. Research Design 148

5.3. Research methods 151

5.3.1. Qualitative research method 152

5.3.2. Quantitative research method 172

5.3.3. Mixed methods research 196

5.4. Justification for the selected research method 206

5.5. Operationalisation of the variables 208

5.5.1. International experience and export commitment 208
5.5.2. Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) 209
5.5.3. Export promotion programmes 210
5.5.4. Foreign market attractiveness 210
5.5.5. Export performance (Dependent variable) 211
5.6. Control variables 212
5.7. Data analysis procedure 212
5.7.1. Measurement Model 213
5.8. Justification for using Partial Least Squares modelling 213
5.9. Structural model 216
5.9.1. Mediating effect 216
5.9.2. Moderating effect 217
5.10. Ethical considerations and aspects 218
5.10.1. Principle of beneficence 218
5.10.2. Principle of human dignity 219
5.10.3. Principle of justice 220
5.10.4. Autonomy 222
5.10.5. Free and informed consent 222
5.11. Chapter summary 223
CHAPTER 6: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION 224
6.0. Introduction 224
6.1. Analysis of demographic data 224
6.1.1. Data collection, editing and entry 224
6.1.2. Data description 225

6.1.3. Descriptive analysis 227
6.1.4. Responses on the factors that affect the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms 229
6.1.5. Checking for outliers 230
6.1.6. Model estimation and fitting using Partial Least Squares (PLS) 231
6.1.7. Non-response bias 231
6.1.8. Analysis using Partial Least Squares 232
6.1.9. Reliability and validity of the measures 233
6.1.10. Testing the structural model – path coefficients and predictive ability 234
6.1.11. Model estimation and measurement 234
6.1.12. The structural model 238
6.1.12.1. Structural Model 1 – Place as mediator 239
6.1.12.2. Structural Model 2 – Product as mediator 241
6.1.12.3. Structural Model 3 – Promotion as mediator 243
6.1.12.4. Structural Model 4 – Price as mediator 245
6.1.12.5. Summary of hypotheses 247
6.1.12.6. Common method bias 248
6.2. Analysis of qualitative data 250
6.2.1. Qualitative interview profile 250
6.2.2. Findings from in-depth qualitative interviews 254
6.2.2.1. Key determinants of export performance 257
6.2.1.1. Managerial characteristics 262
6.2.1.2. Export promotion programmes 265
6.2.1.3. Foreign market attractiveness 266
6.3. Other factors that contribute to successful export 268
6.3.1. Export initiation 268

6.3.2. Location of the firm 271
6.3.3. Cultural adaptation 272
6.3.4. Common export challenges (export barriers) 273
6.3.5. Export performance measurement 275
6.4. Summary of interview findings 277
6.4.1. Summary of key determinants for export performance 277
6.4.2. Other factors that influence export performance 279
6.5. Chapter summary 282
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS 284
7.0 Introduction 284
7.1. Summary of the research results 284
7.2. Factors affecting the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms 285
7.2.1. Firm Characteristics Factors 285
7.2.1. Firm competency factors 287
7.2.2. Adequacy of infrastructure 289
7.2.3. Labour cost and labour skill 290
7.2.4. Economic factors 290
7.2.5. Market factors 292
7.2.6. Contextual environment factors 293
7.2.7. Export initiation 294
7.2.8. Location of the firm 294
7.2.9. Common export problems (Barriers) 295
7.2.10. Current export capacity constraints of firms in Zimbabwe 296
7.2.11. Current coping strategies by exporting firms 297

7.2.12. Exporters' perception of trade promotion organisations 297
7.2.13. Government policy and conducive export environment 298
7.2.14. Export knowledge and the internationalisation process 299
7.2.15. Foreign language proficiency 300
7.2.16. Technological capability and export performance 301
7.2.17. Export development and export performance 302
7.2.18. Export promotion by Government agencies 302
7.2.19. Innovation and export performance 303
7.2.20. Trade facilitation and export performance 304
7.2.21. Export financing and access to capital 305
7.2.22. Trade information and export performance 306
7.3. Mediating effects of the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) 307
7.3.1. Adaption of the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) 308
7.3.2. Export commitment 313
7.3.3. Export promotion programmes 314
7.3.4. International experience 314
7.4. Moderating effects of foreign market attractiveness 317
7.4.1. Foreign market attractiveness 317
7.5. Summary of the research findings 319
7.6. Export performance measurements 322
7.7. Control variables 322
7.8. Chapter summary 322

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 324

8.0. Introduction 324

8.1. Theoretical implications and contribution to the body of knowledge 325

8.1.1. Theory Development 325

8.1.2. Factors that affect the export performance of the manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe 326

8.1.3. Mediating effect of export marketing mix (4Ps) strategy 327

8.1.4. Moderating effect of foreign market attractiveness 328

8.1.5. Identification of gaps in literature 328

8.1.6. Methodological contributions 329

8.1.7. Use of Partial Least Squares in export research 329

8.2. Practical implications for firm managers 329

8.3. Practical implications for public policy makers 331

8.4. Strengths and limitations of the study 334

8.5. Direction of future research 336

8.6. Concluding remarks 338

REFERENCES 339

APPENDICES 414

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1:	Comparison of Zimbabwe's Economic Indicators with Regional Economies.....	8
Table 1.2:	Balance of Payments Snapshot (USD million)…….…….…….…	10
Table 1.3:	List of Major Food and Beverage Manufacturing Exporters……..……	27
Table 2.1:	Examples of Export Performance Measures……...……	47
Table 2.2:	Literature Review of Export Performance Measures……...……..	51
Table 2.3:	Summary of Export Performance Measurements……...……	56
Table 4.1:	Summary of Hypotheses & Enhanced Export Performance……...……	139
Table 5.1:	Distribution of Target Population of the Informants from the Firms…….	156
Table 5.2:	Common Types of Variables Classified by Level of Measurements……...……...	176
Table 5.3:	Advantages and Disadvantages of Questionnaires……..……...…	183
Table 5.4:	Advantages of Smart PLS-SEM……..……...	215
Table 5.5:	Measurement Model Rule of Thumb…….…….……	216
Table 6.1	Distribution of Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms in Zimbabwe…….	226
Table 6.2:	Total Population, Sample Drawn and Response Rate…….....	227
Table 6.3:	Summary of Sample Characteristics……..…….	228
Table 6.4:	Distribution of Firms by Number of Employees……..……..	229
Table 6.5:	Responses on Factors that Affect the Export Performance of Firms in Zimbabwe…….	229
Table 6.6:	Test Measures for Non-Response Bias……..…….	232
Table 6.7:	Measurement Model and Significance Values…….……...	235
Table 6.8:	Discriminant Validity……..……...	237
Table 6.9:	Standardised Direct, Indirect and Total Effects (Place)…….....	241
Table 6.10:	Standardised Direct, Indirect and Total Effect (Product)……..……..	243
Table 6.11:	Standardised Direct, Indirect and Total Effect (Promotion)…….……..	245
Table 6.12:	Standardised Direct, Indirect and Total Effect (Price)……..……..	247
Table 6.13:	Summary Results of PLS-SEM Analysis……...……	248
Table 6.14:	Marker Variable Results on Common Method Bias……..…….	250
Table 6.15:	Industry Sector, Codes and Respondents……..……..	251
Table 6.16:	Interview Characteristics of Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms……..……	252
Table 6.17:	Interview Structure – Main Themes and Sub-Themes……..……..	253
Table 6.18:	Thematic Analysis of the Quantitative Interviews……..	254
Table 6.19:	Adaptation of the Export-Marketing Mix Strategy……..……...	261
Table 7.1:	Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative Results……..……	321

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1:	Zimbabwe Economic Performance Since 2010	5
Figure 1.2:	Zimbabwe Trade Balance Trend	7
Figure 2.1:	Strategic Export Model	94
Figure 2.2:	Chetty and Hamilton Export Performance Model	96
Figure 2.3:	Zou and Stan Export Performance Model	98
Figure 2.4:	Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee	101
Figure 3.1:	Porter's Diamond Model	110
Figure 3.2:	Drivers of Internationalisation (Yip's Model)	119
Figure 3.3:	Export Performance Research Model	122
Figure 4.1:	Conceptual Framework	126
Figure 5.1:	Research Design	150
Figure 5.2:	From Philosophy to Action	199
Figure 5.3:	Exploratory Design: Instrument Development Model	204
Figure 5.4:	The Mixed Methods Research Model	205
Figure 6.1:	Structural Model 1 – Place as Mediator	240
Figure 6.2:	Structural Model 2 – Product as Mediator	242
Figure 6.3:	Structural Model 3 – Promotion as Mediator	244
Figure 6.4:	Structural Model 4 – Price as Mediator	246

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS	: Analysis of Movement Structures
BWP	: Botswana Pula
CEPECS	: Computerised Export Payments Exchange Control System
COMESA	: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CZI	: Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries
ELG	: Export-Led Growth
EU	: European Union
FTA	: Free Trade Area
GBP	: British Pound
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
LISREL	: Linear Structural Relations
PLS-SEM	: Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
RBZ	: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
SACU	: Southern African Customs Union
SADC	: Southern African Development Community
SME	: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Science
SSA	: Sub-Saharan Africa
USD	: United States Dollar
ZAR	: South Africa Rand
ZIMASSET	: Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation
ZimStat	: Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
ZIMRA	: Zimbabwe Revenue Authority

KEY WORDS

1. Adaptation
2. Export Commitment
3. Export-marketing Mix Strategy
4. Export Performance
5. Export Promotion Programme
6. Foreign Market Attractiveness
7. International Business
8. International Experience
9. International Marketing
10. International Trade
11. Place
12. Price
13. Product
14. Promotion
15. Zimbabwe-Sub-Saharan Africa

ABSTRACT

Firm export performance is regarded as one of the key indicators of the success of a firm's export operations, and as such, has been an extensively studied phenomenon. Numerous studies have been conducted pertaining to providing a better understanding of the factors (firm- or environment-specific) and behaviours (e.g., export strategy) that make exporting a successful venture. However, the research results to date are far from being uniform and conclusive. The objective of this study is to establish key factors that enhance export performance, and to investigate how the interplay between certain internal resources and capabilities, and their interaction with the external environment, contribute to the export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. The study contributes specifically to the export performance literature that has featured in international business, international entrepreneurship and international marketing.

This study attempts to develop and test a comprehensive model of firm export performance that investigates the mediating effects of export marketing mix strategy (4Ps on the association between export commitment, international experience, export promotion programmes, and export performance. Theoretical foundations are drawn Porter's Diamond Theory on Competitive Advantage, internationalisation process, and the resource-based view theories as frameworks for the analysis of the study. The study applied a mixed sequential approach using qualitative and quantitative techniques. The data for this study consists of a 49-questionnaire survey and 18 semi-structured in-depth interviews carried out in 2017, and conducted with key informants in the two industry sub-sectors in Zimbabwe. The quantitative data analysis applied a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), and content analysis has been used to develop the interview themes for the qualitative study. The study has found that product and place (distribution) have been the most adapted marketing-mix strategies (out of the 4Ps that are a fundamental aspect of the marketing literature) for the firms, with promotion and price highlighted as the least adapted strategies. The study confirms positive relationship between international experience, export commitment, and export-marketing-mix strategy (4Ps), with export performance. Export commitment, place, product and foreign market attractiveness have emerged as strong antecedents (precursors) of export performance in the study.

This thesis contributes to the better understanding of the value and importance of particular internal, firm-specific resources and capabilities as determinants of a firm's export strategy and performance. The theoretical and methodological grounding of this study contributes to the advancement of export related research in several respects. First, by providing better specification of the nature of the effects, direct or indirect, of particular resource factors on export initiation, strategy and performance. Second, by examining both the individual and concurrent effects of the resource variables on export strategy and performance. Third, by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis to validate construct measurements, and utilisation of structural equation modelling to improve validity, reliability and error levels. Fourth, by employing a composite measure of export performance, including financial and non-financial options. Fifth, by contrasting the empirical findings with the management's subjective (perceptual) observations of the investigated relationships within a same data sample. The study further provides recommendations for future research, public policy makers and firm managers to improve their export development programmes in Zimbabwe and Sub-Saharan Africa in general.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

Globalisation of trade has induced an ever-increasing number of firms to engage in international operations (Mühlbacher, Dahringer & Leihs 2006; Leonidou & Katsikeas 2010; Chang & Fang 2015 and Chen, Sousa & He 2016). Exporting is one of the strategic options for firms to internationalise and has remained the most frequently used foreign market entry modes used (Morgan & Katsikeas 1997; Zhao & Zou 2002; Katsikea, Theodosiou & Morgan 2007, Sousa, Martinez-López & Coelho 2008 and Chen), as it gives firms high levels of flexibility and requires minimal financial, human, and resource commitments when compared to other international entry modes (Leonidou 1995 and Sousa 2004). Furthermore, exporting allows firms to acquire market knowledge, as it often requires them to compete in diverse and less familiar environments (Czinkota 1994). Knowledge acquired through exporting can be applied not only in foreign markets, but also in the domestic market, thereby rendering firms more competitive (and, thus, more successful) abroad and at home.

Furthermore, exporting can enable firms to acquire or develop new resources, which may be also be used by firms to gain competitive advantage both abroad and in the domestic market (Czinkota 1994). For instance, achieving superior export performance levels in a specific export market may require the firm to acquire or develop particular technology. Nonetheless, such technology may also give the firm competitive edge in its domestic market, thereby contributing to augmenting the firm's level of domestic performance. Exporting is also very important for public policy makers and researchers. In this context, exporting enables nations to accumulate foreign exchange reserves to finance their imports, to increase their productivity levels, and to create more job opportunities, thereby fostering economic and social prosperity (Czinkota 1994 & Ronkainen 1995). As a consequence,

researchers view exporting as a challenging and promising are or theory development in international marketing (Zou & Stan 1998 and Sousa, Martinez-López & Coelho 2008).

As a result of several benefits that exporting can bring to firms and nations, over the last five decades many researchers have devoted their research efforts to the identification of the variables which influence firms' export performance. However, and despite notable progress in our understanding of the drivers of export performance of firms, knowledge on this topic is still limited and the export performance literature frequently yields inconsistent results (Sousa, Martinez-López & Coelho 2008). In this context, researchers have investigated the impact of a large variety of factors on export performance, including industry antecedents (Ito & Pucik 1993 and Das 1994), environmental factors (Cavusgil & Zou 1994 and Cadogan, Sundqvist, Salminen, & Puumalainen 2012), and organisational antecedents (Cadogan, Sundqvist, Salminen, & Puumalainen 2012 and Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies 2012). Among the factors just outlined, organisational variables are the ones which have been more often examined by researcher. This may be explained by the fact that organisational predictors are more under the control of the firms. As such, organisational factors can potentially be used by firms to shape their levels of export success.

Organisational factors investigated by researchers as antecedents of export performance include managerial characteristics (Katsikeas, Piercy & Ioannidis 1996 and Baldauf, Cravens & Wagner 2000), organisational structures (Wengel & Rodrigez 2006), organisational resources and capabilities (Cadogan, Kuivalainen & Sundqvist 2009 and Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies 2012), organisational systems (Shoham, Evangelista & Albaum 2002 and Cadogan et al., 2005), and organisational strategies (Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004; Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008 and Hultman, Robson & Katsikeas 2009).

Exporting has historically been the most frequently used mode of foreign market entry, because it constitutes a viable strategic option for a firm to expand its operations beyond domestic borders at a low risk (Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Samiee 2002). This has caught the

attention of particularly two interest groups: public policy makers and firm managers. Public policy makers perceive exporting as a means of augmenting national prosperity, while managers use exporting as an internationalisation strategy to ensure corporate growth and repel competition. Common to both interest groups remain a strong desire of more clarity, regarding the determinants of export performance (Samiee & Walters 1990 and Czinkota 1994). The literature on export performance generally lacks a comprehensive theory base and remains fragmented to this day. This fragmented and lack of a general theory originates in (i) numerous studies that adopt inconsistent methodological and analytical approaches (ii) substantial number of determinants of export performance, and (iii) contradicting and confusing findings on the implications of the different determinants of export performance (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Madsen (1987); Chetty and Hamilton (1993); Zou and Stan (1998); Katsikeas, Leonidou and Morgan (2000); Sousa, Martinez-Lopez and Coelho (2008) and Zou, Daekwan and Cavusgil (2009), have all contributed with noteworthy efforts to synthesise the export performance literature through traditional literature reviews and hybrid approaches, which combine vote-counts with narrative reviews, to reveal discrepancies in the literature.

It is evident from the reviews that determinants of export performance that stand out, and as widely discussed, but least understood in terms of their mediating and moderating effect are international experience, export commitment, export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), export promotion programmes, and foreign market attractiveness. The lack of consensus leaves both public-policy makers and firm managers without theoretical guidelines for improving domestic policies and adapting firms toward exporting. The conventional narrative reviews indeed provide indications of the current state of the literature, but suffer from subjectivity and all too easily ignore findings that are not in alignment with ideology and theory (Stanley & Jarrell 1989 and Stanley & Doucouliagos 2012). Practical policy, nevertheless demands clarity, although conflicting finings characterise academia. This thesis accommodates the shortcomings of narrative reviews by investigating the mediating and moderating effect among international experience, export commitment, export-

marketing mix strategy (4Ps), export promotion programmes, foreign market attractiveness and export performance.

The performance and growth of exports, has throughout the world, been of great interest to among others, economists, entrepreneurs, managers, governments, financial institutions, and non-governmental organisations, (Baker 1992). Globally, exports are being highly regarded for the pivotal role in promoting grassroots economic growth, and equitable sustainable development. Zimbabwean manufacturing companies have been facing and are still facing serious competition from foreign products. This cut-throat competition seems to be intensifying and fuelled by the enhanced globalisation agenda, with regional integration also proving to be the hallmark of the new global economic architecture.

In addition, there is deepening integration in regional blocs to which Zimbabwe is a member, such as the Southern African Development (SADC) and the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), thereby making the movement of goods across nations cost effective or "free" as said in international economics parlance (Hurd 2011). A typical example is the COMESA bloc whose envisaged migration from being a Free Trade Area (FTA) to becoming a Customs Union (CU) results in duties being significantly lowered down, while other non-tariff barriers are also being abolished. Against this backdrop, the Zimbabwe manufacturing sector has struggled for quality and competitiveness. The ripple effect of this scenario has meant that the country's exports have remained very depressed and a negative trade balance has been experienced for some time now (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2016a).

The Zimbabwean economy underwent a period of decline starting around the year 2000, following the adoption of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, resulting in a serious erosion of capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector and a heavy dependence on imports. As shown in Figure 1.1 below, the contribution of the manufacturing sector to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been very insignificant.

GDP Growth Rate (%)

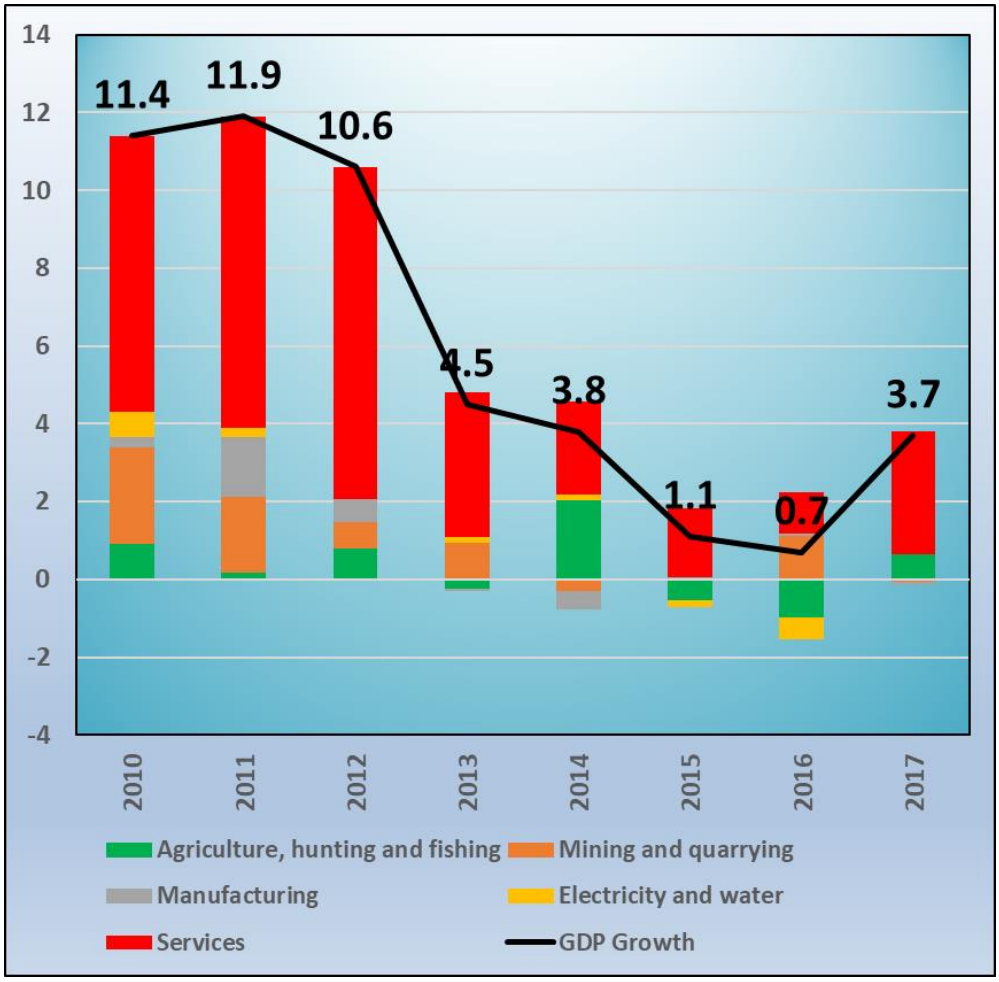

Figure 1.1: Zimbabwe Economic Performance
Source: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2017)

Services accounted for most growth witnessed during the period 2010 to 2017. This is not a sustainable source of medium to long term growth. Productive sectors, except mining, remain subdued. Given the strong synergies between agricultural sector and the manufacturing sector, low agricultural production appears to impact negatively on the performance of the manufacturing sector.

The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2015) pointed out that the liquidity crunch that has been negatively affecting the Zimbabwe economy for the past decade, requires that exports be enhanced or improved, since exports remain the chief source of financial liquidity. The manufacturing sector is very critical to economic growth, prosperity and higher standard of living. Part of the reason for that is its multiplier effect. More than any other sector in the economy, manufacturing creates the most wealth (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2016a). Manufacturing pays higher wages and provides greater benefits, on average, than other industries. It performs almost two-thirds of private sector research and development, creates the highest number of jobs to support the industry while serving the surrounding communities, and contributes to around 8 percent of Zimbabwe's total exports (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2016).

According to the Reserve Bank (2017) over the period January to December 2016, merchandise exports decreased by 6.9 %, from USD3,614.2 million realised in 2015 to USD3,365.8 million during the corresponding period in 2016. Similarly, merchandise imports for the period January to December 2016 at USD5,350.9 million, declined by 11.7% from USD6,062.3 million realised over the comparative period in 2015. However, import expenditure has continued, over the years, to be higher than export receipts, thereby resulting in a trade deficit.

Figure 1.2 shows that Zimbabwe's overall trade balance has been mainly negative during the period 1997 to 2016. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2017) and Karedza & Govender (2017) concurred that exports have remained subdued due to a number of reasons that include, loss of competitiveness (appreciation of the United States dollar, which is currently the main currency of exchange in Zimbabwe; reliance on primary products and falling commodity prices.

USD million

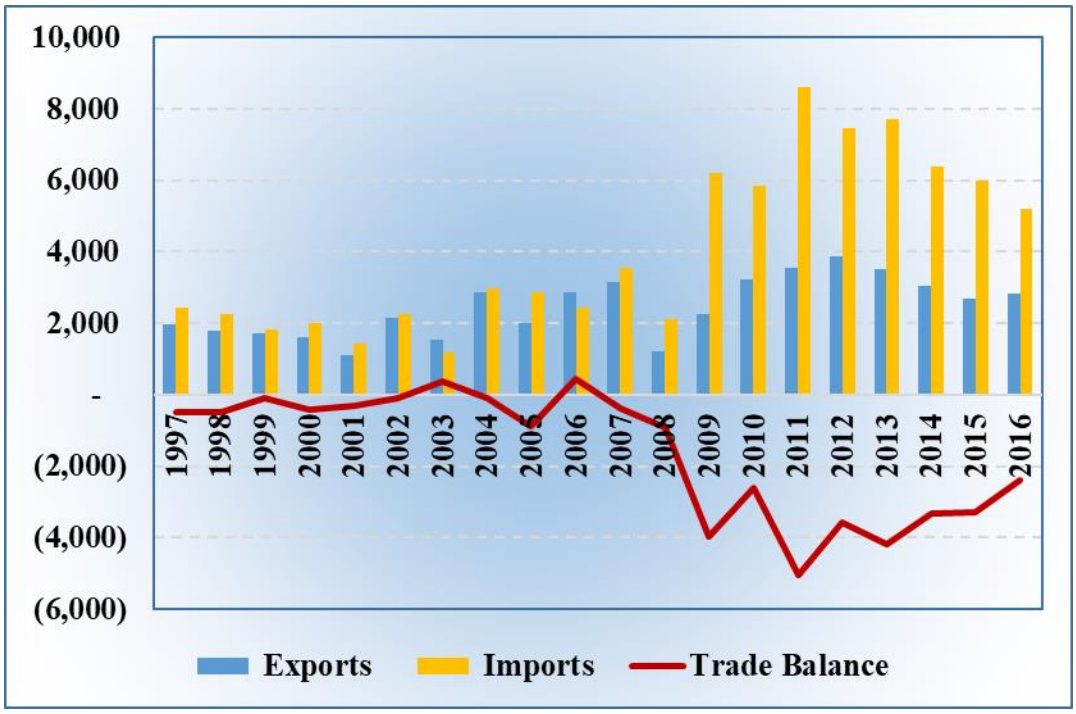

Figure 1.2: Zimbabwe Trade Balance Trend
Source: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2017)

The trade balance is also negatively affected by the high import bill due to the high propensity for imported goods, low domestic production and cheaper import alternatives.

The Reserve Bank (2017) argues that Zimbabwe's continued reliance on imports of finished goods, including food and beverages, is unsustainable, as it undermines efforts to resuscitate domestic industrial production, leading to significant trade and current account deficits. Against this backdrop, this study intends to identify socio-economic strategies that could be employed to enhance export performance of the country's food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. The Reserve Bank (2017) further states that the Zimbabwean economy has not been performing well as compared to its regional counterparts, as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Comparison of Zimbabwe's Economic Indicators with Regional Economies as at 31 December 2017 (USD billion)

Country	GDP (USD)	Inflation Rate (%)	GDP Growth (%)	Govt. Budget (%)	Debt/GDP (%)	Interest Rate (%)	Current Account
Nigeria	405	16.10	-0.52	-1.60	18.60	14.00	-1.80
South Africa	295	5.10	1.00	-3.90	51.70	6.75	-3.30
Kenya	71	9.40	4.70	-8.10	55.20	10.00	-5.20
Zambia	20	6.60	3.60	-8.10	31.00	12.50	-3.70
Zimbabwe	**16**	**0.14**	**0.60**	**-1.70**	**84.20**	**9.17**	**-9.20**
Botswana	15	1.40	0.80	0.20	22.80	5.50	3.60

Source: Reserve Bank (2017)

Zimbabwe's current account deficit of -9.20 shows that its export sector and other foreign currency inflow generating activities have not been performing well.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Given the importance of exporting to both nations and firms, an array of international research has focused on understanding the factors that determines successful performance in export. In particular, recent years have seen increasing attention being given to the identification and assessment of international business competencies that underpin export performance of firms (Knight & Kim 2009, Kaleka 2012, Chang & Fang 2015 and Chen, Sousa & He 2016). However, previous studies have not comprehensively examined major factors that affect export performance of firms, the role played by managerial characteristics (export commitment, international experience, the mediating effect of export marketing mix strategy on export performance, and the impact of foreign market attractiveness on the association between export market mix strategy and export performance.

Moreover, majority of the prior studies in this direction were focused on Western and advanced economies, hence, an understanding of the relationship between such competencies and export performance in the developing economies' context is still lacking (Boso, Oghazi, Cadogan & Story 2016 and Kabagambe, Ogutu & Munyoki 2012). Considerable evidence from prior studies points to differences between advanced and developing economies in factors important for export. More importantly, exporting firms operating from developing economies have to manage multiple export market challenges, such as resource constraints (Tesfom & Lutz 2006a and Boso et al., 2016), little international experience (Gries & Naudé 2010), lack of marketing knowledge and information (Tesfom & Lutz 2006a), complex regulatory system and underdeveloped institutions and structures supporting international operations (Bell, Crick & Young 2004 and Boso et al., 2016), and significant tariff and non-tariff barriers applied to their manufactured exports (Korneliussen & Blasius 2008). Given these differences, more study and data is need from the context of developing economies to broaden knowledge on the subject (Okpara 2009; Boso et al., 2016 and Kabagambe et al., 2012). This thesis, therefore generates better understanding through step-by-step disentangling the complex relationship between managerial characteristics, export marketing mix strategies and export performance in a developing economy context, Zimbabwe.

The manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe has over the last decade suffered from the economic downturn, which the country experienced. Its contribution to total exports has remained extremely low over the years (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2016). Despite numerous Government and Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe efforts to encourage more exports, through various export oriented policies, and export incentive schemes, the annual contribution of the manufacturing sector to total exports remains subdued at around 8%, compared to mining sector at 54%, agriculture 30%, hunting 2%, and services 6% (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2016).

Zimbabwe's exports have featured prominently in recent headlines, and the widening of the current account deficit over the last five years has brought the secular slowdown in export

growth into sharp relief. Even as other less advanced economies are emerging from recession, Zimbabwe's export growth continues to disappoint. Despite efforts by the Government of Zimbabwe and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, geared towards containing the country's import bill, export growth has not been adequate to surpass that of imports, resulting an estimated USD1, 985.1 million negative trade balance in 2016. This situation is not sustainable (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2017). Table 1.2 shows a trend of Zimbabwe's annual trade deficits over the past recent years, and projections for 2017.

Table 1.2: Balance of Payments Snapshot (USD million)

Item	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Current Account Balance	**-2,539.2**	**-2,247.5**	**-1,519.4**	**-1,283.9**	**-826.5**
Trade Balance (Goods)	**-2,947.1**	**-2,589.1**	**-2,448.1**	**-1,985.1**	**-1,537.3**
Merchandise Exports (free on board)	**3,861.8**	**3,717.2**	**3,614.2**	**3,365.8**	**3,669.5**
Of which, Agriculture	*1,047.5*	*981.2*	*1,015.9*	*1,036.3*	*1,113.5*
Mining	*2,223.5*	*2,13.4*	*2,089.2*	*1,910.1*	*2,098.6*
Manufacturing	*487.0*	*532.8*	*417.1*	*325.1*	*360.7*
Merchandise Imports (free on board)	**6,808.9**	**6,306.3**	**6,062.3**	**5,350.0**	**5,206.8**
Of which, Food	*658.1*	*352.3*	*586.3*	*629.1*	*375.2*
Fuel	*1,364.7*	*1,393.6*	*1,460.9*	*1,455.9*	*1,539.5*
Capital & Financial Account Balance	**1,687.6**	**2,095.8**	**1,632.3**	**891.2**	**711.2**
Errors and Omissions	***656.2***	***111.5***	***-138.6***	***206.3***	***0.0***
Overall Balance	**-195.4**	**-40.3**	**-25.8**	**-186.4**	**-115.2**

Source: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2017)

Zimbabwe continues to experience a huge trade deficit due to the poor performance of exports exacerbated by a huge import bill, which is mostly consumptive (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2017). Value added (manufactured) exports, which the Government, over the years, has put considerable efforts to enhance their performance (cf. par. 4.1.2.1), has not been performing well. Manufactured exports have not been performing well over the last four years (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2017). There are seven manufacturing subsectors

in Zimbabwe namely: clothing and textile; furniture; processed foods; beverages; engineering products; leather and footwear, and agricultural inputs. Processed food and beverages industries or subsectors have been selected for this study because, under the SADC coordination of sectors, Zimbabwe is responsible for food, agriculture and natural resources and the country has potential improve production and processing of food products (Government of Zimbabwe 2013).

The recent availability of firm-level micro data has highlighted the importance of firm characteristics in determining trade flows. Food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe are heterogeneous and the characteristics of the firms that export are different from those that do not. Firms that export are typically more productive, more skilled labour intensive and more capital intensive (Bernard, Jensen & Schott 2007, 2010, 2011 and Wagner 2007, 2012) and within the set of exporters, the more productive firms export more products to more destinations and export larger volumes to each market (Bernard, Jensen & Schott 2010). It follows that as these characteristics improve, exports will rise accordingly. Encouraging improvements in the productivity of Zimbabwean manufacturing firms (i.e., reductions in inefficiency or increases in technology), or the quality of inputs they use (i.e., skilled labour, services such as design sales or support, components etc.) will therefore have an effect on the overall Zimbabwe exports. Competitiveness of manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe is often discussed in the context of the relative cost of production. The food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe are faced with high costs of funds, high cost of power, high costs of urban council charges, poor infrastructure, low demand and low capacity utilisation. Furthermore, the firms have to compete with goods from countries with low cost bases.

Export performance research at the firm level in emerging economies in Africa is limited, as studies have largely focused on the country level. Rankin, Söderbom and Teal (2006) contend that in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), without export involvement, the domestic market will remain weak and unlikely to boost firm's output in the region into growth. The overall internal domestic markets of African countries are too small to propel growth if

firms are not encouraged to internationalise their operations (Kuada 2007 & Wolf 2007). Therefore, the export involvement of African firms represents one of the most important policy initiatives to lead the African continent to socio-economic development (Ibeh, Wilson & Chizema 2012; Kuada 2007; Rankin, Söderbom & Teal 2006; and Wolf 2007).

In order to identify key factors that contribute to the of export performance of firms in the food and beverage manufacturing industry in Zimbabwe, an empirical research has been conducted. The work of existing research is not only limited because it overlooks the peculiarity nature of various industries under the manufacturing sector, but is also skewed towards situations prevailing in advanced economies, and studies have mostly been carried out at the national level.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The main research objective of this study is to identify key factors that contribute to the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. The sub-research objectives of the study are: -

1.2.1. To establish key factors that affect the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe;

1.2.2. To examine mediating effects of export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) on the association between export commitment, international experience, export promotion programmes, and export performance;

1.2.3. To examine the moderating effect of foreign market attractiveness on the association between export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), and export performance; and

1.2.4. To develop and test a mediating and moderating export performance model.

1.3. Research Questions

The main research question of this study is: what are the key factors that contribute to the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe? The specific research questions are: -

1.3.1. What are the key factors that affect the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe?

1.3.2. What are the mediating effects of export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) on the association between export commitment, international experience, export promotion programmes, and export performance?

1.3.3. What is the moderating effect of foreign market attractiveness on the association between export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), and export performance? and

1.3.4. What mediating and moderating export performance model can be developed?

1.4. Hypotheses for the research

In order to address the aforementioned, it is hypothesised with respect to the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe that: -

H1: Adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy (place, product, promotion, and price) contributes positively to export performance;

H2: Export commitment contributes positively to the adaption of the export-marketing mix strategy (place, product, promotion, and price);

H3: The use of export promotion programmes contributes positively to adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy (place, product, promotion and price);

H4: International experience contributes positively to adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy (place, product, promotion and price);

H5: Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) mediates the association between export commitment and export performance;

H6: Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) mediates the association between export promotion programmes and export performance;

H7: Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) mediates the association between international experience and export performance; and

H8: The greater the attractiveness of the foreign market, the stronger the association between export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and export performance.

1.4. Justification for the study

For over fifty decades, academics and governmental institutions have paid increased attention to identifying the potential drivers of firms' export behaviour and performance. This aims not only at advancing the international business literature, but also at providing useful support to practitioners. Nevertheless, that various topics within the international business literature have been frequently investigated, there still remain conflictive issues.

Particular to the case of manufacturing firms is the fact that the reasons that move companies to internationalise are closely linked to the personal and professional experiences of the owner/manager and his/her views regarding the future of the firm, as commitment to exporting is likely to be determined by one individual or a small management team (Welch & Luostarinen 1988; Boter & Holmquist 1996; Crick & Chaudhry 1997; Lautanen 2000; Lloyd-Reason & Mughan 2002 and Hutchison Quinn & Alexander 2006). As decision making in a firm is contingent upon managerial perceptions, it is doubtful that decisions for growth in foreign markets will be taken unless the management exhibits positive views regarding opportunities and potential barriers concerning international expansion (Vida, Reardon & Fairhurst 2000). Nevertheless, there is lack of consensus among scholars as to what constitutes comprehensive factors in determining exporting and what constitute mediating and moderating variables between export strategy and export performance (Leonidou, Katsikeas & Piercy 1998).

Once involved in exporting, firms' survival and expansion in a foreign country are strongly contingent upon a better comprehension of the determinants that influence their export performance (Sousa, Martinez & Coelho 2008). Numerous organisational and environmental factors may play a significant role in influencing decision maker's perception regarding export behaviour. During the last five decades, many studies have related one or multiple of these determinants to export behaviour and performance, however most of them have adopted either an internal perspective (managerial and/or organisational factors) or an external one (environmental factors), while only few have considered both

groups simultaneously, thus no general agreement has been reached. In addition, scholars have argued that export performance is a complex phenomenon which should be assessed both from an objective and a subjective point of view, and also that no attempt has been made to examine the relationship between objective and subjective export performance measures (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000). Recent studies highlighted that future research should consider the possibility that certain dimensions of export performance may act as determinants for some other export performance dimensions (Diamantopoulos & Kakkos 2007 and Sousa, Martinez & Coelho 2008).

The decision on adaption of the export marketing mix strategy, which ultimately may determine export performance, has been, is and will be a research area of interest for both academics as well as practitioners (Rosenbloom, Larsen & Mehta 1997; Waheeduzzaman & Dube 2004 and Viswanathan & Dickson 2007). The desirability and/or feasibility of adapting export marketing mix strategy and the impact on export performance, has been subject to numerous controversial debates, however without reaching a general agreement, for more than fifty decades. Despite its relevance, the potential relationship between adaption of the export marketing mix strategy and export performance is characterised by a relative paucity and remains unresolved, therefore, further research attention is need (Shoham & Albaum 1994; Zou, Andrus & Norvell 1997; Lages 2000; Theodosiou & Leonidou 2003; Waheeduzzaman & Dube 2004; Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou 2006).

This study provides policy makers, industrialists, and firm managers with information on trends and directions of the food and beverage market. It also provides information on the relationship between key economic, supply and government factors, and export performance. This information can help in planning and formulating strategies for the future. This study also suggests a mediating and moderating model for export performance for food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. The study also makes some suggestions to enhance the competitiveness of Zimbabwean food and beverage manufacturing firms and to increase the Zimbabwean market share in the global market.

The present study identifies knowledge gap in literature, and proposes for further analysis of the following issues of increased importance for export activity and performance:

- Major factors that affect the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms;
- The role played by managerial characteristics (export commitment, international experience) and the mediating effect of export marketing mix strategy on export performance; and
- The impact of foreign market attractiveness on the association between export market mix strategy and export performance.

This study investigates the determinants of export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, in order to enhance their foreign operations. Exporting brings many benefits to companies. Exporting constitutes an attractive foreign market entry and is an expansion approach for firms who face less favourable economic conditions in their local markets (Hultman, Robson & Katsikeas 2009). At the firm level, earnings from exports assist in raising sales, and productivity, thereby contributing significantly to profitability (Lages & Montgomery 2004).

This study seeks to add to the growing body of empirical research that focuses on export performance, export trade barriers and trade facilitation reforms (Portugal-Perez & Wilson 2010). Public policy makers are aware of the need to re-ignite export growth. However, national economic policy prescriptions for the past five years have not yielded intended or positive results. Exports are expected to be key driver of the economic growth (Zhao & Zou 2002). Increasing exports, particularly manufacturing, may be crucial for the low-skilled job creation needed to substantially reduce high overall and youth unemployment. Furthermore, exports are especially critical given Zimbabwe's widening current account deficit, and the external vulnerability arising from its reliance on volatile capital flows to fund the deficit.

1.5. Definition of key terms and variables

The following definitions are provided to ensure uniformity and understanding of these terms throughout the study. For the purpose of this study, the terms below are defined based on the way they are used for this study, and used interchangeably throughout:

Beverage manufacturing export firm	: an individual firm which is involved in processing and exporting any liquid suitable for drinking such as, milk, alcoholic drink, hydromel (honey diluted in water), oenomel (wine mixed with honey), ginger beer, smoother, refresher, fizz (an effervescent beverage), cider, milk chocolate drink, chocolate drink, fruit crush, fruit juice, fruit drink, soft drink, coffee, tea, and/or drinkable water.
Control variables	: are extraneous or minor variables whose effect one wishes to control or eliminate by holding constant. In this study, firm size, age and industry constitute control variables.
Distribution adaptation	: the adjustment of the exporting firm's channel design in export markets.
Entrepreneurial orientation	: the risk-taking behaviour of the firm's to management in terms of investment decisions and strategic actions in the face of uncertainty, as well as the extent and frequency of product innovations and the related tendency toward technological leadership and the firm's pioneering nature as evident in its propensity to compete aggressively and proactively with industry

rivals (Covin & Slevin 1991; Covin, Slevin & Schultz 1994 and Gibbons & O'Connor 2005).

Export barriers : existence of problems that limit the ability to search, identify and take advantage of export-marketing opportunities that in turn leads to low export performance (Haghighi, Firouzian, & Najafi 2008). Measuring criteria of this variable include high cost of transportation, language barrier, political and cultural differences, lack of expertise in export paperwork, bureaucracy, poor quality packaging and inadequate knowledge about foreign markets.

Export commitment : the degree to which organisational and managerial resources are allocated to exporting activities. Export commitment in this study denotes the amount of various resources devoted by the firm towards exporting activities.

Export market share : is the proportion of a firm's international market share and calculated by dividing the exports of the firms by the total exports of the region or world (expressed as a percentage).

Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) : the means by which a firm responds to the relationship between the internal and external forces to meet the objectives of the established export-marketing plan (Zou, Daekwan, & Cavusgil 2009).

Export orientation	:	actively looking for export market information, attending international fairs and export seminars, and being interested in exporting.
Export performance	:	achievement to the firm's goal when products are exported to foreign markets (Cavusgil & Zou 1994 and Navarro, Acedo, Robson, Ruzo & Losaa 2010a). It concludes indexes such as export sales volume, export sales growth, export profitability, export intensity, achievement expectations and/or assessment of competitors.
Export profitability	:	in this study, export profitability is measured by subjective managerial perception of export profitability. Financial outcomes can be measured objectively as well as subjectively. Objective financial data may provide exact values but data is not easily revealed. Subjective managerial perception may not provide exact value but this data is more accessible and also important because it affects future strategies.
Export promotion programmes	:	programmes offered to firms by Government and public policy makers to acquire foreign market knowledge outside their home country.
Export propensity	:	factors that influence a firm to embark on export business.
Export-sale intensity	:	variable that provides information on a firm's orientation to export and it is measured as

international sales as a percentage of the total sales (Filatotchev & Piesse 2009 and Riding, Orser, Spense & Belanger 2012). It is the export-to-total sales ratio.

Export-sales volume : the quantity, number or value of goods exported in the normal operations of a firm in a specified period.

Exporting : the act of conveying goods abroad or to another country in the course of commerce.

Firm-export experience : is measured by number of years a firm is involved in the export business.

Firm size : is determined by indicators such as financial or stock market value, number of employees, sales or revenue, productive capacity, value of production and/or the added value of production (Delmar 1997 and Ardishvili, Cardozo, Harmon & Vadakath 1998). In this study, number of employees has been used to determine the size of the firm because it is more easily available data as compared to other parameters.

Food manufacturing & exporting firm : a firm that converts raw materials, through a series of processes into food products for consumers and also supply the export market. Examples of manufactured food products include breakfast cereals; cheese; tinned vegetables; savoury snacks such as crisps, sausage rolls, pies and pasties; bread, meat products, such as bacon, fish, sausages, ham, and salami; microwave meals; cakes and biscuits. Raw fruits, vegetables,

grains, meats, seafood and dairy products fresh from the supplier undergo a series of manufacturing processes to prepare products for sale to the public. This often includes preservation processes such as canning, vacuum packing and freezing.

Foreign language skills : ability to speak, understand and communicate in foreign languages so as to facilitate entry into foreign markets, promoting and able to do business with foreign customers.

Foreign market attractiveness : includes factors such as the legal and regulatory frameworks, the level of customer education, customer demand, and potential preferences that exist in various export markets (Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Madsen 1989 and Ogunmokun & Ng 2004).

International business knowledge : amount of familiarity the decision-maker has with international marketing, management, financial, legal systems, ICT applications, will have a positive impact on export results.

International experience : export experience of an individual that has a direct impact on export performance of a firm (Hosseini & Mirjahammard 2011). It is measured in number of years that the individual has worked in international business activities (Stoian, Rialp & Rialp 2011).

Manufactured food and beverage products : bread/bakery, confectionary, cooking oil, sugar, dairy, tinned food, canned fruit, soft drinks, alcohol,

processed milk, tea, coffee, processed meats, and fruit juices.

Mediating effect : occurs when the independent variable no longer has a significant effect on the dependent variable when the mediator is introduced (Baron & Kenny 1986).

Moderating effect : occurs when a variable (moderator) and an independent variable change the strength or even the direction of a relationship between two constructs (dependent and independent variables) in a model (Sharma, Durand & Gur-Arie 1981 and Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a).

Pan-global marketing : adopting a standardised product across the globe as if the whole world were a single market, i.e., selling same goods in same way everywhere.

Product adaptation : the degree to which the firm's actual and augmented product elements are adapted for export markets to accommodate differences in environmental forces, consumer behaviour, usage patterns, and competitive situations (Leonidou, Katsikeas & Samiee 2002). It involves modifying products to be suitable for the habits and tastes of consumers in export markets.

Return on Investment (ROI) : is a measure that investigates the amount of additional profits produced due to a certain investment. Businesses use this calculation to compare different scenarios for investments to see which would produce

the greatest profit and benefit for the firm. The simplest form of the formula for ROI involves only two values: the cost of the investment and the gain from the investment. The formula is as follows: Net profit/Total investment * 100. The ratio is multiplied by 100, making it a percent. This way, a person is able to see what percentage of their investment has been gained back after a period of time.

Social capital : a network of relationships with other firms, economic or social entities, and individuals that generate some form of intangible relational assets valuable to the firm. Such intangible resources are known as social capital, which can potentially endow the firm with strategic resources essential for the creation of sustainable competitive advantage (Lages, Silva & Styles 2009; Nahapiet & Goshal 1998; and Westlund 2006).

Technological capacity : In this study, technological capability refers to the ability to make effective use of technological knowledge in order to assimilate, use, adapt and change existing technologies as well as the ability to create new technologies and to develop new products and processes, in response to the changing socio-economic environment to the advantage of the firms in question (Kim 1997).

1.6. Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations

1.6.1. Assumptions

An assumption is any important "fact" presumed to be true but not actually verified (Gay 1996). An assumption provides a basis to develop theories, and therefore, influence the development and implementation of the research process (Nenty 2009). Assumptions are factors or things that are somewhat out of one's control, but if they disappear, the study would become irrelevant. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) posited that assumptions are so basic that without them, the research problem would not exist. Given that this research study involved both the in-depth interview technique and survey research study seeks to establish ways to enhance export performance of firms in the food and beverage industry, the following assumptions are expected to apply and hold:

- that the respondents have been honest and truthful when they were responding to the questionnaires, and/or interview questions;
- that the selected sample of food and beverage manufacturing exporters is representative of the firms in this industry in Zimbabwe;
- that the interpretation of the data accurately reflects the self-perceptions, and beliefs of the respondents; and
- that the resources (including the literature) used in carrying out the research are valid and reliable.

1.6.2. Limitations

Limitations (of the study) are factors, usually beyond the researcher's control, that may affect the results of the study or how the results are interpreted. A limitation is some aspect of the study that the researcher knows may negatively affect the results or generalisability of the results but over which he or she probably has no control (Gay 1996). Stating

limitations of the study may be very useful for readers because they provide a method to acknowledge possible errors or difficulties in interpreting results of the study. Limitations that are not readily apparent at the start of the research project may develop or become apparent as the study progresses. Limitations are simply factors or conditions that help the reader get a clearer picture of what the study results mean and how widely they can be generalised. The limitations encountered in this study include:

- due to small sample available for the study, results may not be generalisable beyond food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe;
- due to the failure of sample respondents to answer with candour (or frankness), results might not accurately reflect the opinions of all members of the included population; and
- the general literature on export performance, perceptions of chief executive officers, managers, and export officers, is anecdotal (or subjective), not empirically based.

Having noted the above cited limitations, the researcher designed and conducted this study in a manner that preludes having such severe limitations that any results of the study are invalid. In order to control or account for the unwanted influence of extraneous variables and help assure that the study results are both valid and reliable, the researcher used an empirical study, involving a survey, interviews and phenomenology to gain insight into the typical experiences of the participants in order to arrive at sound conclusions. The participants were assured of maximum confidentiality of their information.

1.6.3. Delimitations

Delimitations are factors that affect the study over which the researcher generally does have some degree of control. A delimitation is some aspect of a study which may affect the results or generalisability of the results, but over which the researcher has some measure of

control (Gay 1996). Delimitations describe the scope of the study or establish parameters or limits for the study.

In order to assure manageability of the collected data, the survey instrument used in this study contained mostly multiple-choice questions and did not include open-ended response questions. Due to the large number of potential participants in the study population, and the wide geographical dispersion of the firms, the population involved in the current study focused on food and beverage firms located in six Zimbabwe cities namely Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru, Kwekwe and Chitungwiza.

1.7. Focus of the study

The study has drawn its population and sample from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe database list of registered food and beverage manufacturing exporters. Table 1.3. shows a list of the major food and beverage manufacturing exporters in Zimbabwe.

Table 1.3: List of Major Food and Beverage Manufacturing Exporters

Firm	Sub-Sector	Exported Products
African Distillers Ltd	Beverage	Alcoholic drinks, spirits
Arenel Zimbabwe	Food	Biscuits, sweets
Associated Foods Zimbabwe	Food	Spreads, peanut butter, canned fruit
Beitbridge Juicing	Beverage	Fruit juice
Cairns Food	Food	Potato chips, snacks
Coca Cola Central Africa	Beverage	Soft drinks
Colcom Foods	Food	Processed meats
Cold Storage Company	Food	Processed meats
Consumer Choice	Food	Cereals
Crystal Candy	Food	Sweets
Dairibord Zimbabwe	Beverage & Food	Milk, milk chocolate drink, fruit juice, cheese, yoghurt & bottled water
Dandy Zimbabwe	Food	Sweets
Delta Corporation	Beverage	Alcoholic & soft drinks
Dendairy	Beverage & Food	Milk chocolate drink, fruit juice, cheese
Denver Beverages	Beverage	Fruit drink, bottled water

Firm	Sub-Sector	Exported Products
Food & Industrial Processors	Food	Cereals
Four Seasons Foods	Food	Processed meats and cereals
Innscor International	Food	Pies and pasties; bread
Kefalos Cheese Products	Food	Milk chocolate drink, fruit juice, yoghurt, cheese
La Lucie	Beverage	Coffee
Lobels Biscuits	Food	Biscuits and other dry cakes
Martindale Trading	Beverage	Fruit drinks,
Mc Meats	Food	Processed meats
National Foods Operations	Food	Baking flour, maize meal
Nations Choice Biscuits	Food	Biscuits
Nestle Zimbabwe	Food	Milk products
Olivine Industries	Food	Vegetable oil
Pure Oil Industries	Food	Vegetable oil
Schweppes Zimbabwe	Beverage	Fruit juice, cordials
Speciality Foods of Africa	Food	Processed meats
Surrey Abattoir	Food	Processed meats
Tanganda Tea	Beverage	Tea a7 bottled water
Tetra Breweries	Beverage	Alcoholic drinks
The Biscuit Company	Food	Biscuits
United Refineries	Food	Vegetable oil

Source: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2017)

The firms have been drawn from across the country. The chief executive officers, owners, managers and export officers in the participating firms have been the key respondents in this study. The study has targeted food and beverage manufacturing exporters in major towns in Zimbabwe that have been in operation during the year 2017. The study is descriptive and confirmatory in nature, because it has explored strategies to enhance exports by food and beverage manufacturing firms.

1.8. Research contribution to knowledge and practice

This research aims at addressing the research questions outlined in section 1.3. More specifically, the objectives of this study are to further current knowledge with regard to the main factors that affect export performance of manufacturing firms, the impact of the export marketing mix strategy on the association between managerial export commitment, international experience, export promotion programmes and export performance, and the

impact of the foreign market attractiveness on the association between export marketing strategy and export performance. By pursuing such objectives, this research makes a number of important theoretical, managerial, and methodological contributions.

First, this study introduces important new perspectives with regard to the link between export marketing adaptation and export performance. More specifically, to the best knowledge of the researcher, this is the first study ever to examine the issue of the profile of export marketing adaptation that firms ought to pursue across multiple ventures in order to boost export performance. In this context, existing firm level studies have focused essentially on whether management competencies of characteristics have an impact on export performance. Therefore, this study makes an important contribution as it is the first to investigate the mediating effect of the export marketing mix strategy on the association between export commitment, international experience, export promotion programmes and export performance.

The research study contributes to knowledge and future organisational practice on the of export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms. The study contributes to knowledge that relates to gaps in the literature on export performance of firms in less developed countries. This study contributes to the literature in the following ways:

- Development of theory by drawing from the Porter Diamond Theory of National Advantage, this study enhances our understanding how the interplay between resources and capabilities and their interaction with the external environment, contribute to export performance. The proposed validated, mediated and moderated conceptual model contributes to theory in export performance literature;

- This study has highlighted the determinants of export performance that can be used by Zimbabwean firms to enhance their export performance. Export commitment, place and product adaptation and foreign market attractiveness, have emerged as key success factors for Zimbabwean firms to enhance their export success. Most

significantly, place (distribution) and products are adapted, which reiterates the relevance of adaptation strategies on enhancing export performance. Thus, the research contributes to the literature by validating two of the adaptation forces (place and product) in a model focusing on emerging-country context in Africa. Word of mouth, participation in trade shows, and shipment of samples, are other forms of promotional strategies adopted by Zimbabwean firms;

- Most significantly, export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) illuminated the impact of international experience, export commitment, and export promotion programmes to influence export performance. Therefore, the findings from this thesis validate the standpoint of the internationalisation theory and the resource-based view, which argue that firms can generate and brand their internal resources into creating a competitive advantage to enhance export performance. This study has further provided the reasons behind the mixed findings of international experience-export performance relationships. It has emerged from this thesis that the intervening mechanism that influences international experience-export performance relationship, are export commitment, export promotion programmes, and export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps);

- Additionally, the mainstream firm export performance and export promotion programmes-related literature, mostly neglects any link between export promotion programmes and other variables in establishing relationships between export promotion programmes and export performance. Empirical tests of the proposed hypotheses have revealed that the indirect impact of export promotion programmes on export performance is achieved through adaptation forces (4Ps). Thus using export promotion programmes has an impact on strategic decisions on the export-marketing strategy (4Ps). Therefore, this study contributes to the tenets of the resource-based view theory by adding export promotion programmes as a domestic resource in terms of knowledge and training of exporting to managers so as to achieve their export goals. Hence, this study contributes to export performance

literature by expanding the literature on external determination to reflect the domestic environment of the firm;

- This thesis contributes to the body of knowledge by incorporating moderating effects of foreign market attractiveness on the association between export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and export performance. Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and performance relationships depend on foreign market attractiveness, thus the greater the attractiveness, the stronger the relationships. The main theoretical implications drawn here indicate that if a positive perception of foreign markets is adopted by exporters, export operations adhere to specific legal and regulatory frameworks in different countries by applying effective adaptation strategies (4Ps) to respective foreign market conditions. Therefore, managers of firms can achieve profitability through management of organizational resources, creating synergic benefits by capitalising on opportunities in foreign markets. On the other hand, if managers do not comply with the requirements of various export markets, they will experience negative performance as adaptation levels will be low. This study provides further insights by examining the effect of foreign market characteristics in terms of export competition and cultural similarities in relation to export performance to reiterate its relevance in exporting literature in the context of emerging countries. Thus, the study has addressed the call by some scholars in the field, to advance theory on domestic and foreign market characteristics (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008 and Lages & Sousa 2010);

- It has been possible to identify some gaps in the literature by conducting a detailed examination of export performance at firm level and the findings have been explained in chapters 5 and 6. Identification of these gaps was helpful in formulating the research questions and hypotheses;

- This research also makes important methodological contributions. More specifically, this is the first study to adopt a multilevel approach to the investigation of export performance antecedents. Existing export performance studies adopt single level of analysis techniques. In this context, unlike single level based techniques, multilevel models allow the researcher to accurately examine the predictors of variance in outcome variable(s). As such, contrary to single level approaches, multilevel modelling techniques enable the researcher to accurately analyse the antecedents of export performance by examining the impact of each element of the export marketing mix strategy (product, place, promotion and price) on the export performance.

- Developing a structural equation model including all key variables, using Partial Least Squares (PLS), which has not been widely used in international trade or export research. Partial Least Squares (PLS) has not been used largely in export performance research (Hulland 1999). Many researchers have preferred to use other structural equation modelling (SEM) techniques such as LISREL (Linear Structural Relations), AMOS (Analysis of Movement Structures) and EQS (Equation Systems). With a moderate-sized sample, PLS has an advantage over other SEM techniques (cf. par 4.2.13). This study gives some evidence that PLS can be effectively used for assessing the relationships between variables in export performance research.

The above discussion, clearly indicates that this study has significantly contributed to the extant literature in many different ways and has also many positive implications to both policy and practice.

1.9. Organisation of the thesis

This thesis is developed through eight chapters providing details of the theoretical background of the research, research variables and their measurement methods, data source,

analysis and interpretation of the findings, conclusion and recommendations of the research. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the topic, empirical studies conducted on export performance, with specific focus on the major concepts that impact this research. Chapter 3 is classified into three streams (theoretical perspective, Porter's Diamond Theory and Yip's Model of Internationalisation) which provide the theoretical framework within which this study fits and the platform on which the research objectives and questions have been developed. A research model, conceptual definitions of variables and detailed hypotheses of the study are presented in Chapter 4. Operational definitions and measurements of the variables, the survey procedures and methods used to collect the data, an overview of the sample characteristics, and the statistical techniques for data analysis in this study are discussed in Chapter 5. The reasons for targeting food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe are detailed in this chapter. Chapter 6 presents the research findings and tests of the proposed conceptual model as part of the complementary design of the mixed method approach, and analyses of survey data to present the results of the quantitative study. A two-step approach to data analysis in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) has been performed; (1) assessment of the measurement model, and (2) estimation of the structural equation model. The proposed model to be tested is a complex model consisting of mediation and moderation effects. Discussion of the results is presented in Chapter 7. The chapter discusses the determinants of export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, additional results from the qualitative study as well as export performance measurements used in the study and control variables are discussed. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes the work with an overview and implications for firm management. The limitations of the study are also discussed and recommendations for further research are presented in this chapter.

1.10. Chapter summary

The introductory chapter serves as a plan for the thesis. It provides a comprehensive background to the research area; it introduces background, statement of the problem,

objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and focus of the study. This chapter also underlines the novelty of the study and concludes with the structure of the thesis. The next chapter reviews literature on firm-level determinants of export performance, and major impediments to exports by firms.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on firm-level determinants of export performance, and major impediments to exports by firms. Furthermore, various objective and subjective export performance measurements are discussed.

The chapter is divided into eight sections; Section 2.1 reviews literature on definition of export performance, 2.2 presents conceptualisation of export performance, 2.3 unit of analysis, 2.4 outlines measurements of export performance, Section 2.5 outlines firm-level factors associated with export performance, Section 2.6 discusses determinants of export performance, Section 2.7 presents models of export performance, Section 2.8 outlines the characteristics of Zimbabwe exporting firms, and Section 2.9 presents a summary of Chapter 2.

2.1. Export performance

Researchers seem to agree that export performance is a multidimensional construct. In this context, two broad categories of export performance are export sales performance and export profit performance (Zou, Taylor & Osland 1998; Cadogan, Kuivalainen & Sundqvist 2009 and Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies 2012). Sales base assessments of export performance range across numerous outcomes, including export sales volume, export sales revenue, growth in export sales volume, growth in export sales revenue, export market share, ration of exports sales revenue to total sales revenue, and ratio of export sales volume to total sales volume. Profit-based assessments of export performance take into account costs and range across differing outcomes such as export return on investment, absolute export profits, and export gross profit margin. The importance of export sales performance and export profit performance as two critical categories of export performance corresponds

to the notion that organisational success can be classified into outcomes that take account for costs versus outcomes that place emphasis on revenues and that do not reflect costs (Homburg, Müller & Klarmann 2011).

The substantial literature on export performance is colloquially referred to as the most widely researched, but least understood area of international marketing (Zou & Stan 1998; Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000 and Sousa, Martinez-Lopez & Coelho 2008). Shoham (1996) has generally defined export performance as a result of a firm's actions in export markets. Although a growing body of literature has addressed the issue, there is no evenly accepted conceptual framework and operational framework (Cavusgil & Zou 1994 and Shoham 1998). Sousa (2004) identified about 50 dimensions of export performance measures which are classified as subjective and objective measures. Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee (2002) identified export proportion of sales or export intensity, export sales growth, export profit level, export sales volume, export market share, and export profit contribution are mostly used as measures of export performance.

Most issues associated with the literature boils down to the lack of a sound theoretical basis and disagreement across studies on the appropriate measure of export performance and determinants thereof (Leonidou 2002 and Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). The majority of the export performance literature completely neglects a sound theoretical basis and formulate hypotheses without reference to theoretical arguments, while different conceptual definitions, classifications and measures of the determinants of export performance hinder the comparability of studies. This lack of theoretical guidance and inconsistent use of determinants are among the main causes of the conflicting empirical findings that reflects the literature (Zou & Stan 1998 and Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). The first attempts to synthesise the literature on export performance dates back to Madsen (1987); Aaby and Slater (1989) and Chetty and Hamilton (1993). Aaby and Slater (1989) developed the first conceptual framework of casual relationships in their strategic export model, where export performance was evaluated against management influences such as firm characteristics, competences and strategy. Chetty and Hamilton (1993)

extended the strategic export model in a meta-analysis in an attempt to validate the findings of Aaby and Slater 1989), but most of the findings remained inconclusive. The main point of criticism is related to the inclusion of studies that investigated conceptually broader dimensions of export performance (e.g., propensity to export and export barriers) and the omission of the external environment (Zou & Stan 1998).

In spite of the criticism, Aaby and Slater (1989) and Chetty and Hamilton (1993) came up with the first attempt to group internal management influences on export performance. Zou and Stan (1998) theoretically justified the influence of internal determinants on export performance through resource-based theory, but contrary to Aaby and Slater (1989) and uncontrollable determinants. The resource-based theory posits that a firm hold a competitive advantage against rivals through the firm's unique bundle of valuable, rare, inimitable and no-substitutable resources (Penrose 1959; Wernerfelt 1984; Barney 1986; and Barney 1991). This means essentially that the variations in the firm performance is rooted in the heterogeneity between firm's capabilities (bundle of skills and knowledge) and assets (accumulated resource endowments) (Zou & Stan 1998 and Zou, Fang, & Zhao 2003). Cavusgil and Zou (1994) addressed the lack of the external environment by establishing a revisited conceptual model that determined export performance based on an evaluation of specific internal factors in interplay with the external environment (e.g., industry and export market characteristics). The incorporation of the external environment builds on contingency theory, which has its roots in the principle of strategy-environment co-alignment of industrial organisation that centres on the interaction of firms and markets. Cavusgil and Zou (1994) argue accordingly, that external factors influence firms' strategies and export performance, and refer to the two premises: (i) an organisation depends on external forces for recourses, and (ii) an organisation can manage this dependency through strategy development. This means that the impact of different firm characteristics on export performance depends on the environment in which the firm operates.

There are a large number of contributions that look at the possible determinants of export performance. Most of these contributions estimate a gravity model using aggregated trade

data. Very few however, concentrate on the role played by changes in market access conditions in framing trade patterns, besides the impact of specific events such as the entry into force of a trade agreement. Amongst those few, Redding and Venables (20043) consider that determinants of export performance can be split into external and internal components. External components include market access/entry conditions and a country's location *vis à vis* international markets, whereas internal components relate to supply-side conditions. They investigate the relative contribution towards export performance of external geography (particularly linkages to international demand) relative to capacity of internal supply (mainly internal geographical factors) using aggregated trade data. They emphasise on the fact that countries geographically close to regions where there is strong aggregate import demand will tend to have better export growth. Based on standard gravity equation estimations, they find that most of the differential in export performance of various countries and regions since the 1970s is due to differences in the evolution of the external components mentioned above. Research papers providing evidence at the firm level do not really look at the impact of the socio-economic factors on export performance, or the possibility of the mediating effects of export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) on association between export commitment, international experience, export promotion programmes and export performance or the moderating effect of foreign market attractiveness on the association between export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and export performance.

Several broad approaches are used as measures of export performance, but there is no agreement on which is the most appropriate, what represents the need for further research on the potential relationship existing between different export performance dimensions or assessment modes (Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008 and Jalali 2012) once that depending on the measure utilised, different hypotheses may be supported (Nakos, Brouthers & Brouthers 1998). Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan (2000) and Sousa (2004) divided export performance, similarly economic (objective), noneconomic (subjective) and generic measures, dividing them per sales, profit, market share, product related and miscellaneous. As a result, they found that the most used are export sales ratio (export intensity), which fall into the category of sales-related economic

measures. Export intensity represents export sales as a percent of total corporate sales (Cooper & Kleinschmidt 1985; Bijmolt & Zwart 1994; Nakos, Brouthers & Brouthers 1998 and Zou & Stan 1998) and is widely used in the literature. However, it needs to be taken into consideration that export intensity is not a comprehensive measure of export performance but merely provides a partial and static picture of what is essentially a multidimensional/dynamic concept (Reid 1984 and Ahmed & Rock 2012).

Zou and Stan (1998) grouped the measures of export performance into seven categories representing financial static measures (export intensity, profit), financial dynamic (growth), subjective measures based on beliefs and perceptions (success, satisfaction, goal achievement) and composite scale measures that are based on overall scores of a variety of performance measures. Shoham (1998) on the other hand has divided the measures on sales, profitability and change that include sales and profitability. With today's complexity of our world, it seems relevant to measure the firm's export performance as a level of its success. Considering the importance that exports hold in the world's economies, it is not surprising to find a greater number of researches on exports performance in recent years (Sousa & Lengler 2009). Thus, despite some complexity in its measurement (Lages & Montgomery 2004), the literature states that export performance can be operationalised from several perspectives (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch 1994). Zou and Stan (1998) consider three types of export performance: export revenue, profitability and growth. The definition of export performance should be consistent with definition of firm performance in general (Shoham 1998). Therefore, if firms use sales growth as a performance measure, the measure of export performance should be the growth in export sales.

Export performance is a multidimensional construct that needs multidimensional conceptualisation (Sousa 2004). Nevertheless, Sousa and Bradley (2009) utilised three items: export market share, overall satisfaction, and how competitors rate the firm's export performance. Lages, Lages and Lages (2005) considered five aspects of export performance: financial performance, strategic performance, achievement of objectives, and

contribution of individual unit of export (country-product-customer) for the export operations of the firm, and satisfaction with the overall performance of export venture level.

Export performance has essentially been measured in three different ways: economically, strategically and financially (Julian & Ali 2009). The first measure is the one that is being increasingly used and includes indicators such as sales and market share. Strategically, performance can be measured by an increase in market share, achieving a competitive position in export markets. In financial terms, the performance is measured through attitudes or perceptions, such as perceived export success or satisfaction with operations in foreign markets (Cavusgil & Zou 1994).

Greenway, Guariglia and Kneller (2007), in a study of British firms during the period of 1993-2003, concluded that there is a direct relationship between participation in foreign markets and the increase of ex-post financial performance of firms. The results of this study suggest that export-promoting policies could be useful in reducing the level of financial constraints faced by firms, and indirectly increase their investment and productivity. This latter effect may be particularly relevant for SMEs, whose investment is often limited by lack of funding.

In a recent study on Portuguese product exporters, Silva (2012) offered a postulation, also supported by other researchers such as (Ganesh, Kumar, Sen and Vaidya 2001 and Greenaway, Guariglia & Kneller 2007), and stated that exports may have a positive effect on firm financial performance, due to a revenue diversification effect and through the signal given to financial markets. This way firms improve their ability to obtain financing and reduce their dependence on suppliers.

Another research conducted with firms in the Czech Republic (Manole & Spatareanu 2010) shows that only ex-ante firms will have sufficient liquidity to export. Based on review of the literature produced between 1998 and 2005 on the determinants of export performance, Sousa, Martinez-Lopez and Coelho (2008) concluded that the existence of programs

sponsored by governments and non-government agencies positively contribute to the performance of export enterprises. Also researchers Sousa and Bradley (2009) concluded that the use of export assistance programmes is a major determinant of the export performance of Portuguese firms. Therefore, the mentors of public policy should continue to invest in these programmes and encourage firms in these intensive programmes.

The constantly increasing tendency towards a global economy and the subsequent increase in exporting as a result, has inevitably led to a growing interest in the topic of export success as well (Katsikeas, Piercy & Ioannidis 1996). Superior export performance is of vital interest, both from national governments concerned with improving the international competitiveness of their economies, and reducing the extent that they address different problems (Shoham 1998). Apart from being problem-driven, the conceptual definition of export performance is also likely to depend on the research context of a given study (Cooper & Kleinschmidt 1985; Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Sousa 2004; Hult, Ketchen Jr., Griffith, Chabowski, Hamman, Dykes, Pollitte & Cavusgil 2008 and Lages, Silva & Styles 2009). Although finding a uniform definition of export performance in the literature may have been a major problem in the past (e.g., Ford & Rosson 1982 and Cavusgil & Zou 1994), export performance can now be conceptually defined as the outcome of a firm's export activities in export markets (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000; Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008 and Lages, Silva & Styles 2009).

2.2. Conceptualisation of export performance

Although export performance has been at the epicentre of interest in the study of export-marketing, the evaluation of conceptual underpinnings of export performance and its measures has largely been ignored (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000 and Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Indeed, there is little agreement in the literature about a conceptual definition of export performance, as well as about its operational definition (Shoham 1998). In fact, most of the papers on export performance in the past did not even provide a conceptual definition of export performance (Sousa 2004) and empirical efforts

to explore this area are even less developed (Lages & Montgomery 2005 and Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008).

Three performance dimensions were first put forward over 30 years ago, namely sales, profits and change (Madsen 1987), and were heavily adopted by subsequent studies (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008 and Lages, Silva & Styles 2009). More recent efforts, however, focusing explicitly on the conceptualisation and subsequent operationalisation of export performance also point to the existence of three alternative dimensions (Hult, Ketchen Jr., Griffith, Chabowski, Hamman, Dykes, Pollitte, & Cavusgil 2008), namely effectiveness, efficiency and adaptiveness (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000). Cameron (1984) stated that an organization is effective to the extent that it accomplishes its stated goals, whereas, efficiency is defined as the ratio of performance outcomes to the inputs required to achieve them (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000). Finally, adaptiveness refers to the organisation's ability to respond to environmental changes (Kohli, Jaworski & Kumar 1993). According to Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan (2000), most studies emphasised effectiveness and, to a lesser extent, efficiency. Only an extremely limited number of studies focus on adaptiveness, despite its importance as it pertains to exploiting foreign market opportunities, responding to competition and capitalising on new products (Styles 1998 and Karedza & Govender 2017).

2.3. Choosing unit of analysis

Researchers that examine the antecedents of export performance usually adopt either the export function level of analysis or the single export venture level of analysis (Oliveira, Cadogan & Souchon 2012). Export function level studies examine the overall degree of export performance obtained by exporting entity (Brouthers & Xu 2002; Calantone, Kim, Schmidt & Cavusgil 2006); Kuivalainen, Sundqvist & Servais 2007; Cadogan et al., 2012 and Souchon, Sy-Changco & Dewsnap 2012). Single export venture level investigations (Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Katsikeas 2004; Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou 2006 and Hultman, Robson & Katsikeas 2009) focus on the performance outcomes of a single export venture within the firm, with an export venture being defined as a single product or product

line exported by a firm to a specific foreign market (Cavusgil & Zou 1994 and Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004). The export function and the single export venture level of analysis are related, since firms' export functions can be conceptualised as portfolios comprising such firms' various export ventures (Madsen 1998 and Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000). One can, hence, verify the presence of hierarchical ordering in exporting (and, hence, in export performance), as firms' export functions can be considered as higher level units and those firms' export ventures can be thought of lower level units, which are nested within the export functions (hereafter, and for purposes of simplicity, 'export functions' will be referred to as "firms") (Oliveira, Cadogan & Souchon 2012).

The conceptualisation of export performance is significantly influenced by the choice of unit of analysis as the latter is likely to affect the form and availability of performance data (Jacobson 1987). Past export performance studies have used either the firm level or the export venture as the unit of analysis (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000 and Sousa 2008 and Hultman, Robson & Katsikeas 2009). According to Sousa (2004), the selection of unit of analysis is important for the correct operationalisation of export performance, since a study at the firm level seeks success determinants describing the overall export activity of a firm, whereas, a study at the venture level focuses on performance determinants of a particular product/market combination.

The vast majority of the export performance studies have used the firm as the unit of analysis (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000; Hult, Ketchen Jr., Griffith, Chabowski, Hamman, Dykes, Pollitte, & Cavusgil 2008; and Styles, Patterson & Ahmed 2008). This is because most firms tend to evaluate export success on the basis of broad metrics such as sales volume in export markets over the last 12 months. In such firms, export operations are not organised according to export ventures, as export activities are continuous, joined up and interdependent (Sousa 2008). However, researchers agree that a single product line exported to a specific export destination is more likely to form the proper unit of analysis (Cavusgil & Zou 1994; and Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004). This is based on the

premise that at the venture level a deeper knowledge and insight into key drivers of export success can be achieved (Sousa 2004).

Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan (2000) suggest that both the firm or organisational level and the export venture level have certain shortcomings and are problematic when used as a potential unit of analysis. For example, the use of an organisational unit of analysis (e.g., overall business performance as the dependent variable) may obscure any export-specific outcomes of symbolic information use (such as export profitability) (Vyas & Souchon 2003). On the other hand, the majority of export firms tend to export to multiple markets, which could render generalisation from the product/export venture, level very difficult (Richey & Myres 2001). Furthermore, in most exporting firms, export operations are not organised according to export venture, as export activities are continuous, joined up and interdependent. In these businesses, therefore, it would not make sense to examine export success at the venture level, as the venture would not be a viable unit of analysis (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008).

Conversely, the functional level focuses on the overall patterns of export information use in various forms and place greater emphasis on company-specific (e.g., export experience) and environment-specific (e.g., number and location of export markets) variables (Vyas & Souchon 2003). Within this dialectic, the export function is an appropriate unit of analysis (at least for the purposes of the current study) because, a) the vast majority of Zimbabwean firms are small and/or medium-sized and, b) in direct connection to the previous point, most of the small and medium-sized exporting enterprises in Zimbabwe do not have a dedicated export department and it is not unusual for salespeople or managers to deal both with exporting issues and decisions as well as domestic market ones (Williams 2003 and Vyas & Souchon 2003). A detailed discussion and justification of why the export function seems likely to be the most appropriate unit of analysis for this study will follow in chapter 3.

2.4. Measurement of export performance

The conceptualisation of export performance along its three dimensions, namely effectiveness, efficiency and adaptiveness has important measurement implications (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000). Diverse use of export performance measures puts into question the comparability of existing findings (Zou & Stan 1998). In recent years, attempts have been made to develop comprehensive and psychometrically sound measures of export performance (Shoham 1998; Styles 1998; Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000; Lages & Lages 2004 and Lages & Montgomery 2005). As Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan (2000) report in their review of more than 100 articles of pertinent empirical studies to assess and critique export performance, most studies took a unidimensional approach in the conceptualisation and measurement of export performance; only one third of the studies looked at more than one dimension. However, it has been explicitly acknowledged that export success is multi-faceted and cannot be captured by using a single performance indicator (Diamantopoulos 1998), thus providing a strong basis for a multi-dimensional approach to the measurement of export performance.

Past measures of export performance can be broadly categorized as economic and non-economic (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000). From the economic measures, export sales, are most often used to assess export performance, followed by profit-related measures (Sousa 2004 and Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Market share-related measures, on the other hand, are rarely examined and are criticised on the premise that actual market share is difficult to measure (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000). Non-economic measures include market-related, product-related and other miscellaneous non-economic measures. Table 2.1 provides an overview of the measures used in export performance studies.

Another very interesting distinction of export performance measures, widely encountered in the export performance literature is between objective and subjective measures (Shoham 1998; Sousa 2004 and Lages & Montgomery 2005). Indicators that are based on absolute

values such as export intensity, export sales volume, and export market share, among others, are called objective measures. Meanwhile, indicators that measure the perceptual or attitudinal performance such as perceived export success and satisfaction with export sales are considered to be subjective measures (Sousa 2004). Export performance studies might use objective, subjective or both terms of mode of performance assessment. Katsikeas, Leonidou and Morgan (2000) suggest that the majority of the studies on export performance reviewed, tend to employ objective measures. Sousa (2004), however, supports in his review of export performance studies that the majority of them use both modes of assessment. This emphasises the role of exporters' own evaluations and assessments of export performance outcomes (as successful or unsuccessful) and associated degree of satisfaction resulting from them (Diamantopoulos & Kakkos 2007). In this context, it should be stated that success is both particular, against specific objectives, and subjective, in the sense of who selects which goals and which performance benchmarks (Amber & Kokkinaki 1997). Some scholars, on the other hand, support the use of subjective over objective indicators based on more practical criteria such as the following: a) firms are reluctant to provide the researcher with objective financial data (Leonidou, Katsikeas & Samiee 2002), b) decision-makers are guided by their subjective perceptions of firm export performance rather than by objective absolute ratings (Madsen 1989) and, c) objective data are often difficult to interpret (Katsikeas, Piercy & Ioannidis 1996).

According to Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan (2000), using appropriate time horizons in performance measurement is vital, as it can maximise the theoretical causal links between independent variables and performance dependants and minimise the influence of unobservables. In terms of time frame, most studies adopt a dynamic orientation to measure export performance by reporting results over last three or five years (Sousa 2004). Some studies however, are not taking past performance into account (Hart & Tzokas 1999). There is also a very limited number of studies that use measures of anticipated (future) performance (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch 1994 and Robertson & Chetty 2000). Table 2.1 illustrates different performance indicators used by different export performance studies over the past 30 years. The purpose of Table 2.1 is to provide the reader with specific

examples of export performance measures along the conceptualisation lines of effectiveness, efficiency and adaptiveness.

Table 2.1: Examples of Export Performance Measures

	Sales	**Profits**	**Change**
Effectiveness	Satisfaction with export sales (Shoham 1998).	Satisfaction with profitability (Zou & Stan 1998)	Satisfaction with export sales during the past three years (Cadogan, Kuivalainen & Sundqvist 2009).
Efficiency	Export sales volume (Aaby & Slater 1989)	Export profitability (Cavusgil & Zou 1994)	Five year change in export sales as a percentage of total sales (Rose & Shoham 2002).
Adaptiveness	Competitiveness in terms of export sales (Hultman, Robson & Katsikeas 2009)	Competitiveness in terms of export sales (Souchon & Durden 2003).	Quick adapt products to the needs of the customer Kohli, Jaworski & Kumar 1993).

Source: Developed from Literature (2017)

There is no generally accepted criterion for measuring export performance. Shoham (1998) broadly defines export performance as a firm's outcomes achieved in international sales. There is neither an established definition of export performance nor agreement on establishing acceptable performance levels, leading to use of various measurement dimensions (Lages & Sousa 2010). Literature reviews over the period 2000 to 2010 on export performance measurements indicate conceptualisation and methodological limitations hindering theory development and application (Lages & Sousa 2010; Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004 and Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Export performance measurements may be problem-driven rather than theory driven, as studies on export performance differ in definitions and address different problems (Sousa 2004). The

use of different levels of analysis leads to different and sometimes conflicting comprehension of export performance of a firm (Lages & Sousa 2010).

From the literature, it can be deduced that there are two broad approaches to measuring export performance. The first approach divides firms into exporters and non-exporters. The main objective of studies that use the exporter-non-exporter dichotomy (Daniels & Goyburo 1977; Burton & Schlegelmilch 1987 and Cavusgil & Naor 1987) has been to develop an understanding of the characteristics that differentiate the two groups. The most popular statistical methods used for achieving this objective have been chi-square analysis, discriminant analysis, and automatic detection. The major problem with the exporter-non-exporter approach is the assumption that exporting *per se* is a successful action in its own right. The method is oblivious to the fact that firms pursue export for the benefits associated with increased growth and profitability (Aaby & Slater 1989). The results from studies using this approach could reflect strategies of marginally successful exporters, because they are likely to out-number the highly successful exporters.

The second approach to measurement of a firm's export performance has more meaningful indicators. Unlike the categorical approach, this group of studies use a single indicator. The most popular indicators are **export intensity**, defined as export sales as a percent of total sales (Fenwick & Amine 1979; Gartner 1982; Boughanmi, Al-Mandheri Al-Qafi & Omezzine 2007); export profitability (Bilkey 1982, 1978; Christensen, da Rocha & Gertner 1987); and **export growth rate** (Kirpalani & MacIntosh 1980 and Edmunds & Khoury 1986). The export intensity and export growth indicators are preferred to the more direct profit intensity, because most firms are reluctant to reveal their profit figures (Boughanmi, Al-Mandheri Al-Qafi & Omezzine 2007). Two most popular analytical tools utilised by these studies are multiple regression and analysis of variance. There is however, evidence that export performance is a multi-faceted construct, and cannot be captured by a single indicator (Reid 1984; Cooper & Kleinschmidt 1985; Lee & Yang 1990; Walters & Samiee 1990 and Cavusgil & Zou 1994).

In this study, export sales volume, export market share, export profit, return on investment and export intensity indicators have been used to assess export performance. However, particular emphasis has been put on export intensity. The percent of sales exported will be based on the assumption that firms strive to increase the proportion of sales exported. This ratio is of major relevance to the national export promoters such as the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Government, and Zimtrade (the Zimbabwe trade promotion body), who seek to initiate and expand export sales, regardless of their profitability. It is of little significance to an individual firm whose interest is export profitability and not volume or proportion. However, according to one view (Hirsch 1965), while the two objectives do not necessarily coincide, they do not conflict. It has been established that firms that export profitably, can be expected to expand the proportion of sales exported. It appears, therefore, that the export intensity ratio (or indicator), may not pose a serious limitation on validity. This view is corroborated by one study (Dess & Robinson 1984) which found that, though the various measurement approaches exhibit some disadvantages, there is evidence that the findings do not significantly produce different conclusions.

According to Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan (2000) export performance can be measured at different levels such as product, export venture, or firm level. This study examines export performance at the firm level. Analysis at the product level involves an individual product investigation (Matthyssens & Pauwels 1996). Export venture level analysis investigates the success or failure of a particular product in an overseas market (Cavusgil & Zou 1994). Oliveira, Cadogan & Souchon (2012) argue that analysis at the export venture level does not give complete insights into the long-term performance of a firm, as it examines a particular venture instead of the overall export activity of the firm. One strength of investigating export performance at the firm level is that it provides an overall view of the activity of the firm resulting in an in-depth understanding of export operations (Oliveira, Cadogan, & Souchon 2012). Broadly, export performance measurements can be classified into categories, namely objective and subjective measurements. See Table 2.3 for details.

2.4.1. Objective Measures

As a result of generating more consensus among researchers, objective measures are widely used to assess export performance. Madsen (1987) specified the conceptual definition of export performance following three sub-dimensions namely: sales, profits and change. Each of the three sub-dimensions can be divided into objective and subjective satisfaction based measures (Madsen 1987). Shoham (1998) pointed out that although the three sub-dimensions are related, they offer different views of export performance, as demonstrated by their distinctiveness, as a firm may have high profitability, and be disappointed with profit or sales growth. Sousa (2004) observed that five objective measures of export performance commonly used are export intensity, export profitability, export sales growth, export sales volume, and sales efficiency. Export intensity is the most commonly used measure, although there are criticisms regarding its use in assessing export performance (Cooper & Kleinschmidt's (1985). In referring to Cooper & Kleinschmidt's (1985) paper, Sousa (2004) argued that a firm underperforming with a new product having a large foreign market share, might appear to be an outstanding performer to another firm with a large market share of relatively small foreign market. Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b) observed that export profitability can be measured by objective items such as return on assets, return on investments, and export market share. Crick, Kaganda and Matlay (2011) further observed that the advantages of using financial measurements are their objectivity, and comparisons across firms. However, it is difficult in many less developed countries to obtain objective financial data such as export sales and profitability. Sousa (2004) pointed out that objective measures are considered more reliable for assessing short term export performance.

2.4.2. Subjective Measures

Subjective measurements involve achievements in certain strategic goals like improvement in competitiveness, and increase in market share (Das, 1994; Solberg 2002). Furthermore, satisfaction with export performance can be measured by point scales ranging from "very

unsatisfied" to "very satisfied." (Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b). According to Lages, Abrantes and Lages 2008a satisfaction-based measures provide a richer assessment of each sub-dimension rather than additional independent sub-dimensions. Lages & Sousa (2010) highlight that the usefulness of applying perceived export success can be evaluated while taking into consideration the reference groups of the firm in terms of industry, stage of export involvement, and strategic direction. These two social scientists further claim that subjective measures have proven valid in measuring long-term performance. Robertson and Chetty (2000) recommend application of subjective measures in cases where managers are unwilling or unable to produce financial data or have difficulty in reconciling accounting figures. In a bid to have authentic export performance measurement while using subjective means, Zou, Taylor & Osland (1998) proposed the EXPERF scale, composed of three dimensions: financial export performance (export profits, export sales, and export growth), strategic position, and market share), and satisfaction with export performance (perceived success of the venture, satisfaction with the venture and degree to which the venture is meeting expectations). Shoham, Rose & Kropp (2005) observed that the use of such a combination of items to capture the performance sub-dimensions, has advantage of overcoming any fluctuations and improving performance.

2.4.3. Summary of export performance measurements

Measures of export performance are usually categorised into two broad groups: financial/economic and non-financial/non-economic measures. A comprehensive list of economic and non-economic indicators as measures of export performance are outlined in Table 2.2 alongside the relevant studies.

Table 2.2: Literature Review of Export Performance Measures

Measure	Reference
Economic Measures	
Sales-related • Export intensity	Czinkota & Johanston 1983; Cavusgil 1984; Cooper & Kleinschmidt 1985;

Measure	Reference
• Export sales efficiency • Export intensity growth compared to competitors • Export sales growth • Export sales growth compared to competitors • Export sales return on investment • Export sales return on investment compared to competitors • Export sales volume • Export sales volume compared to competitors	Axinn 1988; Culpan 1989; Madsen 1989; Axin. & Thach 1990; Lee & Yang 1990; Louter, Ouwerkerk & Bakker 1991; Chan 1992; Baldauf, Craig & McLellan 1993; Kayak & Kuan 1993; Crick & Czinkota 1995; Das 1994; Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch 1994; Axinn, Savitt, Sinkula, Thach 1995; Axin, Noordewier & Snkula 1996; Lim, Sharkey & Kim 1996; Gray 1997; Katsikeas, Piercy & Ioannidis 1996; Hoang 1998; Lee 1998; Beamish, Karavis, Goeezen & Lane 1999; Hart & Tzokas 1999; Moen 1999; Dean, Menguc & Myers 2000; Francis & Collins-Dodd 2000; Gençtürk & Kotabr 2001; Ling-yee & Ogunmokun 2001; Brouthers & Xu 2002; Cadogan, Diamantopoulos & Siguaw 2002; Cadogan, Sundqvist, Salminen & Puumalainen 2002; Cicic, Patterson & Shoham 2002; Akyo & Akehurst 2003; Balabanis & Katsikeas 2003; Cadogan, Cui & Li 2003; Dhanaraji & Beamish 2003; Lages & Lages 2004; Lages & Montgomery 2004; Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004; Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b; Hultman, Katsikeas & Robson 2011; and Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies 2012.
Market-related • Export market share • Export market share compared to competitors • Export market share growth • Export market share growth compared to competitors • Gaining foothold in the market • Market diversification • Rate of new market entry • Rate of new market entry compared to competitors	Cavusgil & Kirpalani 1993; Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Lee 1998; Piercy, Kaleka & Katsikeas 1998; Shoham 1998; Thirkell & Dau 1998; White, Griffith & Ryans 1998; Zou, Taylor & Osland 1998; Moen 1999; Myers 1999; Baldauf, Cravens & Wagner 2000; Robertson & Chetty 2000; Albaum & Tse 2001; Prasad, Ramamurthy & Naidu 2001; Richey & Myers 2001; Brouthers & Xu 2002; Cadogan, Diamantopoulos & Siguaw 2002; Cadogan, Sundqyist, Salminen & Puumalainen 2002; Rose &

Measure	Reference
	Shoham 2002; Solberg 2002; Akyol & Akehurt 2003; Dhanaraj & Beamish 2003; Lages & Lages 2004; Lages & Montgomery 2004; Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004; Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou 2006; Hultman, Katsikeas & Robson 2011; and Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies 2012.
Non-Economic Measures	
General • Export success • How competitors rate firm's export performance • Meeting expectations • Overall export performance • Overall export performance compared to competitors • Strategic export performance	Seifert & Ford 1989; McGuinness, Campbell & Leontiades 1991; Czinkota 1994; McCullough & Tansuhaj 1994; Naidu & Prasad 1994; Sriram & Manu 1995; Katsikeas, Piercy & Ioannidis 1996; Patterson, Cicic & Shoham 1997; Lee 1998; Styles 1998; Thirkell & Dau 1998; White, Griffith & Ryans 1998; Zou, Taylor & Osland 1998; McAuley 1999; Moen 1999; Myers 1999; Crick & Jones 2000; Robertson & Chetty 2000; Shoham, Evangelista & Al-baum 2000; Stewart & McAuley 2000; Styles & Ambler 2000; Gençtürk & Kotabe 2001; Ling-yee & Ogunmokun 2001; Prasad, Ramamurthy & Naidu 2001; Brouthers & Xu 2002; Cadogan & Diamantopoulos & Siguaw 2002; Cicic, Patterson & Shoham 2002; Solberg 2002; Akyol & Akehurst 2003; Balabanis & Katsikeas 2003; O'Cass & Julian 2003; Lages & Lages 2004; Lages & Montgomery 2004; Haatti, Madupu, Yavas & Babakus 2005 and Wilkinson & Brouthers 2006.
Miscellaneous • Achievement of objectives regarding response to competitive pressures • Building awareness and image overseas	Myers 1999; Gençtürk & Kotabe 2001; Prasad, Ramamurthy & Naidu 2001; Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004 and Lages, Abrantes, & Lages 2008a.

Measure	Reference
• Contribution of exporting to the growth of the firm and to the quality of firm's management • Customer satisfaction • Gaining new technology/expertise • Product/service quality compared to competitors • Quality of customer relationships compared to competitors • Quality of distributor relationships • Quality of distributor relationships compared to competitors • Reputation of the firm • Reputation of the firm compared to competitors	

Adapted from: Beleska-Spasova (2014)

The aggregate evidence suggests that the most used financial indicators as measures of export performance are:

- sales-related indicators such as: export sales ratio (Madsen 1989; Czinkota 1993; Cavusgil 1984), export sales growth (Cooper & Kleinschmidt 1985; Madsen, 1989), export sales volume and export sales ratio (McGuinness & Little 1981; Axinn 1988); and
- profit-related indicators such as: export profitability, export profitability growth, export profit ratio and export margin (Bilkey 1982; Madsen 1989).

Other less used financial measures are the market share-related indicators, such as: export market share, and export share growth (Cavusgil & Kirpalani 1993 and Cavusgil & Zou 1994). These measures are used as means for capturing the strategic outcome of exporting. Despite the large number of variables employed as measures of export success, several measures appear to be used considerably more than others, such as export intensity (export-

to-total sales ratio), export sales growth, export profitability, export market share, satisfaction with overall performance, and perceived export success (Sousa 2004).

Faced with the difficulties of obtaining financial data from firms, especially the SMEs, some researchers resort to the use of non-financial/non-economic measures of export performance. These approaches advocate the use of perceptual/attitudinal or generic measures of performance, such as: perceived export success, achievement of export objectives, satisfaction with export performance, or strategic export performance (Zou & Stan 1998 and Ibeh & Wheeler 2005). Other non-financial measures include product-related and market-related indicators and other miscellaneous measures. Much of the early export performance research has been dominated by single-item measures, either economic or non-economic. Recognising that export success is "multifaceted and cannot be captured by any single performance indicator: (Diamantopoulos 1998) recent empirical studies have attempted to develop and validate multi-item measures in the form of more complex and multidimensional performance metrics (Zou, Taylor & Osland 1998; Shoham 1998; Styles 1998; Lages & Lages 2004 and Lages, Lages & Lages 2005).

The following factors have been found to affect the choice of export performance measures:

- Data availability and accessibility;
- Firm characteristics (size, export experience);
- Unit of analysis;
- Time frame of assessment (short-term vs. long-term);
- Strategic objectives; and
- Position of the assessor.

The above listed factors are very useful for consideration by any researcher who is interested to push the boundaries of knowledge in the field of firm export performance.
A considerable amount of literature has been published on measurement of export performance and such studies are summarised in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Summary of Export Performance Measurements

Performance Measure	Type of Measure	Literature
Export Sales Growth and Intensity	Objective	Alvarez 2004; Lages & Lages 2004; Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004; Ogunmokun & Wong 2004; Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b; Hultman, Katsikeas & Robson 2011; and Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies 2012.
Export Profitability/Increase in Market Share	Objective	Das 1994; Moen 1999; Ogunmokun & Solberg 2002; Lages & Lages 2004; Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004; Wong 2004; Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou 2006; Hultman, Katsikeas & Robson 2011; and Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies 2012.
Achievement of Strategic Goals	Subjective	Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Das 1994; Styles 1998; Zou, Taylor & Osland 1998; Collins-Dodd 2004 and Lages & Lages 2004.
Management's Perception about Export Success	Subjective	Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Evangelist 1994; Katsikeas, Piercy & Ioannidis 1996; Ling-Yee & Ogunmokun 2001; Haatti, Madupu, Yavas & Babakus 2005 and Wilkinson & Brouthers 2006.
Satisfaction with Export Performance	Subjective	Jap 2002; Lages & Montgomery 2004; and Lages, Abrantes, & Lages 2008a.
The Combination of Measurements	Subjective	Zou, Taylor & Osland 1998; Katsikeas, Leonidou, & Morgan 2000; Shoham

Performance Measure	Type of Measure	Literature
		2002; Julian (2003); Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004 and Sousa & Bradley 2008.

Source: Developed from Literature (2017)

2.5. Firm-level factors associated with export performance

The conceptualisation and operationalisation challenges which Tookey (1964) highlighted in a pioneering study on export performance, persist to this day. An interesting paradox in international marketing is that export development is considered a well-researched facet (Leonidou 2003) yet export performance is the least understood (Leonidou, Katsikeas & Piercy 1998 and Marandu 2009) and measuring scales (Zou, Taylor & Osland 1998 and Lages & Lages 2004) have been proposed, a multiplicity of variables and methods continue to be adopted forcing the discipline to splinter and scatter instead of converging around a common schema, paradigm or theory (Sousa 2004). The existing fragmentation emanates from the lack of consensus over how to conceptualise and operationalise the various elements of export performance (Aaby & Slater 1989; Zou, Taylor & Osland 1998; Katsikeas, Leonidou and Morgan 2000; Lages & Lages 2004; and Sousa 2004).

There are multiple internal and external factors (Zou & Stan 1998 and Calantone, Kim, Schmidt & Cavusgil 2006) that have a direct or indirect relationship (Aaby & Slater 1989 and Cavusgil & Zou 1994) with export performance. These factors include firm demographics such as size (Bonaccorsi 1992 and Mittelstaedt, Ward & Nowlin 2006), age (Ursic & Czinkota 1984 and Brouthers & Nakos 2005) export experience (Kirpalani & MacIntosh 1980), marketing expertise (Ogunmokun & Ng 2004) management traits (Dichtl, Koglmayr, & Mueller 1990), investment in R&D (Cooper & Kleinschmidt 1985), and export destination (Ruane & Sutherland 2005). Further, there are numerous objectives and subjective measures (Zou, Taylor & Osland 1998) for operationalising performance. Indeed, there are 50 ways to operationalise export performance (Sousa 2004) and as many as 700 potential drivers for export performance (Gemünden 1991). As a consequence,

results are often inconsistent and contradictory. For example, in relation to firm size, some studies propose a strong positive relationship (Dean, Menguc & Myers 2000 and Mittelstaedt, Ward & Nowlin 2003), others suggest a weak positive association (Cavusgil & Naor 1987 and Zhao & Zhou 2002), while some indicate an inverted-U (Baldauf, Cravens & Wagner 2000) or L-shaped curve (Duenas-Caparas 2007), signifying declining returns to scale. Once study highlights how the relationship between size and export performance can change from positive to negative when the proxy of firm size is switched from sales turnover to number of employees (Kaynak & Kuan 1993)

Recent studies have focused on possible ways to surmount such challenges of inconsistencies and contradictory conclusions (Aaby & Slater 1989; Gemünden 1991; Shoham 1998; Zou, Taylor & Osland 1998; Sousa 2004; and Marandu 2009). Some scholars have made the case for better conceptualisation of export performance (Zou, Taylor & Osland 1998), improving congruency between performance measures and unit of analysis (Sousa 2004), and use of uniform measures across studies (Aaby & Slater 1989) to allow replication (Chetty and Hamilton 1993).

The glaring absence of a theoretical backbone has also been duly noted by a number of scholars (Brouthers & Nakos 2005; Couto, Tiago, Vieira & Fortuna, 2006; Dhanaraj & Beamish 2003; Gemünden 1991; and Marandu 2009). Because of the absence of a theoretical backbone, the sanctity of the process of the scientific enquiry on export performance is compromised (Kerlinger 1986). The absence of a theoretical stencil has also resulted in studies resorting to using sophisticated analysis to establish relationships, instead of being guided by theory (Sousa 2004 and Gemünden 1991). In response to Dhanaraj and Beamish's (2003) call for development of parsimonious theoretical models, some scholars have since started to apply broader theoretical bases such as social exchange theory (Leonidou 2003 and Styles, Patterson & Ahmed 2003), natural selection (Child, Chung & Davies 2003) and complexity theory (Wollin & Perry 2004) to the study of export performance. This study aims to improve the operationalisation of export performance by

grounding measures of export performance in the Porter Diamond Theory of National Advantage.

2.6. Determinants of export performance

Lages and Sousa (2010) established that the **determinants of export performance** can be classified into two categories: (a) internal determinants, and (b) external determinants. The following sections present a literature review on key internal and external determinants of export performance.

2.6.1. Internal determinants

The resource-based view argues that a firm has unique bundle of tangible and intangible "resources" (assets, capabilities, processes, managerial attributes, information and knowledge) that are controlled by the management (Barney 1991). Recent studies by, Lages and Sousa (2010), Sousa, Ruzo & Losada (2010) and Griffith and Hoppner (2013), have acknowledged the central role played by management teams in the internal environment to influence export performance effectively. According to Sousa, Martinez-Lopez and Coelho (2008) internal determinants of export performance include size, age, international experience, export commitment, managerial perception, export-marketing mix strategies, and export product characteristics. These resources enable the management of the firm to conceive and implement strategies aimed at improving the firm's effectiveness and efficiency in exporting (Dhanaraj & Beamish 2003).

2.6.1.1. Size of firm

A large and growing body of literature exists documenting the relationship between firm size and export performance (Baldauf, Cravens & Wagner 2000; Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008 and Sousa 2010). The number of employees has been mainly used to measure the size of the firm, followed by sales volume (Julian 2003; Ogunmokun & Ng

2004). Researchers such as Dijk (2002), Lages and Jap (2002), have argued that firms should be large enough to compete in foreign markets as different strategies are required to be implemented to achieve export success. Lages and Sousa (2010) observed that larger firms are more likely to have substantial resources to adapt their export-marketing mix strategy because of economies of scale in production, benefits from bulk purchasing, and the opportunity to raise financing at lower cost. Such internal resources can generate competitive advantage for the firm based on the tenets of the resource-based view (Barney, Ketchen and Wright 2011). Some authors, (Wagner 1995 and Katsikeas, Piercy & Ioannidis 1996), have observed that firms owning marketing departments including their own sales force, utilise their professional executives and have a high capacity for taking risks. Sousa, Martinez-Lopez and Coelho (2008) concur that these size-related properties, in turn, facilitate export success. Ogunmokun and Ng (2004) also noted that limited internal resources available to small firms, prevent them from achieving a stable presence in a large number of foreign markets. Consequently, small firms might implement weak export-marketing strategies that require low levels of sunk costs to survive in stagnant foreign markets (Bonaccorsi 1992).

Some studies (Kaynak & Kuan 1993; Baldauf, Cravens & Wagner 2000) have established that having more employees, and increasing export planning and information, leads to higher export sales. Wagner (1995) reminds us that the positive impact of firm size decreases with size, and that a positive relationship exists only to a point. The works of Bonaccorsi (1992) show that firm size measured by annual sales or number of employees, increases the probability of exporting. Furthermore, entry barriers to export activity are not as high as assumed and information on foreign markets is relatively available to small firms. Calof (1994) established that firm size was not a barrier to exporting, as small firms could perform well in international markets as long as they implemented strategies consistent with their resources. Small exporting firms were as successful and competitive in foreign markets as large firms. Small firms are usually integrated into a system of firms that use common external resources and show outstanding imitative characteristics when a similar firm becomes successful in exporting (Bonaccorsi 1992). Other studies discovered a non-

significant relationship between firm size and performance (Diamantopoulos & Inglis 1988; Katsikeas, Piercy & Ioannidis 1996; Wolf & Pett 2000 and Contractor, Hsu, & Kundu 2005)

The impact of having more employees on export intensity is inconclusive as Wolf and Pett (2000) found a negative relationship between the two constructs. Small exporting firms play to their particular strengths and capabilities in export markets, which implies that it is not the number of resources but the type of resources available to the firm that determines their competitive advantage in exporting (Wolf & Pett 2000). Contractor, Hsu & Kundu (2005) did not find a positive relationship between export performance and firm size, which indicates that the relationship between firm size and export performance is still a contentious issue. Brouthers and Nakos (2005) found a negative relationship between firm size and export performance using a Greek sample of firms. Brouthers and Nakos (2005) argued that although some scholars have asserted that large companies perform better internationally, this suggestion has not been supported by previous research. One possible explanation of the negative finding is that larger firms may provide a resource advantage to generate, disseminate and respond to export market intelligence (Brouthers & Nakos 2005). Therefore, notwithstanding the popularity of firm size as an antecedent of export performance, some of the results are fragmented and not validated in the literature.

2.6.1.2. Age of the firm

Sousa, Martinez-Lopez and Coelho (2008) identified business experience in the form of firm age as a determinant of export performance. From the resource-based view perspective, years in exporting can be considered as proxies for the management of the firm's knowledge in international markets (Forsgren 2002). Stoian, Rialp and Rialp (2011) observed that experiential knowledge about foreign market operations is a driving force for business internationalisation. In the same vein, Ruzo, Losada, Navarro and Diez (2011) and Sui and Baum (2014) also observed that age of the firm is associated with the accumulation of experience in the international market, which enables a firm to develop the relevant capabilities required to adapt export-marketing strategies to create competitive advantage

in foreign markets. The age of the firm is generally used as a proxy to measure the amount of learning a firm has acquired over a period about the idiosyncrasies of export market operations (Majocchi, Bacchiocchi & Mayrhofer 2005). Older firms are regarded as holding financial and human resources and higher economies of scale and these resource advantages facilitate their acceleration into international markets (Javalgi, White & Lee 2000). Arteaga-Ortiz and Fernández-Ortiz (2010) observed that age is related to a number of export barriers and the level of risk in foreign markets. Majocchi, Bacchiocchi & Mayrhofer (2005) posit that theoretical projections suggest a positive relationship exists between firm age and export intensity. Furthermore, they found that the positive relationship between age of the firm and export intensity is crucial, as study results confirmed that small firms need time to develop necessary market experience in order to export successfully.

In contrast, Moen and Servais (2002) found no association between the firm's foundation year and export intensity. Baldauf, Cravens & Wagner (2000) reported that younger firms obtained better results in terms of export intensity and sales. Brouthers and Nakos (2005) concluded that age and education were not related to export performance, and further argued that personal characteristics such as the age of the firm and education, may play a less important role in export performance, as owners of such firms may have accumulated substantial informal education and experience that compensate for their lack of formal education and length of time in exporting.

2.6.1.3. International experience

The resource-based view argues that a firm's intangible resources include capabilities, firm attributes, information, experience and knowledge that enables the manager to run operations more efficiently and effectively (Barney, Ketchen & Wright 2011). Griffith and Hoppner (2013) postulated that enhanced understanding of foreign business practices facilitates effective planning and control of export activities. In the same vein, Leonidou, Katsikeas & Piercy (1998) observed that foreign language proficiency may help to establish social and business contacts abroad and improve communication with foreign customers.

Williams and Chaston (2004) also concluded that managers who possess linguistic skills are more likely to access new markets and pull out of existing ones than non-linguists. In agreement with proponents of international experience, Suarez-Ortega and Alamo-Vera (2005) stated that firms run by decision-makers who are proficient in foreign languages, reach higher levels of export performance than firms led by monolingual managers. Leonidou, Katsikeas, Palihawadana & Spyropoulou (2007) also pointed out that decision-makers with international experience, are better prepared to study the international market, identify foreign business opportunities and encounter potential overseas clients. Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho (2008) observed that international experience has emerged as one of the determinants of exports performance.

Knowledge acquired by managers, mainly through export operations abroad, can be challenged by a substantial amount of uncertainty (Hultman, Katsikeas & Robson 2011). Diamantopoulos and Kakkos (2007) noted that managers of firms with international experience can identify the differences in environmental conditions and are more likely to select attractive markets and adapt export-marketing strategies to suit the specific needs of those markets. Julian and Douglas (2001) and Lages and Montgomery (2001) concurred that the international experience of a manager constitutes a source of sustainable competitive advantage. In their 1994 study, Cavusgil and Zou (1994), observed that lack of knowledge of foreign market operations is an obstruction to the decision-making process in export activity. A considerable amount of literature has been published on how international experience is a crucial determinant of exports (Baldauf, Cravens & Wagner 2000; Lado, Martinez-Ros & Valenzuela 2004; Lages & Montgomery 2005; Brouthers & Nakos 2005; Leonidou, Katsikeas, Palihawadana & Spyropoulou 2007; Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b and Stoian, Rialp & Rialp 2011). A study by Cadogan, Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2002) revealed a positive relationship between export experience and export performance of US firms.

Francis and Collins-Dodd (2000) found a positive result for export sales in the study of high-tech firms in Canada, and argued that the more experienced the managers are, the

better their understanding of foreign operations, compared to managers without experience and knowledge of international markets. Firms employing untrained and inexperienced staff in international business tend to exhibit lower levels of performance because of lack of information on environmental opportunities and lack of strategies to deal with threats (Francis & Collins-Dodd (2000). Leonidou and Kaleka (1998) uncovered a strong positive effect of export market knowledge on overall export performance, and attributed this to export experience. In the same vein, Alshammari and Islam (2014) found a positive relationship between international experience and export performance with the study of Malaysian exporters, and explained that managers with international experience have an extra advantage in understanding different market conditions in foreign markets.

There has not been consensus amongst researchers regarding the positive relationship between international experience and export performance. A number of scholars (Naidu & Prasad 1994; Baldauf, Cravens & Wagner 2000; Brouthers & Nakos 2005 and Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b) have identified a negative association between the two constructs. For instance, Naidu and Prasad (1994) found inexperienced exporters performed better, although experienced exporters were more regular. Naidu and Rao (1993) argued that experienced exporters become realistic about the profit impact of exporting and temper their profitability expectations. The negative relationship between international experience and export performance in the literature, is attributed to limited access to resources for young firms, which forces them to go abroad (Brouthers & Nakos 2005). Baldauf, Cravens & Wagner (2000) pointed out that the less experienced managers experience greater pressure concerning achieving of higher export performance, and view international sales as more essential to the long-term profitability of the firm. However, Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b) did not discover a positive relationship between international experience and export intensity, although successful export-marketing management is facilitated by international experience to a large extent (Madsen 1989).

2.6.1.4. Managerial perception

Managerial perceptions regarding export stimuli are generally considered to be good determinants of export success (Robertson & Chetty 2000 and Wheeler, Ibeh & Dimitratos 2008). Leonidou, Katsikeas, Palihawadana and Spyropoulou (2007) observed that the extent to which the management of a firm is motivated to export by sales or profit goals is largely contingent upon the decision-maker's perception of various export markets. Perceived similarities and differences between the domestic and host market, may determine a firm's export behaviour and influence its export performance. Such similarities have often been underscored as an important determinant of export performance. (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Cavusgil (1984 argued that the development of export activities is related to the goals of the firm; however, once the firm reaches a certain export involvement, the most important export motivation is presented by the perceived profits. Theodosiou and Katsikeas (2007) acknowledged that export executives are more capable of advising export sales managers to perform assigned duties in foreign markets that are perceived to be closer to the home market.

2.6.1.5. Export commitment

A number of scholars (Stump, Athaide & Axinn 1998; Lages & Montgomery 2001; and Navarro, Acedo, Robson, Ruzo, & Losaa 2010a) have stated export commitment to be the allocation of resources by management for production of goods and/or services for the export market. Export commitment signifies how important a firm considers exporting and the amount of resources allocations made towards the export activity. The attitudes and commitment of management are frequently cited as important determinants of export performance irrespective of performance dimensions (Navarro, Acedo, Robson, Ruzo, & Losaa 2010a and Stoian, Rialp & Rialp 2011). This outcome tallies with previous scholarly reviews and confirms the conclusion that highly committed managers consistently go after export market opportunities, and pursue effective export-marketing mix strategies to improve performance (Cavusgil & Zou 1994). Julian (2003) observed that once

commitment uncertainty is reduced, export-marketing strategies can be implemented effectively to enhance performance. Navarro, Acedo, Robson, Ruzo, & Losaa (2010a) acknowledged that management teams that are committed to exporting, allocate more human resources and financial resources to export activity.

In highlighting the importance of export commitment, Zou and Stan (1998) observed that management's perceived export success predicted well with export sales, profits and growth, whereas, management's export barriers ended up in low export sales, slow export growth, and low perceived export success. Awan (2011) states that it is paramount for the management of the firm to concentrate on the advantages of exporting rather than barriers, and have a positive attitude towards the export activity. Zou and Stan (1998) acknowledge that proactive managers are motivated and prove themselves in wanting to pursue export opportunities and ultimately show commitment. Milanzi (2012) observed that low commitment towards exporting manifests itself in negative stimuli which supports the conclusion that low attitudinal commitment does not increase export performance. Julian (2003) found that Thailand exporters allocated resources to the export activity to maintain their products' level of exposure to the export market in order to enhance export performance.

2.6.1.6. Export-marketing mix strategy

Cavusgil and Zou (1994) hold the view that **export-marketing mix strategy** is the means by which the firm responds to the interplay of internal and external forces to meet the objectives of the export venture involving aspects of the conventional marketing plan; i.e., product, price, promotion and place (distribution) (4Ps). Export-marketing mix strategy is concerned with the creation of a marketing mix that enables the firm to achieve its objectives in a target market and react to competitive market forces in the environment (Lee & Griffith 2004; Slater, Hult & Olson 2010). Jones and Hill (2007) observed that export-marketing strategies have a major impact on the efficiency and cost structure of a firm and are argued to be the road map to how firms respond to internal and external forces by using

the marketing mix elements. A number of scholars (Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Lee & Griffith 2004; and Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b) also noted that the utilisation of organisational learning is aligned with prevailing opinion in the export-marketing strategy literature that marketing mix strategies incorporate differences in the political-legal, economic, and socio-cultural characteristics of any host country.

According to Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies (2012) implementation of planned marketing strategy is widely seen as a problematic managerial task that consumes extensive time, and effort but often ends in disappointment. Moreover, effectively accomplishing a planned export-marketing strategy is a more demanding and risky task for managers involved in exporting due to the characteristics of the export markets (Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004; Thorpe & Morgan 2007). Sousa and Bradley (2006) observed that operating in export markets, involves dealing with geographical distance, business practices, a disparity in export markets, legal systems, channel structure, and communication infrastructure, which, according to Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies (2012) makes understanding future marketing forecasting particularly difficult.

Douglas and Wind (1987) rightfully pointed out that traditionally, the debate on international marketing, has been polarised around the adoption of a standardised strategy worldwide, versus adaptation to specific local market conditions. The adoption of a standardised strategy worldwide enables a firm to take advantage of the potential synergies from multi-country operations, which constitute a competitive advantage in international markets (Levitt 1983). On the other hand, Douglas and Wind (1987) have argued that adaptation of strategies to characterise specific foreign markets is crucial to success.

Considerable amount of literature on international marketing has identified three perspectives related to the standardisation versus adaptation and the ‘middle road’ (Jain 1989; Solberg 2002; Birnik & Bowman 2007). According to these scholars, the standardisation concept argues that the **export-marketing mix** elements (4Ps) can be standardised across all international markets. This means that selling identified products at

the same price through similar distribution systems, and supported by the same promotion programmes, across foreign markets. This view is supported by Levitt (1983) who states that selling a line of products individually tailored to each nation, is inconsiderate as customers have an overwhelming desire to dependable world standard modernity in all things at aggressively low prices.

In contrast, the adaptation approach points out that despite increasing globalisation tendencies, differences between countries in terms of customer needs, purchasing power, culture and traditions, and laws and regulations, necessitates the adaptation of the firm's marketing strategy to suit foreign markets (Douglas & Wind 1987; Solberg 2002 and Theodosiou & Leonidou 2003). The concept of standardisation explains that a firm is able to sell a low-cost product which is advanced, functional, reliable, and of high quality which enables it to enjoy competitive advantage of scale economies, scope economies, learning efficiency and cost advantages (Levitt 1983). The globalisation of markets is based on technological drivers, and this strategy is based on standardised products that will further strengthen increasingly homogenous customer preferences globally (Birnik & Bowman 2007). In contrast, Douglas and Wind (1987) espouse that changes in the business environment demand a global perspective on strategy and describe the proportion of global standardisation as 'naïve and over-simplistic'. This may result in major strategic blunders for firms who follow that prescription, as planning marketing strategically has become increasingly imperative (Solberg & Durrieu 2008). Douglas and Wind (1987), in contrast to the proposition of 'standardisation', advocate for a contingency solution approach based on mixed strategies.

Solberg and Durrieu (2008) observed that standardisation reduces costs and provides a globally identifiable brand image; however, adaptation is necessary because of the numerous differences between local and foreign customers. The decision concerned with standardisation versus adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) in enhancing export performance, has been a research area of immense interest for both academics and practitioners (Viswanathan & Dickson 2007). The potential association between the

adaptation of the export-marketing mix (4Ps) and export performance is characterised by unresolved findings that attract further investigation (Lages 2000; Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Samiee 2002 and Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou 2006). Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b) strongly believe that export-marketing strategy is associated with managing of all components of the marketing mix. Moreover, a number of studies have focused on the influence of the adaptation strategy of a particular marketing mix element, common product or promotion on export performance, while price and place adaptation have been relatively ignored (Lages 2000 and Theodosiou & Leonidou 2003). There is evidence in the literature that internal coherence should exist between the export-marketing mix elements and policy, revealing the importance of investigating the overall export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) with export performance (Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b; and Zou, Daekwan & Cavusgil 2009). According to Cavusgil & Zou (1994) performance is a function of the strategic co-alignment between export strategy, organisational resources, and the capabilities of the environment. The key elements of the export-marketing mix strategies (4Ps) and their associations with export performance are discussed in the next section.

2.6.1.7. Place (distribution) adaptation

Export channel or distribution strategy is the degree to which a firm applies direct instead of indirect channels of distributing its export products, and this is evaluated by gathering the ratio of direct exports to local distributors and retailers in the export market (Lee and Griffith 2004). According to Eusebio, Andreu & Belbeze (2007b) distribution decisions concerning the export marketing mix strategy are long-term decisions, which cannot be changed. This makes choice of channel structure crucial as firm and market factors influence export task in various ways (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). Lado, Martinez-Ros and Valenzuela (2004) observed that an experienced exporter may decide to control the channel, perform tasks and incur the information-collection and adaptation cost, where-as an infrequent exporter may be quite dependent on experienced intermediaries to get products to the market. Whether the task is self-performed or assigned to export intermediaries, the distribution channel should be planned to enable the channel

function as one rather than as a collection of different units (Eusebio, Andreu & Pilar 2007a). Lee and Griffith (2004) recommend that channel distribution should be adapted to suit the customer characteristics, culture, and competition in the export market.

Cavusgil and Zou (1994) rightly identified place (distribution) as one of the important export-marketing mix strategies, as customers need to have their products in the export market effortlessly, and on time. Some scholars (Myers & Cavusgil 1996 and Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008) concur that place (distribution) is also one of the "4Ps" where limited research has been conducted, particularly in the standardisation and adaptation debate. Distribution channel performance or the effectiveness of channel intermediaries has also been linked to export performance (Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Lado, Martinez-Ros & Valenzuela 2004 and Lages & Jap 2002). Zou and Stan (1998) found the type of channel adaptation's influence on export performance was mixed, although channel relationship expressed as dealer/distributor support, motivation, and involvement emerged as key determinants of export sales, which is consistent with the findings of Madsen (1987).

Eusebio, Andreu and Pilar (2007a) argues that support given to a distributor can lead to a long-term relationship with the exporter, builds mutual trust, and smooth export channel, where strong distribution channels can assist the exporter to implement the export-marketing strategy effectively. Aaby and Slater (1989) found distribution to be important to export performance and Cavusgil and Zou (1994) provided evidence that foreign distribution channels influence export performance as customers in the foreign market need to get their products on time. Similarly, Lages and Montgomery (2005) in their investigation of perceptions of Portuguese and British export managers, revealed distribution network or availability as a determinant of export performance. Lee and Griffith (2004) concluded that a direct exporting channel has a positive effect on export performance if there is a distribution strategy in place. Active and advanced exporters have more control of distribution activities and product delivery plans in the export market (Eusebio, Andreu & Pilar 2007b). Dealer support correlated with export performance positively, and Leonidou,

Katsikeas and Samiee (2002) concluded that one of the marketing mix strategy variables that rarely appeared in studies is transportation cost (Leonidou, Katsikeas & Samiee 2002).

2.6.1.8. Product adaptation

Hollensen (2007) states positively that a firm's international operations are its product or service. Lages, Jap and Griffith (2008b) and Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee (2002) define product adaptation as the firm's consistent and planned activity to meet local consumers' preferences and values. Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady and Beal (2011) define a product as the complex of tangible elements or a collection of physical, service, and symbolic attributes that distinguishes it from the other entities in the marketplace. Products can be differentiated by three components: (1) the physical core product; (2) the product package and; (3) the auxiliary services (Hollensen 2007). The tangible features are the design, colour, size, style, and presentation. Elements of the product packaging include the brand name, and trademark, while the auxiliary services include the warranties, after-sales service, delivery, installation and user manual.

In export-marketing, product strategy translates into a policy of whether to standardise or adapt. According to Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady and Beal (2011) a firm has four basic alternatives in approaching international markets: (1) selling the product as it is in the export market; (2) modifying products for different markets or regions; (3) designing new products for foreign markets; and (4) incorporating all the differences into one product design and introducing an export product. The standardisation or adaptation of the product can be in an element of the physical core product, package, or auxiliary as consumer goods generally require adaptation because of their higher degree of cultural grounding (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). The degree of change introduced in consumer goods, not only depends on cultural differences but also on economic conditions in the target market, a low income in certain countries may cause pressure to simplify the product to make it affordable.

Products for the international market may be designed and introduced specifically for foreign markets in addition to the firm's relatively standardised or adapted products and brand (Calantone, Kim, Schmidt & Cavusgil 2006). For example, although Colgate toothpaste is available worldwide, the company markets some products locally such as spicy toothpaste formulated exclusively for the Middle East. McDonald's serves abroad the same menu of hamburgers and soft drinks, but has tried to tailor its products to local style; adjustments are made for drinks, which include beer in Germany and wine in France. Marketers may have to apply similar adaptation needs in their domestic operations; for instance, fast food restaurants in South America serve iced tea, whereas those in North America do not (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). Ghanaian exports including seafood and vegetables were rejected at entry points in the European and US markets because of non-adaptation to suit the rules and regulations of health and safety, packaging and quality standards in those foreign markets (Kunateh 2013). Adaptation in product styling, colour, size and other appearance features, is more common in consumer marketing than in industrial marketing. Colour plays an important role in how consumers perceive a product and marketers must be aware of the signal being sent by the product colour (Sousa & Bradley 2007c). One-way export firms can protect themselves against incidents of this kind, is through thorough on site testing in the international market (Hollensen 2007).

A cross-continent study of 110 firms by Fraser and Hite (1990) found that product adaptation to country-specific needs had no significant effect on market share and the study concluded that a country-specific design is unprofitable. Conversely, a number of studies have found a positive relationship between product adaptation and export performance (Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Zou & Stan 1998; Shoham 1999 and Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Samiee 2002). Lages, Jap and Griffith (2008b) in a study of 519 Portuguese exporters found export intensity exerted a positive significant effect on product adaptation in the preceding year and product adaptation negatively influenced current-year export performance. Lee and Griffith (2004) found support for the strategy-performance relationship in Korea and argued that product adaptation influenced their export performance positively. The study

concluded that whether there is standardisation or adaptation or not, products designated for export markets should be high quality with low pricing strategies (Lee & Griffith 2004).

2.6.1.9. Promotion adaptation

Promotion strategy is a collection of integrated activities, planned, coordinated, and built around a single major theme or idea designed to achieve predetermined communication activities (Lages & Jap 2002 and Lado, Martinez-Ros & Valenzuela 2004). Effective promotion is particularly important in the international market as geographical and psychological distances separate exporting firms from their intermediaries and customers (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). The elements of a promotional programme include advertising, personal selling, sales aids, and a wide range of promotional activities. Factors that affect the promotional programme design include the extent of the market, customer preference, buying behaviour, competitive circumstances, product characteristics and price (Belch & Belch 2007). An export promotional programme may either be a standardised approach or adapted. The standardised approach assumes that basic human needs, wants, and expectations transcend geographical, national, and cultural boundaries. This means a standardised promotional programme is designed in such a way that it keeps sufficient common elements across various markets in order to minimise resources and time management.

An adapted promotional programme considers differences among countries, including culture, stage of economic and industrial development, product life-cycle and legal restrictions (Hollensen 2007). Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee (2002) present another view that holds that neither complete standardisation nor adaptation alone is necessary. Hultman, Katsikeas, & Robson (2011) argues that promotion adaptation is particularly relevant to exporting because the implementation of an appropriate promotion strategy is largely beneficial in achieving positive performance. Arguments for standardised promotional programmes are based on the low cost preparing advertising material that helps reduce

message confusion, especially where there is an overlap of media (Papavassiliou & Stathakopoulos 1997).

A standardised promotional approach recognises human nature is the same everywhere although different cultures create different needs; therefore, various promotional programmes may have different appeals across markets (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). When an advertisement is run, the cultural background of the advertiser affects the message form, whereas the cultural background of the recipient determines the message perception (Hollensen 2007). The conceptualisation of moving from one end of standardisation to the other polar end of adaptation, indicates a strategy continuum (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). The firm needs to consider specific elements of international advertising strategies to be adapted or standardised to suit the foreign market (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee (2002)'s review supported promotion adaption, which was positively associated with overall performance; they argued that although the effect of promotion adaptation on export profit contribution was limited, it had a strong influence on export intensity and sales growth.

Other studies did not identify any significant relationship between promotion adaptation and export performance (Lages & Jap 2002 and O'Cass & Julian 2003). Singh (2009) found advertising expenditure had a negative impact on export sales and concluded that promotion adaptation is driven by the competitive pressure in emerging markets. Lee and Griffith (2004) in their study of 58 Korean exporters revealed that international advertising expenditures did not influence export performance, and concluded that this could be attributed to the sample which comprised different business-to-business markets. Lee and Griffith (2004) argued that advertising efforts were generally focused on a specific part of the export market because of limited resources of firms in emerging markets, as the managers might not target international customers in an advertising campaign.

2.6.1.10. Price adaptation

Lages and Montgomery (2001) define price as a variable that is used to exchange value with customers. Greater value in relation to price creates significant demand for a product, hence appropriate pricing can influence the success of the export-marketing programme (Kotler 2008). Three general price-setting strategies in international marketing are: (a) a standard worldwide price; (b) dual pricing, which differentiates between domestic and export prices; and (c) market-differentiated pricing (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). The first two methods are cost-oriented pricing methods and the third strategy is based on demand orientation. Standard worldwide pricing may be the same regardless of the buyer, or may be based on average units of fixed, variable and export related cost.

Hollensen (2007) notes that export strategy may also be determined by costs, demand conditions, competition, legal, and political issues, as well as general company policies. In dual pricing, domestic and export prices are differentiated where two approaches to pricing products for export are available: cost-plus method and marginal cost method. Under a cost-based pricing strategy, an exporter will usually attempt to cover true costs, fully allocating domestic and foreign cost to the product. This type of pricing uses margins, as the final price may be too high and compromise competitiveness in the export market. The marginal cost method considers the direct costs of producing and selling products for the export market. An exporter may choose a standardised pricing strategy in which the domestic price is applied in the foreign market (Czinkota & Ronkainen 1993; Lages & Jap 2002; Lado, Martinez-Ros & Valenzuela 2004 and Hollensen 2007). This approach is dictated by costs and experience in the domestic market and while this pricing strategy is easy to implement, it ignores the objectives of a firm as market conditions differ across markets (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). An alternative export pricing strategy is one that adapts and differentiates price for the main exported product or line of products according to the main foreign market, based on the market conditions and level of competition (Lages & Montgomery 2001). Under this strategy, pricing analysis in international markets is explored by the level of value the target segment places on the product category and how

the differences in the product add or subtract value (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011 and Sousa & Bradley 2009).

Hollensen (2007) observed that price adaptation can be limited by the grey-market problem, which could result in unauthorised dealers buying goods at low prices in one country and re-selling in another country at higher prices. Price adaptation can also be affected by dumping activities, whereby goods are sold internationally for less than in the domestic market. Pricing strategies might be difficult to adapt to foreign markets due to resource allocation, and export competition (Lages & Montgomery 2001). The advantage of a differential pricing strategy is that it enables the exporter to consider the differences across markets. For example, a group of customers in diverse markets may have different evaluations of products depending on factors like political, legal, economic, and socio-cultural characteristics of the host country (Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Samiee 2002). Although empirical studies have examined the relationship between price adaptation and export performance, this area of research has received little attention and produced mixed results (Shoham 1995; Lages 2000 and Sousa & Bradley 2009).

Some studies (Das 1994; Lee & Griffith 2004 and Shoham 1996) identified a positive relationship between price adaptation and export performance. Das (1994) revealed that Indian firms with higher export performance were more likely to have adapted their product prices in foreign markets. Cavusgil and Zou (1994) found a positive link between price competitiveness and export performance, and Eusebio, Andreu and Belbeze (2007b) found confidence in product price had a positive impact on export performance in the study of 133 Italian and Spanish exporters. Madsen (1989)'s study of Danish exporters explained that the result of using standardised price was that their market displayed lower prices than those receiving the exports. Therefore, Danish firms benefited from a standardised pricing strategy indicating a lower competitive price was usually linked to export performance (Madsen 1989). Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee (2002) discovered a positive relationship between price adjustment and export performance with the exception of export sales volume. Other studies reported that price adaptation was negatively related to export

performance (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Lages and Montgomery (2001) reported price adaptation was insignificant and negatively related to export performance among Portuguese firms. Sousa and Bradley (2008a) found a negative relationship between price adaptation and export performance, indicating the smaller the degree of price adaptation the higher the export performance of the firm. Other studies reported a negative link between price adaptation and export performance and demonstrated the presentation of a consistent price image across markets led to enhanced performance (Zou & Stan 1998; Shoham 1999) and Lages & Montgomery 2005).

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2.6.1.11. Product characteristics

Product characteristics are the inherent features of the product offering, whether actual or perceived (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). The inherent features include the benefits they provide to consumers in the international market. Consumer nondurables, such as food products, generally show the highest degree of sensitivity towards differences in national tastes and habits. Consumer durables like cameras, and home electronics are subject to similar demands and the success of these goods is predicted by a particular different technology (Hollensen 2007). Industrial products tend to be more shielded from cultural influences, however modifications may sometimes be necessary as a result of government regulations and restraints, for example in the telecommunications industry in certain countries (McGuinness & Little 1981).

The exporter must adhere to legal, social or religious requirements of the product by ensuring the items do not contain ingredients that might violate these rules in the international market (Sousa & Bradley 2007c). For example, in Islamic countries, animal fats have to be replaced by ingredients such as vegetable shortening (De Luz 1993). Product characteristics are utilised to explain marketing policies and methods. Each distinguishing characteristic must be reasonably stable during the period of time (Sethi 2000). The explanation of the product characteristics has to be valid and must be universal in the sense that it is to some degree a feature of all the products. McGuinness and Little (1981)

maintained that product characteristics can influence managers in two categories: those characteristics that highlight or depress a sense of opportunity in managers towards foreign markets, and those characteristics that create a sense of opportunity in managers for additional sales in foreign markets. Managers are pulled into exploiting by the ability of their produce to spread independently into foreign markets and this can relate to the diffusion characteristics of the product, which indirectly stimulate managers to export. Tangible evidence of this motivation as reported where the development of unique product qualities was cited as key motivators for managers who began exporting for internal reasons (McGuinness & Little 1981).

2.6.1.12. Packaging or labelling

Packaging is one of the important features of product characteristics in the international market and provide three major functions: protection, promotion, and user convenience (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). Hollensen (2007) argues that the exporter is most concerned with making sure that the product reaches the ultimate user in the form intended. Packaging can vary as a function of transportation mode, transit conditions and length of time in transit. Hollensen (2007) draws our attention to the fact that many firms in international marketing, especially those exporting food products, tend to use more expensive packaging materials and/or more expensive transportation modes because of the longer time those products spend in distribution channels. The promotion aspect of packaging relates to labelling and a major adjustment legally required is the language in the case of countries, like Canada with two languages. Other government requirements call for more informative labelling on products for adequate identification and failure to comply may cause rejection at the entry point. Companies have to make a prudent choice of colours and package shapes. African nations often prefer bold colours, although flag colours may be either preferred or disallowed and colours like red and black are associated with death or witchcraft (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). Package size may also vary according to purchasing patterns and market conditions across countries with modest or low incomes and purchasing power, where customers buy smaller

sizes or single units. There is growing belief that innovative new products have a better than average chance of developing strong export sales with a marketing strategy that stresses that these products might effectively build greater international sales (Hollensen 2007).

2.6.1.13. Product quality

Product quality is defined as perceived superiority or excellence in a product as compared with competing alternatives from the perspective of the marketplace (Hollensen 2007). Sethi (2000) argues that it is important to understand how specific dimensions of product superiority should be evaluated. Garvin (1984) presented many dimensions of product quality; five of these would be useful in developing a definition of product quality applicable to durable and nondurable products. These five dimensions are aesthetics, performance, durability, workmanship and perceived quality. Aesthetics is the extent to which the new product is attractive in appearance in matters of personal judgment. Performance refers to the primary operating characteristics of a product and how well it performs its intended functions. Durability is the period the product remains usable before it deteriorates and needs to be disposed of. Workmanship refers to how well manufactured the product appears to be. Perceived quality refers to how subjective consumers possess complete information about a product's attributes. In these circumstances, products will be evaluated less on their objective attributes than on their image (Garvin 1984 and Sethi 2000).

Improved product quality might lead to profitability (Christensen, Rocha & Gertner 1987). Garvin (1984) argued that improvements in product performance, features or other dimensions of quality, lead to increased sales and large market share. Quality improvement may affect profitability on the cost side, as increased market share leads to experience-based cost savings and further gains in profitability (Sethi 2000). Field failures result in lower manufacturing and service costs, which can be reserved if defect prevention is reduced in the product. Managers have to assess how their approach to quality changes as the product moves from design to market. The right approach adopted could lead to cost

savings, market share gains, profitability improvement (Garvin 1994). On quality Christensen, Rocha and Gertner 1987 found successful exporters had strong control systems.

2.6.2. External determinants

The external environment or operating environment has significant impact on the operations of firms. Foreign markets pose both threats and opportunities for firms, which are argued to affect export performance significantly (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Exporting usually constitutes a complicated operation for managers as the firm will be operating outside the domestic market. Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal (2011) posit that no manager can afford to ignore the policies and regulations of the country from which their firm conducts international business as they are more likely to be affected by government regulations and the socio-cultural, legal and political situation in a country. A firm's decision to export may depend on either the domestic or foreign market environment, although limited research has been carried out on the external environment as a determinant of export performance (Lages & Sousa 2010 and Sousa, Martinez-Lopez & Coelho 2008). The three key factors highlighted in the literature include foreign market attractiveness, export market competition, and export promotion programmes (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008).

2.6.2.1. Foreign market attractiveness

Foreign market attractiveness variables that appear to influence export performance include the political or legal environment, cultural similarity, and local business conventions (Styles & Ambler 1994; Lages 2000; Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008 and Wheeler, Ibeh & Dimitratos 2008).

2.6.2.2. Political and legal environment

Lages and Jap (2002) argue that external environment factors such as the political and legal environment are also associated with export performance. Political intervention can be defined as a decision on the part of the host government that enforces changes in operations, policies, and strategies of a foreign firm (Jain 19890). Shoham (1999) observed that these may act to undermine the effectiveness and competitiveness of the activities of the exporting firm. The export environment can have an impact on export operations due to different customer preferences and different national and local legislation (Lages & Jap 2002). A foreign country's government may impose exchange controls, which can have a significant impact on reinvestment, financing and repatriation decisions (Beamish 1993). Thus laws and pressure from the foreign government can play an important role in performance by enhancing or reducing a firm's effectiveness and capacity (Beamish 1993 and Cavusgil & Zou 1994). However, managers of high performing firms designed more appropriate strategies to overcome the challenges than those in low performing firms (Ogunmokum & Ng 2004).

Styles and Ambler (1994) reported that high and low performance amongst United Kingdom (UK) exporting firms surveyed, did not differ significantly in terms of their perception of the quality of infrastructure in foreign markets. Sriram and Manu (1995) compared performance of firms that export to developed and less developed countries, and found out that firms exporting to less developed countries have a better performance than firms exporting to developed countries. Sriram and Manu (1995) also found out that the perceived foreign environment (i.e., inflation rates, exchange rates, and import restrictions) affect only export sales in a negative manner, with export ratio and export effectiveness remaining unchanged. Kaynak and Kuan (1993) argue that the suitable foreign marketing environments are more industrialised places where quality control standards are more inter-acceptable and market price fluctuations are lower. They further observed that high profitability is achieved through better management of organisational resources, thus creating synergistic benefits to exporting. Researching on the same subject, Balabanis and

Katsikeas (2003) found that an unstable environment induces managers to adopt an entrepreneurial posture, thereby boosting export performance, although this is not true for hostile and diverse environments. In contrast, Baldauf, Cravens & Wagner (2000) argue that perceived environmental effects do not have a strong impact on export performance in Australian exporters.

2.6.2.3. Cultural environment

Sousa, Martinez-Lopez and Coelho (2008) pointed out that the strategies to apply when entering a foreign market necessitate the need to consider cultural factors, therefore, those managers who are not culturally sensitive, could face difficulties in understanding business practices in foreign markets. On the same subject, Shoham (1999) observed that there is an indirect assumption that cultural similarity is positively related to export performance, and the assumption behind this theory is based on similarities of firms. It is easier for firms to manage similarities than dissimilarities thereby, making it more likely that firms will succeed in similar markets (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Similarly, Lado, Martinez-Ros and Valenzuela (2004) concluded that culturally similar markets reduce the perceived risk of failure and provide incentives to companies with limited exposure to foreign markets to start trading in those markets. On the other hand, Sriram and Manu (1995) found high performing firms perceived the socio-cultural environment to be associated with lower export performance.

Madsen (1989) argues that the more culturally distant a market is, the more different are the product attributes and foreign consumer values. Madsen (1989) posits that in order to export successfully, firms must choose countries with a small **psychic distance**, rather than far distant and unusual markets. Sousa and Bradley (2008a) rightly pointed out that this implies choosing markets in which managers understand factors such as language, culture, the level of education, and political system. Conversely, Mavrogiannis, Bourlakis, Dawson and Ness (2008) found that the similarity of export and domestic markets are insignificant, and neither close nor distant markets affect the export-marketing mix strategy or export

performance. This implies that exporters should utilise new market opportunities whether they are dissimilar to domestic and/or existing export markets. Mavrogiannis, Bourlakis, Dawson and Ness (2008) concluded that psychic distance disturbs the flow of information between firms and markets. For instance, differences in language, culture, political system, and industrial development, which managers need to understand. Julian (2003) suggested that it is important for export managers to know the level complexity in the markets, so as to understand the degree of adaptation required for customer preferences, and the extent of government interventions and regulations.

2.6.2.4. Export market competition

Cavusgil and Kirpalani (1993) define export-marketing competition as the intensity of competition, and the extent to which business strive to outdo others to gain economic rents. The higher the intensity of competition in the foreign market, the more a firm will have to adapt their export-marketing mix strategies (Jain 1989). In the same vein, O'Cass and Julian 2003) concluded that the level of competition in the foreign market and the degree of customer familiarity with the product, influence the firm's choice of export-marketing mix strategy and performance. Katsikeas, Samiee and Theodosiou (2006) concluded that competitive pressures can force firms to reduce their prices or adapt products to meet the specific needs of a particular export market. Cavusgil and Zou (1994) demonstrated that the level of competition affects the levels of product and promotion adaptation. Lages and Montgomery (2001) observed that as competition increases, firms are forced to adapt strategies to distinguish their products and gain a competitive advantage over other firms. Firms adapt strategies in developed markets with affluent, sophisticated, and educated consumers to suit their preferences (Eusebio, Andreu & Pilar 2007b). Robertson and Chetty (2000) combined types of competition in the hostility of the domestic and foreign environments in their study of New Zealand exporters and linked this to management orientation. Their study found that an exporting firm with an entrepreneurial strategic posture will continue to operate successfully in an environment which is either hostile or benign. They further discerned that the entrepreneurial approach is desirable as it is able to

perform successfully in all contextual situations using any combination of these contingency factors. Balabanis and Katsikeas (2003) failed to establish the relationship between environmental hostility and the entrepreneurial posture of managers, as their study produced a negative effect on economic export performance. Overall, high competition may seem to be a threat, but to overcome this challenge, proper export-marketing strategies have to be implemented to suit the characteristics of the export market (Balabanis & Katsikeas 2003).

In relation to markets where a well-defined set of customer preferences is stable, competition is relatively predictable, and technology advances slowly, do not warrant stringent marketing strategies (Hultman, Katsikeas & Robson 2011). Barney (2001) argue that the strategic goal of firms should be to concentrate on creating a sustainable performance through a competitive advantage in the foreign market. This requires firms applying the most appropriate strategies to achieve competitive advantage by minimising operations in less competitive export markets. Intense competition is a predictor of the decision to analyse price and product strategies of competitors in foreign markets to develop a suitable adaptation strategy to enhance exports (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou 2006). Bilkey (1982) discovered the degree of competition in the export market negatively affected strategies leading to low performance, and suggested evaluating competition abroad should be a priority of foreign market analysts. Therefore, creation of an effective export-marketing mix strategy, may enable a firm to differentiate itself from harsh environmental conditions, as the differences between the home and export market, may require additional adaptation strategies to enhance performance (Sousa & Bradley 2008b).

2.6.3. Export promotion programmes

The importance of information and knowledge to export decisions is documented in literature (Walters 1983). The type of export promotion programmes used by managers is perceived to play a role in their subsequent export achievement (Walters 1983 and Reid 1984). Seringhaus (1987) argues that firms considering exporting may lack essential export

information which may hinder their knowledge about the challenges and hurdles the export market may entail. This is predominantly evident in small firms as the primary role of information raises management's export-marketing skills and competence in the early exporting process (Cavusgil 1984). Williamson (1990) hold the view that where the necessary information may not be available internally in the firm, government export promotion programmes that offer export-marketing information, could be a comprehensive and important source of information for the firm. Therefore, to reduce the negative impact of export associated barriers, many governments offer assistance to private sector firms through a wide range of export promotion programmes (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). Although these programmes are exclusive in relations to economic, cultural, legal and political characteristics of each country, their fundamental aim is to improve the strategic management and performance of individual firms operating in overseas markets (Lages & Montgomery 2005 and Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). According to Lages and Jap (2002) promoting national exports is a primary concern of many governments in order to develop the country's full export potential. Moreover, national exports provide the means to increase employment opportunities in the domestic market, generate foreign exchange to finance imports, enrich public funds with additional tax revenues and achieve greater economic growth (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011).

Gençtürk and Kotabe (2001) pointed out that **export promotion programmes** generally comprise (1) export service programmes such as seminars for potential exporters, export counselling, how-to-export handbooks and export financing and (2) market development programmes such as dissemination of sales leads to local firms, participation in foreign trade shows, preparation of market analysis and export newsletters. Export assistance efforts can be differentiated by whether the intent is to provide informational or experiential knowledge. Informational knowledge is provided through workshops, seminars and how-to-export assistance and experiential knowledge is gained through arranging of foreign buyers or trade missions, trade and catalogue shows or participating in international marketing research (Gençtürk & Kotabe 2001). Seringhaus (1986) argued that the role of

export-marketing assistance is threefold. First, it aims to place risks and opportunities for foreign market involvement into perspective. Second, it pursues a firm's interest and commitment to exporting. Third, it acts as an external resource to build the knowledge and experience necessary for successful foreign market operations.

Seringhaus (1986) argues that the concept of export-marketing assistance holds importance for small firms because they do not benefit from diverse resources as large firms. Arguing alone the same line, Alvarez (2004) states that small firms are most likely candidates to become new exporters, therefore promoting their interests and broadening their international scope and competitiveness. This seems to be an important objective of public policy makers. However, public policy makers are faced with the challenge of understanding firms' needs in relation to export involvement to effectively assist managers with export promotion programmes. This understanding means providing the right information to the right firm at the right time. Bodur (1986) reported that the insufficiency of export information provided by the government was a common problem for Turkish exporters.

According to Freixanet (2012) there is a critical need for better understanding of managers' awareness of services and their actual perceived impact on a firm's export-marketing activity. Griffith and Czinkota (2012) concur that the increased understanding between firms and public policy makers, will assist match programmes to specific needs, whereby external resources could positively contribute to exporting success. Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theodosiou (2011) have pointed out that export services that provide managers with personal experience, have been found to produce greater benefits than services that are primarily informational, due to their direct effect on management's expert knowledge. Export promotion programmes have been found to facilitate pre-export activities among less experienced exporters and to improve export performance among more experienced exporters. Export promotion programmes assist firms to overcome barriers in their export operations, thereby accelerating their accomplishment of export results (Gençtürk & Kotabe 2001). Export-promoting programmes represent readily

available external sources of information and experiential knowledge. This view is supported by Martincus and Carballo (2010) who argue that export promotion programmes represent readily available external sources of information, and experiential knowledge that provide the firm with an external capability to cope with the complications of exporting. Gençtürk and Kotabe (2001) argue that export promotion programmes enhance a firm's competitiveness, compared to that of non-users by increasing knowledge, and capability pertaining to export market development.

Sraha (2015) observes that export promotion programmes are generally provided to exporters free or at a nominal charge, offering a cost-efficient means of gaining knowledge and experience. Such assistance also provides a central record for market information and sales leads, which enables firms to save time and money. Thus, the use of export promotion programmes results in a significant reduction in the investment necessary to generate and maintain in-house export expertise (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). Gençtürk and Kotabe 2001) empirically supported the financial benefit of export promotion programmes as direct cost savings enjoyed by users through programmes such as subsidies, below-market rates and travel fares.

2.6.3.1. Export promotion programmes and export performance

Research has examined export promotion programmes since the 1960s, but the works undertaken have been largely fragmented, un-coordinated, and unsystematic (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). Export promotion programmes have been examined generally from two major perspectives: the provider and the receiver (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). Studies using the provider's approach have focused on the content of the specific programmes that the government agencies provide and the procedure of formulating these specific programmes (Seringhaus & Rosson 1998), the procedures these agencies follow to properly target firms (Naidu & Rao 1993), and the method of evaluating the effectiveness of the programmes provided (Wilkinson & Brouthers 2000). Studies examining export promotion programmes from the receiver point

of view can be classified into four major groups (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). The first group dealt with the awareness, usage, and usefulness of export promotion programmes by non-exporters and exporters (Kedia 1986) or both (Albaum 1983). The second set of studies focused on segmenting firms that were receiving export assistance programmes according to the stage they had reached in their internationalisation processing (Ahmed 2002 and Crick & Czinkota 1995). The third group of studies highlighted the firm's efforts to initiate and develop export promotion programmes are instrumental in enhancing organisational and/or managerial competence in export activities (Seringhaus & Rosson 1998). The fourth and more recent studies investigate the effects of export promotion programmes on the export performance (Lages & Montgomery 2005; Wilkinson & Brouthers 2000) or through the intervening effects of other factors (Shamsuddoha & Ali 2006 and Shamsuddoha, Ali & Nelson 2009). In the latter case, these programmes enhanced managerial perceptions, knowledge and commitment, which in turn assisted in designing effective export-marketing strategies to improve a firm's competitive advantage (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011).

Seringhaus (1987) found that Canadian firms differentiated between objective and experiential information services and were more familiar with the latter. The level of awareness of the government export promotion programmes is tied to firm's perceived information needs at different stages of the export involvement process. Donthu and Kim (1993) documented in a study of 640 US firms that outside use of export assistance is positively related to export growth. Gençtürk and Kotabe (2001) used three export performance dimensions to establish a relationship with the export assistance of US firms and the study produced mixed findings. The relationship between export assistance effectiveness and **export sales** was non-significant, however, a positive relationship was found between export assistance and the competitive position of the firm. Lastly, export profitability did not have a significant relationship with export assistance. Gençtürk and Kotabe (2001) attributed the mixed feelings to the fact that although the use of export promotion programmes is an important factor for export success, its impact demonstrates itself differently, depending on the specific performance indicator applied.

Spence (2003) found trade missions to positively impact export performance by generating incremental sales in foreign markets for small and medium-sized firms in a number of countries. Crick and Lindsay (2015) argued that export promotion programmes in terms of trade supported have concentrated on the micro level and ignored support from the macro level. In contrast, some studies discovered a negative relationship between export assistance and export performance (Alvarez 2004 and Francis & Collins-Dodd 2004). Similarly, Stottinger and Holzmuller (2001) discovered a non-significant relationship between the use of export assistance and export performance in a comparative study of US and Australian firms. Lages and Montgomery (2005) reported mixed findings and their findings revealed the direct effect of export promotion programme on export performance was positively significant, and indirect effect highly insignificant. Lages and Montgomery (2005) pointed out that the indirect effect means that firms receiving more export promotion make more effort to adapt their pricing strategy at a lower degree, which in turn leads to poor performance.

Research supports export promotion programmes sponsored by government and non-governmental agencies designed to assist firms' export activities contribute positively to export performance (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). In a review by Zou and Stan (1998), it was found that research on domestic market has received less attention and this is supported by Sousa, Martinez-Lopez and Coelho (2008)'s call to advance theory in the domestic environment. Therefore, this research responds to the call to develop literature in the domestic market domain of export performance. This is very significant for Zimbabwe which has been subjected to near isolation status by the international community.

2.6.4. Other factors affecting export performance

2.6.4.1. Location of the firm

A firm's location is argued to have a positive influence on export operations as the metropolitan areas provide benefits to firms that can contribute to export performance (Freeman & Styles 2014). Mittelstaedt, Ward and Nowlin (2006) observed that location of the firm has been categorised according to external scale economies or the extent to which a location has an advantage because of export–related services, good infrastructure and supply of raw materials favourable to export operations. In effect, external scale economies are the increasing benefits accrued to the firm due to its metropolitan proximity (Freeman & Styles 2014). This finding supports the works of Berko and Damoah (2013) who found firms located in the capital city of Ghana performed better compared to those located in other provinces in the country. Passive externalities emerge from firms, being co-located near similar firms, as close proximity to other firms offers access to skilled labour and specialised suppliers available (Felzensztein, Stringer, Benson-Rea & Freeman 2014). A number of scholars have argued that metropolitan areas provide advantages to firms to enhance export performance (Fuller-Love, Midmore, Thomas & Henley 2006; Freeman, Styles & Lawley 2012; Felzensztein, Stringer, Benson-Rea & Freeman 2014 and Freeman & Styles 2014).

Freeman and Styles (2014) maintained that the economic development in remote areas brews specific setbacks because of geographic isolation and sparse resources, and difficulties in attracting investment, access to business-related services, financial institutions and government agencies. Berko and Damoah (2013) argued that proximity to other firms can be vital to performance and firm's innovation capacity, irrespective of internal resources. Location-specific advantages provide benefits such as skilled labour, low-cost labour, and supply of necessary logistics, which determines how firms are organised and managed to become competitive (Mittelstaedt, Ward & Nowlin 2006). Moreover, benefits are gained when firms are together in an industry cluster, which

provides local economies of scale and creates stable markets for specialised labour for the individual from (Felzensztein, Stringer, Benson-Rea & Freeman 2014). Firms observe and copy the best practices of others in the industry, which creates knowledge spillovers leading to efficient production of innovative products for foreign markets (Capello & Faggian 2005). Freeman, Styles and Lawley (2012) observed that intense rivalry, networks, better inputs and higher standards of production create location advantages to enable competitiveness in foreign markets (Freeman, Styles & Lawley 2012).

Metropolitan areas provide an infrastructure-related advantage to firms from which they can increase their export activities (Berko & Damoah 2013). Effective distribution strategies are affected by additional logistical elements such as transportation delays and adequate warehousing facilities, which are more relevant for exporters due to time and distance required to complete their export operations (Freeman, Styles & Lawley 2012 and Leonidou 2004). Therefore, firms located in capital cities will be advantaged due to their access to financial services, services of government agencies and departments, logistics and competition that sparks invention of innovative products (Berko & Damoah 2013).

2.6.4.2. Export barriers

Study on export barriers is of utmost relevance for many reasons (Leonidou 2000). First, it provides insights into the different types and nature of challenges that prevent domestic firms from internationalisation. Secondly, it develops a platform for understanding the setbacks that prevent exporters from sustaining successful export operation outside their national borders (Leonidou 2000). An **export barrier** is a constraint that hinders the ability of a firm to initiate, develop, or withstand business in foreign markets (Leonidou 2002). Understanding export barriers can assist establish why some exporting firms are unable to exploit the full capacity of their business and why other firms fail to achieve positive performance outcomes (Graig & Ahmed 2005). Milanzi (2012) argues that small firms are more prone to problems such as resource constraints, organisational deficiencies, and managerial limitations than larger firms. Generally, export barriers can be classified as

internal and external (Leonidou 2004). Internal barriers are related to organisational resources/capabilities, and the firm's approach to exporting. External barriers usually emanate from home and host environment within which the firm operates.

Procedural barriers that fall within internal barriers, refer to those factors that are critical to efficient operation of the firm (Tesfom & Lutz 2006a). They originate from logistics and distribution aspects including outsourcing raw materials. Procedure barriers are external to the firm and cannot be controlled directly by the firm (Leonidou 2000; Craig & Ahmed 2005). Shortage of working capital and funds has been identified as an export barrier. To operate a successful export business, more often than not, requires extensive expenditure in researching markets abroad, customer preferences, and product adaptation to suit the idiosyncrasies of the export market (Leonidou 2004). Clearly, this can generate excessive financial constraints and inhibit the firm's progress in exporting. Other important factors are necessary to make these dormant barriers functional, which are attributed to the characteristics of the manager, and the environment within which the firm operates (Fillis 2001; Leonidou 2004).

Leonidou (2004) argues that managerial factors are paramount in operationalising the type, content and effect of export barriers. Managers who are incompetent, risk averse, and inexperienced, are more likely to perceive export obstacles in a strong manner than managers with capability, a risk-taking attitude and foreign exposure. Dissimilarity in export-barrier impact can be attributed to the outcomes of differences in managerial attitudes towards cost, profit growth and other aspects of exporting (Leonidou 1998). Leonidou (2000) argues that organisation factors can have a determining effect on export-barrier perceptions. He further argues that there is evidence to illustrate that young firms are generally more susceptible to export barriers, compared to large firms that have more experience in exporting. Tesfom, Lutz (2006a) posit that small firms are usually vulnerable to export barriers related to resource constraints, operating difficulties and trade restrictions. Moreover, firms, belonging to different industries appear to perceive export barriers differently depending on their operations (Freeman & Reid 2006). According to Leonidou

(2004) environmental factors can also affect export-barrier perceptions in two ways. Firstly, they can be the source of barriers in the home market such as local government regulations, infrastructure, including roads/transport, and logistics systems. Second, environmental barriers shape the obstacles derived from foreign market conditions including economic, political and socio-cultural, within which the firm has to operate. The export market is coupled with legal and regulatory frameworks including high standards to protect the consumer in the import market; therefore, managers have to allocate resources to adapt their products to meet the quality standards in various export markets (Tesfom & Lutz 2006a). Pinho and Martins (2010) conclude that the impart of barriers to exporting is largely dependent on the characteristics of the manager, and the organisation and environmental background of the firm. Leonidou (2004) advocates that managers who adopt a proactive outlook about these barriers and prioritise these problems according to their impact on the achievement of export goals are able to overcome these challenges.

2.7. Models of export performance

Research on firms' export performance dates back to the early 1960s with the pioneering work of Tookey (1964), who first attempted to identify the factors associated with success in exporting. Since then, numerous empirical studies have examined the interrelationships among export performance determinants and their outcomes, indicative of an ever-increasing interest in export operations worldwide. The various determinants discussed in the earlier section are considered for firm export performance. Further, some export performance models are also reviewed below to identify relevant determinants of firm export performance and for better understanding that export commitment, international experience, export promotion programmes, and export marketing mix strategy play pivotal roles on firm export performance.

2.7.1. Aaby and Slater – Strategic Export Model

The Aaby and Slater's Strategic Export model (1989) is the leading framework to guide this research discipline (Figure 2.1). Their export performance model draws on meta-analysis of empirical studies between 1978 and 1988. Aaby and Slater's work identifies the factors that impact export performance in relationship to each other, and it is especially useful for the clear positioning of export barriers. According to their research, export barriers have a direct influence on export performance (Abby & Slater 1989). The fact that the barriers influence export performance is now widely accepted (Aaby & Slater 1989); Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Leonidou, Katsikeas & Samie 2002). The operalisation of export success, however, varies according to be theoretical framework adopted (Zhou & Stan 1998).

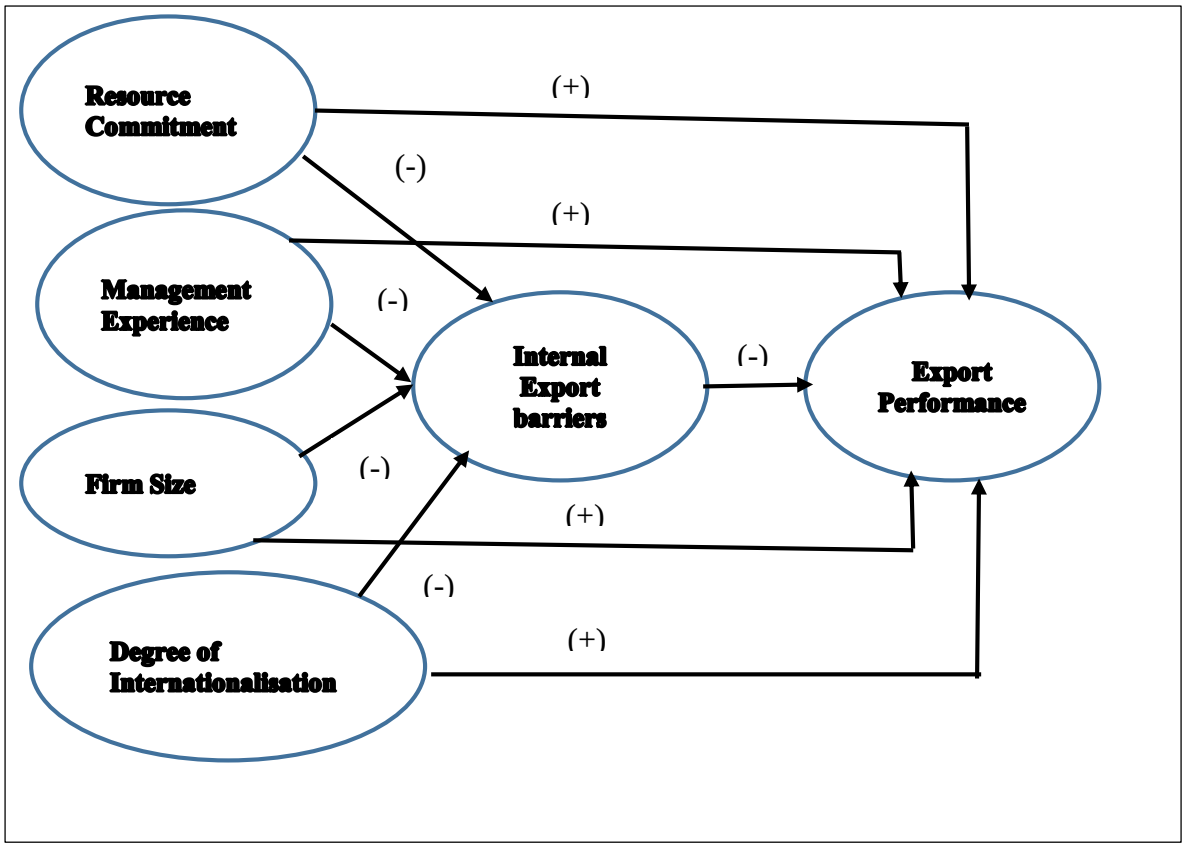


Figure 2.1: Strategic Export Model (Aaby & Slater 1989)

Aaby and Slater (1989) establish a direct relationship between export barriers and export performance, and they locate export barriers clearly between strategy and export performance. Their model has been used intensively as a conceptual framework and guided numerous studies (Chetty 1993; Lu & Beamish 2001; Kaleka 2002 and Bell, Crick & Young 2004). Aaby and Slater (1989) propose differentiating between internal and external influences which impact on export performance. Internal factors concerning competencies include matters such as technology, export and market knowledge, planning, export policy, management control, quality, and communication. Firm size, management commitment, management perceptions towards financial incentives, competition, market potential, distribution, risk and profit, relate to the firm's characteristics and according to Aaby and Slater (1989), it is the firm's characteristics that determine export performance. The researcher further distinguish strategy through market selection, use of intermediaries, product mix, product development, promotion, pricing, and staffing. Competencies and strategy impact either directly or indirectly on export performance. Export barriers are directly influenced by strategy, which in turn is influenced by competencies and firm characteristics. All the above factors drive export performance and the ability to internationalise business. What their model (Aaby and Slater 1989) does not explain, however, is the relationship between environment and strategy.

The more recent export performance models reviewing current empirical research are mainly based on Aaby and Slater's earlier works (Aaby & Slater 1989; Gemünden 1991; Chetty & Hamilton 1993; Zhou & Stan 1998).

2.7.2. Chetty and Hamilton Model

Chetty and Hamilton (1993) put forward a model of inter-related factors impacting on export performance (Figure 2.2). Their model includes competencies, firm characteristics, economic environment, commercial environment, and export strategy as the determining factors on export performance.

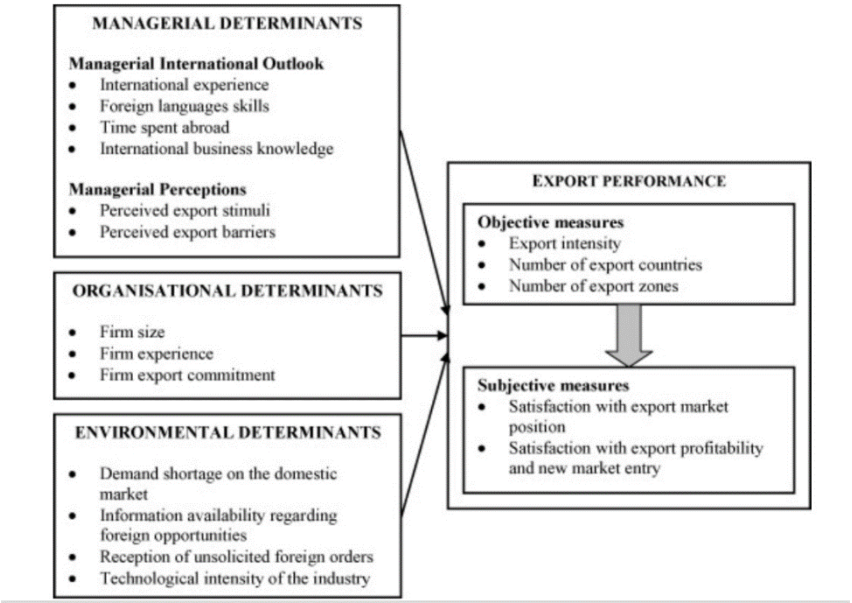


Figure 2.2: Chetty and Hamilton Export Performance Model (Chetty & Hamilton 1993)

In contrast, to Aaby and Slater (1989), Chetty and Hamilton's (1993) model does not show the economic and commercial environment to have any impact on export strategy.

2.7.3. Cavusgil and Zou Model

Cavusgil and Zou (1994) suggested firm could achieve better performance in international markets through deliberate marketing strategy implementation. They also showed that various internal (firm characteristics and product characteristics) and external factors (industry characteristics and export market characteristics) exert indirect influences on export performance through export marketing strategy. Finally, they found marketing strategy, firms' international competences, and managerial commitment, have emerged as the key success factors in export marketing. So, the study has substantiated the empirical link between marketing strategy and performance in the context of export market ventures.

2.7.4. Katsikeas, Piercy and Ioannidis Model

Katsikeas, Piercy and Ioannidis (1996), developed and evaluated a model of export performance using a sample of regular exporters from a small European Union country, Greece, in their trading activities with overseas distributors. A comprehensive model of export performance was developed based on internal and external factors as determinants of export behaviour. The model integrates key firm characteristics, export commitment, and export-related perception variables. They further classified the key variables, e.g., firm characteristics into size and export experience; and export commitment into separate export department, foreign market entry and customer selection criteria, regular export market visits, and export planning and control. Export-related perception variables were divided into three variables: export stimuli, exporting problems and competitive advantages. They divided export stimuli into six fundamental dimensions including domestic market pressures, fortuitous conditions leading to export involvement, international managerial outlook, national export policy, export-market match, and exogenous market conditions. The results suggest that there is no influence of firm size and export experience on firm export performance. Among six export stimuli dimensions, only national export policy is positively related to export performance.

2.7.5. Zou and Stan Model

Zou and Stan (1998) differentiate the determining factors of export performance into controllable and uncontrollable, as well as internal and external (Figure 2.3). Developed ten years after the seminal model by Aaby and Slater (1989), their work is based on a review of internationalisation literature between 1987 and 1997.

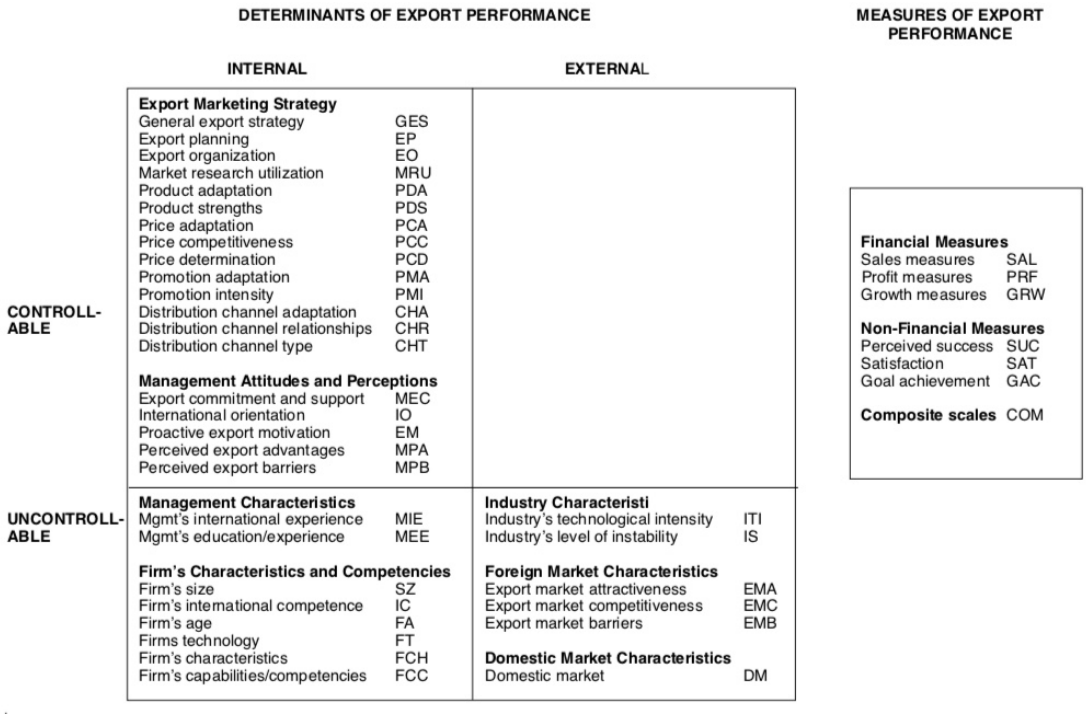


Figure 2.3: Zou and Stan Export Performance Model (Zou & Stan 1998)

2.7.6. Lages Model

Lages (2000) examined existing knowledge in export marketing, dealing in particular with the relationship between internal and external factors, marketing strategy, and export performance. Lages developed a conceptual framework whereby the preceding year's export performance, internal factors and external factors were shown as influencing the current year's export performance through the degree of marketing programme adaptation. Professor Luis Filipe Lages suggested that the marketing strategy and enhance international competitiveness, and consequently, improve their firm's export performance.

2.7.7. Katsikeas, Leonidou and Morgan Model

Katsikeas, Leonidou and Morgan (2000) reviewed and evaluated more than 100 articles of pertinent empirical studies to assess and critique export performance measurements. In a section of this article, Katsikeas, Leonidou and Morgan suggested a simple model of export performance, consisting of three groups of variables: 1) background, that is managerial, organisational and environmental forces that indirectly affect export performance through intervening variables; 2) intervening, that is, variables that directly affect export performance, comprising mainly targeting and marketing strategy elements; and 3) outcome, that is, the firm's export performance.

Environmental factors are forces shaping both the domestic and overseas task environment and macro environment within which exporters operate, and are essentially external factors beyond the control of the exporting organisation (Aaby & Slater 1989). Although the potential role of these factors in influencing export performance has been repeatedly stressed in the export marketing literature, little empirical research has been undertaken to confirm this, probably due to the complexity of the international business environment (Rao 1990; Rao & Naidu 1992 and Reid 1987). Instead, these factors have been examined mainly within the context of stimuli and/or barriers to exporting, and several factors (e.g., economic conditions, trade barriers, and competitive pressure) were revealed as influential (Leonidou 1995).

Organisational factors comprise demographic aspects, operating elements, resource characteristics and goals and objectives of the exporting firm (Leonidou 1998). Managerial factors are those demographic, experiential, attitudinal, behavioural, and other characteristics of the decision maker within the firm who is potentially, or actually involved in the export marketing process (Leonidou et al., 1998).

Targeting factors relate to the critical processes of identifying, selecting, and segmenting international markets (Kotabe & Helsen 1998). Although these factors received scant

empirical attention and were confined to only two major issues- export expansion strategy and foreign market segmentation- increasingly, significant relationships between targeting variables and export performance were often reported (Donthu & Kim 1993; Evangelista 1994; and Lee & Yang 1990). Marketing strategy factors refer essentially to the company's export product, pricing, distribution and promotion strategy (Albaum, Strandskov & Duerr 2016) and are the key to superior export performance.

2.7.8. Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee Model

Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee (2002) reviewed recent empirical literature and provide and advance export performance model based also on met-analysis (Figure 2.4). They classify the critical factors into three groups: (1) managerial characteristics, (2) organisational factors, and (3) environmental forces. Their model considers environmental forces to influence both, the export target and export strategy. This is a major difference to Aaby and Slater (1989) who do not show environmental influences impacting on performance; Leonidou et al. (2002) take them into account. Leonidou et al. (2002) separate strategic factors into two distinct groups: export targeting (market selection and market segmentation). An added and useful point in their suggestion is that export performance can be separated into economic and non-economic aspects.

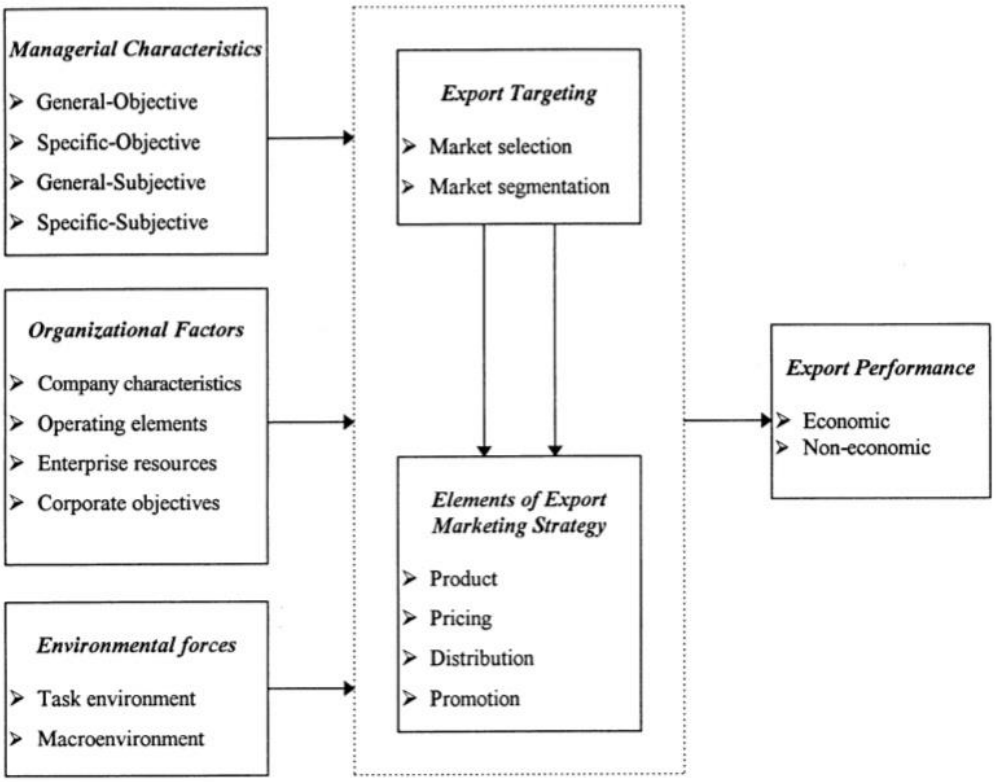


Figure 2.4: Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee Export Performance Model (Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee 2002)

The model, however, does not clearly locate factors that contribute to the of export performance that might be part of, or impact on, every one of the above factors. Possibly, networks are considered part of enterprise's resources, yet one could argue that they are actually outside the firm's direct influence and therefore do not belong directly to organisational factors. The main criticism in regard to their model, however, has been that of a "unidirectional causal relationship" (Leonidou, Katsikeas & Samiee 2002). Critics have suggested that the model lacks the feedback element concerning learning and experience, and also fails to incorporate an increase in resources through profits from the successful export venture. Thus, the model appears to be rather static and not dynamic.

2.7.9. Morgan, Kaleka and Katsikeas Model

Morgan, Kaleka and Katsikeas (2004) developed a further model by differentiating the major impacting factors into two separate groups: available capabilities and available resources (in both cases relating to exporting). They argued that capabilities and resources determine both equally the choice of competitive strategy concerning the export venture. The strategy, consequently, decides on the positional advantage will determine export performance. Finally, the introduce a third variable which they identify as "competitive intensity of the export market." This factor is lying outside the control of the firm and impacts independently on the relationship pf strategy to positional advantage. Morgan, Kaleka and Katsikeas (2004) further suggest that competitive intensity has influence on both, positional advantage and export performance. They acknowledge that this last assumption has not yet been tested by research and has to be treated as a potential relationship.

The major advance of this latest model is the introduction of a feedback loop from export performance to the firm's capabilities and resources through investment and learning (Morgan et al., 2004). The feedback loop addresses the issues of dynamism but the model fails to show the impact that the competitive intensity of the export market has on strategy formulation. Environmental factors also seem under-acknowledged in the strategy consideration of this model and a limitation of the model might be its restriction to the manufacturing sector.

2.7.10. Summary on models of export performance

Good progress has been made towards conceptualisation of factors associated with export performance. Since the Aaby and Salter framework in 1989, subsequent models have been developed and are now available for discussion. However, all of these models still have some limitations when it comes to full explanation of the major observed phenomena. There

is agreement in the literature on some of the underlying reasons for this lack of integrative framework acknowledging three particular problems that tend to limit further progress.

Firstly, researchers draw on a wide range of divergent theoretical perspectives (Aaby & Slater 1989; Morgan et al., 2004 and Zhou & Stan 1998) which makes the integration of findings from different studies difficult. Secondly, there are extensive differences of how the primary units of analysis are selected and these units can range from export venture to firm characteristics (Madsen 1987 and Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000). These practices can make it difficult to isolate the critical factors when using quantitative methodological techniques.

Thirdly, export performance is multi-dimensional, so export performance has economic and strategic components which are difficult to quantify (Thach & Axinn 1994). Therefore, so far no single model has been able to explain and integrate existing knowledge in regard to export performance and internationalisation.

Fourthly, and most importantly, none of the most recent export performance models focuses on the factors that affect the export performance of firms as critical factors for success. The relationship of the factors that affect the export performance of firms has escaped the attention of recent research. Thus, here appears a gap in the literature which warrants further research. A performance model which is developed from the perspective of enhancing export performance might provide explanations on how and why firms achieve or not achieve export performance. At the same time, research that seeks to develop a performance model which integrates both, the positive and negative factors influencing export performance should offer a better understanding of how and why firms internationalise. Ultimately, a framework pulling together major factors that affect export performance will result in a clearer picture of what factors are necessary for success, when they are needed and what private and public policy implications should be considered resulting from them. The next section outlines recent research on the characteristics of Zimbabwe's manufacturing firms.

2.8. Characteristics of Zimbabwe exporting firms

In his nation-wide-exploratory study of 124 manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe that focused on the relationship between characteristics of manufacturing exporters, and constructs that define factors constraining export growth and competitiveness, Professor Zororo Muranda concluded that Zimbabwe's exporters were essentially small to medium-sized in nature, and that size, experience, and risk aversion were common amongst them (Muranda 2003). The study identified inadequate experiential knowledge, inadequate technical skills, uncompetitive pricing, operational capacity and unsupportive business environment, as factors that significantly contributed to low growth and less competitiveness of Zimbabwe manufacturing exporters. Muranda (2003) concluded that while a politically-induced economic crisis had significantly contributed to the subdued trend in exports, corporate weaknesses and strategic inflexibility worsened the poor export performance of Zimbabwe manufacturing firms. The study, however, did not proffer suggestions on what measures can be undertaken to enhance exports by manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe.

Fafchamps (1997) observed that unlike credit from financial institutions, trade credit among Zimbabwe firms, does not rely on formal collateral but on trust and reputation and that contract enforcement is flexible. The study revealed that network effects and statistical discrimination is used to screen trade credits applicants. Fafchamps (1997) concluded that there is a vicious cycle among Zimbabwe's firms that is created between weak financial base, unreliability as a debtor, and inability to access credit, and as a result, a firm's performance is subdued.

Gumbe and Kaseke (2009) conducted a study to assess strategies adopted by Zimbabwe manufacturing firms during the hyperinflationary period 2008 to 2015 and established that firms applied different strategies such as quantity reduction, decentralisation of decision making, reducing quality of products, development of syndicates, adoption of shorter pay periods and other forms of financial and marketing strategies. From the study, the Zimbabwe firms seem not to have the propensity to export as a strategy of survival during hyperinflation.

2.9. Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the literature on the resource-based view, and determinants of export performance at the firm level. The resource-based view argues that a firm's export performance is based on firm-level activities, including firm size, age of the firm, competences, resources and export-marketing strategies. The influence of the external environment provided insights from outside the domestic and foreign environment, to explain the influence of the external characteristics in exporting. Foreign market attractiveness represented the importance of the political/legal regulatory frameworks, cultural factors, and the level of export competition in the host country, which could both strengthen, and weaken export performance. Types of export barriers encountered in the local and export market were classified as external and internal barriers of the firm. The firms encounter logistical, environmental, marketing, and financial barriers in exporting. There are benefits that are associated with firms located in metropolitan cities, as they become successful, and enjoy access to raw materials, logistics, and funding. This chapter presented the theoretical foundation and reviewed literature on key determinants of export performance of the firm to build the theoretical foundation of the study. The next chapter presents the conceptual framework model with hypothesis development.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework of the study. Professor Michel Porter's Diamond Theory of national competitiveness is presented as the theoretical foundation of the study. Researchers working in the field of internationalisation and export tend to have a variety of backgrounds. For this reason, research concerned with internationalisation and export draws on literature belonging to multiple disciplines such as economics, international business, international marketing, strategic management, international entrepreneurship, SME literature, networks, export information system, and supply chain management among others. The body of literature is extensive and a complete literature review exceeds the scope of this doctoral research. Thus, a selection and severe restriction to work closely related to the focus of the study became necessary. Arguably, firms embark on the internationalisation process with the aim of achieving successful performance and profit in international markets (Westhead, Wright & Ucbasaran, 2007). As the current research is concerned with the need to develop insights into how firms achieve export performance in spite of their export barriers, this problem has been approached by probing their export practices. In particular, the focus is on how firms manage export barriers. This chapter attempts to present the theoretical context in which the present research should be located.

This chapter 3 is divided into six sections where, Section 3.1 the theoretical perspective of export performance, Section 3.2 presents Porter's Diamond Theory on Competitive Advantage as the underpinning of the study, Section 3.3 outlines the relationship between Porter's Diamond Theory and export performance, Section 3.4 outlines the relationship between export performance and internationalisation of firms, Section 3.5. presents related research on firm export performance, and Section 3.6 presents the summary of Chapter 3.

3.1. Theoretical Perspective

Trade theory suggests factor intensities and technical innovations as the standard determinants of trade structure. Factor intensity theories argue that factor-based advantages may be important if the firm has either a natural monopoly of a particular factor of is located in a particular region where a factor is plentiful. According to Heckscher-Ohlin model of comparative advantage the focus is on the mapping from factor proportions to trade patterns (Graner and Isaksson 2002). If the comparative advantage model is correct, then firms producing commodities that make intensive use of the country's abundant factor should have a higher probability of being exporters than firms using a scarce factor intensively. Extending the more traditional range of factors included in the trade models, beyond labour and capital, different dimensions of human capital, organisational resources, and natural resources are usually included.

Technical innovations reflect the technology gap of trade originally suggested by Posner (1961) and formalised by Krugman (1979, 1992), together with the product cycle theory of Hirsch (1965) and Vernon (1966). Both these theories assign a crucial role of technological innovation in the structure of trade. Technological-based models of export performance focus on firms' investments or achievement in implementing new technologies or the development of new products or processes. This capacity will depend both on the natural strengths of the manufacturing plant, including where applicable its links to other group companies and on the support available from the regional or national innovation system within which the firm is operating (Metcalfe 1997). The presence of a research and development (R&D) function within a manufacturing plant, for example, may stimulate innovation through type of technology push process envisaged in linear models of innovation.

A set of theoretical models by Dixit (1989), Krugman (1989) and others suggest that hysteresis in exports may be due to the sunk costs in entering the export market as firm level. The underlying theory is that there are fixed costs of exporting that deter those firms

operating below a threshold level of efficiency because their prospective profits from exporting do not compensate for additional costs (Roberts & Tybout 1997). Sunk costs may include expenses related to establishing a distribution channel and modification of commodities to foreign tastes. These costs may vary with the skill of staff, firm age, firm size and ownership structure of the firm (Graner & Isaksson 2002).

Firm age may capture the extent of a firm's learning experience (Graner & Isaksson 2002). If market forces sort out technically inefficient producers, then older plants will tend to be more competitive in the world markets (Roberts & Tybout 1997). The structure of ownership may also be important for the cost to access foreign markets, proprietary information and access to marketing networks abroad (Berry 1992). Similar, foreign-owned firms may have better access to finance, making it easier to bear the fixed costs associated with entering the export market. The skill intensity of operations may capture the potential for technological activities such as research and development.

Exporting may give the firm higher marketing costs than domestic sales, and the larger the firm the lower the average cost of exporting (Bigsten et al. 2004). Related to sunk costs, firm size may also serve as a proxy for the magnitude of the firm's resources that are important for the decision to enter into the international markets (Wagner 1995; Sterlacchini 1999; Bernard, Jensen & Schott 2010). Firms that are relatively more productive may self-select into the export market because they expect the future returns to be greater than the entry costs (Clerides, Lach, & Tybout 1998). Both the learning by exporting, and the self-selection arguments predict that exporting firms ought to be more technically efficient than non-exporters.

The literature on economic geography and trade (Krugman 1992) hypothesises that activities of neighbouring firms may reduce entry costs. Geographical location is thought to capture factors that influence transport costs and infrastructure, spillover effect and natural resources.

3.2. Porter's Diamond Theory

According to Porter in his book, "The Competitive Advantages of Nations", published in 1990, countries are more likely to succeed in industries or industry segments where the characteristics of the country provide the most favourable environment for the firms within industries to upgrade and innovate (Porter 1990). Countries will export and succeed in international markets in the industries that they have competitive advantage in. the key issue is to know which factors affect the competitive advantage of the firms within industries.

Porter argues that there are several attributes of a nation that affect the competitive environment in which firms compete, and that can promote or prevent the development of competitive advantage. It is important to know which characteristics of a nation may lead to success in a particular industry, so that managers and policy makers can enhance these factors. Under this framework, the unit of analysis in the industry since the characteristics of the country affect the whole industry and not particular firms. However, the firms and chains are those that obtain competitive advantage.

This framework emerged after four years of studying several industries in ten important trading nations namely, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States of America. When Porter published his book, it received international attention from academics, politicians, and business community. It has been widely used in country and industry studies. In addition to the ten countries where the model was developed, two other country studies in New Zealand and in Canada were subsequently developed by Porter and his collaborators. There have been also several other applications of the model in different countries such as in Austria (Bellak & Weis 1993), Finland (Yla-Antila 1994), Turkey (Oz 2002) and Saudi Arabia (Jasimuddin 2001).

Porter's theory considered four factors as critical in stabilizing the competitive advantage of any industry within a country. These determinants are factor conditions, demand

conditions, firm strategy, structure and rivalry; and related and supporting industries. He also considered two external factors; chance and government that are likely to affect the four components. Figure 3.1 shows Porter's Diamond Framework.

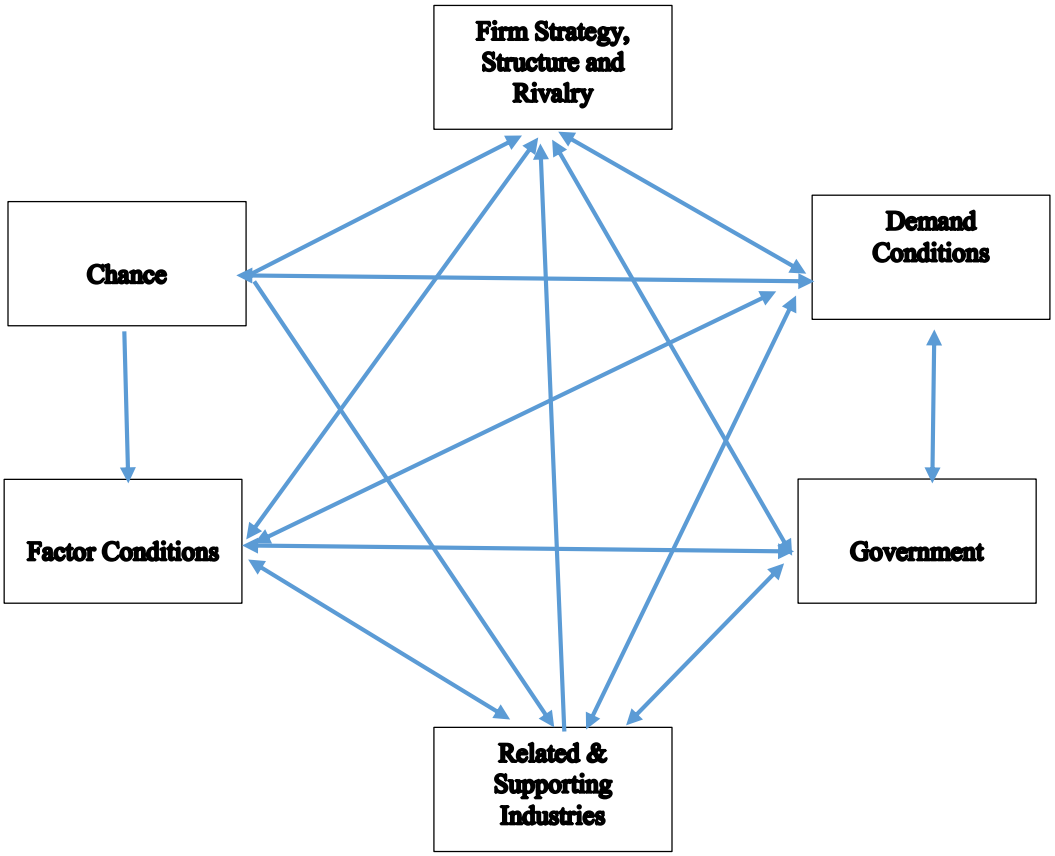


Figure 3.1: Porter's Diamond Model – the Determinants of National Advantage (Porter 1998)

The four determinants shape the industrial environment to the benefit or hindrance of nation's firm by providing the firm the pressure, incentives and capabilities to undertake improvement and innovation. This is a holistic approach with an important level of complexity because it has a combination from different disciplines such as technology innovation, industrial economics, economic development, economic geography,

international trade, political science, and industrial sociology and interrelationships of the framework.

3.2.1. Factor conditions

Factor conditions refer to the relevant inputs necessary to compete in an industry such as physical resources (arable land, climate, location, etc.), human resources (labour cost, availability and level of skills), knowledge resources (number of scientists, research centre, databases, etc.), capital resources (cost and availability of capital) and infrastructure (type, quality and cost of infrastructure).

Factors can be divided into basic factors and advanced factors, Basic factors are those which have been inherited or created with a low investment, for example, natural resources, climate, and low skilled labour. Advanced factors are those which require high levels of physical and human capital investment, such as research institutes or sophisticated infrastructure. Factors can also be divided into generalised and specialised. Generalised factors are those factors that can be used by a range of industries. Specialised factors are those that are relevant to a limited range or a single industry. According to Porter, the most significant and sustainable competitive advantage results when a nation has factors needed to compete in a particular industry that are both advanced and specialised.

Conversely, when competitive advantage is based on basic and generalised factors they are easy to imitate, hence, they are a less sustained source of competitive advantage. Porter claimed that the most important factors for modern industry are created. In order to obtain competitive advantage, it is not the level of resource at a certain point in time, but the rate at which they are generated and upgraded that is most important. Unlike previous theories of international trade, where abundant factors of production were a source of advantage, Porter suggests that the competitive advantage for a particular industry in a country can grow out of disadvantages in some factors. That is, he claims that a shortage in factors of production could be motivation, for particular firms, to create a new way to overcome this

shortage. Hence, this shortage may be transformed into a competitive advantage when innovation to circumvent selective disadvantage not only economies on factor utilisation but can also create new factor advantages.

3.2.2. Demand conditions

Another important factor in creating sustainable competitive advantage for the industries in the country, included in Porter's Diamond Framework, is the demand conditions. Porter found that the characteristics of the home demand had some influence in nearly every industry he and his colleagues studied. The characteristic of the domestic demand is important for two reasons. The first reason is its effect on improvement and innovation within the country when domestic market consumers demand new and better products. Sophisticated and demanding home market consumers will pressure the firms in the country to satisfy them and, hence, to innovate.

There are three important aspects of home demand that are relevant for industries developing competitive advantage. The first aspect is home demand composition, including segment structure of demand, sophisticated and demanding buyers, and anticipatory buyers need. The second aspect is demand size and pattern of growth, including size, rate of growth, early home demand and early saturation. The final aspect is internalisation of domestic demand including mobile or multinational byers and their influence on foreign needs.

3.2.3. Related and support industries

Another important determinant of national advantage is the presence of world-class related and supporting industries in the country. Related industries are those that share common technologies, inputs, distribution channels, customers, or provide products that are complementary. World-class related industries could provide a nation's firms with sources of technology, ideas, individuals and potential competitors that can become advantages for

international competition. Supporting industries are those that provide inputs to the industry, such as technology, information, and raw materials. The presence in the country of a world leading supporting industries can be a source of competitive advantage because these supporting industries can provide early, rapid and preferential access to the most cost effective inputs. Linkages and co-ordination strategies with these supporting industries can be a source of competitive advantage and they may help in the process of upgrading and innovation.

Nations, typically are competitive in "clusters" of related and supporting industries connected through vertical and horizontal relationships. Clusters are geographic concentration of interconnected companies, specialised suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (for example universities, standards agencies, and trade associations) in particular fields that compete but also co-operate. The clusters present in the country reflect the state of the economy's development, and they are an essential ingredient of the economic development of the country (porter 1998). The complex web of interactions within these clusters can provide a major source of competitive advantage throughout the entire economic system. Often the clusters are geographically concentrated, making the interactions closer and more dynamic. It is more difficult to obtain the same level of interaction with related and supporting industries when they are located in foreign countries, than when they are located in the same country.

Clusters affect completion in three ways. Firstly, they can increase the productivity of firms or industries. Secondly, they can increase their capacity for innovation and, hence, for productivity growth. Finally, they can stimulate new business formation that supports innovation and expands clusters (Porter 1998). Clusters may be viewed as relating to one facet of the diamond, "related and supporting industries", but they are best seen as a manifestation of the interactions among all four parts of the diamond (Porter 1990).

3.2.4. Firm strategy, structure and rivalry

Firm strategy and structure relates to the conditions in a country that govern how companies are created, organised and managed. Some of these include social norms and attitudes towards business, which are often reflected in government policy. Generally, it depends on the educational system, social and religious history, family structure and other unique national conditions. In addition, the socio-political environment has an impact on the type of industries in which a particular country achieves international competitiveness.

A firms' rivalry refers to the nature of their domestic competitors. The nature of competition and the presence of local rivals have a fundamental impact on the international competitiveness of a nation's firms. The presence of local rivals is a powerful stimulus for the creation and persistence of competitive advantage. This internal rivalry encourages firms to make investments and take risks to create new competitive advantages. Competing with foreign companies also helps to increase competitiveness. However, competing with domestic rivals is most helpful in the process of upgrading and innovating since these firms are under the same country's environment.

3.2.5. External factors: Chance and Government

Two additional determinants that may affect the national environment, namely chance and government. Chances are events that occur outside the control of the firm and, often, the national government. These events include pure inventions, breakthroughs in basic technologies, wars, and external political developments. These events are important because they create discontinuities that allow shifts in the competitive position. Chance affects the competitive position by affecting the four determinates of the diamond.

Government can also affect competitive advantage by promoting or preventing industry development. Traditional theories of international trade see the government as the most influential factor in modern competition. However, Porter said that the most important role

of government is in influencing the four determinants, either positively or negatively. As n example, subsidies, polices toward the financial markets or education may affect factor conditions in a country. Another example can be regulations and local standards imposed by the government which may affect demand conditions. Government also affects the sources of competitive advantage by its effect on the four determinants.

3.2.6. The diamond as a system

Porter proposed that the diamond has to be considered as a system where all the corners interact with each other. Competitive advantage cannot be obtained if only one corner of the diamond is favourable and the others do not enhance this source of competitive advantage. Similarly, the two external factors affect, in different ways, each of the four determinants of the diamond. Consequently, it is necessary, when using the framework, not to only analyse the effect of the determinants, but also to consider their interactions with the other corners and the external factors.

3.3. Porter's Diamond Theory and Export Performance

According to Porter, the sources of competitive advantage, hence high propensity to successfully export, of any industry within a country, emerge from the interaction of four main determinants, factor conditions, demand condition, supporting and related industries, and firm strategy and rivalry, and also on the effect on two external factors, chance and government, have over these four determinants. It therefore, follows that when a country has a favourable diamond for a particular industry, it is likely that this country is internationally successful in this industry and the firms will be successful in their export business.

A favourable Diamond for obtaining competitive advantage means that its components in the country are appropriate for the firms to have an environment to upgrade and innovate and/or it possesses an adequate pool of resources relevant to the industry. With regard to

the research problem being addressed in this study, if diamonds for Zimbabwe in relation to the food and beverage industry, are described and analysed, the sources of competitive advantage can be identified, which is the main objective of this thesis.

3.4 Export development and internationalisation of firms

Welch and Luostarinen (1988) described internationalisation as the process of increasing involvement in international operations. This involvement can be undertaken in a range of forms and the various degrees of commitment. Globalisation and integration of markets due to technological advances and increased trade liberalisation, in combination with domestic competition, have been reasons for firms' noticeably increased engagement in exporting and internalisation (Douglas & Craig, 1995).

Yip (2003) identifies four sets of "industry globalisation drivers" or internationalisation drivers that underlie conditions in each industry that create the potential for that industry to become more global and, as a consequence, for the potential viability of a global approach to strategy. Market drivers define how customer behaviour distribution patterns evolve, including the degree to which customer needs converge around the world, customers procure on a global basis, worldwide channels of distribution develop, marketing platforms are transferable, and "lead" countries in which most innovation takes place can be identified. Cost globalisation drivers—the opportunity for global scale or scope economics, experience effects, sourcing efficiencies reflecting differentials in costs between countries or regions, and technology advantages—shape the economics of the industry. Competitive drivers are defined by the actions of competing firms, such a s the extent to which competitors from different continents enter the fray, globalize their strategies and corporate capabilities, and create interdependence between geographical markets. Government drivers include such factors as favourable trade policies, a benign regulatory climate, and common product and technology standards.

3.4.1. Market drivers

One aspect of globalisation is the steady convergence of customer needs. As customers in different parts of the world increasingly demand similar products and services, opportunities for scale arise through the marketing of more or less standardised offerings. How common needs, tastes, and preferences will vary greatly by product and depend on such factors as the importance of cultural variables, disposable incomes, and the degree of homogeneity of the conditions in which the product is consumed or used. This applies to consumer as well as industrial products and services. Coca-Cola offers similar but not identical products around the world. McDonald's, while adapting to local tastes and preferences, has standardised many elements of its operations. Software, oil products, and accounting services increasingly look alike no matter where they are purchased. The key to exploiting such opportunities for scale lies in understanding which elements of the product or service can be standardised without sacrificing responsiveness to local preferences and conditions. Global customers have emerged as needs continue to converge. Large corporations such as DuPont, Boeing, or GE demand the same level of quality in the products and services they buy no matter where in the world they are procured. In many industries, global distribution channels are emerging to satisfy an increasingly global customer base, further causing a convergence of needs. Finally, as consumption patterns become more homogeneous, global branding and marketing will become increasingly important to global success.

3.4.2. Cost globalisation drivers

The globalisation of customer needs and the opportunities for scale and standardization it brings will fundamentally alter the economics of many industries. Economies of scale and scope, experience effects, and exploiting differences in factor costs for product development, manufacturing, and sourcing in different parts of the world will assume a greater importance as determinants of global strategy. At bottom is a simple fact: a single market will no longer be large enough to support a competitive strategy on a global scale

in many industries. Global scale and scope economics are already having far-reaching effects. On the one hand, the more the new economies of scale and scope shape the strategies of incumbents in global industries, the harder it will be for new entrants to develop an effective competitive threat. Thus, barriers to entry in such industries will get higher. At the same time, the rivalry within such industries is likely to increase, reflecting the broadening scope of competition among interdependent national and regional markets and the fact that true differentiation in such a competitive environment may be harder to achieve.

3.4.3. Competitive drivers

Industry characteristics—such as the degree to which total industry sales are made up by export or import volume, the diversity of competitors in terms of their national origin, the extent to which major players have globalized their operations and created an interdependence between their competitive strategies in different parts of the world—also affect the globalization potential of an industry. High levels of trade, competitive diversity, and interdependence increase the potential for industry globalization. Industry evolution plays a role, too. As the underlying characteristics of the industry change, competitors will respond to enhance and preserve their competitive advantage. Sometimes, this causes industry globalization to accelerate. At other times, as in the case of the worldwide major appliance industry, the globalization process may be reversed.

3.4.4. Government drivers

Government globalization drivers—such as the presence or absence of favorable trade policies, technical standards, policies and regulations, and government operated or subsidized competitors or customers— affect all other elements of a global strategy and are therefore important in shaping the global competitive environment in an industry. In the past, multinationals almost exclusively relied on governments to negotiate the rules of global competition. Today, however, this is changing. As the politics and economics of

global competition become more closely intertwined, multinational companies are beginning to pay greater attention to the so-called nonmarket dimensions of their global strategies aimed at shaping the global competitive environment to their advantage. This broadening of the scope of global strategy reflects a subtle but real change in the balance of power between national governments and multinational corporations and is likely to have important consequences for how differences in policies and regulations affecting global competitiveness will be settled in the years to come

Yip's Model of Internationalisation is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

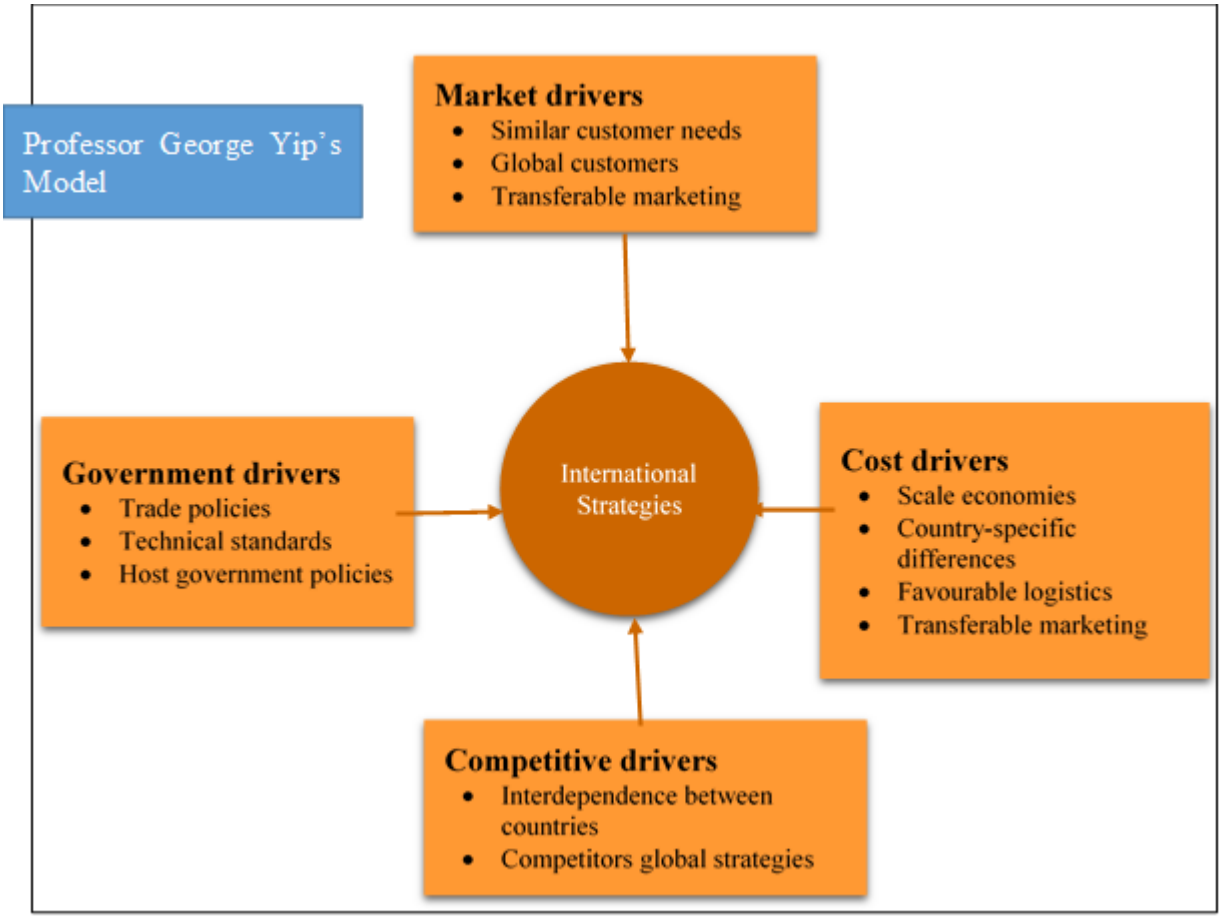


Figure 3.2: Drivers of Internationalisation (Yip 2003).

3.5. Related research on export performance

Exports constitute a vital part of each country's economic framework (Karedza & Govender 2017). Exporting goods and services are most important source of foreign exchange income which keeps global economic live and active. There is an increase in exports because of economic globalisation, reduction in tariffs, free markets policies and governments are also interested in helping ports to increase exports and governments of developed countries launch the exports promotion programs. (Dehdashti 2007) considering the importance of the issue, different studies in various countries in the field of identification of effective factors on exports performance in various industries have been done. In each of these studies, variables were under considerations that in researcher's point of view have effect on exports performance directly or indirectly. In 2000, Deal, Menguch, and Myers considered firm's characteristics (size, perceived entrance barriers and firm's background in business), firm's competency (exports experiment) and exports market experiments (focus on market against variety and being active instead of being passive) on exports performance of the company. Deal et al. (2000) by developing a model considered the relationship between environment's characteristics (social, cultural and political), firm's characteristics (demographics and management motivations) and business strategies (diversification with low cost) with exports performance. Shoham, Evangelista and Albaum in 2002 classification firms into 3 category of defenders, analysis and seekers (enthusiasts) and then identified various variables effective on each of this firm's exports performance. In this study they found out that in analysis firms there is relationship between production of new products, production managements, market orientation and control strategies on one hand and exports performance on the other hand. Shoham and Rose (2002) considered the effect of having market orientation on sell and profit.

Katsikeas, Leonidou, and Morgan (2002) applied a model to introduce three variables as effective variables on exports performance: exports attitude, exports barriers and management support. The first two variables in addition to direct effect on exports performance have an indirect effect by influencing on management support. Leonidou,

Katsikeas and Samiee (2002), after further analysis of pervious works, proposed a model in which factors are classified into five categories (management characteristics, organisational factors, environmental pressure, exports goal setting and components of exports marketing strategies). The three first factors influence the last two and the last two have direct effect on exports performance. In this step a product prototype (or a limited number of it) is produce. In cases which technical knowledge about product is augmented, this step may not be necessary and by technology transferring its production will be possible. But for the products which are produced for the first time and technology transfer is not possible this step is necessary. The key factor in this step is having effective factors of product development such as related technologies (software, hardware, mind-ware) and appropriate capital. If it is possible, it is better to have customer feedback. (Leonidou, et al., 2002).

The key success factors are experts' knowledge, adequate capital, having related technologies in labs and continuity in customer/market feedback relationship. Product development is considerable change in current product or production of new but related product that can be distributed by existing distribution channel. Product development strategy is often applied in order to use the firm's brand and attract customers who have good experiences from using firm's former products. The product development strategy is the firm's plan to propose its product and has various aspects which are active simultaneously to generate a new strategy for developing new products. Although in many cases firms produce new products only because of their innovation and profitability and without any specific strategy but in long term production without strategy will cause wasting resources. (Bazargan 2004). Cooper and Kleinschmidt (1985) came with an Export Performance Research Model illustrated in Figure 3.3 (next page).

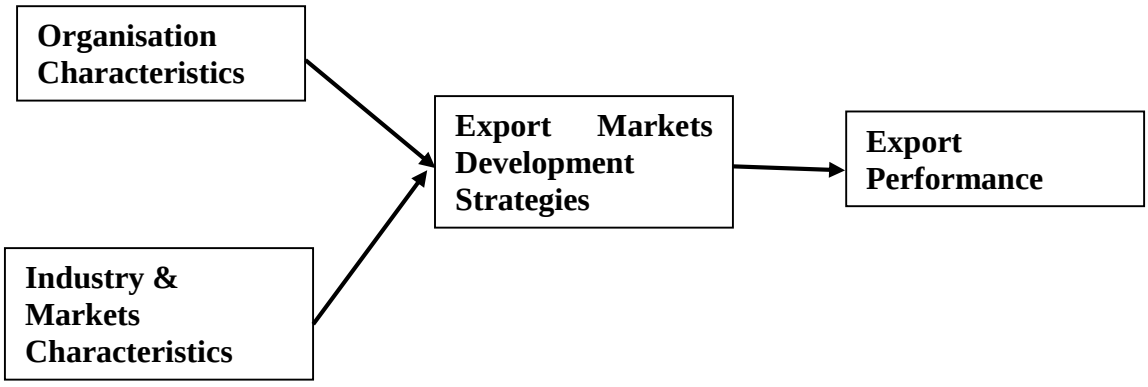


Figure 3.3: Export Performance Research Model (Cooper and Kleinschmidt 1985)

The relations in this model are assumptions of the research that are discussed as follows:

- **Organisation characteristics:** Factors that are related to organisation and organisation has direct control on them (Aker 2010). Factors of organisation characteristics in this research are management commitment, exports policies, knowledge about exports markets and educated exports staff that are measured by questionnaire.

- **Industry and markets characteristics**: Trends and events that are out of organisation's control (Aker 2010). In this research factors of industry and market characteristics are applied technology, fiscal policies, understanding of foreign trade trends and intense competition in foreign markets which are measured by questionnaire.

- **Exports markets development strategies**: long term strategic decision about the span of exports markets over time and allocation of marketing efforts to various exports markets. (Ayal and Zif 1979) In this research factors of exports markets development strategies are based on perceptible variables related to exports and market condition which are measured by questionnaire.

- **Exports performance:** Exports performance is the result of organisation operation including internal and external achievements and goals. In this research, exports performance in defined as organisation goals and product and market development which are the cause of firm's profitability are considered. Exports performance is measured in two formats: exports level and exports growth. They are measured by questionnaire.

3.6. Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework of the study. Porter's Diamond Theory on Competitive Advantage has been presented as the underpinning of the study, and the relationship between Porter's Diamond Theory and export performance has been outlined. The chapter also outlined the relationship between export performance and internationalisation of firms, as well as the related research on firm export performance. The next chapter presents the conceptual framework and hypothesis development drawn from export performance literature, and applies the diamond theory as the underpinning theoretical foundation for the study.

CHAPTER 4

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the conceptual framework and hypothesis development drawn from export performance literature, and applies the Porter's Diamond theory of competitive advantage as the underpinning theory. The conceptual model is developed theoretically on internal factors (firm characteristics and export-marketing mix strategy) and external factors (foreign and domestic market) of the firm.

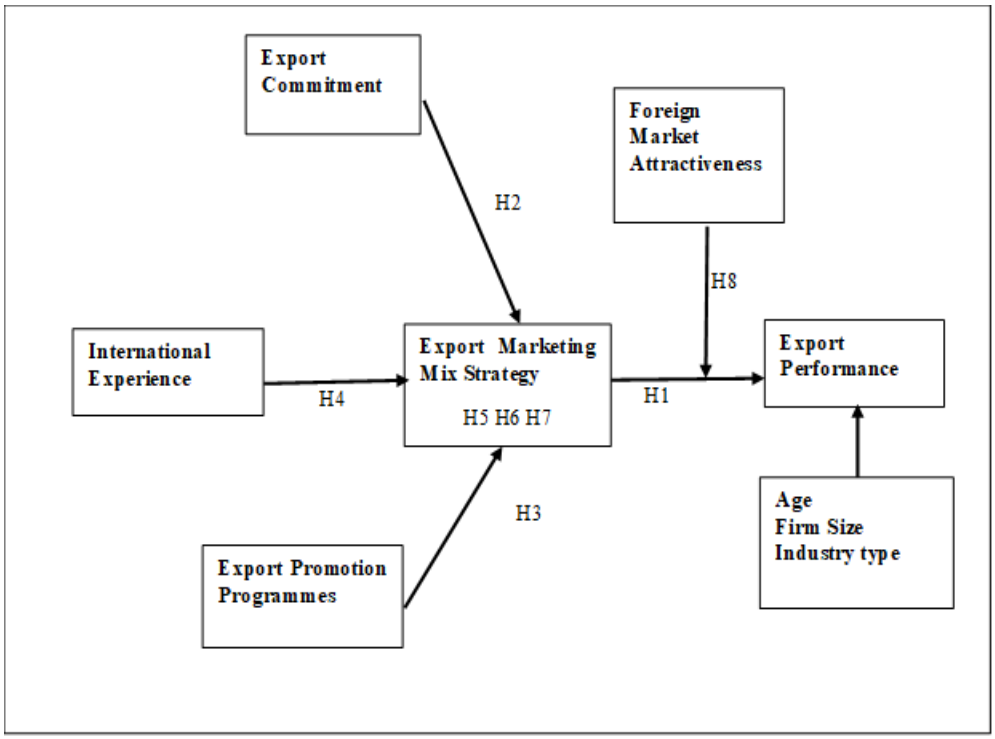
The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 4.1 discusses the selection of the unit of analysis, providing justification of why the functional level of analysis is the appropriate one, Section 4.2 presents the conceptual framework and hypothesis development and Section 4.3 presents a summary of Chapter 4.

4.1. Conceptual framework and hypotheses development

A review of export performance literature on internal determinants, suggests that export performance of the firm is likely to be associated with the key decision-makers' international experience, export commitment, knowledge and skills (Lages & Sousa 2010 and Griffiths & Hoppner 2013). Concerning resources and capabilities, the resource-based view argues that managers with international experience and commitment are more likely to learn the characteristics of various export markets, and adapt export-marketing strategies for effective operations (Lages 2000 and Lages, Abrantes, & Lages 2008a). Drawing from the resource-based view and internationalisation theory, the conceptual model integrates the export-marketing mix strategy [place, product, promotion and price (4Ps)] as the main mediating variable, connecting independent and dependent variables in the model. The hypothesis development, therefore, starts with export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), and

export performance, to allow consistency in the argument of the model, based on theory conceptualisation (Lages & Montgomery 2004).

The study argues that international experience enhances export commitment, and leverages export promotion programmes to empower management of the firm to transform export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) into effective resources to create a competitive advantage in foreign markets (Lages & Sousa 2010 and Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). These variables are internal resources aligned to the resource-based view that empower the firm to generate a competitive advantage in foreign markets. In addition, the attractiveness of the foreign market environment, is examined as a moderator to establish whether its effect strengthens or weakens the relationship between export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), and export performance (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Figure 4.1 shows the **relationships between the independent, mediating and moderating variables on the association with export performance (dependent variable)**. In the model, firm size, age and industry constitute control variables. Control variables are extraneous or minor variables whose effect one wishes to control or eliminate by holding constant.



Note: H5 to H7 are mediation hypotheses
Figure 4.1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Developed for this study (2017)

Da Rocha and Christensen (1994); Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan (2000); Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee (2002) and Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008) all assume a unidirectional causal relationship between international and external determinants of export performance. They identified three core groups: (i) background determinants (e.g., managerial, organisational and external factors), (ii) intervening or moderating variables, and (iii) export performance. The unidirectional mechanism implies that the effect of background variables on export performance is either carried forward through intervening variables such as market selection or marketing mix to enhance export performance or subject to moderating effects. This thesis also assumes a unidirectional relationship, but considers both mediating and moderating variables, because such effects are eligible for statistical methods for data analysis. Sharma, Durand and Gur-Arie (1981) define a moderator as a variable that in a systematic way alters the strength and/or direction of the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The inclusion of the moderators

in the conceptual model is justified, because the moderating effect produced by the moderator contributes with alternative explanations of the relationship between background determinants and export performance (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). The preliminary theoretical model is presented.

4.1.1. Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and export performance

Mavrogiannis, Bourlakis, Dawson and Ness (2008) in their study of export performance of the Greek food and beverage industries concluded that export-marketing mix determines a firm's export-marketing strategy. In concurrence with the resource-based view, Morgan, Vorhies and Schlegelmilch (2006) stated that management of the firm must have adequate accumulation of key resources in order to effectively design and implement export-marketing mix. The resource-based view argues that by identifying, and employing resources in developing effective export-marketing mix strategies, the firm is able to create competitive advantage to gain great economic returns (Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies 2012). Cavusgil and Zou (1994) observed that adapting to local market conditions within constraints of the firm's export market can effectively provide cross markets. In the same vein, Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b) stated that managers have to develop systematic short-term relationships when operating in complex export markets to improve their export-marketing expertise and ability to perform better. Peng (2001) states that the principles of the resource-based view allow managers of exporting firms to apply the export-marketing mix strategy (Place, Product, Promotion and Price) in the internal environment to create resource advantages in generating a competitive advantage to enhance export performance. The resource-based view contends that the principal determinants of a firm's export performance are its internal organisational resources and capabilities that are superior and difficult to be imitated or copied by other competitors in the industry (Newbert 2007).

Place adaption which is also referred to as an export channel strategy or distribution strategy by Lado, Martinez-Ros and Valenzuela (2004), is defined by Lee and Griffith (2004) as a degree to which a firm applies a direct instead of indirect channel of exporting its products

to international markets. Decisions on place adaptation are long term in nature, and cannot be easily changed (Lages & Sousa 2010). Eusebio, Andreu & Belbeze (2007b) observed that recent times have seen active exporters developing control over distribution and delivery channels. According to Walters (1989), distribution (place) strategy is the most adapted to the foreign market. This supports the positive effect of adaption to the sales force and export performance when Israeli exporter used sales force as a channel strategy (Shoham 1996). Lages & Montgomery (2005) in their study of European exporters reported that distribution network or availability influenced performance and this finding supports the study of 434 export ventures in Australia and Britain by Styles and Ambler (2000). Perception of distributor organisations by exporters was positive which strengthened their export performance.

According to the review by Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee (2002), using export sales representatives and direct purchasing, had a positive effect on export sales intensity and a negative relationship between export performance, and adaption of distributors or agents. Cavusgil and Zou (1994) found a positive relationship between channel strategy and export performance, and argued that channel strategy supports leads to better export performance through the development of long-term business relationships. Robles (2011) concluded that channel integration decisions, lead to the development of competitive advantage for performance enhancement, therefore, exporters have to consider strategic options for channels, depending on different market demands. The distribution strategy needs to be adapted to individual foreign markets if the objective is to maximise export sales volume (Lado, Martinez-Ros & Valenzuela 2004).

A positive relationship was established between product adaptation and export performance, in a multi-country study in the United States, Japan, Israel, and South Korea (Zou & Stan 1998 and Calantone, Kim, Schmidt & Cavusgil 2006). The positive relationship between product adaptation and export performance, was attributed to the allocation of financial resources to product adaptation, which transformed into positive export performance. The positive relationship between export intensity and product

adaptation, was attributed to applying effective adaptation strategies to respond to standards in the export market despite set-backs encountered by exporters in developing countries entering foreign markets (Zou & Stan 1998). Lee and Griffith (2004) established that after Korean exporters had employed product adaptation, they achieved better performance than exporters who applied standardised adaptation strategies in the same markets as they adjusted to the needs of their foreign customers. Such findings concur with Shoham (2010)'s results, which indicated that Israeli exporters who allocated substantial resources to adapt their products, achieved positive performance in foreign markets. Lado, Martinez-Ros and Valenzuela (2004) confirmed that product adaptation improves sales volumes if the required appropriate product elements are adapted to respect the characteristics of foreign markets. Evidence reported in the study of Swedish exporters, indicated that product adaptation on its own is not related to export performance, but is dependent on other organisational resources (Hultman, Robson & Katsikeas 2009).

In their study of marketing strategy determinants of export performance, Leonidou, Katsikeas and Samiee (2002) established that promotion adaptation has been found to have an influence on export intensity and sales growth. By applying an adapted promotional strategy, management of exporting firms do not run the risk of isolating their target audience by delivering a promotional message to suit all export markets (Hultman, Katsikeas & Robson 2011). Zou and Stan (1998) established that promotion adaptation had a positive effect on export sales and export satisfaction, as promotional elements were adapted to suit the needs in different export markets. The adaption decision is particularly relevant to exporting because the organisation of appropriate promotional strategies is widely perceived as beneficial for export performance (Hultman, Katsikeas & Robson 2011). Shoham (1999) found a positive relationship between promotion adaptation and export performance, and this was attributed to high levels of advertising by Israel exporters, which was similar to findings of Shoham (2010). Madsen (1989) discovered a positive relationship between the export-marketing mix strategy and export performance, and concluded that firms applying the adaptation mix strategies, subsequently utilised resources efficiently in export markets. Yet, the issue of promotion adaptation and export

performance remains, and is largely unresolved in the literature, as some scholars reported a negative link between the two constructs (Lages & Jap 2002; Lee & Griffith 2004; O'Cass & Julian 2003 and Singh 2009). Cavusgil and Zou (1994) attributed the negative relationship between promotion adaptation and export performance, to high competition among exporters which reduced the effect of promotional activities. Lee and Griffiths (2004) carried out a study of 58 Korean exporters, and revealed that overseas advertising expenditure did not influence export performance and this finding was attributed to the diverse sample of different business-to-business markets. Singh (2009) established that advertising expenditure did not influence export sales, and argued that the advertising efforts of exporters, might be focused on a specific part of the export market, due to limited resources of firms in emerging markets.

Dow (2006) advocated that setting appropriate prices in export markets is crucial to export performance, although it is a difficult task because of competition, high demand, and the complex plethora of foreign market characteristics. Furthermore, firms with ideal balance between environmental conditions, and export pricing strategy, will outperform competitors that do not reach the same threshold. Price adaptation to local conditions is an antecedent of export performance, as this strategy respects the foreign market environment (Lado, Martinez-Ros & Valenzuela 2004). Lee and Griffith (2004) discovered that adjusting export prices to suit different foreign markets in order to remain competitive, enhanced the export performance of Korean exporters. Navarro, Losada, Ruzo and Diez (2010b) argued that when exporters adapt their prices, they are capable of meeting local consumers' needs and achieve customer satisfaction to enhance performance. Adapted prices enhance performance when adjusted to levels that are higher than domestic prices in the host market (Shoham 1995). Cavusgil and Zou (1994) maintained that price competitiveness to suit the characteristics of the export market, enhances export performance.

Eusebio, Andreu and Belbeze (2007b) identified confidence in product price by foreign customers returned a positive relationship with export performance. In a similar fashion, Shoham (2010) demonstrated a positive relationship between market-based pricing and

profitability, as exporters adjusted their pricing strategies to suit the demands of the export market to remain competitive. Obadia and Stöttinger (2014) pointed out that the relationship between pricing policy and export performance, was positive and attributed it to exporters' pricing behaviour when they were faced with the competitive intensity of the export market, although no support was found for price exchange rate and export performance. Thus, competitive pricing leads to better performance because when market uncertainty increases, exporters use all price manipulations to add value to their operations (Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b).

Solberg and Durrieu (2008) observed that standardisation reduces cost, and provides a globally identifiable brand image. However, adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), is necessary due to the numerous differences between local and foreign consumers in creating a competitive advantage for the firm. Drawing from the resource-based view, when managers of exporting firms allocate substantial resources to the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), they put the firm in a position to utilise internal resources to create competitive advantage in foreign operations to enhance export performance. Thus:

H1: *Adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy (place, product, promotion, and price) contributes positively to export performance.*

4.1.2. Export commitment and export marketing mix strategy

Katsikeas, Samiee and Theodosiou (2006) pointed out that the implementation of an adapted export-marketing mix strategy depends on the firm's characteristics, including export commitment and duration of exporting. With resource commitment, uncertainty is reduced and export-marketing mix strategies are implemented effectively (Christensen, Rocha & Gertner 1987). Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b) observed that highly committed firms are able to plan and implement better export-marketing mix strategies, as adaptation demands greater resources. In the same vein, Bloemer, Pluymaekers and Odekerken (2013) stated that managers committed to exporting are usually careful in planning the allocation of

appropriate resources, which reduces uncertainty and enhances the effectiveness of the export-marketing mix strategy.

Stoian, Rialp and Rialp (2011) weigh in with their view that export commitment empowers managers to improve the depth of planning procedures in terms of market analysis needed to implement export-marketing strategies that are characteristic of different export markets. Shamsuddoha and Ali (2006) argued that export commitment leads to the achievement of vigorous adaptation strategies. Without appropriate resources committed to exporting, the firm is unable to engage in required levels of adaptation to meet foreign market demands (Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b). Cavusgil and Zou (1994) identified management commitment as a determinant of export adaptation strategy in the study of US exporters. Committed managers allocate time and resources to research activities in foreign markets to boost performance (Stoian, Rialp & Rialp 2011). Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b) observed that as increasing levels of resources are committed to the firm, managers are able to plan and implement effective export-marketing mix strategies, as adaptation demands greater resources. Export commitment increases managers' willingness to make efforts to achieve their international objectives by applying strategic guidelines to facilitate decision making in export-marketing mix adaptation strategies (Lages & Montgomery 2004). Thus:

H2: *Export commitment contributes positively to the adaption of the export-marketing mix strategy (place, product, promotion, and price).*

4.1.3. Export promotion programmes and export marketing mix strategy (4Ps)

Francis and Collins-Dodd (2004) pointed out that export promotion programmes providing information, training and guidance about exporting, enhance export-marketing competencies that are relevant to the firm's export involvement. Firms receiving export promotion programmes are expected to allocate more human and financial resources to export-marketing mix strategy. External support in terms of export training, exhibitions and export counselling advice from public policy makers, place managers in a better position to

enhance export strategies. This also enables managers to search for information and conduct a vigorous examination of various export markets to implement effective export-marketing mix strategies (Lages & Montgomery 2001). The use of export promotion programmes gives managers more information on adaptation strategies to assist overcome export barriers and increase their level of pre-export activity (Shamsuddoha & Ali 2006). Shamsuddoha, Ali and Nelson (2009) claimed that exporters gain better knowledge about foreign market through use of export promotion programmes, and this enables them to commit resources to improve export adaptation strategies.

Singer and Czinkota (1994) argued that export promotion programmes stimulate managers' positive attitudes and perceptions concerning international marketing by increasing their market knowledge and commitment to marketing activities. To design and implement export-marketing mix strategies, firms must have the right combination of key resources to use effectively in various strategic actions in foreign markets (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). Shamsuddoha, Ali and Nelson (2009) discovered that improved export knowledge acquired from using export promotion programmes, significantly reduces the perceived complications in export markets, and assist managers in implementing effective export-marketing mix strategies. The use of export promotion programmes can contribute to successful export adaptation strategies (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). The findings by Lages and Montgomery (2005) revealed that using export promotion programmes as a resource is positively related to export-marketing mix strategy. Thus:

H3: *The use of export promotion programmes contributes positively to adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy (place, product, promotion and price).*

4.1.4. International experience and export marketing mix strategy

Barney (1991) stated that managers with international experience are more likely to utilise their internal resources to adapt the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) to gain a competitive advantage by responding to environmental opportunities while avoiding internal

weaknesses. The degree of international experience of the key decision-maker is attributed to the accumulated skills and abilities that withstand the achievement of export-marketing strategy goals (Lages & Jap 2002). The level of international experience is valuable when making decisions on financial resource allocation, in particular foreign markets to influence the adaptation of export-marketing mix strategies (Hultman, Katsikeas & Robson 2011). Lages (2000) notes that managers with international experience are able to explore existing opportunities in foreign markets while reducing risks associated with inexperienced decision making concerning export adaptation strategies. Managers with international experience are likely to learn the specific characteristics and export adaptation strategies of different export markets to improve operations (Douglas & Craig 1989) and Stoian, Rialp & Rialp 2011). Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b) concluded that the firm can better achieve its exporting goals if management's international experience promotes learning to identify opportunities, and avoid threats in export adaptation strategies. A firm with international experience can identify the differences in environmental conditions and is more likely to select attractive export markets, and adapt export-marketing mix strategies to suit the specific needs of those markets (Shamsuddoha 2004). International experience at the combined firm level, has been found to be valuable when making decisions to enter particular export markets, and when evaluating export-marketing strategies for country-specific markets (Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b).

Shamsuddoha and Ali (2006) achieved empirical support for international experience and export-marketing strategy, and argued that a high degree of experiential knowledge about export markets and processes tends to assist managers overcome potential barriers in adapting strategies in foreign markets. International experience of the manager plays a significant role in taking decisions on adaptation strategies on channels of distribution, product modifications, promotion and pricing strategies to suit the needs of specific export markets (Alshammari & Islam 2014). Stoian, Rialp and Rialp (2011) concluded that managers are empowered by their international experience to conduct market analysis to adapt export-marketing mix strategies to characterise different foreign markets. Drawing from the resource-based view of the firm, international experience as managerial resource,

can be described as an internal competence relevant to the development of effective export adaptation strategies (Hultman, Katsikeas & Robson 2011). Thus:

H4: *International experience contributes positively to adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy (place, product, promotion and price).*

4.1.5. Mediation effects

4.2.5.1. The mediation role of export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps)

Wheeler, Ibeh and Dimitratos (2008) pointed out that the firm's export commitment is an important competence which facilitates the formation of managers' proactive attitude to develop effective export-marketing mix adaptation strategies to enhance export performance and create a competitive advantage in foreign operations. This denotes that highly committed firms will allocate substantial human and financial resources to adapt their export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) to achieve export performance. According to Navarro, Losada, Ruzo and Diez (2010b) export commitment improves the efficacy and value of resource allocation by providing substantial resources to adapt the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) to boost both export sales and managers' export satisfaction. Therefore, based on arguments from H2a and H1, a mediation relationship is established as the adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) reinforces the relationship between export commitment and export performance. Therefore, in line with Baron and Kenny (1986)'s conceptual framework on moderator-mediator variable distinction in Social Psychological research, this study argues that the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) is the mechanism that explains the relationship between export commitment and export performance relationships. Thus:

H5: *Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) mediates the association between export commitment and export performance.*

This study further argues that management teams using export promotion programmes as a resource to acquire knowledge and skills, are more likely to allocate substantial human and financial resources to adapt their export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) for enhanced export performance. The type of promotion programmes used by managers is perceived to play a leading role in their subsequent export accomplishment (Reid 1984). Congruently, Shamsuddoha, Ali & Nelson 2009) observed that firms considering exporting may lack essential export-marketing information, which may hinder their operations and might fall on export promotion programmes to acquire knowledge about exporting strategies to enhance export performance. It follows that the adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) reinforces the relationship between export promotion and export performance. Therefore, based on the arguments from H3a and H1, a mediation relationship is proposed. Thus:

H6: *Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) mediates the association between export promotion programmes and export performance.*

Wheeler, Ibeh and Dimitratos (2008) argued that managers with international experience, are more likely to adapt their export-marketing mix strategies (4Ps) to enhance export performance and gain competitive edge in operations. Sousa, Martinez-Lopez and Coelho (2008) observed that a firm's international experience is a relevant resource which facilitates the formation of strategic decisions in exporting. This implies that managers with international experience will allocate substantial resources to adapt their export marketing mix strategy (4Ps) to influence export performance. Therefore, based on arguments from H4a and H1, export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) mediates the relationship between international experience and export performance. This follows that the adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), reinforces the relationship between international experience and export performance. Thus:

H7: *Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) mediates the association between international experience and export performance.*

4.1.6. Moderating role of foreign market attractiveness

According to Slater, Hult and Olson (2010) environmental uncertainty can bring about change and unpredictability in customer preferences for product design and quality, which can affect the export-marketing mix strategy by strengthening or weakening export performance. Foreign market attractiveness includes factors such as the legal and regulatory frameworks, the level of customer education, customer demand potential preferences that exist in various export markets (Madsen 1989; Cavusgil & Zou 1994 and Ogunmokun & Ng 2004). Madsen (1989) and Shoham (1999) argued that foreign market attractiveness affects export-marketing mix strategies, leading to positive or negative export performance depending on the prevalent condition of various export markets. Aspects of the foreign market in terms of legal and regulatory framework, are associated with export performance and export-marketing mix strategy, although these regulations can act to undermine or strengthen the effectiveness of the firm's operations (Cavusgil & Zou 1994). Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal (2011) observed that firms operating in foreign markets need to acknowledge changes in regulatory frameworks and customers' preferences, and apply country specific adaptation strategies to remain competitive internationally. Thus, laws and pressures from the foreign government can play an important role in export performance by enhancing or reducing firm attractiveness and capability (Beamish 1993 and Cavusgil & Zou 1994). Furthermore, the degree of customer familiarity and demand potential with the product, moderates the firm's choice of export-marketing mix strategy and export performance.

Empirical evidence from Tremeche and Tremeche (2003) revealed that Japanese exporting to Arab markets encountered heavy legal and administrative procedures, tariff and non-tariff barriers, internal unrest and a multiplicity of technical/legal requirements, which affected their export strategies and export performance. Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal (2011) argued that the levels of adaptation strategies and perceived quality of price vary in particular cultures and social settings. Therefore, firms may have to apply different adaptation strategies in their operations in product styling colour, size and packaging in

foreign markets to remain competitive and enhance export performance (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). Studies on external forces and export performance are sparse, and have produced mixed and inconsistent results (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). In the study of Taiwan exporters, Kaynak and Kuan (1993) found that export sales thrived in less developed and less industrialised markets, with a stricter import policy and high standards. In the contribution to total profit, it emerged in the study that operations of high performers were characterised by unstable public policy, very low untapped and unexpected demand, but was very convenient for foreign exchange. (Kaynak & Kuan 1993). Katsikeas, Samiee and Theodosiou (2006) defined foreign market attractiveness as the differences and similarities in terms of legal and regulatory frameworks, political conditions, customer preferences and demand potential which can strengthen or weaken the relationship between export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and export performance. Thus:

H8: *The greater the attractiveness of the foreign market, the stronger the association between export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and export performance.*

4.1.7. Control variables

Researchers are encouraged to include control variables in export performance studies as they deserve as much attention as independent and dependent variables (Lages & Sousa 2010). The conceptual model incorporates three control variables: firm size, the age of the firm and industry. Firm size is determined by number of employees, which may have an influence on export performance (Wolff & Pett 2000). Bonaccorsi (1992) reported firm size to be positively related to annual sales as the number of employees increases the probability of exporting. The age of the firm is attributed to years of experience of managers to develop capacities to enhance performance (Lages & Jap 2002). Older exporting firms have experience, established networks and survive longer in exporting as they allocate substantial resources to export activity (Adu-Gyamfi & Korneliussen 2013). This study examines exporting firms in the food and beverage manufacturing industries in Zimbabwe. Table 4.1 shows summary of hypotheses developed.

Table 4.1: Summary of Hypotheses and Export Performance

Hypothesis	Explanatory Latent Variable	Expected Outcome
H1	Export-marketing Mix Strategy (4Ps)/Export Performance (EP)	(+)
H2	Export Commitment/Export-marketing Mix Strategy (4Ps)	(+)
H3	Export Promotion Programmes and EMMS (4Ps)	(+)
H4	International Experience/Export-marketing Mix Strategy (4Ps)	(+)
H5	EMMS (4Ps) mediates Export Commitment and EP	(+)
H6	EMMS (4Ps) mediates Export Promotion Programmes and EP	(+)
H7	EMMS (4Ps) mediates International Experience (IE) and EP	(+)
H8	Foreign Market Attractiveness moderates EMMS (4Ps) and EP	(+)

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

4.1.8. Dependent variable (perceived success)

In this study, perceived export success is equivalent to the subjective enhanced export performance, which is the dependent variable. The extant literature lacks uniformity regarding accepted conceptualisation and operationalisation of export performance measurements (Lages & Sousa 2010). Scholars such as Cavusgil and Zou (1994) and Zou, Taylor and Osland (1998) argue that strategic indicators such as gain in market share and attainment of competitive position derive their theoretical justification from how firms set their strategic and economic goals in exporting. An advantage of using perceived export success to measure performance enables managers to evaluate the performance of their organisations while taking into consideration the firm's reference groups such as industry characteristics, strategic position and stage of export involvement (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). The subjective export measures have been selected based on three main reasons. First, the majority of firms are usually reluctant, unwilling or unable to provide solid financial data in emerging economies. Second, objective financial data for such firms is not publicly available, thus, it would be impossible to check the accuracy of reported financial performance. Third, assuming accurate information was received, such data is

usually difficult to interpret due to lack of standardisation of reporting (Robertson & Chetty 2000). Therefore, complete data would be attained with subjective measurements as raw financial data is considered confidential in some cases by managers in emerging markets such as Zimbabwe. Literature supports application of subjective measures where managers may be unwilling or unable to provide objective financial data (Sousa 2004).

4.2. Unit of analysis

There is consensus that export performance is a multi-dimensional construct that needs to be considered in light of the unit of analysis (Souchon & Diamantopoulos 1996). It therefore, follows that any study examining antecedents of export performance also requires a clear unit of analysis. In this context, the of export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, can be seen from a collective perspective (i.e., organisational, departmental, venture, and/or functional) or an individual perspective (Connolly 1977). Therefore, in a study where a number of variables are likely to be related to export performance, a well-defined and appropriate unit of analysis is required.

It is acknowledged that a firm's export performance constitutes a multi-facetted and complex construct that cannot find expression in a single metric (Shoham 1998; Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008 and Carneiro, Rocha & Silva 2011). The literature has lack of agreement on an appropriate unit of analysis and a conventional measure of export performance (Shoham 1998; Oliveira, Cadogan, & Souchon 2012). Two organisational levels tend to dominate the discussion on appropriate unit of analysis: the export function and the venture level (ibid. 2012). The studies that investigate the export function focus on the overall export performance of the firm (Cadogan, Kuivalainen & Sundqvist 2009), while the studies that examine the venture level conceive export performance of a venture such as a single product or product-line in combination with an export market (Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004 and Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou 2006).

The export function appears as the most commonly used unit of analysis. For instance, three quarters of the articles reviewed in Sousa, Martinez-Lopez and Coelho (2008) draw conclusions from an export function level. It has its theoretical foundation in the theory of internationalisation, which states that firms must internationalise firm-specific advantages to maximise economic rent (Rugman 1980). The strength of export function level is rooted in its width, as it considers all firm-specific advantages, whereas the venture level focuses its attention towards the marketing and development of a specific product. The arguments for undertaking the venture as a unit of analysis seem oppositely related to the depth of analysis. The venture level provides a deeper understanding of key success factors and most often the fluctuations in performance can be traced back to the product-market relationship (Douglas & Wind 1987; and Cavusgil & Kirpalani 1993). There is no agreement on the appropriate unit of analysis, but researchers tend to have a predilection or preference for the export function level, because respondents are more willing to disclose corporate information at a broad level (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Besides the unit of analysis, no consistent measurement of export performance prevails across the literature (Sousa 2004). The result is a surfeit (or plethora) of disparate economic, non-economic and composite measures of export performance (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000 and Sousa 2004) who identify 42 and 50 performance measures, respectively).

The strength of the economic measures (e.g., export intensity, export profitability and export turnover) is their objective nature, but financial figures are not always disclosed and may be subject to national accounting standards, hindering comparability across borders (Sousa 2004). The perceptional non-economic measures (e.g., perceived export success, export satisfaction and goal achievement) have oppositely been subject to criticism for their subjectivity, but appear appropriate when comparing across borders, as different accounting standards and exchange rate fluctuations disturb the economic measures (Katsikeas, Leonidou & Morgan 2000 and Brouthers, Nakos, Hadjimarcou & Brouthers 2009). There is clearly a correlation between the objective and subjective measures, but one cannot replace the other, for which reason export performance studies should investigate both

perspectives either in a composite measure or separately (Brouthers, Nakos, Hadjimarcou & Brouthers 2009 and Larimo 2014).

Some previous research studies on export performance have used project or venture level as unit of analysis (Richey & Myers 2001; Cadogan, Diamantopoulos & Siguaw 2002; Lages & Montgomery 2005; Sousa 2008; Hult, Ketchen Jr., Griffith, Chabowski, Hamman, Dykes, Pollitte, & Cavusgil 2008 and Hultman, Robson & Katsikeas 2009). However, the majority of export firms tend to export to multiple markets which could render generalisation from the product or export venture level very difficult (Richey & Myers 2001) Furthermore, in most exporting firms, export operations are not organised according to export ventures, as export activities are continuous, joined up and interdependent. In these businesses, therefore, it would not make sense to examine export success at the venture level, as the venture would not be a viable unit of analysis (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008).

A potential use of an organisational unit of analysis (e.g., overall business performance as the dependent variable) may obscure any export specific outcomes, such as profitability (Vyas & Souchon 2003). Thus, the organisation at large is also not fully appropriate for the purpose of this study.

Conversely, the functional level focuses on the overall patterns of export performance by firms and places greater emphasis on company-specific (e.g., export experience) and environment-specific (e.g., number and location of export markets), export sales volume and/or export sales value (Vyas & Souchon 2003). Within this dialectic, the export function is an appropriate unit of analysis because most of the manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe do not have a dedicated export department and it is not unusual for sales people or managers to deal with exporting issues and decisions as well as domestic market ones (Williams 2003; Vyas & Souchon 2003). Further, given that the majority of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe do not have stand-alone export departments, any other choice other than the export function, would have ruled out the majority of those firms from

being eligible to participate in this study. Such a scenario would have also reduced any prospect for generalisability of the results. In conclusion, the unit of analysis used in this research, is therefore, the export function.

4.3. Chapter summary

The proposed model was conceptualised using the resource-based view of the firm, and the influence of the external environment as discussed in chapter two. The conceptualisation of the study was built on the review of literature on internal factors including managerial characteristics and export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and external environment involving foreign and domestic market characteristics (foreign market attractiveness and export promotion programmes) to address the research question of the study. The proposed conceptual model presents the direct mediation and moderation effects to explain how variables in the model lead to enhanced export performance. Control variables comprising: firm size, age and industry were discussed in relation to their significance to export performance. As a result, the study seeks to bring a significant contribution to export performance literature, deriving its underpinning theoretical assumptions from the Porter's Diamond Theory on Competitive Advantage. The proposed mediated-moderated conceptual model will examine the relationships of the variables to advance theory in the field. The next chapter presents the content of the study and outlines the methodology and data collection processes with measurement definitions of the constructs under study.

CHAPTER 5
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology of the study. The research design is applied so that suitable research methods are used to ensure an attainment of the research objectives set out in chapter one. Hence, the reason or rationale for a discussion of the research design and methodology: Firstly, this is to provide the plan or blueprint for the research. Secondly, this should enable the researcher to anticipate the appropriate research design, to ensure validity of the results. Details of the mixed method approach in collecting data using qualitative and quantitative approaches, and analytical tools are also described. The qualitative approach of data collection for the study is complementary to the quantitative design. Finally, variables examined in the conceptual model are defined in operational terms with their measurement scales.

The chapter is divided into eleven sections. Section 5.1. outlines the research philosophy, Section 5.2. presents the research design. Section 5.3 presents the research methodology, Section 5.4 presents justification for the research methodology, Section 5.5 presents operalisation of the variables, Section 5.6. discusses the control variables, Section 5.7 data analysis procedure, Section 5.8 presents justification for using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) for data analysis, Section 5.9 presents the structural model of the study, Section 5.10 presents the ethical considerations and aspects and Section 5.11. presents a summary of Chapter 5.

5.1. Research philosophy

Research philosophy refers to development and nature of knowledge, which in turn support the research strategy and methods applied for the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2012), it is essential to understand

philosophical issues concerning evidence required, data collection processes, and analysis from the beginning the research process. This research applied a mixed method approach using both phenomenology and positivism philosophical approaches in the research design.

5.1.1. Research Paradigms

Social research has traditionally depended on two paradigms, the functional or scientific paradigm and interpretive or constructive paradigm (Shah & Corley 2006 and Scotland 2012). A paradigm is a basic set of belief systems we hold and it is this belief system which guides our disciplined actions (Guba 1990). The type of these paradigms (e.g., positivism, interpretivism etc.) can be distinguished based on their ontological (nature of knowledge or reality) and epistemological (relationship between the knower and the knowable) positions and methodological approaches (how to access the knowledge) as well as ethical standards (moral principles guiding the enquiry) (Guba 1990 and Bazeley 2002).

Those who follow the scientific paradigm tend to adopt quantitative research methods, whereas the constructivist paradigm leads to embracing qualitative tools and techniques of data collection and analysis. The divide between the two fundamental paradigms has increased over time due continued differences in their philosophical underpinnings. For example, the scientific paradigm is based on the ontological assumption of objectivity, i.e., a single reality exists about a social phenomenon which can be understood using quantifiable facts obtained by adopting quantitative data collection and analysis methods (Shah & Corley 2006). On the other hand, the constructivist paradigm implies that an objective reality does not exist since all realities are socially constructed (Wikgren 2005 and Maxwell 2012).

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adopting quantitative data collection and analysis methods (Shah & Corley 2006). On the other hand, the constructivist paradigm implies that an objective reality does not exist since all realities are socially constructed (Wikgren 2005 and Maxwell 2012).

A research paradigm is "the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed" (Kuhn 1962). A paradigm can also be defined as a shared world view that represents the beliefs and values in a discipline and that guides how problems are solved (Schwandt 2001). According to Guba (1990), research paradigms can be characterised through their:

(a) Ontology – what is reality?
(b) Epistemology – how do you know something?
(c) Methodology – how do you go about finding it out?

A paradigm is, therefore, a way of describing a world view that is informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality (known as **ontology** – that is, what do we believe about the nature of reality), ways of knowing (known as **epistemology** – that is, how do we know what we know?), and ethics and value systems (known as **axiology** – that is, what do we believe is true?) (Patton 2002). A paradigm leads a researcher to ask certain questions and use appropriate approaches to systematic inquiry (known as **methodology** – that is, how should we study the world?). Ontology relates to whether we believe there is one verifiable reality or whether there exist multiple, socially constructed realities (Patton 2002). Epistemology enquires into nature of knowledge and truth. It asks the following questions: What are the sources of knowledge? How reliable are these sources? What can one know? How does one know if something is true?

Paradigms affect the practice of research, and therefore, they need to be stated (Creswell 2009). The roots of the qualitative and quantitative approaches extend into different philosophical research paradigms, namely the positivism and post-positivism (Curther-Smith 2002; Rocco, Bliss, Gallagher, Pérez-Prado, Alacaci & Dwyer 2003; Henning, Van

Rensburg & Smit 2004; Druckman, 2005; Neuman 2006; Flick 2007; Gall, Gall & Borg 2007; Wisker 2008; Collis & Hussey 2009; Creswell 2009; Gratton & Jones 2010; Rubin & Babbie 2010; Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler 2011; Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Muijs 2011 and Addae & Quan-Baffour 2015). Post-positivism (post-modernism) is characterised by two sub-paradigms, namely interpretivism (constructivism) and post-positivism (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler 2011 and Bellamy 2012).

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to middle-level managers and officers responsible for export administration for food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, and assumed the role as an observer of phenomena in a natural setting. The positivist approach applied in this study used a survey as a line of enquiry based on export practices to investigate managers' knowledge and experience in their export operations (Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher 2007). Other scholars have used this approach to research export performance using statistical tools such as the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis (Wolf 2007; Lages, Silva & Styles 2009; Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011 and Griffith, Lee, Seob & Calantone 2014). The PLS-SEM was developed by Ringle, Wende and Will (2005). The researcher was interested in using statistical tools to find out what influences export success in Zimbabwe, as the research is at the budding stage in the African context.

The interpretivism or phenomenology approach has been employed by using qualitative techniques such as qualitative interviews to explore this area to gain insights into the nature of exporting practices of Zimbabwean exporting firms. A total number of 18 semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore export practices due to sparse literature in the African context. A detailed amount of primary data was collected through qualitative interviews to facilitate the researcher's in-depth inquiry and enhance the validity of data collected. This approach permitted exploration of research results to emerge from the frequent, foremost or significant themes inherent in the raw data, without the restraint imposed by prepared statistical methodologies (Malhotra 2010).

Gathering and measuring facts would not disclose the essence of social phenomena; rather one would need to explore how decision-makers of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, come up with strategies to enhance exports. In this way, the researcher would be able to make sense of how firm managers and firm owners interpret their social world. Thus, the researcher is required to dig into processes of subjective interpretation, acknowledging the motivations, interests, intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and the self-understanding of the participants (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit 2004 and Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler 2011).

Gephart (1999) mentions that interpretivistic views tend to show a preference for methods which do not only produce facts, but analyse and describe the meaning of the social world (situation). He proceeds to indicate that the primary analytical methods used in interpretative research are grounded theory and expansion analysis. The use of these methods points to the use of qualitative data-gathering methods, which suggest that the data are generated mainly through interactions like conversations and interviews.

5.2. Research Design

Research design can be classified broadly into three categories; exploratory, descriptive, and causal (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2007). The research design is applied so that suitable methods are used to ensure the attainment of the goals and objectives set out in chapter one. Hence the reasons or rationale for a discussion of the research design and methodology: Firstly, this is to provide the plan of blue print for the research. Secondly, this should enable the researcher to anticipate the appropriate research design, to ensure the validity of the final results.

A research design focuses on the end-product and all steps in the process to achieve that outcome. In this sense, a research design is viewed as the functional plan in which certain research methods and procedures are linked together to acquire a reliable and valid body of data for empirically grounded analyses, conclusions and theory formulation. The research

design thus provides the researcher with a clear research framework; it guides the methods, decisions and sets the basis for interpretation. Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee define research design as:

> "…. operations to be performed, in order to test a specific hypothesis under a given condition." (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee 2006, p.71).

Research design, according to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2009) is best described as the overall plan according to which the respondents of a proposed study are selected, as well as the means of data collection or generation. Babbie and Mouton (2008) describe research design as a plan or blue print for conducting the research. The research design also entails a detailed plan, according to which, research is undertaken. According to Moulton (1996), the main function of a research design is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decisions are likely to be, and to maximise the validity of the eventual results. The relevant data is collected, which in the context of the current study, focus on socio-economic determinants of the export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, and the implications thereof for the management of the firms and policy makers.

The research design should be seen as a mixed-bag approach that implies choosing from different alternatives and options to ensure that the research purpose and perspective are clarified and achieved. The research problem will determine the methods and procedures, the types of measurement, the sampling, the data collection and the data analysis to be employed for the proposed research (Zikmund, Babin & Griffin 2010).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has used an empirical study, involving a survey, qualitative interviews or phenomenology, to gain insight into the typical experiences of the participants in order to arrive at sound conclusions. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) reveal that a phenomenological study is one that attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and views of a particular situation. The phenomenological approach aims to

understand and interpret the meaning that participants give to their everyday life. Creswell (2007) regards a phenomenological study as one that describes the meanings that the lived experiences of a phenomenon, topic or concept have for various individuals.

In the current study, the research has been conducted by means of a literature study and empirical research. The nature and complexity of the research problem, research questions and related research objectives, called for a purposeful research design to meet the requirements of these research intentions. For this reason, the mixed methods approach research design has been chosen to conduct the current research. A mixed methods research design has been chosen to conduct this research in order to address the research problem and the related research questions. The research design utilised for the current study is illustrated in Figure 5.1.

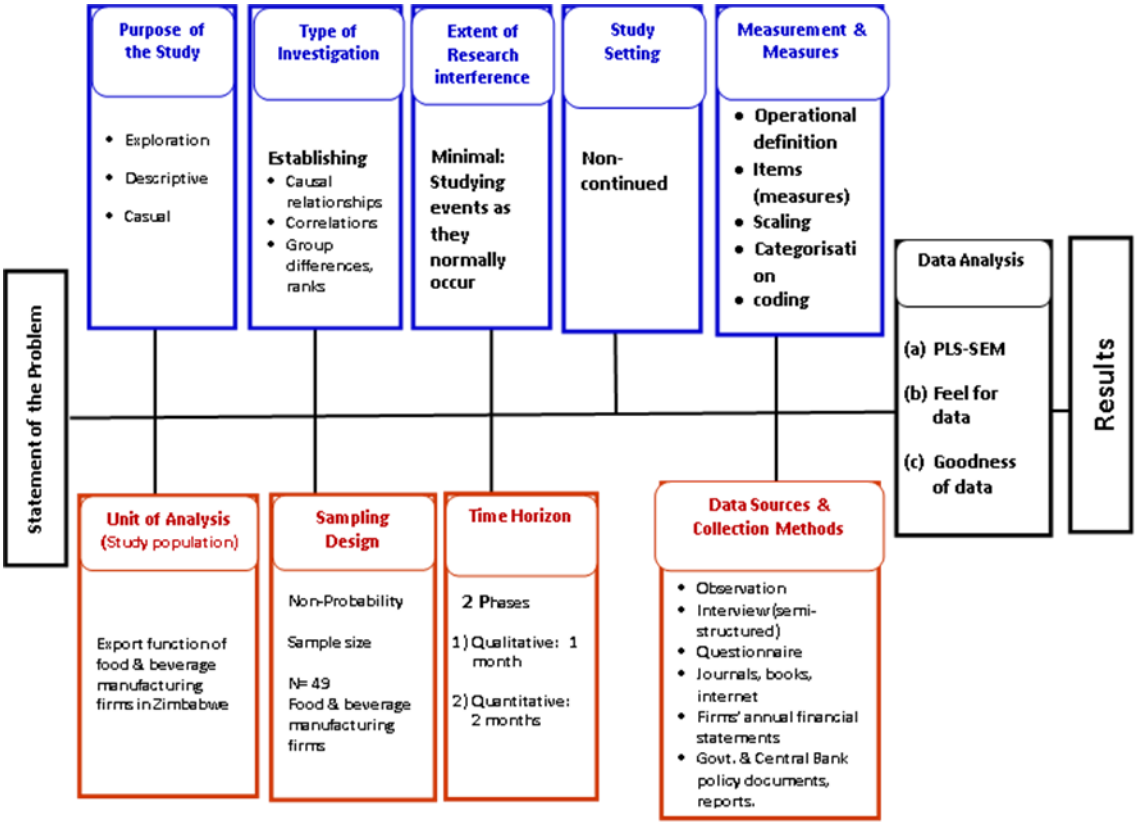

Figure 5.1: Research Design (Adapted from Sekaran & Bagile 2010)

5.3. Research methods

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) agree with Babbie and Mouton (2008) that research methodology refers to the researcher's general approach in carrying out the research project. Mouton (2001) views research methodology as focusing on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. In essence, as Carter and Little (2007) express, methodologies justify methods, which produces data analyses, and methods produce knowledge, so methodologies have epistemic content.

In this study an explorative sequential mixed method has been used in order to determine the socio-economic factors that enhance export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. For this purpose, a semi-structured interview (qualitative method) and a questionnaire (quantitative method) have been used to collect data. Data has been connected in that the results of the qualitative section in coherence with the literature review, has been used to develop a measurement instrument, namely a questionnaire (quantitative method) to determine the socio-economic factors that enhance export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. In this way, an attempt has also been made to ensure triangulation of data.

For any research process to be complete, an applicable research design to obtain reliable and valid data has to be described. Hence, the relevant research design for the study that would meet the expectations and requirements of the researcher, as well as research intentions related to the research problem, research objectives and related research questions, is called for. The research design should enable the researcher to justify that the research was undertaken, only after careful considerations regarding the enquiry. Based on the scope and complexity of the research problem, the researcher decided on a mixed methods research design to conduct this research. A mixed methods research design will be explained and examined further in section 4.2.9.

5.3.1. Qualitative research method

Qualitative writing tends to be rich with quotations, descriptions and narrations, as researchers attempt to capture conversions, experiences, perspectives, voices and meanings. This is research with words instead of numbers (Willis 2008). As such, a qualitative study is concerned with non-statistical methods and small samples, often purposely-selected (Delport & De Vos 2011).

The characteristics of qualitative research are (Kumar 2005; Jones & Kottler 2006; Bogdan & Biklen 2007; Ivankova, Creswell & Plano-Clarke 2007; Creswell 200975-177; Leedy & Ormrod 2010 and Kumar 2011):

- It is usually conducted in natural settings. Natural settings (such as offices, boardrooms, and company premises) are the overwhelming preferences for qualitative studies for firms;
- The extensive use of descriptive data. Qualitative researchers are likely to describe a phenomenon with words, rather than with numbers;
- The emphasis is on process rather than on product;
- It is often based on inductive, thus, going from the specific to the general; and
- The search for meaning is often evident. The *search for meaning* focuses in qualitative research on how people try to make sense of their lives. *How it is* may be nearly as important in a qualitative study as *how the participants think it is*.

There are many qualitative data collection techniques such as interviews, oral history, focus groups, Delphi focus interviews and observation approaches (Luna-Reyes & Anderson 2003). This study has used semi-structured interviews to collect primary data to facilitate researcher's in-depth inquiry and enhance the validity of information (Crouch & McKenzie 2006). Interviews as a source of information, have been associated with providing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Yin 2009). In order to come up with

valid results, Yin (2009) identified two processes during the interview period: (1) there is need to follow a line of inquiry on the interview protocol, and (2) the researcher should ask unbiased questions in response to the needs of the line of inquiry. The interviews conducted have been guided by these two processes.

5.3.1.1. Assumptions under qualitative methods

According to Hathaway (1995) the following assumptions apply to qualitative research methods: -

- Multiple realities exist in any given situation - the researcher's, those of the individuals being investigated, and the reader or audience interpreting the results; these multiple perspectives, or voices of informants (i.e., subjects) are included in the study;
- The researcher interacts with those he studies and actively works to minimise the distance between the researcher and those being researched;
- The researcher explicitly recognises and acknowledges the value-laden nature of the research;
- Research is context-bound;
- Research is based on inductive forms of logic; categories of interest emerge from informants (subjects) rather than being identified *a priori* by the researcher;
- The goal is to uncover and discover patterns or theories that help explain a phenomenon of interest; and
- Determination of accuracy involve verifying the information with informants or "triangulating" among different sources of information (e.g., collecting information from different sources).

5.3.1.2. Population

A study population is the aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected. For the current study, the researcher chose key informants based on their positions in the 100 food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms and based in Zimbabwe. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe exporter's database has been used because the Central Bank keeps an up-to-date database of all exporters in Zimbabwe. The study population for the qualitative phase comprised of chief executive officers, managing directors, general managers and owners of food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms in Zimbabwe. The target population of the qualitative research study consists of a non-probability, purposive selection of 91 exporting firms in the food and beverage manufacturing sub-sectors in six major cities namely; Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru, Kwekwe and Chitunwgiza. A total of 91% of the firms are concentrated in these six major cities. The high concentration of the target population in the six major cities was convenient for the researcher to conduct qualitative interviews with the respective key informants.

5.3.1.3. Selection of the Sample

A probability sampling procedure (Cozby 2009) was used for the selection of knowledgeable and experienced participants. For this reason, a stratified random sampling procedure was used to identify participants from the food and beverage manufacturing industry in Zimbabwe after a purposive sampling was applied to select participants (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2007).

Qualitative studies using interviews tend to randomise the process of identifying prospective informants (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2007). The researcher developed a screening form that specified the characteristics key respondents must have to qualify for inclusion in the interview (Hair, Bush & Ortinau 2000). The main qualification for interview selection was being a Zimbabwean based firm and being involved in exporting for three or more years, plus having at least two product destinations. Firms, were selected

that differed in their industry sector, company size and destination of products to provide variations for the analysis.

A sample of 22 key informants from food and beverage manufacturing firms has been randomly drawn from a target population of 91 firms operating in Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru, Kwekwe and Chitunwgiza. In order to eliminate selection bias, a web-based 'random number generator' has been used to select 22 key informants from the 91 food and beverage manufacturing firms operating in Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru, Kwekwe and Chitungwiza. Three Chief Executive Officers mentioned unavailability of time, tight business schedules, and travel, as reasons for not taking part in the study. Two Chief Executive Officers contacted were not interested in taking part in the study due to tight business schedules, and travel as reasons for not taking part in the study. A total of 18 key informants confirmed and granted interviews after several follow up calls. Of the 18 research interviews, 12 are under food sub-sector and 6 are under beverage sub-sector. This process enabled variability of sample representation in order to validate theoretical arguments proposed in the study. The final sample size of 18 is 19.8 per cent of the drawn population and is regarded as appropriate. A sample size that constitutes at least 10 per cent of the population is deemed appropriate (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2007).

Table 5.1 shows distribution of target population and samples drawn for the qualitative interviews.

Table 5.1: Distribution of Target Population of the key informants from the Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms in Zimbabwe

Location	Food Manufacturing Firms			Beverage Manufacturing Firms		
	Target Population	Sample Drawn Randomly	No. of Qualitative Interviews Conducted	Target Population	Sample Drawn Randomly	No. of Qualitative Interviews Conducted
Harare	31	6	5	8	3	2
Bulawayo	19	3	2	4	1	1
Gweru	8	2	2	2	1	1
Mutare	7	1	1	2	1	1
Kwekwe	4	1	1	1	1	1
Chitungwiza	4	1	1	1	1	0
	73	**14**	**12**	**18**	**8**	**6**
Chinhoyi	2	0	0	0	0	0
Bindura	2	0	0	0	0	0
Chipinge	0	0	0	1	0	0
Beitbridge	1	0	0	1	0	0
Masvingo	1	0	0	1	0	0
Total	**79**	0	0	**21**	0	0

Source: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Exporters' Database (2017)

The participants of this research were conveniently and purposefully selected based on their involvement in decision-making with regards to exporting by food and beverage manufacturing firms. The number of participants was further viewed as being sufficient. It is based on the saturation principle of diminishing returns – the notion that each additional unit of information would supply less new information than the preceding one, until new information dwindles to nothing (Thiétart 2007). In this study, the saturation principle holds true and it can be confirmed that the number of participants has been sufficient and enough information has been provided to enable the researcher to compile a questionnaire for this study that has been reliable and valid. The stratified random sampling which requires the separation of the defined target population into different groups, has been applied to target 22 key informants from the two industries or sub-sectors (food and beverage manufacturing firms) in Zimbabwe.

With qualitative interviews, a critical decision is the selection of key informants. Key informants are selected because they are particularly suitable to illustrate a phenomenon and to extend relationships and logic among variables (Yin 2009). The unit of data collection in this research is the individual key-decision maker for exports, who is the chief executive officer, managing director, general manager and/or owner of the firm. Data collected via qualitative interviews has been deemed appropriate for investigating the determinants of export performance at the firm level, as decision-making power within the firm is dependent on the management teams (Glavas & Mathews 2014). The decision of a firm to pursue international markets is dependent on the international orientation and characteristics of the manager (Glavas & Mathews 2014). Applying cognitive perspectives such as characteristics of the manager as an international entrepreneur may lead to recognition of how managers are exploiting new international opportunities (Mostafa, Wheeler & Jones 2006; Zahra, Ireland & Hitt 2000). At the initial stage of the research, an introductory letter signed by the supervisor of the researcher was submitted to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to announce the research, seek approval to conduct the research, and ask them to kindly provide access to the exporters' directories (see Appendix 4).

5.3.1.4. Reliability and validity in qualitative research

Reliability and validity, in other words trustworthiness and rigour, refer to the extent whether the object under research has been truly measured and whether the process or method measurement gives the same results over and over again, when repeated by others for similar research objects (Stenbacka 2001 and Drost 2011). This type of language typically exists in quantitative research because the overall aim of qualitative research is to explain/explore rather than measure why a social reality is the way it is. Trustworthiness, however, in qualitative research is equivalent to validity and reliability in quantitative research (Munhall 2011).

Nevertheless, critics of qualitative research believe that small samples in qualitative research lead to poor and non-generalisable results (Mays & Pope 1995; Stenbacka 2001

and Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Oslon & Spiers 2008) or, in extreme cases idiosyncratic theory building where each individual phenomenon case, person or situation needs a theory or its own explanation (Eisenhardt 1989). In addition to small samples, qualitative research is mostly criticised for two main reasons. First, research bias (due to close involvement of the researcher in the data collection, and therefore his/her personal impression and interpretation); second, lack of reproducibility (due to the personal understanding of the researcher as other researchers using the same methods/data may not come to the same conclusion) (Mays & Pope 1995).

However, admirers of qualitative research (e.g., Stenbacka 2001; Krefting 1991) argue that unlike quantitative research in which quality of data is sacrificed for quantity or standardisation, qualitative research focuses on small samples to gather a rich set of data, which lead to deep understanding of a social phenomenon. This point has been highlighted by a number of scholars (e.g., Britten & Fisher 1993; Stenbacka 2001 and Payne & Williams 2005) as they argue that smaller sample size in qualitative research is in fact not a generalisability problem. This is done, as they believe, on purpose for three reasons. First, to include those groups which are disadvantaged or in minority or hard to reach; second, to maximize diversity in order to describe the range of phenomena, and third, to go beyond mere numbers, yes/no answers and superficially measured Likert scales in uncovering deep feelings based on lived experiences of people. The notion that research bias negatively affects research quality is refuted by Tongco (2007) as she argues that it contributes positively to reliability of the research process and the data. Her argument is significant as it contributes to the debate that quality of the overall research should be considered instead of focusing only on results. This line of argument was echoed by Stenbacka (2001). She argued that the overall quality of qualitative research can be achieved if the research process and methods are sufficiently explained, and documented so as to help others to trace the results back to each step of the research in order to have confidence in the overall research.

This researcher argues that the main problem in qualitative research, with reference of validity and reliability, is the issue of competing, and sometimes conflicting jargons in the

literature. For example, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) used terms such as truth value, credibility, dependability, trustworthiness, generalisability, legitimation and authenticity to refer to the overall quality of qualitative research. Onwuegbuzie and Jonson (2006) identified the flowing five types of validities in qualitative research in order to simplify this concept (1) descriptive validity (factual accuracy of the research); (2) interpretive validity (accuracy of the interpretation of the data from the respondents' standpoint); (3) theoretical validity (the consistency of theoretical explanation with data); (4) evaluative validity (whether an evaluative framework can be applied to the research); and (5) generalisability (whether results of the research can be generalised to other contexts, individual, times etc.). Mays and Pope (1995) suggested the following six steps to be followed in qualitative research to ensure reliability and rigour as well as to minimise research bias. (1) A systematic and self-conscious research design; (2) accuracy in data collection; (3) a thorough data analysis by involving other researchers and consulting with previous relevant research findings; (4) effective communication with respondents in data collection and with other researchers in interpretation; (5) detailed documentation of the research process; and (6) meticulous documentation of the data and process.

The endeavours made by the above scholars are indeed significant contributions to the literature of qualitative social research but they made the process of selecting methods complicated due to use of conflicting terminologies. Therefore, their efforts are not helpful enough in qualitative social research training and for novice researchers in selecting suitable methods that can lead them in achieving research effectively, in the context their research questions.

Reliability and validity, and implication thereof, will be discussed in detail in the quantitative research section of this report. Some qualitative researchers have begun to question the relevance of the term validity in qualitative research. Some suggest that terminology such as credibility, dependability, conformability, trustworthiness, verification and transferability be used instead of validity. Scholars like Huberman and Miles (2002) and Tobin Begley (2004) are of the opinion that it is inappropriate to transfer terminology

across paradigms. Inevitability, the authors suggest alternative ways to demonstrate reliability and validity outside the linguistic confines of a quantitative paradigm. The trend that rather emphasises the use of *rigour* to ensure reliability and validity in qualitative research was followed in this section of the research (Tobin & Begley 2004; Twycross & Shields 2005 and Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2007). Rigour refers to the demonstration of integrity and competence in qualitative research, by adherence to detail and accuracy, to ensure the authenticity and trustworthiness of the research process.

The rigour of the qualitative section relates to the overall planning and implementation to ensure the authenticity and trustworthiness of procedures, according to the following criteria (Tobin & Begley 2004; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson 2006; Roberts, Priest & Traynor 2006 and Freeman, DeMarrais, Preissle, Roulston & St Pierre 2007):

- **Credibility**: engagement with the data (recordings, notes and transcripts) was done intensively to demonstrate clear links between the data and the interpretations. Regular discussions were held and adjustments were made in accordance with suggestions and recommendations.

- **Dependability**: According to Riege (2003), dependability is analogous to the notion of reliability in quantitative research. The purpose of this test is to show indications of stability and consistency in the process of inquiry. Care has been taken to ensure that the research process was logical, traceable, and clearly documented in a reflexive manner by giving a detailed account of the research process.

- **Authenticity**: The development of the question items is based on substantial theoretical basis described in chapters two, and three. The qualitative interview schedule was first carried out during the pilot test to ensure the yielding or reasonable, unbiased, and valid data.

- **Confirmation**: an audit process has been implemented by working forward, as well as backward through the research process, to ensure that the data and interpretations of the findings were sound and confirmed. The intention during the interpretation process was not to generalise findings to a population, but to identify accepted principles and trends related to the research topic.

The trustworthiness of this research phase has been ensured by applying the following criteria: credibility, dependability, authenticity, and confirming. The description in the qualitative research process of: *What has done; how it has been done; and why it has been done* – as well as adherence to the identified criteria for qualitative research, ensured the authenticity and trustworthiness of this research phase.

5.3.1.5. Data collection in qualitative research

The data collection methods available in qualitative research include (but not limited to) ethnography, focus group discussions, open-ended questionnaires, unstructured interviews, analysis of videos and photographs, and archival documents analysis. The most commonly used technique in qualitative research is face-to-face semi-structured interviews (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007; and Press 2005). Compared to other methods, this method records more and better-accurate data, depending on the research question and objectives, by capturing feelings and body gestures of respondents in addition to what they verbally express (Gilbert 2008). In this method, a number of open-ended questions are asked, which give freedom to both the interviewer and the interviewee to ask relevant and varied questions and to express feelings and experiences in a related environment (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden 2001; Bricki & Green 2007; Bryman & Bell 2007; Denscombe 2010 and Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2011). This method gives freedom to respondents to tell their story in terms of their own lived experiences in their words, which they may be unwilling or unable to share in an indirect situation, such as surveys.

In addition, the one-to-one semi-structured interview process is easy to control as it involves only two people, the interview and the respondent and only data source at a time (the respondent). (May 2011 and Denscombe 2010). Although this method is generally more expensive and time consuming than other methods (except un-structured interviews (Zhang & Wildemuth 2006), its benefits are greater as it provides the opportunity for the researcher to collect in-depth information during the interview by asking both probing and prompting questions (Denscombe 2010) which is not possible in most other data-gathering methods. Moreover, without being so close to their respondents and without observing or noting each bodily gesture as well as each word they (respondents) utter. Goffman (1989) believes, without in-depth qualitative interviews, social researchers will not be able to do a serious piece of work.

To yield data for the qualitative investigation, different measuring instruments have been employed. Measuring instruments include different types of interviews (standardised open-ended, semi-structured and structured), observations and content analysis or review of documents (Cooper & Schindler 2011 and Thomas, Nelson & Silverman 2011). Given the extent and purpose of this research (cf. par. 1.2), qualitative interviews have been used to collect the data. Hence, the chief executive officers, managing directors, general managers and owners of food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms in Zimbabwe, have been requested to participate in an interview to contribute to the achievement of the stated research objectives (cf. par. 1.2).

5.3.1.6. Qualitative research interviews

The qualitative research interview is a social relationship designed to exchange information between the participant and the researcher. The quantity and quality of information exchanged would depend on how astute and creative the interviewer is at understanding and managing the relationship (Monette, Sullivan & DeJong 2008). The interviews are deeply and unavoidably implicated in creating meanings that ostensibly reside within the participants (Greeff 2011).

The goal of any qualitative research interview is, therefore, to see the research topic from perspective of the interviewees, and to understand why they have a particular perspective (King 1994). To meet this goal, the author (King) lists the following general characteristics of a qualitative research interview, a low degree of structure imposed by the interviewer; a preponderance of open questions; a focus on specific situations and action sequences in the world of the interviewee - as opposed to mere abstractions and general opinions.

The role of the qualitative interviewer is a demanding one as they have to ask questions, record answers and try to keep the interview session interesting and worthwhile for the interviewees (Powney & Watts 1987 and Verma & Mallick 1999).

Circumstances in which a qualitative research interview takes place are highlighted below:

- Where a study focuses on the meaning of particular phenomena to the participants;
- Where individual historical perceptions are to be studied prospectively;
- Where individual historical accounts are required of how a particular phenomenon developed, for instance, a new shift system;
- Where exploratory work is required before a quantitative study can be carried out; and
- Where a quantitative study has been carried out, and qualitative data are required to validate particular measures or clarify and illustrate the meaning of the findings (King 1994).

Research texts typically highlight three types of interviews used in international business, standardised open-ended, semi structured and structured (Wolf 2007; Lages, Silva & Styles 2009; Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011; Scott & Usher 2011 and Griffith, Lee, Seob & Calantone 2014), depending on the nature of the event as determined by the researcher who initiates the interview (Greeff 2011). For the purposes of this research, interviews have been conducted according to a **semi-structured interview** schedule as

proposed by Greeff (2011). This specifies predetermined questions and sequences for the interviewer. The interview was, however be guided by the interview guide (cf. Annex 7).

5.3.3.7. Semi-structured research interviews

Interviewing as data a gathering method has been used to: -

- clarify vague statements;
- permit exploration of topics; and to
- yield a deeply experiential account of the extent of exports development and management in Zimbabwe.

Research interviews can yield rich material unobtainable in any other way, which can support or be supported by other data from questionnaires and standardised test responses. The interview is wonderfully adaptable and flexible (Verma & Mallick 1999). The interviews afforded the researcher an opportunity to obtain perceptions of the role players in food and beverage manufacturing industry in Zimbabwe regarding the challenges being experienced by exporting firms, and strategies being employed by the exporting firms.

5.3.1.7. Observations

The following aspects have been included in this section of the research: -

- the socio-economic situation (status) of the community;
- physical local and surroundings;
- reception at office;
- impression of office setting; and
- relevant comments.

The purpose of the observation list was to provide a brief account of the context of the source of the data, in order to facilitate an understanding of the settling in which the respondents work and to provide information about the climate in which the interview took place (Huberman & Miles 2002; Creswell 2003; 2009 and Scott & Usher 2011).

5.3.1.8. The interview schedule

For the purposes of this study, the structured part of the interview was developed according to the research objectives. After pilot test interviews, the interview guide centred on topics of determinants of export performance of the firm. The interview has been divided into four sections: (1) General information about the firm, (2) Export-marketing competencies, (3) Export and domestic market characteristics and (4) Export performance. The CEOs, managing directors, general managers and owners of the firms, were asked to provide general information about their firm in the first section, which included their job title, years of work experience in exporting, main products/industry, and number of employees. The last question inquired about export initiation. The question in the second section asked managers about their international experience, commitment to the export activity and the extent to which they had adapted their export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) in foreign markets. The CEOs, managing directors, general managers and owners of the firms were further asked to discuss the common problems/barriers they encounter in their export business.

The third section asked questions about the product destination, design of products to suit unique customer demand in export markets, and whether the legal and regulatory frameworks in the export market were similar to that of Zimbabwe. An enquiry has been made about whether the CEOs, managing directors, general managers and owners of the firms utilised export promotion programmes to enhance their export performance. In section four, the CEOs, managing directors, general managers and owners of the firms have been asked to select one variable to measure export performance and whether it was an important measurement. The final question gathered information about the location of the

firm and how this enhances export performance. Interview questions have been developed from literature and have been considered unbiased and valid as the interview protocol has been borrowed and adapted from previous studies (Sinkovics, Penz & Ghauri 2008).

A semi-structured interview has been chosen to allow more clarifying, probing and cross checking questions.

5.3.1.9. The interview procedure

In order to ensure that the responses were recorded, a digital voice recorder, and back up recorder have been used to record the responses of the participants. All interviews took place in the offices of chief executive officers, managing directors, general managers and/or owners of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. A copy of the interview schedule and the contact details of the researcher were provided to each interviewee for possible enquiries.

According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002), note taking is an important activity, but it might disturb the interviewees. To limit this, the researcher informed the interviewees that notes would be taken during the interview. The following factors were considered by the researcher to ensure a successful interview: -

- permission to use the tape recorder was sought before the interview. All the participants consented to its use; and
- use of the tape recorder enabled the researcher to maintain eye contact with the participants.

Preservation of participants' words during data collection is very important. The following tips enabled the success of the interview: -

- the tape recorder was positioned close enough between the researcher and the interviewees to record conversation;
- a “do not disturb” sign was posted on the door to ensure silence. The other members of the staff were reminded about the interview that would have been in progress;
- the tape recorder was tested prior to each interview to ensure that it was in good working order. The electric socket in the room was also tested before commencement of the interview. A fully-charged standby battery was at hand in case of a malfunction power supply; and
- the audio tapes were labelled properly for the interview with dates and pseudonyms such as a20/05/17/EF1/ceo. This represents the date of the interview, exporter identification code (food exporter), and position of the respondent.

The rationale for conducting a qualitative study is the technique, which is less structured and allows the researcher to gain additional insights and information into the area of investigation (Jarrat 1996). Face-to-face interviews are crucial for data collection as they allow for discussion of the role of the export business at the firm level (Yin 2009). In order to reduce bias, the study applied a non-directive interview that created a relaxed atmosphere between the interviewee and the interviewer (Malhotra 2010), as the focus of the interview has been to uncover and gain exploratory knowledge on export practices in Zimbabwe. Semi-structured interviews have been carried out with 18 firm executives identified as key informants from the food and beverage manufacturing industry firms in Zimbabwe.

Additional details about exporting firms have been obtained from the internet and websites to identify the location of the firms and triangulate the relevant information for the research. The selected firms have been contacted by telephone to announce the research to the key decision-makers and seek their voluntary participation in the study. In total, 22 firms have been initially selected and contacted to arrange interviews. A total of 18 firms confirmed and granted interviews after several follow up calls. Three non-participating CEOs mentioned unavailability of time, tight business schedules, and travel, as reasons for not taking part in the study. Two firms contacted were not interested in taking part in the study

due to tight business schedules, and travel as reasons for not taking part in the study. Of the 18 research interviews, 12 are under food sub-sector and 6 are under beverage sub-sector. This process enabled variability of sample representation in order to validate theoretical arguments proposed in the study. The 18 research interviews have been considered sufficient as several themes could be developed from the primary data to provide deeper insights into exporting practices in Zimbabwe, which is consistent with other studies in the field (Lages, Abrantes, & Lages 2008aa).

The research interviews have been conducted in Zimbabwe during the period April 2017 to May 2017, and each interview lasted on average, approximately 60 minutes. The interviews have been conducted face-to-face at the firms' premises and audio recorded. The qualitative interviews explored and added deeper insights into determinants of export performance to supplement the quantitative study for triangulation of findings to advance theory in international business. Prior to interviews, The Chief Executive Officers, managing directors, general managers and owners of the firms completed a consent form indicating they had agreed voluntarily to participate in the study in line with the standards of the University of Lusaka Human Ethics Guidelines. The consent form emphasised the voluntary nature of participation and assured confidentiality of all interview data. A copy of the survey cover letter (Appendix 5), participation consent form and interview protocol are attached (Appendix 8). The interview protocol did not include any emerging questions that evolved during the process and asked by the interviewer as being appropriate for probing as and when necessary.

After a day's interviews, the completed interview protocols were locked up in a safe situated in the researcher's work office. All the completed interview protocols were kept in the safe and only the researcher had access to the said safe.

5.3.1.10. Data analysis in qualitative research

In general, data analysis is more complicated in qualitative than in quantitative research because data are buried in the text in most qualitative research (Bricki & Green 2007). Since most qualitative researchers deal with issues where no or little prior knowledge is available, they tend to adopt inductive analysis (Elo & Kyngäs 2007) to make sense of the data. The most commonly used qualitative data analysis techniques are thematic analysis, disclosure analysis, descriptive approaches, interpretative phenomenological, grounded theory and narrative analysis (Graneheim & Lundman 2004; Braun & Clarke 2006; Bricki & Green 2007 and Arregle, Hitt, Sirmon & Very 2007).

The specific data analysis technique to be adopted depends on the research objectives and the type of data collected. For example, in an exploratory or explanatory qualitative research in which data are collected using a semi-structured interview technique, researchers may find thematic analysis as a most suitable technique as it is most widely used for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes from the data (Graneheim & Lundman 2004; Braun & Clarke 2006 and Bricki & Green 2007).

The process of identifying themes by breaking down the textual data into manageable chunks, and them coding each of these chunks, is called code and retrieve process (Hollway & Jefferson 2000 and Hollway & Jefferson 2012). Although the process of coding and pattern-building in a tedious job, it helps researchers in identifying rich sources of codes and themes providing basis for interpretation of the data and drawing meaningful conclusions.

Content or thematic analysis is probably the most widely used formalised procedure by qualitative researchers in their efforts to create data structures from in-depth interviews (Hair, Bush & Ortinau 2000). This procedure requires the researcher to implement a systematic process of taking individual responses and categorising them into larger themes of patterns (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2007). In the process, the researcher reviewed the

participants' raw comments and created data structures according to common themes of patterns (Crouch & McKenzie 2006), requiring the researcher to consider different analysis and interpretive factors. The interview data was transcribed in Microsoft Word before data analysis was undertaken. Although interview analysis is potentially difficult, effective data analysis is the core of theory building according to the literature (Yin 2009). The approach to data analysis was adopted from Miles and Huberman (1984), who describe an analysis of qualitative data as a continuous iterative process. After collecting data and transcribing the interviews, three steps have been used to manage the information, data reduction, data display and data analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994). The first step involved simplifying, abstracting and transforming the raw data. Data display is the process whereby the information is displayed and organised to allow constructive themes and conclusions to be extracted at the third and final stage of the analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994).

In this research, data has been coded in the open coding level, where the researcher broke down the data examining, comparing, evaluating the answers, conceptualising and categorising data (Yin 2009). The interview transcripts have thoroughly been checked against evolving patterns, then themes have been identified and conclusions have been drawn. During data analysis, the coding process also included open coding to allow new themes to emerge for further coordination with the study. Qualitative research interviews have an advantage of dealing with a full variety of evidence, such as documents and company websites (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007).

5.3.1.11. Establishing rigour or trustworthiness

According to Holloway (1997), "trustworthiness is the truth value of a piece of research". A research project is trustworthy when it reflects the reality and ideas of participants (Krefting 1991). Streubert and Carpenter (2003) add that trustworthiness of the research depends on the extent to which it delves into the participants' experience, apart from their theoretical knowledge. In this study, trustworthiness has been ensured by the researcher by laying aside his preconceived ideas about the phenomenon under investigation, and by

returning to participants to ascertain whether the description was a true reflection of their experience. Guba & Lincoln (1989), Krefting (1991) and Taylor (2000) state that trustworthiness involves the following elements: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

According to Polit, Beck & Hungler (2001), credibility refers to the confidence of the data. Credibility is similar to internal validity in quantitative research. Credibility exists when the research findings reflect the perceptions of the people under study. Polit, Beck & Hungler (2001) affirm that validity and reliability are justifiable in research although qualitative researchers use different procedures to establish validity and reliability. Internal reliability is important in qualitative research, as researchers are able to demonstrate the reality of participants through detailed description of the discussions.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) hold that theoretical concepts should have generalisability and transferability, meaning that concepts should be applicable to other similar situations. This stresses the significance of thick description so that the reader has the knowledge on which to base judgement. The following steps enhance credibility: -

- Prolonged involvement – this refers investment of sufficient time to learn culture, test for misinformation, build trust and generally repeating the procedure central to the issue under investigations (Robson 1997). The researcher has been working with exporters as a central banker and policy administrator for 18 years.

- Persistent observation – specific situations regarding the phenomenon under understudy have been observed over sufficient period to identify specific aspects relevant to it. The researcher has observed exporters' attitudes towards export performance for quite some time through interaction with them at meetings, workshops, trade exhibitions, and exporters' awards ceremonies.

- Triangulation – this refers to use of multiple referents to draw conclusions. It involves evidence from different sources, different methods of collecting data and different investigators (Robson 1997). The use of triangulation enables the researcher to strive to distinguish true information. The researcher conducted a literature review to familiarise himself with the content of the phenomenon of export performance, collected data by means of in-depth interviews and survey questionnaires, and involved an independent coder (a university lecturer in statistics) during data analysis.

- Peer debriefing – this refers to exposing the researcher's analysis and conclusion to a colleague or peer on a continuous basis for the development of both design and analysis of the study (Ibid). The researcher conducted a pre-exercise interview with two respondents who met the criteria; the researcher also liaised with colleagues and supervisors regarding data analysis.

In addition to the qualitative component of the empirical research, quantitative research methods in the form of a structured questionnaire have also been used in combination with the semi-structured interviews as part of the mixed methods research design.

5.3.2. Quantitative research method

The quantitative section deals with the statistical analysis and numerical data to provide quantitative information (Lund 2005 and Thiétart 2007). Quantitative research requires objectively evaluating the data, which consist of numbers, trying to exclude bias from the researcher's point of view. Typically, the quantitative method makes use of the questionnaire. Quantitative research always involves the numerical analysis of data gathered by means of some structured questionnaire.

The objective of quantitative research is to test hypothesis to natural phenomena by applying statistical models (Hohenthal 2006). The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). This study applied a quantitative technique using a survey approach (Zaiem & Zghidi 2011). The causal or confirmatory design must meet a number of strict requirements such as a well-defined population, sample frame, hypothesis, parameters, sampling method, probabilities, and conclusions (Ellis 2010 and Malhotra 2010).

Assumptions underlying quantitative methods include: -

- reality is objective, "out there," and independent of the researcher – therefore reality is something that can be studied objectively;
- the researcher should remain distant and independent of what is being researched;
- the values of the researcher do not interfere with, or become part of the research - research is value free;
- the research is based primarily on deductive forms of logic and theories and hypotheses are tested in a cause-effect order; and
- the goal is to develop generalisations that contribute to theory that enable the researcher to predict, explain, and understand some phenomenon.

Interviews require the researcher to elicit information from respondents and provide researcher more insight into the meaning and significance of what is happening. As such, it thus substantiates why survey researchers (Scott & Usher 2011) choose to concentrate on a group of seemingly similar cases, such as for example food and beverage manufacturing exporters in a locality or country.

5.3.2.1. Key informants

The major sources of quantitative data for this research have been the middle level managers, accountants and officers responsible for exports in food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. This approach was premised on the fact that the unit of analysis was the export function of the firm and to avoid duplication of the qualitative interviews that centred on the chief executives, managing directors, general managers and owners of firms. However, the selection of appropriate respondents to be contacted within the firm was a relevant issue. This was carried out by directing the questionnaires and soliciting responses from the "key person" within the firm (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). The key respondent needed to occupy a role that made him or her knowledgeable about the issues under investigation (Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b). The reason is that the type of information required made it necessary that the key respondent has been actively involved in exporting activities of the firm, and in a position integral to the firm's policy making regarding international business operations (Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b). Past research in the field of export performance supported this aspect by claiming the executives and operational officers to be key informants in the firm (Adu-Gyamfi & Korneliussen 2013 and Boso, Story, Cadogan & Kadic-Maglajlic 2013). Recent literature advocates the use of multiple informants to collect data as it is difficult to know whether a single individual provides valid information for quality evaluation (Anderson 1985). However, Anderson (1985) and Pennings (1979) have also argued that collecting data from multiple informants brings different perspectives in the investigation, although this is not always necessary. It is methodologically sound to use a single key informant when they occupy senior executive or ownership positions within the firm (Hambrick 2007). Top managers and middle level executives are the central boundary spanners in dealing with the operations of the firm and are appropriately qualified to provide answers for the organisation (Pennings 1979). The single informant approach has been used to reduce the potential for systematic and random sources error, thus, managers selected were involved in planning, leading and control of firm resources (Sousa, Ruzo & Losada 2010). As the multiple informant approach is not applicable to this study, the predictor and criterion variables have been measured in

isolation to create a temporal time lag between them to address common method bias (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee & Podsakoff 2003). Moreover, a multiple informant approach would have required additional financial resources and a longer period to run the survey in an emerging economy like Zimbabwe.

It is therefore, against this background that an effort was made to access managers, accountants and officers responsible for exports, who were more likely to provide accurate information on the firm's export operations (Sousa, Ruzo & Losada 2010). In order to keep the potential for systematic and random errors as low as possible, the guidelines by Huber and Power (1985) were adhered to by (1) targeting exports personnel in the firm, (2) giving assurance of the confidentiality of the data and (3) interpreting collected interview data accurately. To ensure comprehension, a personalised introductory letter giving background information about the research was attached to the questionnaire. The cover letter emphasised the voluntary nature of participation and assured confidentiality of all data provided. Therefore, the key informants agreed voluntarily to participate in the study in line with the standards of University of Lusaka's research ethics.

5.3.2.2. Common types of variables classified by level of measurement

The building blocks of quantitative research are variables. Variables (something that takes on different values or categories) are the opposite of constants (something that cannot vary). Many of the important types of variables that are used in quantitative research are shown in Table 5.2 (page 176). According to Rovai, Baker & Ponton (2013), the simplest classification of variables is between categorical (type) and quantitative (amount) variables. Independent variables (symbolised "IV") are presumed cause of another variable. Dependent variables (symbolised "DV") are the presumed effect or outcome. Dependent variables are influenced by one or more independent variables. Sometimes researchers want to understand the process or variables through which one variable affects another variable. Such variables are called intervening variables. Intervening variables are, therefore, variables that occur between two other variables. Sometimes a relationship does not

generalise to everyone; therefore, researchers often use moderator variables to show how the relationship changes across the levels of an additional variable.

Table 5.2: Common Types of Variables Classified by Level of Measurements and by Role of Variable

Variable Type	Key Characteristic	Example
Level of Measurement		
Categorical variable	A variable that is made up of different types or categories of a phenomenon.	The variable gender is made up of the categories of male and female.
Quantitative variable	A variable that varies in degree or amount of a phenomenon	The variable annual income varies from zero income to a very high income level.
Role Taken by the Variable		
Independent variable (symbolised as IV)	A variable that is presumed to cause changes to occur in another variable, a causal variable.	Amount of studying (IV) affects test grades (DV)
Dependent variable (symbolised as DV)	A variable that changes because of another variable, the effect or outcome variable.	Amount of studying (IV) affects test grades (DV).
Mediating variable (also called an intervening variable)	A variable that comes in between other variables, helps to delineate (explain) the process through which variables affect one another.	Amount of studying (IV) leads to input and organisation of knowledge in long-term memory (mediating variable), which affects test grade (DV).
Moderator variable	A variable that delineates (explains) how a relationship of interest changes under	Perhaps the relationship between studying (IV) and test grades (DV) changes

Variable Type	Key Characteristic	Example
	different conditions or circumstances.	according to the different levels of use of a drug Ritalin (moderator).

Source: Developed from Rovai, Baker and Ponton (2013)

5.3.2.3. Population, sampling procedure and data sources

The population of this study includes food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms in Zimbabwe. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe exporter's database has been used because the Central Bank keeps an up-to-date database of all exporters in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has been selected as the country context for this research because the country has broadly embraced polices to enhance the performance of exporters and promotion of value-addition. However, there has not been empirical research to establish determinants of export performance. To promote exports, the government of Zimbabwe adopted an Export-Led Growth policy with an aim of increasing the country's value-added exports to boost export growth and development (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2016; cf. par. 1.4). A sampling procedure involving all exporting firms in the two sub-sectors has been derived from making inferences about their export performance. The population has been defined to target both large and small firms exporting in each category. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe exporters' database was identified as the best sampling frame available in Zimbabwe, corresponding to the target population. All the firms exporting value added exports or manufactured exports, are registered in the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe database of exporters. The database comprised of 100 exporting firms in the food and beverage manufacturing sub-sector across the country. Other researchers have relied on this database as the most relevant source of information on exporters (Chipika & Davies 2001; Muranda 2003 and Chigusiwa, Bindu, Mudavanhu, Muchabaiwa & Mazambani 2011).

The study population of the quantitative research consists of a purposive random selection of 91 exporting firms in the food and beverage manufacturing sub-sectors in six major cities namely; Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru, Kwekwe and Chitunwgiza. Sampling refers to

the process of selecting a sample of a small portion of subset from a defined population – with the intention of representing the particular population (Black 2001; Gall, Gall & Borg 2007; Hoy 2010; Monette, Sullivan & DeJong 2011 and Neuman 2011). However, the purpose of this research is not to make use of a sample to generalise the findings to a particular population, but to come up with strategies that can enhance export performance of food and beverage firms in Zimbabwe. A non-probability sampling procedure has accordingly been selected for the identification of firms because the researcher had no guarantee that these firms were either representative of the population of manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe or that they had equal chance of being selected for this particular study.

A purposive random sample has been selected from different firms because the identified firms were accepted as the study population (target population) to determine general trends of firms in a diversity of manufacturing firms with related aspects of food and beverage manufacturing in a diversity of Zimbabwean firms (Fogelman 2002; Grinnell & Unrau 2008; Leedy & Ormrod 2010 and Strydom 2011b). According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2009), purposive sampling is the most important type of probability sampling. Researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to purposely obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population. The adequacy of this kind of sampling for quantitative studies, depends on the judgement of the researcher, and is therefore, sometimes even called judgement sampling. In purposive sampling, the researcher must first think critically about parameters and then choose the sample case accordingly. Criteria for the selection of the participants are therefore, of central importance, and are understood as being dialectical and symbolic.

A sample of 60 food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms has been randomly drawn from a drawn population of 91 food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms operating in Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru, Kwekwe and Chitunwgiza. A total of 91% of the firms are concentrated in these six major cities. The high concentration of the target

population in the six major cities was convenient for the researcher to conduct quantitative study in the stated cities in Zimbabwe.

In order to laminate selection bias, a web-based 'random number generator' has been used to select the 60 food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms from the 91 food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms (target population) operating in Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru, Kwekwe and Chitunwgiza. A sample size that constitutes at least 10 per cent of the population is deemed appropriate (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). The final sample size of 49 is 81.7 per cent of the drawn population and is regarded as appropriate. The need for a large sample is based on the central limit formula that as a sample size increases, the distribution of sample means of size *n*, randomly selected, approaches a normal distribution (Field 2009). This shows that a sample size should be large enough to provide an acceptable level of confidence. The stratified random sampling which requires the separation of the defined target population into different groups, has been applied to target 60 key respondents from the two industries or subsectors in Zimbabwe. Primary data has been collected specifically for this research via direct contact with export managers in Zimbabwe (Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b). Face-to-face interaction is deeply rooted in Zimbabwe business cultural practices (Muranda 2003). Secondary data has been drawn from the internet, journals, textbooks, newspapers, Government of Zimbabwe and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe policy documents, reports and statistics for triangulation purposes (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007 and Malhotra & Birks 2007).

5.3.2.4. Sampling frame

There are two types of sampling procedure and the probability and non-probability procedures (Hair, Bush & Ortinau 2000). Every member of the population has a known, non-zero probability of selection in the first; while in non-probability techniques, the units of the sample are selected on the basis of personal judgement or convenience (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). In this study, two conditions have been taken into consideration in identifying the sample size. First, the limitation of time and financial resources made the

inclusion of all firms in the population impossible (Shamsuddoha 2004). Second, the sample size had to be large enough to provide powerful statistical testing of the theoretically hypothesised relationships. Sample size plays a paramount role in the estimation and interpretation of the data collection procedure of the statistical tool applied for analyses. This study targeted a sample of 91 food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms from a national population of 100 food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms in ten administrative provinces in Zimbabwe, as representative exporting firms in the food and beverage industries.

The selection of the sample size was based on the principle of sample size determination which argues that a sample should be large enough to enable the results of the research to be generalised to the population (Malhotra 2010). A stratified sampling method has been used to divide 100 firms in Zimbabwe into food industry and beverage industry. Firms selected, differed in their industry sub-sector, firm size, and destination of products to provide variations for analysis (Sousa, Ruzo & Losada 2010). This approach has been used in similar studies (Ogunmokum & Ng 2004). The process of selecting firms through stratified sampling is accurate, efficient, and simple, and draws up an appropriate sample in line with methodological fit in business research (Edmondson & McManus 2007). The next section presents the operationalisation of the constructs under this study.

5.3.2.5. Data collection in quantitative research

Various instruments are used to collect quantitative data including telephone interviews, web-based surveys, postal surveys, and structured questionnaires. Each instrument has its own strengths and limitations in terms of time, cost and quality of data. Since most quantitative researchers in social sciences use structured questionnaires for data collection, (Edwards, Roberts, Clarke, Di Guiseppi, Pratap, Wentz & Kwan 2002; Newby, Watson & Woodliff 2003; Bryman 2006; Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salid & Rupert 2007 and Jogulu & Pansiri 2011), they do not have any control or influence over the respondents that leads to low response rates. In this study, the researcher used various techniques to increase

response rate that included use of pre-notification letter to respondents and follow-up/reminder telephone calls (Fox-Wolfgramm, Boal & Hunt 1998; Edwards, Roberts, Clarke, Di Guiseppi, Pratap, Wentz & Kwan 2002 and Newby, Watson & Woodliff 2003).

5.3.2.6. Return rate

Irrespective of the sampling method used, one would have to confront the problem of non-responses to the survey. Non-responses would not matter if one could be certain that non-respondents are very similar to respondents on all relevant variables in that they would have answered the survey similarly if they had taken part. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2009) further state that non-responses occur because participants refused to be involved in the research for various reasons. Non-responses may, thus, occur due to inter-related problems such as: -

- refusal to respond;
- ineligibility to respond;
- inability to locate participant; and
- participant located, but unable to make contact.

A low response rate limits the generalisation of the results from the questionnaires. Based on the perception that low response rates make the final sample smaller, meaning less "statistical power" to test the hypotheses, a number of steps to maximise the response rates are suggested. These include: -

- keeping the questionnaire sufficiently short and attractive;
- minimising cost and effort to the respondents;
- promising (and providing) feedback to all the participants in the study; and
- Provide a reward (book tokens, vouchers and the like) for completion of questionnaires.

In this study, the researcher has used a sufficiently short and attractive questionnaire (cf. Appendix 6), hand-delivered and picked up the questionnaires, emailed some of the questionnaires, (minimising cost and effort to the respondents), promised feedback to all the participants in the study, and followed up with phone calls and visits to the respondents.

5.3.2.7. The questionnaire as measure instrument

Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2011) regard a questionnaire as a way to collect data in survey research that contains recorded questions that people respond to directly on the questionnaire form itself, without the aid of an interview. Using the questionnaire as research instrument has definite advantages (Best & Kahn 2006 and Muijs 2011), but also has disadvantages (Wilkinson & Birmingham 2003 and Muijs 2011), as shown in Table 5.3 (page 183).

Table 5.3: Advantages and Disadvantages of Questionnaires

Advantages	Disadvantages
It is familiar to users and allows them to complete the questionnaire at their own convenience, while allowing some time to think about their answers.	Questionnaires often provide low response (return rates), time-consuming follow-up and data entry.
Questionnaires facilitate the collection of vast amounts of data with minimal effect.	Ease of production and distribution can result in the collection of far more data than can be effectively used.
The availability of a number of participants in one place makes possible economy of time and expense and provides a high proportion of usable responses.	Questionnaires are everywhere, competing for participants' time.
As research instruments, questionnaires can be used time and time again to measure differences between groups of people. They are thus reliable data gathering tools.	Lack of adequate time to complete the instrument may result in the return of superficial data.
The person administering the instrument has the opportunity to establish rapport, explain the purpose of the study and elaborate on the meaning of items that may not be clear.	Lack of personal contact (if the questionnaire in mailed) may mean that response rates suffer, necessitating the expense of follow-up letters, telephone calls and other means of chasing the participant.
Well-designed questionnaires can allow relationships between data to be identified. They are particularly useful to showing relationships with data that are easily quantifiable.	

Source: Developed for this research (2017)

5.3.2.8. The design of the questionnaire

A questionnaire is a form of measurement instrument containing a formal set of questions for attaining information from respondents (Malhotra 2010). To collect quantitative primary data, a researcher must design a questionnaire that deciphers the information needed into a set of specific questions that motivates respondents to complete the questionnaire and minimise response errors (Lietz 2010). Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) state that when designing questionnaires, it is easy to overlook mistakes and ambiguities in question layout and construction. The design of the questionnaire affects the response rates (cf. par. 4.2.8.6), reliability and the validity of the data collected. Response rates, validity and reliability can be maximised by: -

- careful design of individual questions;
- clear layout of questionnaire form;
- lucid explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire; and
- pilot testing.

The questionnaire was designed to be completed anonymously by the respondents. A cover letter for the attention of the respondents was written to accompany each questionnaire (cf. Appendix 5). The cover letter explained the purpose of the research; and it contained important information for the completion of the questionnaire.

In relation to this study, a questionnaire has been constructed in alignment with the literature overview, the theoretical framework, the conceptual framework, the semi-structured interviews, qualitative research and research objectives. The questionnaire has also been developed taking into consideration existing questionnaires relevant to export performance e.g., questionnaire developed by Madsen (1989); Cavusgil, Shaoming and Naidu (1993); Ibeh and Young (2001); Wolf (2007); Stoian, Rialp and Rialp (2011), and Lages, Jap and Griffith (2008b).

The questionnaire has been designed to collect information on managers' perceptions of the export market environment, export knowledge, export commitment, export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), and export promotion programmes, foreign and domestic market environment, and export performance. The researcher has selected measurement items identified as being valid and reliable from the literature (Edmondson & McManus 2007). The scaling technique to yield the highest level of information in a given situation, has been used to allow a variety of statistical analyses (Lietz 2010). The widely used Likert rating scale has been applied for this research. A Likert scale has been used because it necessitates a respondent to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with a variety of statements related to the research investigation (Lietz 2010). The Likert scale has several merits. It is very easy to construct and administer, as respondents readily understand how to use the scale, making it suitable for surveys. The main disadvantage of the Likert scale is that potentially; it takes longer to complete than other itemised rating scales because respondents have to read each statement (Hair, Bush & Ortinau 2000). Seven-point and five-point scales have been used to capture respondents' assessment on a longer range for statistical analysis to increase variability in the data and increase validity of the results.

5.3.2.9. Reliability

Salkind (2006; 2009; 2012) refers to dependable, consistent, stable, trustworthy, predictable and faithful as synonymous for reliability. More specifically, Delport and Roestenburg (2001b) concede that reliability deals with what is being measured. Muijs (2011) states that whether researchers want to measure something, there is some element of error, what he calls measurement error. Reliability then refers to the extent to which test scores are free of measurement error.

To overcome unreliable and biased answers, the researcher selected key informants who are managers or officials responsible for export in the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, which satisfies the requirement of knowledgeable informant. Informants' self-benefit considered independent from the research issues. They would have

no interest in not telling the truth to the researcher since they are independent of the researcher and the research. All critical indicators do not involve the informants' self-benefit. Therefore, informants have no motive of not telling the truth. It can be believed that they provide objective answers. In addition, there is no possibility that informants are encouraged to provide biased answers to obtain financial premiums. The researcher used both a mail survey and 'drop and pick' technique. According to Erdos (1974), by using a mail survey, the research will experience less distribution bias, a higher likelihood of thoughtful replies, and no interview bias. In sum, the informants are knowledgeable, holding no motive to not telling the truth, and are motivated to provide serious and thoughtful replies. All these empirical settings promise highly reliable data coming out.

Although it is rare to have perfect reliability, Neuman and Kreuger (2003), as well as Salkind (2006; 2009; 2012), suggest procedures to increase the reliability of measures. These can be summarised as follows: -

- increase the number of items or observations, i.e., the use of multiple indicators of a variable;
- eliminate items that are unclear;
- increase the level of measurement;
- standardise the conditions under which the test is taken;
- moderate the degree of difficulty of the instrument;
- minimise the effects of external events;
- standardise instructions;
- maintain consistent as scoring procedures; and
- use pre-tests, pilot studies and replications.

Several procedures exist for establishing the reliability of an instrument, such as the test-retest and alternative-from methods and the split-half technique (Gratton & Jones 2010 and Delport & Roestenburg 2011b). For the purposes of the current study, a pilot study was

conducted and the Cronbach *alpha* coefficient (Cronbach *alpha*) was used to measure the reliability of the measurement instrument (in this case the questionnaire).

5.3.2.10. Pilot study

A number of different opinions on, and definitions of the pilot study exist. Some of these address one aspect of the pilot study, while others are more comprehensive. Sarantakos (2000), for instance, differentiates between aspects of the pre-test and the pilot study. The former comprises of testing of one or more aspects of the subject, such as the questionnaire or the programme for the analysis of the data (Strydom 2011). Although concurring with De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) who feel that the concept pilot study is the more correct and more comprehensive, the concept pilot test and pilot study will be used interchangeably in the current study.

Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006) define the pilot study as a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate. Janesick (1994) concurs that the pilot test in qualitative research allows the researcher to make use of the actual qualitative interviews.

According to Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003), the researcher can begin to identify and correct imperfections by piloting or testing a questionnaire with a select few people in order to establish their clarity. Piloting further assists in eliminating ambiguous questions, as well as in generating useful feedback on the structure and flow of the intended interview. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2009) and De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) summarise the purpose of the pilot study as follows: -

- to detect possible flaws in the measurement process (such as ambiguous instructions, and inadequate time limits);

- to identify unclear or ambiguous formulated items. In such a pilot study the actual questions are put to the participants and they are then asked to indicate how they interpreted the formulated questions; and
- an opportunity for researchers and assistants to notice non-verbal behaviour (on the part of participants) that may possibly signify discomfort or wrong of the questions (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell 2009).

The questionnaire has been pre-tested to determine its clarity and comprehension plus uncover any flaws in the design or in specific questions. All aspects of the questionnaire have been tested including scale items, equation content, wording, form layout, question difficulty and instructions (Lietz 2010). The preliminary questionnaire was reviewed by two academics familiar with international business research to assess the questionnaire items for face validity of the constructs. To achieve the best comprehension and clarity of the questionnaire, the questionnaire has been pre-tested with five export managers in Zimbabwe, four academic staff, and ten doctoral students at the University of Lusaka, University of Zimbabwe and Chinhoyi University of Technology, deemed knowledgeable in the field of international business. The questionnaire has been revised based on recommendations received from feedback and adapted to Zimbabwe for the study. The final questionnaire has been discussed with, as well as analysed and approved by my Supervisors.

5.3.2.11. The Cronbach alpha confident

The Cronbach *alpha* was developed by Lee Cronbach in 1951 to provide a measure of the internal consistency of a test scale; it is expressed as a number between 0 and 1 (Cronbach 1951; Cronbach 2004). Internal consistency describes the extent to which all the items in a test measure the same concept or construct and hence it is connected to the interrelatedness of the items within the test (Takavol & Dennick 2011). Internal consistency should be determined before a test can be employed for research or examination purposes to ensure validity. In addition, reliability estimates show the amount of measurement error in a test.

Put it simply, this interpretation of reliability is the correlation of test with itself. Squaring this correlation and subtracting from 1.00 produces the index of measurement error.

If the items in a test are correlated to each other, the value of the *alpha* is increased. However, a high coefficient *alpha* does not always mean a high degree of internal consistency. This is because *alpha* is also affected by the length of the test. For instance, if the test length is too short, the value of *alpha* is reduced (Streiner (2003). Thus, to increase *alpha*, more related items testing the same concept should be added to the test. It is also important to note that *alpha* is a property of the scores on a test from a specific sample of testees. Therefore, investigators should not rely on published *alpha* estimates and should measure *alpha* each time the test is administered.

Internal consistency is concerned with the interrelatedness of a sample of test items, whereas homogeneity refers to unidimensionality. A measure is said to be unidimensional if its items measure a single latent trait or construct. Internal consistency is a necessary but not sufficient condition for measuring homogeneity or unidimensionality is a sample of test items (Green, Lissitz & Mulaik 1977 and Cortina 1993). Fundamentally, the concept of reliability assumes that unidimensionality exists in a sample of test items (Miller 1995) and if this assumption is violated, it does cause a major underestimate of reliability. It has been well documented that a multidimensional test does not necessarily have a lower *alpha* that a unidimensional test. Thus, a more rigorous view of *alpha* is that it cannot simply be interpreted as an index for the internal consistency of a test (Green, Lissitz & Mulaik 1977; Cortina 1993 and Green & Thompson 2005).

The Cronbach *alpha* is widely used in social science research to estimate the internal consistency or reliability of a measurement scale. The Cronbach *alpha* coefficient is widely used as a reliable procedure to indicate how well various items are positively correlated to one another (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). The Cronbach *alpha* is based on the inter-item correlations. If the items are strongly corrected with each other, their internal consistency is high and the *alpha* coefficient will be close to one. On the other hand, if items are poorly

formulated and do not correlate strongly, the *alpha* coefficient will be zero. Guidelines for the interpretation of *Cronbach's alpha* coefficient have been suggested and the following seem widely and generally accepted by researchers:

- 0.90-high reliability;
- 0.80-moderate reliability; and
- 0.70-low reliability.

As pointed out earlier, the number of test items, item inter-relatedness and dimensionality affect the value of *alpha* (Cortina 1993). There are different reports about acceptable values of *alpha*, ranging from 0.70 to 0.95 (Nunnally & Bernstein 1994; Bland & Altman 1997 and DeVellis 2003). A low value of *alpha* could be due to a low number of questions, poor inter-relatedness between items or heterogeneous constructs. For example, if a low *alpha* is due to poor correlation between items, then some items should be revised or discarded. The easiest method to find them is to compute the correlation of each test item with the total score test, items with low correlations (approaching zero) are deleted. If *alpha* is too high, it may suggest that some items are redundant as they are testing the same question but in a different guise. A maximum *alpha* value of 0.90 has been recommended (Streiner (2003). Apart from the importance of the concept of reliability in the content of measurement, validity is widely considered as important in the context of measurement to ensure the success of any study.

In this study, the Cronbach *alpha* coefficient was calculated using SPSS for Windows for each group of items in the questionnaire, and the general coefficient value of *0.85* has been achieved. George and Mallery (2003) provide the following rules of thumb: $\alpha \geq 0.90$ (Excellent); $0.80 \leq \alpha \leq 0.89$ (Good), $0.70 \leq \alpha \leq 0.79$; (Acceptable); $0.60 \leq \alpha \leq 0.69$ (Questionable); $0.50 \leq \alpha \leq 0.59$ (Poor) and $\alpha < 0.50$ (Unacceptable)

5.3.2.12. Validity in quantitative research

Validity is the primary concern of all researchers who gather international business data. Validity is the most important quality of a measured dependent variable. This is because validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure, yielding scores that reflect the true variables being measured. In other words, validity refers to the soundness of the interpretation of scores from a test, the most important consideration in measurement.

A construct, concept or a theoretical construction is aimed at organising and making sense out of our environment. The main purpose is to use observed variables to describe a construct or concept which is an observable variable, e.g., export firm competences and degree of professional exporting experience of the chief executive officer or exports manager (Pedhazur & Schmelkin 1991). Construct validity is the extent to which a questionnaire or test measures a theoretical concept or trait.

5.3.2.12.1. Internal validity

Internal validity is crucial to experimental research designs; and it may be obtained by using at least two groups that are equal in respect of both the dependent variable and all nuisance variables. Cozby (2009) believes that the internal validity of a research study is the extent to which its design allows the researcher to draw accurate conclusions about cause-effect relationships. To ensure the internal validity of research, the researcher needs to attempt to eliminate any other possible explanations for the results observed (Devlin 2006; Cozby 2009).

5.3.2.12.2. External validity

If a study lacks external validity, then one is not confident that the findings can be applied beyond the narrow confines of the study. One especially common threat to external validity

is the lack of random selection. When the sample does not reasonably represent the population, external validity is lacking (Suter 1998). Shadish Cook and Campbell (2002) suggest four areas of doubt concerning the ability to generalise findings:

- the researcher's inability to conceptualise performance indicators, so that other researchers can replicate the experiment;
- the researcher's inability to ensure that the experimental and control groups are representative of larger populations;
- the researcher's inability to be confident that the operationalised variables in the experimental setting can be replicated in real-life situations; and
- the researcher's inability to be certain that internal validity variables such as history, maturation, pre-test sensation, test reliability and selection (Bordens Abbott 2011) will not detrimentally affect external validity.

5.3.2.12.3. Measurement of validity

Neuman (2011) describes measurement of validity as how well an empirical indicator and the conceptual definition of the construct that the indicator is supposed to measure, fit together. Although there are many types of validity, authors are generally in agreement that there are a few common techniques used to assess the validity of a measurement. With regard to content validity, Smit (1991) distinguishes three types of content validity, namely face validity, sample validity and factorial validity. Face validity, according to Lacobucci and Churchill (2010), refers to the relationship (similarities correlation) between the researcher's description of concepts and his/her description of categories measured. The terms face validity and content validity are often used interchangeably in research literature, although some methodologists argue that they should not be thought of as synonymous. They claim that face validity is not technically a form of validation, since it does not refer to what an instrument "actually" measures, but rather to what it "appears" to measure (i.e., it appears relevant to those who will complete or administer it). Nevertheless, face validity is a desirable characteristic of measuring instrument. Without it, we may encounter

resistance on the part of respondents, which may in turn adversely affect the results obtained. Consequently, it is important to structure an instrument as that it not only measures the attributes under consideration accurately, but also appears to be a relevant measure of these attributes. So, whereas Smit (1991) considers face validity as a sub-type of content validity, Delport and Van Roestenburg (2011b) and Neuman (2011), to name a few, are of the opinion that content and face validity should be seen as separate categories of types of validity underlying measurement. The researcher, therefore, agrees with the classification scheme of Delport and Van Roestenburg (2011b) and Neuman (2011) to categorise validities underlying measurement as content face, criterion and construct validity.

In the light of the purpose of the current research, face validity, thus, determines if a questionnaire after a superficial (on the surface/or on face of it) assessment looks valid at first glance (the face of it) for a respondent (person) who has to complete the questionnaire. That is to say face validity does not refer to what items a questionnaire really measures, but rather what the researcher wants it to measure at first glance. In other words, each question or item on the measurement instrument should have a logical link with an objective. Broadly, the establishment of the referred to link, is called face validity (Kumar 2011). Sample validity (logical) of measuring instrument as for instance a questionnaire on the other hand, is grounded on a representative sample of the content subjacent to the concept about which information is obtained from. In this regard, Guion alleges that:

> "…content validity is the degree to which the total variance of the sample (the actual questionnaire) is related to the variance in the total possible population of tasks or items" (Guion 1965, p.124).

Lastly, the factorial validity of a measuring instrument (questionnaire) refers to the loading of the questionnaire with a general factor – in other words, the relation (correlation) which exists between the questionnaire and a common factor, as measured by means of the questionnaire (Smit 1991). Churchill and Lacobucci (2005); Devlin (2006), as well as Gravetter and Forzano (2012) implicitly purport, that there is a relation (correlation)

between the questionnaire and a common factor which is measured by means of the questionnaire.

Two other forms of validity are construct validity and criterion validity. It has been the purpose of this study to determine the perceptions of respondents on the socio-economic determinants of export performance of the Zimbabwe food and beverage manufacturing firms, mediating effects of export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) on the association between export commitment, international experience, export promotion programmes and export performance and the moderating effect of foreign market attractiveness on the association between export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and export performance. Construct validity bears relation to assumptions underpinned by theory relevant to the concept. In an endeavour to ensure construct validity for the current study, the questionnaire items have developed in alignment with the theoretical underpinnings concerning international business management and export performance. Face validity have been optimised by the conduct of a pilot test to verify the relevance and representativeness of the various items to the intended setting (Bush 2002 and Roberts, Priest & Traynor 2006). Criterion validity is seen as the ability of a measure to correlate with other standard measures of similar constructs or established measures. Given the fact that no other standard measures of similar constructs or established criteria was available, criterion validity was not established. Subsequently, it is in line with the research design adopted for this research (cf. par. 4.2.9.10). The external validity has been optimised by the selection of food and beverage manufacturing firms in line with the research objectives (cf. par. 1.2.). Internal validity has been ensured by means of a substantial theoretical framework, initial qualitative data and pilot testing of the questionnaire.

5.3.2.13. Data analysis in quantitative research

Quantitative researchers use a number of statistical data analysis tools and make sense of quantitative data. These tools include, but not limited to, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Linear Structural Relations (LISREL), Statistical Package for Social Science

(SPSS), MATrix LABoratory (MATLAB), MINITAB, STATA, STATISTICA etc. The decision to use a data analysis tool depends on the research objectives and type of data available. The study uses the Structural Modelling Equation (SEM) which is used in cases research is conducted using small sample sizes (Suhr 2006). Furthermore, SEM is widely used in various disciplines including psychology and social sciences (Anderson & Gerbing 1998). The use of SEM is viewed as appropriate strategy as it is a comprehensive analysis tool for statistical analysis of quantitative data (Anderson & Gerbing 1988 and Suhr 2006).

Unlike many first generation statistical methods such as regression, correlation and analysis of variance, use of SEM, as a second generation method offers a number of benefits over traditional statistical techniques if applied correctly (Suhr 2006; Chin 1998). For example, SEM incorporates observed (measured) and unobserved (latent constructs) variables in a multivariate environment to perform path analytic modelling, it allows researchers to carry out multiple tests to determine the best model fit, it allows to take multiple measurements for latent constructs to resolve multicollinearity problems, it represents complex relationships among several variables in a visual way instead of only describing them in complex statistical statements, and it tests a priori theoretical assumptions against empirical data (Suhr 2006; Chin 1998).

In addition, SEM has the unique ability to analyse a number of interdependent relationships in which dependent variables become independent variables simultaneously, it analyses multiple dependent variables at the same time (Shook, Ketchen, Hult & Kacmar 2004) and has excellent prediction and explanatory capability of endogenous (dependent) latent variables in model estimation (Ringle, Sarstedt & Straub 2012).

Critics, however, argue that SEM is a mathematically complex package which many researchers find difficult to use and to make sense of their data (Chin 1998; and Shook, Ketchen, Hult & Kacmar 2004). To address the issues of technical complexities of this tool, as well as other modern statistical analysis packages, future research is required to guide researchers in three areas. First, how to make sure their data meet the assumed multi-

variability of normal distribution of indicator variables? Second, how to measure indicators appropriately as weak measures may result in inappropriate modifications to structural models and false findings. Third, what will be an acceptable sample size to assess model fit because large samples may produce trivial differences and smaller samples may lead to suspicious model fit. The next section explains the mixed method approach that has been adopted in this study.

5.3.3. Mixed methods research

5.3.3.1. Mixed method nomenclature and philosophy

Some authors regard mixed methods research as representing the third methodological movement (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003, 2010 and Wao, HO & Onwuegbuzie 2011). This methodological approach has been the subject of books (Andrew & Halcomb 2009; Bergman 2008; Creswell 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007; Greene 2007; Mertens 2005; Niglas 2004; Ridenour & Newman 2008; Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998, 2003, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009) and articles (Bryman 2006; Cameron 2009; Ivankova, Creswell & Stick 2007; Morgan 1998; Morse 1991; O'Cathain, Nicholl & Murphy 2009; O'Cathain, Murthy & Nicholl 2007; Onwuegbuzie, Johnson & Collins 2009 and Plano-Clarke, Garrett & Leslie-Pelecky 2010). Moreover, two journals focused speciality on mixed methods research has emerged in recent years. The following two main factors can determine the mixed methods design (Creswell 2003; Morgan 1998; Morse 1991; Onwuegbuzie, Johnson & Collins 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998 and Morgan-Ellis, Alexander, Cronin, Dickinson, Fielding, Sleney 2006):

Priority: in a mixed methods study, the researcher can give the same priority, weight, or status to the quantitative and qualitative aspect (equal weight designs), or alternatively can give greater weight to one of them (different weight designs); and

Implementation of data collection: this concept refers to the order in which the researcher collects quantitative and qualitative data. The two options are collecting information at the same time (simultaneous, concurrent, or parallel designs) or at different points (sequential or two stage designs). The way in which these two factors are combined helps to determine the resulting design.

With regard to the purpose of conducting mixed methods research designs by integrating different types of data in the same study, several potential reasons have been noted by various authors (Creswell 2003; Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989 and Morgan 1998). Two of the most widely stated reasons are triangulation (i.e., to seek convergence in data); and complementarity (i.e., to measure facets overlapped from a phenomenon). The main aim of triangulation is to achieve a convergence of the results obtained via quantitative and qualitative approaches, such that these results are more reliable (Jick 1979). what is sought, therefore, is a corroboration or correspondence of results obtained through different methods. According to Greene, Caracelli & Graham (1989), complementarity seeks to clarify or to illustrate the results obtained with one method by also applying the other. In this case, the designs used are usually sequential (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). For example, a QUAN→qual design could be used, whereby the qualitative part can help to evaluate and to interpret the results obtained from the main quantitative study. Another potential purpose of mixed methods research is development (i.e., the intent to help develop or to inform the other method). In this case, it is again usual to use sequential designs, in which one of the methods (normally the one with least weight) helps in some way improve upon the subsequent implementation of the other method (normally the dominant one).

A further purpose of mixed methods designs is to enable expansion (i.e., seeking to analyse and to explore different facets of a phenomenon so as to obtain a richer and more detailed understanding of it). With respect to these main purposes, other authors have indicated a wider range of reasons. For example, Collins, Onwuegbuzie and Sutton (2006) provided a comprehensive list of reasons or purposes for conducting mixed methods research, and each of these purposes was grouped under one of four main rationales: (a) participant enrichment

(i.e., identifying participants characteristics as intervention providers), (b) instrument fidelity (i.e., assessing adequacy of the instrument development and its measures), (c) treatment integrity (i.e., refining intervention implementation and the variables related with its context), and (d) significance enhancement (i.e., expanding the interpretation of the results and enhancing significant findings). Bryman & Bell (2007) also presented a variety of purposes in mixed methods research: (a) triangulation, (b) qualitative research facilitates quantitative research, (c) quantitative research facilitates qualitative research, (d) analysis of static and processual features, (f) qualitative research facilitates the interpretation of the relationship among the variables, and (g) analysis of different aspects of a phenomenon.

Mixed methods research affords the researchers significant flexibility in designing a model that fits their question. There is not a single set of instructions for design of a mixed methods study. Rather there is a guiding principle, namely the Philosophy of Pragmatism as illustrated in Figure 5.2 (page 199).

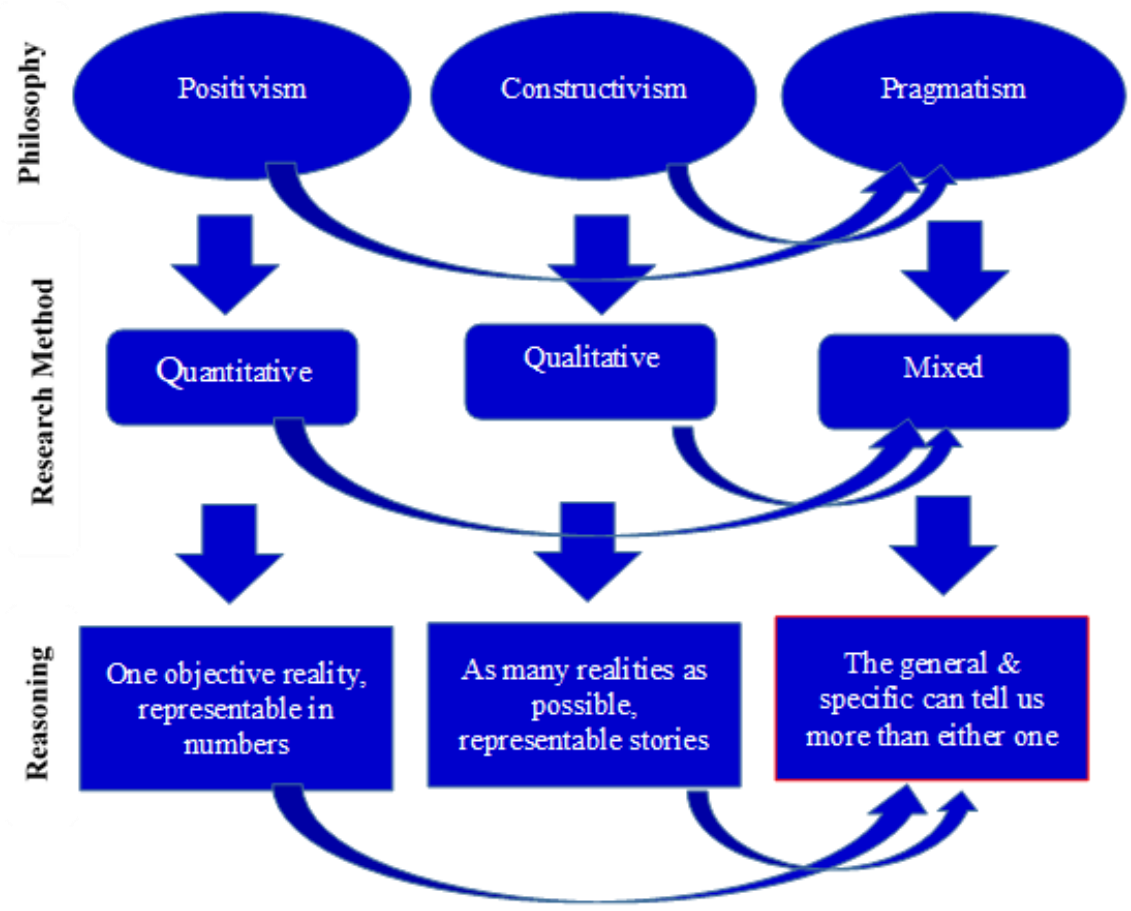

Figure 5.2: From Philosophy to Action
Source: Developed for this study (2017)

A philosophy underlies each methodological approach. For quantitative methods, the philosophy is positivism, for qualitative methods the philosophy is constructivism and for mixed methods the philosophy is pragmatism.

Mouton and Marais (1990); Kumar (2005); Creswell (2007); Leedy and Ormrod (2010), as well as Kumar (2011), are of the opinion that the quantitative approach is highly formalised, as well as more explicitly controlled than the qualitative, with a range that is more exactly defined, and that is relatively close to the social science. In contrast, qualitative approaches are those in which the procedures are not as strictly formalised, while the scope is more likely to be undefined, and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted (Mouton &

Marais 1990; McRoy 1995; 2009; 2015 and Delport & De Vos 2011). Prospective researchers should orientate themselves to the differences between these approaches, and decide whether a combined qualitative/quantitative approach, also known as the mixed methods approach (Bergman 2008a and Bryman 2009) might be appropriate. Both approaches (qualitative and qualitative) do not only have apparent strengths, but also weaknesses.

Social sciences research often utilises both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Fouche & Delport 2011a). The following paragraphs review several preliminary considerations before designing a mixed methods study. The next section addresses the following: -

- Understanding what mixed methods research means;
- Rationale and purpose;
- Value; and
- Specific mixed methods research designs.

5.3.3.2. Validity and reliability in mixed methods research

The issues of validity and reliability in mixed methods research are not the same which researchers face in qualitative and quantitative research as separate methods. The process of combining qualitative with quantitative methods although creates complementary strengths, it also results in non-overlapping weaknesses (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson 2006 and Dellinger & Leech 2007). Complementarity strengths refer to the value added to the overall research when qualitative and quantitative methods are mixed, whereas non-overlapping weaknesses refer to the difficulties of analysing qualitative textual data (also called problem of representation); and making credible, transferable and confirmable inferences (also called problem of legitimisation or integration).

As qualitative and quantitative research approaches complement each other (Britten & Fisher 1993), the concept of trustworthiness can somehow be compatible when appropriate methods are employed, such as sequential mixed methods. Moreover, scholars adopting mixed methods have a degree of leverage over qualitative and quantitative researchers because use of mixed methods minimises research bias (a criticism raised by positivist paradigm) and the risk of survey questionnaires not being uniformly understood by respondents and researchers (a criticism raised by Interpretivist paradigm) (Mays & Pope 1995). In addition, employing verification and self-correcting strategies at each stage of the research process in mixed methods, which are considered measures of validity and reliability improvement (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Oslon & Spiers 2008), may further contribute positively to research rigour. These strategies, coupled with meticulous documentation of the research process, can add value to the overall research, as readers will be able to verify the research process should they wish so.

To be specific, the following two paragraphs shed some light on how validity and reliability can be dealt with in a sequential mixed methods approach: -

In the first phase of the research, qualitative data are collected from purposefully selected individuals using a semi-structured interview technique, which provides a rich source of text data leading to the identification of codes, categories and themes directed by the research question. These codes, categories and themes would provide basis for interpretation of lived experiences of the participants. This method of data collection in particular is useful as it is non-forcing (Stenbacka 2001) and in which participants voluntarily share their real life experiences in their own words. The qualitative thematic data analysis would be followed by a close-ended questionnaire-based survey in which variables and constructs will be defined based on the identified codes and themes. By doing so, both internal and external validity can be increased as samples would be representative of the population and assessing/measuring the phenomenon would not be flawed. In addition, the second phase would complement and triangulate results from the first phase. In order to improve overall research quality, other researchers may be involved and asked

to critically evaluate each stage of the research and provide feedback, which can be considered and acted upon.

Moreover, this type of mixed methods research can also achieve analytical generalisation (Stenbacka 2001) as well as intermediate type of limited generalisation (also called moderatum generalisation) which are acceptable norms in qualitative research as well as in mixed method (Payne & Williams 2005). This point has been elaborated by Cronholm and Hjalmarsson (2011) as they believe that in a mixed methods approach, quantitative data are used to add precision to qualitative analysis results to verify or falsify empirical grounded hypothesis, which is essentially the approach of sequential mixed methods.

5.3.3.3. Rationale and purpose for mixed methods

Greene, Caracelli & Gragan (1989) listed five major justifications for conducting mixed methods research: (a) triangulation (seeking convergence and corroboration of results from different methods and designs studying the same phenomenon); (b) complementarity (seeking elaboration, enhancement, illustration, and clarification of the results from one method with results from the other method); (c) initiation (discovering paradoxes and contradictions that lead to reframing of the research question; (d) development (using the findings from one method to help inform the other methods); and (e) expansion (seeking to expand the breadth and range of research by suing different methods for different inquiry components). Greene and Caracelli (1997) updated the justifications by simplifying as follows: (a) to test the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments; (b) to clarify and build on the results of one method with another; and (c) to show how the results from one method shape subsequent methods or research decisions.

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), the goal of mixed methods research is not to replace the quantitative or qualitative approaches to research, but rather to draw from the strengths of these approaches and to minimise possible weaknesses. One researcher suggests that,

> '...blending qualitative and quantitative methods of research can produce a final product which can highlight the significant contributions of both.' (Nau 1995, p.1).

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) and Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) state that there are two major advantages of employing multi-methods in the same study. Firstly, different methods can be used for different purposes in a study. This would give the researcher confidence having addressed the most important issues. The second advantage of using multi-methods approach is that it enables triangulation to take place. Thus, it may be concluded that the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods offers the advantage of respective qualities of both approaches (Shank & Brown 2007; Thiétart 2007).

Due to inherent limitations of qualitative and quantitative methods, scholars tend to shift their attention towards adopting mixed methods to maximize research rigour and to minimise various methodological weaknesses which are difficult to avoid if either a qualitative or quantitative method alone is used.

Advocates for mixed methods research also argue that quantitative and qualitative methods of measurements and accompanying analyses are compatible, and complementary to each other in a mixed method research design. Such advocates argue that through combining one method featuring in numerical analysis, robust measurement, and testing, and the other featuring in discovering the depth of human experience and perspectives, mixed methods can provide a more complete understanding of research questions than does the use of either one method alone.

Despite typically emphasising the qualitative aspect, the inclusion of a quantitative component seems to satisfy and convince quantitative audiences of the relative value and advantages of the use of the exploratory sequential mixed method research design (Creswell

& Plano-Clark 2011). Challenges associated with this research involve the requirement of considerable time.

The next step is to decide on the specific *model* or *variant* of the chosen mixed methods research design as proposed by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007; 2011). Based on the preceding, the instrument development model was selected as described by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011). The instrument development model is illustrated in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: Exploratory Design: Instrument Development Model
Adapted from: Creswell and Plano Clark (2007)

A combination of the research approaches led to an adoption of a pragmatic position to conduct this research, as this provided a workable solution to the multifaceted research problem (Tashakkori & Teddie 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; Creswell 2009 and Thomas, Nelson & Silverman 2011). The results provided the researcher a clearer and complete picture of the current issues regarding improving exports performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe.

5.3.3.4. A mixed method research model

A model of the instrument development variant of the exploratory sequential-mixed methods research design is depicted in Figure 5.4.

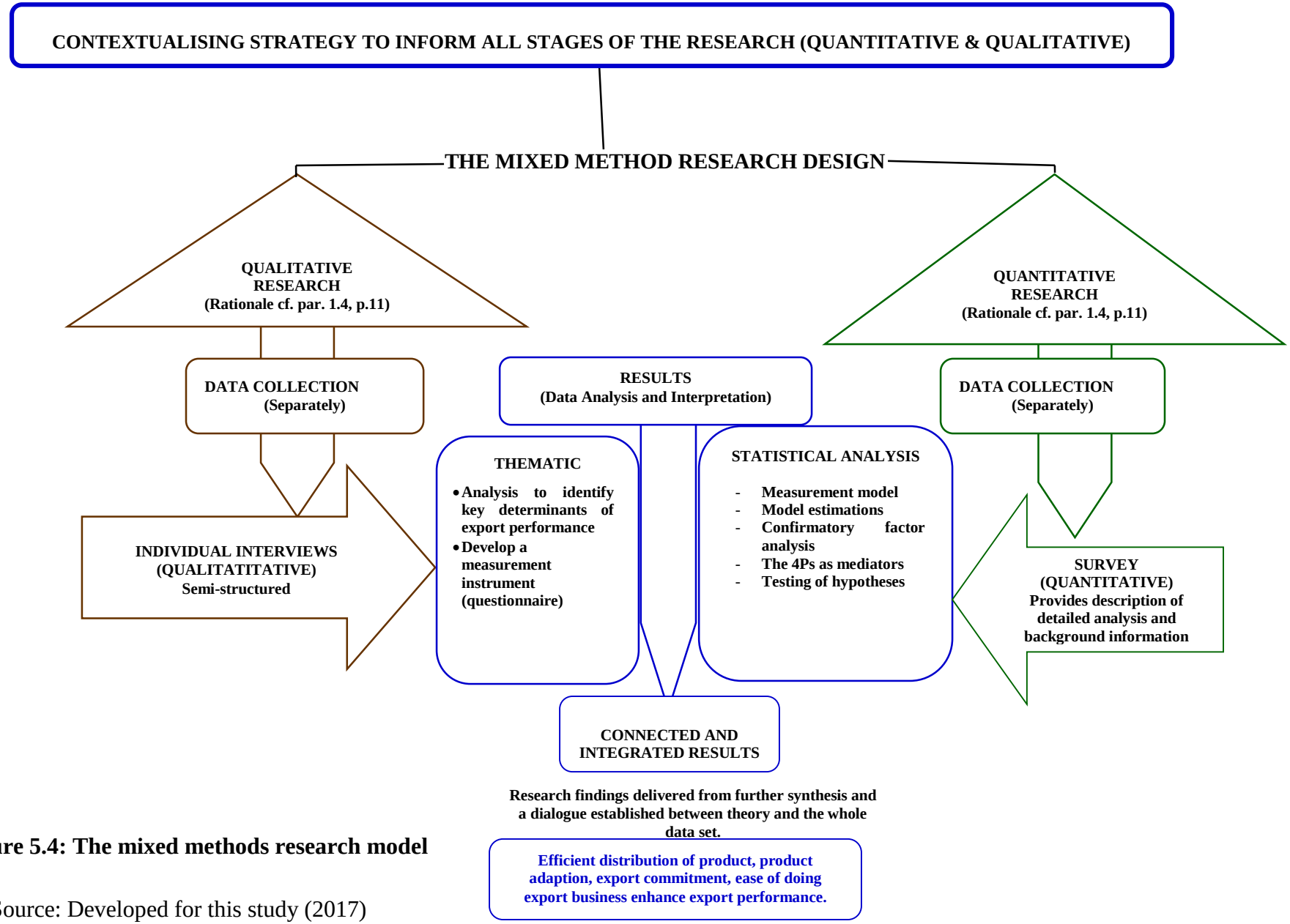

Figure 5.4: The mixed methods research model

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

5.4. Justification for the selected research method

The fundamental principle of a good research design is to match the research design to one's main research question (Sinkovics, Penz & Ghauri 2008). In exploratory design, questions are asked to encourage thinking and learning (Yin 2009). Confirmatory research is designed to assist the decision-maker in determining, evaluating and selecting the best course of action to be take in a given situation (Malhotra 2010). Under the causal or confirmatory design, the study meets a number of strict requirements such as well-defined population, observation process, hypotheses, parameters, sampling method, probabilities and conclusions (Malhotra 2010). This study applied the exploratory and confirmatory design to conduct a mixed method research using qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data in Zimbabwe. Mixed method research has increased in recent times in the social sciences as researchers believe that a combination of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints is useful to address research questions (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007).

There are different types of mixed method approach, namely triangulation, complementarity, expansion and development designs (Foster 1997 and Clark & Creswell 2008). The complementarity design was applied in this research. The purpose was to combine quantitative and qualitative methods and use the findings from the qualitative interviews to elaborate and illustrate the results from the quantitative component (Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989). The complementarity design was applied to increase interpretability, relevance, and integrate them with those from qualitative findings (Bryman 2006).

By using the mixed method approach, the qualitative component was complementary to the quantitative study explaining the meanings of the findings of the empirical study and validating the results to achieve a central practicable solution to answer the research question (Harrison & Reilly 2011). It is also argued in the literature that the merging of findings stemming from two or more methods enhances the certainty that the results are valid and not a methodological artefact (Clark & Creswell 2008). Thus, data was used from both qualitative and quantitative viewpoints to gain deeper insights into the export

performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe to develop theory. The next section presents details of both qualitative and quantitative techniques employed in data collection.

Out of four possibilities (qualitative, quantitative, case study and mix-method), the mixed-method design including usage of both qualitative and quantitative methods, is most approved in an academic research in the field. As noticed by Venkatesh, Brown & Bala 2013, there is a need for wider usage of mixed-method approach in information system field. Creswell (2012) identified six types of mixed-methods commonly used in educational research as, a) convergent parallel, to simultaneously collect, merge and use both quantitative and qualitative data; b) explanatory sequential, to first gather quantitative data and second to gather qualitative data to enhance on the quantitative findings; c) exploratory sequential, to fist collect qualitative data to investigate a phenomenon and second gather quantitative data to explain the qualitative findings; d) embedded, to gather quantitative and qualitative data at the same time while one's design purpose is to support the findings of the other design; e) transformative, to use either the convergent, explanatory, exploratory, or embedded design types while including the design types within an evolving context (a possible change in perspective); and f) multiphase, to examine a subject or issue through a number of studies.

To understand better the joint usage of methods, Venkatesh, Brown & Bala 2013 distinguished seven specific purposes of the mixed-method approach, complementarity – to obtain mutual viewpoints about similar experiences or associations), completeness of phenomenon picture (to ensure total representation of experiences or associations is attained), development of research questions or hypothesis (to build questions from one method that materialise from the implications of a prior method or one method presents hypotheses to be tested in a subsequent method), expansion upon the understanding based on one of the method (to clarify or elaborate on the knowledge gained from a prior method), corroboration/confirmation of the credibility of inferences (to evaluate the trustworthiness of inferences gained from one method), compensation for weakness of a one approach (to counter the weaknesses of one method by employing the other), and diversity of perspectives on a given phenomenon (to obtain opposing viewpoints of the

same experiences or associations). As the main advantage of the mixed-method approach, they emphasised the development of deep understanding of phenomena of interest. Among strengths, they mention also, answering exploratory and confirmatory research aims, stronger inferences than derived only from one type of method, contradictory or complementary conclusions may encourage more thorough examination of the theoretical framework and methodological assumptions.

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Caruth (2013) observed that mixed methods research has become a valid alternative to either quantitative or qualitative research designs. It offers richer insights into the phenomenon being studied and allows the capture of information that might be missed by utilising only one research design, enhance the body of knowledge, and generates more questions of interest for future studies that can handle a wider range of research questions because the researcher is not limited to one research design.

5.5. Operationalisation of the variables

Operationalisation of variables or constructs refers to how a conceptual construct is to be measured (Sekaran 2003). All exogenous variables in the model are latent variables which can be measured directly or indirectly through another latent variable (Sekaran 2003). The method employed in the process of operationalisation is to generate multiple scale items aimed at measuring these variables in quantitative terms. All the items were borrowed from previous research conducted by scholars in the field. These items are widely used in this area of research and have been tested for scale validity in the studies (Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b and Shamsuddoha & Ali 2006). The measurements constructs are summarised and attached in Appendix 3).

5.5.1. International experience and export commitment

For international experience, a five-item measure with a five-point Likert-scale instrument, with endpoints 1 (none) and 5 (extremely substantial) were operationalised, borrowed from Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b). Respondents were asked to rate the management involved in the firm's export business based on their degree of professional exporting experience,

overseas experience-lived or worked abroad, formal training in export courses, ability to follow up on trade leads and operations of many export markets. Export commitment was operationalised, using a five-item, five-point Likert-scale instrument, with endpoints 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed with the following statements: the firm has an organisational structure to deal with all export activities; firm executives travel frequently to export markets; learning about export activities; firm executives travel frequently to export markets; learning about export procedure was high priority in the firm; the firm sets aside funds to develop overseas markets and export is a high priority activity in the firm. The measures were borrowed from Shamsuddoha and Ali (2006).

5.5.2. Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps)

The export-marketing mix strategies (4Ps) of the export firms in the two industries under study in Zimbabwe, fit into the general trend of foreign marketing (Cavusgil & Zou 1994). The adaption of the export-marketing mix strategy by firms in Zimbabwe was based on the definition by Cavusgil and Zou (1994), which states that the export-marketing mix strategy is the means by which the firm responds to the interplay of internal and external forces to meet the objectives of the export activity involving aspects of the conventional marketing plan; i.e., place, product, promotion and price. The measurements for the 4Ps were derived from literature and validated by other researchers (Ogunmokum and Ng 2004). Adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategy was defined as a similar or different way in which a product was marketed in Zimbabwe and the export market in terms of place, product features, promotion and pricing. Respondents were asked indicate the extent they have adapted the export-marketing mix strategies in their major export markets. For product and promotion, a seven-item, five point Likert-scale instrument, with endpoints 1 (not at all adapted) and 5 (fully adapted) was used. Respondents were asked to what extent they adapted their product brand name, product design/style, product labelling, a variety of the main exporting product line, product quality, features and characteristics and packaging. This measure was borrowed from Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b).

For promotion, respondents were asked to what extent they adapted their advertising theme, media channel for advertising, promotion objectives, and budget for promotion, direct marketing, sales promotion, and personal selling of the product. Measures for promotion were borrowed from Ogunmokun and Ng (2004). For price and place, a five-item, five point Likert-scale instrument, with endpoints 1 (not at all adapted) and 5 (fully adapted) was operationalised. Respondents were asked if they adapted their pricing strategy, in terms of concession of credit, price discounts policy, margins and retail price in major export markets. For place, the items included: criteria for selection of distribution, transport strategy, distribution budget/network and the type of middlemen they used. Both measurements were borrowed from Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b).

5.5.3. Export promotion programmes

All measures on export promotion programmes were borrowed from Leonidou, Palihawadana and Theodosiou (2011). A five-item, seven point Likert-scale instrument, with endpoints 1 (not at all adopted) and 7 (fully adopted) were operationalised for the measures. Respondents were asked were asked whether they adopted the organisation of export seminars, training programmes on export documentation, counselling advice on exporting, and whether they used export publications in the operations of the firm.

5.5.4. Foreign market attractiveness

The questionnaire inquired from respondents whether the characteristics of the export marketing were attractive as compared to Zimbabwe. A five-item, seven-point Likert-scale instrument, with endpoints 1 (not all attractive) and 7 (very attractive) were operationalised. Respondents were asked whether they found the foreign market attractive in terms of sophistication of marketing infrastructure, demand potential, the level of education, the level of development and extent of laws and regulations in the export market. This measure was borrowed from Cavusgil and Zou (1994) and Katsikeas, Samiee and Theodosiou (2006).

5.5.5. Export performance (Dependent variable)

Export performance has been measured by asking respondents to indicate whether their expectations for the export business had been met for the year 2016, using a 7-point scale, (where 1=very low; 2=low; 3=slightly low; 4=average; 5=slightly high; 6=high; 7=very high) across five performance indicators: **export sales volume, export market share, export profitability, return on investment, export sales intensity (ratio of export sales to domestic sales)**. These items were adapted from Shamsuddoha and Ali (2006).

In this study, the five export performance indicators have been defined as follows:

Export sales volume - the quantity, number or value of goods exported in the normal operations of a firm in a specified period;

Export market share - is the proportion of a firm's international market share and calculated by dividing the exports of the firms by the total exports of the region or world (expressed as a percentage);

Export profitability - export profitability is measured by subjective managerial perception which is export profitability aspiration level. Financial outcomes can be measured objectively as well subjectively. Objective financial data may provide exact values but data is not easily revealed. Subjective managerial perception may not provide exact value but this data is more accessible and also important because it affects future strategies;

Return on investment (ROI) – is a measure that investigates the amount of additional profits produced due to a certain to investment. Business use this calculation to compare different scenarios for investments to see which would produce the greatest profit and benefit for the firm. The simplest form of the formula for ROI involves only two values: the cost of the investment and the gain from the investment. The formula is as follows: Net profit/Total investment * 100. The ratio is multiplied by 100, making it a percent. This

way, a person is able to see what percentage of their investment has been gained back after a period of time; and

Export sales intensity - variable that provides information on the firm's orientation to export and its measured as international sales as a percentage of the total sales (Filatotchev & Piesse 200933 and Riding, Orser, Spense, & Belanger 2012). It is the export-to-total sales ratio.

5.6. Control variables

The model incorporates three control variables: firm size, the age of the firm and industry. Determination of firm size is based on the number of employees which may influence export performance (Wolff & Pett 2000). The age of the firm is related to the accumulation of experience a firm possesses to develop capabilities to influence export performance (Lages & Jap 2002). The definition of firm size in Zimbabwe is formulated by the World bank's study on Sub-Saharan Africa called the Regional Project on Enterprise Development (RPED). The RPED categorised firms as (1) micro-sized: those employing 5 or less, (2) small; those employing between 6 to 29, (3) medium-sized: those employing 30 to 99 and (4) large: those employing 100 and above. The industries under study included the food and beverage manufacturing industries.

5.7. Data analysis procedure

The study used Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to examine the complex models, which make practically no assumption about underlying data especially with distribution (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014b). PLS-SEM is a variance-based and very efficient with small sample sizes (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt 2011 and Hair, Christian, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena 2012). PLS-SEM incorporates several statistical techniques such as confirmatory factor analysis, multiple regression, redundancy analysis, and canonical correlation without inflating the *t*-statistics, as would happen if each analysis were conducted separately (Hair, Christian, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena 2012). PLS-SEM is statistical package usually used for theory building research plus its advantages over first

generational techniques (Lowry & Gaskin 2014). Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2014a) argued that there are three functions relevant to PLS-SEM statistical application: the model properties, PLS-SEM algorithm and model evaluation of results produced by the measurement and structural models. PLS-SEM has been used in other export performance studies (Lages, Silva & Styles 2009). The characteristics and advantages of applying PLS-SEM are displayed in Table 5.8 (page 271).

5.7.1. Measurement Model

The screening of the measurement model is based on confirmatory factor analysis and the computation of discriminant validity, out loadings of indicators, average variance extracted (*AVE*), composite reliability (*Pc*), Cronbach *alpha* and collinearity using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. According to Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2014a), multicollinearity is a problem that occurs with regression analysis when there is a high correlation of at least one independent variable with a combination of the other independent variables. In multiple regression, the variance inflation factor (VIF) is used as an indicator of multicollinearity. The rule of thumb for PLS-SEM measurement model is displayed in Table 4.10. A two-stage process has been employed for the analysis of the data obtained from the usable questionnaires. The first stage employed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for primary assessment of reliability and validity of the constructs to confirm the measurement model (Haenlein & Andreas 2004). The second stage used path analysis to examine the structural model for significance levels (Ringle, Sarstedt & Straub 2012).

5.8. Justification for using Partial Least Squares modelling

Partial Least Squares path modelling (PLS) is a multivariate data analysis technique that provides researchers the opportunity to simultaneously assess the measurement of constructs (or latent variables), and test hypotheses on all the relationship among the constructs within the same analysis. This technique is designed to explain variance, and is suited for predictive applications and theory building. PLS performs an interactive set of factor analyses and ordinary least squares regressions until the difference in the average

R^2 of the constructs become non-significant. It should be noted that some researchers consider PLS to be one type of structural equation modelling (SEM), while other researchers (e.g., Rouse & Corbitt 2008) contend that PLS is a form of regress and not "mainstream" SEM, which is based on analysis of covariance structurers that explicitly models measurement errors.

Assumptions: The PLS technique imposes less stringent assumptions on normality of the data and measurement scales than covariance-based structural equation model (SEM) methods. It can be applied to small samples, accommodate both reflective and formative measurement models, and contain many constructs and indicators without leading to estimation problems (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics 2009). However, the technique assumes the relationship between the observed variables and their constructs is linear. And although PLS has low sample size requirements, it may not have an advantage in detecting statistical significance in small sample sizes. In addition, PLS parameter estimates are asymptotically correct (large size and large number of indicators per latent variable (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics 2009). The PLS framework consists of two interrelated models: (1) the measurement model, which describes the assignment of the observed items (or indicator) to each unobserved construct, and (2) the structural model, which describes the relationship among the set of constructs. Both models are explicitly defined by the analyst, and depicted in a path diagram. The direction of relationships between a construct and its item pool (the indicators associated with a construct) can be described as a reflective or formative. With a reflective construct, the items are assumed to reflect variation in the construct, thus a change in the construct is manifested as a change in all its items.
Advantages of using Smart PLS-SEM are outlined in Table 5.4 (page 215) and measurement rule of thumb is shown in Table 5.5 (page 216).

Table 5.4: Advantages of Smart PLS-SEM

Parameter	Explanation
Sample size	- No identification issues with small sample sizes. Generally, achieves high levels of statistical power with small sample sizes. - Large sample sizes increase the precision of PLS-SEM estimations.
Distribution	- No distribution assumptions as PLS-SEM is a non-parametric method.
Missing values	- Highly robust as long as missing values are below a reasonable level.
Scale of measurement	- Works with metric data, quasi-metric scaled data, and binary-coded variables. - Some limitation when using categorical data to measure endogenous latent variables.
Model characteristics	
Number of items in each construct measurement model	- Handles constructs measured with single and multi-item measures.
Model complexity	- Handles complex models with many structural model relations. Larger numbers of indicators are helpful in reducing the PLS-SEM bias.
PLS-SEM Algorithm	
Objective	- Minimise the amount of unexplained variance (i.e., maximises the R^2 values).
Efficiency	- Converses after a few iterations even in situations with complex models and/or large sets of data to the optimum solution; efficient algorithm
Construct score	- Estimated as linear combinations of their indicators. Used for predictive purposes. Not affected by data inadequacies.
Parameter estimates	- High levels of statistical power. - High consistency levels.
Evaluation of measurement model	- Reflective measurement models. - Reliability and validity assessment by multiple criteria.
Evaluation of structural model	- Collinearity among sets of constructs, the significance of path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2 and q^2 effect size).
Additional analyses	- Mediating effect. Hierarchical component models. Multi-group analysis. Moderating effect.

Source: Compiled from Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a.

Table 5.5: Measurement Model Rule of Thumb

Characteristic	Rule of Thumb
Indicator reliability (outer loadings)	- Out loadings should be 0.708 or higher. Outer loadings between 0.60 and 0.70 should be considered for removal only if it leads to an increase in Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and composite reliability.
Internal Composite reliability [composite reliability (*Pc*)]	- Composite reliability should be higher than 0.708. A value of 0.60 or 0.70 is acceptable in exploratory research.
Convergent validity	- Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be higher than 0.50
Discriminant validity	- Outer loadings on a construct should be higher than all its cross loadings with other constructs. The square root of the AVE of each construct should be higher than its highest correlation with any other construct (Fornell-Larker criteria).
Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values (Collinearity checks)	- Numbers below the threshold of 5 are accepted.

Source: Developed by Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a.

5.9. Structural model

The second stage of the analysis involves the estimation of the structural equation model and hypothesis testing. Several considerations are important in considering whether or not apply PLS-SEM (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). These considerations are rooted in the method characteristics, as the statistical properties of the PLS-SEM algorithm have important features associated with the characterises of the model. Moreover, the properties of PLS-SEM are used for evaluating the results (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a).

5.9.1. Mediating effect

The structural component of the model examines complex relationships among a set of exogenous variables and the endogenous variable that have a relationship based on theoretical projections (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). This method is different from the traditional regression analysis as it undertakes multiple regression analyses

concurrently and allows the direct and indirect effects of variables to be simultaneously examined (Zhao & Zou 2002). Direct effects are the relationships linking two constructs with a single arrow; indirect effects are those relationships that involve a sequence of relationships with at least one intervening construct, thus, an indirect effect is a categorisation of two or more direct effects that are represented by multiple arrows (Baron & Kenny 1986). This results in a change in the dependent variable as result of a one-unit increase in an independent variable attributable to this indirect relationship (Hayes 2009 and Zhao & Zou 2002). To calculate the total change in a dependent variable, the indirect and direct effects are summed together (Hayes 2009). Full mediation occurs when the independent variable no longer has a significant effect on the dependent variable when the mediator is introduced (Baron & Kenny 1986). Partial mediation occurs when the independent variable still has a significant effect, but its effect diminished when the mediator variable is included in the model (Baron & Kenny 1986); Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014ab).

5.9.2. Moderating effect

On establishing a moderating effect, the construct should directly affect the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous latent variable although in a different perspective (Baron & Kenny 1986 and Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). A moderating effect occurs when the moderator and an independent variable change the strength or even the direction of a relationship between two constructs in a model (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). Moderating relationships, in theory, are tested statistically by checking for interaction effects among independent variables. First, two models one with the moderator relationship and one without, are constructed and compared (Baron & Kenny 1986; Lowry & Gaskin 2014). This process requires two PLS runs – one for a baseline model and one for an interaction model. If the interaction records a *t* statistic of 1.96, then there is a moderating effect on the independent and dependent variables (Lowry & Gaskin 2014).

5.10. Ethical considerations and aspects

Ethics is a philosophical term derived from the Greek word ethos, meaning character or custom and connotes a social code that conveys moral integrity and consistent values (Partington 2003). More in relation to the ethics of social science, Mouton (2001) is of the opinion that the ethics of science concerns what is wrong and what is right when conducting research. To this end all researchers, regardless of research designs, sampling techniques and choice of methods, are subjected to ethical considerations (Gratton & Jones 2010).

Ethical consideration relates to moral standards that the researcher should consider in all research methods in all stages of the research design. After approval from the University of Lusaka was obtained to conduct the study, the researcher followed three principles of the Belmont Report, namely beneficence, respect for human dignity as well as justice (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001).

The following ethical aspects have been adhered to in this research study:

5.10.1. Principle of beneficence

This principle means "above all do no harm". This principle contains broad dimensions such as freedom from harm and exploitation as well as the researcher's duty to evaluate the risk/benefit ratio.

5.10.1.1. Freedom from harm

In this study physical harm has not been considered, however, the researcher bore in mind that the psychological consequences needed sensitivity. The researcher was sensitive to the participants' emotions when probing questions when probing questions that could psychologically harm the participants. The researcher told the participants that if they felt that some parts of the interview were too much for them they were free to withdraw from the study or choose not to answer the questions (see appendix 8).

5.10.1.2. Freedom from exploitation

Participants in a study should be protected from adverse conditions. They should be assured that information that they provide to the researcher or their participation will not be used against them. The researcher-participant relationship should not be exploited (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001). The tapes and written narratives have been safely stored in a lockable safe in the researcher's office at work place and destroyed after the study (Robson 1997).

5.10.1.3. Risk/Benefit ratio

The researcher considered the risk-benefit ratio and kept risk to the minimum. The participants benefited by sharing their ideas with the researcher as well as improving their knowledge regarding strategies to enhance export performance of their firms. The participants were also satisfied that the information they provided would help in improving the level of exports in Zimbabwe. The risk/benefit assessments are concerned with the probabilities and magnitudes of possible hard and anticipated benefits. Many kinds of possible harms and benefits need to be taken into account. There are, for example, risks of psychological harm, physical harm, legal harm, social harm and economic harm, and the corresponding benefits. While the most likely types of harms to research subjects are those of psychological or physical pain or injury, other possible kinds were not overlooked in this study.

5.10.2. Principle of human dignity

This principle includes the right to self-determination and full disclosure (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001).

5.10.2.1. Right to self-determination

This principle means that prospective participants should not be coerced into taking part in the study. Participants have the right to decide whether to participate without incurring

any penalty (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001). Participants were approached and the purpose of the study was explained. No remuneration was offered and they were informed of the opportunity to withdraw at any stage of the research. Verbal and written consent were obtained. Individuals who refused to participate were not forced or pressured.

5.10.2.2. The right to full disclosure

Full disclosure means the researcher has fully explained the nature of the study, and the person's right to refuse participation. Self-determination is dependent on full disclosure (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001). The researcher shared the aim and purpose of study, the type of interview and other data collection procedures with the participants.

5.10.3. Principle of justice

In this context, justice connotes fairness and equity for all participants in research. In procedural terms, justice requires that ethics review processes involve methods that are fair and transparent, that established standards and procedures for reviewing research protocols are in place, and that the process be effectively independent. The study observed the right to fair treatment. Fair treatment includes that the selected participants' inclusion is based on the requirements of the research study.

Non-prejudicial treatment of participants who refused to take part or those who withdrew;

- The participants had access to the researcher at any point during the study to clarify information;
- Sensitivity to, and respect for participants' beliefs, habits, lifestyles, culture and emotions;
- Courteous treatment at all times (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001); and
- The sampling method was purposive with the purpose of selecting participants with experience working in food and beverage manufacturing firms.

This principle includes participants' right to fair treatment and privacy.

5.10.3.1. The right to fair treatment

Fair treatment includes that the selected participants' inclusion was based on the requirements of research. The researcher observed the following principles:

- Non-prejudicial treatment of participants who refused to take part or those who withdrew;
- The participants had access to the researcher at any point during the study to clarify information;
- Sensitivity to and respect for participants' belief, habits, lifestyles, culture and emotions;
- Courteous treatment at all times (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001). At the first stage of the research process, the key respondents were contacted via telephone to announce the study and seek their participation; and
- The sampling method was purposive with the purpose of selecting participants with exporting experience.

5.10.3.2. The right to privacy

This means that the information provided by participants will not be shared without their will (Burns & Grove 2007). As the study was conducted in the participants' natural setting, there was no intrusion of privacy with regard to information provided. Anonymity was therefore upheld throughout the research. Anonymity is the inability to link information to participants. This was achieved by tape-recoding the interview conducted. The participants were assured of confidentiality verbally and in the written consent form.
The following precautions have been used to ensure confidentiality:

- the list of names, transcriptions and notes were kept in a locked safe, in the researcher's work office;
- the list of names was kept separate from recordings, transcription or notes; and
- no names were attached to the tapes or transcription or notes (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001).

5.10.4. Autonomy

This describes acknowledgement of the right of the individual to determine their own course of action in accordance with their own wishes and plans. Respect for individuals is expressed by recognising that their autonomy and right to self-determination underpin their ability to make judgements and decisions for themselves. Autonomy, therefore underlines the need for informed consent.

5.10.5. Free and informed consent

Informed consent comprises three major elements – information, voluntariness and comprehension. When providing information researchers must ensure that participants are given sufficient detail about the nature of the research and the procedures involved, this should highlight the objectives of the study, potential risks and benefits and any alternative treatments must be made clear. The concept of voluntariness has important implications.

Consent must be freely given and may be withdrawn at any time. Undue influence may take the form of inducement, deprivation or the exercise of control, or authority over prospective participants. This is particularly important in research involving vulnerable people, and is absent if consent is secured by the order of authorities or as a result of coercion or manipulation. Voluntary participation implies that participants make an informed choice while informed consent assumes that the information given is accurate. In practical terms, within an ethics review process, this translates into scrutiny of the process, rights, duties and requirements for free and informed consent by the research participant. truthfulness is also central to obtaining informed consent since, without this, participants cannot exert their right to informed consent, justice or fairness.

In order to keep adherence to research ethics when any form of research is carried out, all participants or key informants during the qualitative study interviews of this research, have been given the opportunity to read and sign the consent form. The consent form is to respect and acknowledge participants' rights and to inform them about the research.

5.11. Chapter summary

This chapter presented the research philosophy, research design and research methodology. Operationalisation of the variables including the independent, mediating, moderating, and control variables has been discussed with the scale items. The study used the mixed-method approach, where the qualitative component was complementary to the quantitative study. Respondents have been sampled from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe export database of 100 manufacturing exporters were targeted across the country. Chief executive officers, managing directors, general managers and/or owners of food and beverage manufacturing firms, formed the basis of the study. The chapter described the research methodology. The purpose of the research design is to maximise valid answers to a research question. This was achieved by using a sequential mixed method approach that was contextual. Both the qualitative and quantitative data analysis procedures were discussed. Data was collected by means of interviewing and through questionnaire survey. The researcher made sense of data by using the qualitative data analysis procedure and the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM). Observing the principles of beneficence, human dignity, confidentiality, as well as justice ensured that the participants were morally and ethically protected. The next chapter is an analysis of the findings from the quantitative study and assessment of path analysis of hypothesised relationships in the conceptual model.

CHAPTER 6

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.0. Introduction

This chapter answers the research questions in the study. A two-step approach to data analysis in Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) has been performed; (1) assessment of the measurement model, and (2) estimation of the structural equation model. The chapter also presents findings from the semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted with eighteen (18) owners, chief executive officers, managing directors and general managers of the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. This qualitative research design is complementary to the quantitative study, and aims to enhance and clarify the results of the quantitative study in the discussion chapter to add value to the findings of the study.

The chapter is divided into five sections. Section 6.1 outlines the analysis of quantitative data, Section 6.2. outlines the analysis of qualitative data, Section 6.3. other factors that contribute to successful export, Section 6.4 presents a summary of interview findings, Section 6.5 presents a summary of Chapter 6.

6.1. Analysis of demographic data

6.1.1. Data collection, editing and entry

A self-administered survey approach has been deemed suitable to gather data from food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe because the administration of the research process is comparatively inexpensive and even easy when gathering data from a large number of people spread over a wide geographic area, and it reduced the chance of evaluator bias as same questions were presented to all the respondents. A combination of the 'drop and pick' technique and the use of email services has been appropriate for primary data collection due to lack of up-to-date email directory and the spread of respondents across the major cities in Zimbabwe (Ibeh, Brock & Zhou 2004; and Crick,

Kaganda & Matlay 2011). Export managers and clerks were requested to sign the consent form for the survey, which emphasised the voluntary nature of participation and assured confidentiality of all data given out (please refer to Appendices 5 to 7 for research instruments). At the first stage of the research process, key respondents were contacted via telephone to announce the study and seek their participation. Using the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe database of food and beverage manufacturing exporters as at May 2017, the process of identifying key respondents reduced the sampling frame from 91 to 60 firms. Out of 60 firms contacted, 5 stated that they were no longer involved in export business, 2 were not interested in the study, and 3 did not respond to the survey, giving diverse reasons ranging from time constraints to unavailability of the appropriate person to respond. In total, 50 questionnaires were collected and/or returned. After screening the completed questionnaires, 1 was declared unusable due to more than 15% missing values, leaving a total of 49 questionnaires for analysis (Hair, Christian, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena 2012). The study attracted a response rate of 81.7% which is similar to other studies from Zimbabwe on international business (Muranda 2003; Chipika & Davies 2001 and Chigusiwa, Bindu, Mudavanhu, Muchabaiwa & Mazambani 2011). This study has met the sample size requirements to detect R^2 values of 0.10 to 0.50 based on the number of arrows pointing to the endogenous variable in PLS-SEM analysis (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). R^2 is the measure used to evaluate the structural model coefficient of determination and it represents the amount of variance in the endogenous constructs explained by all the exogenous constructs linked to it. R^2 value ranges from 0 to 1.

6.1.2. Data description

Table 6.1 (page 226) shows the number and geographical distribution of food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms that are in the database of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. The target population is comprised of 91 food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms located in six cities, namely; Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Mutare, Kwekwe and Chitungwiza. A total of 91 per cent of the food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms are located in the stated cities and for ease of access, the researcher, using a web-based ‘random number generator’, selected a sample of 60 food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms (50 food manufacturing firms and 10 beverage

manufacturing firms). The 'random number generator' has been used in order to eliminate selection bias.

Table 6.1: Distribution of Total Population of the Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms in Zimbabwe

Location	Number of Food Manufacturing Exporters	Number of Beverage Manufacturing Exporters	Total
Harare	31	8	39
Bulawayo	19	4	23
Gweru	8	2	10
Mutare	7	2	9
Kwekwe	4	1	5
Chitungwiza	4	1	5
Target population	**73**	**18**	**91**
Chinhoyi	2	0	2
Bindura	2	0	2
Chipinge	0	1	1
Beitbridge	1	1	2
Masvingo	1	1	2
Total population	**79**	**21**	**100**

Source: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2017)

Table 6.2 (page 227) captures data collected from food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms in Zimbabwe, including total population, the sample drawn and the response rate in each industry sub-sector. The total sample drawn across the two sub-sectors and total questionnaires received across the subsets are also presented in Table 6.2. Before running data analysis, the data collected has been entered into SPSS for WINDOWS release 21 to clean and screen the data. The data has been examined and screened through the basic descriptive statistics (means, standard deviation, ranges, explore) and frequency description, because values that are out of range or improperly coded are detected with such simple checks (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). The results from the simple checks has not shown any outliers.

Table 6.2: Total Population, Sample Drawn and Response Rate

Sub-Sector	Total Population	Sample Drawn			Total Responses Received			
		No.	Final selection of Firms	% of Total Population	Total Responses Received		Final Response Rate	
Food	79	73	50	63%	43	86%	42	84%
Beverage	21	18	10	48%	7	70%	7	70%
Total	**100**	**91**	**60**	**60%**	**50**	**83%**	**49**	**81.7%**

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

6.1.3. Descriptive analysis

There have been two industry categories (food and beverage) among the respondent firms drawn from a population of 91 food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms with the majority falling within the food manufacturing sector. The total sample size of 49 firms was 81.7% of the population drawn, and is representative of 91 food and beverage manufacturing and exporting firms in six Zimbabwe cities namely Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru, Kwekwe and Chitungwiza. The sample characteristics in the food manufacturing sector included 7 large firms and 35 small firms. In the beverage manufacturing sector, there were 3 large firms and 4 small firms. Summary of the characteristics of the food and beverage exporting firms including key respondents are shown in Table 6.3 (page 228).

Table 6.3: Summary of Sample Characteristics

Item	Results
Gender of respondents	Female = 15 (30.6%); Male = 34 (69.4%)
Age profile	<24 years = 1 (2.0%); 25-35 years = 6 (12.2%); 36-59 years = 38 (77.6%); >50 years = 4 (8.2%)
Years of exporting	<1 year =0; 1-2 years =1; 3-4 years = 5; 5-6 years = 8; 7-8 years = 15; 9-10 years =13; >10 years =7
Firm size	Micro= 5 (10.2%); Small = 10 (20.4%); Medium = 24 (48.9%); Large = 10 (20.4%)
Industry	Food = 42 (85.7%); Beverage = 7 (14.3%)
Ownership of the firm	Zimbabwean owned = 33 (67.3%); Foreign owned = 3 (6.1%); Joint owned = 13 (26.5%)
Key respondents (49)	Finance Manager =10 (20.4%); Export Manager = 15 (30.6%); Exports Clerk = 3 (6.1%); Marketing Manager = 10 (20.4%); Operations Manager = 9 (18.4%); Other = 2 (4.1%)
Level of education of respondents	Primary = 1 (2.0%); Secondary = 3 (6.1%); Apprenticeship = 2 (4.1%); Diploma = 3 (6.1%); Degree & above = 40 (81.6%)
Destination of product	SADC = 49 (38.0%); COMESA = 40 (31.0%); Europe = 25 (19.4%); Middle East = 15 (11.6%)
Ranking of preferred destination of products	SADC = 1; COMESA = 2; Europe = 3; Middle East = 4

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

The distribution of employees by number of employees in the sampled firms is shown in Table 6.4 (page 229).

Table 6.4: Distribution of Firms by Number of Employees

No. of employees (Firm Size)	Food Manufacturing Firms		Beverage Manufacturing Firms		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Micro: 1-5	3	7.1%	2	28.6%	5	10.2%
Small: 6-29	9	21.4%	1	14.3%	10	20.4%
Medium: 30-99	23	54.8%	1	14.3%	24	49.0%
Large: >100	7	16.7%	3	42.8%	10	20.4%
Total	**42**	**100%**	**7**	**100%**	**49**	**100%**

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

6.1.4. Responses on the factors that affect the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms

Table 6.5 below shows responses to the question on factors that affect export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. A greater proportion of the respondents (94.8 %) indicated that they were agreeable that the listed factors have positive effect on export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms. Only about 1.3% disagreed and 3.9% were undecided.

Table 6.5: Responses on Factors that Affect the Export Performance of the Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms

Factors	Number of Respondents				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Access to affordable working capital	0	0	0	8	41
Availability of efficient production technology	0	0	1	3	45
Availability of export incentives	0	0	0	2	47
Competitive pricing of goods	0	1	2	10	36
Depreciated exchange rate for the local currency	1	2	1	14	31
Ease of doing export business	0	0	0	34	15
Export committed management	0	0	1	22	26
Export marketing mix strategy	0	0	3	13	33
Foreign market attractiveness	0	0	0	5	44

Factors	Number of Respondents				
	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Undecided**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Good distribution network	0	3	1	7	38
Good knowledge of the foreign market	0	0	1	19	29
High capacity utilisation	4	3	10	14	18
High demand for the products	0	0	0	20	29
High productivity	0	0	2	23	24
High quality inputs	0	0	0	24	25
High quality of goods produced	0	0	1	34	14
Large scale operation (firm size)	0	1	11	20	17
Low export market competition	0	0	5	19	25
Low production costs (competitiveness)	0	0	1	22	26
Low tariffs (by importing country)	0	0	3	25	21
Low tax regime	0	0	1	17	31
Low threats of substitutes	0	0	5	33	11
Management perception toward export	0	0	0	35	14
Mature firm (age)	0	0	3	32	14
No trade restrictions (e.g., permit requirements etc)	0	0	2	20	27
Profitable export sales	0	2	1	24	22
Reduced or no export barriers	0	0	2	22	25
Reliable supply of inputs	0	0	0	23	26
Reliable transportation system (road, air & Rail)	0	0	0	20	29
Skilled labour force	0	0	1	24	24
Stable political environment	0	2	1	22	24
Well established research and development	0	1	2	27	19
Total Number of Responses	**5**	**15**	**61**	**637**	**850**
Proportion (%)	**0.3**	**1.0**	**3.9**	**40.6**	**54.2**

Source: Developed for this research (2017)

6.1.5. Checking for outliers

Sometimes a sample data set may be overly influenced by one or more extreme observations that are quite different from the rest of the data (Shamsuddoha 2004). These extreme values known as outliers, often change the covariance matrix and can completely

impact the results in PLS-SEM (Field 2009). For instance, the parameter estimates and associated standard errors, as well as fit indices, may be partial at the presence of outliers. The univariate and multivariate outliers are detected through different statistical techniques such as running frequencies in SPSS software to reduce their influence on the results of the analysis (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). After the exercise using scatter plots in SPSS, no extreme cases were identified in the dataset. One questionnaire detected to have more than 15% missing values has been removed from the sample size of 50 leaving the remaining 49 questionnaires for analysis.

6.1.6. Model estimation and fitting using Partial Least Squares (PLS)

The analysis that has been carried using partial least squares, a structural equation modelling technique is explained in this section. In the first stage of the analysis, the composite reliability and convergent validity of the measures have been assessed. In the second stage of the analysis, the structural model has been tested by assessing the path coefficients and predictive ability of the model. Finally, the discriminant validity of the fitted model is assessed.

6.1.7. Non-response bias

Another important issue of sampling error is non-response bias. This usually occurs when most of the sample surveys attract a certain amount of non-response (Groves 2006). Therefore, researchers have to consider and pay particular attention to this problem, as a sample can be exposed to non-response bias (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007). A *t*-test has been conducted to check the non-response bias issue to determine the significant differences between the two set of scores: early and late respondents. The surveys received have been separated into groups of early respondents and late respondents, as non-respondents tend to be similar to late respondents in responding to surveys. Questionnaires collected in June 2017 have been classified as early respondents and those questionnaires collected in July 2017 have been classified as late respondents. The *t*-test results are shown in Table 6.6 (page 232).

Table 6.6: Test Measures for Non-Response Bias

Variable: Export Performance	T-Test		
	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Export Sales Volume			
Early Response (39)	-.205	110	.838
Late Response (10)	-.205	96	.827
Export Market Share			
Early Response (39)	.448	112	.655
Late Response (10)	.453	104	.652
Export Profitability			
Early Response (39)	.247	114	.800
Late Response (10)	.253	111	.800
Export Sales Intensity			
Early Response (39)	1.391	114	.167
Late Response (10)	1.371	97	.173

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

Table 6.6 shows that the two-tail significance of export performance measures are not significant at $p>0.05$, indicating no differences between the early responses and the late responses. The *p-value* is larger than 0.05, indicating that we have no sufficient evidence to conclude that a significant difference exists between the early responses and the late responses (i.e. weak evidence against the null hypothesis). It can, therefore, be safely concluded that non-response bias can be ignored in this study.

6.1.8. Analysis using Partial Least Squares

There are two approaches to Structural Equations Modelling (SEM) namely covariance based approach and predictive approach. Covariance based methods involve the use of software packages such as LISREL (Linear Structural Relations), AMOS (Analysis of Movement Structures) and EQS (Equation Systems). A large sample size is usually necessary to carry out such analysis and all the variables corresponding to the constructs have to be reflective. The predictive approach is that of Partial Least Squares (PLS), which

is a structural equation modelling technique developed by Wold (1985). PLS is flexible with respect to the distributional properties of the variables in the model. It can handle smaller sample sizes than the covariance based approaches and can handle both formative and reflective constructs. SEM analysis consists of two phases. In phase 1, the constructs in the measurement model is assessed and in phase 2, fitting the path model is carried out.

The conceptual model used in this study has been tested using partial least squares (PLS). Using PLS, it is possible to test the measurement and structural components within the context of one structural equation model. Unlike other structural equations modelling techniques such as LISREL, AMOS, and EQS, PLS does not need to satisfy assumptions like multivariate normality and independence of observations (Chin & Newsted 1999). PLS combines regression, path analysis and principal components analysis, and avoids the problems of factor indeterminacy and inadmissible (Fornell, Lorange & Roos 1990; Buchan 2005). Other structural equations modelling techniques such as LISREL, require a minimum sample of 150 (Anderson & Gerbing 1998 and Chin & Newsted 1999), whereas PLS requires only a minimum number of 30 cases. In line with the reasons cites above, the researcher decided to use PLS for testing the model. The two stage procedure followed by MacMillan, Money, Money and Downing (2005) has been adopted to carry out the analysis. In the first stage, the measurement model has been tested by performing a validity and reliability analysis on each of the measures of the conceptual model. In the second stage, the structural model has tested by estimating the paths (links) between the variables in the model, determining their significance as well as the predictive ability of the model. The procedure for carrying out the analyses is presented below.

6.1.9. Reliability and validity of the measures

Various items used to measure the constructs have been assessed for reliability and validity. Reliability has been assessed in two different ways. Firstly, the magnitudes of the factor loadings corresponding to each construct have been examined. Fornell and Larcker (1981), recommend a loading of 0.70 for each item on the constructed factor, but 0.50 is often used in factor analysis. The construct's *composite scale reliability*, which is a measure of internal consistency similar to Cronbach's *alpha*, is used as another measure of reliability. Convergent validity has been assessed by examining the average variance

extracted (AVE) for each of the constructs. The AVE is the average shared between a construct and its measure, and Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested a minimum of 0.50. In order to assess the *discriminant validity*, the AVE values are plotted on the diagonal and the squares of correlations as off-diagonal items (see Table 5.7). If the amounts shown in the off-diagonals are less than the diagonals, then the measures have discriminant validity. The measures have construct validity if they have both convergent validity and discriminant validity.

6.1.10. Testing the structural model – path coefficients and predictive ability

At this stage of the analysis, the R^2 values are examined to assess the predictive ability of the model. For assessing the R^2 values, the guidelines provided by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham (2006) have been used. Subsequently, the path coefficients are examined and their structural significance has been assessed. PLS being a distribution-free technique, uses the bootstrapping resampling technique to determine the significance of the paths (MacMillan, Money, Money & Downing 2005). In this study, 5,000 resamples have been taken in performing bootstrap.

6.1.11. Model estimation and measurement

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) establishes a valid specified measurement model before assessing the structural model (Haenlein & Andreas 2004 and Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). The measurement model is presented in Table 6.7 (page 235). The full-scale model comprised eight latent variables, one dependent variable and three control variables summing up to 52 items divided into five sub-scales. All construct measures have been evaluated for loadings on their specific exogenous and endogenous variables to compare their relative strength as all coefficients are conveyed in standard forms. The items of a construct should converge or share a high proportion of variance, as the outer loadings of the indicators are used to establish convergent validity (Haenlein & Andreas 2004).

Convergent validity has been assessed using the composite reliability (*Pc)* and Cronbach *alpha* scores in the model. Cronbach's *alpha* is sensitive to the number of items in a scale

and has the tendency to underestimate the internal consistency reliability (cf. par 4.2.9.10). Therefore, Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt (2014a) recommend using consistency reliability known as composite reality (*Pc).* A minimum level of 0.708 is the benchmark although values ranging between 0.60 and 0.70 are acceptable and all indicator outer loadings should be statistically significant. A standardised outer loading of 0.70 or higher is retained, although loadings greater than 0.60 are accepted. Indicator loadings below the threshold of 0.70 have been deleted in the measurement model apart from Price where one item loaded 0.586. This loading of 0.586 has been retained as the deletion did not increase the value of composite reliability or average variance extracted (AVE) (Haenlein & Andreas 2004 and Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a).

Table 6.7: Measurement Model and Significance Values

Latent Variables	**Indicators**	**Factor Loadings**	**Standard *Error***	***T* Statistics**
Export Performance (EP) **α=.92, *Pc*=.94, AVE=.76**	Export sales volume.	0.847	0.034	24.90***
	Export market share.	0.885	0.023	38.43***
	Export market profitability.	0.914	0.015	61.25***
	Return on investment.	0.811	0.057	14.20***
	Export sales intensity.	0.891	0.024	37.12***
Place (Place) **α=.84, *Pc*=.89, AVE=.68**	Criteria for selection.	0.775	0.061	12.79***
	Transport strategy.	0.842	0.057	14.78***
	Distribution budget.	0.890	0.023	38.14***
	Type of middlemen.	0.801	0.046	17.52***
Product (Product) **α=.89, *Pc*=.91, AVE=.69**	Product design and style.	0.729	0.085	8.55***
	Variety of the main exporting line.	0.820	0.062	13.26***
	Product quality.	0.891	0.030	23.06***
	Features and characteristics.	0.836	0.044	18.83***
	Packaging.	0.870	0.038	22.17***
Promotion (Promotion) **α=.82, *Pc*=.88, AVE=.64**	Media Channels for advertising.	0.761	0.062	12.36***
	Promotion objectives.	0.846	0.041	20.48***
	Budget for promotion	0.834	0.046	17.98***
	Direct marketing.	0.782	0.053	14.86***
Price (Price) **α=.70, *Pc*=.79, AVE=.57**	Determination of price strategy.	0.586	0.228	2.70***
	Price discount policy.	0.813	0.186	4.30***
	Price margins.	0.843	0.160	5.27***
Export Commitment (ExpComt)	Firm executives travel frequently to export markets.	0.750	0.071	10.62***
		0.755	0.061	12.46***

Latent Variables	Indicators	Factor Loadings	Standard *Error*	*T* Statistics
α=.72, *Pc*=.78, AVE=.54	The firm sets aside adequate funds to develop foreign markets.	0.701	0.138	5.07***
	Exporting is high priority activity in the firm.			
Export Promotion Programmes (EPP)	Organisation of export seminars.	0.869	0.025	34.25***
		0.885	0.027	33.36***
	Training programmes specialising in exports.	0.887	0.031	28.43***
α=.91, *Pc*=.93, AVE=.75		0.873	0.028	31.13***
	Training on export documentation.	0.817	0.048	17.02***
	Provision of counselling advice on exporting.			
	Export publications.			
International Experience (IntExp)	Degree of professional experience.	0.680	0.064	10.55***
		0.690	0.096	7.18***
α=.77, *Pc*=.86, AVE=.68	Degree of training in international business e.g.,	0.820	0.046	17.91***
	attended formal export courses and seminars.	0.871	0.022	35.95***
	Ability to follow up on trade leads in importing market.			
	The operation of many foreign markets.			
Foreign Market Attractiveness (FMA)	Demand potential in export market.	0.814	0.045	17.65***
	Level of consumer education.	0.832	0.034	28.18***
α=.84, *Pc*=.89, AVE=.67		0.837	0.035	24.30***
	Level of industrial development.	0.891	0.043	21.13***
	Extent of government laws and regulations.			

Notes: ***=.001, α = Cronbach's *alpha*, *Pc* = Composite Reliability, *AVE* = Average variance extracted.
Source: Developed for this study (2017)

Table 6.7 presents the loadings and *t*-statistics for the full measurement model. Construct scores exhibited acceptable levels of composite reliability and Cronbach's *alpha* in the measurement model. All item loadings are greater than 0.58 with the majority of items exceeding 0.708 with significance at the $p<0.001$ level (Haenlein & Andreas 2004 and Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). Collinearity statistics have produced VIF values

between 1.39 and 1.97, which are far below the threshold of 5, meaning there has been no collinearity issues with constructs in the structural model (Sarstedt, Ringle, Smith, Reams & Hair Jr., JF 2014). The measurement model has been confirmed to be used to assess the structural model and test path analysis in the research hypothesis (Hair, Christian, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena 2012). Indicator items deleted from the measurement model are attached in Appendix 10.

Discriminant validity is the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs by empirical standards (Chin 2010). Discriminant validity is established when a construct is unique and captures the phenomena in a way not represented by other constructs in the measurement model (Chin 1998). Discriminant validity has been assessed using the Fornell-Larker criterion which compares the squares root of the AVE values with the latent variable correlations (Martin & Méjean 2011). The Results shown in Table 6.8 do not exhibit any evidence of strong correlations between constructs. Bold figures on the diagonal are the square root values of average variance extracted for each construct, and the values are distinct from the rest of the values.

Table 6.8: Discriminant Validity

Fornell-Larcker Criterion												
	Age	**EPP**	**ExpComt**	**ExPerf**	**FMA**	**Fsize**	**Industry**	**InExp**	**Place**	**Price**	**Product**	**Promotion**
Age	**1.000**											
EPP	0.039	**0.866**										
ExpComt	0.298	0.410	**0.736**									
ExPerf	0.089	0.284	0.419	**0.870**								
FMA	0.194	0.377	0.488	0.600	**0.824**							
Fsize	0.475	0.069	0.432	0.262	0.217	**1.000**						
Industry	0.110	0.147	0.102	0.005	0.018	0.225	**1.000**					
InExp	0.400	0.435	0.492	0.286	0.237	0.350	0.075	**0.770**				
Place	0.036	0.335	0.322	0.393	0.351	0.183	0.029	0.140	**0.828**			
Price	0.244	0.151	0.228	0.125	0.157	0.143	0.238	0.216	0.297	**0.756**		
Product	0.194	0.251	0.383	0.249	0.383	0.184	0.173	0.170	0.201	0.404	**0.831**	
Promotion	0.056	0.216	0.313	0.114	0.046	0.262	0.091	0.435	0.234	0.226	0.118	**0.806**

Notes: Bold figures on the diagonal are the square root values of average variance extracted for each construct.

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

6.1.12. The structural model

Each structural model analysed comprised five exogenous variables. International experience, three mediators (Export commitment, Export Promotion Programmes, and one of the 4Ps – Place, Product, Promotion and Place) and one moderator variable (Foreign Market Attractiveness) to assess the direct and indirect effects on the endogenous variable, the Perceived Export Success (EP) (Hayes & Preacher 2014). Export-marketing mix strategy is composed of four different variables. In order to identify the individual impact of the 4Ps, four models were tested using each P as a mediator variable to examine the impact on the other constructs. Previous research has shown that to detect substantial mediation effects with bootstrapping technique, a model with several potential mediators requires a larger sample size, than this research attained (Fritz & Mackinnon 2007). The complexity of the model comprising multiple mediation and moderation effects required a sample size of 168 observations to attain a statistical power of 80% with 5% confidence level (ibid). Therefore, the sample size necessitated analysing each of the export-marketing mix variables 4Ps) to achieve better results. This study further followed the analysis pattern of Lages, Abrantes and Lages 2008a, whereby they tested each of the export-marketing mix strategy variables (4Ps) to examine their individual impact on export performance. This perspective compares the marketing mix strategies used for foreign markets, aimed at exploring the differences in adaptation strategies (Samiee & Roth 1992). Thus, each variable has been examined to capture the complexity of the export-marketing mix strategy to provide in depth analysis to develop theoretical implications for the thesis (Theodosiou & Leonidou 2003).

Each structural model examined the path coefficient calculated *t*-values and explained R^2, Q^2, f^2 and q^2 of each endogenous variable based on assessment (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). In PLS-SEM, instead of a goodness-of-fit assessment, the model is evaluated using variance explained (R^2) and blindfolding techniques to determine predictive relevance (Q^2) (Chin 1998; Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). R^2 is the measure used to evaluate the structural model coefficient of determination and it represents the amount of variance in the endogenous constructs explained by all the exogenous constructs linked to it. R^2 value ranges from 0 to 1. The Q^2 measures and explains how the observed values are reproduced by the model and parameter estimates. The Q^2 estimates

employ a blindfolding technique in which a part of the data is omitted for a particular block of indicators, and the model attempts to estimate the omitted part using the estimated parameters as an indicator of predictive relevance (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics 2009). Q^2 values larger than zero for a reflective endogenous construct indicate a predictive relevance for a particular construct. Blindfolding technique is used to obtain cross-validated redundancy measures to calculate q^2 values. As a guide, q^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate an exogenous construct has a small, medium or large effect on an endogenous construct. The f^2 values of 0.02; 0.15; 0.35 represent small, medium or large effects (Cohen 1992). A bootstrap re-sampling of 5,000 has been used to operationalise the structural models, which are presented in the next section (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). H5, H6, and H7 are mediations.

6.1.12.1. Structural Model 1 – Place as mediator

The results of the path analysis and significance level are presented in Figure 6.1 (page 240). The value of the mean R^2 average variance accounted (AVA*)* is 0.25 and the individual R^2 is greater than 0.10 and above acceptable levels (Falk & Miller 1992). In this model, Place explained 44% of variance of Export Performance, while Export Commitment (EC) explained 20% of variance of Place and Export Performance, and lastly Export Promotion Programmes (EPP) explained 19% of Place and Export Performance. The Q^2 values in this model range from (*EC=0.08; EPP=0.14; Place=0.09; EP=0.30*) which are above acceptable levels (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). The f^2 values of the exogenous constructs range from 0.02 to 0.26 as shown in Figure 6.1 (page 240). Place recorded a mediation effect of 0.29 on Export Performance. The study has found support for thirteen (13) out of sixteen (16) proposed hypotheses to achieve recommended cut-offs including four direct and indirect effects. Place is statistically significant with Export Performance (EP) at (*p= .009, t=2.60*). The three control variables were not significant with Export Performance as displayed in Figure 6.1 (page 240).

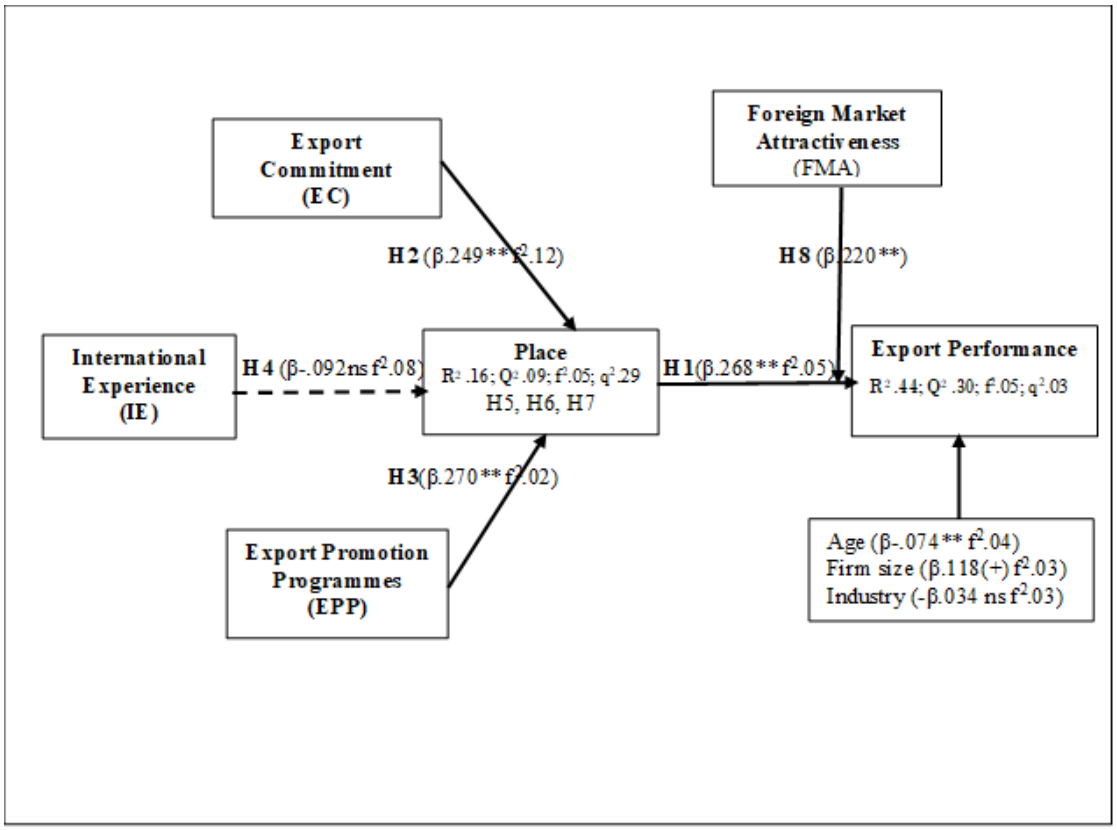

Figure 6.1: Structural Model 1 – Place as Mediator

Broken lines=non-significant. *** significance = .001, ** significance =.05, * significance =.010

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

5.1.7.3.1. Mediation effect

As displayed in Figure 6.1., to show mediation as IE→Place is not significant and *EPP→Place* is significant, there is a full mediation in this relationship. The direct path between *EC→Place* is significant (H2) – (*p=.051, t=1.95*) and *Place→EP* is significant (H1) – (*p=0.009, t=2.60*). As EPP→Place is significant at (*p=.000, t=4.190*) and H1 is significant, there is a partial mediation effect between *EC→Place→EP*. Two mediation effects H5 and H6 are established in this model. The standardised direct, indirect and total effects have been calculated as shown in Table 6.9 (page 241).

Table 6.9: Standardised Direct, Indirect and Total Effects (Place)

Independent	Mediating	Dependent	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
International Experience	EPP	Place	0.804***	0.051	0.855***
EPP	Place	Export Performance	0.595***	0.021	0.616***

***Significance =.001@2.57; **significance =.005@1.96; *significance =.010@1.65. DE+IE=TE

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

5.1.7.3.2. Moderation effect

The moderating effect of Foreign Market Attractiveness (FMA) on *Place→EP* is tested to investigate whether the attractiveness of the foreign market, strengthens or weakens the relationship between *Place→Export Performance*. FMA has returned a significant result (*p=.000, t=5.85*) with *EP*. The interaction term FMA has returned a significant result at (*p=.025, t=2.23*) between *Place→EP*. This results supports the motion that if firms operate in highly attractive export markets, the relationship between Place (distribution) and Export Performance is strengthened (Lowry & Gaskin 2014). Therefore, the adaptation of the distribution strategy is required to achieve positive performance outcomes. This implies that distribution adaptation is paramount in foreign markets as the interacting effect returned a significant result and H8 were fully supported

6.1.12.2. Structural Model 2 – Product as mediator

The results of this model are presented in Figure 6.2 (page 242). The mean of the R^2 in this model is 0.25 and all individual R^2 s are above the acceptable level of 0.10 (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). The Q^2 values range from *EC=0.08; EPP=0.14; EP=0.28* in this model (Hair, Christian, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena 2012). The f^2 values range from 0.02 to 0.26 as displayed in Figure 5.2. The q^2 of Product has recorded a small predictive relevance of 0.07 on Export Performance. The study has found support for nine (9) out of

sixteen (16) proposed hypotheses. Age and firm size are significant with export performance, apart from industry. See Figure 6.2 for details.

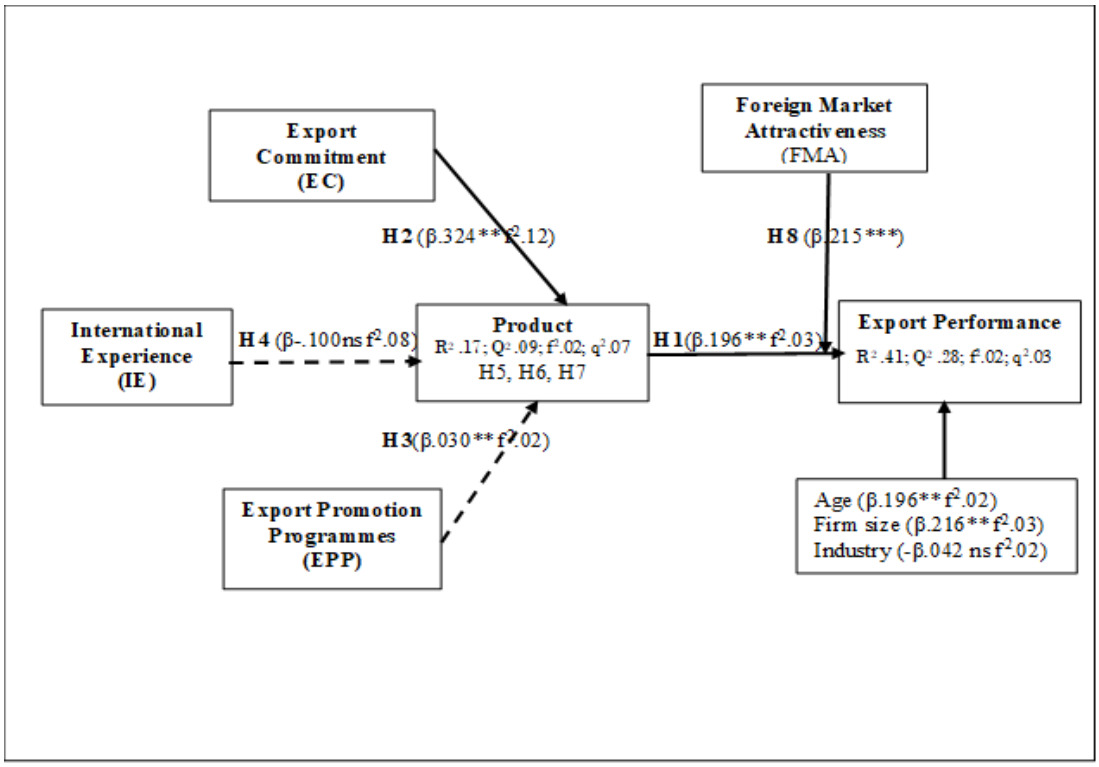

Figure 6.2: Structural Model 2 – Product as Mediator

Broken lines=non-significant. *** significance = .001, ** significance =.05, * significance =.010
Source: Developed for this study (2017)

5.1.7.4.1. Mediation effect

As displayed in Figure 6.2, *EC→Product* is significant (H2) – (*p=.001, t=3.37*). The conclusion from the literature goes directly to the problem of showing the indirect effect is significant (Baron and Kenny 1986). Therefore, as EC →Product is significant (*p=.000, t=4.15*), and *Product→EP* is significant (*p=.019, t=2.35*), Product has a partial mediation effect in the relationship *EC→Product→EP*, as displayed in Figure 6.2. The standardised direct, indirect, and total effects are calculated and shown in Table 6.10 (page 243).

Table 6.10: Standardised Direct, Indirect and Total Effect (Product)

Independent	Mediating	Dependent	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Export Commitment	Product	Export Performance	0.742***	0.121	0.863***
EPP	Product	Export Performance	0.277***	0.006	0.283***

***Significance =.001@2.57; **significance =.005@1.96; *significance =.010@1.65. DE+IE=TE

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

5.1.7.4.2. Moderation effect

With Perceived Export Success (EP) as endogenous variable, FMA interaction term has returned significant results *(p=.026, t=2.23*) between *Product→EP* as displayed in Figure 6.2. The results imply that firms operating in highly attractive export markets have to allocate substantial resources to adapt their products to suit the characteristics of the export market in order to stay competitive and strengthen the relationship between product adaptation and export performance. On the other hand, less attractive markets would weaken the relationship between *Product→EP* as adaptation levels will be minimal. The interacting effect is significant, therefore H8 is fully supported.

6.1.12.3. Structural Model 3 – Promotion as mediator

The results of this model are presented in Figure 6.3 (page 244). The mean of the R^2 in this model is 0.26 and all individual R^2 s are above the acceptable level of 0.10 (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). The Q^2 values recorded in this model are *EC=0.08; EPP=0.14; EP=0.14*; *Promotion=0.14; EP=0.29* and values of f^2 values range from 0.02 to 0.26 as displayed in Figure 6.3. The value of q^2 of Promotion had a predictive relevance of .014 on Export Performance. Eight (8) out of sixteen (16) hypothesised relationships are positive in the predicted direction using 5,000 bootstrapping samples. H1 predicted a positive relationship between Promotion and Export Performance (EP), although as expected the result is negative (*p=.351, t=934*). Age and firm size are significant with export performance, as displayed in Figure 6.3 (page 244).

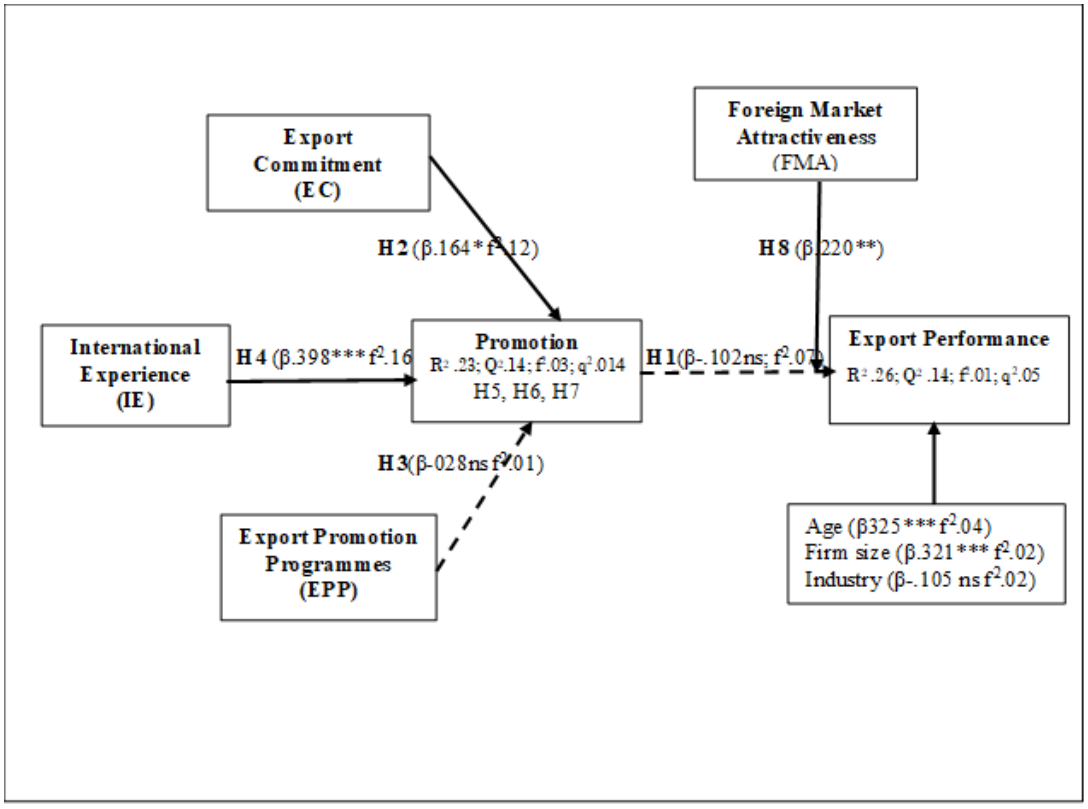

Figure 6.3: Structural Model 3 – Promotion as Mediator

Broken lines=non-significant. *** significance = .001, ** significance =.05, * significance =.010
Source: Developed for this study (2017)

5.1.7.5.1. Mediation effect

One partial mediation effect (H7) is established in this model. The relationship between *EC→Promotion* as significant at (H2) – (*p=.0 46, t=1.96*). A partial mediation has been established as the indirect effect between *EC→Promotion* and *IE→Promotion* is significant in the relationship (Baron & Kenny 1986). Table 6.11 shows the direct, indirect and total effects of the mediation analysis.

Table 6.11: Standardised Direct, Indirect and Total Effect (Promotion)

Independent	Mediating	Dependent	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Export Commitment	Promotion	Export Performance	0.390***	-0.001	0.389*
EPP	Promotion	Export Performance	0.013	-0.004	0.009

***Significance =.001@2.57; **significance =.005@1.96; *significance =.010@1.65

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

5.1.7.5.2. Moderation effect

The interaction effect of FMA on Promotion→EP has been tested to investigate whether the attractiveness of the foreign market strengthens or weakens the relationship between promotion and adaption and export performance. With Perceived Export Success as a dependent variable, FMA interaction term has produced a significant result (*p=.000, t=3.73*) and FMA→EP is significant at (*p=.000, t=6.05*). FMA is significant after the interaction effect (*p=.010, t=2.61*) as displayed in Figure 6.3. This result implies that firms operating in competitive environment in terms of legal and regulatory frameworks, which tend to strengthen the relationship between adaptation practices and performance. H8 is fully supported in this model.

6.1.12.4. Structural Model 4 – Price as mediator

The mean of all R^2 s for this model is 0.14 and the individual R^2 for Price is 0.09, which is acceptable (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt 2014a). The Q^2 values in this model range from *EC=0.31; EPP=0.17; Price=0.012; EP=0.17*. The f^2 values of the exogenous constructs range from 0.02 to 0.26 and has contributed small to medium effects on the endogenous constructs. The value of q^2 of Price had a small predictive relevance of 0.04 on Export Performance. Six (6) out of sixteen (16) hypotheses are significant. H1, Price adaptation and Export Performance (EP) is non-significant (*P=.619, t=.497*), which had not been expected. Firm size and age were significant, whereas industry was non-significant as displayed in Figure 6.4.

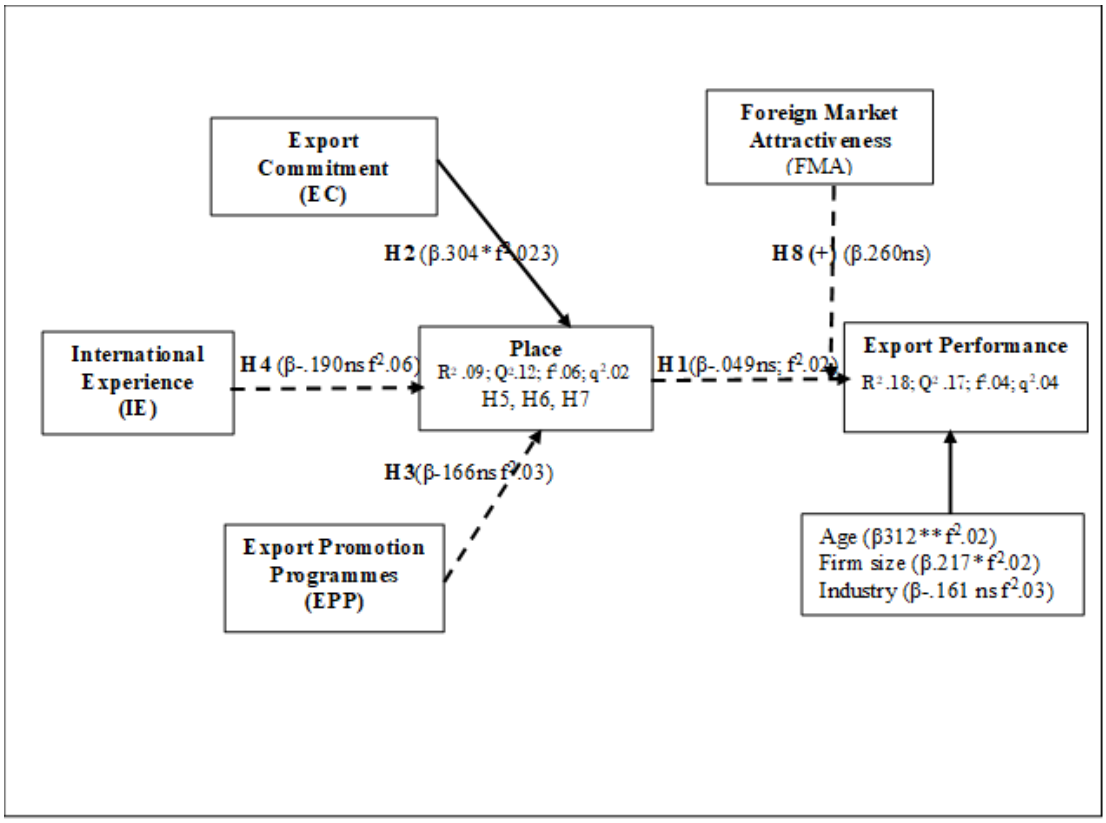

Figure 6.4: Structural Model 4 – Price as Mediator

Broken lines = non-significant. ***significance = .001, **significance =.05, *significance = .010
Sources: Developed for this study (2017)

5.1.7.6.1. Mediation effect

This model did not produce any mediation effect. The relationship between *EC→Price* (H2) is significant at (*p=.004, t=2.86*). As the impact of *IE→Price* is negative after the mediator has been introduced. Table 6.12 (page 246) shows direct, indirect and total effects of the constructs.

Table 6.12: Standardised Direct, Indirect and Total Effect (Price)

Independent	Mediating	Dependent	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Export Commitment	Price	Export Performance	0.177	-0.005	0.427**
EPP	Price	Export Performance	-0.166	0.019	-0.147

***Significance =.001@2.57; **significance =.005@1.96; *significance =.010@1.65

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

5.1.7.6.2. Moderating effect

The interaction term Foreign Market Attractiveness has returned a non-significant but positive relationship (*P=.141, t=1.47*) between *Price→EP* and the direct effect of *FMA→EP* is significant (*P=.044, t=2.01*). No interaction effect has been established in this model therefore, H8 has not been supported as displayed in Figure 6.4.

6.1.12.5. Summary of hypotheses

Table 6.12 provides the results of path analysis in four PLS-SEM structural models including mediation and moderation analysis. Most of the hypothesised relationships between the antecedent variables and perceived export success (EP) are significant in the expected direction, with a few exceptions in the separate models. The non-significant relationships have been returned in the models rather than re-specifying them as the proposed models satisfactorily meet the recommended PLS-SEM assessment criteria. The non-significant positive and negative relationships recorded between some constructs have theoretical implications explaining their mediation effect with export performance, and their removal would have decreased the validity of the conceptual model. Table 6.13 (page 248) shows summary results of PLS-SEM analysis.

Table 6.13: Summary Results of PLS-SEM Analysis

Hypotheses	Latent Variables	Expected Outcome	Place	Product	Promotion	Price	Conclusion
H1	EMMS and EP	(+)	(+)***	(+)***	(-) ns	(-) ns	Two supported
H2	EC and EMMS	(+)	(+)***	(+)***	(+)***	(+)***	Supported
H3	EPP and EMMS	(+)	(+)***	(+) ns	(+) ns	(+) ns	One supported
H4	IE and EMMS	(+)	(-) ns	(-) ns	(+)***	(-) ns	One supported
	Mediation						
H5	EC→EMMS→EP	(+)	(+)**	(+)**	(+) ns	(+) ns	Two supported
H6	EPP→EMMS→EP	(+)	(+)**	(-) ns	(-) ns	(-) ns	One supported
H7	IE→EMMS→EP	(+)	(-) ns	(-) ns	(-) ns	(-) ns	Not supported
	Moderation						
H8	FMA via EMMS(4Ps) and EP	(+)	(+)***	(+)***	(+)**	(+) ns	Three supported

***Significant =.001@2.57, **significant=.005@ 1.96; *significant =.010@ 1.65

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

Where: EC – Export Commitment; EMMS - Export-marketing Mix Strategy; EP– Export Performance; EPP – Export Promotion Programmes; FMA – Foreign Market Attractiveness; IE – International Experience.

6.1.12.6. Common method bias

Common method variance (CMV) can cause systematic measurement errors that inflate or deflate observed relationships between constructs, which could lead to the generation of type I and II errors. CMV is a variance that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee & Podsakoff 2003). This study has applied three approaches recommended as remedies to avoid or correct common method bias, categorised into procedural and post statistics remedies in the research process. The approaches were: (1) respondents were given the

assurance of the anonymity and confidentiality of the study, stressing there were no right or wrong answers to ensure authentic responses were obtained; (2) the complex model has applied 5 Likert scale end points for the exogenous and endogenous variables to diminish common biases caused by commonalities in scale endpoints (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff 2003).

As a post statistical remedy, one major test was undertaken to determine the presence of common method bias; and (3) partial correlation techniques using a marker variable (Lindell & Whitney 2001). Lindell and Whitney's (2001) partial correlation technique has been applied using a marker called Trust Banking Services, measured by three items in the questionnaire. This construct has been ascertained to have no theoretical or conceptual relationship with at least one of the major constructs under investigation. For this technique to work, a data set is perceived to be tainted with common method bias if the correlation coefficients among the variables significantly modify when the effect of the marker variable is introduced (Lindell & Whitney 2001).

The results of this test has shown that the marker variable has a path coefficient close to zero relative to other variables. Therefore, this finding further provides confirmation that common method bias has not been an issue in this research (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff 2003). Table 6.14 (page 250) shows the results of the path coefficient after the marker variable has been analysed with the four models. The analysis produced similar results with and without the marker variable.

Table 6.14: Marker Variable Results on Common Method Bias

Model-Place	*T* Values Without MV	*T* Values With MV	Model-Product	*T* Values Without MV	*T* Values With MV
Place→EP	2.603***	2.089***	Product→EP	2.434***	1.924*
ExpComt→Place	1.953*	1.882*	ExpComt→Product	3.248***	3.110***
EPP→Place	2.323***	2.308***	EPP→Product	0.752 (-)	0.648 (-)
IntExp→Place	0.689 (-)	0.796 (-)	IntExp→Product	1.016 (-)	0.929 (-)
FMA→EP	5.857***	2.485***	FMA→EP	2.223***	2.170***
Model-Promotion	***T* Values Without MV**	***T* Values With MV**	**Model-Price**	***T* Values Without MV**	***T* Values With MV**
Promotion→EP	0.934 (-)	0.467 (-)	Price→EP	0.505 (-)	0.202 (-)
EPP→Promotion	0.806 (-)	0.928 (-)	EPP→Price	1.133 (-)	0.801 (-)
IntExp→Promotion	5.179***	5.146***	IntExp→Price	1.610 (-)	0.932 (-)
FMA→EP	5.495***	5.840***	FMA→EP	2.016**	3.730***

***Significant =.001@2.57, **significant=.005@ 1.96; *significant =.010@ 1.65

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

6.2. Analysis of qualitative data

6.2.1. Qualitative interview profile

The coded transcripts have been used to identify major themes and sub-themes from the qualitative interview data. The amalgamation of categories and their properties in respect of different constructs have been put together enabling discussions and interpretation of the phenomena under study (Bryman & Bell 2007). The selection of key informants from different industry sub-sectors has been used as a yardstick for determining the sample size to enable comparability. This process has permitted variability of sample representation in order to validate theoretical arguments proposed in the study. Twelve qualitative interviews were conducted with food manufacturing firms and six qualitative interviews were conducted with beverage manufacturing firms. For ease of identification of firms in the sectors, interviewees have been categorised according to their sector classification codes, which are shown in Table 6.15 (page 251).

Table 6.15: Industry Sector, Codes and Respondents

Respondent Type Category	Code Letters	Characteristics	Respondent Identification Code
Food Manufacturing Exporter	EF	A firm that converts raw materials, through a series of processes into food products for consumers and also supply the export market. Examples of manufactured food products include breakfast cereals; cheese; tinned vegetables; savoury snacks such as crisps, sausage rolls, pies and pasties; bread, meat products, such as bacon, sausage, ham, and salami; microwave meals; cakes and biscuits. Raw fruits, vegetables, grains, meats, seafood and dairy products fresh from the supplier undergo a series of manufacturing processes to prepare products for sale to the public. This often includes preservation processes such as canning, vacuum packing and freezing.	EF1, EF2, EF3, EF4, EF5, EF6, EF7, EF8, EF9, EF10, EF11, EF12.
Beverage Manufacturing Exporter	EB	An individual firm which is involved in processing and exporting any liquid suitable for drinking such as, milk, alcoholic drink, hydromel (honey diluted in water), oenomel (wine mixed with honey), ginger beer, smoother, refresher, fizz (an effervescent beverage), cider, milk chocolate drink, chocolate drink, fruit crush, fruit juice, fruit drink, soft drink, coffee, tea, and/or drinkable water.	EB13, EB14, EB15, EB16, EB17, EB18.

Source: Developed for the current research (2017)

The characteristics of the respondents including gender, the size of their firm, years of exporting and product destination have been recorded and are shown in Table 6.16 (page 252). Table 6.17 (page 253) shows themes and sub-themes that have been developed for the qualitative interview data.

Table 6.16: Interview Characteristics of Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms in Zimbabwe

Firm Code No.	Position in the Firm	Firm Ownership	Gender	Sector	International Experience	Years of Exporting	Number of Employees	Destination of the Products
EF1	Chief Executive Officer	Zimbabwean	Male	Food	No	8	15 (S)	Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, RSA, UAE
EF2	Chief Executive Officer	Zimbabwean	Female	Food	No	17	337 (L)	Mozambique, Malawi, UK, UAE, Saudi Arabia
EF3	Owner/Manager	Zimbabwean	Female	Food	No	14	17 (S)	Botswana, Afghanistan, Holland, Rwanda
EF4	Owner/Manager	Zimbabwean	Male	Food	No	8	12 (S)	Zambia, DRC, Bots., RSA, Italy
EF5	General Manger	Zimbabwean	Male	Food	Yes	24	789 (L)	Malawi, RSA, Rwanda, UK, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Mozambique
EF6	Owner/Manager	Zimbabwean	Female	Food	No	10	50 (S)	Mozambique, Zambia, RSA
EF7	General Manager	Zimbabwean	Male	Food	No	24	317 (L)	Botswana, Belgium, UK, Zambia
EF8	Managing Director	Zimbabwean	Male	Food	No	11	566 (L)	South Africa, Swaziland, UK
EF9	Chief Executive Officer	Joint owned	Female	Food	Yes	8	200 (L)	Zambia, Malawi, Moza., Saudi Arabia, RSA, UK, UAE, DRC
EF10	General Manger	Zimbabwean	Male	Food	No	6	433 (L)	Malawi, RSA, Rwanda, UK, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Moza,.Zambia; Bots
EF11	General Manager	Zimbabwean	Male	Food	No	5	200 (L)	Botswana, Afghanistan, Holland, Rwanda, RSA, Malawi, UK
EF12	Chief Executive Officer	Zimbabwean	Male	Food	Yes	22	820 (L)	Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Saudi Arabia, Italy, RSA, Uganda, UK, UAE, Zambia, Mozambique
EB13	Chief Executive Officer	Zimbabwean	Male	Beverage	No	20	847 (L)	Malawi, RSA, Rwanda, UK, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Moza., Bots, Zambia
EB14	General Manager	Joint-owned	Male	Beverage	Yes	14	655 (L)	Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, RSA, Afghanistan, UK
EB15	Managing Director	Joint-owned	Male	Beverage	Yes	9	340 (L)	Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, RSA, Malawi, Namibia, UK
EB16	Managing Director	Zimbabwean	Male	Beverage	Yes	22	489 (L)	Angola, Botswana, South Africa, Mozambique, UK.
EB17	Managing Director	Zimbabwean	Male	Beverage	No	8	233 (L)	Mozambique, Malawi, RSA
EB18	Owner/Manager	Zimbabwean	Male	Beverage	No	7	170 (L)	South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, UK

Table 6.17: Interview Structure – Main Themes and Sub-Themes

Key Determinants	
1. Export-marketing Mix Strategy (4Ps)	• Place: (a) Agents & Middlemen (b) Direct distribution. • Product: (a) Modification (b) Deign & Style (c) Packaging & labelling. • Promotion: (a) Word of mouth (b) Trade shows (c) Other forms of promotion such as samples. • Price: (a) Price fluctuation (b) Price reduction (c) Pricing mechanism. • Cultural Adaptation: (a) Language & features (b) Designed to specific culture.
2. Export Commitment	• Lack of financial resources. • Allocation of resources. • Export investment.
3. Export Promotion Programmes	• Trade shows and exhibitions. • Operations of public policy markets. • Training and development programmes.
4. International Experience	• Not traveled or lived abroad. • Experiential knowledge. • International exposure.
5. Foreign Market Attractiveness	• High standards. • Policies and procedures. • Legal or regulatory frameworks. • Customs officials. • Export competition.
Other Factors	
6. Export Initiation	• Potential in exporting (a) Word of mouth (b) fill a gap. • Diversification. • Joint venture. • Export training seminar.
7. Location of Firm	• Proximity to air or sea port. • Access to logistics. • Road network. • Rail network.
8. Common Export Challenges (Barriers)	• Functional problems. • Marketing barriers. • Lack of funding. • Logistics barriers.
9. Export Performance Measurements	• Export satisfaction. • Strategic. • Financial: (a) Readiness to provide data (b) Confidential.

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

6.2.2. Findings from in-depth qualitative interviews

This section assimilates interview findings from key informants on their perception of export performance. The results mainly offer support to the findings of the quantitative study. The interviews have also highlighted some additional factors that are likely to influence the export performance of Zimbabwean firms. The interview findings have been categorised into nine (9) themes and several sub-themes and are shown in Table 6.17. Table 6.18 presents the thematic analysis of the qualitative interviews.

Table 6.18: Thematic Analysis of the Qualitative Interviews

Key Determinants of Export Performance (Main Theme)	Subthemes	Number of Interviewees who cited this key determinant	Percentage of Interviewees who cited this key determinant
Export Marketing Mix Strategy			
• Place adaptation	Agents or middlemen and direct distribution	18	100%
• Product adaptation	Product modification, product design and style, and packaging	18	100%
• Promotion adaptation	Word of mouth, trade shows, and other forms of promotion such as export of samples	10	55.6%
• Price adaptation	Price fluctuation, price reduction and pricing mechanism	9	50%

Key Determinants of Export Performance (Main Theme)	Subthemes	Number of Interviewees who cited this key determinant	Percentage of Interviewees who cited this key determinant
Managerial characteristics			
• Export commitment	Lack of financial resources, allocation of resources and export investment.	15	83.3%
• International experience	Not travelled or lived abroad, experiential knowledge, education and training, and international exposure.	12	66.7%
Export promotion programmes	Trade shows and exhibitions, operations of public policy markets, and training and development programmes	15	83.3%
Foreign market attractiveness	High standards, policies and procedures, customs officials, legal and regulatory frameworks, and export competition	13	72.2%
Other factors			
• Export initiation	Potential in exporting; diversification;	15	83.3%

Key Determinants of Export Performance (Main Theme)	Subthemes	Number of Interviewees who cited this key determinant	Percentage of Interviewees who cited this key determinant
	joint ventures; export training seminars		
• Location of the firm	Proximity to the air/sea ports, access to logistics, and other factors	16	88.9%
• Cultural adaptation	Language & features; designed to specific culture	16	88.9%
• Common export challenges (export barriers)	Functional problems, marketing barriers, lack of funding & logistics barriers	17	94.4%
• Export performance measurement	Export satisfaction, strategic and financial measures	18	100%

Source: Developed for this study (2017)

6.2.2.1. Key determinants of export performance

- Place adaptation

Two sub-themes emanated from **place adaption: Agents/middlemen and direct distribution**. All managers asserted that their distribution (place) adaption strategies were mainly carried out by agents/middlemen.

It has emerged from the interviews that distribution activities were left to offshore agencies and the importer is the host market, as they were most likely to implement the strategies effectively (Lado, Martinez-Ros & Valenzuela 2004). The export performance literature on distribution supports the idea that an exporter may be quite dependent on experienced intermediaries to get products to the market (Czinkota & Ronkainen 1993).

For instance, in the United Kingdom (UK), EF5's firm has direct distribution to reach customers as they have a warehouse there. The study has found that some managers were competent to control distribution channels, and performed tasks to adapt different strategies in export markets.

Zimbabwean firms applied different distribution strategies by using direct and indirect channels to distribute their products in various export markets to add value to their operations.

- Product adaptation

On product adaptation, sub-themes included **product modification, product design and style, and packaging**. It has emerged from the qualitative interviews that products were adapted in terms of **brand, packaging and labeling.** The firms apply product design and style to adapt their products to suit customer preferences in export markets. This was mentioned by all manager interviewed.

The study has revealed different aspects of the products that are adapted to suit customer preferences and standards in different export markets. Export performance

literature has argued that consumer goods, generally require product adaptation because of their higher degree of cultural grounding, and the degree of change required by foreign consumers (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). EF2 design and adapt products to suit different countries based on unique customer demand and specific characteristics of export markets to stay competitive. The manager indicated that colour trends and sizes in the UK change every year, which exporters have to follow to meet customer demands and preferences in order to add value to their products.

On product modification, EF4 and EB18 explained that their respective products were being modified to suit the host country requirements. For instance, EF4 pointed out that the specifications of the Italian market were very different and diverse, as well as those from the SADC region. It is therefore demonstrated in this study that some learning and knowledge have been acquired on the characteristics of various export markets. Products are adapted in different forms by satisfying the required standards and product quality specifications to prevent rejection at entry points in destination countries (Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Samiee 2002). This study, like Leonidou, Samiee, Aykol & Talias (2014), has found that buyer specifications and standards were being adhered to, in order to maintain trust and goodwill in the relationship between importer and exporter.

- Promotion adaptation

Zimbabwean exporters apply different and convenient promotion strategies to market their products in international markets. Three sub-themes emerged from promotion adaptation: **word of mouth, trade shows, and other forms of promotion such as export of samples**. On word of mouth, some exporters explained that they do some promotion but that mainly involved word of mouth, as they do not officially buy advertisement space or time to promote their products. Other exporters have highlighted trade shows as their source of promotional strategy in export markets as buyer contact and networks have been developed through foreign exhibitions.

Promotion of products through foreign trade shows has been highlighted by 15 out of 18 exporters interviewed as an important point of contact in the export market for implementing their adaptation strategies to enhance export performance (Shamsuddoha, Ali & Nelson 2009). Some managers used some other forms of promotion to create awareness of their products, by advertising on radio and television through agents appointed in various export markets to promote their products.

- Price adaptation

The value in price creates a substantial demand for a product in an export market (Kotler 2008). Managers explained price adaption strategies through three sub-themes: **price fluctuation, price reduction and pricing mechanism**. A total of 9 out 18 managers interviewed described how prices were adapted to a lesser extent to respect the characteristics of various export markets

This finding supports export performance literature that argues that pricing analysis in international markets is determined by the level of value and how the product adds or subtracts value to customers in the export markets (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). Operations applied differential pricing strategies to determine prices in order to account for the differences across export markets.

The adaption of prices in various export markets is a significant factor in tailoring export operations to suit the foreign market environment. These comments have been expressed consistently and lend support to the theoretical reasoning from a different study context that prices have been adjusted in respect to export market conditions. This indicates that prices have been adapted to a lesser extent depending on negotiations and market conditions in various foreign markets (Sousa & Bradley 2008a). Prices have been found to be difficult to adapt although additional financial resources would have been committed to export operations to remain competitive.

It has emerged in this study that adaption of export-marketing mix strategy in terms of product features, is highly necessary for exporting firms. Tesfom and Lutz (2006a)

came to the same conclusion in their study on export-marketing problems faced by small and medium-sized firms from less advanced economies. Lack of adequate resources to adapt the product to foreign market standards results in rejection at entry points. Product was the most adapted export strategy followed by place in this study. Promotion was somewhat adapted and price was the least adapted strategy. This implies that not all components of the export-marketing mix variables (4Ps) are fully adapted to export markets by Zimbabwean food and beverage manufacturing firms, as different forms of adaptation strategies are being employed to achieve export success.

Table 6.19 (page 261) show analysis of findings the firms' adaptation of the export-marketing mix strategies based on their perceptions.

Table 6.19: Adaptation of the Export-marketing Mix Strategy

Firm	Place	Product	Promotion	Price
EF1	Moderately adapted	Fully adapted	Not at all adapted	Somewhat adapted
EF2	Moderately adapted	Fully adapted	Moderately adapted	Not at all adapted
EF3	Somewhat adapted	Fully adapted	Somewhat adapted	Not at all adapted
EF4	Somewhat adapted	Adapted to a greater extent	Not at all adapted	Somewhat adapted
EF5	Fully adapted	Fully adapted	Fully adapted	Moderately adapted
EF6	Somewhat adapted	Adapted to a greater extent	Not at all adapted	Moderately adapted
EF7	Somewhat adapted	Adapted to a greater extent	Somewhat adapted	Not at all adapted
EF8	Fully adapted	Fully adapted	Not at all adapted	Not at all adapted
EF9	Adapted to a greater extent	Fully adapted	Somewhat adapted	Moderately adapted
EF10	Fully adapted	Adapted to a greater extent	Moderately adapted	Moderately adapted
EF11	Fully adapted	Adapted to a greater extent	Not at all adapted	Somewhat adapted
EF12	Moderately adapted	Fully adapted	Not at all adapted	Not at all adapted
EB13	Fully adapted	Fully adapted	Moderately adapted	Not at all adapted
EB14	Moderately adapted	Moderately adapted	Somewhat adapted	Somewhat adapted
EB15	Fully adapted	Fully adapted	Not at all adapted	Not at all adapted
EB16	Moderately adapted	Fully adapted	Somewhat adapted	Moderately adapted
EB17	Fully adapted	Adapted to a greater extent	Not at all adapted	Not at all adapted
EB18	Moderately adapted	Adapted to a greater extent	Somewhat adapted	Not at all adapted

Source: Developed for the current research (2017)

Note: All indicators represent researcher's own appraisal of the extent to which the export-marketing mix has been adapted based on the qualitative interviews.

6.2.1.1. Managerial characteristics

6.2.2.1. Export commitment

Export commitment in this study has been defined as the extent to which the management of the firm commit financial and human resources to develop their export business. Three sub-themes emerged: **lack of financial resources, allocation of resources and export investment.**

EF6 and EB17 argued that their firms could not commit financial resources to their export operations. EF6 asserted that export operation was capital intensive, while overseas payments were made after the importer has received a few shipments. EF6 further explained it has been quite difficult to commit financial resources to the export business because of irregular payments from the importers. The managers of EF6 and EB17 were unable to allocate financial resources to exporting business because of their experiences with irregular payments and lack of financial investment, which is not consistent with the export performance literature (Leonidou 2004). Clearly, this may generate constraints and inhibit the firm's progress as indicated by the two managers. A total of 83.3% of the managers have supported allocation of resources. There is clear indication that export commitment enables a firm to consistently allocate substantial resources to pursue effective export-marketing strategies in order to enhance performance.

On export investment, other managers explained that it has been the policy of their companies to increase their exposure to international markets by attending courses and training staff as an investment in the export business. The comments from the study imply that Zimbabwe exporters improve the depth of planning procedures by undertaking market analysis to invest in export operations at home and abroad to improve performance.

Thus, the exporters allocate substantial resources to the needs of different export markets by offering to training their staff to ensure that quality processes are observed in export

production (Lages & Montgomery 2010). This adds value to operational activities of the firm to achieve export goals. The managers' comments highlighted export commitment as a determinant of export performance, as it reduced uncertainty in their operations (Lages & Sousa 2010).

Investing in export operations demands financial and human resource allocation, which contributes to export performance as explained by the exporters (Navarro, Acedo, Robson, Ruzo, & Losaa 2010a). In line with the findings of Stoian, Rialp and Rialp (2011), this study has found that many managers allocate substantial financial and human resources to the export business activity.

6.2.2.2. International experience

International experience emerged as a key concept in the qualitative interviews. In this study, international experience has been defined as the degree of overseas experience i.e., lived or worked abroad. The interview inquired what type of international experience the management of the firm possessed before the firm started exporting. Four sub-themes have emerged, namely: **not travelled or lived abroad, experiential knowledge, education and training, and international exposure**.

EF5 and EB14 explained how the management of the firm have international exposure. The general manager of EF10 lived and worked abroad before initiating the export business in Zimbabwe. EB14 pointed out that the CEO is an international man, and anytime a new export company was setting up somewhere, the management of their firm is given the opportunity to run orientation of staff and management because of their expertise. EB14 indicated that they have been to South Africa and Zambia to offer such export orientation. EB15 indicated that the managing director has substantial international experience as he spends three months every year in export markets to make strategic decisions for the development and expansion of the export business. Through such programmes, the company has been able to open two more branches in Malawi.

However, as also observed by Madsen (1989) in the study to determine elements of successful export-marketing management, this study revealed that not all managers interviewed had international experience as an internal resource to enhance export performance. Some Zimbabwean firms with international experience were able to identify the differences in environmental conditions and used their international exposure to improve export operations at home and abroad (Griffith & Hoppner 2013).

EB15 argued in favour of experiential knowledge, and pointed out that although all the top management were educated in Zimbabwe, one of the shareholders has British and Mauritian citizenships and is a financial analyst who linked the firm with a marketing agency abroad that has substantial international knowledge. The agency was the main outside force in assisting the firm to go into exporting. This explained how experiential knowledge was important to exporting in general.

On education and training, the manager of EF7 explained how he acquired basic classroom training on exporting skills and knowledge in operations. EF2 studied marketing at the University, and she holds another degree in management and is pursuing a master's degree in entrepreneurship, to gain the requisite skills to effectively handle the firm's export operations. EF10 mentioned that management staff have the training through attending courses, workshops, and seminars organised by the policy makers and they have also gained competence from the basic marketing training they went through. Export success has not necessarily depended on the prior international experience of the managers, but has been influenced other factors such as experiential knowledge, education and export training.

Some managers have not travelled or lived abroad prior to the firm commencing the export business, but they had the opportunity to travel abroad to attend international trade shows and exhibitions to boost their export performance. These interviews have produced additional theoretical findings as the majority of the managers did not possess international experience prior to exporting., while just a few others had travelled, lived, or worked abroad. This

observation, therefore, shows that international experience is an indirect antecedent or precursor of export performance in this study.

6.2.1.2. Export promotion programmes

International business literature has acknowledged the benefits of export promotion programmes on export performance (Sraha 2015). Firms considering exporting may lack essential information which may hinder their knowledge about foreign market operations and the possible hurdles entailed in exporting (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). The interview analysis produced three sub-themes under export promotion programmes namely, **trade shows and exhibitions, operations of public policy markets, and training and development programmes**.

It emerged from the qualitative interviews that attendance at trade shows and exhibitions enhanced export performance. Export promotion programmes including participating in foreign trade shows and exhibitions provide dissemination of sales leads, and create new networks and contact with foreign buyers (Gençtürk & Kotabe 2001). Experiential knowledge is gained through foreign buyer participation in trade shows as they act as an external source to build the knowledge and experience necessary to enhance export operations (Wilkinson & Brouthers 2006). At times, public policy makers fail to understand the needs of managers in relation to their export involvement, or assist them effectively with export development programmes (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011).

The findings indicate that export training programmes offered by public policy makers are the first point of call by exporters who want to gain experience and knowledge about foreign markets to enhance export performance (Gençtürk & Kotabe 2001). Different dimensions of export promotion programmes provided by public policy makers are beneficial to exporting, which can enhance a firm's export performance (Sraha 2015). However, some managers argued that some export promotion programmes offered were general and not tailored to suit the characteristics of foreign markets. This study underscores that export promotion

programmes are beneficial to exporting activities in less advanced economies such as Zimbabwe.

6.2.1.3. Foreign market attractiveness

The interviews investigated whether the foreign market environment was as attractive as that of Zimbabwe. Five sub-themes emerged: **high standards, policies and procedures, customs officials, legal and regulatory frameworks, and export competition**. Most foreign country governments impose strict entry controls which can have a significant impact on investment and financing outcomes of exporting firms (Shoham 1999).

All the managers confirmed that there were high standards in various foreign markets and the products have to meet the various standards and certifications required at the entry points.

Policies and procedures from foreign countries can play an important role in the performance of firms by enhancing or reducing their effectiveness and capabilities in export performance (Beamish 1993), However, Zimbabwean exporters provided the necessary documentation upon entry into export market to clear their goods to prevent rejection and that also creates competitive advantage of their operations.

EB13 argued that the processes or ease of doing business in the international markets were more attractive than those of Zimbabwe, in terms of trading across the borders. EB14's firm has been trying to enter the Middle East market but strict policies and procedures have created serious hindrances making it unattractive to pursue orders from that region. This phenomenon has prevented the firm from expanding to other foreign markets to increase their market share and growth.

The study has found that foreign market attractiveness has a significant impact on the export performance of the firm. The legal and regulatory frameworks in various foreign markets can act to weaken or strengthen export performance (Tremeche & Tremeche 2003). Therefore, it

is essential for firms operating in foreign markets to keep abreast of changes in legal and regulatory frameworks in the foreign countries (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). The export environment can have a negative impact on a firm's operations due to varying national and local regulations as indicated in the interviews (Lages & Jap 2002). Therefore, the operational environment of a country might result in interference in the affairs of foreign businesses and obstruct effective export operations (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008a). Two managers exporting to African markets expressed their displeasure about the duties of customs officials in the SADC region and Afghanistan that adversely affect the success of their export business.

The managers further indicated that the lack of professionalism of the customs and excise agencies result in undermining the effectiveness of export activities in the Southern African markets which negatively affects operations and hinder the export performance. It is especially beyond control of the firm if customs officials at both exit and entry points are not abiding by laid-down regulations and procedures, which adversely affects successful export activities. The study has found that the foreign market environment is attractive in developed countries and unattractive in less developed countries in Africa.

The foreign market environment is competitive and demands export adaptation strategies for firms to gain a competitive advantage and enhance export performance (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou 2006). Competitive pressure can force firms to adapt products to meet the specific needs of a particular export market. Two sub-themes emerged from this theme are: **aggressive and moderate competition**. However, the strategic goals of the firms concentrated on creating a sustainable performance through competitive advantage by applying appropriate export-marketing mix strategies (Katsikeas & Leonidou 2010).

This study has found that competition has been aggressive in some export markets and the firms have applied stringent adaptation strategies to distinguish their products to gain competitive advantage (Lages & Montgomery 20010). EF5 experience moderate competitions and explained that competition for their exports to Mozambique previously

emanated from South Africa and Portugal but in the last two years, China had been their main competitor.

Export competition can generate instability and create innovative ideas leading to improvement of product quality, which can inversely or positively affect export performance (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou 2006).

6.3. Other factors that contribute to successful export

6.3.1. Export initiation

Export initiation emerged as a concept from the study and produced several themes. Potential in exporting has been associated with export initiation in this study. EF5 asserted that their firm originally offered business consultancy services to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, then they realised the potential in exporting food products such as canned meat and tinned vegetable products. Therefore, the company diversified from offering consultancy services to exports of canned food products for more economic gains and prosperity. Moreover, through diversification, EB17's exporting firm became successful over the years as the company expanded and gained higher income from international business than the previous import business.

EF9 narrated how his business started in a limited manner, one product, and one line slowly building up until the 1990s when his son who started in the United Kingdom joined the firm as Managing Director and saws the bigger potential of the company and started exporting to expand operations. EF7 commented on export initiation to fill a gap created in international markets by African migrants in Western countries. The chief executive officer of the firm identified a niche in foreign markets to address the cultural needs of African migrants by producing processed African foods in Zimbabwe for international markets. After spending many years in the UK, the chief executive officer realised Africans wanted their local food which was not available abroad. Therefore, an export processing factory was opened in

Zimbabwe to produce African foods in assorted forms to serve overseas markets. The niche market became a successful business operation. This is congruous with the argument that exporting brings companies realistic opportunities for growth as increasing export performance leads to an enlargement of customer base and firm prosperity (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou 2006).

Internationalisation of the firms was not necessarily planned but carried out by different means. One manager's interest in exporting was connected to word of mouth which is recognised as an important tool in international marketing (Sweeney, Soutar & Mazzarol 2012). Sweeney, Soutar & Mazzarol (2012) posit that the strength or power of the way a message is delivered through a word of mouth reflects the strength of recommendation to carry out that action by the person receiving the message. After export initiation, the company became successful and directed its exports mainly to European countries.

EB16 and EF3 initiated their export business through training and learning seminars. EB16 started exporting in 1995 and did extensive research on the demand for processed meats and attended seminars organised by ZimTrade and learnt about exporting. The exporter participated in several local and international trade fairs, acquired experiential knowledge as well as obtained several export sale leads. Gradually, EB16 started exporting through other companies before transforming the firm into a fully fletched registered exporter. EF3 narrated his story leading to export initiation as a baked beans exporter. The firm attended the international trade fairs in Zimbabwe and many potential international buyers made inquiries about the possibility of supplying them with baked beans.

Initiating the first relationship with a foreign buyer is the most important step in a firm's export involvement. The experience acquired from exporting creates new networks to determine future contacts and sales in foreign markets (Leonidou 2003). The reasons for export initiation by EB16 and EF3 are consistent with extant literature that argues that unexpected orders from foreign customers are a powerful stimulus for many firms in different countries to initiate exporting (Leonidou 1995a). In addition, two key informants' export

initiation was attributed to limited number of buyers in the local market in Zimbabwe. On the unavailability of market, EB17 explained that the domestic market demand slowed down due to low economic activity in the country. The firm, therefore, decided to look for markets offshore.

Joint venture as a strategy to export initiation emerged in the interviews as well. EB15 indicated that the firm is jointly owned by Zimbabweans (51%) and Mauritians (49%). The foreign shareholders were very instrumental in securing export markets in the United Kingdom where they own a number wholesale and retail chain stores

Diversification of export operations was useful when EB13 faced operational setbacks on its exports. The firm was exporting processed meat products to Malawi and due to foreign currency shortages, customers failed to pay for the deliveries. The firm diversified its focus from the regional market to international market. The firm diversified their market operations to stay in business and improve productivity, as discussed in the literature (Lages & Montgomery 2004).

EF10's firm ventured into exporting to expand its operations and use the international platform to enlarge its customer base and increase its market share to raise export sales (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). EF10's firm improved its competitiveness in the home market through managerial skills and capabilities gained from participation in foreign markets (Hultman, Robson & Katsikeas 2009). After some years, the firm expanded its operations, particularly to other African countries.

The background statements of export initiation in Zimbabwe explored relevant aspects of the export business as a sustainable and profitable business venture. The managers mentioned multifaceted reasons for venting into profitable export ventures, which adds new insights into the literature on export initiation in international business. Most findings validate the theoretical projections of venturing into exporting because of financial gains and prosperity (Fuller-Love, Midmore, Thomas & Henley 2006).

6.3.2. Location of the firm

The location of the firm is argued to have a positive impact on export operations (Freeman, Styles & Lawley 2012). The metropolitan areas provide advantages that tend to improve the firms' export performance (Freeman & Styles 2014). This study investigated whether location has any impact on export performance of Zimbabwean firms. Three sub-themes emerged: **proximity to the air/sea ports, access to logistics, and other factors**.

It emerged from the qualitative interviews that exporting firms were located in the metropolitan cities to be able to have access to well-placed facilities like good infrastructure, logistics and proximity to the ports. The comments from the exporters support the argument that metropolitan areas provide advantages to exporting firms (Freeman, Styles & Lawley 2012). The location of the firm has huge impact on export activities, as many asserted, it is strategic to be located in the metropolitan cities as communication and logistics are easier to coordinate. It is also easy for managers to build networks with several service providers as well as easy management of local office personnel.

It is argued that economic development in remote areas results in specific setbacks because of geographic isolation and sparse resources (Mittelstaedt, Ward & Nowlin 2006). Zimbabwean exporters have avoided these setbacks by locating their firms in the cities to enhance export performance

According to Mittelstaedt, Ward and Nowlin (2006) location setbacks might create problems and prevent effective firm operations to remain competitive. Apart from some issues, the comments extrapolated are in support of theoretical projection, pointing to location benefits in achieving positive export performance (Capello & Faggian 2005). The majority of exporters reiterated the benefits and importance of locating their firms in the metropolitan cities which are central and near the ports. It can therefore, be asserted that location of firms in metropolitan cities can positively influence export performance.

6.3.3. Cultural adaptation

The qualitative interview investigated whether products were designed to a specific culture, as it is easier to target culturally similar markets (Shoham 1995). The literature posits that the more distant a market is culturally, the more dissimilar the product attributes and foreign consumer values will be (Lado, Martinez-Ros & Valenzuela 2004). Managers made these comments based on two sub-themes (vis-a-vis **language & features; designed to specific culture**).

On **language and features**, EB15 asserted that even though it is the same fruit drink they sell on the local market, they prepare export consignments to meet different specifications of every country. For instance, specific languages and product labels have been used for countries such as Afghanistan and Holland to adapt to language, colour and their customers' ability to read and understand. For some products shipped and sold in major supermarkets in Europe such as ASDA, Sainsbury and Tesco, there were always strict requirements the firms have to meet as these products are displayed on the shelves of these recognised supermarkets.

This is an indication that features of the product are labelled in specific languages depending on the product destination. It also emerged that product packages going to Middle East (Afghanistan) and Francophone (Rwanda) were written in different languages to allow the customers to read and understand the labels on the packages.

In support of product **design to a specific culture**, other managers maintained that they try to have specific packaging to meet buyer specifications in various export markets. They explained that countries like UK, Italy and Holland prefer small PET bottles with seals and those in the SADC region prefer larger bottles as consumers usually buy for the family (which is usually bigger, compared to the European set up).

Therefore, in order to export successfully, the firms addressed cultural dissimilarities in languages, colour and design to reduce perceived risk of failure to suit the cultural needs of foreign markets in enhancing export performance (Madsen 1989). The qualitative interviews

suggested that Zimbabwean food and beverage manufacturing firms consider cultural factors to remain competitive in export markets. As opined by Sousa and Bradley (2007c) that differences in cultural norms can influence customer preferences for product design and inversely affect export performance.

6.3.4. Common export challenges (export barriers)

Barriers to exporting provide insights into the different types of challenges that prevent domestic firms from doing international business (Tesfom, Lutz & Ghauri (2006b). Knowing the barriers develops a platform for understanding the setbacks that prevent exporters from sustaining successful export operations (Leonidou 2000). Four sub-themes (**functional problems, marketing barriers, lack of funding & logistics barriers**) emerged on common export challenges and some managers commented on **functional barriers**.

Lack of final and definitive resolution of the fast track land reform programme in Zimbabwe mentioned by EB15 as the main problem confronting their firm. EB14 has been confronted with the unavailability of suitable raw materials which necessitated their investment into raw material production. Functional barriers in previous studies have been related to the inefficiencies of the firm's export function in production in terms of raw materials and production capacity which can affect export performance adversely (Leonidou 2000; Tesfom, Lutz and Ghauri (2006b).

Cultural norms affect product delivery in Zimbabwe as people commit substantial time to funerals for example. It would seem to be a misplacement if priorities are to commit to funerals and business suffers as noted by EF8 (Hall 1987). Good business relationships are developed through trust and promptness of delivery services.

Bureaucracy has been highlighted as a common problem by EF9. Frustrating red tapes and bureaucratic export procedures, have been mentioned as contributing to a host of hindrances in the export industry. This study has found different problems occurring at each stage of the export process and managers need to be flexible and adapt to different situation at all times.

The challenges of bureaucratic procedures may be attributed to the characteristics of less advanced economy as growth accelerates gradually (Hoskisson, Eden, Lau & Wright 2000).

Marketing barriers have been identified as the second most common challenges faced by Zimbabwe exporters. Sanitary and phytosanitary measures imposed by foreign market authorities pose a significant threat to exports from less developed countries such as Zimbabwe. Castellares (2015) argues that the poor the exporter, the greater the gap between its export quality and the average quality of its trade partners' imports. The issue of meeting quality standards is also viewed as a marketing barrier by Zimbabwean food and beverage manufacturing firms.

Foreign markets are characterised by high product quality standards to protect the consumers. Therefore, allocation of adequate resources is required to adapt products to suit the required quality standards (Tesfom & Lutz 2006a). Lack of adequate resources to adapt products to foreign market standards results in rejections at the entry points (ibid

The production cost base for Zimbabwean exporters is denominated in US dollars and given the fact that it is a strong currency, exports from Zimbabwe to the regional markets are not competitive. The price of raw materials has been mentioned as an export barrier.

Lack of funding emerged as the third common problem. Successful exporting demands extensive financial resources to adapt the export-marketing mix strategies to suit customer preferences and the idiosyncrasies of export markets (Leonidou 2004). Delay in processing bank loans for export orders affects production and delivery times.

Engaging in export operations requires extensive expenditure which creates excessive financial burdens for firms already strained financially (Freeman & Reid 2006). The collateral demanded by financial institutions has been another hindrance to the acquisition of loans to support export operations in Zimbabwe. Unavailability of credit has also been highlighted.

Logistics barrier has emerged as the fourth common problem faced by exporters in Zimbabwe. EF6 reiterated that there has been no dedicated cargo plane for exports in Zimbabwe. Exports to the EU have been carried out through commercial flights such as British Airways, KLM and Lufthansa. The competition for space with passenger luggage is stiff and has negatively affected export business.

These environmental barriers in the local market produce rapid changes incorporated with high levels of uncertainty, which falls beyond the operations of the firm although it affects export activities (Leonidou 2004). Diverse barriers which have been beyond the firms' control that affect operations have been enumerated by all categories of managers. Functional barriers to export and lack of funding have been the most prevalent in the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe.

6.3.5. Export performance measurement

On export performance, three measures: **export satisfaction, strategic and financial measures** were presented to managers to select the most relevant measure applicable to them. The majority of managers asserted it was difficult to provide financial data because of confidentiality nature of the data.

6.3.5.1. Export satisfaction

Export satisfaction has been selected over other measures of export performance. Strategic and financial export performance measures have also been considered realisable based on market share and expansion. In summary, all three indicators have been selected randomly to measure export performance. The sub-question under performance generated interesting findings as the majority of managers from small firms regarded objective financial data as being confidential and difficult to provide readily on request. Other managers from large firms were more likely to provide financial data for public consumption, although they

needed time to present the financial statements. This is in line of findings by Robertson and Chetty (2000) who concluded that small firms in emerging economies are generally reluctant to provide financial data as they regard such information as private and confidential.

The Zimbabwean exporters have been more comfortable to measure the success of their firm with export satisfaction over objective measures as they perceive such information as confidential. Moreover, satisfaction-based measures provide a richer assessment of export performance at the firm level (Lages, Abrantes, & Lages 2008aa).

The statements from all the managers interviewed support the argument for using perceived export performance measures where managers are unable or unwilling to provide financial data for inspection in developing countries (Robertson & Chetty 2000). Export satisfaction emerged as the best measurement for export performance as the majority of the managers applied this measure to assess their firm's export performance. Applying subjective measures has been suggested in cases where managers have difficulty in reconciling figures to produce objective financial data (ibid).

6.3.5.2. Financial export performance data

The sub-question under export performance inquired whether managers could readily provide objective financial data for the past three years. The following sub-themes emerged: **readiness to provide and confidential**. It was difficult to provide objective financial data.

The majority of the managers were unable or unwilling to provide financial data as they consider such information confidential and not for public consumption. This supports the argument that financial data are difficult to obtain, especially in emerging economies in Africa (Crick, Kaganda & Matlay 2011). Reluctance to provide objective financial data on export performance was illustrated strongly in the interviews. Only a handful of managers from large firms indicated willingness to provide their objective financial data.

Perceptions drawn from the interviews confirm theoretical projections that obtaining objective financial data from firms in emerging economies is difficult because of the unwillingness of managers to provide such information (Chetty & Campbell 2003). Managers of small firms regard objective financial data as private and confidential and not for public use, whereas managers of large firms have been more willing to provide such information when requested but need more time to clear it with relevant authorities.

6.4. Summary of interview findings

The qualitative interviews findings based on 18 managers' comments provided rich insights into what determines export success as well as barriers that have been encountered by exporters in Zimbabwe. New findings have emerged from the interviews which imply that diverse factors influence export performance in Zimbabwe. The in-depth interviews have partially supported the proposed conceptual model and provided new insights into the export performance literature. The theoretical development and contradictory findings are not surprising as this study has been conducted in a context of current literature in the field of export performance.

6.4.1. Summary of key determinants for export performance

Key findings on adaption of the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) are illustrated in Table 6.4 and supported with key sub-themes in the analysis. Product and place (distribution) have been the most adapted export-marketing mix strategy followed by promotion. Price has been the last adapted strategy according to the findings of the interviews. Findings from the interviews suggest that products have been designed to suit customer preferences in terms of cultural adaptation in values, colour, and language to enhance export performance.

On export commitment, almost all managers confirmed they allocate financial and human resources to develop their export activities. This implies that the depth of commitment of the managers has been high, which influenced export performance. Only two out of eighteen

firms engaged, indicated they could not allocate resources to export activities due to lack financial resources. The major findings in small firms revealed that no manager had international experience prior to exporting. However, management of large firms had some degree of international experience.

On export promotion programmes, the majority of managers participated in trade shows and exhibitions to learn about exporting. Other managers reflected on how public policy makers operate, and argued that they should offer more support to exporters by designing export promotion programmes to suit foreign operations. Some managers also have participated in training and development programmes, which provided experiential knowledge to enhance their export operations. Export promotion programmes have been useful for successful exporting to some extent, as illustrated in the interviews.

Five themes have emerged from foreign market attractiveness. On high standards, some managers asserted that the standards at the entry points were high on quality certification and requirements had to be fulfilled before the products were cleared for entry into foreign market. Other managers have pointed out that policies and procedures of host countries are more attractive than those in Zimbabwe, as long as all export documentation was pre-cleared before the arrival of the consignment at the point of entry. Moreover, consignments are cleared faster in foreign markets as compared to time taken by Zimbabwean authorities to clear the same.

With regards to efficiency of foreign markets customs officials, managers expressed their disappointment at the way African customs officials at point of entry process their consignments. They described the entry processes in African foreign markets as unattractive and complex. On legal and regulatory frameworks, findings have revealed that the legal and regulatory frameworks in international markets are flexible. The study has found that some firms have been trying to enter the European Market without success due to serious hindrances in terms of legal and regulatory frameworks making it very difficult to access that market for expansion.

A number of managers revealed that the export markets are characterised by aggressive competition. Some managers have asserted that they have encountered moderate competition in export markets as they produce high quality and innovative products to overtake competitors. The export market environment has been perceived as highly competitive by Zimbabwean exporters.

6.4.2. Other factors that influence export performance

Export initiation has emerged as the major theme in interviews. Findings from the majority of firms indicated the potential of increasing revenue was the main reason behind the export initiation of their firms. Once manager was attracted to exporting through word of mouth. Some managers ventured into exporting because of subdued domestic demand. Other managers' export initiation came about through diversification, joint venture of their firms to expand into foreign markets, increase market-share and increase economic rent. These responses indicate that export initiation in Zimbabwe is attributed diverse reasons as opposed to just the international outlook of the manager.

The findings from the interviews have revealed that the location of the firm is an important antecedent of export success. Different themes explained the benefits. All exporting firms surveyed, are located in the metropolitan cities of Zimbabwe, near rail loading ramps and airport, so as to have effective operations and logical arrangements. On common export problems (export barriers), comments from the interviewees demonstrate the managers are beset with various constraints in their export operations. Four themes have emerged based on export barrier literature. On logistical barriers, land ownership and poor farm produce have been mentioned as the main challenges encountered. Other managers emphasised that they do not have enabling environment to operate competitively, they do not have dedicated workforce to efficiently fulfil export orders, and they have also experienced delays in their operations due to cultural attitudes of their workforce. High cost of production model as a result of high value US dollar, has made most Zimbabwe exporters uncompetitive.

On market barriers, the poor quality of raw materials, mainly farm produce, has resulted in high levels of product rejections in international markets. Competitive prices of products from regional and international competitors have affected export sales. Chinese products pose a great threat to Zimbabwe exports to Mozambique. The study has revealed that exporters in Zimbabwe face a common problem of funding for export development. Access to credit, limited support from government agencies and demand for collateral by financial institutions have been mentioned as contributing significantly to set backs in export development. Logistical barriers in terms of lack of unavailability of cargo planes, and high levels of freight charges have been identified as setbacks on export operations. The findings of the interviews have produced theoretical projections that various export barriers provide a platform for understanding the setbacks preventing exporters from sustaining successful export operations (Leonidou 2004). Export barriers amongst Zimbabwe exporters are diverse and not peculiar to a particular industry.

The traditional export specifications, which explain export performance by foreign demand and price competitiveness indicators, are not able to describe the recent developments in Zimbabwe. From the qualitative interviews, this thesis has revealed that escalating labour costs, use of multicurrency (or dollarisation), de-industrialisation, lack of adequate feedstock by the manufacturing sector, weak effective domestic demand, and low capacity utilisation have contributed significantly to decline in exports by Zimbabwean firms. The interviews also revealed that shifting sales towards the export market or even entering the export market altogether, comes with costs.

The findings from the qualitative interviews have revealed that if a company succeeds at selling in domestic market, there is a good chance that it will also be successful in markets abroad, wherever similar needs and conditions exist. However, in markets that differ significantly from domestic market, (comparison between Zimbabwean market and European market) some products may have limited potential.

In Zimbabwe, the Zimtrade is a publicly owned trade promotion organisation that has the mandate to empower private firms with export-marketing information. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) and the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) jointly facilitate export of goods. The RBZ administers export documentation through the Form CD1 system in order to account for value of goods that is exported. The Zimbabwe Revenue Authority ensures that there is no under-declaration of the value of goods when being shipped out of the country. Based on the qualitative results, exporters have the view that Zimtrade does not organise adequate exporters' seminars where firms expect to acquire knowledge on export-marketing strategies.

Many developing countries, Zimbabwe is no exception, continue to lack effective banking institutions and other arrangements for the financing of their exports. The interviews with managers of the firms have revealed that manufacturing firm require export financing. The interviews also have revealed that committed exporters are the main users of government export promotion agencies and the beneficiaries of such services. During the in-depth interviews some managers mentioned that it is important for one to be proficient in foreign languages in order to conduct successful export business.

The in-depth qualitative interviews with 18 food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, provide insights on how firms in less developed economies can embark into exporting business and succeed. There are at least four approaches that have been identified and may be used alone or in combination: (1) Passively filling orders from domestic buyers who then export the product. (2) Seeking out domestic buyers who represent foreign end users or customers (3) exporting indirectly through intermediaries (4) Exporting directly.
The qualitative research has brought up the following additional insights that can contribute to the export performance of the firm: (1) development of technological capability (2) export development initiatives by the government (3) export promotion by Government agencies (4) innovation by firms (5) enhanced trade facilitation (6) improved export financing and access to capital, and (7) availability of trade information to exporters.

6.5. Chapter summary

The measurement model has been confirmed and has been used to test hypotheses in the structural model. Four separate models have been analysed with the export-marketing mix strategy variables (place, product, promotion and price) as mediators and the hypothesised links have been examined with other variables. In the Place model, thirteen (13) out of sixteen (16) hypotheses are statistically significant including four (4) mediations. The Product model has produced nine (9) positive with two (2) negative and two (2) non-significant but positive relationships.

The Price model has recorded the least positive results with six (6) significant results, four (4) negative and two (2) non-significant but positive relationships with the mediation effect. The summary of the hypotheses across the four (4) models supports the notion that Place (distribution) and Products are the most adapted export-marketing mix strategy of Zimbabwean firms with Promotion and Price highlighted as the least adapted strategies. The non-significant results recorded with Price and Export Performance support theoretical evidence of a negative relationship existing between the two constructs. Some scholars have argued that the lower the degree of place adaption in foreign markets, the higher the export performance as the level of prices is adapted to respect the characteristics of various export markets. Finally, the common method variance examination was undertaken and the findings indicated that the study has not suffered from any common method bias. The next chapter presents an analysis of the qualitative interviews conducted with 18 key informants from the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe.

This chapter also presented data analysis processes and findings of the qualitative study carried out with 18 exporters in Zimbabwe. The interview profiles of managers with classification codes have been provided for easy but confidential identification of the firms and their respective sectors. Characteristics of the managers such as gender, years of exporting and ownership of their firm, sector and product destination have been presented in Table 6.2 to illustrate their level of export involvement. Nine main themes, with several sub-

themes have been developed from the transcripts for data analysis and theory development. The interviews offered rich insights for explaining export performance drivers and also provided new exploratory intuitions to support findings in the quantitative study. In summary, the findings from qualitative interviews provided a useful podium to explain the meaning behind the quantitative results. The next chapter is a discussion and interpretation of the results of the study. The results from the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews are discussed and integrated using the mixed method approach. The chapter discusses the determinants of export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, additional findings from the qualitative study, export performance measurements used in the study and control variables of the study. Overall, the next chapter discusses the findings of both quantitative and qualitative studies to address the research objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

7.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the results of the study. The results from the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews are discussed and integrated using the mixed method approach. The chapter discusses the determinants of export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, additional results from the qualitative study, export performance measurements used in the study and control variables of the study.

The chapter is divided into six sections. Section 7.1 outlines summary of the research results, Section 7.2. outlines factors that affect the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms, Section 7.3. discusses the results of the mediating effects of the export marketing mix strategy (4Ps), Section 7.4. discusses the results of the moderating effects of the foreign market attractiveness, Section 7.5. summary of the findings, Section 7.6. presents export performance measures, Section 7.7. presents discussion on control variables and section 7.8 presents a summary of Chapter 7.

7.1. Summary of the research results

The results of this research confirm that export performance of a firm in a less economically developed country, is enhanced by investing into efficient distribution of the product and adaption of the product to the foreign market. Adoption of promotion and price adaptation do not contribute significantly to the of export performance of a firm. The results further show that the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), has significant and positive mediating effects on the association between export commitment, foreign market attractiveness, and export performance. The export-marketing mix strategy has no significant mediating effect on the association between export promotion programmes, international experience and export performance. The mediating effect of foreign market attractiveness is significant and

positive when there is efficient distribution of the product, product adaption to the foreign market and adoption of product promotion. Furthermore, in order to wholesomely enhance export performance of a firm in a less economically developed country, export capacity constraints such as escalating labour costs, use of multicurrency (or dollarisation), de-industrialisation, lack of adequate feedstock by the manufacturing sector, weak effective demand on domestic market, and low capacity utilisation, should be addressed both at firm level and at national policy level.

Motivated by the sparse literature on export performance at the firm level in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, the research objectives of this study were (1) to investigate the factors that affect the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, (2) to examine mediating effects of export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) on the association between international experience, export commitment, export promotion programmes and export performance, and (3) to examine the moderating effect of foreign market attractiveness on the association between export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and export performance. Results from the qualitative component of the complimentary research design are evaluated to explain the quantitative results. The qualitative component of the study has also resulted in some additional determinants of export performance in Zimbabwe. Broadly, the results from the qualitative interviews supported the proposed conceptual model.

7.2. Factors affecting the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms

7.2.1. Firm Characteristics Factors

7.2.1.1. Firm size

In terms of life cycle stage, nature of product-consumer vs. industrial, nature of firm-manufacturer vs. intermediary have a significant effect on export sales. The age of the firm is expressed a s number of years in business have a negative effect (Bodur 1994 & Das 1994)

or insignificant effects on export performance. However, it is understood that younger firms are likely to be successful exporters. This study has confirmed this position.

7.2.1.2. Management perception toward export

Aaby and Slater (1989) and Chetty and Hamilton (1993) indicated that management's attitudes and perceptions are very important determinants of financial measures of export performance such as export sales, profits and growth. As confirm by this study, management also influences non-financial measures of export performance like perceived export success, satisfaction and goal achievement.

7.2.1.3. Firm experience on export

The study has found that the firm experience on export has positive relationship on export performance. It is understood that experiential knowledge about overseas markets and operations is driving force in the internationalisation of the firm. The relationship between exporting and export performance lies in the issue of uncertainty and the way the firms cope with it (Erramilli 1991).

The less experienced firms are likely to have considerable uncertainty, which affects their returns about oversea markets and operations (Agarwal & Ramaswami 1992). Nevertheless, the experienced firms are likely to have better understanding of foreign markets, develop personal contacts and customers' relationship abroad and design effective marketing programmes (Madsen 1989).

7.2.1.4. Firm strategy

Aaby and Slater (1989) stated that export performance is determined by export strategy. It is characterised by marketing mix employed in respect of export markets. It is a way by which firms respond to competitive market conditions.

Marketing strategy has been into four elements of the marketing mix i.e., product, pricing, place and promotion. The linkage between marketing strategy and export performance has been confirmed. However, the differentiation and place have been the heart of the mix. Burton and Schlegel (1987) confirmed that there a s significant relationship between product attributes and export performance. Promotion has been assessed in terms of effectiveness relative to the campaigns of competitors. Pricing strategy has been assessed in terms of willingness of the company to conduct export trade in currency other than home currency.

7.2.1.5 Commitment

The export commitment is a function of resource availability (Cavusgil & Nevin 1981). When the export operations are successful there is more support from internal and external public. It is important to note that low performing firm's managers will have to be more committed because the opportunities are vital. A firm has to be more committed and satisfy while exporting to developed markets, because of its education and sophisticated consumers.

7.2.1. Firm competency factors

- Technology

The technologies strengths are positively correlated to the export (Aaby & Slater 1989). Almost all the research concludes that technology is best applied as a standard in the market worldwide (Christensen et al., 1987). Since the respondents in this study export their products to the developed countries (United Kingdom, France and Belgium), technology is an important source of competitive advantage over the local producers. In less developed countries such as Zimbabwe, other sources of competitive advantage such as low cost of production could be more important as well. Thus, evidence on technology and export performance is mixed. However, there has been different school of thoughts, whereas, Reid (1986) stated that there is a week relationship between technology and export performance. He stated and argues that only possessing specialised knowledge does not create competitive advantage, but depends upon how the firm takes advantage of it.

- Marketing knowledge

The inadequacy of the terminology is used to describe food and beverage industry. Historically, the industry has been associated mainly with the hospitality business such as hotels. However, the broad and growing range of applications have led to recognition of the inadequacy of this term in describing food and beverage manufacturing firms. Therefore, this thesis also seeks to provide a clearer definition and measure of the food and beverage manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe in terms of its products, activities and markets. It will also provide an overview of the industry development patterns, business drivers and supply chain characteristics. The research has involved a review of published resources, including academic and trade journals, research texts, and statistical publications by government agencies and industry associations. The approach taken has been to evaluate definitions, terminology and measures to describe and quantify food and beverage products in order to develop a more integrated perspective and an assessment of how it is defined and documented.

- Foreign market knowledge and international performance

In line with prior research (Johanson & Vahlne 1977 and Musteen & Datta 2011; Musteen, Datta & Butts 2014), foreign market knowledge (FMK) is defined as

> "the knowledge of business practices and potential opportunities as the relate to foreign markets. It includes knowledge related to local culture, competitive conditions, customer needs and the broader institutional environment" (Musteen & Datta 2011, p.93).

Internationalisation literature postulates that knowledge about foreign markets is an essential concept that explains internationalisation behaviour or commitment of firms. According to Uppsala model, such knowledge has experiential character and is growing along with a firm's international experience. FMK is seen as one of the most important resources in the internationalisation process (Johanson & Vahlne 1977 and Autio, Sapienza & Almeida 2000), as it is necessary to understand opportunities and deal with uncertainties and risks

(Liesch, Welch & Buckley 2011). The lack of FMK represents a significant barrier to firm's internationalisation (Eriksson, Johanson, Majkgård & Sharma 1997). Numerous studies confirm this thesis, providing evidence that lack of FMK deteriorates directly or indirectly performance in the foreign markets, both in the context of developed market firms (Descotes & Walliser 2013), and emerging market firms (Elango & Pattnaik 2007; Musteen & Datta 2011 and Musteen, Datta & Butts 2014). For instance, it has been argued that:

"…superior understanding of the foreign competitive and political environments should mitigate the liability of foreignness, enabling entrant firms overcome the barriers set up by incumbent firms and governments and allow them to compete more effectively in international markets." (Musteen & Datta 2011, p. 96)

However, the international character of internationalisation, and the assumption that knowledge is acquired via first had experience have since been questioned by numerous researchers, pointing to the abundance of born-global (BG) firms (Zhou 2007) and other than experiential modes of learning (Forsgren 2002). Searching for explanations of the phenomenon of early internationalisation, where firms have no or very limited knowledge about foreign markets, scholars have pointed either to learning advantages of newness or/and other sources of learning and knowledge accumulation, that can be used by BGs, in general agreeing with the value of foreign market knowledge for performance

7.2.2. Adequacy of infrastructure

Improvements in transportation services and infrastructure can lead to high positive impact in export performance. Lim˜ao and Venables (2001) shows that infrastructure is quantitatively important in determining transport costs. They estimate that poor infrastructure accounts for 40 percent of predicted costs for coastal countries and up to 60 percent for landlocked countries. Bougheas, Demetriades and Mamuneas (1999) have analysed that infrastructure can promote specialisation and long-run growth and its effect on trade through its reflect on resources costs. It requires resources to be taken away from the production of the final good and enhance economic growth through increased specialisation.

7.2.3. Labour cost and labour skill

The importance of labour costs as a determinant of export is almost self-imposing. Contrary to capital and technology, labour has very low mobility. Multinational enterprises can reduce production costs by transferring the more mobile production factors to areas where labour is cheaper. Labour skills were associated with other countries' imitation ability, and even in mature industries minimum skills are required to obtain productivity level that allows economic production.

7.2.4. Economic factors

- Economic growth

Government spending, money supply and the exchange rate contain much more information than export growth or economic growth regarding future movements in export growth or export performances. International trade theory suggests that export growth contributes positively to economic growth which is measured by output growth by the following; facilitates the exploitation of economies of scale for small open economies (Helpman & Krugman 1985).

Relieving the binding foreign exchange constraint to allow increase in imports of capital goods and intermediate goods. Enhancing efficiency through increased competition and promoting the diffusion of technical knowledge in long run through foreign buyer's suggestions and learning by doing (Grossman & Helpman 1991).

- Economic policy

Rapid modernisation and highly sustained economic growth are results of the exchange rate and judicious use of monetary policies. Recently, a number of industry and trade policy development have directed attention to costs and possible benefits of export concession

schemes. Focusing on trade polices is not a good measure of trade orientation since additional domestic policies can have an important influence on trade orientation of a country. Inflation, tax rates and tax structure of the host country are examples of economic policy. Several studies have shown that the rate of corporate taxation has a negative effect on export decisions, meaning that the higher corporate taxes the fewer exports are concluded.

- Inflation

There is disagreement among the researchers about how quantitatively important are the growth depressing effects of inflation and at what levels of inflation these effects begin to appear. Mallik and Chowdhury (2001) showed that low inflation is positively correlated to economic growth in a particular country. Lim (2004) on the other hand, highlighted the need for inflation management in order to attain short-run stabilization as well as long-term inflation goals. Given the importance of sound macro-economic fundamental in the economy, it is essential to identify the important variables that could influence the performance of the economy. In this sense, both inflation and export play an important role in determining the economic growth of a particular country.

- Exchange rate

Different exchange rate regimes give rise to different tendencies for exchange rate misalignment and exchange rate volatility. These are two reasons why the exports of developing countries may be subject to more severe consequences of exchange rate misalignment and exchange rate volatility that exports of developed countries. Exporter sin developing economies like Zimbabwe, are expected to be more vulnerable to exchange rate misalignments since developing countries exports are often comprised of raw materials, where the exporters have little power. In this context, the exporter has to change quantity rather than the export price to respond to misalignment of the exchange rate. The other reason is that developing economies usually have underdeveloped financial markets; exchange rate volatility is more harmful for them in terms of export due to limited hedging possibilities. It

is very important to manage country's exchange rate policy that secures internal and external equilibrium, thus, avoiding misalignment of the exchange rate.

7.2.5. Market factors

- Market attractiveness

Internationalisation theory and contributions on export performance show that knowledge about markets drives performance. This study, in agreement with Kaynak and Kua (1993), established that export market attractiveness has a positive effect on export performance. Zimbabwean food and beverage manufacturing firms need to step outside the box of what is considered good business practices, and they need to identify strategies that will set them apart from other companies and help them thrive in this industry.

- Market competitiveness

Industry has been defined as a group of firms manufacturing products that directly or indirectly competes with each other. It is implied that no nation can be competitive in manufacturing all goods. Hence, industry competitiveness of an entire nation is not quite meaningful. Instead, since it is the firms who compete in international markets, the entire framework of competitiveness would revolve around the firm. "…industrial success was founded on behaviour for firms, not the decisions of governments" and food and beverage sector.

- Market structures

Market structure (also known as market form) describes the state of a market with respect to competition. It affects the nature of competition and pricing but it is important not to place too much emphasis simply on the market share of the existing food and beverage manufacturing firms. The casual relationship between local competition and however; Cortes

(2005) finds that export share leads to more rivalry among domestic firms, urging them to be more efficient and productive.

7.2.6. Contextual environment factors

Trade barriers, cultural differences and physical distance to export markets have been found to play an important role in export development and success (Cavusgil 1984).

- Trade barriers

To overcome trade barriers requires significant investment in both time and resources. As a result, an export industry may be unable or unwilling to fully engage and take advantage of available government consultation mechanisms and strategies for dealing with barriers in foreign markets. In line with other trends of globalisation, export industry is increasingly involved in international business. They not only account for a significant share of exports but also important and link up to global production networks. As they attempt to internationalise, it often encounters substantial barriers. These barriers are complex and can both internal to a particular firm or emanating from the larger business environment in which it operates, including trade policy barriers. Export barriers re important because of their impact on the behaviour of exporters at different stages of internationalisation.

- Cultural differences (cultural distance)

Cultural difference is also termed psychological or psychic distance (the terms are used interchanging but cultural distance is used in this regard). Cultural distance between the home and the foreign markets affects barriers to entry and operation in a foreign market. Cultural distance influence the perceived importance of export barriers. It is based on variability at national level e.g., language, history, etc., organisational e.g., values and orientations, and individual levels (Reid 1986). Cultural distanced is the extent of perceived dissimilarity on dimensions that have an effect on how business is conducted including language, business habits, marketing infrastructure, and legal environment. The large the cultural distance

between the home and host markets, more learning is required for successful marketing. The more culturally distant the markets, the more difficult it is to operate in them because of increasingly different cultural environment (Root 1987).

- Physical distance

In an era of globalisation and falling trade barriers, businesses across the world are increasing seeking out export markets as a means sustained growth. It represents a transaction cost of doing business between countries physical distance costs are expected to vary between any two countries according to the nature of the economic activity (Dunning 1993).

7.2.7. Export initiation

Potential in exporting connected to word of mouth, diversification of business and joint venture emerged in the qualitative interviews as key reasons for export initiation of Zimbabwean firms. This finding supports theoretical projection that a significant level of export adoption among African countries is increasing and many firms from Sub-Saharan Africa are becoming involved in exporting (Ibeh & Young 2001; Rankin, Söderbom & Teal 2006 and Ibeh, Wilson & Chizema 2012). The current study has discovered that international exposure defined as living, studying or working abroad, is not related to export initiation but is related to diverse initiatives in Zimbabwe.

7.2.8. Location of the firm

The qualitative study has found exporting firms in Zimbabwe are located in provincial capital cities and near railway sidings or loading ramps. This supports the positive correlation between firms located in provincial cities and export performance (Belso-Martinez 2006). The location was defined as proximity to port of exit, infrastructure access, the source of raw materials, general labour and other exporting activities as found in this study (Freeman & Styles 2014). Zimbabwean firms identified location benefits as an advantage in exporting, similar to the works of Felzensztein, Stringer, Benson-Rea & Freeman (2014), who argued

that co-located firms can increase competitiveness through marketing externalities. This finding supports the works of Berko and Damoah (2013) who found Ghanaian exporters located in regional cities were advantaged by benefits such as financiers, services of Government agencies and competition that sparks changes and innovation. Zimbabwean exporting firms located in provincial cities are more likely to operate efficiently and effectively to enhance export performance than exporting firms located outside cities.

7.2.9. Common export problems (Barriers)

This study from the qualitative interviews has categorised four common problems faced by Zimbabwean exporters namely: logistics, functional, marketing and lack of funding. Logistical barriers are associated with unavailability of cargo planes for transportation of products overseas, and poor infrastructure that affect export operations. Environmental barriers are associated with rapid changes related to high level of uncertainty, which lies beyond the control of the firm, similar to the results (1995b). The fast track land reform programme and lack of adequate raw materials have been identified as functional barriers in the food and beverage manufacturing industry, creating a gap in the supply chain system. The results are in line with the functional barriers found in previous studies that were related to inefficiencies of the firms' function in terms of unavailability of production capacity that affects export performance (Leonidou 2000; Tesfom, Lutz and Ghauri (2006b).

Marketing barriers, including product quality have been rated highly in export barrier issues (Tesfom, Lutz and Ghauri (2006b). Export-marketing problems in Zimbabwe are related to the firm's ability to respect foreign marketing conditions, which result in high rejection rates in host countries. This finding is in line with the works of Tesfom, Lutz and Ghauri (2006b), who identified marketing problems as a major barrier to export. Other studies reveal that many foreign Governments use special legislation to set up quality standards for certain categories of goods, making product adaptation mandatory in export market (Eillis 2001581; Leonidou 1995b).

Literature has documented lack of funding as one of the major challenges especially for small exporting firms (Leonidou 1995a). The current study has found that Zimbabwean exporters expect lowly priced loans from banking institutions to support their businesses, and yet the banking institutions are not forthcoming. Some studies have documented that some exporters obtain credit after pledging acceptable collateral in form of fixed assets (Leonidou 1995a; Leonidou 2000). Lack of fixed assets by majority of firms in Zimbabwe creates operational barriers in exporting. Most Zimbabwe's exporters are unable to access funding from financial institutions because of strict requirements and collateral demands, which negatively affect their export operations. This finding supports previous studies that argued that engagement in exporting requires extensive expenditure on operations, which creates excessive financial burdens for firms especially if the latter is strained financially (Leonidou 1995b).

7.2.10. Current export capacity constraints of firms in Zimbabwe

Since 1990s, Zimbabwe has exhibited large current account deficits, and as a result, the trade balance has always been negative (Chikoko & Nakunyada 2012 and Mandishekwa, Tambudzai & Marufu 2014). The traditional export specifications, which explain export performance by foreign demand and price competitiveness indicators, are not able to describe the recent developments in Zimbabwe. From the qualitative interviews, this thesis has revealed that escalating labour costs, use of multicurrency (or dollarisation), de-industrialisation, lack of adequate feedstock by the manufacturing sector, weak effective domestic demand, and low capacity utilisation have contributed significantly to decline in exports by Zimbabwean firms. This thesis also reveals that shifting sales towards the export market or even entering the export market altogether, comes with costs. When production capacities are highly utilised amid strong effective domestic demand, an increase in exports is often not possible in the short-term. Conversely, during a domestic recession, capacities will become free and firms will be able to export more; to compensate for low domestic sales. Thus managers increase their efforts towards export market. This consideration is of particular relevance during the prevailing weak economic situation in Zimbabwe.

7.2.11. Current coping strategies by exporting firms

The findings from the qualitative interviews reveal that if a company succeeds at selling in domestic market, there is a good chance that it will also be successful in markets abroad, wherever similar needs and conditions exist. In markets that differ significantly from domestic market, (comparison between Zimbabwean market and European market) some products may have limited potential. Those differences may be climate and environmental factors, social and cultural factors, local availability of raw materials or product alternatives, lower wage costs, lower purchasing power, the availability of foreign exchange, government import controls, and many other factors. If a product is successful in a domestic market, one strategy for export success may be a careful analysis of why it sells there, followed by a selection of similar markets abroad. This has been evident among significant number of Zimbabwean firms in the food and beverage manufacturing industry. These firms export mostly to the regional markets as compared to exports to significantly different markets such as Europe, Middle East or Asia. In this way, little or no product modification is required.

If a product is new and unique, low-cost market research may already be available to help assess its overseas market potential. In addition, international trade statistics (available at the central bank, national statistical agency or department of customs) can give preliminary indication of overseas markets for a particular product showing where similar or related products are already being sold in significant quantities. If a product is unique or has important features that are hard to duplicate abroad, chances are good for finding export market. This is the case with organically produced and GMO-free fruit juices produced by some beverage manufacturers in Zimbabwe. For a unique product, competition may be non-existent or very slight, while demand may be quite high.

7.2.12. Exporters' perception of trade promotion organisations

In Zimbabwe, Zimtrade is a publicly owned trade promotion organisation that has the mandate to empower private firms with export-marketing information. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) and the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) jointly facilitate export of goods. The RBZ administers export documentation through the Form CD1 system in order

to account for value of goods that is exported. The Zimbabwe Revenue Authority ensures that there is no under-declaration of the value of goods when being shipped out of the country.

Based on the qualitative results, exporters have the view that Zimtrade does not organise adequate exporters' seminars where firms expect to acquire knowledge on export-marketing strategies. These findings are in line with previous studies that examined the efficiency of trade promotion organisations in developing countries. According to Hogan, Keesing and Singer (1991) the inefficiency of trade promotion organisations in developing countries has been due to excessive bureaucratisation and unnecessary government participation, lack of funding and lack of customer focus. In their study about the efficiency of government-sponsored export promotion organisations, Knight and Liesch (2002) point to the fact that these institutions have insufficient resources, provide underdeveloped and poorly executed services. They generally lack fundamental knowledge about the private sector and its needs.

As regards the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, trade policies have been redirected towards export liberalisation. However, Zimbabwe is still lagging behind where red tape procedures for exports are still viewed as excessive and costly (World Bank Ease of Doing Business Report 2018). Based on the qualitative results, the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, which is responsible for customs clearance, is viewed as inefficient and thereby delaying exports. It takes an average of 5 days to clear an export cargo as compared to 1 day that is achieved in other countries such as Mauritius and Norway. This finding is in line with the World Bank findings on ease of doing business in Zimbabwe (World Bank Report on Ease of Doing Business 2018)

7.2.13. Government policy and conducive export environment

The globalisation of business and growth in world trade contributes to rising demand for finance among export oriented business. This underlines the urgency with which countries should develop their own export financing facilities. Many developing countries, Zimbabwe is no exception, continue to lack effective banking institutions and other arrangements for the financing of their exports. Two types of financing are required for exporting, long-term

is required for investments in export oriented industries and short-term finance is needed to finance activities associated with the process of exporting.

In the context of export promotion strategy, export financing, refers to short-term financing, including pre-and post-shipment finance, export credit insurance and guarantee schemes. The inability to obtain credit at a reasonable cost affects the competitiveness of Zimbabwean exporters when competing with other firms located in countries that have far better financial institutions offering their customers a variety of financial products to augment their competitive advantage. The interviews with managers of the firms revealed that firms in Zimbabwe require export financing. This is in line with findings by Czinkota (1994; 2002).

The development and promotion of exports encompasses a very broad set of activities. These generally include establishing a favourable policy environment, the creation of institutions and physical infrastructures to support trade, investments in export oriented industries, improvements to product quality and specifications, the provision of export finance means for firms, provision of trade information and promotional activities. Despite the persistent efforts in providing export promotional activities in Zimbabwe, firms still suffer severely of lack of adequate financial means to finance exports. Developing the financial sector in accordance with the needs of the manufacturing firms to have more access to different means to finance their exports is a pre-requisite for the for the export promotion programmes, which in turn contribute significantly to the export performance of firms. Formulation of sound and implementable export development and promotion strategies call for the existence of sustainable institutional capacity in all aspects.

7.2.14. Export knowledge and the internationalisation process

According to Gençtürk and Kotabe (2001), the liaison with export promotion organisations by exporters differs by the degree of firm's nationalisation. Firms that are more export involved have more access to services of the export promotion organisations and are subsequently performing better on exporting. This argument is supported by the findings of this study, as committed exporters were main users of Zimtrade and the beneficiaries of their

services. To some extent this argument could be reasonably valid but it raises a serious enquiry. Export committed firms with their well-established organisational structures (most large scale firms), are in a much better position to access needed expertise from secondary sources and their managerial processes can effectively ease external information processing (Samiee & Walters 1990). Nevertheless, firms that are still at the beginning of their participation process are far more in need for export assistance. These inexperienced potential exporters suffer more of the severity of export impediments, and should thus rely on available external knowledge and expertise provided by secondary sources (Bilkey & Tesar 1978; Ali 1998).

7.2.15. Foreign language proficiency

During the in-depth interviews some managers mentioned that it is important for one to be proficient in foreign languages in order to conduct successful export business. This is another factor that many researchers previously examined. Reviews on the past researches by Sousa, Martinez-Lopez and Coelho (2008) showed that recent studies have not evaluated these variables because business in the foreign market is based on foreign language proficiency, and without this proficiency, trade becomes very hard. Although, this variable has been mentioned in a study by Zarin and Vazife (2009), there is still a need to examine it among Iranian exporters. They noted that most of the export managers could not speak English or speak fluently, and this problem caused misunderstandings on both negotiators in business meetings. Thus, it is worth recognising the relationship between foreign language proficiency and export performance. Katsikeas and Skarmeas (2003), in their research categorised professional components as the significant factors between high and low export effectiveness. Furthermore, previous studies revealed that managers with foreign language proficiency are able to cause better success in exports (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Most of the researchers found positive correlation between foreign language proficiency and export performance. The study by Suarez-Ortega and Alamo-Vera (2005), about firms and managerial factors of international SMEs, revealed the positive relationship between foreign language proficiency of managers and export performance. Das (1994),

Evangelista (1994) and Moini (1995) found foreign languages to be related to exporting involvement and success in performance of export. This study also confirms this finding.

7.2.16. Technological capability and export performance

A number of respondents during the in-depth interviews highlighted the importance of improving technological capability in order to enhance export performance. In this study, technological capability refers to the ability to make effective use of technological knowledge in order to assimilate, use, adapt and change existing technologies as well as the ability to create new technologies and to develop new products and processes, in response to the changing socio-economic environment to the advantage of the firms in question (Hitt, Hoskisson & Kim 1997). There are a number of studies that have evidenced that technological capability is one of the critical success factors for firms in emerging economies (Bell, Ross-Larson & Westphal 1984 and Caniels & Romijn 2003).

The in-depth interviewees believe that firm level technological capacity allows firms to reduce costs of production, increase efficiency, develop new knowledge and technology rapidly, reconfigure operations to international standards, and upgrade its products and processes. The positive relation between technological capability and export performance has been supported by various arguments and theories. Firstly, firm-level technological capability confers market power and consequently facilitates better export performance (Pla-Barber & Alegre 2007). Secondly, firms with greater presence in global markets require more proactive and aggressive technological capabilities (Lefebvre, Lefebvre & Bourgault 1998; Dunphy & Stace 1988 and Pettigrew, Woodman & Cameron 2001). Lastly, technological capability plays an outstanding role in ensuring the firms to achieve a higher level of international performance and to compete successfully in foreign markets (Flor & Oltar 2005).

7.2.17. Export development and export performance

In-depth interviews revealed that export development contributes to export performance. A number of interviewees indicated that there is need to ensure that there is adequate and reliable supply of energy and water to export oriented industries at competitive rates;

the impact of export barriers is shown to be situation-specific, largely depending on the idiosyncratic managerial, organisational, and environmental background of the firm. However, certain barriers, such as those relating to information inefficiencies, price competitiveness, foreign customer habits, and politico-economic hurdles. Seem to have a systematically strong obstructing effect on export behaviour.

7.2.18. Export promotion by Government agencies

Another important finding from the in-depth interviews, is the export promotion role that Government agencies can play to enhance export performance of firms. Export promotion has become popular policy for promoting economic development and growth. Realignments on both macro and micro levels are occurring on a daily basis, making past orientations obsolete and compelling firms to seek new business beyond national borders. Exports and export promotion activity that have received interest only recently due to the balance of trade deficit, unemployment and domestic economic slowdown, are becoming important components of the state economic development programs. The promotion of export activities through government and other public sector institutions has received wide attention from both policy makers and academic researchers (Leonidou 2004). The interest reflects, on the one hand, recognition of the potential usefulness of export promotion for businesses and, on the other hand, that the well-performed export promotion activities have a major impact on exporters' competitiveness abroad and thus bring in the economic well0being of a country.

During in-depth interviews, some exporters strongly felt that Government should provide export incentives in order to improve forms' export competitiveness. This observation is in line with the findings by Gençtürk & Kotabe (2001) who pointed out that Governments

consider exports as engine of growth and worldwide, they provide assistance applied to improve their firms' performance by providing their knowledge and competence applied to export market development. The broadest definition, presented by Czinkota, Ronkainen and Moeffett (2005) define export promotion as the government attempts to stimulate exports by giving incentives to exporting firms. Export incentive programmes are designed to attract more firms into exporting by offering assistance in product and market identification and development, pre and post-shipment financing, payment guarantee schemes, trade fairs, trade visits, foreign representations, etc.

7.2.19. Innovation and export performance

In-depth-interviews revealed that there is need for exporters to be innovative in order to enhance export performance. Despite the existence of various definitions, for the purpose of this study, innovation corresponds to the implementation of a new product or service, or significantly improved; a process; a new marketing method; a new organisational practice in organisations and external relations. Innovation has been studied intensively by researchers in different fields of study for being a multidisciplinary concept (Damanpour & Aravind 2012). As a result of all the socio-economic changes of the recent decades, the term innovation has been associated with the competitiveness of firms and nations (Porter & Rivkin 2012).

In order to enhance export performance, firms should also focus on product innovation and process innovation. Product innovation is the differentiation or improvement of a product to meet the needs of external users, while process innovation is to improve the production of a product or service process (Damanpour & Aravind 2012). Innovation can be promoted by organisation's internal resources (Rosenbusch, Brickmann & Bausch 2011) as well as the knowledge acquired externally (Kostopoulos, Papalexandris, Papachroni & Ioannou 2011 and Saenz, Revilla & Knoppen 2014) or even by a random set of actors combined with internal resources of the organisation – called open innovation (Chesbrough 2007 and Dahlander & Gann 2010).

In the field of International Business, scholars have sought to establish the relationship between innovation and internationalisation (Monreal-Perez, Aragon-Sanchez & Sanchez-Marin (2012) conducted a longitudinal survey by Spanish companies and identified that exporting firms are more likely to develop more innovations and thus increase their activities in international markets. Although studies did not find statistically significant relationship between innovation and export performance, (Mais, Carvalho & Amal 2014) this study, in line with the empirical study of Monreal-Perez, Aragon-Aragon-Sanchez and Marin (2012) as well as evidence from Cassiman, Golovko and Martinez-Ros (2010), Alegre, Pla-Barber, Chiva and Villar (2012), Becker and Egger (2013) and Tavassoli (2013), that, to the gains in the competitiveness, innovation can be seen as a strategic advantage to overcome trade barriers and to establish a significant market position, as well as in the domestic as in foreign markets.

7.2.20. Trade facilitation and export performance

Trade facilitation is broadly defined as the set of policies aiming at reducing export and import costs. It has been in the spotlight policy for as the next key option to reduce trade costs in low income countries. All most all chief executive officers and managers indicated that inefficiencies regarding clearance procedures, lack of transparency of customs clearance, lack of transparency of other border agencies, non-availability of adequate and/or lack of timely information of regulatory changes, negatively affects export performance of Zimbabwean exporters.

The relationship between export performance and trade facilitation is complex, not only because a country's trade flows may change through its own trade facilitation reforms and through its trading partners' reforms, but also because of the multi-dimensionality of trade facilitation. Trade facilitation measures can be thought of along two dimensions: investment in "hard" infrastructure (highways, railroads, ports etc.) and in "soft" infrastructure (transparency, customs efficiency, institutional reforms, etc.

In order to reduce costs of doing export business, there is need for radical trade facilitation reforms and improve the ease of doing export business in Zimbabwe. This finding is in line with a study by Win (2014) on export barriers faced by Myanmar firms exporting to China.

7.2.21. Export financing and access to capital

During the in-depth interviews, a number of managers mentioned that export performance of their firms would be improved if they could access cheap finance from the banks. This finding is in tandem with studies by Muûls (2008) and, Chor and Manova (2012) which found out that exporting firms depend more on external financing compared to domestically producing firms. Foreign activities are often considered riskier than domestic ones because it is more difficult for the exporter to deal with foreign payment systems that may be unknown and, in the case of default, to collect the payment sometimes through intricate or obscure procedures. In addition, since there is a time lag between shipment and payment, the exporting firm has a greater need for working capital and turns to the banking system for financing, for guaranteeing payment, and for providing export insurance.

For exporters, it is very important to access financing as entering international markets requires substantial financial resources (Zahra, Ireland & Hitt 2000). According to Kawas (1997), exporters need financing resources essentially for two reasons: (1) working capital, through trade credit, to run the export business, to manufacture or acquire goods to fill an order, and to reduce their cash cycle, anticipating revenues after shipping goods, as firms often sell on credit and have to wait to obtain payments at maturity. In the first situation, the level of working capital varies significantly from firm to firm and between different industries (Berk & DeMarzo 2011) the major sources of these first needs are finances provided by banks and export credit insurance policy by insurance credit companies, assigning its rights to the amounts payable under the policy to a financial institution to obtain financing and to mitigate risk. In the second situation, exporter can discount a term draft for payment with an irrevocable commercial letter of credit or discount a trade receivable guaranteed resource (forfaiting). Manova (2008) and Berman and Héricourt (2010) explain how trade finance affects the number of exporters and the size of their export sales. Export

trade financing is therefore, critical in ensuring sustainable and competitive exporting, hence contributes positively to export performance of a firm.

7.2.22. Trade information and export performance

Chief executive officers and managers indicated that access to trade information is a critical ingredient to successful and sustained export venture. This finding is in line with the Porter's Diamond Theory which suggests that a firm's relationships and networks afford the creation of social capital that funnels resources into the firm (Porter 1990 and Porter et al, 2012). Export firms require various types of knowledge-based resources such as information on international business opportunities, government policies and procedures, supply chain management and financial management requirements of exporting. Exporting is a resource hungry business venture (Luo 2003; and Walter, Auer & Ritter 2006). Thus, social capital is the form of external connections and networks provides the opportunity to access valuable knowledge-based resources that are needed to fuel their export ventures.

Previous studies have emphasised the importance of social capital in the formation of inter-firm networks of owners or managers and have considered how these social relationships act as conduits or channels that funnel externally available resources into the firm (Bonner, Carlitz, Gunn, Maak & Ratliff 2005; Newbert 2007 and Ellis 2010). The network model of internationalisation (Hadley & Wilson 2003; Federico, Kantis, Rialp A & Riap J 2009 and Ellis 2010) also stresses that a firm's performance in its export ventures depends largely on its ability to build and maintain a strong and reliable network of relationships in both the home country and foreign markets. Social capital provides the firm with an understanding of possible constraints and opportunities for its export operations (Hadley & Wilson 2003). Moreover, social capital has been identified as a critical element in the performance of firms in low income countries because proposer support infrastructure for exporters do not exist in many of those locations (Roxas & Chadee 2012). As a result, firms in low income countries often resort to formal and informal networks to overcome the challenges of exporting (Roxas & Chadee 2011).

Informational knowledge at the firm level is comprised of market information about the export firm's customers, competitors and channels, and the wider environment in the target export market. Market information about the export firm's target export market, provides insights into which value adding activities the firm should undertake, and how these should be accomplished in ways that match market conditions. Information input into the firm's market planning capability helps improve the quality of decision making by guiding how aspects of the venture's planning capability should be designed and managed to align it with the requirements of the export market environment.

Morgan, Kaleka and Katsikeas (2004) explain that the capabilities an export firm requires are derived from the firm's knowledge resource base. The firm's knowledge resources are converted into organisational level capabilities through routines. Routines develop as a result individuals and groups within the export firm exploit and apply available experimental and informational knowledge to solve the firm's problems. The routines that emerge, are combined within the organisation to develop capabilities. In summary, Morgan, Kaleka and Katsikeas (2004) establish the relationship between firm resources, capabilities and performance and highlight the role and importance of routines to the firm. The authors define the export venture's strategy as the ability to respond to the specific and unique requirements of their target export market and argue that this ability is essential in achieving enhanced export performance (ibid.). This implies that knowledge resources are directly responsible for the ability of the exporting firm to plan and implement its strategy.

7.3. Mediating effects of the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps)

This study draws its theoretical underpinning from Porter's Diamond Theory on Competitive Advantage, internationalisation, and the resource-based view as export activity is associated with many aspects of the firm's resources and capabilities (Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas 2004). A firm may have a unique bundle of tangible and intangible resources including assets, capabilities, processes, managerial attributes, and knowledge that improve firm efficiency to enhance export performance (Wernerfelt 1984 and Barney 2001). Drawing from the

resource-based view, some scholars have argued that a resource or capability is any asset that can be described as strength of a firm at a particular time (Prahalad & Hamel 1990 and Collis 1991). The resource-based view contends that the principal determinants of a firm's export performance are the internal resources and capabilities that are superior in use and difficult for competitors to imitate (Collis 1991 and Barney 2001). Different resources can be identified and developed to create competitive advantage for the firm (Wernerfelt 1984). These resource advantages empower the firm to create a competitive advantage with their own resource position, making it difficult for other competitors in the industry to emulate or catch up with the market leader (Barney, Ketchen and Wright 2011). This study presents the discussion based on internal resources including export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), export commitment and international experience, export promotion programmes and foreign market attractiveness, with other factors to create a strategic fit in export markets.

To address the objectives of the study, the mediating effects of the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) on the association of international experience, export commitment, and export promotion programmes with export performance are discussed. Thereafter, the moderating effect of foreign marketing attractiveness and other key determinants are discussed in line with results from the mixed method approach.

7.3.1. Adaption of the export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps)

Place and product adaptation mediate the relationship between export commitment and export performance. Enhanced export performance can be achieved through export commitment and adaptation forces to create a strategic fit in export markets. Thus, export commitment indirectly enhanced export performance by enabling effective export adaptation strategies to achieve perceived export success. Place adaptation has further mediated export promotion programmes and export performance. Applying export promotion programmes has reinforced distribution adaptation to achieve high export performance. This implies that selection of effective distribution networks is fortified by using export promotion programmes to acquire foreign information to improve export performance. Thus, Zimbabwean exporters use export promotion programmes to learn about foreign market

operations, which is considered as the driving force behind the firm's export performance (Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou 2011). Capitalisation of managerial competencies is the prerogative of the firm by allocating resources to adapt export-marketing strategies to enhance performance (Griffith & Hoppner 2013).

The study has found support for place (distribution) adaptation and export performance in both the quantitative and qualitative studies. This implies that creating an effective distribution channel enables a firm to differentiate operations, as dissimilarities exist between the home and host markets that may require additional adaptation strategies to enhance export performance (Lee & Griffith 2004). The type of middlemen, transport strategy, and budget set aside for distribution, enhanced export performance in this study, which is similar to the findings of Lado, Martinez-Ros and Valenzuela (2004) and Eusebio, Andreu & Belbeze (2007b). The qualitative interview results suggest that the international distribution channels of Zimbabwean firms need specific adaptation strategies as management teams have experiential knowledge. Zimbabwean firms are better off outsourcing some of the distribution functions to save cost and need to evaluate the possibilities to ensure an effective distribution strategy is put in place. Therefore, this study argues that highly export committed managers will enhance export performance outcomes by adapting distribution channels in foreign markets.

Product adaptation is necessary because of numerous differences between local and foreign consumers (Solberg & Durrieu 2008). The study has revealed that product adaption enhance performance and reflects findings from other studies (Lee & Griffith 2004 and Zaiem & Zghidi 2011). This study supports the works of Lee & Griffith (2004) on Korean exporters who found product adaptation to influence export performance and argued that adapted products should be of high quality with competitive pricing. Zimbabwe exporters adapt products to suit characteristics of different export markets irrespective of industry and this has been reiterated in the qualitative interviews. High levels of product adaptation by Zimbabwe exporters is associated with the nature of emerging market firms. Adu-Gyamfi and Komeliussen (2013) argue that firms in emerging markets are unlikely to make large

investments in product capacity to enjoy economies of scale, therefore, they allocate substantial resources to adapt products to suit characteristics of export markets they participate in.

The interviews have reinforced the major role of product adaptation in determining the appropriate strategy. The food and beverage products have been fully adapted to suit characteristics and customer preferences in export markets. In the food manufacturing industry, product adaptation has been carried out from planting stage to shop shelf by applying approved inputs, meeting required product features, and meeting product quality. The firms have exhibited product adaptation through product modification, product design and style, and packaging. It has emerged from the interviews that products were adapted in terms of brand, packaging and labeling. The firms applied product design and style to adapt their products to suit customer preferences in export markets.

The study has revealed that different aspects of the products are adapted to suit customer preferences and standards in different export markets. Export performance literature has argued that consumer goods generally require product adaptation because of their higher degree of cultural grounding and the degree of change required by foreign consumers (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011).

On product modification, the firms explained that the products were being modified to suit the host country requirements. For instance, the specifications of the Italian market are very different and diverse as well as those from the SADC region. It is therefore demonstrated in this study that some learning and knowledge have been acquired on the characteristics of various export markets. Products were adapted in different forms by satisfying the required standards and product quality specifications to prevent rejection at entry points in destination countries (Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Samiee 2002). This study has found that buyer specifications and standards were adhered to in order to maintain trust and goodwill in the relationship between importer and exporter (Leonidou, Samiee, Aykol & Talias 2014). Therefore, this study provides exploratory insights to support the positive relationship

between product adaptation and export performance, and attributes this practice to substantial resource allocation by Zimbabwean firms (Cadogan, Sundqvist, Salminen & Puumalainen 2005).

Studies on promotion adaptation and export performance are limited in the literature and the results appear mixed (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008; Zou & Stan 1998). This study did not find any evidence to support the relationship between the two constructs, which supports studies carried out in less advanced countries (Lee & Griffith 2004; Singh 2009) and in advanced countries (Cavusgil & Zou 1994; Eusebio, Andreu & Pilar 2007b and Lages & Jap 2002). The non-significant results between the two constructs imply that promotional activities have been focused on the food and beverage manufacturing industry to a limited extent in Zimbabwe because of financial constraints of firms in less advanced economies (Adu-Gyamfi & Korneliussen 2013). The interviews have provided additional insights to explain this finding. Results from the interviews indicated that promotional activities have been carried out based on requests from the importers. Other promotion strategies involved direct shipment of samples to offshore buyers, word of mouth, and attendance of foreign trade exhibitions/shows.

Price adaptation has received little attention in the literature (Lages 2000 and Sousa & Bradley 2008a) and results obtained with export performance are mixed or mostly negative (Shoham 1995 and Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Samiee 2002). A non-significant relationship has been found between price adaptation and export performance, and this finding has been supported in the qualitative interviews. This finding is similar to other studies that found no support for price adaptation and export performance (Lages & Jap 2002; Lages & Montgomery 2005; O'Cass & Julian 2003; Özsomer & Simonin 2004; Sousa & Bradley 2008a and Zou & Stan 2008). Some scholars have argued that price are mostly adapted to a lower level in export markets depending on foreign market conditions (Sousa & Bradley 2008a and Sousa & Bradley 2009). This study has found that competition and characteristics of export markets demand critical pricing strategies to remain competitive. The qualitative interviews have provided additional exploratory insights and revealed that Zimbabwean

exporters experience price fluctuations, and reduction as pricing strategies have been fixed or based mostly on negotiations in European countries. Foreign discount shops placing orders from the European countries and Middle Eastern countries, request huge discounts which has affected the pricing mechanism of exporters. Other managers exporting to the African markets have reiterated that pricing strategy has always been difficult as other values like border activities, customs duties, and transport costs come into play, which affects export performance.

Results from the qualitative interviews suggest that cultural adaptation was being considered to suit foreign buyer specifications. The interview investigated whether products were designed to a specific culture, as it is easier to target culturally similar markets (Shoham 1995). The literature posits that the more distant a market is culturally, the more dissimilar the product attributes and foreign consumer values will be (Lado, Martinez-Ros & Valenzuela 2004). On language and features, firms have asserted that even though it is the same condensed milk they sell on the local market, they prepare export consignments to meet different specifications of every country. For instance, specific languages and product labels have been used for countries such as Afghanistan and Holland to adapt to language, colour and their customers' ability to read and understand. For some products shipped and sold in major supermarkets in Europe such as ASDA, Sainsbury and Tesco, there were always strict requirements the firms have to meet as these products are displayed on the shelves of these recognised supermarkets. This is an indication that features of the product are labelled in specific languages depending on the product destination. It also emerged that product packages going to Middle East (Afghanistan) and Francophone (Rwanda) were written in different languages to allow the customers to read and understand the labels on the packages.

In support of product design to a specific culture and quality, other managers maintained that they try to have specific packaging to meet buyer specifications in various export markets. They explained that countries like UK, Italy and Holland prefer cans that are easy to open (with pull ring can opener) and those in the SADC region prefer larger cans as consumers usually buy for the family (which is usually bigger, compared to the European set up).

Therefore, in order to export successfully, the firms addressed cultural dissimilarities in languages, colour, quality and design to reduce perceived risk of failure to suit the cultural needs of foreign markets in enhancing export performance (Madsen 1989). This indicates that Zimbabwean food and beverage manufacturing exporters have responded to cultural and quality adaptation in various foreign markets as differences exist in cultural norms that can pose both threats and opportunities in exporting (Fischer 2010). Furthermore, a firm's decision to export is likely to be affected by the socio-cultural situation in a particular country that cannot be ignored (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). Some managers explained that they take religion, colour, norms and culture into consideration.

The qualitative interviews have suggested that Zimbabwean food and beverage manufacturing firms consider cultural factors to remain competitive in export markets. The concept of pan-global marketing is not common among Zimbabwean exporters. As opined by Sousa and Bradley (2007c) that differences in cultural norms can influence customer preferences for product design and inversely affect export performance. Zimbabwe exporters have been utilising similar and dissimilar markets as products have been exported to both advanced and less advanced countries in Europe, Middle East and Africa. This finding is in line with Mavrogiannis, Bourlakis, Dawson and Ness (2008) who argued that similarity of export and domestic markets was insignificant, therefore, exporters have to target new export destinations and should not restrict operations to similar cultural markets only.

7.3.2. Export commitment

The export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) mediates export commitment and export performance. This finding suggests that management's export commitment leads to substantial allocation of resources to export adaptation strategies, which transform into high performance (Aaby & Slater 1989). Therefore, internal capabilities of the firm play a significant role in creating competitiveness in exporting (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). Export commitment has returned a positive relationship with export performance. This has been supported in qualitative interviews. The study has found that Zimbabwean exporters are highly committed to exporting, which supports the study of Muranda (2003)

who has argued that Zimbabwean exporters with high commitment are competitive and survive longer in exporting. This study argues that export commitment improves the effectiveness of resource allocation, provides a vital motivation to remain competitive and thereby enhance export performance.

7.3.3. Export promotion programmes

Export promotion programmes mediated international experience and place adaptation relationship. This indicates that the application of export promotion programmes is achieved through the reinforcement of international experience and the distribution strategy. Export promotion programmes was non-significant with export performance. In some studies, the direct relationship between export promotion programmes and export performance was non-significant (Alvarez 2004; Francis & Collins-Dodd 2004 and Stottinger & Holzmuller 2001). Alvarez (2004) found in a study of Chilean firms that export promotion programmes did not affect the probability of exporting regularly and resulted in a negative relationship between the two constructs. This study has examined export promotion programmes in terms of export documentation and export training/seminars but there was no evidence to support export performance. The interviews provided exploratory insights to explain this finding. Although the qualitative study found that export promotion programmes were beneficial to some extent, some managers had different perceptions. Some managers argued that they hardly used export promotion programmes and expected public policy makers to come closer and offer more support to Zimbabwean exporters. Other managers raised concerns about the operations of the policy makers and argued that export promotion programmes on offer were designed generally without the focus on the foreign market.

7.3.4. International experience

Management international experience refers to the degree to which the company's management has abroad experience, having lived or worked overseas, as well as the skills, abilities and information that provide firm's goals (Langes & Montgomery 2005 and Nazar & Saleem 2009).

International experience in terms of degree of overseas experience-worked or lived abroad was non-significant but positive with export performance. This finding is not consistent with previous studies that found a direct significant relationship between the two constructs (Cadogan, Diamantopoulos & Siguaw 2002; Leonidou & Kaleka 1998 and Stoian, Rialp & Rialp 2011). It has been argued that African firms possess key decision-maker characteristics with previous international orientation, although this is not supported in the current research (Ibeh, Wilson & Chizema 2012 and Ibeh & Young 2001). However, some scholars also found a non-significant relationship between international experience and export performance (Adu-Gyamfi and Korneliussen 2013; Baldauf, Cravens & Wagner 2000; Brouthers & Nakos 2005 and Lages, Jap & Griffith 2008b). The reason behind the finding in the current study can be attributed to experiential knowledge acquired by Zimbabwean exporters from long years of exporting experience. The qualitative interviews supported this finding as many managers did not travel or live abroad prior to exporting.

On the other hand, international experience contributes positively to export commitment (Navarro, Acedo, Robson, Ruzo, & Losaa 2010a). Therefore, management teams with international experience are more likely to commit substantial resources to exporting (Stoian, Rialp & Rialp 2011). Mixed results between international experience and adaptation forces returned in this study is similar to the works of Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b) who found support for product, promotion, and distribution (place) adaptation strategy apart from price. The direct effect of international experience on place, product, and price adaptation has been found to be non-significant. However, the direct effect of international experience on promotion has been found to be positive. International experience influence promotion adaptation of Malaysian exporting firms to enhance performance and this has been attributed to substantial resource allocation (Alshammari & Islam 2014). This finding supports the argument that promotion adaptation can play a significant role in foreign markets (Hultman, Robson & Katsikeas 2009). According to the current study, international experience enhances export commitment and leverages export promotion programmes to transform adaptation forces into superior export performance. Thus, high export performance is

achieved through the indirect effect of international experience on adaptations forces (4Ps), export commitment and export promotion programmes.

Most previous studies revealed that managers with more extensive professional experience may bring in more success in exporting, through some of the scholars do not support this issue. The evaluating of key strategy topics is normally seen to be complex by managers with less experience, while managers with greater experience in international markets have better comprehension on effective factors in export markets and, therefore, they apply appropriate marketing strategy to avoid threats and seize opportunities (Langes & Montgomery 2005). Zou and Stan (1998) in their literature review mentioned that export performance of firms totally benefit from managers with international experience competence. In addition, the review by Sousa, Martinez-Lopez and Coelho (2008) showed that managers with international experience are more successful in exporting. These outcomes were confirmed by Lu and Julian (2007) in their survey. They concluded that a significant factor in discriminating between high and low export-marketing performance is the international experience of the export venture's management, and management's international experience contributes to positive export performance. In the similar vein, Ibeh (2003), Julien and Ramangalary (2003), Brodrechtova (2008), and Faver-Bonte and Giannelloni (2007) noted that export experience of a manager had positive effects onto his/her export performance. In contrast, Brouthers and Nakos (2005) described that the relationship between managers' international experience and export performance could be both positive and negative. Managers with greater experience build a network around themselves, so it is easier for them to handle obstacles faced in the international markets. Experienced managers are less opened to international development and business practice compared with younger managers who are dynamic and practise new approach in managing. Mavrogiannis, Bourlakis, Dawson and Ness (2008), in their research concluded that export experience does not have significant effect on export performance. In addition, they mentioned that some researchers find no positive or negative association between export experience and performance. This result is similar to Contractor, Hsu, and Kundu (2005) study which explains about export performance of international new ventures between Indian and Taiwanese software industry. It was found

that due to little experience, managers use internet and formal or informal networks to reach out to foreign customers. By doing this, they have better export performance compared with experienced managers who ignored it. So, they could associate the negative effect between export performance and experience. Previously, in a study done by Das (1994) mentioned that managers' international experience has less impact in successful exporting firms. One of the important aspects in terms of managers' international experience that needs the researcher's attention was the different market specifications that may affect the managers' target market experience on the overall market experience.

7.4. Moderating effects of foreign market attractiveness

7.4.1. Foreign market attractiveness

A firm's decision to export may depend on either the domestic or foreign market environment although limited research has been carried out in the external environment of the firm in export performance studies (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008 and Lages & Sousa 2010). In the current study, foreign market attractiveness moderated export-marketing strategy (4Ps) (apart from price) and export performance which explains that highly attractive foreign markets necessitate more export adaptation strategies to enhance export performance. The moderation effect between the relationship between price adaptation, foreign market attractiveness and export performance was weak. This indicates that prices were adapted to suit export market conditions (Sousa & Bradley 2009). Management of firms operating in foreign markets need to acknowledge changes in regulatory frameworks and customer preferences and apply country-specific adaptation strategies to remain competitive and create a balance in operations (Czinkota, Ronkainen, Sutton-Brady & Beal 2011). Moreover, the characteristics of the foreign market can strengthen or weaken the relationship between adaptation forces and export performance. Variations between the home and foreign markets in terms of sociocultural, consumer preferences, and legal and regulatory frameworks require adjusting export adaptation strategies to strengthen operations to achieve positive export performance (Mavrogiannis, Bourlakis, Dawson & Ness 2008). This study argues that external forces play a significant role in exporting which can strengthen or weaken the

association between adaptation forces (4Ps), foreign market attractiveness and export performance (Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou 2006). The results of the current study are that the greater the attractiveness of the foreign market, the higher the degree of export adaptation strategies (4Ps) and vice versa (Jain 1989).

Foreign market attractiveness returned a positive relationship with export performance which is in line with the review of the export performance of African firms (Ibeh, Wilson & Chizema 2012). The study has found that considerable differences exist between the domestic and foreign markets. Zimbabwean exporters allocating substantial resources to adaptation strategies to suit cultural differences, customer preferences and legal and regulatory frameworks are likely to perform better in exporting (Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008). The interviews provided support for this hypothesis with exploratory insights. Zimbabwean exporters argued that standards in Western markets are high which demand higher adaptation strategies to satisfy standards and regulations in foreign markets. Interestingly, the exporters stated that once entry requirements have been satisfied in Western markets, it was flexible to clear goods, making Western markets more attractive than African markets. The qualitative interviews revealed that although the Zimbabwean market is similar to other African markets in terms of culture, customer preferences, and regulatory/legal frameworks, the African markets are unattractive in terms of customs and border operations. Therefore, the advantages of exporting to Western markets are more beneficial in terms of foreign market attractiveness.

Zimbabwean firms experience competition in export markets. The interviews have revealed that environment uncertainty has brought changes and unpredictability in customer preferences which affect export performance (Slater, Hult, & Olson 2010). Zimbabwean firms face completion from Asian countries including China and India. Other countries include Kenya, South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Brazil and Tanzania. Zimbabwean firms operate in competitive export environment where customer preferences are unstable and not well-defined, which makes competition unpredictable and necessitate stringent adaptation strategies (Ibid.).

7.5. Summary of the research findings

The study has identified a number of factors that affect the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms such as firm characteristics factors (firm size, management perception toward export, firm experience on export, firm strategy and commitment); firm competency factors (technology, marketing knowledge, foreign market knowledge and international performance; adequacy of infrastructure; labour cost and labour skill; economic factors (economic growth, economic policy, inflation, exchange rate); market factors (market attractiveness, market competitiveness and market structures); contextual environment factors (trade barriers, cultural differences - cultural distance); physical distance; export initiation; and location of the firm.

Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) mediates the impact of export commitment, export pronation programmes on export performance. Place (distribution) and product are the most adapted export-marketing mix strategies by the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, whilst promotion and price are the least adapted strategies. The qualitative interviews supported these quantitative results as promotional activities have been achieved through attendance of trade shows/exhibitions, word of mouth and exports of product samples. The firms employ different strategies including subsidising export sales with local sales in order to stay competitive. Some firms adapt product designs and labeling as part of cultural adaption to suit customer specifications and requirements.

Export commitment and export performance relationships have been supported in both studies (quantitative and qualitative) because of substantial allocation of resources by the managers. International experience has been found to be an indirect determinant of export performance in the quantitative study and this has been supported in the qualitative interviews.

Foreign market attractiveness influence export performance significantly and retained a positive moderating effect on place, product, and promotion, apart from price in the

quantitative study. This result was supported in the qualitative interviews. The foreign market environment is viewed to be more attractive than home market in terms of standards, and legal/regulatory frameworks. The borders in African countries have been classified as complex and less facilitatory as compared to other borders in other continents. The export market environment has been characterised as being aggressive competition. The Zimbabwe food and beverage manufacturing firms face competition in foreign markets, from different parts of the world including Asian, European and African countries.

On additional factors, export initiation has been associated with potential in exporting, unavailability of markets, joint ventures, firm diversification and word of mouth. The qualitative study has identified functional, marketing, and logistical barriers and lack of funding as common problems associated with exporting in Zimbabwe. The fast track land reform programme, poor quality farm produce, unnecessary bureaucracy, lack of aligned workforce, strong US dollar, and late delivery of export orders, have been linked to functional barriers. For marketing barriers, poor quality farm produce, competitive prices from other countries, and lack of good quality raw materials, are common problems. Logistical barriers in terms of unavailability of dedicated cargo airplanes, and general lack of ease of doing export business, have been highlighted in the interviews. Access to bank loans, financial support from government agencies, and demand for collateral by financial institutions, have emerged as themes connected to lack funding for export business. The location of the firm has been related to proximity to the airport, road and railway loading ramps, ports of exit, and access to logistics, to influence export performance. Benefits have been gained by locating firms in regional capital cities. This provides local economies of scale and creates stable markets for specialised labour and raw materials for individual firms.

A subjective measurement of perceived export success has been operationalised in the quantitative study. The qualitative interviews have endorsed the use of subjective export performance measures over objective measures.

On control variables, firm size and age of the firm have retained positive results with export performance. Type of industry has resulted in a non-significant relationship with export performance.

Summaries of results of quantitative and qualitative studies are presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Construct/Interview Themes	Quantitative Study	Qualitative Study
Key Determinants of Export Performance		
Export-marketing Mix Strategy		
Place (Distribution)	Significant (+)	Supported
Product	Significant (+)	Supported
Promotion	Non-significant (-)	Not Supported
Price	Non-significant (-)	Not Supported
Export Commitment	Significant (+)	Supported
Export Promotion Programmes	Non-significant (+)	Supported
International Experience	Non-significant (+)	Not Supported
Foreign Market Attractiveness	Significant (+)	Supported
Mediation		
EC→EMMS→EP	Place and Product significant (+)	not applicable
EPP→EMMS→EP	Place significant (+)	not applicable
IE→EMMS→EP	EMMS (4Ps) non-significant (-)	not applicable
Moderation		
FMA via EMMS (4Ps) and EP	Place, Product & Promotion significant (+)	not applicable
Other Factors of Export Performance		
Export Initiation	not applicable	Supported
Location of the Firm	not applicable	Supported
Common Problems	not applicable	Supported
Export Performance Measures		
Subjective measures	Subjective	Supported
Objective measures	not applicable	Not supported

Source: Developed for the current study (2017)

7.6. Export performance measurements

Subjective measures have been considered appropriate in this study due to difficulty in obtaining objective performance data in emerging economies (Crick, Kaganda & Matlay 2011). The current study has found that managers are unwilling and unable to provide raw financial data as this information is considered private and confidential (Robertson & Chetty 2000). Particularly in the qualitative interviews, it has emerged that small firms are more reluctant than large firms to provide raw financial data. The majority of managers preferred to use subjective indications to measure performance. This finding is in line with international business literature, which supports applying subjective measures, where managers are reluctant or unable to provide objective financial data (Sousa 2004). This study has found that subjective export performance measurements are useful to Zimbabwean exporters (Lages & Sousa 2010). Moreover, it would be difficult to check the accuracy of reported financial data supplied by the managers as this information may not be publicly available in emerging economies such as Zimbabwe.

7.7. Control variables

Control variables have related differently with export performance in this study. Firm size and age influenced export performance. This finding supports the argument that the number of years of exporting and number of employees are often associated with export performance, either directly or indirectly (Samiee & Walters 1990). Industry has not influenced export performance, which indicates that export performance is not dependent on the type of industry or sector. The study has established that African and European markets are leading product destination for Zimbabwean firms, followed by Middle East markets.

7.8. Chapter summary

This chapter has highlighted the summary of results of the study. The results from the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews have been discussed and integrated using the

mixed method approach. The chapter discussed the determinants of export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe, additional results from the qualitative study, export performance measurements used in the study and control variables of the study. The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the research study to draw theoretical, managerial and public policy implications. Thereafter, the strengths and limitations of the study, and future research direction are presented to conclude the research.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0. Introduction

This chapter ties together the entire study. First, the key findings are translated into a meaningful set of conclusions. Second, based these conclusions, the implications for public policy formulation, managerial action, and export marketing theory are discussed. Third, suggestions for future research are put forward. The aim of this doctoral research is to advance the understanding of internationalisation behaviour of firms. The research looks at the factors that contribute to the export performance of the food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. This chapter presents the overall theoretical implications of the study for theory development, with recommendations to academic research, business managers and public policy makers for export development in emerging economies. The chapter also concludes the research study. The main gaps in the extant literature and the contribution of this study are highlighted. The contribution of this study to the existing knowledge, the practical use of the research findings, the limitations of the study and the directions for future research are outlined in this chapter. Limitations in the research design and methods of data analysis are also discussed, and recommendations are made for future research on determinants of export performance, particularly within a Zimbabwean context. It may be noted that suggestions for such possible research are mentioned throughout this chapter, as and when various topics are discussed, although the bulk of the suggestions are presented in the very final pages of this thesis, namely in section 8.5.

The chapter is divided into six sections. Section 8.1 outlines the theoretical implications and overall contribution to body of knowledge, Section 8.2. presents practical implications for firm managers, Section 8.3 presents practical implications for public policy makers, 8.4 presents strengths and limitations of the study, Section 8.5 outlines direction of future research, and Section 8.6. brings the thesis to a conclusion.

8.1. Theoretical implications and contribution to the body of knowledge

This study makes its notable share of contribution to the literature review in the following ways:

8.1.1. Theory Development

Development of theory by drawing from the Porter's Diamond Theory on Competitive Advantage, internationalisation, and the resource-based view, this study enhances our understanding how the interplay between resources and capabilities and their interaction with the external environment contribute to export performance. The proposed validated, mediated and moderated conceptual model contributes to theory in export performance literature. Theoretically, the study used tenets of the Porter's Diamond Theory on Competitive Advantage, internationalisation, and the resource-based view and its causal reasoning as a basic framework to provide an in depth examination of mechanisms among selected key determinants of export performance.

The mediated relationships in the conceptual framework model have provided deeper insights into interplay of international experience, export commitment, export promotion programmes and export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and their influence on export performance. According to the resource-based view theory, the internal resources and capabilities of the firm can be branded into a competitive advantage to enhance export performance. The study has revealed that international experience influence export performance indirectly through export commitment, export promotion programmes, and export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps). This implies that export commitment and export programmes reinforce the relationship between international experience and export-marketing mix strategies (4Ps) to enhance export performance. In other words, export commitment and export promotion programmes transform international experience into export-marketing mix strategies (4Ps), which in turn enhance export performance.

8.1.2. Factors that affect the export performance of the manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe

This study has identified a number of determinants of export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms such as firm characteristics factors (firm size, management perception toward export, firm experience on export, firm strategy and commitment); firm competency factors (technology, marketing knowledge, foreign market knowledge and international performance; adequacy of infrastructure; labour cost and labour skill; economic factors (economic growth, economic policy, inflation, exchange rate); market factors (market attractiveness, market competitiveness and market structures); contextual environment factors (trade barriers, cultural differences - cultural distance); physical distance; export initiation; and location of the firm.

Export commitment, place and product adaptation and foreign market attractiveness have emerged as key success factors for Zimbabwean firms to enhance their export success. Most significantly, place (distribution) and products are adapted, which reiterates the relevance of adaptation strategies on enhancing export performance (Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Samiee 2002). Thus, research contributes to the literature by validating two of the adaptation forces (place and product) in a model focusing on emerging country context in Africa. Word of mouth, participation in trade shows, and shipment of samples are other forms of promotional strategies adopted by Zimbabwean firms.

On the other hand, the results of this research contradict the findings of some scholars including Jain (1989) and Levitt (1983) who suggested that the world is a single large market and wants partly the same and as such, adaptation strategies do not work. The theoretical implications here highlight that wide differences exist across countries in terms of buying patterns, legal/regulatory frameworks and cultural factors, which necessitate export adaptation strategies in foreign markets. This thesis also advances theoretical projections in emerging markets where products exported to Western and Middle Eastern countries enjoy a higher degree of adaptation than products exported to African countries due to differences in cultural and customer preferences. In totality, from a less research context, this study contributes to export performance literature by applying the tenets of the Porter's Diamond

Theory on Competitive Advantage, internationalisation, and the resource-based view to extend the existing literature to a new geographical dimensions, namely Zimbabwe in Sun Saharan Africa, which others can build on.

8.1.3. Mediating effect of export marketing mix (4Ps) strategy

Most significantly, export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) illuminated the impact of international experience, export commitment, and export promotion programmes to influence export performance. Therefore, the findings from this thesis validate the standpoint of the resource-based view, which argues that firms can generate and brand their internal resources into creating a competitive advantage to enhance export performance. This study further provides the reasons behind the mixed findings of international experience-export performance relationships. It has emerged from this thesis that the intervening mechanism that influences international experience-export performance relationship, are export commitment, export promotion programmes, and export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps).

Additionally, the mainstream firm export performance and export promotion programmes related literature, mostly neglects any link between export promotion programmes and other variables in establishing relationships between export promotion programmes and export performance. Empirical tests of the proposed hypotheses have revealed that the indirect impact of export promotion programmes on export performance is achieved through adaptation forces (4Ps). Therefore, this study contributes to the tenets of the resource-based view theory by adding export promotion programmes as a domestic resource in terms of knowledge and training to provide essential information on exporting to managers in achieving export goals. Hence, this study contributes to export performance literature by expanding the literature on external determination to reflect the domestic environment of the firm.

8.1.4. Moderating effect of foreign market attractiveness

This thesis contributes to the body of knowledge by incorporating moderating effects of foreign market attractiveness on the association between export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and export performance. Export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps) and performance relationships depend on foreign market attractiveness, thus the greater the attractiveness, the stronger the relationships. The main theoretical implications drawn here indicate that a positive perception of foreign markets is adopted by exporters, export operations adhere to specific legal and regulatory frameworks in different countries by applying effective adaptation strategies (4Ps) to respect foreign market conditions. Therefore, managers of firms can achieve profitability through between management of organisational resources, creating synergic benefits by capitalising on opportunities in foreign markets. On the other hand, if managers do not comply with the requirements of various export markets, they will experience negative performance as adaptation levels will be low.

This study provides further insights by examining the effect of foreign market characteristics in terms of export competition and cultural similarities in relation to export performance to reiterate its relevance in exporting literature in the context of emerging countries. Thus, the study has addressed the call by some scholars in the field to advance theory on domestic and foreign market characteristics (Lages & Sousa 2010 and Sousa, Martinez-Lopez, & Coelho 2008).

8.1.5. Identification of gaps in literature

Critical examination of existing knowledge through systematic literature review and identifying the gaps in the literature. It has been possible to identify some gaps in the literature by conducting a detailed examination of export performance at firm level and the findings have been explained in chapter 6. Identification of these gaps was helpful in formulating the research questions and hypotheses.

8.1.6. Methodological contributions

This research also makes important methodological contributions. More specifically, this is the first study to adopt a multilevel approach to the investigation of export performance antecedents. Existing export performance studies adopt single level of analysis techniques. In this context, unlike single level based techniques, multilevel models allow the researcher to accurately examine the predictors of variance in outcome variable(s). As such, contrary to single level approaches, multilevel modelling techniques enable the researcher to accurately analyse the antecedents of export performance by examining the impact of each element of the export marketing mix strategy (product, place, promotion and price) on the export performance.

8.1.7. Use of Partial Least Squares in export research

Developing a structural equation model including all key variables, using Partial Least Squares (PLS), which has not been widely used in the international trade or export research. Partial Least Squares (PLS) has not been used to a great extent in export performance research (Hulland 1999). Many researchers have preferred to use other structural equation modelling (SEM) techniques such as LISREL (Linear Structural Relations), AMOS (Analysis of Movement Structures) and EQS (Equation Systems). With a moderate-sized sample, PLS has an advantage over other SEM techniques. This study gives some evidence that PLS can be effectively used for assessing the relationships between variables in export performance research.

The above discussion, clearly indicates that this study has significantly contributed to the extant literature in many different ways.

8.2. Practical implications for firm managers

The findings of this research offer some recommendations to exporting firms, particularly in emerging economies, in their determination to enhance their export performance, and to use

as a yardstick to withstand competition overseas. The following managerial implications are apparent from the study:

- Firm managers should identify which export markets need additional adaptation strategies and tailor their products to suit the specifications and characteristics of the specific markets. For Zimbabwe exporters, place (distribution) and product adaptation pave the way to deal with various cultural, economic, and regulatory frameworks in export markets, leading to enhanced export performance, which is sustainable;

- Products should be adapted to suit the separate requirements of Western and African markets, guided by customer specifications. Other forms of promotion and piecing strategies in export markets are encouraged in order to remain competitive. Firms need personnel who are knowledgeable in export market procedures and are able to develop effective export-marketing strategies;

- Firm managers should put in place development programmes that encourage management to acquire overseas experience through regular visits to export markets to familiarize themselves with overseas operations. Exporters are urged to acquire the right type of training, international exposure and experiential knowledge to develop effective export operations through participation in export promotion programmes;

- Firm managers should remain committed to exporting by allocating substantial human and other resources to implement effective export-marketing mix strategies in various markets to create a competitive advantage and enhance export performance;

- Failure to adapt product features and characteristics to foreign market demand result in rejection at entry points which causes extra costs, and at times forfeiture of the expected export proceeds;

- Firm management teams are encouraged to acknowledge the existence of similarities and differences between the home and host countries. This will encourage managers to react

to socio-economic, geo-political, and legal frameworks in export markets. Managers should respect cultural values and language differences among countries when designing product labels. This could be achieved by learning about diverse cultural characteristics through overseas visits, and participation in foreign trade shows and exhibitions;

- It is recommended that managers exporting to African markets only, should consider other international destinations. Although the African market is preferred because of proximity and similarities in customer preferences, the attractiveness of Western markets could be explored for market expansion, market diversification and premium prices;

- Firm managers should evaluate contents of export promotion programmes and select programmes relevant to their stage of exporting. Seminars related to foreign market networking, foreign language issues, and programmes offering training on product development, pricing strategies, distribution networks and promotional campaigns should be targeted; and

- Firm location for potential exporters should focus on metropolitan cities in provincial capitals, as the proximity of the firm provides additional benefits, less cost in operations and easy access to raw materials, personnel, and logistics.

8.3. Practical implications for public policy makers

Although export promotion programmes by Government agencies and public policy makers are intended to refine export operations, the benefits of these programmes are sometimes questionable. The information needed about foreign markets is demonstrated by the result that favourable conditions in foreign markets positively influenced export-marketing mix strategies and performance. Therefore, information regarding such standpoints should be disseminated to potential and current exporters in order to improve the image of foreign market opportunities. Awareness of conditions pertaining to export markets is paramount to export success, therefore, efforts must be made to congregate up-to-date statistics and information on export markets. This information should include the cultural environment in

foreign markets, foreign Government regulations, restrictions on imports, foreign Government exchange rate policies and pricing, promotion and multiple channels of distribution in foreign markets. The perception of risks can be a strong barrier inhibiting firms' willingness to consider export engagement.

This study highlights the role that policy makers can play in facilitating firm performance in export markets by accelerating regular export activity at the individual firm level. Policy makers should design contents of export training programmes to assist exporters effectively. Special workshops on export-marketing mix strategies could be organised for exporters to acquire skills to create a strategic fit in foreign markets and prevent product rejections at host countries. Policy makers have to stress the relevance of export promotion programmes to potential and current exporters to acquire knowledge and skills to handle unstable and hostile foreign markets by suppressing the hurdles these markets may present. Policy makers should provide advanced training programmes on innovative product designs to enable the production of quality and unique products for export markets.

Policy makers are sometimes faced with the challenge of understanding firms' needs in relation to export involvement to effectively assist them with export promotion programmes. It emerged in the study that export promotion programmes offered by policy makers in Zimbabwe are broad and did not focus on foreign market characteristics. To address this, policy makers could establish communication with managers in developing of export promotion programmes and take useful recommendations on designing new innovative programmes to suit the idiosyncrasies of overseas markets. This means providing the right export promotion programmes to the right firm at the right time. Incentive oriented export promotion programmes could be created and offered to encourage more firms to go into exporting as experiential knowledge is paramount to gaining information and managerial skills. While emphasising on the importance of export promotion programmes, policy makers have to envisage the long-term advantages of these programmes and channel monetary and human resources in developing additional innovative export development programmes despite the era of downsizing on Government spending and budgetary cuts. Growth is an

indicator of success and brings other benefits like the ability to acquire financial support from financial institutions in a particular country to accelerate export growth.

Financial assistance is needed for longer periods to raise firms' competitive advantage. Access to funding has been a common problem in exporting in Zimbabwe. The Government should provide a competitive platform for exporters through financial schemes, trade, policies, market access initiatives, export opportunity awareness campaigns to minimise exporting disincentives and encourage more firms to engage in international business. Small firms especially need more assistance from Governmental agencies with the necessary information about exporting to encourage their export initiation. Lack of information might not be attributable to the scarcity of a firm's resources in not searching for information, but to lack knowledge of how and where to obtain essential materials on exporting. Policy makers must not perform the role of an information-gathering centre, but equally must ensure a channel to disseminate the necessary information is established to reach appropriate firms in private sectors.

It is recommended that Government agencies and policy makers make funding available through export financing schemes to provide support in raising exporter's financial resources by exporters. Difficulty in acquiring financial support for export operations has been a common problem in Zimbabwe. Banks and other financial institutions could also make funding available to exporters through special financial schemes to enable firms to strive and become bigger. Access to funds will result in more financial resources to improve firms' capacity to adapt products to suit characteristics of export markets and gain a competitive advantage over other exporters. Public policy makers could learn lessons from neighbouring countries on their export development programmes and strategies to improve their operations. The long-term results of effective export promotion programmes are more likely to boost value-added exports and economic development in Zimbabwe. This will fit and dove-tail the country's developmental policy of Export-Led Growth.

8.4. Strengths and limitations of the study

The overall strength of this thesis lies in the use of mixed methods in examining the topic which has enhanced the robustness of the study findings and compensated in part for limitations associated with using s single method. The thesis has attempted to straddle international business, international marketing, and international entrepreneurship literature in looking at international business competencies essential for export performance and their interplay in influencing export performance. More importantly, the thesis identifies two matters of crucial importance in examining international business competencies and corresponding export performance in a developing country context, Zimbabwe: (1) datasets of previous studies are typically from developed rather than developing countries, and (2) contextual embeddedness matters in identifying, developing and interpreting how diffident sets of international business competence play out in influencing export performance. By doing so, the thesis sought to extend knowledge about a category of firms that deserve research attention. In the following, some of the strengths and limitations inherent to literature and empirical studies in this thesis are discussed.

A clear strength of the literature study is that recent articles published in international journals have been systematically searched from multiple bibliographical databases and analysed. Nonetheless, although every effort has been made to include all the relevant articles, literature review studies inherently risk excluding some pertinent publications. Future review studies could also make use of more sophisticated meta-analysis methods. The empirical studies included in this review, however, used a wide variety of methodologies and measures. Hence, owing to the incompatible and inconstant nature of the reported results, these studies could not be subjected to a formal meta-analysis. Nonetheless, improved reporting descriptive statistics in future studies could be one step in the right direction to facilitate the use of more sophisticated meta-analytical methods.

Regarding the empirical studies, the fact that the survey study was preceded by a qualitative study aimed at identifying factors that affect export performance of firms relevant in a

specific context of Zimbabwe, and the insights provided by a simultaneous analysis of the direct and interactive effects could offer valuable contributions to the advancement in the field. Despite these issues, this work provides substantive results and suggestions that need to be considered and addressed by future studying export performance. The main limitation of this study is caused by the characteristics of data collected from single respondents in the firm i.e., the individual responsible for international marketing activities (e.g., export manager, or CEO), and use of subjective perceptual data. Although using data from a single respondent is a common practice in export studies in view of the fact that the information sought is so unique to the export function that there is only one person, or a small number of people, with access to the appropriate data (Sousa et al., 2008), and previous studies have shown correlation between subjective and objective performance measures (Ren et al., 2009), they are associated with a number of limitations.

Some of the limitations include common method bias that induces artificial covariance between the items because they are collected from the source with the same method; respondent characteristics such as memories and perceptions affecting the response style such as the tendency to perceive things negatively or to agree irrespective of the content; social desirability due to respondents' willingness to create a positive image of themselves or of their firm; item and scale characteristics such as common scale format; the context in which the items are presented and measured (Chang, van Witteloostuijn & Eden 2010 and Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Podsakoff 2012). Future research may benefit from gathering data from more than one representative of the same firm. This may mean that multiple informants can be used either to obtain the same data from more than one person or to get different bits of the data from different people. Some data could be collected from secondary sources, either to be used to provide information on informant reliability (by comparing secondary data with the same data provided by the single informant), or simply to introduce multi-source data to reduce problems relating to correlated systematic errors. Generally, this may suggest the need to move away from questionnaire-based data, which are provided by those have an interest in the outcomes to researcher based data.

In addition, the findings in Chapter 6 should be regarded with caution, given the cross-sectional nature of the data collected from single country. Where possible, researchers should be looking to reduce problems that may stem from the cross-sectional nature of the data by carrying out longitudinal surveys. More importantly, exploring the model empirically in other developing economies is another aspect that future researchers should consider in order to assess the stability and generalisability of the research findings.

The applicability of the findings of the research has focused only on the food and beverage manufacturing industry in Zimbabwe, rather than on general manufacturing industry in Zimbabwe. Whilst carrying out survey based empirical research, the researcher needs to decide whether a broad multi-industry sample or a narrow sample comprising of a single or limited number of industry sectors has to be used. Both these approaches have advantages and disadvantages (Dess, Ireland & Hitt 1990). Broad multi-industry samples allow the establishment of a general link between the key variables of interests in this study namely export commitment, place and product adaptation and foreign market attractiveness which have emerged as key success factors for Zimbabwean firms to enhance export success.

Notwithstanding the limitations, this research contributes to the body of literature by examining key determinants of export performance in an emerging economy. Key strengths of the research have been the examination of direct and indirect effects of international experience, export promotion programmes, export commitment, and export-marketing mix strategy (4Ps), and the moderating effects of foreign market attractiveness on export performance within firms located in a Sub-Saharan country, namely Zimbabwe.

8.5. Direction of future research

The study results and limitations provide a basis for future research. Further research into determinants of export performance can be directed at a number of general areas. This study has developed a conceptual model that has contributed to measuring and identifying key determinants of export performance through intervening variables. For future research direction, it is particularly important that the complex mediated-moderated conceptual

framework is tested with another large sample in another country to validate the model, and confirm its applicability in a different business environment. More attention should be given to examining the universal applicability of the findings in this study in both advanced economies and less advanced economies or emerging countries to compare results. Interesting results can be generated while looking into comparative studies by replicating the research design with other samples of firms in advanced economies and less advanced economies or emerging countries.

The determinants of export performance in advanced economies many be different from those of less advanced economies as examined in this study. This study examined the impact of adaptation forces on export performance, and recorded mixed findings. Studies on promotion and price adaptation could be replicated without place and product adaptation to separately examine their impact on export performance within the conceptual model with a larger sample size in a different research setting. The study could also be replicated with objective export performance measurements to examine their effect on the variables examined in this research.

The study is based on existing firms with long exporting experience (from three years and above). Thus, it has not been possible to extrapolate the determinants of export performance of less experienced firms using the results of this study. Future research could classify firms into initial exporters and experienced exporters in less advanced economies on the basis of number of exporting years, to provide additional insights on impact of firm characteristics on export performance.

The objectives of the study could also be explored in future by adding the views of Government agencies, and policy makers providing export promotion programmes to compare the impact on export performance at the firm level. Overall, theoretical advancement has been provided in international business literature through this research. Therefore, it is also hoped that findings from this research will give policy makers and Government agencies

the ability to develop more effective export development policies and export promotion programmes.

8.6. Concluding remarks

Drawing from the Porter's Diamond Theory on Competitive Advantage, internationalisation process, and the resource-based view of the firm, this study has investigated the determinants of export performance of firms in the food and beverage manufacturing industry in Zimbabwe, to gain a competitive advantage in foreign markets. To address the research question, a complex mediated-moderated conceptual model has been developed to test hypotheses based on theory. A mixed method approach comprising qualitative and quantitative techniques has been used to collect data from key informants in Zimbabwe. Using a sample of 49 firms under quantitative research survey and 18 informants under qualitative research interviews, this study has provided evidence to validate the proposed complex conceptual model to present a significant contribution to the field by addressing the calls by some scholars who have argued that export performance literature has reached a level of sophistication, where researchers should examine the complex impact of indirect and moderating effects of variables to bring additional insights to the theory. This study also provides several theoretical and practical implications for researchers, managers and policy makers who are concerned with export performance in emerging countries. The findings of this research suggest that the improvements of manufacturing processes, and of product design are critical for the food and beverage manufacturing firms to successfully compete in the international markets. The improvements are based on both internal and external sources. Overall, this study has extended export performance literature on Africa. Results of the study are useful in advancing theory in determining export success practices, particularly in less advanced countries.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of Export Performance Studies

Author (s)	Industry	Sample Size	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Methodology	Findings
Madsen (1989)	Manufacturing	134	Export Market Attractiveness	Export Success	Casual/Regression	Export market attractive had a strong impact on export sales. The author explained that export markets with high growth and little competition tend to result in high sales.
Cavusgil, Shaoming & Naidu 1993	Manufacturing	184	Market Characteristics Experience	Product Adaptation	Multiple Regression	Product adaptation is negatively related to the similarity of legal regulations, but positively influences market competitiveness and international experience.
Kaynak & Kuan (1993)	Manufacturing	154	Foreign Market Environment	Export Performance	Discriminant Analysis	High performers exporter to developed countries and achieved better performance due to the existence of

Author (s)	Industry	Sample Size	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Methodology	Findings
						favourable operations. High profitability was achieved through better management of organisational resources, through creating synergistic benefits.
Das (1994)	Mixed	58	Firm Size	Export Intensity	Exploratory	Negative relationship between firm size and export intensity.
Cadogan, Kuivalainen & Sundqvist 2009	Mixed	198	Competition	Export Performance	Regression	Environment significantly affects export performance: mixed relationships
Ibeh & Young (2001)	Manufacturing	78	International Experience	Export Behaviour	Stepwise discriminant analysis	Decision-makers' previous experience, international contacts and orientation: positive relationship with export performance.
Lages & Montgomery (2001)	Mixed	1,967	Export Competition	Level of Adoption	Descriptive	Competition is positively related to the level of adaption. Poor environment negatively affected performance.

Author (s)	Industry	Sample Size	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Methodology	Findings
Marandu (1995)	Mixed	82	Export Promotion	Export Performance	Regression	Tanzania firms engaged in export promotion enhanced their export performance.
Castaldi, Silverman, Sengupta (2004)	Winery	1,012	Export Commitment	Export Performance	Hypothesis testing and regression	Export commitment is significant and positively related to export performance.
Lado, Martinez-Ros & Valenzuela (2004)	Mixed	2,264	International Experience	Export Performance	Chi-Square	Positive relationship between export performance and international experience.
Lages & Montgomery (2005)	Mixed	519	Export Assistance, Management Experience, Export Market Competition	Export Performance and Export Assistance	Structural Equation Modelling	The study recorded a positive relationship between export performance and export assistance. Export market competition had a significant direct effect on performance. Export assistance was positively related to management experience.

Author (s)	Industry	Sample Size	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Methodology	Findings
Rankin, Söderbom and Teal (2006)	Manufacturing (5 African countries included)	2,770 (1993 to 2003)	Management skills, firm size & ownership of firm	Export Participation	Modelling Framework	Management skills are key success factors in exporting and correlated with size. Size does not matter in export engagement. Foreign ownership has a significant effect on the ability to export.
Wolf (2007)	Mixed	97	Firm Characteristics	Export Intensity	Regression using level data set	The decision to export and export intensity confirmed the assumption that these factors differ by export sector.
Fischer (2010)	Mixed (5 EU countries)	480 (1995-1999; 2000-2005)	Product Quality	Export Performance	Regression Analysis	The regression results show that the connection between product quality and export performance depends on the product category and differs (but not in all cases) according to the export destination.

Author (s)	Industry	Sample Size	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Methodology	Findings
Monteiro & do Rosário (2013)	Mixed	19	Firm Size	Export Performance	Factor Analysis	A negative relationship between firm size and export performance
Dalvand , Moshabaki & Karampour (2015)	Manufacturing	340	Effective and Operational Capabilities	Export Performance	Structural equation modelling	The main relationship between effective and operational capabilities and export performance was demonstrated and it was demonstrated that the impact of operational innovation capabilities on export performance is more than effective innovation capabilities.
Prim, Amal & Carvallo (2016)	Mixed	100	Regional cluster, and innovation	Export Performance	Structural equation modelling	No evidence of relationship between the innovations in products and processes and export performance.

Source: Developed from Literature (2017)

Appendix 2: Summary of Export Performance and Export-marketing Mix Strategy (4Ps)

Author (s)	Industry	Sample Size	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Methodology	Findings
Lages & Montgomery (2001)	Mixed	1,967	Price, Product, Promotion, Place	Export Performance	Hypothesis testing, Weighted Least Squares	Product adaptation is not significant with export performance.
Cavusgil & Zou (1994)	Manufacturing	202	Product, Price, Promotion, Distribution	Export Performance	Hypothesis testing, Confirmatory Factor Analysis	A positive and significant relationship between price and distribution and performance, except promotion.
Lages & Montgomery (2005)	Mixed	519	Price	Export Assistance	Structural Equation Modelling	International experience and export assistance had a positive impact on pricing strategy. Competition does influence price adaptation.

Author (s)	Industry	Sample Size	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Methodology	Findings
Lado, Martinez-Ros and Valenzuela (2004)	Mixed	2,264	Marketing Strategy	Export Performance	Regression	Positive relationship between marketing strategy and export performance.
Lages, Abrantes & Lages (2008a)	Mixed	88	Price, Place, Promotion, Distribution	Export Performance	Confirmatory Factor Analysis	Positive relation between adaptation forces and export performance.
Lee & Griffith (2004)	Electronic Industries	180	Price, Place, Promotion, Distribution	Export Performance	Regression	Positive relation between adaptation forces and export performance. Adaptation of marketing mix achieved greater performance.
Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b)	Mixed	519	Price, Place, Promotion, Distribution	Export Performance	Structural Equation Modelling	Mixed findings between variables and export intensity.

Author (s)	Industry	Sample Size	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Methodology	Findings
						Product adaptation had a significant effect on performance. Export market competition did not have any significant relationship with the (4Ps).
Eusebio, Andreu and Belbeze (2007b)	Mixed	133	Price, Place, Promotion, Distribution	Export Intensity	Regression	Product and distribution is positive and significantly related to export performance but price and place fail to show positive relations.
Shoham (1996)	Mixed	81	Price, Place, Promotion, Distribution	Export Performance	Hypothesis Testing, ANOVA and Regression	Product standardisation and design did not influence performance. Price

Author (s)	Industry	Sample Size	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Methodology	Findings
						standardisation enhanced performance. Distribution had a significant effect on performance and promotion positively related to all dimension of performance.
Cavusgil, Shaoming & Naidu 1993	Manufacturing	184	Degree of Product Uniqueness, Cultural Specific of the Product	Product Adaptation	Multiple Regression	Product adaptation upon entry significant influenced the cultural specificity of the product. After entry, product adaptation was positively related to cultural specificity and negatively related to technology

Author (s)	Industry	Sample Size	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Methodology	Findings
						orientation of the industry.

Source: Developed from Literature (2017)

Appendix 3: Measurement of Constructs

Constructs	Measurement	Source
International Experience	*5 Item-scale (1=None; 5=Substantial)* • Degree of professional exporting experience. • Degree of overseas experience-live/work abroad. • Degree of training in international business, e.g., attended formal courses and export seminars. • Ability to follow up on trade leads in the main importing market. • The operation of many foreign markets.	Cavusgil & Zou (1994); Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b).
Export Commitment	*5 Item-scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree)* • The firm has an appropriate organisation structure to deal with all export activities. • Firm executives travel frequently to export markets. • The firm sets aside adequate funds to develop overseas markets. • Learning about export documentation is a high priority in the firm. • Exporting is high priority in the firm.	Shamsuddoha & Ali (2006).
Export-marketing Mix Strategy (4Ps)		
- Product	*7 Item-scale (1=no adaptation; 5=extensive adaptation)* • Product brand name. • Product design/style • Product labelling. • A variety of the main exporting product line. • Product quality. • Features and characteristics. • Packaging.	Lages, Abrantes & Lages (2008a); Lages, Jap & Griffith (2008b).
- Promotion	*7 Item-scale (1=no adaptation; 5=extensive adaptation)* • Advertising theme. • Media channels for advertising. • Promotion objectives. • Budget promotion. • Direct marketing. • Sales promotion. • Personal selling.	Lages, Abrantes & Lages (2008a); Ogunmokun & Ng (2004).
- Price	*5 Item-scale (1=no adaptation; 5=extensive adaptation)*	Lages, Abrantes & Lages (2008a).

Constructs	Measurement	Source
	• Determination of pricing strategy. • Concession of credit. • Retail price. • Price margins.	
- Place (Distribution)	*5 Item-scale (1=no adaptation; 5=extensive adaptation)* • Criteria for selection. • Transport strategy. • Distribution. • Distribution network. • Type of middlemen.	Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou (2011).
Export Promotion Programmes	*5 Item-scale (1=not adopted at all; 7=fully adopted)* • Organisation of export seminars and conferences. • Training programmes specialising in exporting. • Training on export documentation. • Provision of counselling advice on export business. • General information about doing business in a specific country.	Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou (2011).
Foreign Market Attractiveness	*5 Item-scale (1=not at all attractive; 7=very attractive)* • Sophistication of marketing infrastructure. • Demand potential in the export market. • Level of consumer education in the export market. • Level of industrial development. • Extent of Government laws and regulations,	Katsikeas, Samiee & Theodosiou (2006); Cavusgil & Zou (1994).
Export Financial Performance (Perceived Export Success)	*5 Item-scale (1=very low; 7=very high)* • Export sales volume. • Export market share. • Export profitability. • Return on investment. • Export sales intensity (ratio of export sales to domestic sales).	Leonidou, Palihawadana & Theodosiou (2011).
Control Variables - Age of the firm - Industry – mixed - Firm	 Number of years exporting. Food & Beverage Number of employees	Lages & Jap (2002); Wolff & Pett (2000).

Appendix 4: Research Introductory Letter

Research Introductory Letter

UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA

10 June 2017

The Acting Director,
Exchange Control Division,
Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
80 Samora Machel Avenue,
Harare,

Dear Mr. Farai Masendu,

RE: RESEARCH INTRODUCTORY LETTER – MR. TAYENGWA CHITAURO

This letter serves to confirm that Mr. T. Chitauro is a Doctoral Student at the University of Lusaka in Zambia. As part of his studies, Mr. Chitauro is expected to carry out research on export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe.

Please, kindly assist Mr. Chitauro with approval to access to the database of food and beverage manufacturing exporters in Zimbabwe so that he carries out the necessary academic research.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned for any clarification on this matter. Thank you in advance for your kind assistance on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Reinford Khumalo

Appendix 5: Survey Cover Letter

Thank you for participating in this academic survey. My Name is Tayengwa Chitauro, a student from the University of Lusaka studying for a PhD in Business Administration. As required in our academic curriculum, a practical business research project has to be conducted, and I am currently undertaking a study entitled **"A Study of the Factors Affecting of the Export Performance of the Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms in Zimbabwe."** The purpose of the study is to analyse how the export performance of local food and beverage firms can be enhanced. The survey includes questions on export practices by your firm in order to gain competitive advantage in the export markets.

I would be grateful if you answer this questionnaire. Please note that participation in this exercise is voluntary and you can forfeit whenever you feel like so. Please note that your answers are highly confidential and cannot be linked back to you or your firm. There are no right or wrong answers, therefore please answer each question as completely and accurately as you can. You are also NOT required to write your name or any other identification particulars on this research questionnaire.

*Please indicate your responses by choosing the appropriate answer that shows **the likelihood** that you **agree** or **disagree** with the statements below: Please tick or circle.*

The questionnaire generally consists of five fairly short sections, the first being on your demographic details and export history of your firm, and the last four sections are on the factors that affect your firm's export performance as well as strategies put in place to enhance your firm's export performance.

Appendix 6: Research Instrument for Quantitative Study

SECTION A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS AND EXPORT HISTORY OF THE FIRM

A1. Gender:

Male	
Female	

A2. Age Group (Years):

<24	
25-35	
36-50	
>50	

A3. How many years has your firm been in the export business? (Please tick ONLY **ONE** box).

☐ Less than1 year

☐ 1 – 2 years

☐ 3 – 4 years

☐ 5 – 6 years

☐ 7 – 8 years

☐ 9 – 10 years

☐ More than 10 years

A4. How many employees work for your firm? (Please tick ONLY **ONE** box).

- ☐ 1 – 5 employees
- ☐ 6 – 29 employees
- ☐ 30 – 99 employees
- ☐ 100 and over

A5. Kindly indicate the main industry sector of your firm (Please tick ONLY **ONE** box).

- ☐ Food manufacturing
- ☐ Beverage manufacturing
- ☐ Other, please specify……..

A6. Kindly specify the form of ownership of your firm. (Please tick ONLY **ONE** box).

- ☐ Wholly owned Zimbabwean
- ☐ Foreign owned
- ☐ Joint foreign and Zimbabwean owned
- ☐ Foreign owned subsidiary

A7. Kindly indicate your position in the company. (Please tick ONLY **ONE** box).

- ☐ Finance Manager
- ☐ Export Manager
- ☐ Exports Clerk
- ☐ Marketing Manager
- ☐ Operations Manager
- ☐ Other, please specify……..

A8. What is the highest level of formal education you have attained? (Please tick ONLY **ONE** box).

- ☐ Primary education
- ☐ Secondary education
- ☐ Apprenticeship/Trade qualification
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ University degree of higher
- ☐ Other, please specify……..

SECTION B: FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE EXPORT PERFORMANCE OF THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING FIRMS

B1: Please kindly indicate the extent to which you are **agree** or **disagree** that each of the following factors contributes positively to export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms*: Where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5=Strongly Agree*

Access to affordable working capital	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of efficient production technology	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of export incentives	1	2	3	4	5
Competitive pricing of goods	1	2	3	4	5
Depreciated exchange rate for the local currency	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of doing export business	1	2	3	4	5
Export committed management	1	2	3	4	5
Export marketing mix strategy	1	2	3	4	5
Foreign market attractiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Good distribution network	1	2	3	4	5
Good knowledge of the foreign market	1	2	3	4	5
High capacity utilisation	1	2	3	4	5
High demand for the products	1	2	3	4	5
High productivity	1	2	3	4	5
High quality inputs	1	2	3	4	5
High quality of goods produced	1	2	3	4	5
Large scale operation (firm size)	1	2	3	4	5
Low export market competition	1	2	3	4	5
Low production costs (competitiveness)	1	2	3	4	5
Low tariffs (by importing country)	1	2	3	4	5
Low tax regime	1	2	3	4	5
Low threats of substitutes	1	2	3	4	5

Management perception toward export	1	2	3	4	5
Mature firm (age)	1	2	3	4	5
No trade restrictions	1	2	3	4	5
Profitable export sales	1	2	3	4	5
Reduced or no export barriers	1	2	3	4	5
Reliable supply of inputs	1	2	3	4	5
Reliable transportation system (road, air & Rail)	1	2	3	4	5
Skilled labour force	1	2	3	4	5
Stable political environment	1	2	3	4	5
Well established research and development	1	2	3	4	5

B2. Please kindly indicate (by a tick) your firm's export destination region(s). Please also indicate the ranking of the regions (1 being the most important region).

Select	Rank	Region
☐	◯	SADC
☐	◯	COMESA
☐	◯	Europe
☐	◯	Middle East
☐	◯	ECOWAS
☐	◯	North America
☐	◯	South America
☐	◯	Asia
☐	◯	Other, specify……..

B3. How would you rate the management involved in your firm's export business based on the following statements? *Where 1=none; 2=only slightly substantial; 3=somewhat substantial; 4=definitely substantial; 5=extremely substantial.*

The level of professional exporting experience	1	2	3	4	5
The level of overseas experience (stayed or worked overseas)	1	2	3	4	5
Level of training on international business e.g. formal export courses	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to follow up on trade leads in the main export market	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of operations of many foreign markets	1	2	3	4	5

B3. When you refer to your firm's major export market within the past year (2016), how attractive was that market to your firm's operations based on the following statements? *Where 1=not at all attractive; 2=unattractive; 3=Neural; 4=moderately attractive; 5=very attractive.*

Sophistication of the marketing infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5
Demand potential in the export market	1	2	3	4	5
Level of consumer education in the export market	1	2	3	4	5
Level of industrial development	1	2	3	4	5
Government laws and regulations	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: MEDIATING EFFECTS OF EXPORT-MARKETING MIX STRATEGY (4PS) ON EXPORT COMMITMENT AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

C1. Considering your export activity at the firm level, to what extent have you **adapted** the following in your major foreign markets? Where *1=not at all adapted; 2=somewhat adapted; 3=neutral; 4=adapted to a greater extent; 5=fully adapted.*

Product brand name	1	2	3	4	5
Product design/style	1	2	3	4	5
Product labelling	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of the main exporting product line	1	2	3	4	5
Product quality	1	2	3	4	5
Product features and characteristics	1	2	3	4	5
Packaging	1	2	3	4	5

C2. In terms of **export commitment by management** of the firm, to what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements? Where *1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree*

The firm has a department that specifically deals with all export activities	1	2	3	4	5
Firm executives travel frequently to export markets	1	2	3	4	5
The firm sets aside adequate funds to develop overseas markets	1	2	3	4	5
Learning about export procedures is regarded highly	1	2	3	4	5
Exporting is regarded more important than domestic sales	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: EFFECTS OF EXPORT PROMOTION PROGRAMMES ON EXPORT PERFORMANCE

D1. To what extent does your firm **adopt** the following export promotion programmes from government agencies? *Where 1=not at all adopted; 2= un-adopted; 3=Somewhat adopted; 4=Neural; 5=moderately; 6= adopted; 7=fully adopted.*

Attendance to export seminars/conference	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Participation in export training programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Receiving training on export orientation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Receiving counselling/advice on export business	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
General knowledge about doing business in a specific country	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

D2. What is the extent of adoption of the following promotion means in the export activities of you firm? *Where 1=not at all adopted; 2= un-adopted; 3=Neural; 4=somewhat adopted; 5=fully adopted.*

.

Advertising theme	1	2	3	4	5
Media channels for advertising	1	2	3	4	5
Promotion objectives	1	2	3	4	5
Budget for promotion	1	2	3	4	5
Direct marketing	1	2	3	4	5
Sales promotion	1	2	3	4	5
Personal selling	1	2	3	4	5

D3. To the best of your knowledge, how would you rate your firm's **export financial performance** for the year **2016,** based on the following objectives? *Where 1=very low; 2=low; 3=slightly low; 4=average; 5=slightly high; 6=high; 7=very high.*

Export sales volume	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Export market share	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Export profitability (export profit contribution)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Return on investment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Export sales intensity (ratio of export sales to domestic sales)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

D4. How does each of the following issues affect your firm's export performance?

Issue	**Impact on Revenue and Volumes**				
	Very Insignificantly	**Insignificantly**	**Fairly**	**Significantly**	**Very Significantly**
Supply					
Demand					
Operational					
Security					
Quality					

SECTION E: EFFECT OF FOREIGN MARKET ATTRACTIVENESS ON EXPORT-MARKETING MIX STRATEGY (4PS)

E1. Export market characteristics are the **differences** and **similarities** that exist and differentiate Zimbabwe with the host country in terms of regulatory/legal framework, culture, and competition. When you refer to your major export markets within the past year, how attractive was that market to your firm's operations based on the following statements?

Where 1=not at all attractive; 2= un-attractive; 3=Somewhat attractive; 4=Neural; 5=moderately attractive; 6= attractive; 7=very attractive.

Sophistication of marketing infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Demand potential in the export market	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Level of consumer education in the export market	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Level of industrial development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extent of Government laws and regulations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E2. What is the extent of price adaptation in your firm? *Where 1=not at all adapted; 2= un-adapted; 3=Neural; 4=somewhat adapted; 5=fully adapted.*

Determination of pricing strategy	1	2	3	4	5
Concession of credit	1	2	3	4	5
Price discount policy	1	2	3	4	5
Retail price	1	2	3	4	5
Price margins	1	2	3	4	5

E3. What is the extent of place/distribution adaptation in your firm? *Where 1=not at all adapted; 2= un-adapted; 3=Neural; 4=somewhat adapted; 5=fully adapted.*

Criteria of selection	1	2	3	4	5
Transport strategy	1	2	3	4	5
Distribution budget	1	2	3	4	5
Distribution network	1	2	3	4	5
Type of middlemen	1	2	3	4	5

E4. To what extent does foreign market attractiveness affect the following aspects of your firm's marketing?

Aspect	**Extent**				
	Very Insignificantly	**Insignificantly**	**Fairly**	**Significantly**	**Very Significantly**
Product					
Price					
Place					
Promotion					

Many thanks for your consideration. If you would like to receive a copy of the executive summary of the research findings, please indicate your email address below.

E-mail address……..…

End of the Questionnaire

Appendix 7: Research Instrument for the Qualitative Study

Interview Guide for Interviews with CEOs, Managing Directors, General Managers and Owners

My name is Tayengwa Chitauro. I am a student studying for a Doctorate in Business Administration with the University of Lusaka. I am conducting research on export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe. Thank you for your time to answer some of my research questions. This interview will take approximately 40 minutes of your time. All the information collected from this questionnaire will be used for academic purposes only and will be kept anonymous and in strict confidence.

Part 1: General information about the interviewee and the firm

- Job title
- Years of work experience in export business
- Main product/s for export
- In what industry is the firm?
- Number of people employed
- Could you please tell me a little more about how your firm started to do export trade?

Part 2: Factors that affect the export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms

- What are the major domestic and external factors that positively affect export performance of your firm?
- What should your firm do to enhance its export performance?
- What should the Government do to enhance export performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe?

Part 3: Export-marketing Competence

- Based on your perception, how much and what type of international experience did the management have when the export business was first implemented?
- In your opinion, to what extent has your firm committed financial and human resources to the export business since inception?
- Subsequent to entering the export market, was your product modified? How? Why? To what degree? Please explain.
- Was promotion/distribution/price strategy of the product adapted to fit the export market situations? How? To what extend? Elaborate on each please.
- What are the common problems you are encountering with regards to developing or growing your export business? Please take into account your firm's resources and capabilities as well.

Part 4: Foreign and Domestic Market Characteristics

- To which country/ies is your firm currently exporting its products or has some business operations?
- Have you stopped exporting to any other country? If yes, why?
- In your opinion, were the products designed to meet specific market requirements in terms of language, colour, norms, values and or features?
- Based on your perception, how competitive was the market when the export business was implemented? How aggressive were the competitors in the industry?
- Based on your observations, how do you compare the legal regulatory frameworks in the foreign markets, to those of Zimbabwe? Please explain.
- Does your firm participate in any of the export promotion programmes by Government or its agencies? Please indicate specific programmes your firm has participated?
- In your opinion, to what extent have you benefited from participating in any of the Government export programmes?

Part 5: Export Performance

Now I would like to know more about the specific focus on my research being export performance or success of your firm.

- How would you measure the export performance outcomes of your firm? For example, financial, strategic or satisfaction?
- Of these measures, which one do you believe could be the most important method for measuring export performance of firm success?
- What was the export performance of your firm in 2016, 2015 and 2014?
- Does the location of your firm have any impact on your ability to develop export markets or increase export performance? Please explain

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 8: Research Consent Form

A Study of the Factors Affecting of the Export Performance of the Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms in Zimbabwe

This form outlines my rights as a participant in the study:

- My participation is entirely voluntary. Any information provided in due interview is confidential. I agree to be interviewed for the purpose of the study;
- I have been provided with adequate information about the project and have been given the opportunity to seek further clarification or explanation;
- I agree that the interview may be electronically recorded;
- I have the right to decline to answer any questions;
- I have the right to withdraw my consent to participate in this study by informing the researcher within two weeks after the interview date. If I do so, all information I volunteered will be destroyed;
- I understand that my identity will not be disclosed in any presentation or publication resulting from this research;
- I will have the opportunity to review notes if required to ensure my views are correctly recorded;
- I understand that the data will be used for the research's Doctoral studies and read by the researcher, supervisors, and the transcriber. I also understand that the research may be published in academic or professional journals and disseminated at academic or professional conferences; and
- I understand that when this study is completed, the raw data obtained from the research will be kept for 3 years and then destroyed.

Name of interviewee……..……..

Signature of interviewee…….……

Please indicate below with a tick if you would like to receive a copy of the summary for this study

☐ Yes, please provide your email address
☐ No

Interview participant sheet

I am a Doctoral student at the University of Lusaka, Zambia. This form provides detailed information on the purpose and nature of my research project.

What is this form?
The University of Lusaka requires adherence to research ethics when any form of research is carried out. This form is to respect and acknowledge your rights and to inform you about the research.

Why is the research being done?
This research is being conducted as a requirement of a DBA degree at the University of Lusaka.

What is the purpose of this study?
The research aims to investigate the socio-economic determinants of export performance of food and beverage firms and how they can gain competitive advantage in foreign markets using Zimbabwe as a representative of Sub-Saharan Africa. This study brings more insights into existing literature to enhance exporting practices at firm level rather than the country level in Sub-Saharan Africa.

What will your roles and sensibilities be if you take part in the study?
This research will be conducted and recorded electronically via personal interview, and will take approximately 40 minutes of your precious time.

How many people will be involved?
The interview will consist of yourself and the researcher.

What will happen to the information that you will provide?
This research is completely confidential. The voice recordings will be reviewed by the researcher, supervisors and transcriber for sole purpose of this research and will be securely stored for 3 years in a password protected computer. The interview will begin only with your consent i.e., signing the consent form.

As well as being included in the DBA thesis, the results may also be published in academic journals or conferences' papers. In all published material, your name or your company name

will not be mentioned and no information about your views whatsoever will be tracked back to you. Confidentiality is assured at all times. The Doctoral thesis will be held by the University of Lusaka. If you would prefer written summary of the research, kindly provide your contact details on the consent form. The written summary will not contain any information that is linked back to you or any other participants.

What are the possible benefits?

The research will provide the opportunity for participants to reflect on the operations of their export business in the home country and how it affects their operations and the characteristics of the foreign market. The outcome of this research will provide determinants of export performance for firms for export growth in Zimbabwe and sub-Saharan Africa and highlight areas for improvement for positive performance outcomes.

When can you withdraw from the research?

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, up until two weeks after completing the interview. If you choose to with draw any information you would have proved, such information will be destroyed.

Appendix 9: Summary of Literature Reviews on Export Performance (1987-2017)

Author (s)	Period of Review	No. of Papers Reviewed	Countries	Studies on African Countries
Aaby & Slater (1989)	1978-1988	55	USA, Canada, Brazil, Norway, Peru, Turkey, West Germany, and UK	None
Chetty & Hamilton (1993)	1978-1991	111	North America, Europe and South America	None
Zou & Stan (1998)	1987-1997	50	USA, Europe, Asia, and Latin America	None
Solberg,& Durrieu (2008)	1998-2005	52	USA outside the USA	None
Wheeler, Ibeh & Dimitratos (2008)	1997-2005	33	UK	None
Sousa (2004)	1998-2004	53	USA, UK, Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand & Israel	None
Leonidou, Katsikeas & Coudounaris (2010)	1960-2007	821	USA, North America, UK, Eastern Europe, Asia, Australia, & New Zealand	None
Madsen (1987)	1967-1985	17	USA, and outside USA	None
Leonidou, Katsikeas & Samiee (2002)	1960-2000	36	North America and Europe	None
Theodosiou & Leonidou (2003)	1970-1990s	36	USA and Europe	None
Leonidou & Leonidou (2011)	1969-2008	530	North America, Europe, Asia, Oceania Africa	0,04%
Mysen (2013)	2005-2011	19	Europe, USA, Asia and Australia	None
Rajendran (2016)	2009-2012	5	India, Asia	None
Mohsenzaheha, & Ahmadiana, (2016)	1978-2012	16	Iran, Middle East	None

Author (s)	Period of Review	No. of Papers Reviewed	Countries	Studies on African Countries
Chen, Sousa, & He (2016)	2006-2014	124	USA, Europe, Asia	None
Makanyeza & Ndlovu (2016)	1995-2015	46	USA, Europe, Asia	21.7%
Jamshidi & Moazemi (2016)	2001-2016	46	Iran, Middle East, Far East, Europe, USA	None
Moen (1999)	1980-1999	47	USA, Europe, Asia, and Latin America	None
Boehe, Qian & Peng (2016)	1990-2015	91	USA, Europe, Asia, and Latin America, Middle East, Far East & Australia.	None
Sefnedi & Sallam, (2016)	1989-2005	31	USA, Europe, Indonesia, Asia, and Latin America, Middle East, Far East & Australia.	None

Source: Developed for this study (2018)

Appendix 10: Other Statistics

VIF Values – Collinearity Statistics

	Age	EPP	Ex*pCo*	ExPerf	FMA	Fsize	Industry	IntExp	Place	Price	Product	Promotion
Age				1.585								
EPP				1.589					1.316	1.316	1.316	1.316
Ex*pC*omt				1.966					1.407	1.407	1.407	1.407
ExPerf												
FMA				1.576								
Fsize				1.650								
Industry				1.218								
IntExp		1.000	1.000	2.001					1.444	1.444	1.444	1.444
Place				1.395								
Price				1.437								
Product				1.466								
Promotio				1.436								

Source: Developed for this study (2018)

Items Deleted with Loading less than 0.70

Item	Indicator	Loading
1. Degree of overseas experience-live/work abroad	IntExp_2	0.319
2. The firm has appropriate organisation structure to deal with	Ex*P*compt_1	0.643
3. Learning about export procedure/documentation is a high	Ex*P*comt_4	0.585
4. Distribution network	Place_4	0.629
5. Advertising theme	Promotion_1	0.622
6. Sales promotion	Promotion_6	0.629
7. Personal selling	Promotion_7	0.635
8. Product Brand Name	Product_1	0.612
9. Product labelling	Product_3	0.597
10. Concession of credit	Price_2	0.563
11. Price margins	Price_5	0.409
12. Sophistication of marketing infrastructure in main foreign	ExpMaktCha_1	0.569

Source: Developed for this study (2018)

Latent Variable Scores

	Age	EPP	Ex*p*Comt	ExPerf	FMA	Fsize	Industry	InExp	Place	Price	Product	Promotion
Age	1.000											
EPP	0.039	1.000										
Ex*p*Comt	0.298	0.410	1.000									
ExPerf	0.089	0.284	0.419	1.000								
FMA	0.194	0.377	0.488	0.600	1.000							
Fsize	0.475	0.069	0.432	0.262	0.217	1.000						
Industry	0.110	0.147	0.102	0.005	0.018	0.225	1.000					
InExp	0.400	0.435	0.492	0.286	0.237	0.350	0.075	1.000				
Place	0.036	0.335	0.322	0.393	0.351	0.183	0.029	0.140	1.000			
Price	0.244	0.151	0.228	0.125	0.157	0.143	0.238	0.216	0.297	1.000		
Product	0.194	0.251	0.383	0.249	0.383	0.184	0.173	0.170	0.201	0.404	1.000	
Promotion	0.056	0.216	0.313	0.114	0.046	0.262	0.091	0.435	0.234	0.226	0.118	1.000

Source: Developed for this study (2018)