

**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AMONG BUSINESS COMMUNITIES AND
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF SELECTED GENERAL
MERCHANDISE WHOLESALERS AFFECTED BY CORONAVIRUS
(COVID-19) PANDEMIC IN KAMPALA, UGANDA**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND
GRADUATE TRAINING, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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DECLARATION

I, Peter Gumisiriza, hereby declare that this Dissertation entitled '*Disaster Preparedness Among Business Communities and Financial Performance: A Case of Selected General Merchandise Wholesalers Affected by Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic in Kampala, Uganda*' is my original work and has not been submitted to any other institution of higher learning for any academic award.

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this Dissertation entitled '*Disaster Preparedness Among Business Communities and Financial Performance: A Case of Selected General Merchandise Wholesalers Affected by Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic in Kampala, Uganda*' is work done under our supervision and is now ready for submission to the Graduate School.

Signature..... Date.....

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Signature..... Date.....

Dr. Teopista Kyamanywa

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the family of Mr. Mugisha George Willy and his beloved wife Christine Mugisha for their financial and moral support throughout my Secondary and Tertiary Education.

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I thank Almighty God who has been guiding and protecting me, my Lecturers and University Administrators during the pursuance of my studies at Kyambogo University, especially during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

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ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADPC	: Asia Disaster Preparedness Cooperation
APEC	: Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
BCP	: Business Continuity Planning
BIA	: Business Impact Planning
CVI	: Content Validity Index
COVID-19	: Coronavirus Disease of 2019
ECOP	: Employers' Confederation of the Philippines
KACITA	: Kampala City Traders Association
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organizations
PAHO	: The Pan American Health Organization
RAR	: Risk Assessment Remediation
SMEs	: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
UBOS	: Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNDP	: United Nations Development Program
UNESCAP	: The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNSIDR	: United Nations Strategy for Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction
URWA	: Uganda Retailers and Wholesalers Association

ABSTRACT

The study examined the difference in financial performance arising from Disaster Preparedness before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division, Kampala. The specific objectives of the study were to; examine the difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Planning in Central Division Kampala, examine the difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Strategic Decision Making in Central Division Kampala, and to establish the difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Endowment in Central Division Kampala. The study used a comparative and descriptive survey design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population were general merchandise wholesalers in Central Division. The target sample size for the study was 302 respondents owning/ managing general merchandise wholesales in Central Division Kampala. The study used simple random sampling technique to select respondents for structured interviews. Paired sample t-test was used to examine whether there was a significant difference between the financial performance arising from disaster preparedness before and after COVID 19 lock down in Central Division Kampala. The study found out that there was a significant difference between the financial performance before and after COVID 19 lock down arising from planning in Central Division (t-test value=44.462, df=193, P-value<0.05). The results from the study showed that there was a significant difference between financial performance before and before and after COVID 19 lockdown arising from Strategic decision making in Central Division, Kampala (t-test value=39.461, df=167, P-value<0.05). The findings also made revelation that there was a significant difference in financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown arising from Endowment in Central Division, Kampala (t-test value=29.3222.461, df=182, P-value<0.05). The study recommends that more Disaster planning should be conducted by General merchandise wholesalers. There is need for more strategic decision making since a considerable number of General merchandise wholesalers in Central Division Kampala district were found experiencing very low financial performance. More endowment should be provided to General merchandise wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District so as to step up financial performance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents on the background, statement of the problem, purpose of study, specific objectives, research hypotheses, conceptual framework, and significance of the study, justification of the study, scope of the study, operational definitions and the conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the study

The background is presented under four perspectives. These are: the historical, theoretical conceptual and contextual perspectives.

1.1.1 Historical Background

Financial performance being the primary goal of entities involves achieving organisational objectives, from the perspective of judging individuals (Praise, 2003). The need to actualize financial goals compels entities to continuously handle the events which are beyond human control to ensure that the operations of the organization continue to flow smoothly (Glenn, 2006). An organization can achieve its greatness by ensuring that all the operations are standard and the services required are achieved. Joseph, Matthews & Myers (2014) provide that the high increase of natural disasters in the last twenty years or so has been frequently mentioned in the literature on how disaster is managed in the organization so as to stabilize organizational performance.

Globally, action to integrate disaster preparedness in societies is expressed in the 1989 United Nations International framework for Action against Natural disasters (United Nations Strategy for disaster preparedness and risk reduction, 2013). Consequently, preparedness was also re-emphasized by UN in 1999 (UNSIDR, 2013). As a result, other efforts such as Yokohama strategy and plan for action of 1994, and the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015), have been instituted (Wong, 2016). In most hit countries such as USA, India, Australia, and parts of Africa,

governments and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have encouraged the need for organisations to have strong disasters preparedness policies and plans.

Research conducted by Jones et al (2014) reveals that Disaster Preparedness first evolved in the 1970s and has since been basic in public and private undertakings. As occurrence of disasters widen unprecedented, the quest for disaster preparedness has been viewed as vital. Consequently, in Africa, several disasters including famine, drought, floods, and landslides incessantly occur and distract not only farming but also business economy (Freeman et al, 2002). Several countries, though not well managed, encourage public and private organisations to prepare how to handle disasters in case they occur. Several works have on the contrary shown that a few Wholesalers are prepared for these disasters, and have in place a clear plan, strategy or endowments to counter these natural disasters. Indeed, a number of wholesalers fail to cope up in aftermath of natural disasters, though not many studies have been done to relate poor performance to lack of disaster preparedness.

In the past two (2) decades, East Africa has been hit by several natural disasters, ranging from floods, drought, famine, swarms of locusts, diseases, among others. Instantly, this has not only reduced supplies from farming, but also affected the movement of goods for general merchandise traders in the East African community (World Bank, 2010). Land locked economies such as Uganda, and Rwanda, South Sudan have been severely hit. As a result, wholesale traders are vulnerable to lasting effects of natural disasters. A few Wholesalers exhibit preparedness for disasters, which has led to losses and poor organizational performance (McAuliffe, Saxena and Yabara 2012). Indeed, disaster preparedness is critical, and has been well conceptualized in recent paradigm on disaster management- disaster risk reduction and embraces earlier thinking, practice and is widely used by international agencies, governments, businesses, disaster planners and civil society organizations.

1.1.2 Theoretical Background

There are several theories which have been proposed to explain the relationship between disaster preparedness and financial performance. In this study, the Disaster Crunch Theory by Blaikie et al (1994), the Normative Theories first proposed by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schrammin (Khan, 2008). However, this study adopted the Disaster Crunch theory because hypothetically, disaster preparedness for General Merchandise Wholesalers can be well explained by this theory as it attempts to explain that disasters are not random and that they do not occur in isolation. This theory states that disasters are usually natural or man-made hazards. This theory further asserts that vulnerability to disasters result from what they called root causes. The root causes such as political and economic systems determine how an individual is prepared to respond to disasters. The theory calls for preparedness mechanisms to be put in place to reduce effects of disasters. Therefore, management is bound to work in best interests by designing a disaster preparedness plan that fits the operations of the organization.

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

In this study the major concepts are disaster preparedness as the independent variable and financial performance of general merchandise wholesalers as the dependent variable. Each of these concepts is conceptualized differently by different authors.

To begin with financial performance, Praise (2003) defines it as an act of achieving financial objectives from the perspective of judging individuals. In the same regard, Glenn (2006) refers to financial performance of an organization as one of those tools that can be used to determine an organization's productivity and effectiveness. Financial performance can therefore be measured in terms of capital, ability to pay off debts, return on investment, and others (Berhanu et al 2009).

In the above regard, financial performance of general merchandise wholesalers is measured basing on both quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative financial performance measures are

commonly used by large corporations such as financial outcomes (ROE, ROA, ROI), production (the amount of goods sold, operating expenses ratio), marketing (number of customers), and efficiency (Tattichi et al, 2008). Qualitative financial performance measures aspects such as discipline level, achievement of goals, perceptions of leadership on organizational financial performance and individual behavior in the organization (Marus,2017).

However, financial performance in this study was limited to Return on equity and Return on assets as well as profit margin. Profitability was constructed by deducting the variable cost of production from the total revenue obtained in a particular period. Additionally, Conceicao et al (2014) stipulate that profitability sees business financial performance from the view point of financial targets achievements as planned by the firm. Profitability measures that are universally accepted for their value in management of merchandise wholesale businesses are: return on assets, return on equity and profit margin. These three measures the relationship between outputs (net income from operations) and outputs. A firm's input includes return on assets, return on equity, and operating profit margin (Waithaka and Njeru,2015).

Disaster preparedness is the Process of ensuring that an organization has complied with the preventive measures, and is in a state of readiness to contain the effects of a forecasted disastrous event to minimize loss of life, injury, and damage to property (PAHO, 2000). This is further reinforced by the deliberations at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held from 18 to 22 January 2005 which advocated building resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (United Nations, 2005). In the above regard, General Merchandise wholesalers must undertake disaster preparedness planning not only because disasters may impact any facility anywhere in the country but also because it is a requirement for entities to have an emergency management plan.

1.1.4 Contextual Background

Financial performance of start-ups and established general merchandise wholesales in Kampala is

significantly being improved through putting in place institutional and management mechanisms to mitigate unforeseen and undesirable occurrences that may befall a firm. Wholesaling business is a fast-growing business sector in Uganda. The aforementioned business is central in the supply chain as it serves to connect products from the factory to the retailers. Disaster preparedness is an important discipline in business especially for general merchandise wholesalers. While it is estimated that disasters kill at least one million small businesses around world each year, in Uganda, several wholesalers have closed business, and yet others ask for government support after being insolvent. However, several authors emphasize that relief is not core, as compared to disaster preparedness and financial performance (Mikes and Kaplan, 2014). Like any other business, general merchandise wholesalers in Kampala are advised by Uganda Retailers and Wholesalers Association [URWA] to prepare for disasters. Often, they are taken through the planning phase, decision making and proper endowments to help them avoid, lessen adverse effects of the disasters (URWA, 2016).

General merchandise wholesalers being in a risky business that may be destroyed by fire, falling buildings, floods, terrorist attacks, diseases and thefts, thus, necessitates them to prepare for disasters in order to manage risk exposure and conduct proper analysis to avoid losses. However, general merchandise wholesalers are failing to prepare for disasters. In addition, almost 80% of the businesses in Kampala do not recover whenever they are faced with disasters (Olutayo et. al., 2015). Therefore, it is vital that disaster preparedness and performance of Wholesalers be explored. For purposes of this study, disaster preparedness in general merchandise wholesales such as planning, strategic decision making and endowment were considered. Preparedness assumes a future recurrence of a disaster and seeks to reduce its impact. While Organisational performance in this study is defined as effectiveness, efficiency, timeliness and customer satisfaction from General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Financial performance for start-ups and established general merchandise wholesalers is significantly improved through institutional and management mechanisms to mitigate unforeseen and undesirable happenings that beset general merchandise firms. Murage (2012) provides that disaster preparedness through planning and strategic decision making provide reasonable assurance about achievement of an entity's objectives with regard to effectiveness, efficiency, timeliness and customer satisfaction (Ejoh & Ejom, 2014). Cremonini and Samarati (2008) assert that entities should identify resources, determine roles and responsibilities as well as develop policies and procedures in order to continuously obtain profits during and after disasters. However, despite the aforementioned call, 80% of general merchandise businesses in do not seem to recover from disasters (Nasimiyu, 2019). This is attributed to the fact that many general merchandise wholesalers operate without plans, insurance cover, and also occasionally experience poor decision-making (URWA, 2020) validates that general merchandise wholesales stricken by COVID-19 are reporting a steady decline in their financial performance. It is therefore upon this background that the researcher is prompted to establish the difference in financial performance arising from Disaster Preparedness before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division, Kampala District. The years of consideration are 2019 (before first lockdown) and 2020 (after first lockdown).

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General Objective

To establish the difference in financial performance arising from Disaster Preparedness before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- 1) To examine the difference in financial performance arising from planning before and after the

COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District.

- 2) To analyse the difference in financial performance arising from Strategic Decision Making before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District
- 3) To establish the difference in financial performance arising from Endowment before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District

1.4 Research Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant difference in financial performance arising from planning before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in financial performance arising from Strategic Decision Making before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District.

HO₃: There is no significant difference in financial performance arising from Endowment before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District

1.5 Significance of the study

The findings from this research provide an initial evidence base to inform future research and policy on disaster preparedness and financial performance.

This study is a point of reference for the general merchandise wholesalers who participated in this study. This study is beneficial to general merchandise wholesalers in a way, that they would be able to transform their practices and attitude towards disaster preparedness.

The study also prompts policy makers doing general merchandise wholesale business to formulate appropriate policies to mitigate the impact future disasters may have on their finances, in Uganda and beyond

1.6 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is advanced in order to help structure the research and to identify variables for measurement (Svinicki, 2010). In that respect, the framework below is a graphical model that represents the relationship between the study variables of the research and how they are linked between the independent and dependent variables. Financial performance represents the dependent variable while disaster preparedness represents the independent variable in the study.

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

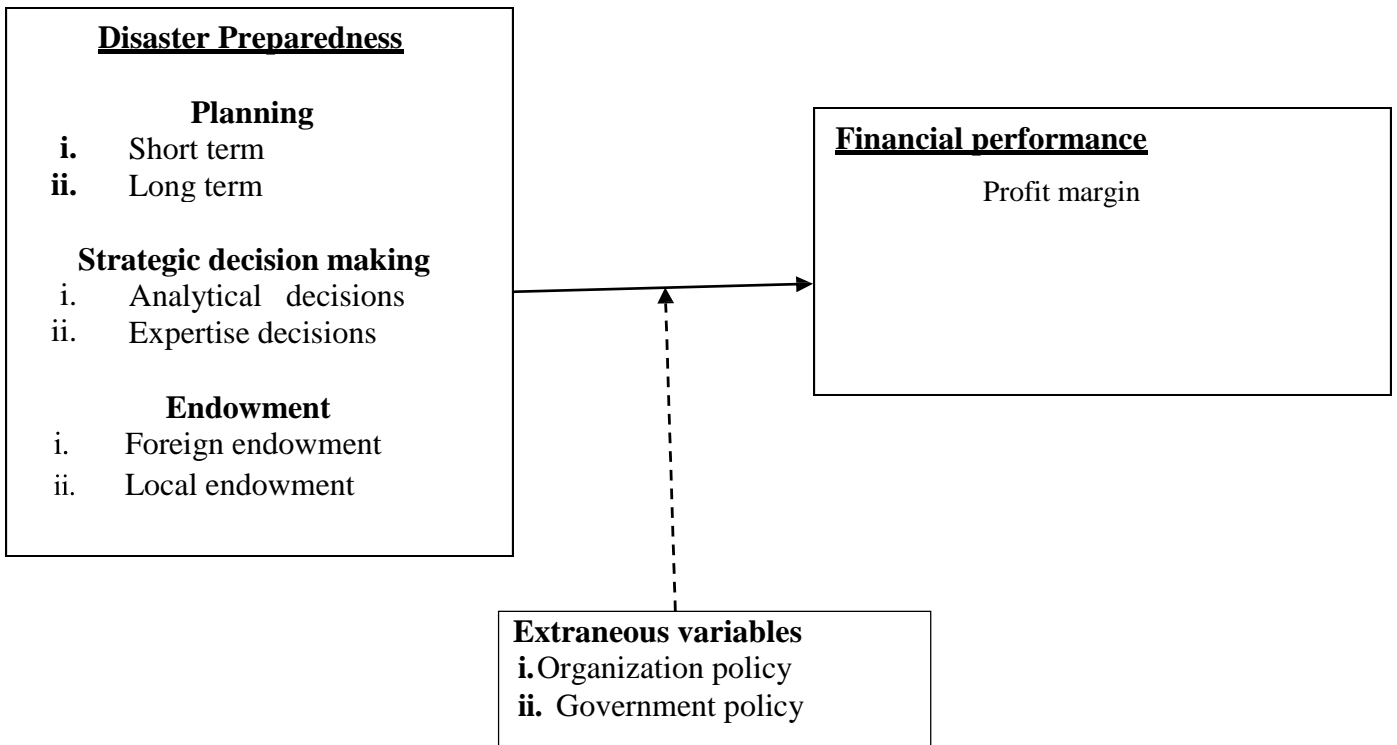


Figure 1. 1: Conceptual framework

Source: *Adapted from Nasimiyu (2017) and modified by the researcher*

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the various theories related to disaster management. This is followed by a review of the existing empirical studies, orientations on the experience of merchandise wholesalers pertaining to performance. The review of literature focuses on the impact of disaster preparedness on performance of merchandise wholesalers.

2.1 Theories of Disaster Preparedness

2.1.1 Disaster Crunch Theory

This study adopted the Disaster Crunch theory by Blaikie et al (1994) because hypothetically, disaster preparedness by General Merchandise Wholesalers can be well explained by this theory as it attempts to explain that disasters are not random and that they do not occur in isolation. This theory states that disasters are usually natural or man-made hazard. This theory which uses a pressure and release model. This theory further asserts that vulnerability to disasters result from what they called root causes. The root causes such as political and economic systems determines how an individual is prepared to respond to disasters. The theory calls for preparedness mechanisms to be put in place to reduce effects of disasters. Therefore, management is bound to work in the best interests by designing a disaster preparedness plan that fits the operations of the organization.

2.1.2 Normative Theories

According to this theory the firm should devise proper procedures for dealing to deal with emergencies cases in relation to disasters. There should be a section that is only assigned the duties of checking and weighing the mechanisms on how disasters may be mitigated and instruct relevant individuals on the strategies. Supervisory effectiveness is improved through following by these necessary instructions and procedures lessons in the eventuality of these undesirable occurrences.

Strategies and specific techniques should be an important factor as mentioned in this theory (Kumar, 2009).

In the above regard, Khan (2008) provides that Normative Theories were first proposed by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm in their book called “Four Theories of the Press. He further asserts that Normative Theory is important because it helps Managers in collecting ideas and organizing their day to day programs with a hazard preparedness approach through the implementation of a series of broad strategies and specific tactics such as building a commonly risk reduction program.

2.1.3 Operational Disaster Theory

This theory states that disasters are literally caused by human persons. This happens because of the firms and countries do not have appropriate disaster supervision instruments to ensure that these encumbrances are handled (Khan, 2008). Proper communication design ought to be in place to make sure that all activities are carried out in terms of preparedness and mitigation mechanisms. In most instances warnings are given but there are societal factors that constrain the management of the organization and persons to respond in one dimension, while others do things differently at the time of floods, landslides and a variation of other types of calamities.

Obviously, early caution should seek to monitor both the falling debris and the vulnerability of the soil piles to pre-determine the jeopardy and degree of a possible disaster. A twofold method is significant due to the fact that it is not always clear *apriori* that a calamity is due to a robust external shock, to the internal dynamic forces of the organization or an amalgamation of both.

2.2 Key Concepts

2.2.1 Planning

Cremonini and Samarati (2008) assert that Disaster preparedness planning involves identifying organizational resources, determining roles and responsibilities, developing policies and

procedures and planning activities in order to reach a level of preparedness to be able to respond timely and effectively to a disaster should one occur. The actual planning process is preliminary in nature and is performed in a state of uncertainty until an actual emergency or disaster occurs. After a disaster has occurred, plans must be adapted to the actual situation.

In the above regard therefore, the goal of disaster planning is to define all the processes, protocols, assets, and benchmarks for an organization to develop plans ensuring the safety of employees, its community and the continuity of time-sensitive operations (Cybulski,2016).

2.2.2 Strategic decision making

Decision making in disaster management differs from regular daily situations. According to French (2004), strategic decision making is geared towards crisis response and also the following: decisions are taken within a network of many actors, decisions have to be taken under time pressure and stress, uncertainty creates the need for ad hoc decision-making often made basing on experience and intuition rather than information, external pressure, such as that of media, affects decision makers and decision- making; · quality assessment of the decision-making process is done afterwards. Under these circumstances the main question is how does the decision-making process look like and how can the existing information systems meet the user-needs under these extreme circumstances? Decision makers in crisis response often deal with complex situations. They have to make decisions on the basis of the information they are provided with, which might be incomplete and even wrong. Most decision support systems (DSS) however only support circumstances which lie in the known and knowable spaces and do not support complex situations sufficiently (French, 2004).

2.2.3 Endowment

According to Disaster Recovery (2016), Disaster endowment is the provision of immediate life support and human needs to persons affected by or responding to an emergency. Disaster

endowment is a coordinated process of supporting affected communities in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing. Timely coordinated deployment of disaster relief and recovery is equally important as effective disaster response in minimizing the impact on the communities affected by a disaster. The application of a holistic approach to relief and recovery requires the clear identification of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the process. In regard to General Merchandise Wholesalers, Gall, Cutter, and Nguyen (2014) provide that endowment is in developing an enabling environment and adequate incentives for General Merchandise Wholesalers which include financial and non-financial incentives.

2.3 Other studies

2.3.1 Disaster preparedness' planning and the financial performance of General Merchandise Wholesalers

Cybulski (2016) defines disaster preparedness planning for “merchandise wholesalers” as business continuity planning (BCP). In his definition, he asserts that disaster preparedness is a set of technical, administrative and management activities aimed at planning the steps to recover and restore critical business assets after an unforeseen event has impaired corporate functions." (Cremonini and Samarati, 2008).

The objective of disaster planning is to define all the processes, protocols, assets, and benchmarks for an organization to develop plans ensuring the safety of employees, its community and the continuity of time-sensitive operations (Cybulski, 2016). It is also important to highlight that, since unforeseen events can disrupt a business' operation and cause revenue loss, a business continuity plan to resume normal operations is essential not only for the survival of the company, but also for the recovery of the region where the business operates (Savage, 2002).

Cremonini and Samarati (2008) argue that disaster planning for general merchandise wholesalers

began during the 1970s, when mainframe computers and network technology gained prominence within business and methods of securing the data from unpredicted events that could undermine them. Nowadays, BCP has evolved together with business models, expanding its focus from technology infrastructure to all the processes and management procedures involved in the continuation of the business in its entirety. The idea is that reducing down-time periods also accelerates recovery and business restoration (Cremonini and Samarati, 2008).

According to Disaster Recovery (2016), three steps are essential when developing a business plan that is efficient and complies with standards, codes and best practices: 1) the Discovery Phase, which consists of business impact analysis and risk assessment; 2) the Planning Phase, composed of the emergency response & management, crisis management and communications steps; and 3) the Governance Phase, which follows the plan auditing, updating and exercising procedures.

Cybulski (2016) provides that the Discovery Process phase of a business preparedness plan seeks to identify potential risks that a company is exposed to, and measure the amount of disruption an organization can withstand or those that must be addressed. The first process of the Discovery Phase is the Business Impact Analysis (BIA), which seeks to identify and qualify the time-sensitive business functions and processes. By measuring these processes, organizations are enabled to understand the point in time when an impact starts to drive negative consequences. Once these impacts are understood, the organization can develop the framework to accept, remediate, or develop planning strategies to support organizational recovery (Disaster Recovery, 2016). The next step in the Discovery Phase is the risk assessment and remediation (RAR), which yields measurable results by quantifying and qualifying those risks and threats that can disrupt the organizations ability to continue time-sensitive business functions and processes (Cybulski,2016).

Cybulski (2016) presupposes that the second phase of the Planning Process, is composed of three separate but integrated plans to coordinate activities, authorities, and responsibilities during

disasters.

These plans utilize the information captured and analyzed during the Discovery Process phase to ensure the organization not only survives catastrophic events, but can more effectively manage the situation, and drive operational resiliency. The Emergency Management and Response plan outlines the initial strategies for responding to, and stabilizing an unforeseen event. First responders are responsible for life safety, stabilizing the incident, qualifying and remediation of damage, and communicating to authorities and the Crisis Management Team (Disaster Recovery, 2016).

Besides the above, the Crisis Management and Communications plan comes next to bridges the responsibility and coordination between the response team and business restoration and operational recovery; providing leadership, decision-making, and communications structure to support the restoring of critical functions. The last plan to compose the Planning Process is the development of business restoration and operational recovery plans, which includes the strategy development, documentation and deployment of activities required to restore and recover functional operations to meet or exceed the recovery time objective (Cybulski, 2016).

Lastly, the Governance phase provides the organization with the ability to keep the business continuity plans updated and accurate to their situation and risks. Three steps are devised in order to take on that task: plan auditing, updating, and exercising. Plan Auditing provides a formalized method for measuring the management of business continuity processes, and determining the effectiveness of the organization's objectives, and understanding of capabilities or maturity of the plans. Plan Updating ensures accurate and up to date strategies; resources and agreements have been documented in compliance with the business continuity policy. The Plan Exercising step is then conducted on a present schedule in order to allow the participating teams to practice the plan implementation, strengthen responsibilities and capabilities while identifying improvements to

strategies and resources (Cybulski, 2016).

In the above regard, it is important to highlight that these are general and broad steps that general merchandise business continuity plans include in order to assess disaster risk and to provide guidelines for swift recovery of operations. Managers and small business owners that possess the full knowledge of their business will be able to fine tune the Business Continuity Planning (BCP) to their company's needs. Additionally, disasters can take several forms. Some primarily affect individuals, while others have a larger, collective impact, such as natural and manmade disasters. Even though some of them may only cause short-term disruptions in normal business operation, the recovery of an impacted area from the many disasters can take much longer, especially if organizations have not prepared in advance (Disaster Recovery, 2016).

Research conducted by Savage (2002) provides that Disaster planning approach requires an understanding of how to handle a crisis before it occurs. As managers take significant time creating strategy on how to achieve business or academic objectives according to the organization's vision and mission, the same vigour ought to be used in planning for crises. They should not wait to use a reactive approach. They ought to integrate crises management into strategic planning processes and statements of corporate excellence. The way teams are vital in performing varied organizational tasks, strategic planners should come up with various crises management teams with clearly defined team tasks, should a crisis occur. Training and workshops in crises management should be provided. All organizational members should be involved in crises simulations. This can transform the organization from being crisis prone to being crisis prepared.

Disaster preparedness Planning should be composed of: The Senior Management and a Multidisciplinary Disaster Committee. It should include Legal Public Relations, Technical and other Experts needed for the anticipated catastrophes. They should provide a broad range of professional skills, centralize all sources of information and make appropriate decisions. A disaster

management committee should have the authority to make major decisions. There should be other teams assigned to handle different disaster should they occur (Savage, 2002).

According to Kumar (2009), general merchandise wholesalers should have a centralized approach to communication in their planning. There should be a Disaster Management Communication Centre. All information during the crisis should go through the communications centre for consistency. Savage (2002) emphasizes that a competent spokesperson selected by management is given significant authority to perform the expected communication responsibilities. Additionally, the spokesperson ensures that information flows continuously during the disaster, reducing the likelihood of the organization contradicting itself. Hence, media relations and updates are well handled to protect the organization's corporate image.

2.3.2 Disaster preparedness' strategic decision making and financial performance

Disaster preparedness requires organization to set strategic objectives relevant for the organizational continuity. Porter, (2004) refers to it as doing a set of different activities contrary to other companies in order to provide a "unique mix of value." Companies can generate a competitive advantage from either superior strategy or operational effectiveness, but Porter makes a pretty persuasive argument that competitive advantages from strategy are more maintainable and could sustain a general merchandise business during the period of disasters.

The Government policies in place are key to disaster strategic decision making. This is because the decisions made enable the organization to follow the necessary rules that the government has laid to ensure that safety first is there. The rules being in place ensure that the operations are well monitored and achieved effectively. Disaster preparedness as a mechanism to disaster management is very important for without the preparedness the institution cannot mitigate the disasters that can occur (Cybulski,2016).

Sudarshan (2009) suggests that whatever key disaster preparation decisions, organisations must

reflect on their goals in the industry. For some wholesalers, products and services being offered are homogenous, making it become highly competitive. Nevertheless, with the prevailing competition, leading businesses must continue offering proper products. Enterprises would fail the market simply because they offer poor quality to customers. Firms could also obtain long-term debt mainly by soliciting for loans.

Decision-making comes in different styles. Flin, O'Conner and Crichton (2008) indicate there are four decision styles: creative, analytical, procedural and intuitive. In practice these decision styles differ in terms of the amount of conscious effort required and the processes applied can also vary at different phases of an emergency event. This notion is supported by Kowalski-Trakofler, Vaught and Scharf (2003) who argue that decision-makers at a high level have considerable relevant experience and may, through pattern-matching, intuitively identify appropriate responses to that pattern. Nevertheless, intuition can also be considered a source of bias and potentially lead to mistakes (Gigerenzer, 2004). The determination of whether intuitive judgments can be trusted requires an examination of the environment in which the judgment is made and of the opportunities the decision-maker has had to learn the regularities of that environment.

Gigerenzer (2004) emphasizes that procedural decision-making involves use of rapid tactics that follow some type of rule. One type of rapid decision-making is fast and frugal heuristics. Fast and frugal heuristics are a cognitive heuristic that relies on a few relevant predictors to simplify and speed up the decision-making process.

Additionally, Mintzberg (1994) in his strategic 5Ps recognizes planning as an important aspect in mitigating upon risks in highly formalized entities. In his planned school of thought, Mintzberg recommends that it is essential for entities to take on SWOT analyses because that would consequently make its strength lie in the assessment stages of strategic planning. As a result, Mintzberg advocates long term planning, by accessing the present situation of the organization's

strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Bryson, 1995). These support organization's moves towards a desired destination despite occurrence of organizational disasters. In regard to the above, Mintzberg asserts that Planning is directly connected with all the rest of the four Ps, that is to say: Position, Ploy, Perspective, And Pattern. This is because all entities mitigate risk by planning their way towards attaining a sustainable competitive advantage through key calculated decisions.

2.3.3 Disaster preparedness' endowment and financial performance

Research conducted by Gall, Cutter, and Nguyen (2014) provides that General Merchandise Wholesalers often see inclusion of disaster risk measures as additional cost and effort. Governments, therefore, have a crucial role in developing enabling environment and adequate incentives for General Merchandise Wholesalers to engage in disaster management. These incentives generally fall into two types: financial and non-financial. Financial incentives include grants (intergovernmental, or government to person or company), tax credits, subsidies, discounts (on prices or insurance premiums), conditional cash transfers or vouchers, bonds and sureties, access to concessional loans or credits, and others (Mardanugraha, 2016).

Additionally, UNESCAP (2018), provides that non-financial incentives include, but are not limited to, technical capability and capacity building (providing training for building risk assessment: training of trades-people in disaster-resilient construction, resulting in access to knowledge and access to construction opportunities); access to technology (technology transfer resulting in access to new, locally appropriate disaster-resilient technology); access to information (access to reliable and credible information about current and future risks, resulting in informed risk-sensitive decision making); awards or certification endorsement of good practice (increasing company brand image to society); and participation of stakeholders (including SMEs and community) in decision making (potential favourable influence in disaster resilient development) (ADB, 2016; Gall,

Cutter, and Nguyen, 2014).

General Merchandise Wholesalers when asked what type of incentives Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia prefer to see from the government, 57% responded that they would benefit from receiving technical assistance and training to cover the knowledge gap. Awareness is, therefore, an essential part of incentivizing SMEs to develop internal procedures related to risk mitigation. The same survey showed that while the majority of interviewees did not have initial knowledge of BCPs and other relevant mechanisms, 82% of them were willing to participate in a national planning process to support them to prepare for disasters (ADPC, 2016). This shows the potential for governments and Small and SMEs to work together and improve the relevant policy and processes.

According to research conducted by UNESCAP (2018), financial endowment is essential to mitigate and manage disasters. Donors, governments and multilateral development banks have gradually scaled up financial assistance for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Risk financing can be defined as the deployment of financial tools and processes to mitigate the impact of events, which have a negative effect on financial flows required to support an enterprise.

Risk financing may be arranged in advance or on the occurrence of an event and identification of the need (ex-post). The former is generally considered both more efficient and more effective than the latter (UNESCAP, 2018). Risk insurance is a beneficial risk transfer mechanism to reduce the economic losses of SMEs caused by disasters and help them recover quickly. However, unlike some business insurances, such as fire insurance, business insurance for natural disasters had a quite low purchasing rate. One of the reasons has been the perception of owners that it is an additional unnecessary cost. Another reason is the absence of tailored insurance products relevant to smaller companies' needs. Governments should, therefore, urge insurance companies to develop targeted insurance products with lower premiums. Governments should also take the responsibility

to strengthen and promote the adoption and use of this kind of risk insurances (UNESCAP, 2018).

According to (APEC, 2014), insurance coverage for various natural disasters, particularly in the event of flooding is important as it serves in increasing the flexibility and coping capacities of a wide range of businesses. It is upon this that in Indonesia, insurance for micro businesses was introduced by the Ministry of Cooperatives and General Merchandise Wholesaler's in cooperation with Insurance Associations. This insurance covers losses caused by natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions. It is targeted for low-income entities, having a premium of only Rp 40,000 (about 3 USD) per year and maximum coverage of Rp 5,000,000 (about 360 USD). This serves to protect General Merchandise Wholesalers' business premises, inventories, and business equipment (Japhta, Rubin, Murthy, Fahmi, Marina and Gupta,2016).

Governments can also increase wider community resilience through the promotion of insurance for individual employees. According to the ADPC (2016) survey respondents ranked the "employees were unable to go to work" option first on the list of reasons for interrupted business operations (ADPC, 2017). Asia Grandview organisation in Coron, the Philippines, was regarded as a good example when Typhoon Haiyan struck. All employees were covered by Pension and Calamity Assistance insurance, Philhealth (hospitalization), and Pag-IBIG (housing), substantially reducing the negative effects of the disaster on the livelihoods of the employees and on the business itself (ECOP, 2015).

According to ECOP (2015), Securing and recovery of records should also be promoted for General Merchandise Wholesalers. Apart from protecting assets and employees, the safekeeping of records is of utmost importance for enterprises. Essential information includes employee records, records of business transactions, customer records, and records of assets (e.g. real-estate property). Losing such information can delay recovery of operations after a disaster.

In the above regard, endowment in terms of risk retention, soft loans and credits can also represent

incentives. Compared with hard loans, soft loans have more flexible terms for repayment and lower interest rates. What is more, going back to the report conducted in the Philippines, complicated and lengthy documentation and screening process is another barrier for General Merchandise Wholesaler's to resort to formal financial agencies for loans or credit. A quicker screening and bureaucracy reduction for loan application can encourage General Merchandise Wholesaler's to return to formal loans for help. In Indonesia, banks were reported to have decreased credit lending interest rate for SMEs to under 10% from about 17% (Mardanugraha, ADPC,2016).

Governments can stimulate General Merchandise Wholesalers to take some disaster resilience actions through tax exemptions. Research conducted in Thailand provides that tax exemption and reduction measures were implemented by the Customs Department, Revenue Department, and Board of Investment for private sectors and General Merchandise Wholesaler's, particularly after the 2011 flood (APEC, 2014). The financial support from the government significantly limited the burden on General Merchandise Wholesalers in the aftermath of the flood. Tax exemption can also be an incentive to encourage more General Merchandise Wholesalers to engage in disaster preparedness, instead of response, which would be a more effective way to limit disaster-related loss.

Ballesteros, Marife and Domingo (2015) further argue that governments should provide relevant incentives according to specific needs and priorities. For example, in the Philippines, the local government requires enterprises to submit hazard assessment and field investigation reports for the issuance of certificates, as part of assuring implementation of climate change adaptation. Another case is the promotion of cash for work schemes instead of relief goods after disaster, in order to infuse more cash in reviving local industries).

2.4 Research gap

A number of studies have been conducted on disaster preparedness. Research conducted in Napier

and Dunedin on Disaster Preparedness for small and medium-sized enterprises by Egbelakin, Poshdar, Walsh, Ingham, Johnston, Becker, Mbachu and Rasheed (2018) revealed that the main preparedness action adopted by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) was the purchase of business insurance with the development of continuity plans whose overall adoption rate of the preparedness actions was less than 30%. This study leaves a researcher with a longing to understand the impact of disaster preparedness on the financial performance of massive capital investing entities like General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District. Therefore, the aforementioned gap is filled by the study on: *'Disaster Preparedness among Business Communities and Financial Performance: A Case of Selected General Merchandise Wholesalers Affected by Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic in Kampala, Uganda'*.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology and discusses the specific procedures and strategies that will be followed in conducting the research study. It therefore focuses on the following: location, research design, population and sample selection, research instruments, pilot testing, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a comparative and descriptive survey design with quantitative and qualitative approaches. A descriptive research design as supported by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007) offers ease in understanding the insight and ideas about the problem. In the same regard, Kothari (2004) further supports that a descriptive design involves large numbers of persons, and describes population characteristics by the selection of unbiased sample. More so, the mixed methods approach was utilized. Mixed method was used for purposes of triangulation. This consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data utilizing questionnaires and interview guides. Quantitative approach was used to collect numerical data, unbiased and can now be generalized to some larger population. Qualitative approach was used to collect non-numerical data. An Interview guide with not more than 12 respondents was used to collect qualitative data for purposes of supporting quantitative findings as recommended by Guest, Bunce & Johnson (2006).

3.2 Area of the Study

The study focused on disaster preparedness and financial performance and how each of its construct; planning, strategic decision making and endowment affects the performance of General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District. Central Division was selected because it has got many general merchandise wholesalers than any other Division in Kampala or

any district Uganda. The respondents were drawn from the owners and employees of the selected general merchandise wholesalers. This study was carried out from the months of August 2020 to January, 2020. The study also used most of the literature from between 2000 -2019.

3.3 Population of the study

This study focused on general merchandise wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District. Kampala Central Division has several general merchandise wholesalers. A total of 1,400 general merchandise wholesalers (UBOS, 2019).

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

3.4.1 Sample size

In this study, a sample of 302 respondents from selected general merchandise firms was considered. This sample size will be reached basing on Krejcie and Morgan (1970). From each business, a business head was be selected, and hence a total of 302 business owners/managers as respondents were considered. In addition, four (4) officers, two (2) in each case from key overseer organisations (KACITA and URWA) were contacted. In total, a sample of 306 participants was considered for this study.

Table 3. 1: Accessible population, Sample size and Techniques Category of respondent

Category of respondents	Accessible Population(N)	Sample Size(n)	Sampling Technique
Merchandise wholesalers	1400	302	Simple Random Sampling
Gov't officers (KACITA and URWA)	4	4	Purposive sampling
Totals	1404	306	

Source: UBOS (2019)

3.4.2 Sampling Techniques

In this study, simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used. The researcher used simple random sampling to select General merchandise wholesalers. This provided an equal chance for firms and respondents to be selected. Officials of influence from Kampala City Traders Association (KACITA) and Uganda Retailers and Wholesalers Association (URWA) were selected purposively. This is because they have exact information needed. Only general merchandise wholesale businesses that have spent over one year of operation were considered, as a basis for information on disaster preparedness and performance records.

3.5 Data Collection Method

3.5.1 Questionnaire

The researcher developed a questionnaire following recommended guidelines of Sekaran and Bougie, (2010). The respondents were given clear instructions on how to complete the items in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to general merchandise wholesalers. This questionnaire type restricts respondents from giving irrelevant information, from a large sample in a short time and at low cost.

3.5.2 Interview guide

An interview guide was used to collect qualitative data. The researcher designed an interview guide which was used during the interview of the key respondents. Interviews were held with officers overseeing activities of general merchandise wholesalers. These included officials from Kampala City Traders Association (KACITA), and Uganda Retailers and Wholesalers Association (URWA). These were contacted by interview guides. Interview guides helped to probe and clarify opinions verbally as supported Leedy and Ormord (2015). Face-to-face interviews were conducted basing on study objectives.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data analysis collected from questionnaires was entered and analyzed by SPSS software. Analysis of hypotheses was performed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics covered frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations to measure the response rates on bio data items in the questionnaire. The researcher adopted bivariate analysis techniques in analysing data. Bivariate analysis is the simplest form of quantitative (statistical) analysis. In addition, a paired sample t-test was used to help the researcher to analyse sample characteristics of variables that will influence the conclusion of the study. A paired sample *t*-test is used when there is one measurement variable and two nominal variables (McDonald, 2014). The paired sample *t*-test was used for measuring variables before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for businesses in Kampala.

3.6.2 Qualitative data analysis

All qualitative data collected by use of interviews guide was put into meaningful and exhaustive categories. Summary of key points that emerged were compressed into brief statements and presented as paraphrased statements in order to make sense of opinions. Principal themes that emerged from the interviews are presented in the discussion of findings as proposed by Saunders *et al.*(2009).

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Data

3.7.1 Validity

According to Kothari (2004), Data validity refers to the ability of research instruments to elicit the desired response from the target population.

The questionnaire was given to the supervisors to seek their opinion about the adequacy and representativeness of the instruments to ensure that it covers all the variables being measured to

remove invalid items on the instrument.

Validity tests were conducted for content and criteria to test well how the tool used is representative and captures relationships between the variables as well as a concept measure (Saunders et al, 2003).

To establish validity qualitatively, the instruments was given to the experts (supervisors) to evaluate the relevance of each item in the instrument to the objectives and rate each item on the scale of very relevant (4), quite relevant (3), somewhat relevant (2), and not relevant (1).

Therefore, the validity of the instrument quantitatively was established using the Content Validity Index (CVI). This involved the expert scoring of the relevance of the questions in the instrument in relation to the study variables. Index (CVI) was computed using the formula below:

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Number of relevant items}}{\text{Total number of items}} \times 100$$
$$CVI = \frac{10}{13} \times 100$$
$$= 0.769 = 76.9\%$$

In the above regard, Saunders et al (2003) affirms that the instruments that yields a CVI above 0.7 is within the accepted ranges. The instrument yielded a CVI of 76.9% (0.769) which is above 0.7.

3.7.2 Reliability

According to Taber (2013) the reliability of a measure indicates the extent to which the measure is without bias and offer consistent results a cross various items in the instrument hence stability and consistency. Qualitatively, the reliability of the instruments was established through a pre-test of the questionnaire to ensure consistency and dependability and its ability to tap data that helped to answer the objectives of the study. The results were subjected to a reliability analysis.

Quantitatively, reliability was established using the Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Coefficient test. Upon performing the test, the values obtained were above 0.7. The items in the instrument were regarded reliable.

Table 3. 2: Reliability is computed as below

Variable	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha
Planning	3	0.746
Strategic decision Making	2	0.82
Endowment	2	0.7
Financial performance	2	0.74
Average	9	3.055

Source: Primary data, 2020

Table 3.2 shows research variables: Planning, Strategic Decision Making, Endowment and Financial performance. Reliability was tested by obtaining the average score. In that respect, the average score was derived by dividing the sum of the values by 4 as follows: $(0.746 + 0.82 + 0.7 + 0.74)/4 = \mathbf{0.75}$. According to Taber (2013) the instrument was regarded reliable since the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was above 0.7

3.8 Ethical consideration

Permission to carry-out an inquiry was sought. Ethical issues regarding anonymity, confidentiality and access to the research findings were discussed with participants to give an informed consent prior to data collection. Therefore, the ethos of research was observed in accordance with Gray’s (2004) key to ethical involvement of not just obtaining consent but “informed” consent.

3.9 Limitations of the Study

The researcher faced a number of challenges which include the following:

The organizations’ confidentiality policy restricted some respondents from giving the information through the questionnaire as it was regarded as against the organizational policy to give confidential information to outsiders. However, confidentiality assurance was emphasized by the

researcher.

The elements of lockdown due to Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic was also a gallant limitation faced while carrying out this study. Adherence to all the guidelines/ Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) given by the Ugandan government and Ministry of Health, by the researcher served as a remedy to the limitation.

Inadequate responses to questions and unexpected occurrences like respondents proceeding on their own businesses before completing the questionnaire was a common phenomenon during data collection. The researcher was patient with interviewees and often rescheduled interviews as well as postponed collection of filled questionnaires whenever need arose to ensure the convenience of respondents was priority

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents descriptive and inferential findings of the study, the presentations are done according to the specific objectives and hypotheses. The first section presents the background information of the respondents. The second section presents descriptive and inferential statistical results along the three study objectives. Thereafter, paired sample t tests results are presented and interpreted.

4.1 Response Rate

This section reveals the response rate that was obtained during the data collection period. During this process, three hundred two (302) questionnaires were given out to the respondents by the researcher. Only two hundred sixty-six (266) respondents returned the data collection instruments. This is shown in the table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

	Distributed Questionnaires	Received Questionnaires	Percentage Response
Respondents	302	266	88.1%

Source: Field study (2020)

Table 4.1 above revealed that 88.1% of the respondents managed to return the questionnaires issued out during the study. In that respect, a response rate above 70% is rated very good (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). This revelation recognizes that a response rate of this study being 88.1% is an indicator of well filled questionnaires.

4.2 Background information of the respondents

The researcher analyzed personal information of the respondents as follows

4.2.1 Position of the Respondents

The positions of the respondents who were general merchandise wholesalers yielded in Kampala yielded the following results as reflected in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Position of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Owner	160	60.2
Manager	106	39.8
Total	266	100.0

Source: Field study (2020)

The study established that 160 (60.2%) of the respondents were business Owners while 106 (39.8%) were Managers. This therefore implies that majority of respondents were owners of General Merchandise Wholesales in Central Division, Kampala District.

4.2.2. Gender of the Respondents

The gender of the respondents (General Merchandise Wholesalers) in Central Division, Kampala District revealed the following results as reflected in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents by gender

	Frequency	Percent
Female	103	38.7
Male	163	61.3
Total	266	100.0

Source: Field study (2020)

The results showed that (61.3%) of the respondents were male, females on the other side were 38.7% of the respondents. This revealed that majority of General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division, Kampala who made up the study were male despite the fact all gender categories were represented.

4.2.3 Age categories of the Respondents

The age categories of the respondents (General Merchandise Wholesalers) in Central Division, Kampala District revealed the following results as reflected in table 4.4 below.

Table 4. 4: Distribution of respondents by Age categories

	Frequency	Percent
Below 20 years	42	15.8
20-30 years	80	30.1
31-40 years	72	27.1
41-50 years	48	18.0
51 and above	24	9.0
Total	266	100.0

Source: Field study (2020)

Table 4.4 above reveals that majority of General Merchandise Wholesalers 80 (30.1%) in Central Division, Kampala District were under the ages of 20-30 years. Age category 31-40 years constituted 72 (27.1%). Also, respondents under age bracket 41-50 years constituted 48 (18.0%) of the total respondents. In the same regard, Respondents in the age bracket of Below 20 years constituted 42 (15.8%). Minority of respondents fell under the age bracket of 51 and above years. The aforementioned revelations indicate that General Merchandise Wholesalers in all age brackets indicated above are business operators in Central Division, Kampala District.

4.2.4. Marital status of Respondents

The Marital status of the respondents (General Merchandise Wholesalers) in Central Division, Kampala District revealed the following results as reflected in table 4.5 below

Table 4.5: Marital status of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Single	35	13.2
Engaged	105	39.5
Married	76	28.6
Divorced	32	12.0
widowed	18	6.8
Total	266	100.0

Source: Field study (2020)

Table 4.5 above reveals that majority of General Merchandise Wholesalers 105 (39.5%) in Central Division, Kampala District were engaged. The married constituted 76 (28.6%). Also, Single respondents constituted 35 (13.2%) of the total respondents. In the same regard, divorced respondents constituted 32 (12.0%). Minority of respondents were widowed 18 (6.8%). The aforementioned revelations indicate that General Merchandise Wholesalers with all sorts of marital statuses were business operators in Central Division, Kampala District.

4.3 Disaster planning and the financial performance of General Merchandise Wholesalers

The study sought to examine the differences of disaster preparedness planning on the financial performance of General Merchandise Wholesalers before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for businesses in Central Division, Kampala District. The objective yielded the following output.

4.3.1 Frequency of planning for disasters

The frequency for disaster planning by the respondents (General Merchandise Wholesalers) in Central Division, Kampala District revealed the following results as reflected in table 4.6 below

Table 4.6: Frequency of planning for disasters

	Frequency	Percent
Never planned any	116	43.6
once in a year	83	31.2
twice in a year	38	14.3
over two times in a year	29	10.9
Total	266	100.0

Source: Field study (2020)

Table 4.6 above reveals that majority of General Merchandise Wholesalers 116 (43.6%) in Central Division, Kampala District had never planned for any disaster. Those who planned only once in a year constituted 83 (31.2%). Also, those who planned twice in a year 38 (14.3%) of the total respondents. In the same regard, respondents who planned over two times in a year constituted 29 (10.9%). The aforementioned revelations indicate that majority of General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division, Kampala District had never planned any disaster before Covid19 lockdown.

4.3.2 The Role of planning on financial performance before and after Covid-19 lockdown for General merchandise wholesalers.

The researcher presents findings on the financial performance before and after disaster planning by general merchandise wholesalers in this case, the researcher was stimulated to track the financial performance before and after Covid19 lockdown so as to assess whether there was a difference. The findings are presented in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Role of planning on financial performance before and after COVID-19 lockdown for General merchandise wholesalers.

Financial performance	Very (%)	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Very High (%)
Before covid19	25.9	28.2	9.4	17.3	19.2
After covid19	8.3	12.0	18.0	32.3	29.3

Source: Primary data, 2020

The study made an investigation to establish the role of planning on financial performance of General merchandise wholesalers before COVID 19 lockdown. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that the financial performance before COVID 19 lockdown was low (28.2%). The implication of the findings is that limited planning for COVID 19 could be the reason why their financial performance was low.

The study further made an investigation to establish the role of planning on financial performance of General merchandise wholesalers after COVID 19 lockdown. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that the financial performance After COVID 19 lockdown is High (32.3%). The findings imply that after the lock down General merchandise wholesalers probably learnt to plan so as to increase their financial performance.

4.3.3 Rating the role of planning on financial performance before and after Covid 19 lockdown

The researcher presents findings on ratings of financial performance before and after disaster planning by general merchandise wholesalers in this case, the findings are presented in table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Rating the role of planning on financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown

	Frequency	Percent
Very poor	18	6.8
Poor	55	20.7
Good	103	38.7
very good	66	24.8
Excellent	24	9.0
Total	266	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2020

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that planning’s role in the financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown was good 103 (38.7%). Minority of respondents rated the role of planning in financial performance as very poor 18 (6.8). The implication of the findings is that COVID 19 could be the reason why General Merchandise wholesalers continuously engage in planning.

Table 4.9: Paired sample t-test examining the difference in financial performance arising from Planning before and after COVID19 lockdown

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval				
				of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Planning after Lockdown	1.743	.747	.062	1.567	1.681	44.462193	.000	
1 - Planning before Lockdown								

Source: Primary data, 2020

The study employed a paired sample t-test to examine whether there existed a significant difference between financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown for general merchandise wholesales. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference in financial performance

before and after lock down arising from planning in Central Division Kampala (t-test value=44.462, df=193, P-value<0.05). The results led to the rejection of the null hypothesis in support of the alternative hypothesis which stated that there is a significant difference in financial performance arising from planning before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District since the P-value (0.000) was less than 0.05 level of significance. The findings show that there was an increase in financial performance.

The aforementioned findings were also supported by qualitative findings from key informant interviews. It was established that planning was in one way a measure of counteracting financial loss in General merchandise wholesales in Central division Kampala. Respondent Coded ‘P4’ contended that;

“Planning for disasters helps merchandise wholesalers to generate more profits than their competitors who fail to plan. Those who failed to plan before Covid19 lockdown have even faced challenges reopening because their capital was used up” (P4).

4.4 Strategic Decision Making and the financial performance of General Merchandise Wholesalers

The study sought to examine the differences arising from Strategic Decision making on the financial performance of General Merchandise Wholesalers before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for businesses in Central Division, Kampala District. The objective yielded the following output.

4.4.1 The differences caused by strategic decision making on financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown for General merchandise wholesalers.

The researcher presents findings on the differences caused by strategic decision making on financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown on general merchandise wholesalers

in this case, the researcher was stimulated to track the financial performance before and after Covid19 lockdown so as to assess whether there was a difference. The findings are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Differences caused by strategic decision making on financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown

Financial performance	Very low (%)	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Very High (%)
Before COVID-19	43.6	31.6	14.3	10.5	0
After COVID-19	42.9	31.2	15.0	10.9	0

Source: Primary data, 2020

The study made an investigation to establish the difference poised by strategic decision making on financial performance of General merchandise wholesalers before COVID 19 lockdown. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that the financial performance before COVID 19 lockdown was very low (43.6%). The implication of the findings is that General merchandise wholesalers may not have embraced strategic decision making before COVID 19 lockdown. This could be the reason why their financial performance was Very low.

The study further made an investigation to establish the role of strategic decision making on financial performance of General merchandise wholesalers after COVID 19 lockdown. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that the financial performance After COVID 19 lockdown is still very low (42.9%). The findings imply that after the lock down General merchandise wholesalers probably haven't yet embraced Strategic decision-making financial performance.

4.4.2 Rating the role of Strategic Decision Making on financial performance before and after Covid 19 lockdown

The researcher presents findings on ratings of Strategic decision making on financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown for general merchandise wholesalers. The findings are presented in table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Rating the role of Strategic Decision making on financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown

	Frequency	Percent
very poor	18	6.8
poor	103	38.7
Good	55	20.7
Very good	66	24.8
Excellent	24	9.0
Total	266	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2020

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that Strategic decision making before and after COVID 19 lockdown was poor 103 (38.7%).The implication of the aforementioned finding is that before and after COVID 19, General Merchandise wholesalers have not embraced Strategic decision making.

Table 4.12: Paired sample t-test examining the difference between financial performance arising from Strategic Decision Making before and after COVID19 lockdown

	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower				Upper
Strategic decision making before Lockdown	1.541	1.143	.062	1.463	1.381	39.461	167	.000

Source: Primary data, 2020

The study employed a paired sample t-test to examine whether there existed a significant difference between financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown for general merchandise wholesales. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Strategic Decision Making in Central Division Kampala (t-test value=39.461, df=167, P-value<0.05). The results led to the rejection of the null hypothesis in support of the alternative hypothesis which stated that there is a significant difference in financial performance arising from Strategic decision making before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District since the P-value (0.000) was less than 0.05 level of significance. The findings show that there was an increase in financial performance.

The aforementioned findings were also supported by qualitative findings from key informant interviews. It was established that Strategic decision making was in one way a measure of counteracting financial loss in General merchandise wholesales in Central division Kampala. Respondent Coded ‘P12’ asserted that;

“Strategic decision making puts general merchandise wholesales in strategic position to attain competitive advantage. After the COVID 19 lock down, firms that increased prices reaped more profits than those whose pricing costs remained low. I also want to submit to you that firms that took loans after COVID 19 lock down are doing well financially than those that never re opened”(P12).

4.5 Endowment and the financial performance of General Merchandise Wholesalers

The study sought to examine the differences arising from Endowment on the financial performance of General Merchandise Wholesalers, before and after the COVID-19 lockdown, for businesses in Central Division, Kampala District. The objective yielded the following output.

The differences arising from Endowment on financial performance before and after COVID-19 lockdown for General merchandise wholesalers.

The researcher presents findings on the differences caused by Endowment on financial performance before and after COVID-19 lockdown on general merchandise wholesalers in this case, the researcher was stimulated to track the financial performance before and after Covid19 lockdown so as to assess whether there was a difference. The findings are presented in table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Differences caused by Endowment on financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown

Financial performance	Very low (%)	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Very High (%)
Before covid19	31.2	44.0	14.0	10.8	0
After covid19	6.8	20.7	38.7	24.8	9.8

Source: Primary data, 2020

The study made an investigation to establish the difference poised by endowment on financial performance of General merchandise wholesalers before COVID-19 lockdown. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that the financial performance before COVID-19

lockdown was low (44.0%). The implication of the findings is that General merchandise wholesalers may not have channeled endowment before COVID-19 lockdown into consumption. This could be the reason why their financial performance remained low.

The study further made an investigation to establish the difference established by Endowment on financial performance of General merchandise wholesalers after COVID-19 lockdown. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that the financial performance After COVID-19 lockdown was moderate 38.7. This reflects are change in financial performance.

Table 4.14: : Paired sample t-test examining the difference in financial performance arising from Endowment before and after COVID-19 lockdown

	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower				Upper
planning after	1.351	.454	.043	1.342	1.753	29.322	182	.000

Pair Lockdown

1 - planning before
Lockdown

Source: Primary data, 2020

The study employed a paired sample t-test to examine whether there existed a significant difference between financial performance before and after COVID 19 lockdown for general merchandise wholesalers. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Endowment in Central Division Kampala (t-test value=29.322, df=182, P-value<0.05). The results led to the rejection of the null hypothesis in support of the alternative hypothesis which stated that there is a significant difference in financial performance arising from Endowment before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for General Merchandise Wholesalers in Central Division Kampala District since the P-value (0.000) was less

than 0.05 level of significance. The findings therefore reveal that there was an increase in financial performance.

The aforementioned findings were also supported by qualitative findings from key informant interviews. It was established that Endowment was in one way a measure of counteracting financial loss in General merchandise wholesales in Central division Kampala. Respondent Coded ‘P8’ contended that:

“Endowments provided after disasters have befallen General merchandise wholesalers breathe life into attainment of the financial objectives of the firms. It is therefore perfectly reasonable to say that firms that didn’t receive alms after lockdown are doing badly in terms of financial performance as compared to their counter parts that received alms” (P8).

4.6 Assessment of financial performance of General Merchandise wholesalers before and after COVID-19 lockdown

The overall financial performance of General merchandise wholesales was further sought by the researcher. The researcher assessed the overall financial performance of General Merchandise whole sales by computing the rate of return on investment (ROI), Rate of return on equity (ROE) and profits made by the enterprises before and after COVID 19 lock down the findings are offered in table 4.15.

Table 4.15: The overall financial performance of General merchandise wholesalers before and after COVID-19 lockdown

Financial performance	Before COVID-19 (Mean UGX)	After COVID-19 (Mean UGX)	Difference (increase/Decrease)
Rate of return on investment (ROI)	9,210,242.45	11,396,813.37	Increased
Rate of return on equity (ROE)	5,113,688.34	9,567,842.88	Increased
Profit Margin	3,215,341.64	4,345,268.13	Increased

Source: Primary data, 2020

Table 4.13 presents the overall financial performance of General merchandise wholesalers before and after COVID19 lockdown. In regards to the Rate of return on investment (ROI), the study established that that there was an increase in the ROI of General Merchandise wholesalers in Central Division, Kampala District. Preparedness before COVID 19 lockdown yielded an average ROI of general Merchandise Whole sales of UGX 9,210,242.45 and after COVID 19 lockdown, it increased to UGX 11,396,813.37 showing an increase of 2,186,570.92. The findings imply that planning, strategic decision making and endowment served to increase on ROI.

About Rate of return on equity (ROE), the study established that there was an increase in ROE after COVID 19 lock down. The findings show that before Preparedness, the average ROE was UGX 5,113,688.34 and after it increased to UGX 9,567,842.88 leading to an increase of UGX 4,454,154.54. The implication is that preparedness after COVID-19 lockdown through planning, strategic Decision making and endowment could have served to increase the ROE.

In regard to profit margin, the study established that there was an increase in profit margin after preparedness through planning, strategic Decision making and endowment. The study indicates that before preparedness, the average profit margin of General merchandise whole sales was UGX 3,215,341.64 and after preparedness after lockdown, it increased to an average UGX of 4,345,268.13 reflecting an increase of 1,129,926.49. The implication is that preparedness after COVID 19 lockdown through planning, strategic Decision making and endowment could have served to increase the profit margin.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study. The general objective of the study sought to investigate the difference in financial performance before and after COVID-19 lockdown for general merchandise wholesale businesses, arising from disaster preparedness in Central Division Kampala. The specific objectives of the study were: to examine the difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Planning in Central Division Kampala, to examine the difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Strategic Decision Making in Central Division Kampala, and to establish the difference in financial performance before and after lockdown arising from Endowment in Central Division Kampala. The data was analyzed and the results of the findings were compared with empirical and theoretical literature available. The conclusions relate directly to the specific objectives of the study and recommendations were deduced from the conclusions and discussions of the findings.

5.1 Difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Planning in Central Division, Kampala District

The results portrayed by paired sample t-test revealed a significant difference between the financial performance before and after lockdown arising from Planning in Central Division, Kampala District. The study findings indicated that there is a significant difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Planning. The t-test results led to the rejection of the null hypothesis in support of the alternative hypothesis. The results from the study meant that after the provision planning, the consequences of disasters are mitigated leading to an increase in the financial performance.

The findings are in line with research conducted by Savage (2002) which provided that Disaster planning increases differences in financial performance when the approach used has a greater understanding of how to handle a crisis before it occurs. He further asserted that managers ought to take significant time creating strategy on how to achieve business objectives and should be tailored towards the organization's vision and mission.

5.2 Difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Strategic Decision Making in Central Division, Kampala District

The results portrayed by paired sample t-test revealed a significant difference between the financial performance before and after lock down arising from Strategic decision making in Central Division, Kampala District. The study findings indicated that there is a significant difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Strategic decision making. The t-test results led to the rejection of the null hypothesis in support of the alternative hypothesis. The results from the study meant that after the provision Strategic decision making, the consequences of disasters are mitigated leading to an increase in the financial performance.

The findings are in line with research conducted Kowalski-Trakofler, Vaught and Scharf (2003) who argued that decision-makers obtain differences in financial performance basing on their level and relevant experience that may be through pattern-matching to intuitively identify appropriate responses to patterns. They further acknowledge that the determination of whether intuitive judgments can be reliable requires an investigation of the surroundings in which the judgment is made.

5.3 Difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Endowment in Central Division, Kampala District

The results portrayed by paired sample t-test revealed a significant difference between the financial performance before and after lockdown arising from Endowment in Central Division, Kampala

District. The study findings indicated that there is a significant difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Endowments. The t-test results led to the rejection of the null hypothesis in support of the alternative hypothesis. The results from the study meant that after the provision of Endowment, the consequences of disasters are mitigated leading to an increase in the financial performance.

The findings are in line with research conducted by Ballesteros, Marife and Domingo (2015) who argued that government's promotion of cash for work schemes instead of relief goods after disaster, in order to infuse more cash in reviving local industries contributed greatly to financial performance compared to other firms that received relief goods after disaster.

5.4 Conclusions

5.4.1 Difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Planning in Central Division, Kampala District

From the study, it was learnt that planning played a significant role in enhancing financial performance. Therefore, the study concluded that planning for disaster in general merchandise wholesales was very important in creating differences in financial performance. Therefore, General Merchandise Enterprises should periodically generate plans of how to operate despite setbacks that may be looming so as to enhance differences in their profit margin.

5.4.2 Difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Strategic Decision Making in Central Division, Kampala District

From the study, basing on the observations that Strategic Decision Making played a significant role in enhancing financial performance, the study concluded that Strategic Decision Making in general merchandise wholesales was very important in creating differences in financial performance. Therefore, General Merchandise Enterprises should embrace Strategic Decision

Making on how to operate despite setbacks that may be looming so as to enhance differences in their profit margin.

5.4.3 Difference in financial performance before and after lock down arising from Endowment in Central Division, Kampala District

From the study, basing on the observations that Endowment played a significant role in enhancing financial performance, the study concluded that Endowment in general merchandise wholesales was very important in creating differences in financial performance. Therefore, General Merchandise Enterprises should embrace Endowment to ensure operationalization despite setbacks that may be forthcoming so as to enhance differences in their profit margin.

Generally, the study concluded that disaster preparedness through planning, strategic decision making and Endowment play a noble role in enhancing the differences financial performance which is observed through increase in profit margin.

5.5 Recommendations

Basing on the findings that disaster preparedness planning has a vital role in financial performance; the study recommended that General Merchandise wholesalers embrace planning so as to mitigate disasters when they come. This would serve to enable such enterprises to continuously obtain increase in ROI and profits.

The study also recommended that General Merchandise wholesalers should embrace Strategic Decision Making so as to mitigate disasters when they come. This would serve to enable such enterprises to continuously obtain increase in ROI and profits

The study further recommended that General Merchandise wholesalers should embrace Strategic Decision Making so as to mitigate disasters when they come. This would serve to enable such enterprises to continuously achieve financial returns. Other business types, NGOs, governments

and communities should include disaster preparedness policies in their strategic planning and budgeting to prevent a complete paralysis of operations in case a disaster strikes.

5.7 Suggestions for further research

This study specifically considered General Merchandise Wholesalers. Therefore, future researchers should address other business distribution channels so as to generate new knowledge geared towards enhancement of financial performance.

Academics should adventure in other institutions: governmental, NGOs, and private sector to increase the scope of awareness about disaster preparedness. By doing this they will be putting their knowledge and skills at the service and solving of societal challenges and taking advantage of opportunities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

This research is for a student pursuing a Master of Business Administration at Kyambogo University. The study is on *'Disaster Preparedness Among Business Communities and Financial Performance: A Case of Selected General Merchandise Wholesalers Affected by Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic in Kampala, Uganda'*. You have been identified as a respondent, and I therefore request you to kindly spare a few minutes of your busy schedule to fill this questionnaire.

This study is purely for academic purposes. Your honest answer and sincere responses are highly appreciated and shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Should you require any additional information or wish to receive the findings for the study, please get in touch with me on the following contacts:

Tel: 0772338082/0751 501599

Email: gumisiriza7000@gmail.com

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Please Tick (√) in the appropriate box and where applicable write your response on the spaces provided

1. What is your position in this firm?

- a) Owner
- b) Manager
- c) Others(specify).....

2. Gender:

- a) Female b) Male

3. Age

- a) Below 20 years b) 20 – 30 years c) 31 – 40 years
 d) 40–50 years e) Above 50 years.

4. Marital status

- a) Single b) Engaged c) Married d) Divorced
 e) Widowed

5. Highest level of education Qualification

- a) Certificate b) Diploma c) Bachelor’s Degree d) Masters
 e) Others (Specify).....

6) Which type of commodities does your business produce or sell?

- a) Foodstuff b) Electronics c) Machinery equipment d) Furniture
 e) Others (specify).....

SECTION B: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

7) How often do you plan for disasters in this general merchandise shop/store?

- 1) Never planned any
 2) Once in a year
 3) Twice in a year
 4) Over two times in a year

8) How would you rate the role of planning on the financial performance of your business before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for businesses in Central Division Kampala District.? Use a scale of 1-5 where 1- Very low 2 - Low, 3 – moderate, 4 – High and 5 – Very high. **(Tick (✓) in the appropriate box).**

Financial performance	1	2	3	4	5
Before COVID-19 business lockdown					
After COVID-19 business lockdown					

9) How would you rate the role of Disaster Preparedness Planning on the Financial Performance of your business?

- 1) Very poor []
- 2) Poor []
- 3) Good []
- 4) Very good []
- 5) Excellent []

SECTION C: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS’ STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING

4) 13) How would you rate the role of disaster preparedness’ strategic decision making on the financial performance of your business before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for businesses in Central Division Kampala District. Use a scale of 1-5 where 1- Very low 2 - Low, 3 – moderate, 4 – High and 5 – Very high. (Tick (✓) in the appropriate box).

Financial performance	1	2	3	4	5
Before COVID-19 business lockdown					
After COVID-19 business lockdown					

10) How would you rate the role of Disaster preparedness’ strategic decision making on the financial performance of your firm?

- 1) Very poor []
- 2) Poor []
- 3) Good []
- 4) Very good []
- 5) Excellent []

SECTION D: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS’ ENDOWMENT

11) How would you rate impact of Disaster Preparedness endowment on the financial performance of your business before and after COVID-19business lockdown? Use a scale of 1-5 where 1- Very low 2 - Low, 3 – moderate, 4 – High and 5 – Very high. (Tick (✓) in the appropriate box).

Financial performance	1	2	3	4	5

Before COVID-19 business lockdown					
After COVID-19 business lockdown					

SECTION E: FIRM FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Please give your assessment of the overall financial performance of your business by indicating the rate of return on investment (ROI), Rate of return on equity (ROE) and profits made by the enterprise before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for businesses in Central Division Kampala District.

Financial performance	Before COVID-19 business lockdown	After COVID-19 business lockdown	Difference_ (increase/Decrease)
Rate of return on Assets (ROA)			
Rate of return on equity (ROE)			
Profit Margin			

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX TWO: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. In your own opinion, is there a difference in financial performance resulting from disaster planning before and after the COVID-19 lock down for businesses in Central Division Kampala District?
2. In your view, is there a difference in financial performance resulting from Strategic Decision Making before and after the COVID-19 lock down for businesses in Central Division Kampala District?
3. In your own opinion, is there a difference in financial performance resulting from endowment before and after the COVID-19 lock down for businesses in Central Division Kampala District?
4. In your view, is there a difference in financial performance resulting from Disaster preparedness before and after the COVID-19 lockdown for businesses in Central Division Kampala District?