

**BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING STRATEGIES ADOPTED FOR
BUILDING RESILIENCE AT THE STANDARD MEDIA GROUP**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented in any other institution for examination purposes.

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Supervisor's Declaration

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family. Thank you for your continued encouragement, unwavering support and care.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCM	Business Continuity Management
BCP	Business continuity planning
CAK	Communications Authority of Kenya
FM	Frequency Modulation
FTA	Free to Air
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KTN	Kenya Television Network
KUJ	Kenya union of Journalists
MCK	Media Council of Kenya
MFIs	Microfinance Financial Institutions
SMG	Standard Media Group
TV	Television

ABSTRACT

For organizations to survive and excel in today's increasingly complex, highly dynamic and competitive business environment, they must continually transform their way of doing business. Firm resilience and business continuity in times of turbulence are critical for all business entities long-term viability, hence the need for business continuity planning strategies. This study sought to establish the business continuity planning strategies adopted by the Standard Media Group and the influence of business continuity planning strategy on firm resilience at the Standard Media Group. This study adopted a case study design. The study was conducted at the Standard Media Group. The study respondents were the managers of the risk, operations, finance, ICT and human resource departments of the Standard Media Group. An interview guide was used to collect the study data. The study was based on qualitative data that was analyzed thematically using content analysis. The study established that the Standard Media Group did have a formal Business Continuity Plan that reflected identified mission critical activities and risks that the firm faced in its line of business. The study also established that the Standard Media Group had adopted a wide range of business continuity planning strategies in the areas of ICT systems, human resource, financial management, market power/share and engagement with critical business partners. The BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to ICT systems aimed to secure the effective operation and safety of the firm's ICT systems. The BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to human resource aimed to secure the full commitment and productivity of the firm's workforce while ensuring that the workforce's current skills-set remained relevant to the needs of the firm in the face of an extremely challenging and dynamic operating environment. The BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to financial management aimed to secure the long-term sound financial standing and viability of the firm. In addition, the study established that the key motive behind the Standard Media Group's marketing BCP strategies was, the desire to not only retain, but also to grow its market share. The Standard Media Group's business continuity planning strategy was instrumental to its enterprise resilience. The management of Standard Media Group should regularly update the firm's business continuity planning strategies to ensure they remain relevant to its needs and to its dynamic operating environment.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The environment in which firms operate is becoming increasingly turbulent and complex due to issues such as globalization, which have opened the firms to more political, environmental, sociological, technological, economic and legal turbulence. Other events such as global warming, earthquakes, major pandemics, piracy, global terrorism and political instability have all had their impact on the global community in the recent past. Indeed, it is noted that in the present times firms are coping with a very competitive, turbulent, and unstable market stemming from prompt technological development. The first challenge the firm faces upon entry into a market is to figure out how it will survive in that market. It is therefore management's responsibility to take action which is appropriate for the firm and enables a successful adaption to these technological and industrial changes (Islami, X, Mustafa, N & Latkovikj, 2020). Turbulence poses both opportunities to be exploited as well as risks that if not mitigated can threaten the very survival of the entity (Wambutura, 2010).

Continuity in times of turbulence is critical for all business concerns, this can only be achieved through clearly planned measures, and procedures defining the risks and their mitigating factors as well as pre-emptive actions against turbulence and disruptions. Business Continuity Management is the name given to such planning measures that seek to mitigate the impact of these threats (Thiga, 2009). Business continuity planning is regarded as a strategic management tool that is useful in addressing surprise issues that have impact on the long-term survival and resilience of the organization in the face of unforeseen circumstances that are likely to impact on its ability to survive and to continue serving its customers both in the short and long term.

The study was anchored in the Open Systems Theory and Chaos theory theories. Baum and Rowley (2005) opine that organizations are adaptive and interdependent systems that strive to adhere and adapt to the dynamic environmental needs based on the Open Systems Theory. The Chaos Theory establishes the theoretical framework which explains the dynamic evolution of industries and the complex interactions within their ecosystems. The need for business continuity planning is advocated for by the Chaos theory school of thought which determines that it would be futile to seek to create order where a state of equilibrium is temporary (Kazmi, 2008). Organizations have counteracting forces at play whereby some push the entity toward stability and order; these include planning, structuring and controlling while other forces push

the entity toward instability and disorder can lead to a chaotic organization (Thietart and Forgues, 1995). The combination of these forces and the dynamic environment call for business continuity planning which seeks to mitigate the impact of turbulence in the organization's environment.

The media industry comprises of the players that are engaged in the passing on of information, entertainment and news content either in digital or print form. Examples of content that is said to be in the form of print include newspapers, magazines, and weekly papers among other publications. Digital media is often made up of content that is disseminated in terms of electromagnetic signals over different locations mostly through Radio or Television.

In Kenya, during the colonial era, the British heavily censored broadcasting as a means of controlling information on the struggle for independence. Immediately before gaining independence in 1961, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation was established and upon Kenya attaining freedom and becoming a republic, KBC became the Voice of Kenya. The struggle for the multiparty system in the late 1980s to early 1990s saw the liberalization of the media space with the entry of a licensed private broadcaster, the Kenya Television Network (KTN) in 1989, the Stellgraphics Limited in 1990 and in 1995, Capital FM was licensed as a private FM station. The media space is now dominated by the Nation Media Group, The Standard Media Group, Royal Media Services, Radio Africa, MediaMax, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation and the Capital Group. We now have approximately 180 radio stations, 90 television stations, and many sources of print content distributed in the form of magazines and newspapers.

1.1.1 Business Continuity Planning

Business continuity planning (BCP) is described by Robson (2017) as a management activity that involves the identification of risks, threats and vulnerabilities that may affect the operations and proceeds to provide a way forward on how firm resilience and capacity can be achieved through a framework for effectively responding to issues identified. Business continuity planning seeks to foster an entity's resilience and allow resumption or continuity of operations under adverse or abnormal conditions.

According to Lyndon (2018) executive buy in for business continuity planning proves to be challenging since it is not easy to give the value of the business. According to Lyndon this may be why many enterprises now exhibit a preference for a better strategic means of building

resilience which focuses on emphasising the capabilities of the enterprise rather than on response. Lyndon further proposes that the primary goal of an entity ought to be the building of the firm's resilience competencies and the people capabilities that can help them take control of the organisation in case of unexpected challenges given the eminent threat facing today's firms 'world-over.

The growing threats, disruptions and attacks call for a more dynamic response to disasters (PwC, 2017). As stated by Pearce and Robinson (2017) when a firm has a continuity plan in place, then its critical areas of operation will continue even when the business is under crisis. The firm will continue to meet the demands of its customers and clients. The continuity plan ensures that instead of the business focusing on the resumption of its critical operation areas after a crisis, the critical operation areas continue to run even amidst the crisis. A Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is made up of risk evaluation, risk management, control plans and the measures to be taken to ensure business continuity.

According to World Bank (2017) the BCP comes after a strategic planning process that is done to ensure that the business continues to provide its most important services or products in the midst of a crisis. Thus, the BCP should be made up of arrangements, strategies and plans that can help the enterprise continue delivering its products even in cases of disruptions. This allows the business to safeguard its assets, information and resources. The planning process also requires the pinpointing of the business resources that can help in the continuity of the enterprise even in the occurrence of challenges. Such resources can be in the form of employees, data, money, equipment, legal counsel, accommodation, protection of assets. When a firm has a BCP in place then the employees, shareholders and customers 'confidence in the firm is enhanced since it shows that the firm is proactive and has put in place measures to ensure the business stands even during difficult times. Other notable benefits of BCP are improved firm efficiency and the identification of the link between assets, financial and human resources to the important business products and deliverables (PwC, 2017).

1.1.2 Business Resilience

Weinschenk (2016) notes that business resilience is the ability of a firm to anticipate challenges, adapt to deal with these challenges and create an on-going value to its customers and clients. Resilience is the capacity to adapt in an effort to respond to the needs of the business environment and to come up with an effective strategy to respond to the security, risk,

survivability and preparedness issues that are part of any dynamic business environment. Resilience is also the capability of a business to continue functioning and providing its most important services even when it is in the midst of an external or internal crisis or disruption (Sadgrove, 2015).

Resilience as a business approach needs to start from the management level before it can be taken up as a firm culture by the other employees (ASIS, 2009). Firms have the option of experimenting with different crisis response methods before adopting the best response approach that can help make resilience part of the firm's culture especially in firms that embrace business continuity (Burgelman, Christensen, Steven and Wheelright, 2018).

Doughty (2011) also explains that resilience is shaped by the ability of the firm to respond to operational changes and demands which also determines if the business will continue or fail. Organisation have to develop past the operational difficulties and come up with a system that has resilience in ever part of the operation process to ensure that the business continues to operate even amidst disruptions and challenges. Every successful enterprise must have the ability to adapt to changes in the market demands and continue to produce goods and services that can satisfy this new demand. The firm stakeholders who include its customers, suppliers, shareholders, employees and regulators do affect its continuity. Its therefore necessary for any business that wants to be successful to take care of its stakeholders needs including those of its suppliers and to ensure the manufacturers, distributors and its assets are all working. The firm must also come up with a readiness and preparedness framework to ensure the continuity of its operations even during challenging periods (World Bank, 2017).

As explained by Kaye and Graham (2016) resilience is not a one-time process as every organisation, network, individual or system is continually improving on its resilience and no one can be 100 per cent resilient. A firm should be operationally aware, tactically able and strategically adaptable if it wants to respond effectively to any internal or external challenges. Resilience is not a static undertaking as the firm has to constantly adapt to changes. By use of firm continuity functions, a business can pinpoint the resilience strategies that it can use specifically for itself. The indicators can also be used to create a relationship with others helping a business become so resilient that it can bounce back from any distractions.

Enterprise resilience refers to a firm's ability to weather systemic discontinuities and adapt to the challenging environment. These discontinuities are occasioned by disruptive events and

can, in serious situations; result in total collapse of a company. Enterprise resilience brings together the processes of risk assessment, reporting and risk governance and business planning and the firm planning capabilities (Booz, Allen Hamilton Inc, 2004).

Enterprise resilience improves the business speed and ability to respond to unplanned and planned disruptions and uncertainties (Starr, Newfrock & Delury, 2005). How impactful a disruptive situation is to the business depends on the extent to which the business operations are affected and the extent to which the disruption integrates to the organisations value chain. The ability to weather disruptions is due to the strength of the firm's resilience process and its capability to foresee the disruption, understand its capabilities and use the capabilities to plan around the disruptions that are likely to happen. (Waters, 2007) observes that building enterprise resilience requires control that is more proactive than reactive.

1.1.3 The Media Industry in Kenya

The Kenyan media industry is one of the key drivers of the economy through job creation, tax revenues and by being a platform through which different industry players advertise their firms. The Kenya traditional media industry disruption by emerging media technologies like social media is a major threat to its survival and its resultant negative effect to the county's economy. The digitization in Kenya media industry is being aided by the improving broadband internet infrastructure.

Social media has been widely embraced by the media industry to gain and preserve market share, inform, entertain, interact with the users and enhance brand loyalty. The media industry in Kenya is co-regulated by the Media Council whose Board is shortlisted and selected for appointment by media professional bodies like: The Media Owners Association, the Editors Guild, Kenya Correspondents Association, Kenya Correspondents Association, Kenya union of Journalists, and the Ministry of Information which advocate for media freedom, set standards for media practitioners as provide oversight over the operations of the industry in general.

The Kenyan Media industry has played a critical role in the country's social, political; and economic growth. It's one of the major sources of employment for many Kenyans who work as content creators, administrative staff and journalists which has improved the living standards of these Kenyans. The media has also been credited with enhancing democracy and good

governance while also advocating for the right and freedom of expression. The Kenyan media is also hailed for being part and parcel of midwifing the birth of multiparty democracy and advancing the course of the public voiceless. On the socio-economic front media has been a platform for allowing others to experience the Kenyan culture by sharing the countries stories and also encouraging the preservation of the country's culture while also being a voice when it comes to decisions relating to cultural issues (CAK, 2018).

Apart from the proliferation of the new Free to Air (FTA) TV channels, Kenyan subscribers can also access local Pay TV channels through ZUKU, regional TVs like DSTV and Showmax as well as international firm Netflix all striving to establish market niches among the Kenyan viewers (Mbeke, 2008). Technological advancements have eased the barriers to entry and increased competition with entrance of many players in the industry. The country's TV and radio stations have continually grown over the years which have resulted to a diverse and active media mainly headquartered in the urban locations.

1.1.4 The Standard Media Group

The Standard Group was established in 1902 making it the oldest media house in Kenya, starting out with weekly newsprint titled the African Standard, which evolved to a daily newspaper known as The Standard, it then made its entry into electronic media by launching the first private independent television station in Kenya. The Standard Media Group is currently a multi-media organization with investments in media platforms. The main activities of the media house include publishing of The Standard Newspaper and The Nairobiian weekly newspaper, distribution of renown local and global periodicals, papers and magazines, broadcasting under the Kenya Television Network (KTN), KTN News, KTN Farmers and KTN Burudani, Radio Maisha, Spice FM and Vybez Radio, respectively, offering outdoor media advertising services under the name Think Outdoor and offering digital services through the Standard Digital.

1.2 Research Problem

World-over, companies are operating in dynamic and interconnected business environments than ever before. The changes in today's business environment means that there are new risks and uncertainties which require businesses to adapt and to have new continuity strategies if they are to compete sustainably and to survive such disruptions, remain competitive and

profitable within a fast-moving and highly dynamic industries (Booz, Alen & Hamilton, 2014). Modern-day firms face more than just man-made and natural disasters. They are also faced with competitors aggressive business strategies such as entering into dynamic markets, consolidation of firm operations, global integration which are just a few changes that have brought about new uncertainties for firms which can only be addressed using the firms business continuity plans (Business Continuity Institute, 2017).

In the recent past the Standard Media Group has experienced instances of disruptions of its operations whereby on the 2nd March 2006 , masked men stormed the Company's and switched off the lights and CCTV cameras, immobilised the lifts before detaining and harassing the journalists meanwhile at the Company's Likoni Road Office, the raiders broke down doors to access the printing press, vandalised the press machines and torched copies of the day's newspapers that were being printed, and carted away more equipment, including a motor vehicle. On the 30th January 2018, the Government through the Communications Authority of Kenya shut down KTN for airing live Opposition leader's 'swearing-in' as the 'people's president' at Uhuru Park in Nairobi, the Standard Media Group managed to leverage on social media platforms to continue distributing its broadcast content.

Evolving the business continuity plan is not an easy task, but this cannot be compared with the negative results of not having one or having a BCP that is ineffective and its integration into overall enterprise risk management program can prove detrimental to the firm reputation and its operations (IBM, 2017). Business are constantly trying to come up with a competitive strategy while also minimising their risks in order to sustain their competitiveness in an ever-changing business environment, among the developed economies, only 17% of the firms have a well-laid out plan on their business continuity that is useable in the organisation, hence the lack of models that firms in developing economies like Kenya with which to benchmark. The situation is even worse since generalised adoption of BCP strategies for lack of models is risky as different industries function with unique difference. This increase the failure rate in application of BCP strategies, yet such initiatives are capital-intensive hence impacting firm performance and resilience negatively (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2018).

Among the global empirical studies on BCP and firm resilience include Robson (2017) who observed that whereas risk management seeks prevention disruptions are highly likely and dealing with them is more practical. Lock, Bennet and Vile (2011) revealed that although few small and medium businesses have formal disaster recovery plans, they still manage risk

proactively using limited selection of available disaster recovery options. However, the above cited global studies cannot be generalised to predict the situation in the Kenyan firms particularly those from the media industry. Thus, a knowledge gap exists and conducting a similar study on media firm in Kenya would help to validate the earlier study findings.

A number of local studies on business continuity planning strategy and firm resilience among Kenyan firms exist. Gathuku (2010) looked at how micro finances (MFIs) responded to changes in regulations in the industry. On the other hand, Macharia (2011) analysed the sustainability of Kenyan MFIs in the face of uncertainties. Similarly, Kitetei (2011) studied how practices in corporate governance affected organisations' financial performance. From the review of previous studies, it was evident that there was lack of comprehensive empirical evidence on use of business continuity planning strategies among firms in Kenya and their influence on firm resilience. Therefore, the current study sought to determine the influence of business continuity planning strategy on firm resilience at the Standard Media Group. The research question that helped guide the study included: what was the influence of business continuity planning strategy on firm resilience at the Standard Media Group?

1.3 Research Objective

This study sought to determine the influence of business continuity planning strategy on firm resilience at the Standard Media Group.

1.4 Value of the Study

This study sensitises the media companies in Kenya to exercise cautious optimism at all times and institute strategies to cater for any major negative eventualities or threats to the long-term sustenance of their businesses.

To the Communication Authority of Kenya, the study is beneficial in understanding the emerging approaches being leveraged upon by media players to guarantee their continuity of operations. Hence informing their policy making process that would protect the sector from collapse. This is part of the mandate of the Communication Authority of Kenya as a regulator of the media sector in Kenya. The media industry employees on the other hand benefits from gaining awareness of the overall disaster preparedness and business continuity standing of their media companies and how it impacts their jobs sustainability. Therefore, the study will help the public to make informed decisions on the future of media industry in Kenya.

Sustainable continuity of enterprises is an important factor that impacts the stability of any economy. Thus, the greatest value of the study is its contribution to the practice of management in the contemporary business environment and in the media sector context that in turn contributes to the growth of the economy. In fact, the study struggles to find theory in business continuity management. Hence, it contributes to building a theory on enterprise resilience.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review chapter looked into past literature related to the study topic and gives a review of this past literature. The literature was obtained from different sources and was from various researchers. The chapter in the first section outlines the theoretical framework and looked into the following theories: the open systems theory and the chaos theory. This is followed by an analysis of the concepts of organizational strategy and business continuity planning.

2.2 Theoretical perspective

The study was anchored in the following theories, namely the Open Systems Theory and the Chaos Theory.

2.2.1 Open Systems Theory

Organization theory looks at how the different social structures, tasks, resources and the environments relate with each other in a firm. For any firm to succeed, then it must be aware of the external changes and requirements (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Richard Scott classifies the firm theoretical definitions into three. These schools of thought are called: human relations, system perspectives and classical (Scott, 1998). The system perspective or the “open system view” of a firm as explained determines how the firm uses its inputs namely raw materials, data and resources to come up with outputs. According to this theory, all firms are complex entities and this is why they are open systems as they have been shaped by uncertainties but based on the rationality criteria which mean they need certainty and determination to survive (Thompson 1967).

The open system school of thought looks at the firm environment and the strategies it uses to survive. The firm is constrained by its environment since the organisation doesn't have perfect or complete control of this environment. The environment is also dynamic since it keeps on changing and the environmental elements are all interrelated (Emery & Trist, 1971). In certain circumstances, the firm can be in control of its environment due to the use of power gained from different relationships established between the firm and the environment elements. The organisation and the environment are interdependent and the organisation isn't always in

control of this environment or its actions which makes the environment a major source of risks and uncertainties. The plans and actions that are undertaken by the environment will undoubtedly impact the organisation performance. The organisation will therefore need to come up with strategies that can help it sustainability survive under the ever changing environment. The theory is based upon the concept that firms are greatly shaped by their surrounding environment. The firm environment is always challenging the organisation by exerting different social, political and economic changes but it's also the source of the different resources used by the firm to survive and compete with other organisations (Bastedo, 2004). When the organisation is part of an open system, it can openly relate with its surrounding environment (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) explain that firms get their resources from external sources and the firm cannot survive without these resources which is why it's noted that the environment does control the firm.

The environment isn't static, it's ever changing and it can't be controlled by the firm management. To minimise the uncertainty exerted on the firm by the environment, the firm tries to build positive relations with its surroundings (Dubois, 1998). Further, the theory also opinions that firms have no choice but to meet the needs of the different actors who give them the resources they need to continue. Such actors include: suppliers, customers and shareholders and they are said to exercise a significant amount of control on the firm (Christensen, 1997). According to many scholars organisations are social structures conceptualised by people to attain specific objectives and goals. From this definition, its obvious that all firms are faced with certain challenges that they have to take care of: they must come up with their goals, they must encourage participants to provide services, they must effectively use, coordinate and control these contributed services, they must obtain resources from their environments and distributed the products and services, they must choose , train and replace participants and they must come up with a working relationship and a positive way to interact with the firms neighbours (Scott & Davis, 2015).

2.2.2 Chaos Theory

Chaos theory when applied in management assists in the financial forecasting, prediction of the behaviour of the market and helps the firm anticipate the competitive methods used by competitors. Organizations operate in a dynamic environment that enables the applicability of the tenets of chaos theory to them. Kazmi (2008) recommends that scholars of strategic

management should be aware that in an ever changing business environment a static firm cannot survive. Any firm that wants to survive in such an environment should be willing to change dynamically in line with the changes in its environment. It is all in vain for an organisation to attempt to create order when the equilibrium state is only for a short period.

The chaos theory is behind the dynamic changes experienced by firms and the complex relations seen among organisations. The theory notes that organisations are chaotic entities which results to the development of rules and guidelines to help cope with this complexity and to cope up with indirect ways to meet the firm objectives. This theory helps to show the necessity of the management intervention in reducing the volatility of the firm environment and the importance of building of resilience by firms in an effort to minimise the effect of environmental disruptions (Levy, 2007).

2.3 Business Continuity Planning and Organizational Strategy

The strategic management process is geared towards gaining competitive advantage for a business operating within an environment that has many competing interests and threats. The external environment of an enterprise is made up of the different forces and conditions that impact its strategies and shape its competitive environment (Pearce & Robinson, 1997). As explained by Pierce and Robinson, the strategic management model indicates that the firm external environment is made up of three segments that are in constant interaction: the remote, industry and operating environments. The firm has to come up with a strategy which is a plan or process on how the organization is going to meet its objectives. The strategy should also define the objectives and come up with a formula on how it's going to meet these objectives or goals by defining the plans and policies to be followed. According to the available literature the different parts of the firm are categorized as processes, structures, resources, people and information technology that can help managers come up with changes in the firm that can help the organization move forward.

All these environmental factors have a direct impact on the continuity of an enterprise. Continuity is, in turn, the measure of enterprise resilience. Disasters scenarios that affect continuity, for instance, may be a result of natural factors that are in the remote environment or an act of sabotage from competitors in the industry environment or perhaps a supply chain failure within the operating environment. Essentially, all threats to the continuity of businesses are resident in the environment. Organizations constantly evaluate their purpose and redefine

the way they relate with the environment. Effective firms are able despite environmental changes to maintain a constant market for their products while ineffective organizations are often overtaken by their competitors in this area. The process that a firm takes to adjust to the changing environment is not easy. It's a complicated process that is made up of many decisions and changes at the firm level. It's, however, possible for organization to simplify this process by looking at the pattern in the way other successful firms have behaved in an effort to adjust to the changes in the environment (Miles, Snow, Meyer & Coleman, 1978).

Strategies are achievable when the firm stakeholders work in harmony with each other over a period of time (Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985). A strategy is said to be "organizational" if there is coherence and harmony in the processes of the firm which means the processes are completed in coordinated action streams (Mintzberg, 1978). Enterprise resilience is a key ingredient to an organization's competitive advantage. Indeed, the continuity of a business is an implied assumption in the strategy making process. According to Pierce and Robinson (1997), three economic goals guide the strategic direction of any business organization, whether or not they are explicitly stated. These goals are survival, growth and profitability. The concept of enterprise resilience is concerned with the first goal- ensuring that the life of the business is reasonably guaranteed. In the absence of this guarantee, strategic planning would be incomplete. Enterprise resilience requires decisions and strategies to help an organization recover from real disruptions. Thus, building enterprise resilience is a key outcome of the strategy process as it seeks to secure the long-term sustenance of a business. Sustainable competitive advantage needs the firm to have differentiation strategies such as better quality, enhanced performance, technological superiority and value for money to customers (Thomson, Strickland & Gamble, 2008).

Engemann and Henderson (2011) opine that because business continuity planning often deals with improbable events the analysis of risks is challenging and organizational resilience is possible by use of effective strategies that emphasize on risk management and business continuity while also being aware of risks that the firm is dealing with and the way the firm can use technology to deal with these risks. Some enterprises do not have a clear understanding of the critical areas of business that need to be secured because of their impact on continuity. Weinschenk (2011) asserts that the reason for this gap is the failure by management to involve the business departments and have them identify the critical functions and processes without thinking about IT or software. Firms have to come up with effective strategies and make

decisions that are complex in nature. Sometimes some of the decisions and strategies taken up do not work but this shouldn't be an excuse for the firm not to make decisions or not to decide on the course of action to follow (Thomson et al., 2008). These decisions may determine if a company survives in the long run or not. In the event of an industry-wide disruption, for instance, the business organizations that have sound continuity plans thrive and can turn the fortunes on themselves and in effect drive competitors out of business. In the event of a disruptive event affecting one enterprise, its competitive advantage is greatly diminished due to the disruption of capacity. However, if adequate resilience is built in, there would be little time for competitors to take advantage of the situation.

2.4 Empirical Studies and Research Gaps

Maina (2012) has studied the concept of business continuity planning and firm resilience amongst deposit taking Kenyan MFIs. Six licensed deposit taking Kenyan MFIs were selected and questionnaires issued amongst them. Descriptive statistics and correlational analysis were used to analyze the data. The results indicated that most of the microfinance institutions had a formal business continuity planning process and it recommended further research on the activation of business continuity planning methods in organizations in the event of occurrence of a real disruptive event. These findings may not be replicated at the Standard Media Group owing to differences in types of business. Also, the Standard Media Group is skewed towards provision of goods as compared to deposit taking microfinance institutions which provide services which may alter the type of distribution channel adopted.

Gathuku (2010) looked at how MFIs responded to changes in the regulatory environment. The main sources of financial regulation were looked into in the study especially when it came to the inter-bank sector and the impact of deposit/loan changes, interest rate spreads and changes in bank equity. The researcher noted that there were potential for the recording of differing findings due to the access of asymmetrical information by the concerned organizations and the markets monitoring costs for unsecured loans, the settlement process results to an 'institutional' contagion potential. This study did not focus its research on the same industry and type of business as the current study, the context was limited to the regulatory environment and not generalized to internal or external threats in the environment that are crosscutting across political, social, regulatory, economic, technological or acts of god.

Macharia (2011) focused on the sustainability of Kenyan MFIs. The study focus was on the availability or lack of enough business opportunities for the survival of the MFIs. The study may not be applicable to the Standard Media Group due to the difference in type of business and industries, since the Standard Media Group is a media company that has an output of different products while the microfinance institutions are in the finance sector and centered in the service industry. Also Macharia's study focused on opportunities for survival while this study seeks to look into business resilience planning strategies in mitigating the impact of threats and their effect on firm resilience.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the nature of the research activity that was undertaken. It systematically solves the research problem by logically adopting various steps. It begins by explaining the research design that was adopted. It then specifies the data collection methods and techniques that were employed. Finally, the chapter describes how the data was analysed.

3.2 Research Design

Research design entails detailed guidelines that ought to be adhered to in order to optimize achievement of the study objectives (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2014). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), it is through research design that researchers minimize their distraction from achieving study objectives.

The study adopted a case study design, which has been defined by Robson (2002) as a research strategy that empirically investigates a given phenomenon in its real life surroundings by use of different evidence sources. Merriam (2009) notes that its crucial for a researcher to define the case study feature as this should be the case or the bounded system for the research adding that this type of research focuses on a given situation and the findings of the research ought to be heuristic or descriptive. The use of case studies in research has been opinionated to be a form of qualitative research that is versatile and its suited for the in-depth and comprehensive study of a phenomenon or a group or an event, especially in instances where there are multiple variables and there is unclear distinction between the study context and issue under study (Creswell, 2014).

During the research design process, the researcher should come up with the research questions that would help them choose the case. They should also pinpoint the focus of the study and provide boundaries if they are to effectively provide the research elements (Stake, 2006). The process of case bounding is very crucial as it helps in the framing and management of the collection and analysis of data. The researcher ought to be specific and selective when it comes to providing the parameters to build the case. The researcher should selectively choose the location, process and the participants to be studied and come up with the frame for researching the case (Yin, 2014). It sought to determine the formality of business continuity planning as a way of building enterprise resilience at the Standard Media Group. It began by gathering

descriptive information on the Standard Media Group - specifically on size and scope of operations and current performance. The study was designed to elicit the prevalent level of disaster preparedness in the organisation. The study also explored how the various challenges cited by the respondents interacted with each other.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary and secondary data were both used in the study. The primary data was gathered with the help of an interview guide. The respondents at the Standard Media Group were the managers of the risk department, operations, finance, information, communication and technology and human resource departments. The interview guide was used to facilitate the oral administration of questions in a face-to face encounter hence allowing in-depth collection of data.

Secondary data, specifically, on BCP strategies and firm resilience aspects were obtained from SMG's previous file records. The researcher also referred to published supervision reports on media companies from the Communication Authority of Kenya.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out through content analysis which involves outlining any type of substance and checking the different perspectives to it thus securing more target assessment. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) provided that content analysis serves to analyse the available information so as to come up with factors that influence a certain event or process. Open-ended questions are best analysed using content analysis since this method is objective and flexible and can be used to systematically describe quantitative data (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

Content analysis determines the 'what' aspect of the data also called the semantic part of the content (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). It ensures that the content is not selectively perceived but that there is the use of reliability and validity during the analysis of content (Klenke, 2008).

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the findings as set out in the research methodology. The study sought to determine the influence of business continuity planning strategy on firm resilience at the Standard Media Group. Data for the study was obtained from the managers of the following departments: risk, operations, finance, information, communication and technology and human resource departments at the Standard Media Group.

4.2 Demographic Profile of the Study Participants

The study participants were requested to indicate the positions they held within the Standard Group Limited, their areas of specialization and duration for which they had worked in the media industry. From the study findings, the respondents indicated that they were heads of departments at the Standard Media Group. In addition, the study participants had diverse competencies with their areas of expertise ranging from accounting and finance to ICT to operations management to risk analysis to human resources management. Further, the study participants were unanimous that they had worked in the media industry for over 10 years, implying that they were better placed to comment on the research subject.

4.3 Business Continuity Planning Strategies Adopted by the Standard Media Group

4.3.1 Formality of Planning and Management Focus on BCP

On formality of planning and management focus on business continuity planning at the Standard Media Group, the study sought to establish whether the Standard Media Group had a formal Business Continuity Plan reflecting identified mission critical activities and risks for all its departments, its focus, whether the BCP was subjected to regular testing, review and updating and whether business continuity planning appeared on the Board Agenda at least once a year.

From the study findings, the study participants unanimously agreed that the Standard Media Group did have a formal Business Continuity Plan that reflected identified mission critical activities and risks that the firm faced in its line of business. According to the study participants, the major aim of the firm's Business Continuity Plan was to ensure the firm's continuity of

operation in times of major operational disruption/turbulence. This is through establishment of clearly planned measures and procedures defining major risks to its continued operation, their mitigating factors as well as possible pre-emptive actions against these turbulences and disruptions. This was as enumerated in the following verbatim;

Participant 1 said that;

“Indeed, we have a formal business continuity plan that covers the firm’s core operation activities and potential risks in all significant area of the firm’s operations.”

Participant 4 echoed the same words by indicating;

“Our firm’s formal business continuity plan main aim is to ensure the firm’s continued operation in the event of significant disruptions or major crises. In short, the business continuity plan aims to ensure that our company is able to continually meet the needs of our customers and other stakeholders even amidst a crisis.”

Participant 5 also added;

“Our firm’s formal business continuity plan outlines clear interventions and procedures that should be initiated in the event of certain disruptions with the view of maintaining the firm’s operations during these turbulent episodes before more robust strategic decisions are made in relation to the particular events”.

The study participants added that the Standard Media Group's Business Continuity Plan was a strategic management tool for analysing the impact of significant disruptive events on the firm's survival and resilience, both in the short-term and in the long-term. As such, the study respondents were of the view that the Standard Media Group's BCP provided the framework for evaluation, understanding and responding to major disruptions in the Group's operating environment. This was as depicted in the following verbatim;

Participant 2 stated that;

“I am of the view that our firm’s formal business continuity plan serves as management’s strategic tool of safeguarding the firm’s immediate and long-term survival and continuity in the face of serious adverse and disruptive events that may arise”.

This was in line with Lyndon (2018) who argued that a firm's business continuity plan provides a broad framework through which the firm addresses major events in its operating environment that threaten its very existence and continued operation. A similar view was expressed by Robson (2017) who averred that business continuity planning seeks to foster an entity's resilience and allow resumption or continuity of its core operations under adverse or significantly challenging operating conditions. Pearce and Robinson (2017) opine that business continuity planning aims to enhance firm resilience and long term continuity through identifying action plans against major risks, threats and vulnerabilities.

As to whether the Standard Media Group's Business Continuity Plan was subjected to regular testing, review and updating, the study participants were unanimous that the firm's Business Continuity Plan was tested, reviewed and updated on a regular basis. According to the study participants, the regular testing, review and updating of the BCP was critical to ensure that the BCP remained robust, up to date with emerging changes in the firm's operating environment and relevant to the firm's current circumstances while helping the Standard Media Group to stay alive to the dynamism of the local media industry. This was as captured in the following verbatim;

Participant 2 stated that;

"It's true that our firm's business continuity plan is tested, reviewed and updated on a regular basis. This ensures that the plan remains relevant to the current needs of the firm in the face of constant changes that occur in our business environment".

Participant 3 echoed these sentiments by noting that;

"The prominence of the BCP strategy concept has significantly grown at the Standard Media Group, as is the case in the wider industry, in recognition of growing threats and disruptions in the industry, hence the need to have a framework that would guarantee organizational resilience and capacity for effectively responding to emerging issues, hence allowing for continuity of operations under adverse or challenging conditions".

Participant 1 added that;

“As a firm, we regularly test and review our firm’s business continuity plan to keep it well updated and sufficiently robust in light of emerging threats and opportunities in the media industry”.

Robson (2017) and Burgelman et al. (2018) espoused similar sentiments on the need for firms to regularly update their business continuity plans as a mechanism of ensuring that the BCPs remained alive to changes occurring in their operating environments. Engemann and Henderson (2011) expressed related view that it was instrumental for firms to keep their BCPs well updated to ensure the BCPs did not grow obsolete in the face of changing dynamics in their business environments. Regular review and updating of a firm’s business continuity planning, according to Weinschenk (2011), grants a firm the capacity to remain aware of potential major threats and vulnerabilities in their enterprises and hence the ability to develop necessary interventions to safeguard an entity’s immediate and long term well-being.

Further, as to whether business continuity planning regularly appeared on the Board Agenda every year, the study participants answered to the affirmative. The study participants indicated that business continuity planning was a common feature on the Agenda items of the firm’s Board meetings and annual retreat. The study participants expressed the view that business continuity planning was regularly discussed in Board meetings due to its direct contribution to the firm’s long term resilience capability given its emphasis on a wider strategic focus on business resilience and continuity through proactive management of emerging disruptions and adverse events. This was as evidenced by the following verbatim;

Participant 5 pointed that;

“In our firm, business continuity planning is a regular item in Board’s annual deliberations given its significance to our firm’s immediate and long term continuity in the face of a dynamic and increasingly challenging operating environment. I guess it’s part of our strategic focus to remain acutely aware of potential events that may severely affect our firm’s normal operation and being able to act on time to safeguard our firm’s continued operation”.

Similar sentiments were shared by participant 3 who asserted that;

“Elevation of business continuity planning to board level discourse allows the Group’s top most governing body the opportunity to review fundamental risks, threats and vulnerabilities that the firm faces in its operation hence allowing the board to develop a framework for building organizational resilience and continuity of operations in the face of these risks, threats and/or vulnerabilities”.

This concurred with the views of Thiga (2009) and Weinschenk (2011) who argued that elevation of BCP discussions to board level not only denotes the significance of BCP in a firm’s strategy but also allows the board the opportunity to make necessary strategic decisions that may shape the strategic position of the firm with respect to firm resilience and business continuity in the face of major disruptions in the firm’s operating environment.

4.3.2 BCP Strategies Adopted by the Standard Media Group

The study sought to establish the BCP strategies currently in place at the Standard Media Group for ensuring business resilience with respect to the following parameters: ICT systems, human resource, financial management, market power/share and engagement with critical business partners.

According to the study participants, the BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to ICT systems included major investments in latest media technologies, having a dedicated team of ICT experts to manage the firm’s ICT systems, undertaking testing, review and upgrading of the ICT systems on a regular basis, investing in the security and protection of the ICT systems, close integration of the firm’s ICT systems, consistent monitoring of the delivery of the ICT systems and consistent monitoring of significant threats to the firm’s ICT systems. This implied that the BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to ICT systems aimed to secure the effective operation and safety of the firm’s ICT systems. This was as depicted in these few excerpts;

Participant 4 pointed that;

“As a firm, our BCP strategies in the area of ICT include investing in latest media technologies, continually building on the capacity of our ICT team and other staff with respect to

management of the firm's ICT resources and continually reviewing and testing the ICT systems regularly to ensure their optimal working”.

Participant 2 added that;

“Our firm's BCP strategies with respect to ICT systems include having a highly competent and dynamic ICT team to manage the firm's ICT resources, prioritizing on the ICT systems 'security and protection and close integration of the firm's ICT systems as well as with the firm's operations”.

Participant 1 echoed these sentiments by noting that;

“The area of ICT is integral to a firm's effective operation. As such some of the ICT systems 'based BCP strategies that we have include close monitoring of the ICT systems 'operation and rate of delivery as well as close monitoring of any serious threats to our firm's ICT resources”.

According to the study participants, the BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to human resources included recruiting top talents across all cadres of staff, regular staff training to enhance their competence and capabilities, fair remuneration of the workforce, providing opportunities for career advancement, rewarding excellence and innovation at work, undertaking regular staff performance evaluations and instituting proper courses of actions to address identified staff performance gaps, institution of sound dispute resolution mechanisms to address any emerging workplace conflicts, fostering a work environment characterised by common understanding, trust, diligence and ethical conduct, ensuring the right skills to job match, fostering a positive and stimulating work environment that allows the staff to realize their full potential in their areas of work and close monitoring of the impact of changes in its operating environment on its staffs 'required skills set. This implied that the BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to human resource aimed to secure the full commitment and productivity of the firm's workforce while ensuring that the workforce's current skills-set remained relevant to the needs of the firm in the face of an extremely challenging and dynamic operating environment. The following excerpts act as evidence of these findings;

Participant 2 pointed out that;

“I think our key BCP strategies on human resource is attracting and recruiting top talents in every department and ensuring that we offer these top talents opportunities for career growth and advancement.”

Participant 5 said that;

“In my view, our firm’s BCP strategies on human resource include regular staff performance appraisals, regular staff trainings so as to enhance our staffs ’on-job knowledge and skills and providing regular feedback to our staffs in regard to the outcomes of their performance appraisal.”

Participant 1 also added;

“Our firm’s BCP strategies on human resources also entail building a conducive and cohesive work environment based on various moral and ethical principles as well as fostering a positive and stimulating work environment that allows the staff to realize their full potential in their areas of work”.

Participant 3 concurred by stating that;

“Our firm’s BCP strategies on human resources place special emphasis on work excellence and hence include regular trainings to enhance the staff’s skills at work and to address any noted performance gaps among the staffs. Another important strategy on HR in our firm is conflict resolution mechanisms that seek to ensure harmony among the firm’s workers”.

According to the study participants, the BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to financial management included growth of the firm’s asset base, enhancement of the firm’s capital structure, diversification of revenue streams, debt restructuring, curtailing non-essential expenditure, strict supervision of the application of the firm’s budget, placing emphasis on effective cash flow management and adherence to recommended financial management practices and regulations. This implied that the BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to financial management aimed to secure the long term sound financial standing and viability of the firm.

Participant 4 said that;

“On financial management, the BCP strategies we have adopted as a firm include strict application of firm budget, diversification of revenue streams, debt restructuring and curtailing non-essential expenditure. This has been instrumental in ensuring that the firm remains financially sound particularly during these troubling economic times”.

Participant 2 added that;

“My view is that as a firm we have put lots of emphasis on asset growth, strengthening our firm’s capital structure, prudence in budgeting and financial planning and adhering to issued financial management regulations as core BCP strategies to safeguard our firm’s financial standing.”

According to the study participants, the BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to market power/share included continued enhancing of its current product offerings, having a significant presence in social media platforms, adoption of social media technologies and/or platforms in its marketing and product offering, growth and diversification of its product offerings, rebranding and market repositioning, competitive pricing, increased emphasis on meeting customer needs coupled with enhanced customer care services, keeping track of changing consumer preferences and their changing news consumption behaviours/habits and keeping tabs with competitors 'actions/moves and changing dynamics in the global and local media industry. According to the study participants, the key motive behind the Standard Media Group's marketing BCP strategies was the desire to not only retain but also to grow its market share.

Participant 3 said that;

“With regard to market share, our firm’s BCP strategies focus on enhancing the quality of the firm’s current product offerings, aggressive marketing and continued growth and diversification of the firm’s products and services.”

Participant 1 also shared his thoughts by stating;

“Our firm’s BCP strategies on market share recently have been on adoption of social media technologies and/or platforms for marketing and delivery of firm product offerings, and maintaining a strong presence in social media platforms.

Rebranding and market repositioning have also been key strategies in this sphere.”

Participant 5 also added;

“Our firm’s BCP strategies on strengthening market share also revolve around competitive pricing and putting the customer first. As such, we are keen on keeping tabs with changing consumer preferences and their changing news consumption behaviours/habits and are keen to meet our customers’ needs at all times. To add to this, we also keep an open eye on our competitors’ actions/moves and changing dynamics in the global and local media industry”.

According to the study participants, the BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to engagement with critical business partners included safeguarding the interests of its critical business partners in its operation, close collaboration with its critical business partners in its strategic decisions, maintaining regular communication with its critical business partners on the firm’s state of affairs, placing value on and giving due consideration to the input of its critical business partners, making effort to amicably resolve any disputes with its critical business partners and making efforts to enrich/strengthen relations with its critical business partners. This implied that the BCP strategies adopted to ensure business resilience at the SMG with respect to engagement with critical business partners aimed to cultivate an enduring positive engagement with the Group’s critical business partners.

Participant 1 said that;

“Indeed, as part of our BCP strategies on engagement with our critical business partners, we regularly engage them and closely collaborate with them on all important firm decisions.”

Participant 4 echoed these sentiments by stating that;

“I would say safeguarding the interests of our critical business partners in our operations, engaging them on important business decisions, keeping them abreast of the firm’s current state of affairs, giving due consideration to their voice and strengthening our relations with the critical business partners form the key BCP strategies that we have adopted with respect to engagement with our critical business partners.”

4.3.3 Factors affecting Business Continuity Planning in the Group

The study participants were requested to identify factors that impacted the level of resilience and business continuity at the Standard Media Group. According to the study findings, the study participants identified emerging media technologies such as social media, ever increasing ICT advancements, liberalization of the airwaves, declining revenues from traditional sources, consumers 'changing news/information consumption habits, a demographically changing audience, increasing business competition, fake news phenomenon and tightening regulation as the key factors that impacted the level of resilience and business continuity at the Standard Media Group. This was as depicted in the following verbatim;

Participant 2 said that;

“Oh my, the disruption occasioned by the emergence of social media has been profound. We've had to have a radical reset in the way we offer our news products to our consumers in this age of ICT. This truly has tested the resilience of our business model and remains an area of work-in-progress”.

Participant 5 shared his views by noting that;

“Indeed, a number of factors stand out and which have had a significant impact on our continued existence as a firm and these are a demographically changing audience and their dynamic tastes and preferences, the rapid opening up of the airwaves, the on-going digitization of the media platforms and tightening policing/regulation of the industry by the government.”

Participant 1 concurred by noting that;

“The greatest challenge to our continued being as a firm, from where I stand, has been declining revenues from our traditional sources. This means that we have had to become more creative and innovative in the way we operate as we continue to diversify our income streams. To add to this, tightening regulation of the industry, increased liberalization of the airwaves, changing consumer dynamics and the fake news phenomenon have all tested our firm's level of resilience and continuity. But I am confident, we will emerge victorious and that our firm will become more robust in readiness of the future and what it may bring”.

This implied that the factors that affected business continuity planning at the Standard Media Group related to emerging technologies in the media sector, increasing competition, changing

demographics of the audience and their news consumption habits, changes in the regulatory environment and declining revenues from traditional sources. Similar observations were made by Engelmann and Henderson (2011) who also identified emerging changes in consumer habits, regulation, ICT advances, levels of competition and diminishing financial capabilities as leading factors impacting an entity's resilience and business continuity both in the short and long run; sentiments also shared by Gathuku (2010) and Weinschenk (2011).

4.4 Influence of Business Continuity Planning on Firm Resilience at the Standard Media Group

The objective of the study sought to determine the influence of business continuity planning strategy on firm resilience at the Standard Media Group. The findings were as described in the subsequent subsections.

4.4.1 Resilience Level at the Standard Media Group

The study participants were requested to indicate what they considered to be mission critical activities/processes at the Standard Media Group. From the study findings, the study participants cited uninterrupted news coverage/content delivery on the firm's news media platforms, uninterrupted signal frequencies, uninterrupted power supply, operationally sound media technologies, a competent and harmoniously working editorial, news and technical team, sound leadership, timely and effective communication among the staff and close coordination among all units involved in news/content delivery as the mission critical activities/processes at the Standard Media Group. This was as depicted in the following excerpts;

Participant 3 stated that;

"As a reputable media house, being able to offer uninterrupted news coverage to our viewers on all our media platforms is a core activity to our mandate. As such complementary services to this role such as a competent and ever ready editorial team and unfailing media systems, signal frequencies and power supply are all critical components in our working that we closely keep an eye on".

Participant 4 echoed these sentiments by noting;

"Our core business is to dispense news items to our audience and therefore all activities that facilitate news delivery become mission critical activities. As such, sound media platforms,

uninterrupted signal frequencies and power supply and a competent and cohesive news and technical team are crucial”.

Participant 2 added that;

“Effective leadership and communication and close coordination of all our various units form mission critical elements of our working and are equally important as to the technical aspects of news delivery”.

The study participants also shared the view that the Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption (MTPD) for these mission critical activities was an hour to 6 hours, implying that any disruptions to these mission critical activities exceeding this duration could have significant implications on the Group’s ability to fulfil its mandate of providing uninterrupted news coverage on an ongoing basis. This was as captured in the following excerpts;

Participant 1 stated that;

“Our kind of business is time-sensitive and thus we cannot afford lengthy disruptions to our continued news delivery. Remember, we pride ourselves for providing uninterrupted news to our audience. So yes, it has to be uninterrupted!”.

Participant 2 echoed these sentiments by noting;

“Technically saying, I would put our Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption (MTPD) for our mission critical activities to between an hour to 6 hours. And that’s a stretch already. Any form of serious disruption that would curtail our ability to offer uninterrupted news coverage on an ongoing basis even for the least time is considered as a matter of grave concern”.

As to whether the Standard Media Group, in the respondents’ view, had a robust Business Continuity Plan to guarantee resilience of its business under diverse adverse circumstances that included total loss or destruction of its critical ICT systems and/or data; prolonged unavailability of critical ICT systems; loss, sickness or departure of critical human resources; withdrawal or unexpected failure by any critical supplier(s); withdrawal or unexpected failure by a strategic financier; prolonged loss of power supply affecting systems and hence service delivery and loss of crucial facilities/equipments due to natural disasters such as fires, earthquakes, floods or human crime such as burglary, terrorism and/or fraud; the study participants answered to the affirmative. The study participants were confident that the BCP

strategies adopted by Standard Media Group were adequately robust to safeguard the firm's continued operation in the face of these cited adverse events. However, they also shared the view that there is always room for further enhancement of the firm's BCP strategies as there cannot be absolute safeguard mechanism against these potential adverse events especially in light of their dynamic nature. This was as enumerated in the following verbatim;

Participant 5 stated that;

"I am confident that our firm's business continuity plan is robust enough to safeguard its continued operation in the face of serious adverse events such as failure of the ICT and media systems, prolonged power loss and various disasters such as fires and human crime".

Participant 2 echoed these sentiments by noting;

"While I have no doubt regarding the capacity of our firm's business continuity plan in safeguarding the resilience of this firm under challenging times, we are also alive to the very fact that no plan, however good it is, is foolproof. This is to say, though our BCP is sufficiently robust, we are keen to constantly strengthen it, in the face of a dynamic operating environment, filled with numerous hurdles".

Participant 4 added that;

"I answer to the affirmative that I am confident that the BCP strategies adopted by our firm are adequately robust to safeguard the firm's continued operation in the face of varied difficult scenarios with their potential adverse ramifications. That is not to say, there are no gaps in our BCP. As they say, there's always room for improvement. So, we keep working on our BCP to make it better ready to respond to any eventualities that may arise".

4.4.2 Importance of Business Continuity Planning and Management on Resilience of the Standard Media Group

To determine the influence of business continuity planning strategy on firm resilience at the Standard Media Group, the study participants were queried on whether business continuity planning was important for ensuring enterprise resilience at the Standard Media Group. From the study findings, the study participants were all in agreement that business continuity planning strategy was instrumental to enterprise resilience at the Standard Media Group. The

study participants shared the view that the Standard Media Group's business continuity planning strategy had a significant influence on the firm's resilience. This was as enumerated in the following verbatim;

Participant 1 pointed that;

"The BCP strategy in place here is absolutely critical to the firm's immediate and long-term continued operation".

Similar sentiments were shared by participant 2 who said;

"BCP strategy is a necessity to SMG's existence and continued being. No doubt about that".

Participant 3 added;

"At the heart of SMG's enterprise resilience is its BCP strategy. These two are inseparable".

Participant 4 concurred by noting that;

"There is no doubt that our firm's BCP strategy is at the root of its resilience. The BCP strategy is indeed instrumental to our firm's continued operation now and in the future".

This was evidenced by the BCP strategy's focus on prompt identification of significant disruptive events that could threaten the very survival of the Standard Media Group and its prescription of appropriate courses of actions to mitigate these threats. The study participants concurred that the BCP strategy provided a framework useful for addressing significant disruptive events that could put the long term survival and continuity of the Standard Media Group in jeopardy. The study participants also added that the significance of the BCP strategy to enterprise resilience at the Standard Media Group lies in its ability to make the Standard Media Group highly adaptive and hence increasing the firm's capacity to meet and influence the dynamic demands of its operating environment.

The study participants also noted that the Standard Media Group's business continuity planning strategy was instrumental as it ensured that the firm's critical operations continued to be available even in times of serious adverse events. The study participants also expressed the view that the firm's business continuity planning strategy was a proactive mechanism that

safeguarded continued delivery of the firm's critical services and/or products in times of a disruption. As such, the study participants affirmed that the SMG's business continuity planning strategy helped enhance the firm's ability and capacity to withstand systemic discontinuities and adapt to its own risk environment.

This was as depicted in the following verbatim;

Participant 3 pointed out that;

"The BCP strategy significance to our firm's resilience lies in its ability in helping the SMG to address any emerging significant disruptive events that could put its long term survival and continuity in jeopardy".

Participant 1 shared these sentiments;

"The importance of the BCP strategy to SMG's continued existence and operation rests in the BCP strategy's ability to make the SMG highly adaptive in meeting the dynamic demands of its operating environment".

Participant 5 added that;

"SMG's BCP strategy provides a framework for guiding action against any significant happenings that threaten the continuity of the firm. In short, it ensures the continued functioning of the entity in the face of serious adverse events/disruption. As such, it has a profound impact on the firm's long-term continuity".

Participant 2 also added that;

"The BCP strategy is indeed critical to SMG's continued operation and is integral to its resilience as it enhances SMG's ability and capacity to withstand systemic discontinuities in its operating environment".

In view of its critical significance to enterprise resilience and continuity, the study participants argued at formalised BCP strategy should be made compulsory for all media firms. It was thus evident that the BCP strategy in place at SMG was of critical importance to the firm's enterprise resilience and continuity. This agreed with Weinschenk (2011), Kaye and Graham (2016) and Robson (2017) who also noted that BCP strategies are instrumental in contemporary

organizations as a mechanism of enhancing their capacity to deal with emerging significant disruptive events and to adapt to the dynamic demands of their operating environment.

4.5 Evidence from Secondary Data on SMG's BCP Strategy

From the Standard Media Group's file records, information relating to the current status of the various elements that form the firm's BCP strategy was extracted. The findings were as summarized in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Current status of SMG's BCP strategy

BCP strategy metrics [applicable to all departments]	Complete	Ongoing	Not yet started
Roles defined, and responsibilities currently assigned			
Policy, scope and objectives created, approved and published			
Competencies defined, documented, and approved			
Participation of team members in training and workforce awareness			
Business impact analyses completed, documented, and approved			
Business continuity strategies documented, selected, and in place			
Response procedures created and approved			
BCP exercises conducted, post-exercise reports produced and approved			
Management review completed within the past year			
Corrective actions documented, approved, and completed			

Source: SMG File Records, 2020

The results in Table 4.1 hereinabove provide evidence from secondary/documentary sources at SMG that indicate that, as at the end of year 2020, SMG had a BCP strategy in place which could be evaluated as being strong on the basis of the identified BCP strategy metrics. The documentary evidence indicated that the firm's BCP strategy elements that were already complete included roles definition and assignment of responsibilities; creation, approval and publication of policy, scope and objectives; clear definition, documentation and approval of required competencies; completion, documentation and approval of business impact analyses and business continuity strategies; creation and approval of response procedures and management review of the BCP strategy in the immediate past year. The few BCP strategy elements denoted as ongoing included participation of team members in training and workforce awareness; conduct of BCP exercises as well as generation and approval of post-exercise reports and completion, approval and documentation of corrective actions. This secondary information was clear evidence of the existence of a robust BCP strategy at SMG.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations. It also contains suggested areas for further research. The study sought to establish the business continuity planning strategies adopted by the Standard Media Group in order to build firm resilience.

5.2 Summary

5.2.1 Business Continuity Planning Strategies Adopted by the Standard Media Group

The study established that the Standard Media Group did have a formal Business Continuity Plan that reflected identified mission critical activities and risks that the firm faced in its line of business. The major aim of the firm's BCP strategies was to ensure the firm's continuity of operation in times of major operational disruption/turbulence. The BCP strategies adopted covered the areas of ICT, human resource, financial management, market share/power and engagement with critical business partners. In the area of ICT, the BCP strategies aimed to secure the effective operation and safety of the firm's ICT systems.

In the area of human resource, the BCP strategies aimed to secure the full commitment and productivity of the firm's workforce while ensuring that the workforce's current skills-set remained relevant to the needs of the firm in the face of an extremely challenging and dynamic operating environment. In the area of financial management, the BCP strategies aimed to secure the long term sound financial standing and viability of the firm. In the area of market share/power, the BCP strategies aimed to help the firm to not only retain but also to grow its market share, while in the area of engagement with critical business partners, the BCP strategies aimed to cultivate an enduring positive engagement with the firm's critical business partners.

Further, emerging media technologies such as social media, ever increasing ICT advancements, liberalization of the airwaves, declining revenues from traditional sources, consumers' changing news/information consumption habits, a demographically changing audience, increasing business competition, fake news phenomenon and tightening regulation were cited as the key factors that impacted the level of resilience and business continuity at the Standard Media Group.

5.2.2 Influence of Business Continuity Planning on Firm Resilience at the Standard Media Group

The study participants were also in agreement that the Standard Media Group's business continuity planning strategy was instrumental to its enterprise resilience and that it had a significant influence on the firm's resilience. This was evidenced by the BCP strategy's focus on prompt identification of significant disruptive events that could threaten the very survival of the Standard Media Group and its prescription of appropriate courses of actions to mitigate these threats. The study participants noted that the BCP strategy provided a framework useful for addressing significant disruptive events that could put the long term survival and continuity of the Standard Media Group in jeopardy.

They added that the significance of the BCP strategy to enterprise resilience at the Standard Media Group lied in its ability to make the Standard Media Group highly adaptive and hence increasing the firm's capacity to meet and influence the dynamic demands of its operating environment. As such, the study participants affirmed that the SMG's business continuity planning strategy helped enhance the firm's ability and capacity to withstand systemic discontinuities and adapt to its own risk environment. However, they also acknowledged that there is always room for further enhancement of the firm's BCP strategies as there cannot be absolute safeguard mechanism against these potential adverse events especially in light of their dynamic nature.

5.3 Conclusions

From the study findings, the following conclusions were drawn thereto;

The Standard Media Group had adopted a wide range of business continuity planning strategies in the areas of ICT systems, human resource, financial management, market power/share and engagement with critical business partners and whose broad aim was to safeguard the firm's continuity of operation in times of major operational disruptions or turbulence.

Various key factors that impacted the level of firm resilience and business continuity of the Standard Media Group were identified as including emerging media technologies such as social media, ever increasing ICT advancements, liberalization of the airwaves, declining revenues from traditional sources, consumers 'changing news/information consumption habits, a

demographically changing audience, increasing business competition, fake news phenomenon and tightening regulation.

The Standard Media Group's business continuity planning strategy was instrumental to its enterprise resilience and that it had a significant influence on the firm's resilience. This is given that the BCP strategy provided a framework useful for addressing significant disruptive events that could put the long term survival and continuity of the Standard Media Group in jeopardy. This was through providing a clear outline of measures/interventions and procedures that should be initiated in the event of significant disruptions with the view of maintaining the firm's critical operations on-going during the turbulent period/episode.

5.4 Recommendations

In view of the study findings, the study recommends that:

The management of Standard Media Group should regularly update the firm's business continuity planning strategies to ensure they remain relevant to its needs and to its dynamic operating environment. This would also ensure timely identification and resolution of any gaps within the firm's BCP strategies in turn leading to their strengthening.

The management of Standard Media Group should ensure that the firm's staffs are adequately trained about the firm's BCP strategy and their role in its effective implementation. This is critical, as no matter how good the BCP strategy is, its effective implementation heavily relies on the competence of the organization's staff(s) with regard to their in-depth understanding of the strategy and how it should be operationalized/executed when need arises.

The management of Standard Media Group should ensure that the firm's BCP strategy is integrated into the firm's corporate strategy and is accorded right priority and significance through adequate facilitation and resource allocation. This is critical in ensuring that the firm's BCP strategy remains robust and positively contributes towards the realization of the firm's corporate goals.

The management of Standard Media Group should ensure adequate constructive engagement of all its critical stakeholders in the formulation and deployment of the firm's BCP strategy. This is critical in achieving ownership and acceptance of the firm's BCP strategy among all its

critical stakeholders. It also offers an opportunity for the various stakeholders to offer their input in the formulation of the firm's BCP strategy hence enriching the process.

5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research

Given that the current study explored the business continuity planning strategies adopted for building resilience at the Standard Media Group, a wider study involving other media firms in the country is hereby recommended. This will facilitate a broader comparison and generalization of the study findings.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Part A: General Information (Answer/Tick (✓) the appropriate answer)

1. What is your position within the Standard Group Limited?
2. In which department/ section are you currently serving?
3. What is your area of specialization?
4. How many years have you worked in the media industry?
1-2 years [] 3-5 years []
6-8 years [] More than 10 years []

PART B: EXTENT OF ADOPTION OF BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING AS A STRATEGY TO BUILDING ENTERPRISE RESILIENCE

1. Formality of Planning and Management Focus

- i. Is there a specific department responsible for ensuring business resilience through BCP at the Standard Group?
- ii. Is there a formal Business Continuity Plan reflecting identified Mission Critical activities and risks for all departments?
- iii. If there is a Business Continuity Plan, does it reflect the impact that a major operational disruption would have on the business?
- iv. Is the Business Continuity Plan subjected to testing, review on a regular basis and is it regularly updated?
- v. Does Business Continuity Planning appear on the Board Agenda at least once a year?

2. Importance of Business Continuity Planning & Management

- i. In the last 3 years have you had an incidence that would have been a major threat to the Standard Group's Business Continuity?
- ii. Is Business Continuity Planning important for ensuring enterprise resilience within the Standard Group and should formalised strategy on business resilience and continuity be made compulsory for Media Firms?

3) Required resilience level and assessment of current level of resilience

- a) What do you consider to be mission critical activities/processes at the Standard Media Group?

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- b) What is the Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption (MTPD)/Recovery Time Objectives (RTO) for the Standard Group's Mission Critical activities?

Less than 10 minutes

10-30 Minutes

30 Minutes- 1 hr

1 hr- 6 hrs

6hrs-1 day

Greater than 1 day

- c)

- c) In your view, does the Standard Media Group have a robust Business Continuity Plan to guarantee resilience of the business under the following circumstances

- i. Total loss or destruction of the critical ICT systems and/or data?
- ii. Prolonged unavailability of a critical ICT system?
- iii. Loss, sickness or otherwise departure of critical, human resources?
- iv. Withdrawal or unexpected failure by any critical suppliers?
- v. Withdrawal or unexpected failure by a strategic financier?
- vi. Prolonged loss of Power Supply affecting systems and hence service delivery?
- vii. Loss of facilities due to natural disasters such as fires, earthquakes, floods?
- viii. Loss due to crime: Burglary, terrorism, Fraud?

4) Methods adopted to ensure Business Continuity

What are the options currently in place for ensuring business resilience with respect to the following parameters?

- i. ICT Systems
- ii. Human Resource
- iii. Financial Management
- iv. Market Power/Share
- v. Engagement with Critical Business Partners

5) Factors affecting Business Continuity Planning

- i) Which factors impact the level of resilience and continuity readiness at the Standard Media Group?
- ii) Based on your assessment of the Standard Media Group, how would you rank the abovementioned factors in order of their weight in causing the prevailing BCP situation

6. Any other comment on Enterprise resilience at the Standard Media Group;

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter, **Lynette W. Mwangi** of Registration Number **D61/60170/2013** is a Master of Business Administration (MBA) student of the University of Nairobi.

She is required to submit as part of her coursework assessment a research project report. We would like the student to do her project on **business continuity strategies adopted for building resilience at the standard media group**. We would, therefore, appreciate if you assist her by allowing her to collect data within your organization for the research.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organization on request.

Thank you.


PHILIP NGIGI
FOR: DEAN, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



15th January 2021


Ms. Lynette Mwangi
University of Nairobi
P.O Box 30197-00100
NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “Business Continuity Strategies Adopted for Building Resilience at the Standard Group PLC”, I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research at the Standard Group PLC.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two hard copies of the research report to our office.

Thank you.



Benedict A. Omollo

Chief Officer Operations & Strategy

